T.R.
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RELIGION AND NATIONALISM AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS OF RELIGIOUS KURDS IN TÜRKİYE

PhD THESIS

Murat KAÇER

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

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ONAY SAYFASI

Murat Kaçer tarafından hazırlanan "Religion And Nationalism Among Different Groups of Religious Kurds in Türkiye" adlı tez çalışması aşağıdaki jüri tarafından oy birliği / oy çokluğu ile Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Anabilim Dalı'nda Yüksek Lisans / Doktora tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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İmza

Murat KAÇER

Kerem Mirza, Yusuf Taha ve Müjde'ye….

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ÖZET

Türkiye'deki Farklı Dindar Kürt Grupları Arasında Din ve Milliyetçilik

Bu tez, tarikatlara bağlı bireyler ile herhangi bir tarikatla ilişkili olmayan grup veya partilerde bulunan bireyler özelinde İslam ve milliyetçilik arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiyi dindar Kürtler bağlamında ele almaktadır. Çalışma, dindar Kürtlerin Kur'an ve Hadis gibi İslami kaynaklardan yararlanarak millet ve milliyetçiliğe ilişkin bakış açılarını, bu bakış açılarını şekillendiren nedenleri ve sonuçlarını araştırmaktadır. Bourdieu'nun Habitus kavramından hareketle bu tez, dindar Kürtler için (siyasi yönelimli ve dini yönelimli) ikili bir sınıflandırma yapmakta ve bu grupların içindeki dinamiklere dair bir kavrayış sağlamaktadır. Bu tez, tarikatlarda yer alan dindar Kürtlerin daha ılımlı ve daha az talepkar bir milliyetçilik biçimi sergilediğini, öte taraftan herhangi bir tarikatla ilişkisi olmayan dindar Kürtlerin ise daha talepkar ve milliyetçi denilecek bir tavır sergilediğini ileri sürmektedir.

Bu tez, dindar Kürtler arasında milliyetçilikle ilgili çeşitli düşünce ve davranış kalıplarının, çeşitli ortamlar veya 'alanlar' tarafından şekillenen farklı habituslar aracılığıyla açıklanabileceğini öne sürmektedir. Çalışma, Pierre Bourdieu'nun kavramlarına dayanarak, çeşitli habitusların farklı milliyetçilik deneyimlerine ve anlayışlarına yol açtığı şeklinde bir denklem kurmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, tez, farklı habitusların dindar Kürtlerin alışkanlıklarını, eğilimlerini ve sosyalleşme süreçlerini nasıl şekillendirdiğini ve İslam ile milliyetçilik arasındaki farklı bakış açılarını nasıl etkilediğini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Ayrıca, bu tez, tarihsel, politik, dini ve sosyo-ekonomik faktörleri bir araya getirerek kapsamlı bir analitik çerçeve kullanmayı amaçlayarak, bu grupların dinamikleri hakkında aydınlatıcı bir bakış açısı sunmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu bağlamda, mevcut literatüre önemli bir katkı sağlamayı amaçlayan tez, dindar Kürtlerin İslam ve milliyetçilikle ilgili çeşitli bakış açılarını anlamak için geniş bir perspektif sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Milliyetçilik, Din, İslam, Dindar Kürtler, Tarikatlar, Türkiye

ABSTRACT

Religion and Nationalism among Different Groups of Religious Kurds in Türkiye

This dissertation explores the complex relationship between Islam and nationalism within the context of religious Kurds, with a specific emphasis on individuals affiliated with Sufi orders and those aligned with groups or parties not associated with Sufi orders. The study explores the causes, consequences, and varied perspectives that religious Kurds hold regarding nation and nationalism, drawing from Islamic sources such as the Quran and Hadith. Employing Bourdieu's concept of Habitus, the research introduces a dual categorization of religious Kurds—politically oriented and religiously oriented—providing insights into the dynamics within these groups. The dissertation argues that religious Kurds in Sufi orders exhibit a more moderate and less demanding form of nationalism, while religious Kurds associated with movements unrelated to specific Sufi orders advocate for a more assertive nationalism.

The study contends that the differing thought and behavioral patterns among religious Kurds regarding nationalism can be explained through the lens of their distinct habitus, shaped by diverse environments or 'fields.' Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept, the dissertation formulates an equation positing that varied habitus gives rise to different experiences and understandings of nationalism. This exploration seeks to understand how distinct habitus shaped the habits, inclinations, and socialization processes of religious Kurds, contributing to their different perspectives on Islam and nationalism. The dissertation makes a substantial contribution to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive analytical framework that incorporates historical, political, religious, and socio-economic factors, offering an enlightening perspective on the dynamics within these groups.

Keywords: Nationalism, Religion, Islam, Religious Kurds, Sufi Orders, Türkiye

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	:	Justice and Development Party
AZADI	:	Kurdistan Islamic Project for Right, Justice, and Liberty
BDP	:	Peace and Democracy Party
CUP	:	Committee of Union and Progress
DDKO	:	Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Centers
DEHAP	:	Democratic People's Party
DTP	:	Democratic Society Party
HADEP	:	People's Democracy Party
HDP	:	Peoples' Democratic Party
HEP:	:	People's Labour Party
HÜDA PAR	:	Free Cause Party
KKTC	:	The Kurdish Society for Solidarity and Progress
KTC	:	The Society for the Betterment of Kurdistan
PKK	:	Kurdistan Workers' Party
RPP	:	Republican People's Party
TKDP	:	Kurdistan Democratic Party/North
USSR	:	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,
WPT	:	Workers' Party of Turkey (1961)

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INTRODUCTION

Nationalism, as a political doctrine and ideological movement, has been integral in shaping political landscapes by leveraging cultural and ethnic elements for political objectives. This multifaceted ideology emphasizes the significance of specific territories, shared historical narratives, and cultural unity among its constituents (Metreveli and Polyakova, 2015). Ernest Gellner, in his exploration of nationalism, characterizes it as a historical process premised on the congruence of political and national units (Gellner, 1983: 1). Contrary to the notion that ethnic affiliations are prerequisites for a nation, Gellner argues that nationalism has the power to create and legitimize cultural ties that transcend political and ethnic boundaries (Gellner, 1983: 85). The shared perception and culture are pivotal aspects for Gellner, defining a nation as individuals who recognize each other under a common cultural framework (Gellner, 1983: 7).

The intersection of religion and nationalism has historically played a crucial role in the formation of nation-states. Religions have served as pillars and catalysts for nationalism, providing language, concepts, values, and institutions that contribute to the identity-building process. Even ostensibly secular forms of nationalism often seek religious or quasi-religious foundations for the concepts of land, people, and nation (Soper & Fetzer, 2018). This interplay is evident both theoretically and empirically, with religion either supporting, opposing, or remaining indifferent to nationalist movements (Soper & Fetzer, 2018). The relationship between religion and nationalism is further explored through various historical and cultural contexts, such as pietism in German nationalism, Catholicism in Polish nationalism, Orthodoxy in Balkan nationalism, Shinto in Japanese nationalism, Buddhism in Sinhalese nationalism, and Hebraic covenant ideas in Northern Irish, Afrikaaner, and Israeli nationalism (Brubaker, 2012: 6).

Examining the relationship between Islam and nationalism, two fundamental approaches can be identified. The first asserts that Islam and nationalism can coexist, with proponents like Arab nationalists and Islamists emphasizing their harmonious compatibility. In contrast, the second approach rejects this coexistence, viewing a Muslim's faith as their true nationality and opposing nationalism as divisive. Various figures, such as Sayyid Qutb and Arab radical Islamists, vehemently denounce nationalism, associating it with secularism

and Western influences that undermine Muslim unity. Scholars like Ali Bulaç in Türkiye criticize nationalism as akin to idolatry, advocating for a pluralistic approach rooted in Islamic principles. Muhammad Iqbal opposes Western-style nationalism, emphasizing Islam's holistic and unified approach to life. Muhammed Hamidullah and others argue for a progressive Islamic notion of nationality based on individual choice and ideological unity. These perspectives reflect a complex discourse on the intersection of Islam and nationalism, ranging from assertions of compatibility to vehement rejections based on ideological and religious principles (Yahya, 1991: 49-50; Sıddıki, 1991: 113; Zubaida, 2004: 409-410).

This dissertation aims to explore the perspectives of religious Kurds regarding nationalism within the broader context of nationalism, as well as its intersection with religion, specifically focusing on Islam and nationalism. Among the religious Kurds being studied, there are those who were raised within specific Sufi orders and maintain affiliations with these sects. I classified these people as religiously oriented. Additionally, there are religious Kurds associated with movements, parties, and groups unrelated to any specific Sufi order. I classified these politically oriented.

Before moving on to the research questions related to my dissertation, it is crucial to provide clear definitions for the terms used to understand religious Kurds. Primarily, who do I refer to as religious Kurds? The term religious Kurds encompasses individuals who believe in the fundamental principles of the faith, regardless of whether they practice Islam or not. In essence, I am referring to individuals who acknowledge Islam as a religion, affirm the existence and unity of God, recognize Muhammad as the final prophet, believe in life after death and resurrection, and accept all the conditions outlined in Islam. In Turkey, there are Kurds within this framework who cannot be categorized as religious, and some may even be considered secular. So, what distinguishes the religious Kurds I address in this thesis from these individuals? Religious Kurds, even if they engage in actions prohibited by Islam in their private lives or fail to adhere to Islamic practices, consistently experience a sense of unease and discomfort with transgressing these prohibitions. Conversely, I perceive other secular Kurds as individuals untroubled by embracing the Islamic religion. However, both mentally (by adhering to the political ideology of Islam and incorporating it) and in practice (deed), they remain largely disconnected from the Islamic world, showing little concern for the balance between sin and virtue in their daily lives.

Furthermore, the breadth and complexity of the spectrum of religiousness is also a matter of fact. Within religious Kurds, there are those who fulfill the basic requirements of Islam while avoiding political engagements, such as living in a Sharia state. Conversely,

there are religious Kurds who aspire to live in an Islamic state, neglecting the practical aspects of Islam, such as prayer and fasting, and actively engage in the political sphere for this purpose, possessing the mental codes of Islam. To illustrate this better, I place individuals who do not pray five times a day but mobilize all their resources, both material and spiritual, for an action related to Palestine in this category (not guided by universal principles such as human rights, but for Islam).

After addressing the issue of religiousness, I elaborate on my categorization of religious Kurds into those with political orientation and those with religious orientation. I define politically oriented religious Kurds as having various levels of rights, demands, and desires related to Kurdish nationalism, ranging from linguistic rights to the idea of a separate state. This categorization is based on the understanding that these individuals, while practicing religious activities in their private lives, also engage in political demands and discourse regarding Kurdish nationalism. Thus, they are politically oriented, and this does not imply a lack of religious sensitivities or religious life. On the other hand, religious orientation prioritizes the ummah, Islamic unity, and the practice and promotion of Islam, with minimal or no demands concerning Kurdish nationalism. Individuals and institutions within this category may also intertwine with political institutions, and state relations are notably higher compared to politically oriented groups. However, what I mean by religious orientation is their lack of interest in Kurdish nationalism at the political level; they do not make demands in that regard. Nevertheless, it is crucial to note that these individuals are not devoid of political engagement and are not isolated from politics in character. In providing this explanation, my aim was to demonstrate that the expression of religiously oriented religious Kurds is not a tautology.

After clarifying the categorization and concepts, the inquiries and challenges I aim to address are following:

How can we understand the complex dimensions of nationalism within the context of religious Kurds affiliated with Sufi orders and religious Kurds not associated with any Sufi orders? What are the causes and consequences of the interaction between Islam and nationalism as perceived and navigated by religious Kurds? What kind of relationship exists between Islam and nationalism, and how do religious Kurds interpret this relationship? Does Islam, as interpreted by religious Kurds, support or oppose nationalism, and what are the differences surrounding these perspectives? How can we explain the foundational principles upon which religious Kurds construct their attitudes and beliefs about nation and nationalism, particularly drawing from Islamic sources such as the Quran and Hadith? What

influences the affirmative or dissenting perspectives of religious Kurds regarding nation and nationalism within the context of these revered Islamic scriptures? What are the consequences of the political affiliations, Sufi orders, and communities to which religious Kurds belong on their perspectives regarding nation and nationalism? How do these perspectives evolve within unique environments, and why does the ideology of nationalism differ for individuals raised in Sufi orders compared to those brought up in more politically oriented organizations?

How can we understand the contrast between the strong anti-nationalist stance in the primary literature of political Islam and the distinct inclination toward nationalism demonstrated by religious Kurds within these organizations? How can we explain the factors or beliefs that lead individuals within these movements to hold an affection for Sayyid Qutb, while also maintaining a favorable stance toward nationalism, a concept that Qutb openly and vehemently criticized? What are the causes that contribute to this apparent contradiction in perspectives?

These questions not only deepen our academic knowledge but are also crucial for grasping why nationalism among religious Kurds has been slower to develop. This is especially evident after the initial uprisings led by sheikhs and aghas, continuing up to the present day. Furthermore, these questions shed light on the dynamics that lead religious Kurds to align themselves with the Turkish government, particularly during the administrations of Welfare Party (also other National Outlook Movement parties) and AK Party, as opposed to supporting secular nationalist movements like the PKK and other secular Kurdish groups.

This thesis makes a substantial contribution to existing literature by introducing a unique sample composition, exploring diverse Sufi orders and communities, employing a dual categorization to understand nationalism among religious Kurds, applying Bourdieu's concept of Habitus, and developing a comprehensive analytical framework. The inclusion of Sufi orders and communities with a focus on Kurdish founding members, the dual categorization of politically oriented religious Kurds and religiously oriented religious Kurds, and the application of Bourdieu's Habitus concept provide fresh insights. The developed analytical framework incorporates historical, political, religious, and socio-economic factors, offering an enlightening perspective on the dynamics within these groups.

I argue in this dissertation that the religious Kurds in Sufi orders exhibit a more moderate and less demanding nationalism influenced by Sufism, historical and political context in Türkiye, and the ambiguity in Islamic political thought. I derive the following

thesis from this scenario in the context of Islam and nationalism: as nationalism is considered an obstacle to their religious mission, posing a threat and competition that could undermine coexistence, the sense of a Muslim community, and overall unity, Islam weakens or rejects nationalism for these religious Kurds. In contrast, I argue that religious Kurds associated with movements, parties, and groups unrelated to any specific Sufi order advocate for a more assertive nationalism by emphasizing Quranic verses, historical examples, and a human-centered perspective. I contend that within the theoretical framework of Islam and nationalism, Islam actively supports and strengthens nationalism, providing tangible and spiritual resources, shaping thoughts and actions, and motivating individuals to support nationalist causes for these religious Kurds.

I contend that the varying thought and behavioral patterns among religious Kurds regarding nationalism can be explained through the lens of their distinct habitus. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of Habitus, I aim to formulate an equation positing that diverse habituses give rise to different experiences and understandings of nationalism. This exploration seeks to understand how distinct environments, or 'fields,' shaped the habits, inclinations, and socialization processes of these religious Kurds. Additionally, I construct an explanatory framework for the habitus within which religious Kurds reside.

1. QUANTITATIVE EXPLORATION: A METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK WITH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

In this dissertation, I explore nationalism among religious Kurds. So, when did the religious Kurds' nationalism adventure begin? The historical trajectory of Kurdish nationalism has traditionally been intertwined with left-secular affiliations, particularly gaining prominence in the 20th century. During this period, numerous individuals and groups, whether armed or unarmed, intellectual or activist, were aligned with leftist and secular ideologies. In fact, Kurdish nationalism initially emerged within the left movement in the 20th century, eventually diverged and evolved into an independent entity. Their collaboration with the left at the political level continues from time to time. Surprisingly, despite the prevailing association of Kurdish nationalism with leftist circles, the literature points to a noteworthy figure in the religious domain as a pioneer of modern Kurdish nationalism: Sheikh Ubaydallah[1]. Sheikh Ubaydallah held the title of sheikh, indicating his religious role as the head of the Naqshbandi Sufi order (Ateş, 2017: 159; Olson, 2013: 1) Sheikh Ubeydallah's clear intention to establish an independent Kurdistan is stated below:

> *The Kurdish nation is a people apart. Their religion is different (to that of others), and their laws and customs are distinct. They are known among all nations as mischievous and corrupt. . . . The chiefs and rulers of Kurdistan, whether Turkish or Persian subjects, and the inhabitants of Kurdistan (the Christians) one and all are united and agreed that matters cannot be carried on this way with the two governments, and necessarily something must be done so that the European governments having understood the matter shall enquire into our state. . . . We want our affairs to be in our hands. . . . Otherwise the whole of Kurdistan will take the matter into their own hands, as they are unable to put up*

[1] Sheikh Ubeydullah, a descendant of Seyyid Abdulkadir Geylani, belonged to the "Sadâte Nehir" family, settling in Hakkari's Şemdinli district and later becoming known as "Şemzinan Seyyids." The family claimed descent from Abdulaziz, son of Abdulkadir Geylani, and exerted significant influence in the region. Migrating from Akra to the Heriki tribe region in Şemdinan, they eventually affiliated with the Naqshbandi Khalidi sect. After Seyyid Abdullah, the family's leader, passed away, Sheikh Taha Hakkâri and later Sheikh Salih succeeded him. Born in 1826, Sheikh Ubeydullah actively participated in the 1853-54 Ottoman-Russian War alongside Sheikh Salih, gaining recognition for his leadership. Post-1870s, Sheikh Ubeydullah's influence expanded, and he became politically engaged. Following a conflict with Iran, he was exiled to Mecca, where he succumbed to cholera in October 1883 at the age of 53 (Kılıç, 2022: 3-4)

with these continued evil deeds, and the oppression which they suffer at the hands of the two governments of impure intentions (Olson, 2013: 2).

As in the case of Sheikh Ubeydullah, religious Kurds in the late 19th and early 20th centuries embraced nationalist ideologies, aligning with sects like Naqshbandi and Qadiri. Particularly after the 1878 Russo-Ottoman war, the Naqshbandis adopted a fresh nationalist language, advocating "love for the homeland" (hubb-ı vatan) and emphasizing national defense. Kurdish sheikhs affiliated with the Naqshbandi order became focal points for nationalist sentiments, mediating tribal conflicts and leading rebellions perceived as nationalist or proto-nationalist. Similarly, other Sufi orders, such as the Qadiri sect, played a pivotal role in Kurdish national movements, producing figures like Sheikh Mahmud Berzinci. The Qadiri sect influenced the broader Kurdish national movement by actively participating in various uprisings in Kurdish provinces. Additionally, prominent Kurdish families like Talabani and Barzani trace their roots back to the Qadiri sect (Leezenberg, 2017: 37; Kurt, 2021: 508).

So, how did a movement originating from religious figures come to be dominated (owned) by left and secular factions? What are the key issues dividing religious Kurds from their left and secular counterparts? Have they maintained their nationalist sentiments but taken a divergent route from the left and secular Kurdish nationalists, or have they suppressed their nationalist inclinations entirely?

Kurdish individuals, both religious and secular, joined forces with their Turkish brothers (again, both religious and secular) during the First World War against infidels *in the name of Allah, for the sake of Allah*. In any case, no ethnicity was brought to the fore during the war, and religious Kurds did not have the time or motivation to think about it. However, post-war revelations presented a starkly different perspective for both the religious Kurds and their religious Turkish *brothers*.

Republic of Türkiye as the successor state of the Ottoman Empire was officially proclaimed on 29 October 1923 in Ankara. Mustafa Kemal became the republic's first President. In order to transform the Muslim community into a new nation-state, Atatürk asserted state control over religious life and practices, and introduced many reforms, reorganizations and removals in this area (Jenkins, 2008: 92)

The caliphate and office of sheikhulislam were abolished in 1924. In place of the abolished the sheikhulislam, two new institutions, subordinate to the Prime Ministry, were created, the Diyanet İşleri Reisliği (Presidency of Religious Affairs or Diyanet for short),

(for serving purpose to religious functionaries and properties); and the Evkaf Umum Müdürlüğü, or Directorate of Pious Foundations, for administration of all the pious foundations in Türkiye (Jenkins, 2008: 92). Madrasas, traditional religious schools were closed through unifying the entire educational system (the Law on the Unifcation of Education (Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu) and also the Shari'a courts were abolished. This changes rendered the tariqah as the only religious structure with any influence in Turkish society. But in 1925 tariqah lodges were also closed. Mustafa Kemal defended the necessity of closing the tariqah "*in order to prove that our nation as a whole was no primitive nation, filled with superstitions and prejudices*" (Jenkins, 2008: 96, Eligür, 2010: 43).

A number of changes continued to be introduced: replacement of the Islamic Hegira calendar with the Western (Gregorian) calendar, replacement of Ottoman and sharia with a legal system[2] based on the Swiss Civil Code (1926), the adoption of New Turkish alphabet (1928) (in a modified Latin form); the deletion of constitutional provision establishing Islam as the official religion and the declaration that the new state is to be secular (1928), the recitation of call of the prayer (the adhan) in Turkish instead of Arabic (1933), adoption of Sunday as the legal weekly holiday rather than Friday (1935) (Jenkins, 2008: 96, Eligür, 2010: 43).

Lewis (2002: 404) states that Islam is lived at two levels and represented in two different institutional structures in Türkiye. One of them is the formal, canonical, dogmatic state religion represented by the ulama. The other is the popular, mystical mass belief represented by sects and communities, Islamic brotherhoods (Sufi orders). With Atatürk's reforms, the ulema, who were already in the state bureaucracy and intertwined with the state apparatus in the Ottoman period, were easily eliminated, but since the Sufi orders were informal structures, as it was difficult to follow them, so even tough Sufi orders and dervish lodges were closed as de jure, they continued their activities de facto by going underground (Eligür, 2010: 46-47, Jenkins, 2008: 96).

At that time, the republican elites regarded reactionary and religious movements as threats that needed to be dealt with at least as much as their Western enemies, in Yakup Kadri's words, politician and novelist of one-party period *"Black Terror, black terror! Our*

[2] "The changes it introduced included: granting Turkish citizens the right to choose their own religion, thus abolishing the previous prohibition on apostasy from Islam; officially recognizing only civil marriage ceremonies conducted by representatives of the civil authorities, while still allowing religious weddings as an additional but legally invalid option; outlawing polygamy; making divorce dependent on a decision of the courts; lifting the ban on Muslim women marrying non-Muslims; and granting men and women equal inheritance rights". (Jenkins, 2008: 97)

enemy is not only Europe, but also these, as well. The day will come when it will be necessary to fight against them" (Akyeşilmen, & Özcan, 2014: 33).

Atatürk did not declare any intention to establish a secular nation-state during the War of Independence. But after the establishment of the Republic, it has made this intention clear. The new secular republic, based on the Western state model, was a disappointment for the Islamist people. We can easily understand this from the words of Şevket Kazan, one of the Islamists of Milli Gorus: "*the faith caused us to win the war of independence. Yet, it was the faith, which was betrayed in the end*." (Eligür, 2010: 45; Çaylak & Çelik, 2008: 77-79).

Atatürk's speech below reveals to some extent both his purpose and the character of the secular nation-state he ultimately planned:

> *I flatly refuse to believe that today, in the luminous presence of science, knowledge, and civilization in all its aspects, there exist, in the civilized community of Turkey, men so primitive as to seek their material and moral well-being from the guidance of one or another şeyh. Gentlemen, you and the whole nation must know, and know well, that the Republic of Turkey cannot be the land of şeyhs, dervishes, disciplines, and lay brothers. The straightest, truest Way (tariqat) is the way of civilization. To be a man, it is enough to do what civilization requires. The heads of brotherhoods will understand this truth that I have uttered in all its clarity, and will of their own accord at once close their convents, and accept the fact that their disciplines have at last come of age* (Lewis, 2002: 410).

The abolition of the caliphate had a serious impact on most Sunni Muslims living inside or outside the Republic. The issue was not just loyalty to one person, the caliph. The caliphate, meaning the leadership of all Muslims in the world, was an emotional focal point and a living symbol of the ideal of Muslim unity. The abolition of the caliphate caused a serious loss and disorientation, including those who previously objected to the Sultan's caliphate, and this gap is still not filled even today (Jenkins, 2008: 93).

This time, religious Kurds, together with their religious Turkish *brothers*, entered into a struggle with this new *Godless* state. They had neither the time nor the opportunity to deal with their own nationalism; they had a bigger problem to fight against. They wanted to

practice their religion comfortably. They did not want to be “a stranger in their own home, a pariah in their own land!"[3] (Kısakürek, 1988).

At the end of the day, at the beginning of the 21st century, a government dominated by religious Turks began to rule Türkiye. Step by step, like embroidery, this administration systematically diminished the secular and Ataturkist ambiance that had long prevailed in the country.

The AKP, or the Justice and Development Party which came to power in 2002, has shaped its identity through a blend of conservative political and social initiatives, often intertwined with a commitment to religious freedom. Under the AKP government's leadership, there has been a notable emphasis on fostering an environment that accommodates diverse religious practices and expressions. One significant aspect of the AKP's approach has been the relaxation of restrictions on religious practices. This is evident in policies supporting the right of women to wear headscarves in universities and public offices, reflecting a commitment to individual religious freedom. Additionally, the government has taken measures to facilitate a more accommodating educational landscape. This includes the introduction of changes to the education system, allowing for the establishment of imam hatip schools, which focus on religious education, and increasing the number of religious vocational schools. These institutions aim to provide an education that integrates both religious and general subjects. The AKP government's involvement in the restoration and construction of mosques further underscores its commitment to religious and cultural values. Notably, the decision to re-open the Hagia Sophia Mosque for worship, transitioning it from a museum to a mosque, signifies a tangible manifestation of this commitment. However, alongside these efforts to promote religious freedom and cultural heritage, the AKP government has implemented legal changes that have, at times, heightened the influence of conservative Islamic values in public life. These legal modifications include alterations to laws related to alcohol sales and restrictions on certain types of entertainment. These changes reflect the government's aim to align public policies with its conservative values, contributing to a broader transformation in the societal landscape (Lord, 2018).

Thus, when religious individuals assume leadership roles within the state, so some of the religious Kurds, who had previously fought against the secular state together with the religious Turkish brothers, returned to the discourse of what about our rights. This

[3] This line is from Necip Fazıl Kısakürek's poem titled "Sakarya Türküsü," featured in his book "Çile."

dissertation will, in essence, compare religious Kurdish groups that emphasize the discourse of what about our rights with religious Kurds who prioritize a broader identity, the ummah, and for some, the question of these rights may not even arise.

1.1. Research Objective

The core objective of my dissertation is an in-depth exploration of nationalism within the context of religious Kurds. I aim to analyze the intricate dimensions of how religious Kurds perceive and navigate the complexities of nation and nationalism. Specifically, I am examining the interplay and nuanced relationship that they establish between Islam and nationalism. At its essence, the fundamental objective is to investigate whether Islam, as interpreted by religious Kurds, supports or opposes nationalism and to elucidate the subtle nuances surrounding these perspectives. To articulate this more distinctly, the dissertation is driven by essential questions: What sort of relationship exists between Islam and nationalism? Does Islam serve to bolster, encourage, and endorse nationalism, or does it challenge, prohibit, and reject it? Can Islam and nationalism coexist in harmony? Does nationalism have an adverse effect on the consciousness and unity of the Ummah (the global Muslim community)? What kind of bond and relationship can be cultivated between the Ummah and the nation state? Lastly, has Islam played a significant role in shaping Kurdish nationalism and consciousness, and if so, in what manner?

The second objective of my research involves a comprehensive exploration of how religious Kurds shape their perspectives on nation and nationalism, drawing extensively from Islamic sources, particularly the Quran and Hadith. I aim to analyze the foundational principles upon which they construct their affirmative or dissenting attitudes and beliefs concerning nation and nationalism within the context of these revered Islamic scriptures.

The third objective of my research focuses on elucidating how the worldview of religious Kurds is influenced by the political parties, sects, and communities to which they belong. I aim to comprehend how their perspectives on nation and nationalism evolve within the unique environments they are situated in. This prompts a fundamental question: Why does the ideology of nationalism differ for individuals who were raised in religious sects compared to those brought up in more politically oriented organization? I aim to comprehend this difference through a thorough analysis of these Sufi orders, organizations, and parties

within the contexts of historical and political concepts, Islamic political thought, evolving perceptions of religion, as well as their social, economic, and human capacity.

1.2. Importance of the Study

I contend that this dissertation significantly enhances the existing literature by deviating from prior works in terms of the unique composition of my sample, the distinctive findings and the novel framework employed to elucidate and contextualize these discoveries.

1. **Distinct Sample Composition**: My sample stands out notably. In addition to the organizations and parties that have been extensively examined in previous theses, I incorporated Sufi orders and communities. While analyzing politicized parties and structures is relatively straightforward, analyzing Sufi orders and communities presents a challenge due to the higher degree of privacy. Given this aspect, I assert that the interviews conducted with these Sufi orders and communities hold exceptional value.

2. **Exploration of Diverse Sufi orders and Communities**: Sufi order such as Menzil[4] have been subjects of previous studies; however, this particular Sufi order, situated in the Kurdish region, distinguishes itself by having Kurdish founding members. Conversely, I also investigated Kurdish individuals raised in Süleymancı[5]

[4] The Menzil Sufi order, originating from the village of Menzil in Turkey's southeast, has maintained a century-long legacy of spiritual guidance within the Naqshbandi order. Founded by Abdülhakim Erol in the early 20th century, the leadership succession continued through his son Muhammet Raşit Erol and later Abdülbaki Erol. Following Abdulbaki Erol's death in July 2023, a division within the sect emerged, with potential successors vying for leadership. Despite the absence of official records, estimates suggest a substantial membership of one to two million individuals, making it the largest among Naqshbandi orders. The Menzil Sufi order, predominantly composed of lower socioeconomic strata, has witnessed recent socioeconomic development and expanded bureaucratic influence (Çakır, 1990: 69-72; Akyeşilmen & Özcan, 2014: 34; Balancar, 2019: 29).

[5] The roots of this Sufi order trace back to Sheikh Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan, born in 1888 in Silistra, northeastern Bulgaria, holding the titles of Seyyid and Şerif. Sheikh Suleyman Hilmi Tunahan is recognized as the 33rd guide of the Naqshbandi sect. In the 1940s, Tunahan's impactful sermons delivered in Istanbul mosques and the educational circles he established, even in challenging circumstances, garnered him widespread public acclaim and led to the formation of a community centered around Quranic studies. After Tunahan's death in 1959, his son-in-law Kemal Kaçar led this Sufi order. Kaçar's death in 2000 marked the movement's strength, and Arif Ahmet Denizolgun succeeded him. Following the unexpected and untimely passing of Arif Ahmet Denizolgun in 2016, Arif Ahmet Denizolgun's sister's son, Alihan Kuriş, became the new leader of the Sufi order (Sitembölükbaşı, 2012: 377; Aydın, 2004: 311).

and İsmailağa[6] communities, located in Istanbul, whose founders were not of Kurdish descent.

3. **Dual Categorization for Understanding Nationalism among Religious Kurds:** In my thesis, I applied a dual categorization to comprehend the nationalism of the groups under discussion — namely, individuals oriented towards politics, aptly labeled as politically oriented religious Kurds and their counterparts inclined towards religion, denoted as religiously oriented religious Kurds While broader classifications have been previously proposed, I argue that this specific categorization offers a fresh and insightful perspective.

4. **Application of Bourdieu's Concept of Habitus**: I elaborated on how these groups perceive nationalism differently by classifying them into two distinct categories through the lens of Bourdieu's concept of Habitus. In a similar vein, Türkmen (2021) also utilized Bourdieu's framework, but with a greater emphasis on field theory. However, in my analysis, I placed a unique emphasis on the concept of habitus, thereby contributing a distinctive layer to the overall understanding and interpretation of the dynamics at play.

5. **Development of an Analytical Framework**: I have devised a comprehensive framework to elucidate the differences in habitus as indicated by my findings. I endeavored to explain these differences through an analysis of these Sufi orders, organizations, and parties within the contexts of historical and political concepts, Islamic political thought, evolving perceptions of religion, as well as their social, economic, and human capacity, considering the differences in their missions. I contend that this study provides an enlightening and enriching perspective in this regard.

[6] The İsmailağa Sufi order, founded by Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu in Istanbul, holds a significant spiritual legacy rooted in the İsmailağa Mosque. Ustaosmanoğlu, serving as the imam from 1954 to 1997, shaped the İsmailağa Community known for its unique attire, requiring a change upon initiation. This distinctive clothing poses challenges in securing high-level employment due to clashes with conventional dress codes. Despite these barriers, the community, akin to a "countryside within the metropolis," emphasizes education through private schools and Quran programs, targeting the lower-middle classes. The passing of Ustaosmanoğlu in 2022 led to Hasan Kılıç succeeding him (Aviv, 2018: 7-15; Balancar, 2019: 24-25).

1.3. Literature Review

In this chapter, I will engage with a range of studies that analyze Kurdish nationalism within the context of religion and nationalism. My elaboration stems from the crucial emphasis that these studies place on analyzing Kurdish nationalism from perspective of religion and nationalism.

Martin von Bruinessen's seminal studies (1984; 1986) provide a comprehensive analysis of rebellions instigated by sheikhs and Sufi orders leaders driven by religious motives during the tumultuous period of establishing the new state, particularly within the Turkish Republican era. These works analyze the dynamics, motivations, and contexts surrounding the rebellious actions, offering valuable historical and sociopolitical insights into the interplay of religion and political upheaval during a crucial phase in the state's formation.

Fulya Atacan (2001) focuses on Med-Zehra, a splinter group from Nurcu[7], highlights Nursi's Kurdish heritage and openly challenges Turkish nationalist interpretations of Nursi's works. Med-Zehra is a significant Nurcu group in Türkiye and also represents Kurdish Islamic movement.

Christopher Houston's (2003) "Islam, Kurds and the Turkish Nation State" based on fieldwork that took place in Istanbul from 1994 to 1996, examining how the Islamist movement functions and how it responds to the Kurdish issue. The goal was also to explore the possibility of Islamist multiculturalism. The study categorized Islamist viewpoints into three types: statist Islamism, which supports the state's policies and rejects Kurdish identity; Islamism, which challenges the secular government and looks for solutions in Islamic

[7] The Nur Movement (Nurcu), led by Said Nursi, emerged as the second focal group after the Naqshbandi. Nursi, born in 1878 in eastern Turkey, grew up in a religious Kurdish family and gained renown for his intellect. Despite facing opposition, he aspired to establish a university blending theology and natural sciences. Nursi critiqued Sultan Abdul Hamid II's rule, supported constitutional democracy, and opposed the Party of Union and Progress. He fought against the Russians in World War I but distanced himself from the Kemalist regime. Nursi's exile led to the creation of the Nur/Light Epistles, considered a modern interpretation of the Quran. Nursi envisioned a future where knowledgeable, faithful generations would govern. Despite state oppression until 1950, Nursi continued writing, gaining followers during the Democrat Party era. The movement's prominence coincided with an era of relative freedom under Prime Minister Adnan Menderes. Nursi's death in 1960 marked the continuation of the Nur Movement, defined by the belief in divine inspiration behind the Epistles of Light and Nursi's role as a guide for modern times (Mardin, 1989: 101; Yavuz, 2004a: 268; Vahide, 2012: 333; Markham & Pirim; 2016: 16-17).

principles; and Kurdish Islamism, which advocates for Kurdish autonomy within an Islamic context. Kurdish Islamists criticize Turkish Islamists for not backing Kurdish rights and stress the importance of accepting ethnic diversity within Islamic society. Houston's conceptualization is insightful, particularly his exploration of Kurdish Islamism as a distinct category, which is highly relevant to my dissertation. However, my dissertation offers a thorough categorization and in-depth analysis of Kurdish Islamism, encompassing an assessment of both Kurdish Islamism and the concept of Islamic Kurdishness.

Zeki Sarigil & Ömer Fazlioglu (2013) discuss the compatibility of Islam with ethno-nationalist ideas, particularly in the context of the Kurdish issue in Türkiye. They highlight a shift where some Islamic groups support Kurdish ethnic demands, while secular Kurdish nationalists are more open to Islamic influence. They suggest that political elites from both camps borrow and exchange ideas to strengthen their ideological positions and legitimize nationalist claims, with implications for theory and policy.

Jenny White (2013) explores the profound shifts in Turkish national identity, Islam, and secularism in modern Türkiye. She examines the substantial challenge posed by Muslim elites to the country's secularists, suggesting an alternative vision rooted in a nostalgic revival of the Ottoman past. White raises questions about whether the Turkish model should be seen as a success or a cautionary tale, as Muslim nationalists redefine the nation beyond traditional Republican ideals. White details how these nationalists reconcile Muslim values with a secular state, expressing their identity through economic participation and an Islamic lifestyle. White argues that religious and national identities have become personal choices for many young Turks. Although not specifically focused on Kurds, the book is significant for its analysis of the changing relationship between religion and nationalism in Türkiye, a context relevant to the Kurdish population.

Ahmet Yıldız (2016) extensively analyzes the ideological underpinnings of Kurdish Islamism, delving into its intricate political agenda, its evolution away from Turkish Islamism, and its robust embrace of a distinct Kurdish nationalist narrative. The study thoroughly dissects the diverse components within this movement or conception, encompassing entities like HUDA-PAR (The Free Cause Party), Öze Dönüş Platform (Back to the Roots Platform), Hak, Adalet ve Hürriyet için Kürdistan İslami İnisiyatifi/Azadi İnisiyatifi (Kurdistan Islamic Initiative for Right, Justice and Liberty) (Azadi Initiative), Nubihar Circle of Zehra Group within the Nur Movement, as well as various Independent Kurdish Thinkers and Mullahs. Religious Kurds, whom I described as politically oriented religious Kurds due to their strong political orientation in my dissertation, constitute the focal

components in Yıldız's study, forming its essential foundation. Yıldız (2016) investigates how Kurdish Islamists' identity dynamics are evolving. A significant commitment to mainstream Islamist currents in Türkiye has resulted from Kurdish nationalism's secular nature, even as the socialization of Islamic identity through Turkishness has diminished. The state's long-standing authority over ethnic management has been undermined by the rise of Kurdishness and Kurdification among the general public and elite. Today, some Kurdish Islamists emphasize the value of a Kurdish nation state in addition to the moral rights of Turks, placing a higher priority on their Kurdish identity than a strictly Islamic one.

Cuma Çiçek (2017) explains the complexities of the Kurdish issue by categorizing it into a tripartite Kurdish bloc- national, religious (inclusive of both Sunni Muslim and Alevi), and economic elite blocs - each serving as pivotal players within the broader historical context. The theoretical underpinning begins with an exploration of collective identities, providing a foundation to comprehend the intricacies of the Kurdish blocs and their dynamic interplays. Notably, the pro-Islamist bloc is further granulated into six principal groups: traditional Kurdish pro-Islamists, often affiliated with the Kurdish Sufi orders; followers of the National Outlook Movement political tradition led by N. Erbakan, many of whom transitioned into AK Party supporters post-2002; the Gülenist[8] Cult, embodying a globalist Turkish pro-Islamist ideology; Kurdish pro-Islamists advocating Kurdish national rights within an Islamist framework that promotes cultural plurality and equality among ethnic or national groups; the Mustazaflar Hareketi (Movement of Oppressed People), succeeding the Kurdish Hezbollah and epitomizing a fundamentalist iteration of Kurdish pro-Islamism; and several smaller Salafist factions, stemming from international radical fundamentalist pro-Islamist groups based in Qatar and Saudi Arabia. This multifaceted categorization enriches

[8] The Gülen Movement, led by Fethullah Gülen, originated in Turkey in the 1960s as a small religious community and gained prominence after the 1980 military coup. Gülen, known for his close ties with various political figures, especially in the 1990s, eventually fell out of favor with the AK Party and President Erdoğan due to concerns over the movement's influence in key institutions like the military, police, and judiciary. The relationship further soured after the MIT Crisis of 2012 and the corruption investigations in 2013. In the aftermath of the failed coup attempt in 2016, the Turkish government launched a massive crackdown on Gülenists, resulting in the dismissal of thousands from the military, police, and judiciary. The movement's educational institutions and businesses faced widespread closures. Although Gülenists have a global presence, efforts by the Turkish government to dismantle their network abroad are ongoing. While the Gülen Movement's influence within Turkey has been significantly diminished, its survival abroad remains uncertain, with thousands of educational institutions in 134 countries facing closure (Balancar, 2019: 39-46).

our understanding of the diverse political landscape within the Kurdish context in Türkiye. In contrast to Çiçek's (2017) extensively researched thesis, which is based on comprehensive approach and powerful field research, my study introduces a divergence in the classification of the religious bloc, simplifying it into a more accessible two-fold structure. Additionally, my research expands beyond the confines of Kurdish geography, encompassing a broader spectrum of orders (tariqa) within the religious blocs. Furthermore, my study is underpinned by a distinct theoretical framework (Habitus), setting it apart from Çiçek's approach and providing a unique perspective to analyze and interpret the intricacies of the topic at hand. These nuances in classification and theoretical underpinnings contribute to a novel perspective on the subject matter, shedding light on a broader range of religious dynamics and theoretical paradigms.

Ömer Tekdemir (2018) discerns four distinct categories among Kurdish Muslims concerning their interpretation of Islam: (1) Kurdish-led Hizbullah, emphasizing political Islamism; (2) statist or passive groups, focused on economic aspects of Islamism; (3) traditional tariqa and madrasa institutions, embodying culturally oriented Islamism; and (4) pro-Kurdish groups like Zehra and Azadi, representing socially oriented Islamism. Through the lens of a social constructivist theory, this study delves into a comprehensive analysis of their diverse socio-political identities, social realities, sub-groups, religious movements, and their adeptness in utilizing opportunity spaces within the public sphere. Compared to the aforementioned research, Tekdemir's study holds particular relevance to my dissertation. This is primarily due to its systematic categorization of religious Kurds, providing valuable insights for my own work. Tekdemir (2018) notably classifies orders and madrasahs as culturally-originated Islamism, specifically within the Kurdish geographical context. However, my dissertation extends the scope to encompass all of Türkiye, categorizing these orders as religiously oriented religious Kurds. Furthermore, while Tekdemir bifurcates the collected movements and approaches into socially-oriented and politically-oriented categories, my dissertation consolidates them into a single category, emphasizing their collective impact as politically oriented religious Kurds. Lastly, it's important to note that Tekdemir's study adopts a social constructivist approach, relying on a classification derived from written sources rather than employing field research methods like interviews. In contrast, my dissertation employs Bourdieu's concept of Habitus as a theoretical framework in the context of religion and nationalism, utilizing interviews as a primary research method to inform the classification and analysis of the subject matter.

Ahmet Murat Fırat (2021) analyzes nationalism and religion within the Kurdish context, tracing this dynamic from its inception to the contemporary era. Fırat (2021) posits that Islam plays a predominantly constructive role in shaping the identity of Kurds. Within the framework of Kurdish history, Fırat (2021) explains the substantial influence of various entities such as madrasahs, sects, sheikhs, mullahs, and jurists (feqi in Kurdish). These components, according to Fırat, have left an indelible and multifaceted legacy encompassing sociological, national, historical, literary, and cultural dimensions. Notably, Fırat emphasizes that the essence of Kurdish history and culture finds its essence and vitality through these deeply ingrained values, with particular emphasis on the Naqshbandi tradition.

Gülay Türkmen (2021) explores the Kurdish conflict in Türkiye, examining why religion often falls short in resolving ethnic tensions among co-religionists within a post-secular context. Türkmen argues that differing perceptions of religious and ethnic identities among Turkish and Kurdish religious elites hinder their unity under Islam and the garnering of mass support for peace initiatives. The study highlights the role of Sunni Islam as a supranational identity in attempting conflict resolution within the Kurdish crisis in Türkiye, where religion was employed as a tool for this purpose. In this particular context, the study focuses on the significant role of Sunni Islam, and as a result, the sample includes active participants from both Turkish and Kurdish backgrounds, offering a nuanced perspective.

Halime Kökçe (2021) discussed Kurdish nationalism within the dynamics of religion and secularization. He probed the intricacies by posing questions: "What sets apart religious Kurds from their left-secular counterparts concerning Kurdish nationalism?" "Does the spectrum of Kurdish nationalism lean more towards left-secular Kurds?" "Is there a noticeable rise of Kurdish nationalism within the religious Kurdish demographic?" Kökçe's research involved an analysis of perspectives held by religious Kurds and secular-left Kurds, crucial categories within the framework of Kurdish nationalism. Key themes like secularization, identity, tradition, modernity, women, and youth were employed to analyze the intertwining of religiosity with the secularization process. In essence, Kökçe compared and contrasted the nationalist ideologies of religious Kurds and secular Kurds.

Utku Aybudak's (2022) study stands out as a significant contribution. Aybudak contends that communities/ Sufi orders in Türkiye can be seen as a field in the Bourdieusian sense, and this field has experienced transformations within the context of its interactions with the bureaucratic field of the state. With a historical perspective, Aybudak also investigates how the relative value of various forms of capital within this field evolves over time. In a sense, this study aligns with my dissertation, i.e. communities play a crucial role

in shaping the perception of nationalism among religious Kurds within the framework of field and *habitus*, given that Aybudak also regards them as a field.

Muttalip Çağlayan (2023) analyzes the complex relationship between Islam and Kurdish nationalism. The study simplifies this complexity into a dual interaction model, where Islam competes with and symbiotically supports Kurdish nationalism. Islam, while promoting a transnational identity, simultaneously averts and fosters Kurdish political aspirations. This interplay positions religion and nationalism as almost equal yet conflicting order-creating systems, identifying Muslim nationalism as a unique religious form. Islam, rather than hindering Kurdish political mobilization, plays a supportive role by reinforcing the Kurdish national cause through spiritual discourse, imagery, and symbols grounded in the principles of egalitarian justice. This perspective allows ethnically conscious pious Kurds to align their religious and national identities without hindrance from Islam. Although this study is based on empirical data with the interview technique, it includes an evaluation in the context of existing theories of religion and nationalism.

So, what sets this dissertation apart from the this literature? I argue that this dissertation significantly enriches the existing literature by diverging from prior works in terms of the unique composition of my sample, the distinctive findings (determinations) drawn, and the novel framework employed to elucidate and contextualize these findings.

1. My sample is distinct. In addition to the organizations and parties previously scrutinized extensively in various theses, I included Sufi orders and communities. While engaging with politicized parties and structures is relatively easy, Sufi orders and communities provide a realm where privacy is more safeguarded. Considering this aspect, I argue the interviews conducted with these Sufi orders and communities as exceptionally valuable.

2. Sufi orders such as Menzil have been previously studied. However, this specific Sufi order, located in the Kurdish region, stands out due to its founding members being Kurdish. On the other hand, I have also explored the Kurdish individuals brought up in Süleymancı and İsmailağa communities, which are based in Istanbul, whose founders were not of Kurdish descent.

3. In my dissertation, I've applied a dual categorization to understand the nationalism of the groups under discussion- namely, politics-oriented individuals, aptly labeled as politically oriented religious Kurds, and the religion-oriented counterparts, denoted as religiously oriented religious Kurds. While broader

classifications have been proposed previously, I argue that this specific categorization offers a fresh and insightful perspective.

4. I elucidated the disparity in how these groups perceive nationalism, categorizing them into two classes, utilizing Bourdieu's notion of Habitus. Türkmen (2021) similarly employed Bourdieu in his research, but with a more pronounced focus on field theory, whereas I placed greater emphasis on the concept of habitus.

5. I have developed a framework to elucidate the differences in Habitus as indicated by my findings. I endeavored to explain these differences through a thorough analysis of these Sufi orders, organizations and parties within the contexts of historical and political concepts, Islamic political thought, evolving perceptions of religion, as well as their social, economic, and human capital (capacity), along with a consideration of the differences in their missions. I argue that this study offers an enlightening perspective in this regard.

1.4. Research Method

This dissertation deserves some evaluations concerning both its subject matter and the conceptual framework in which it is situated.

The primary focus of my dissertation centers on looking into the intricate dimensions of nationalism among religious Kurds. I aim to understand how religious Kurds navigate and approach the complex concepts of nation and nationalism, specifically exploring the delicate interplay and nuanced relationship they establish between Islam and nationalism. My objective is to investigate whether Islam, as perceived and interpreted by religious Kurds, sanctions or opposes nationalism, and the nuances surrounding these perspectives.

A central aspect of my research involves an exploration of how religious Kurds shape their views on nation and nationalism by drawing heavily from Islamic sources, notably the Quran and Hadith. I intend to analyze the foundations upon which they construct their affirmative or dissenting attitudes and beliefs concerning nation and nationalism within the context of these Islamic scriptures. This is the subject of the dissertation and the questions I pursue throughout dissertation.

In embarking on this academic journey, I intertwine my personal background and experiences as a person of Kurdish descent raised in a religiously inclined environment. Throughout the course of my life, the prominence and interplay of these two facets—my

Kurdish heritage and my religious upbringing—have undergone diverse trajectories, leading to a rich tapestry of perspectives and beliefs. These personal experiences profoundly inform and shape the lens through which I approach and analyze the subject matter of this dissertation.

I constructed the conceptual framework of this dissertation, utilizing Pierre Bourdieu's seminal concept of Habitus as a principal guide. Bourdieu's presence on these pages will become more meaningful when his approaches to methodology are explained below. Explaining Bourdieu's methodological approaches can be achieved by outlining three key points: The first one is Bourdieu's strong emphasis on empirical study and field experience. Bourdieu highlighted the importance of combining rigorous empirical research and immersive fieldwork. He advocated for actively engaging with the social contexts being investigated through methods such as participant observation, interviews, and surveys, to capture a detailed and accurate portrayal of the complexities of social life (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 162; Swartz, 2020: 319, Calhoun, 2007: 274).

The second one is reflexivity, one of Bourdieu's most important concepts. According to Bourdieu, sociologists should engage in reflexivity to critically examine their own beliefs, biases, and the influence of their social, cultural, and academic backgrounds on their work and theories. This self-examination is crucial for comprehending how sociological knowledge is produced and for removing any biases within the profession.

The third one is "The objectification of the objectifying subject" which is demonstrated in the following expressions:

> *My sociological discourse is separated from my personal experience by my sociological practice, which is itself in part the product of a sociology of my social experience. And I have never ceased taking myself as an object, not in a narcissistic sense but as one representative of a category. One of the things that often irritates people is that when I analyze myself— Homo Academicus contains pages and pages on me to the extent that I belonged to the category I call the ŏblates"— I say aloud the truth of others by speaking about myself* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 203).

Bourdieu's statement (2008: 23) that "*there are many intellectuals who call the world into question, but there are very few intellectuals who call the intellectual world into question*" can be interpreted as encapsulating the challenge of both reflexivity and the objectification of the subject that we discussed above.

In this specific research context, I deliberately selected a specific social segment that I had a preexisting understanding of, choosing it as the subject of my in-depth study and analysis, following Bourdieu's (2008: 4) "*to understand is first to understand the field with which and against which one has been formed*."

My primary methodology for data collection in this study revolves around employing qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview is a flexible and dynamic research method that is well-known for its ability to adapt to various research goals. This approach involves asking a mix of different types of questions, using carefully designed prompts, and employing specialized tools to thoroughly explore participants' perspectives on the research topic. It combines the openness of broad questions with the precision of theoretically grounded ones, effectively gathering a wealth of data from participants' real-life experiences and established concepts in the relevant field (Galletta, 2013: 45).

My familiarity with the object of the dissertation endowed me with the ability to cultivate a confident and trust-based relationship with the individuals involved, making it easier to access data efficiently.

In this dissertation, I conducted a comprehensive study of different religious Sufi orders, groups, movements, and parties. As a result, my primary focus centers on analyzing these collective entities, making groups the unit of analysis. However, since my objective is to understand how individuals raised within these organizational contexts perceive nationalism, I've opted for in-depth interviews as the methodological approach. In this context, the unit of observation for this dissertation is individuals.

In addition to conducting qualitative interviews, I derived significant value from primary and secondary sources, especially books. These sources not only bolstered the data acquired from my interviews with specific individuals but also provided access to information and data not disclosed during the interviews. This broadened the foundation of my arguments and enhanced their robustness.

Besides, the primary and secondary sources, I conducted research by consulting various sources, placing special emphasis on academic theses that extensively utilized in-depth interviews to examine these organizations and contributed to supporting the points made in these sources. By employing a combination of in-depth interviews, textual analysis and the examination of scholarly theses, I aimed to establish a robust groundwork for my research. This approach helped me learn more about the subject, making my work more complete and more thorough.

1.5. Recruitment Strategy

In the course of this dissertation, I employed the snowball sampling technique. Snowball sampling is a nonprobability-sampling technique used when locating members of a special population is challenging, such as homeless individuals, migrant workers, or undocumented immigrants. In this method, the researcher starts by collecting data on a few accessible members of the target population and then relies on them to identify and provide information about other members they know. The term snowball describes the process of accumulation as each located subject suggests other subjects. This technique is particularly useful in studying loosely structured groups or networks (Babbie, 2008: 205).

Identifying the groups, I designate as politically oriented religious Kurds proved relatively straightforward, given that many of them were public figures and had been subjects of previous studies. Employing the snowball sampling technique facilitated effective interviews with these individuals, who also offered recommendations for additional subjects. In contrast, conducting interviews with groups identified as religiously oriented religious Kurds posed a significant challenge. These individuals were associated with organizations characterized by more closed structures compared to the first group, rendering them less accessible. As a result, establishing initial contact and gaining their trust necessitated a heavy reliance on personal and familial connections. Once an initial interview was successfully completed, I leveraged the acquired trust to obtain valuable referrals, thus enabling further engagements with individuals in the same category. In this regard, I applied the snowball sampling technique once again to broaden the scope and enhance the depth of my research.

In the context of this study, the criteria for including potential participants necessitate a dual identification with both Kurdish ethnicity and Sunni Muslim faith. To be eligible, individuals must embody the confluence of these two aspects within their identity.

Conversely, the exclusion criteria are defined to encompass individuals who identify solely with either Kurdish ethnicity or Sunni-Muslim faith as well as Muslims who adhere to sects other than Sunni. This exclusion guarantees a focused investigation on the discovered dual identity, enabling a more specialized and different investigation within the parameters of the study.

In Türkiye, a noteworthy Alevi Kurdish population exists; however, it is essential to note that Alevis are not within the scope of the organizations explored in this dissertation.

Specifically, the Süleymancı, Menzil, and İsmailağa sects are closely associated with the Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamaat[9] identity. For adherents of these sects, transitioning away from Alevism is analogous to a Christian converting to Islam. Although Azadi, Hüda Par and Zehra organizations do not have such a harsh attitude, Alevis choose not to engage with these structures due to their unique beliefs and perspectives.

1.6. Data Collection and Analysis

In this dissertation, data collection was primarily carried out through interviews. The interview methodology adhered to a semi-structured format. This format allowed me for a mix between pre-planned questions and the freedom to look deeper into the answers provided by the respondents. While initially I had numerous inquiries, I gradually shifted towards exploring broader thematic subjects. I didn't confine myself to my initial set of prepared questions and, throughout the interview, I also spontaneously posed fresh and diverse questions in alignment with the evolving dialogue. I wanted to get detailed and different comments that would allow me for an understanding of the participants' experiences and opinions regarding the subject matter.

I conducted interviews with individuals affiliated with the groups, parties, Sufi orders, and congregations outlined and introduced in this study, namely Zehra, HÜDA PAR, AZADI, Süleymancı, İsmailaga, and Menzil. This included individuals who held official positions within the mentioned groups, parties, sects, and congregations. It also involved individuals who had undergone training or affiliation with these entities at some point but have since shifted into regular roles within the public or private sector, therefore they have

[9] The Arabic phrase "Ahl Sunnah wal Jama'ah" (also written as "Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah" or "Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah") refers to the mainstream, orthodox, and traditional Sunni branch of Islam and means "the people of the Sunnah and the community" in English. The phrase includes "Ahl Sunnah," or those who adhere to the Sunnah, which is the customs and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad as documented in his sayings (Hadith) and deeds, stressing following his lead in addition to the Quran. Moreover, "wal Jama'ah" means "and the community" or "and the congregation," emphasizing the importance of harmony and agreement among Muslims as well as the observance of shared customs and beliefs. The Sunni community, particularly from its early stages, has consistently adopted the term "ahl al-sunnah wa'l-jamaah" as a comprehensive descriptor. This choice is deliberate, as the term encapsulates not only the adherence to the Prophet's path but also underscores the unity and integrity of the entire Muslim community (ummah). In essence, "Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah" stands as the foundational structure that broadly represents Muslims, possessing a unifying characteristic (Yavuz, 1994: 325-330; Karadaş, 2017)

no official positions in these organizations. Furthermore, I conducted two elite interviews, not associated with any specific group mentioned.

Every interview was carried out individually, one participant at a time, ensuring a focused one-on-one interaction. No interviews were conducted in a group or focus group format involving multiple individuals simultaneously.

I conducted a total of eighteen interviews, each lasting an average of fourty minutes. These meetings were conducted in person in Ankara, Diyarbakır, and Ağrı. Due to the pandemic, online tools gained prevalence, prompting phone interviews from Istanbul, Elazığ, Bingöl. The phone interviews were comparatively shorter than the face-to-face ones. Among these 18 interviews, 8 took place face-to-face, with the remaining 10 conducted online. I communicated that the interview was intended to collect their viewpoints on the correlation between Islam, nation, nationalism, and specifically Kurdish nationalism. I endeavored to explore themes such as consciousness, attitudes, and motivations regarding nation and nationalism. My approach throughout the interviews was impartial, emphasizing active listening and encouraging participants to openly articulate their perspectives. I highlighted that participants could withdraw from the study at any point without providing a reason.

In addition to conducting interviews, I collected data from a variety of primary and secondary sources. This methodological approach served two paramount purposes within my research framework. Firstly, it provided access to well-organized and comprehensive information that was often more structured than the insights gathered through interviews alone. Secondly, as emphasized in my dissertation, understanding individuals' perspectives on nation and nationalism requires insights into the characteristics of organizations, they are exposed to while growing up or affiliating with. Therefore, these sources were essential to acquire information about these structures, including their nature, mission, vision and historical background.

1.7. Ethical Considerations and Limitations

Adhering to the regulations of the Institute of Social Sciences, the interview questions were organized and formally submitted to the Ethical Board of Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University. Following an evaluation process, the board granted approval for the interview design and the set of questions.

I placed emphasis on including the names and surnames of individuals who have close associations with political party officials or communities. For those involved in politically oriented religious Kurds, I rarely employed anonymous identifiers, given that a significant number of them have previously engaged in interviews for different research projects/thesis and expressed their views publicly. On the other hand, concerning sects and communities identified as religiously oriented religious Kurds, I chose to use anonymous designations instead of providing explicit names and surnames.

For limitations of this study, it does not include Shiites, Alawites, or other heterodox communities within Islam; rather, it focuses mostly on Sunni Muslim sects. It is important to recognize that this study does not address the wide range of traditions and beliefs found among Shiites, Alawites, and other heterodox communities, allowing room for further investigation and study into these fascinating parts of Islam.

Conducting interviews within Sufi orders and communities are uniquely challenging, especially when compared to engaging with other politicized structures. In the context of Türkiye, these groups have a dual presence—they are both part of society (people) and exist somewhat apart from it. They are within society due to their dependence on public donations like qurban[10], zakat[11], and fitra[12], for funding most of their activities, necessitating

[10] Qurban: Qurban refers to the act of sacrificing an animal during the Islamic festival of Eid al-Adha, which is also known as the Feast of Sacrifice. Usually, an animal such a sheep, goat, cow, or camel is sacrificed. The practice commemorates the willingness of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) to sacrifice his son as an act of obedience to God, who ultimately provided a ram as a substitute. Muslims all across the world conduct qurban as a sign of their dedication, obedience, and readiness to make sacrifices for the glory of God.

[11] Zakat is one of the Five Pillars of Islam and refers to the duty to distribute a part of one's wealth to the less fortunate. It's a kind of philanthropy and almsgiving meant to help the less disadvantaged people in the community. Muslims are obligated to donate a set portion (often 2.5%) of their whole assets, including investments, savings, and other assets, to charitable causes such debt relief, orphan care, and poverty alleviation.

[12] Fitra is a charitable donation given by Muslims at the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, just before the celebration of Eid al-Fitr. For those who can afford it, it is required.

interactions with people. Simultaneously, they maintain rituals, operations, and private functions that are not widely known, placing them somewhat outside the conventional societal sphere. For example, understanding their economic resources, such as owned companies, poses a significant challenge due to this dual nature, further complicating engagement with these sects and communities. This complexity becomes more pronounced when considering the strong loyalty of individuals to these communities. These individuals wield considerable influence, seeking approval from the organizations they belong to, for major life choices such as naming a child. Consequently, in navigating these challenges, I had to reach out to individuals through mutual acquaintances and family to coordinate and conduct interviews.

1.8. The Frame of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized into eight interconnected parts to provide a holistic understanding of the subject matter.

The first part establishes the methodological framework, laying the foundation for the entire study. It describes the research objective, emphasizes the importance of the study, conducts a comprehensive literature review, outlines the research method, discusses the recruitment strategy, details the data collection and analysis procedures, explores into ethical considerations, and acknowledges the study's limitations.

The second part is the conceptual framework with a two-fold exploration. Firstly, an examination of the literature on religion and nationalism establishes the background, providing a broad foundation. This initial exploration transitions into a more targeted investigation into the complex relationship between Islam and nationalism, exploring debate surrounding the existence of nationalism within the Islamic context. The second layer of this conceptual framework is dedicated to a comprehensive discussion of the concept of Habitus. This component, constituting the core of the thesis, is interwoven with the influential theories of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and his enduring intellectual legacy.

Its goals are to assist the underprivileged and needy and to cleanse those who fast from any offensive behavior or words.

The third part offers a historical perspective of Kurds and examining Kurdish nationalism in Türkiye. This section seeks to clarify the intricacies of nationalism within a particular cultural and historical context.

The fourth chapter explores the concepts of Islam, nation, and nationalism. Subsequently, I will explain the concept of the nation in Islam, followed by an examination of the evolution of nationalism within the Islamic world.

The fifth and sixth parts focus the two primary groups central to the thesis politically oriented religious Kurds and religiously oriented religious Kurds The former is exemplified by figures like Zehra, Hüda Par, and Partiya Azadi, forming the basis for an overview of political Islam discussions. Meanwhile, the latter group, featuring Süleymancı, İsmailağa, and Menzil Sufi orders, analyzes religiously oriented religious Kurds and provides an insightful examination of Sufism, with a particular focus on Naqshbandiyya in Islam.

The seventh part presents and discusses the findings derived from semi-structured interviews as well as other primary and secondary sources, offering a qualitative dimension to the study. These findings serve as a crucial empirical basis for the subsequent analytical discussions.

The eighth and final part includes a comprehensive discussion of the findings. This part employs the established frameworks to clarify and interpret the complex dynamics observed within the two main subjects of the thesis, providing a cohesive and insightful exploration of the intricate interplay between nationalism, religion, and politics.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: EXPLORING NATIONALISM, RELIGION AND HABITUS

This study is a comparative case study aiming to reveal the nationalist perspectives of religious Kurds raised in different religious organizations. As mentioned in the methodology section, my aim is to discuss two fundamental concepts by examining religious Kurds in different organizations.

Firstly, I will address my subject through the lens of the relationship between nationalism and religion. Here, I will compare the nationalist perspectives of religious Kurds to illustrate how Islam influences their understanding of nationalism. This will also provide an opportunity to discuss whether Islam supports or weakens nationalism among these religious Kurds.

The second concept is based on Bourdieu's concept of Habitus. Habitus posits that individuals, molded by their upbringing in diverse temporal and contextual settings, develop distinctive predispositions or ingrained dispositions that influence their perceptions, behaviors, and attitudes. In my research, I'm planning to look closely at this idea by studying how the nationalist views of religious Kurds, who grew up in different organizations, change over time. The main idea is that the specific cultural, social, and religious backgrounds in which these Kurds were raised have had a significant impact on how they see nationalism. By examining these connections closely, I will, in a sense, be discussing the Habitus concept as well.

In summary, this study is structured as a comparative case study grounded in two pivotal theoretical frameworks. Firstly, I look closely at how religion and nationalism are connected, exploring their complex relationship. Secondly, I use Bourdieu's concept of Habitus, which investigates how people's ingrained habits and behaviors, shaped by society, influence the way they see and interact with the world. The main goal of this research is to discuss these two concepts through semi-structured interviews, primary and secondary sources. In this chapter, I will explore essential concepts that form the theoretical/conceptual foundation of my dissertation.

2.1. Nation, Nationalism and Religion

The historical, theoretical, and empirical dimensions reveal a profound relationship between religion and nationalism. Religion has consistently emerged as a cornerstone and catalyst of nationalism and the formation of nation-states throughout history. In the realm of theory, religions play a pivotal role in shaping the identity of nationalism by contributing language, concepts, values, and institutions. Even in the most secular forms of nationalism, there is a quest to find religious or quasi-religious foundations that connect with notions of land, people, and nation. When examining empirical evidence, religion takes a parallel or coexisting position with nationalist movements, the nation-state, and political actors, influencing their institutions, actors, and ideas. Nationalist movements can either garner support, face strong opposition, or encounter religions that remain indifferent, displaying no discernible discursive or operational reactions (Soper & Fetzer, 2018: 2; Karakuş, 2018: 47-51).

Whether a positive or negative correlation exists between religion and nationalism, both national identity and the notion of a nation serve as sources of solidarity for specific groups, anchoring them to a distinct identity and culture. They both give rise to what Benedict Anderson coined as an *'imagined community*,' relying heavily on the significance of symbols to imbue their members with shared meanings. In this sense, they are *'equally imagined communities that can simultaneously unite and divide people across time and space'* (Soper ve Fetzer, 2018: 9; Anderson, 2006: 5-6; Fokas, 2015: 1-2). The concepts of religion and nation are two fundamental and universally relevant social factors. Both command a sense of loyalty that supersedes any other allegiance, transcending the scope of individual existence (Fokas, 2015; Rémond, 1999). Hutchinson and Smith (1994: 4) posit that religion and nationalism exhibit noteworthy similarities in terms of their breadth, emotional intensity, and importance. They propose that, perhaps, only religious affiliations have matched national loyalties in their extent and passion. However, Brubaker (2012: 7) reminds that we should consider that even though the languages of nations and religions are intertwined, they have fundamentally different purposes by expressing clearly The languages associated with religion and nation, as with all types of language, can be deeply interconnected. However, even in cases where these languages overlap, their fundamental principles and justificatory structures remain distinct.

The sphere of influence and social power of religion is closely related to its positive relationship with national consciousness. If the national myths, values and heroes of a society and religion are in conflict and inconsistency, religion will have a limited influence in that society. Martin (1978: 101) conveys that in many contemporary European countries, it holds significant importance that the existence of the nation and its heroic collective memory is either directly grounded in religion or has a positive connection to it.

In nationalism studies, it is especially expressed how important religion is for the nation and national identity. Smith (1995: 89) states that religion is a very fundamental element in the nation-building process, as a part of designation, cultivation, and transmission of 'authentic' elements of shared culture of the people. Kedourie (1971) argues that although nationalism emerged in the modern period, nations are restricted by the mass culture, which has existed for a long time, including religion. Brubaker (2012: 4) argues that nationalism and religion are the forms in which social identity takes place; modes in which social organization and divisions occur.

Rémond (1999) defined the periods in which religion cooperated or competed with the nation as the age of symbiosis by exemplifying the establishment of empires, the modern period in which the principle cuius regio, eius religio (meaning whose region, his religion) was dominant and the era of revolutions in which religion and the nation faced each other.

The relationship between religion and nationalism can be examined quite clearly, especially in the Christian world. The influence of religion on the construction of national identity and its repercussions on nationalist and independence movements has been the subject of extensive academic inquiry. Brubaker (2012: 6) highlights a range of pertinent studies, including investigations into the impact of pietism on German nationalism, Catholicism on Polish nationalism, Orthodoxy on nationalism in the Balkan regions, Shinto on Japanese nationalism, Buddhism on Sinhalese nationalism, and the influence of the Hebraic concept of covenant on Northern Irish, Afrikaaner, and Israeli nationalism.

When examining the discourse surrounding the interplay of religion and nationalism, three distinct approaches come to the fore. In the first approach, it is stated that nationalism replaces religion in modern era. In the second approach, it is stated that religion continues to exist as an important source of national identity and is a complementary part of nationalism. The third approach focuses on ways in which religion and nationalism can reinforce each other as different categories and axes (Grzymala-Busse, 2019).

The first perspective posits that nationalism and religion are in competition, with nationalism supplanting religion in the contemporary era. This viewpoint aligns with the

theories of Durkheim, who contends that secularism has increasingly taken the place of religion and spirituality (Grzymala-Busse, 2019). This perspective, often termed the 'secular replacement' theory, asserts from a modernist standpoint that secular and revolutionary nationalism will gradually displace religion in the modern era. While not universally embraced by modernist thinkers, many of them argue that nations are emblematic of modernity, whereas religion is a vestige of traditional society, destined to fade away with the process of modernization. Conversely, nationalism is seen as an integral component of modernization, progressively infiltrating societal realms in lieu of religion (Smith, 2003: 13-14). There is no normative prejudice to religion in this approach, it does not deny the importance of religion, but simply argues that modern nationalism is inherently incompatible with religion. Nationalism has the potential to substitute for religion, functioning as a political religion, a surrogate for religion, or even evolving into a distinct form of religion. However, it cannot coexist harmoniously with traditional religious beliefs, just as the coexistence of tradition and modernity remains incompatible. (Gorski and Türkmen-Dervişoğlu, 2013: 194).

In the realm of nationalism theories, modernists like Eric Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner, and Benedict Anderson assert that nationalism is a product of historical construction, emerging as a consequence of the processes of modernization, urbanization, and industrialization. It serves as the driving and unifying force behind the formation of nation-states, notably following the French and American revolutions. During this transformative period, language, print-capitalism, and the modern educational system played pivotal roles in shaping national identity and fostering loyalty to the nascent national entity. Remarkably, these modernist perspectives often downplay the significance of religion in this evolution. It is conceivable that the initial form of nationalism to emerge was secular nationalism, particularly evident in the 18th century as the concept of nationalism and the French nation evolved in France, coinciding with the waning influence of the Catholic Church through the Enlightenment era (Soper & Fetzer, 2018). It can be said that this approach of the modernists is compatible with the theoretical pattern and puzzle they have established. Because if nationalism is something new and has a relation with religion, why did nationalism emerge in the modern era and not earlier? If too many references were made to the role and importance of religion, then the impact and scale of the argument that nationalism is a result of the modernization process would be weakened. That is, nationalism cannot be both a new phenomenon and related to an old phenomenon, religion. Therefore, it becomes evident that

modernists need to argue that religion does not play a central role in shaping nationalism and that nationalism is inherently secular in nature.

In this respect, it is possible to define the modernist nationalist perspective as *secular nationalism* at the same time. Accordingly, the idea of secular nationalism, that is, the modernist nationalism approach, in which the role of religion is not mentioned, has both institutional and ideological components. Looking at its institutional component, church and state were separated from each other, and the direct political power of religious organizations decreased. The French Revolution is a pretty good example in this context. The secular nationalism and secular institutions brought about by the French revolution eventually led to the decline of the Catholic Church's political power. A similar institutional character can be seen in Nehru's India, Atatürk's Türkiye, Mazzini's Italy which were established on the axis of a secular national ideology after the post-colonial or national liberation struggle. In all these countries abolished religion from official institutions and built a nation-state on modern and secular values (Rieffer, 2003: 231; Soper, & Fetzer, 2018).

Nationalism may or even have religious roots, it can be said that religious nationalism may even be a stage in the development of nationalism, but when the nationalism project reaches its goal, religion is no longer a central identity and is replaced by widespread literacy, the central role of military crises and the spread of industry and modern nation-states (Grzymala-Busse, 2019).

The substitutive relationship between religion and nation does not mean the complete and inevitable disappearance of religion in the era of secular nationalism. On the contrary, different religious views can take the place against secular nationalist movements (Grzymala-Busse, 2019).

The second approach, so-called neo-traditional argues that religion did not disappear in the age of nationalism; but religion and nationalism exist together as separate entities or intertwined, and they exchange language and symbols from each other. For example, the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* that emerged with the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 led to the strengthening of national religious projects that combined religious and national elements over time. It can be said that the origins of nationalism should not be sought in the weakening of religion, but in the times of religious sentiments and religious awakening. It also emerges in different countries that religion and secular nationalisms exist at the same time. For example, religion shaped around Protestantism is a very important element for nationalism and national identity in America, the tension between Protestantism and Catholicism in the formation of British identity, the impact of intertwined religious narratives and myths,

symbols and rituals on national identities in Iran, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Palestine can be evaluated in this context. (Grzymala-Busse, 2019). Nationalist movements borrow religious symbols and language elements and use them for their own purposes. For example, in the former Yugoslavia, religious symbols and discourses were used by the leaders of the nationalist movement to enthuse nationalist feelings and mobilize people. Although the politicization of religion has negative consequences for the reputation and moral authority of religious institutions and other religious groups in the long run, but in the short run this exchange between nationalism and religion enables the political authority to benefit from religious legitimacy and also intertwines religious and national elements (Smith, 2003: 13-14).

The third approach regarding the relationships between nationalism and religion on ways in which nationalism can reinforce each other as different categories and axes. Defining nationalism as a *heterodox religion*, Smith (2003: 13) noted that it is a type of religion opposed to conventional, traditional religions" with "inheriting many of their features—symbols, liturgies, rituals and messianic fervor—which now come to possess new and subversive political and national meanings. Smith (2003) adds that one of the characteristics of nationalisms is that they transform all the values and institutions of traditional religion for secular political purposes. Religion defines the nation and nationalism strengthens religious practices, and this resulted in high level of both national identification and religiosity. The high level of religious participation and religious nationalism seen in Philippines, Poland, Ireland is an example of this form of mutual reinforcement. Religious nationalism raises the rates of religiosity and plays role in consolidation of the nation and its territorial structure (Grzymala-Busse, 2019). Hibbard (2010) also argues that not only religion shapes politics, but politics also shapes religion and contributes to the increase in religious ideologies. The actors who dominate politics in India, Egypt and the USA brought an exclusive vision of religious nationalism back into the ideological mainstream to legitimize their own aims and to provide social support. If religious nationalism does not create a strong change in the religious life of individuals, then this exchange becomes one-sided, while religion feeds nationalism, nationalism does not contribute to the development of religious practices. The situation in Greece, Bulgaria, or Russia is an example of this (Grzymala-Busse, 2019; Çemrek ve Köprülü, 2020: 218-222).

Three factors were effective in the emergence of a mutually reinforcing relationship between religion and nationalism. The first of these is resilience of religion, which enables it to continue to survive in the face of secular attacks. Divine sanction, promise of an afterlife,

spiritual climate enabled religious people to stand strong against the wave of secularization, and religious institutions could not be easily abolished like other socio-political institutions. The second factor is the hostile conflict waged by the secular state or power against religion. No matter how strong and hostile the secular state was, it backfired, and religion continued to exist in this society. It is stated that the strict imposition of secularism on society by the Western liberal or Eastern socialist regimes led to the rise of religious nationalism in the former Soviet countries after the collapse of communism. No matter how much the state officially restricts religion and prohibits religion in the curricula of schools, the society continues to learn and live religion through family, other non-governmental organizations and other informal means. Finally, the direction and role of the elite, the mixed power relations, long-standing hostilities or friendships in the society and the local dynamics can strengthen the bonds of religion and nationalism. As in the case of Indonesia, the campaigns made by the state led to the emergence of a phenomenon of *godly nationalism*. As in the wars of Yugoslav succession from 1991 to 2001, elites can mobilize the people and prompt certain identities by using religious symbols (Grzymala-Busse, 2019).

Islam and Nationalism: Is There Room for Both?

After addressing the relation between religion and nationalism in general, in this section, I will explore discussions regarding the compatibility of Islam and nationalism.

Regarding Islam and nationalism, two fundamental approaches can be identified. The first approach asserts that there is no conflict, inconsistency, or outright rejection when it comes to the coexistence of Islam and nationalism. For example, many proponents of both Arab nationalism and Arab Islamism argued for the compatibility of these ideologies, asserting that they can coexist harmoniously. Various narratives have been constructed to delineate the intricate interplay between Islam and Arab nationalism based on this assertion. Arab nationalists held Islam in high esteem, considering it a paramount component of the Arab nation's heritage, alongside the Arabic language. Notably, secular Arab nationalists, particularly Ba'ath ideologues, lauded Islam as an integral facet of the Arab nation and a historical reality. Michel Aflaq, a co-founder of the Ba'ath Party and a Syrian Christian, viewed Islam as the national culture of the Arabs. In his perspective, Islam represented a genuine and perfect symbol of the Arab essence, with Muhammad embodying the entirety of the Arab identity in its truest form and timeless nature (Yahya, 1991: 49-50; Sıddıki, 1991: 113; Zubaida, 2004: 409-410).

In contrast, for Arab Islamists, religion is not solely a historical legacy of the Arabs; it's a vibrant system encompassing politics and law, capable of regulating modern societies.

Additionally, Islam is regarded as the force that propelled the Arabs into their golden age, granting them significant agency in history. The reverence for the Arabic language and the esteemed position of Arabs both globally and within non-Arab Muslim circles can be attributed to the fact that the holy texts were revealed in Arabic and that the Prophet of Islam was of Arab descent. Consequently, Arab Islamists staunchly oppose language reform, deeming it sacrilegious and contrary to their religious beliefs (Yahya, 1991: 53-54; Zubaida, 2004: 410).

To give an example from Türkiye, Zekeriya Beyaz, who has also written a book called "Nationalism According to Islam," does not see any incompatibility or conflict between Islam and nationalism. He claims that Islam and nationalism can coexist without conflict, and he emphasizes the unity of their Muslim and Turkish identities. Beyaz strongly opposes any attempts to separate these identities and implies that such efforts are harmful. He states:

> *We are both Muslims and Turks. If Islam is our spirit, then being Turkish is our body. If Islam is our religion, then being Turkish is our lineage and nationality. Those who want to separate our Turkic identity from our Muslim faith are like those who want to separate our spirit from our body. They are the ones who want to kill us* (Beyaz, 1975: 379).

In line with the first approach, Yavuz (2004b: 214) particularly emphasizes that the issue of identity is one of the fundamental dynamics, especially in new Islamic movements, during the process of globalization. This insight can provide a significant theoretical framework for understanding the nationalist perspective of religious Kurds and discussing the possibilities of a *Kurdish Islam*.

The second approach holds an opposing view and refrain from juxtaposing Islam and nationalism. This approach adheres to the notion that "*a Muslim's nationality is his faith*." Therefore, it rejects nationalism, viewing it as a force that fractures the Muslim community, known as the Ummah, into smaller factions and weakens it against religious and civilizational adversaries (Garia, 1991: 28; Zubaida, 2004: 407; Nakavi, 2005: 86). For instance, Sayyid Qutb, considered a pioneer of radical political Islam, vehemently denounces nationalism. During his trial leading up to his death, he stated,

> *I believe that the bonds of ideology and belief are more enduring than those of regional patriotism. The false divisions among Muslims on a regional*

basis stem from crusading and Zionist imperialism, which must be eradicated (Zubaida, 2004: 407).

Like Qutb, many Arab radical Islamists reject Arab nationalism, asserting that it is intertwined with secularism, both of which they believe undermine Muslim unity and faith. A notable statement comes from Palestinian-Jordanian preacher Abdallah Azzam, who described Arab nationalism as conceived in sin and born in corruption and dissolution, highlighting their perspective (Zubaida, 2004: 407). These radical Islamists, both Arab and non-Arab, argue that Arab nationalism is a Western import encouraged by orientalists and colonialists to divide and weaken the Islamic Ummah, driving a wedge between Arabs and Turks and overthrowing the caliphate. They also point out that ideologists of Arab nationalism include Christian Arabs like Jirji Zaydan, George Antonius, Michel Aflaq, and George Habbash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), claiming an alliance with Western co-religionists (Zubaida, 2004: 412). Another concern for radical Islamists is the shift of Christian Arabs from the dhimmis ('people of the Book') position they previously held. They criticize the leaders of wealthy Arab countries, particularly those in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, for their opulent lifestyles while their citizens struggle, considering it hypocritical. Addressing this issue is a part of their agenda (Zubaida, 2004: 412).

The belief that nationalism and the concept of the nation-state are akin to idolatry, replacing the worship of God, is not only held by Arab Islamists but also by scholars from various Muslim societies. Ali Bulaç in Türkiye, for instance, argues that many modern world problems stem from nationalism and criticizes Hegel for deifying the nation and its state. He advocates for a pluralistic approach with *law communities* coexisting under a minimal state, which he terms a kind of liberal communalism (Zubaida, 2004: 412-413). Bulaç emphasizes that Islam provides the method and content to address contemporary social, political, and cultural challenges. He opposes the portrayal of Islam as a medieval, traditional, or reactionary religion, asserting that Islam is timeless and universally relevant, offering a moral social order where property rights are acknowledged, and the affluent voluntarily assist the less privileged. Revitalizing this social order through embracing Islam could greatly contribute to resolving international tensions, as all societies worldwide have their underlying causes of internal conflicts. Thus, Islam is seen as an opportunity not only for Muslims but for the entire world (Meeker, 1991: 2000; Bulaç, 2014: 568).

Muhammed Hamidullah also claims that the idea of nationality grounded in language, race, color, or place of birth is viewed as archaic and confining, whereas the Islamic concept of nationality is regarded as forward-thinking. This is because it relies on an individual's choice and promotes unity among those who follow the same ideology, irrespective of their race, language, or place of residence.

> *Nationality on the basis of language, race, color, or birthplace is too primitive; therein is a fatality, an impasse, —something in which man has no choice. The Islamic notion is progressive and is based solely on the choice of the individual. For it proposes the unity of all those who believe in the same ideology, without distinction of race, tongue or place of abode (Hamidullah, 1970: 48).*

Muhammad Iqbal expressed his opposition to Western-style nationalism and approached nationalism in a manner consistent with the Islamic concept of tawhid, the unity of God. Iqbal rejects secularism, materialism, Western democracy, and nationalism based on this concept of tawhid. He emphasizes that Islam offers a holistic and unified approach to life, unlike nationalism, which divides life into 'religious' and 'worldly' domains. Iqbal's rejection of nationalism is based on his belief that it clashes with Islamic principles and laws, as well as his interpretation of the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions. He argues that nationalism's secular foundation separates religion from the nation-state and reduces religion's significance in the political sphere, thus he believes that it is the greatest enemy of Islam. Iqbal also criticizes the formation of nation-states based on geographical, racial, linguistic, and other differences, as it demands absolute loyalty and undermines the unity of the Ummah (İkbal, 2010:183-184; Sevea, 2012: 145-146; Khaja, 2018: 51-55)

Following Iqbal's poem is also important regarding his perspective on nationalism:

> *We are neither Afghans, nor Turks or Tatars*
>
> *We are from the same garden and the same branch*
>
> *Discrimination based on color is prohibited amongst us*
>
> *As all of us have been cultured by the same spring* (İkbal, 2006: 51).

Babanzâde Ahmet Naim is a well-known figure who frequently comes up in conversations related to the topic of nationalism in the context of Islam. Babanzâde Ahmet Naim approached the issue of nationalism in Islam by referencing the Quran and the Sunnah. He cited verses and hadiths that emphasized unity among Muslims and discouraged division

based on nationality. He argued that nationalism fosters division and is the province of the ignorant, likening it to tribalism. Ahmet Naim's perspective underscores the harmful impact of racism and nationalism on both religious and moral aspects. He firmly opposes these two ideologies with the aim of promoting unity among Muslims and strengthening the concept of Islamic unity. According to him, religion should be the primary guiding force in people's lives, and he cautions against the potential dangers if racism attempts to supplant religious beliefs. Likewise, he criticizes nationalism for its potential to divert individuals from their religious values. Ahmet Naim places a strong emphasis on the principles of brotherhood and unity within Islam. He argues that racism has the potential to undermine and even dangerously disrupt these core values. Consequently, he asserts that racism is incompatible with religious principles and can create division and hostility among Muslim communities. Additionally, he stresses that nationalism should never take precedence over one's religious faith and that prioritizing religious values is of utmost importance (Naim, 2018).

Thus far, I first focused on the relationship between religion and nationalism from a general perspective, then narrowed down this relationship by personalizing the connection between Islam and nationalism. In the context of my study, I would like to clarify how I will operationalize nationalism, religion, and nationalism to make it more understandable. Within the two groups I identified in my study, in the first group (religiously oriented), I argued that the Islam does not have a significant influence on the concept of nation, nationalism, and Kurdish nationalism. Islam came before the nation, nationalism and Kurdish nationalism and that Islam does not play an encouraging and strengthening role in nationalism here. In the other group (politically oriented), I asserted that religious Kurds place Islam at the center of their nationalist demands, justifying their nationalism by grounding it in the Islamic principles. In conclusion, through the lens of the relationship between nationalism and religion, I will discuss the relation between Islam and nationalism regarding both religious Kurds of these groups.

2.2. Habitus

In this section, I will discuss the concept of Habitus. But before moving on to the concept of Habitus, I will also touch upon Pierre Bourdieu and his legacy. I will also explore key concepts such as Field and Capital, as they provide necessary groundwork for a comprehensive understanding of Habitus.

2.2.1. Pierre Bourdieu and His Legacy

Pierre Bourdieu, son of a small civil servant, was born on August 1, 1930, in Denguin, France and died of cancer at the age of 71, in 2002. By writing some thirty books and 400 articles as well as numerous lectures, interviews, informal communications and articles, Bourdieu is the most well-known French sociologist (after Durkheim) and the most cited French social thinker (after Foucault). Among his most important and well-known books, Reproduction (with Passeron, 1970), Distinction (1979), The Logic of Practice (1980), and Pascalian Meditations (1997). In addition to these books, there are various collections of talks and interviews and especially, his courses at the Collège de France (Calhoun, 2007: 274; Vandenberghe & Peters, 2019: 2; Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 7-8).

Bourdieu was graduated in philosophy in 1954 and became a professor of philosophy at a high school. He was called to Algeria to do his military service, he remained there as an assistant at the Faculty of Letters of Algiers from 1958 to 1960. This forced break with the academic world provokes his conversion to sociology (Bourdieu, 2008: 41; Vandenberghe & Peters, 2019: 1, Swartz, 2020: 317-318; Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 8).

The main dynamics in his conversion to sociology from philosophy are the investigation into Kabyle society and the crisis of Algerian society (Calhoun, 2007: 280). Bourdieu has the founding works on education and culture (school, museum, photography) in this scientific itinerary. The tools of thought developed over the course of previous works (such as those on the anatomy of taste, social classes and struggles for categorization, academic field, literary field, political field, scientific field, and artistic field and economic field) are tested, revised, clarified, and reworked in the course of these works (Vandenberghe & Peters, 2019: 1).

When Bourdieu's work is evaluated at a theoretical level, it can be described as an economy of symbolic goods dues to his extending capital from economic capital to cultural, social and symbolic capital and associated with different fields of social space. His works can also be considered theoretically as a theory of conflict and revolution in terms of examining symbolic revolutions, resistance, refusals and possible revolts. Lastly, his works can also be described as a theory of practice (conceived as the product of the encounter between a habitus and a field), as a theory of symbolic violence and relations of domination in social space (colonial domination, class domination, male domination) (Vandenberghe & Peters, 2019: 1; Swartz, 2020: 320-323).

When Bourdieu's work is evaluated from an epistemological perspective, it is part of the sociological tradition and the classic Durkheimian perspective. Due to its exceptional ability to distinguish a third position in relation to the traditional oppositions between the individual and society, mental structures and social structures, history and structure, freedom and determinism, relativistic historicism, and universalist rationalism, especially subjectivism and objectivism, it also appears to be a symbolic revolution in the field of social sciences (Swartz, 2020: 319; Calhoun, 2007: 286; Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 38-41).

Bourdieu did not write from an ivory tower in isolation from the realities of the society and world he lived in. He took a public stance as public intellectual not only in France but also abroad in the social struggles against neoliberalism and globalization in the 1990s. He supported anti-globalization activists, the unemployed movement, and strikes (Swartz, 2020: 317-318; Calhoun, 2007: 274; Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 12).

In the same way that Bourdieu takes an outspoken position on local, national, and global concerns, he was not an arm-chair scholar and his works do not simply represent a bulk of theoretical studies, definitions, or abstract propositions, as in the expression "*research without theory is blind, and theory without research is empty*" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 162; Bourdieu, 2008: 46). In this statement Bourdieu claims that one of the most essential characteristics that sets sociology apart from philosophy is that sociology is grounded in empirical data, not purely philosophical speculation. In a similar vein, he argues that studies and field data that lack theory are just a mass of information and do not tell anything. Thus, his Homo Academicus (1984) is a study of the Paris university faculties and professorate. The State Nobility (1996) is the research project on the grandes écoles. His investigation of French public housing policies resulted in several pieces published in Actes and the 2005 publication of The Social Structures of the Economy (Swartz, 2020: 319, Calhoun, 2007: 274).

Each of Bourdieu's key concepts has drawn a lot of critical attention. For instance, it is argued that cultural capital is less beneficial in nations with greater cultural diversity and less of a strong highbrow cultural tradition, such as France, because it is connected with high culture. It is claimed that for Bourdieu's studies of education, the concept implies a deficit and thus a stigmatizing image towards disadvantaged individuals and groups. There has also been debate as to whether the concept of field requires a national context and is of limited value for international comparisons or for describing particular transnational social spaces. Although Bourdieu thinks that the concept of Habitus will make the role of agency within structuralism more visible, there are also criticisms that do not evaluate it in this way and

that saying that notion includes an excessive structural emphasis where a form of macro determinism predominates. Critical approaches also dispute the concept of habit's flexibility and demand greater precision regarding its cognitive, emotional, psychological, or psychoanalytical components (Swartz, 2020: 335).

2.2.2. The Notion of Habitus and Related Concepts

Pierre Bourdieu says "*the real is relational: what exists in the social world are relations*" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 97) by distorting Hegel's famous "*the rational is real, and the real is rational*." Given the inherent interrelationship of all concepts in Bourdieu's framework, we will initially comprehend the notions of 'field' and 'capital' to understand the notion of habitus.

2.2.3. Field (Champ)

The sociological theory of Pierre Bourdieu placed a significant emphasis on the concept of field, which is used in physics and psychology to explain how elements are related to a larger configuration. The field, which is comparable to terminology like system or instance, aims to account for a differentiated social world with distinct/determined regions that cannot be reduced to the overall social structures of the society in which they exist (Bourdieu, 1998a: 32).

Field, like law or literature, has its own distinctive rules and logic, which is very important for understanding certain aspects of social life. The scope and scale, quality and quantity of a field can be extremely diverse. As long as having an operating or organizing logic, a family, a village, a market, a national and international organization, and various professional categories can be conceptualized as a field (Leander, 2009: 4; Calhoun, 2007: 294; Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 122)

Each field is marked by a taken-for-granted (partially autonomous) perception of the world we live in, as well as explicit and implicit codes of behavior. The point here is to understand and analyze the logic and rules of the game in a specific area, affecting everything and everyone within this area. The magnetic nature of fields stimulates and regulate social interaction. Changes in this magnetic force or field logic have an impact on the entire field and all of its actors. Therefore, a field is an organizing logic that surrounds an issue,

observable by its consequences and dominating all people who are affected by it, whether or not they are conscious of participating in the field and/or actively involved in the struggle for definition of this issue (Leander, 2009: 4).

Due to this nature of field, Bourdieu uses the analogy of a game to explain how a field functions. According to him, each field develops its own set of laws that define its peculiarities. These guidelines, which define the *game* within a field, specify the appropriate ways to acquire and preserve capital particular to that field. They also outline the requirements for entering the field and moving up in it (Bourdieu, 1998a: 78). In addition, Bourdieu highlights the centrality of the idea of illusion, which comes from the Latin word *ludus* meaning game. Bourdieu explains it as the games that hold significance for you are compelling and noteworthy due to their influence and introduction into your mind and body, encapsulated as a sensation referred to as the feel for the game (Bourdieu, 1998a: 77). Thus, the excitement and dedication required to participate in this figurative game are represented by illusion, which don't necessarily materialize into money advantages (Leander, 2009: 4; Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 123). For example, the intergenerational transfer of knowledge was symbolically maintained with the ceremonial transfer of the kavuk, a headgear worn by traditional Turkish theater performers (Durmaz, 2008). From this point of view, kavuk can be described as an illusion.

To understand the field, one usually starts by creating a more or less formal and graphical mapping of the positions. This is the predominant way to understand the effects of the field. To carry out this mapping, it is important to understand what counts as an advantage in the field and who has it (Leander, 2009: 4)

As will be explained here in the concept of capital, the advantage need not be of a material or financial kind. In some fields (like voluntary aid workers or revolutionary groups) there may even be a need to reduce the visibility of money owned, considering positions in the internal hierarchy. Rather, education, local connections, practical experience or personal authority (i.e. forms of cultural, social or symbolic capital) could be of great importance. By locating individuals or groups on a map according to the capital they own, it is possible to analyze their connections with one another. This mapping is often based in part on objective and easily measurable indicators such as income statistics or CV data (Leander, 2009: 4-5)

Field is not static, it changes throughout time. It is dynamic environment that undergoes ongoing change and struggle. People and organizations in a field argue over the rules of the game as well as the relative worth of various forms of capital in their field. They attempt to strategically enhance their own positions in order to achieve this. As a result, field

analysis includes instrumental rationality (strategy) as a key component. By taking resources (capital) from other fields, people attempt to improve their own positions within the confines of the field, reshaping hierarchical relations in the process. But they do it from a specific position (based on their capital) and with certain provisions. Unlike rational choice theorists, to understand and explain their instrumental strategies, these must be explained and cannot be assumed. People make history in field analysis (as in Marxist thought), but they cannot choose the position from which they start. People are unable to even decide how to interpret their starting point, interests, or the appropriate strategies. Their habitus influences how they perceive the world (Leander, 2009: 5).

Besides, field exists within a context. Ultimately, because the individual's social world consists of the existence of more than one field, they are only relatively autonomous from each other. Developments in one field also affect other areas. People and organizations move between fields and may attempt to move capital and positions from one field to other fields. Individuals can strengthen their existence in one field with the capital they acquire from other fields and make reinforcements from other fields. A civil servant working in the public bureaucracy can also transfer to the university field and acquire cultural capital tools such as a master's degree or doctorate in order to rise in this field and reach a higher position (Leander, 2009: 5-6).

Essentially, there is a certain homology (common ancestry) between the positions and hierarchies produced in different fields, because ultimately, as stated above, capitals and positions accumulate and rise. Owned (existing) field and capital contribute to the formation of new fields and capital acquisition. This newly acquired field and capital likewise plays a role in the diversification of field and capital accumulation and its growth in quality and quantity. However, it should be noted that not all fields are equal; there are differences in their scope and capacity, power, sphere of influence, and their perception in society. Thus, the fields are hierarchically interconnected. Some fields, such as education or government, can produce capital that has value in all (or most) other fields. These are metafields that shape other fields. (Leander, 2009: 6).

2.2.4. Capital

In Bourdieu's sociology, the idea of capital plays a significant role. It basically has an important relationship with the notion of field, and the two ideas mutually explain one

another. Bourdieu used Marx's notion of economic capital and Durkheim's notion of cultural capital and applied them in different and very rich context. The social space is divided into a particular number of fields and sub-fields, as we previously mentioned. Social actors use a variety of capital in these fields and its subfield to shape their positions and achieve diverse goals. These various capitals are also inherited, processed and accumulated by social agents in accordance with dispositions (habitus) learned in childhood and adolescence. This demonstrates the importance of social belonging in the construction and even transmission of this habitus (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 106)

Bourdieu divides capital into various categories: economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital. Economic capitals, immediately and directly convertible into money, are traditional production factors such as industrial production facilities, research, services, land, currency, business, etc. whose strategic importance changes over time. Since acquiring capital requires a certain financial cost, having economic capital facilitates the individual's access to other types of capital. (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 106; Calhoun, 1993: 69).

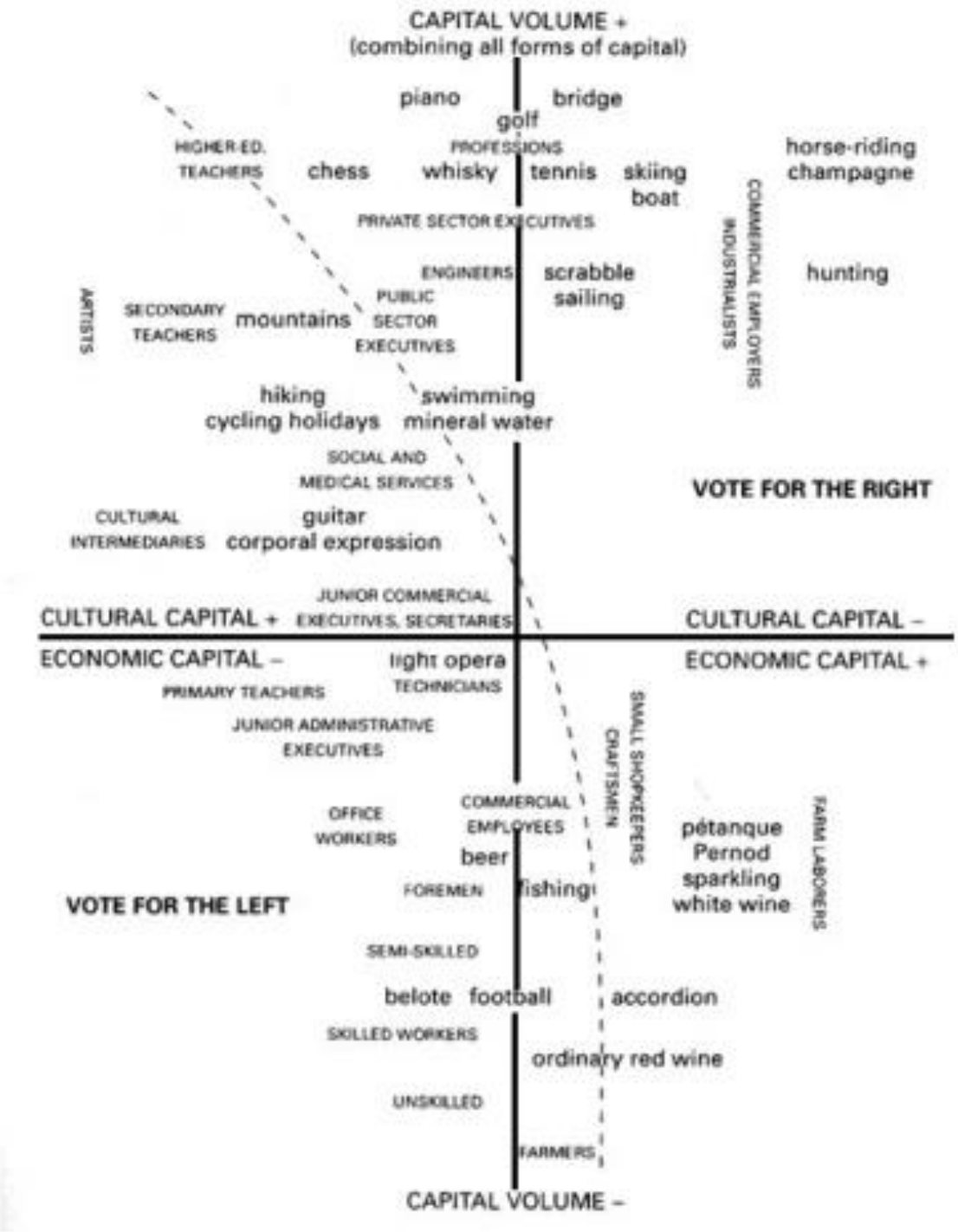
Cultural capital includes social assets such as knowledge and skills, education, intelligence, speaking and dressing style that enable and promote mobility within a society. In the earlier studies, Bourdieu used cultural capital to explain the inequality of opportunity in the school system according to social origin (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 52-55). Subsequently, Bourdieu identified three states of cultural capital: embodied cultural capital, objectified cultural capital, and institutionalized cultural capital. Embodied cultural capital is an accumulation of capital that works in the body's naturalized propensity and primarily acts unconsciously. It is expressed in the body's posture and actions. The most well-known examples include craftsmanship, language accent, and playing instruments that were first introduced at a young age. Objectified cultural capital accumulates in the form of cultural goods/objects. Objects that symbolize tastes and cultural competence such as paintings, books, etc. Important thing to keep in mind is that simply owning cultural objects does not constitute cultural capital; a person must have a certain level of education as well as aesthetic and artistic judgment to make sense of these cultural objects. This is the divide between an uneducated mafia boss who owns priceless works of art and an art historian. Without these requirements, such paintings will only have value as economic capital, not cultural capital. Institutionalized cultural capital is formally acknowledged by an institution, typically through academic credentials or professional credentials. For instance, having a degree from MIT may indicates strong institutionalized cultural capital (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 106-107).

Social capital includes the relationships, networks, group affiliations that the individual develops through the socialization process (family, school, work, social and volunteer activities). For example, graduating from Galatasaray High School is a very important source of social capital, on its own alone. Because it is anticipated that students who graduated from elite universities will eventually hold high-level positions. The friendship network of these students is an important social capital throughout their lives. It should be noted that social capital has multiplier effect, comparing to other types of capitals (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 107).

Lastly, symbolic capital is an analytical tool to capture the unequally distributed symbolic aspect of social life (such as social esteem, credit, honor, and respectability), which is a distinct and subtle form of power in and of itself. It results from, and in some cases sustains, social processes and arrangements that may appear to have nothing to do with a symbolic function (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 107-108). According to Bourdieu (1998: 102):

> *Symbolic capital is an ordinary property (physical strength, wealth, warlike valor, etc.) which, perceived by social agents endowed with the categories of perception and appreciation permitting them to perceive, know and recognize it, becomes symbolically efficient*.

Figure 1: Bourdieu and Habitus



Source: 1: Bourdieu, 1998a: 5

The diagram shows the allocation of total capital volume between economic and cultural components as indicated by the horizontal axis, which follows a binary opposing structure. This map places social groupings according to their capital volume and structure to highlight the two primary dimensions of Bourdieu's social space. For instance, due to their

significant total capital volume, which is primarily characterized by economic capital domination, commerce and industrial leaders are located in the northeastern quadrant of the diagram. Workers, on the other hand, are positioned lower on the chart due to their relatively low capital volume. The diagram's physical separation of these two groups effectively represents a measure of social distance. On the other hand, the closeness of wage earners and employees shows the similarity of their capital in terms of both volume and structure. The graphic also includes a lifestyle dimension, which includes particular signs like tastes in gaming, sports, music, and beverages. This lifestyle space in the diagram sits on top of the social position space, allowing us to see where social groups' habits are most similar and most dissimilar. For instance, compared to the self-employed, skilled workers show a stronger propensity for playing football and the accordion. Salaried workers that are geographically close to one another also have comparable pastimes. Additionally, the variety and quality of hobbies change as knowledge and wealth rise. For instance, self-employed people frequently exhibit increased interest in hobbies like playing the piano or golf. Importantly, these interests and pastimes are connected to people's voting tendencies (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 114)

2.2.5. Habitus

The Latin term Habitus (from the verb habere-to have) comes from the Greek term hexis (from the verb ekheïn, to have). It comes from Thomas Aquinas's translation of Aristotle's Hexis into Latin. Habitus, in its first usage, refers to a learned and enduring disposition related to ethics or noetics. Habitus identifies moral virtue in the ethical field. According to Aristotle, a virtuous man actualizes the method of being (hexis) that has been the subject of his thought. The disposition of an actor who develops his action willingly is known as his habitus. Compared to ethics, the notion of habitus in noetics is a more comprehensible concept. From the earliest time, it has been used to describe the intellectual capacity that permits the pursuit or application of knowledge. In a second meaning, the habit takes on the passive and external significance of an outward appearance or mode of being. The general appearance of the body or face is described as the habitus in terms of morphology of the medical kind. Thus, the habitus denotes a general state of health or disease, but it also enables the identification of a specific species (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 42-43; Hadas, 2021: 9; Silva, 2016: 74)

When habitus acquires a sociological content and to gain a more effective function, the notion of habitus must first be freed from its normative implications. Thus, it will be revisited in order to be first recorded in the process of personal socialization. For instance, Durkheim characterizes it positively as all of the learning a child acquires during his/her educational life. He promotes a non-mechanical definition of how mental dispositions, collective representations and individual actions are connected (Hadas, 2021: 9).

Renewing the sociological meaning of habitus, Marcel Mauss will apply it to socially acquired bodily techniques (which viewed as the product of both collective and individual practical reason) and exercised in a more or less automatic way. The concept of habitus would then be used by Norbert Elias to depict the sort of psychic personality created by the Western civilizational dynamics. Elias initially asks what type of man (Menschentum) social arrangements have shaped. Elias can clarify the functional interdependence between social structures and the internalization of norms by viewing the habitus as a stabilized psychic state. Additionally, he can argue that this dependency resolves the individual-society antinomy in theoretic way. Elias then uses the concept of ethos to explain the habitus question. From the specific groupings that people make and the connections they uphold within them, he can then explain how a homogeneous habitus is formed. The social ethos of the bourgeoisie changes the social structure as a whole by prioritizing the accumulation of wealth through hard effort (work) over the acquisition of titles of nobility. Thus, the competition for social status; shifts from prestige linked to rank (aristocratic habitus) to work aimed at the accumulation of capital (bourgeois habitus) (Reed□Danahay, 2018: 1; Hadas, 2021: 9).

Pierre Bourdieu will place his own redefinition of habitus in a similar problematic, the mediation between social practices and the objective structures of the social spaces in which they are registered. The concept of habitus, when applied to the dimensions of sociological theory of knowledge, will enable us to break away from two antitheses: objectivism and subjectivism. Indeed, these two antitheses hold a crucial place in Bourdieu's general theory, and he, in a way, harmonizes them. Objectivism explains the external meanings of social phenomena and the construction of social facts without reaching their inner meanings. In its structuralist extension, it assumes that individuals are determined by social relations. On the other hand, subjectivism seizes the inner significance of the present moment. It transforms subjective experience (a durable and transferable system of perception, taste and action) into the social qualities of behaviors on the individualist side. An individual, acting with reason and autonomy within society, becomes integrated into

social frameworks and operations without being entirely constrained by them, and they can exercise their free will (Eisenberg, 2007: 2045; Sallaz, 2010: 321).

Habitus refers to how individuals shape their lives based on the norms, rules, and values they possess, perceiving social reality through these lenses. It embodies predispositions and tendencies that influence how they understand and evaluate the world and determine their actions. Habitus centers on our behaviors, emotions, thoughts, and identity. It encapsulates how we internalize and carry our past experiences, integrating them into our current situations. It explains how we subsequently decide to behave in specific ways and not others, based on this integrated history. In Bourdieu's words:

> *The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them* (Bourdieu, 1990: 53).

The acquisition of these norms, rules, and values, the transmission and inculcation of perceptions, judgments, or behaviors involves a process primarily rooted in an individual's socialization. During this socialization process, individuals engage with family, school, work, and their circle of friends, absorbing a distinct worldview. This process forms a conceptual framework, instilling specific values and rules about the external world and social reality. Consequently, a certain attitude is internalized, forming one of the foundational dimensions of Habitus: the internalization of externality.

In essence, the socialization process leads to the internalization and inculcation of particular patterns, values, and beliefs, culminating in the emergence of Habitus as a structured structure. Habitus profoundly influences cognitive processes, the capacity for understanding and perception, and overall behavior:

> *The habitus is not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure: the principle of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world is itself the product of internalization of the division into social classes. . . . As structured products (opus operatum) which a structuring structure (modus operandi) produces through retranslations according to the specific logic of the*

different fields, all the practices and products of the given class are objectively harmonized among themselves, without any deliberate pursuit of coherence and objectively orchestrated, without any conscious concertation (Bourdieu, 1984: 170–73)

The second dimension, internality is externalized, signifies those individuals, at this stage, instinctively exhibit behaviors expected by the social context without conscious deliberation. Hence, Habitus acts as a structuring structure, shaping an individual's lifelong journey based on the foundation acquired during the socialization process. It impacts various aspects, including political affiliations, interpretations of concepts and ideologies, understanding of human relations, and perceptions of both the present world and the afterlife (Maton, 2014: 51

Bourdieu explains the relationship between field and habitus as follows:

the habitus - as a system of schemas of perception, appreciation and action produced by the socially instituted body - and the field as a system of objective relations produced by socially instituted things or mechanisms that are almost as real as physical things. It is also everything engendered by this relation - that is, social practices and fields when they appear in the shape of realities perceived and appreciated, and hence form fields of action and fields of struggle. The relation between the habitus and the field is a two-way process: it is on the one hand a relation of conditioning, where the field structures the habitus, which is the product of the incorporation of the requirements of a field (or set of fields); it is also a relation of knowledge, with the habitus helping to constitute the field as a world that is endowed with meaning and value and is worth investing in. It follows from this that, on the one hand, a part of the relation of knowledge depends on the prior relation of conditioning that fashions the structures of the habitus. And, on the other hand, that science is in this case knowledge of a kind of knowledge and must make room for a sociologically orientated phenomenology of the experience of the field, or, more precisely, of its invariants (including, for example, analyses of everyday practice and doxic experience, as well as crisis and criticism) and of the variations in the relations between the different habitus and the different fields (Bourdieu, 2020: 344)

Bourdieu also establishes an equation between habitus, capital and field, and the individual's actions as follows: [(habitus)(capital)] + field = practice. This equation can be

elucidated as follows: an individual's actions and behaviors (practice) are a consequence of the interplay between their predispositions and tendencies (habitus) and their status and resources (capital) within the prevailing dynamics of a given social domain (field). (Maton, 2014: 51-52)

A hermeneutical relationship exists between habitus and field, where both mutually attribute meaning to one another. Habitus, shaped by an individual's background and experiences, profoundly influences their engagement in various social fields. The effectiveness of an individual's habitus in a field determines the breadth and depth of their participation.

A well-aligned and qualified habitus facilitates entry into corresponding qualified areas within a field. However, discrepancies between an individual's habitus and the requirements of a field can lead to conflict and detachment, causing a sense of displacement and despair. For instance, an individual from a traditional, rural upbringing attempting to navigate the academic field, in which individuals from middle- and upper-class families *play*, may face challenges due to differing habitus and socialization. The *rural* individual may have entered this field with his own skills (micro merit), but the habitus (macro merit) he came from does not match this field. This contradiction or incompatibility between Micro-Macro and Habitus-Field will affect a number of variables such as the individual's human relations and the individual's work performance.

Similarly, considering the religious field, an individual raised in a secular family might struggle to relate to the discourse and actions within a traditionally religious sphere, experiencing a sense of alienation. When the habitus and field align in terms of quantity and quality, the individual is likely to display a more harmonious and successful *playing game* within that field. Examining it from the perspective of social class dynamics, the arrival of a person from a working-class habitus into an environment largely characterized by bourgeois habitus is likely to give rise to numerous complex obstacles. In summary, the congruence between an individual's habitus and the demands of a particular field significantly impacts their ability to adapt and thrive within that domain, influencing their interactions, attitudes, and overall experience within the social space.

It's important to understand that evaluating the impact of habitus on a field shouldn't be limited to a negative viewpoint. When an individual with a distinct habitus enters a setting where the prevailing habitus is uniform and dominant, they can also draw upon the benefits of their own habitus. For example, someone from a more traditional habitus entering an area with a strong bourgeois habitus can bring the genuineness of traditional values to the

forefront, creating a positive impression compared to the formal nature often seen in bourgeois interactions.

Just as habitus exerts its influence on field, conversely, the field also shapes habitus. As previously discussed, a hermeneutical relationship exists between these two notions. Habitus, defined as an individual's predispositions and inclinations, is intimately tied to the socialization process, a dynamic and evolving arena. It's crucial to emphasize that the socialization process is not a stagnant, unchangeable structure; rather, it remains malleable. Although dispositions and the resulting habits may persist over time, they are not entirely immutable. Engaging in pedagogical endeavors, embracing new experiences, pursuing education, or undergoing training can all serve as catalysts for challenging, adjusting, or even reversing these predispositions.

A field, with its distinctive qualities and array of capital, possesses the power to mold an individual's habitus, inducing either positive or negative alterations. To illustrate, envision two working-class individuals with similar habitus. The socialization process and habitus of a worker in a local office compared to a worker in a tea house at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) would inevitably diverge. The interactions and engagements with academics and students at MIT would invariably reshape the latter worker's habitus. It's essential to acknowledge that the impact of the field on habitus isn't exclusively positive; individuals can undergo adverse shifts in the quality of their preexisting habitus as well.

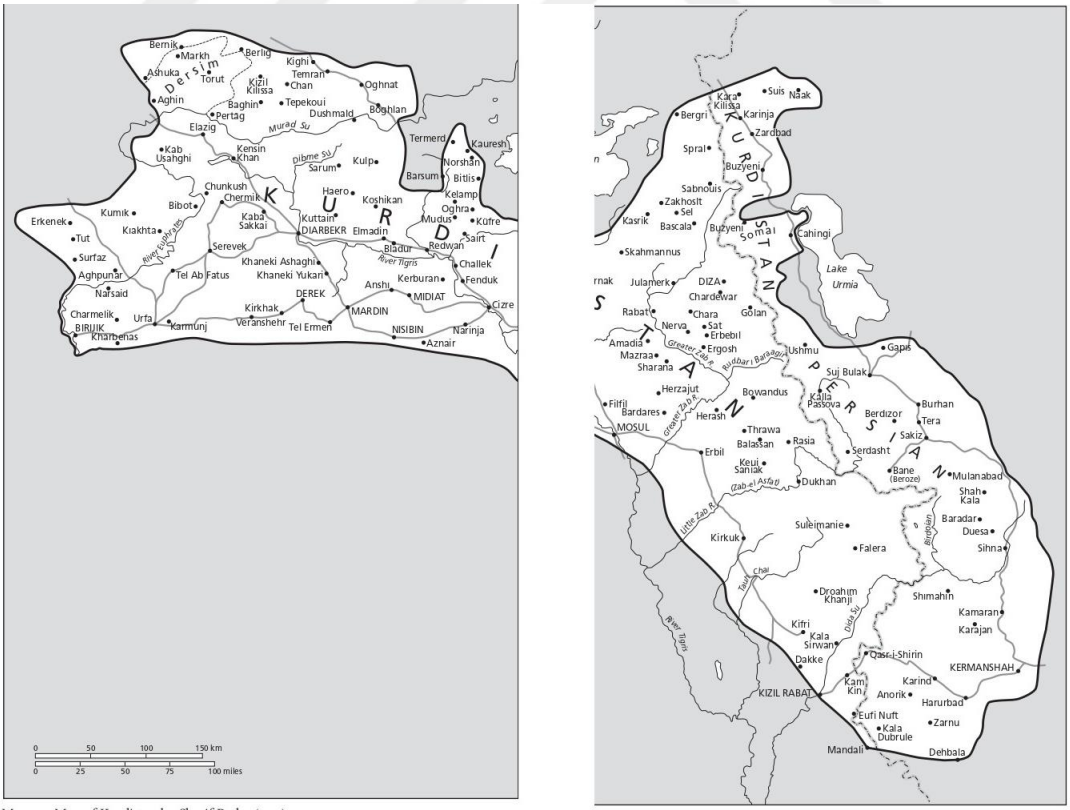
So far, I've been explaining the concept of Habitus and connecting it to other ideas from Pierre Bourdieu and his legacy at a general literary level. To enhance clarity, it is significant that I articulate the specific manner in which I intend to *operationalize* the concept of habitus within the framework of my dissertation. I'm focusing on religious Kurds who belong to specific groups and social setups. These Kurds undergo a developmental process within these societal configurations, shaping not only their socialization but also influencing the perceptual lens through which they interpret life, events, and individuals. This way of seeing things becomes a sort of second nature for them, with specific habits and tendencies forming their habitus. In the introduction of my dissertation, I suggested that religious Kurds in these social setups have distinct interpretations of nationalism. I will try to discuss and support this idea by examining real-world results and findings, operationalizing the concept of habitus as a guiding framework.

3. FROM ANCIENT ORIGINS TO MODERN STRUGGLES: THE KURDISH NARRATIVE

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of the Kurds' general history and briefly discuss the evolution of Kurdish nationalism in Türkiye. This will enable a detailed investigation into the central theme of the dissertation, providing insights into key elements of Kurds. It also allows for an analysis of the changing dynamics within Kurdish nationalism, helping to clarify how dominant figures have evolved over time. Furthermore, it aids in understanding the rise of leftist and secular influences within Kurdish nationalism.

The Kurds are one of the Iranian people of the Near East and live within countries belonging to different ethnicities and sects like Türkiye, Shia Iran, Arab and Sunni Iraq and Northern Syria, and Soviet Transcaucasia. After the First World War, like all the peoples in the Middle East, the Kurds and the geography they live in experienced very critical and important changes and transformations in almost every field, political system, economic, social and cultural fields. (Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 439).

Figure 2:Historical Maps of Kurdish regions



Map 0.1 Map of Kurdistan by Sherif Pasha (1919)
Redrawn based on Memorandum on the Kurd Question submitted to the Paris Peace Conference 1919, Sherif Pasha

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Map 0.1 (cont.)

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The historical word Kurdistan goes back to the reign of the last great Seljuk Sultan, Sultan Sandjar. Sultan Sancar established a region in the northeast of Hamadan, whose capital is Bahar. The location of the Kurdistan region was between Azerbaijan and Luristan, with the regions of Hamadan, Dinawar, Kirmanshah and Senna, east of the Zagros and west of the Shaharazur and Khuftiyan. Ḥamd Allah Mustawfi states that the Kurdistan region consists of 16 cantons at that time. However, the nominal scale of the Kurdistan region has changed over the centuries. In his famous book Sharaf-nama (1596), Sharaf al-Din also includes the Lurs region in Kurdistan. Turkish traveler Ewliya Celebi (1682) counts 9 cities (wilayets) for the region called Kurdistan in his Siyaḥat-name in his time. These are Erzurum, Van, Hakkari, Diyarbakr, Dja zira, Amadiya, Mawṣil, Shahrazur and Ardalan. Celebi also states it required 17 days to travel around these regions (Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 439).

The struggles between the Ottoman state and the Iranian shahs disrupted the unity of Kurdistan, which was a monolithic region before. During the Ottoman period, the eyalet of Kurdistan consisted of three liwas, Darsim, Mush and Diyarbakr, in the 17th century. In Iran, Hamadan and Luristan was detached from the region of Kurdistan, and the Ardalan region was defined as Kurdistan , with its capital Sinna in the 16th century. Today, Iran is the only state that recognizes a region called Kurdistan (Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 439).

Considering the geography where Kurds live in Türkiye, it is possible to say that they live in the entire eastern region of the country, the spreading limit in the north of the country is Divriği-Erzurum-Kars. They live especially in the eastern and southeastern of Erzurum. Kurds live on the western slopes of Mount Ararat, in Kağızman and Tuzluca districts. Their places of residence lie in a wide belt beyond the Euphrates River in the west, in the Kangal and Divriği, districts of Sivas region. It is even possible to say that some Kurdish settlements are in Cilicia, in Heymana, south of Ankara (Jwaideh, 2006: 3-4; Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 439). Especially with the rapid urbanization, significant Kurdish population lives in big cities such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. Former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's statement Istanbul is the biggest Kurdish city is not only intended to appear sympathetic to the Kurdish voters, but also refers to the massive Kurdish immigration flowing into Istanbul[13](Manşet Türkiye, 2021).

[13] (2021, https://www.mansetturkiye.com/davutoglu-en-buyuk-kurt-sehri-istanbul/62055/).

Kurds live in Iran in the north-west of the country. Primarily in western Adharbaydjan provinces, in Makū, Kotur, Shahpur districts east of Lake Riḍa'iyya (Urmiya) and in the south, Mahabad (former Sabla); the districts of Bukan, Saḳḳiz, Sardaşt, Bana, Bidjar (Garnis), Meriwan and Hawraman in the province of Ardalan, whose capital is Senna or Sanandadj, is called the province of Kurdistan; In Kirmanshah province, Ḳaşr-i Shirin. There are also isolated Kurdish groups in Khorasan, Budjnurd, and Fars and Kirman. Furhermore, as in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir of Türkiye, a large number of Kurds live in the suburbs of Tabriz and Tehran, the big cities in Iran. Much further to the east and outside Iran, there is also an important Kurdish group in Balucistan (Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 440).

Kurds live in the north and northeast of Iraq: in the city of Duhok (separated from Mawshil), Kirkul, Arbil and Suleymani regions, the districts of Zakho, Mazuri, Djer, Amadiya, Accra, Diyala, Khanakin and Mandali. Yezidis, a different faith group of Kurds, live in Sindjar and Shaykan. Kurds also live in big cities of Iraq, Baghdad and Mawshil (Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 440).

In Syria, Kurds live three major centers in the north of this country and to the south of the highway which forms a border with Türkiye. Three major centers are the northern part of the Jazira, the central Euphrates Region around Kobanî and in the west the area around Afrin (Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 440).

Former Soviet Transcaucasia is another geography in which Kurds live. Kurds live in various villages in the Aparan, Basargecar, Huktemberia, Tallinn and Ecmiadzin regions of Armenia, and the Kelbadjan, Latchin and Kubatli regions of Azerbaijan. Besides, there are Kurds living in cities of Yerevan, Baku and Georgia's Tbilisi (Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 440).

The indeterminacy of the borders of Kurdistan also makes it difficult to fully assess the region. Encyclopedia Britannica estimates Kurdistan as a region 600 miles long and 150 miles wide. Ḳamus al-ʿalam, (Istanbul 1896), taking into account only the Kurdish provinces of the Ottoman Empire at the time of writing, records this region as an area of 900 square kilometers with a width of between 100 and 200 km. In the Brill Encyclopedia of Islam, the places where Kurds live in different countries are approximately 392 square kilometers; approximately 190,000 square kilometers of this in Türkiye, 125,000 square kilometers in Iran; 65,000 square kilometers is located in Iraq and 12,000 square kilometers in Syria (before the civil war that started in 2011, of course) (Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 440).

The population of the Kurds in terms of numerical extent is quite controversial and is equally difficult to measure. There are various reasons for this. First of all, the census data is highly likely to be manipulated for political purposes, so official data should be approached with caution. Secondly, there are data from independent researchers. However, these data are far from providing precise information, since they are not applied on the axis of the same criteria regarding ethnic belonging, religion and language (Jwaideh, 2006: 9-10).

3.1. Origins and Pre-Islamic history

The classification of the Kurds as one of the Iranian nations is mainly based on linguistic and historical data. However, this situation does not prevent the existence of a complex situation regarding the ethnic elements within the Kurds. The expansion of the Kurds has been from the West of Iran to the East (Central Kurdistan), but we have to consider the presence of different ethnic elements in this eastern region before the Kurds settled (Jwaideh, 2006: 11; Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 447).

In two Sumerian inscriptions dating back to 2,000 B.C., a country called Kar-da-ka was found next to the Su people. While an English Orientalist, G. R. Driver spotted it as the south of Lake Van, an old castle called Suy in the Bidlis region is also mentioned in the book of Sharafnama. G. R. Driver states that the people of Kur-ti-e in the Azu mountains, on whom the Assyrian King Tiglath Pileser I waged the war, are today the modern Hazo (today's Kozluk in Batman province). In his book The Return of the Ten Thousand, Xenophon (401-400 B.C.) mentions a people called Karduchoi, who lived in the east of Kentrites (Bohtan, old the regional administration, comprising today's Eruh, district of Siirt; Şırnak and Şırnak's district, Cizre). Since the place (i.e. Bohtan) mentioned by Xenophon was one of the main centers where Kurds lived for many years and of course now, it creates a strong axiomatic assumption that the Karduchoi living in that region were identical with the Kurds (Bulloch & Morris, 1992: 55; Jwaideh, 2006: 12; Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 447). A single ethnic term, Kurd (plural form is Akrad) began to be used for a mixture of Iranian or Iranianized tribes during the era of the Arab conquest.

Neither Muslim sources nor the Kurds' own traditions do provide data for making a definite judgment about the origins of the Kurds. One legend claims that the Kurds descended from Persians fleeing the persecution of the tyrant Dahhak, a child-eating monster. A traveler named Morier refers to a festival called Ayd-i Kurdi (The Kurd Festival)

at Damawand, which celebrates liberation from Dahhak's persecution (McDowall, 2007: 4; Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 449). Another narrative that can be perceived as the effect of their conversion to Islam and a search for prestige is that Kurds claim to be descended from Arabs. Accordingly, their ancestor is Rabia b. Nizar b. Ma'add (according to some, Mu'ar b. Nizar), after the feuds with the Ghassanids, they separated from their Arab ancestors and retreated to the mountains, mingled with foreigners, and forgot their mother tongue. In the following periods, the names of the tribes began to be explained with the places they lived. Sharaf-nama claims that all the Kurdish tribes (Badjnawi and Bokhti tribes) came from the Badjan and Bokht regions. According to another legend, the Kurds were once divided into two branches as Milan and Zilan. Milan is of Arab origin, Zilan is of eastern origin and an inferior race. A similar story suggests that they are descended from the children of King Salamon's slave daughters, whose master was the devil named Jasad, who was driven into the mountains by the angry king. Another legend claims that Sarah[14], wife of the Prophet Abraham, was a Kurd from Harran, thus confirming that Kurdish identity was within the lines of monotheistic religions (Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 449).

3.2. The Islamic period up to Ottoman Period

What Arabs wrote about Kurds was usually found in books under such titles as Zawzan, Khilat, Arminiya, Adharbaydjan, Dji bal, Fars. Masudi (942) and Istakhri (952) are the two authors who gave systematic information about the Kurds for the first time. These authors list the main Kurdish tribes according to the geography they live in, as if this tribe lives here and there (Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 450).

The Kurds, who lived under the rule of the Sassanids in the pre-Islamic period, had adopted Zoroastrianism (Magusism) as their religion. In the time of Caliph Umar, when the Islamic armies started the conquest movement in Iran and Iraq, the Kurds fought against these armies together with the Sassanids. Utba b. Ferkad al-Sülemî captured Nineva in Mosul in 64, Islamic armies turned to Merc, Banhezra, Baezra, Hitbun, Dasin, Karda, Bazebda and other centers of Mosul, and these regions were conquered. Muslims also conquered the regions of Shahrizor and Samgan. When the conquest of Ahvaz was carried out by Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, most of the region where Kurds lived was captured by Muslims during the time

[14] Sadık, a member of the Süleyman Community whom I interviewed, conveyed that Sarah (Sare), of Kurdish origin, signifies "cold" in the Kurdish language.

of Caliph Umar. In the process of these conquests, most of the Kurds were left in the centers where they lived with the agreements, they were not displaced. İstahr, Sabur, Erdeşirhurre, Darabcird and Errecan in the Persian region, where the majority of the population is Kurds were conquered during the reign of Caliph Uthman. As mother of the last caliph of the Umayyads, Marwan II was enslaved women concubine of Kurdish origin, the ties of the Kurds with the state became stronger and the spread of Islam among the Kurds accelerated (Jwaideh, 2006: 14-15; Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 450, Eppel, 2014: 40-41; Akbaş, 2019: 116).

During the Abbasid period, the people who lived in the region between Shahrizor, Cibal, Erbil and Hamadan, and were almost entirely Kurds who accepted Islam. Shahruzor and Mosul became separate province in the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (786–809) through some administrative regulations in Kurdish region. During the Abbasid period, the Kurds sometimes rebelled on their own, and they supported some rebellions. However, there were no widespread, systematic rebellions with the intense participation of Kurds. On the contrary, Abbasid caliphs wanted to take advantage of the Kurds to break the power of the Turks in the army by increasing the number of soldiers of Kurdish origin. During the reign of Buyid, Izz al-Dawla and ʿAḍud al-Dawla took very harsh measures against the Kurds, especially in Hakkari and its surroundings. The Marwanid period is important for the Kurds. During the Marwanid period, they broke the influence of the local elements of the region, the Assyrians and Armenians, as well as the Arabs, and laid the groundwork for the Kurdishization of the region. Sharaf-Han introduces the Marwanids as the rulers of Diyarbekir and al-Jazeera and states that they ruled for ninety-one years. When the Seljuks came to Iran, their relations with the Kurds began. Later, the Kurds cooperated with the Seljuks rather than the Buyid. They fought together with the Seljuks in the defeat of the Emperor Romanus IV at Malazgird. (Bulloch & Morris, 1992: 63; Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 450, Eppel, 2014: 42-43; Akbaş, 2019: 117).

After the collapse of the Great Seljuks, a significant part of the region where the Kurds lived was dominated by the Zengis (1127-1233). Although there were conflicts between the Zengids and the Kurds, after a while, the Kurds became an element of the Zengi army and state, as they were recruited by the Zengids. Salah al-Din, who founded the Ayyubid dynasty and saved Jerusalem from the occupation of the Crusaders in (1187), was one of the important statesmen and commanders of the Zengids. The Ayyubids, especially with their armies consisting of Kurds and Turkmens, had great success against the Crusaders. However, there was a great internal struggle between Kurds and Turkomans in this period,

beginning around Nusaybin spread to Mosul, Diyarbekir, Ahlat, Syria, Shahrizor and Azerbaijan (Bulloch & Morris, 1992: 65-68; Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 454-455, Eppel, 2014: 44; Akbaş, 2019: 117).

In the 13th century the Kurds regions were also occupied by the Mongols, as in other places. The Mongols, who destroyed the settlements and burned everything, committed great massacres in Hakkari, Mosul, Erbil, Mardin, Diyarbekir and Ahlat. Later, many Kurds were killed during the reign of Ilkhanid Ruler Ghazan Khan. On the other hand, the Kurds living in the Persian region formed an alliance with the Mongols and joined the wars with them. The Ilkhans army (1306), which invaded Gîlan during the reign of Öljaitü, was largely composed of Kurds. While some of the Kurds fleeing the Mongol raids took refuge in the foothills of the Taurus Mountains, some of them went to Algeria via Syria and Egypt. Those who remained in their regions lived under the Mongol rule until 1390. Timur captured important Kurdish centers such as Ahlat, Van, Adilcevaz, Mardin, Erbil and Mosul in 1394 (Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 455, Akbaş, 2019: 117).

In the first half of the 15th century, they came under the rule of two Turkoman confederations that were fighting each other. One of these confederations is the Qaraqoyunlu. The center of the state was Erciş and it ruled in eastern Anatolia, Iran and Iraq. The other confederation is the Aqqoyunlu (the Bayandur dynasty). The principal center was Diyarbakir. Since Kurds established friendly relations with the Qaraqoyunlu for a long time, they faced great pressure from the Akkoyunlus who were trying to seize the dominance in the region (Bois, Minorsky and MacKenzie, 2012: 457, Akbaş, 2019: 117-118).

3.3. Ottoman Period: Up to 1920

The Kurds came under Ottoman rule after the campaigns against the Safavids during the reign of Yavuz Sultan Selim. These expeditions against the Safavids formed an alliance between the Ottoman Empire and the Kurdish tribes, and then the region came under Ottoman rule. In the early 16th century, Ismail declared himself shah and became a part of the struggle for dominance in the region by terminating dominance of the Aqqoyunlu in the region. The Kurdish lords, who survived the Aqqoyunlu oppression, also planned to regain their effectiveness, by being subject to Shah Ismail. For this reason, twelve Kurdish chiefs went to Tabriz to present themselves to pay homage. However, Shah Ismail imprisoned them and appointed Shiite rulers in their stead governors. This is related to Shah Ismail's a zealous

extreme sectarian conservatism because he is an ardent supporter of the Shiite Sect. Shah Ismail was also poet using the pen-name Khaṭai (the wrongful in Persian) contributed greatly to propagation of Shi'i doctrine. This policy of Shah Ismail led the Kurdish emirates to ally themselves with the Ottomans. In fact, some of the Shiites believed that Yavuz Sultan Selim's campaign against the Safavids took place at the call of the Kurds. Henceforth, for about three centuries Kurdish region became the stage for the struggle between the Ottoman Sultans and the Shahs of Persia (Eppel, 2014: 45; Özcoşar, 2019: 118).

Yavuz Sultan Selim followed a policy aimed at attracting the Sunni Kurds in the region against Shah Ismail, who aimed to advance towards the west. In the Battle of Çaldıran in 1514, some Kurds fought on the side of the Ottomans. The possibility of continuing the Safavid threat in the region and the importance of the Kurds acting together with the Ottomans, Yavuz Sultan Selim commissioned İdris-i Bitlisî to persuade the Kurdish chiefs to join the Ottomans upon his return from Tabriz (Tahiri, 2007: 26; Eppel, 2014: 45; Özcoşar, 2019: 118).

With his activities and initiatives, İdris-i Bitlisî ensured the loyalty of Kurdish chiefs to the Ottoman States and taking some lands from the Safavids at the same time. His personal visit to all Kurdish chiefs won 25 of them over to Ottoman Empire. These activities of İdris Bitlis, in a way, created a mutual benefit between the Ottomans and the Kurdish chiefs. The intervention of the Ottoman administration in the traditional administrative structure of the Kurds could cause these emirates to side with the Safavids. On the other hand, not accepting the Ottoman rule meant being vulnerable to the Safavid threat for the Kurds. Thus, the Ottomans gained a buffer zone against the Safavid threat in the east, Kurd's regions came under a feudal organization securing the predominance of the Kurd nobility (Özcoşar, 2019: 118).

The Ottoman State took into account the local political structure and experience of the region while creating its own administration. As mentioned before, this is part of the beneficial symbiotic and flexible relationship between Istanbul and the Kurdish aristocracy. The distance of the Kurdistan region from the center of the sultanate, the harsh topography of the Kurdistan region, and the limited transportation and communication technologies forced the Ottomans to accept such an administrative structure. The Kurdish emirates were in the form of tribal confederations ruled by local dynasties and maintaining their own internal order. Both the military power and the bureaucratic structure were provided by local resources. The judicial system was established by assigning the authority of kadı to mullahs of tribes (who got traditional education in Islamic theology and sharia law). The dynasty

family is called Mir (derived from the Arabic, an aristocratic title Emir 'general, prince'). Mirs do not have full authority over the tribes. Rather, they provided the check and balance between the tribes. This emirate structure shows the characteristics of a phase between the tribe and the simple state structure. It can also be mentioned that there is a hierarchy formed over time within the local dynasties in the Kurdish emirates. As it is written in the Sharafname, some of these emirates, although not at the level of declaration of independence and sultanate, are strong enough to have coinage issued in their own names and to have sermons (khutbah) delivered in their names on the minbars (Özcoşar, 2019: 119).

The Ottoman empire started a process of centralization reform, the Tanzimat, especially after Mahmud II's ascension to the throne in the early nineteenth century. Indirect administration through privileged local administrators has now been replaced by bureaucrats appointed from the center. Apart from that, the landholding model was changed, new taxes were introduced and military service became a compulsory duty. The Kurdish region was also affected by these regulations. Within the scope of these regulations, the privileges of the emirates were terminated. After the privileges of the emirs were terminated, the province of Kurdistan was established in 1847 in order to establish the central authority. Thus, for the first time in the Ottoman administrative system, the name of a province became Kurdistan (Natali, 2005: 11; Taşpınar, 2005: 15; Ateş, 2021: 75; Özcoşar, 2019: 119)

Eppel (2008: 240) argues that the abolition of the privileges of the Kurdish emirates indirectly affected a strong Kurdish nationalism and the potential of the Kurds to establish a nation-state after the First World War.

> *The elimination of the Kurdish emirates, with their feudal characteristics, wiped out any potential nuclei for the growth of a force with ambitions to dominate Kurdistan, which – in order to adapt itself to modern political conditions and discourse – would have adopted Kurdish nationalist discourse and arguments. The existence of such a force could have aroused the imaginings of the Kurdish nation and attracted the support of educated, westernized Kurds within and outside Kurdistan, and accordingly could have become a nucleus for Kurdish statehood and nationalism after the First World War.*

The elimination of the Kurdish emirates increased the tendency of Kurdish tribes to act independently, leading to a period called time of the tribes in the region. Since the central authority could not be established despite the abolition of the emirates, tribes had the struggles both among themselves and with the central powers for regional dominance. In

addition to these turmoil, Russia began to be influential in the region in the 19th century and tried to establish contact with Armenians and Kurds in order to strengthen and maintain this influence. This situation forced the Ottoman Empire to implement new policies regarding Kurdish tribes.

During the reign of Abdulhamid II, cooperation between the Kurds and the central government was developed. As the Ottoman state weakened, it became the focus of international goals, and international powers saw the Kurds as a useful tool. In the face of these international policies towards the Kurds, one of the important steps Abdulhamid II took was to establish the Hamidiye Light Cavalry Regiments (Hamidiye Hafif Süvari Alayları) among Kurdish tribes between 1890 and 1892. Inspired by Russia's Cossacks, the Hamidiye Light Cavalry Regiments were named in honor of the sultan, and his brother-in-law became their commander. The Hamidiye Regiments quickly demonstrated their influence, and the tribes, who referred to Abdulhamid II as the 'father of the Kurds' (bavê Kurdan), became the sultan's most loyal allies in the empire. (Yayman, 2011: 31; Bajalan, 2021: 120; Bozarslan & Güneş, 2021: 586).

A traditional internal law and conflict solution mechanism among the Kurds focuses feuds among themselves, the main driving force and reason for existence of this mechanism is feuds between these tribes and the conflicts they result from (James, 2021: 29)

War and its resolution are two sides of the same coin. Therefore, when tribes are at war with each other, they must somehow compromise. One of these solutions is to ask for mercy (aman) and displaying submission to the victorious side by the defeated one. In the face of threats and dangers from outside, alliances were also seen among Kurdish tribes. Besides, very close friendships and sincere neighborly relations between the tribes have also existed in the historical process (James, 2021: 29).

Two main tribal values can explain the cycle of tribal warfare among the Kurds. These are solidarity within the tribe and hospitality, generosity and a sense of responsibility for foreigners. Solidarity (asabiyya, esprit de corps), refers to the participation of all members in the tit for tat. On Determined by unwritten rules, if a tribe shows disrespect to a foreigner, who is a guest and under responsibility of another tribe, this is also a cause of conflict. These principles are in the form of a system of social and political games and are of a complex nature. These principles, as well as kinship and blood ties, are principles that have symbolic meaning and play an important role in maintaining the existing structure of social organizations. In the same way, these unwritten rules also serve other functions such

as a shield against external interventions, guaranteeing the autonomy of the tribes, and drawing the distances and boundaries between the tribes (James, 2021: 29)

The Kurds played an important role in the constitutional struggle. Two Kurds (Dr Abdullah Cevdet and Dr Ishak Sükuti) were among the founders of the Ittihad-i Osmani Society, which was founded in particular on the promotion of Ottomanism (İttihad-ı Anasır, the unity of ethnic and religious subjects) and then evolved to the Committee of Progress (Committee for Union and Progress, CUP). When the Constitutionalist movement became popular and powerful, two more important Kurds (Sheikh Abdülkadir Efendi and Mehmed Serif Pasha) joined this movement and played important roles. This constitutionalist struggle resulted in Sultan Abdulhamid II's re-implementation of the constitution, call elections for parliament in 1908 by some soldiers, who were affiliated with the CUP. The Sultan himself remained on the throne until 1909, after him, the autocracy of the empire was broken until its collapse, and the succeeding sultan (Mehmed V) acted only as a ceremonial figure (Jwaideh, 2006: 102-107; Tahiri, 2007: 43; Yayman, 2011: 32; Kutlay, 2012: 109-111; Erdem, 2020b: 369; Bajalan, 2021: 114).

The Constitutional Era was also a critical period for the development of the Kurdish question. Kurdish leaders carried out important activities such as organizing, lobbying and provoking for Kurdish rights in the environment of freedom and mobility that followed the revolution. During this period, an increasingly organized and active Kurdish movement emerged. However, Kurdish activists were basically divided into two poles. At one pole, there were loyalists who were trying to advance Kurdish interests within the framework of a constitutional Ottoman Empire and were loyal to the Ottoman state. At the other pole, there were nationalists who tried to separate the Kurdish element from the crumbling empire and act independently (Bajalan, 2021: 115).

The declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy excited the Kurdish intellectuals, as did many Ottoman intellectuals, and they gladly welcomed the end of the Hamidian regime, which they called the era of oppression (devr-i istibdad). Said Nursi, who would be known as the founder of the Nurculuk movement during the republican period, compared the new regime to a miracle. Dr. Abdullah Cevdet defined the revolution as a festival of freedom and called on everyone to embrace each other and celebrate this festival. Furthermore, some Kurds occupied various high-level positions during the Constitutional Monarchy period. Mehmed Serif Pasha became CUP's Pangaltı branch president, Sheikh Abdulkadir entered to the Ottoman parliament's upper house (Bajalan, 2021: 115).

In order to understand how constitutionalism was perceived from the eyes of a religious Kurdish scholar, it would be useful to look at Said Nursi's Address to Freedom speech, which he delivered just after the declaration of constitutional era:

> *O Freedom! I convey these glad tidings to you, that if you make the Shariah, which is life itself, the source of life, and if you grow in that paradise, this oppressed nation will progress a thousand times further than in former times, if that is what it takes you as its guide in all matters and does not besmirch you through harbouring personal enmity and thoughts of revenge. Freedom has exhumed us from the grave of desolation and despotism, and summoned us to the paradise of unity and love of nation.*
>
> *... the doors of a suffering free paradise of progress and civilization have been opened to us... the Constitution, which is in accordance with the Shariah, is the introduction to the sovereignty of the nation and invites us to enter like the treasury-guard of Paradise. O my oppressed compatriots! Let us go and enter!* (Vahide, 2019: 68).

The fact that the Constitutional Monarchy regime was welcomed among the Kurds and that the Kurds remained in various positions in this regime and participated in the administration did not prevent the interest in the Kurdish issue. Especially Istanbul, where approximately 30,000 Kurds lived, became the focal point of the new Kurdish activism. In the first year of the constitutional rule, some newspapers and journals of Kurdish-origin began to be published in the capital of the empire. These are Kurdistan (Kurdistan), Shark and Kurdistan (The East and Kurdistan) and Said-i Kurdi's [15] Marifet and Ittihad-ı Akrad (The Skills and Unity of the Kurds). However, the most important development regarding the Kurdish issue in this process was the establishment of a society in 1908. Although it has been active for less than a year, this society, which is called the Kurdish Society for Solidarity and Progress (Kurd Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti, KTTC), has published two newspapers Kürd (The Kurd) and Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi (The Kurdish Mutual Aid and Progress Gazette), and established various connections in the Kurdish regions of the Ottoman Empire (Kutlay, 2012: 113; Bajalan, 2021: 116).

[15] Said-i Nursi divides his life into two part, as The Old Said and The New Said. He calls the period of the Second Constitutional Monarchy, when he was involved in politics as the Old Said, and the second period, in which he lived an apolitical and reclusive life and focused only on writing, as the New Said. He was also known as Kurdish Said in his first period, the Old Said.

Certain issues come to the fore in the publications in these newspapers. First of all, education is frequently emphasized, it is recommended to open new schools and send children to these schools for science. In these publications, Said-i Kurdi emphasizes that education should be carried out on two axes, in addition to religious sciences, positive sciences should be taught for civilization and progress. His personal project, Madrasatu'l Zahra, is the name of the university-level project that plan to teach Islamic sciences and natural and positive sciences together in Kurdish region. In addition to education, articles focusing on social and economic development were also appeared in the publications of the KTTC. It was stated that in order to get rid of the poverty and disorder among Kurdish tribes, conducting public works, settlement of nomadic tribes and benefiting from the opportunities of Mesopotamia were important (Bajalan, 2021: 116).

However, anti-constitutionalist tendencies and reactions were also seen in some units of the KTTC locally as in Diyarbakir and Bitlis branch. In this respect, the KTTC embodied two different factions of the burgeoning Kurdish movement, the constitutionalist movement in Istanbul and the anti-constitutionalist movement in the countryside (provinces) (Bajalan, 2021: 117).

The period between 1908 and 1909, it can be said that is the most important active and optimistic period of the Kurdish movement in Istanbul. Because subsequently the oppressive regime of the Constitutional Monarchy began, the international crisis and increasing political conflict caused a change in the mood for the Kurds, as it did for many ethnic groups. Some restrictions were imposed on national clubs by prohibiting them from getting involved in political matters (Bajalan, 2021: 117).

However, Kurdish activities continued in Istanbul, albeit at a low level. The most important is The Kurdish Society for the Propagation of Education (Kurd Neshr-i Maarif Society) founded by some Kurdish intellectuals and politicians, including Said-i Kurdi and Dr.Abdullah Cevdet. This society aimed to promote education among the Kurds, whom they called out of all the sons of the [Ottoman] homeland, had been the most deprived of the blessings of education. For this reason, a model school named Kurd Meshrutiyet Mektebi (The Kurdish Constitutional School) was established in Istanbul (Bajalan, 2021: 118).

Kurdish activism in the capital continued with young people, different cadres and new names. This new generation of young people founded the Kurdish Students' 'Hope' Society (Kürd Talebe 'Hêvî' Cemiyeti, Hêvî) in 1912. Most of its founders were students studying at the Agricultural School in Istanbul. This association, which received permission from the government, also provided the official participation of about 200 members. This

association continued its activities actively until the fall of 1914, when the First World War was declared, and young people were drafted into the military. During its active period, the society published three magazines: Rojê Kurd (Kurdish Day), Hetawê Kurd (Kurdish Sun) and Yekbûn (Unity). It also distributed the Baghdad-based newspaper Bangê Kurd (Kurdish Call), a legal advice center for the poor of Istanbul, and a partnership among Kurdish students studying in Lausanne (Bajalan, 2021: 119; Kutlay, 2012: 113; Aras, 2013: 44; Erdem, 2020b: 370).

There were some differences between Hêvî and his predecessors, it can be said that Hevi was more radical than his predecessors. First of all, they started discussions in different fields than before, such as land reform, women's rights and alphabet reform. In addition, the association stated that Kurdish youth have a great responsibility in the progress, awareness and development of the Kurdish society and described this as the burden of the Kurdish youth. However, for these young generation activists, the social, economic and educational development aspects of the Kurdish question were also prior to political and identity issues. At least publicly, they stayed loyal to the continuation of Ottoman politics. As one article suggests, their pure and lofty intention was to prepare Kurdish society for service and self-sacrifice to the supreme caliphate and the exalted sultanate (Bajalan, 2021: 120; Cagaptay, 2006: 19).

In the CUP regime, while Kurdish activism continued in this way in Istanbul, the unrest in the Kurdish regions continued to increase. The Hamidiye Regiments, previously founded by Abdulhamit II, were reorganized in 1910 and renamed as 'Tribal Light Cavalry Regiments' (Aşiret Hafif Süvari Alayları). There was a disagreement between the Armenians and the Kurds in that region regarding land issues, and the state was not taking steps to satisfy the Kurds in this direction. A tribal chief wrote a letter to Said Nursi in the context of this issue, saying the Armenians became lords and they remained wretched. The military defeat in the Balkans stimulated European interest in the Armenian question and in February 1914 led to Ottoman submission to the so-called six provinces (vilayat-ı sitte) European rule: Van, Erzurum, Mamuretülaziz, Bitlis, Diyarbakır and Sivas, together with the province of Trabzon. While the Young Turks' administration and tax policies led to more discontents among Kurdish tribes, (in this process, there were rebellion attempts of the Bedirhan family in particular), the land losses and defeat of Ottoman were attributed to the *Godlessness* (Allahsız) of the Young Turks (Taşpınar, 2005: 73; Bajalan, 2021: 120).

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 and the Ottoman entry into the war with Germany had a dramatic effect on the course of both the Kurdish society and the Kurdish

movement. With the First World War, the Kurdish region became the battlefield of the Ottoman Empire and Tsarist Russia. The Ottoman Minister of War Enver Pasha launched a huge attack on the Russian Caucasus region, but this attack resulted in a great disaster in Sarıkamış due to the seasonal conditions. The Ottoman defeat in the Kurdish geography provided an important opportunity for Russia to increase its influence in this region. During the following year, Russian forces advanced deep into Ottoman Kurdistan. By early 1916, they had captured a large part of Ottoman territory, including the cities of Van and Erzurum. In February 1916, the Russians also took the strategically important town of Bitlis (Jwaideh, 2006: 125-128; Bajalan, 2021: 123).

The Kurds were not affected just because the war was on their land, they also fought on the fronts of the war as part of the Ottoman army, especially in the Third and Fourth Armies as part of the Ottoman Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Army. Kurdish tribal chiefs provided irregular troops against both the Russians in the east and the British in Mesopotamia. The cost for the Kurds has been enormous. Muhammad Zeki Bey, a military historian and a former Ottoman officer, estimated about 300.000 Kurds lost their lives in that war (Bajalan, 2021: 123; Aras, 2013: 45).

With the surrender of the Ottoman state and the collapse of the CUP government, the Kurdish political movement was mobilized again. Especially after the war, as before the war, Istanbul became the center of this mobilization. In 1918, prominent Kurdish intellectuals and politicians founded an organization called the Society for the Betterment of Kurdistan (Kurdistan Teali Society, KTC) (Hakan, 2013: 90; Bajalan, 2021: 126).

When the KTTC was established, there was an atmosphere of excitement, motivation and freedom brought by the new constitutional regime; but the KTC emerged in the atmosphere of a major military defeat and the collapse of Empire. In addition, at that time, both the capitalist Western world (Wilsonian) and the communist Bolshevik regime (Leninist) introduced the principle of national self-determination, which affected the actions and thoughts in the post-war solution process in Paris. Moreover, US President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points principles were clearly a discourse about the nations living in the Ottoman Empire and promised an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development for the communities living in these lands (Hakan, 2013: 44-45; Bajalan, 2021: 126).

In this period, when there was a historical opportunity for many stateless nations living in empires, the KTC did not have a clear and definite stance on Kurdish autonomy. The expression of commitment to defend the general interests of the Kurds in the founding

text of the organization was changed to 'the Kurdish nation's political, economic and social interests and historical and racial/ethnic rights'. In 1919, the leaders of the organization tried to establish warm relations with the British authorities with the desire to request for self-government on a certain geography, their appeal to the British Government is a request for the government's benevolent commitment to safeguard their rights and interests. They seek assistance on their journey towards civilization and progress (Bajalan, 2021: 126).

Some elements within the KTC wanted to remain loyal to the Ottoman state. In addition, the President of the KTC Sheikh Abdulkadir, continued to play an active role in Ottoman politics by serving as the Chairman of the State Council between March and May 1919. He openly stated that the Kurds remained loyal to the sultan and only demanded a limited kind of provincial autonomy. However, there was also a serious demand for full independence within the KTC. Especially the young members demanded a decision to declare the independence of 'Kurdistan' and came into conflict with Sheikh Abdulkadir, who was a pro-state loyalist. This conflict and the lack of a common demand resulted in leaving of the supporters of a more nationalist policy from the KTC and establishing a new organization: the Kurdish Society of Social Organization (Kurd Teskilat-i Içtimaiye Cemiyeti, KTIC) (Hakan, 2013: 102; Erdem, 2020b: 374; Bajalan, 2021: 126-127).

Despite the split among Kurdish activists regarding limited provincial autonomy and complete independence, Kurdish activists in Istanbul continued to lobby the Great Powers for recognition of their national rights. Kurdish activists specifically aimed to gain the support of Great Britain, which emerged as the leading imperial power in the Middle East after the end of the war. These lobbying activities included petitioning British representatives in the Ottoman capital and also attempting to be represented at the Paris Peace Talks. For this purpose, Mehmed Şerif Pasha was commissioned by the KTC to represent Kurdish interests in Europe and to work for this purpose. As the chief diplomat of the KTC, he put forward Kurdish territorial claims in a 1919 pamphlet entitled *Memorandum sur les revendications du peuple kurde (Memorandum on the demands of the Kurdish people)* and tried to persuade the British that the Kurds would act in their interests. He started negotiations with the Armenian delegation, which resulted in an agreement on the border between Kurdistan and Armenia in 1919 (Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997: 86; Kutlay; 2012: 167-168; Hakan, 2013: 99-101; Bajalan, 2021: 127).

These lobbying activities of the Kurds yielded results. the Treaty of Sèvres, signed by the Ottomans in 1920, contained provisions on how the future of the Kurdish region would be shaped. The self-rule envisaged in the Treaty of Sèvres was of a limited nature due

to the initiative and will of Britain, France and Italy. Besides, the geographical scale covered by Kurdistan was not as Kurdish nationalists expected. Moreover, the provinces of Erzurum, Van and Bitlis, which were partly or wholly Kurdish, were also included in the borders of a planned Armenian State. Dersim, where the Alevi Zazas lived intensely, was also left to the Turkish side. In addition, Articles 62 and 64 did not offer a final solution regarding the Kurdish areas in the British-controlled Mosul province, using vague terms (Jwaideh, 2006: 131-132; Bajalan, 2021: 128).

Although the form of Kurdish self-government envisaged in Sèvres was limited and somewhat at the mercy of the three states, it actually constituted the worldwide acceptance and record that the Kurds were at least a community with the potential for self-government. However, Kurdish activists at that time could not even secure and protect this limited form of autonomy. It is claimed that the reason for not securing Kurdish independence after the First World War, regardless of its scale, is the divisions among the Kurds. Particularly, rivalry between groups and factionalism prevented Kurdish nationalism from demanding the assurance of independence as a single voice and force. There have also been problems in the fact that the Kurdish representatives were not fully and seriously addressed by the European powers reshaping the world map. Representatives have not been the only voice in terms of both their demands and the degree of their representative position and have not been able to inspire confidence in the other party. A British official highlighted this aspect, referring to it as the sense of coherent public opinion. The official pointed out that a small number of educated Kurds residing outside of Kurdistan, who entertain separatist ideas, are prone to overstating their own influence and significance (Bajalan, 2021: 128).

Besides the divisions between Kurdish groups, one of the reasons preventing a separate Kurdish state is the start of a resistance movement in Anatolia. Some military members and former CUP officials started a resistance against the partition of Anatolia, including Greece's efforts to seize Izmir and its inner regions and the idea of establishment of an Armenian state. This resistance later united under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal. This movement, which did not recognize the Istanbul government that signed the Treaty of Sèvres, established a government resided in Ankara, and took control of the Kurdish regions as part of that resistance and independent movement (Bajalan, 2021: 128-129).

This resistance movement in Anatolia actually used Ottomanist political discourse and practices. They declared to the public and the public that their goal was to save the caliphate and the Islamic country from enemy and Christian occupation. In addition to this religious motivation, another discourse that concerns the east and the Kurds is the strong

statement that they would not allow the establishment of a Christian Armenian state in Muslim Kurdish lands. In this respect, Kemalist discourse actually took advantage of the fears of the Kurds about Armenian sovereignty, and those who wanted an independent Kurdish state were denounced as those who tried to *turn Kurdistan into Armenia* (Karabekir's statement) in the official discourse. Major Edward Noel expressed that fact in another way with the expression of frantic efforts to win over the Kurds to the nationalist cause by pan Islamic and anti-Christian propaganda (Hakan, 2013: 123; White, 2013: 30; Bajalan, 2021: 129).

One of the factors that weakened the influence of Kurdish nationalists after the First World War is their loss of Russia. After Russia withdrew from the First World War, the new Bolshevik government abandoned the anti-Türkiye policy of Tsarist Russia for centuries. This new policy greatly facilitated the control of the Turkish liberation movement in the Kurdish regions. The existence of a Russia that would support the Kurds in those difficult conditions would undoubtedly have severe consequences for the Turks. Thus, the Kurdish nationalists lost a strong potential supporter between 1918-1923. Another reason that weakened the hand of the Kurdish nationalists was that Great Britain was not very interested in the establishment of a Kurdish state. The main concern of Great Britain at that time was its interests in the Middle East and its desire for control over the provinces of Baghdad and Basra (Bajalan, 2021: 130).

The recognition that the Istanbul-based government was weak, and the gaining both power and diplomatic recognition, as the Ankara government defeated both Armenia (1920) and Greece (1920–1922), led Britain to take the Ankara government more seriously. As part of a broader strategy to isolate Russia, Britain now sat down with the Ankara government, and in October 1922, the Mudanya Armistice was signed, and new negotiations were started. As a result of these negotiations, the Treaty of Lausanne was signed in July 1923. Sèvres was superseded by the Treaty of Lausanne between the Kemalist government in Ankara and Great Britain. The result was disastrous for Kurdish nationalists. The Kurds were not even mentioned as a separate ethnic community, let alone the Kurdish self-rule. Without reference to the name of any ethnic community, Türkiye has done a commitment to assure full and complete protection of life and liberty to all inhabitants of Turkey without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race or religion (Cagaptay, 2006: 100-101; Tahiri, 2007: 52; Bajalan, 2021: 131).

A provision similar to the mentioned commitment as follows:

> *No restrictions shall be imposed on the free use by any Turkish national of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, religion, in the press, or in publications of any kind or at public meetings. Notwithstanding the existence of the official language, adequate facilities shall be given to Turkish nationals of non-Turkish speech for the oral use of their own language before the Courts* (Hurewitz, 1979: 122).

While the founders of the new regime were giving blank checks to the Kurds during and early after the War of Independence, they later followed a different policy (Bulloch & Morris, 1992: 172; Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997: 96-97; Natali, 2005: 71; Aras, 2013: 46). For example, the following speech of Mustafa Kemal in this process is not even remotely related to the next developments.

> *In accordance with our constitution, a kind of local autonomy is to be granted. Hence, provinces inhabited by the Kurds will rule themselves autonomously . . . The Grand National Assembly of Turkey is composed of the deputies of both Kurds and Turks and these two peoples have unified their interests and fates* (Yüksel, 2021: 209).

Therefore, it is not possible to say that these commitments were fully fulfilled after the agreement. In a way, the new republic gave up on these commitments. The tension between the Kurds and the new regime was taken to another level with the abolition of the caliphate in 1924, which served as a symbolic link between the Kurds and the Turks. On the other hand, England, which was the addressee of the commitments made in Lausanne, was not in a position to monitor and control the process, its priority was Mosul (Taşpınar, 2005: 69; Bajalan, 2021: 132).

Following a nationalist discourse and policy and the destruction of the symbolic link between Kurds and Turks with the abolition of the Caliphate brought along a series of Kurdish rebellions between 1924 and 1938. Mete Tuncay, an academician, describes this period as a civil war-like situation in the Kurdish regions. The three most important of these rebellions are the 1925 Sheikh Said Revolt, the 1927–30 Ağrı Revolts and the 'pacification' of the Dersim region in 1936–8 (Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997: 98-99; Natali, 2005: 78-79; Taşpınar, 2005: 77-82; Yayman, 2011: 38-39; Yüksel, 2021: 210). These rebellions and uprisings are complex situations where tribal leaders, holding religious identities at the same time such as Sufi order leadership, emerge as pivotal figures.

Civata Azadi Kurd (Society for Kurdish Freedom) played an important role in the preparation process of the Sheikh Said Revolt. This society was founded in 1923 by urban elites, wealthy aristocrats, intellectuals, some religious opinion leaders and former soldiers in Istanbul. The Sheikh Said Rebellion was overcome within two months and Sheikh Said and other leaders were executed in Diyarbakir in June 1925. As a result of this revolt, many Kurds fled to the Syrian Jazeera, and many Kurds were settled in Turkish regions in the west (Jwaideh, 2006: 203-207; Yüksel, 2021: 210; Kutlay; 2012: 225; Aras, 2013: 46-49).

There are different opinions about whether this rebellion was a rebellion with Islamic dynamics against the abolition of the caliphate or a rebellion that occurred with the reflex of Kurdish nationalism for independence (Kutlay, 2012: 244-245). Robert Olson (2013: 152) argues that the nationalist factors are more important than religious elements and dynamics in this rebellion. Kurdish academic Hamit Bozarslan also states that nationalist factors come to the fore more than religious ones (Olson, 2000: 70). Martin van Bruinessen (1992) describes the dynamics of this rebellion as not solely religious or purely nationalist. According to him, both Shaikh Said and the Azadi (nationalist) leaders shared the common goal of establishing an independent Kurdistan. While the motivations of the ordinary members were diverse, there is a suggestion that the religious factor may have played a more prominent role among them. In essence, the rebellion is characterized by a complex interplay of religious and nationalist elements, with leaders aiming for an independent Kurdistan and the rank and file possibly being more influenced by religious considerations. When we look at the studies written on this revolt in Türkiye, we see that the Kemalist and nationalist sections highlight the Islamic/religious aspect of this revolt. One of them, the secular, leftist-Kemalist Uğur Mumcu's (2018) book on this subject is called *Kurdish-Islamic Uprising* (*Kürt-İslam Ayaklanması*). Yaşar Kalafat (1992: 321), who drew a more Turkish nationalist profile, also said that this rebellion had a religious aspect, aimed to establish a caliphate, he describes the rebellion as backward looking, anti-democratic, anti-republican, theocratic, anti-Atatürk, anti-revolutionary movement.

Considering the approach to this revolt among Kurdish nationalists, there are difference between Islamist Kurds and secular nationalist Kurds. Islamist Kurds state that this revolt is essentially a revolt with religious motives. While talking about Sheikh Said, they emphasize Sheikh Said's religious and Muslim identity by using the epithet of Hazret (Excellence), which is used for prophets and important religious figures. For example, the approach of The Free Cause Party (Hür Dava Parti, abbreviated as HUDA PAR) as follows: "*Sheikh Said Efendi was a God-fearing scholar who prayed 5 times a day and devoted his*

life to Islam"; "*Sheikh Said believed that it was obligatory for Muslims to stand up against oppression on behalf of Muslims*"; "*The color of Sheikh Said Efendi's resurrection was Islam. The Kıyam (Revolt) was a reaction to the Kemalist system's removal of Islamic values from society and the removal of Islam as the state's religion*[16]" (İlkehaber, 2018). On the other hand, secular nationalist and left-wing Kurds state that this revolt was made for the Kurdish people, and there was no demand for sharia and religious system. In a press release in 2020 titled "*We respectfully commemorate Sheikh Said and his 47 friends: Their burial places must be announced*!", The Peoples' Democratic Party (Turkish: Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP) notes that since the day of their execution, Sheikh Said and his friends have been told very differently to the public in official history books and political discourses, and their struggle for rights and justice for the Kurdish people is presented as a rebellion initiated with the demand for sharia[17] (HDP, 2020).

The Kurdish nationalist Khoybun organization, established in Syria, orchestrated the Ağrı rebellions. These uprisings commenced on the border between Türkiye and Iran, leading to coordinated operations by both countries to quell the rebellions. İsmet İnönü characterized this uprising as a Kurdistan movement (Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997: 111; Jwaideh, 2006: 211; Kutlay, 2012: 260-261; Yüksel, 2021: 210). As previously stated, the religious identities of the individuals involved are undeniable, irrespective of whether their motivation is rooted in religious beliefs or national objectives.

The third significant rebellion unfolded in the Dersim province, predominantly inhabited by the Zaza people, during the years 1936-1938. Following the suppression of this rebellion, a considerable number of individuals were relocated to western regions, continuing a pattern observed in prior uprisings. Notably, Sabiha Gökçen, the adopted daughter of Atatürk and the world's first female combat pilot, actively participated in the air operations during this rebellion (Yüksel, 2021: 210; Aras, 2013: 57).

The newly established Turkish state tried to reshape the perception of both Kurdishness and Turkishness, as well as military measures against the Kurds and the Kurdish geography. The Şark Islahat Planı (Plan of the Reformation of the East), which was prepared a few months after the suppression of the Sheikh Said Rebellion, aimed to implement comprehensive educational, demographic, and administrative measures in the Kurdish inhabited regions. The idea that there was no separate Kurdish identity and Kurdish, and that

[16] (https://ilkha.com/gundem/seyh-said-efendinin-kiyaminin-rengi-islamdi-77272).
[17] (https://hdp.org.tr/tr/seyh-said-ve-47-arkadasini-saygiyla-aniyoruz-mezar-yerleri-aciklanmalidir/14403/)

the Kurds were actually a branch of the Turkish people were widely promoted and Kurdish was banned in public (Cagaptay, 2006: 84-85; Çaylak, & Çelik, 2008: 102; Yüksel, 2021: 210).

A series of reforms and arrangements were made to build a homogeneous Turkish Identity. Two institutions, The Turkish Historical Society and the Turkish Language Society, were established for the development of Turkish history and Turkish language. The Latin alphabet was adopted for the Turkish language. It was aimed to carry out studies on Turkish race, culture and history through the history, anthropology and archeology departments established in universities. The theories of 'Turkish History Thesis' and 'Sun-Language Theory' have been put forward for this purpose (Çaylak & Çelik, 2008: 80; Yayman, 2011: 40-41; Yüksel, 2021: 211). According to these theories the Turkish race is the founder of civilizations, and that all world languages are actually derived from a proto-Turkic primal language. The role of the Turks in the history of civilization is deliberately or unknowingly underestimated. However, European civilization was created by people coming from Asia as a result of migrations, "*All the springs (sources) of Greek science, art and philosophy are in western Anatolia, as well as the root of Roman civilization*" (TTK, 1930: 57).

During the period of intense Kurdish revolts, Kurdish was associated with savagery and backwardness especially in press. Some books and articles published in a newspaper provide important clues about the Kurdish perception in the press and literature. An early republican Turkish novel by Halide Edib, titled Zeyno'nun Oğlu (Zeyno's Son), published in 1928, tells what happened in Diyarbakır before the Şeyh Said Rebellion and often likens Kurds to animals. An article in the newspaper Cumhuriyet on 13 July 1930 placed the Kurds side by side with *ordinary animals* and *African barbarians*; the articles written by a nationalist journalist named Yusuf Mazhar in the same newspaper contained the following statements:

> *Even though they may be more capable than the redskins in the United States, they are – history is my witness – endlessly bloodthirsty and cruel . . . They are completely bereft of positive feelings and civilized manners. For centuries, they have been a plague for our race . . . Under Russian rule they were prohibited to descend from the mountains, where they did not lead humane and civilized lives, therefore these creatures are really not inclined to profit from civilization . . . In my opinion, the dark spirit, crude mental state, and ruthless manners of this Kurdish rabble is impossible to break* (Yüksel, 2021: 211; Üngör, 2011: 184).

3.4. 1938-1960: The Silence Period

The period of 1938-1960, twenty-year period which came after the fifteen-year rebellion period regarding the Kurdish movement, is generally called the period of silence, the years of fatigue (Aras, 2013: 62; Bozarslan, 2002: 850).

After the suppression of the rebellion in 1938, the Kurdish movement had neither a material force to initiate a new uprising, nor any other strategy to replace the uprising. The Second World War and the post-war political turmoil of the Middle East have led to significant historical changes in succession. The Nationalist Kurdish elite, who somehow escaped from the country during the rebellion period, started to live in exile, having broken away from the Kurdish regions. The cultural Turkification move of Kemalism from the Kurdish cities yielded important results. A new Kurdish intelligentsia has emerged that seeks its references in the political culture of Republican Türkiye, if not in Kemalism (Bozarslan, 2002: 850).

In addition, with the transition to the multi-party system in 1946 and Democratic Party (DP) government, the pressure on the Kurdish people in rural areas decreased relatively, because people began to use the voting tool effectively. The integration of tribes and sects into the political system has developed a mutually beneficial relationship with the political power. Through the party system, these local authorities formed alliances with the political forces in the capital. They controlled large numbers of local votes and, in turn, provided their supporters with apportioned privileges. Thus, the positions of these traditional leaders were consolidated against both the central government and the local people. It also brought about the formation of a *privileged from the center* class in the Kurdish region. The government tried to control the region by recruiting Kurdish religious and tribal chiefs and landlords. In this period, the Democrat Party's election of Sheikh Said's grandson, Melik Fırat, as a deputy shows that the regime had some relations with Islamism and Kurdish movement (Bozarslan, 2002: 850; Bruinessen, 2002: 340-341; Taşpınar, 2005: 83-84).

The fact that the children of the powerful tribal leaders, with whom the government cooperated locally, that is, who put their tribes at the service of the government as a kind of vote depot, went to study in Istanbul and Ankara during the DP period, in a way, brought about a social and intellectual activity among these students. There has been a political case that these students showed political stance. A deputy (Asım Eren) from the Republican People’s Party (RPP) gave a speech in the parliament on the killing of Kurds in Türkiye in

response to the Turcomans killed in Kirkuk. Under the name of Kurdish Higher Education Students", these students (the number is 104) condemned the proposal to kill the Kurds by telegram protesting in 1959. In the same year, at another event, Musa Anter published a poem called Kımil in Kurdish in a local newspaper, Ileri Yurt, published in Diyarbakir. Owners of Ileri Yurt Abdurrahman Efem Dolak and Musa Anter were arrested in 1959. 50 people who supported Musa Anter were detained. When one of the detainees, died of stomach bleeding, 49 people remained and the case became known with this number: *49'lar Davası* (49's Case). Sait Elçi, Şerafettin Elçi, Nurettin Yılmaz, Medet Serhat, Sait Kırmızıtoprak, Canip Yıldırım, Musa Anter, Yaşar Kaya, Naci Kutlay, who are among these 50 people arrested, would play an important role in the Kurdish movement or Turkish political life in the following years (Yeğen, 2021: 317-318; Natali, 2005: 96; Bozarslan, 2002: 852).

In this period, the armed struggle gave way to publishing activities and literary works such as writing history and memoirs. It can be said that the Kurdish intellectual who fought in the mountains and engaged in lobbying activities in the field during the periods of rebellion, sat at the table during this period (of course in exile), took a pen and paper, wrote his own memories on the one hand and articles on the Kurdish language and history on the other. Roji Nu and Ronahi are two of the publications issued in this period for the promotion and instruction of Kurdish culture. The *old rifle* Kurdish intellectuals (such as Nuri Dersimi, Cemilpaşazade brothers, İhsan Nuri) who lived in exile and wrote their history and memories aimed to leave a legacy to the younger generations with this. While doing this, it is possible to say that they follow the *argumentum a contrario* tactic, even though they do not have institutional structures and resources. In other words, whatever the official discourse about the Kurds was saying, they were suggesting the opposite. Another strategy is similar to what the Kemalist regime said about the originality and importance of the Turkish race, history, culture and language, and Kurdish intellectuals did for Kurdish and Kurds. Like many nationalist historiographies around the world, it was blended with legends and slogans (Bozarslan, 2002: 851).

In his book of *Kurdish History*, İhsan Nuri invites Kurds to boast about the tombstones of those who fought and died on the path of freedom and independence. Kadi Cemilpaşazade, in his book *A Brief History of Kurdistan*, calls on the Kurds to protect their language, history and future. In the Nuri Dersimi (1952: 336) *Dersim in the History of Kurdistan*, there is a section called *Address to the Youth* (Gençliğe Hitab), like Atatürk's Address to the Turkish Youth (Gençliğe Hitabe). Atatürk's Address to the Youth begins with "*O, Turkish Youth, Your first duty is forever to preserve and defend the Turkish independence*

and the Turkish Republic". Dersimi's Address to Youth begins as "*O Kurdish youth, O son of the brave nation, who reaped the oppression of centuries, listen to me*". The similarity is striking (Bozarslan, 2002: 851).

3.5. 1960-1970 Period

In this period and afterwards, the primary proponents of Kurdish nationalism were individuals with left-leaning and secular orientations. Initially affiliated with the left and secular movements, they subsequently forged their own distinct identities and emerged as independent actors. The ascendancy of left and secular actors within Kurdish nationalism became more evident in the aftermath of this period.

The military junta, which took power after the 1960 military coup, perceived Kurdish movements as an important threat. While all political prisoners were taken out after the coup, 49 Kurdish people (49s Case) who were arrested just before the coup were excluded from the scope of that amnesty. In the period following the coup, 55 Kurdish aghas and beys were exiled. 485 sheikhs and tribal chiefs from the Kurdish regions were exiled to Western Anatolia four days after the 27 May Coup in Sivas Kabak Yazı, as called Sivas Kampı. Military junta accused the DP members of working to achieve Kurdish independence. The camp in Sivas was evacuated with the Compulsory Settlement Law No. 105 enacted on October 19, 1960, and 55 aghas, associated with DP, deported to different provinces in western region like Antalya, Isparta, İzmir, Afyon, Manisa, Denizli and Çorum by the National Unity Committee. This law was abolished in 1962 (Bozarslan, 2002: 853, Gunter, 1988: 391).

On the other hand, the 1961 constitution, which was prepared after the coup and accepted with a referendum, expanded areas such as freedom of thought and expression, freedom of association, and contributed to the discussion of the Eastern problem (due to the ban on the word Kurd) and to the emergence of new opportunities for Kurdish intellectuals to express their opinions. The handling of the Eastern question in magazines of the period such as Barış Dünyası and Yön was an unprecedented development for the history of the Republic. In this period, Kurdish nationalism was reborn in a way with intermittent broadcasting activities. Magazines such as Dicle Fırat, Deng, Yeni Flow, articles and books by Musa Anter, M. Emin Bozaraslan, Aşık İhsani, Şükrü Yastıman and İsmail Beşikçi attracted great attention among high school and university students. Especially in this period,

the publication of Ahmede Xani's Mem-u Zin, the most important classic of Kurdish literature, was a very important development in terms of emphasizing the convenience of Kurdish as a written language. (Bozarslan, 2002: 853).

During this period, the left publications also discussed the Kurdish issue intensively. In particular, journals such as Ant, Türk Sol and Aydınlık, and the translation of some source works by Marxist literature (Lenin and Stalin) on nations into Turkish, contributed to the legitimacy of Kurdish issue as a national problem (Bozarslan, 2002: 853).

The greatest contribution of leftist discourse to the Kurdish movement is universality. Here, the Kurds had the opportunity to somehow insert themselves into the Marxist struggle scheme. As representatives of an oppressed nation, they were able to connect their fate with the fate of the proletariat and the peasantry. The embrace of the national question by the Marxist-Leninist discourse also enabled Kurdish intellectuals to be heavily involved in leftist legal and illegal organizations, especially The Workers' Party of Turkey (WPT- Turkish: Türkiye İşçi Partisi, TİP) and The Revolutionary Youth Federation of Turkey (Turkish: Türkiye Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu), often known simply as Revolutionary Youth (Turkish: Devrimci Gençlik, DEV-GENÇ) (Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997: 114-116; Taşpınar, 2005: 90; Aras, 2013: 67; Bozarslan, 2002: 854).

In this process, the discourse and practice of Kurdish nationalism has a cultural and constitutional character. Their demands are to liberalize the Kurdish language in radio, press and education, to respect constitutional freedoms, and to make/increase investments in Kurdish regions. Some political demands were also put forward. Former deputy M. Remzi Bucak shared the idea of a Kurdish-Turkish federation by writing a letter to Prime Minister İsmet İnönü saying, "*Kurdism and Kurdishness are at least as sacred and delicious as Turkism and Turkishness, they are worthy of respect and life, and they have that right*" (Bozarslan, 2002: 854).

In this period, it is not possible to say that the Kurdish movement existed on its own, as an entity with its own symbols and discourses. In this respect, it is in a symbiotic relationship with two cases. One of these was the Barzani revolt that started in 1961 in Iraqi Kurdistan. This rebellion was met with interest in all other Kurdish geographies (Syria, Iran, Turkey). Kurdistan Democratic Party/North (Türkiye Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi (TKDP), leaders are Fait Bucak, Dr. Said Elçi), which was established illegally in Türkiye as an extension of the Kurdistan Democratic Party in Iraq, is the result of this motivation and inspiration. While the Iraqi KDP has a conservative character in terms of the administration and the profile of the administrator, the youth movement and guerrilla activities are left-

inspired. Similarly, Turkey's KDP is generally composed of conservative Kurdish strata (tribal leaders, sect sheikhs and apostates, shopkeepers and merchants). This movement mostly embraced the figure of Sheikh Said and was away from leftist discourses. However, the younger strata of this movement were just like the Iraqi KDP. They were highly influenced by leftist discourses and practices (Bozarslan, 2002: 854).

Along with Kurdish publications that did not go beyond limited demands, leftist ideas that legitimize the national issue were also attracting attention from Kurdish circles, especially Kurdish students, tradesmen and craftsmen. In particular, the WPT, where Kurdish intellectuals, young people and self-employed individuals were present and represented in decision-making bodies, had a significant impact in the Kurdish regions. The experience of the Kurdish movement in this process can be evaluated within the scope of Mirosloav Hroch's period for nationalism movements, called the B stage, when nationalism crossed the borders of a small intellectual class and became popular (Bozarslan, 2002: 855).

While the left discourse gave a universal and supranational legitimacy to the subjective national issue, it also established a relationship between national and social issues. Thus, the Kurds in the leftist movement saw themselves as a part of the workers-peasant movement and the peoples fighting against imperialism, with classical nationalist themes and a *de facto* transnational stance at the same time. This dual attitude of the Kurds strengthened and broadened the base of the Kurdish movement, while at the same time acquiring a social identity. For this reason, the rallies held in seven Kurdish cities in 1967 turned into intense mass movements in which national and social demands were expressed together (Bozarslan, 2002: 855; Tahiri, 2007: 193).

There are serious discussions within the left about what kind of struggle/strategy to be followed to establish a socialist order. These discussions basically revolved around axes/stragies such as armed struggle or unarmed struggle, urban-based struggle or rural-based struggle. In that process, the projects of transition to armed struggle had a radicalizing effect among the Kurds. This radicalization led to the official recognition of the Kurdish question by the WPT in the fourth congress in 1970, where the Kurds were heavily represented in the decision-making process, stated:

> *There is a Kurdish people in the East of Turkey.... The fascist authorities representing the ruling classes have subjected the Kurdish people to a policy of assimilation and intimidation which has often become a bloody repression* (Bozarslan, 2002: 856, Gunter, 1988: 392).

However, by 1970, a significant part of the university youth had decided on a separate organization from the Turkish left. Young people who left the Revolutionary Youth established The Revolutionary Cultural Eastern Hearths (Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları, DDKO) in 1970. This organizational development refers to change from the slogan of *the people of Turkey* (Türkiye halkı) used in leftist circles to the slogan of the peoples of Türkiye (Türkiye Halkları); from *the problematic of social revolution* to the *problematic of national liberation strugggles that determined the era*. The foundation of DDKO was the separation of the Kurds from the Turkish left and the emergence of an independent Kurdish organization based on the Kurdish identity. According to the founders, the underlying reason for that break was that Turkish leftists do not show the necessary sensitivity to the Kurdish issue and are far from showing such sensitivity. DDKO was important in two ways. First, the Kurds separated from the Turkish Socialist movement and started to organize independently. Secondly, by influencing the Kurdish organizations that would emerge after them, it became a "*new beginning*" for the Kurdish movement and created an important political ground for the Kurdish movement. The inaugural monthly bulletin of DDKO, printed in 30,000 copies, included appeals to combat the exploitation by American imperialism and its local allies—large landowners and capitalists. It also emphasized the need to foster and disseminate the revolutionary culture of the people. In the first general assembly resolution draft, DDKO stated as follows (1) There are Kurdish people in the integrity of Türkiye (2) The Kurdish language is a spoken-language in Türkiye (3) This entity has created a unique cultural unity (4) The Kurds are centered around a common market economy in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia regions of the country (Bozarslan, 2002: 856; Taşpınar, 2005: 92; Güneş, 2012: 165-168; Doğanoğlu, 2016: 957).

A second event, which is both a result and a part of the radicalization process of the Kurdish movement, which acts independently from the left, is the separation of Sait Kırmızıtoprak (Dr. Şıvan) from the TKDP and starting an initiative aimed at armed struggle. The murder of TDKP's then-president, Sait Elçi, by Sait Kırmızıtoprak (Dr. Şivan), and then the execution of Dr. Şivan on Barzani's orders during the 12 March period both demoralized the Kurdish movement and eliminated the realization of Dr. Şivan's potential in the context of the Kurdish movement. These events show that the divisions and factions that the leftist movement in Türkiye experienced within itself even at a point of disagreement, started in the Kurdish movement too (Natali, 2005: 97; Bozarslan, 2002: 856).

3.6. 1971-1980 Period

During the March 12 military coup, almost all of the radical leaders of the leftist organizations were killed. Also new government after military intervention closed WTP down and sentenced its leaders to jail, partl, for supporting pro-Kurdish separatist discourse and activites. Although not as affected as the leftist movement, the Kurdish Movement was also affected by the March 12 military regime. During this period, Diyarbakir prison in particular became a platform where those imprisoned at that time discussed the Kurdish issue, and also became the source of the divisions that would occur in the Kurdish movement later. Mümtaz Kotan and his friends started the organization known as Rizgarî (Liberation), which focused on publications activities. Said Elçi supporters continued the TKDP tradition, and Sait Kızıltoprak supporters embarked on the formation known as Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Associations (Devrimci Doğu Kültür Derneği-DDKD) (Güneş, 2012: 177-180; Aras, 2013: 72; Bozarslan, 2002: 857).

Kemal Burkay, a former member of the Workers' Party of Turkey (WPT), along with his supporters, established what eventually became the Turkish Kurdistan Socialist Party (TKSP), later known as the Kurdistan Socialist Party or Riya Azadi (Road to Freedom), referred to as Özgürlük Yolu in Turkish. Riya Azadi/Özgürlük Yolu embodies a movement that advocates for moderate socialist and nationalist objectives. Its influence extends notably within workers' and teachers' unions, garnering support primarily from a minority of urban workers and intellectuals. The moderate nationalist orientation of this movement is reflected in various discourses, including:

> *Kurds can live together with the Turkish people, under a democratic system, if the principles of equality are observed. .. there will be set up either a federation in Turkey or the Kurdish people will establish their own independent state.... Time and the historical development will tell* (Bozarslan, 2002: 857, Gunter, 1988: 392).

These four initiatives combined non-violent legal and illegal activities and were against armed struggle. While DDKD and Freedom Road pursued a pro-Soviet policy, TKDP and Rızgari took place outside the Soviet-Chinese conflict (Bozarslan, 2002: 857, Gunter, 1988: 392).

The division that emerged in the Kurdish movement was not due to ideology, it was due to sociological factors. It was also the result of the absence of a power, check and balance

mechanism in these movements, since the legitimacy and legality of the Kurdish movement was not accepted by the state. In addition, the fellow-townsmenship have also been effective in these divisions (Bozarslan, 2002: 857).

During this time, the collapse of Barzani's movement in March 1975 had a significant impact on the Kurdish movement in Türkiye. Initially, Barzani was a pivotal reference and a source of inspiration for the Kurdish movement in Türkiye, but with his movement's collapse, that reference point was lost. Subsequently, this situation presented an opportunity for the Kurdish movement in Türkiye to emerge as a key Kurdish actor in the Middle East. Barzani's failure, especially due to his western-oriented policy, strengthened and validated the choice of leftist policies within the Kurdish movement in Türkiye. The movement adopted a more radical stance in response to these circumstances, departing from Barzani's approach and emphasizing a leftist ideology as a means to further their cause (Bozarslan, 2002: 857).

The radical Kurdish activists of the 1970s distinguished themselves from the Kurdish nationalists of the 1960s in several key aspects. During the 1960s, Kurdish nationalism often had roots in families associated with influential tribes. However, in the 1970s, there was a notable shift, and it is argued that Kurdish nationalists primarily emerged from either rural youth or the first-generation of urbanized youth. Organizations such as the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and KUK (Kurdistan Patriotic Union), which would later come into existence, exemplify this change. The members of these organizations were largely comprised of individuals from rural backgrounds or first-generation urban dwellers, reflecting a shift in the demographic makeup and sources of support for Kurdish nationalist movements during the 1970s (Bozarslan, 2002: 858, Tahiri, 2007: 195).

During the 1976-1978 period, the Kurdish movement in Türkiye experienced the emergence of new factions resulting from internal divisions within existing movements. While not abandoning the possibility of employing violence, the Kurdish movement aimed to significantly expand and develop its theoretical foundations during this time. In particular, in 1977, independent candidates supported by the Turkish Kurdistan Socialist Party (TKSP) secured victories in mayoral elections in Ağrı and Diyarbakır, demonstrating substantial popular backing for the movement. Theoretical discussions within the Kurdish movement during this period revolved around the perception that the Kurdish regions were not merely integral parts of Türkiye, Iraq, Iran, and Syria, but rather viewed as fragmented internal colonies within these respective nations. This theoretical perspective had profound

implications for how the Kurdish movement in Türkiye perceived itself, positioning it as an integral part of the broader Kurdish history within the Middle East (Bozarslan, 2002: 858).

The intense violence experienced throughout Türkiye in this period, and the tensions especially in the Alevi-Sunni and Turkish-Kurdish mixed regions brought the left movement into a very serious conflict with the state and the radical right in the Kurdish regions. In 1977, the TKDP, which had an important activity among Kurdish tradesmen, artisans, intellectuals and villagers, split and the young people who left here established a new organization aimed at the armed struggle called KUK-the National Liberation of Kurdistan (Kürdistan Ulusal Kurtuluşçuları) (Bozarslan, 2002: 858-859).

A second significant development during this period was the founding of the PKK (Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan, or Kurdish Workers Party) in 1978. The PKK is officially the name of a small group that coalesced around Abdullah Öcalan in 1974, initially known as the Apocular (a shortened form derived from Abdullah). Notably, the PKK represents the most violent and radical Kurdish movement that emerged in Türkiye (Bozarslan, 2002: 859; Gunter, 1988: 394).

The group first developed during the meetings of Abdullah Öcalan and 17 Kurdish university students in the circle of Ankara Democratic Patriotic Higher Education Association in Ankara in 1974. This movement feeds on Marxism-Leninism and ultra-nationalist ideas and ultimately aims to establish an independent Kurdistan consisting of Türkiye, Iraq, Iran and the Kurdish regions of Syria. It is equally interesting that the small Kurdish region in the Soviet Union was not included in their program (Bozarslan, 2002: 859; Gunter, 1988: 395).

This movement, in its program published both after the founding congress, considered Kurdistan as a colony and determined the main goal of the Kurdish people as national liberation. Explaining that the Kurdish problem was *the problem of the freedom and unity of the four parts of Kurdistan*, the party defined the phenomenon it called *Kurdistan revolution* as follows.

> *The Kurdistan revolution has two characters: national and democratic. The national contradiction is the contradiction between the Kurdish people and the Turkish state and the imperialist powers behind it. The democratic contradiction is the contradiction between the Kurdish people and the feudal order and traditions. The primary of these two contradictions is the national contradiction. The Kurdish Revolution is a revolution of people based on the revolutionary youth, workers and poor peasants. The Kurdistan revolution is a*

frontal revolution in which all patriotic popular segments take place around this bloc. The Kurdistan revolution is a protracted the war of people. The basic struggle method of the war of people, which consists of defense, balance and attack periods, is armed struggle. Turkish colonialism, the imperialist powers behind it and local collaborators in Kurdistan are the targets of armed struggle (Bozarslan, 2002: 859).

Although the PKK called some districts liberated areas in Kurdish regions in that process, it was actually a small minority of Kurdish villagers who saw the PKK as liberators. Many Kurds in Türkiye seemed to resent the PKK's violent tactics and came to view it as cruel, reckless and irresponsible. Most of the PKK participants were young (18 to 25 years old), poorly educated workers, farmers or shepherds, and unemployed. The party financed itself through banditry and extortion. It is alleged that most Turkish heroin refineries are run by Kurds in Turkey's rugged southeast and that there is some degree of overlap between smugglers and Kurdish separatists in the area. Turkish sources also state that the separatists are particularly keen to trade drugs in exchange for weapons (Gunter, 1988: 395).

When we look at the common points of these two radical and pro-terrorist movements, KUK and PKK, it is seen that both of them are extremely weak at the level of ideology and theory. Besides, both of them claimed that after the collapse of the Barzani movement in Iraq, they represented the Kurdishness of the Middle East, and argued that the turn passed to the Kurds of Türkiye, and that a united and independent Kurdistan could only be established with an armed struggle. Both movements show a significant development, especially among the rural youth, both providing a political discourse to this youth and initiating a socialization process based on violence and internalized with Kurdishness (Bozarslan, 2002: 859).

The KUK and PKK continued the leftist discourse, however, the intensity shifted to a Kurdish-oriented discourse rather than social struggle. The fact that there were people of Turkish origin among the founding members of this PKK and its own perception as a continuation of the radical left movement such as Deniz Gezmiş, Mahir Çayan and İbrahim Kaypakkaya actually created a paradoxical image (Bozarslan, 2002: 859).

While the PKK was pretending to be the representative of the Kurds in the Middle East, it also saw its violent and radical movements as a part of the leftist revolution process. It is possible to understand this from the words of their leaders.

> *As it is necessary to see the Kurdistan national liberation movement as an analytical element for the Turkish revolution, developing the Kurdistan national liberation movement, by taking the weakest link, Kurdistan, which intensely experiences the most complex of contradictions, is an indispensable strategic task not only for patriotism but also for the liberation of the Turkish people and proletariat in terms of internationalism* (Bozarslan, 2002: 860).

Between 1977 and 1978 there was a spontaneous, unplanned break between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish left, which was divided into many different factions. This break has also formed a political microclimate on the basis of Kurdish identity (Bozarslan, 2002: 860).

It is possible to see that the Kurdish movement actually went through a process of violence among themselves before committing to acts of violence against the state. This domestic violence was basically the result of the struggle to establish a hegemony on the Kurdish regions and Kurdish people. The testimony of Musa Anter clearly reveals this situation: "*I witnessed that in the past, most of these organizations in my region were destroying each other without the need for the state's security forces.*" The PKK's attacks against some tribes (especially Ramans and Bucaks), which it calls feudalismmand *the most reliable servants of colonialism*, can also be evaluated in the context of this internal violence (Bozarslan, 2002: 860).

3.7. 1980-1999 Period

Like other leftist movements, 1980 military coup caught the KUK, PKK and other Kurdish organizations off guard. Hundreds of Kurdish militants and intellectuals were arrested. Some of them died in prisons, some PKK militants burned themselves to protest the regime and the conditions of captivity. The PKK withdrew to the Middle East. Taking advantage of the Türkiye-Syria tension and the opportunities created by the 1982 Lebanon War, PKK reorganized on the mountain-based military organization by the end of the 1980s. The KUK and other parties became *exile movements*. This *exile* soon led to political exhaustion. Movements outside the TSKP could not survive. However, the settlement of hundreds of intellectuals in Europe enabled the development of a *diaspora nationalism* and the revival of Kurdish culture and research activities in exile. More than 800 works were published only in Sweden for this period. The Paris Kurdish Institute, which was established

in Paris, played an important role in the diplomatic field (Natali, 2005: 107; Bozarslan, 2002: 861, Yeğen, 2021: 323).

Four years after 1980 military coup, the PKK made a statement as follows:

> *Patriotic people of Kurdistan! It's time to raise the struggle against colonialism, which has wanted to destroy us as a nation for centuries, and to call to account for the oppression, torture and tyranny that has been used for centuries, especially in the last four years, for the blood we shed. It is the patriotic duty of every Kurdistani who wants to live with dignity*" (Bozarslan, 2002: 862)

After this statement, they started widespread terrorist activities in 1984. Defining the rebellions of 1925 as *tribal-feudal-religious* (aşiretçi-feodal-dinci), the PKK targeted Kemalism and the Republic of Türkiye in the first years. In the following years, PKK aimed to establish a Kurdish state that would be a part of a socialist federation to be established in the Middle East. For them, socialism is the art of approaching all kinds of truth, goodness and beauty, and preserving and developing the positive characteristics of human beings. The PKK's relationship with Marxism-Leninism is evident in Öcalan's following words:

> *The PKK is primarily based on its own ideological-political line, that is, the vast creativity of Marxism-Leninism and its ideological-political line, which means its implementation in Kurdistan* (Bozarslan, 2002: 862).

The PKK, despite facing criticism for *primitive nationalism*, indeed developed a nationalist discourse rooted in violence and self-sacrifice. This nationalism can be attributed to three main sources. Firstly, the nationalism seen in dominant and authoritarian regimes prevalent in the Middle East served as a foundational influence. The structures and organizations emerging within these regimes adopted a similar nationalist model, which influenced the PKK's discourse and practices. Secondly, the universal discourse of Marxism-Leninism, which legitimizes subjectivity and agency, played a significant role in shaping the discourse and actions of the PKK. This ideology provided a framework for justifying and operationalizing their nationalist aspirations. Lastly, violence became fetishized within the PKK, perceived not only as a means but sometimes even as the ultimate goal for salvation. Violence was applied not only to the perceived *other* but also within the organization itself through a punishment mechanism. The PKK aimed to forcibly liberate the Kurdish nation, which they defined as *enslaved*, from this perceived state of subjugation. This created a kind

of Kurdishism in opposition to and sometimes in the name of the Kurds, challenging conventional norms and expectations (Güneş, 2012: 10-11).

The Turkish state used new tools in the early 1990s to deal with the expansion of the PKK's armed struggle. The state began to evacuate the villages they thought were supplying the PKK, providing logistics, and sheltering its members in their homes. Despite the state's security policies and measures, it is seen that the PKK recruited a large number of people in that process. Likewise, the PKK's penetration into towns and mobilization of people for urban uprisings called *serhildan* has revealed that the PKK was an important actor both militarily and politically in both urban and rural areas (Güneş, 2012: 104; Yeğen, 2021: 324).

In the early 1990s, the PKK started to use different tools to mobilize and raise awareness among the masses. One of them, the People's Labor Party (HEP), which was previously founded by leftist politicians and intellectuals in 1990, came under the control of politicians close to the PKK, and in a way, this party became the political wing of the PKK. Secondly, civilian Kurds associated with the PKK in Türkiye and Europe established numerous legal associations to promote and spread the Kurdish movement's causes. The Kurds, who are directly related or close to the PKK, published daily and weekly newspapers in Europe and Türkiye, and established a television channel called Med TV, which broadcasts via satellite from abroad. Legal associations, non-governmental organizations, mass media, all these, in addition to the violence and terrorist acts carried out in the mountains, made the PKK a huge political complex (Yeğen, 2021: 324; Natali, 2005: 110-11; Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997: 120).

The quantitative increase in mass support for the PKK has also changed the nature (qualification) of its participation in the PKK. While the Kurds who joined the PKK in the 1980s were mostly poor educated or uneducated Kurdish youth from the Kurdish countryside, in the 1990s many Kurdish university students from Kurdish, Turkish and European cities joined the PKK. Meanwhile, PKK-related legal associations, political parties, and mass media were all led mainly by urban Kurds of middle-class origin. In short, while the poor people in Kurdish regions, and especially the displaced peasants of the 1990s, remained the part of Kurdish nationalism, the modern and better-off sections of Kurdish society also joined them and took responsibilities (Yeğen, 2021: 324-325).

The 1990s brought a change and diversity not only in the quantity, quality and tools of Kurdish nationalism, but also in its spaces. By the mid-1990s, Kurdish nationalism had become entrenched in different areas, while continuing to reside in the mountains of Türkiye

and Iraq, towns in eastern and western regions, and European cities had become places for Kurdish nationalism (Yeğen, 2021: 325).

The increase in the PKK's voluntary/involuntary hegemony over the Kurds has also changed the Turkish state's attitude towards the Kurdish issue. The attitude of rejecting the Kurdish issue since the establishment of the Republic followed a course towards recognition in the early 1990s. The PKK welcomed this different trend of the state and declared a ceasefire in 1993. With this turning point, some direct and indirect, secret and open negotiations between the PKK and the state opened up another area in the Kurdish issue. In addition to Türkiye's moderate stance, the end of the bipolar order in the world with the collapse of the USSR and the wounding of the Marxist ideology have also created a change in the discourse and practice, ideology and program of the PKK. Öcalan, criticizing real socialism, advocated the idea of a socialism that merging with democracy, pluralism and ecology. All these developments have changed the ultimate aim of the PKK. The PKK, which previously aimed to establish an independent Kurdish national state, gave up this aim in the mid-1990s. They stated that they abandoned separatist ideas and were ready to use unarmed means of struggle and set the ultimate goal of *cohabitation* (Güneş, 2012: 126; Yeğen, 2021: 325).

The course of Kurdish nationalism movement experienced a different phase towards the turn of the millennium with a historical event. As a result of serious threats and pressure from Türkiye to Syria, the PKK's leader Abdullah Öcalan was forced to leave this country. The speech delivered by Land Forces Commander General Atilla Ateş in Hatay (near the Syrian border) on September 16 was the first sign of the inevitable fate that resulted in the capture of Abdullah Öcalan. Ateş said, "*We have no patience for Syria. If Turkey does not get the response it expects, it will be entitled to take all kinds of measures*" and cornered Syria, which is harboring the organization. Öcalan was abducted in Nairobi, Kenya in 1999 by the Turkish National Intelligence Agency (MIT) (allegedly with assistance of the CIA) and was brought to Türkiye. Öcalan, after being brought to Türkiye and handed over, suggested renewing the aims and means of the PKK without standing up to the state. He argued that the goal of building an independent Kurdistan should now be replaced by the goal of making Türkiye a democratic republic, and the tool of armed struggle should be replaced by the tool of political struggle. The PKK also adopted Öcalan's changing policy with a congress held in January 2000. The PKK, which drew its elements from Türkiye's borders into Iraq, stopped the armed struggle (Yeğen, 2021: 325).

3.8. After 1999 Period

In the historical process, the following trend has been observed in Kurdish nationalism. Generally, after the Kurdish nationalist movements were defeated, their struggle was interrupted, and it took a while to reactivate. However, despite the capture of PKK's leader Öcalan in 1999, the Kurdish movement continued to exist without interruption. The PKK continued its existence by withdrawing to Iraq. Most importantly, the Democratic People's Party (DEHAP), which was founded after the closure of the HEP, continued its massive and political support by winning almost half the votes of the people living in the Kurdish regions in the 2002 general elections (Yeğen, 2021: 326).

While Kurdish nationalism continued to exist after 1999, after Öcalan was captured, there was a kind of shift in the lexicon and tools of Kurdish nationalism from its previous goals. In this process, Öcalan abandoned his separatist ideas and the goal of an independent state and adopted an anti-state stance. Öcalan shared with the public and his organization his proposal for democratic confederalism project, a post-national and anti-state programme, intertwined with the concepts of direct democracy, self-government, pluralism, feminism and ecology. The idea of democratic confederalism proposed by Öcalan is inspired by Murray Bookchin's *The Ecology of Freedom*. Öcalan developed the concepts of democratic nation, democratic modernity and democratic autonomy. Democratic autonomy has been used locally (in Türkiye), democratic confederalism (on a regional basis), and democratic modernity on a global basis for the implementation of its new program (Tahiri, 2007: 235; Güneş, 2012: 136; Yeğen, 2021: 326-327).

The new plan and program proposed by Öcalan has been adopted by the Democratic Society Party (DTP), the political wing of Kurdish nationalism and founded after the closure of DEHAP, and all legal or secret associations and media organizations affiliated with the PKK. These legal and illegal organizations have changed their discourse, actions and programs within the scope of democratic confederalism and democratic autonomy principles. PKK adopted the idea of democratic confederalism as its main target and then started to establish women, youth and peasant communes and assemblies in Kurdish regions. Even after the PKK returned to its armed and terror activities in 2004, it did not revive its goal of an independent Kurdistan, on the contrary, it acted on the axis of Öcalan's suggestions of democratic confederalism and democratic autonomy, and continued its discourses in this direction (Güneş, 2012: 164-165; Yeğen, 2021: 326-327).

These changes in the discourse, actions and programs of Kurdish nationalism led to a more inclusive Kurdish nationalist movement. as a result of this; DTP and its successor Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi (Peace and Democracy Party, BDP) won a large number of seats in the general elections held in 2007 and 2011, enabling it to enter the parliament. In the local elections held in 2009, DTP won the mayoralties of eight provinces and fifty-one districts and towns in the east and southeast. The moderation of the language of Kurdish nationalism created social response, and the creation of social response made its language more moderate. For this reason, the Kurdish nationalist movement abandoned a rigid nationalist perspective and began to appeal to Turkish society in a more radical democratic way such as self-government, pluralism, gender equality. As a part of this inclusive and more radical democratic politics, Halkların Demokratik Partisi (Peoples' Democratic Party, HDP) was founded in 2014, replacing the BDP, which includes both Kurds and the left. This new party meant that the Kurdish nationalists and the Türkiye's leftists, from which Kurdish nationalism had emerged before, came together under the same umbrella after nearly four decades (Güneş, 2012: 169-172; Yeğen, 2021: 328).

The changes in the discourse, actions, programs and tools of the Kurdish nationalist movement, in terms of quality and quantity, have made this movement more legitimate, widespread and inclusive, and have also led to changes in its spaces, members and actors. The early 2000s were more diverse, regarding both its spaces and its actors, compared to the 1990s. Damascus and the Bekaa valley, which had previously served as the PKK's base camp and where military and theoretical training were given, were now deserted by them. Because after the capture of Öcalan, the Syrian regime banned the PKK and its activities in Syria and closed all its camps and centers. The PKK deployed all its armed elements to the mountains in Iraq and Türkiye, and the mountains became important and privileged areas for the PKK. However, by the 2000s, mountains were not the only base areas for the PKK. The significant success of the DTP and BDP in local and general elections has now made the municipalities and parliament two strategic areas of the nationalist movement. Thus, nationalist Kurdish movement had the opportunity to address all of Türkiye, both locally and centrally. It gained a certain power not only in the east and southeast, but also in many parts of Türkiye, and it became visible and audible (Yeğen, 2021: 328).

Demonstrations, rallies and similar organizations held in the streets; panels, conferences and similar events organized by many NGOs at universities and in different venues have made the Kurdish nationalist movement more visible and audible to the public. While Syria was a closed place to Kurdish nationalism in the first decade of the 2000s, after

the end of the first decade, with the (still ongoing) civil war in Syria, Syria has become one of the venues of Kurdish nationalism, albeit in a new form. First, the civil war in Syria enabled PKK-linked Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat (Democratic Union Party, PYD) and Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (People's Protection Units, YPG) to take control of Kurdish-populated areas, making the PKK an important sub-state in Syria for the international public. The US and other western powers began to use PKK-linked organizations as proxy actors in Syria. This was a profitable transaction for both parties. While the US and other Western powers were driving PKK-related elements into the field against organizations such as ISIS, the PKK and other affiliated organizations acquired lands to rule and benefited from a windfall, like a poor and unemployed person who won a lottery. Besides, the siege of the town of Kobani, where Kurds live, by the Islamic State (IS) for months, and the fact that PKK elements fought and died in this process, was important for both Kurdish nationalists in Türkiye and Kurdish nationalists in Syria. These events connected the two sides (one for effort, the other for gratitude) (Yeğen, 2021: 328-329).

In the first two decades of the 2000s, new sections of Kurdish citizens in Türkiye joined the Kurdish nationalist movement, which underwent a significant transformation in terms of its discourse, practice and program, and support was provided by voting in the election process from the left and democratic Turkish section, who welcomed this discourse in the West. In the 2000s, the poor Kurds in Kurdish regions, party activists, NGO volunteers, middle-class professionals, white-collar workers and the European diaspora continued to be the main actors, but also the Kurds, who were affected by this wind of change in the Kurdish movement, especially between 2005 and 2015, voted for Kurdish parties in the elections. In 2013, the HDP presidential candidate Selahattin Demirtaş and in the 2015 general elections HDP itself received considerable electoral support from Turkish voters in the west, especially in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir (Yeğen, 2021: 329).

The Kurdish nationalist movement, which started to centralize, entered into a negotiation process with the state after 2009. Negotiations, which included a reform program, the content of which was not very clear and carried out behind closed doors by a limited number of participants, continued until February 2015. This was basically a process aimed at disarming the PKK. Shortly after the collapse of negotiations in the spring of 2015, clashes between the PKK and the Turkish state restarted. After this process, an operation was carried out both against PKK terrorists in the mountains and against people associated with the terrorist organization that waged trench warfare (hendek savaşları) in the East and Southeast. Thus, the PKK suffered a serious defeat both in the mountains and in the city

centers. In addition, an operation was carried out against parties and NGOs acting as the political and social wing of the PKK, and two HDP leaders, deputies, mayors and activists were arrested. Thus, in 2016, the Kurdish nationalist movement suffered a significant defeat (Yeğen, 2021: 329-330).

3.09. AK Party and Kurdish Question: Policies and Kurdish Peace Initiatives

Especially before the 2000s, not only Kurdish identity, but also rhetorical or written expressions such as minority rights and autonomy could be associated with separatism and lead to serious sanctions. However, as we mentioned above when examining the post-1999 Kurdish movement, after the 2000s, this situation has changed relatively, and an environment has emerged where identity, culture and political issues are discussed. This situation is partly the result of the changes made by the Kurdish nationalist movement in its discourse, actions and programs, but also owes to liberalization policies of the AK Party, which came to power in this period (Bahcheli & Noel, 2011: 105-108; Updegraff, 2012: 120). The split of the Fazilet Party into two separate branches as traditionalist and reformist, and the AK Party itself, which formed the reformist part of this party, had a past that was perceived as danger and threat by the *status quo* and suppressed by the regime. Besides, the conservative and religious aspect of this party had a counterpart for the Kurds living in the east, southeast and other parts of Türkiye (Kaya and Whiting, 2019: 237).

In the first terms of AK Party government, the Kurds were largely recognized as a distinct group within Türkiye with their own language, history and cultural traditions. In addition, the state and society accepted the existence of a *Kurdish problem*, but opinions differed on the nature and solution of this problem. However, Kurdish autonomy demands based on the desire to determine their own collective future were accepted by a limited group. The recognition of Kurdish ethnic or cultural identity has brought with it the search for a certain administrative and political concept regarding this problem within the existing borders and within the framework of a liberal constitution (Bahcheli & Noel, 2011: 106; Updegraff, 2012: 120).

In the early years of its rule, the AK Party granted certain rights for broadcasting in Kurdish and teaching Kurdish language. The goal of membership in the European Union also triggered the AK Party to follow different policies than previous governments. In 2005, Erdogan said in a speech that the state made mistakes regarding the Kurdish issue and stated

that Kurdishness should be recognized as a sub-identity by pointing out *"I say to those who say what will happen to the Kurdish problem, as the prime minister of this country, that problem is my problem before anyone else*." The abolition of the death penalty, the release of former Kurdish deputies and the abolition of the state of emergency eased tensions between the state and the Kurds (Bahcheli & Noel, 2011: 110; Dinç Belcher, 2012: 167-168; Köse, 2017: 141; Kaya and Whiting, 2019: 238).

It's important to note that during the AK Party's tenure marked by a moderate approach towards the Kurdish issue, it faced significant resistance from opposition parties and entrenched elements of the existing status quo. The AK Party, unable to establish complete supervision and control over the bureaucracy, military, and other state institutions, proceeded cautiously in addressing the Kurdish issue. This caution stemmed from the opposition it faced from parties like the Republican People's Party (CHP), which essentially upholds the legacy of Atatürk, as well as the Turkish-nationalist Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). Additionally, high-ranking military officials were hesitant to depart from traditional politics and make concessions concerning the Kurdish issue. This resistance influenced the AK Party's approach and decision-making in this regard (Kaya and Whiting, 2019: 238).

The first peace initiatives began in 2005, then continued in 2008 with secret talks with the intelligence service, government representatives and PKK's top leaders. The first step in 2005 was Norway became an intermediary between Türkiye and the PKK, after the former prime minister and foreign minister of Norway, Kjell Magne Bondavik, met with prime minister Erdogan at a meeting. Towards the end of the same year, a second meeting channel was opened. An institute with experience and expertise in Geneva conflict resolution was involved in this peace process and shuttled between the two sides (Çandar, 2019: 255-256).

The public did not have a clear idea of the content of the talks, speeches and negotiations between the state and the PKK. The book 2005-2015 Türkiye-PKK Talks (2005-2015 Türkiye-PKK Talks) written in 2017 by a journalist named Amed Dicle, who is affiliated with the PKK, contains important information about this period. The author admitted that he obtained the material of the book from the PKK. Çandar, a Turkish journalist, as a result of his own research, claims that before the mutual talks in Oslo, meetings were held between the state and the PKK in different places, including Brussels, Geneva, Ankara and Sulaymaniyah in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, between 2005-2008. Kurdish leaders in Iraq were also involved in this process. Former Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, especially during the period of 2006-2008, Iraqi Kurdistan Region President

Massoud Barzani were actively involved in this process between 2006 and 2007 (Çandar, 2019: 256).

The Oslo Process is an important process that started on September 3-4, 2008 within the scope of the AK Party's Peace Initiative, and where Turkish officials and a PKK delegation gathered around the negotiation table for eleven times. Meetings between the state and the PKK were held four times in 2009, three times in 2010, three times in 2011 in Oslo, and in Brussels in 2010 for once. In 2010, the head of Turkish intelligence, Hakan Fidan, was assigned to meet with Abdullah Öcalan. Fidan, as Deputy Undersecretary of the Prime Ministry and personally on behalf of Tayyip Erdoğan, participated in the 5th Oslo talks held on 13-14 September 2009 (Çandar, 2019: 256).

The main motivation of the state in the Oslo process is summarized by Emre Taner's speech, former Head of Turkish Intelligence (2005–2010), in the Parliamentary panel in 2016 below:

> *We [Turkey] were in the Oslo process in order to prevent foreigners from abusing the Kurdish problem. When we've focused at it [the Kurdish issue], we've seen that very many foreign intelligence services were in close contact with the PKK and treating the issue as they like, as befitting their interests, while poor Turkey was watching as a bystander. [Hence] I persuaded the prime minister and other officials that we need to intervene, to remain face-to-face with that group [PKK], because resolving the problem is incumbent upon us, we should not leave it to the others. Their [foreigners'] intention was different. They wanted to carry the [Kurdish] issue to a multilateral international conference for its resolution. What they wanted was to resolve it against our interests. That is the reason why we have been to Oslo. Oslo was not a betrayal, at all. Oslo was an undertaking in order to stop the [spilling of] blood. Secret services enter into a minefield to clean it. That is the raison d'etre of secret services. They open the road for politics to take over. [In Oslo] there was never a protocol agreed upon, neither a signed agreement, nor any contract. It was not more than an experiment for creating a ground on which we could discuss the confidence building measures* (Çandar, 2019: 258).

While the Turkish state did not openly share the talks with the public, grassroots of the PKK was not aware of the Oslo talks, these meetings were only within the extent of

knowledge of twelve people in the executive branch. The PKK's view of the Oslo talks is as follows:

> *the Oslo process has a character that goes much beyond Turkey and the region [Kurdistan and the Middle East], because the intermediary for these talks, the center in Geneva, has the support of the United Nations, United States, the EU and Britain. Therefore, all these Powers were aware of the talks and endorsed the process* (Çandar, 2019: 259).

Despite its failure, the Oslo Process has been as important an effort as the last peace process, which took place from 2012 to 2015. In Oslo, both sides shared the same places in some activities such as meals and breakfast for 22 days, in addition to their official meetings. In this process, both parties were represented by five people. The PKK delegation consisted of two prominent figures from Mount Kandil and three prominent PKK figures from Europe. In mid-2010, the PKK began to despair of the success of the negotiations and lowered its representation. Five MIT (National Intelligence Organisation) personnel took part in the state side. The head of these people was Afet Güneş, the deputy undersecretary, who was in charge of the PKK desk at the MIT for many years. Afterwards, Hakan Fidan, with his new duty as the Head of Turkish National Intelligence, chaired the Turkish delegation and carried out this task until the end of the process (Çandar, 2019: 257).

Çandar (2019: 257) dclaims the assertion that characterizes the Oslo Talks as poorly designed, rushed, and dirty," asserting that this perspective is entirely inaccurate. Instead, he contends that these talks align with the universal principles commonly observed in conflict resolution processes. As outlined by Çandar (2019: 257), the Oslo Talks process saw the fulfillment of several essential prerequisites and settings. These included a reasonably effective preparatory phase characterized by the adherence of both parties to necessary confidentiality, the participation of a reliable third party (though not an absolute requirement for successful negotiation) for mediation or facilitation, a favorable international political environment, and a sequence of meetings between the conflicting parties held in a peaceful setting without external pressures that could jeopardize the peace process.

It is argued that the failure of the Oslo talks lies in the fact that the parties in the negotiation process have not made a real commitment to a political solution. While the state was ideologically unprepared and unwilling to have a comprehensive political solution to the Kurdish question, the Kurdish side did not see a political solution as the only option from the beginning. The third party in the negotiation also played a facilitating function rather

than mediating or arbitrating, although this was important, it did not prevent the failure of negotiations. In short, before and during the negotiations, the necessary and sufficient grounds for confidence-building measures were not established (Çandar, 2019: 257).

The negotiations, which ended with the failure of the Oslo Process, started again due to some regional and national developments. The PKK's Syria-linked PYD (Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat, Democratic Union Party) and its armed wing, the YPG (Yêkineyên Parastina Gel, People's Protection Units) became important actors in the conditions of the Syrian civil war. After the Syrian army withdrew from the Kurdish-inhabited areas of Syria along the 911-kilometer border with Türkiye in July 2012, Kurdish self-rule began to be implemented in three cantons on the Syrian side of the border stretching from the northeast to the northwest. The PKK's capture of a strategic area in this sense was a development that Türkiye should have taken into account. Secondly, a hunger strike started for Abdullah Öcalan by hundreds of PKK members in prisons across the country. Thirdly, Türkiye started to suffer losses due to violence in the east and southeast. These three developments and three future elections (the March 2014 local elections, August 2014 presidential elections, and June 2015 general elections) were influential in Prime Minister Erdogan's decision on a new Peace process (Köse, 2017: 152-153; Çandar, 2019: 259-260).

Thus, after a one-and-a-half-year hiatus, the second peace process began. This process started when Türkiye asked Iraqi President Celal Talabani for mediation, then Talabani met with Türkiye's intelligence chief Hakan Fidan in Berlin in 2013 and, at their request, Talabani contacted the PKK on Mt. Qandil. This second peace process was different from the first one, the first peace process was a process in which international individuals, institutions and foreign governments took part, while the second peace process was a process carried out only by Türkiye and the PKK (Çandar, 2019: 260).

Another distinctive aspect of the Second Peace Process is the public awareness of the negotiation's commencement. During a television program on December 28, 2012, Erdoğan openly disclosed that the National Intelligence Organization had engaged with Abdullah Öcalan to seek a resolution to the Kurdish problem. He emphasized that negotiations with Öcalan were ongoing, stating, "*negotiations with the 'island' (referring to Öcalan) are still in progress because we need results. If we see the light of this, we continue to take steps forward*." This transparency marked a departure from the previous approach and demonstrated a willingness to keep the public informed about the peace process (Köse, 2017: 143-144; Çandar, 2019: 260; Habertük, 2012).

One of the main aspect of the Second Peace Process was that Öcalan *de facto* became a part of the negotiation. Ahmet Türk and Ayla Akat, two members of the Kurdish nationalist party BDP (Peace and Democracy Party, Peace and Democracy Party), went to İmralı Island in early 2013 and met with Öcalan. During this period, very important and unprecedented developments took place regarding the Kurdish issue in Türkiye. Öcalan, who is known as a *baby killer* and a vicious and murderous terror ringleader, became a negotiator. The deputies of the Kurdish party were included in the process. While very simple rhetoric and operational elements were the reason for being imprisoned before, within the scope of this process, the deputies mediated between Mt. Qandil and state officials with the tools and means the state provided itself (Çandar, 2019: 260).

The second peace process took on a very different character when a letter from Abdullah Öcalan was read at a rally with approximately 2 million people on March 21, during Nowruz, a festival that celebrated as the beginning of the Kurdish New Year. In this letter, read in both Turkish and Kurdish, Öcalan emphasized the Kurdish-Turkish unity and most importantly, announcing the end of the armed struggle by saying "*I see it necessary and historically for the PKK to hold a congress to end the 40-year armed struggle against the Republic of Turkey and to determine the political and social strategies and tactics in line with the spirit of the new era*", and he ordered the PKK elements in Türkiye to leave (Köse, 2017: 144; Çandar, 2019: 260; NTV, 2015).

After the 2013 Nowruz Declaration, a very important meeting was held at Dolmabahçe Palace on February 28, 2015. While the government and bureaucracy participated in the meeting, three deputies from HDP also attended. At this meeting, it was mutually announced that within the scope of the solution process, both sides came to an agreement on a memorandum of understanding consisting of 10 articles and in which Öcalan also intervened very actively. (Cicek & Coşkun, 2016, Aljazeera, 2015; Görmüş, 2019).

Ten articles that have been announced to be agreed upon as follows: 1) Definition and content of democratic politics 2) Defining the national and local dimensions of the democratic solution 3) Legal and democratic guarantees of free citizenship 4) The relationship of democratic politics with the state and society and its institutionalization 5) Socio-economic dimensions of the resolution process 6) In the resolution process, the democracy-security relationship should be handled in a way that protects public order and freedoms. 7) Legal solutions and assurances of women, cultural and ecological problems 8) Developing a pluralistic democratic understanding of the concept, definition and recognition of identity 9) Defining a democratic republic, common homeland and nation with democratic

criteria, providing legal and constitutional guarantees in a pluralistic democratic system. 10) A new constitution that aims to internalize all these democratic moves and transformations (Aljazeera, 2015).

While the Second Peace process was met with satisfaction and optimism in many quarters, there were those who hesitated that this process would end with a final and definitive solution. Tezcür stated in a column he wrote in 2013 that the second peace process might not produce a solution for three reasons. The first reason for Tezcür (2013) was that the current conflict was at a level that both sides could tolerate and bear, the chips were not down. Secondly, there are quite a few differences between what the AK Party put forward for disarmament and what the PKK expects from disarmament. It was very unlikely that the solution would come from over these differences. The AK Party's inclusion of Öcalan as part of the negotiation process may not yield the desired result. Because it is not certain that the mountain cadres, who are free outside, will be sensitive and obedient to all of Öcalan's demands and wishes, after all, Öcalan is under state control and in a position quite open to the direction and motivations of the state.

September 20013 justified Tezcür's (2013) predictions and evaluations. On this date, the PKK stopped its withdrawal from inside the country, claiming that the government did not fulfill its commitments and promises and stalled the process, so the second peace process was also suspended and remained only on paper until its collapse in July 2015 (Çandar, 2019: 262). On March 22, 2015, President Erdoğan deepened the pessimism about the fate of the Peace Process by announcing that he did not *approve* the Dolmabahçe Consensus and was unaware of it. Since Erdogan is a very strong leader and it is known that he follows everything in detail, the fact that he announced that the Dolmabahçe process was not within his knowledge both confused people and was not found very convincing. Thereupon, Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınc stated that the President's ignorance of the meeting was nonsense and that all developments were reported to him in detail in advance, which strengthened this tendency (Köse, 2017: 156; Görmüş, 2019: 47). The people involved in the process by the government were not ordinary people, but Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan, Interior Minister Efkan Ala, Group Deputy Chairman of AKP Mahir Ünal. Therefore, it does not make much sense to think that Erdogan was unaware of these talks.

In this process, the general elections were held on 7 June 2015. In the elections, which were entered in a tense atmosphere, the AKP received 40.8 percent of the vote and lost its parliamentary majority for the first time since its establishment on November 3, 2002. The HDP, which was established to replace the BDP and consists of Kurds, the Left and a very

small number of religious Kurds on the other hand, received 13.1 percent of the votes and 80 deputies, thus getting the highest vote in its history. HDP both exceeded the ten percent threshold and achieved a great success by winning 80 seats (Köse, 2017: 148-149; Çandar, 2019: 262). Considering that the number of seats the Turkish nationalist MHP received in this election was 80, the success of HDP becomes more understandable.

The conclusion of the second solution process was significantly influenced by electoral dynamics and Türkiye's administrative, political, and constitutional structure. The initiation of the solution process by the AK Party led to the HDP adopting a more central position. This strategic shift was driven by the consideration that visiting small towns with a high concentration of Turkish nationalists could lead to intense protests or even violent acts against the HDP. As the HDP moved towards a central position, it gained greater visibility, actively participating in television programs and avoiding being portrayed as a bogeyman. This strategic move helped the HDP increase its votes, and this rise in electoral support was perceived as a challenge to the AK Party. Ultimately, both parties were engaged in electoral competition, especially in the east and southeast regions of the country and in major metropolitan cities like Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Antalya, where the Kurdish population is substantial. In essence, the existing administrative and constitutional order necessitated a trade-off relationship between the AK Party and the HDP, impacting their strategic decisions and electoral strategies.

4. ISLAM, NATION AND NATIONALISM: A HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I will initially explore the concepts of Islam, nation, and nationalism. Subsequently, I will explain the concept of the nation in Islam, followed by an examination of the evolution of nationalism within the Islamic world.

4.1. Islam

Islam is the last of the three major monotheistic religions, it consistently presents a complex and significant area of research for every field of social sciences from theology to art. Islam centers around the idea of an essentially unconditional monotheism, but historically different levels of interpretation, from very rigid to more flexible lines, has been emerged in the various regional, linguistic and cultural contexts of Muslim communities.

The absence of a single independent and undisputed religious authority in Islam is a special character of Islam but has also resulted in too many local and cultural divisions involving different ideas and religious affiliations. In this respect, it is possible to say that the history of Islam is also a series of divisions and fragmentation. These fractures are also the reason why different approaches and interpretations are adopted by different communities at the local level. The central divisions within Islam are Sunni, Shia, Ismailis, Zaydis etc. can be understood in this way. In addition, each division, like the Druze example, led to other divisions inside itself that could be contradictory with each other (Lewis, 2003: 225; Leaman & Ali, 2007: 124).

Shia represents the most important break within the Islamic world, dividing the Islamic world into two poles, although these poles are not equal in number and scale. Shia was born after the death of the Prophet of Islam in 632 through the controversies over the caliphate of Ali (the son-in-law of the Prophet of Islam whose lineage is continued by him) and the result of a series of subsequent schisms. On the other hand, the Sunni argued that *the prophets did not leave their successors* and that the authority should be chosen by a body (like a council) formed by Islamic scholars. This situation has led to ongoing tensions between Sunnis and Shiites, and it has spread to both different communities and different geographies (Ahmad, 2002: 45; Leaman & Ali, 2007: 124).

Unlike the mainstream Sunnis, there has been a series of changes in the doctrinal and structural structures of the Shiites as a result of various historical conditions. Especially in the sixteenth century, there was a deep crisis in doctrine between the conservative section, called (ahbadi) and the innovative section (called usuli). Another approach called pietism (religiosity) is based on the immutability of Shiite beliefs. With the Sassanids dominating Iran, Shia became identified with a state, and a high-ranking Shiite clergy emerged, including the Ayatollahs, who were considered interpreters of the Qur'an (Ahmad, 2002: 44-45; Allam, 2015; Ramadan, 2017: 121).

In Shia Islam, there is a hierarchy of authority led by a religious leader called the Ayatollah (sign of God). This such an authority is not only to interpret the Qur'an, but at the same time establishes a consensus throughout the Shiite community with its judgments and interpretations. Although the Iranian Revolution in 1979 made the government and religious institutions think of an interdependent relationship, there are actually some religious institutions within Shiite Islam that are independent of the government. Although the Iranian Revolution is a serious historical event, it is only a revolution based on a certain ideology related to the relationship between religion and government (Allam, 2015; Ramadan, 2017).

In Sunni Islam, on the other hand, civic institutions are few, and the independence of religion from government is seen as the main trend. Unlike Shiite Islam, the authority is not in a certain institution, there is a structure that assigns an important role to jurists (faqihs, scholars of Islamic jurisprudence [fiqh]), and the problems in the society are solved in the axis of the knowledge, views and comments of these jurists. What is considered in the selection of a political and religious leader is that the person to be elected should be the guarantor of the unity of religious communities and have the capacity to solve individual, social and political problems. The election of such a leader is as follows, first the caliph is elected with the legal consensus (icma) in a council (shura) formed by jurists (ulama), and all the members of the society, including the members of this council, owe loyalty (baya) to this leader (caliph). It should be noted that this allegiance includes the condition that the Caliph must obey orders of God. Although such a method is foreseen in the fiqh books (de jure), it could not prevent the passing of the authority from father to son and the existence of dynasties in practice (de facto). However, even if the Sunni belief is shared in such a society, the dynasties did not last long due to ethnic differences, which caused instability for the society (Leaman & Ali, 2007: 18; Ahmad, 2002: 42-43).

The role model for the social and political structure in Sunni Islam is the tradition of prophethood (Sunna Al Nabi). The Medina Period from 622 to 632, which we will refer to

on Islamism, and the Charter of Medina (Dustūr al-Madīnah), which we can call a kind of road map and constitution of that period that regulates relations between Muslims and other religious groups (such as Jews) in Medina, is very important. During this period, the Prophet acted as both a religious leader and a charismatic political leader. Seen by Muslims as an archetype guiding them to solve the fundamental questions of Islam (Sharia), his deeds and sayings formed the basis of the first principles of Islamic sharia, along with the Qur'an, the main source of Islamic law. So much so that in some cases or even his silence in the questions asked, it is a source of judgment and interpretations for Islamic jurists (faqihs). Although this means that the political authority in Sunni Islam is integrated into Muslim life, different ideas in Islam, hesitations and uncertainties about the meanings of some verses in the Qur'an have revealed the necessity of appropriate methods in order to obtain better solutions to various problems that concern all areas in society. Needless to say, these methods must be compatible with both the Qur'an and what deeds and sayings of Prophet, which is called the Sunnah of the Prophet (Allam, 2015).

This is how the four basic concepts on which the legal thought of Islamic Islam is based emerged: ijma (consensus), qiyas (deductive analogy process), ra'y (personal opinion) and ijtihad (interpretation). The last legal method, i.e. ijtihad, which is also called the door of interpretation, has been the source of many conflicts throughout the history of Islam. Ijtihad is basically reasoning, a fiqh scholar to comment on or to verdict about an issue to the extent of his own mental ability and knowledge, whose answer or verdict is not in the Qur'an, in the Sunnah, for which there is no common judgment (consensus-ijma) and qiyas is not possible. It derives from the root of jahd meaning "to make an effort, to use all one's strength, to be persistent, to take trouble, means to put forth the best effort in an issue, to spend all your strength in order to achieve something. Derived from the same root, the words jihad and mujahedea coincide with the concept of ijtihad in the common sense of to make an effort, even if their natures are different (Ruthven, 1997: 83; Lewis, 2003: 226; Apaydın, 2000: 432; Denny, 2016: 189-191; Ramadan, 2017: 37-39). Religious and political authorities prevented the implementation of this method in some periods, due to its personal nature and the thought that it was a weakness of orthodox belief. It is believed that this method is necessary and should be used frequently in order to create a certain institutional and theoretical response in many issues related to the modern world and society (for example, the bank, male-female relations, technology, etc.) that Islam has encountered with the modernization process (Allam, 2015).

While there are many schools of law in Sunni Islam that use these legal (juridical) methods to make provisions in worship, social life and many other areas, but two kinds of schools are generally accepted today. The first kind of school are schools of theology or aqidah (creed). These schools put forward different views on the principles of religion towards belief, such as tawhid, destiny, faith-deed relationship. Maturidiyya and Ash'ariyya are two main schools of schools of theology (Ruthven, 1997: 61; Üzüm, 2004: 527)

The second one is called as schools of jurisprudence (fiqhi schools). The emergence of these schools and the use of these provisions have varied depending on the historical and cultural tradition. The local context is also very effective in the emergence of different schools. Today, these schools are located in different parts of the Islamic world. These schools are named for the jurists who founded them: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi and Hanbali schools. Hanaf School was founded by Abu Hanifah (699-767) an Persian jurist. It is considered to be a liberal school as it conducts a reasoning-based method through analogy. Türkiye, India, China and the Balkans are main regions that its provisions applied. Maliki School was founded by a jurist from Medina, the Imam Malika (711-795). It is based on the method of consensus for its provisions which can be used by a small number of jurists. It is common in the Maghreb, North Africa, northern Egypt, Sudan, West Africa, Spain, and (during Muslim domination) southern Italy. The Shafi School, founded by Imam Shafi (767-820), mainly defines like a duty to verdict about a particular problem at a certain time by the common opinion of Islamic scholars, and does not use other methods of reasoning much. It is common in southern Egypt, Hedjaz (the current border region between Yemen and Saudi Arabia), East Africa, Palestine, and southern India. The Kurds who are the subject of our study generally belong to this school. Finally, the most common school is the Hanbali school, also known as the most orthodox Sunni school. The founder of this school is Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780–855). This school is characterized by a very strict traditionalism, it is based on the Qur'an and Hadith, it does not use either personal opinion or interpretation. This school is common in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and various parts of Egypt and Iraq. It is the school that the Islamic fundamentalism movement mostly belongs to and tries to spread (Lewis, 2003: 226; Üzüm, 2004: 527; Denny, 2016: 195-196; Ramadan, 2017: 99-100).

4.2. Nation

As it is a social formation composed of different elements (language, faith, common history, sense of community, political and territorial bonds) it is difficult to define nation. Barrett and Davis provide a definition of a nation as a named human community that resides in its historical homeland, shares a common history, possesses a collective mass public culture, holds myths of common ancestry, shares symbols, traditions, and customs, and exhibits self-awareness as a nation. In his classic definition, Ernest Renan referred to a nation as "*a soul, a spiritual principle*" and existed as a daily plebiscite, just as the existence of the individual is a perpetual affirmation of life (Tartakovsky, 2011: 1850).

Nation is Latin origin which means nasci-to be born. In its first usage, it was understood as *community of origin*, was used to refer to a group of people from the same geographic/linguistic region in the Middle Ages. Over time, the meaning of the word nation changed and took its present form as the human community, which is the ultimate addressee and bearer of political sovereignty in any country. When we look at its first usage, it is seen that the word nation means a concrete historical community, a sense of identity and a reflection of the natural order. The second and modern meaning is understood as a rational structure established by citizens coming together voluntarily.

Besides, Greenfeld (1992) states that the development of the term nation has historically passed through nine distinct stages. The Latin word, nasci-to be born, which was mentioned above and used to express a group of foreigners in the first period. In the second stage, the word nation was used to denote student communities coming from the same geographical or linguistic regions. University life in the Middle Ages had its own unique structure, similar student societies acted together and took the same side in scholastic debates and developed common views. This actually also determined the meaning of the word nation in the third stage. Because in the third stage, nation gained the meaning of a community of ideas and purposes. Thus, as universities send representatives to judge serious religious decisions, it started to be used for different parties in the e*cclesiastical republic.* In the fourth stage of the word nation, it was associated with more distinguished people and thus to be identified with the representatives of cultural and political authority or a political, cultural and then social elite. In the 16th century, the English word nation began to be used not only for a certain elite group, but also for the general public, and in the fifth stage, it became equivalent and synonymous with the word people. According to Greenfeld (1992), this semantic transformation is the introduction of the word nation into the way we know it today.

The word continued to develop in the next period to mean populace, country, sovereign people.

In the ethnicist paradigm, nation is a human community that is connected to each other with the basic ties that have existed since ancient times on the basis of blood ties, race, language, religion, tradition, religious affiliations. The belonging has not been *acquired* later, but internal. In the modernist approach, nation is a social formation that emerges through the transition from the traditional/agricultural community to the modern industrial societies. In this social formation the sense of belonging is *acquired* later, not internal (Dieckhoff, 2015).

Some scholars evaluate the nation from a state-centered point of view and to argue that the nation emerged with the rise of the states. Giddens (1984: 116):

> *By a nation, I refer to a collectivity existing within a clearly demarcated territory, which is subject to a unitary administration, reflexively monitored both by the internal state apparatus and those of other states... A nation, as I use the term here, only exists when a state has a unified administrative reach over the territory over which its sovereignty is claimed.*

Haas (1964: 465) makes use of the Gemeinschaft (community) and Gesellschaft (society) conceptualization that Tönnies used in the transition from traditional society to modern society, and states that in the modernization process, the nation fulfills traditional functions in modern society:

> *The nation is a synthetic Gemeinschaft. In the mass setting of modem times, it furnishes the vicarious satisfaction of needs that have previously been met by the warmth of small, traditional, face-to-face social relations. As social life has been transformed by industrialization and social mobilization into something resembling a Gesellschaft based on interest calculations, the nation and nationalism continue to provide the integrative cement that gives the appearance of community.*

4.3. Islam and Nation

The word used in Islam world as the equivalent of the term nation is millet. Millet has Hebrew and Aramaic origin and means *melel* (to speak) and *mille* means *word, vocable*. In this context, millet, derived from the root *imlal* meaning *to dictate, to write through recitation* in Arabic, is based on something heard and read. it was used for *religion*, and the word was also given the meaning of the path followed, the way to be followed. In this context, al-milletü'l-İslâmiyye (al-milletü'l-Muhammediyye), el-milletü'l-Yehûdiyye, el-milletü'n-Nasrâniyye or milletü'l-İslâm, milletü İbrâhîm, milletü'l -Mesîh (milletü'n-Nasrâniyye), milletü Yehûd (milletü'l-Yehûdiyye), milletü'l-Macûs, milletü's-Sâbie, milletü'l-hak, milletü't-tawhîd, milletü'l-qufr refers to certain religions. The word, probably later influenced by the meaning attributed to it socially, was transferred to Turkish and Persian as the equivalent of the concept of *nation* in the West in the modern period, and gained a completely sociological and political content in these languages and so lost its religious content in Islamic literature. (Şentürk, 2005: 64).

In the Qur'an, nation is mentioned in fifteen places in the meaning and context of religion, *the religion of Abraham* (means *the only true, monotheistic religion*) in seven places of these fifteen, also the religion of the heathens; the Christian and Jewish religion. In the hadiths, the word millet is also used in the meaning of *innate characteristics, nature,* besides its meaning (i.e., religion) in the Qur'an. Islamic jurists use the definition as the principles that Allah has set for His servants in His books and with the language of His prophets synonymously with religion and shari'ah, but a more secondary point of view is also observed. Islamic philosophers, like Al-Farabi, on the other hand, define it as opinion and behavior according to the conditions set by the chief administrator of a community (Şentürk, 2005: 65; Ursinus, 2012: 61)

4.4. Nationalism

Nationalism is generally defined as a political doctrine or ideological movement that instrumentalizes culture or ethnicity for political ends. Therefore, it emphasizes the importance of a certain piece of land, a common past and cultural unity shared by all. As a political ideology, nationalism combine all these claims, and generates and expresses them for the purposes of certain groups. (Metreveli and Polyakova, 2015).

Gellner (1983: 1) explains nationalism as a process in history which based on a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent. According to Gellner, ethnic bonds, connections, or shared cultural elements from historical backgrounds aren't obligatory for the formation of a nation. Nationalism has the ability to cultivate these affiliations and employ legitimacy mechanisms that can transcend political boundaries and the ethnic makeup of the populace residing within those borders (Gellner 1983: 85Gellner underscores the importance of perception and culture as fundamental elements in comprehending nations. According to him, for individuals to be considered part of the same nation, they must share a common culture—consisting of a system of ideas, signs, associations, and behavioral norms—and mutually acknowledge each other as belonging to the same nation (Gellner, 1983: 7).

Gellner (1983: 32-33) draws attention to the importance of an official and common language.

> *The paradigm of work is no longer ploughing, reaping, thrashing... It generally involves exchanging communication with other people, ormanipulating the controls of a machine... Most jobs, if not actually involving work with people, involve the control of buttons or switches or levers which need to be understood; and are explicable, once again, in some standard idiom intelligible to all comers. For the first time in human history, explicit and reasonable precise communication becomes generally, pervasively used and important*

A central and administrative education system is also essential for the development of official and common language for both the elite and the public.

> *The level of literacy and technical competence, in a standardized medium, a common conceptual currency, which is required of members of this society if they are to be properly employable and enjoy full and effective moral*

> *citizenship, is so high that it simply cannot be provided by the kin or local units, such as they are. It can only be provided by something resembling a modern 'national' educational system* (Gellner, 1983: 34)

In a nutshell, Gellner (1983) states that an industrialized economy led to the birth of nationalism in Europe. Nationalism is complete when a certain group of people share the same language and culture. The rise of nation-states made possible by the intertwining of economy, culture and politics like never before.

Eric Hobsbawm (1990: 10) explains the rise of nationalism in a similar manner with Gellner by noting nations exist as a function of or in the context of a particular stage of technological and economic development. The succinct argument of the division of humanity into autonomous nationals was essentially economic is another expression of this idea (Hobsbawm, 1990: 28). Perception is important for Hobsbawm as for Gellner. He states that awareness of belonging to a political and cultural group is very important. Hobsbawm also argues the significance of an official language advanced through education and administrative system (Hobsbawm, 1990: 62).

Anthony D. Smith defines nationalism as an ideological movement aimed at achieving and preserving autonomy, unity, and identity for a population, with some of its members perceiving it as an existing or potential nation.(Smith 2009: 61).

Anderson (2006) argues that the nation is an *imagined community*. It is the invention and creation of a nation that did not exist in the past, not, so to speak, waking the sleeping beauty with a kiss. Anderson explains the origins of nationalism similarly to Gellner and Hobsbawm. The spread of print capitalism coincided with the development of a common and official language and the development of a bureaucratic state. Print capitalism, common language and bureaucratic state led to the development of an imagined community and to the birth of the nation state (Anderson, 2006: 46). The three developments we have mentioned have increased the level of literacy, people have learned about their nation by reading newspapers and books, supported national movements and gathered around an ideal.

There are three distinct approaches to understanding the historical roots of nationalism. The first is the primordialist/perennialist paradigm, positing that nationality is an innate aspect of human nature, akin to basic emotions and senses like speech, sight, or smell. According to this view, nations have existed since an ancient and untraceable time. The second approach, modernist in nature, asserts that nationalism is a modern phenomenon closely linked to significant sociopolitical and economic transformations occurring in the

late eighteenth century. Lastly, the third paradigm, known as ethnosymbolism, seeks a middle ground between primordialism and modernism. It explores the genesis, persistence, and evolution of nationalism and ethnicity by referencing enduring values and institutions such as myths, symbols, memories, and traditions that have endured for centuries.

Primordialism asserts that nationality is an inherent and fundamental aspect of human beings, akin to basic emotions and sensations, suggesting that nations have existed since an ancient and indeterminate time. It has been widely embraced, especially by historians, aligning with the general perception of nation and nationalism held by the average person. The term primordial refers to something ancient, originating from the earliest times, or serving as the foundational basis for further development. Edward Shils is credited with introducing the term primordial to describe familial relationships, emphasizing the significance of blood ties and relational grounds in defining primordial attachments. Clifford Geertz's concept of givenness highlights the compelling and inherent influence of factors like birth into a particular community, language, or social practices (Özkırımlı, 2017: 51).

Primordialism encompasses four distinct approaches: nationalist, sociobiological, culturalist, and perennialist. The nationalist approach views nationality as an innate aspect of human existence, comparable to physical traits, placing belonging to a national community above other affiliation. The sociobiological approach, represented by Pierre van der Berghe, emphasizes genetic similarities as a vital factor in the formation of nations, akin to a super family. The culturalist approach, influenced by Edward Shils and Clifford Geertz, underscores the role of perceptions and cultural ties, including religion, in shaping ethnic and national identity. Perennialism posits that nations have always existed in some form throughout history, presenting the nation as a modern rendition of ancient ethnic communities. Additionally, the perennialist perspective recognizes the antiquity of nations, suggesting their eternal and permanent nature. It proposes that nations have always existed, albeit challenging precise identification. Perennialists argue that while nationalism is a modern and ideological phenomenon, the concept of the nation is a modern adaptation of ancient ethnic communities. This approach delineates two versions: continuous perennialism, emphasizing cultural continuities over centuries, and recurrent perennialism, positing that the concept of the nation is a recurring form of unity and collective identity throughout history, regardless of specific nations emerging and disappearing. The distinction between these versions is not always clear (Özkırımlı, 2017: 53-60)

The second approach, modernism is a counter to the primordialist view that sees nationalism as innate and ancient in human societies. It argues that nations and nationalism

emerged recently due to modern processes like capitalism, industrialization, centralized states, urbanization, and secularization. The modernist paradigm emphasizes that these conditions only existed in the last two centuries, making nations a sociological necessity in the age of nationalism. It presents a chronological thesis, asserting that nations and nationalism are historically new phenomena, and a structural thesis, claiming their emergence in the modern period is a sociological necessity.

Özkırımlı (2017) classifies modernist theories into three categories based on economic, political, or socio-cultural transformations. Economic transformations included economic factors that are highlighted in the emergence of nation and nationalism in the modern period. Scholars like Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson emphasize this perspective. Tom Nairn's uneven development approach attributes nationalism to historical processes in the world political economy between the 18th century and the present. It views nationalism as a reaction to capitalist development. Michael Hechter's internal colonial model explains unequal exchange and exploitation within a state, contributing to nationalism (Özkırımlı, 2017: 83-92).

Political transformations examine the rise of the modern bureaucratic state, suffrage expansion, elite power struggles, and changes in wars between countries. Scholars like John Breuilly, Paul R. Brass, and Eric J. Hobsbawm analyze nationalism as a form of politics, often associated with the acquisition and use of state power, as well as the instrumentalization of ethnic and national identities by political elites (Özkırımlı, 2017: 93-105).

Social/Cultural Transformations included social and cultural factors that are emphasized in the emergence of nation and nationalism. Ernest Gellner characterizes nationalism as a modern political principle, arguing that it invents nations where they did not exist. Benedict Anderson introduces the concept of an *imagined community*, portraying the nation as a political entity with imagined borders and a shared culture. Miroslav Hroch links nation formation to broader processes of social transformation, highlighting phases of national activism and mass movements. The emergence of nation and nationalism is depicted as a product of the modern era, influenced by economic, political, and socio-cultural changes. Nationalism is viewed as a complex phenomenon deeply intertwined with the development of modern society and its structures (Anderson, 1991: 6-7; Özkırımlı, 2017: 115-123).

Ethnosymbolism is a theory that challenges modernist views on nationalism by emphasizing the significance of ethnic background and culture in explaining nationalism. It

rejects primordialism and criticizes modernist approaches as inadequate. Key ethno-symbolist theorists include John Armstrong, Anthony D. Smith, and John Hutchinson, who seek a middle ground between primordialism and modernism. They argue that modern nations are a continuation of pre-modern ethnic communities, differing in level of development but not in type. Ethnosymbolism explores the role of values and institutions like myths, symbols, memories, and traditions in the formation, continuity, and change of nationalism and ethnicity. Anthony D. Smith's main thesis highlights the importance of preexisting ethnic components in understanding modern nations and national identity, defining a nation as a named human population sharing historical territory, common myths, memories, culture, economy, and legal rights. Smith identifies six characteristics of an ethnie, which serves as a basis for modern nationhood. He also distinguishes between 'lateral' and 'vertical' ethnies, impacting the formation of territorial nationalisms and ethnic nationalisms respectively. John A. Armstrong emphasizes a long historical perspective (la longue durée) to study nationalism, focusing on the historical continuity of the nation and nationalism. He views ethnic identity formation through a time dimension spanning centuries, similar to the longue durée perspective of the Annales school of French historiography (Özkırımlı, 2017: 154-166).

Table 1: Theories of Nationalism

Scholar	**Concept**	**Definition**
Hans Kohn	consciousness, state of mind	Nationalism is a state of mind, in which the supreme loyalty of the individual is felt to be due the nation-state."
Hans Kohn	Western and Eastern Nationalism	Western nationalism: a softer form of nationalism characterized by a rational unity formed by citizens bound to each other in a shared country, linked by common laws and principles.

		Eastern Nationalism: the type of nationalism that associates the nation with national character and unique features such as common culture and ethnicity,, often expressing more hateful forms of nationalism.
Elie Kedourie	Doctrine	Humanity is divided into nations that have naturally emerged throughout history and are recognized based on their differences, and the only legitimate form of governance is for these nations to govern themselves (self-determination).
Ernest Gellner	High Culture	the imposition of a common high culture, previously having many subcultures, on a society, which unifies the society and makes it homogeneous, a process that primarily occurs in industrial societies. This high culture gives rise to nationalism, and nationalism, in turn, forms the concept of a nation.
Eric Hobsbawm	An ideology created nation with invention of tradition	an ideological invention in capitalist societies, enabling

		the creation of new nations and states through the invention of the past, with a mythical historical continuity and a cultural purity project, following the destruction of old cultures.
Benedict Anderson	Imagined Community	a particular type of cultural construct that was created around the idea of an imagined national community toward the end of the 18th century.
Anthony Smith	Ideological movement	an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation
Tom Nairn	Underdevelopment (nationalism as a theory of anti-imperialism)	Nationalism is a product of capitalism (its uneven development between core and peripheral countries). Nationalism is the response of underdeveloped countries to underdevelopment and imperialism.
Michael Hechter	internal colonialism	the sentiment of feeling like a distinct nation due to the economic disadvantage (poverty) of ethnic groups that haven't received

		sufficient government investment or assistance, resulting in their sociological inability to integrate with the dominant (oppressive) culture. It is the emergence of a cultural group and solidarity (ethnic) consciousness, leading to a desire for independence (separatism). Therefore, it serves as a tool for the oppressed against the oppressors.
Liah Greenfeld	status anxiety and ressentiment	status anxiety and ressentiment of the new elites who claim to be different from the old elites or their neighbors.
Charles Tilly	Centralization	Nationalism is a means of centralization and unification that accompanies the establishment of a state.
Craig Calhoun	Discourse	the production of a cultural understanding and rhetoric that leads people worldwide to contemplate their aspirations within the framework of a nation and national identity, as well as the production of nationalist language and thought forms

		in specific contexts and traditions.
Michael Bilig	Banal nationalism	the one that constantly evokes and produces a sense of us in a way that people cannot realize, through symbols and discourse such as daily newspapers, news, television programs, flags in government offices, while living daily life in the states with established order.

Source: Erdem, 2020a: 46-47

4.5. Islam and Nationalism

Kavmiyya comes from *kawm* a term used for tribal origin to a group of people that claims to have (or share) a common ancestor or a tribe from a single ancestry. Any person's tribe is a genealogically determined or mythologically and folklorically depicted a group of people. Over time and especially today, kawmiyya concerns the nationalist movement among the Ottoman-dominated Arabs in the Fertile Crescent, which was conquered by the Allies in the World War I. The term has been widely used in other parts of the Arabic-speaking world since the Second World War. After the middle of the 20th century, the kavmiyya became an instrument for a so-called economic, political and social Arab revolution and also for the Arab nationalist movement (Vatikiotis et all, 2012: 781). Kavmiyya provided two different possibilities among the Arabs. First of all, it created a national identity-oriented reaction movement for the Arabs who gathered around the idea of ummah during the Ottoman rule and were isolated from the idea of nationality. It is also worth mentioning here that the Arabs were one of the main Muslim elements that formed the Empire, which was called *milleti-hakime* (sovereign nation) in the Ottoman period, and it should be noted that Arabs were more specifically recognized by the Ottomans as *kavm-i necip* (noble kavm-people) because the prophet of Islam was also an Arab. Secondly, after

the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1920, there was a voice against the regional-political arrangements prepared by the European powers at the desk and applied to the regions. In this respect, it has always carried the potential of an integrative power (Vatikiotis et all, 2012: 782; Özcan, 2020: 84-87).

Arab intellectuals, especially Syrian, Lebanese and Iraqi politicians, teachers, journalists, writers and publishers, have made an effort to lay out the theoretical and philosophical foundations and historical and ideological assumptions for Arab nationalism since the Second World War. the Ba'th (Baath) party founded in 1943 and the smaller radical Arab youth movements in Iraq and Syria in the 1930s have come to the fore in a more activist and political way. In 1955, Egyptian Gamal Abdel Nasser (Nasser) embraced the kawmiyya discourse with the desire to strengthen his country in the Arab World and the Middle East, and managed to stay on the agenda to a great extent with his political charisma (Vatikiotis et all, 2012: 781, Zubaida, 2004: 410; Anscombe, 2014: 272-273).

Arab nationalism deals with the importance and necessity of uniting the Arab nation (umma in Arabic) under a single, organic and dominant political body, although Arab regions are de facto divided into separate states by the intervention and program of the world states. Elements such as the Islamic faith, Arabic language, Islamic culture, and a common history are thought to bind the members of the Arab nation together. For them, Islam was the national culture of the Arabs. Arab nationalism formed its strategy not in the context of economic and other practical elements, but rather on religious, cultural and socio-political reasons such as religious feelings, common identity and the desire for political unity. These elements have been the most fundamental aspects, variants and components of the Arab nationalism, Arabism and Pan-Arabism movement in the 20th century, namely the kawmiyya (Cabiri, 2011: 20-21; Vatikiotis et all, 2012: 781; Anscombe, 2014: 212-213). In 1936, the Palestinian problem, which emerged as an Arab-Jewish struggle in Palestine under British mandate, created an external stimulus for Arab nationalism. However, since then the movement's aspirations and goals for unity have not been realized, the uncertainty regarding the meaning, significance and mode of existence of kawmiyya and its failure to become a monolithic motor power continue and the Arab world is still in the form of separate states (Vatikiotis et all, 2012: 781, Zubaida, 2004: 410-411).

As a secular concept by nature, nationalism takes the whole of European history behind it. It has been filtered from the ongoing philosophical debates and political movements about secularism and authority in the state and society in connection with the tradition of the Christian religion from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, the Reformation

and the Enlightenment. Kavmiyya, on the other hand, lacked such experience in the context of Arab secularism, could not free itself from Islamic interpretations and restrictions, and tried to evaluate Islam as a mortar rather than challenging it. As in the rest of the world, the definition that we can use as a basis for Arab states is territorial Kavmiyya, which tries to deal with all aspects of Arab nationalism, is obviously a self-contradictory and unrealistic political doctrine. It's not just about the situation of Arab nation being divided into several states, either. There is no complete and perfect nation-state structure in the world that is associated with only one nation in all aspects. It is also difficult to obtain a satisfactory criterion of nationalism on the basis of race, language, religion, culture and history alone. Yet, like many forms of nationalism, the kawmiyya remains a powerful doctor and a political myth (Vatikiotis et all, 2012: 782).

When ethnic, linguistic, and cultural nationalism entered the Ottoman lands and created a wave of excitement among firstly non-Muslim religious communities, then the Arabs, Muslim essential elements, It is not possible to say that the same thing happened for the Ottoman Turks, at least in the beginning. There are two interrelated reasons for this. First of all, although some strong movements regarding the national self-consciousness were observed among the Turks between the 9th and 15th centuries, after accepting Islam, this fell behind, and they became strongly attached to Islam and undertook the responsibility of spreading Islam to the whole world. For this reason, nationalism did not find a serious response at the beginning. Secondly, Ottoman Turks were formerly aware of Western European patriotism, but did not create ethnic or linguistic damages to maintaining Ottoman unity and power (Vatikiotis et all, 2012: 790). This may have caused them to fail to analyze the risks that new wave of nationalism would pose.

Interest in Turks as Turks was first awakened by Arthur Lumley Davids (1811-32) with the publication of a Grammar of the Turkish Language in London in 1832. This new interest in Turcology developed through the work of the famous Hungarian Turcologist Arminius Vambéry (1832-1913) and the French Léon Cahun. The reasons for the interest in Turcology include the search of Hungarian scholars to discover a common heritage with the Turks as a counterweight to Pan-Slavism, the Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia, and the role of intellectuals exiled from the Turkish and Tatar regions of Russia. All these started to find a response among the Turks, albeit to a lesser extent (Vatikiotis et all, 2012: 790-791).

After the non-Muslim peoples of the empire gained their independence, when national movements started among the Muslim subjects like the Arabs, the way for a real Turkish nationalism based on a common race, language and culture was opened to some

extent. among Ottoman Turks who touched on this subject was historian Ahmed Vefik Pasha (1823-91), Süleyman Pasha (1838-1932), first Ottoman Turk to write about pre-Islamic Turks, Fuad Pasha (1814-1869), Cevdet Pasha (1822 – 1895) and Necib Asım (1861-1935), who was the first Turkish Turkologist in real sense (Vatikiotis et all, 2012: 791).

However, the general interest in nationalism among the Ottoman Turks began with the Young Turk Period and the shrinking of the Empire with the gradual decline of its lands. It can be said that this interest has started to develop seriously with the emergence of some journals, associations and other institutions: The Turkish Society (A Turkish Society), which was established in 1908 to examine Turkish culture in many aspects, and the Türk Yurdu magazine (Turkish Homeland), which was published by Yusuf Akcuraoglu and developed ideas of Political Turkism, and many associations established to examine and promote Turkish Culture, such as the Türk Ocakları (Turkish Hearths). By the end of the First World War, it began to be accepted in Ottoman Turkish society that movements such as Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism or Turanism were either meaningless or impossible to implement. The idea of Ottomanism (ittihâd-ı anâsır) is a Tanzimat project of Young Ottomans and an attempt to bring all different religious (Muslim-non-Muslim) and ethnic (Turkish-non-Turkish) groups of the Empire under a new nation, Ottomans with granting equal rights to all, regardless of their religion. However, this idea became virtually impossible due to developments such as economic collapse, territorial losses in the Balkans, the independence of non-Muslim ethnic groups, and the influx of immigrants from the Caucasus and the Balkans. Pan-Islamism, which can be called a kind of Muslim nationalism, aimed to bring together all Muslim ethnic groups living in the Ottoman lands under the identity of the caliph of the Ottoman sultan, but this idea could not be put into practice due to the Arab rebellions (Özcan, 2020: 85-86). The Turanism movement, which aims at the cultural and political unity of all Turkish/Turkic people within and outside empire and takes place in strings of Ziya Gökalp's poem as "*vatan ne Türkiye'dir Türklere, ne Türkistan; Vatan büyük ve müebbet bir ülkedir: Turan."*(means *To a Turk the homeland is neither Turkey nor Turkistan. But a Big and Eternal country that is Touran*), proved its impossibility, especially with the enormous defeats in the Caucasus during the First World War. But the Turks had to justify their national unity against the Allies. The focus of Ottoman Turkish society was the liberation of Anatolia from the invading Christian forces. Religious arguments were still a valid tool to mobilize people, but a new and second impetus appeared, such as land-territory, that the Turks' lands were in danger (Vatikiotis et all, 2012: 791, Landau, 1990: 9).

Nationalism with the emphasis of land/territory that emerged in the War of Independence was tried to be strengthened and justified by encouraging historical research to show that Anatolia was actually the former lands of the Turks during the Republican period after the war. This type of nationalism, which also has a romantic nature as a commitment to the land, national folklore, popular tradition and national solidarity, actually had a very strict secular understanding, it was a secular nationalism, the abolition of the caliphate, which meant the leadership of the Ottoman Turks in the Muslim world, and the abolition of Islamic institutions, many changes in the social and political life strongly proved this. Although the secular, cultural and territorial nationalism of Atatürk's period was seen as the dominant type of nationalism in Türkiye after the Second World War, there are quite controversial, contradictory, self-contradictory approaches among many different groups' understanding of secularism and nationalism. (Vatikiotis et all, 2012: 791).

The idea of nation entered Persian in the 19th century as a result of the influence of Western Europe. Before that, *nation*, *nationality*, *nationalism* and *nationalist* did not have the exact meaning, although various words were used for the people, groups and communities, none of them were in the content to mean what we mentioned. Until then, the words umma, raiyyat (the flock-subject), kawm and taifa, and watan were used in Persian at certain times. However, most of them had tribal implications, none of them were used to mean a community of people who shares the same language, religion, common interests, feelings and wills under the same government on a defined territory, even though some of these terms refer to one or more of these values and institutions, but not to all of them. The word millet became the equivalent of the *nation* in the 19th and 20th centuries, following a similar adventure in Turkish, firstly in reference with religious groups and then to denote a political nation (Vatikiotis et all, 2012: 785).

Iran, which remained a part of the Muslim states from its conquest by the Muslims until the rise of the Safavids in the 16th century, emerged as a land state for the first time after this date. With the adoption of Islamic Shi'ism as the official religion, Iran remained a separate state from the rest of the Islamic world and the sense of national unity against Ottoman Empire dominated this state. The conflict between these two empires, on the other hand, came to the fore not as being different nations (Turko-Persian), but as an expression of sectarian division (Sunni-Shi'i) to a large extent. The Shi'ism sect, which was adopted by the previously people mostly deprived of property and privileges, became, so to speak, a flag of Persian nationalism during the Safavid period. But Shi'ism attitudes towards political power is obviously not something that will come together very well with the concept of

political nationality of Persian nationalism. Because Shi'ism has a theological belief that the real king is the Hidden Imam, and that all rulers usurp his right in some way (Özcan, 2020: 87).

By the second decade of the 18th century, the intervention of Western European countries and Russia began to be felt as a threat to Muslims and territories of Islamic world. Against foreign domination, Iran sought a solution in military modernization, as Türkiye did, so modernization began in the military field. Thus nationalism, patriotism and modernism in Persia became closely interwoven. The years of World War I are the period when romantic Persian nationalism emerged, and pre-Islamic Persian culture and history were frequently highlighted. This trend became more evident when Riza Khan came to the throne of Iran in 1921.The occupation of Iran by the British and Russians during World War II increased the nationalist feelings. After Iran came under American influence after the war, an opposition movement was formed under the leadership of Mohammad Mossadeq, consisting of nationalist, left and conservative tendencies. After the military coup in 1953, when Reza Shah Pahlavi completely dominated the administration, Persian nationalism in Iran developed as official state nationalism due to the unique situation of the country (Vatikiotis et all, 2012: 786; Özcan, 2020: 87).

5. POLITICALLY-ORIENTED RELIGIOUS KURDS

In this chapter, I will begin by providing a concise overview of political Islam. Subsequently, I will take a comprehensive examination of Zehra, Hüda Par, and Azadi, whose members were interviewed during the course of this dissertation. I will use group for Zehra, party for Hüda Party and movement for Azadi. I will classify these organizations as politically oriented based on the data I gathered during my field studies, as extensively discussed in my thesis.

The definition of political Islam is a broad category of analysis used for Islamic activism in the public sphere. Political Islam is an ideology that leverages the principles of Islam to advocate for the establishment of an Islamic political, legal, and socioeconomic framework within Muslim societies. Adherents of Political Islam view Islam as not only a spiritual belief system but also as a comprehensive political and state theory, insisting on the inseparability of religion and politics. The overarching objective of Islamism is the formation of a society governed and shaped by Sharia, the Islamic legal system. Consequently, the manipulation and restructuring of state institutions are considered a strategic means—albeit just one among several—to achieve this goal, rather than an end in itself (Eligür, 2015).

However, the concept of political Islam has been criticized in many ways. First of all, when the words *political* and *Islam* are formed as a phrase, it is assumed that these two are separate from each other. However, this creates an artificial distinction by ignoring the fact that Islam and politics are intertwined with each other, and that politics is inherent in Islam (din wa da dawla). As political Islamists claim, Islam can provide a theory of politics and state (Eligür, 2015). It is also argued that this concept attributes an illegitimate extension of the Islamic tradition outside of its religious domain (while, historically, the Islamic tradition was included in the religious domain) (Rosse, 2017). Boubekeur and Roy (2012) highlight the acknowledgment that political Islam encompasses a political ideology with an emphasis on establishing and controlling an Islamic State. However, they argue that Islam has inherently been political, asserting that associating Islam with politics is not exclusive to Islamism.

The origins of political Islam can be traced back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Movements such as Wahhabi in Arabia, Sanusi in Libya, and Mahdism in Sudan emerged in response to moral decay and religious corruption in Muslim society. The rise of Europe through modernization and industrialization, along with its military, economic,

political, and cultural dominance in Islamic lands, fueled the development of political Islam into a more visible, politically active, and anti-colonial movement. Political Islam represents an ideological formula that asserts religion's role extends beyond the private lives of individuals, shaping not only personal conscience but also the political system and all aspects of life. This perspective fully emerged in the twentieth century, encapsulated Islam is not merely a faith to be disseminated through proclamations; it is a comprehensive and manifest path, representing a liberating movement aimed at emancipating all of humanity (Ayoob 2009; Ayubi 1991; Esposito 1998; Roy 1994).

Political Islam as anti-western colonialism in Muslim countries perceived their rulers as corrupt who enforced man-made laws instead of enforcing God's laws. According to political Islamists, nationalism and socialism are unsuccessful secular ideologies that do not fulfill their promises. The Islamists aimed to spread the system they believed to be true Islam by establishing an appropriate state structure, science, and technology structure, and to rule the society with Sharia as the sole legal system (Rosse, 2017). This order of society will be in the form of the transfer of the first periods of Islam, called Asr-ı Saadet (means the age of happiness, like golden age) to the modern world. While Sunni Muslims generally associate Asr-ı Saadet with the time of Prophet Muhammad and the first four caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali), this interpretation is not universally shared among all Islamic sects, especially considering the tumultuous rule of the last two caliphs. Therefore, there exist varying perspectives regarding the scope and significance of Asr-ı Saadet (Eligür, 2015; Ayubi, 1991).

In political Islam, the principles of the state to be established according to Islamic principles should be as follows (Eligür, 2015, Lewis, 2018, Roy, 1994)

1. *Hakimiyya* which means God is the only sovereign. This principle is rooted in the fourth verse of the Quranic chapter Al-Yusuf (Q12:40) as Sovereignty belongs to none but Allah. Additionally, some contemporary organizations, such as Hizbut Tahrir, categorically reject democracy and label it as a blasphemous regime based on their interpretation. They go to the extent of declaring that those who participate in democratic elections are considered as committing an act of disbelief. "*Democracy is a system of Kufr (ťo be faithless)' It is forbidden to adopt, implement or call for it* " (Zallom, 1995; Kar, 2017: 149-150).

2. State is defined as community of believers who are bound to each other by the consciousness and bond of common faith of Islam (*umma*)

3. *Sharia,* based on the Qur'an and hadith, is the only source of law, regulates the social and political structure, and binds both the ruler and the ruled.

4. Rulers are responsible for establishing, executing, and implementing an Islamic order. It will encourage Muslims to do good things and forbid them to do bad things. This is rooted in the principle of e*njoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong* (al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-n-nahy ʿani-l-munkar). This charges believers to practice these two duties. This principle is revealed in the Quran and hadith semantically the same or similar.

5. As Quranic prescription and practice in the golden age of Islam, the ruler must be selected or elected by the *umma*. This is an expression of the shura principle. Shura means consultation. It encourages Muslims to decide in consultation with each other. Quran has a chapter named like this principle Shurah (Q42) and thirty-eight verse of this chapter says *"and they gather amongst each other to conduct their affairs by mutual consultation"*.

6. Umma should constantly watch over the ruler and advise him to act in accordance with the sharia, otherwise the ruler should be removed from power if he does not act in accordance with the sharia.

7. Society must reflect the principle of unity (tawhid), which eliminates the possibility of national, ethnic or social divisions and an autonomous political space with its own values, jurisdictions or rules. From this point of view, political Islam does not envisage a citizenship-based secular democratic nation-state model.

The removal of Islam from being a political touchstone to be a part of private life was first carried out by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938) in Türkiye, and it is claimed that this is the most fundamental and driving force of the emergence of political Islam. After the Greco□Turkish War (1919–1922), a series of reforms and innovations were carried out in Türkiye: banning the fez by the Hat Law (1925), Encouraging women and men to dress in Western styles, replacement of the Islamic Hegira calendar with the Western (Gregorian) calendar, replacement of Ottoman and sharia with a legal system based on the Swiss Civil Code (1926), the adoption of New Turkish alphabet (1928) (in a modified Latin form); the deletion of constitutional provision establishing Islam as the official religion and the declaration that the new state is to be secular (1928), the recitation of call of the prayer (the adhan) in Turkish instead of Arabic (1933), adoption of Sunday as the legal weekly holiday rather than Friday (1935). The practices of Kemalism in Türkiye and the way it followed were effective in the context of modernization and struggle with the Western world in other countries, although not exactly (for example, the Alphabet change). It is possible to observe the overlapping common features between the changes made in these countries and those made in Türkiye: such as Iran-Reza Pahlavi (1878–1944), Afghanistan-Amanullah Khan

(1890–1962), Egypt-Abdel Gamal Nasser (1918–1970), Indonesia-Sukarno (1901–1970) and Tunisia-Habib Bourguiba (1903–2000) (Sayyid, 2017; Jenkins, 2008: 95).

The development of Sunni political Islam is closely related to twentieth-century activist intellectuals such as Hassan al-Banna (1906–1949), founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966), and Abul A'la Maududi (1903–1979), founder of the Jamaat-e-Islami in India. Important intellectuals who influenced these people and whom we can also extend the beginning of political Islam are Jamal al-din al-Afghani (1830–1897), Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905), and Rashid Rida (1865–1935) in the nineteenth century (Rosse, 2017). Mawdudi, Al-Banna, and Qutb were not religious scholars who grew up in normal classical schools of Islam (madrasah), all three were raised in the modern education system and had professional occupations. The founder of Jamaat-i Islam, Mawdudi began his career as a journalist in the Indian subcontinent. Al-Banna, who founded the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928, and Qutb, one of the biggest ideologists of this movement, started their careers by teaching in schools. From this point of view, political Islam developed outside the madrasa, mosque and ulama (Eligür, 2015; Ayoob, 2009; Roy 1994).

However, there is an important difference between Sunni and Shiite Islamists in their relationship with the ulama and their perspectives on the ulama. Sunni Islamists both criticized and stayed away from the ulama, seeing them as part of the outdated system and as corrupt individuals who were blessed at the table of state officials (Eligür, 2015; Ayoob 2009; Roy 1994). Sunni Ulama also defined these people as reformists and claimed that they made various judgments by using incomplete, insufficient knowledge and wrong methods and that they have problems in terms of faith. Even ulama questioned whether these reformers were apostatized or not. The name of a book written by one of the Sunni scholars on this subject is also self-evident and tells a lot *Religious Destroyers in the case (purpose/name) of Reforming Religion* (Dini Tamir Davasında Din Tahripçileri) (Davudoğlu, 1974). However, since the Ayatollahs, considered interpreters of the Qur'an, is an important element of faith in Shiism, Shiite Islamists have a more respectable and positive view of the ulama (Eligür, 2015; Esposito 1998).

In addition to follow the development of Islamism in the context of intellectuals' views and effects, it is also followed through certain cultural, socio-economic and political events. The first such event is the abolition of the caliphate. In the republics and monarchies where the Muslim world is divided, belonging to the same nation has begun to be emphasized rather than the brotherhood of faith. People who used to be a Muslim subject now emerged

as a national subject. The second is the establishment of the Pakistan state. It was discussed that a Muslim political identity would be possible when Pakistan, which had the largest Muslim population at that time, left India with the ideal of establishing a Muslim country. The third is the Iranian revolution. The collapse of the Shah's regime in Iran, one of the oldest and most powerful regimes that imitated the Kemalist regime and implemented similar practices, showed the potential power of Islamism (Sayyid, 2017).

Political Islamists are divided into two basic groups in terms of the methods followed in achieving their ultimate goal, an Islamist society: revolutionary and reformist. As in the example of Qutb and Khomeini, revolutionary Islamists advocate the capture of politics and the overthrow of the existing order by including violence, and then the transformation of society from the top down, with a Jacobin approach. Radical Islamists assume that the current order in which Muslims live is actually the condition of jahiliyya as society of jahiliyyah that should be changed and an Islamic state be established, so it is permissible and necessary to declare jihad against this order (Ayoob 2009; Eligür 2015; Roy 1994).

On the other hand, reformist Islamists (eg Mawdudi and Al-Banna) advocate changing the system, starting with the individual and society. Reformists believe that if Muslims do what Islam commands and avoid what is prohibited, that is, if they fulfill the requirements of Islam, they will transform the state they live in. For this reason, it is an important necessity that Islam to be lived and practiced in society. This is possible if people fulfill their requirements such as praying, fasting, reading the Quran, and giving alms to the needy. In order for people to fulfill these requirements, they need to be conscious and educated. Hence reformists carry out many activities and organizations. by establishing charities, foundations, economic enterprises, media, Quran courses, mosques, dormitories and schools that transform individuals and society (Eligür, 2015).

After concluding the exploration of political Islam in this section, I will examine three distinct groups that I categorize as politically oriented religious Kurds within the context of this dissertation. It's important, however, to acknowledge some key points in this regard. While I introduced these groups immediately following the discussion of political Islam, it is essential to note that these groups do not self-identify as political Islamists. This distinction arises from the comprehensive view of Islam, which posits, Islam is Islam; there are no political, moderate, or extreme form. However, this should not lead us to ignore the effects of political Islamic thought and ideologists on politicized Religious Kurds. Nevertheless, we mustn't disregard the impact of political Islamic ideas and thinkers on religious Kurds involved in politics. In Türkiye, many Kurdish students started their

education at Al-Azhar University in Egypt back in the 1950s. This experience brought them closer to the Muslim Brotherhood. The thoughts of political Islamists like Hassan al Banna and Sayyid Qutb, which these educated Kurds brought back with them from Al-Azhar, deeply influenced the way young Kurds thought during the period after 1950 (Karadağ, 2017: 57-58).

However, a notable contrast becomes evident both for me and for them, given that the primary literature of political Islam frequently has a strong anti-nationalist stance. Conversely, I argue that these structures demonstrate a distinct inclination toward nationalism. Hence, in this context, I will assert that the individuals within these movements were familiar with Sayyid Qutb and held a sympathetic view towards him. This raises the question: How can one hold an affection for Sayyid Qutb while having a favorable stance toward nationalism Qutb openly and vehemently criticized? I will discuss this contradiction in more detail in the dissertation.

In brief, I address political Islam in this context because I perceive these organizations/parties as being highly politicized and politic-centric. It seems appropriate to familiarize with the politicized aspects of Islam's mindset and explore them in conjunction.

5.1. Zehra Group

Zehra group is a movement that emerged as a breakaway from the Kurdish Nurcu group known as Med-Zehra. Med-Zehra was a faction of devoted followers within the Nur Movement, helmed by the visionary leaders Sıddık Şeyhanzade and İzzeddin Yıldırım, passionately asserts that the Yeni Asya group had been undermining the sacred Epistles of Light (Risale-i Nur) and suppressing Said Nursi's identity as a Kurd and his perspectives on the Kurdish community. Med-Zehra's divergence from the conventional Nur Movement occurred in 1971, signifying a significant schism within the movement's ideology and direction (Çakır, 1990: 122-123; Tekin, 2013: 48-49; Çiçek, 2020: 49-50; Bora, 2017: 889; Şentürk, 2019: 80).

There is another dimension to the tension surrounding Said Nursi's Kurdish identity. Within the mainstream Nurcus, there exists a belief that Said Nursi is the Mahdi, a messianic figure, the expected messiah of Muslim tradition. However, for someone to be the Mahdi, he is traditionally expected to be a descendant of the Prophet through both Hasan and

Husayn. In this case, Said Nursi naturally had to be an Arab, not a Kurd. This represents a source of tension between Nurcu Kurds and mainstream Nurcus (Kutlular, 2009: 252-253).

To gain a deeper understanding of the Med Zehra and Zehra groups, a brief exploration of Said Nursi's life and teachings is essential.

Said Nursi was born in 1878 in the Kurdish-majority Nors village of Hizan in Bitlis, a modern-day city in eastern Türkiye. He was raised in a devout Kurdish family and attended some of the most significant madrassas in the Kurdish region for his education beginning in his early years. Said Nursi's reputation spread outside of the Kurdish region due to his extraordinary intelligence and powerful recall. His name was also known in the Ottoman Palace in Istanbul, which served as the nation's capital at the time. When Nursi received the invitation to Istanbul, he articulated his vision to the Ottoman officials he encountered during his visit. He expressed his profound desire to establish an esteemed educational institution named Medresettüz Zehra in the captivating city of Van. At this prestigious establishment, a comprehensive curriculum encompassing theology and natural sciences would be imparted. Nursi envisioned locating this institution strategically within a region of the Ottoman Empire primarily inhabited by the Kurdish population, aiming to provide a beacon of knowledge and opportunity for young Muslim Kurds aspiring to advance their education (Mardin, 1989: 42; Yavuz, 2004a: 264; Vahide, 2012: 3; Markham & Pirim; 2016: 3-8).

While he was in Istanbul, Said Nursi advocated for constitutional democracy and supported the Second Constitutional Era in 1908 in opposition to Sultan Abdul Hamid II's autocratic reign. Later, he rebelled against the Party of Union and Progress because of its repressive nationalist views toward Türkiye. Through the First World War and the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Nursi's tense ties persisted. After the Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925, he separated himself from the Kemalist government and came under suspicion, which resulted in a nine-year exile. He wrote the Nur/Light Epistles during this time, an important work that defined the Nur movement and portrayed them as a distinct order. According to Nursi, these writings represent a contemporary, divinely inspired interpretation of the Quran. He dedicated his life to spreading the Epistles of Light, aiming to strengthen the faith of Muslims until his passing in 1960 (Mardin, 1989: 82; Yavuz, 2004a: 265; Vahide, 2012: 33; Markham & Pirim; 2016: 10-13).

Said Nursi passed away in Urfa, where he was buried, in 1960. His 12-volume book, Epistles of Light, which captures his deep impact, has a large following that is thought to number in the millions, while exact figures are still unknown. According to Said Nursi's teachings, Nur Movement followers fervently declare that the Epistles of Light constitute a

contemporary interpretation of the Quran, and that Nursi was inspired by God to write these enlightening books. They also think that Nursi was a divine messenger sent to the modern period to enlighten humanity. This unique belief system is what distinguishes the Nur Movement from numerous other religious groups and movements, cementing its distinctive position in the religious landscape (Mardin, 1989: 101; Yavuz, 2004a: 268; Vahide, 2012: 333; Markham & Pirim; 2016: 16-17). Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the Zehra group holds a distinctive position within the broader Nur Movement who also distinguished from numerous other religious groups and movements.

Why is Zehra group presented here? Indeed, upon visiting a Zehra madrasah, one would find a dynamic gathering of individuals profoundly immersed in reading passages from the profound Epistles of Light (Risale-i Nur), actively participating in intellectually stimulating discourse, and congregating for communal prayer. This unique atmosphere sets Zehra apart from the Hüda-Par or Azadi movement, a distinction, I'll analyze further in this section. Essentially, other similar groups of the Nur movement also gather in these madrasahs, reading passages from the Risale-i Nur collection, conversing, and praying together. We can discern Zehra's unique position and clarity within the landscape of views on nationality and politics among different Nur groups. Zehra stands out with its pronounced pro-Kurdish nationalism. This clarity sets Zehra apart, making it particularly pertinent for assessment within this context (Yıldız, 2016: 217; Balancar, 2019: 37; Çiçek, 2020: 49-50).

Akin to other Nurcu groups, Zehra can't be classified as a tariqa. It can be attributed to their strong alignment with Said Nursi's profound perspectives on both tariqa and Sufism, which serve as a foundational inspiration for their beliefs and practices. Indeed, Said Nursi's approach towards different tariqa, professions, and dispositions within the Ahl al-Sunnah community was characterized by respect and a desire for unity. He promoted mutual respect, harmony, and cooperation among the numerous groups and ideologies that make up Ahl al-Sunnah, the collective name for the vast majority of mainstream Muslims who uphold the ancient Islamic teachings.

Said Nursi makes a distinction between Sufism/tariqa and faith/belief. He emphatically asserts that in the contemporary world, the crux lies in nurturing faith and belief. Nursi firmly contends that countering the pervasive influence of positivist ideologies and practices necessitates a bolstering of faith and belief, firmly grounded within the rational and logical principles that form the very framework of human understanding (Döğen, 1998: 51).

In two instances within the same book, Said Nursi (2016) emphatically conveys a crucial message:

> *This is not the time for tariqa, it is time to save faith. There are many people who go to Heaven without a tariqa, but there is no one who goes to Heaven without faith…. The profession of Risale-i Nur is not a tariqa, it is the truth; it is a manifestation of the profession of the Companions. This time is not the time for tariqas, it is the time to save the faith.*

Furthermore, Said Nursi, in another of his literary works, underscores this perspective by asserting,

While many people enter Heaven without Sufi order *and Sufism, Heaven cannot be entered without faith. Humans can survive without fruit but cannot survive without bread (the basic aliment). As a result, aqidah and trust are like bread, whereas tasawuf and* Sufi order *are like fruits.* (Nursi, 2002)

Zehra group had strained relations with both the state and other Nur Movement groups from the 1970s to the 2010s due to its distinct political attitudes. The movement emphasized that they impartially express principles of right and wrong, guided by an unwavering commitment to justice free from bias. They conduct social and political evaluations based on the merits of policies and practices rather than personal affiliations. During election processes, they respect the political preferences of their followers, ensuring that they do not engage in partisan decision-making or form supportive relationships with any particular party[18] (Nûbihar Derneği, 2015). However, as the participant I conversed with from this group, Orhan, expressed, during the early years of the AK Party, the Zehra group felt an affinity with the party in terms of both politics and religion. The AK Party's religious identity (religion cause) and its efforts to address the Kurdish problem and challenge military influence (politics cause) led to this sense of closeness. In this period, the AK Party's alignment with the MHP disappointed the Zehra group both politically and religiously. Consequently, the movement shifted its allegiance towards Kurdish parties, despite religious differences. The grassroots of the Zehra group began to lean towards these parties in terms of political affiliation. However, it is important to emphasize that this situation is not the same, as certain community groups openly express their support for specific political parties on various social media platforms.

[18] (https://komanubihar.org/?p=2181&lang=tr).

5.2. Hüda-Par

Hüda-Par was known as *Hezbollah (Party of God)* by both its adversaries and its own members, this community was established in 1979 by Hüseyin Velioğlu, the esteemed late leader of the movement. The group went through a fierce factional conflict in the early 1990s, which caused it to split into two wings with the names Ilimcis and Menzilcis. Hezbollah became the name of the first faction (Ilimcis) afterwards, while the latter withdrew from politics and later emerged under the name Öze Dönüş Platform (Back to the Roots Platform) (Yildiz, 2016: 213; Bora, 2017: 890-891).

Critics, often pointing fingers at the deep state for purportedly leveraging this group against the PKK, disparaged the Menzilci movement. Despite the allegations, Menzilci staunchly disavowed violence as a viable political tool and shifted its focus towards civil society efforts following the inception of Mustazaf-Der in 2004. As an important juncture, the movement transitioned into a full-fledged political entity (The Free Cause Party, Hüda-Par) in December 2012, making its leap into the political landscape. This leap culminated in active participation during the general local elections on March 30, 2014, marking a significant milestone in the movement's evolution (Yıldız, 2016: 213; Şentürk, 2019: 601).

The Free Cause Party places Islam at the core of its principles and strategically aligns its policies with the purported Kurdish dedication to the Islamic faith. Presenting itself as a devout alternative to the ruling AK Party, Hüda-Par positions itself as a staunchly nationalist and deeply religious entity in contrast to its secular and leftist Kurdish political parties, affiliated with or linked to the PKK. This Islamic-oriented agenda of Hüda-Par notably advocates for Kurdish independence, a stance that challenges the secular Kurdish parties attempt to appeal to religiously inclined Kurds. This ideological positioning highlights the evolving tapestry of Islamic perspectives within the Kurdish political landscape, distinct from the AK Party's vision of Islamic unity (Yıldız, 2016: 213).

The party's ideological stance serves as a vivid illustration of the Kurdish Islamic synthesis, advocating for *Kurdishness* as the outward form and Islam as its core essence. Demonstrating significant influence with a substantial mass following and an extensive media network, the group embodies a powerful presence. As outlined in its political manifesto, the party prides itself on its multi-ethnic nature and firmly opposes the political ambitions of the Kurdish national movement. Their perspective on the Kurdish question transcends the Kurdish community alone, encompassing the broader Muslim ummah. They

propose a framework for addressing this question, rejecting assimilationist policies, non-recognition, and suppression in favor of a collaborative solution involving all Muslims. This proposed resolution aims to ensure the preservation of Islamic and humanitarian rights for the Kurdish populace, potentially entailing autonomy, federation, or even independence based on political feasibility. The party remains resolute, decided in their commitment to their cause, which envisions the establishment of an Islamic government aligned with the faith, culture, and rights of the Kurdish people (Yıldız, 2016: 213).

Hüda-Par asserts its influence across the entire territorial expanse of Türkiye, strategically focusing its political efforts in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. Positioned as an integral part of the global Islamic movement, it espouses a comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges faced by the Muslim world. Advocating fervently for the freedom and autonomy of Muslims, they emphasize the unity of the Islamic ummah. Additionally, they advocate for the official recognition of Kurdish language, pushing for its use in education and the provision of public services across various spheres of society. Hüda-Par contends that both Kurds and Turks were foundational populations in the establishment of Türkiye, advocating for the official recognition of Kurds as a distinct nation within the constitutional framework. Consequently, they argue that the acculturation process for Kurds should mirror that of Turks from Western Thrace or any other region. Expressing concern about the AK Party administration's initiation of the so-called peace/settlement process with the PKK, Hüda-Par fears that this approach may elevate the PKK to a position of protector for all Kurds. While acknowledging the PKK's role as a pertinent party for negotiating an end to political violence, Hüda-Par emphasizes that the intricate Kurdish issue should not be exclusively entrusted to the PKK's oversight.

In the highly consequential 2023 Presidential elections, the alliance forged between the AK Party and Hüda-Par significantly elevated Hüda-Par’s prominence in the country's political landscape. Hüda-Par, situated on the fringes of mainstream politics, notably due to its historical association with Hezbollah and its prior violent activities, including the infamous hogtie method, and whose name is perhaps not even heard of in a part of Türkiye, became a topic of discussion in the mainstream media.

In a strategic move, Hüda-Par aligned itself with the People's Alliance during the presidential elections, throwing its support behind Erdogan as one of the candidates. Additionally, the party made a calculated choice to collaborate, securing its place by being elected from the AK Party lists in the concurrent parliamentary elections. Notably, this

tactical collaboration saw four accomplished members from the Free Cause Party elected to the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, further strengthening their political influence.

Hüda-Par exhibits a keen awareness of the state's vested interest in their affairs. Remarkably, they not only acknowledge but also comprehend and engage with criticisms, particularly from the left and secular Kurds, even without prompting. During the interviews, participant Muhammed, serving as a legal expert, emphasized:

> *Hüda-Par does not have a strict relationship with the state, but left secular parties have. This rigid attitude of the left secular parties also marginalizes the Kurds and the Kurdish language. Hüda-Par pursues a balanced policy; but while doing this, it does not throw away its Kurdi sensitivity. The left secular Kurds' disfavor towards Hüda-Par stems from a discordance in response style, color, tone, and shape. They struggle to grasp the underlying political logic, subscribing to a rigid perspective of 'This is the only authentic way to express Kurdish identity. If you deviate, you're seen as less Kurdish or Kurdistani.' Now, considering this, does it imply that Hüda-Par is susceptible to influence by the state? I firmly argue that we must establish a clear demarcation between 'us' and 'them,' maintaining unwavering clarity on this matter. However, I also believe there exists an opportunity to guide them in a different manner, I can also manipulate them, ultimately striving for a mutually beneficial outcome—a win-win scenario*.

5.3. Partiya Azadi

In 2012, a notable group of Kurdish intellectuals, their beliefs rooted in Islamic principles, came together to establish a transformative initiative in Diyarbakır. This initiative, named the *Kurdistan Islamic Project for Right, Justice, and Liberty* (Ji Bo Maf, Dad û Azadiyê Înîsiyatîfa Îslamî Ya Kurdstanê) in Kurdish, was a significant departure from conventional Turkish Islamism, focusing primarily on the plight of Kurdistan. The distinctiveness of this endeavor lay in its exclusive dedication to Kurdistan, highlighting a break from Turkish Islamism and firmly establishing itself within the region. The synthesis of Kurdish identity with Islamic values was clearly articulated in the Initiative's Declaration. While not confined by Islam, the initiative drew inspiration from its principles, seeking to continue the legacy of Shaikh Said by intertwining the steadfastness of Islam (salabet) with

the fervor of Kurdish identity (hamiyet). The Declaration emphasized that despite being occupied by other Muslim-majority nations, the people of Kurdistan should assert their authority and governance over their land. Rejecting the assimilation of religion, language, and ethnicity enforced by the Turkish Republic, the Initiative championed the preservation and celebration of the diverse religious, linguistic, and ethnic fabric of Kurdistan (Yıldız, 2016: 215; Arpa, 2018: 324; Çiçek, 2020: 54-55).

The initiative envisions a society where divine and universal laws stand as guarantors of diversity, encompassing a rich tapestry of religions, sects, ethnicities, and lifestyles. In this vision, the inherent sanctity of every individual's beliefs and cultural background is upheld, fostering an environment of acceptance and coexistence. The principles within this framework emphasize the harmonious cohabitation of varied faiths, traditions, cultural practices, and ways of life, promoting understanding, tolerance, and mutual respect as foundational values (Yıldız, 2016: 215; Çiçek, 2020: 54-55).

The initiative firmly advocates for the protection of the collective rights of religious and ethnic groups, underscoring the necessity of safeguarding their distinct identities and practices. It asserts that Kurdistan holds a significant place within the broader Islamic geography, and its residents are viewed as global citizens, acknowledging their interconnectedness with the world. Furthermore, it unequivocally affirms the unquestionable right of the Kurdish people to exercise their national self-determination. This encompasses a spectrum of possibilities, ranging from autonomy and federation to complete independence, affirming the legitimacy of their aspirations and the imperative of respecting and realizing their chosen path towards self-governance (Yıldız, 2016: 216; Çiçek, 2020: 54-55).

This movement's attention to a few crucial themes in its discourse is another noteworthy feature that merits emphasizing. By claiming that its members are Kurdistani rather than just Kurdish, it highlights a distinct identity that goes beyond simple ethnicity and promotes a feeling of community and shared culture. This title denotes a greater connection to the Kurdish people's common values, history, and aspirations. Additionally, the movement deliberately distinguishes itself by referring to itself as an Islamic movement and not an Islamist one. This distinction is important because it emphasizes adherence to Islamic principles and values without sharing the frequently linked political and ideological implications with the term Islamism. The movement makes it clear that these two claims about their nature and identity are not at odds with one another but rather complement one another, expressing a complex and all-encompassing view of their group's vision and objective (Yıldız, 2016: 216; Morkoç, 2014).

6. RELIGIOUSLY-ORIENTED RELIGIOUS KURDS

In this chapter, I will start by offering a succinct overview of Sufism. Following this, I will go into a discussion on Naqshbandi/Khalidi order, renowned as one of the oldest and most extensive sects within the realm of Sufism. Then, I will thoroughly explore Süleymancı, Menzil, and the İsmailağa Sufi orders, prominent constituents of the Naqshbandi/Khalidi spectrum, whose members were interviewed in the course of this dissertation. These organizations are referred to as order, community and group in various scientific and academic studies. I will use the definition of Sufi order throughout my dissertation. I will classify these organizations as religiously oriented based on the data I gathered during my field studies, as extensively discussed in my dissertation.

6.1. Sufism

The term Sufism, which is of Arabic origin, is widely used to describe Islamic mysticism. The term Sufi means the mystic. The Sufist equivalent is the verbal noun taṣawwuf. It encompasses a multitude of movements of varying importance, often differing in their practices and doctrines, that spread between the beginning of Islam (7th century AD) and the present day. While some movements experienced ephemeral existence, having a modest number of adherents and a brief historical period, some are still alive today and can look back on centuries of history. These institutions educate, socialize, mobilize and motivate the individuals who join them from an early age for a lifetime. Individuals raised here also contribute to the continuation of this cycle by entrusting their children to these institutions that they find safe and reliable. These structures continue to exist not only in this way, but also continue to expand, attracting individuals of all ages and backgrounds into their fold (Ahmed, 2002: 49-50; Kara, 2003: 16; Uludağ, 2019: 24-25; Kaya, 2020: 105; Ziad, 2015).

Islamic mysticism began historically in the 8th century. After a gradual and difficult process of maturation amid initially hostile social and religious environments, Sufism was eventually recognized as a distinct religious movement within the Arab and non-Arab Islamic world, a transformation notably from the 12th century. Starting from the ninth century, Sufi teachings and methods were organized into distinct schools of mysticism, often referred to as *tariqahs* or paths. These schools preserved Sufi practices within a diverse body

of literature, encompassing poetry, ethical guidelines, meditation practices, biographies, and instructional texts. By the eleventh century, Sufism had undergone a significant evolution, integrating itself into a broader spectrum of knowledge, melding with various sciences. It became institutionalized alongside fundamental Islamic disciplines such as law, theology, and philosophy. Consequently, Muslim scholars and practitioners have regarded Sufism as an integral aspect of Islam from this period onwards. They see it as a complementary force rather than contradictory to the sharia, or religious law. Nevertheless, it's important to acknowledge that criticisms of Sufism have persisted and cannot be dismissed. The discourse surrounding Sufism remains active, with ongoing discussions, critiques, and rejections from various religious (especially Muslim reformists) and non-religious spheres (leftist and secular groups in various Muslim countries). These critiques encompass a range of concerns, including questions regarding its authenticity, religious congruence, and its social and political stances (Çakır, 1990: 187-188; Massington et al; 1993: 314-315; Ziad, 2015; Denny, 2016: 211-212; Ramadan, 2017: 101-102).

Sufis claim that the Prophet Muhammad and his associates Ali ibn Abu Talib or Abu Bakr were the originators of Sufism. The idea is thought to have been captured in a hadith (prophetic tradition) in which the archangel Gabriel described the three dimensions of Islam as being Islam (submission), iman (faith), and ihsan (perfection or excellence). For Sufi traditions the last one, (ihsan) stands for Sufism (Ruthven, 1997: 123; Ceyhan, 2015: 30; Ziad, 2015)

During the eleventh century, Sufism saw the emergence of transregional schools that proliferated, often named after influential Sufi teachers associated with each path. An illustrative example is the Suhrawardi tariqah, founded by the Persian mystic Shahab al-din Suhrawardi in the twelfth century. Each tariqah traced its lineage back to the Prophet Muhammad through a silsila, representing the chain of Sufi masters. The initiation into these schools became a formalized process involving oaths (bayah) and principles of succession (khilafah). The appointment of numerous successors was pivotal for the widespread dissemination of teachings within each school. For instance, the seventeenth-century Sufi master Khwaja Muhammad Masum in North India appointed over a thousand deputies. He carefully selected promising students from diverse ethnicities and language groups to ensure the propagation of teachings in specific geographic regions (Ceyhan, 2015: 29; Ziad, 2015)

The Kadiriyya, Kubrawiyya, Nakshbandiyya, Khalwatiyya, and Shadhiliyya are among the most notable Sufi orders. These orders are characterized by well-established written guidelines that cover various aspects:

1.) Allegiance (Silsila) of the Order: These guidelines outline the silsila or spiritual lineage of the order, often traced back to the Prophet Muhammad through the current leader. The lineage can consist of 30 to 40 degrees of affiliation. While the affiliations are typically not strictly historical, they often trace back to the time of the Prophet up until the establishment of the specific order in the seventh through ninth/thirteenth through fifteenth centuries. However, variations and divergences may occur after this time.

2.) Requirements and Rites for Joining the Order: The guidelines detail the prerequisites and rituals for individuals seeking to join the order. Depending on the specific order, both men and women may be accepted. The novice is required to demonstrate unconditional obedience to the shaykh (spiritual leader). This obedience is conveyed through expressions such as *to surrender to the Sheikh like a dead person in front of a gassal (dead body bather), to be like a dead person in the hands of a gassal.*

3.) Application of Dhikr Formulae: The guidelines elaborate on the application of dhikr, specifying the respiratory control, rhythmic patterns in which the formulas should be recited, and the appropriate rates for the recitation. This includes instructions on how to regulate breathing and maintain a rhythmic recitation for effective spiritual practice.

4.) Guidelines for Isolation (Khalwa): Sufis often engage in periods of isolation (khalwa) to intensify their focus on dhikr practices. The guidelines provide detailed instructions for this seclusion, which can last for weeks. They cover aspects such as the selection and arrangement of a suitable location, the duration of seclusion, the prescribed order of formulae and litanies, recommended postures, as well as practical matters like maintenance and cleanliness of the secluded space.

5.) Interpersonal Relations within the Order: Additionally, the guidelines offer advice regarding the relationships and interactions among members of the Sufi order. This advice emphasizes fostering a sense of unity, cooperation, and mutual support among the members, promoting a harmonious and spiritually enriching environment within the order (Massington et al, 1993: 315; Kara, 2003: 156; Ceyhan, 2015: 31; Uludağ, 2019: 41-42).

6.2. Naqshbandiyya

The Naqshbandiyah order (tariqat) is one of the oldest and largest Sufi groups in the world. It is one of just a few of orders that can trace its spiritual ancestry (silsilah) to the Prophet Muhammad. The order derives its name from Bah' al-Din al-Naqshband (1318-1389). During the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, the order was established by Naqshband's successors (khulafā'; singular khalīfah) and it is still one of the biggest orders in the world. Despite the fact that Bah'al-Din al-Naqshband gave the order its name, Sufi techniques were actually practiced long before him. Abd al-Khaliq al-Ghujdawani (Ghujduvani or Ghijduwani) (1103 - 1179) and occasionally his teacher, Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf al-Hamadani (1048-1140) are recognized as the first practitioners of the Naqshbandiyah way (Mardin, 1989: 54-55; Kara, 2003: 231; Weismann, 2007: 10; Tosun, 2015: 611; Long, 2018: 525).

Al-Ghujdawn meticulously delineated eight fundamental guidelines for his devoted followers to wholeheartedly adhere to: foremost, the imperative vigilance over one's spiritual progression, often referred to as *nigah dasht*; the essential practice of retracing one's steps from worldly pursuits, akin to a form of restraint; the profound art of recollection, remembrance, and unwavering concentration, encapsulated by the term *yad dasht*; the mindful awareness of one's breath, denoted by the term *hush [hosh] dar dam.* Furthermore, Al-Ghujdawn stressed the significance of treading in the revered footsteps of the Prophet, a practice encapsulated in *nazar bar qadam*, signifying a vigilant observance of one's actions mirroring those of the Prophet. He emphasized the spiritual voyage within one's homeland or the mystical path, symbolized by *safar dar waṭan*, a journey that traverses the realms of both inner and outer existence. Lastly, Al-Ghujdawn advocated for moments of profound solitude, encapsulated in the term *khalwat dar anjuman*, acknowledging the transformative power of seclusion within a bustling society. It was through the teachings and wisdom imparted by Al-Ghujdawn that his pupils, eventually known as the Khawjagn, embraced and embodied these profound concepts. The term *Khawajagan* derives from the Persian term *khawajah*, which finds equivalents in Arabic and Turkish (Hodja), all collectively signifying *master*. This spiritual legacy persevered for nearly two centuries, mainly within the Transoxiana region centered around Bukhara, where these sacred teachings were faithfully passed down through generations (Weismann, 2007: 27; Long, 2018: 525; Yaşar, 2011: 34-37).

Baha'al-Din al-Naqshband received his instruction from Amīr Sayyid Kulalī al-Bukhārī and Muḥammad Bābā al-Sammāsī esteemed mentors of their time. This distinguished figure, although not a prolific writer (no written product), significantly contributed to the spiritual teachings of the Naqshbandi Sufi order by incorporating three essential practices into the original eight al-Ghudawn practices. These additions encompassed temporal awareness/pause, denoted as wuqf-i zaman, aiding in understanding the utilization of time; numerical awareness/pause, termed wuqf-i adad, assisting in maintaining concentration during dhikr through counting; and heart pause, identified as wuqf-i qalb, emphasizing focus on the heart as a center of spiritual attentiveness. Furthermore, within the practices employed by al-Naqshband, a notable aspect was the application of silent dhikr, famously known as dhikr khafī. Additionally, the Naqshbandiyah order encompassed various practices, including tawajjuh (contemplation), muraqabah (awareness/watching), and al-rabiṭah bi al-shaykh (a strong bond between the shaykh and the disciple, which is a daily practice done especially after morning prayer). It's essential to highlight that al-Naqshband remained dedicated to the eight principles established by al-Ghudawani and recognized their significant importance. Despite being a faithful follower of al-Ghudawānī's teachings and leaving behind limited written records of his own, al-Naqshband's association with the entire order has intrigued scholars, leading to the eponym of the Naqshbandi order bearing his name. As the order expanded beyond the vicinity of Transoxiana after al-Naqshband's passing, its influence and teachings reached broader horizons (Weismann, 2007: 24; Tosun, 2015: 664-666; Long, 2018: 526).

Less than a century after Naqshband's passing, around the 15th century, the Naqshbandiyya order saw a pivotal moment when it was first introduced among the western Turks. This marked a crucial milestone in the broader dissemination of Naqshbandiyya beyond its native Transoxianan territory. The order strategically gained traction among the Ottoman Turks, showcasing its unwavering Sunni identity and a strong emphasis on a disciplined and devout adherence to the sharia, which solidified its appeal and garnered the loyalty of the Ottoman Turks (Algar, and Nizami, 1993: 936; Öngören, 2015: 78-80).

For several centuries, Naqshbandis embarked on migrations from Central Asia to Istanbul and various Turkish regions, evident in the names of tekkes like Bukhara, Kashghar, and Ozbekler. The landscape shifted dramatically in the first half of the 19th century with the rise of the Khalidi branch, marking a transformative epoch in the Turkish Naqshbandiyya's chronicles. Preceding the advent of Khalidiyya, the Naqshbandis enjoyed substantial renown and esteem both within Istanbul and on the international stage. However,

their influence, while significant, fell short of the dominant position they would later attain, particularly mirroring their ascendancy in Central Asian Sufi circles. The Khalidis, however, elevated the Naqshbandiyya to the pinnacle of Sufi orders in Türkiye, a position that endured even following the formal dissolution of such orders. Mawlana Khalid Baghdadi (d. 1242/1827), a Kurd hailing from Shahrazur, stands as a central figure in this transformation. He was initiated into the Naqshbandiyya in Dihli at the hands of Ghulam Ali Dihlawi (d. 1240/1824), marking the genesis of the Khalidi branch's influence and reshaping the trajectory of the Naqshbandiyya in Turkish Sufism (Mardin, 1989: 57; Algar, and Nizami, 1993: 936-937; Weismann, 2007: 12; Öngören, 2015: 80; Tosun, 2015: 651; Tenik, 2019: 111).

The Khalidi movement found fertile ground primarily among the Kurdish population, profoundly impacting the understanding of Sufism within the Kurdish community. Mawlana Khalid tirelessly endeavored to disseminate the practices and principles of his order. He strategically appointed over a hundred caliphs, predominantly Kurdish Sufis, to far-reaching locations including Mecca, Medina, Basra, Baghdad, and notably in places like Erbil, Mosul, Kirkuk, Imadiye, Cizre, Antep, and India. Through this extensive network, he effectively communicated his message to distant lands, reaching as far as Afghanistan, Dagestan, Egypt, the Maghreb, and Oman, significantly broadening his sphere of influence (Mardin, 1989: 57-58; Weismann, 2007:101-102; Tosun, 2015: 652; Turan, 2017: 219; Doru, 2018: 2-3; Tenik, 2019: 107-108).

6.3. Suleymancı Sufi Order

The Süleymancı, adherents of Süleyman, trace their origins to the visionary Syeikh Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan, born in 1888 in Silistre, located on Bulgaria's northeastern border. Bestowed with the revered titles of Seyyid and Sharif due to his lineage believed to be traced back to the Prophet, he laid the foundational teachings of the Süleymancı Sufi order (Çakır, 1990: 127; Aydın, 2004: 308-309; Tosun, 2015: 680; Şentürk, 2019: 87). In designating this Naqshbandi order, it's imperative to highlight the nuanced perspectives of emic and etic approaches. From an etic standpoint, this Sufi order is commonly referred to as *Süleymancı (Süleymancıs)* within scholarly discourse. However, within an emic lens, the Sufi order displays a distinct discomfort with this label. In Turkish linguistics, the suffix -cı and its various forms (-ci, -cu, -cü, -çı, -çi, -çu, -cü) typically connote a profession or occupation. For instance, *sütçü* translates to *milkman*, denoting someone involved in the sale of *süt*

(milk). Utilizing this linguistic understanding, the Sufi order conveys a powerful message: We do not sell Süleyman. Consequently, they opt to be identified as *Süleymanlı*, drawing inspiration from *Osmanlı* (the Ottoman Empire rather than being characterized as *Süleymanlı*. Due to the widespread use of the term *süleymancı* in societal discussions and academic/non-academic literature, I will use this expression to prevent any possible confusion.

The leader of the Süleymancı held the revered position of the 33rd mursyid kamil, the pinnacle of mastery within the Naqshbandi Sufi order. Key rituals and practices integral to Süleymancı Sufi order encompass rabita (the solemn oath), dhikr (the devout recitation), and khatim (the collective dhikr held thrice weekly). Specifically unique to Süleymancı Sufi order, these rituals constitute foundational aspects of their spiritual journey. The initiation oath, known as *rabita*, dedicated to Syeikh Süleyman, stands as a fundamental requirement for all Süleymancı. Through this solemn pact, Süleymancı firmly believe they establish a profound spiritual connection between the Syeikh and the disciples (talebe), uniting the entire Süleymancı Sufi order in a cohesive bond of spiritual devotion (Tosun, 2015: 680; Şentürk, 2019: 89; Efe, 2013: 259-260).

Süleymancı believed that Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan stands as the final and 33rd Sufi master, a revered murshid kamil embodying spiritual perfection. Following his passing, the Süleymancı maintain a conviction that no successor has emerged to claim the mantle of murshid kamil, nor has any comparable spiritual authority manifested in the contemporary world. According to their beliefs, Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan's legacy as the last and ultimate master remains unparalleled, marking a significant period of spiritual leadership within the Naqshbandi Sufi order (Çakır, 1990; 128; Emre, 2016: 18-19).

The Süleymancı Sufi order stands out distinctly in terms of attire, particularly among its active members like teachers and students. They adhere to a specific dress code, commonly seen donning suits while maintaining a clean-shaven face, adorned only with a moustache (Çakır, 1990: 137). They take care to wear cloth trousers, but not jeans.

Following the passing of Syeikh Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan in 1959, a legacy was left behind, comprising an established jamaah and 14 Kuran kursu schools scattered across Türkiye. Given that Syeikh Tunahan had no sons, the responsibility of directing the Süleymancı Sufi order was assumed by his son-in-law, Kemal Kacar. Kemal Kacar held the esteemed position of abi, signifying the highest rank among the senior brothers of the Süleymancı, from 1954 until his death in 2000. Upon Kemal Kacar's passing, the mantle of leadership was passed down to the Syeikh's grandson, (son of his other son-in-law Hüseyin

Kamil Denizolgun), Arif Ahmet Denizolgun, who undertook the significant role of guiding and presiding over the Süleymancı Sufi order. Following the unexpected and untimely passing of Arif Ahmet Denizolgun in 2016, Arif Ahmet Denizolgun's sister's son, Alihan Kuriş, became the new leader of the Sufi order (Aydın, 2004: 311; Weismann, 2007: 159; Efe, 2013: 255-258; Şentürk, 2019: 91-94).

In the era of multi-party politics, the Süleymancı predominantly aligned their political preferences with center-right parties. Notably, Kemal Kacar, the leader of the Sufi order, actively engaged in the political arena, serving as a deputy in these center-right parties. The Sufi order's political inclinations evolved over the years: they supported the Nation Party (Millet Partisi) and the Justice Party (Adalet Partisi) prior to the 1980 military coup, followed by backing the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi) after the coup up until the 1990s. During the 1990s and the early 2000s, the Süleymancı shifted their support towards National Outlook (Milli Görüş) parties such as Welfare Party (Refah Partisi), Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi) and The True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi, centre-right) (Çakır, 1990: 138; Akyeşilmen & Özcan, 2014: 34). Subsequently, as the influence of the centre-right parties diminished in the 2000s, they strategically aligned themselves with right-wing parties like Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi) and The Good Party (İyi Parti). Notably, the community never extended their support to the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi), a dominant political force in Turkish politics during the 2000s, indicating a divergence in political ideology and preference (Şentürk, 2019: 95-98).

6.4. İsmailağa Sufi order

The Ismailaga Sufi order, rooted in Istanbul, is another prominent Naqshbandi order established by Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu. Derived from the İsmailağa Mosque situated in Fatih, Istanbul, the Sufi order carries a legacy of spiritual influence. Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu, an eminent figure, held the esteemed position of imam at this mosque for over four decades, commencing in 1954 and concluding upon his retirement in 1997 (Çakır, 1990: 61; Efe, 2013: 177; Weismann, 2007: 155; Tosun, 2015: 678; Aviv, 2018: 3; Şentürk, 2019: 114; Balancar, 2019: 24).

The İsmailağa Community, flourishing during Ustaosmanoğlu's active years from 1954 to 1997, is notable for its distinctive attire. Men within the community typically sport turbans atop their heads, complemented by copes and shalwars, and maintain long beards,

reflecting their traditional sartorial identity. In contrast, women don black burqas, embodying their unique dress code. An essential aspect of assimilating into this community involves a change in clothing, a directive imparted to both men and women upon their initiation into the group. It's important to highlight that securing employment opportunities in the high-level public and private sectors within the İsmailağa Sufi order can be exceptionally challenging, primarily due to their distinctive clothing preferences. These preferences, which are deeply ingrained in their cultural and religious identity, often clash with the conventional dress codes and expectations prevalent in these professional spheres. As a result, members of the İsmailağa Sufi order face notable barriers in accessing such positions and careers, underlining the impact of their traditional attire on their societal integration and occupational opportunities (Çakır, 1990: 61; Efe, 2013: 179; Tosun, 2015: 679; Aviv, 2018:4; Şentürk, 2019: 114; Balancar, 2019: 24). In relation to this aspect of the İsmailağa order, Çakır (1990: 60) employed the analogy of a *countryside within the metropolis* (metropoldeki taşra).

Similar to other orders, the İsmailağa Sufi order places a strong emphasis on education and has developed a range of associated institutions. These include private schools, Quran programs, and media outlets, all contributing to their holistic approach to education and cultural influence. The community gained recognition since the 1970s, primarily organizing within the lower-middle classes, specifically appealing to small and medium-sized enterprise owners. This strategic engagement within these socioeconomic strata has played a crucial role in their growth and influence within society (Şentürk, 2019: 114; Özet, 2019: 121).

Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu, passed away on June 23, 2022, at the age of 93. During Sheikh Mahmud Ustaosmanoğlu's janaza (funeral), his son announced Hasan Kılıç, also known as Hasan Efendi, as the successor to Sheikh Mahmud Efendi within the İsmailağa Sufi order.

In the era of multi-party politics, the Ismailaga Sufi order predominantly aligned their political preferences with National Outlook (Milli Görüş) parties. Especially in the period preceding the establishment of the AK Party, the İsmailağa Sufi order leaned towards these specific political preferences until the early 2000s. However, with the founding of the AK Party, a significant shift occurred in their voting patterns. Members of the İsmailağa Sufi order began primarily voting for either the AK Party or Erbakan’s Felicity Party, with a notable trend towards the AK Party, particularly following its rise to prominence. Leading up to the June elections in 2015, İsmailağa Camii İlim ve Hizmet Vakfı, an organization

associated with the community, made an official call on its website to vote for the AK Party. Additionally, the New Welfare Party (Yeniden Refah Partisi), under the leadership of Necmeddin Erbakan's son, Fatih Erbakan, which advocated for stronger stances and distinct discourses on topics such as women's rights, globalization, and the new world order, also garnered a considerable portion of votes from the İsmailağa community (Aviv, 2018: 7-15; Balancar, 2019: 24-25).

6.5. Menzil Sufi order

The Menzil Sufi order, one of the largest groups of the Naqshbandi order in Türkiye, derives its name from the village of Menzil, located in the Kahta region of Adiyaman in Türkiye's southeast. The visionary founder of this Sufi order, Abdülhakim Erol, was born in 1902 in Siirt's Baykan district. However, he later made his way to Menzil, where he established and nurtured this spiritual Sufi order. Following Abdülhakim Erol's passing in 1972, his son, Muhammet Raşit Erol, assumed leadership of the Sufi order, steering its course. After Muhammet Raşit Erol's demise in 1993, the mantle was passed to Abdülbaki Erol, further solidifying the Sufi order's continuity and traditions. Over a span of a century, the Menzil Sufi order has steadfastly remained rooted in the village of Menzil, fostering a rich and enduring legacy of spiritual guidance and influence within the Naqshbandi order (Çakır, 1990: 66; Efe, 2013: 145; Weismann, 2007: 156; Tosun, 2015: 678; Şentürk, 2019: 138; Tenik, 2019: 191; Balancar, 2019: 28; Darende, 2021: 105).

Abdulbaki Erol passed away on 12 July 2023 at the age of 74. His death triggered a notable division within the sect, causing news of the split to rapidly circulate. In the wake of this event, multiple potential successors emerged within the Sufi order. Muhammad Saki Erol, the eldest son of the late Sheikh, was the expected successor for the leadership role. However, his brothers, Mubarak and Fettah Erol, also put forth their claims to leadership. The followers of the Menzil Sufi order were faced with the decision of pledging their allegiance to the son whom they felt the closest connection to and considered worthy of assuming the revered position of their Sheikh (Tosun, 2015: 678; Şentürk, 2019: 140; Tenik, 2019: 192).

While there are no official records, estimates suggest that the Menzil Sufi order boasts a substantial membership, ranging from one to two million individuals. Among the Naqshbandi order, it holds the distinction of having the largest following. The Menzil Sufi

order exhibits a widespread presence, being organized in almost all cities across Türkiye. An impressive testament to its popularity is the daily visitation of approximately 15,000 people to Menzil to seek the guidance of the sheikh or leader. The influx of visitors led to the establishment of a bus station near the village, contributing to the transformation of the area into a sizable complex. Typically, the Menzil Sufi order predominantly comprises members from the lower socioeconomic strata, especially in comparison to other Naqshbandi communities. However, recent years have witnessed a notable socioeconomic development within the Sufi order, accompanied by an expansion of their bureaucratic influence and reach. This evolution signifies a positive trajectory in the socio-economic standing and organizational structure of the Menzil Sufi order (Öztürk, 2019: 188).

The Menzil Sufi order has exhibited diverse political alliances and affiliations over the decades. From 1973 to 1977, they threw their support behind the Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi). Following that, between 1977 and from 1987 to 1995, Menzil aligned itself with the Islamists, including the National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi) later succeeded by the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi), alongside the NMP. In 1983, during a period when nationalists and Islamists were prohibited, Menzil extended its support to Turgut Özal's Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi). Moving forward to 1995 to 2002, the Menzil Sufi order backed the Great Unity Party (Büyük Birlik Partisi) led by Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu. However, the most significant transformation occurred from 2002 to the present, where the Menzil Sufi order shifted their electoral allegiance to the ruling Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi-JDP). This epoch denoted a pivotal shift in the state's interaction model with the Menzil Sufi order, as their influence on the political landscape underwent a profound evolution during the JDP's tenure (Çakır, 1990: 69-72; Akyeşilmen & Özcan, 2014: 34; Balancar, 2019: 29).

7. FINDINGS: NATION AND NATIONALISM AMONG RELIGIOUS KURDS

7.1. Interpreting Quran and Hadith: Unveiling Perspective of Religiously and Politically Oriented Religious Kurds

In this section, I will explore how religiously and politically oriented religious Kurds draw upon and interpret the teachings of the Holy Quran and Hadiths to justify their stances on topics like nation, nationalism, kawmiyya, asabiyyah and love for one's homeland. It is apparent that both groups reference shared verses from the Holy Quran and Hadiths as a foundational point. However, the different interpretations and comments attributed by these two groups to these shared verses and Hadiths diverge. They put these shared verses and hadiths in different context according to their ideological and religious position. Furthermore, besides these common verses and hadiths, both groups present distinct verses and hadiths to substantiate their respective perspectives.

7.1.1. Politically Oriented Religious Kurds' Arguments

The basic and common verses, Hadiths and historical events that politically oriented religious Kurds quickly learn to read, with some even prioritizing their Arabic versions, almost as soon as the conversation begins, are as follows.

1. O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has At-Taqwa [i.e. one of the Muttaqun (pious - see V.2:2). Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (Al- Hujurat 49:13)

This verse carries substantial importance for factions advocating nationalism, exemplified by groups like Hüda-Par, Azadi, and Zehra, whom I identify as politically oriented religious Kurds.Within their interpretation, this verse serves as pivotal evidence suggesting that, according to divine will, humanity is organized into distinct nations. From their theological perspective, this understanding forms the bedrock of justifying and

promoting Kurdish nationalism. In their view, it implies divine acceptance and validation of the Kurdish nation along with its nationalist ideals and aspirations. According to them, the Qur'an acknowledges the existence of diverse nations, each with distinct features. Belonging to a nation is a natural phenomenon and brings a sense of identity and pride. Hence, it is of paramount importance for these tribes or nations to preserve, honor, and uphold their unique tribal or national identities, encompassing a diverse scheme of languages, traditions, and a rich tapestry of cultural heritage actively and attentively.

On the other hand, the Süleymancı, Menzil, and İsmailağa Sufi orders, whom I classify as religiously oriented religious Kurds, interpret this verse differently. Mahmut, participant from the İsmailağa Sufi order, argued that verses like this should be assessed by its siyaq and sibaq (the order of before and after of the verse to understand the context, internal and external context). He maintains that no basis, justification or endorsement for nationalism can be derived from these verses.

According to these Sufi orders, Allah (God), in this profound aayah (verse), has unequivocally outlined that people have been intentionally diversified into nations and tribes to facilitate mutual understanding and awareness, discouraging any inclination towards arrogance or superiority over one another. The divine wisdom behind this intentional diversity is to foster unity through knowledge and appreciation. Moreover, Allah has elucidated that the most esteemed among them is the individual distinguished by their piety and taqwaa, emphasizing the true measure of nobility lies in one's righteousness and reverence for God. The profound notion of taqwa, which embodies endurance in facing challenges, fear of straying from righteousness, and self-restraint in actions and thoughts, emerges as a pivotal and fundamental principle when evaluating the context of a nation and its nationalism.

> 2. And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your languages and colors. Surely in this are signs for those of ˹sound˺ knowledge (Ar Rum, 30: 22).

One of the verses that holds significant familiarity among the members of the politically oriented religious Kurds groups discussed in this dissertation, often recognized even in its Arabic version, is the 22nd Verse of Surah Ar-Rum.

The politically oriented religious Kurds articulated a compelling argument, asserting that this particular verse powerfully underscores the notion that languages and colors represent divine signs from Allah. From their perspective, dismissing or discriminating against a race, ethnicity, or language amounts to a disavowal of the profound signs and messages bestowed by Allah.

These verses hold a significant position, particularly in the Zehra group's advocacy for the preservation of the mother tongue. The Zehra group asserts that Kurdish language is a divine verse, as the other languages, and individuals whose mother tongue is Kurdish should have the right to education in this language. Moreover, within the Zehra group, the statements of Said Nursi concerning the importance of the mother tongue, quoted below, serve as crucial reference points.

> *The mother tongue is a mirror reflecting the essence of national sentiment, the source tree from which a society's literary creations bloom, a vessel of education and enlightenment as vital as life-giving water. It serves as a gauge of the alignment of your acquired values and progress, and a guiding light, opening a direct path to everyone's conscience—the most powerful realm for understanding and connection. Your Kurdish language, endowed with such potential (though regrettably neglected and influenced by external forces affecting some of its aspects), could have flourished like the heavenly tree. However, it has languished, remaining arid and disheartened, falling short in the realm of literature, which is the hallmark of a civilized language. By expressing its sorrow, the mother tongue laments the impact of narrow nationalism on its growth and preservation. Language is the hallmark of human destiny, a vivid fresco depicting humanity's essence on the canvas of linguistic expression. Finding words for the mind is an effortless endeavor, as the mother tongue flows naturally. The mind remains undivided, fostering the exchange of ideas through shared meanings. The knowledge imparted through the mother tongue leaves an indelible mark, akin to a fresco etched in stone. All that is veiled by national culture and attire becomes recognizable and amiable through this linguistic lens* (Nursi, 2013: 191).

In this statement, Nursi presents the mother tongue as a critical tool for enlightenment and education, as well as a complex mirror of national sentiment and a nurturing wellspring

for literary creation. Nursi uses striking metaphors to highlight the language's crucial function in forming personal values and the advancement of society. He compares the language to a mirror, a source tree, and life-giving water. Nursi laments the Kurdish language's failure to bloom like a heavenly tree, while dutifully pointing out its neglect and outside influences. Strict nationalism's effects are regretted, especially in the field of literature, which is seen as a hallmark of civilized languages. According to Nursi, language is the distinguishing feature of human destiny, painting a clear picture of humanity's fundamental nature using words. The natural flow of the mother tongue is highlighted, fostering an undivided exchange of ideas, and the knowledge it imparts is described as leaving an indelible mark, unveiling and endearing aspects of national culture and attire through its linguistic lens.

Rauf Çiçek, a lawyer from Zehra group, pointed out that learning in your mother language allows you to show your real abilities (true potential) more easily. He shared that he started learning Turkish after beginning school, and a teacher once told him that he would be an excellent student if he had better Turkish skills (Oğlum senin şu Türkçe olmazsa dört dörtlük öğrenci olurdun). Another member of the Zehra group, Abdullah Şahin made a compelling connection between the notable achievements of Kurds in diverse domains like music, cinema, and mathematics and their lack of formal education in their mother tongue. He suggests that individuals who weren't educated in their mother tongue, and consequently had a more limited vocabulary, often demonstrated exceptional aptitude in these fields, just like Freudian compensation phenomenon (*my expression*). In his view, these disciplines, rich in symbols and emotions, provided a canvas where their innate creativity and talent could shine brilliantly despite linguistic constraints.[19]

[19] According to literature mother language instruction in education yields numerous benefits. These include increased access and equity, improved learning outcomes, reduced repetition and dropout rates, sociocultural advantages, and lower overall costs. Learning in a language understood by children allows for more effective teaching methods and promotes cognitive development, facilitating easier learning of a second language. Various studies, such as those in Mali and Brazil, demonstrate that first language teaching is linked to better literacy skills acquisition. In Burkina Faso, initial literacy in the local language before transitioning to French instruction led to better results in French and mathematics. The use of local languages also incorporates more relevant content into the curriculum, fostering parental and community involvement, and strengthening cultural inclusion. Moreover, the financial benefits of local language instruction, primarily through decreased repetition and dropout rates, outweigh the incremental costs of implementing and maintaining such programs, as evidenced in Mali and Guatemala (Bender, P., et al, 2005).

Muhammet, a lawyer close to Hüda-Par also said that his Kurdish way of thinking and perspective have gradually faded away.

> *The Kurdish part of me has weakened; this is evident, the Kurdish way of thinking and perspective has diminished. Because each language shapes your thought process uniquely, I find my thinking aligning more with a Turkish perspective at the moment. When analyzing an event or a problem, you naturally lean towards the mindset and logic of the language you're using. For instance, I believe if I had been educated in my native Kurdish language, I could have excelled as a skilled novelist and a proficient writer*.

I'd like to share an interesting observation from my fieldwork regarding the language issue. During interviews, independent researcher Reha Ruhavioğlu and Muhammet, a lawyer associated with Hüda-Par highlighted a significant shift concerning the criminalization of Kurdish, particularly during the solution process led by the AK Party. Initially, I thought that Kurdish language was no longer stigmatized within Turkish society.

However, what surprised me was when the participants emphasized that this change was especially notable within the religious Kurdish community. Both participants emphasized that in the past, those interested in learning and using Kurdish were predominantly left-secular Kurdish nationalists. They mentioned that religious families had concerns about their children learning Kurdish, fearing that it might lead them towards supporting figures like APO, atheism, or the PKK, saying that "*our son will be an APO supporter (APOCU), an atheist, or a PKK member.*" However, they noted that with the introduction of the Kurdish channel and other policies implemented during the solution process, the association between learning Kurdish and leftism-PKK in the eyes of religious families has significantly diminished.

> 3. We divided them into twelve tribes—each as a community. And We revealed to Moses, when his people asked for water, “Strike the rock with your staff.” Then twelve springs gushed out. Each tribe knew its drinking place. We shaded them with clouds and sent down to them manna and quails,1 ˹saying˺, “Eat from the good things We have provided for you.” They ˹certainly˺ did not wrong Us, but wronged themselves. (Al A’raf 7: 160)

Another verse that holds significant familiarity among the members of the politically oriented religious Kurds discussed in this dissertation, is the 160th Verse of Surah Al A'raf. In this verse, it describes how God organized Musa's people into twelve separate tribes, each with its own distinct community. This verse is understood and interpreted as follows: Moses' community, residing in the desert as a sizable population, faced the challenge of limited water resources, intensifying the crucial need for water among its members. The quest for water had the potential to ignite conflicts and disputes among them. In order to avert this looming conflict, Allah (God) designated a water reservoir for each tribe. This strategic allocation ensured the equitable distribution of water, acting as a preventive measure against potential conflicts among the tribes. While distinctions among the twelve tribes were inherent, these water reservoirs played a crucial role in fostering unity and maintaining order by ensuring a just balance in the sharing of water resources. The significance of this narrative resonates in the present day. When contemplating our lands, flag, homeland, and state as analogous to a water source, it underscores the paramount importance of fair distribution and collaboration among societies. Just as the equal provision of water is foundational to coexistence, the fair and sustainable utilization of resources forms the cornerstone of communal living.

All instances in the Holy Quran that express the concept of *We divided the people into tribes* hold significant relevance within the sphere of political discourse. This becomes particularly apparent as politically oriented religious Kurds look into these verses, utilizing them as a foundational pillar for shaping their distinct interpretation of the concept of nation and nationalism. Moreover, this particular verse is commonly interpreted as an Islamic justification for the presence and distinctions of nations and tribes.

4. Love of one's country is a part of faith

Another important Islamic justification used by politically oriented religious Kurds is *Love of one's country is a part of faith*, This is not a verse, but a saying attributed to the Prophet. It is also frequently used by politically oriented religious Kurds. Politically oriented religious Kurds argue that patriotism and a strong love and care for one's country as an inherent and crucial part of a person's religious faith. According to politically oriented religious Kurds, there exists an innate sense of belonging in all humans—a fundamental aspect of being human. In the context of Islam, it is believed that Islam embraces all aspects that align with human nature and the essence of being human. It does not incorporate

elements that contradict human nature, nor does it prescribe provisions that go against the inherent characteristics of humanity. On the other hand, Mahmut, participant from the İsmailağa Sufi order said the following regarding this hadith: *"Hadith scholars said that this hadith is fabricated, it is not true, but its meaning is sound."*

The leader of the Ismailağa Sufi order, Ustaosmanoğlu, also conveys this hadith and uses the following expression: "*Love for one's homeland is part of faith. Our homeland is our life, our school, our home, our everything. If we lose our homeland to the enemy, we also lose everything we possess*" (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010c: 139). As seen here, the interpretation that Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu assigns to this hadith is much broader and devoid of the more political (nationalist) undertones attributed by politically oriented religious Kurds.

5. The Prophet Gathering Tribes Under Their Own Flags in Battles

Politically oriented religious Kurds often cite a significant historical event involving Prophet Muhammad, where he organized and gathered all the tribes participating in a war. During this event, he allowed each tribe to fight under its distinct flag, symbolizing their unity and identity. This particular historical episode is leveraged to elucidate a more extensive principle: the notion that nations unite and identify themselves under their respective flags, signifying a collective sense of purpose and cohesion. Notably, this historical case has been highlighted and discussed by Mele Süleyman Kurşun, Ayetullah Aşıti Chairman of the Azadi and Muhammet, a lawyer close to the Hüda-Par.

On the contrasting perspective, when questioned about this historical event, religiously oriented religious Kurds employ distinct criteria to analyze this historical event. Sadık, a member of the Süleymancı Sufi order argues that the event should be understood within the context of the time, emphasizing that during that era, a gradual transformation was pivotal in altering people's entrenched behaviors and beliefs. They assert that the Prophet, in his actions, prioritized a step-by-step approach, facilitating the abandonment of outdated and ingrained habits. According to this interpretation, the Prophet employed this practice because the prevailing mentality of ignorance (jahiliyya) had not yet been entirely overcome. On the other hand, Mahmut participant from the İsmailağa Sufi order views this event through the lens of war strategy. They suggest that the gathering of tribes under their own flags was a tactical move, designed to optimize the effectiveness and coordination of forces during a conflict.

6. The Constitution of Medina: Mentioning Each Tribe Separately

Muhammet, a lawyer close to Hüda-Par stated that the Constitution of Medina employs a systematic categorization based on tribal organizations, presenting a micro-to-macro perspective. Each tribe, regardless of their religious affiliation, is acknowledged and accounted for within this structure—Muslim tribes and Jewish tribes are both recognized distinctly. The wisdom underlying this approach, demonstrated by the Prophet, signifies a fundamental principle within Islam: the acceptance and recognition of diverse nations as unique and separate entities are in harmony with Islamic teachings.

7.1.2. Religiously Oriented Religious Kurds' Arguments

Below are the verses and hadiths typically cited by religiously oriented religious Kurds in their initial discussions regarding nation and nationalism.

1. *The noblest of you in the eyes of Allah is the most pious* (Al-Hujurat, 49:13)

This verse (Al-Hujurat, 49: 13) amplifies the belief that an individual's societal position is intricately linked to their level of religious dedication and unwavering faith in God, thus emphasizing the concept of spiritual superiority. Genuine superiority isn't about a person's looks, family, wealth, job, or the group they belong to. It's about how close someone is to Allah, love and fear for Allah, living as if Allah is always watching, and organizing their life around these values. This forms the basis for determining the true hierarchy and superiority among individuals. This verse was referenced by all the individuals I interviewed from the Süleymancı, Menzil, or İsmailağa Sufi orders.

Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu's statement, leader of İsmailağa Sufi order, i*f your mother, father, brother or relatives prefer disbelief over faith, they should not be taken as friends.*

However, if your parents have urgent needs, they will be met, but they will not be loved[20] (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010a: 274) also underscores the paramount importance of the criterion of belief in God above all other material and spiritual connections.

El-Hüseyni (1982: 80) one of the leader of Menzil Sufi order also asserts "*there is nothing more acceptable, more honorable, and more valuable for an individual than possessing faith. Faith serves as the key to eternal salvation*."[21]

2. *The believers are nothing else than brothers* (Al-Hujurat, 49: 10).

Another verse (Al-Hujurat, 49: 10) highlights the concept that Muslims are brother to one another. This profound verse sheds light on the enduring brotherhood and togetherness that characterize the Muslim community. It expresses the idea that Muslims are similar to a close-knit family, united by a strong sense of intimacy, faithful support, and sincere concern for one another. The verse emphasizes the communal cohesiveness and strong ties that exist among Muslim community, presenting Muslims as more than just people who share a faith; rather, they are an intricately woven, interwoven, and harmonious brotherhood. It depicts a lively mosaic of hearts and minds working together, motivated by shared values and a common devotion, all striving for a world marked by understanding, empathy, and peace. It stands for compassion, solidarity, and mutual respect.

Referring to this verse, Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu said, *The only thing that separates people from each other and differentiates them is blasphemy. It is not their lineage, language or race. While the Ottomans were in this situation, the infidels were defeated when they fought against them. They were defeated every time they fought* (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010b: 74).

The following statements by Ustaosmanoğlu elsewhere align with this verse:

[20] Anan, baban, kardeşin veya yakınların küfrü iman üzerine tercih ediyorlarsa onları dost edinilmemelidir. Ancak ana babanın zaruri ihtiyacı olursa, onlar giderilir ancak onlar sevilmez (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010a: 274).

[21] İnsan için imandan daha makbul, daha şerefli daha kıymetli bir şey yoktur. Çünkü iman ebedi kurutuluşun anahtarıdır. (El-Hüseyni, 1982: 80)

Being born to the same parents cannot truly make us brothers. Islam makes us brothers. Let's look for brotherhood in Islam, let's look for sincerity in Islam. Let's look for help in Islam. If a nation embraces the Holy Quran in this way and embraces Islam in this way, will there be any border, blood, honor or ego disputes between them? (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010a: 59).

3. *O men! Fear your Lord Who created you from a single being and out of it created its mate; and out of the two spread many men and women* (An-Nisa, 4: 1).

Based on that verse, religiously oriented religious Kurds state that there is just one common ancestor among all humans, and his name is Adam. This viewpoint exceeds only being a genealogical one; it encompasses a fundamental idea that goes beyond the features that make us unique on the outside. This perspective essentially highlights the firmly held idea that, despite the many differences in race, culture, and origin, all of humanity is connected by a shared heritage going back to Adam. It's a conviction that highlights our shared origins and affirms our interconnectedness with one another across space and time. This shared origin, which has its roots in Adam, highlights a sense of unity that is very important in religious narratives and how we perceive our role in the universe.

4. Address of the Quran: O People/O Believers and The Day of Judgment

Religiously oriented religious Kurds place considerable emphasis on a significant aspect of the Holy Quran, drawing attention to Allah's universal call to all of humanity as *O People* or *O Believers*.They emphasize that this divine address transcends narrow national or ethnic distinctions, be it *O Kurds* or *O Turks*, highlighting the overarching unity of mankind. According to them, this underscores the insignificance of differences between nations.

From a similar standpoint, religiously oriented religious Kurds convey a message to people concerning the afterlife or being in the grave:

Your deeds for the Kurdish or Turkish nation won't be the focus of questioning (what you did for the Kurdish nation or what you did for the Turkish nation); rather, you will be asked about your actions for the sake of Allah and for the cause of Islam.

This highlights the importance of faith in Allah and aligning one's actions with Allah's approval. The belief is that, just as the questioning and assessment in the afterlife will revolve around this principle, the subsequent reward and punishment, symbolized by heaven and hell, will also be determined based on adherence to this fundamental framework. In this context, it is crucial to emphasize that this is a fundamental conviction that guides religiously oriented religious Kurds' approach to nationalism—a perspective that tends to moderate and soften the demands and rigidity of traditional ideas of nationalism.

5. *O people, your Lord is one and your father Adam is one. There is no virtue of an Arab over a foreigner, nor a foreigner over an Arab, and neither white over black nor black over white, except by righteousness. Have I not delivered the message? They said, Of course, O Messenger of Allah. The Prophet said, Let the witness inform those who are absent.*

In addition to aforementioned verses, religiously oriented religious Kurds analyze the discourse surrounding nation and nationalism by drawing upon the teachings of the prophet and examining historical events from his era. A notable instance is the expression used by the Prophet at the end of the pilgrimage in the farewell sermon. In this sermon, The Prophet articulates that all people are united under the same Creator and are connected as Adam's descendants in an expressive way that conveys a meaningful message about equality and unity. He fervently emphasizes that one's dedication to virtue, which transcends the surface limits of tribe or race, determines ultimate greatness.

6. Case of Abu Dharr and Bilal The Abyssinian

The following historical event, which took place during the time of the Prophet, is also a reference frequently used by religiously oriented religious Kurds.

The Prophet would not stand for another to make fun of anyone else in his presence. Once, while his Companions got together in a gathering and the Prophet had yet to come, Khalid B. Al-Walid, Abdurrahmann B. Auf, Bilal B. Abi Rabah, and Abu Dharr were among those in attendance. The only dark-skinned companion present was Bilal the Abyssinian. Abu Dharr began speaking, and Bilal corrected him. Abu Dharr, in a moment of anger, made a derogatory comment towards Bilal based on his ethnicity, saying, Even you, O son of a black woman, try to correct me? Bilal was visibly upset and said: By Allah (God), I will report you to the Prophet. He went to him and informed him of what was said, and the Prophet became very angry. Abu Dharr rushed to meet the Prophet and said Peace be upon you, O Prophet of Allah. He continued, I am not sure if he responded to my greeting due to his extreme anger. Then he said: O Abu Dharr! Have you ridiculed him on account of his mother? Indeed, you are a man in whom there remain traits of the pre-Islamic era (cahilliyya)! Abu Dharr wept and said: O Messenger of Allah, ask Allah to forgive me. He left the Masjid weeping and when he saw Bilal, he put his head on the ground and said to Bilal, O Bilal, I will not move from my position till you put your foot on my head. You are the honorable and I am the disgraced. Bilal wept and kissed the cheek of Abu Dharr and said: "A face that has prostrated to Allah is not to be stepped on—rather, it is to be kissed.

7. *Whomever attributes himself (in lineage) with an attribution of Jahiliyyah, then tell him to bite his father's male organ and do not speak figuratively (i.e. be explicit)*

I had never heard of above-mentioned hadith that was conveyed to me by Mahmut, a participant from the İsmailağa Sufi order. He interpreted this hadith as saying that the thing that brings a person to the world is actually a worthless piece, and therefore, glorifying one's own lineage, tribe or nation is quite meaningless. If an individual takes pride in their family background and national identity to the extent of using it as a tool for oppressing or displaying arrogance, they should think about where their heritage comes from and how it developed. This self-reflection will show them that using it to feel superior is fundamentally wrong.

7.2. Homo mensura: Man is the Measure Of All Things

Mele Süleyman Kurşun, quoting verse: "*And He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth – all from Him. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought*" (Al-Jathiyah, 45: 13) from the Quran, said:

> *Human being is the center of the universe; the universe was created for human being. Allah created it as his caliph. He created it to nourish the earth with knowledge, mercy and justice. He created it physically exceptional in the most beautiful form of creation, and He also gave the greatest value to it in terms of meaning (spirtually) and made it the leader of creatures. He created the universe for human being and created human being for friendship. Everything is for people. He created all the blessings in the world, including the state, for human being. The existence of the state is also for people. He created the world and the afterlife, heaven for human being*.

Ayetullah Aşıti, chairman of Azadi, reiterated his stance on this matter, emphasizing, *Islam equals human. The sanctity within Islam is meant to serve humanity, not to bring about its destruction*. Thus, he underscored a core tenet of Islam, highlighting the inherent value and equality of all human beings. In Islamic doctrine, he asserted that humans distinguish themselves through the sanctity of their creation, forming a robust foundation for societal cohesion, moral conduct, and devotion to God. Furthermore, he expressed the perspective that sacred values are designed to benefit humanity, emphasizing that their purpose is not to harm, but rather to encourage mutual support and foster a harmonious coexistence marked by love and tolerance.

A noteworthy illustration of Ayetullah Aşıti's emphasis on human rights and freedoms, and consequently his human-centric perspective, is also found in Sayyid Qutb's statement, which Aşıti quoted as "*Freedom (hurriya) comes before monotheism (tawhid)*."

Süleyman Kurşun and Ayetullah Aşıti's human-centered viewpoint on this topic can be understood from two perspectives within the context of nation and nationalism. Firstly, if we believe that everything in the universe was created for the benefit of humanity, including the creation of organized states, in line with this belief, it aligns with the core principles established by religious teachings, promoting the idea that individuals should live and prosper within a state that mirrors their cultural, historical, and national identity. Secondly, if we acknowledge the significance of humanity in all aspects, actions contrary to the natural

progression of nations evolving into states—such as resistance, coercion, initiating wars, or resorting to violence—stand at odds with both divine principles and the very essence of human existence. Therefore, this approach contradicts the teachings and values ingrained within Islamic doctrines.

Therefore, the position put forth by politically oriented religious Kurds highlights the principle that human beings are the benchmark for evaluating all aspects. This stance aims to facilitate and validate nations' journey towards statehood. Moreover, it strongly underscores that impeding the legitimate aspirations for statehood through forceful means, oppression, and violence fundamentally contradicts the sacred tenets and values embedded in divine principles.

Lastly, I argue that highlighting the human criterion introduces another important perspective. In religious-oriented circles, the perspective often aligns with first I am a Muslim, then I am a Kurd. However, emphasizing the human criterion in politically oriented circles can lead to an understanding of I am Kurd first, then I am a Muslim. This raises questions about the primacy of the terms Kurd and Muslim: Is Muslim functioning as an adjective or is it Kurdish? Essentially, the dilemma lies in prioritizing either one's Kurdish identity (Kurd as a noun, Muslim as an adjective) or one's Muslim identity (Muslim as a noun representing Islam, Kurdish as an adjective). Is it Kurdish Muslim or Muslim Kurds? Based on my field observations, in politically oriented groups, Muslim functions as an adjective and Kurd as a noun—thus Muslim Kurd. Conversely, in religiously oriented groups, there seems to be a prevailing notion of Kurdish Muslim, where Kurd is an adjective and Muslim is a noun. For instance, Nuh, a participant from the Menzil Sufi order emphasized the primacy of his Muslim identity by stating first of all, I am a Muslim at the outset of his speech, highlighting the religious orientation. On the other hand, politically oriented groups argue that God initially created them as human beings and subsequently assigned them religious responsibilities, emphasizing that their duty towards religion stems from their humanity. This associates the essence of Kurdish identity with the fundamental aspect of humanity, categorizing it as a noun and resulting in the combined term Muslim Kurd.

7.3. Advocating for Rights, Justice, and Equality: The 'Why Not Me?' Perspective

The most basic and common discourse discussion among various political groups like Hüda-Par, Azadi, and the Zehra —politically oriented religious Kurds— highlights the importance of tackling the Kurdish issue with a focus on fundamental values: rights, justice, and equality. This view advocates for giving the Kurdish community the same rights and chances as other Islamic communities. The goal is to create a cooperative and open relationship within the larger Islamic community, firmly grounded in the essential values of rights, justice, and equality. In practical terms, these groups aim to thoroughly examine and address all questions and challenges within this overarching framework of fundamental principles.

Mele Süleyman Kurşun argued that

> *there is nothing more legitimate and rightful than fighting for the right to live freely in one's own medium, whatever that medium is. I'm not doing anything illegal. I am not killing a person unjustly. I do not insult or deny anyone's race or the institution they belong to. Everyone has rights, everyone should enjoy the rights God has given them. I am a human being like you, and I want to attain the right granted to me as soon as possible.*

Abdullah Şahin, closely associated with the Zehra Community, expressed the following statements within this foundational framework.

> *Our approach to nation and nationalism is based on granting equal rights to other nations, reflecting the teaching from the hadith: 'No one of you is a true believer until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.' I live by using the language in which God created me, and I grant this right to others as well. This is what the principle of justice requires Having two children, it's unfair to show favoritism and grant privileges to just one of them. The issue should be approached in a fair, moral and equal manner, and the problem should be solved with this understanding*.

Lawyer Rauf Çiçek, who has an affiliation with the Zehra group, similarly conveyed the subsequent remarks based on these principles.

In matters of nationalism, various aspects revolve around rights. Kurds possess rights that should not be denied or hindered. This is very clear. What tends to evolve over time is the approach to addressing these rights—whether through constitutional amendments or the potential establishment of a separate state. These dynamics are subject to change and adaptation as circumstances evolve.

The statements below were made by Muhammet, a lawyer affiliated with Hüda Par.

Every Islamic element's rights should also be extended to the Kurds. If others have a state, the Kurds should too. If another group preserves its culture and heritage, the Kurds should also preserve theirs. All rights deemed permissible (halal) for others should be recognized as halal for the Kurds as well. Hujurat verse "O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another" means to recognize and respect each other's rights and laws. It says to address each other at eye level. In other words, a relationship should be established with the Kurds at eye level.

All these statements above underscore the importance of extending the same rights to the Kurds as those enjoyed by other groups. It emphasizes the need for equality in preserving cultural heritage, establishing a state, and recognizing permissible rights.

7.4. Stand Against Cruelty and Arrogance: Even If It's Your Own

One of the primary and arguably most prominent criteria emphasized by politically oriented groups like Hüda-Par, Azadi, or the Zehra regarding nationalism that contradicts and conflicts with Islamic principles is the presence of cruelty and injustice. These groups passionately assert that Islam, at its essence, does not inherently prohibit nationalism; instead, it condemns an individual's indifference, endorsement, or involvement in the unfair deeds and oppression carried out by their nation or group. According to their viewpoint, this behavior constitutes a type of racism—an expression of nationalism that opposes the teachings and ethical foundations of Islam.

Mele Süleyman Kurşun highlighted this criterion by sharing an anecdote from the Prophet's period:

> *Wathilah ibn Al-Asqa' narrated: I inquired of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, asking, O Messenger of Allah, is it considered asabiyya (tribalism) for a man to have love for his community? The Prophet responded, No, true asabiyya is when a person supports their community in wrongdoing*.

Muhammet, a lawyer close to Hüda-Par also made similar statements:

> *Islam and Kurdish nationalism are not inherently in conflict. In essence, no form of nationalism inherently opposes Islam. Even tribalism is not against Islam. The crucial factor is, when your tribe/nation is in wrong, do you stand by it or not? History illustrates this through a war between the Quraysh and another tribe, during which our prophet aligned with his tribe.*[22] *The point is not to stand by when there is injustice or wrong. This is the criterion*.

Based on Said Nursi's explanation of positive and negative nationalism, the Zehra group perceives the criterion of oppression/cruelty as a fundamental factor distinguishing between positive and negative nationalism. Abdullah Şahin commented on this matter with the following statements.

> *Positive (müspet) nationalism is when a person acts with a feeling of compassion for his own gender. Just as a person cares for everything about his own child with compassion, it is positive nationalism when a person shows such an approach to someone from his own nation; the negative thing is if you trip up*

[22] The referenced wars are known as the Fijar wars. Historical records suggest that the Prophet participated in the Fijar wars alongside his uncles when he was around 14-15 years old (the most prevalent account indicates twenty years or less of age).
There are two distinct narrations regarding whether he actively engaged in combat during this conflict. In the first account, it is conveyed that he did not directly partake in the fighting, but rather safeguarded his uncles' possessions. He protected them by intercepting arrows with a shield, gathering them, and returning them to his uncles.
In the second account, it is stated that the Prophet did shoot an arrow during this war in which he participated alongside his uncles. Furthermore, he expressed no regret for his involvement in the conflict (Algül, 1996: 52).

or harm the neighbor's child while you are taking care of your own child, this is It is the negative one. This is the nationalism (menfi) that is against Islam.

Another aspect present in the form of nationalism associated with the criterion of cruelty and not endorsed by politically oriented religious Kurds is arrogance and humiliation. Mele Süleyman Kurşun and Nuh, a participant from Menzil Sufi order illustrate this through an anecdote involving the creation of humans and Satan's disobedience, as detailed in the Qur'an. The Qur'an narrates that Allah instructed angels, including Iblis, to prostrate to Adam, the initial human ancestor. However, Iblis refuses, asserting his superiority over Adam by being created from fire, while Adam was made from clay. When Allah questions Iblis about his defiance, Iblis responds arrogantly. Similar to how Iblis' arrogance and pride resulted in his punishment by Allah, politically oriented religious Kurds assert that a form of nationalism considering itself superior to other nations and subjecting them to humiliation goes against the teachings of Islam.

Considering the above statements, the discourse on nationalism within politically oriented groups is framed by the pivotal criterion of cruelty and injustice. These groups contend that Islam does not inherently prohibit nationalism but condemns the endorsement of unfair deeds and oppression committed by a nation or group. They draw a distinction between positive nationalism, rooted in compassion and care for one's own community, and negative nationalism, characterized by harm to others while protecting one's own. The criterion of cruelty is seen as a fundamental factor distinguishing between positive and negative nationalism, emphasizing the rejection of standing by a tribe or nation when it engages in wrongdoing. The rejection of arrogance and humiliation is also articulated, drawing parallels to the Qur'an's narrative of Satan's disobedience and his arrogant refusal to bow to Adam. Based on this narrative, any form of nationalism that considers itself superior to others and subjects them to humiliation contradicts Islamic teachings, paralleling Iblis' defiance and subsequent punishment.

7.5. Sword of Damocles: What About Ummah?

When discussing the connection between Kurdish nationalism or nationalism in a broader context and the concept of Ummah, politically oriented religious Kurds argue that Muslim-majority states and individuals in regions with Kurdish populations have often exploited the notion of Ummah to counter Kurdish nationalist aspirations. They contend that Muslims tend to rally behind the rights and legal claims of Muslim populations residing in territories governed by different religions, demonstrating sensitivity even to the demands of non-Islamic nations like the Irish. However, when it pertains to the rights of the Kurds, the *ummah* is selectively invoked, allowing for a double standard.

Faruk, a teacher closely associated with the Zehra group shared the following perspective on this matter:

> *When the Kurdish cause becomes more noticeable, some parties try to shift discussions towards religion and faith, using appealing tactics to distract from the crucial issues at the heart of the Kurdish struggle. This tactic aims to divert attention and blur the focus away from the significant challenges faced by the Kurdish community*.

Saying "*Turks assert, 'Hey Kurds, we are the ummah.' However, this raises the question: why are there numerous Turkish states? Similarly, Arabs in Iraq proclaim to the Kurds that they are part of the ummah, yet there exists more than one Arab state*", Mele Süleyman Kurşun once more offered a comprehensive view of this issue.

> *This issue revolves around a disagreement within our Muslim community. These Muslim groups stand in solidarity with oppressed communities like Palestinians, Kashmiris, Eritreans, Moros, and others, advocating against oppression. However, there's a discrepancy in extending this support to Kurds and Kurdish nations; they defend everyone, but when it comes to Kurds, the unity of the Muslim 'ummah' seems to falter here. The concept of 'ummah' should encompass all Islamic nations rather than selectively. It's crucial to defend the*

'ummah' in a way that unites all Muslims, including the Kurds. But unfortunately, as we said, the ummah is described in bird language. Regrettably, the notion of 'ummah' is often misrepresented, hindering the acknowledgment of Kurdish struggles for justice. When Kurds raise their voice for justice and their rights, they are redirected to prioritize the 'ummah,' suppressing their unique grievances. This misuse of 'ummah' has inadvertently become a tool for denying and assimilating the Kurds.

Ayetullah Aşıtş, reiterated similar ideas expressed above, stating that Muslim states ignore their own conquest and colonial tendencies, but oppose the imperialist discourses, movements and policies of other states.

As the aforementioned statements demonstrate, politically oriented groups claim that the idea of ummah is deliberately used against the Kurds and they promote a more inclusive interpretation of ummah that acknowledges and supports the efforts of all Muslim countries, including the Kurds.

7.6. Unpacking the Leftist Argument: Did Islam impinge the progress of Kurdish Nationalism?

The left secular Kurdish nationalist segment constructs a negative correlation between Islam and Kurdish nationalism. Accordingly, Islam has been a significant obstacle in the Kurds' acquisition of national consciousness and has blunted their nationalist feelings. The persistent exposure of the Kurds to propagandistic messages championing Islamic unity and brotherhood (Umma) has played a crucial role in this dynamic. Such messages have not only influenced their perception of their own national identity but have also introduced a layer of deception, complicating their ability to discern the true nature of their aspirations. In contrast to many Islamic groups that successfully established their own nation-states and achieved dominance, the Kurds have struggled to attain statehood and have remained subject to the authority of dominant states (Turan, 2017: 228).

Öcalan's (1978: 25) subsequent statements significantly contributed to the broad dissemination of this discourse within the left-secular Kurdish nationalist community.

The Kurds have experienced a significant history of occupation, invasions, and various forms of foreign dominance, particularly during the feudal period when they fell under Arab rule. During this time, the Zoroastrian

religion, which had maintained at least an ideological national character during the slave era, serving as a basis for national resistance, was eradicated. This event marked a spiritual occupation for the Kurds. Islam can be likened to a Trojan Horse infiltrating the Kurdish consciousness and heart, assuming the role of subduing their essence from within. Over time, Islam's influence has permeated various facets of thought and emotion, perpetuating this subjugation. Throughout history, Islam has played a similar role in the hands of every invader of Kurdistan, subtly paving the way for cultural and ideological subjugation. It has been utilized as a tool by both local and foreign feudals to conceal exploitation, promote ummahism, and divert attention from national values. With its various sects and branches, Islam has emerged as a dominant ideological tool that has suppressed the spirit of national resistance in Kurds from the Middle Ages to the present day.

I have addressed this argument to both religiously oriented religious Kurds and politically oriented religious Kurds. Both groups contend that it's not a mere claim; they disagree and label it as an accusation. Some individuals have also analyzed this within the broader context of the intricate relationship between nationalism and Islam. One instance involves Salih, a participant from the Ismailaga Sufi order who responded, asking, "*If this assertion were accurate, then why did the Turks establish a state?*"

Sadık, a member of the Süleymancı Sufi order also shared the following remarks:

If there was no Islam, there would be no Kurds. Islam does not tell you to leave your origin, does Islam tell you not to speak Kurdish? Is there anything in the hadiths that says not to speak Kurdish? No. This is a slander. Mongolians lost their race because they did not choose Islam. Mongolians are normally Turks. Why do they use this? By putting this forward, the West wants to say that you are left behind because of Islam. Islam is the religion of Allah, not Kurds, not Arabs, not Turks.

Abdullah Şahin, a prominent member of the Zehra group, offered a comprehensive response to the question at hand.

The usage of accusatory language is not conducive to constructive dialogue. In revolutionary contexts, an idea strives for success by establishing an oppositional framework against established ideologies within the masses. The foundation of this effort lies in critiquing the old ways, for without directly challenging and criticizing the established norms, it is difficult to carve out a place within the evolving society. This phenomenon aligns with a sociological reality and serves as a sociological explanation for this argument. Furthermore, it is imperative to discern that the crimes and missteps committed by individual Muslims, Muslim communities, or Muslim states do not reflect the core teachings of Islam. This fundamental distinction must be acknowledged. While there exists a realm of Islamic history with dedicated literature like History of Islam, in contemporary times, the term History of Muslims is become spread. This change emphasizes that it encompasses the actions of Muslims, not the essence of Islam itself. Within the annals of this history, unfortunately, one encounters instances of oppression, massacres, injustices, and a departure from the fundamental principles of Islam. This deviation from the core principles underscores that the blame should not be placed on the religion (Islam), but on the individuals (Muslims) who deviate from their religious tenets. Hence, it becomes essential to discuss the history of actors, not the history of religion. The assertion by the secular Kurdish movement that religion played no part aims to highlight this distinction. These narrative gains traction as they lack the religious infrastructure necessary to make this differentiation evident.

On the other hand, in a conversation with Faruk, a young teacher affiliated with the Zehra, I noticed a partial agreement with the viewpoints expressed by the leftists. The teacher shared that during the Treaty of Lausanne, Some Kurdish legislators in Türkiye wrote letters to foreign delegations, clearly expressing their desire to remain in Türkiye. Consequently, the teacher emphasized that the Islamic sensitivities prevailing at that time played a role in deterring the Kurds from pursuing the establishment of a distinct nation-state, especially during the early days of the Republic.

In consideration of the aforementioned assertions, it is noteworthy that both politically and religiously oriented groups refute the assertion made by the left and secular factions, contending that Islam has adversely influenced the evolution of Kurdish

nationalism. Instead, they interpret such claims as accusatory, perceiving them to be rooted either in a lack of understanding or driven by malevolent motives.

7.7. Glorifying the Past: The Issue of *Our Ancestors*

The founders of Süleymancı and İsmailağa Sufi orders are of Turkish descent, their inception took place in Turkish regions, and the majority of their members are Turkish. Specifically, İsmailağa has a higher proportion of Turkish members, particularly from the Black Sea region. Notably, their influence in Kurdish regions is comparatively limited, especially when compared to the Süleymancı community. On the other hand, the Menzil Sufi order was established in the Kurdish region, and its founding members are predominantly Kurdish.

After emphasizing this point, it is important to highlight that Islamic Turkish states and leaders were often revered and held in high esteem, particularly within the İsmailağa and Süleymancı Sufi orders. This reverence is frequently expressed through the use of the term *our ancestors (ecdadımız)* in discussions involving statesmen and their historical narratives. To illustrate, Semih, affiliated with the Süleymancı, asserted that all Ottoman sultans were regarded as saints among the members. He recounted an incident in his high school dormitory where a friend who labeled Murad V, an Ottoman sultan, as a freemason faced ridicule from another friend from Erzurum. Additionally, I brought attention to a classification termed Süleymanlı-Süleymancı earlier. I emphasized that this specific Sufi order, drawing inspiration from the Ottoman-Osmanlı concept, favors being called Süleymanlı rather than Süleymancı. This observation brings clarity to the significance of the Ottoman era, providing insight into the historical context within this Sufi order and fortifying the argument I have put forth.

In the İsmailağa Sufi order, there is no unconditional perspective on elevating Ottoman sultans to the status of saints. According to Salih, a member of the İsmailağa Sufi order, the attainment of saintliness is contingent upon adhering to God's commands and avoiding prohibitions. He suggests that a sultan could achieve saintly status by following these principles, but he does not endorse the notion that every sultan automatically qualifies as a saint. Mahmut, another member of the İsmailağa community, shared that some teachers, particularly their sheikh Mahmut Efendi, have emphasized from the pulpit that numerous Ottoman sultans were raised under the guidance of a sheikh. According to Mahmut, specific

sultans, including Abdulhamit II and Yavuz, were considered saints by some within the Sufi order. The implication from the mentioned post is that in İsmailağa, there exists a reverence and respect for Islamic Turkish states and statesmen. In this post, the third sultan of the Seljuk Empire, Malik-Shah I, is commemorated on the anniversary of his death, emphasizing his nickname that sanctifies religion and the world (*Muizzü'd-Dünya ve'd-Din*).



Figure 3: İsmailağa Twitter (X) Post

However, it is essential to consider that what elevates these states and statesmen in the eyes of these sects is the perceived contribution they made to Islam. For instance, Semih asserted that Osman Bey, the founder of the Ottoman state, exemplified his dedication to Islam by foregoing sleep when a room he stayed in contained a copy of the Quran. Osman Bey believed it would be disrespectful to stretch his feet in its presence, and as a result, he

bequeathed a state that endured for 600 years to his descendants.[23] According to Semih, this state declined when it deviated from Islamic principles. Similarly, Mahmut from İsmailağa emphasized that the admiration for these sultans originates from their upbringing in accordance with Islamic values. He contended that these rulers lived committed to Islam, without compromise, and governed their lands based on sharia principles.

This determination is underscored by the fact that within these Sufi orders, Republican elites are not held in high esteem; in fact, they are not only disliked but also described using unfavorable adjectives. The root of this sentiment lies in the Republican elites' role in dismantling a state founded on Islamic principles, i.e., an Islamic state, and replacing it with a secular system. It is essential to note that the veneration of the past in these structures differs from the *glorification of the ancestors* observed in the secular and nationalist The Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) or the Good Party (İYİ Parti) structures. In the latter groups, the founding elites of the republic, particularly Atatürk, are respected. The followers of these parties harbor no objections or concerns regarding the founders of the nation and the underlying principles upon which the republic was established. This distinction arises because the critique within these Sufi orders is centered on Islam, as opposed to the sentiment prevailing among the MHP and İYİ Party bases. Given that the defense and exaltation within these Sufi orders are rooted in Islam and underscore a commitment to serving the religion of Allah, it does not negatively impact Kurds involved in these organizations. Consequently, it ceases to be a source of discomfort for religious Kurds; on the contrary, the emphasis on Islam in the discourse fosters the Kurds' adoption of this perspective.

7.8. Assessing Consistency: Do Findings Align with Previous Studies?

In literature review, I highlighted the substantial body of literature dedicated to the study of politically oriented groups- Azadi, Hüda Par, Zehra (Atacan, 2001; Yıldız, 2016; Çiçek, 2017; Tekdemir, 2018; Kökçe, 2021; Çağlayan, 2023). The correlation between the findings from these studies and the results of my own research serves to strengthen the external validity of this study.

[23] It is worth noting that this narrative is not unique to the Süleymancı Sufi order but is prevalent in various religious and conservative circles.

These groups are chiefly distinguished by their nationalist sensitivities and demands, a characteristic that has been emphasized in previous research. The symbiotic relationship between Islam and nationalism emerges as a pivotal dynamic in shaping the political identities of these groups. The consistent outcomes I have identified in this study, particularly in relation to the specific groups under examination, underscore the significance and enduring nature of this symbiotic relationship.

Table 2: Religiously vs Politically Oriented Religious Kurds

References	Religion-Oriented	Politics-Oriented
Key words and themes	Muslim brotherhood (Ummah), spiritual superiority, common ancestry, universal call and accountability, Promotion of Faith, Ethical Teachings, Seeking Divine Approval, Preservation of Core Teachings, Equality and unity in Islam, rejection of prejudice	Muslim Kurds, Right, Justice, Equality, Promotion of Political Ideals, Emphasis on Nationalist Teachings, Solutions for the Kurdish Issue,
Nature	Cooperative (Docile)	Defiant
State Relations	Strong	Weak
Capacity (Economic, Human, Social)	High	Low
Intelectual and Academic Capacity	Low	High



Figure 4: Network Visualization (Religiously Oriented Groups)

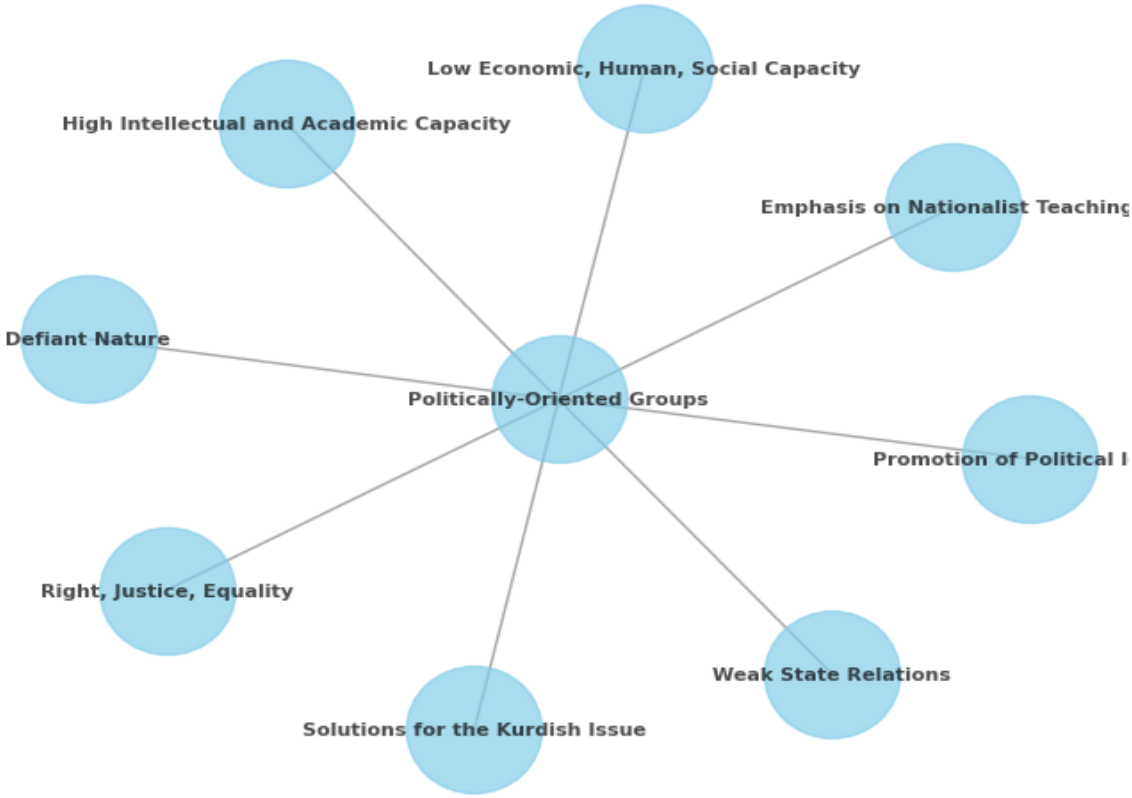


Figure 5: Network Visualization (Politically Oriented Groups)

8. DISCUSSION: WHY THEY DIFFER? DIFFERENT HABITUS DIFFERENT ATTITUDES

In this dissertation, a compelling argument is put forth, delineating the distinct habitus of two diverse religious Kurdish groups and its profound influence on their perspectives of nationalism. This exploration reveals that these religious Kurds have acquired distinct forms of capital across various field, consequently shaping their respective habitus. Consequently, a group of religious Kurds exhibits a heightened sense of nationalism characterized by a proactive and political approach, categorized aptly as politically oriented religious Kurds due to their politics-centric orientation. Conversely, another subset embodies a more faith-driven perspective, falling under the category of religiously oriented religious Kurds, demonstrating a nuanced and less nationalist sensitivity, guided primarily by their strong devotion and faith-centric approach.

Why do individuals associated with these groups adopt diverse attitudes and behaviors in specific contexts? What influences contribute to the development of their Habitus, shaping their distinctive ways of approaching various aspects of life?

In this study, I intend to categorize the data gathered from the field, aiming to elucidate the observed differences. To begin with, a precise determination (finding) has been established (different habitus different approaches), and subsequently, I will expound upon the discerned categories, shedding light on the underlying reasons with compelling arguments. In other words, I will develop an explanation framework for how this Habitus was formed, why people in these groups go to the same mosque, prostrate on the same prayer mat, read the same book (Quran) and develop different approaches to nationalism.

8.1. The docile nature of Sufism: A Call to Avoid Tribulations (Fitnah)

The nature of Sufism significantly contributes to the cultivation of a more moderate nationalist perspective among religious Kurds who grew up in the İsmailağa, Menzil and Süleymancı Sufi orders. To gain a deeper insight into the nature of Sufism, we should explore two pivotal aspects.

The first dimension involves understanding the motivation of Muslims to steer clear of discord and upheaval. With the growth of the Muslim population and the expansion of

their conquered territories, disputes, conflicts, and turmoil became increasingly prevalent, often driven by social, political, and economic factors. Throughout the years of the Islamic state's rapid and expansive growth, what were initially mere contradictions soon transformed into formidable challenges. Those fortunate individuals who had the privilege of not only meeting and befriending the Prophet but also absorbing his wisdom, were paradoxically forced to draw their swords and engage in bitter conflicts against one another. The Umayyad dynasty's ruling elite deviated from the ascetic principles that had characterized the lives of the first four caliphs. Consequently, the broader society found itself progressively drifting away from the serene and virtuous existence that had defined the early Muslim community. If the newly converted Muslim societies persisted in this manner, they risked forfeiting the opportunity to embrace that way of life (Kara, 2003: 39; Uludağ, 2019: 79; Kaya, 2020: 106-107; Darende, 2021: 91).

This leads us to the second core aspect of Sufism, which involves distancing oneself from these worldly confusions and seeking solace in solitude. As a natural response to these challenges, a life of ascetism began to hold a certain attraction. This retreat, which would later become a significant driving force within Sufism, found support in hadiths like:

> *Prophet said that there will be a period of commotion in which the one who lies down will be better than the one who sits, and the one who sits is better than the one who stands, and the one who stands is better than the one who walks, and the one who walks is better than the one who runs (to it). He asked: What do you command me to do, Apostle of Allah? He replied: He who has camels should remain with his camels, he who has sheep should remain with his sheep, and he who has land should remain with his land. He asked: If anyone has more of these, (what should he do)? He replied: He should take his sword, strike its edge on a stone, and then escape if he can* (Kaya, 2020: 106-107).

When examining the concept of nationalism, it becomes evident that it inherently involves opposition to established systems and often leads to political strife. Nationalist movements that emerge vary in their preferences, approaches, and methods of political struggle. Regrettably, this struggle sometimes escalates to the use of weapons and acts of violence. The historical events that unfolded after the passing of the Prophet, including the tragic beheading of his beloved grandson, and the enduring memory this left within the Muslim community, particularly among Sufis, can serve as a plug and hesitation against such nationalist discourses and actions. I argue that the relatively moderate nationalist demands,

discourse, and actions of the religious Kurds who identify as Sufis becomes more understandable in this context.

8.2. Historical and Political Context: The Turkish-Islamic Synthesis and Perception of Threats and Opportunities

After the 1980 Military Coup, the political and state elite implemented and institutionalized a policy known as The Turkish-Islamic Synthesis (*The best Turk is a Muslim Turk, the best Muslim is a Turkish Muslim*), effectively merging elements of Sunni Islam and Turkish nationalism, as a solution to address Türkiye's social and cultural challenges. This fusion was carefully overseen by the Motherland Party (MP), marking a covert collaboration between the military and Islamic factions. Specifically, Alevi Kurds and separatist Sunni Kurds found common cause with the radical left, prompting soldiers to navigate a delicate compromise with Sunni Islam. Ruşen Çakır's analysis underscores the military's development of a unique relationship, particularly with the Sufi orders and brotherhoods within the Islamic movement—notably distinct from groups with a strong inclination towards sharia and pervasive political Islamism. These Sufi orders and congregations played a role in maintaining order by housing and educating students in their facilities, steering them away from street protests and conflicts. In doing so, they nurtured a generation loyal to the state, instilling respect for authority. In this symbiotic arrangement, the military assured stability, curbed anarchy, and contended with Communism, a term equated with atheism by Sunni Muslims. Consequently, Sunni communities and sects did not find it necessary to engage in a profound struggle against the military, as they benefited from the established order (Çakır, 1990: 275-277; Çetinsaya, 1999: 374; Taşpınar, 2005: 139; Eligür, 2010: 93; Dinç Belcher, 2012: 90; White, 2013: 35-36; İnalcık, 2014: 190; Bircan ve Atalar, 2017: 257-258).

This statement gains significance when considered alongside the personal account of Hayrullah Karadeniz. Karadeniz, a former soldier and lawyer associated with the Süleymancı Sufi order, being expelled during the Arif Ahmet Denizolgun era following Kemal Kacar, revealed some details (Karadeniz, 2016; Güleç, 2016). Karadeniz (2016) said that he visited Kemal Kacar two years after the 1980 Military Coup. Kacar, who had been arrested and subsequently released after the coup, disclosed that state officials visited him in prison and presented the following options: the complete elimination of Kacar and his 16

administrator-Hodja friends, along with the confiscation of all the community's assets or collaboration with the administration. Hayrullah Karadeniz (2016) stated that Kemal Kacar responded to the offer by saying[24],

> *How can I wholeheartedly say yes to this agreement? But if I do not accept, these people have the strength and determination to do what they say. For this reason, I accepted the agreement and was released in this way. Our other friends will also be released*.

Hayrullah Karadeniz references General Çetin Doğan, a defendant in the Sledgehammer military coup plot case. Doğan's statement to the prosecutor in 2010, which was later removed from the internet, is following:

> *What coup are you talking about? Whatever we did, we did it to protect the State from reactionism (irtica). For example, those Süleymancıs, they had a leader named Kemal Kacar. We made an agreement with him after September 12. But the man turned out to be a warhorse, and while we were trying to manage him, he tried to manage us by putting Demirel and Özal to mediate*.

In his interview with Nazlı Ilıcak in 1989, Kemal Kacar himself said "*Far from having any covert or overt activities against the state or the nation, the Süleymancıs have instead acted as a stabilizing element, a counterbalance to any actions against the state or the nation*." Both the content of this statement and its timing in the aftermath of the military coup are quite significant in this regard.

Another person and community, in his memoirs, Mehmet Kutlular, the leader of the Nurcu Yeni Asya group, recounted two encounters with state National Intelligence Organization (MIT) officials. The first occurred in February 1981 when a MIT colonel approached him on behalf of the council, expressing a desire for collaboration. The colonel stated: *The council sent me. We want to work with you. you choose to collaborate with us, we commit to making all state resources available to you and offering comprehensive assistance in all your endeavors*. On a subsequent occasion, another individual, claiming to be MİT's Istanbul chief, approached Kutlular as a representative of the Council. This person mentioned:

[24] Nevertheless, Mustafa Akkoca, who asserts close collaboration with Kemal Kacar within the tarikat, refutes Karadeniz's allegations, firmly asserting that Karadeniz has neither familial nor friendly ties with Kemal Kacar. (https://www.oncevatan.com.tr/suleyman-efendi-hazretleri-hakkindaki-yalan-iftira-ve-buhtanlara-cevaplar-28)

> *The council sent me. Previously, one of our associates approached you with certain proposals and discussed a potential agreement. Additionally, we have another proposition for you, we will provide you with support in resolving the conflict between you, Kırkıncı Hodja, and Orhan Bey. (*Kutlular, 2009: 300-302).

These and similar statements from individuals representing various communities demonstrate that the state presented diverse incentives and warnings to these communities and sects after 1980.

However, it is not possible to say that cooperation with the state is essentially a sincere acceptance of the official discourse and practices of the state for these Sufi orders. Although the survival of the state and the nation is seen as important in principle and abstract terms in these organizations, it should be noted that the secular values and leaders of the state are not sanctified and assimilated, and a much more negative perception is established in some organizations. Built upon the idea that religious values are diminishing within the nation, key objectives such as rescuing the younger generation and promoting religious education within society serve as the foundation. This implicit cooperation is a manifestation of strategic thinking, acknowledging that challenging the system and the state would not result in the fulfillment of these goals.

It can be argued that the apolitical stance of these orders, i.e., *de-politicization through İslam* (Taşpınar, 2005: 137) and *Islamization through State* (Çakır, 1990: 277), in a manner of speaking, provides insight into the historical and political backdrop. During our interview with Semih, a member of the Süleymancı, I inquired, "*Have you engaged in any demonstrations advocating for the right to wear a headscarf*?", "*Have you taken part in protests condemning Israeli policies in support of Palestine*?", "*Sometimes at the university, some students would protest when cafeteria fees were increased. Have you participated in these protests*?" and "*Have you participated in protests against internet restrictions*?" In all cases, the response was consistently in the negative, participant said “no.”

So, why did the state establishment cultivate such extensive connections with religiously oriented religious Kurds, while falling short in establishing comparable ties with what I refer to as politically oriented religious Kurds? Understanding this discrepancy requires an examination of the state's perception of threat and opportunity and its art (mechanism) of control. Religiously oriented religious Kurds significantly amplify the state's perception of both threat and opportunity, given the extensive reach and impact they wield

on diverse audiences, as well as the considerable resources they possess—essentially affecting the state in terms of both quality and quantity. On the other hand, political missions aren't perceived as an immediate or substantial threat, neither in terms of their audience reach nor their resource capacity. Additionally, the state perceives limited opportunities stemming from its involvement with political missions. The contrast lies in how these missions are perceived; religiously oriented religious Kurds often possess a wider and more influential outreach, leveraging substantial resources, while politically oriented religious Kurds, in the state's view, lack the same level of immediate impact or potential for advantageous collaboration.

For instance, Hüda-Par exhibits an even stronger emphasis on nationalism compared to what is typically associated with religiously oriented organizations. During the 2023 elections, the state (establishment) was portrayed it as an opportunity (changing perception) and it became integrated into the political framework. Notably, their discourse in the media became more nuanced, especially during the election period. For instance, a Hüda-Par official remarked, "*We do not think that the parliamentary oath text is the correct text. The oath text should be changed.*" Interestingly, the same individual proceeded to take the existing oath upon entering parliament after the elections (Cumhuriyet, 2023).

It is possible to evaluate these perceived opportunities, threats, and the potential for cooperation as a strategic mechanism for exerting control and influence. I also came across an expression such as "those who are baited will be bridled" (yemlenen, gemlenir) especially for the relationship between sufi orders and communities and the state. This phrase underscores the idea that the numerous advantages and incentives extended by the state can paradoxically serve as effective tools for maintaining control over and regulating these organizations. In this context, it's important to convey Ercümend Özkan's assessments. Ercümend Özkan, who significantly contributed to the recognition of the Hizbu-tahrir organization in Türkiye and later distanced himself from them to act independently, also has harsh criticisms, especially concerning the relationships between Sufi orders and the state in Türkiye. Özkan characterizes Sufism as a separate religion and claims that Sufi orders and communities in Türkiye do not engage in structural criticism but rather content themselves with a simplified form of Islam reduced to just five conditions. Furthermore, he expresses his views by stating:

> *Can the male enter the harem or not? But the eunuchs roam around the harem all day long. Why? Because the man has lost his manhood; they have destroyed his manhood. Now, a manhood-eradicated Islam is wandering around*

in secular harems. Secularists are sure of their honor; they do not tarnish their honor.

Özkan also questions the teachings by asking, "What are they teaching? They were providing the people with religious catechism *(Mızraklı İlmihal*). In other words, what impact can these religious catechisms have on the regime?" (Bircan ve Atalar, 2017: 291; Şentürk, 2019: 293-294; Bakacak, 2020: 142-143).

One of the participants I interviewed, Mele Süleyman Kurşun, also alleges that the government allocates significant resources to religious communities and orders, providing them with the discretionary fund. He adds the following: t*o put it bluntly, and it's the right term, in Kurdish regions, useless bones are given to the* Sufi order*s and communities, while the meat goes to Turkish and right-wing orders*.

8.3. The ambiguity of Islamic political thought and shifting religious perspectives

Another significant factor influencing the development of this habitus is the ever-evolving dynamics of Islamic political thought and individuals' diverse interpretations and perspectives on religion.

8.3.1. The ambiguity of Islamic political thought

Based on Islamic principles and teachings, Islamic political thought includes a range of ideas, theories, and views concerning law, government, and societal organization. The way people view power, justice, governance, and their duties in society can be influenced by various interpretations of Islamic political ideology.

Islamic political thought and the philosophy of an Islamic state, along with considerations regarding Islamic administration, can be thoroughly examined by focusing on two fundamental aspects. Firstly, Islam does not prescribe a specific, rigid administrative structure with clearly delineated boundaries. The religion does not advocate for a definitive system such as monarchy, oligarchy, or democracy, like *monarchy, oligarchy or democracy is better for you*. Rather than prescribing the best or ideal form of governance, Islam primarily emphasizes what governance should not be. It vehemently opposes anarchism,

turmoil, and chaos, deeming them as the greatest evil. Within Islamic teachings, there is no explicit endorsement of any particular political system. Instead, the Quran briefly references the concept of a state in an economic and social context, suggesting the concentration of wealth in specific hands rather than conveying a modern state structure (Uludağ, 2014: 35). Uludağ (2014) astutely observes that the term state is mentioned only once in the Quran (Haşr, 59/7), and its usage conveys an economic and social connotation related to wealth distribution rather than aligning with the contemporary understanding of a state.

> *There is no concept of state in the modern sense in the Quran. Nothing is said in the Qur'an about the name, form and structure, organization, principles and working style of the state, as well as the qualifications of those who govern the state, how they will come to power, how they will manage the state when they come to power, and under what conditions and in what way they will be dismissed. There is no clear statement about who will be appointed and who has the authority to terminate the duty.*

However, stating that the state institution holds a secondary position in Islamic political thought is not possible. Islam did not delve into the concept of the state institution through a casuistic method. Nevertheless, the state institution holds immense significance in terms of its presence and functions. The expression 'religion and state are twin brothers,' found in the Ahd testament written by Ardeşir bin Babek I, the founder of the Sassanids, is frequently referenced in the works of both Maverdi (2008: 13) and Gazali (Kahveci, 2012: 148). Another fundamental issue revolves around the nature of the ruler-ruled relationship. There is no definitive, indisputable rule dictating how the people should respond to the state's oppressive, tyrannical, and cruel behavior towards those under its dominion. Islamic political thought attempts to elucidate this situation through various approaches. Therefore, the uncertainty surrounding government formation parallels the uncertainty found in the opposition's situation. Al-Juwayni's (1028-1085), also known as Imamu'l-Haramain, explanatory framework proves highly valuable, particularly concerning the first of these two fundamental issues—determining the administrative form.

Al-Juwayni, an Ash'ari theologian and a Shafi'i fiqh scholar, who also taught Imam-i Ghazali, elucidates the fundamental principles of Islamic politics and the theoretical boundaries of its operations through the distinction of 'kat'iyyat' and 'zanniyat' in his work called 'al-Gıyâsî' (Cüveyni, 2016; Kavak, 2009). In fact, the theoretical foundation for distinguishing between 'kat'iyyat' and 'zanniyat' lies within the field of fiqh (Kavak, 2009:

22). This distinction is employed in interpreting evidence and making judgments. In Islamic jurisprudence, evidence is categorized into two types: definitive (kat'iyyat) and speculative (zanniyat). Definitive evidence provides a clear and indisputable conclusion, leaving no room for alternative meanings or interpretations. It is binding, and alterations or additions are not permissible. On the other hand, evidence that indirectly offers a judgment, necessitates interpretation and elucidation, and thus allows for diverse judgments and evaluations is classified as conjectural evidence (Bardakoğlu, 1994: 140). Employing this established conceptualization, al-Juwayni asserts that there exist foundational principles in Islam, shaped based on the Quran and the Sunnah, and consequently carrying a definitive ruling. These foundational principles encompass key tenets frequently emphasized in the Quran and hadiths, such as justice, trust, allegiance, and council (Çaylak, 2015; Kahveci, 2012: 43; Şirvani, 1965: 25-27). As for matters concerning the structure of government, the selection of administrators, and the governance mechanisms, al-Juwayni defines these as hypothetical issues, stating that they can be organized in various ways while adhering to the foundational principles (Cüveyni, 2016: 43; Köse, 2009: 7).

The second significant aspect, which is the nature of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, pertains to how to respond to oppressive authority, characterized as tyrannical, oppressive, cruel, despotic, or dissolute (Uludağ, 2014: 136). In this context, Mustafa (2001) classified the schools within the tradition of Islamic political thought based on their approaches towards opposition. According to Mustafa (2001), these approaches are revolutionary school (Medresetu's-Sevra), pro-patience school (Medresetu's-Sabr), and the poise/caution/ability school (Medresetu'l Temekkün). The revolutionary school (Medresetu's-Sevra) advocates rebellion (huruc) against tyrannical authority. Early political sects in Islamic history, such as the Kharijites and Ahl al-Shia, align with this school. Members of this school strive to establish a legitimate foundation for revolution and the use of force within Islam, drawing upon specific expressions and discourses found in the Quran and hadiths. Key verses and hadiths evaluated by members of the revolutionary school in this regard include those from the Al-i Imran surah of the Quran (3/104), "*Let there be a group among you who call ˹others˺ to goodness, encourage what is good, and forbid what is evil—it is they who will be successful*,' as well as the words of Prophet Muhammad: "*Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then [let him change it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart — and that is the weakest of faith*." (Mustafa, 2001: 228-231).

In this context, the revolutionary school argues for action against any corrupt authorities who oppress and commit injustice against the governed, regardless of the time and place. On the other hand, pro-patience school (Medresetu's-Sabr) advocates tolerance in the face of excess, cruelty, and injustice. This school underscores the importance of patience when dealing with the cruelty and mismanagement of rulers, affirming that both good and evil are outcomes determined by God, and judgment on all actions will be rendered by God. Consequently, the promotion of rebelling against the government is not encouraged, envisioning a stance of passive opposition. The fundamental principles of this school include what is known as the five human necessities (al-daruriyyat al-khams) involving a strong focus on safeguarding religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property (wealth). In the conceptualization of the opposition tradition within Islam, it is observed that the Ahl al-Sunnah, in general, and the Ithna Asheriyya Imamiya among the Shiites, predominantly align with the school of patience. For instance, Hasan Basri, a notable figure within the Sunnah sect, when asked about his stance on rebelling against Haccac-ı Zalim, a cruel ruler of that era, advised against it. He expressed, 'I don't think you should fight him,' suggesting that if it is a punishment from God, one should not resist God's decree with swords. He further emphasized patience, stating, 'If it is a trial or adversity from Allah, endure it until Allah delivers His judgment, for He is the best of judges' (Mustafa, 2001: 277; Evkuran, 2005: 225). Also, a Hanafi jurist and traditionalist theologian, Tahavi stated, "*We do not deem it permissible to rebel even if our rulers oppress us. We do not curse them. We do not deviate even a hand's span from obeying them*" (Tahavi, 2015: 224). Another crucial point to note in this context is that this approach does not imply legitimizing, normalizing, approving, or downplaying cruelty, injustice, or excess (Mustafa, 2001: 271-273). Another jurist and theologian Nasafi says *a caliph is not dismissed due to being a sinner (fasık) and committing injustice (zalim)* (Nesefi, 2015: 203). This viewpoint is based on the idea that when you resist or go against it, it can lead to larger and more long-lasting divisions or conflicts, along with unfavorable results. In other words, trying to oppose this approach can worsen divisions and result in more enduring, harmful consequences.

The third and final opposition school, known as the cautious school (Medresetu'l-Temekkün), is founded on assessing the appropriate time and circumstances before taking action against a tyrannical government. Hence, this school is often referred to as the school of 'waiting and watching' for the opportune time (intizar ve tarakkub) or the school of 'conditioning on being able' (iştirâtu'l-kudret). It is also plausible to describe this school as adopting an economic approach (rational choice) to opposition, as it aims to act by weighing

the current damage against the potential damage that may result from reacting. Ibn Taymiyya, a prominent representative of this school, states, 'In matters where benefits and harms, goodness and evil conflict, the superior one should be preferred' (Mustafa, 2001: 271-273). Consequently, the cautious school, or temekkünist school, represents a middle ground between the 'revolution' and 'patience' schools. Notably, alongside the Mu'tazila, Abu Hanife, the founder of the Hanafi sect of Ahl al-Sunnah, is also often associated with this school.

The absence of a clear and specific provision within Islam regarding the concept of a state, whether it be a nation-state or a federal state, or a particular regime such as monarchy or democracy, as discussed in detail earlier, profoundly affects how religious Kurds perceive nationalism. Serhat, a member of the Menzil Sufi order eloquently expressed that his relatively reserved stance on nationalism is influenced by Islam's lack of precise guidance on these matters. Essentially, he indicated that if Islam had a defined provision regarding the nation-state, his position on nationalism would be clearer and more firmly grounded in his faith.

Likewise, Salih, a member of the Ismailaga Sufi order stated,

> *There is no specific command from Allah in the Holy Quran stating that all races must have a state. Such a verse does not exist. Nor does the Prophet have a hadith conveying this. Therefore, God has not imposed such an obligation upon us. However, there is no prohibition against it, and if it is pursued through legitimate means, no one can say whether it should happen or not.*

8.3.2. Shifting religious perspectives

How people perceive Islam, interpret its teachings, embrace its values, and embody its moral precepts profoundly shapes their daily habits and behaviors. This understanding is intricate and fluid, subject to shifts influenced by an individual's cultural, geographic, historical, and ideological context. These diverse perspectives and experiences contribute to a rich tapestry within the larger Islamic community, allowing its habitus to manifest in a myriad of ways.

The perspectives and interpretations of religion held by religious Kurds significantly influence their comprehension of nationalism. During my conversation with Sıdkı Zilan, a member of the Azadi movement, I inquired, *As you became more attuned to nationalism, did*

you seek references to this in religion, I mean in Quran and/or Hadith?" In response, he shared, "*my understanding of religion had also undergone a profound transformation”*. However, this transformation is not detachment from religion, but rather about adopting a different perspective or viewpoint.

Above, we have elucidated the revolutionary, pro-patience, and poised/cautious schools within Islamic political thought, particularly highlighting their unique perspectives on dealing with opposition. In this context, the influence of the pro-patience school is predominantly evident within organizations exhibiting a heightened sense of sensitivity adhering to Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah.poised/cautious schools within Islamic political thought, particularly highlighting their unique perspectives on dealing with opposition. The reflection of this perspective on nationalism manifest as a less demanding form of nationalism. Nationalist demands, when needed, may escalate into armed struggle, encompassing actions and street protests as integral components of the nationalist struggle. However, within the pro-patience school, a prevailing emphasis on maintaining order (establishment) takes precedence, driven by apprehensions about potential harm to religion and religious practices if order is disrupted. Consequently, this orientation leads to the suppression of anti-establishment demands. The matter at hand centers around Süleyman Çevik's articulation, which poignantly portrays the internal conflict faced by religious Kurds: "*There are Kurdish individuals who, firmly grounded in their religious beliefs, contemplate the complex question of whether advocating for their nation and language might entail a compromise of their faith or a harboring of prejudiced perspectives*" (İlkehaber, 2010). Furthermore, to provide context on the extent of politicization, when I inquired with two participants (Semih and Mehmet) affiliated with the Süleymancı about their familiarity with figures like Sayyid Qutb and Mawdudi, they both expressed no recognition of these names. In an interview, Kemal Kaçar, who assumed leadership of this Sufi order after Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan, made a significant statement: "*Our aim is to regulate our personal lives, not to change the state's order*" (Ilıcak, 1989). This statement sheds light on the level of politicization among those who are part of this Sufi order and underscores their distance from individuals like Sayyid Qutb and other political Islamists who seek to change state order.

On the other hand, the influence of the revolutionary school becomes apparent within the Religious Kurds, who exhibit a heightened level of politicization and interpret Islam from a broader standpoint compared to the to the Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah tradition. This perspective significantly shapes their understanding of nationalism, resulting in a more

assertive form of nationalism. In this context, taking to the streets, voicing demands, creating a stir, and expressing objections are not perceived as alarming, and there is no fear of these actions causing harm to their religious beliefs. As evidenced by Sıdkı Zilan, a member of the Azadi movement, the inclusivity and diversity of individuals joining the struggle, irrespective of their specific religious background, reflect the broader approach embraced by this revolutionary school. He emphasized, *It is not very important for me which Kurd is fighting alongside me; it can also be a Yazidi. Because I am not religious missionary*.

The practical manifestation of Sıdkı Zilan's perspectives is evident in the Azadi movement's actions. This movement, defined by its religious identity, effectively forged an electoral alliance with the left-leaning and secular People's Democratic Party (HDP) during both the 2018 general elections and the 2019 local elections. This strategic collaboration not only highlights the translation of Zilan's views into tangible political engagement but also underscores the movement's willingness to bridge ideological gaps for a shared political agenda[25] (HDP, 2015; Bianet, 2019).

In the section on Political Islam, I highlighted a significant contradiction that the political Islamists has an anti-nationalist stance, the groups I examine as politics-oriented that align more closely with the mindset of political Islamists are, in fact, pro-nationalist. Essentially, Islamists regard nationalism as an imported ideology, alien to the Islamic society. According to them, western imperialism instrumentalize nationalism to divide Muslims into separate nations and creating discord among them, to weaken the consciousness of the ummah. Political Islamists criticize nationalism for several reasons. First of all, Nationalism is based on popular sovereignty, whereas, as we mentioned above, Islamists believe in Al-hukmu 'Illa Lillahi, that is, God is sovereign, divine sovereignty. Secondly, nationalism is based on the idea of secularism in which religion and state are separate from each other, whereas such a thing is unthinkable for political Islamists. Thirdly, nationalism is based on certain ethnic groups and builds a structure over them, whereas Islam has a universal character that includes all Muslims. Finally, nationalism is essential to nation-state citizenship, which requires belonging to a nation. But in Islam, the distinction is based on faith, the rules are based on being Muslim or not. The rights and duties of Muslims are different from those of non-Muslims (Eligür, 2015; Esposito 1998).

[25] https://hdp.org.tr/tr/kurdistan-secim-ittifaki-kuruldu/5979/ https://bianet.org/haber/yedi-kurt-partisi-yerel-secimler-icin-ittifak-yapti-204212

Upon closer examination, it becomes evident that individuals like Sayyid Qutb and other political Islamists were active during the era of nation-states. They had first-hand experiences of living within this nation-state framework and bore witness to the challenges it posed, often enduring imprisonment or facing execution due to their ideologies. These experiences provided them with unique insights into the inner workings of the nation-state. In contrast, the politically oriented groups I examine in my dissertation, lack this direct experience, and have not such firsthand encounters with the nation-state's complexities. To put it in another light, political Islamists have sat at the table of the nation-state, tasted its complexities, and grappled with its intricacies. Meanwhile, the Kurds, the focal group of my study, have not had the opportunity to partake in this experience and have been largely excluded from the decision-making processes of nation-states. I contend that this apparent contradiction can be reconciled in this manner. I assess this situation independently of the potential outcomes for the emerging national state, irrespective of whether it adopts a Sharia-based system or not. My emphasis lies in highlighting that the perspective of these religious Kurds is influenced by their lack of experience with a nation state. Their assessments are often characterized by an optimistic outlook and are somewhat detached (isolated) from a comprehensive consideration of the benefits, costs, advantages, or disadvantages associated with the establishment of a nation state.

8.4. Economic, Social and Human Capital: Bigger They are the harder they fall

Individuals or institutions endowed with considerable economic, social, and human capital are predisposed to encountering more significant setbacks. In an effort to minimize these setbacks, it is expected that they will embrace a conciliatory stance and function within the confines of the existing system (establishment). This pattern creates a cyclical dynamic: having substantial resources signifies being deeply connected to the system, necessitating collaboration with it. This cooperative engagement subsequently results in the augmentation of resources, thus perpetuating an enduring cycle of involvement within the system (establishment).

In my dissertation, when comparing the two groups I discuss, the groups whom I call politically oriented religious Kurds, with a high sensitivity to nationalism have more constrained economic, social, and human resources. An illustrative example comes from Sıdkı Zilan of the Azadi movement, who fearlessly voiced his perspective: *I am on my own,*

I have nothing to lose, I do not deal with tenders, I do not have any relatives who deal with tenders.

On the contrary, religiously oriented religious Kurds, whom I perceive to have a low nationalist sensitivity, possess substantial resources in terms of economics, social influence, and human capital.

While it remains challenging to compile a comprehensive and precise inventory of the economic capitals within these organizations, certain associations can be made with confidence. For instance, within the printing/publishing sector, notable entities linked to Süleymancı include Fazilet Neşriyat, Çamlıca Publications, and magazines such as Human and Life, Camlica Çocuk, and Yedikıta (Tosun, 2015: 680; Efe, 2013: 264). In the health sector, the prominent establishment is Hisar Intercontinental Hospital, and in the educational sector, one can cite İsabet Schools. Furthermore, there is a company known as Hisar Turizm, specializing in organizing Hajj pilgrimages that are associated with this particular Sufi order.

Considering the economic capital of the Menzil Sufi order, a significant business association affiliated with Menzil is the Turkish Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (TÜMSİAD). Noteworthy businesses associated with the Sufi order operate within the publishing sector, including Semerkand TV, Semerkand Radio, Semerkand Publishing House, Hacegan Publications, Semerkand Magazine, Semerkand Children's Magazine, Semerkand Family Magazine, and Genç Okur magazine. Furthermore, the Sufi order's influence extends to the healthcare sector with Emsey Hospital serving as a important establishment in this field (Tosun, 2015: 679; Şentürk, 2019: 140; Öztürk, 2019: 152; Tenik, 2019: 194;Efe, 2013: 153-154).

The mentioned organizations (religiously oriented religious Kurds) extend well beyond a national level, operating on a global scale and reaching across multiple countries worldwide. As an illustration, The Federation of the Associations that Value Humanity (IDDEF) serves as a key authority overseeing the international engagements and initiatives of the İsmailağa Sufi order. IDDEF offers its extensive array of services across an impressive 309 regions spread over 55 countries, encompassing Türkiye as well. Their influence is felt through 80 complexes, mosques, masjids, and lecture halls distributed across the continents of Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the Balkans. Their educational institutions, known as madrasas, serve as centers of knowledge, boasting a faculty of over 400 teachers and providing education to nearly 10 thousand students. Furthermore, the Süleymancı Sufi order has firmly established its international presence since 1974, orchestrating various activities abroad under the unified banner of *Islamic Cultural Centers*. Additionally, the Menzil Sufi

order actively engages in international activities through notable entities like the Bashir charity association and the Ukba association.

When examining the social capital of these organizations (Sufi orders), it becomes evident that their communication and network structures within society are remarkably robust in comparison to politically oriented religious Kurds (Politically oriented religious Kurds). These groups have strategically established dormitories and Quran courses dispersed throughout the Sufi order, a thoughtful arrangement that amplifies their reach and impact. Moreover, their consistent and systematic collections of donations within the society play a crucial role in sustaining the ongoing operations of these dormitories and courses, ensuring their continuity and effectiveness. This dedicated effort not only contributes to their financial sustenance but also significantly fortifies the maintenance of enduring and steadfast connections with the society, reinforcing the bonds that underpin their communal impact and influence.

When examining the human capital of these organizations (Sufi orders), it is clear that a significant number of individuals, amounting to millions, are associated with them. Additionally, these organizations house a substantial group of state-level bureaucrats[26]. These bureaucrats play a vital role in providing essential resources, fostering growth, and supporting development for their respective organizations. They also actively engage in numerous initiatives to protect these entities from significant challenges, particularly during adverse and challenging circumstances (Öztürk, 2019: 188-189).

As mentioned earlier, large-organized structures need to establish their relationships with the system in a more careful manner. For instance, when opening a student dormitory, it's essential to acquire licenses from various government offices, particularly the Ministry of National Education. Similarly, to establish a Quran course, permission must be obtained from the Presidency of Religious Affairs. Additionally, communities request quotas for Hajj and Umrah activities, and the state grants permission for these requests. In some cases, undesirable judicial and administrative issues and crimes may arise in these dormitories and courses. When conflicts with the system occur, these judicial and administrative issues are thoroughly examined. Nevertheless, maintaining positive relations with the system can lead

[26] In this particular context, the significance of Mehmet Kutlular, the leader of the Yeni Asya Nur community, making a statement regarding their advance knowledge of the 1980 coup lies in its revelation of the intricate ties between these organizations and the government apparatus. Kutlular's statement underscores this connection as he conveyed, 'Naturally, we were informed about the upcoming coup the day prior, thanks to a friend who approached us during the day, telling us, "there will be a coup d'etat tonight" (Kutlular, 2009 :273).

to some leniency, resulting in occasional overlooking or resolution of such cases with minor penalties.

We can reiterate the stance, especially regarding Hüda-Par, within the historical and political context regarding their relationship with the established system. Upon forming an alliance with the ruling party and obtaining parliamentary seats through their list, Hüda-Par found it imperative to tread carefully in their expressions. They felt the need to elucidate their earlier statements, which had drawn criticism from specific segments of society. Clearly, integration into the established system inevitably necessitates a heightened sense of caution and careful communication.

Pierre Bourdieu's insights in *On Television* regarding the intersection of television and literature serve to provide a foundational and meaningful context for the observations I've outlined earlier in this part. Pierre Bourdieu (1998b: 62) argues that cultural producers with high autonomy, specialized knowledge, and a niche audience of competitors are more inclined to resist external influences. Conversely, those targeting the mass market, like essayists, writer-journalists, and popular novelists, are more likely to collaborate with influential entities such as the state, church, or party, as well as media platforms like journalism and television, potentially yielding to their demands or orders. The inclination to resist or collaborate is influenced by the producer's level of autonomy, specific capital, and the nature of their target audience and market. How can I harmonize this with the previously discussed concepts? Much like entities targeting the mass market, Sufi orders engage with the general public, pursuing expansive objectives, and are thus more inclined to collaborate with existing structures. In contrast, organizations such as Zehra, Huda Par, and Azadi, operating independently of religious orders, harbor more defined and specific goals. Consequently, their target audience and followers are more constrained and precisely delineated. As a result, the likelihood of these groups resisting the established order is elevated.

8.5. Contrasting Missions: Religiously Oriented vs. Politically Oriented Perspectives

The main influence on the Habitus analyzed in this dissertation stems from the distinct mission and vision of the two religious Kurdish groups. This divergence in mission serves as the foundation for the classification I established, distinguishing them as either

religious/faith-oriented (religiously oriented religious Kurds) or politics-oriented (politically oriented religious Kurds).

8.5.1. Religiously Oriented Religious Kurds

The core driving force behind the religious Kurds in Süleymanites, Ismailaga, and Menzil is deeply rooted in their unwavering dedication to their religious beliefs and the devout observance of their practices. Because these Sufi orders were shaped around such a mission, the Kurds who grew up here or were somehow related to these Sufi orders embraced and internalized this very mission during the course of their socialization.

8.5.1.1. Süleymancı Sufi order

For a comprehensive understanding of the mindset of a religious Kurd raised in a Süleymanites sect, looking into the teachings and sayings of Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan, the founder of the sect, proves immensely insightful and illuminating. By quoting and reflecting upon the wisdom imparted by Tunahan, one can gain a deeper appreciation of the values, beliefs, and philosophical underpinnings that shape the worldview of adherents within this particular religious community.

Gentlemen (Effendis)! Being a teacher (master/hodja) is not a profession or a bread and butter. Teaching (being Hodja) is the duty of conveying the message of Allah, His Messenger, the Book of Allah and religion of Islam [27] (Dağılma, 2013: 402; Emre, 2016: 10).

There came a time, I wanted to give money as much as the parliamentary salary to have the student read it, but I could not find it. They take the money and run away because they were afraid. I was afraid that these knowledges (İslamic) would disappear from the face of the earth. But later, Allah Almighty made reasons and I had the opportunity to teach. We started with the old ones, then the young ones came. And now it's walking (continues). All of

[27] Efendiler! Hocalık bir meslek, bir ekmek teknesi değildir. Hocalık, Allah'ın, Rasulullah'ın, Kitabullah'ın ve din-i mübin-i İslam'ın tebliğ memurluğudur.

this is the grace of Allah Almighty to us [28] (author's statement in parentheses) (Dağılma, 2013: 404).

An elderly person asked the students who will be sent to different regions to teach 'Would you go wherever you are sent?' The students replied in unison, *'We will go anywhere; because our Master (Süleyman Efendi) will not leave us alone*.' *Do you love the Hodja more than your mother and father?*' they were asked. *'Yes, we* do' they responded. *'We love the Hodja more than our mother and father*.' Upon hearing this, the elderly person narrated the incident to Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan, he commented, *'Of course... Their parents brought them into this world. We guide them through this universe, lead them through the world, the grave, judgment, and questioning, and take them to heaven and the Divine beauty*[29] (Dağılma, 2013: 412).[30]

> *Our path is centered on instilling Faith, Islam, and the ethical teachings of Muhammad. Our ultimate purpose is to attain Divine Consent. Let it be our collective will to stay united, avoiding division and nationalism. Let us steadfastly follow the righteous path guided by the Sunnah and abstain from straying onto erroneous routes*[31] (Dağılma, 2013: 399).

> *Hey lecturers/Hodjas, you bear the responsibility of upholding our religion in this country today. By taking the time to educate just a few individuals, imparting the teachings of our faith, you can effectively prolong the essence of*

[28] Bir zaman geldi, mebus maaşı kadar para verip talebe okutmak istedim bulamadım. Parayı alıp kaçıyorlardı, çünkü korkuyorlardı. O zaman ümidim kırıldı. Bu ilimler yeryüzünden kaybolacak diye korkuyordum. Bunun üzerine kızlarımı okutmaya başladım. İleride torunlarım olursa onlara öğretirler ve böylece bu ilimler yeryüzünden kaybolmaz dedim. Fakat sonradan Cenab-ı Hak, sebepler halketti ve talebe okutma imkânı buldum. Yaşlılardan başladık, gençler daha sonra geldi. Ve şimdi yürüyor... Bütün bunlar, Cenab-ı Hakk'ın bize lütfudur.

[29] Tabii... Anne babaları onların bu denî dünyaya gelmelerine vesile olmuştur. Biz ise onları lem-i ervahtan alıyoruz, dünya, kabir, mahşer ve sualden geçirip, cennet ve cemal-i İlahiye kadar götürüyoruz.

[30] In an interview with a 40-year-old female participant, she expressed, " "My mother and father prepare me for the world, but Süleyman Efendi, the person to whom I am attached, prepares me for the afterlife and taught me that I need to know the Quran in order to prepare well for there." annem, babam, beni dünyaya hazırlıyor ama bağlı olduğum zat Süleyman Efendi, beni ahirete hazırlıyor ve oraya güzel hazırlanmak için de Kur'anı bilmem gerektiğini öğretti" This account " serves as a noteworthy illustration of how Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan's teachings profoundly influence the tarikat's members (Baynal, 2017: 156).

31 Bizim yolumuz İman, İslâm ve Ahlâk-ı Muhammedî'yi aşılamaktan ibarettir. Gâye: Rıza-î İlahîdir. Vasiyetim olsun; tefrikaya düşmeyiniz. Kavmiyet gütmeyiniz. Sünnetten gayri olan, yanlış yollara sapmayınız

Islam for at least 50 years and through one or two generations. Failing to take up this crucial task means you cannot evade the accountability that awaits you in the presence of God.[32] (Dağılma, 2013: 402)

We have no time to stop. While the children of the Ummah of Muhammad flow into hell like a flood, we cannot stand by and watch them. Whatever logs we save from this flood will be profitable[33] (Dağılma, 2013: 405; Özdamar, 1996: 186)

My dear children, You see, we have come to a time when religion is at its strangest. I have nurtured and educated you in the midst of these challenges, I don't want money from you. The only thing I want from you is this: Go and open courses and dormitories all over Anatolia and teach your religion and your book (Quran) to the children of the Ummah of Muhammad[34] (Dağılma, 2013: 408)

My children, you are the servants of Allah and the servants of religion... Your duty is to save the children of the Ummah of Muhammad, who have fallen into the swamp and fallen into the mud, from the swamp. If you do not let others read, teach or impart the knowledge you have received from us (me), know that I will firmly grasp your collar with both hands in the presence of God. [35] (Dağılma, 2013: 408; Özdamar, 1996: 115; Erol, 1981: 73).

I witnessed the invaluable, treasure-like works penned by my predecessor fading into decay, buried in the earth and sold off to grocery stores, left to rot in garbage dumps, or gathering dust on library shelves, all under the dim glow of candlelight. In an era where madrasahs were closing, scripts were evolving, and

32 Ey dersiamlar! Sizler bu memlekette, bugün için dinin teminatlarısınız. İkişer, üçer kişi oturup, onlara dini öğretirseniz asgari 50 sene bir-iki nesil boyu İslam'ın ömrünü uzatmış olacaksınız. Bunu yapmazsanız, huzur-u İlahide mesuliyetten yakanızı kurtaramazsınız.
33 Bizim hiç duracak zamanımız yok. Ümmet-i Muhammed'in evlatları cehenneme bir sel gibi akıp giderken, biz onlara seyirci kalamayız. Bu selden ne kütük kurtarırsak kardır.
34 Evlatlarım! Görüyorsunuz dinin en garip olduğu bir devirde geldik. Ben sizi bunca zor şartlar altında okuttum. Sizden para istemiyorum. Sizden istediğim tek şey şudur: Siz de gidip Anadolu'nun her yerine kurslar, yurtlar açın ve ümmet-i Muhammed'in evlatlarına dininizi ve kitabınızı öğretin.
35 Evlatlarım, siz Allah'ın memuru, dinin memurusunuz... Vazifeniz batağa düşmüş, çamura yuvarlanmış Ümmet-i Muhammed'in evlatlarını bataklıktan kurtarmaktır. Bizden aldığınız ilmi başkalarına okutmaz, öğretmez, aşılamazsanız, biliniz ki huzur-u İlahi'de iki elim yakanızda olacaktır.

religious sciences were on the verge of disappearing, I found it more necessary to raise students, that is, living books, who would understand and explain the scientific works written and who would transfer the knowledge from the pages to the heart and keep it alive, rather than writing books (Dağılma, 2013: 415; Emre, 2016: 15). [36]

My dear children, religion is noble and sublime, but the world is vile and dirty. Religion is noble, politics is dirty. Religion is the main one, others are secondary. Then, the world and politics can be instruments for the development of religion. It's normal. But religion cannot be a tool for worldly interests and politics. There is a curse on those who use religion as a tool[37] (Özdamar, 1996: 70)

He often prayed with a fervent plea: 'O Lord, grant me the grace to raise sufficient clergy for every district and province of Turkey, and then receive my soul[38] (Özdamar, 1996: 91-92).

My children, you will save the children of the Ummah of Muhammad. You will teach them religion. You will teach the book of Allah. You will bring the light of God and the light of Muhammad to them.[39] (Özdamar, 1996: 92).

It is necessary to never engage in matters such as government politics, political partyism, or criticizing the actions and activities of the government, and to not say anything about these issues, and to only deal with your own material and spiritual affairs. Otherwise, it is both dangerous and a waste of time. If you come across a situation that contradicts your religious beliefs, it is necessary to

36 Selefin mum ışığında yazdığı baha biçilmez hazine misali eserlerin toprağa gömülerek çürüdüğünü, bakkallara satılarak çöplüklerde çiğnendiğini, bir kısmının da kütüphane raflarında tozlanmış ve çürümeye terk edilmiş olduğunu gördüm. Medreseleri kapanmış, yazısı değiştirilmiş, din ilimleri yok olmaya yüz tutmuş olan bir zamanda, kitap yazmaktansa, yazılan ilmî eserleri anlayarak anlatacak ve ilmi satırdan sadra intikal ettirip yaşatacak talebe yani canlı kitap yetiştirmeyi daha lüzumlu buldum.

37 Evlatlarım, din alidir, ulvidir, dünya ise adid ve suflidir. Din ulvidir, siyaset suflidir. Din asıldır, diğerleri feridir. O halde dünya ve siyaset, dinin inkişafına alet olabilir. Bu normaldir. Fakat din, dünya menfaatına ve siyasete alet olamaz. Alet edenlere lanet vardır

38 Şöyle dua ederdi çokça: Ya Rabbi, Türkiye'nin kaza ve vilayetlerine yetecek kadar din adamı yetiştirmeyi nasip et!. Ondan sonra ruhumu al

39 Evlatlarım, sizler ümmet-i Muhammed'in evlatlarını kurtaracaksınız. Sizler, onlara dini öğreteceksiniz. Kitabullahı öğreteceksiniz. Nur-u İlahiyi ve fuyuzat-ı muhammediyi onlara sizler ulaştıracaksınız

reject and deny it wholeheartedly and never express this denial. Because our time is not suitable and patient for al-amr bi-l-ma'rūf wa-l-nahy 'an al-munkar[40] (Özdamar, 1996: 135).

The quotes above from Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan also demonstrate that he emphasizes instilling faith, Islam, and the ethical teachings of Muhammad as the central path, with the ultimate goal being Divine Consent. He encourages unity, warns against division and nationalism, and calls for the education and salvation of the children of the Ummah of Muhammad. His primary focus is on teaching and preserving Islamic knowledge and values, with a strong sense of urgency and responsibility to guide and educate the younger generations in the ways of the religion.

8.5.1.2. Ismailaga Sufi order

We observe a similar approach to religious and belief education in the İsmailağa Sufi order, akin to that seen in the Süleymancı Sufi order. Occasionally, they even utilize remarkably similar expressions. Quoting the words of Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu, the founder of the İsmailağa Sufi order, can shed light on understanding the mindset of a religious Kurd who grew up in this environment.

I offer you something that is very easy. For example, let five Muslims come together, rent an apartment, furnish it with the necessary furniture, assign a female teacher, and let that teacher teach the knowledge of the Holy Quran to the ladies of the neighborhood there. Likewise, if a male teacher teaches the boys of that neighborhood in another department, and if there is a male and a female madrasa in all neighborhoods, Islam will come, with the blessings of Allah. [41]

40 Keza, hükümet siyaseti, siyasi fırkacılık, icraat ve muamelat-ı hükümeti tenkid gibi umur ile asla meşgul olmamak ve bu mesaile müteallık hiç bir kelime tefevvüh etmemek, yalnız kendi maddi ve manevi işlerine teveğğul eylemek lazımdır. Aksi hal hem muzırdır hem izaa-i evkattır. Herhangi umurda münkerat-I diniyye müşahede edilirse, onu kalben red ve inkar etmek ve bu inkariyeti asla lisana getirmemek iktiza eder. Zira zamanımız, dini emri bil maruf nehyi anil münkere müsait ve mütehammil değildir.

41 Ben size çok kolay olan bir şey teklif ediyorum. Müslümanlardan mesela beş kişi birleşsin, bir daire kiralasınlar, içini gereken eşyalarla döşesinler, bir hanım hocayı görevlendirsinler, o hoca mahallenin hanımlarına orada Kur'an-ı Kerîm ilmini tahsil ettirsin. Keza başka bir dairede de erkek hoca o mahallenin erkeklerini okutsa, bütün mahallelerde böylece bir erkek, bir kız medresesi bulunsa, biiznillâh İslâmiyet gelir.

Our objective should be to uphold and preserve the divine teachings and principles of God's religion[42] (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010a: 58)

We must affirm, 'I will cherish this book; I will breathe life into its pages, nurturing love for it within me and inspiring others to do the same. I will delve into its wisdom, and share that knowledge with others (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010a: 63)

I would like my entire community to know the meaning of these words (i.e Arabic). Everyone has a problem, that's my problem. If you understand the Quran and act accordingly, alhamdullah, you will be a man of Allah (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010d: 80)

Let's read the Quran and make others read it. Let us not remain idle. God Almighty did not send us to this world to read newspapers, novels, or watch movies. What did He send us to this world for? He sent us to remember Him and worship Him (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010d: 69).

It is imperative to consistently beckon humanity towards the truth. Our duty holds great significance. We should not be swayed by trivial matters or be captivated by worldly standings (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010a: 66).

Our focus should be on the essence of our faith. Islam knows no bounds of tribe or faction. We pray for those who aid and uplift this religion[43] (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010a: 185)

I command everyone to pursue the knowledge of Islamic sciences, regardless of their age, even if they are 90 years old. Let us begin this journey as soon as possible. Why? Because if a 90-year-old embarks on the path of studying and, God forbid, passes away, they will be rewarded for their intention and effort[44] (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010a: 221).

42 Gayemiz yalnız Mevlâ'nın dinini yaşamak ve yaşatmak olsun.
[43] Derdimiz din olmalıdır. Islam'da kavimcilik, taraftarlık yoktur. Bu dine kimden menfaat geliyorsa biz ona duacıyızdır.
44 Herkese İslami ilimleri öğrenmesini emrediyorum. 90 yaşında olsa bile. Öyle ise bir an evvel başlanılsın. Neden? Çünkü 90 yaşındaki bir insan ilme başlayıp ölse bu iyi niyeti ile muamele görür.

Even if we were certain that studying religion would not bring us even a penny, even if we faced hunger and destitution, we would persist in this pursuit. We shall read and encourage others to read for the sake of God[45] (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010a: 270).

While on a flight from Bukhara to Turkey, the behavior of some immodest stewardesses and passengers on the plane bothered me, making me feel uneasy. As I pondered how to address this, a spiritual revelation came to me, reminding me that we should not let such matters pass unattended. In response, I told our female members on the plane, Each one of you, kindly share insights about religion and faith with the women seated beside you and the stewardesses serving (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010c: 26).

We have entered this world with the purpose of seeking and understanding God; this is our foremost duty. (Bu dünyaya Mevlayı bilmeye ve bulmaya geldik. Asıl vazifemiz budur. Buna çalışalım) (Ustaosmanoğlu, 2012: 285).

Delve into the realm of goodness and piety, contemplating questions like: 'In what ways can we bestow favor upon our people? How might we establish a madrasah to nurture minds? How shall we impart knowledge to our students? (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2019b: 221).

The greatest jihad today is to study Islamic sciences and try to become a servant of Allah, an ummah to His Messenger and a competent person of the Qur'an, and to try to make nation the servant of Allah, the ummah of His Messenger and the people of the Qur'an[46] (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2019b: 231)

We have been placed in this world to learn and teach the Quran. (Biz bu dünyaya Kuran'ı Kerim'i öğrenmeye ve öğretmeye geldik) (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010c: 196)

From quotes above, it is evident that Ustaosmanoğlu's primary motivation is deeply rooted in the Islamic faith, underscoring a passionate dedication to sharing their profound

45 Bizler dini tahsil etmemiz sebebi ile bir kuruş dahi kazanamayacağımız bilsek açlıktan ölsek yine bu ilme devam edeceğiz. Allah için okuyup okutacağız

46 Bugün en büyük cihat, İslami ilimleri okuyup Allah'a kul, Resulüne ümmet ve Kur'an'a ehil olmaya çalışman, millet de Allah'a kul, Resulüne ümmet ve kuran ehli etmeye uğraşmandır.

beliefs, embodying the principles of Islam in their daily life, and actively participating in the education of others about the tenets of this religion. This commitment extends to the practice, propagation, and preservation of Islam, embracing a profound personal devotion and a fervent commitment to educational outreach, all contributing to the enrichment of Islamic values and knowledge within their community.

8.1.5.3. Menzil Sufi order

We observe a similar approach to religious and belief education in the Menzil, akin to that seen in the Süleymancı and Ismailağa Sufi orders. The teachings of Menzil leaders, emphasizing a path of devotion, spiritual connection, and a sense of community as a spiritual family bound by faith, shape the mindset of a religious Kurd in this environment.

> *The afterlife is far superior to the earthly realm, with its longer-lasting and more delightful life. Consequently, one should devote themselves to obedience and worship in order to attain the immense joy and pleasure that awaits in the Hereafter* (Kınacı, 2003: 62).

> *Worldly matters should be viewed merely as a means to an end and should not captivate one's heart. Love for the world and being enticed by its pleasures should be avoided. Consistently considering Allah's approval in all our actions ensures peace for the servant on the Day of Judgment, securing entry into eternal heavenly bliss. Dünya işleri sadece araç olarak görülmeli, insanın kalbine girmemelidir. dünyayı sevmemeli, keyf ve zevkine aldanmamalıdır. Her işimizde hep Allah rızası gözetilmelidir ki kıyamet günü kul, selamete ersin ve ebedi olarak cennete girsin* (Kınacı, 2003: 64).

> *Our duty is to worship the supreme sovereign, Allah, and exert diligent effort in our endeavors. Bizim üzerimize düşen sultanlar sultanına Allah çok ibadet edip çok çalışmamızdır (Kınacı, 2003: 170).*

> *If a person does not spend this very sacred and precious life of her in the way of Allah, for the sake of Allah's consent, and does not spend it with good deeds, it would be a great pity (İnsan bu çok aziz ve kıymetli ömrünü Allah yolunda, Allah rızası uğrunda harcamazsa, salih amellerle tüketmezse çok yazık etmiş olur) (El-Hüseyni, 1982: 3)*

There is nothing more acceptable, more honorable, and more valuable for an individual than possessing faith. Faith serves as the key to eternal salvation. İnsan için imandan daha makbul, daha şerefli daha kıymetli bir şey yoktur. Çünkü iman ebedi kurutuluşun anahtarıdır (El-Hüseyni, 1982: 80)

If an individual is wise and vigilant, they will not compromise their faith for worldly gains. The epitome of intellect and wisdom lies in prioritizing the afterlife over this transient world. A person who neglects their devotion to God is essentially misguided, regardless of their worldly accomplishments. True intelligence is reflected in dedicating oneself to actions that ensure eternal benefit, as opposed to toiling for a brief existence at the cost of jeopardizing the afterlife due to minor transgressions[47] (El-Hüseyni, 1982: 156)

We are living in a time where preserving and fortifying faith is enough İmanı kurtarmanın ve pekiştirmenin kafi olduğu bir devir yaşıyoruz (Konuralp, 2006).

The statements I've presented here, nearly all of which are direct quotations from the leaders of these communities, warrant a deeper exploration of the fundamental objectives that these institutions aim to achieve. It is abundantly clear that these organizations assert a well-defined and singularly focused mission within the context of Islam. This mission comprises several critical elements. First and foremost, they ardently champion the promotion and propagation of faith, tirelessly endeavoring to nurture a deep and unwavering belief in the tenets and principles of Islam. The leaders of these communities recognize the profound importance of fostering a strong sense of faith among their members, striving to imbue individuals with a profound connection to their religious identity. Equally significant is their commitment to imparting ethical teachings, which form the moral foundation of their faith. These organizations view ethical guidance as integral to the daily lives of their members, advocating for a virtuous and righteous way of living as prescribed by the teachings of Islam. They view this ethical framework as not only a personal responsibility but also a means to foster a just and harmonious society. Furthermore, a central pillar of their mission is to seek divine approval. Their actions and endeavors are not mere rituals but a sincere effort to align with the divine will and earn the favor of the Creator.

47 Eğer insan akıllı ise uyanık ise dünya için dinini bozmaz. En akıllı en bilgili kimse dünya için ahiretini bozmayan kimsedir. Allah için çalışmayan kimse aslında delidir. İsterse profesör olsun. Gerçekten akıllı olan ebedi menfaati için çalışandır. Çok az bir ömür için ahirete karşı bir dakikacık bir hata için çalışıp çırpınan kimseye akıllı denemez

This quest for divine consent underscores their devotion and underscores the importance of leading lives in accordance with the principles and values of Islam. One of the aspects of their mission is the preservation of the core teachings of the religion. These leaders are aware of the need to protect the authenticity and integrity of their faith. They recognize that deviations from the core teachings can lead to misunderstandings, distortions, and the dilution of the faith. As such, they are resolute in their commitment to safeguarding the essence of their religion, ensuring that it remains pure and untarnished for generations to come. In sum, these Sufi orders underscore the paramount significance of adhering to the central values and principles of the faith. This adherence is not only a testament to their commitment to preserving the integrity and purity of their religion but also a means of fostering a vibrant, faithful, and ethically guided community. This also explains why I refer to these Sufi orders as religion-oriented, religiously oriented religious Kurds.

8.5.2. Politically oriented religious Kurds

Politically oriented religious Kurds play a crucial role in the complex landscape of Kurdish nationalism. They actively engage in diverse political discussions, advocating not only for fundamental rights but also for different socio-political issues like linguistic rights, cultural preservation, and even the pursuit of an autonomous Kurdish identity.

8.5.2.1. Azadi

Azadi and Hüda-Par, as distinct political entities, are fundamentally anchored in the domain of politics, with their overarching goal revolving around the advancement of political agendas and ideals. The religiously inclined Kurds actively participating in this movement do so within the clearly delineated framework of this shared mission. Their engagement encompasses a broad spectrum of political strategies, ideologies, and actions aimed at effecting meaningful change and advocating for their beliefs within the political landscape.

While these movements consistently underscore their actions being deeply rooted in an Islamic ethos and foundation, positioning Islam as their fundamental basis (*Islam is the fundamental dynamic of our way of life, both as individuals and as a society.),* it's crucial to recognize that their prominent engagement in the political sphere distinguishes them significantly from the religiously oriented İsmailağa, Menzil, and Süleymancı groups. This

focus on political endeavors represents a divergence in their approach and objectives, as they navigate the intricate intersection of religion and governance, striving to shape policies and effect change within the broader societal framework.

The Azadi movement emphasizes its actions rooted in the principles of right, justice and freedom. Its assertion of right is founded on the following statements:

> *Upholding what is right is vital for Kurdistan to move beyond its current challenges. Oppression, which involves going against what is fundamentally right, has led Kurdistan to its present difficult situation. 'Right' is a core principle in both religious teachings and human values. It implies that those who have been wronged deserve special consideration and respect, emphasizing the significance of justice in the eyes of both the Almighty and humanity*[48] (Partiya Azadi, 2019).

Azadi, defines justice as *acting equally and balancedly, not showing favoritism, and acting in accordance with the law*, states that *the law or thought must be in accordance with the righy* and says *a law or thought that denies the Kurds and Kurdistan cannot, by its nature, apply justice in accordance with the right*[49] (Partiya Azadi, 2019).

The Azadi movement establishes its conception of freedom through the following arguments: *Freedom can only manifest through a law or ideology that is grounded in what is right and enforces justice accordingly. Freedom essentially embodies the application of what is right and just. When the historical aspirations of the Kurds are actualized through 'right,' their freedom will be achieved*[50] (Partiya Azadi, 2019).

The Azadi movement explicitly states that the core of its political agenda is defined by the Kurdish and Kurdistan cause. They assert that Kurdistan, encompassing its natural, historical, and political rights, should be recognized as such. The movement advocates for Kurdistan to fully embrace its distinctive attributes and rightfully position itself among the nations and states of the world. Azadi acknowledges Kurdish history, culture, literature, art, and their integration into a broader civilization as foundational aspects. The movement embraces the diverse populace residing in Kurdistan, including Arabs, Turkmens, Armenians, Chaldeans, Assyrians, Mhelmi, and Roma, each with their distinct belief systems like Zoroastrianism, Yazidis, Yaresanism, Judaism, and Christianity, as integral components

[48] (http://partiyaazadi.com/index.php/2019/06/10/01-azadi-inisiyatifi/)
[49] (http://partiyaazadi.com/index.php/2019/06/10/01-azadi-inisiyatifi/)
[50] (http://partiyaazadi.com/index.php/2019/06/10/01-azadi-inisiyatifi/)

of the broader Kurdish civilization. Furthermore, Azadi comprehends the complex tapestry of Kurdish identity, encompassing a mosaic of dialects and traditions, establishing a common bond. It acknowledges that Islam, in all its diverse sects, forms a dominant belief system within Kurdistan, contributing to the multifaceted cultural and spiritual landscape[51] (Partiya Azadi, 2019).This differentiation holds great importance, particularly in contrast to religiously oriented groups such as Süleymancı, Menzil, and Ismailağa. Within these groups, the acceptance criteria are notably exclusive . let alone Kurds of other religions, even in Islam, only Kurds who follow to Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah are considered acceptable.

8.5.2.2. Hüda-Par

When it comes to Hüda-Par, It states that it believes that justice cannot be sacrificed for anything and therefore declares the restoration of justice as its primary goal. The party articulates its commitment to reinvigorating human and Islamic values, striving to breathe life into them and make them practicable. Additionally, it outlines its aim to address the Kurdish issue based on principles of justice.

HUDA PAR puts forward the following demands for acknowledging and honoring the rights and identities of the Kurdish population in Türkiye in its party program.

These include:

1) Acknowledging Historical Wrongs: Apologizing and compensating victims for past injustices and cruelties. Advocating for official acknowledgment, sincere apologies, and appropriate compensations to address the historical atrocities and sufferings endured by the affected individuals and communities.

2) Recognition of Kurdish Identity: Rejecting the idea that each citizen is exclusively Turkish and advocating for a constitutional acknowledgment that recognizes Kurds as essential founders and integral components of the country's identity and history.

3) Language and Education Rights: Emphasizing the importance of linguistic and educational rights, with a focus on recognizing Kurdish as the

[51] (http://partiyaazadi.com/index.php/2019/06/10/01-azadi-inisiyatifi/)

secondary official language and advocating for comprehensive education in Kurdish wherever needed.

4) Ending Discrimination: Calling for the eradication of discriminatory practices, texts, and inscriptions that propagate racism and exclusivity (like Happy is who says I am a Turk', 'Andımız' (Our Oath, 'A Turk worths the (rest of the) world'), fostering an environment of equality, tolerance, and unity. '

5) Addressing Historical Figures: Advocating for the alteration of place names linked to historical figures infamous for tyranny and discrimination, promoting a societal shift towards values of equity, inclusivity, and respect for all.

6) Investigations and Justice: Urging a comprehensive investigation into unresolved cases of murder, forced displacements, and injustices perpetrated by various entities, with a determined commitment to holding those responsible accountable for their actions, ensuring justice is served for the victims and their families.

7) Cultural and Religious Rights: Urging for the proper acknowledgment and support of Kurdish cultural and religious figures, alongside the resolution of grievances and the preservation of historically significant burial sites of revered personalities (the people like Said-i Nursi, Sheikh Said and Seyyid Rıza)

8) Educational and Regional Development: Underlining the pressing necessity for advancements in the educational system, targeted investments in underdeveloped regions, and the application of affirmative action to cultivate well-rounded growth and provide equal opportunities for all.

9) Equal Treatment: Advocating for equal rights and privileges for Kurds, parallel to the treatment offered to other foreigners seeking citizenship, underscores the aspiration for a just and impartial citizenship process, promoting equality and fairness for all individuals regardless of their background.

10) Political Reforms: Advocating for a reformed, decentralized governance structure, empowering local authorities and promoting direct election of local officials, fostering a democratic and inclusive approach to governance.

Hüda-Par believes that these steps are seen as essential for fostering harmony, equality, and progress, reflecting the belief that mutual recognition and respect of diverse identities lead to shared freedom and prosperity for all the people in the country.

8.5.2.3. Zehra Group

In regard to the Zehra group, we initially characterized them as being politically oriented. However, fundamentally, we can observe that Said Nursi's principle of auzu billahi mina'sh-shaytani'r-rajim ve siyase (I seek refuge in Allah from Satan and politics), inspired by the phrase *auzu billahi mina'sh-shaytani'r-rajim* recited by all Muslims at the beginning of the Qur'an, remains an active guiding principle within their beliefs and practices. It can be said that this disposition persists in various aspects, including involvement in political engagements, fervent political dialogues, party affiliations, and more. For instance, they do not welcome students studying in their madrasahs to join a political party, to openly express this stance and to actively participate in party-related activities. I'm not attempting to draw a line between high politics and low politics and assert that this group is more associated with low politics. Instead, I'm emphasizing that this group lacks activities such as active involvement in politics, participation in protests, or being an active member of a political party. Nevertheless, it is not challenging to infer that they engage in conversations among themselves about everyday political matters, much like the prevalent discourse found throughout Türkiye.

The perspective on nationalism held by the Zehra group, closely aligns with Said Nursi's conceptualization of nationalism. Said Nursi classifies nationalism into two distinct categories: *menfi* (representing a negative outlook) and *müspet* (representing a positive outlook). Nursi perceives müspet-positive nationalism as a naturally inclusive and non-judgmental concept, standing in stark contrast to the detrimental and detrimental characteristics of menfi-negative nationalism. Additionally, Nursi's portrayal of nationalism as analogous to racism significantly shapes his discourse (Nursi, 2006: 394). In the perspective of Said Nursi, menfi-negative nationalism embodies harmful tendencies, cultivating hostility, a sense of superiority over others, and ultimately leading to conflicts, enmity, racism, separatism, imperialism, and arrogance (Nursi, Mektubat, 2002: 323). Said Nursi puts forth müspet-positive nationalism as a viable remedy for menfi-negative nationalism, encouraging Muslim nations to come together as a fraternity through İslam. He

regards this the community of Islam as positive, sacred, and an authentic expression of public identity (Nursi, 2006: 224). This suggestion promotes a unified and harmonious approach, countering the divisiveness fostered by negative forms of nationalism.

Fundamentally, the conceptualization presented by Said Nursi garners widespread support among religious adherents within the Turkish and Kurdish Nur communities. What distinctly characterizes the Zehra group is their conviction that the Risale-i Nur corpus has undergone alterations, particularly modifying Said Nursi's beliefs, viewpoints, and expressions pertaining to his own Kurdish heritage, along with alterations to phrases relating to Kurd and Kurdistan Tekin, 2011: 68-70; Malmisanij, 1991: 59-76). This perspective sets them apart from other Nur movement. Therefore, I've included this group here due to their distinctiveness from other Nur groups. Their emphasis on Said Nursi's Kurdish identity sets them apart, particularly in their articulation of Kurdish identity and nationalism, which carries a distinct political dimension. İzzettin Yıldırım, the leader of the Zehra group, contended that some Nurcus were influenced by the Kemalists in their approach to the Kurdish issue, aligning their views with them (Tekin, 2013: 158-159). During his address at Mazlum-Der's Kurdish Issue Forum on 28-29 November 1992, he articulated, *The Kurdish issue... is a problem that emerged within the nation-state process... After the First World War, Kurdistan was fragmented into five separate countries; It is a geographical structure shared among Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Russia... Hence, the struggle for Kurdistan or the Kurdish Nation has extended across this region. The Kurdish issue, when viewed in its own context, transcends mere nationalism; it is about determining the destiny of a nation... Our aspiration is to foster a universal Islamic state where all nations coexist on the foundation of equal rights* (Yıldırım, 1992: 342).

Zehra initiated the publication of Nûbihar, a magazine entirely in Kurdish in 1992, amidst intense suppression of the Kurdish language and during a heightened period of the Kurdish issue, with the cover file about the hadith *Do not be oppressor nor be oppressed (in Kurdish: Ne Zalim be Ne Mazlum* (Tekin, 2013: 69).

The Zehra Foundation places significant emphasis on the Kurdish language. Süleyman Çevik, the Editor-in-Chief of Nubihar magazine and a prominent figure within this community, highlights the immense value of any endeavors conducted by Kurds in their native language. He asserts that a nation's language holds paramount importance as its most valuable asset.

People need to make special efforts to spread Kurdish throughout society. We are committed to giving our utmost in this endeavor, mirroring the dedication

of other Kurdish publishers. It is imperative for politicians, intellectuals, and artists to advocate for Kurdish as an educational language. Maintaining the vitality of Kurdish is significantly challenging, especially when millions of Kurdish children in Turkey are unable to use their mother tongue within the educational system. Incorporating a few lessons per week in compulsory education for Kurdish children is a pivotal step towards fostering widespread usage and preservation of the language[52] (Yaşar, 2020).

Süleyman Çevik outlined a set of comprehensive solutions aimed at addressing the complexities of the Kurdish issue.

1) **The Right to Education in the Mother Language**: Kurds should be entitled to a comprehensive educational experience delivered in their mother tongue, empowering them to fully embrace and preserve their cultural and linguistic heritage.

2) **Local Governance in Kurdish Regions without Separation from Ankara**: Kurds should be granted the opportunity to exercise substantial governance and autonomy within their regions, maintaining their integral role within the broader central government based in Ankara. This allows for a more inclusive and participatory approach to regional governance, fostering cooperation and collective progress while upholding the unity and cohesion of the nation.

3) **Preservation of Historical Names of Villages**: It is of utmost importance to restore the original names of villages, as changing names is not just a superficial alteration but a profound shift that impacts the historical narrative. Preserving the authentic names of villages ensures the preservation of historical continuity and cultural identity, anchoring communities to their roots and heritage. Each name carries a unique historical significance, and altering them disrupts the narrative and erases a crucial part of the community's past.

4) **Representation of Kurds in Religious Affairs**: Recognizing the predominant affiliation of Kurds with the Shafiism sect, it is imperative to ensure their meaningful representation and participation in religious matters. Even in the absence of a specific department catering to Shafiism, efforts should be made to inclusively integrate Kurds within the religious framework, acknowledging and respecting their religious traditions and beliefs. This approach promotes religious

[52] (https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/kitap/2020/03/09/suleyman-cevik-28-yilinda-nubihari-anlatti-kurtcenin-ronesansi)

harmony and fosters a sense of belonging and inclusivity within the broader religious community.

5) **Kurdish Language in Religious Sermons**: Empowering Kurdish religious figures with the freedom to deliver sermons in Kurdish within their respective Kurdish regions is a fundamental step towards promoting cultural and linguistic autonomy. This not only preserves the integrity of the Kurdish language but also facilitates a deeper understanding and engagement with religious teachings, enriching the spiritual experience of the community. By enabling religious communication in Kurdish, it supports the sense of identity, fosters stronger community bonds, and enhances religious expression in a way that resonates authentically with the people.

6) **Economic Investment in Kurdish Regions:** Encouraging and facilitating both individuals and businesses to invest substantially in the economic progress and prosperity of Kurdish regions is a vital imperative. Such investments not only drive economic growth within these regions but also contribute to broader national development. By encouraging economic development, it can be enhanced employment opportunities, infrastructure, education, healthcare, and overall living standards, empowering the Kurdish population and fostering a more equitable and inclusive society.

7) **State Support for Kurdish Cultural Activities and Studies**: Eliminating discrimination against Kurds in cultural activities and studies, with the state actively supporting and promoting Kurdish culture. For instance, the publication of Kurdish books by the state is a positive step that should continue and expand.

8) **Inclusive School Curriculum:** Modifying content in schoolbooks to reflect the significance of Kurdish heroes and culture, enabling Kurdish children to identify with their heritage without any sense of shame or marginalization (Bayram, 2017: 80-81)

As evident, the Zehra movement, akin to Hüda-Par and Azadi, adopts a particularly assertive nationalist approach, significantly politicizing Said Nursi's teachings and philosophy.

These organizations have a clearly defined and highly focused mission centered around politics, nationalism, and addressing the Kurdish issue. This mission encompasses several crucial aspects. Foremost, they passionately advocate for the promotion and

dissemination of political ideals, working to instill a deep and unwavering belief in the principles and tenets of their political cause, especially for Azadi and Hüda-Par. Additionally, they place great importance on imparting nationalist teachings, which serve as the ideological bedrock of their movement. These organizations have presented a comprehensive set of solutions to address the complex Kurdish issue. This also explains why I refer to these organizations as politically oriented religious Kurds.

8.6. Awakening the Mind: Intellectual and Socio-Political Awareness vs. Ignorance

One of the factors affecting the development of this Habitus is the intellectual and socio-political formation of the individuals growing up in these groups. In this section, it is argued that individuals who are politically oriented, particularly those striving for nationalist causes, generally possess a well-developed intellectual and socio-political foundation (formation). Conversely, individuals inclined towards a religious orientation, particularly those with minimal nationalist inclinations, often display a relatively weaker grasp of both socio-political and intellectual foundation (formation).

The main idea I'm expressing here is that, upon conducting interviews with participants, I observed a marked lack of analytical understanding in the realm of social and political sciences among those deeply engrossed in religious learning, teaching, and devout practice. In contrast, individuals with a pronounced inclination towards political involvement displayed a heightened interest and grasp of social and political sciences, demonstrating a broader comprehension of the related terminology and jargon. his disparity is fundamentally shaped by the distinct missions and influences that shape the mental outlook and Habitus of individuals within these respective spheres of focus.

During my interviews with two Süleymancı participants (Semih and Mehmet), I inquired about their engagement with literary works like novels, as well as their interest in social and political sciences such as sociology and philosophy. I aimed to understand the frequency of their reading habits in these domains. One of the participants shed light on the matter by explaining: *the frequency of reading such books is quite low. When you have free time, you face a choice between God's knowledge and worldly knowledge. Literary readings and similar pursuits are often regarded as trivial and of no value (malayani) compared to the knowledge of God*.

Another Süleymancı participant (Mehmet) said that *I prioritize reading the Quran and studying hadith over engaging with worldly and transient matters. This practice benefits me both in this life and the hereafter. I don't read numerous books; my focus is on reading the Quran daily*.

Similar to the Süleymancı Sufi order, the İsmailağa Sufi order holds a negative perspective towards *worldly sciences*, particularly literature, social sciences, and philosophy. The leader of the İsmailağa Sufi order, Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu, articulates a particularly direct and stern stance regarding universities and related topics. To provide clarity on this matter, I will directly quote relevant expressions from Ustaosmanoğlu's works.

The university doesn't instill religion in individuals; in fact, it often fails to create a sense of religious need within people. (Üniversite insana din vermez, insanın dine ihtiyacı olduğunu bile hissettirmez). (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010a: 224)

Most people do not know anything about religious sciences, but they yearn for a diploma. (İnsanların çoğu dini ilimlerden bir şey bilmiyorlar. Diploma diploma diye tutturuyorlar) (Ustaosmanoğlu, 2012: 285)

Many students in academic institutions believe they attain enlightenment through the study of worldly sciences. However, true enlightenment is achieved through the divine revelation of Almighty Mevla. Universities are often seen as sterile institutions that do not foster essential virtues like faith, prayer, and fasting. [53] (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010c: 19)

Ustaosmanoğlu often quotes an expression from İbrahim Hakkı in his conversations: Because you found the science of the Quran. What do you need, the science of the Greeks? Çü buldun İlmi Kuran-ı Ne lazım İlmi Yunan-ı (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010a: 269)

> People nowadays cannot find time to dhikr (spiritual remembrance) because they are busy with plays and theatres. Şimdikiler piyeslerle, tiyatrolarla uğraşmaktan zikre zaman bulamıyorlar (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010a: 257)
>
> You are well-versed in Sarf (the study of Arabic morphology) and Nahw (the study of syntax) sciences in Arabic. How lucky are you that you know these sciences but you do not know Greek philosophy. It's a good thing you didn't dirty

[53] O mekteplilerin çoğu dünyevî ilimleri tahsil etmekle kendilerinin aydın ve münevver olduklarını zannederler. Halbuki hakiki münevverlik Mevlâ Tealâ'nın vehbi iledir. … Üniversite kısır bir müessesedir. Iman, namaz, oruç gibi hayırları doğurmaz. (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010c: 19)

your lips by talking about them and explaining them. [54] (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010c: 72)

The Holy Quran shouts to us: I am the book of Allah, your Creator—unveil me, read me, and follow my guidance. Yet, our response is: "Be silent! I've bound you in a cover and placed you in a corner of my home for safekeeping. What more do you seek? Now I will study Greek philosophy, read newspapers, and be informed about the world. we say.[55] (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010b: 134)

University is a nest of scorpions. Üniversite akrep yuvasıdır. (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010c: 85)

If you stand before God with only that diploma, you'll face condemnation. Mevla will inquire, 'Did I create you for Greek philosophy? You were so eager to gain this fleeting worldly knowledge, why didn't you strive for the path to everlasting happiness? While I had my Quran, what were you reading?' Mevla will then request, 'Read one of my verses.' If the individual cannot read, Mevla will remark, 'How can I favor you when you never even turned to me?'[56] Ustaosmaoğlu, 2019a: 162.

They introduced Greek philosophy to Islamic lands, initially advocating the study of both sharia sciences and Greek philosophy. However, over time, they entirely replaced sharia sciences with worldly sciences and philosophy in educational curricula. In our nation, universities focusing on worldly sciences and philosophies are safeguarded, but sharia sciences are not. A nation with such priorities is bound to face defeat and humiliation. Even if individuals like these

[54] Arapçanın Sarf ve Nahiv ilimlerini biliyorsunuz. Ne mutlu sizlere ki bu ilimleri biliyorsunuz da Yunan felsefesini bilmiyorsunuz. İyi ki dudaklarınızı onları konuşmak, onları anlatmak sureti ile kirletmediniz. (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010c: 72)

[55] Kur'an-ı Kerim bize bağırıyor: "Ben seni yaratan Allah'ın kitabıyım, beni aç oku, benim ile amel et." Biz ise ona: "Sükut et! Senin için kılıf diktim, onunla seni muhafaza etmek için evimin köşesine de koydum daha ne istiyorsun? Şimdi Yunan felsefesi okuyacağım, gazete okuyacağım, dünyadan haberdar olacağım." diyoruz. (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010b: 134)

[56] Sen yalnızca o diploma ile Mevla'nın huzuruna çıkarsan silleyi yersin. Mevla soracak "ben seni Yunan felsefesi için mi yarattım. Şu beş paralık dünyayı kazanmak için can attın da ebedi saadet yolunu kazanmak için niye çaba sarfetmedin? Benim Kuran'ım dururken sen ne okudun? Ayetlerimden birini oku bakalım" buyuracak. Eğer okuyamazsa "sen bir kez bile benim tarafıma bakmamışken ben şimdi senin tarafına nasıl bakayım" buyuracak Ustaosmaoğlu, 2019a: 162

fail to grasp the significance and criticality of Sharia knowledge, let us endeavor to emphasize its importance[57] (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010b: 75)

Philosophy is something that comes from dirty minds. Allah Almighty did not create us to read and learn Greek philosophy. Felsefe kirli akıllardan çıkan bir şeydir. Allahu Teâlâ bizleri Yunan felsefesini okuyup öğrenelim diye yaratmadı (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010c: 168)

This socio-political framework and perspective have a profound impact on the way individuals within these communities perceive and interpret notions related to nation and nationalism, as portrayed in literature. For instance, a notable observation is that religiously oriented religious Kurds groups, such as Süleymancı, İsmailağa, and Menzil, actively delve into dialogues concerning the concept of nation within the Quranic context. As previously mentioned in the discussion on Islam and its relation to the concept of nation, in the Qur'an, nation is mentioned in fifteen places in the meaning and context of religion, *the religion of Abraham* (means *the only true, monotheistic religion*) in seven places of these fifteen, also the religion of the heathens; the Christian and Jewish religion. The people in the group that I define as religiously oriented religious Kurds first started the subject in this context. The word nationalism is evaluated together with racism, that is, those who grew up in these structures attribute a meaning close to racism to the points that one would normally define as nationalism.

However, it has been noted that participants I identify as politically oriented religious Kurds approach subjects like nation and nationalism in a more scholarly and modern literary manner. They certainly acknowledge the Quranic definitions and are not uninformed or detached from them. Because the people in these organizations have more developed socio-political understanding and literary intellectual skills. For instance, Mele Süleyman Kurşun. Although he is not organically affiliated with Hüda-Par, Azadi or Zehra, he stands as an independent figure with upbringing rooted in traditional Kurdish madrassas, sharing analogous views on nationalism. When he articulated the notion that people have historically been exploited across diverse domains—be it in terms of class or geography—I inquired

[57] İslam diyarlarına Yunan felsefesini soktular, evvela hem şeriat ilimleri hem de Yunan felsefesi okunsun dediler bir zaman sonra şeriat ilmini tamamen kaldırdılar. Okullarda yalnız dünya ilimleri ve felsefe kaldı. İşte bizim milletimiz, dünyevi ilimler ve felsefeler okunan üniversitelere sahip çıkıyorlar da, şeriat ilimlerine sahip çıkmıyorlar. Böyle bir millet elbette hezimete uğrar, zelil olur. Şeriat ilminin ne kadar ehemmiyetli, önemli olduğunu bu gibiler anlamıyorsa da bizler uğraşalım. (Ustaosmaoğlu, 2010b: 75)

whether this perspective was a recent development or a longstanding reality. His response was as follows:

> *So, of course, according to Marx's dialectics, first primitive communal society, then feudalism, feudalism created capital, capitalism. When capitalism emerged, the proletariat class emerged. So the dialectic continues like this. According to thesis and antithesis synthesis, its synthesis is communism.*

The intellectual comprehension, specialized jargon, and terminology employed here hold significant importance. It is difficult to see a similar example of this in the religiously oriented religious Kurds. Essentially, individuals nurtured in the environment of politically oriented religious Kurds engage in a rich socio-political and intellectual discourse, leading to a transformation in their worldviews. As their perspectives evolve, both the depth and breadth of their engagement with socio-political and intellectual literature enhance. This initiates a fruitful cycle: as you read, your perspective evolves; as it evolves, you read anew. I observed a similar level of perception not only in Mele Süleyman Kurşun, but also in conversations with various members of the Azadi, Hüda-Par, and Zehra.

However, it's essential to emphasize a critical point. The groups we classify as religiously oriented religious Kurds should not be perceived as an *uninformed mass/ clueless crowd*. Examining the literature studied by those aspiring to teach in these madrasahs, we find a vast array of books encompassing logic, rhetoric, fiqh (jurisprudence), usulu fiqh (Principles of Islamic jurisprudenc), hadith, and tafsir (exegesis)—subjects that have been part of Islamic educational history for centuries. Moreover, the students in these communities often memorize extensive phrases and lines from these books. Notably, the practice of memorizing the Holy Quran (Hafiz) at a young age is prevalent, particularly within the İsmailağa Sufi order.

For example, the Süleymancı organizes their system into several educational levels. The first stage, known as the *primitive* stage, focuses on Quranic sciences, memorization, and catechism. Students completing this stage primarily study the initial four books: Emsile, Bina, Avâmil, and Maksut, all are in Arabic grammar. The second level introduces *Ihzâri* courses, emphasizing quick revision of Quranic knowledge and the first four Arabic books, with specific focus on lessons like Izhar, Nurulizah, Word, and Composition. The third stage involves a rapid review of prior learnings and introduces the Texts group, comprising books like Emâli, İsâgûci (logic, Alâka, Akâid, and Menâr. The fourth and final stage, Evolvement (Tekamul), serves as an advanced level where students undergo internship-style training and

study a variety of advanced texts. Key texts taught at this stage include Telhis (Arabic book of eloquence and rhetoric), Kuduri (advanced fiqh book- Islamic jurisprudence), Muhtârul Ehâdis (selected hadiths), Cezeri (information about the Quran), a selection of hadiths and the words of the companions, Münebbihât, Yasin-i Şerif Tefsiri (Hammâmi Tefsiri-tafsir (exegesis)), El-Fevâid (hadith), Durer and Gurer (tafsir-exegesis), Mir'âtül Usül (usulu fiqh-Principles of Islamic jurisprudence), şemsiyye (logic), Feraiz books (inheritance law), and select sections from classical commentaries, all taught through specific procedures (Çakmak, 2013: 58-60)

Therefore, the point being conveyed is that these communities exhibit a limited engagement with contemporary and academic literature. For instance, while logic and rhetoric books are indeed part of their reading repertoire, they are primarily approached as tools to enhance comprehension of core Quranic sciences like hadith, fiqh, and tafsir. In simpler terms, the study of logic is pursued in these communities to aid in the understanding of other sciences, rather than for its intrinsic value as the science of logic. A participant from the Menzil Sufi order aptly illustrated this fundamental principle. *Ilahi Anta Maqsudi wa ridhaka matlubi* This means *O Allah, you are my objective, your redha (gratification / satisfaction / pleasure) is my purpose*. In alignment with this principle, every dimension of life, from the intellectual realms of science to the daily intricacies of existence, is harnessed and directed towards the ultimate purpose—to seek a profound connection with the divine and journey towards God.

8.7. A Common Perspective on Nationalism among Religious Kurds: Marginality, Criminality, and Irreligiosity

I outlined the transformation of actors within Kurdish nationalism in the introductory section of my dissertation. Following the national or proto-national movements led by sheikhs of Sufi orders, the trajectory of Kurdish nationalism during the republican era centered around leftist and secular figures, eventually establishing a monopoly over time.

Within Turkish society, there exists a pervasive negative perception of the left. Throughout the republican era, a constant narrative of the peril and menace of communism was actively propagated. This narrative found expression in entities like the Anti-Communism Associations (the 1950s and 1960s). These associations, often associating being a Muslim with being an anticommunist, played a crucial role in crafting rhetoric that

portrayed devout Muslims as inherently opposed to communism. Statements from these associations underscore this perspective (Meşe, 2017: 230-232):

> The fight against communism is considered a jihad-e-akbar (The Greater Struggle). It is a national duty for everyone who loves their homeland and nation, who values family life, sacred values and morality, and who has a language and religion, to join this war wholeheartedly. [Komünizmle mücadele, bir Cihad-ı Ekber sayılır ki; vatanını, milletini seven, aile hayatına, mukaddesata ve ahlaka kıymet veren diline ve dinine sahip olan herkesin bu savaşa canla başla katılması Milli vazifedir.]
>
> True Muslims love Allah and His prophets more than themselves. They hate those who blaspheme Allah and His prophets. They never love communists. They abhor godless communism. (...) The religion of Islam is against communism until the end of time. And it is its relentless enemy. [Hakiki Müslümanlar Allahı ve Onun peygamberlerini kendi nefislerinden çok severler. Allah ve peygamberlerine küfredenlere nefret beslerler. Komünistleri asla sevmezler. Allahsız komünizmden tiksinirler. (. ..) İslam dini kıyamete kadar komünizmin karşısındadır. Ve amansız hasmıdır]

This viewpoint has permeated religious Kurds, leading to a widespread belief that the left movement is marginal, criminal, and irreligious. Consequently, religious Kurds developed a similar perception of left and secular Kurdish nationalists. The emergence of terrorist movements such as the PKK further heightened the apprehension among religious Kurds, transforming this ideological space into something frightening. As mentioned earlier, the Kurdish language is deemed criminal by religious Kurdish families, a sentiment echoed by participants like Reha Ruhavioğlu and Muhammed. The fear stems from the association of Kurdish language learning and cultural engagement with leftist and secular Kurds, raising concerns that their children might become supporters of the outlawed PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan (APOCU).

In this context, drawing upon the aforementioned arguments, I articulate the following viewpoint. The landscape of Turkish Kurdish nationalism has been significantly shaped by the prevailing influence of left-leaning figures, who are often marginalized and viewed as not adhering to religious values. This extended dominance has given a perception that these actors hold a lesser significance and lack a commitment to religious principles. Furthermore, the involvement of groups associated with terrorism, such as the PKK, has intensified the connection between the nationalist ideology and these negative elements. This

association has not only impacted the general perception of Kurdish nationalism but has also influenced how Kurds within specific religious sects see this ideology. This perception extends to the broader religious Kurdish community, where the intertwining of nationalist ideals with elements linked to terrorism has fostered a shared viewpoint. In this broader context, nationalism itself has acquired a stigmatized image, being considered inherently malevolent. The negative associations, particularly with terrorist elements, have contributed to the belief that supporting nationalist Kurdish parties with a secular focus is not just a political choice but is, in fact, a moral transgression or sin.

9. CONCLUSION

The primary topic of this dissertation revolves around religious Kurdish individuals within the context of religion and nationalism. I identified six distinct groups of religious Kurdish individuals for my research. Among these six, I categorized three as Sufi orders due to their association with the Naqshbandi order, one as a group, one as a movement, the remaining one as political party.

The groups linked to the Naqshi Sufi order include Süleymancı, İsmailağa, and Menzil. It's worth noting that the founders of Süleymancı and İsmailağa orders are of Turkish origin, their establishment occurred in Turkish regions, and the majority of their members are also Turkish. In the case of İsmailağa, the proportion of Turkish members is notably higher, with most key members originating from the Black Sea region. Furthermore, their influence in Kurdish regions is comparatively lower when compared to the Süleymancı community. In contrast, the Menzil community was founded in the Kurdish region, and its founding cadre is comprised of Kurds.

The one I designated as a *group* is the Zehra group, which is one of the mainstream factions within the Nurcu (Nur) movement. This group diverged from the mainstream Nurcu movement due to its emphasis on the Kurdish issue, highlighting Said Nursi's Kurdish identity and the Kurdish themes found in his writings. Importantly, the entire membership of the Zehra group consists of Kurds.

The entity I categorized as a *movement* is Azadi. Originating as an intellectual Kurdish initiative, Azadi is relatively modest in terms of its scope of activities and membership, constituting a comparatively small-scale organization.

The one I classified as *party* is Hüda-Par. Hüda-Par emerged as a product of the Kurdish Hezbollah's integration into the democratic system and its transformation into a political party.

I examined the religious Kurds' understanding of religion and nationalism in the sects, groups, and parties. Therefore, I posed fundamental questions to them: How can we comprehend the complex dimensions of nationalism among religious Kurds, considering those affiliated with Sufi orders and those not associated with any Sufi order? What causes and outcomes result from the interplay between Islam and nationalism for religious Kurds? What characterizes the relationship between Islam and nationalism, and how do religious Kurds interpret this dynamic? Do religious Kurds, in their interpretation of Islam, endorse

or oppose nationalism, and what differences exist in these perspectives? How can we explain the fundamental principles guiding the attitudes and beliefs of religious Kurds about nation and nationalism, drawing notably from Islamic sources like the Quran and Hadith? What factors shape the affirmative or dissenting stances of religious Kurds on nation and nationalism in light of these esteemed Islamic scriptures? How do the political affiliations, Sufi orders, and communities to which religious Kurds belong impact their views on nation and nationalism? How do these perspectives transform in distinct environments, and what accounts for the divergence in nationalist ideologies between individuals raised in Sufi orders versus those brought up in more politically oriented organizations?

My primary and fundamental method was in-depth interviews. In addition, I read texts associated with these structures, turning to both primary and secondary written sources in this regard. Furthermore, I also consulted some sources, with a particular focus on academic theses that extensively employed in-depth interviews to investigate these organizations and benefited from evaluations related to my arguments in these sources. Through the use of a combination of in-depth interviews, text analysis, and the study of scholarly theses, I worked to establish a solid foundation for my research. This approach allowed me to explore the subject in greater depth and enhance the thoroughness and rigor of my work.

This study centers on exploring the theoretical connection between religion and nationalism. I used Bourdieu's concept of Habitus as the core theoretical framework. I placed my research findings within this framework. To assess, comprehend, and communicate my results effectively, I drew from the theories of religion and nationalism, as well as Bourdieu's concept of Habitus.

What were the perspectives of Kurds involved in these structures following an in-depth interview? I concluded that there are significant differences between the Kurds present in the Süleymancı, İsmailağa, and Menzil religious orders and those in Zehra, Azadi, and Hüda-Par in terms of their understanding of the nation and nationalism.

I observed that the religious Kurds in the Süleymancı, İsmailağa, and Menzil sects, drawing from religious teachings, Quranic verses, and historical examples, had a less fragile and demanding understanding of nationalism within this framework. Their issues of nation and nationalism were shaped around fundamental and key concepts such as spiritual superiority, Muslim brotherhood, common ancestry, universal call and accountability, equality, and unity in Islam, as well as the rejection of prejudice.

According to them, what truly matters is spiritual superiority (taqwa). An individual's societal position is closely tied to their level of religious dedication and unwavering faith in God. They emphasize that genuine superiority isn't about physical appearance, family background, wealth, or other worldly attributes. Instead, it is about how close someone is to Allah, their love and fear for Allah, and how they organize their life around these values. This concept forms the basis for determining hierarchy and superiority among individuals. Another point they emphasized in relation to this concept was equality and unity in Islam. They address the unity of all people under the same Creator and their shared lineage from Adam. This message conveys the idea of equality and unity, transcending tribal or racial boundaries in their understanding.

These Kurds placed great importance on the concept of the ummah and prominently highlighted the significance of Muslim Brotherhood. According to them, Muslims are like a closely-knit family, united by a strong sense of intimacy, support, and concern for one another. They stress the communal cohesiveness and strong ties within the Muslim community, emphasizing that Muslims are more than just people who share a faith; they are part of an interconnected and harmonious brotherhood.

Another aspect that these religious Kurds drew attention to was the concept of common ancestry. According to them, all humans share a common ancestor, Adam, as stated in the Quran. This concept goes beyond genealogy and highlights the shared heritage of humanity, emphasizing unity and interconnectedness despite differences in race, culture, and origin in the perspective of these religious Kurds.

Another notable aspect emphasized by these religious Kurds was the universal call and accountability. They point out that the Quran addresses all of humanity as *O People* or *O Believers*, transcending narrow national or ethnic distinctions. It underscores the insignificance of differences between nations and emphasizes the importance of faith in Allah and aligning one's actions with Allah's approval.

Another aspect that devout Kurds emphasized was the rejection of prejudice. They discourage attributing oneself to a lineage of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance). They emphasize that glorifying one's lineage, tribe, or nation to the extent of oppressing others or displaying arrogance is fundamentally wrong.

Finally, these Kurds of Sufi orders have sought to substantiate their commitment to nationalism, rejection of discrimination, and promotion of equality among people by citing a multitude of historical examples from the era of the Prophet.

On the other hand, I observed that religious Kurds within Azadi, Hüda-Par, and Zehra have a more robust and assertive sense of nationalism by drawing from religious teachings, Quranic verses, and historical examples.

Hüda-Par, Azadi, and Zehra, emphasize Quranic verses, like Al-Hujurat 49:13, to argue that humanity is divinely organized into distinct nations, validating Kurdish nationalism. They believe that this recognition of diverse nations justifies the preservation of cultural and linguistic identities.

Hüda-Par, Azadi, and Zehra, emphasize Quranic verses like Ar-Rum 30:22 as evidence that languages and colors are divine signs. They use this perspective to advocate for the preservation of the Kurdish language, viewing it as a divine gift.

Hüda-Par, Azadi, and Zehra *Love of one's country is a part of faith*, attributed to the Prophet, is frequently used by politically oriented religious Kurds to argue that patriotism is an integral part of religious faith.

I observed that Kurds with a strong nationalist orientation, in addition to Quranic verses and Hadiths, also hold a political worldview that places humans at its center. They assert that the universe was created for the benefit of human beings. They view humans as the center of the universe, created as Allah's caliph, and tasked with nurturing the Earth with knowledge, mercy, and justice. They believes that everything, including organized states, exists for the well-being of people. This human-centered perspective has two implications within the context of nation and nationalism: It supports the idea that individuals should live within a state that reflects their cultural, historical, and national identity, aligning with religious teachings. It emphasizes the importance of humanity in all aspects and discourages actions that hinder the natural progression of nations toward statehood through force, oppression, or violence.

Hüda-Par, Azadi, and the Zehra emphasize the importance of addressing the Kurdish issue based on fundamental values such as rights, justice, and equality. These groups advocate for granting the Kurdish community the same rights and opportunities as other Islamic communities, aiming to establish a cooperative and open relationship within the larger Islamic community while adhering to the principles of rights, justice, and equality. They express their views on the matter, emphasizing the legitimacy of fighting for the right to live freely and granting equal rights to all nations, including the Kurds, within a framework of fairness and morality. They also highlight the idea that all Islamic elements' rights should extend to the Kurds and that they should be recognized and respected on an equal basis with other communities.

Hüda-Par, Azadi, and the Zehra emphasize the importance of opposing cruelty, injustice, and arrogance in the context of nationalism, even if it involves one's own community or nation. These groups argue that Islam does not inherently forbid nationalism but condemns individuals' indifference or involvement in unfair deeds and oppression committed by their nation or group. They view such behavior as a form of racism that contradicts Islamic teachings and ethical foundations. They also emphasize the importance of compassion and care for one's own people without subjecting others to humiliation or arrogance. The overarching message is that nationalism should align with Islamic principles by rejecting cruelty, injustice, and arrogance, regardless of one's own community or nation's actions.

Hüda-Par, Azadi, and the Zehra claim that there is a discrepancy between the use of the concept of *Ummah* (the global community of Muslim believers) and the treatment of Kurdish nationalist aspirations. They argue that while Muslims tend to rally behind the rights of Muslim populations living in territories governed by different religions, there is a double standard when it comes to the rights of Kurds. They contend that the concept of *Ummah* is selectively invoked, with some parties using religious and faith-based tactics to distract from the fundamental issues at the core of the Kurdish struggle. This selective use of *Ummah* has become a tool for denying and assimilating Kurdish grievances and has hindered the acknowledgment of Kurdish struggles for justice within the broader Muslim community. They emphasize the need for the concept of *Ummah* to encompass all Islamic nations, including the Kurds, in a way that unites all Muslims rather than selectively supporting some while ignoring others.

I want to unpack and explore the argument put forth by left secular Kurdish nationalists regarding the impact of Islam on Kurdish nationalism. The central argument posits that Islam has hindered the development of Kurdish national consciousness and has muddled Kurdish nationalist feelings. According to this argument Islam has subjugated Kurdish identity and served as a tool for cultural and ideological subjugation throughout history. Despite the differing views these groups have on issues related to the nation and nationalism, I observed that religious Kurds within these groups strongly oppose the assertions put forth by leftists. They don't simply see these assertions as statements; rather, they view them as serious accusations. They argue that Islam has not impeded Kurdish identity. They suggest that the blame for the Kurds' challenges should not be placed on Islam but on individual actions. Some responded by asking why there are states for Turks and

Arabs if Islam is supposedly incompatible with nationalism. Others argued that leftists' claims were aimed at legitimizing their own positions by criticizing the past. Some also suggested that this misunderstanding may stem from ignorance.

Once I recognized that both groups held distinct nationalities and varying views on nationalism, I focused on exploring the underlying reasons for these differences. This exploration led me to the concept of *Habitus* introduced by Bourdieu. To clarify, when we consider the environments in which individuals are raised as different *fields*, these environments were indeed distinct. Consequently, the habits, inclinations, and processes of socialization they developed, collectively referred to as their habitus, were also distinct. These differing habitus frameworks influenced their respective approaches and perspectives. This raised the question: What factors contributed to the divergence in their habitus? What set apart the environments in which they were brought up? In response to these inquiries, I constructed a framework to elucidate the nature of these environments. I substantiated my explanations using both the data I gathered during fieldwork and relevant literature.

Firstly, Süleymancı, İsmailağa, and Menzil were each Sufi/Sufism organizations. The nature of Sufism influenced the character of individuals raised within these structures because Bourdieu described Habitus as an individual's second nature. So, what was the nature of Sufism and, by extension, these organizations?

Sufism has a docile nature. Sufism, with its emphasis on avoiding discord and upheaval, plays a significant role in cultivating a moderate nationalist perspective among these Kurds. To understand the docile nature of Sufism, I emphasize two aspects. First, I discussed the motivation for Muslims to avoid conflict and chaos. I mentioned how the early Muslim community, after the death of the Prophet and the expansion of Islamic territories, faced disputes and conflicts driven by various social, political, and economic factors. The early unity and ascetic principles of the first four caliphs eroded over time, leading to a society moving away from its peaceful and virtuous origins. Sufism is presented as a response to these challenges, emphasizing a retreat from worldly conflicts and seeking solace in asceticism. This withdrawal from worldly affairs finds support in hadiths and contributes to the development of Sufism as a way of life.

The second aspect discussed is the historical context of Sufism, which is rooted in the memory of tragic events that occurred after the passing of the Prophet, such as the beheading of his grandson. These events left a lasting impact on the Muslim community, particularly among Sufis, and contributed to their reluctance to engage in nationalist discourses and actions that may lead to violence. Thus, I argue that Sufism's docile nature,

influenced by a desire to avoid conflict and chaos, contributes to a more moderate nationalist perspective among religious Kurds who are part of Sufi orders, and this is rooted in both the early history of Islam and the memory of post-Prophet events.

In addition to the nature of Sufism, the second framework I developed for these structures was historical and political context in Türkiye. I discussed the historical and political context in Türkiye, particularly focusing on the concept of the *Turkish-Islamic Synthesis* and the state's interactions with various religious and political groups. I addressed several key points. After the 1980 Military Coup in Türkiye, there was an effort to merge elements of Sunni Islam and Turkish nationalism to address social and cultural challenges. It was a way of promoting both Turkish identity and Sunni Islam in a combined framework. The state used a variety of incentives and warnings to influence these religious and political groups. This included collaboration offers and threats, demonstrating the state's interest in maintaining control and order. Certain Islamic groups, such as Sufi orders and brotherhoods, played a role in maintaining social order. The state's interaction with these religious organizations was seen as a strategic mechanism for exerting control and influence. By offering advantages and incentives, the state could effectively regulate these organizations and ensure they did not pose a significant threat. The state had more extensive connections with Sufi orders (Süleymancı, İsmailağa, Menzil) than with Hüda-Par, Azadi, Zehra. This was attributed to the perceived threat and opportunity posed by religiously oriented religious Kurds, who had a broader reach and greater impact on society.

The third framework I developed is the exploration of how the ambiguity in Islamic political thought and the evolving religious perspectives of individuals, particularly religious Kurds, play a crucial role in shaping their understanding and approach to nationalism. I discussed how Islamic political thought does not prescribe a specific, rigid administrative structure and how this absence of clear guidance influences the way religious Kurds perceive and engage with nationalism. I suggested that the lack of explicit guidance within Islam on matters like nation-states and specific political regimes (monarchy, democracy) can lead to varying interpretations and attitudes among religious individuals, particularly regarding nationalism. Some participannts from Sufi orders I interviewed, expressed that their stance on nationalism would be clearer if Islam had provided precise guidance on these matters, but they acknowledge that there is no specific command from Allah or the Prophet regarding the necessity of nation-states for all races.

I also argued that religious perspectives within the Islamic community can vary greatly and are influenced by individual, cultural, geographic, historical, and ideological

factors. These differing perspectives can have a significant impact on how people understand and interpret religious teachings and how they relate to broader social and political issues, such as nationalism. I concluded because of these different perspectives, some religious Kurds, influenced by the pro-patience school within Islamic political thought, adopt a less demanding form of nationalism. They prioritize maintaining order and may suppress anti-establishment demands out of concerns for potential harm to their religious beliefs. On the other hand, the passage also highlights that other religious Kurds, influenced by the revolutionary school within Islamic political thought, exhibit a more assertive form of nationalism. They are more politically oriented and are willing to take to the streets, voice their demands, and express objections without fearing harm to their religious beliefs.

As for the fourth framework, I claim that individuals or institutions with substantial economic, social, and human capital tend to be deeply connected to the existing system (the establishment). As a result of this connection, they often cooperate with the system, which, in turn, reinforces and perpetuates their involvement within the system. I illustrated this concept by comparing two groups: Hüda-Par, Azadi and Zehra with high sensitivity to nationalism, who have limited economic, social, and human resources, and *Sufi orders* with low nationalist sensitivity, who possess significant resources in terms of economics, social influence, and human capital. I discussed how *Sufi orders*, operate on a global scale and have a wide-reaching presence across multiple countries. I also emphasize the robust social and human capital of these organizations, with extensive networks and millions of individuals associated with them, including state-level bureaucrats who support their activities. These religious groups strategically establish dormitories, Quran courses, and collect donations to maintain their influence and connections within society. I also highlighted the need for such large, organized structures to carefully navigate their relationships with the established system, as they often require government permissions and licenses for various activities. Maintaining positive relations with the system can lead to some leniency in dealing with administrative and judicial issues that may arise.

The fifth framework is the distinct missions that differentiate these organizations, allowing me to categorize them as religiously-oriented/politically-oriented.

I argued that the religious organizations, referred to as Sufi orders or religiously oriented religious Kurds, have a well-defined and singularly focused mission within the context of Islam. The key features of Sufi orders include the promotion and propagation of faith, ethical guidance, seeking divine approval, and preservation of core teachings. Islamic organizations worldwide are driven by a shared and fundamental goal: the promotion and

nurturing of a deep and unwavering belief in the tenets and principles of Islam. They are unwavering in their commitment to fostering a strong sense of faith among their members. At the core of their existence, these organizations emphasize the importance of ethical teachings within Islam, which form the moral foundation of the faith. They advocate for a virtuous and righteous way of living as prescribed by the teachings of Islam, emphasizing the values of compassion, honesty, and integrity. Moreover, the leaders of these organizations view their actions as sincere efforts to align with the divine will and earn the favor of the Creator, seeking divine approval to underline the depth of their devotion. Simultaneously, these organizations are resolute in their dedication to safeguarding the authenticity and integrity of their faith. They understand that deviations from the core teachings can lead to misunderstandings, distortions, and the dilution of the faith. Therefore, they are unwavering in their commitment to preserving the essence of their religion to ensure it remains pure and untarnished for future generations, investing in educational programs and scholarship to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of the faith. This is why I referred to these Sufi orders as religiously oriented religious Kurds.

On the other hand, I argued that Hüda-Par, Azadi and Zehra have intricately defined missions that revolve around the spheres of politics, nationalism, and the resolution of the Kurdish issue. In their pursuit of these objectives, they undertake multifaceted endeavors. Firstly, they are deeply committed to the promotion and widespread dissemination of their political ideals, striving to garner widespread support and fervent belief in the principles underpinning their political causes. For movements such as Azadi and Hüda-Par, this mission constitutes a central pillar of their activities. Furthermore, the organizations place a significant emphasis on the propagation of nationalist teachings, recognizing the profound impact of a shared cultural identity in uniting their followers and advancing their political goals. This nationalist philosophy serves as the ideological bedrock of their movement, reinforcing their sense of unity and commitment. Additionally, they tackle the complex Kurdish issue with comprehensive and well-thought-out solutions, seeking to address the longstanding challenges and conflicts associated with it. By presenting these solutions, they aim to contribute to the resolution of the Kurdish issue and create a more harmonious sociopolitical environment. Given the paramount importance of political and nationalist aspects in their activities and teachings, I referred to these organizations as politics-centered politically oriented religious Kurds

The sixth framework is the different academic, intellectual, and analytical backgrounds of both groups, I argued that that religious Kurds of Azadi, Hüda-Par and

Zehra, who are heavily engaged in political activities, especially those dedicated to nationalist causes, usually possess a strong and comprehensive intellectual and socio-political background. This means they tend to show a deeper interest in and a better understanding of social and political sciences, including the specific terminology and jargon used in these fields. On the other hand, religious Kurds of Sufi orders (Süleymancı, İsmailağa and Menzil, particularly those who are less inclined towards nationalist movements, often have a less robust understanding of socio-political matters and the foundational concepts in these areas. They typically lack the analytical skills necessary to navigate the complexities of social and political sciences effectively. This disparity in knowledge and perspective can be attributed to the distinctive missions and influences that shape the mental attitudes and habits of individuals within these different spheres of focus.

The seventh and ultimate framework is the shared perception of nationalism among religious Kurds, characterizing it as marginal, criminal, and irreligious. Over an extended period in Turkey, Kurdish nationalism found dominance within the left and secular sectors. Moreover, the emergence of the PKK terrorist organization contributed to imparting a marginal, criminal, and terror-inclined quality to this nationalist domain. This association was not exclusive to religious Kurds within religious orders but extended to include all religious Kurds, as the nationalist ideology became intricately linked with these particular elements.

In summary, I explained that religious Kurds are brought up with specific cultural norms and practices in different areas of life, and these cultural norms play a significant role in shaping how religious Kurds perceive their nation and the concept of nationalism.

Additionally, the second part of the theoretical framework aimed to examine how religion and nationalism relate to each other within the context of religious Kurds. If we break down the relationship between religion and nationalism into two main aspects, we find that on one side, religion can actively support and enhance nationalism by providing it with tangible and spiritual resources, as well as influencing the way people think and act, essentially motivating, mobilizing, and even manipulating them in support of nationalist causes.

On the other side, there is a scenario where religion weakens or rejects nationalism. This could be because religion sees nationalism as a competitor and a threat. It may also view nationalism as an obstacle to the unity, mutual support, and collective actions of the religious community. In the context of Kurds, when we examine the relationship between Islam and Kurdish nationalism, what I refer to as politically oriented religious Kurds, such

as Hüda-Par, Azadi, and Zehra, play a significant role for Islam. This means that Islam is perceived as compatible with Kurdish nationalism by Kurds affiliated with these organizations, and they use Islamic elements from the Quran and Hadith to support their understanding of nationalism. In other words, Islam serves as a crucial foundation that provides them with material and spiritual resources, discourse, and practices, and it motivates, mobilizes, and even manipulates them.

On the other hand, in religiously oriented organizations like Süleymancı, İsmailağa, and Menzil, nationalism is perceived as a threat. In this context, Islam weakens the religious sensitivities and reflexes of individuals raised in these groups. Nationalism is seen as an obstacle to fulfilling their religious mission because it is understood as a threat and a competitor that could make it difficult for differences to coexist, undermine the sense of the Muslim community, and unity.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

I will provide recommendations for future research, which can be summarized as follows:

1. In my current study, I mainly focused on exploring the national and nationalist beliefs of religious Kurds. However, I did not provide specific, detailed recommendations for addressing the Kurdish issue. I believe that more research in this area is necessary in the future.

2. I examined the national and nationalist beliefs of Kurds within the religious orders of Süleymancı, İsmailağa, and Menzil. For future research, it could be highly beneficial to conduct a comparative analysis of the national and nationalist beliefs of both Kurds and Turks within these religious orders, offering fresh perspectives.

3. Notably, my study did not include female participants. Nonetheless, there's potential for valuable research by exploring the perspectives of women within these religious organizations on their national and nationalist beliefs. It's essential to highlight that conducting interviews with women in these religious orders may pose challenges for male researchers. Hence, it's important to recognize that female researchers may have an advantage in this area.

4. In Türkiye, both Kurds and Turks generally follow the same religious denomination, Sunnism. Investigating how this common religious background influences their national and nationalist beliefs is an important research topic that can yield diverse insights.

5. I conducted a comparison between the understandings of nation and nationalism among Kurds in religious sects in Türkiye and those in more politically oriented entities such as parties and groups. This research, initially focused on Türkiye, has the potential for broader international comparisons, encompassing countries such as Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Proficiency in Arabic would be particularly advantageous in extending the scope of this study.

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12. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND THE LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

How would you define the concepts of Nation and Nationalism? What is the relationship between Islam and nationalism? Does Islam strengthen, encourage, and approve of nationalism, or does it weaken, prohibit, and reject it? In short, can Islam and nationalism coexist? Does nationalism harm the consciousness and unity of the ummah? What kind of bond and relationship can be developed between the Ummah and the nation-state? Has Islam had an impact on the development of Kurdish nationalism and consciousness, and how? What are your thoughts on the views of some circles that suggest Islam weakens Kurdish nationalism?

The List of Interviewees

1. **Ayetullah Aşıti (Partiya Azadi, Chair)**
2. **Sıdkı Zilan (Partiya Azadi Diyarbakır)**
3. **Rauf ÇİÇEK, Lawyer, Diyarbakır**
4. **Abdullah Şahin, Diyarbakır**
5. **Mele Süleyman Kurşun, Diyarbakır**
6. **Refik Alpaya, Bingöl**
7. **Muhammed Ata Yüksel, Lawyer, Diyarbakır**
8. **Reha Ruhavioğlu, Diyarbakır**
9. **Semih**
10. **Nuh**
11. **Mehmet**
12. **Faruk**
13. **Sadık**
14. **Serhat**
15. **Yusuf**
16. **Mahmut**
17. **Orhan**
18. **Salih**