

TURKISH MODERNITY AND KURDISH ETHNO-NATIONALISM

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ABSTRACT

TURKISH MODERNITY AND KURDISH ETHNO-NATIONALISM

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This dissertation analyzes the context and discourse the Kurdish ethno-nationalism have emerged in modern Turkey. In a critical survey of a selected Kurdish nationalist theories, it tries to analyze the historical and contextual trajectory the nationalist discourse have assumed vis-à-vis Turkish modernity. A particular emphasis is given on how and on what basis Kurdish nationalism has questioned the formation and the sources of the legitimacy of the Turkish state and its role in the making of Turkish modernity. Kurdish nationalism, in doing so, defined and instrumentally utilized ethnicity, along with other aspects of cohesion such as Islam, socialism and traditional tribal solidarity since the 1920s. This study argues that modern Kurdish nationalist movement emerged by divorcing itself from the Turkish left in the 1960s. It proliferated in the 1970s and spiraled down to separatist violence in the 1980s. Violence has dominated and synchronized Kurdish nationalist discourse in the 1990s. It sought for international recognition and independent sovereignty by targeting the legitimacy of the Turkish state. The Kurdish nationalist movement moved along, in discourse and practice, around the issues related to the Turkish state, which has evolved with the changing and diversified context of international rights.

Keywords: Turkish Modernity, Kurdish Nationalism

ÖZ

TÜRK MODERNLİĞİ VE KÜRT ETNİK MİLLİYETÇİLİĞİ

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Bu doktora tezinde çağdaş Türkiye’de Kürt milliyetçiliğinin oluştuğu bağlam ve söylemi incelenmektedir. Bazı seçilmiş Kürt milliyetçiliği kuramları eleştirel biçimde tartışılarak, milliyetçi söylemin Türk modernliği karşısında izlediği tarihsel ve bağlamsal değişim çözümlenmeye çalışılmıştır. Kürt milliyetçiliğinin, Türk devletinin meşruiyetini ve Türk modernliğinin oluşumundaki rolünü nasıl ve hangi temelde sorguladığı üzerinde özellikle durulmuştur. Kürt milliyetçiliği bunu yaparken, 1920’lerden bu yana İslam, sosyalizm ve geleneksel aşiret dayanışması gibi diğer birleştirici ögelerin yanında, etnisiteyi de araçsal biçimde tanımlayarak, kullanmıştır. Bu çalışma, modern Kürt milliyetçi hareketinin 1960’larda Türk solundan ayrılmayla ortaya çıktığını öne sürmektedir. Bu hareket, 1970’lerde aşırılaşarak, 1980’lerde ayrılıkçı şiddete yönelmiştir. Şiddet, Kürt milliyetçiliği söylemini egemenliğine almış ve eşsesli hale getirmiştir. Türk devletinin meşruiyetini hedef alarak, uluslararası tanınma ve bağımsız egemenlik elde etmeyi amaçlamıştır. Söylemde ve uygulamada, 1920’lerden bu yana değişen ve çeşitlenen uluslararası haklar bağlamında, Türk devletinin meşruiyetine ilişkin etkenlerle birlikte hareket etmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk Modernliği, Kürt Milliyetçiliği

To my dearest wife, Güldem and sons, Alp and Can

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1. INTRODUCTION

This research intends to study the complex relationship between Turkish modernity and Kurdish nationalism. The question of legitimacy that has constituted a contextual area for the two, has changed with the shifting and sometimes conflicting perceptions of modernity. My main thesis will be that Kurdish nationalism in Turkey has emerged, moved and consolidated with the question of the legitimacy of the Turkish state.

The main theoretical framework in this study will be based on the understanding that nations are modern political phenomena. The distinctiveness and historicness of ethnic, cultural, religious and social ‘qualities’ in human collectivities help, but do not make nations and nationalisms. It is ‘modernity’ that defines the political form and relations between the nations. It was the changing socio-economic conditions in history that brought the need for the absolutist state and a secular national polity within it in the 16th and 17th centuries of Western Europe.

The nation-statehood became the international norm of *sovereignty* in the 17th century. The conditions of its *recognition* increasingly involved the norm of legitimacy, which evolved with the accelerated expansion of Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, toward Eastern Europe and onto colonial possessions. That ‘expansion of modernity’, in turn, defined the norms of sovereignty-seeking behavior. Hence, modernity assumed a new, *secondary* form: the one experienced by the state-seeking/nation-building human collectivities. This constituted a *duality* along with that of the existing nation-states, who defined the[ir] rules of recognition in the[ir] international system. As such, modernity did not entail a single path for all human collectivities in assuming a political form, nor did it imply a universal recognition for all.

The conditions of sovereignty and recognition have changed with the evolving and expanding modern international system. The Ottoman modernization in the 19th century is a function of this expansion. The Ottoman effort (i) was a *secondary experience* as an outsider and (ii) sought 'saving the statehood' by way of recognition, without construction of a nation-statehood, based on popular legitimacy and national sovereignty. Hence, in every effort to reform that was expected to bring 'more' recognition by its rivals in Europe, the Ottoman Empire delegitimated its sovereignty, until it collapsed when faced with the final expansion by the 'Powers' in the First World War.

In 1923, republican Turkey was lent recognition by the international system, but remained under the constant pressure of Kurdish nationalist claims. This pattern followed (i) the *territorial* legacy of Kurdish nationalist claims, (ii) the deficiencies in the legitimation effort by the republican state and (iii) the changing conditions of international legitimacy for the recognition of their sovereignty-seeking behavior.

I shall argue that Kurdish nationalism converged three times with the international context of legitimacy and recognition. In 1918-1930 Kurdish *proto-nationalism* involved *private projects for recognition* in the international system by the traditional tribal and religious elite. In the late 1960s, during the heyday of *decolonization*, a modern Kurdish nationalist movement emerged by *divorcing itself from* the re-liberationist *Turkish revolutionary left*. In 1990s, however, Kurdish nationalist movement *consolidated*, albeit by the separatist violence of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). This violence did *not* modernize the Kurdish nationalistic polity, but has *synchronized* it.

The only point on which all students of nationalism converge is that there is not an agreed normative framework to define what nationalism is. The normative problems in theorizing nationalism involve two dimensions. One of them involves the *analytical* problems caused by the duality of the historical

experience by different nations in making or seeking their own path to nation-statehood. The second one is more complex as it involves the *ideological/discursive* way how they define and legitimate themselves for an effective mobilization. In the case of the contemporary Kurdish nationalist discourse, I shall try to argue that this definition and legitimation effort is observable.

Legitimacy is the context where the state-building governments and the revolutionary, secessionist and state-seeking nationalisms coincide on a given territory. It is, by definition, an area of political/ideological struggle. This struggle has inner dynamics that target popular support. But it also has an international target, recognition.

I shall try to establish a pattern where Kurdish nationalism has tried to mobilize its project in Turkey, by adopting itself to the changes in the international context. In the 1990s, the PKK has dominated and distorted *all* forms of ‘Kurdish expression’, including the re-legalized ‘non-violent’ political expression. The ‘non-violent’ legal party politics has thus been made to serve to the legitimation of the PKK violence. I shall try to conclude by discussing how the PKK violence and legal party politics mediate over the perennial question of *territoriality*. This claim will be pursued by arguing that Kurdish nationalist movement has achieved, within a decade, *a structural place in Turkish modernity* by an active mediation of this enigmatic principle.

1.1 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is intended to cover the emergence and consolidation of Kurdish nationalism within Turkish modernity. The analytical framework will involve three main discussions:

- (i) a historical and theoretical consideration of the different approaches regarding the relationship between modernity, nationalism and ethnicity,
- (ii) a critical review of various theories in the Kurdish nationalist literature concerning the relation between Turkish modernity and Kurdish nationalism,
- (iii) an analysis of the historical, political, ideological aspects of the Kurdish nationalist discourse with a view to its legitimization effort vis-à-vis the question of legitimacy of the Turkish state.

As the research is intended to cover Kurdish nationalism in its relation to Turkish modernity, Kurdish nationalist movements in other countries such as Iraq, Iran and Syria shall remain out of its scope. The study is not intended to answer existential questions as to whether Kurds constitute a separate ethnic people or a nation in terms of their social, historical and political properties. But the discussion certainly involves, for analytical purposes, a critical review of such answers given by the Kurdish nationalist scholars.

Both the theoretical discussion (Chapter Two) and the critical review (Chapter Three) involved in the study is intended to frame the analysis of Kurdish nationalism in its relation to Turkish modernity within the context of changing sources of international legitimacy. This context does not allow a ‘performance evaluation’ of Turkish modernity, with any implications on Kurdish nationalism. I do share the point raised by many modernist scholars that Turkish modernity has been deficient in many respects, which negatively affected its perception by vulnerable sections of the society in particular. But in terms of Kurdish revolutionary/secessionist movement and its ‘main body of claims’, only the ‘ideologically feasible’ ones that matter. This is particularly observable in the shifting discourse of Beşikçi from “under-underdevelopment” in the 1960s to “decolonization” and “revolutionary liberation” in the 1970s and 1980s. This is why, this study pursues ‘what has been made political’ by Kurdish nationalism.

The latest ‘wave’ of Kurdish nationalist movement has begun its action the same year (1984) when the Turkish government started the construction of the single largest development investment in the entire republican history, the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP). One of the observable consequences of the guerilla violence has been the disruption of public and private investments and services in the region since that time. The ‘Turkish imposed Kurdish under-underdevelopment’ is no more a ‘feasible’ argument for the Kurdish nationalist discourse itself. But I would certainly agree on the need for further studies on the social and economic disruption in the last two decades of violence in the area.

Yet, the question of ‘what was wrong with the Turkish modernity’ is still a relevant one for this study. The answer that defines our scope here has been, again, is provided by the Kurdish nationalist discourse itself. In the post-1990 era, Kurdish nationalism has dwelled particularly on the ‘ethnicist/racist, discriminatory, exclusive nature’ of Turkish modernity as an historical trajectory. This is because the contemporary international context, politically and scholastically, has shaped the question of ethnic minorities, non-colonial and indigenous peoples since the late 1970s and definitely in the 1990s. If the current ‘paradigm’ that proves ideologically ‘feasible’ for the sovereignty-seeking nationalist/secessionist movements allow a legitimization pattern as such, it is only natural, as is argued in this study, that Kurdish nationalism ‘re-constitutes’ on it. But this ‘re-constitution’ behavior, i.e. adopting to changing international paradigms, is also worth studying. Here, the context is larger, but the state-seeking behavior is easier to observe. It is also helpful to dissect in this larger context, the ideological content of the Kurdish nationalist discourse. It invests so much in the delegitimation of Turkish modernity, without saying what it wants or wants not to say.

The Kurdist nationalist discourse has devised ethnicity as well as religion and ideology effectively to gain international recognition and legitimacy. It has

increasingly politicized ethnicity in a context it articulated as such. In doing so, the recently burgeoning Kurdish nationalist literature elaborated on a relational framework arguing for an ethnic action-reaction scheme that brings exclusion, domination, repression and resistance. I will try to argue that this theoretical framework is ‘constituted’ ideologically on an ‘ethno-relationalist’ plane in order to legitimate nationalist claims for international recognition. The ‘relation’ should be sought not as one between the ethnies, but between the legitimation behavior of the two overlapping political claims to sovereignty.

1.2 Areas of Problem

I have dissected five problem areas in my readings on Kurdish nationalism. Each of these problem areas could well have constituted a topic for individual theses. But a contextual study that seeks to analytically interrelate these areas can equally be worthwhile an effort to undertake. The present work is therefore and before all is a study of the context. It involves the multi-dimensional change in the context as well as the way it is perceived and presented by different scholars and actors in Kurdish nationalism in Turkey.

The first problem is the definition of what nationalism is. It involves both a normative and an analytical discussion about nationalism. In the relevant literature, there has been a general normative confusion on what nationalism is.¹ This confusion emerges out of a fundamental discrepancy between such

¹ For ‘contemporary’ analytical accounts where this problem has been acknowledged, see Beiner (1999), pp.2-17; Smith [1998], pp.x-7, Smith (2000), pp.2-4; Guibernau (1999), pp.13-15; Guibernau (1996), pp.1-3; Anderson [1983], p.3; Hobsbawm [1990], pp.2-7; Greenfeld [1992], p.5; Breuilly [1993], pp.1-2; Alter [1989], pp.1-5; Mac Laughlin (2001), pp.10-15, Seton-Watson [1977], p.42; Calhoun (1997), p.123. Going back in history toward more ‘contextual’ accounts bearing witness to the climax of Western nationalist era, however, we observe a more assertive and thorough statement of ‘leading’ philosophies in their phenomenal form as nationalism: i.e. nationalism as (neo-) Kantian doctrine of societal self-accomplishment in Kedourie [1960], pp.1-3, 15-6, 20, 71-2; as a building principle of liberal internationalism in Carr (1945), p.38ff; as *Volkish* “cultural populism” which we need to get immersed to be free in Herder or as a guide to follow between the collective will and culture since the [nation-] state (*la Patrie*) exists in the relations of the state to its members, in Rousseau. Smith (2000), pp.8-9.

normative theorizing effort and the analytical problems entailed in the historical development of modernity. As I shall outline in Chapter Two, nationalism, being categorically a modern phenomenon, has changed through time, in form and content, according to where and when its subject had been located. Yet, the deterministic relationship between modernity and nationalism remained intact. But the change in the parameters of modernity (i.e. industrialization, ideology, status of nation states in the international system, globalization) alter the context perceived and adopted by different nationalisms.²

It is the changing context of modernity which has made nationalism not only a cause, but also consequence of nation-states. The political space was reorganized along national lines. This meant that new states, which were yet-to-be nation-states, were credited with a wholesale legitimacy. The ensuing effort involved new forms of nationalism, contents of which were furnished to suit these states' individual needs in their domestic and international legitimization strategy. That strategy took on ideological forms in the post-war era, rendering modernity and nationhood a 'project' for these new states, as opposed to the much celebrated 'phenomena' for the old European industrialized nation-states of the 19th century. Nation-statehood is no more an end *per se*. Henceforth, modernity for many, albeit ideologically rather than phenomenologically, meant modernization. The ensuing gap between the two was an area left to the legitimization performance of the state.

In Chapter Four, I shall argue that Turkish modernity can also be approached as a system of legitimization. I suggest that the Turkish state and state elites have deliberately sought political legitimacy in substituting Ottoman legacy with a new political order. I argue that the Turkish modernity discourse should be understood in its totality, rather than through its components such as

² Tamir, Y., "Theoretical Difficulties in the Study of Nationalism" in *Theorizing Nationalism*, Ronald Beiner (ed.), New York: State University of New York Press, 1999, pp:67-90.

nationalism, reformism, populism, secularism and so on. It was a project of post-sovereignty legitimation.

The second problem area is the ‘ethno-relationist’ approach prevailing in the recently burgeoning scholarly work on Kurdish nationalism in Turkey. It is particularly striking that most scholars implied Kurdish ethnic nationalism as virtually the making of Turkish modernization. Indeed, today there has been a formidable literature accumulating around a mythically evil, grandiose oppressive machinery of the Turkish state, as an agent of Turkish nationalism. Yet it is equally striking that in all such accounts Kurdishness has been assertively and separately coined in as an ethnic-national ‘quality’. The question involved here is rather confusing: Is Kurdish nationalism a product of Turkish modernity or a historical sequence predetermined by the perennial ‘qualities’ of ethnic Kurdishness? In Chapter Three, I shall argue that the relational framework is in no way sufficient in understanding Kurdish nationalism vis-à-vis Turkish modernity. There has always been an indigenous ideological nationalist dynamic that enables us to look at it ‘from within’. That dynamic is not based on so-called perennial ethnic qualities, but fed by a modern paradigm that universally frames nationalist aspirations with an ultimate goal of sovereign statehood.

In Chapter Four, I will suggest that this dynamic forms a common code of operation among the conceptions of Kurdish nationalism. This code is a central claim to territorial sovereignty by the Kurdish nationalist elite, in terms of autonomy/independence from the political-societal structure. This provides the ideological mediation for the theoretically conflicting primordialist, perennialist and modernist conceptions of Kurdish ethnicity to converge into political nationalism. This claim assumes different patterns in its relation to the legitimation efforts of the Turkish modernity.

The *relational* aspect should be sought not between the allegedly exclusivist/ethnicist Turkish nationalism and ensuing reactionary/emancipatory

Kurdish ethnic nationalism, but as one between the legitimation effort by a new modern republican polity and its exclusive alternatives. They range from a total rejection of Turkish modernity to secessionist movements and more recently, toward creating alternative conceptions of peoplehood with claims of shared territorial authority.

There emerges at a third problem area. How can we explain Kurdish nationalism aiming to reach a modern universal right to statehood, while perennial claims of Kurdish ethnicity insist on rendering it essentially a particularistic framework? To answer this, one needs to understand the convergence (or tension) between the universalistic and particularistic claims of Kurdish nationalism. I have observed that the single universalistic claim for sovereign statehood required devising many particularistic claims and methods depending on the context modernity entails. I shall argue that sovereignty-seeking nationalism is essentially instrumentalist in terms of its method. Hence, it is capable of converting any ethnic, cultural, historical and humanitarian quality into a resource. Nationalism needs these resources to construct its sovereignty and legitimacy. In that sense, a brief debate will be given on theoretical redundancy of the term “ethno-nationalism” toward the end of Chapter Two. I shall then argue in Chapter Four that Kurdish nationalism needs not be qualified as essentially ethnic in terms of its sovereignty-seeking behavior.

Still, the question of ‘ethnicity’ on its own constitutes another (fourth) problem area. In my readings, I have encountered more often than not accounts that begin describing the Kurds as the “largest people in the world *still* without a state of its own”.³ This standard statement entails with it an analogy worth

³ Chailand (1994), “Introduction” [italics added]. Hobsbawm also refer to Kurds, along with the Basques, the Jews, the Somalis and others, as proto-nations. But his reference involves a distinction regarding the “ethnicity in the Heredotean sense” that binds together populations dispersed on large territories, not one of the crux related to the formation of a nation-state. Hobsbawm [1990], p.64.

discussing. Gellner criticized this as a 'social ontology' that posits nations as real entities presupposes sovereign statehood as a 'natural right'.⁴ If the standard (contemporary) mediation between sovereign statehood and a 'people' is their 'right to self-determination', then this unit to self-determine needs to be determined in the first instance. However, the independent sovereignty of states in the international system operates on 'recognition' by other states. Hence, their territorial and sovereign claims necessarily overlap by those of the existing states expected to recognize them. Then, how can a right be claimed as 'natural' when its subject (the 'people') as well as its object (the 'state') are both bound by the subjective/political will of other state actors? In other words, in the real political world of modernity, 'peoples' can only define and express themselves. Determining them as a 'subject' (i.e. 'self') of the so-called principle of self-determination is the work of others.

I shall argue in Chapter Four that Kurdish nationalist particularism (i.e. Kurdish ethnicity) is an effort to define this 'self'. As such, I have looked at Kurdish ethnicity, in its capacity as a tool of Kurdish particularism. Kurdish nationalist particularism has produced mainly ethnic markers used as boundary-setters for separating the Kurds from Arabs, Iranians and Turks. I have also considered the functional pertinence of the so-called ethnic markers, i.e. cultural/symbolic, linguistic, territorial, kinship/sanguinity and psychological, devised by the Kurdish nationalist elite in Turkey.⁵

⁴ Gellner (1983), p.48. I must add that, other than those perennial and primordial accounts that consider nations as real and sometimes as natural, there are modernist accounts which see nationalism as a natural phenomenon. For Guibernau, nationalism can be seen as a 'natural state of being' for all 'nations without states'. Guibernau (1999), pp.89-108. This means, nations without states exist prior to their nationalistic action. I think, Guibernau aims to replace the political by moral causes which define nations from outside. When nation exists before its plea for power, that means when it declares its plea, it is a moral obligation to accept it, rather than subjectively questioning its political acceptability. Kymlicka forwards a similar argument regarding moral obligations toward minorities, which should be treated as the subject of collective rights rather than individual/universal rights which are more vulnerable to abuse by states. Kymlicka (1995), pp.47-54.

⁵ Methodologically, I had to refrain from indulging into any essentialist debate on the 'qualities' of these ethnic markers. But it was particularly impressive to see, for example, that the Kurdish ethnic nationalist 'discourse' became utterly irritated when the state 'officially' adopted 'Nevruz' festivities after 1996. This vivid reaction was induced not by the

The local/territorial factors have been historically and politically devised more ‘systematically’ than others. The cultural/linguistic aspects of Kurdish ethnic claims have been the most ventilated ones. But the local/regional *territoriality* has been *the* primary factor that fuelled Kurdish nationalist ‘movement’. It has been only *more discreetly* argued, usually and preferably toward the local Kurdish audience, rather than the national scale.

This territorial aspect voiced quite amply by the Kurdish nationalist political parties proper in the 1990s, yet again with a ‘double tone’ that differed on the national scale. I argue that local/regional seclusion served two main purposes of Kurdish nationalism: firstly for the practical purposes of concealing and protecting the nationalist project and the relevant ‘revolutionary’ organization from any possible defensive reflex by the state. Secondly, through 1960 and 1970s when Turkey still lacked a modern national communication network, it proved best to use the ‘cosmic’ localities as incubators that may later be unified by expanding nationalist action. These two factors were adopted by the emerging local Kurdish nationalist elite on a tactical plane in the 1960 and 70s until they were reinforced by the armed violence introduced ‘from without’ after mid-1980s.

On the other hand, as I shall assert, Kurdish claims at the national scale in Turkish politics have been devoid of the sovereignty-seeking behavior. These were made to fit into the legitimate and legal framework provided by Turkish politics, at least until modern Turkish legal socialist movement was outlawed in 1971. I shall discuss that this rather confusing ‘double tone’ of Kurdish nationalism has continued with the Kurdish nationalist parties of 1990s. I shall

government’s unexpected move to accommodate culturally the Kurdish ‘Newroz’. It was rather a disappointing experience that a significant ethnic border, so strenuously erected by the Kurdish ethnic nationalist enterprise to express Kurdish “*serihildan*” (popular disloyalty), was so easily stepped over by other ethnicities. The fact was that this ‘new day’ have been celebrated throughout the entire Euroasian Turkic world as ‘Nooruz’ as well as by the Iranians and other minor Caucasian peoples.

also argue that this double-tonality to be a major impediment before the ‘construction’ of a common language on the Kurdish issue in Turkey.

The problem of modernity within Kurdish nationalism, is a distinct (fifth) area where I had to ask further questions. One may feasibly ask why we should endeavor to understand modernity and modernization within Kurdish nationalism in Turkey, where we have a larger social formation in which the elements of modernity and forces of modernization transform the Turkish society, including the Kurds, as a whole. Does the answer really depend from which angle you look at it? Or is the ‘double experience of modernity’, which I mentioned in my first problem area, applicable as well in here? Can we, at least for analytical purposes, apart from the essentialist or ethno-symbolist claims of separateness, divorce the modernization of Kurdish nationalism from Turkish modernity? If we do, does this amount to a fundamental refutation of the ‘contextual’ nature of this thesis? And if we divorce not, does this mean our criticism toward relationalist literature rendered meaningless?

The first point in line here is whether the modernity the Turkish society experienced at the time of the constitution of the republic was the same what classical modernist conceptions of nationalism entailed? The myth of ‘westernization’ that haunted Ottoman modernizers continued as an official ideology in the early republican context. But there was hardly the Gellnerian path of industrial-cum nationalist causation. Nor there was a genuine capability by the “military-administrative elite [who] had to acquire its folk base, and almost contingently alighted on the Anatolian peasantry.”⁶ Yet there was the project of legitimation to which the nation-building process served as its function.

⁶ Gellner (1994), Chpt.7 “Kemalism”, p.88. Gellner refers to Stirling who echoed the general conviction that the early republican modernity had been characterized by its acute inability to reach masses. *Idem* [Stirling (1981)].

The disagreement on continuities and discontinuities is a second argument in line. In most accounts on Kurdish nationalism, there is a general tendency to extend Ottoman reformism into the republican modernization. There are two basic analytical concerns in such theoretical effort. One is that there is a need to ‘historicize’ the Kurdish nationalist genealogy, linking late-Ottoman and early republican Kurdish ‘ethno-political resistance’ into the present day. To this, I will disagree, by claiming in the fourth chapter that there are differences between an ethnic resistance and nationalism proper. I contend that, despite the ethnic congruence, a political consideration/comparison of Sheikh Ubeydullah (1880s) to Sheikh Said (1925), metropolitan/politicized to provincial/rural Kurdish elites and pre-1930 to post-1960 Kurdish claims bring more discontinuities and dissimilarities than vice versa.

The second aim is to expand the operational area of the ‘idiomatically doctinated, ethnicist irredentism’ involved in the Turkist ideology, nurtured by the Union and Progress (CUP). This is to support the argument that it survived in spirit and person within the early republican era. This is far larger a catch for the relationalist ethno-symbolist analysis. Painting a picture in starker tones would no doubt strengthen the expression, but the configuration will remain. The ‘ethnicism’ of the late-Ottoman reformists was anti-Christian, not anti-Kurdish.⁷ As such, Ottoman reformism never aimed at assuming universal dimensions of an overall, ‘biting’ modernization of a nation-building process. “Saving the state” did not mean making a new one.⁸ ‘Turkism’ turned out to be a ‘*narodnik*’ type of a populist, peasant-based nation-building ideology.⁹ The

⁷ See Landau’s account regarding the Committee of Union and Progress in the earlier half of the 1910s resolving to denationalize all non-Turkish communities and to promote patriotism among the Turks. Landau [1981], *Pan-Turkism, From Irredentism to Cooperation*, 2nd ed., pp.48-56.

⁸ On historical conditions of this indecision see Ersanlı-Behar (1992), pp.63-78. Bora, asserts that there has been a ‘consciousness of continuity’ based on Ottoman ‘technology of saving the state’. Bora [1998], pp.15-19.

⁹ For a useful classification and comparison of various forms of late-Ottoman nationalisms see Ersanlı-Behar (1992), pp.68-75, Berktaş (1983), pp.24-45. Georgeon (1980), pp.8-33. Oran presents an analytical discussion on the continuities and discontinuities between the late-Ottoman state-saving and the early republican state-building. On nationalism, he stresses on the

myths (e.g. the ‘Sun Language Theory’ of the Turkish Historical Society, the investigations -by A. Inan- on the anthropometric properties of the ‘Turkish race’ among others)¹⁰ fabricated by the ‘official history’ during the early republican era are long gone.

This list can be extended to match each and every claim by an ethno-symbolist relational analysis, which would eventually submerge into an essentialist discussion. The actual problem here is the methodological/epistemological confusion by the ethno-symbolist, who attempts to replace history by archaeology. I shall criticize one such typical attempt by Yeğen in Chapter Three. Yet it should suffice here to argue that if a relational context exists in terms of ethnicities or nationalism, it lies not in between them, but in their relations to modernity.

1.3 Theoretical Premises and Hypotheses

The above argument gives us a third point in line which involves the relational context of ethnicity and nationalism with modernity. This is the context my study intends to examine. Therefore, the theoretical premises and hypotheses of the study must be made clear.

- i) Nations are modern social phenomena. As such, they are neither primary, nor natural, unchanging entities. We can only speak of nations (and nationality) in the context of modern state. They do not make states or nationalisms, but the other way round.¹¹

elimination of the imperialist pan-Turkist irredentism and allegiance to national sovereignty (through prioritization of Gökalpian (Durkheimian) solidarism) as the two essential discontinuities between the two. Oran [1988], pp.50-69. Other major sources on comparative Turkish nationalism include Kohn (1944), Heyd (1950), Landau (1981).

¹⁰ See Inan (1939) and Inan (1947).

¹¹ In terms of the relation between the modern state, nation and nationalism, I share the theoretical position laid out in Hobsbawm [1990], pp.9-12, Gellner (1983), p.1 and Breuilly (1993), pp.1-4. Smith, an arch perennialist, confuses the above historical dialectical approach with that of the liberal-rationalist theories of modernization, and criticizes it for being

- ii) Nationalism, therefore and before all, is political. It may thus serve as a ‘principle’ of congruence, as Gellner claims, between the political and national unit. But depending on the context, as is the case for ‘nations without states’, it may serve as an ideology to prospectively define a ‘nation’ and its future ‘state’.
- iii) Hence, nationalism is also contextual, depending on where in time and how its subject (i.e. the social entity conceiving itself as nation) is placed politically. Modernity constitutes the temporal dimension referred above, whereas spatial/political dimension involves whether nationalism has or has not achieved a nation-state.
- iv) Nationalism then is located in time and space relative to the modern sovereign nation-state. Sovereignty serves as ‘point zero’ that legitimates nationalism. Its *a priori* goal is directed to seek for that legitimacy, whereas its *a posteriori* behavior involves keeping it. Nationalism is extremely instrumental. Hence, sovereignty is a struggle for power and legitimacy. Nationalism is both an instrument and an area (together with its nation-state) of such struggle. It invents, converts, obliterates, fabricates and engineers social, cultural, historical phenomena in both phases, before and after sovereignty.
- v) Ethnicity is but one of the above resources functional to the political struggle projected by nationalism. But it is not essentially a required ‘quality’ or an ‘organic’ part of it. Nation can not be defined as a natural and collective vision/aspiration of an ethnically coherent/homogenous social entity. Therefore, ‘ethno-nationalism’ has a semantic or normative relation to nationalism, rather than

“decidedly anti-historicist and rationalist”. Smith (1998), p.19. I agree that the anti-historicism of modernization (and communication) theorists such as Deutsch, Eisenstadt, Apter, Rustow *et al.* must be criticized in detail on a deeper methodological/ideological plane, rather than their approach to history. Yet, I see the difference between the modernist approach and the modernization theory as telling, and I will elaborate on it in the second chapter. Smith’s criticism is misleading.

being an analytical requirement.¹² The above argument, however, does not mean ethnicity does not exist in and by itself, or help make nations. And this corrigendum does not entail that ethnicity, on the contrary to nations, is exclusively perennial or primordial.

- vi) Modernity changes. So do the circumstances of nationalisms and their mode of conceiving and constituting their nations. The perception of modernity also varies from one social formation to another. The contextual change defines these variations. But the ‘organizing principle’¹³ of national sovereignty does not. It is this essentially modern principle which makes nationalism a secularizing and democratizing phenomenon. It also constitutes the main difference between all modern nationalisms and the national phenomena that might have occurred or recurred before modernity. This is also why, I think, there is an ontological/epistemological problem of definition between modernist and perennialist/ethno-symbolist theories of nationalism. In so far as the perennialist/ethno-symbolists do not analytically base on, nor even ontologically admit the significance of secular and democratizing national sovereignty. For them, secularism, democracy and their relation to the making of national character of sovereignty are merely phenomenological qualities, rather than being analytical tools. National sovereignty represents an analytical and historical discontinuity in the theory and history of nations and nationalism.

¹² In here, I am arguing against the relationship Connor’s perennialism has tried to establish between ethnicity and nation. He claims that nationalism is essentially ethnic and modern workings of the state run against this. Therefore modern state is not nation-building, but nation-destroying. Connor (1972) in Connor (ed.) (1994), pp.29-66.

¹³ I borrowed this term from Greenfeld, as a useful analytical tool to explain that there need not be a theoretical confusion regarding different forms of nationalism, since ‘modern’ nationalism has ‘organized’ over the principle of national sovereignty of a particular, secularizing and democratizing ‘type’. Greenfeld uses this term to signify ‘sovereignty’ in order to repel the confusion the particularist understanding of different nationalisms entails. Greenfeld (1993), pp.7-9. On this, basing on Mill and Hobsbawm, I add the secular and democratic character that this national sovereignty should necessarily involve. Hobsbawm (1990), p.19 and 23.

- vii) The changing nature of modernity is also a source of confusion, particularly within the modernist tradition. It is although they all agree on the preceding argument here, they rarely admit the difference in the way modernity is perceived by different societies. The multiplicity of perception and experience is induced by the uneven level of development of the social forces and sources in different social formations. The modernist accounts in general tend to base their 'typologies' on a single (i.e. Western European) or dual (i.e. Western and Eastern European) definitive analysis. They then project such analyses onto others (i.e. Third World, post-colonial etc.) to create often conflicting series of dualities and relativistic categories (ethnic/civic, risorgimento/reform, anti-colonial, separatist, integral *et cetera* nationalisms). Such relativism lead to idealistic typologies and tend to create 'more science' than is originally intended.
- viii) The Marxist view too is not immune to the organizing principle of national sovereignty. The marxist/leninist conceptions of nations and nationalism have also been arch modernists themselves. Beyond their critique of its potential for 'reifying' the class conflict, they celebrate nationalism as an 'ideologically democratizing and unifying strategy' for transition to a further stage of socialist democracy. I believe that the question of transition to socialism has been bound by the strategic dilemma whether a 'national democratic' or a straightforward socialist revolution should be adopted. I shall argue that this strategic use of nationalism and the associated right to self-determination had been made an effective policy tool by the Soviet Union in the post-war decolonization. I shall further argue that the modern Kurdish revolutionary nationalism has emerged over the basic premises of this doctrine.

In Chapter Four, I shall first discuss the analytical and normative dimensions of Kurdish nationalism. To do so, I will try to understand the continuities in the

‘genealogy’ as claimed by the Kurdish nationalist historiography to bridge today with the past. I will then discuss the discontinuities involved in the Kurdish nationalist ‘genealogy’ with a reference to the Kemalist legitimacy to discuss how Kurdish proto-nationalism failed to converge in a truly nationalist mobilization.

I will then consider the historical development of legitimacy in the international system. In doing so, I will try to understand how the republican Turkish state tried to construct its legitimacy with an increasing recourse to the international/universal sources: political ideological institutions, including League of Nations in 1932, NATO, OECD, Council of Europe in early 1950s and the CSCE/OSCE in 1975. The republican Turkish state assumed the merits of a contemporary democratic country through its international legitimation. It had deficiencies in terms of democratic practice, but its people “knew” that they were a member of the family of ‘free democratic nations of the West’.

In 1960s, the Turkish politics was increasingly polarizing along the ideological party lines, whereby the Kurdish ethnic nationalist discourse was organized within the Turkish left. Their main claims were not clearly disassociated until late 1960s from the ‘re-liberation’ and ‘fraternity’ discourse of the Turkish radical left. Then, they signed up to a “decolonization” discourse, in a world of newly emancipating, decolonizing nations in the late-1950s through the 1970s.

The Turkish state, while devising international institutional legitimacy, implicitly and in the post-Cold War era, explicitly subsumed the international context the rights and freedoms have entailed. With the fall of communist regimes the legitimating myth of the ‘free democratic West’ also imploded. Within few years the legitimation gap of the state assumed serious dimensions.

The “third generation” rights, i.e. collective cultural rights, democratic pluralism and autonomy for non-colonial ‘ethnic’ minorities, replaced the already matured paradigm of decolonization in the international system. The

conceptions of Kurdish ethnic nationalism increasingly leaned toward creating a 'subject' to these new international rights. Their new scope was creating 'a people' entitled to such rights, an alternative peoplehood.

1.4 Methodological Concerns and Literature

This study intends to contribute to a critical perception of the 'ethno-relationist' accounts. To the extent they achieve an unreserved place at the methodological/epistemological level in Turkish or Kurdish studies, whatever one may call them, they also become part of a pseudo-scientific discourse, an ideological stance. This produces a perplexity in social studies on Turkey. There is a need to survey and criticize such theories and evaluate their validity in terms of their theoretical integrity and historical context.¹⁴ There is a need to search for a common normative background where theoretical assertions can be critically interrelated in a methodological way and with other levels of abstraction.

Recent studies on Kurdish ethnic nationalism attempt to analyze the matter categorically in terms of ethnicity. This creates an anachronic and non-contextual context in studying Kurdish ethnic-nationalism in relation to Turkish modernity. This has been part of an overall paradigm that increasingly dominated the study of ethnicity and nationalism. Such studies attempt to invent a self-justified ontology for the analysis of Turkish modernity as an

¹⁴ Marx argued that the man's consciousness is determined by his social being. Marx, K., *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, in *Early Writings*, R. Livingstone and G. Benton (trans.), Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975, p.225ff and 332ff. Berger and Luckmann, arguing that knowledge and reality are social constructs, denote the former as an internal representation of the latter to man. For "reality" is defined as a "quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent from our own volition (we cannot 'wish them away')". Berger, P. and Luckmann, T., *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1991 [1966], pp.13 and 16-18. It is Dilthey's attribution of precedence to historicism, who combines Marx's conception of consciousness to the contextual knowledge in Berger and Luckmann's sociology of knowledge, when he introduces the overwhelming sense of relativity of all perspectives on human events. (ibid. p.19). This proposal also contends there is much to learn from sociology of knowledge, although is not intended to be one.

ethnicist project.¹⁵ In arguing so, I refer to Hobsbawm's critical distinction between a historian of nations and a political nationalist, since the latter is ideologically bound by the Script, while former suffers from (primordialist/perennialist) nationalist criticism for being non-apprehensive of the 'overriding' nationalist sentiments, beliefs etc.

[N]o serious historian of nations and nationalism can be a committed political nationalist, except in the sense in which believers in the literal truth of the Scriptures, while unable to make contributions to evolutionary theory, are not precluded from making contributions to archaeology and Semitic philology. Nationalism requires too much belief in what is patently not so. [...] Historians are professionally obliged not to get it wrong, or at least to make an effort not to. [...] Some nationalist historians have been unable to do so.¹⁶

There are two divergent views stemming out from the ideological nature of the matter. In the works adopting a radical stance such as Beşikçi, Burkey, Kutlay, Nezan, Yeğen and the like, the basic methodological position has been *reduced* to an initial rejection of the "official discourse". Whereas others like Çay,

¹⁵ There are significant source-groups in the relevant 'nationalist' literature such as a variety of Western scholars including van Bruinessen, Houston, White, Barkey and Fuller, Gunter, Olson, Izady, McDowall, Krayenbroek each of whom refer to a series of sources usually where the issue has been treated as part of a 'greater' problem of either contemporary framework of human rights or a historical extension of the Kurdish 'problem'. The publications of the (Kurdish) institutes in Paris, Stockholm, Brussels and (Kurdish information) 'networks'/centers/NGOs in London (KHRP, KSC, KIC), Cologne, Berlin, Paris, Washington (AKIN) and elsewhere as well as of (mostly Turkish) journalists such as Birand, Ballı, Bulut, Mumcu, Imset present useful documentary to the consolidation of the ethnic nationalist movement in the last two decades. There are also internet sources mainly dominated by NGOs and Kurdish diaspora parties with claims over the ethno-nationalist revival in Turkey, albeit marginalized in their influence and support to the Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers Party -PKK). The Kurdish ethnic aspirations have been represented by a (recurrent) 'single' party (DEP/HEP/HADEP/DEHAP/DTP), rather than other nominal parties like DKP of Ş. Elçi and HAK-PAR of A. Fırat. There are as well the individual researchers/writers such as Alakom, Bender, Malmusanij, Kutlay, Anter, Diken, Çiftiyurek, Tori, Kutlay, Beşikçi, Yıldız, Yeğen representing a wide array of input in their personal capacity. Lastly, there has been a sound Kurdish media controlled directly or indirectly by PKK/ERNK such as *Serxwebun*, Med-TV, Medya-TV, Roj TV, Özgür Gündem, Ülkede Gündem, Özgür Ülke, Özgür Politika, MHA, FHA etc.

¹⁶ Hobsbawm [1990], pp.12-3. An arch ethno-symbolist, such as Hutchinson, defines the work of nationalist historians as "encyclopaedic myth-making". Hutchinson (1994), p.45. I must also add another ethno-symbolist, Guibernau, herself being a Catalan nationalist, calls it an 'intertwinning of the rational and emotional arguments'. For her, it is something like "defending [the nation] from external aggression". It is "the distinctive character of the *nation's intelligentsia*" [italics added]. Guibernau (1999), pp.93-4.

Kalafat, Türkdoğan, Öke, Rişvanoğlu and the like, have been *discarded* by the former for playing a mouthpiece for the “official discourse”. The latter in turn, discard the former as the extension of a greater “imperialist design” on the Turkish state and society. There is hardly a common ground for critical exchange, as the extreme ends of the theoretical spectrum rarely share cross-references to each other, nor they are methodologically contended to do so.

There are two main features in this disjunction. The first one relates to a methodological stance involving a categorical rejection of the “official discourse” (i.e. whatever has been said by or implied in the actions of the state authorities on Kurdish people and/or ethnicity). There emerge, albeit being squarely opposite in theoretical terms, epistemological myths: the “demystification of the state” or an “unmasking of the imperialist design”, each of which serve as analytical tools to unfold a series of usually inconsistent and non-contextual arguments. Creating ‘empty vessels’ as such is a facilitating but simplistic way of criticism in analyzing the social phenomena.¹⁷

A second feature relates to the problem of ‘progress’ in social studies in Turkey. ‘Progress’ may denote whatever it is expected from it by different eyes. In his introduction to a study on a “recently embraced” phenomenon in Turkey, Tunçay has argued that the readers should not be disappointed by

¹⁷ For example Yeğen, with an interesting ‘ethical’ self-adhesion, refers to Beşikci as an original source of his thesis which conceives the state discourse as an ideological one (to be ‘demystified’ –See Note 1 to Yeğen, M., “The Turkish State Discourse and the Exclusion of Kurdish Identity”, *Middle East Studies*, Vol.32 (2), 1996. Yeğen praises Beşikçi’s works as “gigantic” and offers his delight before his “productive ‘naivety’” as well as his tenacity. Yeğen advises his readers that there is much to learn from Beşikçi “in the name of intellectual ethics”. Yeğen, M., *Devlet Söyleminde Kürt Sorunu* (Kurdish Problem in State Discourse), İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999, pp.22-3n. Yet Mumcu, another writer previously accused by Beşikci of being a ‘racist’, on the other hand, shows in more than several occasions, the intentional material mistakes committed in Beşikçi’s works. See Mumcu, U., *Kürt Dosyası*, İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1993, p.105-7n.82-88. It would also be interesting to note that Yeğen’s reference to Beşikçi’s works do not include his early seminal work, which later suffered from its author’s refutations. Other claims on mystifying official discourse include Kadioğlu, Ayşe, “The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Construction of Official Identity”, *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.32 (2), 1996; also in İçduygu, A., Romano, D. and

concluding that these terms were in fact new names to the previously differently phrased phenomena, because there *are* always nuances which prevent overlapping. He further argues that “progress” probably lies with these nuances which may be counted as “small paradigmatic changes”.¹⁸

Social sciences cannot be studied value free, but the students are under the burden of maintaining a critical space between their own approach and the substance. Essentialist predisposition can harm a scholar’s own work, rendering it a pseudo-scientific nature, an ideological engagement. The works of Beşikçi as well as Çay and Bender are typical examples of such predisposition. The former constitutes a case where the scholar consciously and deliberately closes the critical angle in his work,¹⁹ whereas in the latter group, the angle is narrowed by the essentialist views of the authors.²⁰ Discourse is a problem in our search for a common normative theoretical background. All methodological novelties in studying Turkish politics do not necessarily enjoy a pipeline-fed appreciation by the scholarly audience. As Hobsbawm perceives it, there has been a general slide of the ground under everyone’s feet, as we are

Sirkeci, I., “The Ethnic Question in an Environment of Insecurity: the Kurds in Turkey”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.22 (6), Nov.1999.

¹⁸ Tunçay, Mete “Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları ile İlgili Kavramlar” in *Tanzimattan Günümüze İstanbul’da STK’lar* [NGO’s in Istanbul Since the 1839 Reform] Yücekök, A.N., Turan, İ. and Alkan, M.Ö. (ed.s), Istanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998, p. ix.

¹⁹ Beşikçi admits that he no more approved what he argued in this early work, stating that the “change” was not in the phenomena or the relations inherent to it, but in the way he perceived them. See Beşikçi, İ., “Doğu Anadolu’nun Düzeni’nin Başına Gelenler” [What has happened to ‘The Order of Eastern Anatolia’] in *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi*, [Encyclopedia of Socialism and Social Struggles], vol.7, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991, pp.2124-25. Also see, Beşikçi, İ., *Bilim Yöntemi* [Method in Science], İstanbul: Komal Yayınları, 1976, p.4ff.

²⁰ Çay, A., *Her Yönüyle Kürt Dosyası* (The Kurdish File with All Its Aspects), İstanbul: Turan Kültür Vakfı, 1993. Kalafat, Y., *Şark Meselesi Işığında Şeyh Said Olayı, Karakteri, Dönemindeki İç ve Dış Olaylar* (Sheikh Said Affair Under the Light of the Eastern Question, Its Character, Internal and External Events at Its Time), Ankara: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 1992. Çay, A., Kalafat, Y., *Doğu Anadolu’da Kuvva-yı Milliye Hareketleri* (National Forces Movements in Eastern Anatolia), Ankara: TKAV, 1990. Rışvanoğlu, M., *Saklanan Gerçek: Kurmanclar ve Zazaların Gerçek Kimliği* (The Hidden Truth: The Real Identity of Kurmanjs and Zazas), 2 vol.s, Ankara: TANMAK, 1994. A useful review of the “KurdTurks approach” is found in Kutlay, N., “Türkleştirilmiş Kürtler ve Kürttürkleri” (Turkified Kurds and Kurdturks), *Tarih ve Toplum*, (210), 2001 pp.49-53.

no more talking about the good old family fights between the 19th century ideologies.²¹

Mardin for one, detects the above issue as a methodological problem, depicting the use of conceptual categories as methods themselves. His conclusion is that this (i.e. perceiving Turkish modernity through a conceptual category, therefore eliminating the totality and rendering the ‘project’ a single dimension) leads to rejection of the multi-layered process of such project.²² From there flows, in our case, that ethnic analysis is something, depicting Turkish modernization as an ethnic/nationalist ‘project’ and the Turkish state as its ‘perpetrator’ (i.e. subject) should be another. This does not prevent or diminish the power of theoretical criticism, but enhances the chances of its validity. As such, studies on Kurdish ethnic nationalism, based on ‘new’ theoretical models intend to make more formidable theoretical assertions than nuances. Such assertions involve a considerable volume of ideological discourse which cannot be perceived as “small paradigmatic changes”. To the extent such methodology binds itself with such flaws, it becomes an instrument of yet another discourse. This is where this study attempts to survey such scientific/theoretical effort as part, if not an ‘instrument’, of an overall Kurdish ethnic nationalist discourse.

At a second level, there is a contextual crisis emerging in the theoretical/methodological platform. Conceptions of Kurdish ethnicity in Turkey tend to step over from history to make today the past. Various social and political phenomena (i.e. ethnicity, secularism, nationalism etc.) have been analyzed in retrospect by references to primary texts, but out of their historical context. In each case, uncontextual analysis leads to casual generalizations, such as the ‘ethnicist/racist nature of the Republican Turkish nationalism’. The texts randomly drawn from the past individually serve some symbolist

²¹ Hobsbawm, E., “The Crisis in Today’s Ideologies”, *New Left Review*, No.192 (1992), p.58.

²² Mardin, Ş., “Projects as Methodology: Some Thoughts on Modern Turkish Social Science” in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Bozdoğan, S. and Kasaba, R. (ed.s), Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997, pp.64-80.

analytical purposes, but their contextual validity is, again, randomly questioned or criticized.²³ This “vertigo of relativity”²⁴ is both the cause and a symptom of the perplexity involved in the recent studies on Kurdish ethnic nationalism in Turkey.

Turkish modernity was a total project with different layers with economic, social and political imaginations for an indefinite future. It boasted structures and dynamics of continuity and discontinuity with the Ottoman legacy. The cultural (Mardin)²⁵ or political (Heper)²⁶ or economic/financial (Keyder)²⁷ myth of “saving the state” served as a historical trajectory for the republican elite to design their “project from above”. But the main aim for Turkish modernity has been a nation-building, rather than the state-saving behavior of the Ottoman modernizing elite.

Turkish modernity has been analyzed by various scholars who depicted the principles of Kemalism as its basis.²⁸ But before all, it relied mainly on the

²³ The necessity for an organic theoretical/analytical relation between text and context is coined by French deconstructionist R. Barthes. In the Turkish example, the absent aspect is the context, despite an abundant retrieval of new primary texts. There are, though, exceptions to this general practice of omission, as in Aktar, A., *Varlık Vergisi ve ‘Türkleştirme’ Politikaları* (Wealth Tax and ‘Turkification’ Policies), İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000, in particular see Chpt.2 “1934 Trakya Yahudi Olayları ve Türk Milliyetçiliği” (1934 Jewish Events in Thrace and Turkish Nationalism), pp.71-101. Another one is Davison, A., *Secularism and Revivalism in Turkey: A Hermeneutic Reconsideration*, Yale University Press, 1998.

²⁴ “Vertigo of relativity” is offered by Berger and Luckmann (1966: p.17), referring to the particular problem of German philosophy, caused by its extraordinary effort to ‘make the past the present’ to the contemporary mind through the efforts of historical scholarship. To Berger and Luckmann, this unparalleled effort painstakingly (empirically) investigated the relationship between thought and its historical situations. Reversing this mechanism, i.e. painstakingly imposing today’s vast array of thoughts to history, culminates in a similar relativistic vertigo.

²⁵ Mardin (1997), p.73. Also see Mardin, Ş., *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları 1985 and Mardin, Ş., *Türk Modernleşmesi* (Turkish Modernization), İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları [1991] 2002, p.87.

²⁶ Heper, M., *State Tradition in Turkey*, Walkington, Beverley: The Eothen Press, 1985, p.37ff.

²⁷ Keyder, Ç., *Türkiye’de Devlet ve Sınıflar* (State and Class in Turkey /A Study in Capitalist Development, London: Verso, 1987), İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları 1989, p.28 and 49.

²⁸ The (six) principles of Kemalism have been evaluated by various scholars on different criteria basing on those scholars’ context and unit of analysis. For different reasons, Mardin and Berkes would construct a hierarchy among these principles placing secularism in the first place. Also, whereas Keyder, Güllap and Boratav would place etatism in that place, Landau, Parla, Bora, Oran and recent “paradigm” would nominate nationalism, again for different

legitimizing behavior of the Turkish state. Along with its national/republican and secular state project, also and perhaps more vigorously, the republican elite aimed at creating *a people*, since this would have been a material basis (a sound civil society) for the legitimacy of regime. But this legitimacy has been strained by counter-legitimation projects such as Kurdish nationalism or Islamism. The states are also under scrutiny, albeit in different terms, by the international system as a source of legitimacy by way of recognition as a sovereign subject. I shall argue that the states are capable of mediating various sources of legitimacy on both sides of their borders. This mediation may function as a legitimation but may also convert into a gap, under certain circumstances, which may not be easily bridged. Under such circumstances, legitimacy becomes an area of political struggle.

Kurdish nationalism is a modern phenomenon. It is independent of all modernist, perennial and/or primordial claims of Kurdish ethnic identity. Its particularistic claims for a common ethnic identity serves for recognition in the world order of nations. As such, it is a project with important international dimensions which does not perpetuate or constrain but qualify its recurrence. As regards to its universalistic claims of political independence, it is a project also independent from and not predetermined by Turkish ‘ethnicist/racist’ nationalism.

theoretical concerns. Zürcher, places four, i.e. nationalism (latently, though, a *primus inter pares*), populism, reformism and secularism, at an equal level as the ‘essence’ of Kemalist ideology, whereas depicting republicanism and etatism as not principles (i.e. targets) themselves, but as instruments for such targets. See Zürcher, E-J., “Kemalist Düşüncenin Osmanlı Kaynakları” (Ottoman Sources of the Kemalist Thought) in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce, Kemalizm*, Vol.2, A. İnel (ed.), İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, pp.44-55.

2. MODERNITY, NATIONALISM AND ETHNICITY

“Alas! Alas! Religion is vanishing... Everything that was is no more. All that will be is not yet.” said Alfred de Musset²⁹ faced with the debasing secular challenge of the industrial society in the 19th century. The challenge was also an equalizing one, to the effect that all melt into a ‘mass society’, as part of a new universal fact like the one it superseded, the Divine Order. Every aspect of social life bound to change and become part of this new universal existence.

Among the celebrating voices of the Age of Revolution, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Kant and other German pre-Romanticists, there appeared the pioneers of social science as a distinctive discipline, namely Comte, Condorcet, Turgot (the Encyclopaedists) and Saint-Simon. In his Motto for a projected *New Encyclopaedia*, Saint Simon was looking forward: “*The Philosophy of the eighteenth century was critical and revolutionary, that of the nineteenth will be inventive and organizational.*”³⁰ Although retracted by the shortcomings of the Revolution, as did the other pre-Romanticists of the German philosophical school, Kant (as well as Fichte, Schlegel and later Herder) was still convinced that the Revolution should be hailed as the fulfillment of the ideals of Enlightenment.³¹

After a century of industrial experience, some other social theorists were inspired rather in a pessimistic way. Tönnies for instance, in his explanation for the decline of community (*gemeinschaft*), accounted for the disruption of the

²⁹ Quoted in Coser, L., *Men of Ideas*, New York: The Free Press, 1965, p.101.

³⁰ Referred to in Kumar, K., *Prophecy and Progress: The Sociology of Industrial and Post-Industrial Society*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978, p.27.

³¹ Aris, R., *History of Political Thought in Germany – From 1789 to 1815*, New York: Russel & Russel Inc., [1936] 1965, pp.65, 113-115.

unity of time and space. According to Tönnies, the principle of time dominates the family and the tribe (the people) through invisible metaphysical roots, connecting every other member over a sequence of past and future generations. The place (the village), on the other hand, is the real soil, a permanent location and a visible land that created strongest ties and relations. These temporal and spatial features became disconnected in (contractual-) society (*gesellschaft*) as the exaggerated (distorted) form of village, the industrial city, emerges. The industrial urban society was an artificial construction of human beings, but essentially united in spite of all separating factors. The *a priori* unity of will and spirit in *gemeinschaft* was no more manifested in the calculated (–egoistically reasoned) actions of the free individuals of *gesellschaft* the city.³²

Weber was also quoting Schiller's negative definition of the social change as 'disenchantment of the world',³³ rather than accepting it purely as a matter of rationalization of the world. Echoing Tönnies, Durkheim was also suggesting a separate but functionally similar type of societal disruption,³⁴ as described in his concept of the anemic society.

2.1 The Double Experience of Modernity and Nationalism: Between History and Theory

A critical eye, however, would take up the question at a different level, which would allow us to consider the significance of the quantitative change brought by the industrial revolution to the image of modernity and its human aggregate. As Ruskin puts it:

³² Tönnies, F., *Community and Society*, New York: Harper & Row, 1963, pp. 227-33.

³³ Referred to in Kumar (1978), p.102.

³⁴ E.P. Thompson gives a detailed account of the emergence of British working class and its discontent with the Industrial Revolution, dates back as early as 1811, extending well into the latter half of the 19th century, which included Owenite propaganda, Jacoben papers, radical journalism, the Ten Hours Movement, riots and uprisings as well as newly brewing socialism

We have much studied and perfected, of late, the great civilised invention of the division of labour; only we give it a false name. It is not, truly speaking, the labour is divided; but the men: divided into mere segments men –broken into small fragments and crumbs of life [...].³⁵

The Industrial Revolution, along with its irreversible consequences in terms of productive capability, also brought about a dramatic increase in human population, causing a spatial and temporal compression on the societal organization. The Western European population almost doubled from some 120-130 million in 1750 to 270 million in 1850, reaching to 401 million and 468 million in 1900 and 1913 respectively.³⁶ As such the pre-industrial ‘mob’ became the dark, impenetrable masses of the new society, so shattered the then egalitarian, proto-industrial dreams of the French Revolution, at least for the account of these ‘crowded hives’. Thompson quotes W.C. Taylor’s *Notes of a Tour in the Manufacturing Districts of Lancashire* (1842):

The population, like the system to which it belongs, is new [...] The manufacturing population is not new in its formation alone: it is new in its habits of thought and action, which have been formed by the circumstances of its condition, with little instruction, and less guidance, from external sources.³⁷

These ‘debased’ new masses, due to relatively sudden and irreversible quantitative changes to their physical existence, were to strive for a meaning in society.³⁸ They were now objects of the economic activity, while remaining as subjects of a new, concomitant social/political system, the modern capitalist

among the ‘class’ of workers. Thompson, E.P., *The Making of the English Working Class*, New York: Vintage Books, 1964, pp.191-93.

³⁵ Ruskin, J., *The Stones of Venice*, Sect.II Chpt.VI, quoted by Braverman, H., *Labor and Monopoly Capital: Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974, pp.78-79; from Coates, K., *Essays on Industrial Democracy* (London, 1971), pp.44-45.

³⁶ Figures extracted from Kumar (1978) pp.75-76 and from Cipolla, C. M., *The Economic History of World Population*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, [1962] 6th edn. 1974, pp. 113-14.

³⁷ Thompson (1967), pp.190-91.

³⁸ Considering the new phenomenon of ‘masses discovered’ in that age, Kumar suggests that even the French Revolution was more of a populist character than being egalitarian or democratizing. His perception regarding the main surface of this process was the need to re-

nation-state. The quest for self-subsistence and a mere social existence was transformed into a search for consciousness. This is the *first* experience of modernity: The disunity of object and subject of social existence of men.

How was this reflected on the ‘international system of states’? The spatial compression brought by the demographic transition in Europe was but one cause of massive outward migration to the new colonies in America and elsewhere. Cipolla notes that over 50 million Europeans sought new homes overseas between 1846-1930, rated at an annual average of 377 thousand in the period 1846-90 and around 911 thousand in 1891-1920.³⁹ Europe was expanding not only in terms of its population, but also geographically in terms of colonization to consolidate the world capitalist system. This system was based on nation-states at the center and colonized ‘territories’ in the periphery. The so-called ‘international community’ or the Concert of European Nations depended on ‘Great Powers’ and nation-statehood was their reserved privilege vis-à-vis other would-be nations.

What was the benchmark? “The difficulty for nineteenth-century liberal economists” suggests Hobsbawm, “was that they could only recognize the significance of nations in practice, but not in theory.”⁴⁰ He argues that,

[C]lassical political economy, and notably Adam Smith’s, had been formulated as a critique of the ‘mercantile system’, i.e. of precisely the system in which governments treated national economies as ensembles to be developed by state effort and policy. Free-trade and the free market were directed precisely against this concept of national economic development, which Smith thought he had demonstrated to be counter-productive. [With] persons or firms –rationally maximizing their gains, [...] at the limit it was, and could not but be, the world market. So far as the general theory of economic growth was concerned, it had no place for the nation, or any collectivity larger than the firm.⁴¹

integrate those ‘debased’, *‘through some form of legitimating populist ideology, whether democratic, liberal or Marxist’*. KUMAR (1978) p.90.

³⁹ Cipolla [1962], pp.115-16.

⁴⁰ Hobsbawm [1990], pp.26-7.

⁴¹ *Idem*.

This liberal ‘proto-internationalism’, however, would reflect the typical behavior of the center in the world system. “But in countries pursuing national economic development against the superior economy of Britain” Hobsbawm asserts, “Smithian free trade seemed less attractive. There we find no shortage of men who were anxious to talk about the national economy as a whole.”⁴² He adds, for these men, it was a matter of ‘viability’ for the nation-state to exist. The ‘principle of nationality’, so strongly argued by the propagators (like Mancini, Mazzini, Bismarck) of newly consolidating nations was based on this ‘viability threshold’. It represented the benchmark for the exercise of the right to self-determination. This was why, the principle of nationality (i.e. right to self-determination) was so selectively and arbitrarily applied by the international community during the time of the League of Nations.⁴³

As to the liberal internationalism, with America emerging as a new ‘Great Power’ from the First World War, it was President Wilson this time arguing, in his Fourteen Points, for free world trade in the name of liberal internationalism. His plan was to combine an international system of nation-states with a world of free trade, through a universalized right to self-determination.⁴⁴ We shall discuss his internationalism comparatively with that of Lenin’s later in this chapter, but it should suffice here by saying that modernity was changing and in becoming so, it was producing its elusive versions for nations and to-be-nations.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.29. Hobsbawm refers here in particular to the German economist Friedrich List. He was inspired by the American Federalist Hamilton, in forming his list of ‘great national measures’, including the foundation of a national bank, national responsibility for state debts, protection of national manufactures by high tariffs and compulsory excise. Interestingly, I must enter here, Akçura, the populist/democratic theoretician of modern Turkish nationalism, was also inspired by List in developing his own model of national [industrial] bourgeois development strategy basing on tariff protections. Berktaş (1983), p.42n.107.

⁴³ Cassese (1995), pp.22-33.

⁴⁴ President Wilson tried in vain to bring the US into the League of Nations, an idea he personally pursued at the Versailles Conference. Faced with a shifted balance in the Congress against him and Democrats, he had nothing but saying “*Dare we reject it and break the heart of the world?*” before the US Senate rejected to ratify the Versailles Treaty by seven votes. (www.whitehouse.gov) See also www.lib.byu.edu/-rdh/1918/14points.html for his speech to the Congress on his 14 Principles.

Why, then, the identical historical data on modernity eludes social theory, to the effect that conclusions driven by theoreticians fail to bear (naturally, not identical) similar ‘scientific quality’? In his analysis of the causes of one-dimensional perception in modern capitalist culture, Marcuse refers to a notion what he terms as ‘objective ambiguity’ which

adheres to the data of experience. It is objective ambiguity because the shift in [*one’s*] sensations and reflections responds to the manner in which the experienced facts are actually interrelated. But this interrelation, if comprehended, shatters the harmonizing consciousness and its false realism.⁴⁵

The subject matter of social theory is no more a mere theoretical concern on what men as social beings *are* –or where do they come from, but it is also how and why do they *act*, under any given circumstance *throughout* the history. But this emerging duality of being and (knowledge of its) action requires detailed explanation, particularly in terms of the claims of scientificity by social theory in the age of modernity.

We have already seen the novelty of the modern age, in terms of its one significant consequence of splitting the individual sense of belonging into two main realms: the first one is men’s objective being belonging to the economic realm by his productive function/activity. Marxian ontology elaborates on this phenomenon by attributing evasive and reifying nature of this relationship of men to their productive function, by introducing the notion of alienation deliberately undertaken by the very nature of capitalist set of relations of production. Whereas the Weberian concept of rationalist action, echoing the long-persisted liberal/individualist philosophy, suggests that this is not a compulsory, but a voluntary belongingness on part of the men, where, if accomplished, an ideal set of relation is said to have been established between men and their rational goals. This contradiction, however, should not detain us

⁴⁵ Marcuse, H., *One-Dimensional Man*, London: Routledge, [1964] 2nd edn. 1991, p.227.

in length here, since our practical concern lies with the second, but concomitant sense of belonging, that is, the one to the nation-state.⁴⁶

The (modern) sense of belongingness by its subjects to the nation-state denotes a double-faceted process. On the one hand, it entails a social/ ideological sense of belongingness to the *nation*, which E. Weber describes as a process that took French peasants fifty years to realize in becoming 'Frenchmen'.⁴⁷ Whereas on the other, it presupposes a political/practical (thus material) sense of belongingness to the *state*, as citizens, whose basic media is the *universalized suffrage*. In their analysis of the sense of belonging of or ascription by men to the national identity, modernists such as Gellner stresses on the crucial cohesive functions of national education system and the conscript-based (nationalized) army. Shy references have been made to universal suffrage, realized or projected, as a consequence of this purely modern phenomenon of new sense of belongingness. That is why nation-state thus becomes an area of continuous strife between the rulers and the ruled, for on part of the ruled, citizenship (not nationality at a time) meant *equal* privileges, albeit solely political, without any immediate economic gains.

E. Weber's assertion of the temporary gap between peasantry (as individual members of the French society) and their becoming of French nation is a factual, but analytically a dead-end one. Because it bears no explanation to the problematic relationship between citizenship and nationality, during the time of that very gap was experienced. French peasants had long been *citizens* of France, when they actually came to feel themselves as Frenchmen. The actual

⁴⁶ Lipset also refers to a distinction between the industrial and political citizenship in Lipset, S.M., *Political Man*, Heinemann: Mercury Books, [1959] 2nd edn. 1963, p.406.

⁴⁷ In fact E. Weber himself admits that this was a process of nation-building, through which a set of causalities were in play. Weber, E., *Peasants into Frenchmen, The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1979, quoted Smith, A.D., *The Ethnic Origins Of Nations*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, [1986] 1999, p.134.

gap, suggested here instead, is (again a temporary) one between the political (citizenship) and the ideological (nationality) sense of belonging.⁴⁸

This suggestion seems to imply that the modern state preceded the nation-state. But we should bear in mind that the history of mankind is not a sequencing of ‘events’ in the right chronological order. It is a process where causalities explain the order of phenomena (rather than that of events). Nevertheless it was a process.

The ‘phenomenology’ of the features of the modern state, as a base for the sense of belongingness for ‘debased’ masses, therefore, is also debatable. Since we already know that suffrage was not immediately universalized *per se*,⁴⁹ nor education systems could become nationwide undertakings, nor even the conscript-based armies occurred spontaneously. But they were *projected/expected* or desired consequences of the new political structure. The state, by its very nature, bore these projects as immanent promises for the foreseeable future. The popular riots, uprisings indicated not the purely economic demands of the newly emerged working classes (the excluded), but their *political* aspiration for enactment of necessary legal framework (the 10-hours riots etc) *by the state* (not by the factory-owner with which the real conflict prevailed). They felt a genuine sense of belongingness to the modern state, as the conflict being reduced to its framework between the state and its

⁴⁸ This distinction focuses on the change in the nature of the relationship of individual to the state in (early and late) 19th century. In another instance, for example, Dahrendorf distinguishes capitalism from industrialism, at the level of societal organization to argue that capitalism was a ‘passing phase’ of industrial society. So was, to him, the phase of class-conflict, which essentially belonged to a short-lived period in 19th century, when the factory-owner used to be both the employer and the chief (political) authority over the workers. Then on, the ‘split’ of belongingness occurred. Dahrendorf, R., *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959, p.50ff.

⁴⁹ In Britain for instance, even after the acts of 1867 and 1884, less than thirty percent of the adult population could vote. It was not until 1918 Reform Act (incorporating women over thirty) that anything like mass suffrage existed. Kumar (1978), p.143. Also Dahrendorf calculates that only 10-15 percent of the European population had a realistic sense to take part in the political life of their countries before the Ist World War; while in the US, only 16 percent of population took part in 1912 elections. Quoted *ibid.* p.347.

(newly incorporated) citizens, mediated through the genius mechanism of (progressive and) careful segregation of the economic (objective) membership of society with that of political (subjective) citizenship.⁵⁰

For social theory, this ‘cohesive division’ was encouraging only in the technical (‘scientific’) sense. Spencer’s and Durkheim’s interest in *detailed* division of labour,⁵¹ Weberian ‘status group action and interaction’ have been the products of this technicality. They prescribed no ‘*grandiose roles*’ to social theoreticians as philosopher-kings as Burke or educators as Herder, or even reformers (*Aufklärer*) as Kant. This is the *second* experience of modernity, for the share of social theory. This formed the intellectual basis for modernization theories which sprung out in the post-second world war era. Modernity was out there, and for those who did not have it, it was only a matter of technicality, rather than a revolution.

2.2 When and What is a Nation?

For modernists,⁵² the age of modernity has altered qualitatively all particularities of the ethnic phenomena for good. The perennialist claims of

⁵⁰ Giddens calls this as the “‘*de-fusing*’ of the ticking bomb of class conflict”. Giddens, A., *Sociology, A brief but critical introduction*, London: The Macmillan Press, [1982] 2nd edn. 1986, p.32. The significance of this ‘defusing mechanism’ (the state), according to Giddens is not fully comprehended by Marx, with the data available to him in his time. Ibid. pp.35-38. This may be said to be true, considering Lenin’s *corrigendum* in his ‘*The State and Revolution*’ [quoted in Kumar (1978, p.142)] who concluded Marx’s restriction of a revolutionary change to England was no longer valid, as England too had sunk in a ‘bloody morass of bureaucratic-military institutions’ (the modern bureaucratic state).

⁵¹ Nearly half a century later, Dahrendorf also echoed Durkheim, claiming that the ‘solidarity’ of the *new* industrial order depended on ‘upward mobility’, which meant individual base for articulation into modern society was based on the system’s ability to recognize its members’ professional talents. The system, thus, eliminates progressively external (social) inequalities (in Durkheim’s words), increasing equality of opportunity (in Dahrendorf’s definition). See Dahrendorf (1959), p.57. Parsons also take up Durkheim to stress on the importance of the ‘non-contractual elements in contract’, as ‘socially given’ components of the institution –the (industrial) state. See Parsons, T., *The Structure of Social Action*, Chicago: The Free Press, [1937] 3rd edn. 1949, pp.311-16.

⁵² We refer here to ‘liberal’ modernists as relativists like Gellner, B. Anderson and Kedourie, as nation-builders like Bendix, Deutsch and Apter and to ‘radical’ (Marxists) modernists such as Wallerstein, Balibar, Hobsbawm and partly Nairn. The dialectical themes of disruption and

nation as a simple cultural extension of ethnic communities, their immemorial/organic (ancestrally-based) are translated into the modernist language of nations as predominantly political entities with modern, (elite-) created, hence mechanical and divided (communication-based) entities.⁵³

The importance of this comparison is *the* comparison itself: whereas a perennialist would see nations as politicized and enlarged version of immemorial ethnic-cultural communities, a modernist would immediately reject such comparison for self-validated theoretical reasons as modernity represents not only a major disruption in the social and economic organization of the human societies, but also it gives birth to nations, as collectivities that never existed before. The rest of the theoretical effort is a record of phenomenological *order of things*, for the modernist, as to when and where the nations (or its pre-conditions) occurred or could *not* occur (as anachronic or pathologic cases). Thus, modernist phenomenology is concerned with the structure, rather than the individual occurrence of ethnic phenomena.

For Gellner, modernity is based on the permanency of change, due to the *egalitarian* nature of the certain kind of *division of labour* inherent in its new stage of development, that is, industrialization.⁵⁴ Industrial technology has replaced the economic need for extremely labor-intensive specialized manpower, ‘emancipating’ men from their socially assigned, static roles into a larger pool of social existence. Contrary to the agrarian societies in which training (education) is localized and specialized, industrial society requires a basic, generic training for universal purposes to perpetuate the mobility of its

transcendence are actually the one and only common theoretical ground in both liberal and Marxist account of (modern) nations. The comparison made here is based on liberal tenets of the ‘modernist paradigm’ vis-à-vis the perennialist discourse, since for Marxists, with the exception of Nairn, the ethnic (national) question is a non-categorical element in social theory.

⁵³ For example Smith, being an ethno-symbolist/perennialist himself, also notes these differences as ‘dichotomies’. See Smith (1998), pp.21-24.

⁵⁴ Gellner, E., *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1983, reprinted in excerpts by M. Guibernau and J. Rex (ed.s), *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration*, Cambridge: Polity Press, [1997] 1999, pp.52-69.

individuals to fit in the large-scale industrial production organization. This creates an egalitarian, homogenous society to aspire consolidation in their interests and collective existence. In contrast to widely dispersed, elite-driven and internally-segregated culture in the “agro-literate” societies⁵⁵ in the agrarian age, the industrial age creates a cultural cohesion, homogeneity to lead *nationalism*.

Nationalism, for Gellner, is a product of modernity, as nation is a function of nationalism. But he deliberately avoids establishing any causal (if not analytical) relation between the emergence of state and nation. To him, it is only the modern state, which could render a universal, generic function through its system of national education, a conscript army and a cultural standardization, which *support* a nation. Still, for Gellner, the two had to emerge concomitantly, but independently:

In fact, nations, like states, are a contingency, and not a universal necessity. Neither nations nor states exist at all times and in all circumstances. Moreover, nations and states are not the *same* contingency. Nationalism holds that they were destined for each other; that either without the other is incomplete, and constitutes a tragedy. But before they could become intended for each other, each of them had to emerge, and their emergence was independent and contingent. The state has certainly emerged without the help of the nation. Some nations have certainly emerged without the blessings of their own state.⁵⁶

Gellner urges himself to clarify on the problem of contingency by introducing a dual description of the individual bonds of men to their nations. To him, two men are of the same nation *if and only if* they (i) share the same culture⁵⁷ and (ii) recognize each other as belonging to the same nation. He concedes that each of these definitions, the former being cultural and latter voluntaristic, are inadequate, since, for example, the definitions of culture in the anthropological

⁵⁵ Smith reminds us that Gellner defines agro-literacy as elite-literacy in general and localized, manual training in particular. See Smith (1998), p.30, 39-41.

⁵⁶ Gellner (1983) in Guibernau & Rex (1997), p.56.

⁵⁷ Culture here has a double and non-restrictive meaning: i.e. it encompasses both a system of ideas/signs *and* the ways of behaving/communicating. Idem.

rather than the normative sense are extremely difficult and unsatisfactory. Thence, he recommends to “approach this problem” by looking at what culture *does*, without defining it. This is where Gellner’s *cultural relativism* starts.

We have already stated that Gellner argues industrialization made the society egalitarian, which in turn laid the ground for men to take up a form of state and a nation. Gellner relates the question of why and how do they take up this form of state to the eternal problem of order, which (in short), came to be a necessity in the industrial age.⁵⁸ But in order for them to take up a form of nation, men needed their *culture*. Culture functions as a pool of *historical* myths, symbols and *the necessary raw material* for nationalism to selectively pick up and transform in a radical/ideological way. This raw material in itself is by no means ideological, but purely historical, in the sense that its elements bred by *unconscious* cultures of pre-industrial ages.

Without defining what culture is, Gellner later categorizes it into two broad phenomena: the low (‘wild’, pre-industrial) and high (‘garden’ cultures, cultivated, standardized, education-based) cultures.⁵⁹ The former fails to make it into industrial era, proving that nationalism is a *weak* phenomenon, only a small proportion of potential linguistic⁶⁰ candidates stake a claim to becoming

⁵⁸ To Gellner there are three main stages of history: (i) the hunting-gathering stage when state was *not* an option, (ii) the agrarian (feudal) society when state was optional, as the political order was bound by private areas and private wars were legitimate, and (iii) the industrial society within and above which the state is a *must*, as the “*specialization and concentration of order maintenance*”. Ibid., p.54.

⁵⁹ Is this distinction, in the form of a theoretical addendum to Gellner’s concept of modernity, really necessary? One cannot decide easily on the contrary, particularly when he sees that Gellner mainly aims to show, once again, that the time of (agrarian) segregated localized cultures has passed and an age based on “exo-socialization” (i.e. the production and reproduction of men outside the local unit) has now become the norm. So, according to Gellner, culture and state *must* now be linked. Gellner (1983) in Guibernau & Rex (1997), p.69. Such a Weberian necessity of linkage with the state is what we have seen before on Gellner’s concept of history and society. ‘*Modernity, as a phenomenon “outside the local unit”*’ is also not a unique invention credited to Gellner.

⁶⁰ As, for example, Anderson attributes ‘print capitalism’ a central place in cementing the societal organization in the modern age, Gellner regards linguistic unity as the backbone of the national existence. Though he later introduces public education to assume more generally the same function, the instructional significance of standardization remains the backbone of

nations.⁶¹ Thus, Gellner brings us to an extremely relativistic theoretical position, where (i) perennialists such as Smith note, “culture” and “history” are replaced with “ethnic past”,⁶² (ii) the nations and nationalism are completely derived from modernity, where modernity being considered a historical phenomenon largely *in* itself, rather than being a culmination of a causal development in history, therefore, with no effective relation to its determining factors of existence (causes of modernity are modern as well), (iii) the typical myth of “awakened cultures” adopted in the theoretical sense to indicate a hierarchy between potential nations, which has no explanatory contribution to the socio-genesis of nations (or “slumberer” nations) on the comparative level and finally, (iv) modernity argument is developed in a phenomenological manner, rather than a deterministic way, so as to allow a socio-cultural evolution pattern to articulate into classical modernization theory. This results in an unexpected detachment of Gellner’s modernism with the (structuralist/empiricist) modernization theory.⁶³

Wallerstein fills Gellner’s perfectly described but unexplained gap between the “realized” and the “slumberer” nations with a more dynamic and deterministic approach to social and economic history. Although he concedes to the typical discourse of modernity by saying that “peoples” of the modern world have not

Gellnerian modernity. See Anderson, B., *Imagined Communities*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1983, reprinted in excerpts by M. Guibernau and J. Rex (ed.s), *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration*, Cambridge: Polity Press, [1997] 1999, pp.43-51. Also see Smith (1998), p.39.

⁶¹ Ibid., p.32ff.

⁶² Ibid., p.45.

⁶³ In fact, Gellner does not intend to block the way for aspirations toward modernity in the “slumberer nations”. He regards these cases have become pathological, since they missed the train of the becoming-of-modern, although they acquired a semi-national potential (mostly in conflict with the ruling national identity). To Gellner, these “slumberers” cannot become nations unless they have a political roof worthy of them and shelter them. And here we have to deem that since they don’t have such political roofs, they simply cannot become “high cultures”. Gellner’s cultural relativism reaches atop in Gellner, E., *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals*, London: Penguin Books, 1994, pp.114-115. For modernization theories too, distinct themselves from Gellner’s position: there is a notable gap between the Gellnerian political modernity (achieving a political roof) and the “modernization” of the *existing* political entities (particularly in the Third World). The result, in this sense, is that Gellnerian model of

always been there and have been created, Wallerstein aspires to introduce the concept of internationalism which foresees explanatory reasons for *some others* which were smashed or distorted or submerged. To him, its not only the individual nationalism's, but also their interaction have been in play, albeit in the form of commodified relations between them.

For Wallerstein modernity dates back, contrary to Gellner's *industrialist* assertion of somewhere around the early 19th century, to the mid-15th century⁶⁴ when capitalist (commodified) relations of production (and their reproduction) emerged in *peasant* production, which continued into the age of industrial production. This new mode of production exerted itself onto the cultural and political realms, transforming them into a hegemonic structure of domination. This in turn, was translated into an international (world) hegemony. In this system, to employ a Marxist terminology as Wallerstein's, the relations of production (in their commodified form) preceded⁶⁵ the forces of production. These (commodified exchange) relations of capitalism guided the productive forces to develop in phases (or cycles) at a *world* level, creating at its own interest an unevenness in their development, whereby social and political constructs took their share. Wallerstein thus sees the concept of the nation-state and nationalist ideology as a struggle over the political power structure (the state) generated by the capitalist development.⁶⁶ What, then, is the effect of that struggle over the societal/cultural identities?

modernity, although based on "egalitarian mobility", prescribe no mobility in terms of their status to the "slumberer nations" once the age of becoming-modern had passed.

⁶⁴ Wallerstein, I., *Geopolitics and Geoculture: Essays on the Changing World-System*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p.141ff.

⁶⁵ Balibar highlights this sequencing to justify that the contradictions of capitalism are essentially *of progress*, *not* of the one *between* the relations and the forces of production. See Balibar's *Preface* in Balibar, E. and Wallerstein, I., *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, London and NY: Verso, [Fr.1988] 1991, p.3. More importantly, this sequence teaches us of the Wallerstein's theoretical position advocating the primacy of circulation sphere over the production sphere, with capabilities of the former to guide the latter.

⁶⁶ Wallerstein (1991), p.142.

Wallerstein inquires the reasons of *making up* three social categories, i.e. race, nation and ethnic group, within one logical category, suggesting that each of these modal terms (denoting the same social constructs) hinge on one of the basic structural features of the capitalist world-economy.

The concept of 'race' is related to the axial [spatial] division of labour [between Europe and the rest] in the world economy, the core-periphery antinomy. The concept of 'nation' is the political superstructure of this historical system, the sovereign states that form and derive from the interstate system. The concept of 'ethnic group' is related to the creation of household structures that permit the maintenance of large components of non-waged labour in the accumulation of capital.⁶⁷

As for Wallerstein the formation of nations relates to the political structuring of the world system in which nation-states preceded the nationhood. Nations without a political/administrative unit of their own simply could not achieve a meaningful place and continuity in the *hierarchy* of the world capitalist system. After all, who remembers the Burgundian Netherlands, the Habsburg Empire, the Holy Roman Empire? The states emerged henceforth, created a corresponding nation in order to overcome internal and external effects against their cohesion. The states catered for and promoted nationalist sentiments.

Races, on the other hand, were the identities attributed to the peripheral regions onto which the "European expansion" of capitalist mode of production and exchange system extended itself. These were the peoples excluded from the core zone of capitalist subsumption, without a place in the interstate system.

Finally there were the 'ethnic groups' in the form of minorities, with their relative existence to their controlling majorities. Being a minority depended not on the arithmetics but on the social power within the boundaries of separate states.

⁶⁷ Wallerstein, I., "The Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism, Ethnicity" in Balibar & Wallerstein (1991), p.79.

Wallerstein insists on what he terms by a *hierarchy* within the labor segment, along with the classical antinomy between labor and capital, in which some labourers lose a larger portion of their 'created surplus-value'. The more the workers are paid the more they become 'proletarianized', whereas the less they are paid the more they are likely to be bred by 'ethnicization' by their households (as the key institution to permit surplus extraction from wage-labourers). The households, Wallerstein intends to say, are the area of familial ties of consanguinity and contiguity, compensating for the alienating, humiliating and exploitative effects of 'labourhood'. Ethnicization of labour, as is the case in South Africa (as well as in immigrant receiving states of Europe) and was in the United States, according to Wallerstein, creates an occupational hierarchy along with 'created' boundaries of ethnicity. Capitalism as a historical system requires constant inequality, therefore constant restructuring of economic processes.

[W]hat guarantees a particular set of hierarchical social relations today may not work tomorrow. [...] The recurrent birth, restructuring and disappearance of ethnic groups is thereby an invaluable instrument of flexibility in the operation of the economic machinery.⁶⁸

It seems finally that there can be a common methodological ground between the liberal and Marxist interpretations of the phenomenon of ethnicity for us to operate in theoretical terms. Wallerstein suggests so tellingly that the liberal universal theme of 'subjectivity' can and is worthy in many ways to be reversed. Ethnic bonds can be defined from outside, *without* omitting the 'role' of the individual as liberal modernists/instrumentalists such as Gellner, Deutsch, Anderson. That is, the role of the individual may perceived to be an objective one, culturally/ideologically outside yet socially/economically within a phenomenon.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.84

We face a second theoretical nod on the row at another level. Without attempting to criticize the validity of his conception of ethnicity as ideological construct which demands many questions, we should simply highlight the functional instrumentality attributed to its very existence. Wallerstein's structuralist conception of the world economy (which also demands many questions even in Marxist tradition) also presents us a historical explanatory power, which is distinctive in its *causal determinism* from the idealist historicism embedded in Gellner's concept.

Whereas a third one involves a dualism in approaching ethnicity. How shall we *explain* the phenomenon of ethnicity? By focusing on who people *are* or simply by counting on what they *do*?

2.3 Ethnicity as a Theoretical Concept and as an Ideological Tool

In studying theories of ethnicity, I think three peculiar dualities (if not antinomies) should be understood thoroughly:

- i) the *kernel* (essence, core, identity, 'is', 'absolutism' etc.) versus the *boundary* (relations, behavior, 'do', 'relativism' etc.)
- ii) the pre-modern existence of the ethnic phenomenon versus its purely modern appearance -where *both* share a view of modernity as a cultural break-even point
- iii) the objective presence of ethnicity as a phenomenon versus its subjective qualities, utilized as an ideological instrument.

The liberal tradition, since Hume, has a further (epistemological) duality in perceiving the social phenomena, that is, the empiricist/interpretative dilemma. The empiricists have always tended to seek for objectively cognizable data to diagnose the phenomena under study. As far as the phenomenon of ethnicity is concerned, this data have been sought for in the area of psychology (Fishman, Horowitz, Armstrong) or in sociology (Brass, Barth Gellner, Pye, Deutsch) as

well as in the natural world of biology (Van den Berghe). The interpretative approach, on the other hand, needed not empirical data as a requisite to offer rational categories of (Weber, Parsons, Hayes, Shils, Connor) 'mindful perception'. Although their behaviorist version heavily required empirical confirmation (Hechter, Banton, Horowitz), a phenomenological branch (Grosby) relied solely upon the relative autonomy of mind to cognitively perceive the objects of ethnic affiliation.

This epistemological duality has polluted the liberal theoretical activity on ethnicity as a social phenomenon. Was the subjectivity attributed by the liberal scholars to the ethnic actors' way of perceiving their position vis-à-vis the society, a rational or a non-rational (not irrational but real, tangible) one?

Perceiving ethnicity as a separate, distinct form of human sociality based on a definite form of rationality, in fact, is Weber's formulation in his 1922 work, *Economy and Society*.⁶⁹ To Weber, this underlying rationality is purely a product of human calculation, an economic one, rather than of human nature, therefore it is attainable, constructed and desirable in terms of historical development of forms of human interaction. History itself is a development from irrationality to rationality, in which social institutions are not exception.

In that very process of historical development, the social systems and collectivities operate on the basis of human action, which in turn, is guided by certain motives and display regularities of certain types. It is the duty of sociology to *abstract* common motives of this particular, *pure types of human action*, from a mass of historical/concrete cases of action (which is a concern of history). Insofar as individuals participate in social collectivities such as status groups, classes or *ethnic groups*, their actions give insight to and guide the

⁶⁹ Weber, M., *Economy and Society* [Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, 1922], 3 vol.s, New York: Bedminster Press, 1968.

behavior of these collectivities. This is how Weber approaches the ethnic groups *along with* other collectivities.⁷⁰

Weber defines ethnic groups as yet another type of social collectivity, as a phenomenon, which occurs wherever social interaction is *not* widespread enough. It is a sense of personal brotherhood based on ‘ethnic’ -communal-belief system, simply because every process of association (as societal organization) attracts a spreading consciousness of community. Therefore, existence of associations, in the form of economic action or self-protection (which is a ‘given’) *precedes* ethnic bonds, *constructed* afterwards based on race, religion, descent, customs etc. This occurrence is *not* systematic, as the ethnic boundaries may not coincide with apparent/physical boundaries of social collectivities, hence ethnic groups are not universal categories as the tendency of monopolistic closure based on purely economic (calculated –rational) activity. Only after then and through this way the socio-genesis of ethnic groups (as cultural constructs) may take place, on the basis of *ascription* of individuals to a limited circle of benefits and privileges.⁷¹

For Weber, therefore, ethnic identity remains within a subjective sphere of human consciousness. For ethnic groups are “those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or of both, or because of memories of colonisation or migration.”⁷²

We shall see in the following section how this Weberian subjectivity in perception of ethnicity is translated into the realm of ‘tangible assets’ of culture

⁷⁰ Guibernau and Rex argue that Weber sought to conceptualize ethnic groups ‘*in contrast*’ to the notions of class, status and party. Guibernau, M. and Rex, J. (ed.s), ‘Introduction’, *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration*, Cambridge: Polity Press, [1997] 1999, p.3-6.

⁷¹ McAll (1992), pp.57-58.

⁷² Weber, M. [1922] 1968, p.389. Also see Smith (1998), pp.13-14 and Guibernau and Rex (1997), p.2.

(Connor) and social psychology (Horowitz and Armstrong). But it is necessary here to understand how Parsons books a place for ethnicity in his theory, based on the interpretative tradition build up by Tönnies and Weber.

Parsons is also in line with Weber (and Tönnies) in placing moral and legal systems of an abstract character as the basis for solving the problem of order,⁷³ for they govern the social evolution of the modern state and of a formally rational capitalist economy.⁷⁴ Rex argues that Parsons' main theme on ethnicity was to say that "[L]iving in a larger world with abstract moral principles was [...] psychologically possible only if individuals could retreat somewhere conducive to intimate relations and letting their hair down"⁷⁵ In a more precise way, referring to ethnic identity as one of the new channels of solidarity and identification in an age of declining traditional ties, Melucci recalls Parsons' suggestion of 'de-differentiation' as a *need* for a collective identity among particular groups. Melucci reveals that for Parsons, the growing plurality of social roles call upon individual to act, yet not adequately offering any stable identity to guide him. The need for de-differentiation arises from this necessity and is the cause of ethnic identity revival.⁷⁶ In fact, as Parsons reveals himself, this is a process of abandoning 'empty symbolism', for it intends to revitalize the ethnic group as a functional identity.⁷⁷

McAll suggests that this position of Parsons on ethnicity is ultimately unclear.⁷⁸ It should be born in mind, moreover, that Parsons' data is the American society, which he defines as an "ethnically pluralistic national

⁷³ For all structuralist/systems approaches, the 'problem' of order is of a Hobbesian nature. The problem is said to be solved on a 'system' of selectively defined and placed parts, functioning to harmonize not only their relations from within, but also to prescribe the rules of change.

⁷⁴ Rex, John, "Multicultural and Plural Societies" in Guibernau and Rex (1997), p.205-220.

⁷⁵ Idem.

⁷⁶ Melucci, A., "The Post-Modern Revival of Ethnicity" in Melucci, A., *Nomads of the Present*, London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989, pp.89-92, reprinted in Hutchinson and Smith (1996), pp.367-70.

⁷⁷ McAll (1990), pp. 65-66.

⁷⁸ Idem.

societal community”.⁷⁹ Parsons’ perception of American society is the one that is largely differentiated along with religious, class, community-type lines, but “*not very greatly on an ethnic basis*”.⁸⁰ This is a highly dubious suggestion as we recall how Connor exemplifies the US society (the White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) as one that resisted assimilating the other minor ethnic entities (Blacks, Hispanic and Asians etc.).⁸¹

2.4 Phenomenology of Ethnicity: Primordialist and Perennialist Conceptions

It has been acknowledged elsewhere that the term ‘primordialism’ was first coined by Shils in 1957.⁸² Shils used this term to distinguish between the two types of social bonds in modern polity: first being related to the modern state in the form of public and civil ties, whereas the second being to different centers of loyalty like family, religion or ethnicity, in the form of primordial ties. Shils’ Durkheimian understanding commanded him to suggest that the latter being ‘organic’ form of solidarity was complementary to the former, being a ‘mechanical’ one. He then analyzed the relative impact of the primordial ties, the tension they create over loyalty to the political authority.⁸³

In fact, Shils’ problem, when he wrote about primordial loyalties, was related to the social order, rather than an analytical incursion into the theory of ethnicity. Following the Parsonian analysis of the structure of social action, he endeavored to answer how the social order was possible, among often conflicting loyalties of the individuals in a social system. His Durkheimian presumption was that the functioning of these conflicting loyalties was at the

⁷⁹ Parsons, T., “Some Theoretical Considerations on the Nature and Trends of Change of Ethnicity” in *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, Glazer, N. and Moynihan, P. (ed.s), Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975, p.82.

⁸⁰ Ibid. p.65. Parsons voluntarily ignores black movement of early 70’s.

⁸¹ Connor, W., *Ethnonationalism –The Quest for Understanding*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994, p.21.

⁸² Hutchinson and Smith (1996), *Introduction*, p.8.

source of the conflict and cohesion in modern industrialism.⁸⁴ His suggestion of *peripheral values* vis-à-vis the *central value system* in any society at large involved, among others (i.e. familial, educational, economic, professional), the ethnic *qualities* which may be in severe conflict with the *consensual* pattern of the values of the central elites clustered into a [central] system of values.⁸⁵ To him, the differences appeared from the “uneven development of sensitivity to ultimate things”.⁸⁶

What Geertz does is to apply Shils’s analytical principles to post-colonial societies/states to understand the effects and the course of change of loyalties of new citizens.⁸⁷ In the process of decolonization in many African and Asian states, peoples’ aspirations have been two-fold: a search for identity and a demand for progress. These expectations, to Geertz, made the integrative revolution (in the new states) a ‘double-edged process’ with inter-state and intra-state tensions (based on the above aspirations). Geertz, elaborating on the conflict between civil and primordial sentiments, abstracts primordial ties of race, assumed blood ties, language, religion and custom as bases of disaffection with their new states. The primordial ties, in these post-colonial but yet ethnically unconscious/economically unsuccessful societies, have produced various forms of pathological forms of subnationalism: such as separatism, parochialism, communalism and racialism.

Geertz’s suggestion of primordial attachments, which cause disaffection in new states, stem from “‘assumed’ givens –of social existence”. This givenness which starts by birth into a particular community, as well as their ineffable and

⁸³ Smith (1998), pp.151-53.

⁸⁴ Shils, E., “Centre and Periphery” in *The Logic of Personal Knowledge: Essays Presented to Michael Polanyi*, London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1961, pp.117-30, reprinted in P. Worsley (ed.), *Modern Sociology*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, [1970] 2nd edn. 1978, pp.566-78.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp.568-69.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.571.

⁸⁷ Geertz, C., “The Integrative Revolution” in C. Geertz (ed.), *Old Societies and New States*, New York: Free Press, 1963, pp.108-113, reprinted in Hutchinson and Smith (1996), pp.40-45.

sentimental nature, which tie “every person, in every society, at almost all times, [flowing] more from a sense of natural –some would say spiritual affinity than from social interaction”.⁸⁸ It is at this point, Geertz precipitates harsh behaviorist criticism from Eller and Coughlan.⁸⁹

Eller and Coughlan have three broad objections to Geertz’s primordialist approach. The first is that the *a priori* [i.e. *causa sui*, *ab origine*, *natural*] or ‘given’ nature of the primordial attachments, according to them, is misleading. Because these attachments are renewed or remade, hence, not self-perpetuating. The ‘new’ primordials arise according to situational changes, rendering the very nature of these attachments *made* rather than *given*. Secondly, they level an epistemological criticism to Geertz’s claim of ineffability of primordial ties, suggesting that for Geertz, identification of *the* primordial is the end of analysis. It is the ethnic actors however, for Eller and Coughlan, who regard their experience as ineffable (unquestionable), *not* their attachments to the social analysis. They criticize the *method* of Geertz’s substantive claims of failing to bear a *scientific, empirically testable* explanation to the genesis of ethnic feelings. Thirdly, as an extension of their general methodological criticism, Eller and Coughlan denounce the givenness of emotions as prescribed by Geertz, as a mystification to the extent that renders, to them, Geertz’s analysis epistemologically unscientific [in terms of sociological theory]. To them, the affectivity suggested by Geertz bound in the ethnic identity [i.e. ethnic ‘emotions’], cannot be a given, hence it should have a clear socio-genesis, just like its often counterposed conceptual pair, instrumentality. For in extreme cases, the givenness of affectivity may lead to

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp.41-42.

⁸⁹ Eller, J. and Coughlan, R., “The Poverty of Primordialism: The Demystification of Ethnic Attachments”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 16 (2), 1993, pp.187-92, 199-201, reprinted in Hutchinson and Smith (1996), pp.45-51. Geertz draws criticism also from instrumentalists such as Brass, who argues that some primordial attachments are variable and the fictive character of the ethnic groupings essentially construe their variability. Brass also reminds that the ethnic attachments need not necessarily belong to the non-rational part of the human personality and hence, they may well be adopted for quite rational reasons, for survival or for gain. See Smith (1998), pp.154.

charge itself a *biological imperative* of bond-formation. Therefore, to Eller and Coughlan, Geertzian/Shilsian model of bond-[or identity-] formation lacks a knowledge of genesis *and thus*, a sociology.⁹⁰

Is it fair or wise to claim so broadly, as do Eller and Coughlan, that primordialist suggestion of given, ineffable emotions lack sociology? Steven Grosby, in his shattering counter-criticism to Eller and Coughlan's behaviorist onslaught, grounds emotions on the interpretative cognitive activity of human mind and thus, opens a new chapter in primordialist perception of ethnicity as a phenomenon.⁹¹ He refers to the concept of plurality of orientation of human action, in order to denounce the 'crude simplicity' involved in Eller and Coughlan's [materialist/empiricist] shallow behavioralism and to put forth the notion of this action of human mind.⁹²

Grosby bases initially himself on the interpretative tradition⁹³ in order to criticize Eller and Coughlan's empiricism. But later, he continues by developing a clear and analytical phenomenology of ethnicity, based on primordial emotions of attachment. As for Grosby, "*the emotions accompany the cognitive perception of the object –in this case, it is the cognition of the kinship*". There is an *obscure* relation of emotion to cognition in ethnicity. The objects of emotions [of ethnicity] are beliefs about ancestry (origin –kinship) and territory (residence –locality). Together with the surrounding biological connection (family ties we are born into), they form a common territory for our cognitive behavior. Hence, human mind act over the categories of

⁹⁰ Eller and Coughlan (1993) in Hutchinson and Smith (1996), pp.49-50.

⁹¹ Grosby, S., "The Verdict of History: The Inexpungeable Tie of Primordiality –A Response to Eller and Coughlan", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 17 (2), 1994, pp.164-71, reprinted in Hutchinson and Smith (1996), pp.51-57.

⁹² Ibid., p.53.

⁹³ Idem. Grosby refers here to Tönnies, Weber, Parsons, Schamalenbach and Shils. He relates Eller and Coughlan's sheer empiricism in refuting emotional imperative in Geertz analysis, to the "*current intellectual disarray of sociology and anthropology in the United States*".

interpretative (emotional) cognition [of objects of ethnic emotion], in accordance with a primordial criteria.⁹⁴

Grosby clarifies his phenomenological stance by suggesting that the actions of human beings are not meaningful from within but *for* themselves and that there is an ontological base for emotions, which have historical evolving *patterns*. These patterns become *a priori*, making up traditions, upon which our cognitive beliefs (on primordial objects) are built. This is why the significance that human beings attribute to biological connection (origin –kinship) is not accidental.⁹⁵

Grosby thus intends to answer Eller and Coughlan's criticism of lack of *scientificity* (sociology) by offering *to the* scientist a method and a set of epistemological criteria to cognize the emotions as do the primordial actors. He even explains the ineffability of the primordial objects (such as family, state, and nature): For as they can be manipulated to a large extent, whereas part of them remains beyond manipulation as "*we stand in awe of them*". They become coercive and sacred, for whom we live and die.⁹⁶

Grosby carves out a phenomenological, yet distinctive, *kernel* of perception of ethnicity, which was not intended originally by Shils and Geertz. His reference to the interpretative tradition of social theory is only methodological, far from being substantive. For as his (plural) categories of perception of human mind (i.e. the relative autonomy of mind) do not by themselves legitimize the objects of that mindful perception. Grosby offers a subjective perception activity neither in the psychological realm as is the case for perennialists such as

⁹⁴ Grosby here refers to Husserl's notion of "*horizon of ownness*" to describe somewhat a phenomenological methodology of the subjective sensation of the 'objective' world. Hence, to him, the cognitive behavior of the human mind over his ethnic identity should be considered as a phenomenological, rather than an idealistic one, as perceived by Weber or other advocates of the action theory.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.55.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.56.

Fishman, Armstrong or even in Horowitz, nor in the fully subjective/interpretative (voluntaristic) way as did Weber, Tönnies or the perennialists as Connor. His idealist phenomenology remains *alone* throughout the whole theoretical plane constructed around the phenomenon of ethnicity. Insofar as Grosby cannot elaborate on his criticism of American scholarship he introduces in his article, yet he marks a new, untouched theoretical realm to analyze ethnicity.

2.5 Class versus Nation

For Marx, as for all Marxists, there is no contradiction between the *historicity of knowledge* and the *reality of their objects*. The structures of the socio-economic phenomena may differ from what they generate (i.e. the differentiation of reality). Their representation in thought require a critical transformation composed of pre-existing theories and practical activity as well as recognition of the independent activity of objects of knowledge. Thus the unity of knowledge and its object is assured.⁹⁷

For Marx, the modern state had to be national in character, so as to ensure capitalist market conditions. He saw the very existence of nation somewhat in a linguistic and natural (physical) form, but was concerned with its components, the social classes. The class identity, once emancipated from and replace the reifying national sentiments, this unity would be reassured. The capital owning classes may be acting on their separate interests, but the working classes formed the majority of those nations. Hence, the capitalist market economy in its industrial form was hastening the conditions of the demise of its own national character,⁹⁸ helping out the demise of nationalist character of the

⁹⁷Keat & Urry (1982), pp.96-114; Bhaskar, R., "Science" in Giddens (ed.) (1991), pp.491-93; Marx, K., *Grundrisse, Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, M. Nicolaus (trans.), Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973, pp.4-22.

⁹⁸ Exemplifying the Polish stance against the reactionary feudalism of the Tsarist Russia, Engels also adopted Hegel's notion of "historyless people" to encourage Polish independence, reassuring them of their being people with a history, therefore, having a right to claim back

capitalist state and the working class to establish its own identity and own rule.⁹⁹ Even that being done, although the nationalist sentiment would wither away together its mentor, the capitalist state, the nation as a physical entity would not vanish but be replaced in its content by a global convergence into the unity of workers.

Marxism understands that the human sociality is based on classes, that there are no other external realities to or internal varieties of it. It is as objective a social phenomenon as is the 'natural' (physical) existence of nations. Any alternative criteria to organize the society along with lines of race, ethnicity, sex or profession means a (ideologically designed) division of class identities into unreal ones.¹⁰⁰ So, ethnicity is an analytical construct, it may explain certain phenomena, but not the reality in the same sense as class.¹⁰¹ When it extends onto the whole society it becomes a mask concealing the real (class) identities of individuals.¹⁰²

their state. See Smith (1998), p.48. Wallerstein also echoes this Hegelian concept and Engels' interpretation of it, but rather in a different way, in his conception of hierarchy of peoples in different forms of societal existence, i.e. race, ethnic group and nation.

⁹⁹ See Kiernan, V.G., "Nation" in Tom Bottomore (ed.), *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, [1983] 2nd edn. 1991, pp.392-93. Also see Kiernan "Nationalism", Ibid., pp.395-97.

¹⁰⁰ Marx also related the class divisions in the English proletariat to the impact of migration of foreign labor, especially from Ireland. McAll states that the inflow of Irish workers, who were willing to work under any conditions, left the English proletarian movement in limbo due to the hardening of intra-working-class conflicts. To Marx, the opposite case where the English workers in Ireland who regarded themselves as part of the ruling nation was also noticeable. McAll (1992), pp.72-73. On effects of migration, Bonachich offers a slightly different, critical framework. She criticizes the classical Marxist position as being functionalist when posing the question of 'how ethnicity serves capitalist interests?' and suggests that once this question is answered to show 'how', then the phenomenon is thought to have been explained. But she later admits the classical Marxist scheme which entails that the labour market is split between the organized (better-off) and the worse-doing workers. Her explanation is that the capital is no longer the instigator of masking and mystification, as the second group is always composed of racially and sexually subordinate individuals, i.e. immigrants and women. However, the traditional Marxist scheme also relies on the system rather than the 'will' of the capitalist class. Besides, are not the capitalists themselves at their own 'will', the 'importers' (employers) of the immigrant workers? Bonachich's contribution is a minimal one. *Idem*.

¹⁰¹ McAll (1992), p.70. McAll also refers to Poulantzas, who suggested that social classes are the only way in which the reality can be divided up. *Idem*.

¹⁰² McAll (1992), pp.77-79.

Other side of the line of illusion between ethnicity and class is power relations among classes. The working classes have the potential to unmasking of their false identities. But these identities may be further obscured by states nationalizing interests of the bourgeois classes.¹⁰³ These ‘*national interests*’ operate at a global level to legitimate a world capitalist system. The states, operating on national interests, are by no means equal in terms of the size, depth and content of their level of national development.

The myth of ‘*national development*’, argues Wallerstein, was a common theme in the interaction of the developed and un(der)developed nations of the world. It was also the common focus both for Wilsonianism and for Leninism. By the end of the First World War, these two agreed on the *peoples’ right to self-determination*, i.e. to establish a state of their own (and then a nation), to become individual/separate subjects to integrate into the world system.¹⁰⁴ The difference between Wilsonianism and Leninism was the ‘path’ to national development. For Wilson, the principle of self-determination meant a simple projection of liberal individualism to the scale of nations/peoples. It was seemingly reasonable to say “let people decide”, but someone would still have to decide who these ‘people’ were.¹⁰⁵ Wilson, no doubt, had in mind the peoples of the crumbling empires of the time, i.e. Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Russian. The rest, i.e. British, French and Dutch, would follow after one generation.

For Lenin, on the other hand, it was an anti-imperialist project of proletarian internationalism.¹⁰⁶ The project of global proletarian insurrection was being

¹⁰³ Miliband, R., *The State in Capitalist Society, The Analysis of the Western System of Power*, London and NY: Quartet Books, [1969] 1973, pp.69-70. Miliband quotes much referred idiom “*What is good for General Motors is good for America*”.

¹⁰⁴ Wallerstein, I., *After Liberalism*, New York: The New Press, 1995, pp.109-111.

¹⁰⁵ Wallerstein quotes Sir Ivor Jennings’ critique. *Idem*.

¹⁰⁶ After he saw that the mythical German proletarian revolution did not occur, Lenin turned his back to the West and in Baku, proclaimed a new emphasis on the “East”. It is interesting to note here that it was Stalin who took up the ‘national question’ more argumentatively than Lenin. See, for example, Stalin, J., “Marxism and the National Question” [1913] in Stalin, J.,

replaced by a theory of anti-imperialism.¹⁰⁷ For Stalin, the definition of a nation was as broad as its 'use'. The forms its future constitution could prove even broader consequences, which will depend on the concrete historical conditions in which the given nation finds itself.¹⁰⁸ Smith argues that given the dissolution of the big ancient empires and the spate of independence struggles, the new generation of socialist thinkers such as Lenin, Kautsky, Luxemburg and Bauer had to be engaged more seriously with the 'national question'.¹⁰⁹ For it was no more a problem of 'historyless people', that Engels adopted half a century ago as a primitive right to self-determination against the spread of (Tsarist) aristocracy. It was a problem of rivalry between the colonized people and imperialism as 'the advanced form of capitalism'.

The circulationist theorists such as A.G. Frank and Wallerstein regard the imperialist expansion as the establishment of a global capitalist interstate system, whereas decolonization would mean a further expansion of the global capitalism due to the introduction of the new states. It is also a transition from being a 'race' to a 'nation', once establishing own state, its hierarchical status remaining unchanged in terms of national development.

Rey and Saul as well as Laclau, however, tend to see the issue of articulation in terms of structures of production rather than circulation. For these group of 'productionists', the expansion of capitalist center to the periphery in the modern world does not necessarily transform the relations of production in the intra-peripheral enclaves. To Rey, for example, there are three phases of

Marxism and the National and Colonial Question, A Collection of Articles and Speeches, London: 1941, pp.3-67.

¹⁰⁷ Lenin's corrigendum is inspired by his defense of the Slav peoples of the Habsburg Empire, who were previously condemned by Marx and Engels for turning against the stronger German-speaking Austrians and the Magyars and thus helping the conservatism to regain control during the 1848-9 revolutions. Lenin reversed this accusation, although he himself was under the counterrevolutionary threat of Pan-Slavism, by 'rationalizing' what Slav minorities did at that time, i.e. subordinating their nationalist claims to the larger requirements of progress. See Kiernan "Nationalism", *Ibid.*, pp.395-97.

¹⁰⁸ Stalin [1913], pp.10ff.

¹⁰⁹ Smith (1998), p.48.

implantation of capitalist mode of production in the pre-capitalist social formations of the ‘periphery’: (i) Capitalist mode resides alongside the existing modes of production, develops trading links, where labor is *not* separated from the means of production, (ii) capital, by intruding more directly, alter the existing relations without totally displacing them; here again, there are no labour reproduction costs for the capital, and lastly (iii) there is the total penetration. Saul takes up the second stage where, he argues, the (internally) migrant workers also retain their tribal affiliations at their original home(hinter)land although they may well be engaged in structural class determination in their (urban) workplaces. Thus, Saul argues, the tribal (ethnic) affiliations are not simply a form of mystification –but a basis for non-class solidarity in diffused urban community.¹¹⁰

The idea of center-periphery antinomy, however, is inspirational to understanding the relationship between ethnicity and underdevelopment. Exclusion from sharing the benefits of industrialization with the core states, suggests Nairn, creates a reaction of peripheral elites against the imperialist domination. They turn to the masses as their only resource left to them. The middle-class intelligentsia, as the most ‘aware’ section of the native bourgeoisie, try to mobilize them using a set of general cultural elements and symbols. The result is a “*Janus-headed*” nationalism with two faces: looking back to a past –mythical if necessary, and forward to a future, unleashing the forces independent of the will of those who conjure them up.¹¹¹ The populist nature of this type of nationalist appeal¹¹² and revival is based on a program of

¹¹⁰ McAll (1992), pp.75-76. There is also an open theoretical criticism here to the world capitalist system thesis, which assumes that capitalism has altered totally all peripheral economies it penetrated since 15th century onwards. Productionists want to see that actual alteration in real relations of production, whereas circulationists ‘assume’ that these relations deemed changed due to the fact that they have articulated to the ‘world system’ dominated by capitalist mode of production by means of their exchange relationships. Also see Keskinok, H.C. and Ersoy, M. (ed.s), *Üretim Tarzlarının Eklemlenmesi Üzerine*, Ankara: Birey ve Toplum Yayıncılık, 1984.

¹¹¹ Smith (1998), pp.51-57; McAll (1992), p.78; Smith (1986) p.137.

¹¹² McAll refers to Laclau’s analysis of Fascist appeal to the ‘people’ (instead of an appeal based on class positions) in pre-War Germany, which made effective the fascist mobilization of

romanticism, a ‘sentimental culture’, quite remote from Enlightenment rationalism as observed in the birth of Western (core) nation-states. To Nairn, “nationalism is not in itself a gateway through which all social formations necessarily pass”,¹¹³ it does not have a singular historical format, its way of appearance is not popular although it has populist character in peripheral societies. Yet it is the most ideal and subjective of ideological phenomena, forged in opposition to ‘outside forces’, to supply the myth of ‘the separate destiny of an inter-class community.

Nairn, as Smith argues, draws an original synthesis of spatial and social elements behind the worldwide appeal of nationalism.¹¹⁴ He successfully applies the Marxist concept of uneven development of capitalism with the social composition of the ideological movement of nationalism. In doing so, the axial theme in Nairn’s theory is the concept of “*uneven development of history*”.¹¹⁵ Looking at history, to him, one could see the even and progressive development of mass culture was characteristic of European Enlightenment. It reflected a forward view natural to the elites of that time and place. However, as the European expansion toward the peripheral areas of the world took place, the peripheral “cosmopolitan” elites in charge of capitalist diffusion into their societies saw that the so-called ‘commonwealths’ were not common in wealth as once expected.

Instead of the social revolutions forecast by the men of the 1840s, there have been World Wars. Instead of civil strife, there has been imperialist and nationalist slaughter [...] with [...] motifs as to have a sense quite different from the one envisaged by Marxist universalism.¹¹⁶

masses. To Laclau, this represented a strategic error of Marxism, which opted to wait *fatalistically* the collapse of capitalism due to its internal contradictions. McAll (1992), p.78.

¹¹³ *Idem*.

¹¹⁴ Smith (1998), p.51.

¹¹⁵ Nairn, T., “The Modern Janus”, *New Left Review*, 94, Nov.-Dec. 1975, reprinted in excerpts in Worsley (1978), pp.527-532.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*.

Nairn goes on to say that his intention is not to imply two brands of nationalism, rather that they “all are stained” by forms of irrationality, making the concept ambivalent –its substance being always politically, morally and humanly ambiguous. The “Janus head” of nationalism stand over the passage of modernity. Looking back to all-irrational rites laid in history, whereas looking forward, however, no more means a ‘natural’ progress of the mankind.

Nairn’s concept uneven development of nationalism is also utilized by Hobsbawm, who sets out to criticize the liberal universalism of Wilsonian self-determination as well as to show that ‘the world’ was aware of the changing nature and knowledge of nationalism in the post World War era. But on the contrary to Nairn’s assertion of nationalism persisting in distorted forms, Hobsbawm suggests that it will pass away, disappear, due to a set of material and rational causes. He suggests that there were three forces in play:¹¹⁷

- i) Decolonization, as a function not of the nationalist aspirations but the internationalism of their leaders;
- ii) Revolution, in which the social revolutionaries knew the power of nationalism, but also after which the post-independence tensions took apace.¹¹⁸
- iii) Intervention of outside powers, which was by no means nationalist both in their motivation and in effect.

Hobsbawm says, nation is losing an important part of its *old* functions, i.e. the territorially-bound ‘national’ economy. The growth of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the internationalization of division of labour and intercontinental migration are, but few causes to expedite this process.

¹¹⁷ Hobsbawm, E.J., *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1990] 2nd edn. 1992, pp.178-192.

¹¹⁸ Hobsbawm quotes J.H.Kautsky (1962) as saying “Countries including many language and culture groups, like most African and Asian ones, have not split up, and those taking in only part of a single language group, like the Arab ones and North Africa, have [...] not united.” Hobsbawm (1992), p.179.

Henceforth, the ideology of nations and nationalism is *irrelevant* today, as today's *curious* combination is the technology of the 20th and the free trade of the 19th centuries as well as the interstitial centers of world trade in the middle ages. Nations and nationalism no longer suffice to describe and analyze the political entities. They will decline with the decline of the national state.¹¹⁹ The phenomenon is past its peak.¹²⁰

For Nairn, the great failure of Marxism was its inability to come into terms with nationalism.¹²¹ I think this argument is incomplete and misleading. The Leninist socialist revolution adopted a 'national strategy' assuming that the 'toiling masses' could be mobilized toward a proletarian democracy. This assumption involved that the democratic promise of socialism would take control of an ensuing nation-state. But as Stalin argued,

A nation has the right to arrange its life on autonomous lines. It even has the right to secede. But this does not mean that it should do so under all circumstances, that autonomy, or separation, will everywhere and always be advantageous for a nation, i.e., the majority of its population, i.e., for the toiling strata...¹²²

Indeed, nationalism and socialist revolution could be seen in same terms, but only on a circumstantial way. I must note here that Austrian Marxists had been the first to encounter this problem in practice in the years leading up to the First World War. Having faced with the communal antagonism between Czechs and Germans in Bohemia dividing across the working-class interests, the Austrian Social Democratic Party was trapped in between promoting a socialist revolution and preserving the Habsburg Empire territorially as a party of the whole empire. As the number of new independent parties drawing upon

¹¹⁹ *Idem.* Hobsbawm also refers to a dilemma faced by the ethnic groups, aspiring-to-be-nations: While the economic viability of small states are no less than the larger ones, an ethnic-group-based regionalism may be more rewarding.

¹²⁰ Hobsbawm's metaphor is Hegel's 'Owl of Minerva' (which brings wisdom) that flies out at dusk. "It is ... now" he says, "circling around nations and nationalism". Hobsbawm (1992), p.192.

¹²¹ McAll (1992), p.77.

¹²² Stalin, *idem.*

national working-class support and each adopting the title of ‘national socialist’ grew, Otto Bauer argued that nation was an objective reality. To relate this separate objective reality with that of class, he claimed that the national culture was collectively shaped by the contribution of various classes. In a socialist society where class divisions were removed, the antagonism between nations would disappear into cooperation and coexistence. According to Bauer’s formulation, it was the class relations that produced antagonism due to conflicting economic interests, whereas the national conflicts had been one of a cultural and essentially non-antagonistic type. Each nation could be given autonomy to focus more clearly and directly on class-conflict. But Bauer naively misestimated the political insight in nationalist ideology. He tried to de-politicize nationalism, ignoring the fact that the nationality politics is not reducible to pre-existent cultural identities.¹²³ Nationality politics shares with class politics the same dynamics in terms of its aspiration for the control of state power.

The post-war Marxist-Leninist revolutionary movements, including the Turkish and the Kurdish revolutionary left, had to live through this dilemma: the tension between the vision of a socialist/democratic revolution and a nationalist liberation. In the late 1960s, it divided the Turkish left into two: the adherents of the socialist revolution theses and those attached to a ‘re-liberationist’ nationalist democratic revolution (NDR) strategy. Whereas it unified the Kurdish left into a national liberationist (Kurdish NDR)¹²⁴ camp, divorcing itself along nationalistic lines from the Turkish left. As we shall see, during the

¹²³ Breuilly (1993), pp.40-1. Yet, Anderson warns us about the more naïve side Bauer’s revisionism, which concerned ‘saving the state’ from the perennial Austrian-Hungarian duality. The triumph of the Magyar gentry’s nationalist aspirations after 1875 led, among others, the Austrian Marxists seek for plausible solution to save the Habsburg state from dissolution. Bauer, in his contribution to this search for a new ‘official nationalism’, proposed that the Habsburg Crown should ensure the common will, a single realm [*Reich*] of the two component nations by counterposing against the idea of a Hungarian nation-state, the federalist [*Bundesstaat*] alternative of the *United States of Great Austria* [*sic*]. Anderson [1983], pp.107-9. The search for an ‘official nationalism’ constitutes a striking resemblance between the two “*evolutionary fossils*” [Hobsbawm (1992), p.38] of the time, the Habsburg and the Ottoman states.

time of the divorce, the Turkish left represented by the Labor Party of Turkey (TİP) was trapped in a Bauern dilemma: arguing both for a socialist revolution and the presence of a Kurdish people as an 'objective reality' at the same time, it hoped for the 'brotherhood of the peoples' would remedy the conflict pursued by [Kurdish] nationality politics. What is more interesting was that, at the time, a sizeable group of Kurdish socialists in TİP probably shared the same 'naivety'.

2.6 Does Ethno-nationalism Exist?

Is tribe is ethnîe is nation? Perennialist accounts of ethnic identity, such as Fishman's and Connor's, enter the historical dimension to the complexity of relations of the structural legacies such as language and the state with an historical sense of ethnic belonging.

Fishman argues that nations are updated versions of immemorial ethnic communities and have existed in all epochs of recorded history, to become immemorial to their members. Therefore, Fishman suggests, ethnic groups are not natural, but strictly historical and social based on a *subjective* feeling of belongingness rooted in history and human psyche (emphathetical and internal, that is, outside reason).¹²⁵ Hence, he rejects the sociobiological reductionism of (external) objective 'realities' as well as (although his clear stress on primordality of ethnic feelings) the primordialists' theoretical interest in beliefs and emotions.¹²⁶

In his analysis of the history of ethnic belonging in Eastern Europe, Fishman, invoking Herder, views the structural functionality of language to ethnicity and

¹²⁴ See Zileli, (2002).

¹²⁵ Fishman, J., "Social Theory and Ethnography" in Peter Sugar (ed.), *Ethnic Diversity and Conflict in Eastern Europe*, Santa-Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1987, pp.84-97, reprinted in Hutchinson and Smith (1996), pp.63-69.

¹²⁶ Smith (1998), pp.159-60.

speaks of ‘unconscious, untutored ethnicity of everyday life’.¹²⁷ But what is this ethnicity of everyday life?

Fishman perceives the phenomenon of ethnicity as a totality, which has ‘being’, ‘doing’ and ‘knowing’ dimensions. In terms of ‘being’, ethnicity is the experience of the tangible, living reality of the body.¹²⁸ It is a *bodily experience* that gives insight to the eternal biological bond between generations. ‘Doing’ on the other hand, consists of behavioral and verbal expressions which preserve, confirm (and prescribe), augment collective identities and natural order. In this respect, they are ‘more valuable’ than the goal-directed behavior of some other theoretical approaches.

Ethnic ‘doings’ are often linguistically encumbered, dependent, and expressible [songs, prayers, jokes etc.] only within traditional ethnic networks. [...] They are viewed and fully available only through the linguistic systems to which they are naturally related. ‘Doing’ is ultimately more negotiable than ‘being’ since behavior and linguistic media are subject to change, but even these changes are subject to authentication before the resulting behavior is justified. The changes are limited to the revitalization and recapture of authentic linguistic expressions.¹²⁹

Ethnicity as ‘knowing’ then, for Fishman, is a wisdom of collectivity, *the* authenticity of the media. It is like the grammar of things-in-order, whereby authenticity itself serves to direct *change*. For the intimate –deeply rooted sense of belonging is preserved through change, it is this felt need to belong which is the basis for modern ethnic nationalism.

¹²⁷ Idem. As we shall return to Herder and his relevance to the issue of the relationship between human consciousness and the role of the Aufklärer, we suffice by acknowledging here the ‘untutored’ nature of ethnicity in itself.

¹²⁸ Fishman categorizes this directly and bodily experienced reality (like other physical capabilities and gifts as sex, intelligence, skill, strength etc.) with language (and/or speech) as another ‘tangible element of identity’, which is experienced in the self and issued from the self. But these are, according to Fishman, not to lead biological interpretations of human behavior which would lead to racism. Fishman (1987), Hutchinson and Smith (1996), p.64.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p.65. This passage curiously reminds us Saussure and his linguistic-structuralist interpretation of the social phenomena, where his distinction between *langue* (language) and *parole* (speech) indicated a necessary symbiosis of the structure and meaning. This resemblance shall be discussed in detail later, but we will suffice here saying that Fishman also attributes an analytical/explanatory capability to *speech* (as *the* experience) and *language* (as *the* inherited capacity).

But how are these ‘doings’ and ‘knowings’ authenticated? If (authenticated) change is merely an act of re-interpretation and re-direction, is not history a simple recurrence rather than change *per se*, in which Fishman’s ‘ethnic continuity’ remains unchanged?

Fishman’s linear but anachronic historicism¹³⁰ deserves deeper criticism on methodological and epistemological planes. His assertion that the ethnic authenticity being used for *new* ‘collective’ purposes and that language being used to authenticate these purposes oscillates between instrumentalism and functionalism. For one, Fishman never explains why and how ethnic communities decline, or do they ever decline (or simply *recur* in different fashions –i.e. *speeches*, their rules of reference –i.e. language/grammar remaining intact)? For another, how can we verify their belief, especially in *pre-modern* epochs?¹³¹ Do we simply judge in retrospect to impose a contemporary *grammar* that seems ambiguously relativistic from behind? Fishman’s ordering of change for (ethnic) continuity seems to be drowned in old structuralist dilemmas. We should seek for other accounts of ‘ethnic continuity’ to clear our minds.

Connor brings a more ‘workable’ insight to the perennialist understanding of ethnic continuity, introducing somewhat a historical insight to development of (modern) nations and ethnicity as a distinctive aspect of the phenomenon of modernity. To Connor, the basic misunderstanding underlying the divergence between the scholarly expectations and the actual history is the assumption that (i) nationalism is functional to (modern) state integration and (ii) the state will win over all its competitors in terms of national support.¹³² To him, the inter-

¹³⁰ Fishman’s historicism is a start-and-go type of time which has no explanatory insight. Theoretically his formula of *start recording*→*generations*→*modernity*→*generations* need not any reference to modernity.

¹³¹ This criticism is leveled against Fishman’s constructivist methodology in selection of his ‘observable’ data. See in Smith (1998) pp.160-61.

¹³² Connor (1994), p.91.

utilization of the terms state and nation is wrong, as the sense of loyalty to the former is patriotism, whereas to the latter is nationalism. He claims that when the ethnic groups become aware of themselves as nationally self-conscious, nations emerge as a more developed form of ethnic group. Modern state accelerated this awareness,¹³³ therefore, nations existed after late the 19th century. Henceforth, nation formation is a process (of self-definition/consciousness), rather than being an historical occurrence or an event. Ethnic group *may*, but nation *must* be self-defined. What is ethnicity then?

For Connor, ethnicity is a non-rational (not irrational –but *beyond* reason), psychological essence –a sense (not emotion) of ancestral relationship. This sense is not natural, but a historical one. It is a subconscious conviction.¹³⁴

Whereas Connor falls short of explaining the object of his ‘subconscious conviction’, Horowitz elaborates on this matter in terms of psychological sensation. On the one hand, he concedes that ethnic identity is established by birth,¹³⁵ on the other, he suggests that it is laden with familial emotion.¹³⁶

Citing Fishman on the extent of kinship ties, he claims that ethnicity *can be acquired* by way of migration, intermarriage and conversion, beyond the actual sphere of ‘kinsmen’. Whereas Fishman offers a self-definition of ethnic group

¹³³ Connor bases his analysis of functionality of modern state in nation formation on Hayes’s account of modernity. Whether or not Hayes’s account is true, the importance of it is the reversed instrumentality here. It is not the nation, but the (modern) state which preceeds. Therefore, Connor’s nation is not (only) historically, but also theoretically (and necessarily) a modern one.

¹³⁴ It is interesting to see here how Connor adopts Weber’s ‘subjective belief in common descent’ (as *presumed* identity) into his own ‘subconscious conviction’. Both terms indicate a subjective positioning vis-à-vis ethnic sense of belonging (ethnicity), but Weberian *presumption* becomes a somewhat psychological *diagnose* (on subconsciousness) in Connor’s conception. Connor, though, does not elaborate on that psychological dimension.

¹³⁵ Horowitz, D. L., *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, p.52.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 61, 81. Horowitz also refers to Weberian definition of ‘subjective belief in common descent’ (*Ibid.*, p.53) and to the Freudian view of the family as the unconscious prototype of all human groups. (*Ibid.*, p.59).

identity from inside, Horowitz offers, based on his extensive research of the ethnic conflict in post-colonial societies, that this self-definition is made from outside, by way of comparison with other [competing] ethnic groups. For him, this comparison is a direct outcome of post-colonial competition between the ethnic communities for the prize of power over the modern state.¹³⁷ Such comparison (with significant others) leads to a perennial struggle for collective self-esteem and a relative group worth which forms the basis for ethnic conflict today.¹³⁸

Smith notes that Horowitz's account on post-colonial ethnic conflict accords little role to the pre-colonial ethnic communities and conflicts.¹³⁹ In discussing the indicators of ethnic identity, Horowitz is seen to share Connor's and Fishman's conviction on *presumed* kinship basis of ethnicity¹⁴⁰ and its subjectivity, but he does not extend the power of this presumption over to the pre-colonial era.¹⁴¹ This leaves Horowitz's conception of perennial type of ethnic struggle based on (acquired *or* birth-ascribed) presumed familial/psychological bonds without a retrospective/perennial past.

Like Connor however, Horowitz attributes a functionality to the relationship between ethnicity and modernization. He argues that even the Western individualist liberalism, which is very hostile to birth affiliations (symbolizing feudal immobility and centralized monarchies) and is weakest when it comes to constructing community bonds, made use of the supplementary power of ethnicity.¹⁴² But he also argues that the rise of the modern territorial state introduced the principle of membership by proximity, thus piercing the 'perfect dichotomy of kinship (blood –consanguinity) and territory (proximity –

¹³⁷ Ibid., pp.66-67.

¹³⁸ Ibid., pp.141-43.

¹³⁹ Smith (1998), p.166.

¹⁴⁰ Horowitz (1985), pp.74-76. He argues that perceiving ethnic affiliations as part of a natural phenomena is a mistake of 'pseudo-speciation' –i.e. "*treating members of other groups as if they were the members of different species, which manifestly they are not*". (Idem.)

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p.41ff.

contiguity)'. In this way, Horowitz also reverses the one-way functionality between the modern state and ethnicity as prescribed by Connor.¹⁴³

The problem is, then, which historical approach should we take up to define the perennial ethnic bonds to nationhood. Do we simply assume a linear evolution from family to kinship to ethnic group to nation? Can we reverse this pattern path?

Armstrong is more clear in his perennialist account arguing that the group identity called the 'nation' is simply a modern equivalent of pre-modern ethnic identity. Armstrong's main concern is to show how boundaries between ethnic groups are maintained by a structure of symbolic elements that *recur* throughout the history.¹⁴⁴ His 'boundary management' is a direct descent of Barth's analysis that suggests that ethnicity is maintained by social boundaries rather than presumed kinship ties or primordial attachments.¹⁴⁵

Armstrong's controversial position vis-à-vis both the primordialist and modernist approaches is based on his conviction that the symbols building ethnic boundaries are objects of a collective psychological perception for members of an ethnic community to act as 'border guards' between 'us' and 'them'. By studying how strong and widespread were the ethnic senses of belonging in medieval Islam, Christendom and Judaism,¹⁴⁶ he not only tries to

¹⁴² Ibid, pp.87-88.

¹⁴³ Idem.

¹⁴⁴ Smith (1998), pp.167-68.

¹⁴⁵ Idem. For Barthian conception of social boundaries of ethnic groups, see: Barth, Fredrik, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1969, pp.10-19, reprinted in Hutchinson and Smith (1996), pp.75-82. In fact, Barthian analysis also entails a thorough criticism of the approaches to ethnic groups as culture bearing units. For Barth, although cultural component in ethnic identity is very important, it is rather an implication or result. Hence, for him, such approaches draw attention to the analysis of cultures, not of ethnic organization. They try to explain cultural change (ethno-history), but the actual unit of analysis is a social phenomenon (Idem). We shall return to this distinction as cognized by Barth in the fourth section.

¹⁴⁶ Armstrong, J., *Nations Before Nationalism*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982, pp.206-213, reprinted in Hutchinson and Smith (1996), pp.120-127. Though, Armstrong takes up the 'ideal types' of Armenian and Jewish diasporas, renown for their ultimate

show the pre-modern legacy of ethnic identities, but also, by way of comparison, to prove that ethnicity is subject to long-term emergence, transformation and dissolution.¹⁴⁷

There is, however, another major theoretical problem remaining of Armstrong's collective psychological border-markers of *recurring* ethnic identity. Smith, being himself an 'ethno-symbolist', argues that Armstrong, rather than advocating a continuity of ethnic identity, offers a recurrent phenomenon. Therefore, according to Smith, Armstrong's approach is [largely] phenomenological.¹⁴⁸ Now, one may ask the epistemological question of 'what makes an approach like Armstrong's a phenomenology, if all it does is to describe recurrences in history, without explaining (analytically) the *occurrence* of at least one of them? We believe that Smith is wrong. Insofar as those phenomena, if recurrent in identical forms and when not explained in terms of causal relations, are simple recurrences. Smith implies that they do not change in substance, although they alter their form through time, just like the concept of the 'grammar' of change described by conventional structuralists. Such perception of phenomenology renders recurrent phenomena a repetitive insight –rather than a phenomenological occurrence (and recurrence) or even continuity (in Hegelian sense) under specific causes through time.

Phenomenology of ethnicity should be discussed with 'cultural' primordialist approach, as defended by Grosby or with the inter-complementary approaches of the modernist paradigm. When it comes to the *reason to die for*, however, Grosby is not alone, nor unique in his theoretical challenge. Connor, for one, offers his own reasons when he says "*people do not voluntarily die for things*

'boundary management' capabilities, since one can claim that his generalizations over the said data may prove false in most other cases. Besides, religion contains but one set of symbols for collective psychological sentiment, albeit the strongest in Armstrong's examples.

¹⁴⁷ Smith [1986] 1999, pp.14-15.

¹⁴⁸ Idem. Also see Smith (1998), pp.168.

that are rational'.¹⁴⁹ Connor's perennialist non-rationalism, in essence, is a half-way to what has been termed as modernist perception of ethnicity. On the one hand, Connor rejects the modernist claim that the nation (as an extension of family-kin-ethnie) is the product of modern capitalism, on the other, he recognizes (as does his mentor Hayes) the instrumental position of the modern capitalist state to the formation of the [modern] nation.

I will transpose the question here in a modernist way. Is 'ethno-nationalist project' feasible in terms of basic aspirations of nationalism? If we agree on the fact that nationalist project is pre-occupied in making a state up to the 'point of zero', i.e. national sovereignty, and building a nation-statehood from then onwards, the answer is affirmative. Yet, this 'feasibility' exercise does not explain the validity of ethno-nationalism as a separate category in and by itself.

We have seen so far that the primordial and perennial conceptions of ethnicity are necessarily based on continuities. These continuities are mediated by consanguinity (blood, birth, kinship), culture (language –oral/written, religion – scriptural/non-scriptural, symbols, rituals), psychology (beliefs, senses – belongingness/exclusivity/uniqueness) and proximity (local, territorial, contiguity, socio-economic –rural/urban). Modernists, however, tend to rely on discontinuities brought about by socio-economic (modes and relations of production/circulation, demographic expansion/contraction/migration) and political/ideological (the rulers and the ruled, power relations/access, forms and limits of authority, sovereignty/recognition/legitimation, cultural/ideological construction, change). In doing so, modernists do not deny objective existence to any of the mediating 'qualities' listed by the primordial/perennial paradigm. They differ only and broadly their mediation *capacity-in-themselves*. The modernist methodology seeks explanatory, if not deterministic, causalities between these qualities and the dual phenomena (e.g. tribalism-ethnicity,

¹⁴⁹ Connor, quoting Chateaubriand: "*Men don't allow themselves to be killed for their interests; they allow themselves to be killed for their passions.*" Connor (1994), p.206.

ethnie-nation, state-nation, minority-nationalism etc.) they mediate. This is why modernist epistemology is skeptical toward perennialist relationalism, since theoretically constructed relations do not necessarily represent a causation. Furthermore, modernists try to see through the historical development an ontological basis to explain history. Simple dialectics based on action/reaction, essence/boundary or occurrence/recurrence schemes may describe continuities, but they fail to explain history, i.e. change.

A similar theoretical problem with primordial and perennial conceptions relates genealogy of ethnic and national phenomena. We observe that the primordialist and perennialist genealogy is constructed on observed or speculative givens. This arbitrary rationalism/positivism does help in expanding even further the ethno-symbolist archaeology. But as we shall see, it also makes today the past, trusting history at the hands of casual relativism of myth-making nationalist intelligentsia.

I do not wish to further idealize the types of theoretical approaches to ethnicity and nationalism. But I must assert that, despite all the descriptive material and overwhelming evidence, primordialist and perennialist ethno-symbolism fails to explain the linear contiguity from ethnie to nation, ethnic to national, ethnicity to nationality and hence, ethno-nationalism.

Ethnicity is one of the tools required for the construction of nationhood or nation-statehood. The key to understand its use is its functionality, as is for other tools devised by nationalism, i.e. language, religion, class interests etc. In order to understand the context and the extent ethnicity devised by nationalism, we need to dissect its content signified politically by the nationalist discourse. It may contain as many “qualities” as the ethno-symbolist literature counts. But only few serve as a “resource” to the nationalist cause.

3. A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THEORIES OF KURDISH ETHNICITY AND NATIONALISM IN MODERN TURKEY

In this chapter, I will discuss how Kurdish nationalist discourse attempts to construct an ideological self-legitimation. Regardless of the theoretical divergence among various authors, this self-legitimation discourse converges mainly on an ethno-relational pattern of historical legitimacy. This pattern involves an action-reaction scheme, whereby the 'space', 'essence' and the mere objective existence of Kurdishness has been threatened, subjugated, colonized, suppressed, omitted and systematically destroyed by the Ottoman/Turkish modernization process.

This process, as 'reduced' above, according to the Kurdish nationalists, has been characterized and propelled by an accelerating ethnic exclusion, racism, discrimination on part of the state and ethnic resistance, nationalist reaction and rebellion on part of the 'Kurdishness'. Hence, Kurds became nationalists, seeking for a sovereign state of their own. It is important to understand how the Kurdish nationalist discourse wants its audience to read it. It is argued in this chapter, that the said discourse is also a teleological enterprise which talks about today, when it talks about the history.

How does a human collectivity acquire a sense of ethnic identity? According to Smith, it needs a combination of subjective (i.e. collective memory, value, myth and symbolism) and objective (i.e. population size, economic resources, communication systems, political/social organization) factors to define the phenomenon of ethnicity. Therefore, argues Smith, we can no longer regard nations as the natural 'givens' of social existence and neither we can accept

them as “nervous tics” of capitalism.¹⁵⁰ For the advent of industrial capitalism, the bureaucratic state, secularization and mass culture/education have not rendered obsolete many of the cultures and identities formed in pre-modern eras, but undoubtedly effected and transformed, amalgamated some of them, while destroying many others.

Modernity has effected human collectivities unevenly, not only in the sense that its socio-economic systems of production and distribution had different impact on various social formations, but also it has been *percieved* unevenly among them. Theoretically, the former kind of unevenness as an externally-determining aspect have been formulated through objective factors of ethnicity formation, whereas the latter being invoked more often to underline the subjective factors. Theoreticians put aside, the perceptions of ethnic actors themselves have depended on their relative position vis-à-vis the effects of modernity, through which they found venues to express their ethnicity. As Gurr asserted,

[T]he key to identifying communal groups is not the presence of a particular trait or a combination of traits, but rather the shared perception that the defining traits, whatever they are, set the group apart.¹⁵¹

For hundreds of years Kurdish tribes have lived at the crossroads of other major ethnic groups, i.e. Arabs, Persians, Turks and Armenians. They had substantially varying cultural, social and economic properties, which amounted often to wars and persisting conflicts among each other. This state of affairs among the Kurdish tribes and groups has been referred generally as the main cause of the ‘statelessness’ of the Kurdish people. There have been

¹⁵⁰ Smith, A.D., *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford: Blackwell, [1986] 1999, p.4.

¹⁵¹ Gurr, T.R., *Minorities at Risk: a Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts*, Washington DC: US Institute of Peace, 1993, p.3.

unavoidable ‘effects’¹⁵² of various Kurdish nationalist movements in the periphery of Turkey¹⁵³ as well as in the ‘diaspora’ in Europe¹⁵⁴ and of course, the covert support extended by states to the Kurdish nationalists in the neighboring territories.¹⁵⁵ It is interesting to note, however, the nationalist movements could neither cash the evolving course of events into their declared ends nor they cooperated in a meaningful sense toward the mythical objective of a ‘unified, independent Kurdistan’.¹⁵⁶ There had been a ‘shared perception’ of distinctiveness among the Kurdish intelligentsia against the ‘significant others’, as expressed in the late 17th century poetic story of Ahmed-i Khani:

Look, from the Arabs to the Georgians,
The Kurds have become like towers.
The Turks and Persians are surrounded by them.
The Kurds are on all four corners.
Both sides have made the Kurdish people
Targets for the arrows of fate.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² Gurr calls these effects as ‘diffusion’ and ‘contagion’, the latter being a more indirect but unavoidable effect to the different social forms of the same ethnic group in a neighboring state. *Ibid.*, p.133.

¹⁵³ Among such effects, Barkey and Fuller counts, the attempt to bridge the ethnic divide by the return of Mullah Mustafa Barzani to Iraq in 1958 after the overthrow of the monarchy by Abdulkarim Qasim, as well as the destruction of the Kurdish villages in 1988 by Saddam in the *Anfal Campaign* in Iraq. See Barkey, H.J. and Fuller, G.E., “Turkey’s Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol.51 (1), 1997.

¹⁵⁴ Barkey and Fuller also refers to this phenomenon as a potential source of conflict in the diaspora, especially in Germany where over two million people of Turkish origin reside, a fourth of which have been Kurdish descent. *Idem.*

¹⁵⁵ Well known examples have been the PKK supported by Syria against Turkey, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) supported by Iran against Iraq. In an interview, Kemal Burkay, Secretary General of Kurdistan Socialist Party, labels these relations as deplorable but unavoidable, in which the control of the [liberation] movement should not be trusted in the hands of the supporting government. See interview with Kemal Burkay in Ballı, R., *Kürt Dosyası*, Istanbul: Cem Yayinevi, [1991] 1993, pp.386-87. Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK leader, also admits the need for such a support, but rejects the charges that PKK is manipulated by Syrian government. In interview with A. Öcalan, *ibid.*, pp.267-75.

¹⁵⁶ This lack of concomitance between the actors of Kurdish independence movements elsewhere has, for instance, been attributed by Sheref Khan in 1597 mythically to a will of the Prophet Mohammed, who asked God not to give Kurds a chance to unite and rule. Şerefhan, *Şerefname: Kürt Tarihi* [Bitlis, 1597], M.Emin Bozarslan (trans.), Istanbul: Hasat Yayınları, 1990, p.25. The translator’s note refutes this claim as being nonsense and unreal. But the claim itself is a revelation of the ‘myth’ of unified independence among the Kurdish elite. The myth of ‘unification and independence’ reappeared politically in modern Turkey in 1969 when an armed faction (Dr. Siwan –S. Kırmızıtoprak) influenced from Barzani illegally established the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey (T-KDP). See Ballı (1991), p. 614.

¹⁵⁷ Excerpt from *Mem-u-Zin* by Ahmad-i Khani dated late 17th century, quoted McDowall, D, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris, [1996] 2nd edn. 2000, p.5.

An overall review of the scholarly work as well as views expressed by the ethnic actors over the issue of ethnic/national identity of Kurds in modern Turkey suggest that there are basically three main conceptual lines as to the content and the meaning of ‘Kurdishness’.

The first involves a primary perception of cultural elements, distinctive in their being and becoming, of the Kurdish identity. It is mainly those cultural elements in history, in the form of myths, religious cults, language, rituals, chants and belief systems that matter to show the distinctiveness of being Kurdish. The point of articulation of this very identity signifies the contribution of Kurds to the world cultural civilization. Bender’s work¹⁵⁸ is an example of this way of perception, which attributes a specific mission to the cultural/historical awareness of Kurdish ethnicity, which extends beyond a ‘scientific’ undertaking to reveal the cultural history of Kurds. It also involves a basic theme that attributes ‘immemorial’ qualities to the Kurdish ethnicity, granting it a retrospective, primordial existence. But when it comes to the assertion of nationalist aspirations in context, Bender is not alone.¹⁵⁹

A second line involves comparative work on ethnic symbols and perennial assertions. A third perception involves a direct confrontation with or reference to the legacy of Turkish modernity. The confrontationist tendency, led by the works of Beşikçi, sought a radical *demystification* of the ‘state discourse’ which tried to conceal and suppress the Kurdish claims as a separate ethnic

¹⁵⁸ Bender, C., *Kürt Tarihi ve Uygarlığı*, Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, [1991] 2nd edn. 1995. Bender also refers to some local Kurdish intelligentsia who worked on the ethnic history of the Kurds, including Gen. Ihsan Nuri, Vet. Nuri Dersimi, Serdar Baran, Ali Rıza Arslan, Musa Anter and Mehmet Bayrak etc. *Ibid.*, p.41. This indicates that there has been a lively effort on the ‘historicity’ of Kurdish culture, as a matter of ‘shared perception’.

¹⁵⁹ The PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan devotes first 210 pages of his two-volume work to the analysis of prehistoric ethnicities starting from homo sapiens and the “neolithic revolution” to the Sumerian Monk State and the Hurris as the ‘ethnic’ ancestors of Kurds. Öcalan, A., *Sümer Rahip Devletinden Demokratik Uygarlığa*, [From Sumerian Monk State to Democratic Civilization], 2 Vol.s, Cologne: Mezopotamien Verlag und Vertrieb GMBH, 2001.

entity.¹⁶⁰ His method of class analysis entailed that the ‘matter’ lies in the relations of power within the transformation of the feudal mode of production in eastern Turkey and in the colonial/imperialist rule in Ottoman and later, Turkish state.

Another critical approach is developed by Yeğen¹⁶¹ in an interpretative way, albeit initially inspired by Beşikçi’s ‘demystification’. While Yeğen shares that the ‘state discourse’ deliberately concealed the ‘actual’ content of the matter, he suggests that this matter was an ‘ethnic’ problem, rather than a problem of exploitation, as originally offered by Beşikçi. His Foucaultian conception of the discursive formation of the Turkish modernity allows a total transcendence¹⁶² by the Kurdish ethno-political resistance beyond the Turkish modernity that has refused to speak about it in its formative years.

The modernist approach to the Kurdish ethno-nationalism also involves a reverse tendency to criticize it, regarding Kurdish nation/ethnicity as a product of the ‘Eastern Question’ as formulated by the imperialist manipulation over the Ottomans and modern Turkish state. Çay¹⁶³ and Öke¹⁶⁴ argue rather in a

¹⁶⁰ Beşikçi, İ., *Doğu Anadolu’nun Düzeni: Sosyo-Ekonomik ve Etnik Temeller*, Vol.I and II, Ankara: Yurt Kitap-Yayın, [1969] 1992. Also Beşikçi, İ., *Devletlerarası Sömürge Kürdistan*, Ankara: Yurt Kitap-Yayın, [1990] 1991. Other works of the author include *Kürtlerin Mecburi İskanı* (1978), *Bilim-Resmi İdeoloji, Devlet –Demokrasi ve Kürt Sorunu* (1990), *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi* (1990), *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkasının Programı (1931) ve Kürt Sorunu* (1991), *Türk Tarih Tezi, Güneş-Dil Teorisi ve Kürt Sorunu* (1991).

¹⁶¹ Yeğen, M., “The Turkish State Discourse and the Exclusion of Kurdish Identity”, *Middle East Studies*, Vol.32 (2), 1996.

¹⁶² Two main examples could be Bruinessen, M.V., “Osmanlılıktan Ayrılıkçılığa: Seyh Sait Ayaklanmasının Dini ve Etnik Arka Planı” and “Kürtler Arasında bir Siyasi Protesto Aracı Olarak Nakşibendi Tarikatı” in *Kürdistan Üzerine Yazılar*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1992, pp.108ff and 127ff; and Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, Huston: University of Texas Press, 1989. For a structuralist version of the analysis based on religion, also see Kreyenbroek, P.G., “Religion and Religions in Kurdistan” in *Kurdish Culture and Identity*, P.G. Kreyenbroek and C. Allison (ed.s), London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1996, pp.84ff. Other accounts of illusionary official discourse include Kadioğlu, A., “The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Construction of Official Identity”, *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.32 (2), 1996; also in İçduygu, A., Romano, D. and Sirkeci, I., “The Ethnic Question in an Environment of Insecurity: the Kurds in Turkey”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.22 (6), Nov.1999.

¹⁶³ Çay, A., *Her Yönüyle Kürt Dosyası*, Ankara: Turan Kültür Vakfı, 1993.

xenophobic way that the Kurdish problem is an artificial one and Kurdish nation is a false construct, imposed on the Turkish state by international powers such as communism, zionism, imperialism. Whereas their efforts to counter-demystification of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism could amount to a concrete and consistent framework for their intended objective, they are instrumental in underlining that modernity is based on an inter-state system since the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and thus nationalisms of our age in weakened (peripheral) states follow a different pattern of evolution than the nationalisms of the age of nationalism. The main difference involved is the very existence of the international (inter-state) system, in which the power relations between the states have been institutionalized either by ‘concert of nations’ in a permanent oligarchy, or by incidences like ‘world’ wars and ‘world’ peaces (i.e. the amplifying effects of Treaty of Sevres, Paris Peace Conference regarding the Kurdish ‘question’).¹⁶⁵

3.1 Primordialist Conceptions on Kurdish Ethnicity

3.1.1 Bender: Territorial Primordialism

Bender characterizes Kurds as the “oldest people of Anatolia. Old as its age cannot be dated. [...] A community which did not come to these lands from outside.”

He first draws a spatial/territorial definition to ‘these lands’ that extends from the Taurus mass in southern Anatolia in the west to the western banks of the

¹⁶⁴ Öke, M. K., *Belgelerle Türk-İngiliz İlişkilerinde Musul ve Kürdistan Sorunu, 1918-1926*, Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1992, *İngiliz Ajanı Binbaşı E.W.C. Noel’in “Kürdistan Misyonu” (1919)*, İstanbul: Boğazici Yayınları, 1990. Also see Mumcu, U., *Kürt Dosyası*, İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1993. In various articles discussing the dimensions of international manipulation over the Kurdish question, references have also been made to Şimşir, Sonyel, Akşin.

Caspian Sea in the east that nearly includes whole of the upper and lower Mesopotamian plains, with particular reference to the Zagros mass at the center.

Bender secondly frames his temporal concerns to involve a time span that extends from an ‘undated past’ that culminates in the paleolithic age:

As seen, Kurdish people have existed since 11,000 BC till today and settled in the same place, surviving up until our time. They established some great states starting from Gutium to Hurri, Kassite, Mitanni, Urartu and Medes throughout the history.¹⁶⁶

These “Guti Kurds” lived in the upper or middle Zagros mountains shared a common descent with the “Mitanni Kurds” and the Hurri-Hittites. They were also referred to as “Qurtis” that meant Kurds.¹⁶⁷ To him, all races that lived and all states that were established within the landscape he circumscribes were Kurdish, with the Gutis (i.e. Qurtis) being the first linguistically denominated one among them.

Bender thirdly draws ethnic and racial markers, claiming that the peoples of the Zagros were non-semitic races. They shared a common territorial descent as the Sumerians who, on the contrary to the conventional wisdom, were in fact non-semitic and descended from the Zagros to the lower Mesopotamia. The Medes, as their Hurri, Kassite and Urartu ancestors, recovered Ninova in 612 BC from the Assyrians, being one of the semitic races of the Middle East like Elam, Akkad and Egyptians.¹⁶⁸ Bender later rectifies his position on racial markers by carefully refuting the claim that the Kurds belong to the family of Indo-European races. In order to reinforce his territorial understanding of the

¹⁶⁵ A compact but well-established analysis of the international dimensions of the Kurdish question is found in Kurubaş, E., *Başlangıçtan 1960’a değin Kürt Sorununun Uluslararası Boyutu*, Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, 1997.

¹⁶⁶ Bender (1995), p.41.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p.37 and 40, 43.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p.57.

primordial Kurdish ethnicity, he rejects the idea of the racial attributes to the Indo-European communities. He claims that this involves a linguistic continuity that as well originated from Zagros.

In terms of the historical inheritance of the Kurdish ethnic identity, Bender goes far beyond the limits of 'recorded' history of any perennialist project:

In terms of [material] civilization, they rescued men from caves and settled them in their first homes. Gutis started agriculture and converted wheat to flour, baked it in furnaces called "tendur". They made the first garden, discovered the wheel, and by domesticating the horse, used them to pull coaches and to ride on.¹⁶⁹

To Bender, the Kurds invented the writing, made the first written peace treaty in history, wrote the first legend, the *Gilgamesh*, in history and so on. As the Kurdish nation is at least 2,450 years older than the Persian, Bender claims, all cultural inheritance attributable to the Persian history becomes questionable, including that of Zarathustra, Mazdaism, the legend of King Djemshid.¹⁷⁰ To him, the humanity fell into darkness in terms of new discoveries, inventions and civilization between 534 BC and 16th century, when the Kurds lost their political sovereignty.¹⁷¹ Considering the merits of the Kurdish leadership to the humanity, this absence is a loss for Kurds in terms of their ethnic peculiarities more than it is for the rest of the world.¹⁷²

Bender details on aspects of Kurdish primordial identity, i.e. cults (of animism, of communal identity-matrilinealism, mountains, fire etc.), myths and legends (Kawa the Blacksmith, Zarathustra, Ali and Alevis and 'Deng-Bej's as revelations of oral history) and other folkloric elements which fill the *core* of Kurdishness.

¹⁶⁹ *Idem.*

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. p.49, 84-87, 113-21. Bender also claims Kurdishness of the Prophet Noah and the legend of the Flood that took Noah's Arc to Mt Djudi in Zagros.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. p.42.

In doing so, Bender relies in part on revelations by Sheref Khan, a Kurdish ruler who lived in Bitlis in the 16th century, and his *Sherefname*. Sheref Khan explains the ethnic identity of Kurdishness as distinctive, basing on the legendary struggle by Blacksmith Kawa against the Assyrian King Dhahhak, the Assyrian tyrant, that led Kurds to uprising against tyranny and exploitation. Sheref Khan attributes this distinctiveness to the heroicism, belligerent characteristics and religious devotion of the Kurdish people, in a *comparative manner*, vis-à-vis the surrounding ethnic entities, i.e. Persians, Yezidis, Arabs etc.¹⁷³

In many other accounts of Kurdishness, perennialist or modernist, we observe similar generic references to Bender's sources and claims. Anter, for one, reveals his *innate disposition* to Kurdishness with references to all sections of societal and ideological spectrum. He carefully excludes any religious attributes on Kurdish identity, by claiming that Islam did nothing materially to develop human society, but forcing them to perform its own rituals.¹⁷⁴ Bender's work displays a similar tension vis-à-vis Islam, at least against the social and political forms of domination it entails. To Bender, Kurds were of the path of Zarathustra, himself being a Kurd.¹⁷⁵ They have been Yezidi's¹⁷⁶ or even Alevi's,¹⁷⁷ but never been voluntary supporters of the Sunni Islam. This external form of religious domination was forced from outside, mainly by Arab conquests, destroying indigenous (i.e. Zoroastrianism) rituals and religious patterns within the Kurdish society.¹⁷⁸ Other than these shy references, Bender's work does not elaborate on how Sunni forms of Islam affected the

¹⁷² To Bender, for Kurds, after all "it is not easy to be the first in everything". Ibid. p.11. For Bender's perception of Kurds' contributions to the world civilization, see ibid. pp.247-53.

¹⁷³ Şerefhan (1597), pp.20-27.

¹⁷⁴ Anter (2000), p.243.

¹⁷⁵ Bender (1995), pp.113-18.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., pp.122-36.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., pp.140-43 and 151-54.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p.120.

societal organization or political domination in the Kurdish societies since the conversion of Kurds into Islam in 8th century.

Another generic reference is on linguistics.¹⁷⁹ Bender's primordialist approach to what language means is two-fold: First, he makes casual, impressionistic references to phonetic similarities between the words he picks from the 'immemorial' past. Gutis becoming Qurtis and then Kurds as mentioned above is but one example.¹⁸⁰

His second perception, however, has more general and instrumental implications. In an exchange with Beşikçi, Bender refines his racial and ethnic markers by adding to his perception that Indo-European communities denote a linguistic continuity, rather than a racial unity.

There is not an Indo-European or Arian race. Some authors who think they write Kurdish history, count Kurds as a people of the Arian race. The same mistake is done to the nations that belong to the other linguistic families. For example there is a Latin language. But there is not a Latin race. There is a Slav[onic] language group, but there is not [*sic*] a Slav[ic] race. [...] It would be wrong to impose a race upon a people, by looking at what that particular people speaks as a language belonging to which particular linguistic family. In any case, anyhow, Arian language itself, originates from Zagros.¹⁸¹

Bender rejects the idea of an Indo-European Arian race, because it entails the theory of mass migration of Arian tribes into Mesopotamia from 15th to 10th century BC. The Kurds must have never migrated and they must be the oldest

¹⁷⁹ For example, Vanlı refers to (along with Gutis, Urartus) Medes, in which there had been two tribes named as 'Kurd' and 'Mandh' in making up 'Kurmanch'. See Ballı (1991), Interview with İsmet Şerif Vanlı, p.572.

¹⁸⁰ Bender's linguistic references are either enmeshed with symbolic texts extracted from myths and legends such as Blacksmith Kawa, Shehname, Mem u Zin, Meme Alan or Newroz [Bender (1995), pp.182-211], as well as individual phonetic expressions that links history to his immemorial nation, such as Urartu's to Kurds over the Zaza dialect. The reader is made to accept such mechanical transfusion from Zaza into Kurdish ethnicity, as if Zaza is actually Kurdish and nothing else [ibid. p.37].

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p.66.

people on their land.¹⁸² This remains as one of the major theoretical claims where primordialist, perennialist or modernist conceptions of Kurdish ethnicity converge.

Bender's primary concern is the spatial peculiarities of the Kurdish ethnicity. It is the territory rather than the time that is bound to be immemorial. The temporal feature of Kurdishness comes with the territory whoever lived on it. Bender's and Sheref Khan's temporally all-embracing perception is not shared by modernists. However, in most modernist accounts, there is an immanent and common reference to the 'ancient' history traced back to Medes in 7th century BC,¹⁸³ then onto the 'first' political recognition of Kurds in their name by Seljuk Sultans in the 12th century. Even a modern nation needs to be sufficiently old.

Seljuks denomination of 'Kurds' and 'Kurdistan' in fact has another connotation, to which most of the Kurdish intelligentsia are clandestinely affiliated. It is the fact that this represents the first recognition by 'outsiders' of the *land* Kurds had lived on since undated times. Another modernist, McDowall defines this geography as an expanding one to include "to the north beyond Araxes river, to the west as far as Sivas, Erzerum and Marash and on to the Mesopotamian plain around Kirkuk; and to the east beyond the city of Kirmanshah."¹⁸⁴

This definition becomes more delicate than it potentially is with the Turkish state, as it brings severe disagreements with the territorial claims by the

¹⁸² Idem. Also see Bender's reference to Aksoy, G., "Hint Avrupalılar ve Kürtler", *Özgür Ülke*, 6 September 1994.

¹⁸³ Nezan, a modernist, also refers to Medes, however denoting Seljuk denomination of Kurds and Kurdistan as a proto-national form. See Nezan, K., "The Kurds: Current Position and Historical Background" in Kreyenbroek and Allison (1996), p.10. Öcalan refers history of national genesis in a similar way, based on Seljuk sultans' denomination of Kurdistan. See Ballı (1991), p.211. It is interesting to note that Öcalan's perception here includes a historical 'symbiotic' relationship between the Turks and Kurds. *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ McDowall [1996], p.6.

Armenians. The conflict dates back to Paris Conference, exacerbated by previous hostilities rooted in Kurdish involvement (Hamidiye Regiments of Sultan Abdulhamid) in suppression of Armenian revolutionaries sponsored by Czarist Russian army during the Russo-Turkish War in late 19th century.¹⁸⁵ Hence, the validation of authenticity within the specified territory is conceptually and politically more important than the validation of Kurdish ethnic identity *per se*.

3.1.2 The “Turkic Descent” Debate: Çay and Türkdoğan

In his study on Kurdish ethnic nationalism, Çay rejects the ‘historicness’ of Kurdish ethnicity. He criticizes the primordialist conceptions of Kurdish ethnic identity basically on two points. First, he dwells on the anachronism involved in Bender’s approach that dates the Kurdish ethnicity to ‘undated’ times in history. To Çay, the idea that Kurds existed before the written history and that they are descendants of all Arian communities as the authentic/endogenous people of the southeastern Anatolia has no sense in spatial or temporal terms.

History, Çay suggests, starts with the writing and none of the written accounts of the ancient civilizations reveal Kurds as an ethnic or otherwise entity in ancient history. The claims that attribute Kurdishness to the prophet Noah or to the myth of the Flood as well as other ‘Kurdish contributions’ to the world civilization including the invention of the wheel, the writing, the measures and the calendar etc. are complete nonsense. According to Çay, Bender’s refusal of

¹⁸⁵ Burkay concedes Kurdish atrocities against Armenians, condemning them as sporadic acts of opportunists aiming to grab Armenian lands. Burkay, K., *Geçmişten Bugüne Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, Vol.I, Istanbul: Deng Yayınları, 1992, p.502. Öcalan seems more pragmatic in relations with Armenians and coping with their territorial claims over what they call as the ‘heart of Kurdistan’. He thus offers ‘hospitality’ should they wish to come to settle there. See Ballı (1991) pp.305. In fact, the post-war Kurdish intelligentsia seemed more comfortable on this issue ever since the joint declaration by the Armenian and Kurdish (Şerif Pasha, former Ottoman Ambassador to Stockholm, as a self-declared delegate) delegations in Paris Conference, mediated by the British. In fact, the territorial question was left to the peace conference, and thus, was never solved. See Kurubaş (1997), pp.83-87. For a ‘Kurdish-

the claim that the Kurds were an Arian race, in order to reinforce his own claims of authenticity (although their language were Arian) is scandalous in terms of history as science.¹⁸⁶

Çay quotes Gündoğan, a “sensible Kurdist ideologue”, who classifies the above mentioned Kurdish nationalist theorists as ‘reactionary historians’ that have simply failed to develop a sound methodological stance against the ‘Kemalist theses’. Gündoğan claims that reversing what the official history suggests does not make any history-writing, which actually leads only to writing a negation that is devoid of scientificness. The Kurdish historiography is bound to import methodological problems from the Kemalist historiography, were it to continue to use the material the latter has up to date congregated.¹⁸⁷

Çay’s second point of criticism relates to the subject matter of the Kurdish nationalist theses. There, Çay’s peculiar perspective toward the subject matter begins to operate. On the one hand, he forwards a modernist argument that the civilized nations in history such as the Sumerians, the Elam or the Hurri and Hittites did not represent any particular ethnic group or identity. They have been conglomerates of communities overlapping onto each other as their contemporaries in India or in the far east.

nationalist’ version, see Alakom, R., *Şerif Paşa, Bir Kürt Diplomatının Fırtınalı Yılları*, İstanbul: Avesta, 1998, pp.87-104.

¹⁸⁶ Çay [1993], pp.43-47.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., pp.87-89, extracts from Gündoğan, C., “Kürt Tarih Yazımının Metodolojik Sorunları” [Methodological problems of Kurdish historiography], *Rewşen*, (2) 1992; reprinted in Gündoğan, C., *1924 Beytüşşebap İsyanı ve Şeyh Said Ayaklanmasına Etkileri* [1924 Beytüşşebap Rebellion and Its Effects on Sheikh Said Rebellion], İstanbul: Komal, 1994. Gündoğan suggests the ‘young’ Kurdish historiography, instead of spontaneously rejecting the claims of the ‘Kemalist historiography’, must search for and find its own historical facts and interpret them basing on a ‘correct’ methodology. For example, this ‘autonomous’ research would construe that the Kurds’ sought for British support (which the latter declined) in the Sheikh Said Rebellion or that the religious reaction was a primary factor in the rebellion. Ibid., pp.186-7. Despite his rhetorical criticism, Gündoğan does not elaborate on how to ensure such ‘autonomy’ and to what extent, in order to bring down the ‘Kemalist hegemony’ on historical research.

Çay argues that he does not intend to take a stock of these nations in the making of Turkish history. But on the other hand, Çay claims that the anthropological findings indicate that Turkic elements of brachycephalic Ural-Altaic nomads had mixed into the Sumerian, Guti (Kut),¹⁸⁸ Elam and Hurri stocks.¹⁸⁹ He then goes on to suggest linguistic pairs sampled from both Turkish and Sumerian to imply an organic relation between the two languages. He also draw upon the claims of various historians who discussed the possibility of Turkic groups leaving the central Asian steppes to come to Asia Minor to form Sumerians. The same effort is repeated for “Kuts” and similar hypothetical bonds are mentioned to encompass the Skyths, the Saka Turks from inner Siberia.¹⁹⁰

Türkdoğan, relying on a similar pattern, attempts to chronologically circumscribe the other ancient dwellers of Asia Minor such as the Greek colonies on the Black Sea coast.¹⁹¹ Rişvanoğlu enlarges the project yet again to include Siberia, the Caucasus, central Europe (Hungary), Afghanistan and so on. He claims that Kurds have been a part of the Turkish stock wherever and whenever they lived, because they were essentially Turkish.¹⁹²

Çay rejects a distinctive Kurdish ethnicity. He concedes that the term has existed in different forms and contexts through centuries of Turkish history. He argues that Kurds were referred to in the *Köktürk inscriptions* of 7th century in Mongolia as the name of one of the Turkish clans or tribes.¹⁹³ When Kurds

¹⁸⁸ Guti in Çay’s reference turns out to be “*Kut*”, a Turkish word for ‘the sacred’, denominating a Turkic origin. Ibid., p.47.

¹⁸⁹ Idem.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., pp.48-54.

¹⁹¹ Türkdoğan (2003), p.211ff.

¹⁹² Rişvanoğlu (1994), pp.48-87.

¹⁹³ Çay [1993], Ibid., pp.219-21. Rişvanoğlu (1994), pp.50-51. Kirzioğlu adds *Yenisey Monuments*. Kirzioğlu (1968), pp.20-23. Despite the intensity of cross references between the works of the scholars that assert primordialist conceptions of ethnicity favoring Kurdish and Turkish descent respectively, there have been rare substantive effort to criticize individual evidence submitted by each other. One significant example in this vein is Kutlay’s handling of Turkish primordialists’ claim of “Kurdified Turks”. On the “reference to Kurds in Yenisey Turkic monuments” (the “*Elegest Inscript*”) Kutlay quotes Tekin (1995) who demonstrates that

were referred to by the Arabs and Seljuk or early Ottoman sources, they must have been in reference to nomadic Turkoman tribes moving along the borderlands. ‘Kurds’ is a generic term rather than an ethnic marker, which includes Turkomans as well as local nomads that must be understood as conglomerate communities.¹⁹⁴ In time the Turkomans themselves have lived through a process of acculturation¹⁹⁵ and adopted local dialects and cultural forms.

While these mutual ethnic transfusion has been observed, Çay implies that these were cases of ethnic degradation, from an identity (that is Turkish in essence) to a lost identity (that is peripheral, unconscious, nomadic, but still essentially Turkish). Türkdoğan, on the other hand, inspired by Togan and Cahen, offers a sociological explanation which introduces Oghuz vs Turkoman dilemma. This scheme involves the former becoming in time the ruling elite, whereas the latter remains in the periphery, along the borderlands, and evolve into forms of peripheral opposition against the center.¹⁹⁶

For Çay, Kurdish ethnicity is a fabricated concept. Kurdish nationalism is a tool that was employed by some imperialist designs on Turks and the Turkish state.¹⁹⁷ Kurdish ‘nationality’ as well, does not exist. ‘Kurd’ is a sociological term, denoting one part of the Turkish nation. It is also a linguistic term in

the said reference is a simple –linguistic misreading of an originally Turkish word. Kutlay (2001). See Prof. Tekin’s original article quoted in Tekin, T., “Elegest (Körtle Han) Yazıtı”, *Türk Dilleri Araştırmaları*, Vol.5, pp.19-32.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p.64-5, 83, 105. Rışvanoğlu, basing on land registers, repeats this thesis and claims the term was adopted even by the Ottoman state naming the nomads as “Turkoman Kurds”. Rışvanoğlu (1994), p.31.

¹⁹⁵ Process of acculturation and identity shift in Turkoman nomads is a phenomenon generally agreed by other observers. See Gökalp [1910], p.39, 62. The opposite is also true. See Van Bruinessen (1992), pp.42-43, 148.

¹⁹⁶ Türkdoğan (2003), p.181-82.

¹⁹⁷ Çay devotes nearly half of his work (pp.271-455) on discussing the political connotations of the ‘feasibility’ of a Kurdish national identity, given the long efforts to destabilize and dismember the Turkish nation. A similar theoretical devotion is observed in Rışvanoğlu (pp.575-788) and to a lesser extent, in Türkdoğan (pp.183-91, 380-93, 563-69).

Turkish which is currently used either to describe some act, some state of being or in some cases, as place names.¹⁹⁸

Çay et al. are primordialists. Çay's criticism of the eclecticism and anachronism in Kurdish primordialist theses is methodologically tenable. But Çay's own thesis suggesting 'Turkic descent' suffers from similar errors: Postulated kinship ties with past communities, presumed patterns of ethnic descent, interpretative secondary sources and voluntary causation etc.

The "Turkic descent" theses share a common essentialist predisposition that the Kurds are in fact Turks and nothing else. They strongly criticize claims of descent from other historical communities such as Assyrian, Urartu, Medes or others. Therefore they are devoid of 'Kurdishness', as a distinct ethnic identity and any attempt to fabricate one must be treated as heresy.

This ethnic unity is corporately structured: Turks, being an immemorial nation in history, have Kurds as one of their peripheral branch or tribe. Kurds allegedly have visited nearly every geography Turks may have seen. Kurds have been a branch of the Oghuz before the 'exodus' from their Siberian-Asian heartland. They have also been seen together with other Turkic stock in Hungary, along with their 'Magyar' kins. Such kinship is reinforced by pages of casual linguistic and ethnographic data which serves to the detriment of the intellectual grasp that may be expected from any reader.

There is also a strong parallel effort to retain a chronological precedence over territorial claims. Here too, the ethnic kinship/descent theses are instrumental: There is no doubt that the Turks are historically outsiders in Asia Minor. But they are also very successful in riding over new lands and establishing new empires. Hence we must not give up a virtue that has long become a symbolic/mythical marker to the primordialist conceptions on Turkish

¹⁹⁸ Çay [1993], pp.215-38. Also see Rişvanoğlu (1994), pp.24-27.

ethnicity. An authentic and endogenous nation, equally immemorial and distinct, (i.e. Kurds) in contemporary Asia Minor runs as an anathema to the Turkish precedence. This is where the ethnic kinship/descent theses should solve the problem: If Kurds are of Turkish descent, they would not have been in Asia Minor before their ancestors.

3.2 Perennialists/Ethno-symbolists

Of all the different approaches to the phenomenon of ethnicity, it is perhaps the perennialist/ethno-symbolist perspective proves to be the most widely adopted. This may depend on two reasons, without prejudice to the analytical strength of the approach itself.

First, it is easy to be a perennialist. A perennial phenomenon brings less problems regarding history. Technically, if the theorist is able to show that an ethnic phenomenon is observable more than once in history, all he has to do is to provide it a plausible grounds for a possible third occasion. Ethno-symbolism too is easy. The above definition would apply, only by substituting symbols of ethnicity for time frequencies.

Secondly, context does not matter for ethno-symbolists. Symbols are like objective facts, content of which cannot be altered by their context. Their positivistic nature is so powerful that they cannot be easily challenged by other theorists, especially by those who have not been on the field themselves. Symbols are taken for granted by their audience, along with the meaning charged on to them.

Perennialism and ethno-symbolism are neither randomly, nor voluntarily paired theoretical/methodological stances. They have a functional relation, in making of nations through postulated ethnicities. In doing so, perennialism provides an incessant historical projection for a particular ethnicity, whereas ethno-symbolism collates the data: i.e. the symbols of that ethnic phenomenon.

That is why, the ethno-symbolic artifacts are so readily adopted by modernist conceptions, despite their methodological differences.¹⁹⁹

There are also scholars, such as Yeğen, who argue that these symbols have not been perceived and reacted correctly by the state. They claim that the essentialist ideology that surrounded the state failed to realize Kurdistan, based on its authentic/symbolic structures was in operation, long before expressing its ethnicity. The so-called religious, tribal, linguistic and peripheral structures have always had a function of ethnic resistance, hence nation-building for Kurds. When the symbols are in question, the problem of perception is always a point of discussion, not only in terms of the theoretical arguments, but also for methodological concerns. Yeğen attributes an object/subject unity to the ethnic actors themselves and an assumed ideological integrity to their actions. I think this theoretical effort deserves a separate discussion. Because it alters the objective nature of the ethnic symbols and their perception by the ethnic actors, who are at the same time, their ‘producers’.²⁰⁰

3.2.1 Non-contextual Analysis I: Yıldız and the Exclusive Symbols of Turkish Modernity

Yıldız argues that Kemalist nationalism was an ethnicist project. This was the other side of its Janus head in the shade.²⁰¹ Because, Kemalism used religion first as a marker for defining a national body-politic that

¹⁹⁹ Common myths and symbols of Kurdish ethnicity, such as Kawa the Blacksmith and Dhahhak the Tyrant, Ahmed-i Khani’s *Mem u Zin*, mountain cults and associated pastoral bravery, integrity, religious and linguistic peculiarities relative to the surrounding ethnicities and etymological retrospection are all referred to even in modernist accounts of Kurdish ethnicity, along with the typical political, economic and social analyses that usually extend only as far as early 19th century. See McDowall [1996] pp.4-5, 8-11 and 21-9, White (2000) pp.14-22, van Bruinessen [1992] pp.390-2, McDowall in Chailand (ed.) [1973] pp.4-5, Chailand [1992] pp.23-5, Küçük (1990) pp.30-43, Jwaideh (1942) pp.20-62, Ghassemlou [1965] pp.33-8, Beşikçi [1969] pp.106-16.

²⁰⁰ Yeğen (1999), pp.249-52.

²⁰¹ Yıldız (2001), p.30, 124. What Yıldız means by this ‘shaded side of Janus’ was the “*racial-ethnicist definition of Turkishness*”. Ibid. pp.165-71.

involved ethnic pluralism (including all Muslim communities, i.e. Kurds, Circassians, Arabs along with the ethnic Turks). To Yıldız:

Kemalism's "*naïve image*" does not reflect the reality exactly. In order that the citizens enjoyed their rights, they had to fulfil the conditions of being a Turk. Being a Turk in itself involves ethnic elements on both discursive and performative level. The borders of Turkish national identity have thus been drawn accordingly.²⁰²

Then by demolishing the social and political institutions of Islam, Kemalism changed tracks and started implementing its ethnicist nation-building project.²⁰³ That ethnicity was based on an imagined, fabricated Turkism. In essence, Kemalist nationalism was not racist, but believed strongly in the superiority of the ethnic Turkish to the other ethnicities, compounded within the national project. Therefore, it was essentially discriminatory, 'racialist' and exclusive in terms of ethnic pluralism.

The ethnicist, exclusive, discriminatory discourse and performance displayed by Kemalist nationalism were perceived antagonistically by the other ethnic communities. When faced with resistance, Kemalism reacted by harsh measures, including armed and political repression, forced migration, cultural and linguistic assimilation, ideologically totalizing indoctrination, corporatist political domination etc.

So Kurds had to revolt.²⁰⁴ Because they dreamt of and were promised by Kemalists "at the beginning", a multi-ethnic polity, a project that had started by the 1839 Ottoman Reform Edict. Kemalism, at least in its

²⁰² Ibid., p.124.

²⁰³ Yıldız recalls Z. Sertel (the then director general of press) who named 1924 as "the year of destruction" since all the important pre-republican institutions (i.e. the constitution, the caliphate, education, justice and finance etc.) were abolished to be made again, excluding the religious establishment. To Sertel, in order to make well, you have to demolish all the obstacles that stand in the way. Ibid., p.125n. Yıldız, of course, refers to Sertel's anecdote in order to highlight the 'destructive nature' of the early republican regime.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p.238.

beginnings (1919-23), was a continuation of this project. But later by defining Turkish nation along with the ethnically marked borders, ethnic differences themselves have become national borders.²⁰⁵

To Yıldız, “The Kemalist nationalist discourse does not recognize a problem named ‘Kurdish problem’”.²⁰⁶ When faced with a problem of unity, it is always a problem of security. The rebellions in the East and South East are banditry. Policies against Islam, eradication of the tribal structure, [national modern] taxation and compulsory military service are “*in fact against the Kurdish identity too*”.²⁰⁷

Yıldız’s theoretical projection outlined above can be better read and understood if his methodological stance is grasped correctly. Firstly, Yıldız grants priority to a textual reading of the early republican era. In doing so, he relies on a wholesale assumption that the words of the single party leaders actually represent the deeds of the state.²⁰⁸ Hence in many instances he misses the context.²⁰⁹ But, though rarely, he

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p.300.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p.242.

²⁰⁷ Idem.

²⁰⁸ He admits this method: “[A] textual reading of Kemalism renders enough evidence, independent of the degree of concomitance between the text and the practice, in order for us to paint the imagined world of Kemalist nationalism.” (Ibid., p.20) “For as there are no sufficient grounds to assume that there is a wide gap between the text and the practice or the Kemalist nationalist imagination and its real projection.” (idem, notes)

²⁰⁹ For example, Yıldız refers to Bozkurt’s speech in the parliament on 18 November 1921, condemning the Christian communities of the Empire for disloyalty and armed treason. Then he refers to Bozkurt as suggesting, to Kemal Atatürk in Ankara on 18 July 1923, Christianity as an official religion [along with Islam]. The context in November 1921 involved the Greek invasion with the support of the local Greek subjects of the Empire and the Armenian battle in the east. Within two months before that speech, Greeks had been thrown back to the east of Sakarya river, from a battle fought in an hour distance to Ankara where the nationalist parliament sit. Whereas 18 July 1923 is nearly a year after a definitive victory against the Greek troops but only six days before the Lausanne Treaty was signed. The context then involved the Turkish government’s efforts to certify their legitimate authority by containing the Allied demands over, among others, the protection of minorities remaining in a newly-defined Turkey. The two text having thus been bound, Yıldız draws our attention to “a distinction between the Christians and Christianity”. That is, ‘ethnicist’ Kemalist nationalists do not want Christians, but they equally do not want to be seen as anti-Christian discriminators. (Ibid. pp.127-8n) Another example for Yıldız’s ‘collage’ involves relocation of the Jews in Thrace. (Ibid., pp. 254-5) In a contextual analysis of this episode, Aktar argues the state neither had the

sometimes seizes the context. Yıldız, referring to Gabriel Almond who did not mention ethnicity and nationalism in his theory, claims that the theories of modernization as the dominant paradigm of the 1950s and 60s failed to consider the problems inducing from ethnic heterogeneity.²¹⁰ This voluntaristic approach rests in comfort behind the positivistic methodology of his ethno-symbolism. As long as he continues to provide more evidence on the ‘exclusive nature’ of the Turkish state in the early republican era, the reader would be less inclined to ask contextual questions. Yıldız’s problems with context are of systematic nature, due to his methodological error. This error is commonly shared by a number of scholars with different theoretical stance, including Yeğen, as discussed below.

Secondly, despite his effort to understand the theoretical framework regarding ethnicity and nationalism, Yıldız relies heavily on Smith²¹¹ with particular inclination toward ethno-symbolism. For Smith, it is

motives nor the means for a racist implementation. The ‘ethnicist’ nature of the officials’ policies was a ‘natural’ reflex toward the Italian expansionist threat, due to their experience with the minority behavior during or before the War of Independence, rather than an established and well-planned official policy. See Aktar (2000), pp. 71-99. But Yıldız, binds the concept of ‘ethnicism’, which is neutrally referred in Aktar’s analysis, to the arguments that draw in economic interests and the ‘Law on Settlements’ promulgated during this episode. Aktar’s contextual analysis, thus stripped off its context, serves the theses which he himself had criticized. Again, Yıldız implies that the state was conducting ‘ethnicist’ cleansing by forced relocation of Jews. But, just like it did to the Christian minorities, the state, by sealing off anti-semitic propaganda and by receiving Jewish academics as political refugees from Germany, was also wishing to eliminate any anti-semitic image that may be attributed to it in the outside world. Yıldız (2001), pp.256-7.

²¹⁰ Yıldız argues that this problem has enlarged the ‘gap between the reality and the theory of nation-building’. But, ethnicity as a concept came more into focus from 1970s onward, showed that ethnic-nationalism will not erode in the later stages of modernization, despite originally claimed by the “nation-building” school. Ibid., pp.23-24n. Firstly, although Yıldız does not cite, this suggestion is actually taken from Connor. Connor (1987) reprinted in Connor (1994), p.71. In fact, Almond’s ‘optimism’ is not shared by some other “nation-building” school theorists. Those, like Deutsch and Foltz, stressed the importance of mobilization and participation, which would remedy the limits of territorial sovereignty, against the danger of being overridden by other sub-national loyalties. See Deutsch and Foltz (1963), ‘Introduction’. Secondly, Yıldız having said these, declines from explaining why and how “*this significant gap*” occurs. Yıldız (2001), *idem*. This seems awkward, because his “ethnicist Turkish nationalism” thesis is built on this ‘gap’.

²¹¹ Ibid., p.19.

ethnie rather than nation, ethnicity rather than nationality and *ethnicism* rather than nationalism.²¹² Ethnicity is a perennial phenomenon and depends on a historical/deathless ‘myth-symbol’ complex. Thus it must be analyzed by employing “*la long durée*”.²¹³

Despite this affirmative theoretical framework, Yıldız does not explicitly provide us a perennialist/ethno-symbolist account of the ‘*Kurdish ethnie*’. In fact, he does not provide one for the ‘*Turkish ethnie*’ either.²¹⁴ On Turkish ethnicity, he suffices by referring to the conceptual texts by late-Ottoman Turkists, including mainly Akçura and Gökalp or political manifestations by political parties or state authorities.²¹⁵ There is not a mention of perceived sentiments among the lay people, their perception of others. The Kurdish ethnicity, on the other hand, is a given, an objective reality that must be taken for granted, before reading Yıldız’s work.

His analysis focuses on a period of two decades (1919-38), phased into three episodes, through which the early republican state ‘manages’ to change the ethno-political climate in Turkey. Yıldız’s theoretical stance involves an extremely constructivist/modernist approach toward Turkish nation-building and falls far apart from his claimed perennialist/ethno-symbolist reference.

Instead of providing the content of what Turkish ethnie is, Yıldız focuses on its ‘ethno-secular’ borders. In doing so, he chooses to define

²¹² Smith [1986], p.89.

²¹³ Smith (2000), p.76.

²¹⁴ The farthest Yıldız goes in defining Kurdish ethnicity is his suggestion that “*Caliphate and the sheikhs, religious orders and brotherhoods had been the constitutive aspects of Kurdishness.*” According to Yıldız, policies against Islam have in fact been to the detriment of Kurdish identity as well. Yıldız (2001), pp.242-4. With these arguments, the reader is expected to guess what *really* is Kurdish identity.

Kemalist nationalism as essentially ethnicist, rather than racist.²¹⁶ But the concept of ‘ethnicism’ here is a negative rather than an affirmative one, which helps Yıldız in developing his main theoretical tool to exhibit the “discrimination based on ethnic peculiarities”.²¹⁷ What are those ‘ethnic peculiarities’, we do not know. What we understand is that Yıldız believes the issue, which boils down to the “essential” characteristics of the ethnic communities, should be studied further.²¹⁸ But he gives no indication as to those ‘essentials’ either.

Some of Yıldız’s references to the theoretical framework surrounding the concept of ethnicity and nationalism beg questions as to whether he really intends to understand them. He refers to Van der Berghe along with Smith and Horowitz, as sharing a common ground regarding ‘kinship’, which defines an ethnic community as a group of kins.²¹⁹ It is true that they all share that view, but there is a fundamental difference between how they define the kinship bonds. For Smith and Horowitz (both perennialist/ethno-symbolists), those bonds are of irrational-sentimental, whereas for Van der Berghe (a primordialist/‘bio-sociologist’), they are *biological*.

Thirdly, the novelty that lies beneath Yıldız’s theoretical framework is his mechanical ethno-symbolism in constructing the relationship between nationalism and ethnicity. Yıldız simply shrinks nationalism and expands ethnicity in conceptual terms. He refers to nationalism as a

²¹⁵ Yıldız does refer to religion in considering the Turkish national identity. But this reference remains descriptive and unexplained, other than retrospective arguments involving unifying power of religion on Turkish and Kurdish identities. Ibid., p.115, 126-32.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p.18.

²¹⁷ Yıldız reverts here from Smith, his ‘basic reference’, to Bacal (1991), although he does not need to, since Smith also refers to ‘ethnicism’ long before the former did. Smith (1986), p.89. Smith’s adoption of the term is ‘ethnicism as ideology’, in place of nationalism. But we think ‘ethnicism as discrimination’ is a desperately needed tool for Yıldız, in order to maintain the ‘discrimination’ aspect while refraining from labeling the state with ‘racism’. Yıldız (2001), p.45n.

²¹⁸ Ibid., p.41, 43.

blurred concept and therefore, its normative problems.²²⁰ Then he picks an ethno-symbolist version to argue that nations, like [perennial] ethnies, depend on subjective (i.e. perceptive/cognitive) rather than rationalist/conscious behavior of their members.²²¹ So nationalism too depend on collective memories, symbols and myths, just like ethnicity.²²² In fact, the ‘only’ difference that may count between them is that the demands by ethnies for territorial sovereignty would be only symbolic, whereas nationalists’ are real and physical.²²³ Anyhow, all nations need ethnies as one of their constitutive aspect, hence we do not even need the term ‘ethnic’, since ‘all nationalisms are ethnic by their very nature’.²²⁴ Same rule applies to Turkish nationalism, whose most important constitutive aspect is it being ethnic.²²⁵

Another problem area in Yıldız’s mechanical ethno-symbolism is his rather non-perception of relations between the ethnies in Turkey. He adopts Hall’s definition which suggests that ethnic conflict is a political conflict that occurs between two (or more) ethnies themselves and with the state in terms of their existence. That is, the state is in there administratively and politically.²²⁶ Yıldız’s text provides problems of Kurdish ethnie, as well as other –non-Muslim ethnies with the state. But little has been said about the relations between the Turkish and Kurdish

²¹⁹ Ibid., pp.25-6.

²²⁰ Ibid., p.25. Yıldız actually contributes to this blurred picture by elaborating on various ‘conceptual typologies’ (of Hayes and Kohn, the “*founding fathers*”, Kedourie, Smith, Herder and Gellner etc.) and ideological aim(s). He then ‘makes himself admit’ that these typologies does not help in overcoming the normative problems. Ibid., pp.39.

²²¹ Ibid., p.33.

²²² Ibid., p.25.

²²³ Ibid., p.42.

²²⁴ Ibid., p.35. On equivalence of ethno-nationalism with nationalism, Yıldız cites Connor. See p.32. In fact, Connor’s suggestion is conditional: “[...] if nationalism is used in its *pristine* sense.” Connor (1994), p.xi (my italics).

²²⁵ Ibid., pp.16, 298-9. The other two constitutive aspects are legal and political dimensions. But since ethnicism forms its dominant character, these aspects, so we deem, remain as ‘side orders’. In fact, Yıldız does reveal some of these legal and political aspects which entail “racial-ethnicist tendencies”. Ibid., p.234ff.

²²⁶ Ibid., p.26.

ethnies. We learn about the official discourse and action against the Kurdish ethnies, but we do not know what the ‘ordinary ethnic Turks’ think about ‘ethnic Kurds’. The ‘relational’ nature attributed to ethnic relations is clearly stated. But it is equally clear that Yıldız wishes us presume that ‘ordinary ethnic Turks’ believed and acted in the way the state authorities did. Why, then, Yıldız insists on the subjective nature of ethnic/national identity?

3.2.2 Comparative Symbolism

If you are to sign up to the ‘fact’ that there are four countries hosting a population of Kurdish tribes that differ not only in size, political status and economic functionality, but also in cultural/linguistic ways of expressing itself, then studying Kurdish ethnicity needs to assume a fair degree of comparativeness. But how to begin with?

Izady’s comparative ethno-symbolism begins with comparing the ‘map of Kurdistan’ in size and geographical position with those of ‘other states’ in western Europe and the US.²²⁷ He continues with plotting the topographical, demographic, social/economic, historical, political and religious peculiarities of this “imagined land” as an objective reality. Everything, then, is external and alien to this land: starting from its occupation by and present division among ‘the three other major ethnic groups’ (–Persians, Turks and Arabs), religions (–of the script), (nomadic or imperial) customs and manners (–of the majority ethnies) etc.

Secondly, Izady dissects the endogenous peculiarities of ‘Kurdistan’. The current political boundaries being externally imposed divisions,²²⁸ the

²²⁷ Izady (1992), pp.1-3.

²²⁸ Izady prefers to call these ‘subdivisions’, each centered on five major Kurdish cities: Kirmanshah (‘southern Kurdistan’), Arbil (‘central’), Mahabad (‘eastern’), (Doğu-) Bayazid (‘northern’) and Diyarbakır (western). *Ibid.*, p.8.

ethnic/cultural homogeneity of Kurds was subsequently ‘diluted’ under the rule of the Byzantines, Ottomans, Persians and Arabs. He picks authentic ethnic symbols representing endogenous veils and manners of Kurdishness and claims that these “preserve for posterity at a glance at what northern Kurdistan might have been, had it been spared this [cataclysmic] devastation”.²²⁹ Religious practices and deities too, are among the exogenous effects that “*made inroads into Kurdistan*”, among which, Izady counts Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Manichaeism, Christianity and Islam.²³⁰ To make the contrast, he identifies *Yezidism* or the ‘Cult of Angels’, a faith least known and practiced in the region, as *the* original –indigenous Kurdish faith.²³¹ Thereafter, he continues with an exhaustive and equally confusing description of this ‘Cult of Angels’. In doing so, he makes a “*Cult of Angels*” (with *Yezidism* now a branch of it) a flexible faith capable of encompassing Baha’ism, Yarsanism and even the Alevi Islam (and its Syrian version, Nusayrism), Sufi and Bektashi orders, over the universal myth of ‘reincarnation’ that exists both in the ‘Cult of Angels’ and the Shi’ite Islam (Ali making a come back for salvation). Among this bombardment of impressionistic evidence, the reader is introduced with the ‘fact’ that Alevism is *not* an indigenous Turkish/Anatolian sect, *not* even its Bektashi orders –albeit having been established by a Turkish dervish.²³²

It must have been, for Izady, the Kurdish ‘Cult of Angels’ that controls the entire *genealogy* of mythical faiths,²³³ most of which have curiously been described rather in a ‘Farsi’ enthusiasm. Izady’s focus on ‘Iran-habited’

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.11

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.131.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p.137ff.

²³² *Ibid.*, pp.150-3.

²³³ Van Bruinessen, while admitting that Yezidi is a faith followed by no others than the Kurds, also acknowledges that it is one of the many sects within the religious heterodoxy among the Kurdish communities, followed only by their Kurmanch-speaking tribes. Van Bruinessen [1992a], p.43ff. When it comes to the issue of ‘national’ conscience, the subjective perception of the ethnic actors themselves should also be taken into account. Yezidis, as noted by Van Bruinessen on the contrary to what Izady tries to construct, have not been welcomed by muslim Kurds who regarded this sect as “devil/fire-worshipping”. *Ibid.*, p.392. McDowall also refers to such distaste particularly among radical (sunni) muslim Kurdish religious elite against the Yezidis. McDowall (1997), p.52.

Yarsanism, Baha'ism and reincarnation myth based on the "Cult of Angels"²³⁴ looks to us far too 'Farsi' a version, than being an authentic 'Kurdi' explanation. A similar syllogism follows for linguistic dimension as well.²³⁵

For Izady, Kurdish national identity is both ancient and *presently* authentic. Their long "common historical experience, common worldview, common national character, integrated economy, common national territory, and collective aspirations [...] qualify them as a distinct nation".²³⁶ The skepticism, on the other hand, about this 'fact' comes mostly from the 'state-sponsored' challenges equipped with "a superficial and rudimentary knowledge". Izady calls these scholarly challenges as being 'external', as he does all historical, social, cultural data that surround his omnipresent ideal country and nation.²³⁷

The external challenges for Van Bruinessen can be seen neither as irrelevant as Izady tends to show, nor they are really external at all. In his "*Agha, Sheikh and the State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*", while

²³⁴ Izady (1992), p.140ff. Also see the matrix Table 6 on Yarsanism, –noting the Turkish names. *Ibid.*, p.148. Also see Figure 2 on Indo-European Family of Languages, locating the lineage of Kurdish on "West Iranian-Northwest Iranian" branch of the family. *Ibid.*, p.168-9.

²³⁵ A similar 'Farsi' approach is observed in Mir-Hosseini (1996) and Arfa [1966]. Mir-Hosseini's description of the "religious universe" resembles to Izady's explanation of the heterodoxical absorption of different faiths 'invading' the Kurdish realm. To Mir-Hosseini, the religious groups that practice heterodoxical faiths such as the Ehl-i Haqq, Yezidism and Alevism are but a result of Kurdish assimilation to outside beliefs without giving up their essential world-view. Mir-Hosseini (1996), pp.111-34. Arfa focuses on common Arian descent by Kurds and Iranians. Arfa [1966], p.24. This includes linguistic ethimology of Kurdish dialects (other than Zaza) based on 'Farsi' [*ibid.*, p.29] and their historical and cultural loyalties [*ibid.*, p.48] at least until Shah Ismail (16th century) of the Safevid dynasty in Iran [Izady's one of the two "major historical divisions"]. It is useful here to note that Arfa was the Chief of Staff of Iran from 1944 to 1946, when 'Mahabad Kurdish Republic' was established by the Soviets during the Anglo-Soviet invasion that started in 1941. Arfa later served as the Iranian Ambassador to Turkey in 1958-61. Mahabad Republic, as we shall see in the next chapter, was the first modern attempt to involve Kurds in regional power struggle and the cradle where Barzani's 'Kurdistan Democratic Party' legacy was born. For a detailed history, see Jwaideh (1960), pp.709-74. For Soviet involvement, *ibid.*, pp.772-4.

²³⁶ Izady (1992), p.183.

²³⁷ The Egyptian nationhood is but one striking example by Izady that demonstrates how, after so many invasions by other nations (hence, introduction of 'new genetic elements') and conversions into many religions, "*few people deny the modern Egyptians are the inheritors and descendants of the ancient Egyptian people and civilization*". *Idem*. I think this is a vulgar comparison.

describing his main aim is to analyze the ‘primordial loyalties’ within the Kurdish society, Van Bruinessen maintains that the Kurdish national identity and nationalism should be understood how these loyalties have been effected by those external factors themselves.²³⁸

The relational aspect for Van Bruinessen constitutes an area of comparative understanding, rather than Izady’s idealistic nation ‘compared’ within its own world. To do so, Van Bruinessen traces the Kurdish ethnic expressions in history and investigates into their political meaning. To him, the constitutive elements of power, such as sheikhs, mirs and religious orders (the Nakshibendi, Kadiri and Nur in particular) within the Kurdish social structure can be said to have exercised political control over the nationalist revival. Therefore, he indulges in a detailed structural/functional analysis of these (mainly religiously-sanctioned) power-elite in order to explain how Kurdish national consciousness was built. In short, Van Bruinessen claims that the sheikhs have been successful in mediating religion for general political control as well as particular local/personal economic interests.²³⁹ In relation to Kurdish ethnic nationalism, he concludes by suggesting that Sheikh Said rebellion initiated a new era in the history of Kurdish nationalism, which has not yet closed.²⁴⁰ But then again, Van Bruinessen’s approach has its own problems.

First of all, his analysis relies more on relational understanding than a comparative one for two reasons: for one, the subject matter, ‘Kurdistan’, having been defined no less idealistically than Izady does, Van Bruinessen suffices by terming Izady’s ‘externalities’ as relational factors. In this line of understanding, the legacy of the Ottoman state in its relations with ‘Kurdistan’ entail a set of local social ‘structures’ (mirs, aghas and sheikhs, their relations with the lay people –the Kurdish *tribal men* and the tribal relations of power) and political interference by the center (oppressive measures, military

²³⁸ Van Bruinessen [1992a], p.21.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.304.

intervention, legal reforms on land and its consequences). For another, the post-Ottoman era does not immediately convert into comparable political units: Turkey becomes an independent/sovereign state, rapidly modernizing and aspiring to re-establish central control over its territory and citizens now defined otherwise than were in the Ottoman past. Iran, Syria and Iraq on the other hand would have to wait at least three more decades in order to ensure a sovereign/national control over their territory and (Kurdish) population. The historical circumstance allows for relational analysis, not comparison.

Secondly, as the historical dimension is concerned, within the Ottoman polity itself too, there is a problem of uneven circumstances throughout Ottoman Kurdistan. There are significant differences as, for example, to the consequences of 1858 Land Code between Van Bruinessen's 'central', 'northern' and 'southern' Kurdistan. Such differences, as the author admits, amount to abate the meaning derived from the analysis. Van Bruinessen, for instance, tends to generalize over the consequences of the land reform, by dwelling mainly on samples drawn from the 'southern' (Iraqi) Kurdistan.²⁴¹ He also ignores the larger universal context that the land reform conferring a 'legal title' to the 'agha'.²⁴² By the time the Ottoman state is gone and the Republic is established, his samples remain outside the 'Turkish Kurdistan'.

A last point may be Van Bruinessen's considerable emphasis on the nature of those relational aspects which, as he claims, are not enough but crucial in understanding the Kurdish nationalist problem. For him, these contain, first and

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.388.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp.280-4.

²⁴² See Quataert "Agriculture" in H.İnalçık and D. Quataert (ed.s) [1994], p.856-61. Also see Shaw and Shaw, who claim that the original intent was to reassert the state ownership over the imperial possessions first through an initial cadastral regulation, then a re-distribution to people who prove their rights over the land they demand for ownership. Shaw and Shaw [1977], pp.114-5. This was effectively evaded by most local notables to get more land registered in their names. A similar re-distribution applied in the case of the Kurdish tribal chiefs, who further strengthened their socio-economic bases.

the foremost the ‘primordial loyalties’.²⁴³ It is rather confusing to understand the primacy of the ‘primordial loyalties’ when the author in general binds the social and political change in ‘Kurdistan’ to relations with an ‘outer world’ of power, domination and enforcement.²⁴⁴ If the externalities are capable of changing structural loyalties among the Kurdish society as well as toward the political center, what can we expect of Van Bruinessen’s analysis of the ‘primordial’ ones?

I think he constructs a separate, but an equally arbitrary and relative world of Kurdistan, hence launches his analysis from within. The trouble here is, when it comes to the relations of domination, the externalities are there, but when loyalties are concerned, only the ‘primordial’ (i.e. authentic Kurdish) ones prevail.

Van Bruinessen clarifies elsewhere his theoretical position as to Kurdish ethnicity and nationalism. He thinks these are separate, Kurdish ethnic consciousness being older and primary. But this ethnic identity in history (“at least from 16th century onward”) never involved the lower classes. Therefore, the Kurdish ethnic actors have constituted a “lateral-aristocratic ethnîe”. Whereas the role of the sheikhs and their respective religious orders had been effective in mediating an ethnic consciousness that transcended sectarian and linguistic differences. The emergence of the nationalist claims came later, with the emergence of the mass media. But then again, the tribal structure in Iraq and Iran kept its predominance and the Kurdish nationalist movement was effective only in Turkey in reaching the rural and urban poor.²⁴⁵ Van Bruinessen is an ethno-symbolist/perennialist on Kurdish ethnicity, but his conception of Kurdish nationalism, as being a modern phenomenon, classifies him as a modernist. He signs up to the idea that nationalism is a modern phenomenon and to the Gellnerian cultural evolution of nationalism, but he

²⁴³ Van Bruinessen [1992a], p.22.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.294-301.

declines from undertaking the historical, social and economic causality involved in the modern genesis of nationalism.²⁴⁶ For him, as for all ethno-symbolists, the ethnic borders are more important than the causality that lies within them.²⁴⁷ This is why, argues Van Bruinessen, for many Kurdish intellectuals the protection of Kurdish culture constitutes a priority, rather than claiming autonomy and independence.²⁴⁸ But given the present dominance of an armed separatist movement for the latter, he declines to account for a meaningful difference between the two strategies.

As such, Van Bruinessen's analysis lacks an inner causality on political/economic loyalties,²⁴⁹ not of the Kurdish tribal members to their – whatever-chiefs (*mir, sheikh or agha*), but of the latter to the political center.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁵ Van Bruinessen (1992b).

²⁴⁶ *Idem.*

²⁴⁷ What does make them *ethnically* Kurdish? This is absent and does not look like much of an absence. Because the boundary approach on shifting 'relations' are seen and shown as being more important than its nuclear component. For its criticism, see Armstrong (1982), p.5ff.

²⁴⁸ Van Bruinessen (1992b).

²⁴⁹ In fact, Van Bruinessen later admits this absence, albeit in a positive way. He joins Barth in claiming that the ethnic unity of dispersed communities (in our case, Kurds dispersed among Turkey, Iran and Iraq) may present cultural differences due to varying conditions of their surrounding environment. Van Bruinessen (1994). But if a group can maintain an ethnic/social boundary between itself and the surrounding environment, the ethnic identity remains intact. Hence, he claims, as does Barth, "The critical focus [...] becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff it encloses". Barth (1969), p.15. Van Bruinessen (1994)

²⁵⁰ Van Bruinessen does imply elsewhere that important changes, such as the 1858 Land Code, in the socio-economic structure of the Ottoman Empire effected profoundly the local power structure and relations. *Ibid.*, p.280. But his focus does not allow his foregoing analysis to elaborate on 'why' and 'how', for example, the 'transformed' local power-holders maintained their relations with the center [which conferred 'legal' title to them and their land-possession]. Van Bruinessen resents the land-policy of the British colonial administration in Iraq, who took over the Ottoman land reform and continued it to promote private land-ownership, albeit its negative, feudalizing consequences. The Ottoman central administration, on the other hand, was aware in its design and implementation, so as not to allow such concentration of ownership. This control proved unsuccessful in the southeast, the land became concentrated, the tribal leaders turned into land-lords and the members into land-less serfs. But such 'proto-feudal' [Timur (1989), p.37] development neither boosted the surplus production [due to chronic under-population since the 16th century –Keyder (1983), p.232.], nor there had been a free and paid agricultural working class emerged [up until mechanization in 1950s. Van Bruinessen, [1992a], pp.283-4], nor even its possible political manifestations would be tolerated by the state. This 'space', as we shall see, is defined by Yeğen (1999: *passim*) as one where "Kurdishness was constituted". By whom? By the 'transforming' Kurdish chiefs or by their relations with the state, conserved at the expense of their tribal member-turned-'serfs'? I think Yeğen shares Van Bruinessen's mistake.

This is a general theoretical problem, a common absence in the presently-so-fashionable relational analysis of Kurdish ethnic nationalism. We shall observe this problem briefly in different parts of this chapter and try to fill this gap in the next.

3.3 Modernist Paradigm

The modernist paradigm involves a basic perception that the Kurdish ethnic nationalism has helped the underlying structural deficiencies in the state-society relations. These deficiencies will eventually become “demystified” and dissolved. In so becoming, the Kurdish ethnicity has played an axial role in altering the state-society relations which had long been reproduced by the state. So Kurdish ethnicity as a social and political phenomenon will help ‘modernizing’, i.e. rationalizing,²⁵¹ the existing polity in Turkey.

There are discursive similarities among the different “modernizer” approaches to the behavior of the Turkish state in its response to the Kurdish ethnic nationalism. These generally aim at a ‘rationalistic regulation’ of the ‘problem’ usually accompanied with an imminent criticism of the violence perpetrated by the PKK, which should otherwise be perfectly justifiable as an ‘interlocutor’.²⁵² The ‘opportunities’ (choices) are lost because the parties are being irrational.

²⁵¹ Rationalization theses commonly entail a recurring theme of “missed opportunities”. Typical Anglo-American examples include Barkey, H. and Fuller G., *Turkey’s Kurdish Question*, Lanham MD: Rowan Littlefield Publishers, 1998; or in “Turkey’s Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities”, *The Middle East Journal*, Vol.51 (1), 1997 by the same authors and in Robins, P., “Turkey and the Kurds: Missing Another Opportunity?” in *Turkey’s Transformation and American Policy*, M. Abromowitz (ed.), New York: The Century Foundation Press, 2000, pp.61-93. Barkey and Fuller assert that the problem should be recognized as an ethnic one, thereby requiring an ethnic solution. Barkey and Fuller (1998), p.179.

²⁵² Robins (2000), pp.62 and 74ff. For previously ‘missed opportunities’ with Prime Minister Demirel’s recognition of the ‘Kurdish reality’ after lifting of the ban on Kurdish language and election of Kurdish nationalist MPs on SHP ticket in 1991, and President Özal’s initiative followed by PKK’s ‘cease-fire’ in 1993, see Robins (1993). Beriker-Atiyas is more generous in picking opportunities, counting NGOs and private attempts to ‘intervene and manage’ the conflict. To her, the political system was unable to generate a political solution, rendering “by

The theme of [absence of] modernizing choice [by the state] has appealed Turkish and Kurdish authors on the Kurdish ethnicity. Beşikçi, as we shall see, starts from analyzing uneven development before he switches to decolonization theses, just like Bozarslan,²⁵³ another Kurdish nationalist.²⁵⁴ Özer claims that it has been the state which ‘officially’ kept itself distant from the region. To him, wrong policies [of the state] conducted since 70 years have been the root cause of many miseries today.²⁵⁵ Koca points at the administrative inability of the state in devising appropriate policies for modernization.²⁵⁶

Another important work in line has been the ‘TOBB Report’ prepared by Ergil *et al.* for the Union of Chambers and Exchanges of Turkey.²⁵⁷ The Report was based on classical assumptions of the modernization theory. Its focus was the state and claim was that the state was the culprit behind the neglect, administrative incompetence, political mistakes etc. In sum, it was the failure of Turkish modernization that bred the lack of sensitivity toward the problems of the region as well as the public services.²⁵⁸

default the *military solution* adopted by the military the only viable solution” [author’s italics]. Beriker-Atiyas (1997).

²⁵³ Bozarslan, M. E., *Doğu’nun Sorunları* (Problems of the East), Istanbul: Avesta, [1966] 2002.

²⁵⁴ Hasan Yıldız focuses on the wrongs in the initial political setting in the early republican era. Yıldız, H., *XX. Yüzyıl başlarında Kürt Siyasası ve Modernizm* (Kurdish policy and modernism in the early 20th century), İstanbul: Nujen Yayınları, 1996. Kutlay elaborates on the same point in more detail. Kutlay (2002), pp.15ff.

²⁵⁵ Özer, A., *Modernleşme ve Güneydoğu* (Modernization and the Southeast), Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1998, pp.49-51.

²⁵⁶ Koca, H., *Yakın Tarihten Günümüze Hükümetlerin Doğu-Güneydoğu Politikaları* (Eastern-Southeastern Policies of the Governments from Recent Past to Date), Konya: Mikro Yayınları, 1998, pp.543-5.

²⁵⁷ TOBB (Union of Chambers and Exchanges of Turkey), *Doğu Sorunu, Teşhisler ve Tespitler, Özel Araştırma Raporu* (Eastern Question, Observations and Findings, Special Research Report), Ankara: TOBB, 1995.

²⁵⁸ TOBB Report (1995), pp.73-90. The Report makes prescriptive policy recommendations ranging from managing foreign relations to cease foreign aid to instituting self-rule in local administrations and then onto fairness and equality in public services, along with economic incentives and investments. *Ibid.*, pp.159-75. In a thorough critique of the report, Cizre contends that the Report was at least useful in terms of the aura it created through some public debate on the Kurdish issue. However she correctly points at a major flaw that it failed to account for the ethnic identity sought for by the Kurdish nationalists. Cizre claims that this sort of identity goes far beyond the cultural identity discursively promoted in the nationalist

One problem common to all modernization theories is that they fail to account for change in the context, while arguing for change in terms of substance. The modernizationist dualities (i.e. from traditional, rural, ‘low’, agricultural etc. to modern, urban, ‘high’, industrial) involving transitional change between them may, through changing contexts, lose their original meaning. Losing sight as such with modernity, renders modernization theories static, descriptive and redundantly prescriptive.²⁵⁹ Modernist analysis need not be modernizationist.

3.3.1 Beşikçi: From “under-underdevelopment” to “decolonization”

Beşikçi endeavors to describe causes to explain the disenchantment between the Turkish state and Kurdish population. Beşikçi charges the scientist (the social theorist) with a mission of demystification of the illusionary state discourse which had dominated the Turkish polity regarding the Kurdish ethnic identity.²⁶⁰ To him, only such an emancipating approach could bring the social theory in line with the [objective] requirements of the socio-economic analysis which should also consider the ‘ethnic factors’ involved in it.²⁶¹

He asks the reasons behind why the Eastern Anatolia remained stranded under feudal relations, in a search for the causes of uneven development between the West and East of Anatolia. In his brand of analysis, he departs from the basic assumption that every form of dissolution in feudalism necessarily results in

literature, and argues that it has now a political value that comes with political change in nationalism. Cizre (1996). We shall discuss this crucial matter of ‘change’ and the functionality of those ‘new ideas’ in detail in the next chapter. We suffice by agreeing in full with Cizre that this intervention by TOBB, a major hub of business interests in Turkey, needs to be qualified as more than a mere technical contribution to the resolution of the conflict. It drained down the state’s economic, political and military sources at the time of the writing of the report. It was followed by further interventions, corporate (the “Eastern Holding” by TOBB, reports and panels by TÜSİAD, MÜSİAD etc) and private (Sabancı’s report, Boyner’s political party).

²⁵⁹ Ergil, following his TOBB report in 1995, offered in 2000 a sophisticated example of such prescriptive effort involving a “Document of Mutual Understanding” seemingly prepared at the US National Endowment for Democracy. Ergil (2000).

²⁶⁰ Beşikçi [1969], Vol.I, p.29-32, 37-40.

²⁶¹ Ibid, p.32.

nationalism, therefore, nations come out parallel to the advent of capitalist relations of production²⁶² Beşikçi argues that a specific set of relations with the highly centralized Ottoman imperial government gave way to the establishment, strengthening and survival of the feudal relations of production in the Kurdish inhabited east, whereas all potentially feudal sub-centres of power had been crushed by the Ottoman central authority, therefore making them more vulnerable to capitalist integration to outside imperial demands.²⁶³

At this point, Beşikçi suggests another basic assumption, distinguishing the main characteristics of the feeling of belongingness in the European and the Eastern Anatolian type of feudal societal organization. In the former the sense of belongingness involves a territorial imperative, whereas in Eastern Anatolia a sense of consanguinity, which is demonstrated at all levels of the tribal societal organization of Kurdish population. This peculiarity gives the landlord in the east additional and substantially different functions with regards to the collective identity of the tribe adhered to him²⁶⁴ as well as to his religious attributes most usually accompany his previous qualities.

The East however, was not immune to the huge transformations that effected the Ottoman/Turkish country. The landlords of the East had to develop limited but vital market relations with those of the West. The primordial ties and familial bonds of the old ages thus went into a dissolution. This is actually the outcome of a voluntary passage of the landlords from feudal to capitalist mode of production relations, due to low rates of surplus. Feudalism declined, with all its symbolizing functions of ethnic and religious unity²⁶⁵ and nationalist sentiments rose. Therefore, Kurdish nationalism have become another means of ‘concealing’ the basic problem of exploitation in the East.²⁶⁶ The landlords

²⁶² Ibid.,p.49.

²⁶³ Ibid., pp.98-101.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., pp.165-74

²⁶⁵ Ibid, p.188.

²⁶⁶ The other means of concealing exploitation being the religious/sectarian conflicts. Ibid. p.524.

themselves utilized the ‘counter-revolutionary’ functions of nationalist sentiments.

Beşikçi argues that the dissolution was expedited by the new state through secularization and forced exiles including many landlords. The Sheikh Said Rebellion was thus, an occurrence of *religious* resistance which had been utilized as an instrument of imperialism.²⁶⁷

Beşikçi makes interesting suggestions when he refers to some central and symbolic factors in the making of Kurdish ethnic identity. For example, he defines ‘Kurmanch’ as an expression adopted by the feudal Kurdish aristocracy to define the Kurdish people (peasants, nomads), which became a credible “ethnic/class attribute” in later stages when the said people became ‘emancipated’ from their tribal affiliations.²⁶⁸ Now, this must have been an original invention: an ethnic ‘quality’ altering its value basing on changes in the class status.

In another, Beşikçi claims that the oppressive effects of Islam as a religious institution are not observed in the nomadic tribes.²⁶⁹ Religion among the members of such tribes, argues Beşikçi, has never become an instrument of

²⁶⁷ Beşikçi here gives the example of arrival of gun catalogues from Britain to Genc, the center of the Rebellion, in the immediate aftermath of the first shootings. But he fails to refer this suggestion to a source and moreover his connection remains vague and vulnerable. One may deem that if the leader, Sheikh Said, had fallen into the ‘Landlord=tribal chief=religious leader’ typology, given the lack of any theoretical connections to show external manipulation, his idealist model could have easily depict the Sheikh as an example of nationalist resistance. Ibid., pp.200-202. Tunçay also discussed the possibility of British imperialist manipulation, and after exhausting resources including the British, he argues that it is not possible to charge the British with manipulation on a conceptual basis depending on the resulting benefits to the British interests in Mousul and Kirkuk. See Tunçay [1981], pp.137-38. But one thing remains intact, that the Sheikh Said Rebellion has later been depicted by the ethno-nationalists among the myths. Beşikçi, referring to one of his followers, answers this question rather in a populist way: “Kurds like Said-i Kurdi more than Said-i Nursi. Because he is one of who signed with his Kurdish name”. As Beşikçi intends to distinguish this qualities of the ‘revolutionary Kurdish nationalism’ in the east, comparing with the ‘Nurcu’ type of hegemonic religious organizations in the west, to our mind, also distinguishes his confusion. Beşikçi (1969), pp.348-49.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., p.238.

²⁶⁹ *Idem.*

oppression in social relations. Given his earlier claims pertaining to the centrality of religion as a tool of oppression by the tribal authority, this secularized liberty of nomadic tribes appear as a real alternative to the ‘feudal’ model idealized by Beşikçi. If, moreover, the religious resistance reacts against the secularizing effects of the modern Turkish state, then we should also claim that such ‘agents’ of secular plurality should have been destroyed by their ‘dominant’ rivalries, i.e. the landed aristocracy. Alevi’s in that sense, would have been more destructive to the so-called ‘order of the Eastern Anatolia’, but it survived.

Beşikçi offers the concept of ‘non-proliferating’ Alevi consciousness, as Alevis had been more affluent in terms of social values, a sign of societal secularism and relief on a comparative basis. Regarding Dersim Alevis, Beşikçi argues that they have been less subjected to exploitation, due to lesser margins of surplus induced by the limited number of cattle to breed in their mountainous terrain. However, when they faced with ‘central economic oppression’, they assumed revolutionary peculiarities against the state.²⁷⁰

Beşikçi also tries to explain how ‘Azeri’ [Turkish] Alevis were traditionally settled in the town centers and thus were ‘tamed’, whereas ‘Kurdish’ Alevis remained in the rural area, thus receiving lesser shares from the ‘economic surplus’. But where is this conflict-inflicting surplus, one which was, originally according to Beşikçi, to be extracted by the tribal/religious feudal chiefs? Besides, for the semi-nomadic people of little or no ‘economic surplus’, what does this economic oppression by the state mean?²⁷¹

Finally, Beşikçi, in order to cement his ‘ethnic understanding of class analysis’, makes ‘sporadic’ references to ethnic factors of Kurdish identity. He starts

²⁷⁰ Ibid., pp.320-22.

²⁷¹ *Idem.*

from primordial references to Urfa songs,²⁷² and to cultural symbols of Kurdish literature, i.e. Ahmed-i Khani and Sheref Khan,²⁷³ constructs a detailed account on the historical/perennial recurrences of Kurdish ethnic existence.²⁷⁴ He complements this primordial picture with non-Marxian attributes to the language, i.e. “unalterable existence vis-à-vis other superstructural institutions”.²⁷⁵

Beşikçi in fact presents a rather eclectic and eccentric model of Marxist class analysis. Setting himself off to make a class analysis to explain the social, economic and ethnic causes of the Kurdish problem in his early work in 1969, he ends up describing the class bases of Kurdish ethnicity.

Later, he states that he “had come to realize the fortresses in his own mind and demolished them to free his thoughts” as a result of court trials in 1970s, military interventions in 1971 and 1980 and of the ideas and actions of the PKK. He argues that these barriers, he was not aware when he wrote his first book, would never come back again as the “Kurdish emancipation and nation-building has been intensified by the Kurdish masses”.²⁷⁶

Beşikçi argues that he was wrong in his central assumptions claiming that the main cause of under-underdevelopment in the East must have been the ethnic exclusion and resulting colonial exploitation of the Kurds by the Turkish state.²⁷⁷ Beşikçi, in his new approach, dwelled on an ethnic model of “internal

²⁷² Ibid, pp.252-55.

²⁷³ Ibid, pp.110-11.

²⁷⁴ Ibid, pp.106-10 and 112-16 for pre-Ottoman ages, p.113ff for post-Ottoman era.

²⁷⁵ Beşikçi warns against misconceptions. He suggests that, by saying language is not a superstructural institution. But he does not intend to mean that it is an institution of base either. Beşikçi (1969), Vol.II, pp.635-640.

²⁷⁶ Beşikçi, İ., *Doğu Anadolu'nun Düzeni: Sosyo-Ekonomik ve Etnik Temeller* [The Order of Eastern Anatolia: Social Economic and Ethnic Bases], 2nd ed. [1970], Istanbul: Yurt Yayınları, 1992. “Introduction to the Third Impression”, p.16.

²⁷⁷ Beşikçi, İ., *Kürtlerin Mecburi İskanı*, [The Enforced Settlement of Kurds], Istanbul: Komal Yayınları, 1977. In fact, he coins this new approach as a criticism against the ‘mainstream’ socialist perception of the time, which argued that inequalities between the developed West and the underdeveloped East in Turkey were caused by the uneven development of capitalism in

colonialism” which basically claimed that the Turkish state exploited Kurds, just because they were Kurds, not Turks. There was a basic contradiction between the Turkish dominant and ruling (administrative) classes and the Kurdish nation.²⁷⁸ According to him, the law of uneven capitalist development could explain regional inequalities “only under conditions where all people within the boundaries of that state were of the same nation” [sic].²⁷⁹

In his new line of argument, Beşikçi repeats his major confusion in his earlier work, by rendering an ethnic insight to Marxian conceptions such as capitalist exploitation. Aydın points at Beşikçi’s failure to answer the fundamental questions as to

[W]hat is the relationship between the system of class exploitation and domination and the relations of racial, ethnic, cultural or national exploitation and domination characteristic of internal colonialism? In what way does internal colonial exploitation differ from class exploitation?²⁸⁰

Aydın suggests further that Beşikçi makes no attempt to link exploitation of one ethnic group by another. In fact, as stated above, Beşikçi does make a suggestion where ‘Kurmanch’ as the name of a class which at the same time implies that of an ethnic group coincide. But this remains rather an unconscious, isolated suggestion. Beşikçi also suggests, before he signed up to the ‘internal colonization’ approach, that the actual problem is that

Turkey. Behice Boran, the chairwoman of the Turkish Worker’s Party, was the leading voice of this approach. BORAN, B., *Türkiye ve Sosyalizm Sorunları*, [Turkey and the Problems of Socialism], İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1970.

²⁷⁸ Beşikçi, following his trial and conviction by the Diyarbakir Court for his first work in 1971 and his release during the general amnesty in 1974, had elaborated on the idea that the Turkish state never recognized Kurds as a distinct ethnic entity. Beşikçi (1975), *passim*.

²⁷⁹ Beşikçi (1977), pp.205-6.

²⁸⁰ Aydın, Z., *Underdevelopment and Rural Structures in Southeastern Turkey: the Household Economy in Gısgıs and Kalhana*, London: Ithaca Press, 1986, pp.24-27. Aydın quotes H. Wolpe, who undertook a similar study in the case of South Africa. See Wolpe, H., “The Theory of Internal Colonialism: the South African Case” in Ivar Oxaal et al. (ed.s) *Beyond the Sociology of Development*, London and Boston: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1975, pp.229-52.

The socio-economic and ethnic dimensions of the Eastern Problem constitutes an integrated whole. Every measure that aims at fostering socio-economic development and any action that attempts to suppress national consciousness would further enhance this consciousness as well as socio-economic backwardness. But, the Eastern dominant classes that realized feudal exploitation actually yields too small a surplus, have been looking for ways to become capitalists and the government is responding to such demands, which in turn bring with them the national consciousness.²⁸¹

What changes when Beşikçi signs up to the ‘internal colonization’ approach is that he upsides down the above causality. By making ethnic exclusion a ‘cause finale’, he attributes an exploitative ethnicism to the Turkish state. By then, as Beşikçi concedes himself, his original “socio-economic and ethnic totality” thesis would be replaced by an Apartheid-like “ethnic causes of exploitation” argument.

Beşikçi, in fact, abandones his ‘totality’ approach almost immediately after publishing it. The main reason, as he admits, is his prosecution for his work and active involvement on Eastern demonstrations of 1967-69. The ‘internal colonization’ approach appears (*Kurdistan, an Interstate Colony*, 1990) some 15 years after his first ‘ethnic exclusion’ arguments. I tend to take ‘internal colonization’ thesis that also connotes ‘decolonization’ more in connection with the guerilla warfare by the PKK (since 1984), than a ‘commendable ethical/scientific stance’. With his ‘internal colonization’ approach, Beşikçi actually develops a theory of decolonization. In doing so, he baptizes PKK as a ‘first bullet’ that serves not only to the noble cause of decolonization, but also as a ‘revolutionary modernizer’.²⁸²

Beşikçi later devotes a whole book (*Method of Science*, 1975) to argue in a repetitious style how ‘unscientific’ is the denial of Kurdish nation by the Turkish state. This ‘methodological resistance’ of Beşikçi has been praised

²⁸¹ Beşikçi [1969], p.675.

²⁸² See Beşikçi [1990], pp.67-9 and 77-83.

nearly by all Kurdish nationalist scholars.²⁸³ It is equally interesting to note that I have come across, other than the essentialist/primordialist objections by Çay et al., only one criticism by Mumcu against Beşikçi's theoretical claims as well as his methodology and epistemological stance. Mumcu re-visited Beşikçi's data and found voluntaristically selected and re-articulated reference in his account of early republican history. He demonstrated in more than several occasions that Beşikçi mistook or distorted texts and public testimonies he referred to in his works.²⁸⁴ Mumcu's critical argument toward Beşikçi's work is also important as it demonstrates a much larger debate on the libertarian and democratic aspects of the Turkish modernity, which Beşikçi (and later Yeğen) condemns as tools of destruction on Kurdish ethnicity.²⁸⁵ I think the ensuing gap between Beşikçi's 'demystifying' stance and the universal claims of modernity is worth a separate discussion, which I shall briefly attempt at the end of this chapter.²⁸⁶

3.3.2 Constructivist Nationalism

For modernists, the immemorable past is not worth mentioning if there are no political expression based on these 'memories' in the present day. The political

²⁸³ See Yeğen's praise to Beşikçi in Yeğen (1999), pp.22-23, n.4.

²⁸⁴ See Mumcu (1991), p.93 n.75 and 77, pp.105-7 n.82-88, p.120 n.95, pp.134-5 n.106. For instance, Beşikçi quotes Şükrü Kaya, Interior Minister at the time, as saying "*İstismar tarihinde hiç bir kavim yoktur ki, [...] Türkler kadar istismar kaabiliyeti göstermiş olsun*" [No other race in the history of *deception* can equal the Turks in their ability to *deceive*] (*sic*). Beşikçi (1977), p.173. Mumcu reveals that the original spelling of the word "*istimar*" [public works, founding, ~of public settlements] has been altered by Beşikçi as "*istismar*" [deception]. Mumcu (1991), pp.105-6 n.84.

²⁸⁵ The debate in the Turkish left on the Law on the Settlements (Law no.2510 dated 1934) is but one enigmatic example. While many Turkish Marxists see it as a tool of liquidating landlords and associated power structure in the early –revolutionary republican era, it is condemned by Beşikçi, Yeğen and the like as a destruction of the Kurdish ethnic sphere, mainly because it was, at the time and within the context of its enactment, applicable mainly to the Kurdish landlords. While Beşikçi displays it as an all-out ("colonialist, anti-democratic, racist and fascist") war against the Kurdish people as a whole [Beşikçi (1977), p.130], Yeğen qualifies it as yet another effort to conceal the 'real ethno-political essence' of the Kurdish problem. See A. Mesut (alias Mesut Yeğen) (2001).

²⁸⁶ I think, a more recent controversy on the inaction of the Kurdish political parties on "honor killings" in the ('predominantly Kurdish') southeastern Turkey ensues from a similar confusion.

expression of ethnic identity is a must that would enable a meaningful strategy for survival. That strategy involves an independent nation state, recognized by the rest of the world. Nezan acknowledges that the Kurdish movement was successful in raising questions in the conscience of the world, but it has “yet to be placed on the United Nations agenda”.²⁸⁷

Recalling Medes *in passim*, Nezan’s political genealogy extends back to the 12th century when the Seljuk Sultan Sanjar ‘recognized’ the distinctive personality of the Kurdish people, to resume it back again in the 19th century when the Ottomans started to take away all Kurdish privileges and prerogatives. Then came President Wilson’s fourteen-point-declaration of 1918, the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 and the breaking of the promises by Mustafa Kemal to the Kurds for national autonomy. The Council of the League of Nations refused to take into account the will of the Kurdish people and approved the status quo (i.e. “division of Kurdistan”) in 1926, after which modern Turkey received all the recognition and help from its western allies to consolidate that division. The Kurds are the ‘victims of history’ and the moral/political burden of their present misery falls in part on the international community.²⁸⁸

While recounting history as a sum of ‘factors inhibiting Kurdish unity’, Nezan provides a modern definition of ‘being a Kurd’: “to share, despite borders and geographical distances, the same basic cultural identity forged by centuries of history”.²⁸⁹ To keep this identity alive, everything would “depend on conscious efforts by the Kurds, in particular by their political and cultural elite, to achieve a better control over the collective fate of the Kurdish people”.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ Nezan (1996), p.7.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.11-5.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.18.

²⁹⁰ *Idem.*

Chailand, joins Nezan in building a historical victim of the moral/political shortcomings in international politics. He offers minority rights as a way of building a legal/political identity within the states they currently live, but necessarily under the protection of international law and organizations. He thus addresses the question in a more practical way:

[T]he heart of the problem lies not only in the rights accorded to minorities under international law, but also in the procedures through which the law can at least be defended, even if it can't be guaranteed. [...] Is it more legitimate to discriminate against, to oppress and to crush a minority than to be a state founded on apartheid? ²⁹¹

With 'international legitimacy' being the critical window as argued by Chailand, Kerim Yıldız looks into the problem from the inside of the Kurdish identity, i.e. the right to self-determination. He follows the similar path of historical "*victimization pattern*" of Kurds conduced by the fear of Kurds breaking away from the states in which they live in.²⁹² To him, Benedict Anderson's definition applies to the Kurds: they are those who believe themselves to be so, since there are neither linguistic, nor religious and nor even an ethnological criteria to define them.²⁹³

Whatever their differences may entail, the Kurds qualify as a 'people' and therefore, to exercise their right to self-determination or to autonomy or else, if not more likely then the former options, to a UN mandate in northern Iraq –the Kurdistan Regional Government.²⁹⁴ In analyzing the existing conditions in 'Iraqi Kurdistan' to exercise its right to self-government, Yıldız is extremely cautious on relying on the international community's commitment to Kurdish rights as he is on the overall feasibility of an independent state of their own, given the hostile environment surrounding the area.²⁹⁵

²⁹¹ Chailand (1994), p.93.

²⁹² Yıldız (2004), p.2.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.1.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.154-61.

²⁹⁵ *Idem.*

For Yıldız, the essential legal criteria: an ‘ethnically distinct’ people with a ‘geographically separate’ territory is there for self-determination.²⁹⁶ The rest would depend on the ethnic actors’ will, whether to convert this ‘people’ and ‘territory’ into a ‘nation’ and its ‘state’. In fact, Yıldız’s ‘construction’ of nationhood in the case of Iraqi Kurds involves political landmarks, as he terms them, in the history of Iraq: starting from the inception of the Kurdish autonomy that followed the League of Nations 1926 resolution inspired by the Treaty of Sevres, the Barzani revolt of 1943 with his return during the 1958 coup, the March Manifesto of 1970, the Algiers Agreement of 1975 and the ‘democratic experiment’ of the de facto self-rule under US-led operation “Provide Comfort” in the 1990s.²⁹⁷ It is only after the international intervention, albeit not sanctioned by the UN, to create a safe-heaven for the Kurds in northern Iraq, the ‘new kind of political space’ is established for self-rule. That experience, for Yıldız, combined with the American-led invasion in 2003, laid the ground for the Iraqi ‘Kurdistan’ to have its present options. In other words, the Iraqi experience for the Kurdish nationalist movement, has been a case which combined the two basic strategies for modern state-building: Chailand’s morally/politically motivated, active intervention by the international community against an illegitimate regime on the one hand and on the other, Yıldız’s window of opportunity for self-determination, realization of which would no more depend on the approval of the administering state.

An interim solution to the problem, in the context of Iraqi ‘Kurdistan’ for Yıldız, could be the objective and fair application of the ‘elements’ of the principle of self-determination. This could provide the basis both the minority

²⁹⁶ Yıldız, while conceding that its scope (legal/political substance and application) is still highly vague, relies on the UN criteria based on political resolutions such as the UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (UN –XVth General Assembly Res.No.1514). Yıldız also concedes that almost all UN references to the principle of self-determination are accompanied by statements defending the territorial integrity of the states.

rights and territorial integrity of the state they live in.²⁹⁸ Hence, Yıldız re-defines the both ends of the spectrum, in which Kurds as ‘a people’ will either have the option of full autonomy without territorial secession or full independence through the legitimate right to self determination. But, as Nisan argues, “Kurdish liberation, if it ever comes, requires native mass mobilization based on national unity across the boundaries of the region’s states”.²⁹⁹ And that the Kurds, whether in Turkey, Iraq or Iran, wary of the international promises and even effective aid, should have understood that the liberation must be a ‘home-made’ one.

3.3.3 The PKK: Revolutionary Modernizers?

The PKK involvement sparked a debate among the scholars as to its ‘modernizing effects’ over the Kurdish issue as well as on the Kurdish community as a whole.³⁰⁰ For White, the Kurdish rebels in Turkey had been ‘primitive rebels’ led by the local religious elite. These were “really nationalistic only at their head; their rank and file was basically motivated by religion”. They were defeated in late 1930s. But the PKK’s significant support, with direct precursors “emerged out of the Turkish Left in the mid-1970s” [sic], indicates its ‘popular roots’.³⁰¹

McDowall argues, if it were not for the Turkish government’s brutal response that annihilated the entire population in the region, it would not have been possible for the PKK to garner such popular support in a massive nature.³⁰² The result was that the “recently urbanized villagers lost their unpoliticized

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.10-25 for the period preceding the operation ‘Provide Comfort’. *Ibid.*, pp.39-42 and 44-48 for the latter.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.151.

²⁹⁹ Nisan (1991), p.43.

³⁰⁰ White, P., *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers: The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, London: Zed Books, 2000, pp.162-67.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp.206-7.

³⁰² McDowall [1996], pp.424-6, 439-42.

traditional culture in favor of a highly politicized one”.³⁰³ McDowall claims that the PKK changed the nature of the tribal allegiances by shooting landlords, showing there was “another method of dealing with the enemy class”.³⁰⁴ It “created a climate of fear [and] struck ruthlessly in the heartlands of conservatism in Kurdistan, and seemed to preach an irreligious creed of atheism and social revolution”.³⁰⁵

The problem is whether PKK has ever intended to change the entire class structure in ‘Kurdistan’ to make a ‘social revolution’. When asked about the ‘class bases’ of PKK movement and its approach to the tribal structure among the Kurds, Öcalan affirms a pragmatic stance, rather than a revolutionary idealism.

[T]he enemy has worked to get the tribal system on its feet, to stop the development of national consciousness. [...] But we should also consider it, because it is a natural community. We believe that we are trying to absorb it, in a national context. The important thing is that we have managed the unity. [...] We are not only a class movement. You should call our movement a humanitarian movement –not a class movement, but a movement for the freedom of the human being.³⁰⁶

The above confusion was originally induced by an initial controversy in the PKK manifesto, as originally drafted (later amended) by its founders in 1978, which described the ‘revolution’ as being a two-folded, but concomitant enterprise.

[T]he revolution has two facets: national and democratic. Its national facet targets the colonial domination in political, military, economic and cultural domains. The revolution must prioritize this facet at the very beginning. The national conflict is the prime conflict which over-determines the solution of

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.456.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.421.

³⁰⁵ *Idem.*

³⁰⁶ Extracts of the interview with Öcalan, 2 July 1992, Bekaa Valley, Lebanon. White (2000), pp.153-4.

other social conflicts. Without solving the national conflict, no other conflict has the possibility of solution on its own.³⁰⁷

The idea of “National Democratic Revolution” (NDR) here, had been a mythical theme in the post-1960 Turkish left. Throughout 1960s, the NDR theses advocated that Turkey had been re-colonized by the West and dominated by American interests, which prevented the completion of its national democratization and modernization project. Hence it must ‘re-liberate’ itself from this re-colonization by the West, revolutionize its path of development to modernize its national democracy by eliminating feudal relations within peasantry in making its path to a future socialist regime. To them, nationalism meant sovereignty whereas democracy aimed at modernization and eventual mobilization of the peasantry for an eventual socialist revolution.

The PKK however, being part of the NDR debate in its founding years, devised the NDR strategy to emphasize national liberation, supported by a united popular front, modern or traditional. The question of conversion of feudal relations of production in ‘Kurdistan’ or modernization of the Kurdish peasantry was of a secondary nature. Once the ‘national question’ was solved and since it ‘over-determined’ all other questions, the feudal relations would have been dealt with thereafter.

By 1996, the PKK was forced to give up its presence in the rural areas due to massive security operations by the Turkish military. These operations involved newly-recruited special forces operating in guerilla-like teams, stiffened control over the borders with occasional hot-pursuit incursions into northern

³⁰⁷ Under the section “The Characteristics of the Kurdistan Revolution” in PKK, *Kürdistan Devriminin Yolu (Manifesto)*, *Kuruluş Bildirisi* (1978) [The Path of Kurdistan Revolution], www.pkk.org. In another section, the ‘revolution’ has been described as the liberation of ‘all Kurdistan’ (divided among Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria) and the ‘Turkish Kurdistan’ being the largest, shall thus “pioneer the overall revolution”. “The characteristic of the revolution is a national democratic one. The target is to bring down the colonialism and to establish an

Iraq, evacuation of hamlets and villages to cut logistical support to the PKK teams,³⁰⁸ effective intelligence etc.³⁰⁹ The PKK would intensify its politicizing and internationalizing efforts particularly in Europe and elsewhere, while retreating its armed presence within Turkey. This became more acute when Öcalan was expelled out from Syria facing credible warnings of use of force in October 1998 from the Turkish government. He wanted to intervene in person with the Western governments and the public opinion with support from ERNK-controlled Kurdish migrant diaspora in Europe.³¹⁰ He said: “Our history has shown the following: by leaving Ankara we became a party, by going into the Middle East we became an army; when we go out into the world we shall achieve a state”.³¹¹

The reality was no government wanted to host him either as an asylum-seeking ‘freedom-fighter’³¹² or as a simple criminal,³¹³ other than Turkey. He was finally captured by the Turkish security forces off the Greek ambassador’s residence in Nairobi and brought home in February 1999, tried and convicted to death penalty in June the same year. While in Europe, he called for decommissioning of arms by the PKK and a political solution to the Kurdish problem. In its sixth congress held between January-March 1999, the PKK disowned terrorism, while claiming ‘armed struggle still remained valid’.

independent, democratic and unified state of Kurdistan. The ultimate aim is to establish a Marxist-Leninist state”. *Idem*.

³⁰⁸ Of all measures taken to combat guerilla activities in the region, evacuation of villages and displacement of the rural population have been the one mostly criticized by the international human rights organizations and other governments. HRW/Helsinki (1994), “*Forced Displacement of ...*”; Amnesty International (1994), “*Turkey: Escalation in ...*”, (1996) “*No Security without ...*”; see US Department of State Country Reports on Turkey for human rights practices for years 1994 through 1998.

³⁰⁹ Kışlalı (1996), pp.187-208.

³¹⁰ White (2000), pp.180-83.

³¹¹ Öcalan statement to MED-TV on 15 December 1998, Rome, Italy, as quoted in White (2000), p.183.

³¹² He did apply for asylum in Greece, Italy and Russia, his applications were turned down by the relevant governments, despite parliamentary support lent by communists and Northern League MPs (including intensive lobbying by Mme Mitterrand) in Italy, ultra-nationalists led by Zhirinovskiy in Russia and PASOK sympathizers in Greece.

³¹³ German government, having previously had issued an international warrant on Öcalan, declared that it would not proceed with it ‘for the time being’. MESR, 19 November 1998.

In an analysis to decode Öcalan's political project and leadership, White claims that PKK acting on Öcalan's calls for peace, without his actual presence in its decision-making process in the said congress, was a 'crowning achievement' as a leader. For him, this alone showed how "his movement clearly took a modern path, indicating its determination to secure legal-rational legitimation for a realistic-sounding set of modest objectives".³¹⁴ For White it was the sign of the birth of the "New Kurdish Person".³¹⁵ Was it?

We should distinguish between the 'modernization of the Kurdish nationalism' within itself, as White tends to conclude upon and the 'modernizing effects' of Kurdish nationalist mobilization on the Turkish society including the Kurdish people. We shall discuss the first question in this section, as the second one will be analyzed in the next chapter in greater detail.

White attributes a Weberian legal-rational framework for the relations between Öcalan and the entire Kurdish nationalism. In doing so, he presupposes a chain of representation from Kurdish people to PKK and then onto Öcalan as the leader. The legal-rationality here seems to appear, as White claims, when Öcalan 'delegates' his decision-making capacities to the PKK, as the legitimate-institutional reflection of the 'will of the Kurdish people'. White supports this representative function by arguing that Öcalan felt compelled to claim that PKK was 'democratic' and that this was different than traditional/charismatic tribal leaders of Kurdish nationalism like Sheikh Ubeydullah. In his argument, White carefully remains reserved toward the extent of democracy allowed by the PKK, considering Öcalan's physical elimination of rival groups in the past. He is equally careful in asserting that Öcalan is now a captive and therefore his 'charisma' has been stripped of his

³¹⁴ White (2000), p.185.

³¹⁵ *Idem.*

‘leadership’ capabilities, which now need to be entrusted to the PKK organization, while Öcalan himself going under a process of “*occultation*”.³¹⁶

Does a legal rationality emerge from this formula? White argues, if we add in a ‘PKK-dominated or tolerated popular organs’³¹⁷ as a “*sort of limited substitute for civil society in the standard Western democratic model*”, it does. Because the system involves a ‘guided democracy’, a representative ‘quality’ White uniquely adds in to the PKK project.

White’s argument suffers from three misjudgements. To begin with, White is correct in his reservations toward Öcalan’s democratic claim and the context (i.e. his captivity) these claims are made. But he clearly misjudges the ‘modernizing’ impact of Öcalan on PKK’s behavior and strategy. Öcalan’s capture did not make the PKK ‘legally and rationally’ autonomous from the former, but caused rupture in its operations and among its ranks as well as splits in its leadership structure. The PKK, since Öcalan’s capture, does have a leadership problem. But it is in no way autonomous, nor even dare to distance itself from Öcalan’s ‘charisma’. It continues to split, but minor dividends are immediately dealt with.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.216-17.

³¹⁷ White refers to the ‘Kurdish Parliament in Exile’, Medya-TV and other PKK affiliates.

³¹⁸ The leadership row within PKK that followed Öcalan’s capture contributed to these fractures. His brother Osman (“Ferhat”) left PKK, along with a group of prominent members (PKK founder N. Taş “Botan”, F. Dunlayıcı “Kani Yılmaz”) after a brief interlude when his claims for leadership were apparently refused by the ‘trusteeship council’ that took over after Öcalan’s capture. Osman *et al.* founded Patriotic Democratic Party (PWD) in August 2004 in northern Iraq. Bila (2004), pp.220-24. Öztürk, “PKK’da bu kavga bitmez”, *Gözcü*, 13.02.2006. Osman had been in control of the ‘*Makhmur Camp*’ run by the PKK (previously by the UNHCR) in northern Iraq. PWD secured KDP (Barzani) and US approval, who provided another camp at Seyyid Sadik town near Halabja for PKK deserters to join the new party. Çakır, “PKK içinde daha çok kan akacak”, *Vatan*, 13.02.2006. The PWD had built on a dispute within DEHAP over the party candidate for Diyarbakır mayoralship (outgoing mayor Feridun Çelik vs Human Rights Association’s vice-chairman Osman Baydemir) before the local elections in 3 November 2003. Öztürk, *Ibid.* The PWD have organized within Turkey under former HADEP Vice President H. Fidan, who was later assassinated by PKK in Diyarbakır on 6 July 2005, sharing the faith of K. Sor and S. Rojhelat. Durukan, *ibid.* On 11 February 2006, PWD’s founding member F. Dunlayıcı (“K. Yılmaz”), PKK’s former ‘European caretaker’ (later charged by the PKK for forfeiting party’s USD 100 million and spending part of the money with his girlfriend, a former MED-TV presenter, in northern Iraq) and another PWD

The PKK's 'liberation strategy' that involves a united popular front under strict 'leadership of the proleteriat' does not afford pluralism. This is why, White also misjudges Öcalan's 'democratic' discourse. While it is true that Öcalan feels compelled to build popular support for his project, but he is equally compelled to maintain others (i.e. tribal chiefs, religious figures, other leading secular political leaders) under strict control. In that sense, an anachronistic comparison with historical/traditional leaders of Kurdish tribalism, Sheikh Ubeydullah or Sheikh Said, might render him 'modern'. But he fails in the acid test of democracy due to his exclusive domination over traditional tribal/religious loyalties as well as his particular style of dealing with his dissidents.

Thirdly, White's confusing relativism which substitutes 'PKK-dominated popular organs' for a Western-type civil society certainly does not make any representative democracy. White's observation that the limited civil society forged under PKK domination among the Kurdish diaspora is correct. But claiming that this may be a substitute to Kurdish [nationalist] civil society that represents the Kurd in Turkey, is a far-reaching judgement. The PKK organs are corporately organized by the ERNK in the diaspora. Some of them aimed at collecting 'tax' in hard currency from the migrant Kurdish workers or to launder the organization's income from drug and human trafficking. Others were designed to bolster PKK's internationalization strategy.

3.4 Transcending Turkish Modernity

In modernist approaches to the republican Turkish modernity, a general agreement on its 'profane face' overwhelms the Kurdish nationalist theses. This is useful since the theoretician can sweep across history and theory with a

member S. Tori were bombed in their car near Suleimaniyah in northern Iraq. Yavuz, "PKK'nın en derin cinayeti, 'İmrâlı' infazı -2-", *Hürriyet*, 12.02.2006.

quasi-methodological yardstick to tell profane, *ergo* evil from genuine, *ergo* good. The theoretical resemblance between concepts help this. For example “demystification of state” and “Janus-faced” nationalism³¹⁹ emerges from the perception of a dual-reality. The second face remains in the shade where essentialist (ethnic) and formal (legal) national identities differ. The diagnosis of this ‘second’ face of young Turkish nationalism is technically similar to identifying the ‘demystified’ version of the ‘racist’ character of the Turkish state (i.e. modernity). Both of these terms serve as sweeping narratives. Technically, both concepts perform what is intended by the concept of ‘reification’ by classical Marxism. Reification in this sense, is a most “brutal, unambiguous, and apparently straightforward enough [concept] to provide a ‘total’ if somewhat pessimistic narrative of modernity. [...] Inseparable from its utility, however, is the crudeness of the concept.”³²⁰ The actual criticism targets the Turkish modernity. In that sense, for example, Yıldız’s criticism to the secular limits of Turkish nationalism is identical to what a traditional conservative might have said about Republican modernity project.³²¹ They become theoretically obsolete when taken out of their category and placed in a larger theoretical and historical context.

The significant second-thought implied here is that the subject (i.e. the state) constructed behind these ‘mystifying’ or ‘hiding’ performance is a grandiose political machinery, capable of planning and executing every (secret and evil) design. Some modernist approaches seek to remedy this, whereas some others aim at transcending it altogether, including the conditions of modernity that created the perceived problem. To that extent, they are equally against modernity itself.

³¹⁹ Yıldız, A., (2001).

³²⁰ BEWES, T., *Reification or the Anxiety of Late Capitalism*, London & New York: Verso, 2002, pp.3-9.

³²¹ On the substitution of Islamic testimony to God by the nationalist order and resolution, see Yıldız’s reference (2001: p.141, n.62) to Dilipak, A., *Cumhuriyetin Şeref Kitabı* (The Republican Book of Honors), İstanbul: İşaret Yayınları, 1993, p.5-6.

3.4.1 Non-contextual Analysis II: Yeğen's Foucaultian Archaeology

Yeğen objects to the adoption of classical concepts and tools of modernist analysis on Kurdish ethnicity. To him, it is the humanist/rationalist epistemological radicalism of the modernist paradigm that has to be dealt with first. This radical epistemology assumes the rational subject as the assurance of the truth, only due to its capability, as a teleological enterprise, to reflect the objective reality. When it does not, it becomes an ideology. As such, the classical concept of ideology entails a teleological enterprise that distorts, inverts or conceals the objective reality.

Yeğen argues the critical analyses which claim that the 'official discourse' (formulated in the early republican era) hid the destruction of the Kurdish identity, actually lack sociology in analyzing the 'ethno-political insight' of the matter. That 'sociology', claims Yeğen, is the relation between the Turkish modernity and the Kurdish problem that extends back in two centuries. The modernist and other approaches categorize the Kurdish problem within the framework of ethnicity or nationalism. They blame the official discourse for inverting the Kurdish ethnicity (as a category in itself) into matters of traditional tribal or religious resistance and banditry. However these, according to Yeğen, had been the very area where Kurdishness was constituted. This is a matter of perception, more than a teleological enterprise that is deemed to be capable of 'seeing' the objective reality. Yeğen suggests it should be a mind which 'perceives' through a language unimpeded by illusions and inverted concepts, will be capable of 'reading' the Kurdish problem as it is, i.e. as a 'national question'.

Yeğen sees (Turkish) modernity as a teleological enterprise that helped the 'Kurdish problem' be re-articulated within a particular discourse by the (Turkish) state. The state, being an agent (i.e. subject) of modernity, denied the 'Kurdish' character of the phenomena and re-articulated it within a modernist discourse, under historically otherwise defined concepts.

The state is not only the subject of modernity discourse, it was also an object of the historical process it entailed. To that extent, the state did not distort the subject matter, but rather it was limited to the discursive capabilities historically projected (i.e. made possible) therewith.

It follows, for Yeğen, that the method and conceptual tools have to be ‘made’ in a such a way which would make possible a ‘textual reading’ of the Turkish modernity. So that the phenomena have to be taken out of its modernist context and re-arranged, following a discursive trajectory, in order to find the denied truth over a set of discursive regularities and relations. The ‘Kurdish problem’ has to be ‘re-historicized’.

Yeğen explains the development of ethno-nationalist resistance to Turkish modernity through a linear modernization paradigm which dominated the Turkish modernity.³²² To him, the ‘Turkish state discourse’, which tried to explain the ethno-nationalist resistance of the Kurdish people in terms of reactionary (religious) politics, tribal resistance and regional backwardness, never portrayed it as an ethno-political question. In fact, this discourse concealed the exclusion of Kurdish identity, basing on the above components of the social space wherein Kurdish ethno-political identity was constituted, without naming it as such.³²³

Yeğen bases his argument on two assumptions: First is that there is an intrinsic connection between the contemporary Turkish state discourse and the historical/social space in which the Kurdish ethnicity was constituted. The transitions and discontinuities in Ottoman/Turkish modernity since the early 19th century are concomitant with those of Kurdish “ethno-political

³²² Yeğen (1999), pp.216-29.

³²³ Yeğen acknowledges that he owes the illusionary state discourse theme ultimately to Beşikçi. Yeğen (1999), p.227n. Whereas he refers to Foucaultian concept of ‘discursive formation’ on the analysis of Turkish state discourse. (*Idem.*)

resistance”.³²⁴ Ottoman modernization was necessarily a ‘state-led’³²⁵ drive due to a ‘self confidence’ crisis by the Ottoman state, imposed by the Empire’s alarming weakness against the European powers.

The ensuing modernity brought first centralization. This shifted the ‘imperial sovereignty’ which provided a space for the (Kurdish) periphery to articulate to the center, i.e. the Sultan/Caliph, through (i) traditional political allegiance patterns based on religion and (ii) the administrative structure that exempted Kurdish periphery from typical Ottoman administrative domination. To Yeğen, religious allegiance and administrative autonomy had not only prevented absorption and assimilation of the ‘differences’ including Kurdishness, but also worked against ethnic and cultural uniformity within the Empire. But the Unionists’ post-1908 Turkification and secularization (and early-Republican abolishment of the Caliphate) destroyed the unity of periphery with the state. For Yeğen, the Ottoman and Republican Turkish modernization represent a continuity in terms policies (i.e. centralization, secularization and Turkification). But they resulted in major social and political discontinuities to the detriment of the ‘Kurdish space’ within the traditional Ottoman polity.³²⁶

The loci of such discontinuities in the history of Ottoman/Turkish modernity are not bound by the ‘imperial vs republican’ pattern of events. Discussing discontinuity, Yeğen argues 1908 revolution (and CUP’s Turkifying modernization) sets itself aside than 1839 Reform Edict [as an ‘accidental bill of rights’ referring to Mardin and Ortaylı] and the promulgation of the Republic in 1923.³²⁷ Because the Ottoman/Turkish modernization was dominated in a linear pattern of leadership by the neo-Ottomanists, the Young

³²⁴ Yeğen (1999), pp.14-18. He claims first ethno-political manifestations of Kurdish resistance were observed by early 19th rebellions. (Ibid. p.14)

³²⁵ Ibid., pp.41-3. ‘Modernity’ as Ottomans aping the West, identifying modernization with Westernization. The Ottoman practice, though, was ‘by, for and within the state’.

³²⁶ Ibid., pp.62-69.

³²⁷ Ibid., pp.49n-50. Concerning the continuities, he argues that the republican elite relied on CUP [quoting Zürcher (ibid., p.53)] and the Democrats of the 1950s on the republicans.

Turks, the CUP, the Kemalist Republicans, the Democrats so forth. In short, what changes is the multi-ethnic religio-pluralism (i.e. the ‘imperial norm’) into a secularizing-Turkifying modernity and what does not is its “perpetrators”. The second implication is the explanation of such space, based on a concomitant historical path of development of Kurdish identity into the realm of Turkish modernity, where the ‘real confrontation’ occurs.

The second basic assumption for Yeğen, is that the official discourse on history of Turkish modernity *can* be read as the history of ‘Kurdish ethno-political resistance’, *provided that* the reader fills the pockets of ‘unconscious silence’ (i.e. discursive gaps) in the way suggested by the author.³²⁸ The history-telling activity must be not only independent but also an emancipating one. For as the state is not the subject of its own discourse³²⁹ and someone is needed to ask “that [Foucaultian] faithful question”.³³⁰

The meaning, for Yeğen as for Foucault, arising from the interaction between the subject and the object is contextual that needs to be articulated, historically and socially, through discursive analysis. “Articulated” is a strategic word, which accompanies the reader throughout the author’s work. Yeğen rejects as does Foucault, the classical humanist epistemology of modernity which places reason that sees object as a [cognizable] *thing-in-itself* and the cognitive capacities entrusted to the subject in knowing that external reality. Hence, enter analysis and exit analogy. All we need is a ‘discursive order’, based on reasoned disquisitions on links and connections between the social context and a projected ‘paradigm shift’. Neither the structural causations, nor any

³²⁸ Yeğen (2001), Yeğen (*alias* “Ahmet Mesut”), (1993), Yeğen (1996, p.216) and Yeğen (1999, pp.11-13, 19, 36, 39, 109-10, 221 *passim*)

³²⁹ The Ottoman official discourse integrates into the republican one, through a discursive network constituted around nationalism, secularism, modernization etc. This makes the official discourse around the Kurdish question the produce of an unconscious mind, which had not occurred at a sudden, defined moment. Yeğen (1999), p.106-7.

³³⁰ “Why is this sentence and not another?” Yeğen quotes Foucault, in order to stress the significance of the theoretical enterprise that would contextualize the relational and historical meaning within the [official] discourse. Yeğen (1999), p.30.

exhaustive empirical historical evidence, nor even dialectical, historical determinism matter. The ‘series filled with gaps’, the ‘interplay of differences’ and ‘distances’ suffice for establishing a ‘discursive order’.³³¹

The problem with Yeğen’s argument, is its second part: The constitution of Kurdish ethnicity. Yeğen’s understanding of Kurdish ethnicity involves a politico-social space where ‘Kurdishness’ was constituted by the Kurdish *mirs* reigned autonomously until the end of the 19th century. Sheikhs took over from *mirs* who gradually eroded under the influence of modernization efforts by the Ottoman center and finally abolished by it. By the end of the 19th century, it was these sheikhs who led the Kurdish rebellions. Sheikhs acted as mediators between Islam and Kurdish nationalism. Religious orders (‘*Tarikat*’s) helped this role.³³² This was the social space wherein Kurdishness was constituted. The Caliphate was the bond between the center and the Empire’s Muslim subjects. Its replacement in 1924 with a republican tyranny at the center meant of the dissolution of their traditional links with the political authority. The Kurdish people and tribes, led by sheikhs, resisted this dissolution, which also meant a direct threat to their tribal organization within themselves. The Sheikh Said rebellion was “both tribal and religious, yet still national.”³³³

Yeğen then goes on to analyze the phenomenology of the Kurdish discontent with the Turkish state, i.e. smuggling as a way of expressing older ties with the pre-republican economic centers. For Olson, as for Yeğen, the articulation of different forms of resistance to the practice of centralization was the articulation of different types of repression. As centralization was an immense project, it yielded an attack on periphery which was by no means limited to the

³³¹ Ibid., pp.31-37.

³³² Yeğen borrows this dual-functionality of the religious institutions in ‘Kurdistan’ from Olson (1989) and van Bruinessen (1992). He is also at par with Yıldız in ‘diagnosing’ the causes of Kurdish ‘religio-politically’ motivated disenchantment.

³³³ Another concept borrowed from Olson. Olson (1989), pp.153-55. Olson’s confusing conception of the Sheikh Said rebellion was discussed by Tuncay to bear a similar conclusion, albeit through a different reasoning. Tuncay, (1999), pp.136-40.

administrative and political realms, later incorporating the economic integration of 'Kurdistan' into the center.

Yeğen attempts at building a project of transcending the Turkish modernity both in meaning and practical presence. As for Yeğen

The exclusion of Kurdish identity was one of the outcomes of a political project of building a modern, central, and a secular nation-state, the necessary condition of which was the exclusion of religion, tradition and the periphery.³³⁴

Therefore, the exclusive nature of the Turkish modernity had to be transcended so as to 're-articulate' the space where Kurdishness can be re-constituted. That space, Yeğen suggests, can be found within a 'de-nationalist' process re-articulated through a synthetic language of human rights, democracy and poverty.³³⁵ This is because that the Kurds and the Turkish modernity itself, at least since late 1980s, is being drowned within the globalization process.³³⁶ It is a new polity, representing a discontinuity with the past, that unfolds independently even from the 'organizational history of the PKK' and its action between 1984 to 1989. The PKK activity, for Yeğen, had not played a crucial role as once claimed, for the post-1989 generalization of the Kurdish discontent.

What are those aspects of globalization that fed a generalized Kurdish discontent? What makes this 'new polity' so different as to serve as yet another 'over-determinant' of the Kurdish 'ethno-political resistance'? For Yeğen, it is first the information technology that 'universalized' the human rights and democracy by displaying before the world audience the spectacular fall of the Berlin Wall and the Eastern Bloc (including Chausescu in Romania), the Tiennanmen Square demonstrations, the release of Mandela. In Turkey, this

³³⁴ Yeğen (1996), p.226.

³³⁵ Yeğen (2001).

³³⁶ Idem.

picture included the extensive repression practiced by the military coup of 1980, the mass exodus of Turks from Bulgaria to Turkey (whereas this created a dilemma when Turkey's treatment of Kurds is considered), and in a similar row, the inflow of the Iraqi Kurds fleeing into Turkey from Saddam's revenge. The latter, as an implication of the establishment of a new –this time a global order, gave the Kurds to 'become aware of some kind of opportunities that might be there to stay'. Because, as a second aspect of this globalizing process, the catastrophic balance had been dismantled by the fall of the Soviet Bloc, making it possible that the inertia mounted around the nation-states dissolve and that the local injustices come into focus.³³⁷

Yeğen's strenuous effort to overcome the omnipresence of Turkish modernity involves not only a criticism, but also a substitute dictated on to it by globalization from without. That substitute however, does not entail, at least in its current sociological composition, a fundamental fracture that would lead to a division or separation.³³⁸ But criticizing (Turkish) modernity is one thing, substituting it with a new polity (i.e. re-constitution of Kurdish –ethno-political identity) is another. To see the difference, let us reconsider Yeğen's project at a theoretical level.

The first problem area is the relationship between ideology and the meaning.³³⁹ I think Yeğen, by inverting twice the concept of ideology, establishes a rather arbitrary theoretical construct. Firstly, following the Gramscian/Althusserian structuralist assertion, he grants an unquestioned 'positive' existence to ideology³⁴⁰ outside its teleological enterprise.³⁴¹ By attributing to it a

³³⁷ Idem.

³³⁸ Idem.

³³⁹ Yeğen (1999), pp.26n-28.

³⁴⁰ Marx clearly defines ideology as a negative phenomenon with a dual function of distortion (of consciousness) and inversion (of reality). See Bottomore (1991), pp.247-52 (Entry under 'Ideology' by J. Larrain).

³⁴¹ Yeğen's Gramscian/Althusserian perception necessarily rejects an overlap between ideology and social formations. Ideology has a separate, positive existence as a constituent part of the social formation. It still is placed within the superstructure, but now has the power to

historical/categorical being that is capable of ‘over-determining’ the social relations, Yeğen quietly inherits a fundamental disagreement within the Marxist theory as to the place and functions of ideology within a social formation. Yeğen refers to Brewster and Callinicos who, based on Marx’s conception of ‘phenomenological’ and ‘true’ categories of reality, discuss that ideology inverts and distorts the ‘truth’ (i.e. exploitation) through ‘real’(positive) categories (i.e. cost, profit, wage etc.).³⁴² We understand that for Yeğen, ideological ‘mediation’ of real –positive categories is a sufficient indication of ideology being ‘positively real’. For him, Marx implies that ‘ideology is the whole topography of human consciousness’, a definition that does *not* imply a negativity.

At a second instance, in order to make his Althusserian subjects (as autonomous actors) speak, Yeğen resorts to French linguistic structuralism (Pecheux) that carries the subject into discourse analysis, which claim that the structure (of the discourse) is determined by (the social) context. Hence, (Althusserian) ideology determines a (Foucaultian) ‘discursive formation’, which in turn, determines the (Pecheuxian) meaning.

The post-structuralist analysis (a revered term they substitute for analogy) suggests, in our quest for meaning, it is important that we ‘know’ these subjects do not speak for themselves, it is the ‘author’ who ‘tells’ us what they are after. He can only do so by asking the faithful Foucaultian question, whose answer would necessarily alter at any moment in time, depending on who asks what, where and when: “your answer is correct, only if you see it as I do”. That is, if the subject is to look for the truth, it has to be sought for within the

‘overdetermine’ the social relations (signifying a Gramscian/Althusserian two-way functionality of ideology vis-à-vis the classical Marxist instrumental relationship between the sub and super-structure). The individual becomes the subject of an [Althusserian] ideological enterprise, a performer within the [Foucaultian] discursive formation. The meaning, then, is to be sought for within the discursive formation which is necessarily shaped within the ideological area.

³⁴² Yeğen (1999), *ibid.*

discursive formation historically and relationally contextualized *by the faithful author*.³⁴³ Yeğen reminds us Foucault is at par with Derrida in radicalizing the historic and relational dimension of the meaning.³⁴⁴ This is probably why Foucault is commonly referred to as an ‘historian of the present’.³⁴⁵

As such, Yeğen’s theoretical effort to transcend the Turkish modernity aims at radicalizing the [present] history and the relational dimension of the meaning.³⁴⁶ As we shall discuss below, the ‘power’ of his analysis does not stem from an explanation that ‘de-mystifies’ the historical meaning, but from the ‘radicalizing’ way he re-describes history. This is a position Yeğen shares, along with other theorists of Kurdish nationalism, in an increasingly entrenched radical outlook to *the* problem.

Here we arrive at a second problem area. Yeğen does not explain history. He just re-describes it. He calls this an effort to re-contextualize the (state) discourse in its historical and relational place that would have *a* meaning. In doing so, he confines himself strictly to an ‘over-determining’ state discourse, but the determinants are subjectively defined that they are known only to the author. One such determinant he refers, for instance, is the ‘psychological state

³⁴³ Yeğen criticizes the modern positivist/humanist-rationalist epistemology that presumes human mind as being capable of (cognitively) ‘seeing’ the truth. But as the subject and the object are radically relational and historically contextual, they cannot meet outside history and context. What ensues from such ‘radically contextualist’ Foucaultian epistemological stance is a simple relativist/structuralist distortion of the Marxist ontology. While vulgarizing Marxist epistemology by annexing it to Enlightenment positivism “humanist perception that regards human reason as a guarantor of truth”, Yeğen ignores Marxist realist ontology supports human consciousness (not ‘reason’) by granting human action (i.e. *praxis*) an ontological primacy above all. The ‘truth’ does not simply stem from the human mind, but from his action. That action precedes the social formation within which the discourse (i.e. ideology in context) is formed.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., p.35n.

³⁴⁵ “History of the present” is a term Foucault utilizes his conceptual framework in *The Order of Things: an Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, New York: Random House, 1970 (ch. VI, 7) and in *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, New York: Pantheon, 1977, pp.30-1. He defines himself as such in an interview with Bernard-Henri Lévy in *Telos*, n.32, Summer 1977. Also see Merquior, J.G., *Foucault*, 2nd ed., London: Fontana Press, [1985] 1991, pp.15-6.

³⁴⁶ Yeğen admits in a covert way that the theoretical frame of his work is “influenced deeply” from the radicalizing effect of post-structuralism of Foucault and Derrida on the [re-told] history of the meaning. Yeğen (1990), p.35n.

of being' of the state officials in 'omitting' the Kurdish character of *the* problem.³⁴⁷ But again, the reader questions the causality here: It should be the other way round, that the 'Kurdish character of the problem' must be causing a psychological state of being to lead the officials omit it. But as argued earlier, post-structuralism replaces analogy by analysis, causal by relational and determinism by over-determination. The re-contextualization is simply designed to serve a '*cause finale*' which radicalizes *the* problem to the effect that allows a sufficient degree of de-contextualization. Yeğen suffers from the similar ills as Foucault when 'telling' history. He is an ardent critique of [Turkish] modernity, but his own version of history relies heavily on modernist accounts of the Turkish history.³⁴⁸

Yeğen discusses the concept of Turkish citizenship by suggesting that the 'textual' indecision by the state discourse is not an accident, but a regulated one. It induces from an 'ethnicist rationale' which is in turn based on a 'spirit' that maintains the gap between Turkishness and Turkish citizenship. That malicious spirit is racist,³⁴⁹ discriminatory,³⁵⁰ assimilating,³⁵¹ and exclusivist.³⁵² Utilizing such psychological judgement to span critical theoretical gaps must be typical of de-constructivist analysis.³⁵³ All this psychological 'stuff' is carefully deconstructed and re-bundled, in order to create an 'ethno-relationist' aura, rather than analyzing the substance of the subject matter. There is not a comparative analysis, other than uninformed (e.g.

³⁴⁷ Yeğen (2002).

³⁴⁸ Yeğen's history-telling is based on modernist accounts by Mardin, Tunaya, Gözübüyük (documents), Tanör, Tunçay. In doing so, his 'archaeology' scatters vulgar mistakes: See his reference to the "*Gülhane Hatt-ı Şerifi*" [*sic*] in Yeğen (1999) p.47.

³⁴⁹ Yeğen (1999), pp.94-8.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., pp.126-8.

³⁵¹ Ibid., pp.121-3.

³⁵² Ibid., *passim*; see also Yeğen (1996), p.217 and 226.

³⁵³ Other typical examples include Bora (1992) who suggests that this is a 'paranoid' [Turkish] nationalism which suffers from a 'survival crisis', due to its inability to establish a hegemonic prevalence over the national consensus. Akçam's (1992) reliance on psychology is stronger, yet far from being less contradictory. The 'psychosis' ensues from a fatal question of "to live or die" in which the [Turkish] nationalists find themselves perpetually entrapped. The reflection of such 'psychosis' on to other minorities is of criminal nature: Armenians targeted, just like the Jewish were by the Germans, upon 'a similar ethnic hatred as anti-semitism' (*sic*).

Akçam's repeated reference to anti-semitism) impressionistic references to rare cases. There is not even empiricism, in its most humble sense. The relational character of the phenomena described is crucial, since there is a great deal that has been said about the victim. Hence every sin, as Yeğen and the like try to stack, is on part of the 'perpetrator'. The rest is left to the readers' imagination.³⁵⁴

3.4.2 Theories of Transcending Turkish Modernity Re-visited

The criticism directed on Turkish modernity in the context of Kurdish ethnic nationalism commonly share a theoretical effort to 'demystify' it. But the problem with the theses of demystification is that they commonly lack universalism claimed by modernity. For Foucault, as for Yeğen, Yıldız, Beşikçi and others, the universal rationality upheld by modernism is a mask of official dogmatism. Its purposeful absence is a conscious choice that allows the theorist directly confront the 'humanist myths' of the modern society. But for Habermas, the 'demystifying culture' only makes sense if we preserve a standard truth capable of telling theory from ideology, knowledge from mystification.³⁵⁵ The demystifying critique, then, collapses into an *ad hoc* negation of contemporary society.

A good way of testing Habermas's criticism is to read Yeğen in his own way. Yeğen's discourse is assertive, authoritative, regulative.³⁵⁶ This discursive style

³⁵⁴ For another example of 'suggestive recourse to imagination', see McDowall who argues in his much-quoted seminal piece that "Turkey had unmistakably intended *genocide* on the Kurdish people. In practice its intentions were defeated by the sheer size of the task." MacDowall (1996), p.210.

³⁵⁵ Habermas (1985), *passim*. Habermas also criticize first generation of the Frankfurt School, Horkheimer and Adorno, for denying themselves of a rational theory by dropping the Enlightenment's ideal of a 'rational critique of the existing institutions' and for ending up by relinquishing a 'proper theoretical approach' as Heidegger's irrationalist ontology and Foucaultian genealogy.

³⁵⁶ Yeğen emphasizes a special consideration of the official language commanding our knowledge of things as articulated in state discourse. His style, however, is no less commanding than the state discourse he criticizes, with frequent and casual use of assertive propositions such as 'without doubt', 'it is obvious that' or 'as known' and so on.

makes that faithful Foucaultian question equally valid to negate Yeğen himself: why is it that this sentence and not another?³⁵⁷

Secondly, the demystification theories are strikingly self or circular-referenced within themselves.³⁵⁸ This behavior is understandable only if we are to accept that the demystifying critique is able to establish a ‘new skepticism’ as claimed by Foucault, rather than a ‘subversive cynicism’.³⁵⁹ We believe that a readiness to recognize a delusion or mystification in the realm of values or history has to have a stronger universal epistemological/ontological (i.e. less relativist and speculative) stance, in order not to develop a habit of inferring that every value and idea is but false or sham.³⁶⁰ As Habermas queries, ‘how far should we go along with Foucault, on his road to a self-referential critique of the supposedly totalitarian features’ of modernity and its social embodiments?³⁶¹

In order to understand the extent of the theoretical assault on universal rationalism, the essential claims of such post or non-modern attitude must be discerned.

A third point in line is that demystification theses and theorists are not accidental. Their discourse and action are intended to be part of a general emancipation, a transcending of the Turkish modernity as they perceive it.

³⁵⁷ For Habermas, “*The peculiar feature of this discourse formation is that the rules that constitute the participants’ self-understanding at the same time provide resources for a critique of its own selectivity*”. Habermas “Concluding Remarks” in Calhoun (ed.) [1992], p.467.

³⁵⁸ Yeğen’s main theoretical assertions, although repeated many times in his texts, have been introduced in footnotes, as references to his own arguments. For instance, see Yeğen (1999) footnotes in ch.1: 4 (on a general reverence to Beşikçi), ch.2: 1, 5, 7-13, 16, 18, 21-22, 25, 26, 35, 45, 50, 57 etc. Also see Yeğen (151-153) footnotes 1, 2, 4, 6; Yeğen (1996) notes 17, 26, 27 etc.

³⁵⁹ As Hilary Putnam remarks on Foucault: “to demote rationality, in a positivist way, to a mere concoction of a given historical culture is as reductionist as the logical positivist’s reduction of reason to scientific calculus”. Putnam (1981), p.126.

³⁶⁰ Sharing Merquior’s suggestion here. See Merquior [1985], p.160.

³⁶¹ Habermas “Concluding Remarks” in Calhoun (ed.) [1992], p.466.

Beşikçi vividly reveals his own course of intellectual development and political activism.³⁶² Yeğen applauds this stance ‘in the name of intellectual ethics’.³⁶³

The issue of the role of the intellectual is as well conjured up in the problem of power. In his “Microphysics of Power” Foucault argues that power is not primarily a product of wealth, a function of class domination. It can also be seen as a ‘relation of force’ that represses. But ultimately it must be a ‘war, continued by other means’ which both produces and represses through a silent, unspoken warfare that re-inscribes conflict in various institutions including the language, economic and social (ethnic, gender and sexual) inequalities.³⁶⁴ Hence, for Foucault, “power ‘produces’ before repressing, mainly because what it represses –individuals are already, to a large extent its ‘products’”.³⁶⁵

It is, then, the intellectual before others, to stand against this production. For it is the “knowledge is the space in which the subject may take up a position”.³⁶⁶ This ‘*aufklaerer*’ behavior is common nearly to all demystification theories on the ‘present’ relationship between the Turkish modernity and Kurdish ethnic nationalism. Foucault had apparently assumed such a ‘transcendental’ mission claiming that when Kant wrote his famous “*Was ist Aufklärung?*”, the philosophy ceased its long tradition of speculation and started to see itself as an ‘activity’ deeply involved in the fate of the community.³⁶⁷ He was not impressed particularly the way enlightenment impressed Kant in his time. His concern was rather the way Kant was able to make the ‘rational mechanics’ a revolutionary, transcendental mission for the philosopher himself.³⁶⁸

³⁶² Beşikçi, [1970] “Introduction to the Third Impression”, p.16.

³⁶³ Yeğen (1999), p.22n. Similar ‘ethical’ references have been made in Küçük (1990), p.25-7.

³⁶⁴ Foucault (1980), pp.87-90.

³⁶⁵ Merquior [1985], p.111.

³⁶⁶ Foucault [1969], pp.182-3.

³⁶⁷ Merquior [1985], p.149-50.

³⁶⁸ Foucault (1980), pp.204-5. In the same way as Küçük also crowns himself, as he does Beşikçi, as a “path-clearer”. Küçük (1990), p.27.

For a similar transcendental path, Yeğen suggests, “the language of the Kurdish discontent in the coming decade shall be a synthesis of democracy, human rights and poverty” that such “discontent is being fed by the possibilities and problems of globalization today”.³⁶⁹ But to do that, first the universal ‘claims’ of the Turkish modernity have to be dismantled. As most post-structuralists, Yeğen’s negation of (the Turkish) modernity is not concerned with its universal dimensions, but rather with its claims. But as Baumann suggests, such attitude is but a way to promote an ethico-political communitarianism, disguised under the mask of a progressivist universal ethics.³⁷⁰

Beşikçi identifies the demystifying mission with a larger context of decolonization, as part of a total strategy in breaking-up with the Turkish modernity which he sees as a model of colonial domination. He refers to the Kurdish landlords, aghas and sheikhs, as a “class of agents” which also includes the Kurdish collaborationist intelligentsia.³⁷¹ To Yeğen, Beşikçi’s collaborationist agents have been part of the politico-historical space where Kurdishness was constituted. For Beşikçi, a ‘first bullet’, as suggested by Fanon, is needed first to kill the colonized man within the colonized-man’s

³⁶⁹ Yeğen (2001). Yeğen also offers prescription for future Kurdish nationalist action in Yeğen (1999), pp.268-9. On 12.08.2005, he renewed his prescriptions, basing on Prime Minister Erdoğan’s “recognition of the Kurdish problem”, that the state was no longer capable of preventing an ethnic conflict and therefore would not be able to alter the US-led designs in northern Iraq conducted by Barzani. Adding that the ball was on the PKK’s side who should insist on a general amnesty, Yeğen alleged while the alienation of the Kurds from the state has become dramatically apparent, it is “now that the local mayors of DEHAP as well as the PKK [together] are *the legitimate interlocutors*”. (italics mine) “Düzen etnik çatışma olasılığını ciddiye aldı –M. Yeğen” (The establishment took serious the possibility of an ethnic clash –M. Yeğen), T. Korkut’s report at www.bianet.org, 12.08.2005. On 13.12.2005, Yeğen mixed in, among others, [since] that there is no going back to the days before the Gulf crisis, the PKK should now look for ways to remain within the US’s sight, as it cannot be same as Al-Qaeda. “Kuzey Irak Türkiye siyasi denklemine girdi!” (Northern Iraq has entered into Turkey’s political equation), T. Korkut’s report at www.bianet.org, 13.12.2005

³⁷⁰ Baumann (1993), p.32.

³⁷¹ Beşikçi [1990], p.93.

self.³⁷² Yeğen, on the other hand, develops an immanent criticism of Beşikçi's thesis of 'colonial' domination based on radical class analysis, drawing on an *irony* that the "logic of Kurdish activists of the 1970s and that of the Turkish state were the same".³⁷³ But Yeğen, unlike Beşikçi, prefers to remain in shade in referring to the 'Kurds perceived as the red troops by the Turkish army' under a pen name.³⁷⁴ There is a normative problem as to the articulation of the demystifying action toward its subject matter, the 'Kurdish emancipation' from the Turkish modernity.

In his foreword to "*Black Skin, White Masks*", Bhabha suggests that Fanon

is not raising the question of colonial man in the universalist terms of the liberal-humanist ('How does colonialism deny the Rights of Man?'); nor he is posing an ontological question of Man's being ('Who is the alienated colonial man?'). Fanon's question is not addressed to the such a unified notion of history nor such a unitary concept of Man. [...] [I]t rarely historicizes the colonial experience. There is no master narrative or realist perspective that provide a background of social and historical facts against which emerge the problems of the individual or collective psyche [as] the colonial subject is always 'overdetermined from without'.³⁷⁵

In order to by-pass the universal/dialectical categories of analysis, Fanon asks "what does the black man want?" to privilege the psychic dimension.³⁷⁶ Hence, he evades the burden of reaching at a universal level, a 'higher unity'. I think neither Fanon's psychopathological colonial being nor Foucault's self-

³⁷² From Fanon's "*Wretched of the Earth*", paraphrased in Beşikçi [1990], pp.67-9. Beşikçi uses this suggestion in order to justify later armed action by PKK against both the state and the 'class of agents'. *Ibid*, pp.77-87.

³⁷³ Yeğen bases this suggestion on the assumption that the Kurds' resistance to taxation and military recruitment was not a sign of anti-central (non-national), but it was purely a national one given the intentions of the "state to create a national state in a multi-ethnic space around a single nation". Yeğen (1996), p.224.

³⁷⁴ See Ahmet Mesut [alias Mesut Yeğen] (1993), p.30.

³⁷⁵ Bhabha (1986), "Foreword: Remembering Fanon –Self Psyche and the Colonial Condition" in Fanon [1952], pp.xii-xiii.

³⁷⁶ In the sense of a negro as a psychopathological being. Fanon [1952], p.11, 17, 109-10, more precisely in p.151ff, where Fanon suggests that Freud and Adler never thought of negroes as a subject of investigation, and in p.228ff.

contextualizing man is capable of solving the normative problem of detachment with the universal, in order to detach with the Turkish modernity.

I want to recall here my initial reference in the first chapter to Hobsbawm's ethical/epistemological comparison between a nationalist intellectual and the historian. The point I would like to stress is that the work of the Kurdish nationalist intellectual is part of the Script. Yet, only few of them admit to this.³⁷⁷ I will argue in the next chapter, as the foregoing analytical and normative confusion in theories of Kurdish 'ethnic' nationalism entails, that the paradigm of modernity cannot be easily transcended by simplistic accounts of ethnic relationalism. For the confusion itself is a part of that modernity.

³⁷⁷ I must count Anter, a renowned Kurdish journalist, as one. In his memoirs, he gives a vivid account of his intellectual and professional effort to fabricate mythical expressions of Kurdish misery and bravery as well as of the government's oppression to agitate the local/nationalist sentiments. Anter (2000), pp.140-2. Another one is Gündoğan who suggested autonomous [from the Turkish historiography] and hence 'scientific' research methodology for the Kurdish historians. Gündoğan (1994), pp.186-7. A further example is Kutlay, who admits the problem, yet tries to explain it with conjunctural circumstances. In a preface to his work, he suggests that there is a hunger for knowledge in the Kurdish society, but the work of the [Turkish and Kurdish] intellectuals have been acutely subjective "the period we lived in did not company with works of such [objective] quality. At least in the moral sense...". Kutlay (2002), pp.15-6.

4. KURDISH ETHNIC NATIONALISM AND THE LEGITIMACY OF THE TURKISH STATE

The foregoing discussion exhibits a historical legitimation pattern by the Kurdish nationalist discourse. This pattern converges on the ‘ethnic’ resistance by the Kurds, against the claimed discrimination, exclusion and suppression by the Turkish state. Hence, the said pattern also aims at the delegitimation of the Turkish state, by producing an answer as to the ‘why’ question. But does it explain ‘when’ and ‘how’ this theoretically constructed Kurdish ethnic resistance converges into political action?

This chapter aims to show the discrepancy between the two sides of this perennial problem in all nationalisms, i.e. the one between the nationalist ideology and mobilization, in the context of Kurdish nationalism. In doing so, I will attempt to understand the basic dilemma of the Kurdish nationalist discourse. It is one that has presumed, in all three instances (in the period between 1918-23, in the 1960s and the 1990s) it converged with the international context in terms of legitimacy. It also presumed that the prevailing international context would bring an automatic recognition. I shall discuss when and how it tried to ensure such recognition and why it proved to be a failure.

In the first section of this chapter, I will briefly revisit the Kurdish nationalist scholars, this time in a thematic order (i.e. ethnicity, convergence, nationalism, national movements, modernity and claims for international recognition). I will seek for an answer as to when and how Kurdish nationalism, in its political form, has emerged. I shall argue that their self-legitimizing discourse based predominantly on an ‘ethnic genealogy’ is blurred as to the emergence of political forms of Kurdish nationalism. The Western positivist historiography,

that is mainly based on the records of the British and other ‘outsider’ sources are, by contrast, more specific on the mechanics of this political ‘genealogy’. I will try to understand this difference, by introducing the concept of international legitimacy.

In the second section of this chapter, I will elaborate on the concept of legitimacy. Legitimacy is an area of clashing claims of sovereignty for international recognition. Since the late 19th century, with the consolidation of the inter-state system, it followed a dual historical pattern of development. One involves the legitimacy of states and the other, the legitimacy of non-state actors. I shall argue that the sovereignty-seeking Kurdish nationalism clashed three times with the state legitimacy of the republican Turkey. The first period involves an elite-driven proto-nationalism in the early 1920s. Whereas in the second period, Kurdish nationalism emerged as a political movement in the late 1960s. In the third, starting from the early 1990s, it has *consolidated* on the question of legitimacy of the Turkish state.

The latter part of the chapter is devoted to the contextual discussion of the emergence and consolidation of Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey. That context is characterized by two concomitant changes in terms of the international paradigm. One has been the shrinking definition of the conditions of legitimacy on part of the non-state actors vis-à-vis the states. The other has been the enlarging definition of legal and political obligations by the states toward their individual citizens and minorities. I shall argue that the Kurdish nationalist movement emerged on the internationally legitimated context of ‘decolonization’ in the late 1960s.

In the 1990s, however, the decolonization struggles have long lost their context which now evolved toward non-colonial minorities. Kurdish nationalist ideology and action also moved along with this context both in its self-legitimation behavior and in challenging the international legitimacy of the Turkish state. I will try to explain ‘when’ and ‘how’ this movement took place,

in order to understand ‘why’ the ethnic reasoning in Kurdish nationalism has been so instrumental in consolidating the nationalist ideal of territorial sovereignty. In doing so, I will try to analyze critically the discontinuities which are of equal importance as the continuities in understanding the Kurdish nationalist movement.

4.1 On the ‘genealogy’ of Kurdish Nationalism

For the Kurdish nationalist discourse, the convergence from ethnic to national polity or from ethnic resistance to nationalist struggle is an involuntary, instinctive one. It is based on given properties of ‘ethnic’ Kurdishness and assimilating, homogenizing and oppressive processes of (the Ottoman/Turkish) modernization. Therefore, ethnic resistance has been political from the ‘beginning’ (i.e. when Ottoman modernization “insulted” Kurdish freedom in its “own” territory) and continued as such. Hence, national polity is an enlarged projection of the ethnic and Kurdish nation is an extension of the omnipresent Kurdish ethnicity. The Kurdish nationalist intellectuals were later to ‘tell’ this standard historical pattern, although with terminological differences depending on the theoretical yardstick they adopt.³⁷⁸ We must understand the basic presumptions of this standard pattern of ‘genealogy’.

4.1.1 The Ottoman Polity and Kurdish Ethno-political Reaction

Firstly, there is the argument of *externality* of the Ottoman polity to the autonomous Kurdish ethnic and political existence. For Yeğen, the Ottoman centralization early in the 19th century destroyed the territorial and political autonomy of Kurdish mirs, whose leadership was later taken up and continued

³⁷⁸ Yıldız, A. (2001), pp.70ff; Yeğen (1999), pp.14ff, 216ff; Ghassemlou [1965], pp.38ff; Jwaideh (1960), pp.147ff; Kutlay (2002), pp.37-50; Işık (2002), pp.157ff. For Beşikçi, dissolution of feudalism necessarily brings nationalistic sentiments. Its decline brings with it also the decline of ethnic and religious unity, but feudal landlords used nationalism as a ‘counter-revolutionary’ tool. Beşikçi [1969], pp.49, 165-74 and 524.

by sheikhs and seyyids. This is the context where the ‘Kurdish ethno-political resistance’ emerged.³⁷⁹ H. Yıldız refers to this period as “hundred-year-wars”,³⁸⁰ Nezan as “the era of great feudal revolts”,³⁸¹ whereas for Işık this resistance continued up to the present day.³⁸² For Beşikçi, this has been a question of colonization, whereby Kurds resisted against division of their land among the imperialist neighbors (Turkey and Iran, along with the British in Iraq and French in Syria) in 1915-1925. This period of colonization, albeit constituting an important political restructuring, was a mere continuation of the efforts to “divide, rule and destroy” the Kurdish nation as whole since the Assyrian invasion of the 7th century B.C.³⁸³ For Ghassemlou, it all started when the Ottomans, following their defeat in Vienna in 1683, “turned their attention to their eastern borders and gradually interfered in the affairs of the Kurdish principalities”.³⁸⁴

Reading Ottoman legacy as an externality is a teleological project of Kurdish nationalist history-writing. It is not concerned with whether Ottoman rule had really been external to the Kurdish society, like the Western overseas empires to their colonies. Rather, the argument aims at projecting an exclusive space to politicize Kurdish ‘ethnicity’ that is presumed to expand toward a nationalistic dimension. The externality argument is constructed on the territorial autonomy Kurdish mirs enjoyed up to the 19th century.

³⁷⁹ Yeğen (1999), pp.226-32, 243-246.

³⁸⁰ Yıldız, H. (1996), p.21.

³⁸¹ Nezan (1980), pp.18-24.

³⁸² Işık (alias *Tori*) (2002), pp.167ff. Işık argues that the whole history of resistance should be understood as “Kurdish separatism”. This history has been continuous in this separatist essence, uninterrupted by political changes. The only intervention in this historical pattern can be said to be the “Kurdish Enlightenment” affected by Lenin’s introduction of revolutionary self-determination and the socialist revolution in Russia. Apparently, for Işık, the Kurds took the news of the Bolshevik Revolution and inspired by the revolutionary conscience. Ibid., p.188ff.

³⁸³ Beşikçi [1990], pp.32-41. In the earlier version of his argument, Beşikçi counts Bedirhan and Sheikh Ubeydullah rebellions as the beginnings. Beşikçi [1969], pp.408-9.

³⁸⁴ Ghassemlou [1965], pp.38ff.

Ottoman polity operated over a tension between the central authority concentrated in the person of the sultan and peripheral foci of power localized in different corners of the empire in different size and might.³⁸⁵ In Ottoman state tradition, this relation is based on ‘circle of justice’ (*‘Daire-yi Adliye-i Osmaniyye’*) where (i) state (*mülk*, i.e. the sovereign) shall not exist without military [power, might], (ii) military power requires economic wealth, (iii) wealth is collected from the subjects and (iv) subjects shall acquire wealth only by means of justice.³⁸⁶

Ottoman sovereignty was concentrated, as such, on the person of the sultan. In that respect, albeit mediated by a religious legitimation, it was not different than that of other absolutist monarchies in Europe.³⁸⁷ This conception of sovereignty depended of a loosely-knit system of personal allegiances of the peripheral rulers/vassals to the sovereign, where direct Ottoman rule (*sanjaks*, *beğliks*) had not been imposed. The Ottoman borderlands in central/eastern Europe (particularly in Hungary, Wallachia, Transylvania-Romania, Moldova and the Crimean Khanate, except Greece, Bosnia and parts of Serbia and Albania), Egypt and the entire north Africa, Arab provinces (except Hijaz) as well as the Kurdish mirs were articulated to the Ottoman sultan over this formula.

The sultan would know exactly which vassal submitted to his sovereignty, but he would not know exactly where his empire’s borders ended.³⁸⁸ The

³⁸⁵ For a classical argument on the center-periphery relations in the Ottoman Empire, see Mardin (1973).

³⁸⁶ Tanör (1992), pp.14-7.

³⁸⁷ As Louis XIV declared with little fear of contradiction [with the Catholic universalism]: ‘In France, the nation is not a separate body, it dwells entirely with the person of the King.’ Breuille (1993), p.76. Breuille quotes from Hubert Méthivier, *L’Ancien Régime* (Paris, 1971), p.82.

³⁸⁸ Yurdusev presents a very useful discussion of the Ottoman understanding of sovereignty in Yurdusev (2004), 17-21. He argues that it was an imperial system, like the Chinese and Roman examples, not territorially demarcated due to its universal claims. Whereas I agree with Yurdusev on the non-territoriality of Ottoman understanding of sovereignty, I assume that it was more bound by practical administrative/military concerns, rather than the Islamic-universal claims of the Ottoman state, as Yurdusev attempts to portray. Secondly, I would suggest that

‘territoriality principle’ started only after one traveled to a borderland principality, into the *private* realm of the ruler (i.e. whatever he chose to name himself, prince, khedive, khan, emir or mir, voivode etc.). It was the local ruler to calculate over his private territorial domain, i.e. territory and people. That was why local feudal-aristocratic rulers, e.g. Serbian principalities, Wallachian princes or Transylvanian voivodes, had been quick to convert expansion of nationalist ideals in Europe into their own territorial claims and became front-running nationalists supported by the rural peasantry to carve their independent states out from the Ottoman Empire in the mid-19th century.

The deterioration of the centralized financing system based on taxation of the small peasantry in the 18th century reversed the central patronage over the periphery, where notables (*ayan*) asserted their growing localized power. This decline resulted in the sultan being forced to agree a “*Sened-i İttifak*” (‘Deed of Alliance’) with the notables from the Ottoman mainland, who visited the Ottoman capital with their private armies in 1808. This proved an end, rather than a beginning,³⁸⁹ as the sultan would not share his sovereignty other than his person. Sultan Mahmud II, like his predecessor Selim III, took decisive steps to reform the central government, including a regular-professional army, as well

Ottoman Empire, although termed as the ‘Third Rome’ by some scholars like Ortaylı, would produce more effective conclusions in an comparison with the British or French Empires of the time. Therefore, the comparison should rather be made on a duality of ‘land’ and ‘colonial’ empires. In the former, there is the notion of territorial contiguity that necessitates an all-encompassing administrative ideology and legitimacy, whereas in the latter there is the principle of separation, where colonies [and colonial/indigenous people] do not represent subjects as they are counted among the wealth of nature to be made subjects of a civilizing mission. For Wallerstein, this was one of the ‘insurmountable contradictions of capitalism’. See Wallerstein (1995), pp.145-56. For a more detailed discussion as to the establishment and operation of the Ottoman sovereignty system, see Karpas (2003), pp.1-14. For a particular discussion on Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, see Öz (2003), pp.145-56.

³⁸⁹ For a review of the debate on the meaning or the contribution of the *Sened* to Turkish constitutionalism, see Tanör (1992), pp.34-46. Tanör argues that *Sened* represents, before all, the power of the peripheral notables (*ayan*) to assert and to impose themselves on the sultan. Secondly, that the *ayan* themselves did not represent a unity. The Balkan (and mostly christian) *beğs* were increasingly aware of the new nationalistic policy in Europe. They had thus the full support of their concomitantly ‘nationalizing’ church (Bulgarian and Greek) and an emerging national bourgeoisie. So they had enough resources and legitimacy to evolve into nationalist democratic liberation (from the Ottoman/Islamic rule where religious autonomy accompanied

as to eradicate the locally accumulated power to whom he seemed to give in by signing the *Sened* in 1808. Yet his rigorous program of centralization proved detrimental to his own central authority.

The reforms³⁹⁰ were to company humiliating external military blows to the Ottoman rule between 1770-1839 and 1877-82, which were in turn to be followed each time by internal conflict.³⁹¹ The revolt by Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt, who defeated the Ottoman army twice in Konya (1831) and Nizip (1839) to remain permanently in Syria and Lebanon, was a good indication of what peripheral foci of power can do.

There were three major rebellions led by Kurdish mirs in the 19th century. They are generally thought by the Kurdish nationalist history-writing to have represented the first political expressions of Kurdish nationalism. These are Muhammad Pasha of Rawanduz (1815-34), Bedirhan Bey (1840-45) and

discrimination based on sharia). Tanör, *idem*. But the muslim (Turkish, Kurdish and Arab) *ayan*, at its best, could only demand for ‘better’ implementation of the Sharia.

³⁹⁰ By “reforms”, I refer here, for the purposes of this analysis, mainly to those profoundly affected the state and society relations, rather than other, albeit important, modernization/westernization steps such as abolition of Janissary corps (*Vaka-yi Hayriyye*), financial, judicial and schooling system. These ‘reforms’, then, mainly include *Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu* (The Imperial Edict/Rescript of Gülhane-1839, known as “*Tanzimat*” –literally translated as ‘reordering’) which announced equality before law of all Ottoman subjects and assurances as to their property rights as well as a new provincial (*sanjak*) system of administration. Shaw and Shaw argue that the reforms brought a new fabric to the society before the state and its reformed bureaucracy. Shaw and Shaw [1977], pp.105ff. The two others, i.e. land and provincial administration, shall be referred to in a latter footnote.

³⁹¹ These were coming either from wars with Russia (in 1768-74, Crimea in 1783, Dniestr in 1787-92 and in 1812, Balkans in 1828) trying to expand toward Balkans and the Black Sea, Austria, France (expedition to Egypt in 1798-1801) and Iran (1820-28) or from domestic rebellions (of Wahhabis in 1811 and 1819, Greeks in 1821-29, Serbs 1813-17, northeastern and eastern Anatolia in 1812-17 –including Çapanoğlu Süleyman Bey, 1814 and western and southwestern Anatolia –including Karaosmanoğlu Hüseyin Ağa, 1816, northern Syria and Elbistan 1815-20, Mamluks in Iraq 1810-28, Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt 1831-40). A similar wave of wars and revolts came after a period of relative calm between 1856 (Allied – British, French, Ottoman peace with Russia following the Crimean War in 1854-55). This wave brought new conflict with Russia (1877-78) advancing onto Kars and Erzerum in the Ottoman mainland as well as the Balkan nationalist secessionism (Bosnia 1874, Bulgaria 1876, Serbia and Montenegro 1878).

Sheikh Ubeydullah (1880-81) and should be understood as part of the above described cycle.³⁹²

Muhammad Pasha's action started with his killing of immediate relatives around him as his rivals in 1814. Then he proceeded onto the neighboring tribes (Mamish, Baban) and onto the Yezidi tribes (Alkhoshi, Mizuri) to invade whole Bahdinan region. From Greater Zab to Khabur, he massacred Yezidis and neighboring Christian communities. Muhammad Pasha's Sorani invasion was resisted by Zibari's in the south and Bedirhan's Bohtan principality in the west, before he advanced toward Cizre, Mardin and Nusaybin. He annexed the whole region to the Rawanduz state. His entering into contact with Ibrahim Pasha, advancing toward the Ottoman capital with his Egyptian army, provoked Ottoman government who sent Rashid Muhammad Pasha, Vali of Sivas. Apparently, the latter convinced him to avoid bloodshed and come to terms with the government in 1834, probably with the help of a *fatwa* issued by Muhammad Pasha's own *mufti*, forbidding armed action against the army of the Caliph. After agreeing to surrender, Muhammad Pasha went to Istanbul in 1834, where he was rewarded for his renewed allegiance, and his Bahdinan 'conquest' ended by the neighboring tribes, without further Ottoman intervention.³⁹³

Bedirhan fought against Muhammad Pasha's invasion and served under Ottoman command against Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt in the battle of Nizib in 1839 (where he was granted by the Ottoman army commander the rank of honorary captain). As the Egyptian army retreated from Anatolia and Syria, Bedirhan was already in armed conflict with neighboring tribes, including Yezidi's and Nestorian communities. The weakening of his local/tribal enemies (the Bahdinan and the Yezidi's) made it feasible to advance eastward onto

³⁹² Kutlay argues that traditionally there have been a double legacy in this respect: one is the secular path of Bedirhan Bey and the other is Sheikh Ubeydullah's religious tradition. Kutlay (2002), p.15.

³⁹³ Jwaideh (1960), pp.131-75; McDowall [1996], pp.42-4; Van Bruinessen [1992a], pp.270-1.

Soran. With the blessing of local sheikhs and Nurullah Bey, the *mir* of Hakkari who wanted to subdue the Nestorian patriarch, he started massacring Nestorians in the Hakkari mountains. To the protests of the Western powers induced by the English and American missionaries operating in the region, the Ottomans sent an army, defeated by Bedirhan's forces. Then Ottomans sent a larger army under the command of Marshal Osman Pasha who, by the help of defecting Izzeddin (Yezdin) al Shir, a former ally of Bedirhan, defeated Bedirhan. After his defeat by the Ottoman army, Bedirhan, accompanied by 200 of his men, was then exiled in 1845 to Crete where he later served in suppressing the Greek revolt in 1856.³⁹⁴

Sheikh Ubeydullah took to invade Iran in 1880, to reassert his son Abdulkadir's authority over the Nehri chieftains, whose revolts were met by harsh suppression by the Iranian government. He had little choice but to lead these revolting tribes, which took him to the seizure of Sawj Bulaq (Mahabad) and then Urumiya, to annex these with his own principality, sporadically clashing with the Russian forces in the north. With the Iranian forces advancing from the southeast and European diplomatic pressure,³⁹⁵ Ubeydullah was forced to retreat from Iran. He first agreed to go to Istanbul and when he

³⁹⁴ Jwaideh (1960), pp.176-211; McDowall [1996], pp.45-7. Van Bruinessen [1992a], pp.272-8. Bedirhan stayed in Crete for ten years and awarded the title of 'mirimiran' (literally 'mir of the mirs', equivalent to the rank of a pasha -general) by the sultan for his services there. He went first to Istanbul and then to Damascus where he died two years later. Özoğlu (2005), pp.95.

³⁹⁵ It is important to understand the European involvement in Ubeydullah rebellion in terms of the Armenian Question as settled by the (Treaty Art. 61 of the) Berlin Congress of 1878, following the Russo-Turkish War. The European (in particular, the British) pressure sought on the one hand protection for non-Muslim subjects (i.e. Armenians) of the Empire in the region by a series of administrative and judicial reforms. On the other hand, it demanded provision for elections for local offices that would amount to virtual self-governance in the region. This had been the first European intervention to the Ottoman affairs in the region following the Berlin Congress. Karal [1962], pp.132ff. It was also an alarming one for the Sheikh as the traditional ally of the Ottoman rule in the region. McDowall [1996], pp.57. Also see his statement to the Qaymaqam of Başkale, rejecting the possibility of a sovereign Armenian state in Van, and British consular protection on Nestorians, quoted in Özoğlu (2005), pp.97-8.

tried to escape from there, he was exiled to Hijaz in 1882 where he died a year later.³⁹⁶

A review of the continuities and discontinuities in these rebellions will help us understand our second theoretical concern: the convergence between ethnicity and nationalism. The Ottoman ‘intervention’ was indeed aimed at the powerful peripheral ‘aristocracy’, by a series of reforms including the land system and provincial administration. But these came rather later, not prior the ‘great revolts’ in the first half of the 19th century.³⁹⁷ Hence, the claimed ‘action-reaction scheme’ needs to be re-considered. The area covered by Muhammad Pasha, Bedirhan Bey and Sheikh Ubeydullah, with half a century in between them and except the area covered by the Sheikh in revenge against Iran, converge,³⁹⁸ except the area covered by the Iranian expedition of Sheikh Ubeydullah and the Rawanduz, as the home base of Muhammad Pasha. This is the area where the Ottoman power vacuum had occurred, as this promised all three an imagined ‘greater [private] principality’.

The nationalist argument asserts that the ‘space’ involved an ethnic Kurdishness, prior to the private interests of the Kurdish mirs. So these mirs are not only a symbol, but a politically conscious comrades of a mass Kurdish ‘ethno-political’ mobilization. But as discussed above, the first two ‘rebellions’ by the unwavering Kurdish ‘mirs’ (Mir Muhammad of Rawanduz in 1815 and

³⁹⁶ Jwaideh (1960), pp.214-289; McDowall [1996], pp.51-9.

³⁹⁷ Among the ‘reforms’, we must refer to the Land Law of 1858, replacing old Islamic categories of land with new ones, designed to reassert the state ownership over the imperial possessions, together with the introduction of a new ownership deed to consolidate Tanzimat. But the problem was, the new ownership in practice brought legalization and expansion of lands in possession by the Kurdish aristocracy. Another ‘reform’ was the introduction of the *vilayet* system of provincial administration in 1864, which was complemented by a principle of decentralization added into the Ottoman Constitution of 1876. This was to reorganize the provinces under government appointed governors (*vali*) and *qaymaqams* in sub-provinces, who would work with local mayors and councils. By an imperial decree (*Salname*) in 1867, the Ottoman administrative division introduced provinces to replace the regional division of Kurdistan. Özoğlu claims that this omission has been brought by a later intervention for ‘unknown reasons’. Özoğlu (2005), pp.83-4, 174 n.58 and 59.

³⁹⁸ For the primordial issue of territoriality and maps see Özoğlu (2005), p.111.

Bedirhan in 1840) had actually *preceded* the so-called ‘biting’ Ottoman centralization that took pace only in the second half of the 19th century. The last one, staged by Sheikh Ubeydullah in 1880, on the other hand, was aiming to stave off the Iranian pressure on the Sunni Nehri tribes along the Ottoman-Iranian border, not an Ottoman intervention.³⁹⁹

All three rebellions followed major international wars that paralyzed the Ottoman military might. They started with an explicit aim to expand in terms of territory. Therefore, at the beginning, there were no direct contact and conflict with the Ottoman center. The sultan would be less concerned with issues of local territorial claims, than the assured personal allegiance of the claimants. Neither there had been a declared intention or deliberate organization, as was the case for Balkan nationalisms, to establish a nation-state, nor it is evidentially possible to dissect a secessionist strategy to eventually clash with the Ottoman imperial interest.

In terms of the designated ‘evil’, it was either the non-Muslim such as Nestorians, Yezidis and Armenians or Iranian pressure which were targeted as ‘external’ elements, rather than the Ottoman centralization. Hence, the Ottoman intervention in all three cases ensued apparently due to the ‘extended disturbance’ in the region, which was in fact induced by the European diplomatic intervention to protect the Christian communities. The leaders then were all ‘convinced’ to surrender and exiled by the resulting Ottoman intervention, as they seemed to accept their fate in submission.

For most Kurdish nationalist scholars, convergence between the ethnic and the national is deemed perfect, at least not questionable, and is only a matter of size and time. Once an exclusive space, i.e. a *territory*, is constructed for

³⁹⁹ Once again, the findings of the Western positivist historiography falls apart from the Kurdish nationalist mythology. McDowall for one, aptly states while there has been a general conviction that Sheikh Ubeydullah (Nehri) rebellion of 1880 was the first manifestation of modern Kurdish nationalism, the evidence is hardly conclusive. McDowall (2000), p.53.

Kurdish ethnicity, its ethnic and chronological continuity proves faultless. Any discontent or conflict, physical or intellectual, among them is alien to the ‘qualities’ of Kurdish ethnicity/nation. The same applies to the territorial problem. Since the 19th century onwards, the territorial problem had not been an ethnic, but a *private* one, based on individual and conflicting interests of the tribal leaders. The territorial problem had become politicized by the Kurdish nationalist elite during the First World War. This is why, there has been a great deal of mythology of ‘treason’ in the Kurdish nationalist literature, enough to rival mythology of Kurdish rebellions. And ‘treason’⁴⁰⁰ itself has thus been internalized as one of natural qualities of Kurdish ethnicity, rather than a sign of cross-cutting loyalties, conflicting interests and competing political/ideological allegiances.

4.1.2 The Ethnic and Religious Exclusion Debate

The second standard Kurdish nationalist argument involves the repressive and assimilationist *ethnic exclusion* by the Ottoman/Turkish modernization. For Yeğen, it is the territorial and political autonomy enjoyed by the Kurdish mirs, which later continued in a social context under sheikhs, where the Kurdishness had been constituted. As discussed earlier, Yeğen does not explain what this ‘Kurdishness’ involved.⁴⁰¹ Yet he elaborates well in defining the incrementally

⁴⁰⁰ Common examples involve the fatwa issued by the own mufti of Muhammad Pasha of Rawanduz, who had to surrender to the Ottomans. The fatwa ordered cession of armed action against the army of the Caliph. Another one is the defection of Izzeddin Al Shir, a prominent chief of Bedirhan, when the latter’s forces were met by the Ottoman army. The problem in this one is not the defection, but the fact that Bedirhan’s own Bohtan principality being in conflict with the local Yezidi’s. Bedirhan was an ardent proselytizer of Yezidi’s (termed as ‘devil-worshippers’ among the sunni Kurds). He allegedly took the authority of their mir, Mir Seyfeddin Shir who had been the true hereditary chief of Bohtan, Therefore Bedirhan ruled in the name of Mir Seyfeddin Shir. Izzedin Al Shir, accused for treason, was the son of Mir Seyfeddin. See Jwaideh (1960), p.177.

⁴⁰¹ Yeğen is not a primordialist or a perennialist in terms of his understanding of Kurdish ethnicity. He explicitly argues that Kurdishness is not ‘self-induced’. He makes clear his understanding of Kurdishness as a sociologically-mediated phenomenon, that began its ‘formation’ from the 19th century onwards. This formation involves a set of ‘relations’ that is mediated over tribal, religious, traditional and autonomous economic activity (i.e. smuggling). It is only when this ‘relational sociology’ is understood, the collective resistance can be

racist, discriminatory and assimilationist Turkish ethnic nationalism around this “area of Kurdishness”. To him, the Ottoman polity was based on a Sunni-Turkish center.⁴⁰² The religious aspect was later excluded, in part by the Union and Progress⁴⁰³ and in full by the republican project.⁴⁰⁴ So the ethnic, religious and cultural exclusion was complete, as originally aimed by the Ottoman/Turkish modernization project. A. Yıldız takes up the above question of exclusion in the formative years of the republic and regards it to be the main cause of Kurdish ethno-religious resistance.⁴⁰⁵

The Ottoman system of citizenship was originally based on Islamic sharia. What is meant by the ‘circle of justice’ in the Ottoman political system of sovereignty was prescribed in the working of the rules of the sharia. This operated as a main tool of legitimacy in a state headed by a sultan caliph. Mardin terms this relation between the state and society in the Ottoman Empire as a “latent contract”, which functioned as an unwritten –apart from the Script, but an effective constitutional framework.⁴⁰⁶ Mardin argues that this involved a contractarian relationship between the sultan and his subjects, where the former was bound by the rules not of a secular/separate contract, but of the sharia, in order to protect his throne.

Sharia was not only the source of sultan’s personal sovereignty, but a means of legitimation into the individual realms of his Sunni Muslim subjects. Centralization and reforms continued with an Islamic reference in the latter

understood as a political one. So we understand ‘how we should understand’ the very formation of Kurdish ethnicity. But still, the ethnic content in “Kurdishness” remains unaccounted for (i.e. what is “Kurdishness”?). Yeğen (1999), pp.250-2, also see *idem.*, n.25.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 63-75. And Islam was the only aspect which prevented an integration based on ethnic and cultural homogeneity. *Idem.*

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-4, 83-98, 119-29.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 119-29.

⁴⁰⁵ Yıldız, A. (2001), pp.241-2.

⁴⁰⁶ Mardin (1988).

half of the 19th century, despite the Hamidean absolutism in 1876-1908, who successfully re-incorporated the Kurdish peripheral tribal elite.⁴⁰⁷

The problem of *religious exclusion*, according to the Kurdish nationalist discourse, starts with the radicalized secularization in the post-republican era. The religious motivation utilized by the Kurdish nationalist elite in the Sheikh Said rebellion is said to have followed the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924. But little has been said as to why, for instance, the Kurdish Alevi tribes, who had staged the Koçgiri rebellion in 1920, were absent in the Sheikh Said rebellion of 1925.⁴⁰⁸ The Koçgiri rebellion staged by the Alevi tribes from Dersim (now Tunceli) and Sivas were not supported by Sunni Kurdish ‘establishment’ either.⁴⁰⁹ The republican secularization was welcomed by the (Kurdish or Turkish) Alevis, who had been repressed until then both by the Sunni state *and* the Sunni orders within the Kurdish society. The Kurdishness ‘constituted in the ethno-political space’ was a Sunni realm. It was led by Sunni sheikhs and in fact, did not include the Alevis as it did all others.⁴¹⁰ As a

⁴⁰⁷ On the “Islamic reference”, I must note that the reform process was seen by some as the ‘Ottomanization of Sharia’, making Islamic legitimation a defensive ideology against the foreign intervention. Deringil (1998), p.48 İslamoğlu-İnan argues that this was what Hamidean reform based on. İslamoğlu-İnan (1993), p.30ff. For the sultan, it was an easier and effective legitimation pattern. For Kurdish tribal leadership, it must have meant a recognition of their local/territorial ‘sovereignty’, re-unified under Islam as had been in the old-times. Yet again for Abdülhamid, it was the extension of his own base of legitimacy, rather than a means for ensuring the Islamic unity. Kurdish tribes were anxious to join in the *Hamidiye Regiments*, since the Hamidean plan re-invoked Islam defense of the Ottoman ‘patria’ against the “Armenian Question” imposed by the Berlin Congress (1878). It was but the only effective way of stimulating the ‘senses’ of territoriality among the Kurds, along with other Muslim subjects. Also see Karaca (1993), pp.37-52 and 173-82.

⁴⁰⁸ Some nationalist sources suffice by acknowledging the absence of Alevi support in the Sheikh Said rebellion. For most accounts, this is presumed to be among the technical and logistic inefficiencies in the ‘nationalist’ organization. See Mumcu’s interview with A. Firat, the grandson of Sheikh Said in Mumcu [1991], p.152.

⁴⁰⁹ The Western positivist historiography, contrary to Kurdish nationalist scholars, detects Alevis and their political behavior. Van Bruinessen reminds that there had been Alevi membership within the Society for the Rise of Kurdistan (Kürt Teali Cemiyeti –KTC), which was the first of its kind in aiming at an independent sovereign Kurdistan. This Alevi group was led by Vet. Nuri Dersimi, who had been ‘promised’ by the leading elite in KTC a ‘pluralistic’ state that would accommodate Alevis along with Sunnis, as well as the Zaza along with the Kurmanch. See Van Bruinessen [1992a], p.409, n.27.

⁴¹⁰ This alliance, forged by Sunni religious motivation, ‘accidentally’ recruited Sunni Turks taking action along with the rebels.

matter of fact, Alevis have later become the ardent supporters of radically secularizing Turkish republicanism. *Nothing*, if not in *passim* only, is mentioned as to Alevis in Yeğen's 'sociological articulation', nor there is a single reference to them within Yıldız's 'boundary-markers'.⁴¹¹ Olson and Van Bruinessen, on the other hand, refer to Alevis as one of the major divisions in the Sheikh Said rebellion.⁴¹²

The problem of *ethnic exclusion* starts, for Yeğen, with the "Turkification" of the Ottoman polity. This was, for the author, crystallized as a means of defining the new *patria* at the CUP congress in 1913⁴¹³ that followed the Balkan Wars, when the remaining Christian territories were ceded.⁴¹⁴ In other words, the Turkish modernization was the continuation of the CUP's ethnicism, which was carried over into the republic, through the trajectory of 'saving the state'.

For Yeğen, the Kemalist nationalism had emerged in this context with an ethnic project *in mind*, with a traditional Islamic reference *at hand*.⁴¹⁵ This ethnicist *mind* is commonly described by the Kurdish nationalists as the proliferation of the Turkist ideology from 1910 onwards. However, there is an *indecision* among the Kurdish nationalist theories regarding this ethnicist project. A conservative Islamist argument by A. Yıldız, points out that this was a project of linguistic and cultural homogeneity which did not amount to racism. It relied on a modernizing pattern of Gökaltipian solidarism.⁴¹⁶ The 'solidarism' involved among others, for Yıldız, existing religious loyalties, which could not be overcome by the republicanism. Hence the republican Turkey had to reject its ideological anathema, i.e. the *sharia* that survived

⁴¹¹ Kutlay, another 'Sunni' Kurdish nationalist, refers to Dersimi and the Koçgiri rebellion, in a context where the Alevis bargained and sided with the state, but mentions none about the Sunni-Alevi division among the Kurdish nationalists. Kutlay (2002), pp.300-9.

⁴¹² Olson [1989], pp.149-50; Van Bruinessen [1992a], pp.420-1.

⁴¹³ Yeğen (1999), pp.71ff.

⁴¹⁴ Yıldız, A. (2001), pp.76ff.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., pp.101ff.

among the society as primary source of political loyalty, in its totality. The radical secularism ensued out of this early republican dilemma. Hence, the ‘biting’ ethnicism of the early republican era should be sought in its *form*, corporately organized to achieve a ‘total westernization’. For Yıldız, a dullness coexisted along with extremes in this project due to its ‘engineered’ nature, that tried to reject by repression the essential religious loyalties within the society.⁴¹⁷

For Beşikçi⁴¹⁸ and Yeğen⁴¹⁹ however, the republican ethnicist project was a direct projection of Turkism that had its intellectual roots in the Ottoman/CUP ‘saving the state’ technology. Therefore republican ethnicism should be sought for in its *essence*, that involved an exclusion in terms of its racist assimilation policies. This disagreement (over the emphasis on form and essence of republican exclusion) between the two arguments in perceiving ethnic exclusion is meaningful in ideological terms.

In this “Turkism” debate, which has a larger context ignored by Yeğen, there are two main lines of thought led respectively by Gökalp and Akçura. Yeğen refers to Parla, in claiming that the republican project had been a “fascist enterprise with varying tones of racism”.⁴²⁰ Parla’s contribution involves that the Gökalpian model of solidarism, seen as the ‘feasible alternative’ as to “narodnik” type of peasant-based populist nation-building theses of Akçura,⁴²¹ regarding the state society relations in an overwhelmingly corporatist single-party era.⁴²²

⁴¹⁶ *Idem.*

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.159ff.

⁴¹⁸ Beşikçi [1990], p.42.

⁴¹⁹ Yeğen (1999), pp.78ff.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.104-5.

⁴²¹ Ersanlı-Behar (1992), pp.68-75. The Pan-Turkist idealized land of “Turan” and Turkism in general had a particular appeal in the idiomatic language of the nationalist historiography, but any racial perception of such ideals had hardly a reflection among the Young Turks.

⁴²² Parla (1989), Introduction.

The ‘racism’, on the other hand, had had a different context as to the claims of ‘racial equality’ vis-à-vis the Western nations. Akçura, argued for the predominance of racial elements in the formation of nationalism against an anachronistic/cosmopolitan version pursued by a “Westernized Ottoman Empire”.⁴²³ With his populist nation-building thesis, Akçura was placed at the top of ‘message-producing’ cultural institutions in the republican era.⁴²⁴ An important functional target of these institutions was ‘nationalizing history’.⁴²⁵ The actual modernism in Akçura’s approach comes from his conviction in history as an area of study on the ontological basis that govern the common development of humanity. His was a genuinely materialistic perception that saw the history moved inevitably toward nation-building and democracy.⁴²⁶ For Akçura, the basic problem of the Ottoman-Turkish society was its underdeveloped bourgeoisie. He believed in the necessity of a strong national bourgeoisie, as an engine for a “social reform”, where populism would mean a program for national democratization.⁴²⁷

Akçura’s commitment to an imagined nationalist bourgeois modernity illuminates his criticism toward tribal resistance in the early republican era. In a conference after the suppression of the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925, he suggested a land reform to do away with the large land-ownership, as a prerequisite to the realization of a state in which the national bourgeoisie holds

⁴²³ Yusuf Akçura, himself a Volga Tatar born to a propertied family in Kazan in Czarist Russia where –after graduating university in Paris, he acted as a member of the central committee of the “Kadett” party during the 1905 revolution, was the definitive leading figure of Turkism in the Ottoman and in particular, early republican era. He was a founding member and later in 1932 the chairman of the “Society for the Studies in Turkish History” (founded in 1931) and worked as the member of the committee that drafted the infamous “*Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*” later known as the enigmatic piece of the Turkish “official history”.

⁴²⁴ Aydın (1993), 174-6.

⁴²⁵ Berktaş and Georgeon argue that Akçura’s was a modernizing approach to integrate the Turkish history as part of the universal history. Akçura’s secular nationalism rendered Turkish historiography autonomy vis-à-vis the Islamic historiography, made it increasingly integrated to the universal history. The Kemalist national history theses, argues Georgeon, emerge from this dualistic movement. Berktaş (1983), pp.40-42. Georgeon (1980), pp.48-9 (also quoted in Berktaş).

⁴²⁶ Berktaş, *idem*.

⁴²⁷ Berktaş (1983), p.42.

all echelons of political power.⁴²⁸ Should this reform made, claimed Akçura, only the bourgeoisie and the small peasantry, the two truly progressive classes that formed the basis of the republic, would remain on stage.⁴²⁹

By contrast, Gökalp's populism was based on his anti-liberal idea of 'generalism' (*umumculuk*) that excluded Akçura-type of free social and economic forces that transform the society and polity as a whole. Individual interests could not be left free to overwhelm the general or common good. And reformism, still depending on a modernist homogenization, must not be left to create class conflicts where any one of these 'groups' could extend its power onto the state. The state had to remain impartial, as ensured by universal suffrage and political equality of its citizens, but interventionist in terms of expediting the modernization for the common good. Its performance in modernizing the social and political realm would add on to its legitimacy before its nation.⁴³⁰

The problem with Yeğen is his general approach to the Turkish 'ethnicist modernization' ideology in the early republican era as a unique and dedicated 'anti-Kurdish project'. The modernization process may well be a homogenizing and unifying, which undeniably works against social and economic particularities. 'Re-articulating' this universal project of modernization as a dedicated anti-Kurdish ethnicist program as Yeğen attempts, however, is not justifiable, since neither Akçura nor Gökalp attempts a unique and dedicated anti-Kurdish program as such. Akçura's economic modernization program, for

⁴²⁸ Georgeon (1980), pp.57-61. Georgeon adds that Akçura, as the member of parliament, had proposed in 1924-25 session a draft 'Labor Law' at the parliament, justifying his proposal by claiming that it is needed since the industrialization may bring proleterianization and further revolutionary pressures, which should be anticipated and curbed by legal regulations. The proposal was deemed 'far too progressive' and rejected. *Ibid.*, pp.84-5.

⁴²⁹ Berktaş (1983), p.42.

⁴³⁰ See for an extended discussion on how Gökalp's formula of transcending the disintegrating effects of liberalism by solidarist corporatism, came to be adopted as the official ideology of the young republican elite. Parla (1989), pp.81-101.

example, was clearly influenced by the German economist Friedrich List,⁴³¹ who argued for the creation of a ‘national economy’ (*Volkswirtschaft*, literally meaning ‘peoples economy’), as originally inspired by his Alexander Hamilton during his visit to the USA in the 1820s.⁴³² As Hobsbawm argues “one need hardly add that this development would take the form of capitalist industrialization pressed forward by a vigorous bourgeoisie.”⁴³³ It has only been Yeğen’s ‘addition’ claiming that it was an anti-Kurdish program and nothing else.

Despite the extensive interest observable in the Kurdish nationalist literature on ‘Turkish ethnicist/racist nationalism’, the question of what the said literature has ‘articulated’ as to the Kurdish ethnicity remains unanswered. As discussed earlier, the ‘ethnic exclusion’ debate in the Kurdish literature paints the picture around ‘Kurdishness’, but leaves the ‘content’ of it blank. Instead, as seen in Yeğen, there is a ‘space’ reserved for ‘Kurdishness’ to be ‘constituted’ or in A. Yıldız, there are the ‘boundary-markers’ threatened by outside ethnicities. In the ‘early’ Beşikçi, it was a ‘social class’ of non-tribal rural poor, whereas in the ‘latter’, it was a whole people colonized from outside. I believe, all these ‘non-definitions’ converge on defining an ‘area’ contained by externalities. In the absence of a ‘definition’ of the ethnic ‘content’ of Kurdishness, but given the definition of the ‘area’ for its presence, the only aspect we can dissect in the name of Kurdishness is its *territoriality*.

The relationship between the ‘content’ involved in ethnicity and territoriality, should *not* be sought for within the private realms of Kurdish mirs/sheikhs and their property. Kutlay, a modernist proponent of Kurdish nationalism, tries to place a modern ‘ethno-genesis’ to Kurdishness by arguing that the revival of [Kurdish] civil associations in the early 19th century Ottoman capital meant an

⁴³¹ Georgeon (1980), pp.66ff.

⁴³² Hobsbawm [1990], pp.29-30.

⁴³³ *Idem*.

‘ethnic awakening’⁴³⁴ inspired by the ethnic/nationalist sentiments in eastern Europe in the late 19th and early 20th century. But, given the Kurdish nationalist claim involving the tribal/religious formation of Kurdish ethnicity in its rural/territorial form, this is a paradoxical statement. It thus ignores the *secluded rurality* of the ethnic content as attributed by the Kurdish nationalist ‘sociology’. The Eastern European example involves a *rural proliferation* of an identity consciousness. But Kutlay’s model does not explain how the urban nationalist elite converged with the rurality.

The genuine concern of the Kurdish nationalist political mobilization had not been an overall ‘ethnic awakening’ at least up until the 1990s. The major dilemma of the urban nationalist elite of early 1920s was their detachment from that rurality. This *ethnicity-in-itself* proved insurmountable social-cultural divisions as construed by their failure in mobilizing in the 1920s. A presumed homogeneity that ‘awakened’ into an *ethnicity-for-itself*⁴³⁵ has been a myth ‘the present’ rather than a phenomena of the past. In the context of Kurdish ethnicity, even if it is read today, involves apparent divisions, rather than a unifying awakening: i.e. the one between the Kurmanch and the Zaza⁴³⁶ (the *Dimilis* as they call themselves, *in contrast to* Turks and the Kurmanch) with all its cultural/linguistic implications, between the Sunnis, the Yezidis and the Alevis and between the settled and nomadic tribes, together with surrounding tribal and non-tribal allegiances.

⁴³⁴ Kutlay (2002), p.32 and 72. This ‘likening’ to the eastern European rural ethnic-nationalisms is interesting but not valid, since the ones that ‘ethnically-awakened’ in his context involves *no* rural-ethnic communities, but the urban cosmopolitan Kurdish nationalist intelligentsia. Theirs, as different to what they have been likened to by Kutlay, theirs was a ‘proto-nationalist’ one.

⁴³⁵ Gündoğan suggests that a ‘scientific’ analysis regarding Kurds must refrain from focusing on the relational context with the Kemalist state. Instead, it should focus on the “process of convergence from the Kurd[ishness]-in-itself to the Kurd[ishness]-for-itself”. Gündoğan (1994), p.60.

⁴³⁶ The Zaza presence in the KTC led by Vet. Nuri Dersimi and *Dersimli Alişer* is an argument in line here. Technically, KTC encompassed the *Zaza Kurds*,

As to the crucial question of nationalist mobilization, a discussion of *where* and *how* these discontinuities come into play is extremely important. The scope of this study does not intend to cover a thorough discussion of the content and meaning of a Kurdish ‘ethno-genesis’. But, as will be discussed later in this chapter, that *ethnicity* is a recent ideological attribute by the Kurdish nationalist project, which followed the post-1970s international literature on the burgeoning ethnic and minority rights. The context of that attribution is always political in relation to such awakening or resistance, rather than its content *in-itself*. This is a nationalist *technology* of making today the past.

4.1.3 The Problem of Mobilization

Thirdly, there is the problem of political nationalist *mobilization*. Modernists such as Kutlay and Özoğlu refer to the division within the KTC into two as religious/conservative autonomists (Seyyid Abdulkadir) and secular separatists (Bedirhans and Babans) as a defining one that can be traced down to the present day. Gündoğan dissects three political groupings between 1919 and 1924 in terms of Kurdish nationalist mobilization. One involves the urban Kurdish nationalist intelligentsia within the Society for the Rise of Kurdistan (*Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti-KTC*). The second involves the separatist military tribal/religious alliance forged by *Azadi* founded in Erzurum in 1923. And the last being by far the largest, was that of “collaborationist” tribal/religious Kurdish elite who were also represented within the Kemalist national parliament in Ankara.⁴³⁷

Post-structuralist and perennialist analyses that commonly share ‘ethno-symbolist’ background have a slightly nuanced perspective on the problem of mobilization. Yeğen’s Foucaultian analysis, if read in its own terms, is ‘silent’ and has ‘discursive gaps’ in explaining the context where political struggle of Kurdish nationalism occurs. He describes the ethno-political actors (mirs and

sheikhs) and institutions (tribal organization, language and education) and their necessarily ethnic resistance.⁴³⁸ But his insistence in remaining within a “sociology of Kurdish resistance” ignores the political context. That context involves the ‘universal pain’ suffered by all sovereignty/power-seeking nationalist elites in mobilizing masses behind them and for their cause.

Yeğen constructs a ‘sociological’ model of mobilization. This model follows his account on the trajectory of Kurdish traditional leadership that transfers from mirs to the sheikhs in the period from the 1870s to the 1920s. He refers to the “leading figures of Kurdish nationalism” such as “Sheikh Ubeydullah, Sheikh [sic] Abdulkadir,⁴³⁹ and Sheikh Said” to support his ‘sociology of continuities’. ‘Political’ leadership of the ‘continuing’ Kurdish nationalism is thus made ‘sociological’. Inspired by Van Bruinessen’s account on Sheikh Said, Yeğen argues that the sheikhs are not ‘ordinary’ religious figures. They had a politically justified ‘nationalist’ power-base. From then on, Yeğen steps out of his context of ‘sociology of Kurdish nationalism’ and generalizes the power of religion in fermenting nationalist mobilization in societies. For Yeğen,⁴⁴⁰ as for the ethno-symbolist A. Yıldız,⁴⁴¹ the abolition of the caliphate in 1924 empowered Sheikh Said for yet another rebellion as part of the perennial Kurdish ethno-political resistance.

There are differences between the way the Kurdish nationalist mythology perceives ‘its’ history and the one described by the Western positivist historiography. These differences seem to lie in the epistemological base of two lines of effort in ‘telling’ history. The latter mainly bases itself on records of

⁴³⁷ Gündoğan (1994), pp.59-69.

⁴³⁸ Yeğen (1999), pp.226ff.

⁴³⁹ Yeğen fails in detecting the proto-nationalist elite in early 20th century Istanbul. Seyyid Abdulkadir was not a ‘sheikh’, since the former denotes a patrilineal descent from the Prophet and the latter entails a tribal/religious leadership. By the time he came back from Mecca where his father (not grandfather as Yeğen fails again) he was not in a position of claiming such leadership in the territorial sense. Instead, he became a member of the Ottoman Lower Chamber after the 1908 revolution. Ünlü and Aydın (2005), pp.61-2.

⁴⁴⁰ Yeğen (1999), pp.236-7.

the Western archives.⁴⁴² Whereas the former heavily derives from a general legitimization effort by the nationalist literature, as an extension of the ‘first-hand’ accounts of the activists and memoirs of the leaders themselves. Hence, the difference is *not* accidental. It is a *voluntary deviation* on part of the nationalist historiography. This brand of ‘history-telling’ do not acknowledge the *discontinuities* involved in the emergence of Kurdish nationalism. It also fails to address the difference between the nationalist ideology and nationalist movement. For them, the nationalist ideology and mobilization is there from the ‘beginning’, that is construed by every ‘symbol’ in history that is eligible to be accounted for only by being ‘Kurdish’. As Renan said, “Getting its history wrong is part of being a nation”.⁴⁴³

4.1.4 A Kurdish Proto-nationalism (1919-1930)?

The first discontinuity in the problem of *convergence* is the one between the emergence of the Kurdish nationalism in its ideological form and its inability to

⁴⁴¹ Yıldız, A. (2001), p.242ff.

⁴⁴² The ‘Turkish’ historiography also, along with the Turkish archival material, bases on the Western (British), as well as Turkish records. Solid examples of such efforts have been Şimşir (1991) and Öke (1990) and (1992). It must be conceded that these efforts may have been one of the reasons that the Turkish historiography has been the first to credit the hypotheses involving British provocation in Kurdish nationalist revival. But while doing so, the importance of the archival data must not be ignored. Gündoğan’s methodological criticism points at this deficiency in Kurdish nationalist historiography. See Gündoğan (1992). There are, however, Kurdish nationalists who gathered data in the Western archives. One such example is ‘Ahmet Mesut’ (*alias* M. Yeğen). But since his scope of research has been the discursive area of the Turkish state, his findings compiled in a single volume remained untapped, even by himself. See Yeğen (*alias* M. Yeğen) (1992). Yeğen, instead, based his ‘archaeology’ on public texts drawn randomly from the early republican era, as messages produced by the ‘state discourse’. We have already shown how, Beşikçi, another Kurdish nationalist, have made use of such public texts (i.e. the parliamentary debates) with critical deviations and forgery. H. Yıldız, provides us with a small number of selected documents drawn from the French archives in Yıldız, H. (1996). Apart from the work of the general historians who worked on the Ottoman archives, a ‘rare’ example that involves particular data from the archives of the Turkish Ministry of Interior was published by Koca on the Inspectorships General established in 1927, following the Sheikh Said rebellion. See Koca (1998). Karaca presents some information drawn from the Ottoman archives on the mission of Şakir Paşa, during the formation of the Hamidean Regiments. Karaca (1993). Bayrak is a ‘rare’ example in the Kurdish nationalist literature for archival data. Bayrak (1993).

⁴⁴³ Ernest Renan, *Qu’est ce que c’est un nation?* (Paris, 1882), quoted in Hobsbawm [1990], pp.12.

mobilize a national movement. It is important here to understand that it had been the *second generation*, rather than the ‘fading’ mirs or sheikhs themselves, that constituted the Kurdish nationalists proper. These had been the children and grandchildren of Bedirhan and Sheikh Ubeydullah, who made their way back into the Ottoman polity. These were well-educated and socio-economically affluent members of their respective families. They were also well-placed in time and place, i.e. in Istanbul and at the time of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire 1908-23. But were these well enough to form a group of Kurdish proto-nationalists?

Bedirhan Bey’s son Mehmed Emin Ali came back from Crete as a judicial inspector. In the constitutional parliamentary period from 1908 to 1923, Mehmed Ali, his brothers Mikdat Mithad, Mehmet Ali and Bedirhan’s grandsons Kamuran, Süreyya, Celadet, Asaf, Bedirhan Ali and Abdurrahman became ardent Kurdish nationalists. On the other hand, Sheikh Ubeydullah’s son Seyyid Abdulkadir came back from Hijaz after his father’s death. He became a member of the clandestine Committee of Union and Progress in 1895 in Istanbul⁴⁴⁴ and appointed in 1910 as a member of the higher chamber (*Ayan Meclisi*) of the Ottoman parliament where he served until its seizure by the occupying troops in March 1920.⁴⁴⁵ Seyyid Abdulkadir and his sons Mehmet, Abdullah and his brother Seyyid Taha, together with the second and third generations of the Bedirhan family had thus come back into the Ottoman polity. But this time, they were part of the urban Kurdish intellectual elite, rather than peripheral tribal leadership, despite their tribal links have survived the exile.

⁴⁴⁴ But later exiled back to Mecca in 1896 for having participated in a plot against Abdülhamid II. He then came back again after the 1908 revolution. Özoğlu (2005), p.115-6

⁴⁴⁵ By the time the CUP government collapsed together with the Ottoman state at the end of the war, he was among the founders of Freedom and Accord Party in 1919, becoming the Speaker of the *Şura-yı Devlet* (Council of State), lower chamber of the Ottoman Party. Ünlü and Aydın (2005), p.61.

In the years leading up and following the 1908 revolution that brought relative freedoms and a constitutional order back to the Ottoman society, there had been a revival of organized political activity. The clandestine CUP experience before the revolution served as a model for the first nationally named (Turkish, Kurdish, Albanian etc.) associations in Istanbul, later followed by legal organizations and journals essentially run by Western-educated intellectuals.

Among those established by the urban Kurdish intellectuals in Istanbul were the Kurdish Club (*Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) in 1908, followed by Kurdish Society for Dissemination of Knowledge (*Kürt Neşr-i Maarif Cemiyeti*) in 1910, Friends of Kurdistan Society (*Kürdistan Muhibban Cemiyeti*), Kurdistan Joint Labor Society (*Kürdistan Teşrik-i Mesai Cemiyeti*), Kurdish Guidance and Path Society (*Kürdistan İrşad and İrtika Cemiyeti*) and Kurdish Student-Hope Society (*Kürt Talebe-Hevi Cemiyeti*) in 1912.⁴⁴⁶

A closer look at the Kurdish-named organizations in the post-revolutionary era in 1908-18, we observe that their founders had been rather a restricted group of metropolitan Kurdish intellectuals renowned for their families, including among others, Bedirhans⁴⁴⁷ and Şemdinans (Seyyid Abdulkadir).⁴⁴⁸ The declared interests at least until the end of war in 1918, as seen in the founding contract of the Kurdish Club revealed “Kurds as an inseparable part of the Ottoman state, with a mission to further strengthen the allegiances to the state by other nations such as Armenians and Netorians as well as to help resolving of individual inter-tribal and ethnic problems and conflicts.”⁴⁴⁹ Contrary to

⁴⁴⁶ For a round up of the Kurdish organizations in this era see Çay (1981), *passim*; Alakom (2001).

⁴⁴⁷ According to Özoğlu, when Bedirhan died in Damascus in 1869-70, he had 21 sons and an equal number of daughters. Özoğlu (2005), p.95. Öztuna offers a far larger number of 96 children in total, from an unknown number of wives offered to him by the Yezidi tribes he ‘proselytized’. Among those wives, only four had been his legal spouses. Of 96 children, 54 had died before he passed away and 21 sons with an equal number of daughters remained at the time he died. Öztuna (1996), p.516. For a useful family history see Çetin (2002).

⁴⁴⁸ Çay (1981), Mumcu (1991), pp.1-14, Olson (1989), pp.37-50.

⁴⁴⁹ Özoğlu (2005), p.103.

what Çay and Mumcu claimed, Özoğlu argues that these organizations should not be regarded as ‘nationalist’.⁴⁵⁰

These urban intellectuals had been the self-nominated founders or members of rank-and-file in every organization with a Kurdish name, regardless of the size and effectiveness of its activity. The urban/cosmopolitan intellectual nationalism would have to wait until the end of the war, when it became clear that the Allied had in mind, contrary to the reparative peace with Germany and other allies of the Ottomans, a more punitive project for what was left from the empire after the war. Having seen the military/diplomatic capability⁴⁵¹ of the empire collapsed, the metropolitan Kurdish nationalists took to enhance their private project of an independent statehood, with a hope that it would be recognized by the Powers.⁴⁵²

The first Kurdish nationalist organization, clandestinely aiming to establish a sovereign polity was established within this circumstance in December 1918, within two months after the Mudros Armistice: the Society for the Rise of Kurdistan (KTC),⁴⁵³ under the leadership of the Şemdinans and Bedirhans. The KTC was established in Diyarbakır, but it was run by its elite through its Istanbul branch. The problem for this Şemdinan/Bedirhan alliance was their difficulty in penetrating to their imagined country, due to the political perceptiveness of the state which was aware of their clandestine involvement.⁴⁵⁴ In the case of Bedirhans, the need to forge an alliance with

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid, p.102. Çay (1981), p.80ff. Mumcu [1991], *passim*.

⁴⁵¹ Ortaylı, in his analysis of the Ottoman administrative system and sovereignty, suggests military and diplomacy as *the* two areas that had never been shared by the Ottoman central administration with the peripheral/centrifugal forces.

⁴⁵² Özoğlu points at the sequence between the Mudros Armistice that ended the military capability of the empire on 30 October 1918 and the establishment of the Society for the Rise of Kurdistan (*Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti-KTC*) on 17 December 1918. Özoğlu (2005), p.107-11.

⁴⁵³ For a list and discussion on these associations see Çay (1981), Malmısanij (2002), pp.13-45, Özoğlu (2005), p.100-9, Mumcu (1991), pp.1-14 and 156-60, Ünlü and Aydın (2005), Olson (1989), pp.37-85. Kutlay adds the associations established in Egypt (though again, under the instructions of Seyyid Taha and Seyyid Abdulkadir). Kutlay (2002), p.79.

⁴⁵⁴ Bedirhan's (Osman and Hüseyin) involvement in 1878 in the Mutki and Reşkotan rebellion and in the revolt attempt and detention in 1889 (by Emin Ali and Mithat) indicate that Ottoman

another power-house, the ruling Cemilpaşazade family in Diyarbakır, was apparent, through their membership in the KTC. The same was also true with the Babans, another powerful tribal dynasty.

The KTC consolidated the Kurdish nationalists with their ideology in search for a sovereign polity. To achieve this ultimate aim, they needed international recognition. That recognition, however, was bound by four different political concerns. One was the problem of overlapping territorial claims with the Armenians, who sought for an independent state of their own. Their cause had been a long-legitimated one since the British assumed their protection at the Berlin Congress of 1878. At the Paris Peace Conference, Sherif Pasha's⁴⁵⁵ compromise deal with the Boghos Nubar Pasha of the Armenian delegation on the common border between the future Armenia and Kurdistan resolved this problem with a memorandum signed between the two on 20 December 1919.

Yet a second problem emerged, which involved the nature of the political project. For Seyyid Abdulkadir, a wide autonomy for Kurdistan within the Ottoman State like the one Kurdish mirs enjoyed prior to 19th century would suffice. For Bedirhans however, Sherif Pasha's concessions to the Armenians meant a territorial loss.⁴⁵⁶ For both, however, this compromise constituted a

government knew what they were doing. See Ünlü and Aydın (2005), p.54, Çetin (2002), pp.63-5 and Bayrak (1993), pp.55-6.

⁴⁵⁵ It is interesting that Sherif Pasha is one of the much-revered figures in Kurdish nationalist literature. He neither had a tribal or religious leadership in terms of his social base, nor he spoke any Kurdish at all. He was an Ottoman diplomat, an arch opponent of the CUP in particular, before he became a self-declared head of the Kurdish delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. Probably with the great relief as to having accomplished his role, he left this 'position' after the Armenian deal amidst protests from the local Kurdish chieftains and re-acknowledged his allegiance to the Ottoman sultan with a telegram on 23 April 1920. According to Özoğlu, Sherif lacked the nationalist will as he settled in at a wide estate along the fertile banks of the Nile in Egypt and probably died there in the early 1950s. Özoğlu (2005), pp.141-4.

⁴⁵⁶ In a letter he signed as "Emin Ali Bedirhan, the Eldest Son of Bedirhan, the last Mir of Jazirah" to the French High Commissioner in Istanbul, Emin Ali requests French economic mandate on part of South Kurdistan (Jazirat Bin Omar) which had been ruled by the Bedirhan dynasty from the 7th century to 1847. This description is a clear indication of what Bedirhan's nationalistic conscience and project involved. For the text of the letter drawn from the French official records, see Yıldız, H. (1996), pp.40-1.

treachery. For Bedirhans, Sherif Pasha should never concede Lake Van and its environs to the Armenians, whereas for Seyyid Abdulkadir the idea of striking a deal with the Armenian infidels should be rejected in its totality in the first place. Hence Bedirhans wanted to expel Seyyid Abdulkadir from KTC. But the religious appeal of the latter was stronger among the other KTC members and Bedirhans had to leave themselves, founding a new “Society of Social Organization” in Diyarbakır in alliance with the Babans and the Cemilpaşazades.⁴⁵⁷

Özoğlu argues that the split between Seyyid Abdulkadir and Bedirhans represents the emergence of a fundamental duality among the nationalist elite and within the Kurdish nationalist ideology. On the one hand, there was the secular revolutionary separatism represented by the Bedirhan-Baban tradition that relied on secular tribal aristocracy. On the other, there was the conservative religious establishment represented by Seyyid Abdulkadir. The latter, despite all ethnic and territorial dispute with the Ottoman/Turkish elite in terms of the resulting political imagination, still had the will to preserve the political unity, on the basis of a territorial autonomy. In a statement to the daily *İkdam* on 27 February 1920, Seyyid Abdulkadir said “Today the Kurds reside in five-six provinces; [we] want the government to grant autonomy to these provinces. Let us [s]elect our own administrators, that Turks may also part of this autonomy, if they so wish.”⁴⁵⁸

The third problem emerged over the parameters that caused the split in the ranks of the nationalist elite. It was the problem of nationalist mobilization. For Bedirhans, the explicit demarcation of the boundaries of a future Kurdistan, regardless of the territorial concessions to the Armenians, was enough to build

⁴⁵⁷ This group involved Babans and some other non-religious tribal leaders. Kutlay (1991), p.135. Özoğlu (2005), p.119-20. Dr Abdullah Cevdet (a former CUP ideologist and an ardent materialist) was also a member. Mumcu (1991a), p.159.

⁴⁵⁸ Özoğlu (2005), p.119.

a state.⁴⁵⁹ It was a recognition of a future Kurdistan *par excellence*. Hence, all they had to do was to engineer the realization of the project, with their international patrons. To do that, they intensified their diplomatic initiatives with the Powers.⁴⁶⁰ They were late, however, in realizing the pertinence of nationalist mobilization of the would-be members of their nation.

By April 1920, the Kemalist movement had mobilized from the East to the West of a 'self-defined' country over a legitimization pattern which reversed what Bedirhans wanted to engineer. If a nationalistic polity was to occur, it should also promise 'liberation' to its would-be nation. The "National Pact" declared by the Kemalist nationalists and adopted by the Ottoman parliament in the early 1920 rejected altogether what Bedirhans had agreed earlier: the Treaty of Sevres, foreign occupation and mandate, Armenian state, a country under advancing (Greek) occupation, a caliph in custody, loss of the national (i.e. Ottoman) pride and the dignity of Islam. It was only natural that Kemalist mobilization gained a far larger legitimacy, against the personal kingdom of Bedirhans.

The 'Bedirhani Kingdom of Kurdistan' still seemed feasible for its author, if only he could manage to get through to the interests of the Powers. The fourth problem emerged at that stage: the Powers constituted not only the international community whose recognition was required, they were now (as of

⁴⁵⁹ In his testimony to the Eastern Court of Independence that tried and later convicted him for death for his possible links with the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925, Seyyid Abdulkadir accused Emin Ali Bedirhan as a sworn enemy of the Turks. He told the panel that Emin Ali said he would unite with the Armenians, rather than the Turks. Çetin (2002), p.67.

⁴⁶⁰⁴⁶⁰ Olson accounts for the individual appeals in 1919 through 1922 to the British by Seyyid Abdulkadir personally in Istanbul and through his envoy in Baghdad, which ranged from a request for support to his own leadership to a joint project with the Iranian Kurdish leader Simko in Iran against the Bolshevik advance. Similar initiatives were taken by the Bedirhan's with the British (and Maj. Noel) as well as with the Greeks, advancing into Anatolia in 1920. Celadet Bedirhan offered his services to the Greeks to prepare flyers in Kurdish to be printed at the family print-shop in Cairo and flown by the Greek planes to the Kurdish soldiers fighting in the Kemalist army ranks. This network was later taken over by the Azadi members, notably by İhsan Nuri and Col. Halit in 1924, who tried to drag a British support by claiming that their interests would be destroyed by Kemalist Turks seeking for unification with "Turan", hence severing British link to India in Asia. Olson [1989], pp.92-121, 161ff.

25 April 1920) the neighbors to the future Kurdistan from the south (French in Syria and British in Iraq). Hence, Kurdish nationalist elite had to live up to their neighboring interests, in addition to the problem of satisfying the requirements for their entry into the club of states. In order to fulfill the first requirement, the Kurdish nationalists had to overcome with the *British indecision*,⁴⁶¹ whereas for the latter, they needed a genuine nationalist *mass mobilization*.

In fact, the Articles 62-64 of the Treaty of Sevres were neither a success of the 'Kurdish Delegation' led single-handedly by Sherif Pasha, nor it was a genuine international recognition of the 'Kurdish statehood'. These had constituted a mere sign of the *British indecision*, reflected in the text of the Treaty.⁴⁶² That indecision was induced by the presence of *ex post facto* circumstances. The British knew that an explicit recognition of an independent Kurdistan before it is fully justified by British interests would have troubled their mandate covering the Kurdish populated areas of their mandate on Iraq. Even though its initial reliance on British involvement would have abated any future tensions likely to occur against the British interests, the utility of such a new 'nation-statehood' was highly debatable. Hence, the British debated the issue within themselves, for three years. The Treaty Articles 62-64 remained as an interim

⁴⁶¹ Olson argues that British position toward the Kurds changed remarkably from a clear support after 1918, as seen in the activities of Major Noel (otherwise known as 'Lawrence of Kurdistan' in those days) to a cautious negligence in 1923. Olson [1989], pp.83. In 1919, being the occupying power in Iraq to remain there for a foreseeable future, they were concerned with a independent Kurdish state in their neighborhood, given the fact that they had to suppress brutally the Sheikh Mahmoud rebellion in northern Iraq. In April 1920, they assumed mandate on Iraq with growing concerns on how to cut the cost of running the country, considered to be a crucial step-stone for their interests in Iran and India. In May 1921, facing the Kurdish revolts again (this time provoked by Kemalist nationalist officers), and the Turko-French agreement signed in Ankara later that year, rejected all plans (Col. Rawlinson's and Maj. Noel's) to provoke a general Kurdish uprising. By September 1922 when the Kemalists won a decisive victory over the Greeks, the British policy was reduced to border demarcation (i.e. the Mousul Question) with the Kemalist government. Ibid., Chpt.III.

⁴⁶² The options regarding a proposed British support to Kurdish aspirations for a sovereign state had been debated amidst conflicting theses from the India Office and the Foreign and Colonial Office in the early 1920. The genuine formula of 'postponing the resolution of the question for a year' came from R. Vansittart, a British foreign service official, in one of the

answer by the British diplomacy to the question of utility of a Kurdish state to British interests. The British decided to retain the de facto division occurred by the Mudros Armistice between the 'Northern and Southern Kurdistan'.⁴⁶³ The real answer imposed itself on the British with the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 and the ensuing Mousul Question, which was finally resolved in 1926. With the recognition of the Turkish Republic in Lausanne, the Bedirhans lost their hopes for legitimacy in the international system. They left Turkey after the republic was proclaimed in 1923.

The Treaty of Sevres, however, served as an enigmatic success for the Kurdish nationalist imagination. Wary of British inaction and provoked by Kemalist success in Lausanne, the Kurdish nationalist elite staged two consecutive projects for national mobilization: the *Azadi* (Kürdistan İstiklal Cemiyeti) founded in Erzurum in 1923 and *Khoybun* founded in Lebanon in 1927. These projects culminated in the two major rebellions, the Sheikh Said in 1925 and the Ağrı in 1927-30, in the early republican era.

Azadi in its inception, was essentially an alliance between military and tribal elements established by Colonel Halit Bey of Jibran, a former commander of the tribal Kurdish regiments as well as the leader of the Jibran tribe. He served in Erzurum in 1923 and knew well the Kurdish nationalist officers who served in the Ottoman 7th Army corps based in Diyarbakır, where his own garrison was attached in command. Among those officers was the Army Capt. İhsan Nuri, who deserted the army during the Nestorian rebellion, with a group of other officers and few hundred troops, to stage one of their own in Beytüşşebap in September 1924.⁴⁶⁴ This was only a prelude to the Sheikh Said rebellion a year later when the *Azadi* followed an ideological and organizational pattern

inter-agency meetings in the late 1919. This formula was then included in the text of the Treaty of Sevres as Articles 62-64. Olson [1989], p.87.

⁴⁶³ Beşikçi dwells his decolonization argument of divide and rule by the colonial powers on this 'final division'. Beşikçi [1990], p.41, 171.

⁴⁶⁴ McDowall [1996], pp.192-3, Gündoğan (1994), *passim*, Olson [1989], pp.139-42, Van Bruinessen [1992a], pp.417-8.

not so dissimilar to what Kemalist national mobilization adopted in 1919. The tribal leaders, allied with the Sunni religious establishment, banked on the radical secularization of the new republican Turkey in March 1924.⁴⁶⁵ The rebellion aimed at reinstitution of the Islamic sharia in a sovereign Kurdistan. But the much-needed logistical support for which they tried to drag the British in, never materialized.⁴⁶⁶ The intervention by the republican army, on the other hand, came faster than expected.⁴⁶⁷

Was the rebellion premature at its beginning? For many, it was and therefore it could not succeed.⁴⁶⁸ For others, it was divided right from the beginning.⁴⁶⁹ The Sheikh and the tribal nationalist elite expected a ‘national’ support, which they never fully had. The much needed ‘nationalist’ leadership never culminated in another person than the Sheikh himself. Yet the Sheikh called for ‘*kıyam*’, an Islamic rebellion against the infidel, at the time the nationalists were propagating for an independent nation-state. The tribal leaders themselves

⁴⁶⁵ Olson quotes Şerif Fırat arguing that the main motivation for the military establishment in the Beytüşşebap rebellion was the proclamation of the republic in 1923. Olson [1989], pp.140. The one that provoked the Sunni Kurdish establishment was the radical secular reforms. These were the abolition of the Caliphate (law no.431), the Ministry of Sharia and Endowments (law no.429) and the unification of the education system, i.e. abolition of the religious education institutions (law no.430) all in a day on 3 March 1924. The abolition of religious orders and fraternities followed the rebellion on 28 November 1925. Çavdar (1995), pp. 253ff. Gündoğan (1994), pp.82.

⁴⁶⁶ Given the Mousul Question, i.e. demarcation of the Turco-Iraqi border, awaiting a resolution from the League of Nations at the time of the rebellion, precipitated the Turkish claims on British instigation. For such provocative involvement would naturally have brought with it the much needed logistical support as was the case in Sherif Hussein revolt instigated by Lawrence of Arabia. There was neither a Sherif Hussein, nor a Lawrence in the imagined ‘Kurdistan’. Yet there was a clear British interest in the turmoil. Olson argues that these claims cannot be substantiated. Olson [1989], p.191ff.

⁴⁶⁷ The tribal elite sought for British help, which did not come, at least in terms of the logistics. However, it was not only the British interests concerned there, but the French as well. The French, concerned by any possible British enlargement in the area to include Cizre and Diyarbakir, let the republican army troops use the railway that passed from the Syrian territory to the area. McDowall [1996], pp.195, Jwaideh (1960), p.600.

⁴⁶⁸ This brand of argument starts from the Sheikh himself, in his testimony to the panel at his trial and continued by A. Fırat, the Sheikh’s grandson. A. Fırat, interview with Mumcu in Mumcu [1991], p.151-3; also see Gündoğan (1994), pp.173, 179, Kutlay (2002), pp.259ff. Prematureness was due to the earlier Azadi activism in Beytüşşebap. White (2000), pp.74-6, “the rebellion appears to have broken out prematurely”, Jwaideh (1960), p.598.

⁴⁶⁹ For the collaborationist Kurds devised by the divide-and-rule tactics of Turkish imperialism. Beşikçi [1990], pp.239ff. “[W]ithout a strategic plan” in Van Bruinessen [1992a], p.414.

were suffering from their personal vendettas around them, instead of forging a nationalistic unity.⁴⁷⁰ The mobilization project failed, bringing a widespread purge of the religious and nationalist leadership, executions and exiles, followed by other legal and administrative measures to enforce ‘law and order’.

The Sheikh Said project brought two lessons on part of the Kurdish nationalists. One was the problem of logistics which had to be solved outside of the country, rather than reliance on ‘national’ resources that could not be mobilized in full. It was still a national liberation, but it needed to base itself outside its nation, the experience and the circumstances said. The second was the nature of the project should be defined for an effective mobilization. This implied that the nationalists could not rely on religious or tribal/ethnic sentiments alone, as they have seen that religious motivation had been effective not in uniting the Kurdish nation, but in disuniting them by staving off the Alevi tribes.⁴⁷¹ The mobilization had to be organized on a secular tribal/military leadership.

In 1927, Bedirhans re-gathered in Damascus and Beirut. This time, aided logistically by the revolutionary organization of the Armenians, they established *Khoybun*.⁴⁷² The initiative originally planned by the organization

⁴⁷⁰ The military operations conducted by the rebels also targeted the Alevi Lolan and Hormek, previously nomadic tribes which had settled in the ‘territory’ of the Jibrán tribe led by Halit Bey. There were also operations against other Alevi tribes in the area. Olson [1989], pp.149-50.

⁴⁷¹ Inspired by Tucker, Yeğen’s ‘sociology’ attributes to the Sheikh Said rebellion and sheikhdom in general the (somewhat ‘unique’, if we do not count the Islamic Republic of Iran) ‘success’ that religion and nationalism could be brought together. In Yeğen’s ‘re-construction’, this ability of sheikhs as a ‘symbol’ to bring together religion, tribe and ethnicity ensured that “the relationship between Islam and nationalism could be experienced as a complementary relationship, rather than one of a tension” [*sic*]. Yeğen (1999), p.237. Yeğen repeats his ‘omission’ of the Alevi issue here. A political argument by Jwaideh, on the other hand, suggests that “[T]his was not the first time that religion was manipulated. The Turks themselves had often used it both as an agent of unity and disunity”. Jwaideh (1960), p.614. It is possible to multiply the examples of religion-nationalism symbiosis by other cases in Quebec, Bosnia, Ireland beyond the Tucker/Yeğen modality that collates Iran and ‘Kurdistan’.

⁴⁷² Alakom suggests that “all organizations founded in Istanbul [in the early 1900s] and their leading cadres joined in *Khoybun*” (*sic*). Alakom (2001). The fact was the Kurdish nationalist intelligentsia was dominated by three families in those *urban* organizations: Şemdinans, Bedirhans and Babans. The last two had to leave Istanbul after the republic was established and

was essentially a military operation, led by İhsan Nuri, rather than a ‘national’ enterprise. It proved more successful in terms of its operational success, but ended in vain.

The military defeat was arranged for, again by another inter-state cooperation, this time with Iran.⁴⁷³ There had been other revolts organized and suppressed, which have been later listed by the nationalist history until 1930. But no widespread attempt was recorded until the Dersim Rebellion of 1937-38, which had rather different parameters as will be discussed later.

This period between 1918 and 1930 was characterized by a *disorganized proto-nationalism* that failed to mobilize. The absence of a single nationalistic ideological/operational code in mobilizing toward a projected national unity was one reason in defining it as such. The second reason that was instigated in part by the first, is more important: the changing context and parameters of the much-needed international recognition.

The Kurdish nationalism had managed to seize the international context at the time of the Treaty of Sevres in 1920. This ground was all lost by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, until the modern Kurdish revolutionary nationalist movement seized it back again in the 1960s. Before we understand how and why this was possible, we have to discuss the *change* in the international context of recognition and the related question of governmental legitimacy.

went to Damascus, Beirut and Cairo. Khoybun involved these, not *all* of the Istanbul cadres. Besides, Azadi shows there were ‘other’ families, i.e. Jibran, Hasenan, Cemilpaşazades.

⁴⁷³ İhsan Nuri was promoted general and sent back to the area by Khoybun to command military operations supported by the Dashnak Armenians around Mount Ağrı (Ararat). It was not until the Turkish government convinced the Iranians for minor alterations on the Turko-Iranian border to cover the eastern slopes of the mountain, the rebels were finally defeated in 1930. It is interesting that İhsan Nuri found refuge in Iran, lived there under the surveillance of Iranian military intelligence until his death in a traffic accident after the Second World War. For an interesting account on İhsan Nuri, other than his memoirs, see Arfa (1966). Arfa had been the Iranian Chief of Staff at the time when İhsan Nuri found refuge in Iran. Arfa later served as the Iranian Consul General in Istanbul.

4.2 Turkish Modernity and International Legitimacy

For the Ottoman Empire up until the end of the 18th century, no state was considered as its equal.⁴⁷⁴ The sultan considered himself, as his other contemporaries until the late 18th century, free at will in conquest against the infidel. In the universalistic imagination of the Islamic Sharia the realm of the infidel represented the permanent state of war. The legitimacy of his rule and his conquest was thus justified.

The interstate system was established in Europe by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. The Treaty codified the principles of a secular states system, by way of setting *domestic sovereignty* above the authority of the Holy See. Yet it was confined to Christianity, from which it originated.⁴⁷⁵

The European interstate system in the post-Westphalian order was first introduced with the concept of popular legitimacy with the French Revolution. The French had been the first to undertake popular legitimation of their rule by means of plebiscite. This constituted the basis of the recognition of the legitimate sovereignty of the government instituted in the fringe territories by the French conquerors.⁴⁷⁶ The French plebiscites was a way of extracting public confirmation of the annexation in new territories in the early 19th century. So the principle of legitimacy replaced the sovereign will of the monarch. This was further enforced by the popular revolutions of 1848, when plebiscites became a means for the resolution of territorial disputes.⁴⁷⁷

When the French conquest was edged out by other powers in Europe, the Vienna Conference in 1815 introduced the *mutual recognition of sovereignty*

⁴⁷⁴ Though the Ottoman Sultan treated, for the first time, the Habsburg monarch as an equal in the 1606 Treaty of Tsitvatorok. Quataert (2000), p.77.

⁴⁷⁵ Österud (1997).

⁴⁷⁶ Österud (1997), Roth (1999), pp.205.

⁴⁷⁷ Farley (1986), pp.26ff. Roth, *idem*.

and the *principle of sovereign equality* in the European system of states. This meant that once a state's sovereignty had been recognized, the principle of *non-interference* by other states took over.⁴⁷⁸

Deprived of its military might at the beginning of the 19th century, The Ottoman state had understood by then its survival depended on two basic factors: one was the urge to re-assert its sovereignty over the centripetal power of the peripheral notables, the other was to resist the expansion of the European states system at its expense. Given the territorial losses in wars against the Habsburg and the Russian empires, compounded by the rapidly spreading nationalist separatism in its Christian possessions in Europe in the first half of the 19th century, the latter became even more pressing a need to be addressed urgently. The only means to address this problem, apart from a desperate 'politics of balance' which resulted each time more concessions to the Great Powers,⁴⁷⁹ was to have its *international recognition* reassured by entry into the European system of states.

4.2.1 Reading the Ottoman/Turkish Modernity as a System of Legitimacy

It was a matter of little concern for the Ottomans, when the European system of states had originally took off in Westphalia in 1648. In the post-Napoleonic era which opened in the Vienna Congress in 1815, the Ottoman State was also excluded. Having lost the chance of its territorial sovereignty being recognized, the Ottoman State was not immune to the external pressure of the expansion of

⁴⁷⁸ Cassese (1995), p.45.

⁴⁷⁹ In the 19th century the balance of power in Europe involved five Great Powers: Britain, France, Russia, Prussia/Germany and the Habsburg, unable to eliminate each other in a single war. The fate of others, as well as that of the Ottomans, rested on alliances with these. When Muhammad Ali's Eypatian Army provoked by France took to invade Ottoman Middle East, having been denied help by the British, Ottomans sought Russian help by signing Hünkâr İskelesi Treaty of 1833. They had the Russian support, though, in exchange for the right to free passage of Russian vessels from the Turkish Straits. Britain, having realized its mistake and taking the advantage of Ottomans search for balance against the Russians, aided (against French and Russian interests) Ottomans in suppressing Muhammad Ali, in return for

the system at its borders. To become a member of the European family of states and be a subject to its conferral of the legitimacy, the Ottomans had to accept the rules defined by the Europeans. The Ottomans had to *modernize* in order to subsume to a phenomena defined from outside. This was the *double experience of modernity* for the Ottomans. Hence the history of Ottoman modernization had been also a history of its efforts to construct a legitimacy in the international system.

Yet the conferral of recognition was problematic when it came to the Ottomans. By the early 19th century, the act of recognition still depended upon the subjective will of the states, with no explicit rules to guide them. In practice, the states searched for a reliable authority in control of a given territory, capable of conducting normal diplomatic relations and carry out its international obligations toward other states in the system. But the Ottomans had not evolved out of the European states system. They were outsiders to the European canon law and the Christian culture in general. They knew none of the obligations conferred onto the European monarchs by this culture of law. Therefore, the conventional practice of *prescriptive* recognition by the European states should not apply in case of the Ottomans. It needed to prove first that it was capable of undertaking the obligations laid in the European culture, i.e. to ensure its governmental legitimacy as regards to its Christian subjects.

The reforms that brought in Western norms and ways in *Tanzimat* in 1839 and by *Islahat Fermanı* in 1856 and finally by the introduction of constitutional monarchy in 1876 represented the Ottoman plea for recognition by the European states as an equal subject of the international law. In 1839, the Ottoman state introduced for *all* its citizens equality before the law, the right to life, of ownership, of physical integrity of the person and his dignity, of legality

acquisition of dominant position in the Ottoman trade by signing the Treaty of Balta Limanı in 1838. See Hale (2000), p.24ff.

of punishment, of basic tenets of habeas corpus (i.e. “no one shall be executed without trial”), fairness in taxation based on personal income, a Council of Judicial Provisions (*Meclis-i Ahkam-ı Adliye*) to debate enactment of laws and to rule on taxation. The *Islahat Fermanı* in 1856 improved further three of these and introduced also freedom of conscience and faith, whereas the constitution of 1876, conferred constitutional protection on all these rights. In 1839, the Ottoman system of ‘Western’ rights and freedoms had covered almost half of the 17 points laid in the 1789 by the French Declaration of the Rights of Man. By the time the constitutional monarchy was inaugurated in 1876, the Ottoman system boasted eleven of them, which were later refined in the Ottoman constitutional development.⁴⁸⁰

In return for the reforms that ensured equality before the law for its Christian subjects, the Ottomans had been recognized as a European power and therefore ‘invited to participate in the public law and concert of Europe’ first time at the Paris Conference in 1856. This entry meant an explicit recognition of the Empire’s sovereignty, reassured by the principle of non-interference.⁴⁸¹ “The continuation of this *recognition* has since remained one of the Turkish state’s main foreign policy goals”.⁴⁸²

Österud contends that this entry of Ottomans meant also that the European system of states had evolved for the first time beyond the “similarity of culture”.⁴⁸³ In practice, however, the Ottomans had always been regarded as an outsider or the “other”. Hence, they served as a vital means for self-definition by the Europeans over contradicting dualities such as cruelty versus

⁴⁸⁰ Comparison based on matrix table provided in Karal [1962], Table 1, Annex to Vol.8.

⁴⁸¹ Accordingly, the Czarist Russia would cease to act as the protector of the Christian minorities within the Ottoman territories. This was of utmost importance, because Russia had obtained this right with the Treaty of *Küçük Kaynarca* in 1774, at a nominal reciprocal recognition of the Sultan as the Caliph of Crimean Tatars. Hence, despite military defeat and territorial loss, Sultan was satisfied with the recognition of his religious sovereignty in an extraterritorial way. Quataert (2000), p.82.

⁴⁸² Hale (2000), p.27.

⁴⁸³ Österud (1997).

humaneness, barbarism versus civilization, infidels versus true believers. The Turks had been “unspeakable”, terrible, savage, harem-driven, a “divine punishment” for the Christians of Europe who were, by contrast, restrained, sober, just, sexually controlled, rational and moderate.⁴⁸⁴ The “Turkish atrocities” against their Christian subjects in Crete, Bulgaria, Greece,⁴⁸⁵ Kurdistan,⁴⁸⁶ Arabia and Albania⁴⁸⁷ had been mere signs of their “bloody tyranny”. The Allied appeal on 10 January 1917 to the President Wilson in soliciting America’s entry into the war claimed to seek “the reorganization of Europe, guaranteed by a stable regime and based on nationalities [...] [and] setting free of the populations subject to the bloody tyranny of the Turks”.⁴⁸⁸

The problem with the double experience of modernity in case of the Ottomans was that the political insight institutionally incorporated into the system did not alter the relations of the state to its Muslim subjects, but elevated the status of its non-Muslim ‘citizens’. The Ottoman ‘latent contract’ was in force for all, but its ‘practice’ regarding non-Muslims had come under strict scrutiny by Western states. Hence, owing to the arbitrary practice in the European law of states, the legitimacy of the Ottoman system depended on its treatment of the Christian subjects, who were now defined as objects (‘minorities’) within the European [law of] states. The ‘Eastern Question’ was a product of this process.

⁴⁸⁴ Quataert (2000), pp.6-7.

⁴⁸⁵ McCarthy (1996), *passim*.

⁴⁸⁶ See, for example, references to the accounts of missionaries regarding Bedirkhan’s onslaught on Nestorians in 1844-46. Jwaideh (1960), pp.186ff. Jwaideh contends that one of the most important outcomes of the Sheikh Ubeydullah rebellion was the establishment of diplomatic relations by the US with Iran, as instigated by the American missionaries there, under the threat of a massacre that would target them along with the local Christians there. *Ibid.*, p.268. McDowall suggests, Ubeydullah had been a great savior of Armenians and Nestorians when he was a commander in the Ottoman army during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. But a decade later, during his rebellion, he was known as a persistent instigator of attacks on Armenians. McDowall [1996], pp.56 and 65, n.21.

⁴⁸⁷ Jwaideh quotes the Russian daily “Bereg” questioning in 1881 the Turkish role in making use of Kurds as a pretext for not complying with the decisions of the Berlin Treaty of 1878 regarding Armenians, as they previously did by using Albanian Muslims massacring Christian Montenegrins. *Jwaideh, ibid.*, p.274.

The 19th century Ottoman modernization created a judicial/political duality within the state as well as in the society. Strategically the Ottoman state had the urge to move toward and remain within the recognition of the European law of states. But in every step it had to take to satisfy the conditions of this legitimacy, the Ottoman administration conceded to the creation of practical solutions to remedy any objective losses incurred on the Christian minorities.⁴⁸⁹

The increased patronage and consular protection by the Powers over the Christians that raised their social and economic status vis-à-vis the Muslims, had been fuelling the inter-communitarian resentment.⁴⁹⁰ This was further exacerbated by the separatist nationalism instigated by Powers in the Christian territories in Europe and later among the indigenous Christians within the Ottoman mainland. By 1878 the European public law, which had treated (i.e. legitimated) the Ottoman state as an equal subject, thus named it as a mere “Eastern Question”.

The gradual loss of the multi-national character of the Empire meant two things: emergence of a sense of an Ottoman ‘patria’ covering an increasing proportion of its Muslim subjects.⁴⁹¹ Yet the country remained an ‘evolutionary

⁴⁸⁸ Quoted in Roth (1999), p.205 from W. Ofuatey-Kodjoe, *The Principle of Self-Determination in International Law*, NY: Nellen Pub. Co., 1977, p.76.

⁴⁸⁹ For example, a 1876 law enlarged the conscription base for the imperial army, requiring Ottoman Christians to serve. But a parallel arrangement institutionalized the purchase of exemption by a special tax. When this loop was broken by another law in 1909, hundreds of thousands of Ottoman Christians fled the empire. Quataert (2000), p.175.

⁴⁹⁰ By the early 19th century, the capitulations granted to foreign states as unilateral privileges in foreign trade was enlarging to exclude the citizens of the beneficiary state from the Ottoman jurisdiction. Hundreds of thousands of non-Muslims were distributed or sold passports by the foreign embassies, who later, by extension of capitulation privileges, assumed exclusive judicial functions as to ‘their’ citizens in the empire. Their wealth, multiplied via tax immunities, surpassed the Muslims who mainly lived on tax farming or manual labor. See Keyder [1987], p.20-3; Quataert (2000), pp.77-9. The state had thus been deprived of an allied national bourgeoisie to complement the administrative reform by social and economic integration into the Western system of states. But instead, the class divisions followed the religio-ethnic ones, producing confrontation. Keyder, *ibid.*, pp.44, 57.

⁴⁹¹ Hale estimates that Muslims (Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Albanians and Muslim Slavs) constituted about two thirds of a total of around 26 million population in the mid-19th century.

fossil',⁴⁹² despite a century of reforms conducted in the name of 'saving the state' by the state. Although its relative success in legitimation within the European law of states until the First World War, this 'technology' of state salvation aimed at neither the creation of a secular national sovereignty, nor a modern nation-statehood.⁴⁹³

The rights that never existed in the Ottoman system included the principle of national sovereignty, the freedom of expression, enforcement of rights by public military forces, accountability of the government to the citizens, the rule of law and the separation of powers.⁴⁹⁴ The sovereignty could not be national. The sultan could not be held accountable to his subjects. Nor his authority derived from the divine law of Sharia could be overruled by laws that would bind, among others, himself as well. Same applied to his ultimate authority, representing the unity of the state with Islam that could never be shared by secular political organs of a modern state, which did not derive their legitimacy from the Sharia.

Following the territorial losses in Europe, the total population had fallen to around 17-18 million, of which 72 percent were Muslims. After the loss of all European territories following the Balkan Wars, Ottoman State had a population of 18.5 million in 1914, with more than 80 percent being Muslims. Hale (2000), p.15. It was this increase in coherence in terms of the population and contiguity in territory had brought an ideological insight to the Ottoman reformer elite, evolving in the order of Ottomanism in the mid-19th century to Islamism under Abdulhamid II in 1876-1908 and then onto the emergence of Turkism after the Balkan wars. Çavdar, based on the official estimates in 1919, argues that the post-war population within the borders of the "National Pact" proclaimed by the last Ottoman parliament was about 14 million, of which less than a tenth constituted the Armenians and Greeks. Çavdar (2001), vol.1, pp.15-19.

⁴⁹² Hobsbawm [1992], p.38.

⁴⁹³ Bora, contends that nationalism emerged in the Ottoman Empire by the late-19th century, as a recurring form of European nationalism to convert the Ottoman polity into a nation-state. For him, this was not only a 'late' phenomenon –as regards to Habsburg, but also a Hobsbawmian proto-nationalism wrapped around religious identities, therefore its previous forms had been in continuity with it. Such consciousness of continuity, for Bora, was based on pre-war Ottoman technology of 'saving the state'. Bora [1998], pp.15-19. Ersanlı-Behar, on the other hand, reverses Bora's assertion by pointing at the indecision by the Ottoman intelligentsia and reformers on how to define the 'nation' in the Ottoman Empire throughout the 19th century. The three successive episodes, namely Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism, as representing respectively civic, anti-imperialist (West) and ethnic/irredentist forms of nationalism, each reflected the historical contraction of the Ottoman population and territory. Ersanlı-Behar (1992), pp.63-78.

⁴⁹⁴ Karal [1962], *idem*.

The Kemalist liberation program, that followed the collapsed of the Empire, by contrast was based on popular legitimacy when they convened in Ankara in April 1920 mediated after a series on local and regional congresses.⁴⁹⁵ This was compiled into a new text of constitution submitted to the nationalist parliament in Ankara as early as September 1920.⁴⁹⁶ In a separate “Declaration by the Turkish Grand National Assembly”, extracted from the preamble of the proposed constitution, the self-defined secular and popular will of the “people of Turkey” read as the following:

[T]he Turkish Grand National Assembly has constituted to restore the [right to] existence and independence within the national boundaries [...] Therefore, [it is] convinced that it may do so by way of making the people of Turkey the master of its own will, whose life and independence is known to the sole and a sacred end. The Turkish Grand National Assembly has under its command an Army, established to defend the nation against the imperialist [...] aggressors who insult the existence and independence of the nation and with an aim to punish those who take action to subvert this objective.⁴⁹⁷

The Declaration involved a “people of Turkey” within the “national boundaries” expressing the *national unity of a people* and its *contiguity with territorial control*. There was not a mention of ethnic differences, but a clear definition of the aggression against the people. The clear assertion of an *army under the command of the Assembly* meant that this *popular will* was poised not to conquer, but to defend itself against this aggression. Therefore, this *will* was different than the ‘subjective will of a Sovereign’ to declare war at his own wish. Its legitimacy lied with the command of a national will.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁵ For a detailed account of these ‘nationalistic’ congresses, see Tanör (1992a), *passim*. The interesting point here is that the popular legitimation pattern had been there, as mediated by these congresses and an armed resistance had already started, when Mustafa Kemal joined in. Tanör also states that a model republican statelet in “Elviye-i Selase” had been established as early as 1919, which might have served as a political trajectory at the beginning. *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁶ This text was more like a government program than that of a constitution. Hence, it had been later referred to as the “Program of Populism”. Tanör (1992), p.198.

⁴⁹⁷ Tanör (1992), p.200.

⁴⁹⁸ Within two months of the this concise declaration of the popular will, a constitution was adopted on 20 January 1921. The Article 1 of this constitution defined the sovereignty as one

Following the decisive victory over the invading Greeks and during the negotiation of the new peace with the Powers in Lausanne in 1923, the Kemalist argument was based on the new, secular and national concept of sovereignty. This creation would involve the civil and political rights and freedoms that would flow from a secular/popular will which could have never existed in the Ottoman cosmopolitan regime.⁴⁹⁹ Hence, the Treaty conferred a *prescriptive* recognition on the new Turkish state, in exchange for its *a posteriori* legitimization performance.⁵⁰⁰ The republican modernity was therefore a *project* of legitimacy at its inception. Its *performance*, however, was bound by its international obligations that flowed from the recognition of its sovereign equality.

Turkish modernization was a project of popular legitimization with different layers of economic, social and political imaginations. The century-old cultural (Mardin)⁵⁰¹ or political (Heper)⁵⁰² or economic/financial (Keyder)⁵⁰³ myth of

which rested unconditionally and in entirety with the nation. Then the Article 3 defined the new polity as the “State of Turkey”. Gözübüyük and Kili (1982), pp.---.

⁴⁹⁹ Basing on this seemingly ‘complementary-extensional’ character of the republican project that filled the gap in the Ottoman process of political/legal reform, some scholars argue that the Turkish Republic constitutes a “Third Constitutional Monarchy”, in its capacity as the continuation of the Ottoman constitutional evolution. See Tanör referring to Goloğlu in Tanör (1992), p.196. The problem in this argument is not its reductionism in rendering the republican era to a mere extension of Ottoman constitutionalism. It is but the failure to understand why the Ottoman state could not evolve further into a ‘third’ constitutional monarchy that would be based on a truly national sovereignty –rendering the sultan to a mere figurehead monarch as it happened in other European constitutional monarchies. The explanation as to why it could not happen, lies with the fact that the sultan, as a matter of distinction from the ‘others’ in Europe, was also the caliph. The Kemalist sequence of abolishing *first* the sultanate and *later* the caliph in that sense, was not only a matter of political conjuncture that came with the Ottoman government’s attempt to share with them the Turkish delegation at the first Lausanne Conference in 1922. It was to remove the political claims of the sultan to universal Islamic sovereignty from his Islamic leadership. In this sense, the Kemalists wanted to ‘secularize’ the caliph first, by abolishing his political person and then, his Islamic person in 1924. They knew that they could have not done the other way round. For a concise discussion on the constitutional distinctions in the said episode, which made it a ‘revolutionary regime’, see *Ibid.*, pp.196-8. Also see Çavdar (1995), p.243.

⁵⁰⁰ , which would be partly monitored by the League of Nations.

⁵⁰¹ Also see Mardin (1985) and Mardin [1991], p.87.

⁵⁰² Heper, M., *State Tradition in Turkey*, Walkington, Beverley: The Eothen Press, 1985, p.37ff.

“saving the state” served as a historical trajectory for the republican elite. With the establishment of the republic, it was nationally-defined to with a recourse to the legitimating will of its people.⁵⁰⁴

The project fundamentally depended on two⁵⁰⁵ determinants: *nationalism* (i.e. national/republican, secular state) and *populism* (i.e. populist developmentalism). The ultimate aim of populism was to ‘nationalize’ the people, politics and the economy to achieve a coherent and cohesive “self-standing society”⁵⁰⁶ with all its classes, desirably led by (a national) bourgeoisie. Its deficiencies in economic and social development led the political level shrink rather than to expand, at the cost of losing its legitimacy, at times replacing it by a recurrently military or pseudo-democratic state.⁵⁰⁷

4.2.2 The Kurdish Nationalist Claims for International Legitimacy 1919-1923

In an introduction to his detailed study into the international dimension of the ‘Kurdish Problem’, Kurubaş argues that this dimension had *first* come about by the end of the First World War. For the author, however, it was not the Kurds but the Great Powers who played a main role in this becoming.⁵⁰⁸ Defining it as a ‘problem’ and attributing to it an ‘international dimension’ begs further questions as to their *context* and *content* in his argument.

⁵⁰³ Keyder (1987), p.27ff and 46.

⁵⁰⁴ On the ‘revolutionary image’ of and undermining of the traditional legitimacy by the early republicans, see Eisenstadt [1981].

⁵⁰⁵ See Zürcher (2001), pp.44-55.

⁵⁰⁶ Keyder calls this a “self-generating societal process”. But his concept is presented as a dialectical corollary which have never gained the upperhand against the “from above” reality. Keyder (1997), pp.37-51. Whereas for Heper this “option” is the most desired, it’s a situation of “instrumental polity”, a situation where the civil society accomplishes itself, as originally desired by Kemalism. Heper (1985), pp.4-16 and 146-54. Interesting similarity here is the idea of an *imagined moment* of self-consciousness of all classes in the society.

⁵⁰⁷ Held argues that a ‘strong state’, as was the case for central and southern Europe throughout 1930s, may emerge under such circumstances. In order to rule out such attempts happening again, representative governments use progressively ‘strong arm’ tactics. Held [1996], p.247.

⁵⁰⁸ Kurubaş (1997), pp.11-2.

Kurubaş aptly dissects a ‘beginning’ and an ‘international dimension’ brought about by the imperialist policies of the Great Powers. But this context seems to present a picture of intervention by the Powers in the ensuing politicization of the Kurdish nationalist claims. This may be an argument considering that it was, after all, the promise of the Powers to allow the principle of self-determination apply to a state of Kurdistan. There was, however, also a *power struggle* by the Kurdish elite for *legitimacy* that sought *international recognition*. This ‘internal dimension’ should be seen in no less significance than the international one.

By the time the First World War ended, the Ottoman government lost its effective territorial and legal control on its country. But there was a problem with the realization of the pre-war plan of the long-standing promises made to the Armenians for the last fifty years or so, the Powers had a The Kurdish nationalist elite knew that the Kurds had no more been simple objects shaped by big state interests. They actively pursued an internationalist policy to become recognized by the Powers as a *subject* of international law. To that extent, the Treaty of Sevres established their ‘right to self-determine’.

The problem that arises here begs two questions. Was there really a competing pattern of two nationalisms, i.e. Turkish and Kurdish, who wanted to make a nation of their own out of the Muslim subjects of the Empire between 1919 and 1923? How was that the Kurdish nationalists failed to realize their right to self-determination as established by an international treaty? To answer these, we have to refer first to the Kurdish nationalist literature, which tend to see the republican modernity either as ‘coercion’ or ‘reluctance’ or ‘deception’.

The first line of argument is the ‘Kemalist coercion’ whereby Kutlay claims what Kemalists did to mediate Kurdish consent was simple coercion. Kutlay, based on French documents ‘uncovered’ by H. Yıldız, argues that the French knew that the telegrams from the Kurdish notables sent to international

conferences “against [the interests of] Kurdishness” were forcibly extracted by the local officials.⁵⁰⁹

A second line involves the argument of ‘Kemalist reluctance’. In this brand, Yıldız’s ethno-symbolism runs atop when it comes to the question of ‘competing nationalisms’, which stimulates his ethno-relationalist analysis. Yıldız’s analysis elaborates on a dual pattern: first one is based on a rather clumsy argument that attributes an ‘essential anti-Christianism’ to the Kemalist nationalism. This was an ideological sequel of the Union and Progress (CUP) type ethnicist Turkification. Hence, the anti-imperialist discourse in Kemalism had only been a by-product of the anti-Greek and anti-Armenian nature of its nationalist ideology. Therefore the Kemalists found no difficulty in making sweeping references to Islam in their nationalist propaganda to mobilize Muslims. Thus, for Yıldız, the national movement sought to convert the anti-Christian sentiments of a bunch of peasants, who had no interest in national consciousness, into a sense of ‘patria’ and ‘nation’.⁵¹⁰ The Kemalists had to argue these ‘alien’ notions as general as possible, which compelled them to accept reluctantly a sort of pluralism in their mobilization discourse and strategy.⁵¹¹ This discourse, as the author seems to imply, was ‘good’ since it complied with a ‘state of nature’.

Yıldız’s second pattern relates to the ‘evil’ project, the ethno-secular homogenization embedded to the Kemalist nationalism. He places the twin-principles of ‘full independence’ and the ‘unconditional and unreserved

⁵⁰⁹ Kutlay (2002), p.204. Whereas Kutlay refers to H. Yıldız, the latter finds the telegrams by the Kurds in protest of the Allied and Greek occupations as genuine. H.Yıldız, (1996), pp.80-4. Hence, the ‘detection capabilities’, attributed by Kutlay to the French, regarding the genuineness of the Kurdish protest telegrams as an expression of the popular will, has thus been denied by his own reference. It may feasibly be said that by 1919, the technology of forcible extraction of the popular will had been a long-standing French practice that began in the Napoleonic conquest. See Roth (2000), pp. 205. It is also worth noting that the legitimization by plebiscite as a French technology of extracting popular consent to government (i.e. instituted by the French conquest) was a practice applied to the fringe territories in Christian Europe only, *not* to the French colonies.

⁵¹⁰ A. Yıldız (2001), p.89.

sovereignty of the nation' to the base of the nationalistic polity. However, the popular element, was misused by the Kemalists. The Kemalist populism then, as inspired by Rousseau, identified national sovereignty with Mustafa Kemal's person, like a philosopher-king. So Kemal acted as the single denominator of the new regime.⁵¹²

To be concise, in the face of all these impressionistic examples, the Kemalist concept of national sovereignty has to be reluctantly pluralist at the beginning. It was later identified with the person of the Kemal, as the single man. Then it began to unfold with its ethnicist/secularist essence. So it was neither popular, nor anti-imperialist as it seemed to the eyes, other than Yıldız's. The rest of the analysis is filled with impressionistic ethno-symbolist indexing of the ethnicist and nationalist expressions contained in the early-republican texts.

A third argument that reflects in the Kurdish nationalist literature on the republican modernity is the 'Kemalist deception'. In his memoirs, Anter has Sheikh Abdulbari Küfrevi tell the standard account in first person:

Son, I committed a crime against humanity and my own nation. I will confess it to you with my deepest apologies in these last days of my life, so that you may convey it to my nation in the future. [...] In 1919, Kemal Pasha came to Kurdistan. [I and other Kurds protected him [from the Ottoman government]. We signed [in at] the Erzurum Congress [and did so again at] the Sivas Congress. Let me say it in short: Kemal Pasha confirmed many times that he would observe the rights of the Kurdish nation. [...] But the man, after he signed the Lausanne Treaty and founded the republic, turned his back at all of us. By finding a pretext for each of them, he executed or exiled all the powerful Kurdish personalities and families who helped him. Look at me now. Bedir Bey's children [...], Colonel Halit, Bitlis deputy Yusuf Ziya, and all the Dersimis.⁵¹³

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.98-100.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, p.97.

⁵¹³ Anter [1990], pp.91-2. A Kurdish leftist Anter's dubbing of the Sheikh exemplifying 'executions and exiles' with secular Kurdish nationalists such as the *Azadi* leaders, Bedirhan's and Dersimis is interesting. The Sheikh, on the other hand, is the son Sheikh Mohammad Kufrevi, one of the five Nakshbandi chaliphs sent by Mevlana Khalid to Kurdistan in the early 19th century. Anter thus bridges the gap between these Nakshbandi sheikhs (including Seyyid Abdulkadir's father Sheikh Ubeydullah) and the secular revolutionaries in the past, making it a

The myth of ‘Kemalist deception’ recurs more in the secular revolutionary tradition of Kurdish nationalist literature. For example, Beşikçi straightforwardly names it an ‘imperialist deception’.⁵¹⁴ In his earlier work, though, Beşikçi had argued differently. There, after praising the way the Turkish and Kurdish fraternity mediated by the Kemalists, Beşikçi named the feudal/tribal landlords and bourgeoisie as the main culprit, because Kemal simply could not control the policies they imposed, which caused further exclusion of the Kurdish poor.⁵¹⁵

For Yeğen, the introduction of a civic egalitarian understanding of nationality in the 1924 constitution on a universal criteria of secular and non-ethnic republican citizenship is a deceptive one. A ‘closer reading’ of the text, for the author, reveals that this category had been ‘deceptively’ constructed. For example Article 12 of the 1924 constitution prescribed that the knowledge of the Turkish language as a prerequisite to qualify for election to the parliament. By attributing ethnic Turkishness to these civic bonds, these republican universal categories proved deceptive themselves, rather than their perpetrators.⁵¹⁶ It is not a personal, but a categorical deception. In becoming so, the author argues that these categories narrowed down by arbitrary linguistic barriers imposing the use of Turkish as the main national language for participation in the public life.⁵¹⁷ For Yeğen, this “narrow discourse of the State” which denied the existence of Kurds continued until 1990s.⁵¹⁸

unified heritage of exiles and executions for ‘all Kurds’. For another statistical account of Mevlana Khalid’s Nakshbendi proselytizers, where the number raises to a much credible 67 (of which 33 were Kurds) see Ünlü and Aydın (2005), pp.45-6.

⁵¹⁴ See Beşikçi [1990], p.95.

⁵¹⁵ Beşikçi [1969], pp.374-88, 409. The [Kurdish] feudal/tribal leaders were in perfect harmony with their [Turkish] bourgeois brothers in the War of Independence. Hence the liberation did not target the feudal order [in the east]. *Idem*.

⁵¹⁶ Yeğen (1999), pp.110ff.

⁵¹⁷ Yeğen draws the Article 8 of the program of the Republican People’s Party which makes the knowledge of Turkish as a condition for party membership. *Ibid*, pp.123ff.

⁵¹⁸ Yeğen draws “racist” texts as examples from the single-party era of 1930s, including the public prosecutor’s indictment at the *Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths* (DDKO) case, where the prosecutor claimed that there had never been a migration to the Eastern provinces to

In fact, Yeğen's position is tenable. Every modernizing practice can be considered as an assault depending on the angle the scholar chooses to look at those practices. Yeğen's is a Kurdish nationalist angle. But the benchmark here is that his 're-articulation' of history out of its 'conventional' context amounts to a wholesale denial of modernity. It is true that it had been painful in terms of the minorities when the Western European nationalities consolidated from the mid-19th century to the end of the First World War on a *national* economy, *national* language, *national* law, even in some cases, a *nationalized* religion, a *nationalized* history and a culture, so on.

There are excellent comparative examples in the scholarly literature analyzing this consolidation process of nationality in Europe. E. Weber, as referred earlier, analyzes the process how the French peasantry transformed into a nation in the latter half of the 19th century.⁵¹⁹ Watkins argues that a gradual "nationalization" of markets and culture went along with a waning of regional differences and the creation of a national community beyond politics and economics. By drawing local communities into national networks, the decline from 1870 to 1960 in demographic diversity was accompanied a decline in linguistic diversity.⁵²⁰ Watkins also argues that even after the linguistic homogenization, the cultural residues survived. It would be naïve to claim that these homogenization processes had all been the natural course of history and the nation-state did not intervene in it. Hence it would equally be a negation of the fact that some regions defied the said processes persistently.⁵²¹

On the question of 'nationalization of citizenship', as Yeğen criticizes the republican project for attempting, there are enough archaeological material in

leave behind today's people there as a sedimentation, neither there was in the world a foreign race called as Kurds by themselves. Ibid, pp.126ff.

⁵¹⁹ . See Weber, E. (1979).Elsewhere, he discusses the demographic aspects of such transition in Western Europe. Weber, E. (1992).

⁵²⁰ Watkins (1991), pp.45ff, 78-88, 127ff.

⁵²¹ *Idem.*

individual histories of the European nation-states. Brubaker for one, compares the respective histories of France and Germany. In the beginning, the French case involved an incipient ethnicization of nationhood, which firmly established in 1848, came to mean “the congruence of legal and ethnocultural nationality as a desirable and ‘natural’ state of affairs. This had been the culmination of the *jus sanguinis* principle as the basis for French citizenship in the earlier half of the 19th century.⁵²² But the principle of *jus soli* later became eminent due to a compelling mediation of the demographic and military interests when it was finally adopted by law in 1889.⁵²³ In the German case, it was again the play of ‘national’ interests as defined by the state. It was the revisionist policies of the Wilhelmine Germany in 1913, when the state abandoned the dual principle (either by territory –*jus soli* or by descent –*jus sanguinis*), since the German minorities outside the mainland (*Auslandsdeutsche*) were to be protected for future [imperial] expansion.⁵²⁴

The crucial question here is not whether the nation-states had enough means to alleviate the ‘minority pain’ at the time, but one relates to Yeğen’s teleological enterprise to ‘re-articulate a history of the present’. In fact, we do know even before reading Yeğen in his own terms, that the early Republican modernity involved suppression of cultural and social differences, an enforced homogenization and ‘nationalization’ of culture, history, language, economy, education and even the life-styles. But, his persisting reluctance to acknowledge comparative examples from other nation-building processes that took a century since the mid-19th century is telling. This is the Faucaultian refusal to acknowledge the universality dimension involved in modernity. Without such repudiation, the teleological project is not complete. Hence, Yeğen knows all too well that his ‘analysis’ would perfectly apply to *any* state in Europe undertaking the said process of national consolidation in the said

⁵²² Brubaker (1992), pp.98

⁵²³ Ibid., pp.103-10.

⁵²⁴ Ibid., pp.115ff.

historical context. Yet his authoritative text needs to keep the audience in a ‘re-articulated’ context, through which only his assertions can pass through.

Why is it that the question of ‘competing legitimacies’ so painful for the Kurdish nationalist discourse, other than Beşikçi? Elsewhere, the Western positivist scholarship quotes Beşikçi’s admission of the undeniable success by the Kemalists, as regards to the Kurdish nationalist elite, in mediating the Kurdish tribal allegiance into a unified popular will.⁵²⁵ The ‘Kemalist coercion’ argument has been non-contextually placed in time. What the Kurdish nationalist discourse detected as ‘coercion’, have been categorized by the Western scholars as ‘Kemalist incorporation’ in the post-1930 single-party era, rather than before.⁵²⁶ In the latter, there is a state authority, with a monopoly of coercion. Whereas in the former, i.e. pre-republican era with an authority/power vacuum, the Kurdish elite *did have* an option in implementing ‘the deal’ with a neighboring project of Armenian statehood.

This was a process in which the Kurdish proto-nationalist elite wanted to become the leaders of Kurdish public/political interests.⁵²⁷ But their ‘imagined Kurdistan’⁵²⁸ had been a *private* one.⁵²⁹ They could neither consolidate their individual private interests within themselves,⁵³⁰ not they were able to re-define them as the public/political interests for an entire ‘Kurdish nation’. The British and the other Powers searched in vain a ‘Kurdish public interest’ that consolidated the project of a ‘would-be nation’ onto which they could confer

⁵²⁵ See Olson [1989], pp.66, 232. McDowall [1996], pp.187-91.

⁵²⁶ For example, see McDowall [1996], Chpt. 9. The

⁵²⁷ In his letter to the British on ----- Sherif Pasha nominated himself as the founder-president

⁵²⁸ In order to counter-balance the Armenian territorial claims, in a memorandum issued to the powers at the Paris Peace Conference,

⁵²⁹ Bedirhans sense of a Kurdish ‘patria’ ---. In a letter to the French, Emin Ali Bedirhan urged the French government for the restoration of his kingdom, which existed since the Assyrian’s left in the 7th century and lasted until the mid-19th.

⁵³⁰ Private rivalries between the tribal elite involved: Bedirhan’s against Şemdinans, Cemilpaşazades, Babans; Azadi tribal/military elite against the Alevi tribes; Sunni sheikhs resented by the Alevis, Armenian Dashnak support to Bedirhans resented by the Sunni Sheikhs, etc.

international legitimacy, and thus, recognition. This was the subject matter of competition.

4.2.3 The Path to Nation-statehood in the Inter-war Period

At the end of the First World War in 1918, the establishment of new states was left to the individual will of Powers that ‘govern’ the international public law, as a matter of practical recognition. This was an extremely arbitrary system without universally recognized formalization. The ambiguity involved in this system of recognition was governed by the customary practice in international peace conferences which later culminated in the establishment of the League of Nations. The League as well as the conferences as its precursors had been dominated by an uncontested core of ‘Great Powers’. The membership at the League, in its establishment after the First World War however, was not bound by a rule that required the exclusive recognition of an entity as a state.⁵³¹

The recognition of sovereignty had been an arbitrary practice governed by the Powers. Yet, the minority undertakings culminating from the 19th century international conferences/treaties “were no longer voluntarily assumed by states as gestures of international goodwill [...], but were externally dictated preconditions for the new nation-states’ membership in the international society.”⁵³² The League of Nations system thus included a formal protection scheme for minorities, as an alternative to independent statehood, at its establishment. Hence, it was again the arbitrary system of state recognition was to define the sovereign states, in order to define the minorities to be protected within them as such.

⁵³¹ The membership of the League, according to the Article 1 of its Covenant, depended on an admission by a two-thirds majority of the League’s Assembly and on the condition of showing proof of [the candidate’s] intentions to observe its obligations and the regulations of the League. Hence, India and the ‘white dominions’ of the British Empire had been among the signatories and original members. Österud (1997).

⁵³² Preece (1997).

Meanwhile, a powerful rhetoric regarding the principle of self-determination had been propounded by the Allied Powers at the Paris Peace Conference. At the time of the founding of the League, this principle proved an explosive background for the above explained ‘arbitrary recognition/minority protection’ scheme. Therefore, the ‘principle’ was not included into the text of the League’s Covenant in the form of a right.⁵³³ In exchange the League, by way of establishing a Committee on New States, undertook the project of creation and non-creation of nation-states in Europe.⁵³⁴

The League system, hence free from a normative framework to define sovereignty-induction (self-determination) as well as recognition, on two sets of double-standards. The first set was related to the scope of the principle of self-determination, which was deemed irrelevant where the will of the people was to run counter to the political, economic and strategic interests of the victorious Allied Powers. Hence, at the time when the Paris Peace Conference was to convene, The US President Wilson, as the most fervent proponent of the principle of self-determination, said in a speech that “it was not within the privilege of the conference of peace to act upon the right of self-determination of any peoples except those which had been included in the territories of the defeated empires.”⁵³⁵

The second set was a distinction placed in between the new states of Eastern Europe: the first group, whose recognition depended on their acceptance of certain minority guarantees (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Serbia,

⁵³³ Cassese (1995), p.27. Emerson notes that in the original proposal by the US President Wilson (and Colonel House) to the preliminary drafts of the League Covenant, the principle of self-determination was squared as a ‘continuing right’ with the Covenant’s guarantee of the territorial integrity and political independence of the League’s member states. This proposal also involved ‘territorial readjustments’ which might be undertaken, basing on the “changes in the [present] racial conditions and aspirations, pursuant to the principle of self-determination”. Emerson (1960), pp.300-305. The proposal must have been debated in length as to its ‘explosive’ nature, before being dropped in later drafts.

⁵³⁴ Preece (1997).

⁵³⁵ Quoting from the speech in San Francisco, 17 September 1919, in Wilson, *War and Peace*, vol.II, New York and London, 1927. Cassese (1995), p.26

Croatia, Slovenia, Greece, Albania, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia) and the second group, as the losers of the war (Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire) who had been imposed by the victors the minority guarantees as a condition for peace.⁵³⁶ The international recognition that was conferred upon involved a nation-state in all cases, *but* one: the Ottoman Empire, which was yet to be dissolved into its national constituencies in Asia.

The Treaty of Sevres of 11 August 1920, thus, had been a product of this context. It involved the dismemberment of the Empire with one apparent (Armenia) and several projected (Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kurdistan and other Arab lands) nation-states. Among those new ‘nations’, Armenia, being the only Christian entity outside Europe was projected an automatic recognition. The rest would be left to the mercy of the colonial powers to assume mandate over their territories.⁵³⁷

The project of ‘Kurdistan’ presented a unique case. Contrary to the case of Armenia, there was no mention of it in the Mudros Armistice signed at the end of war in November 1918. Yet, in December 1919 Kurdistan qualified as a new nation-state project, when the Boghos-Sherif agreement delineated the southern borders of the projected Armenian state. In August 1920, this was incorporated in the Articles 62-64 of the Treaty of Sevres.

There were two problems. One of them was that, in the meanwhile, in 25 April 1920 the British assumed a ‘Class A’ mandate over Iraq. This status meant, to paraphrase from the Article 22 of the League Covenant, that the “Iraqi nation” had reached a stage of development where its existence as an independent nation can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of

⁵³⁶ Preece (1997).

⁵³⁷ According to the League Covenant, there were three classes of mandates: Class A mandates involved the former Ottoman territories. This status conferred a provisional recognition to these territories as future ‘nation-states’, until the time they are able to stand alone. Class B and Class C involved African and southern Pacific territories, which were likely to remain under mandatory administration as autonomous or integral part of that administration.

administrative advice and assistance by [a Mandatory] the British. Hence, while assuming a mandate over Iraq and legitimating it as a nation for future statehood, the British had rendered the Kurds, by the norms of international law, a ‘minority status’⁵³⁸ which should be protected under the League of Nations system, once the Iraqi nation-state assumed its sovereign independence.⁵³⁹

Second one problem was which the British tried to resolve at an inter-agency conference in Cairo in March 1921: the legitimacy of the British mandate and its regime headed by Faisal in Baghdad. A ‘plebiscite’ organized in Iraq by the British the same year legitimated the throne of Faisal. In turn, the “Anglo-Iraqi Treaty” of 1922 legitimated the British presence in Iraq. By the time the Kurdish nationalist elite were trying to persuade them for the project of “Kurdistan”,⁵⁴⁰ the British were in practical breach of the Article 62-64 of the Treaty of Sevres in the ‘Iraqi Kurdistan’.⁵⁴¹ The British *indecision* on the fate of ‘Kurdistan’ had not been an accidental one.

⁵³⁸ McDowall [1996], p.166.

⁵³⁹ League protection was not conceivable *before* the independence, as the League’s minority protection system was designed to protect the minorities in small and new states. The League’s minority safeguards were deemed unnecessary for politically mature Western European states, who had the ‘standard of civilization’. Preece (1997). The Kingdom of Iraq did win its independence in 1932 and became a member of the League the same year, by accepting its minority obligations.

⁵⁴⁰ Olson’s account on the initiatives by the Kurdish nationalist elite in Istanbul reveals Bedirhans’ exchange with Maj. Noel in Baghdad in 1921, Emin Ali and Celadet Bedirhan’s initiative at the High Commission in Istanbul from 1919 to 1921, with new proposals in April-May 1921; Seyyid Abdulkadir’s intervention with the British both in Istanbul and through his envoy in Baghdad, proposing a British-sponsored Kurdish rebellion of the sheikhs in northeastern Kurdistan to join forces with Simko in Iran against the “Bolshevik threat”. These initiatives became desperate when Bedirhans approached the Greeks in Istanbul, proposing that Celadet Bedirhan prepare flyers in Kurdish and Greek to be flown by the Greek planes over the Kurdish volunteers fighting in the Kemalist army ranks against the Greek occupation. Olson [1989], pp.90-129.

⁵⁴¹ McDowall argues that the electoral law as revised in December 1920 [for the Iraqi plebiscite next year], reveals that Britain had no longer any real intention to safeguard the Kurdish interests as laid in the Treaty. McDowall [1996], p.166.

By the time they won a decisive victory over the Greeks in 1922, the Kemalist government in Ankara knew by experience the model⁵⁴² that the Powers would try to impose at the peace conference to convene in Lausanne. The League system of minority safeguards imposed by the Powers urged the Kemalist government to make the ‘definition of minorities in the new state of Turkey’ in the narrowest way as possible. Given the fact that it already had a ‘governmental legitimacy’, having won a war of liberation, basing on an uncontested popular support formulated over a nationalist polity, the text of the treaty should involve minimum interference to its sovereign independence.

The prevailing criteria for the definition of minorities in Europe in 1920s involved religion, language and ‘race’.⁵⁴³ The Turkish delegation at the Lausanne Conference succeeded to limit the definition of minorities to the non-Muslims in Turkey, by suppressing the Powers’ claims as to the minority status of the Muslim groups. These claims had an explosive character, insofar as the Kemalist mobilization rested largely on a Muslim unity.⁵⁴⁴ This was achieved in exchange for Turkey’s additional undertakings as to generalized linguistic, cultural, religious liberties by the Turkish government.⁵⁴⁵ But the real success was that only the rights conceded to the non-Muslims were subject to international protection.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴² That experience involved the terms of the treaties with the losers of the First World War, except Germany in Versailles: The Treaty of St Germain-en-Laye signed by Austria in 1919, Trianon by Hungary in 1920, Neuilly-sur-Seine by Bulgaria in 1919 and finally Sevres by the Ottoman Empire in 1920.

⁵⁴³ This argument by Oran cannot be openly contested. Oran (2004), p.62. But, Preece notes that ‘culture’, along with language, had been introduced by the Versailles Treaty of 1919, as the most recent criteria in defining minorities, drawn from the liberal countries of Western Europe. She argues that cultural/linguistic identity had been a legitimate basis then in 1918-19 for claiming right to self-determination for peoples inhabiting a particular area with a unique language and culture. Yet her example to this involves a unification, one between Czechs and Slovaks, rather than one of formation of a ‘separate’ entity. Preece (1997).

⁵⁴⁴ From the Report of the Sub-commission on the Minorities to Lord Curzon, Chairman of the First Commission, dated 7 January 1923. Quoted in Oran (2004), p.73.

⁵⁴⁵ Articles 38 and 39 of the Treaty of Lausanne. See text at <http://www.lib.byu.edu> accessed as of 12 March 2006.

⁵⁴⁶ Article 44/1 of the Treaty prescribed that Turkey accepted the guarantee of the League with respect to the provisions that affect its non-muslim nationals. <http://www.lib.byu.edu> Oran notes that this provision has been modeled largely on the Article 12/1 of the Treaty of

The success by the Turkish government in restricting the minority status only to its non-Muslim subjects has been a source of resentment in the Kurdish nationalist literature.⁵⁴⁷ The criticism involves a standard line, as Yeğen repeats, “the minutes of the Lausanne Conference constitute another indication that the republican founders had accepted that the Kurds and Turks co-existed in their future state”.⁵⁴⁸ This argument then connects to a general line which involves the texts of the *Amasya Protocol* and other pre-republican ‘deals’ with the Kurds promising a ‘unity of the equals’. “Even a plain reading of these texts” Yeğen argues, shows the unreserved affirmation by the republican founders “*the rights of the Kurds that flew from their ethnic being*” [sic].⁵⁴⁹

Indeed İnönü, the Turkish Foreign Minister and the head of the Turkish delegation was making these statements in a most assertive style and the Kurdish deputies in the parliament were sending telegrams to the conference as to the unbreakable unity of Turks and Kurds behind a common cause. Lord Curzon was in the meanwhile insisting on holding a ‘plebiscite’ among the Kurds as promised in the Articles 62-64 of the Treaty of Sevres, in order to stave off the Turkish claim on the Mousul province.⁵⁵⁰

The Mousul province was held by the British in northern Iraq, but claimed by the Turkish government as part of its “National Pact”. The debate in Lausanne was not one between a ‘Western democratic state’ and an ‘Eastern autocratic’ one over the human rights that should *flow from* ethnic beings, *as re-*

Versailles that bound Poland with a similar submission to the League’s protection mechanism. Oran (2004), p.63. Ironically, Poland would be the first to denounce its treaty obligations regarding the minorities on 13 September 1934, which marked an effective end to the League minority system. Preece (1997).

⁵⁴⁷ See Ekinçi (2004), pp.52-3; Beşikçi [1969], pp.393-408 and 438-9; A. Yıldız (2001), pp.57.

⁵⁴⁸ Yeğen (1999), p.117-8.

⁵⁴⁹ *Idem* [italics added]. In his review of Mustafa Kemal’s pre and post-republican nationalist discourse, Oran notes that his pre-republican emphasis on [the state of-, army of-, government of-, people of-] “Turkey” faded abruptly in the post-republican era, as replaced by “Turkish” [-people, -government, -army, -nation]. Oran (1999), p.211.

⁵⁵⁰ See Beşikçi [1969], pp.393-408.

constituted by Yeğen⁵⁵¹ and many others in the post-1960 Kurdish nationalist scholarship.

It was one between an outright imperial power, speaking on behalf of its ‘mandate’ [read colony] who conceded to its rule over its resources [and defense] a year ago (the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1922) in exchange for partial sovereignty of the King [Faisal I] as an alien ruler over a vague populace defined arbitrarily as ‘a nation’, *and* a would-be nation-state who ‘imagined’ the similar territory within its political project at its beginning.⁵⁵² That would-be nation-state, two years after being recognized as such, was to reject the League of Nations’ arbitration [which it once accepted] on the Mousul Question on 16 December 1926, yet conceded it in exchange for a fair share of its oil income basing on a tripartite agreement of 5 June 1926.

This was the context the in the Turco-British diplomatic fight over the so-called ‘ethnic rights’ of the Kurds.⁵⁵³ As Sureyya Bedirhan, an ‘ethnic actor’

⁵⁵¹ Yeğen, if reads ‘closer’, he would feel the urge to be more skeptical about Lord Corzon’s tactical enthusiasm in bringing about the ‘Kurdish’ rights as inscribed in the Sevres Treaty. The British had suppressed only few months ago new uprisings by the Iraqis and the Iraqi Kurds by aerial bombardment.

⁵⁵² For a better judgement of the ‘oil-inspired’ British strategy on Mousul, we must note the figures relating to the rapid employment of petrol engines by the British war industry. As Ediger notes “[B]y the end of the war to get oil, where oil was used intensively, the British had acquired 56 thousand tanks, 23 thousand oil-engined vehicles, 34 thousand motorcycles and bicycles. The overall tonnage of the vessels that had amounted to one million at the start of the war, had increased by eight to nine-fold at its end.” Ediger (2006), p.337. Ediger also accounts for the British efforts to amend the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916, which left the control of Mesopotamia to the French. As this had been remedied at the end of the war following the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, the British would have spared no efforts to not to let Mousul go out of their hands again to anyone else, certainly not to the Turks in Lausanne. See Ediger, *ibid.*, pp.328ff.

⁵⁵³ And the Turcomans in Mousul, it must be added, since an important part of the Turkish argument constituted the substantial Turkish-speaking minority there. Hale (2000), p.58. The minutes of the discussion between Curzon and İnönü indicate that both parties had been well prepared in terms of evidence, i.e. demographic figures (genuine or fabricated). See Meray (1970), pp.306ff. A similar British attempt was also recorded at the Haliç conference convened in Istanbul in 1924 to discuss the resolution of the Mousul conflict between the two countries. The British this time forwarded claims of Nestorians, who had been in the uprising along the southeastern borders of Turkey.

who happened to lead the Kurdish revolutionary *Khoybun* at the time argued,⁵⁵⁴ in the case of the US being another beneficiary of the said oil income: Wilson's delaying of the Treaty of Sevres had been detrimental to the races under the Ottoman tyranny. The US, only after when they were rewarded with a fourth of the oil income, gave way to the Turks in Lausanne.⁵⁵⁵

The implication that can be drawn from the Kurdish nationalist experience about the Treaty of Lausanne, apart from the ensuing resentment and disappointment involved, was the total delegitimation of the case for a Kurdish self-determination. In 1920 the League tasked a commission of three jurists (like the one for resolving the Mousul Question) to examine the *Aalands Islands* case. The case involved whether the Swedish inhabitants on the islands had the right to self-determine by way of seceding from their newly independent Finnish government. The commission resolved that the right to national self-determination was not recognized by international law and the right of disposing of national territory was essentially an attribute of the sovereignty of every state.⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵⁴ Paraphrased by Tunçay in excerpts from a book by Sureyya Bedirhan (son of Emin Ali, the self-declared heir apparent to the throne of "Bedirhani Kingdom of Kurdistan"), *The Case of Kurdistan against Turkey* (Philadelphia: The Kurdish Independence League, 1927 or 1929). Tunçay [1981], pp.143-4. The fact is that the US Congress refused to ratify the Treaty of Lausanne. But the 'hard work' by Admiral Mark L. Bristol, the US High Commissioner in Istanbul, who championed the Turkish efforts, had been noted.

⁵⁵⁵ The first oil well (Baba Gürgür) was drilled in Mousul in 1927 following the Turkish Petroleum Company (TPC) had secured concessions from the Iraqi Government in 1925. But before that the TPC, after a series of protracted negotiations, agreed to allot 23.75 percent of its shares to the American firms in February 1923. In the meanwhile an American firm called "Chester", on tacit approval of the US Government, had been in contact with the government of the National Assembly in Ankara. Ankara had made earlier (January 1921 and February 1922) no secret of its intentions to break the European monopolistic initiatives on its natural resources. In April 1923, "Chester" secured the first oil concessions by the Government of Turkey. In July 1923, Lausanne Treaty was signed. See Ediger (2006), pp.384-6.

⁵⁵⁶ Emerson notes, hence the claims of peoples to disrupt states were flatly rejected. Emerson (1960), pp.295-328.

The commission also stated that international law did not recognize the right of the constituent units of federal states, as such, “to separate themselves from the state of which they form a part *by simple expression of a wish*.”⁵⁵⁷

The minority protections in the League of Nations system did not last long. It collapsed shortly after Turkey was invited to the League’s membership in 1932. The League itself ceased to exist with the Second World War. But the private project of Kurdistan survived, at least until late 1950s in the form of personal appeals to the League and its successor, the United Nations.⁵⁵⁸ Jwaideh lists a total of 24 notes and memoranda presented by Kurds to the international bodies and leaders in the post-Second World War. These had been prepared and sent by the members of the Bedirhan and Cemilpaşazade families⁵⁵⁹ based in Damascus, Aleppo and Cairo. The last one detected by Jwaideh involved a petition by a ‘veteran’ delegation of Kurdish nationalists headed by Sherif Pasha and Kamuran Bedirhan to the UN Secretary General in November 1948, to have the case of Kurds heard before the UN Assembly. The request was courteously rejected and they were informed to find a [Member State] sponsor.⁵⁶⁰

4.2.4. Incorporation and Parliamentary Politics 1930-1960

The Dersim rebellion is an important case for discussion to understand the Kurdish ethnicity vis-à-vis the Turkish modernity. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, the Dersim rebellion is generally ‘neglected’ by the Kurdish

⁵⁵⁷ Paraphrased from the report in Crawford (1997), para.46. [italics added]

⁵⁵⁸ Jwaideh (1960), pp.792-803. Vet. Nuri Dersimi, who fled Turkey after the suppression of the Dersim Rebellion in September 1937, should be added to this list of ‘private nationalists’. Vet. Dersimi also sent petitions to the governments and the League of Nations in 1937. Also, one letter, alleged to have been sent by Seyyid Rıza, the leader of the Dersim Rebellion, to the British Foreign Office. This letter has been considered important by the Western scholars as the only initiative by the rebels to contact outside world. It is although that the letter was written in French and sent from Syria [Kurubaş (1997), p.191], McDowall for one, forsakes his usual skepticism and quotes the ‘usual line’ of the ‘private’ nationalists demanding for the “three million Kurds, [...] freedom and peace in their own country”. McDowall [1996], p.208.

⁵⁵⁹ Kurubaş counts 14 of these as being related explicitly to Turkey. Kurubaş (1997), pp.194-5.

nationalist discourse. Other than Beşikçi, who accounts for the Dersim rebellion as a “genocide”,⁵⁶¹ this topic is hardly accounted for by the Kurdish nationalist literature. Why is that, for example Yeğen and Yıldız, fail to address the conflict between the republican modernity and the Alevi Kurdish ethnicity in Dersim?

In building a relationalist framework between Turkish and Kurdish ethnicity, A. Yıldız argue that a Kurd may feel closer to a Turk, rather than his ethnic kin, through cultural assimilation. Cultural boundaries may not overlap with ethnic ones. He then, by quoting Eriksen, to argue that if a *sociopolitical environment* is composed of the members of a single ethnicity, that ethnicity loses its activity since there would be no others to exchange cultural differences.⁵⁶² What Yıldız want to say here is that a ‘nuclear identity’ becomes active only when it interacts with other ethnicities. Modernity is a lost context in this conception, in which the interaction is seen as purely ‘ethno-mechanical’.

Yeğen, on the other hand, places his ethnic actors within a sociological ‘space’ where only a selected set of actors are signified, omitting among others, as previously discussed, the Alevis. Neither of them accounts for the Dersim rebellion as an example of ‘Kurdish *Alevi* ethnic resistance’ against the ‘biting modernity’ of a rapidly centralizing, nation-building republic.⁵⁶³ In fact, Yeğen

⁵⁶⁰ Jwaideh (1960), pp.802-3.

⁵⁶¹ Beşikçi (1990), *passim*. Concluding his discussion on the ‘incorporation of Turkey’s Kurds’ that involved Dersim rebellion, McDowall generalizes this argument to claim that “Turkey had unmistakably intended *genocide* on the Kurdish people. In practice its intentions were defeated by the sheer size of the task.” MacDowall (2000), p.210.

⁵⁶² Yıldız, A. (2001), p.43, quoting Roosens, E., *Creating Ethnicity: The Process of Ethnogenesis*, London: Sage Publications, 1982, p.12 and Eriksen, H., *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, London: Pluto Press, 1993, p.34.

⁵⁶³ A secret report after a fact-finding mission headed by the Interior Minister Ş. Kaya to the area in 1936 stated “The Government must take earnest measures to save Dersim. The danger in this system is that the tribes are armed. Dersim must give up its arms. The state organization must be established in Dersim by means of force, justice and culture. In order ensure this, the administrative structure must be reorganized.” Çavdar (1995), pp.333-4, quoting from the Report No.55058 by Gendarmarie Command, 1936. The purpose was “to be as effective in governmental competence as in *normal* provinces, to steer the people of the region toward

claims that this incident has provided the ground for the official discourse to ‘re-articulate’ Kurdishness over the discourse of banditry and tribal resistance.⁵⁶⁴ Is it not Yeğen, omitting the secluded Alevi tribal content to ensure an *ideologically-homogenized* [re-articulated] *Kurdishness*?

The modernity is placed in context vis-à-vis ethnicity more aptly by Hobsbawm and Nairn. In his account on nations and nationalism, Hobsbawm dissects the nationalists’ claim for common ethnic origin in the formation of nations, on the basis of territoriality. He distinguishes the “Herodotean sense” of ethnicity by human collectivities dispersed on vast territories, who lacked a common polity into something called proto-nations. To the said author, these ethnic polities, the vast their territorial presence and secluded ethnic/cultural ‘distinctions’ do not make themselves as resources to the formation of nations, if they had been unable to convert these into a coherent, publicly-formed, national polities. Hobsbawm’s example to such success is Magyars, though as an exceptional, rather than a common case.⁵⁶⁵ The so-called ‘ethnic resistance’ is the function of this territorial seclusion, as Hobsbawm suggests:

[T]he peoples with most powerful and lasting sense of what may be called ‘tribal’ ethnicity, not merely resisted the imposition of the modern state, national or otherwise, but very commonly to *any* state: as witness the Pashtu speakers in and around Afghanistan, the pre-1745 Scots highlanders, the Atlas Berbers [...]. Conversely, insofar as ‘the people’ was identified with a particular polity, even when seen from below it cut across ethnic (and linguistic) divides within it [...]. Moreover, very few modern national movements are actually based on a strong ethnic consciousness, though they often invent one once they have got going.⁵⁶⁶

trade, agriculture and craftsmanship and to make the government services qualify for implementation”. *Idem*.

⁵⁶⁴ Yeğen (1999), pp.137-49. Yeğen bases his claim on the fact that the leaders of the Dersim revolt were executed on charges of banditry. Hence we understand that, for Yeğen, their ‘real sin’ had been their being ‘Kurdishness’.

⁵⁶⁵ Hobsbawm [1990], pp.63-4.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.64-65.

Nairn calls this territorially secluded ethnicity as “the spell of rurality”. He argues that the

intense emotionality and the violence of ethnic nationalism acquire more meaning when traced to [its] ethnic root [which] would seem to be a frankly psychological one: a story of ‘human nature’, in fact, where feelings of ‘belonging’ or extended kinship are read as the essential realities offended by the circumstances of modernity. [...] Nationalism is only a question because nationality politics and national identities are not all ‘ethnic’ in the imagined-kinship,[...] immemorialist sense.⁵⁶⁷

The problem starts not with the diagnosis of territorial seclusion, but at the *political/ideological* level of conversion of this ethnicity into a resource for defining ‘a people’, as a tool to mediate a nationalistic polity. Hobsbawm’s distinction between the tribal/ethnic resistance and that of a popular nationalistic polity is based on a test of ‘territorial seclusion’. In doing so, Hobsbawm dissects the nationalist re-invention and politicization of ethnicity. In Nairn, however, as we have discussed in Chapter Two, the territorially secluded ethnicity is *the* bedrock that supports nationalistic polity formation. The nationalist distortion can be read backwards to find this ‘human nature’, whose resistance is not political, but natural in essence.

The Dersim rebellion in 1937-38 distinguishes itself from the Sheikh Said and Ağrı rebellions as it did not start as a rebellion. With a ‘law and order operation’ planned and organized in four years prior to the actual clashes,⁵⁶⁸ this was a by the republican modernity to impose itself on the territorially secluded, violently criminal⁵⁶⁹ rural ethnicity. For the state, the ‘Dersimis had

⁵⁶⁷ Nairn (1998), pp.120-3.

⁵⁶⁸ For official reports and preparations see Mumcu (1993), pp.49-104; Beşikçi (1977), pp.76ff. and Beşikçi (1990), *passim*.

⁵⁶⁹ This is the ‘mediation’ criticized by Yeğen as the ‘re-articulation of the Kurdish ethno-political resistance’ over the categories of banditry and tribal resistance. Yeğen (1999), pp.134ff. We shall discuss later why Yeğen ‘re-articulates’ tribal resistance over an ethno-political category of a ‘uniform Kurdishness’. But it should suffice here to refer to the security reports which indicated that the armed banditry by the tribes had become a way of making their earnings in an area covering Malatya, Elazığ, Sivas and Erzincan. There had been 229 reported cases of armed robbery within a year only in Erzincan, with the overall number of suspects

been notoriously defiant'⁵⁷⁰ since the revolts by Koçgiri tribe in 1920 and the Koçuşağı in 1925-27. They had been refusing to disarm, pay taxes, conscription and public schooling.⁵⁷¹ These Alevi tribes also remained defiant to the Sunni organized Sheikh Said and subsequent revolts, nor were lent any support from the latter. The 'security operation' yielded a brutal suppression of the territorially secluded ethnicity, resulting in a decisive end to tribally-motivated resistance against the 'authority of the state'. But as suggested in the foregoing analysis, the Dersim rebellion stands out as the single case, variables of which cut across the 'dominant' Kurdish nationalist discourse.⁵⁷²

The planned suppression of Dersim resistance brought with it a dual pattern in the efforts of consolidation of the Turkish legitimacy. In his analysis regarding the consequences of the Sheikh Said rebellion, Olson argues that it brought a repressive pattern of consolidation for the young Turkish Republic.⁵⁷³ Çavdar, like Toker, distinguishes the military and political dimensions of the rebellion. For both, the rebellion was not perceived as a serious military threat to the consolidation of Turkish state and nationalism, whereas its political repercussions were far more important for the overall political consolidation of the new regime.⁵⁷⁴ This consolidation thus, was not specifically designed to repress the Kurdish tribal resistance, but all opposition in the country.⁵⁷⁵

sought for by the state only in four sub-provinces in Dersim had reached to 4,680. Mumcu (1993), pp.61, 65 and 118.

⁵⁷⁰ McDowall [1996], p.207.

⁵⁷¹ McDowall quotes Prime Minister İnönü as saying in 1937 that there was hostility in Turnceli to the introduction of compulsory education. McDowall [1996], p.209, quoted from "Kurds who Object to Education", *The Times*, 16 June 1937. Öz provides with other causes of hostility. The Dersimi tribes evaded the state taxes. The military conscription had been realized only by around 10-25 percent in three sub-provinces, and by 60-80 percent in the other three. In the 1930-31, 220 of the 351 conscripts run away. By 1937, the state authorities sought for 3,700 suspects in the hiding in Dersim, including those from the Sheikh Said rebellion. The same year, before the clashes began, the state authorities had succeeded to collect 4,991 rifles in Dersim. Öz (2004), pp.134-7.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, pp.188-9.

⁵⁷³ Olson [1989], pp.235-8.

⁵⁷⁴ Çavdar (1995), pp.274ff. Toker [1968], Introduction.

⁵⁷⁵ The rebellion brought (in 1925) the Courts of Independence (in Ankara and Diyarbakır), the Law on the Restoration of Order, the Inspectorships General, changes (outlawing the religion as an instrument in inciting public against the state) to the Law on Treason, as well as a wave

Beyond the consolidation, the government pursued an aggressive policy of modernizing reforms.⁵⁷⁶ This dual pattern of reform and repression was enlarged in the single party era, rendering the whole modernization process an authoritarian and arbitrary face whose tools *bit*, instead of searching for a ground for reconciliation and consent.⁵⁷⁷ The most ‘deterrent’ policy tool employed by the state was internal displacement/exile of the tribal elite, which directly targeted the territoriality as the primary bondage of the Kurdish tribal legacy. This was devised by the Ottomans against the local notables in the 19th century. As different from its Ottoman practice, the exiling of the Kurdish tribal elite in the republican era was that the territorial possessions of the tribal landlords were also under the risk of liquidation.⁵⁷⁸

The Law on the Resettlement (1932) has been resented in the Kurdish nationalist literature as a policy tool for Turkification in ‘Kurdistan’, by means

of massive arrests (in June to August 1925) of journalists, communists, former CUP notables, closure of newspapers and opposition parties and organizations. Çavdar, *idem*. Within two years of service, the Courts of Independence tried about 7,500 people, 660 of which were convicted to capital punishment, of which 357 were executed. Tunçay [1981], p.173 quoting from Aybars, E, *İstiklal Mahkemeleri 1923-1927*, unpublished post-doctoral thesis, Ankara University DTCTF. Forced internal displacements, particularly in the area of the rebellion (in April, June 1925). Tunçay, *ibid.*, pp.178-9.

⁵⁷⁶ Including closure of orders and fraternities and the introduction of the Law on Attires (both in November 1925), a new Civil Code (in October 1926) and the new alphabet in Latin (in 1928). “without which [the Law on the Restoration of Order] none of these would have been possible”. Toker, *idem*.

⁵⁷⁷ Tunçay [1981], pp.239-40.

⁵⁷⁸ Sheikh Said, when convicted to death, requested his penalty be commuted to exile in a western province, possibly Edirne. Mumcu [1991], p.139ff. All tribal chiefs with secondary relation to the rebels were exiled to the western provinces but later permitted to return upon a general amnesty enacted on 23 May 1928. Another group of 400 families involved in other incidents were exiled a law enacted on 10 June 1927, most of which also returned their homes in the following years. Mumcu [1991], p.214 Following the Dersim rebellion, the Ministry of Interior prepared another list of 347 families to be exiled from the area. The overall number of people involved in the list was 3470, who were distributed to six western provinces with a total allowance of 300 thousand Turkish liras. Mumcu (1993), pp.73-4. Basing on an amendment to the Law on the Resettlement (1937) enacted by the military junta on 1 June 1960 (no.105), 483 landlords were detained, 55 of which were later exiled. Mumcu (1993), p.107. This policy of ‘de-territorialization’ continued up until 1990s, when the government transferred onto the Regional Governorship General of the state of emergency region the authority ‘to send out temporarily from the region’ the persons deemed necessary in terms of general order and security (by-law no.413 dated 10 April 1990).

of settling immigrants and refugees ‘of Turkic origin’ into Kurdish areas. But the figures covering the said population movements indicate that from 1923 to 1937 Turkey received an overall number of 771,611 refugees and immigrants from abroad, only around eight thousand of which (slightly more than one percent) of them had been resettled in the East. Mumcu notes that within almost a decade or two, most of these families had left their new places in the East, partly due to the inability of the state in issuing landownership certificates for places they had been resettled.⁵⁷⁹

As such, the years leading up to the transition to multi-party democracy in 1950 constituted an authoritarian incorporation of the opposition, including the Kurdish tribal resistance that ceased after 1938 Dersim rebellion. The subsequent period brought reconciliation and consent, whereby the party competition brought in greater sensitivity to the electoral/popular demands. The reconciliation, in fact, was not a function of reform and repression. It was rather the emergence of an effective conservative opposition to the legacy of the single-party era. In the first competitive general elections, the Democrat Party was banking on this resentment by the Kurdish elite.⁵⁸⁰ The traditional/religious (Sunni) conservative Kurdish elite largely sided with the Democrats. The Kurdish Alevis, however, remained within the Republican People’s Party, to lend a strategic support to secularism. The Kurdish right and left had been occurring along with the parliamentary lines.⁵⁸¹

The democratic parliamentary engagement by Kurds in the 1950s is generally criticized in the Kurdish nationalist literature for being a simple extension of the single-party era. Beşikçi contends that the Kurdish members of the parliament had not been different than the ‘sheikhs in the service of the official ideology’ in the 1920s and 30s. They were simply unable to voice their

⁵⁷⁹ Mumcu (1993), pp.109

⁵⁸⁰ Kutlay (2002), p.516.

⁵⁸¹ McDowall [1996], p.397.

national democratic (Kurdish) demands.⁵⁸² Yeğen dissects a systemic defect in the multi-party parliamentarism in Turkey. To him, the Kurds elected to the parliament in the 1920s as ‘Turks’, since the Article 12 of the Constitution required literacy in Turkish as a constitutional requirement. So the system, i.e. “this article, de facto denied the Kurds the parliament” [sic].⁵⁸³ Yeğen argues further that the system in effect told the Kurds that “you may not be elected to the parliament, not because that you are Kurds, but you are not Turks” [sic].⁵⁸⁴

But the Kurdish deputies in the parliament among the Democrat Party ranks had been active in bringing down the legacy of brutal incorporation in the single party era in the 1930s. These deputies have succeeded in bringing General Muğlalı case to the parliament,⁵⁸⁵ also made fervent speeches about the bloody and brutal measures of the past, including the Inspectorship General, branding them as practices seen in colonial administrations. The parliamentary activism of the Kurdish deputies had been widely used by the DP in its general political propaganda against the RPP for their excesses during the single-party era.⁵⁸⁶

By the mid-1950s, the nationwide electoral success of the Democrats inspired splitters. Among them were a group of right-wing Kurdish deputies who joined in the Freedom Party (Hürriyet Partisi) as founders in 1955.⁵⁸⁷ This formed the backbone of the New Turkey Party (Yeni Türkiye Partisi –YTP) established after the military coup in 1960-61 by former DP deputies. This had been an advance step toward leading the Turkish center right by taking over from the

⁵⁸² Beşikçi [1990], p.105-11.

⁵⁸³ Yeğen (1999), p.120.

⁵⁸⁴ *Idem.* So the ‘real Kurds’, i.e. the monolinguals, have been excluded until the 1961, when this provision was amended in the new constitution.

⁵⁸⁵ In 1943, General Mustafa Muğlalı, defying the Inspector General's instructions, ordered the execution of 33 Kurdish smugglers arrested at the Iranian border in Özalp (Van). This incident was not investigated until 1950s, when Van deputies in DP brought it to the parliament. General Muğlalı was then arrested, convicted and died in prison.

⁵⁸⁶ See Ahmad (1977), pp.108-79.

⁵⁸⁷ Yücel (2006), p.35.

DP.⁵⁸⁸ The party leadership involved tribal chiefs and landlords.⁵⁸⁹ At the 1961 elections, the YTP gathered 13.7 percent of the votes and recruited 65 deputies. This success secured for the YTP two seats in the coalition government. As the Turkish center right re-articulated around the Justice Party (Adalet Partisi – AP), the nationwide electoral base of the YTP gradually eroded, despite their continued presence in the subsequent coalition and its strong electoral support in the eastern provinces.

4.3 The Emergence of Modern Kurdish Nationalism in the 1960s

At the time when the Ağrı rebellion staged by Khoybun had been crushed by the Turkish army, a paper presented to the Second International convened in Zurich in August 1930 read:

[F]or our International, the Kurdish problem is most important in that should it remain unsettled, this question threatens peace in the Near East. [...] The agents of the Third International [Moscow] are trying to bring the Kurdish movement under their sway. [...] These attempts are quite realistic, as the Kurds are now feeling deserted by the whole world. A demonstration of sympathy with the Kurds from our side would mean a great support to those people in Kurdistan who maintain hostile attitude towards the Moscow International.⁵⁹⁰

The paper was presented by the Dashnaksutyun as the patron of the Kurdish cause and Khoybun at the time. For the Dashnaks, Turkey and the Soviet Union had been the arch enemies. The Second International, the European rival to the Third (Moscow) International, constituted a perfect framework to gain ground against its foes by voicing the Kurdish cause, which was, after all, supported by the European powers 15 years ago. But neither de Brucker, the Chairman, nor Otto Bauer were willing to accept a resolution as such. For de Brucker, this would lead the problem “spread from a mere Turkish problem to

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 38.

⁵⁸⁹ Güney (2002), pp.122-37.

⁵⁹⁰ Quoted from *Bulletin Pressy Srednevo Vostoka*, No.13-14, Tashkent, 1932, p.119 by Ghassemloo (1965), p.55.

one which would concern [the British] Iraq, Iran, and [the French] Syria, and [...] bring about the danger of war in extensive areas of the Near East”.⁵⁹¹ Since, as the ensuing resolution read out by Bauer asserted “the Second International [was] against the rights of nations for self-determination being attained through weapons and bloodshed.”⁵⁹²

In 1965, Ghassemlou, a prominent leader of the Kurdish nationalist movement in Iran, denounced the European social democracy for their reluctance in 1930s in recognizing the right to self-determination of the Kurdish people. To him, this understanding served the imperialist interests of Britain and France, as the main allies of the Turkish government. His book, published by the *Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences* in 1965, denounced the ‘counter-revolutionary’ Dashnaks nationalists either. However, the international context in 1930s he denounced, involved his present patron in the mid-1960s, the Soviet Union too as the main ally of the republican Turkey.⁵⁹³ As the first edition in 1937 of the *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia* (Grand Soviet Encyclopedia) described it, “The rebellions of 1925, 1930, and 1937 are said to have been masterminded by imperialist intrigue and directed against Turkish and Soviet interests.”⁵⁹⁴ What was the change in the international context from 1930s through 1960s?

4.3.1 Decolonization and the Changing Context of International Legitimacy

In terms of the Kurdish nationalist project, there had been two main changes in the post-war era, as compared to the pre-Second World War context. The first

⁵⁹¹ Quoted *ibid.*, p.56.

⁵⁹² Quoted *ibid.*, pp.56-7.

⁵⁹³ See Comintern press releases in support of the Turkish government against “the imperialist-instigated feudal uprisings” and their emphasis on the “need to anti-feudal reforms”. *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, no.s (31) 1925, p.458; (35) 1925, pp.527-8; (65) 1930, pp.1595-6; S. Mustafa [Bağdat] *Rundschau* (34) 1933, pp.1310-2; R. Davaz, *Rundschau* (32), p.1162 quoted in Perinçek [1977], pp.15-22, 58-60 and 66-9.

one of these had been general position of the Soviet Union vis-à-vis Turkey that changed dramatically in the post-war era.

This change was two-fold: on the one hand, the Soviet government appeared as a direct military threat to the Turkish independence and sovereignty by forwarding its demand in the immediate aftermath of the war to exert its control on the Turkish Straits, with territorial adjustments along the Turco-Soviet land border in northwestern Turkey. The result was Turkey's appeal to become a member of the "free world of democracies". The Truman Doctrine was extended over to Turkey, followed by its membership to NATO and other western organizations in the early 1950s. These efforts included formation of regional alliances in the middle east with Britain, Pakistan, Iraq and Iran, i.e. the Baghdad Pact of 1955. The "Northern Tier" formed against the Soviet threat as such, had been seen by the Barzanis as yet another inter-state manoeuvre like the 1937 Saadabad Pact, which was also resented at the time by the Arab nationalists too.⁵⁹⁵

The other one was a gradual, but more pertinent one as to the Kurdish nationalist claims. The Soviet Union was increasingly becoming a major sponsor of anti-colonial liberation struggles against the imperialist domination in an emerging bipolar world. In this context, following the short-lived Kurdish Republic of Mahabad experience in Iran in 1946,⁵⁹⁶ the Soviets became a major sponsor of the communists and the Kurdish nationalists in Iraq and Iran as well as the Barzani movement in Iraq after 1958.⁵⁹⁷ The Soviet support to

⁵⁹⁴ Quoted in Jwaideh (1960), p.614, n.2.

⁵⁹⁵ McDowall [1996], pp.299-300.

⁵⁹⁶ In an article in the aftermath of the war, Westermann likened the Soviet design in the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad to a "hoary Tsarist game of expansion". He noted that the Kurds had no unity, no national tradition and no experience of self-rule, whose territorial project would not be recognized in the UN. Westermann (1945/46).

⁵⁹⁷ In a long quotation from KDP's "Kurdistan Press", Kutlay agrees to the story of the 'legendary success' by Mustafa Barzani in personally persuading Krushchev in 1953 for Soviet support. Kutlay (2002), pp.453-5. But he does not account for the Soviet hesitation, since a support to Kurds would endanger their support to the Arab nationalists in the 1950s. It took

the Kurdish nationalism in Turkey, in contrast to what had happened in Iran and Iraq, operated through other countries, i.e. the KDP (Barzani) in Iraq in the 1960s and Syria in the 1980s and 1990s.

The second major change was in the international context where the principle of self-determination was made a universal right both in the Charter of United Nations and in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The concept was brought into fore during the wartime documents adopted between 1941 and 1944, and finally at the San Francisco Conference that convened in April 1945. The delegations present at the conference raised questions as to the overall applicability of the principle universally as it would bring in the question of intervention, if one minority claimed the right to self-determine and the hosting state rejected its use by way of secession.⁵⁹⁸ A second concern was the way the text drafted. It read the right to self-determination of peoples. How are the people to whom the principle applies to be defined?⁵⁹⁹ A third one was the scope of the principle. It was designed to bring a previously arbitrarily-recognized, abstract principle to a working reality without a ‘dangerously’ universalized scope. Beyond it, this was the first time the principle was laid down in a multilateral treaty.⁶⁰⁰

In order to alleviate the States’ concerns, the principle of self-determination was based on *negative* inferences. These included the principle of *non-intervention*⁶⁰¹ and *friendly relations among States* (i.e. sovereign equality) without extending its application in the form of a *legal obligation* on Member States as sovereign entities and *denial of the right to secede*. Hence, the principle applied to would-be nation-states *not* as a right to political

them *five years* before they finally decided to send Barzani back into the “theatre” to balance the conservative coup by General Qasim in Iraq in 1958.

⁵⁹⁸ Cassese (1995), pp.38-40

⁵⁹⁹ Emerson (1960), pp.295-301.

⁶⁰⁰ Cassese (1995), p.43.

independence, but to self-government.⁶⁰² In the end, what had come out of the UN Members' effort to make it an international standard was the universalization of self-determination *only as a principle*, rather than as a *right*.⁶⁰³ As Weller noted, it could translate into a right in the form of an 'exception', applicable only in the context of colonial liberation, *if* mediated through the principle of self-government.⁶⁰⁴

The principle of self-government, as counted in the Article 76 of the UN Charter among the basic objectives of the UN trusteeship system (a successor of the League of Nation's mandates system), in fact, meant a wholesale conferral of *ius cogens* to peoples under colonial domination. It did not mean political independence as *the* ultimate objective, but it was aggressive enough to be devised as a policy tool for the Soviet Union. The Socialist Bloc was joined in at the 1955 Bandung Conference by the Third World countries in shifting the emphasis from peaceful relations among sovereign states to independence from colonial rule.⁶⁰⁵

The Third World countries believed in the legitimacy of fight against colonialism and racism and this was all to well for the Socialist Bloc, who simply did not want this fight to go further, once the stage of an independent state has been achieved.⁶⁰⁶ This is where the distinction between 'external' and 'internal' self-determination occurs. The 'right to exist as a State', for the

⁶⁰¹ "Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of Their Independence and Sovereignty" adopted by The UN General Assembly Res. 2131(XX) on 21 December 1965.

⁶⁰² *Idem*.

⁶⁰³ Emerson (1960), pp.300ff.

⁶⁰⁴ Weller (2005).

⁶⁰⁵ Cassese's argument that 'Socialist Bloc was joined in by the Third World' can be misleading. Cassese (1995), p.44. Because one of the main points of discussion at this conference of 29 African-Asian newly independent states (India, Pakistan, Egypt, Burma, Ceylon and Indonesia) was whether the Soviet policies should be censured along with Western colonialism. A consensus was reached in condemning "colonialism in all of its manifestations", implicitly censuring the Soviet Union as well. Yet, as the conference served ultimately to the establishment of the non-aligned movement in 1961, the denial of 'all forms of colonialism' was a step good enough to recruit Soviet support to 'all forms of anti-colonial struggle'.

⁶⁰⁶ *Idem*.

Soviet Union, should not be overwhelmed by a further questioning of the ‘expression of the popular will’.

The problem of ‘secondary colonies’ had been an issue of concern for the ‘free democratic family of nations’ who did raise the problem at the UN. But the problems of ‘internal self-determination’ (democratic mediation of popular will) and ‘secondary colonies’ (i.e. post-colonial annexation of East Timor by Indonesia, West Sahara by Morocco, Goa by India) was denied from UN action either by the overwhelming majority of the Socialist Bloc and the Third World countries, or simply by the Soviet veto as was in the Goa case.⁶⁰⁷

Hence, it was not only the *normative rules*, but also the *customary practice* in the international system mattered, since in a world of highly polarized world and entrenched group interests, it was only the States’ practices would determine the extent of the applicability of the norms. In a rapidly decolonizing world,⁶⁰⁸ the state practices had surpassed the normative work by the UN members until the 1960s. But it was still the customary practice, when the normative breakthrough came in the 1960s, that determined the scope and application of the principle of self-determination.

The UN General Assembly adopted in December 1960 the “Declaration on Granting Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples” (with an annex) and ⁶⁰⁹ in 1971, a *balancing* “Declaration on Friendly Relations and Co-

⁶⁰⁷ Weller (2005); Cassese (1995), pp.79-81, Roth (2000), pp.215-6; Wilson (1988), p.70.

⁶⁰⁸ Throughout 1950s, there were 17 states only in Africa who liberated themselves from colonial rule. According to the Report of G. Espiell, the Special Rapporteur on the Implementation of UN Resolutions Relating to the Right of Peoples under Colonial and Alien Domination to Self-Determination, by 1979, there were seventy territories who achieved independence since 1945, and 28 cases awaiting resolution. UN Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/405 (vol.s I and II).

⁶⁰⁹ Resolution 1514(XV) adopted on 14 December 1960, as well as it ‘annex’ in a separate Resolution 1541(XV) on the “Principles which should guide Members in determining whether or not an obligation exists to transmit the information called for in Article 73(e) of the Charter of the UN”.

operation among States”.⁶¹⁰ Hence a ‘normative framework for the customary practice’ was drawn for recognition of new states who gained their independence by way of decolonization. Accordingly, all peoples under colonial rule would have the right to self-determination. This right would only consist ‘external’ self-determination (i.e. the choice of international status of the people and the territory). The right belonged to the people as a whole, not to the individual constituent parts (i.e. ethnic, cultural, social groups) who were not at liberty to choose by themselves their external status. This, in turn, was tied up to the principle of *uti possidetis* to prevent carving up of other states into new boundaries, as it meant preservation of the *old* colonial boundaries. The States would decide according to the *outcome* of the self-determination practice. In case when this outcome is an independent sovereign state, the States would be free in conferring their individual recognition to it. But in case when the practice brought an integration or association with an existing independent state, the States would examine whether this was an act of the free will and voluntary choice by the peoples of the territory concerned, which must have been expressed through democratic processes. Finally, the exercise of this right was a ‘one-time-only’ practice which, once used, would expire.⁶¹¹

There was no room, hence, for the non-colonial peoples or minorities and indigenous peoples. The possibility for a ‘recalculation’ of their destiny had been curbed for ‘the peoples’, under a flat rejection by the international community the *right to secede* from an existing, sovereign and independent (non-colonial) state.⁶¹² As Weller argues, this system which strictly *delegitimated secession* had been a “disenfranchising” one.⁶¹³

⁶¹⁰ The full title is “Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations” adopted by the UN General Assembly Resolution 2625(XXV) on 24 October 1970.

⁶¹¹ Cassese (1995), pp.72-3, Roth (2000), pp.208-10.

⁶¹² Emerson (1960), 300ff.

⁶¹³ Weller (2005).

There had been no more pre-First World War arbitrary ‘Great Power’ politics, which allowed the unilateral right to interfere with the minority affairs of other states. Nor there were selectively awarded legitimacy to ‘peoples’ on secretly drawn maps. For that reason, the anti-colonialist discourse of the revolutionary Kurdish nationalist movement of late 1960s was not met with a readily-available recognition when it radicalized into guerilla action in Turkey in the latter half of the 1970s. The decolonialist stance of modern Kurdish nationalist mass-movement had been stillborn.

4.3.2 The Legalization of Revolutionary Kurdish Nationalism

The post-Democrat Party era in the 1960s started with the introduction of a liberal constitution and a rapid industrialization in urban areas. Ensuing internal migration and growing size of the urban working class had been adding new pressures on the parliamentary politics, fed by proleterianization and class awareness.

The Labor Party Turkey (TİP) was a product of this process, as originally founded by the labor unions, later proving an unexpected success by winning 15 seats in the parliament in 1965 general elections. But the party, since its establishment, was prone to internal ideological tensions.⁶¹⁴ These tensions were sufficiently fed by the circulating revolutionary ideologies that spun around the competing revolutionary socialist strategies of the time. These strategies mainly oscillated between Soviet-style Marxist-Leninist revolution and the Maoist-type of rural guerilla action for a national democratic

⁶¹⁴ Ideological tension that haunted the party since 1965 elections surfaced at the second congress of the party held in Malatya in 20-24 November 1966. It led to a division within the party into two main lines. First one was the anti-imperialist national democratic revolution (–"from below") thesis advocated by Mihri Belli, whereas a second group led by Boran, Aren *et al.* insisted on socialist revolution (–"top down") thesis. Belli *et al.* left the party and started publishing *Türk Solu*. His ideological position later converged with what Aybar, as the party chair in 1966-69, who advocated for a "socialism with a smiling face". Aybar was later expelled by the second group led by Boran until the party was closed by the Constitutional Court after the 1971 coup.

revolution. To that extent, the parliamentary socialism observed in older and more established socialist parties in continental Europe had not been considered as an option. Turkey was an underdeveloped country, facing the threat of neo-colonialism and the anti-imperialist liberation process that started in 1919 had to be complemented.

From its establishment in 1963 to its closure in 1971, the Labor Party of Turkey moved from its originally intended class-based parliamentary politics toward an increasingly radical revolutionary discourse, albeit an election defeat in 1969 elections. In the meanwhile, Kurdish activists⁶¹⁵ within the party

⁶¹⁵ For ease of reference, an evolution of the organizational trajectory of Kurdish nationalist movement is given in the following:
 ADYÖD:Ankara Demokratik Yüksek Öğrenim Derneği (Ankara Democratic Higher Education Association)
 ARGK :HRK←Arteşa Rızgariya Gele Kurdistan (People's Liberation Army of Kurdistan -of PKK)→HPG
 DDKO :Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları (Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths)→DDKD, DHDK
 DHDK :DDKO← Devrimci Halk Kültür Dernekleri (Revolutionary Associations of People's Culture) → TKSP
 ERNK :Eniya Rızgariya Netewî Kurdistan (National Liberation Front of Kurdistan -of PKK)→
 FEY-KOM:PKK←(Federation of Unions of Kurdish Workers –in Europe)
 HRK : (Kurdistan Liberation Force -of PKK) →ARGK→HPG
 HPG :PKK←HRK←ARGK← Halk Savunma Gücü (People's Protection Force)
 KADEK:PKK←Kürdistan Özgürlük ve Demokrasi Kongresi (Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress)→KONGRA-GEL
 KAK :TKTC←Koma Azadiya Kurdistan (Kurdistan Liberation Committee?)→DDKO→DHDK
 KDP : (Iraqi) Kurdistan Democratic Party (Barzani)→TKDP→T-DKP
 KDPM :Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi Mesullüğü (Kurdistan Democratic Party Representation)→TKDP→
 KNK :PKDW←Kongra Netewiya Kurdistan (Kurdistan National Congress)
 KUK :TKDP←
 PİK :PKK←YDK←Partiya İslamiye Kurdistan (Islamic Party of Kurdistan)
 PKK :Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers' Party)→HRK→ARGK, ERNK;
 PKDW, FEY-KOM, YAK, YDK→PİK, YEK, YXK, KNK; →KADEK→KONGRA-GEL
 PKDW :PKK←Parlamana Kurdistan Li Derveyi Welat (Kurdistan Parliament in Exile)→KNK
 PPKK :TDKP←Partiya Peşeng Karkeren Kurdistan (Pioneer Worker's Party of Kurdistan)
 THKO :Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu (People's Liberation Army of Turkey)
 THKP-C:Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi (People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey)
 TİP :Türkiye İşçi Partisi (Labor Party of Turkey)

founded the Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths (DDKO) in Ankara in 1969. They were inspired by the "Eastern Demonstrations" were carried out by TİP from July and November 1967⁶¹⁶ and from July to September 1969.⁶¹⁷ By end of 1970, the DDKO had been organized in Diyarbakır⁶¹⁸, Silvan, Ergani, Batman, Kulp, İstanbul.⁶¹⁹

These demonstrations had been functional not only in propagating the revolutionary discourse and program, but also provided the opportunity to forge a mass-organization within the target population: the Kurdish peasantry. The propaganda activity toward the peasantry and the accompanying recruitment process had been part of a common 'national democratic' revolutionary strategy, not only by the Kurdish nationalists, but also by the Turkish revolutionaries of the time. By the time the Eastern Demonstrations took place in 1968-1969, the Revolutionary Youth Federation of Turkey (DEV-GENÇ) had been involved, along with mass demonstrations in large cities, in

TKSP :DHDK←Türkiye Kürdistanı Sosyalist Partisi (Socialist Party Of Turkish Kurdistan)→KSP, Rızgari, Ala Rızgari, KOM-KAR
TKDP :Türkiye Kürdistanı Demokratik Partisi (The Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan) →KUK, PPKK
T-DKP :KDP←TKDP←Türkiye'de Kürdistan Demokratik Partisi (Kurdistan Democratic Party in Turkey –"Dr Shiwanists", i.e. Barzani loyalists)
TKTC :Türkiye Kürt Talebe Cemiyeti (The Kurdish Students Association of Turkey)→KAK
YAK :PKK←ERNK←Yekitiya Aleviyen Kurdistan (Kurdistan Alevi Union)
YDK :PKK←Yekitiya Dindarane Kurdistan (Kurdistan Pious Union)→PIK
YEK :PKK←ERNK←Yekitiya Ezidiyen Kurdistan (Kurdistan Yezidi Union)
YXK :PKK←ERNK←Yekitiya X Kurdistan (Kurdistan Student Union)
→ later or merges into
← former or splits from

⁶¹⁶ Organized in Suruç, 17 July; Silvan, 13 August; Diyarbakır, 16 September; Siverek, 24 Sept.; Siverek, 1 Oct.; Batman, 8 Oct.; Tunceli, 15 Oct.; Ağrı, 22 Oct. and Ankara, 18 November 1967.

⁶¹⁷ This time with considerable organizational input from the DDKO in Hilvan, 27 July; Varto, 2 August; Siverek, 2 August; Lice, 24 August and Diyarbakır, 3 September 1969.

⁶¹⁸ With membership including Y. Ekinci, T.Z. Ekinci, N. Kutlay, M. Zana, as prominent Kurdish members of the TİP.

⁶¹⁹ The DDKO branches were organized as separate cellular associations to escape a wholesale closure by the courts. They also set up, through the İstanbul branch, links with European Kurdish Student Union and the KDP in Iraq.

rural mobilization activities⁶²⁰ resulting in peasant protests on basic matters of rural production.

The DDKO program promised "*to preserve of the integrity of the people (...) to bring to fore a societal national pact based on humanitarian values...*". This had been a prototypical expression of a "national democratic revolution" ideology, on which the revolutionary Kurdish nationalist movement would easily base itself.

On 29 October 1970, the fourth national congress of TİP resolved "*a Kurdish people has been living in eastern Turkey (upon whom) the dominant classes implemented a policy of repression, terror and assimilation*". Tarık Ziya Ekinci, then the secretary general of TİP, argues that this had been the first time the Kurdish aspirations as "a separate people" had been carried over into the parliamentary politics in Turkey.⁶²¹ Shortly after the congress, TİP was sued for closure at the Constitutional Court on the grounds that it provoked minority discrimination by denominating Kurds as a separate minority. Chairwoman Boran defended the party by claiming that it regarded Kurdish people *not* as a minority, but a group that must be saved from unconstitutional repression. The party was closed down on 20 July 1971 by the Constitutional Court. But Boran's arguments in defense of her party was denounced by the Kurdish activist members who called themselves as the 'Easterners Group' within the party.

From 1963 through 1970, when its Kurdish policy had been formulated, the TİP faced with a two-fold dilemma. The first dilemma the Party had to overcome was the nationalism versus socialism problem. With the incorporation of the Kurdish nationalist revolutionaries in the party, its endeavour to translate the Kurdish demands into a revolutionary program on a

⁶²⁰ These involved rural contacts in Ankara, Malatya, Yozgat, Konya, Elazığ, İzmir, Manisa, Ordu, Giresun, Kars, Maraş and other provinces. See Babuş (2003), *passim*.

national scale gained a dual tone.⁶²² One was the typical anti-feudalist argument by the Turkish radical left, as defended by Avcıoğlu.⁶²³ The other one was the way Kurdish nationalists perceived the problem. For them, there was hardly a common ground, as they saw the national question as a matter of assertion of national independence, not one of fairness and feudalism.⁶²⁴

The 1970 Declaration by the Party was a success in terms of its definition of Kurds as “a separate people”, rather than the proposed remedies to the regional backwardness.⁶²⁵ The cellular type of organization adopted by the DDKO had been dictating to the peripheral Kurdish nationalist activists a cautious discourse in terms of the local politics. They were saying a great deal about the liberation, but their voice had been less amplified when it came to the anti-feudal struggle as part of the nationwide socialist vocabulary the Party employed.⁶²⁶

⁶²¹ See Ekinçi (2004a), p.152.

⁶²² Ekinçi (2004b), pp.288-9.

⁶²³ Avcıoğlu, a leading socialist writer of the time, was fervently against the Kurdish nationalist project. For him, Kurdish nationalist movement was not based on law and it was aiming division of the brotherhood which should target, before all, feudal order in the area. Avcıoğlu, *Yön* (194), 16 December 1966. He saw the ‘Kurdistan’ project as one instigated by the IKDP [*Devrim* (28), 28 April 1970] and a game staged to divide the revolutionary front [*Devrim* (63), 29 December 1970]. Belli, a leading figure of the Turkish national democratic revolution thesis, was proposing that the revolution must not be overwhelmed by divisions on the national question, and the national unity in Turkey should not be disturbed. For that purpose, the issues like education in Kurdish language and their cultural development should be provided, but only through the secular, democratic central government, rather than autonomous structures that would serve to the imperialists interests. M. Belli “Millet Gerçeği” [The real (meaning) of the nation], *Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi* (7), May 1969.

⁶²⁴ Aras, a Kurdish nationalist reporter on eastern problems in the socialist weekly *Ant*, argued that feudalism has not been the dominant form of societal organization, hence the problem involved the struggle against the alliance of the national comprador bourgeoisie and the “racist bureaucrats” who tried to prevent the capitalist development in the East. Ahmet Aras “Türkiye’de Feodalite Var mıdır?” (Is there feudalism in Turkey?), *Ant* (139), 26 August 1969 and *Ant* (140), 2 September 1969.

⁶²⁵ Ekinçi argues that the ideological duality within the party was reflected on its Kurdish policy. The socialist revolutionaries led by Boran, kept away from the Kurdish revolutionaries, who supported Aybar’s national democratic revolutionary discourse. Ekinçi (2004b), pp.288-9.

⁶²⁶ In August 1969, Kemal Burkay, a DDKO activist and the TİP’s candidate in Tunceli, was arrested for fomenting separatism in Tunceli area by organizing a performance of the folk epic “Pir Sultan Abdal”. As the report of the TİP delegation to investigate into the incident reported the brutality of the security officials against the socialists in Tunceli, Burkay was publicly stating that this was “a freedom struggle of the [Tunceli] people”. See “Pir Sultan Olayları Her Bakımdan Tertiptir” (Pir Sultan Incidents are a Design by all Means), *Ant* (141), 9 September

For Ekinci, the TİP was unable to democratize the national polity by actively promoting its policy on the Kurdish problem, but the Kurdish problem benefited from the TİP in becoming a legal political problem.⁶²⁷ The TİP, thus, served as an *incubator*, in terms of both the legal organization of the revolutionary Kurdish nationalism and legitimation of its revolutionary discourse based on national liberation.⁶²⁸

The second dilemma was related to a more practical, but a vital problem. Being a parliamentary movement, the TİP had to compete with the ‘parties of the establishment’ on an electoral basis, which was tougher challenge. The New Turkey Party (YTP) had been far stronger than TİP in terms of electoral support in the eastern provinces⁶²⁹ for two reasons. One was that the center right YTP was based on support by the landlords who controlled the tribal/peasant votes and was propagating a modernization program for alleviating the problems of the east.⁶³⁰ The TİP on the other hand, was

1969. Also see “Piyas yüzünden çıkan olaylarda bir ölü dört yaralı var” (One dead four wounded in incidents after the performance), *Cumhuriyet*, 24 August 1969.

⁶²⁷ Ekinci (2004b), p.289.

⁶²⁸ Burkey defined this as a symbiotic relationship, that arises from needs rather than one of choice. K. Burkey “Sosyalizm, Kemalizm ve Doğu Sorunu”, *Emek* (6), November 1970.

⁶²⁹ In his statement to the press after the June 1968 by-elections in 28 provinces, the TİP Chairman Aybar argued that only his party alone made an electoral gain with an overall increase. In terms of its competition with YTP on the Kurdish votes, however, the TİP was lagging behind the YTP. In Diyarbakır YTP received 23.11 percent of the votes in 1965 elections, compared to 8 percent by the TİP, whose votes fell further in 1968 to 3.55 percent [and in 1969 to 2.2 percent]. *Ant* (76), 11 June 1968.

⁶³⁰ YTP partially kept its promises when E. Alican (party chair) and Y. Azizoğlu had seats in the coalition cabinet in the first half of the 1960s. Sanal (1997), pp.143-4. In particular Azizoğlu, being the Minister of Health, pursued a rigorous policy of building clinics in the eastern provinces, for which he was later accused of promoting “Kurdism” before he was finally forced to resign. As the Kurdish nationalist Ekinci, the then TİP Secretary General was accusing him of serving to the interests of the landlords in the east [T. Z. Ekinci, “Doğu Kalkınması Edebiyatının İçyüzü” (The Other Side of the Eastern Modernization Literature), *Ant* (17), 25 April 1967], Azizoğlu and other YTP members were accused of adopting a dual-tone in their political propaganda: one arguing for national modernization elsewhere, whereas in the East promising for Kurdish development. Ünlü and Aydın (2005), pp.128-9. Also see “Seçimlerden Çıkan Sonuç” (Results drawn from the elections), *Barış Dünyası* (90), November 1969. The YTP did have a modernizationist approach toward the eastern region as explained in its Election Manifesto 1969, arguing that underdevelopment has been widespread in the eastern provinces, more than elsewhere, so the alleviation of regional inequalities by the governmental

proposing an outright anti-feudal polity to transform the existing social relations there in its entirety.⁶³¹

The military coup in 1971 illegalized the Kurdish revolutionary nationalist organizations, along with the Turkish revolutionary left. The DDKOs were closed down by court in few months following TİP as its members were convicted to prison terms for separatism.⁶³² This group, after their release in general amnesty in 1974, refused to join the Turkish leftist movement or the TİP, when the party was re-opened in 1975. Instead, they founded the Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Associations (DDKD) and its “Komal Press” advocating decolonization and self-determination on 28 November 1974.⁶³³

The emerging revolutionary Kurdish nationalism quickly proliferated, cloning the ideological lines of the Turkish revolutionary movement in the 1970s. These clandestine organisations evolved fastly into guerilla action within

initiative is needed to lift the East up to the national average. YTP Election Manifesto (1969), pp.3-6.

⁶³¹ The TİP was not immune to the ‘hard facts’ in Turkish electoral politics. The Secretary General of the Party (Ekinci) was a member of a landowning family in Diyarbakır. The rank-and-file members in the Party, who thought theirs was a socialist struggle, were angry about the Party’s concessions, however rare these were, to landowners in the East. In the run-up to the 1969 general elections, there were resignations from the party when it became clear that the party nominated S. Tanrıverdi, another landlord in Adıyaman. “Bir ağanın aday olması TİP teşkilatını karıştırdı” (Nomination of a landlord stirred things up in TİP), *Cumhuriyet*, 27 August 1969. In Bingöl, the TİP candidates were unknown even to the local party branch, as no-one wanted nomination by this party. “They were scared to be nominated, since the party was branded as ‘communist’” “Seçime doğru: Bingöl’de bütün seçmenler herkese ‘evet’ diyor” (Toward elections: All voters say ‘yes’ to all in Bingöl), *Cumhuriyet*, 1 October 1969.

⁶³² On 27 April 1970, DDKO trials (“*Eastern hearings*”) began with 100 accused. Arguments in defense asserted, among others, “*internal colonization*”, “*brotherhood of peoples*”, “*two thousand years of Kurdish history*” etc. Prosecutor based his accusation on the Turkishness of Kurds. DDKO members convicted on 11 December for separatism, up to 16 years in prison. All released in 1974 general amnesty.

⁶³³ Another one was the Socialist Party of Kurdistan in Turkey, TKSP (also referred to as “*Özgürlük Yolu*” –Liberation Path) founded in November 1975 by K. Burkay, M. Zana, T.Z. Ekinci *et al.* from DHKD, as its legal operating branch. TKSP issued “*Riya Azadi*” (Özgürlük Yolu) in 1975 and “*Roja Welat*” in 1977 arguing for self-determination or federative alternatives within Turkey, thereby fell in stark conflict with the PKK.

themselves, with the Turkish revolutionaries as well as the security forces.⁶³⁴ The DDKD later split into *Rızgari* (Liberation) in 1976, *Ala Rızgari* (Liberation Flag) in 1978 arguing for a Marxist-Leninist style mass action seeking support from the USSR.⁶³⁵ Another organization that appeared at the time was *Kawa* (which in turn produced in 1976 splitters named *Red Kawa* propagating an Enver Hoxa line and *Denge Kawa* propagating Maoist China until 1979).⁶³⁶

This proliferation further spiraled down with armed guerilla groups such as *Central Red Kawa*, *The Red Peshmerge of the Armed Revolution of the Laborers of Kurdistan Revolution* and *The Guerillas of the Kurdistan Revolution*. As we shall discuss later, the *Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan* (PKK) had been a product of this illegal radicalization process.⁶³⁷ The guerilla groups had been dispersed among themselves, despite a common target of liberation, due to ideological/tactical differences. But in terms of recruitment and organization, they have been utilizing links with the other guerilla movements in the Middle East, including camps in Iran, the Barzani peshmerga movement in Iraq and the Palestinian Liberation Organization based in Syria and Lebanon (guerilla camps in the Bekaa Valley).⁶³⁸

There have been several implications of this crystallization process in the Kurdish political experience through 1960s in Turkey. First one was that the Kurdish aspirations had evolved into what can be termed as modern

⁶³⁴ See the scheme worked out by the Directorate General of Security in Öztürk (2003), *Appendices*. For a chronological ‘family tree’ explaining the proliferation by Ballı [1991], pp.48-9 and 70-82. Also see Kurubaş (2004), pp.19-27.

⁶³⁵ On a personal account about the mass organizational activity in Diyarbakır, Odabaşı notes that DDKD had been rivaled by ASK-DER (The Anti-Colonialist Cultural Associations) and DHKD (Devrimci Halk Kültür Dernekleri –The Revolutionary People’s Cultural Associations) which altogether preceded the coming of “Rızgari” and “Ala Rızgari” toward 1977-78 in the context of ‘anti-colonial struggle’. Odabaşı (1991), pp.29-31.

⁶³⁶ Ballı (1991), *passim*.

⁶³⁷ *Idem*.

⁶³⁸ See Ballı [1991], pp. 119-120, interview with İ. Güçlü (Ala Rızgari) for camps in Iraq and Iran; p.154 with Kawa for collaboration with Komela and KDP (Iran), PUK and IKDP (Iraq) in 1978-1984; pp.318-9 with Serhat Dicle (PPKK) for non-state collaboration with the movements in other countries –“but no camps”.

nationalism, seeking for a massive national revolutionary liberation. This movement, by its very nature, needed to be secessionist which, at a certain point in time had to divorce from the Turkish socialist movement. The later leaders of the TİP such as Boran had to face, what Otto Bauer had faced some half a century ago, the dilemma between nationalism and socialist revolution. The modern Kurdish nationalist movement proper emerged out of this *divorce*, in a revolutionary liberationist fashion, seeking to secede not only from the socialist movement in Turkey, but also and preferably, altogether from the Turkish territory along with the national lines.

The second implication relates the problem of strategy. The localized cellular organization and rural guerilla action was what the security organization of the state had been weak at reciprocating. But more importantly they discovered, as did İhsan Nuri and other Kurdish nationalists in Azadi and Khoybun, the power of territoriality. Their Maoist guerilla strategy commanded the creation of such territoriality by forming 'liberated areas' later to be joined into each other, just as what Mao did in his "Long March".

The territoriality entailed a de facto sovereignty over the imagined land and people, whereby popular support could be almost automatically mediated *en masse*. The national democratic revolution strategy was perfectly tailored for this purpose, whereby, once a territorial control was ensured by guerilla action, i.e. a strategic balance hit with the rival authority, the popular support would expand enough to cover the revolutionary action. As we have discussed in the previous chapter, this was what the PKK attempted to achieve in the early 1990s, and it was not until the Turkish government introduced the concept of 'area control',⁶³⁹ its territorial project lost its pace.

⁶³⁹ On 6 November 1993, Chief of Staff Gen. Güreş named the counter-terrorist struggle as "low intensity warfare" that must be controlled territorially. *Hürriyet*, 7 November 1993.

Yet there is a third implication in the emergence of modern Kurdish nationalist movement. It is the external variable. The Kurdish guerilla movement from 1975 to 1980 was weak and strove hard to overcome the problem of a reliable logistical base, preferably outside the Turkish borders. Barzani movement and its experience in Iraq provided an enigmatic ‘self-determination’ example to the emerging Kurdish movement.⁶⁴⁰

There had been a sizeable interest in the Turkish radical leftist media regarding the guerilla liberation movements around the world.⁶⁴¹ It also exerted a direct influence that operated either directly –via tribal and local loyalties, or by clandestine intervention to the Kurdish nationalists in Turkey, in early 1960s in

⁶⁴⁰ Barzani had been supported by the Soviet Union against the Iraqi regime. In 1967, the Turkish Ministry of Interior, wary of the KDP-bound activities in the eastern provinces, decided to take effective security measures against arms smuggling into northern Iraq through the Turkish territory. “Barzani’ye silah kaçırılması önlenecik” (Arms smuggling for Barzani will be prevented), *Cumhuriyet*, 9 October 1967. Turkish government was highly perceptive on the possibility of Barzani-instigated guerilla activity within Turkey. This was not a far-reaching perceptiveness, since at the 13th European Union of Kurdish Students [named in 1982 as the “European Union of Kurdistan and Youth” (AKSA)] Conference in West Berlin chaired by Sami Rahmani, the Union’s secretary general and Molla Mustafa Barzani’s envoy, published a map of Kurdistan spreading into Turkey and issued a call in late August 1969 to Barzani to start armed propaganda in Turkey. Rıza Başol “Hayali Kürdistan Sınırlarına 20 İlimiz Sokuluyor” (20 of our provinces placed within the borders of an imaginary Kurdistan) *Cumhuriyet*, 26 August 1969. The said organization had actually established a branch in Istanbul in 1962 by the Iranian and Iraqi Kurdish students in Turkey, which was closed down in 1963 with its members arrested. Kurubaş (2004), pp.15-7. This time the Turkish government’s response to these risks involved a massive security operation by the gendarmarie commandos in the eastern provinces. By December 1971, after two years of operations, 5,660 suspects were apprehended with massive amount of weapons and ammunition. “Harekat, 2 yıldır sürüyor. Güney Anadolu’da 5,660 kanun kaçağı yakalandı” (Operations have been in progress for two years, 5,660 wanted suspects apprehended), *Cumhuriyet*, 29 December 1971. While the government successfully publicized the operations as one against the widespread banditry, which actually was a matter of fact in the east, [“Komandolar Geliyor. Devlet memurunun gitmediği Siirt Köylerinde Köylüler vergiyi ağalara ve eşkiyaya verirler” (Commandos are coming: In the remote villages of Siirt, where no state official visits, the villagers pay their taxes to the landlord and to the bandits), *Cumhuriyet*, 16 and 17 August 1967.] the TIP chairman Aybar carried the brutality involved in the operations over to the parliament with an interpellation. “Doğu Hareketi ile ilgili gensoru önergesi reddedildi” (Interpellation rejected on Eastern Operation), *Cumhuriyet*, 28 July 1970.

⁶⁴¹ These were stories on the “direct transition to socialism” by way of guerilla action in China, Cuba and Vietnam, as well as guerilla-led self-determination/decolonization in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, with additional accounts of guerilla theories [*Ant*, 1968-70 issues] and leaders like Che Guevara, R. Debray and A. Bayo. *Ant* (88), 3 September 1968; (159), 13 January 1970; (165), 24 February 1970. These included articles on the Barzani’s

particular. On 11 July 1965, the TKDP was founded in Diyarbakır. F. Bucak (chair), S. Elçi, S. Kırmızıtoprak (Dr Shıwan), N. Balkaş, H. Buluttekin. The TDKP can be registered as *the* first *Kurdish* political party in Turkey, which replicated Barzani's (KDP) political claims from the Iraqi government into the Turkish polity.⁶⁴² In terms of parliamentary politics, Kurubaş notes that they supported the TİP in elections.⁶⁴³

Mustafa Barzani had left 'Kurdistan' with his men in 1946 after the fall of the Soviet-supported Kurdish Mahabad Republic in Iran. He lived in the Soviet Union for 12 years, before he recruited the Soviet support and returned to Iraq in 1958 to fight for the Kurdish autonomy.⁶⁴⁴ But after 1975, things changed for Barzani's KDP in Iraq, as the Soviet Union shifted support to the Baas regime in Iraq, which leaned toward anti-American and anti-Israeli strategies after the Arab-Israeli War of 1973.⁶⁴⁵ Hence, Barzani's peshmerga in northern Iraq was not forthcoming in such support for a cross-border guerilla action within Turkey. Furthermore, sporadic clashes went on with them at the border area surrounding Hakkari.⁶⁴⁶ As many of the guerilla fighters had to flee Turkey following the military coup in September 1980, the expected logistical support came from Syria.

guerilla movement. *Ant* (119), 8 April 1969; (127), 3 June 1969; (169), 24 March 1970, (174), 1 May 1970.

⁶⁴² The activities of Barzani's KDP in Turkey started earlier. On 16 September 1961, KDPM was founded in secrecy A. Ökten, F. Bucak, S. Elçi *et al* in Diyarbakır to represent Barzani's KDP of Iraq. S. Kırmızıtoprak later formed T-DKP in 1969 as a main splitter and killed F. Bucak in 1971. Kırmızıtoprak himself was immediately executed by Barzani in northern Iraq. Kurubaş argues that the TKDP died off in a decade as its cadres have been lost in splitter movements after 1971. Kurubaş (2004), pp.17-9. But Ballı argues that the KDP influence was dominant in the local politics in southeastern Turkey as late as 1987 and this was challenged in serious terms only by the PKK then onwards. Ballı [1991], pp.6-9.

⁶⁴³ Kurubaş (2004), pp.18.

⁶⁴⁴ See Jwaideh for Barzani rebellions of 1931-32 and 1943-45 in Iraq, Jwaideh (1960), pp.641-707; *ibid.*, pp.709ff. for the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad and the Soviet involvement in the establishment of a Democrat Party of Kurdistan, and its Iranian and Iraqi splitters, the latter representing the Barzani movement since the 1950s.

⁶⁴⁵ It was not only the shifting Soviet support, but also the Algeria Agreement signed between Iran and Iraq that put an end to Iranian support to the Barzani guerillas against the Iraqi government in the mid-1970s.

A fourth implication in line was the crystallization in the ideological discourse of Kurdish nationalist movement, basing on the legacy of Kurdish nationalist journalism that managed to create a “print nationalism”⁶⁴⁷ that survived 1940s and 50s.⁶⁴⁸ The modest but effective media run by a restricted group of intellectuals in the 1950s re-articulated the revolutionary Kurdish nationalist ideology in a discursive network.⁶⁴⁹

These were the first to discuss the “national question”⁶⁵⁰ and translate the ‘imaginings’ of the past into a modern popular project, before it was taken up by legalizing Kurdish associations in the 1960s.⁶⁵¹ The subsequent incidents of purging of the urban revolutionary Kurdish nationalist elite referred to as “49ers” in 1959 and “23ers” in 1962-3 had been instigated by this intellectual

⁶⁴⁶ Since early 1980s, PKK was fighting with Barzani's KDP in Hakkari which was a battleground for KDP against Talabani's PUK, who lost 400 peshmerge in 1978 against KDP there. Ballı [1991], *passim*.

⁶⁴⁷ This term is inspired from Anderson's “print capitalism” to denote the spread of Protestantism by means of mass print circulation. Anderson (1991), pp.39-42.

⁶⁴⁸ Karahan and Anter have been but two of a group of Kurdish nationalist intellectuals, who mainly stood out from the student hostels (Dicle, Fırat, Toros) in İstanbul that hosted Kurdish university students in the 1940s and 50s, as well as from local dailies (*Dicle Kaynağı* in 1948, *Şark Mecmuası* in 1959 in İstanbul and *İleri Yurd* in Diyarbakır in 1958 by Anter, *Dicle-Fırat* by Karahan in 1962, *Deng* in İstanbul in 1963 by Selek, edited by Y.Kaya, *Doğu* by Anter in 1969). These had been detained and jailed in the “49ers” case in 1959, and in “23ers” case in 1962 and again in the DDKO case in 1971. For a detailed review of early modern revolutionary Kurdish media, see Yücel (1998), pp.63ff. Another ‘institution’ that served the revitalization of the revolutionary Kurdistan was Diyarbakır prison in the 1960s and 70s. Anter [1991/1992], *passim*. Kutlay (2002), pp.429ff. These also had acquaintance with the ‘former generation’ of Kurdish nationalists like Dersimi, Bedirhans and Ghassemlou through their relatives in Turkey. Anter [1991/1992], pp.83, 114-5.

⁶⁴⁹ That is, in the hands of a “vernacular intelligentsia”. Smith [1998], pp.135-6.

⁶⁵⁰ Yaşar Kaya, the then editor of the *first* Turkish-Kurdish journal in the republican era, published only three issues in 1963, said in an interview in 1990 that they had wanted in 1963 to change the name of the problem from the “Eastern Problem” into “Kurdish Problem”. See interview with Y. Kaya in *Deng* (2), January 1990.

⁶⁵¹ Yücel notes that “Kurdism” had been re-vitalized by the Kurdish students in İstanbul and Ankara in late 1940s and 1950s. Anter's weekly *Dicle*, prepared in the Dicle Student Hostel in İstanbul since 1948, was initially emphasizing human rights as the post-war idiom and used it a critical tool against the ending legacy of the single-party era. But it also involved an extensive literature on the past Kurdish rebellions, General Muğlalı incident and exiles. Anter's daily *İleri Yurd* published in 1959 in Diyarbakır plays a similar role. The publication of his poem “Qımıl” in Kurdish on 31 August 1959 had been, again, a progressive “print-nationalist” step which stirred the Turkish nationalist reaction in the mainstream media. See Yücel (1998), pp.67-71.

discursive network, which in fact helped the intelligentsia turn into activists and popularize their case vis-à-vis their target audience.

4.4 The Consolidation of the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey

Throughout 1960s this ideological legacy was transformed from one that involved democratic revolutionary unity with the Turkish people, to anti-colonialist stance against the Turkish rule. It is best expressed in the establishment and publications of the Komal press and Beşikçi in post-1971 era.

In a “Note from the Publishers” to Maraşlı’s book on ‘political defense’ at the Rızgari⁶⁵² case in Diyarbakır in 1984. Komal editors explain how and why the Kurdish liberation movement opted for Kurdish national liberation, instead of socialist revolution with the Turkish left, starting from the first half of the 1970s. Firstly, the editors claim that the Kurdish problem is an issue of the right to self-determination by the Kurdish people. This means freedom and independence for the Kurdish nation as an *a priori condition* for the exercise of this right. Secondly, by the same token, it is also anti-colonialist and socialist in character, since the Kurdish country is in a state of military occupation. Therefore, all kinds of struggle against this occupation are legitimate. Thirdly, Kurdistan is an international colony, hence no-one’s internal problem. It cannot be disregarded or suppressed on the pretexts of ‘non-interference’. Fourthly, if there are Kurds then there is Kurdistan. Hence no other solution can be deemed satisfactory. Finally, the international colonial status of Kurdistan renders its national liberation movement an anti-imperialist character. This means a new internationalism at the level of Middle East, which falls in conflict with the interests, who try to domesticate and legalize it. The right to self-determination is a fundamental pre-requisite for its internationalism. Hence “each nation

⁶⁵² Rızgari, by tradition, had been the ‘Iraqi Communist’ version of ‘Greater Kurdistan’ project, that propagated the liberation and unification of all Kurds. See Jwaideh (1960), pp.730ff.

[was] a graceful flower and all [should] blossom freely in the garden of the world.”⁶⁵³

But why, after all, should be the ‘freedom and independence of the Kurdish nation’ be an *a priori condition* for the exercise of [its] right to self-determination? If the Kurdish nation were ‘naturally’ entitled to such right, why would it liberate itself first, and *only then* it would self-determine? Finally, why the right to self-determination was not considered [by Komal as well as by other contemporary revolutionary Kurdish nationalists, including the PKK] as a status, politically viable on the way to forming a separate, independent and sovereign entity? The problem of legitimacy starts here, as this ‘type’ of self-determination advocated by the revolutionary Kurdish nationalists since late 1970s has a ‘delayed’ or ‘secondary’ nature, rendering it an ‘implied’ characteristic.⁶⁵⁴

4.4.1 The Burgeoning Minority Rights in the post-Helsinki Era: A Case for Non-colonial Liberation?

As is discussed above, the self-determination was made a legal standard after 1945. At the time, it was intended to guide the action of the world organization, but over the years, with the development of the minority treaties, the Member States gradually turned that standard into a precept, binding directly on States.⁶⁵⁵

As a matter of international law, the decolonalist context which extended well into the 1970s automatically conferred all peoples under colonial rule or in non-self governing territories the status of *ius cogens*. This meant that the said peoples had been *recognized* by the international community and law as such for anti-colonialist liberation process. However, while doing so, the

⁶⁵³ Maraşlı (1992), pp.32-8.

⁶⁵⁴ Weller (2005).

international community also *unrecognized* other peoples outside of the said context.

For those who had been unrecognized, the prospect for recognition had ceased to exist at its beginnings in the aftermath of the Second World War. The first implication was that they would have to wait for the development of a *new context* where the principle of *non-interference*, a principle on which the international system agreed unanimously since its modern establishment, could be somehow superseded.

In the formative years of the Cold War, the United Nations system based on Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) tried to create a 'truly universal' normative framework. However, this process was hampered by the ideological differences between the Western and Socialist blocs as well as between the underdeveloped former colonies supported by the USSR and the West, including the former colonial powers.⁶⁵⁶ The result was an inevitably expanding normative framework,⁶⁵⁷ but an impotent, narrow margin of political processes restricted with near anonymity by all states.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁵ Cassese (1995), p.43

⁶⁵⁶ In 1954, under the effective opposition created by American Bar Association, the US Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers which attempted to limit deliberately the US President's authority to negotiate international agreements. The Bricker Amendment to the US Constitution, originally tabled in 1951, finally and barely defeated in 1954. Evans (1996), pp.105-45. President Eisenhower had to step back radically from arriving a 'universal' deal with a majority of Socialist Bloc plus the Third World over economic rights (basically on the egalitarian concept of "right to development") in the UN. For a detailed discussion and history Xin Chunying, (1996), pp.43-56. As these rights (despite the strong opposition of the Western group) had been included (in Articles 22 through 29), along with the classical political and civil rights of the Western culture, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the US representatives were under instruction also to dilute even the universal implementation of political/civil rights laid in such a covenant, due to widespread segregation and racial discrimination particularly in its southern states, mainly by proposing clauses retaining competence of federal units in implementation of covenant provisions. The very same effort was also displayed by the Western European colonial powers, who translated the US's "federal" efforts into "colonial" ones, trying to eliminate effective and universal implementation the right to self-determination (which then meant decolonization) and the newly introduced egalitarian right to development. *Idem*.

⁶⁵⁷ The result was that a projected single covenant on human rights encompassing the universal aspirations of all three worlds was split into two, one on political and civil rights and the other on economic, social and cultural rights, both of which took over 15 years to become finalized

There was hardly a normative effort toward defining non-state entities outside the colonial framework, other than a reserved formulation of minority rights in the Article 27 of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Being the most progressive regional human rights framework, the European Convention on Human Rights had no mention of minority rights.⁶⁵⁹

By 1975, the Western states succeeded by way of signing the Helsinki Final Act on trading in minority rights to the Socialist Bloc, as a sign of major departure from the post-war avoidance of minority questions and the Soviet resistance to 'internal' self-determination. The Conference on [later Organization of] Security and Cooperation in Europe ensured that these issues are talked in the 'follow-up' meetings, where member states had to give up the 'non-interference' safeguard against each other's criticisms.⁶⁶⁰

On part of the Third World, the long-awaited development prospects eroded through the inadequacy and corruption of their political cadres as well as with their growing reliance on the manipulative development assistance extended by the Bretton Woods institutions. The anti-Western flora in the UN in the immediate Cold War years dissolved, reducing the political significance of the developing nations into the realm of compulsory concessions to the Western world under enormous debt load throughout 1970s and 1980s. The end of the Cold War marked the spread of intra and trans-border ethnic conflicts leading

in the UN before they were adopted and opened to the signatures of the member states in 1966 and then to enter into force in 1972. The US did not sign the latter, while signing the former only late 1980s, with a federal reservation on the question of death penalty.

⁶⁵⁸ For example, of the 25 documents related to human rights prepared by the UN until this day, some particularly elaborating on the famous civic rights such as the physical integrity and security of the person, whose implementation have been effectively limited by "geographical" reservations by the European colonial states, mainly Britain, France and Holland. *Status of Instruments*, Vol.s I and II, (Geneva: UNCHR, 1987)

⁶⁵⁹ Crawford (1997). There were, of course, *bilateral* minority agreements, like the ones in between Austria and Italy (1946), Germany And Denmark (1955) and others in Europe. See Preece (1997), n.22.

⁶⁶⁰ Preece (1997).

to a loss of about five million people, mainly from the non-Western societies.⁶⁶¹

After the Cold War, the normative efforts extended onto ‘vulnerable’ groups and ‘thematic’ categories. The European efforts involved the Paris Charter in 1990 and a Framework Convention on National Minorities (1995). At the UN, the normative work involved UN conventions involving the rights of women (CEDAW 1979), children (CRC 1989) and against torture (CAT 1984) were adopted, doubling the treaty bodies to six for monitoring violations. But more importantly, this normative effort was coupled with the emergence of an enormous political machinery which included, by 2000, 16 country and 20 thematic procedures.⁶⁶² These political efforts were complemented by further organizational reforms, including an Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 1993. There were also regional mechanisms with varying effectiveness in Europe (1992 OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities), Africa (1988 African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights) and in Arab world (1983 Arab Organization for Human Rights).⁶⁶³ Within states, there have been established ‘truth and reconciliation commissions’ that operated before international public opinion (11 in the 1990s)⁶⁶⁴ in addition to international tribunals (e.g. Rwanda and Former Yugoslavia).

Within a decade after the ‘Cold War balance’ imploded, *no state*, in theory, *was immune* to this internationally devised, intrusive political machinery. The problem was, the scope of the normative shift and the political intrusiveness as described above, encompassed an area much larger than the minority rights. The new international legal and political scrutiny, once focused on a country with a poor record on human rights, tended to question its overall legitimacy, rather than its individual thematic or categorical ills. Hence, the opposition

⁶⁶¹ UN Human Development Report (2000), p.60.

⁶⁶² Ibid, p.44.

⁶⁶³ Ibid. pp.27-8, 45-7.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid. p.72.

groups, minorities or even individual applicants previously ignored by ‘the system’ due to lack of dedicated political/legal means, had their voices amplified through these new channels, particularly in this age of information. The context in international rights had once again changed in favor of legitimating dissent.

The second implication was, however, that the non-colonial peoples and minorities had, ever since the modern system has been established, failed to qualify for being conferred a status recognized by international law. To overcome these difficulties, they could *fight* their way for a status that would help to achieve ultimate aim of sovereign independence, which they did. Weller calls this the “entitlement [i.e. right?] to turn it into an international conflict in terms of international humanitarian law”.⁶⁶⁵

Hannum notes, the “specter of secession” has not been translated into a right recognized by the international community, but the international law does not prohibit secession, voluntary or violent, either.⁶⁶⁶ Since 1945, the international community has been extremely reluctant to accept unilateral secession from the independent states. Indeed, between 1945 and 1989, there had been 22 cases of unilateral secession outside the colonial context. Yet again, since 1945, no state that was created by unilateral secession was admitted to the United Nations against the declared wishes of the government of the predecessor state.⁶⁶⁷

Despite the states have restricted the *area of legality* for themselves, the increasing number of ethnic conflicts within their sovereign area led a number of states took the initiative of developing further norms into international humanitarian law. The two 1977 Protocols Additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions have been a product of such effort led by the Swiss government. The Swiss initiative involved a diplomatic conference in 1974 where a number

⁶⁶⁵ Weller (2005).

⁶⁶⁶ Hannum (1998).

of liberation movements were also invited to discuss the two draft protocols submitted by the International Committee of the Red Cross, created an international controversy. The states, albeit without any prejudice to their sovereign rights, were to consider proposals on *legitimate* ways to the recognition of non-state entities.⁶⁶⁸ It was although explicitly stated in the Preamble of the 1977 Protocol (I) that the aim of the Protocol was not to legitimate or authorize “any act of aggression or any other use of force inconsistent with the Charter of United Nations”,⁶⁶⁹ by creating pseudo-legal categories of ‘existence’ for the ‘armed opposition groups’, the Protocols were designed to regulate not only the armed conflict itself (where the declared ultimate aim was to protect the victims), but also the way states may choose to ‘approach’ these groups. This had been a novelty, in terms of producing ‘legitimate’ ways to recognize ‘illegal’ non-state actors as new *ius cogens* in international law.⁶⁷⁰

How are the states are expected to ‘recognize’ the existence and legitimacy of situations of insurgency and their actors? Insurgency has three categories: a *rebellion* is an armed internal conflict which do not prompt other states or international community to take any account of it. It is an outlaw use of force against the legitimate authority, hence the government’s response is a matter within domestic jurisdiction. An *insurgency* however, is a more serious challenge. The other states may not treat the rebels as mere law-breakers. It is thus a *de facto* recognition, but without prejudice to the legal rights of the legitimate government. The status of *belligerency* is a further level of recognition, whereby belligerent factors may impair the standing of the recognized, legitimate government. They may do so by imposing on the international community an obligation of neutrality, that may possibly involve

⁶⁶⁷ Crawford (1997).

⁶⁶⁸ Wilson (1988), pp.127ff. The invitation involved eleven liberation movements recognized by the Arab League and the Organization of African Unity.

⁶⁶⁹ Preamble, 1977 Protocol I.

⁶⁷⁰ Wilson argues that the Protocols simply constituted “a treaty of *jus in bello*”. Wilson (1988), p.129.

the claims of unlawfulness of provision of military aid to *either side of the civil conflict* by foreign states.⁶⁷¹ The need for such recognition of insurgency for states may arise, Lauterpacht argues, from an *ad hoc decision* to protect their national interests (including commercial intercourse) in the territory occupied by the insurgents or to intercede with them to ensure humane conduct.⁶⁷²

What are the legal and political conditions, elements and consequences of such recognition? In his theoretical effort to lay down the essential conditions for (implicit or explicit) recognition of insurgency, Menon lists the following that the states may consider the following:

1. There is within the disturbed State a hostile, armed uprising beyond the control of its civil authority;
2. this party is pursuing public ends by force, namely endeavoring to change the form of government [...]
3. the insurgents have gained control over part of the territory;
4. there is considerable support to the insurgents from the people inhabiting the territory –*the support must be forthcoming out of their own free will and must not be the result of duress or compulsion*;
5. the insurgents have the capacity and [be] willing to carry out the international obligations imposed on them by the grant of insurgency;
6. the conditions within the state are so disturbed as to materially affect outside States; and
7. in the absence of control by the parent State, outside States have some relations with the insurgents.⁶⁷³

Roth argues that all the above but the fourth criterion seem plausible, where there is a ‘judgement’ of the efficacy of the insurgency in a given zone. This, according to Roth, is *unnecessary* as the recognizing state has *interests in need of protection*.⁶⁷⁴ Strikingly, Roth attempts to *extend* the post-war principle of wholesale conferral of legitimacy to the decolonizing states, this time to the insurgents by way of recognizing their ‘external’ right to self-determination. It

⁶⁷¹ Roth (2000), pp.173ff; Lauterpacht (1947), pp.266ff.

⁶⁷² Lauterpacht (1947), p.278. He adds that these foreign states are not bound to cooperate with the legitimate government in the suppression of the rebels and treasonable acts.

⁶⁷³ Menon (1994), pp.137 [italics added].

⁶⁷⁴ Roth (2000), pp.174-5.

is *not* necessary, for the author, to question as to how the insurgency has mediated its popular support based on free will of the people it claims to represent. The author deems the insurgency is *legitimate from its beginning*, as its very existence is a sufficient indication as to its legitimacy vis-à-vis the expiring one of the parent state.

Hence, the recognizing state needs neither an extensive consideration of the international law relating to such recognition, nor it has an obligation to recognition which, in practice, is a matter of convenience.⁶⁷⁵ This is an extreme argument, insofar as the author claims that ‘effective control’ should not be seen as a safeguard for the government, governmental legitimacy must depend in empirical manifestations rather than irrebutable presumptions of popular consent.⁶⁷⁶ It carries a striking resemblance to the arbitrarily practiced minority protection regime *prior* to the First World War. Do the States, however, desire such a reversal of the existing system?

We have already discussed that the post-war international system conferred recognition to the peoples under colonial rule or in non self-governing territories. In order to facilitate their recognition, as we have shown, the UN has adopted mainly the declarations 1514 and 1541 to guide the States Members in 1960, and a balancing 1970 Declaration on Friendly Relations among States. The UN, in this context, adopted also resolutions denouncing colonialism as a ‘crime’⁶⁷⁷ against which it confirmed the “legality of the peoples’ *struggle* for self-determination” including, among the colonial people, the Palestinians.⁶⁷⁸ The First UN World Conference on Human Rights that convened in Tehran in 1968, also proclaimed the *struggle* against ‘Apartheid’

⁶⁷⁵ *Idem.*

⁶⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.182.

⁶⁷⁷ UN General Assembly Res. 2621(XXV), 1970.

⁶⁷⁸ UN General Assembly Res. 2728(XXVI), 1971 [*italics added*].

as *legitimate*.⁶⁷⁹ The legitimization framework of the anti-colonial struggle in the late 1960s and the early 1970s had thus been extended, at least on a case-by-case basis, to cover the Palestinians and the colored peoples *in their homelands*.⁶⁸⁰ These, however, did not evolve into customary practice due to their particular/exceptional nature. Even the 1977 Geneva Protocols declined to provide a legal standing to insurgents, reducing the rebels to the level of criminals.⁶⁸¹

Regarding the legitimacy of the internal insurgencies in a post-colonial and post-Cold War world, where the above explained normative expansion in minority treaties had taken its pace, the States adopted a common and fundamental position at the Second UN World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna 1993. With due consideration of the legal and political democratic expansion early in the 1990s, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the Conference explicitly set a new benchmark in terms of the question of legitimacy. The Conference ‘recognized the *right of peoples* to take any *legitimate* action’, but framed it in the following way:

[T]his right shall not be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States conducting themselves in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and thus *possessed of a Government representing the whole people belonging to the territory without distinction of any kind*.⁶⁸²

⁶⁷⁹ “The struggle against apartheid is recognized as legitimate”, Para.7 of the Proclamation of Teheran, Final Act of the International Conference on Human Rights, 22 April-13 May 1968, UN Doc. A/CONF.32/41 at 3 (1968).

⁶⁸⁰ The Apartheid was later defined as a ‘crime’ and became subject to the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid which came into force in 1976 with subsequent international sanctions by the States, before the Apartheid regime in South Africa finally imploded in the early 1990s. The Palestinians, on the other hand, went into a bilateral peace process in exchange for the Israeli-occupied territories by the late 1980s.

⁶⁸¹ Roth (2000), p.177.

⁶⁸² From Para.2(Ter) of the “Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action” adopted at the UN World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14-25 June 1993 [italics added].

The PKK/ERNK had poured in its European diaspora activists before the conference building in Vienna for demonstrations and propaganda during the conference proceedings.⁶⁸³ The adoption of the Vienna Declaration introducing the concept of democratic and representative legitimacy for governments against acts of secession (as a form of self-determination) was a “step back”⁶⁸⁴ by the “double-faced UN” for the Kurdish nationalists.⁶⁸⁵

4.4.2 The PKK Movement: Legitimacy by Violence?

The armed violence conducted by the PKK starting from mid-1980s has had its operational space between the options of secession/independence and autonomy with full minority rights. Its ideological claim to represent the Kurdish ‘people’ was based on an initial presumption that it would be capable of mobilizing masses for a home-made liberation. It did not rely, at least initially, on aid by superpowers, but simply nurtured and abetted by the Syrian government seeking land and water from Turkey. Syria’s was a clandestine support and was critical to maintain the operational logistics for the PKK.

After almost a decade of fighting, the PKK claimed to have rationalized and legitimated the support it extracted by force from the tribal chieftains. Öcalan called this a ‘victory’. He claimed that the PKK established its ‘social base’ on the [Kurdish] ‘patriotic revolutionary proleteriats’ since the mid-1970s vis-à-vis the traditional KDP (Barzani) line that relied on aghas, sheikhs and tribes.⁶⁸⁶ He said PKK undertook “a ‘dual struggle’ that exposed and alienated both the

⁶⁸³ “Viyana’daki açlık grevi” (Hunger strike in Vienna), *Özgür Gündem*, 18 June 1993.

⁶⁸⁴ On his return from the conference, Akın Birdal, the Chairman of the pro-PKK activist “Human Rights Association” in Turkey, said the “Vienna Conference was a step backward”. He further stated that the big states dominated the Conference where he called for international intervention in the war between the Turkish Government and the PKK; and that the rights of the Kurdish people suspended in Turkey for 70 years should be restored. “Viyana bir geri adımdır” (Vienna Conference was a step backward), *Özgür Gündem*, 26 June 1993.

⁶⁸⁵ “Viyana’da BM ikiyüzlülüğü” (The double-faced UN in Vienna), *Özgür Gündem*, 27 June 1993.

Turkish [bourgeois] nationalism and Kurdish primitive [tribal] nationalism, among the Kurdish people”.⁶⁸⁷ By dual-struggle here, Öcalan refers to PPK action against the Bucak tribe in Siverek in 1979 and against the KUK and other guerilla groups along the Iraqi border. In the former, the PKK was unsuccessful in organizing a peasant rebellion against a local Kurdish agha.⁶⁸⁸ Öcalan asserts that while the traditional/tribal Kurdish nationalism relied on “decolonization” theses inspired by Barzani/Talabani movement against the Iraqi state, his own “creative socialism” won the lead as a “National Liberation Struggle”.⁶⁸⁹ In the real world of guerilla strategy, though, Öcalan needed to keep his tribal allies under his terrorizing patronage, rather than killing them.

It has been argued that the state was so slow in assessing the PKK’s strategy and tactics.⁶⁹⁰ Up until early 1990s, the government officials insisted to perceive the PKK as yet another rebellion attempt with foreign and domestic (tribal) support. Hence they drew in typical policy tools, adopted in 1920-30s to suppress this ‘banditry’: in April 1985 the ‘temporary village guards’ system was brought to ensure rural security against the PKK attacks.⁶⁹¹ The arrangement confirmed the inability of the state security forces to mobilize efficiently,⁶⁹² but later proved an effective policy tool against the PKK’s plans to forge a ‘popular front’.⁶⁹³

⁶⁸⁶ Öcalan and Küçük (1993), pp.240-44.

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.240. By ‘primitive Kurdish nationalism’, Öcalan referred to the Barzani supported, pro-Soviet tradition represented by organizations such as DDKD- the T-KDP (Şivancılar)-KUK-TKSP (KSP -Burkay), Özgürlük Yolu, Rızgari.

⁶⁸⁸ The PKK later admitted that the Siverek incident proved reliance on peasantry would be a futile effort and confidence should be given to the ‘leadership of the proleteriat’. *Serxwebun*, “Onuncu Zafer Yılı”, December 1988, p.26. Also see Öcalan and Küçük (1993), pp.262-65. In its second congress in 1981, the PKK declared ‘regret’ on its conflict with the T-DKP/KUK operating through the Turkish-Iraqi border from northern Iraq.

⁶⁸⁹ Öcalan and Küçük (1993), p.241.

⁶⁹⁰ See an analysis by Kışlalı (1996), pp.166-84. Also see Elekdag (1996).

⁶⁹¹ Law No.18715 published on 4 April 1985 in the Official Gazette.

⁶⁹² This practice was originally introduced by the early republican government in October 1923 by a law named “*İzale-i Şekavet Kanunu*” (Suppression of Banditry Law). It allowed for the non-prosecution for the acts of killing of those criminals labeled as such [and called to surrender] by the Ministry of Interior. The Minister Ali Fethi Bey himself, responding to the criticism during the parliamentary debate on the law, admitted that there was a real problem of

A similar instrumental approach by the PKK was devised toward another rival, namely religion. At a time when the PKK's legacy in the region was challenged by increasing political support to the Islamist Welfare Party as well as the clandestine operations of *Hizbullah*, Öcalan's video tapes depicting him 'exchanging views' on Islamic conduct with religious scholars called '*mele*' among the Kurds was widely distributed:

Öcalan: Are we slaves?

Mele: Yes, we are.

Öcalan: Tell me mele, is a slave required [by the Book] to give *zekat* and fast?

Mele: No.

Öcalan: Then we should [rise for a] *jihad* in order to get these [rights], shouldn't we?

Mele: Of course.⁶⁹⁴

In August 1996, shortly after the Welfare Party came to power, eleven deputies offered extension of cultural autonomy and the inclusion of Sheikh Osman, a religious Kurdish leader in Northern Iraq, into the scene⁶⁹⁵. Alarmed by this rivaling initiative,⁶⁹⁶ MED-TV, the PKK's TV channel, frequented broadcasting Qoran readings. Öcalan had in fact set forth the principles of devising 'religion as a means of revolutionary struggle'.⁶⁹⁷ In an article, he defined it as "an essentially revolutionary and anti-imperialist ideology that is rising today, which needs to be led as a means of struggle in conformity with

insecurity and the state was unable to fill this gap. The law was abolished for its unconstitutionality in 1962. Aytar (1992), pp.190-95.

⁶⁹³ By 1990 there were about 20 thousand village guards, by 1993, 35 thousand. McDowall [1996], p.422. The introduction of the village guard system increased the ruthlessness of the PKK attacks on civilians, which in turn increased the local tribes' enrollment in the system. *Ibid.*, p.423.

⁶⁹⁴ Milli Gazete, 22 Eylül 1992.

⁶⁹⁵ G. Aydın, "RP'li 11 milletvekilinden Kürt Muhtırası" (Kurdish Memorandum from 11 WP MPs), *Hürriyet*, 10 August 1996.

⁶⁹⁶ F. Çekirge, "Erbakan'ın gizli Kürt Zirvesi", *Sabah*, 3 August 1996. For a detailed account of Welfare Party's organization and popular support among the Kurdish community, see Çalmuk (2001), pp.11-3, 132ff. And 159ff.

⁶⁹⁷ See Gunter (1997), pp.36-7; Kurubaş (2004), pp.106-7; Imset (1992), p.141.

the historical traditions of the people”.⁶⁹⁸ There was neither ‘atheism’ nor ‘social revolution’ in this.

In fact, the PKK was well aware of the rivaling potential of religious affiliations among the Kurds in the early 1990s. The PKK established religious unions for Sunni (YDK), Alevi (YAK) and Yezidi (YEK) communities in Europe in 1990-93, with almost no active presence among the Kurds in Turkey.⁶⁹⁹

The PKK had occasionally aligned itself with the ‘patriotic’ tribal chieftains. But, Van Bruinessen argues that it never allowed them to take organic leadership within it.⁷⁰⁰ Same applies to the religious establishment. In fact, Öcalan and his organization had no tolerance to other voices from within and without. The PKK systematically exterminated its inner dissidents, surrounding and potential rivals, Kurdish or Turkish, in its area of action.⁷⁰¹ Hence, the slightest possibility to diversify the political discourse in Kurdish nationalism was met by PKK action, in many occasions before the state prosecutors’ legal initiative.⁷⁰² The organization later used this hegemonic position to give prominence during the elections to the political party and the candidates, which acted as its political off-springs.

⁶⁹⁸ Quoted in Mumcu, “Kürt-İslam Sentezi” (The Kurdish-Islam Synthesis), *Cumhuriyet*, 15 March 1991, quoting Öcalan, A. “Kürdistan’da Türklük, İslamiyet ve Ulusal Kurtuluşçuluk” (Turkishness, Islam and National Liberation in Kurdistan), *Serxwebun*, Nov.1990. Mumcu also quotes the practical decisions by the PKK National Congress as published in *Serxwebun* (August, 1990) on the need to organize the religions and sects around PKK as well as organizing Union of Imam’s as an institution of the revolution, religio-political propaganda in the mosques, etc.

⁶⁹⁹ The “Kurdistan Pious Union” (YDK) which in 1993 changed its name into “Kurdistan Islamic Movement” was targeting the Sunni Kurdish communities in Europe. With six mosques in Germany, one in France and one in Austria, it stood no chance against the machinery of over 500 mosques run by the “National View”, the Welfare Party affiliate in Europe. Gunter (1997), *idem*.

⁷⁰⁰ Van Bruinessen (1998), p.42.

⁷⁰¹ For a concise account of PKK exterminations, see White (2000), pp.144-52.

In case of the ‘lay people’, i.e. the rural peasantry, upon whom the PKK organization dwelled for guerilla recruitment, the PKK violence was equally intimidating, exercised by indiscriminate mass killings in targeted raids of ‘punishment’ by the organization.⁷⁰³ This was part of a larger strategy aiming at ‘balancing’ the state authority in the region⁷⁰⁴ and a short-cut, albeit terror-induced, for much needed popular legitimacy. From the Eruh attack on 15 August 1984⁷⁰⁵ to December 1990,⁷⁰⁶ murdering civilians, mainly the Kurdish villagers presumed to be or declared as the ‘collaborators of the Turkish state’, were ‘officially sanctioned’ tactics of the PKK.⁷⁰⁷ The guerilla war by the PKK ‘had to be ruthless’ at the beginning, in order to reach at a ‘balance’, a break-even point in terms of popular legitimacy, for which the loyalty of the people to the state had to be destroyed at *any* cost. The cost, however, was tremendous, particularly to the Kurdish villagers –including women and children.⁷⁰⁸ The PKK later ‘officially’ outlawed such killings⁷⁰⁹ but killing of

⁷⁰² A more recent estimate on the number of PKK executions stands at 1,500, including the former party leaders assassinated by PKK squads after Öcalan’s capture in 1999. Durukan, N., “1,500 executions by PKK”, *Milliyet*, 14 February 2006.

⁷⁰³ White notes a resemblance between the PKK and the *Castroists* or the Che Gueveran “Camilo Cienfuegos” in terms of its effort in creating a ‘model guerilla fighter’. White (2000), pp.138-41. But Kirişçi and Winrow argue that in terms of intimidation of the rural population with brutal raids and indiscriminate killings to ensure their allegiance against the state, the PKK’s reputation resembled more like the *Shining Path* in Peru. Kirişçi and Winrow (1997), p.127.

⁷⁰⁴ The PKK organization depended on three structures: the party (PKK), the front (ERNK) and the army (ARGK –initially HRK). The ARGK was organized as a ‘guerilla army’. ARGK was to conduct a three-phased strategy of the armed action (termed by PKK as “*extended popular warfare*”): (1) strategic defense; (2) strategic balance and (3) strategic attack. Özcan suggests that guerilla type of armed struggle was later adopted as *the* basis of the PKK’s political struggle. Özcan (1999), pp.82-3.

⁷⁰⁵ This date was later declared by the PKK as the “*Army Day*” to commemorate the armed action.

⁷⁰⁶ PKK’s Fourth Congress, December 1990, Helvi Camp (later named after *Mahzun Korkmaz*, ERNK leader, killed in action on 28 February 1986 in Gabar) in Bekaa Valley.

⁷⁰⁷ ARGK replaced in October 1986 the HRK (*The Kurdistan Liberation Brigade*) which was charged with ‘armed propaganda’. Özcan, *ibid*.

⁷⁰⁸ Many of which were hung on trees, stuffed in the mouth with banknotes or simply by bullets. Bila (2004), pp.41-3.

⁷⁰⁹ And depending on personal interviews with and testimonies by the PKK guerillas in mid-1992, he also argues that some ARGK commanders were said to have been charged with death penalty for such actions. White (2000), pp.195-6.

the civilians continued,⁷¹⁰ the range of the targets expanding to include school teachers,⁷¹¹ imams, road and mine workers etc. This became a ‘grey-area’ between the PKK and the security forces, as the latter were also accused by the human rights organizations for extra-legal executions or mystery killings.⁷¹² Kutschera –a pro-PKK author, says that systematic and indiscriminate killing of the civilians made the Turkish Government able to easily label internationally the PKK as a terrorist organization.⁷¹³

The problem, as perceived by the government, was one of a security matter and could be dealt with by the armed forces based on the operational principles of a regular army force, as it was back in the 1920s.⁷¹⁴ By 1987, the martial law was abolished under international pressure that mounted since the military coup in 1980, and state of emergency was instituted. The area was administratively tied to a regional governor to work with a gendarmarie regional security command. The government’s failure to understand and react accordingly to the guerilla warfare conducted by the PKK would continue until 1992, when the PKK undertook to carve out a “*liberated area*” along the Turkish-Iraqi border covering Cizre, Silopi, Şemdinli and Nusaybin.

⁷¹⁰ The civilian casualties had risen to 3,736 in the period between 1992-95 as compared to 1,278 in 1984-91. Kirişçi and Winrow (1997), pp.126-9.

⁷¹¹ The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV) reported 128 schoolteachers were killed between August 1984 and November 1994, attributing more than 80 per cent of these deaths to PKK, noting that the families of these teachers have also been attacked. TIHV (1994). Öcalan dissociated himself from killing of the civilians. Imset (1993), pp.125-31. When expelled from Syria, in Rome in December 1998, he repeated his plea for not being guilty for these ‘mistakes by some ARGK commanders’. White criticizes him for being at least dishonest, as this was a ‘total war’ conducted on his commands. White (2000), p.196. White also reveals that the schoolteachers were targeted not only because they were regarded as the agents of assimilation, but also Kemalist indoctrination. *Ibid.*, p.195.

⁷¹² Based on the allegations in the report by the Parliamentary Commission to Investigate the Unsolved Political Killings. This report was not made public, as some of its members refused to sign it, but its contents were revealed in the press. See Turkish Daily News, 18 April 1995.

⁷¹³ Kutschera (1994), pp.13-4.

⁷¹⁴ Kışlalı argues that the government and the army had been so slow in understanding until late 1991 that the guerilla warfare was in fact a form of “*low intensity conflict*” which should be responded by similar a strategy and tactics those cannot be implemented by regular army units. Kışlalı (1996), *passim*.

The PKK strategy in 1990-1992 initially involved converting its operation into a controlled mass movement in provincial towns like Nusaybin, Silopi and Cizre in March 1990, which it called ‘*serhildan*’ [popular disloyalty/uprising]. The popular riots were organized in the town centers during the annual *Newroz* celebrations, with protesters piling barricades on roads, covering their faces with headscarves and youngsters throwing stones to the security forces, in symbolic semblance with the first Palestinian *intifada* that had won the sympathies of the world public opinion. On 23 March, thousands of protesters took control in Cizre town center, shops and public offices were shut down.⁷¹⁵ Bolstered by the unprecedented popular support, the PKK was calculating that it has achieved a political, if not military, ‘balance’ with the state for two reasons.⁷¹⁶

Firstly, from the Cizre riots in March to its Fourth Congress⁷¹⁷ in December the same year, one critical development had happened, namely the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The PKK enlarged the depth of its operational area, fortified its capabilities by the leftovers of the withdrawing Iraqi troops and virtually carried its organizational structure into the vacuum created in northern Iraq.⁷¹⁸ It was now stronger militarily than before, and already convinced of its political superiority. Hence, the PKK opted for creating and enhancing a “*liberated area*” within Turkey supported by its bases in northern Iraq.

Secondly and more importantly, there was the problem of scale. This problem emerged from the disjunction in perception of the scale by different actors: To start with, President Özal was emboldened by international intervention to Iraqi

⁷¹⁵ *Hürriyet*, 24-25 March 1990.

⁷¹⁶ Özcan (1999), p.110-28. Bila (2004), p.49. Özcan quotes Öcalan, in his speech to the Second National Conference held on 13 May 1990 –shortly after Cizre riots, as saying: “Although we have not reached a balance in the military sense, we can easily do so in political superiority and we can say so even now.” Özcan (1999), p.120

⁷¹⁷ The decisions by the PKK Fourth Congress in December 1990 in Northern Iraq. They entailed massive popular action alongside spreading the guerilla warfare and ‘army-building’.

invasion of Kuwait. He made public that he considered a wholesale political option that would permit Turkey converting into a US-style federal system, joined by the Kurdish chunk of northern Iraq (Mousul and Kirkuk) and where Turkey's Kurds would live in peace in a 'federalized area'. Özal's 'option', which required Turkey opening a second front on the northern border of Iraq during the Gulf War, was stiffly opposed by the military, with the Chief of Staff General Necip Torumtay handing in his resignation in protest. Özal was left alone, even among his former party fellows.

In early 1993, Özal continued his 'political' approach through his personal informal contacts with the Iraqi Kurdish leader Talabani. Talabani apparently built on Özal's ideas regarding a progress that would be possible rendering PKK's decommissioning of arms, if the state was to grant amnesty and let PKK legalize as a 'party to the conflict' along with the state.⁷¹⁹ Talabani, acting as a self-declared interlocutor, carried Özal's tacit approval to this suggestion to Öcalan. The latter immediately banked on it in a joint press conference in Bekaa Valley, announcing a conditional 'cease-fire' to let the state its deed by further steps in this direction.⁷²⁰ Öcalan declared he is ready for negotiations:

From 20 March to 15 April, we shall not fire. [...] In this way, we are trying to respond to the wishes of the international, Turkish and Kurdish public opinion for finding a chance for peace. In addition, we are declaring to the Turkish officials that we have expectations. [...] It is clear that a comprehensive

⁷¹⁸ The coalition forces intervened in January 1991 that created a political vacuum in northern Iraq (i.e. north of the 36th parallel) which was later ensured, paradoxically, by a US-led military presence in Turkey.

⁷¹⁹ Özal's ideas had then been of an experimental character. They were based on a report by Adnan Kahveci, a Motherland Party MP, in mid-1992 after his fact-finding mission in the southeast. Özal added some remarks into Kahveci's assessment and sent it to Prime Minister Demirel. But he also continued to promote his experimental approach in August 1992, commenting that broadcasting in Kurdish must be allowed and that the official TV channels might be used for such purpose. For excerpts of Özal's report, see Cemal (2003), pp. 125-8. Given the recent extension of the armed violence by the PKK after the Gulf War, Özal's ideas apparently gave an important impulse to PKK's 'expectations', rather than a 'democratic solution' that was brought into fore by the PKK leader after his capture by Turkey.

⁷²⁰ Two columnists, Çandar and Cemal, argued that this proposal originated from Öcalan, who was forced to do so as a result of extensive operations by the Turkish army in the region and in northern Iraq in October 1992. See Çandar (1993) and Cemal (1993).

cease-fire shall require negotiations. [...] Unilateral decommissioning of arms, without opening a window for negotiations, would mean committing suicide for us. [...] The significant question here is: Is the government ready to bring to front the political method or not?⁷²¹

Öcalan wanted to keep his arms, while negotiating for ‘peace’, i.e. the ‘democratic solution’. He was hoping to construct a pattern well-known to other secessionist guerilla movements such as the ETA in Spain and the IRA in northern Ireland. Unlike the IRA or the ETA, he lacked the will to place the HEP/DEP as a political interlocutor with the system.⁷²² His proposal for political negotiations was swiftly rejected by the government.⁷²³ A month later, Özal died. His ‘political options’ perished with him.⁷²⁴

The government’s rejection of a ‘political option’ carried with it another disjunction within the coalition parties. Within the major partner, the True Path Party (DYP), Tansu Çiller took over from Demirel and gave the go-ahead for the new counter-guerilla strategy called “area control”.⁷²⁵

The issue of the ‘modernization of the Kurdish problem’ has three dimensions: local, national and international. Apart from the historical, socio-economic, legal/political and discursive aspects involved in this discussion, we should

⁷²¹ Excerpts from Öcalan’s statement to the press. Öcalan (1993).

⁷²² The DEP deputy H. Dicle, in his address to the party conference on 12 December 1993, said the PKK was not a terrorist organization and called the state to implement the provisions of the humanitarian law. A. Sirmen, a columnist like many others in the media, accused the DEP for electing a “PKK Sposkesman” to the chair. A. Sirmen, *Cumhuriyet*, 15 December 1993. See a useful comparative history in Gürses (1997), p.35, 43-50 for IRA-approved negotiations with Sinn Fein and pp.70-3 for ETA-backed Herri Batasuna’s intervention with Spanish government.

⁷²³ Press statement by the Council of Ministers on 18.03.1993. Excerpts in *Milliyet*, 19.03.1993.

⁷²⁴ With one exception: In 1997, Prime Minister Erbakan and his aides considered ‘bringing back’ the main elements (amnesty, cease-fire, negotiations –but the state acting as a ‘referee’ this time) of the ‘option’. Çalmuk (2001), pp.169-71. But there had been fierce criticism in the media, and these plans were abandoned.

⁷²⁵ This was a total war. White (2000), p.171. Kışlalı argues that the new strategy belonged to the Chief of Staff General Doğan Güreş, who changed the conventional understanding up until then. In an interview, General Güreş admits that by 1992, the PKK had secured the general

remark the following general pattern the PKK has brought about the ‘Kurdish problem’.

First, in terms of the national polity in Turkey, the PKK has constituted the most extensive and violent action toward the Kurdish people as well as against the state authority. Since early 1990s, the Kurdish nationalist actors (armed groups, parties, voluntary organizations and the Kurdish media) have been dominated by the PKK violence. This has synchronized the Kurdish nationalist claims at a ‘discursive’ level.⁷²⁶ This synchronization has induced the consecutive Turkish government officials (Özal, Demirel, İnönü, Erbakan, Erdoğan) first to ‘accept’, then to ‘recognize the Kurdish reality’ and finally the ‘Kurdish problem’. I shall argue later in this chapter that this ‘discursive synchronization’ does not necessarily amount to a modernization *per se*, but that the Kurdish nationalism has now acquired a *structural* space within Turkish politics.

Secondly, at the local level, the PKK never assumed a systematic mission in terms of modernizing the socio-economic and political relations within the Kurdish population. Ideologically, to PKK, the Kurdish “national democratic revolution” required an all-class alliance of the Kurdish society under the Kurdish ‘proletariat’. Once the national question was solved, the democratic ingredient would automatically add in. Hence, the Kurdish ‘state of affairs’ could continue in a way that served best in the operational interests of the

popular support in the area. It had to be an all-out-fight. See interview with General Güreş in Kışlalı (1996), p.222.

⁷²⁶ For a vivid account of the report by the Istanbul Branch of the Islamist Welfare Party, which named the ‘problem’ as the “Kurdish Problem”, see Çakır (1992). The ‘conservative Kurdism’ too had to give way to the PKK violence, despite a repeated complaint that their political activities had been marred by the guerilla intimidation. The HAK-PAR chair A. Fırat (a grandson of Sheikh Said) complained about the PKK and HADEP/DEHAP violent intimidation on his voters at the November 2002 elections. See A. Fırat, “Seçim sonuçları üzerine”, HAK-PAR Statement dated 5 November 2002, Diyarbakır at <http://www.hakpar.org.tr/aciklamalar/39.htm> accessed on 18 March 2005. HAK-PAR Chair Fırat, however, alleged that the guerilla violence had been only natural, given the repression imposed by the state on the Kurds. A. Fırat, Roundtable Discussion in Bahçeşehir University, *Siyaset Meydanı*, ATV, 7 December 2005.

PKK. But in practice, the PKK itself was seriously contested by surviving traditional/tribal relations as well as traditional religious affiliations. The government's counter-measures such as the village guards system further exacerbated the tribal patronage, whereas the increased ideological strife stiffened the religious affiliations throughout 1990s.

Thirdly, the scholars widely agree that the international context has been effectively utilized by the PKK's nationalist claims. But they rarely dissect a dual pattern involved in the international connection utilized in the PKK action. The PKK has tactfully devised two concomitant, but necessarily separate set of international connections. These were its cross-border armed capabilities maintained in Syria and northern Iraq and its 'diplomatic' intervention capacity with the Western world, where the legitimacy of the Turkish state had been built.

It was critical for the PKK that the two should not interfere with each other.⁷²⁷ The organization was extremely successful in ensuring this. The Syrian support to the PKK had never been brought, despite repeated –yet overtly cautious attempts of the Turkish diplomacy,⁷²⁸ to the international limelight until 1998 when Turkey decided to deter Syria with a 'threat of war'. The fact that Öcalan had to leave Syria, within a month after an unprecedented threat of war from Turkey, trivialized the PKK's legacy in Europe as yet another terrorist organization Syria has nurtured and used against its neighbors. As Öcalan sought in vain a refuge somewhere –anywhere in Europe and despite massive demonstrations by the PKK-affiliated organizations, the PKK's carefully

⁷²⁷ For Öcalan, it was not important whether the camps were in Bekaa or in Europe. It was whether that organization could mobilize its nation. Since the PKK had "achieved the greatest insurgency *inside*, the PKK is not an outsider." H. Bildirici, "Abdullah Öcalan Konuşuyor –2" (Abdullah Öcalan Speaking –2), *Özgür Gündem*, 8 June 1992.

⁷²⁸ See Mufti (1998) for 'daring and caution' in Turkish diplomacy in the earlier half of 1990s, circumscribed by a concerted network of bilateral military arrangements by the PASOK government in Greece with Syria, Iran and Armenia. Elekdag asked in 1996 why Ankara refrained from making use of a wide range of alternatives that could be resorted before reaching the stage of using military force against Syria. Elekdag (1996).

knitted ‘international legitimacy’ suddenly dispersed. Öcalan’s capture by Turkish intelligence off the Greek ambassador’s residence followed by ministerial resignations in Greece and the PKK was included in the European Union’s list of proscribed terrorist organizations.

Regarding its cross-border armed action, the PKK relied heavily on the strategic and logistical military support by the Syrian government and to a limited extent, by the non-state actors such as KDP and PUK in northern Iraq. The Turkish security forces, unlike their success in northern Iraq,⁷²⁹ failed to respond effectively to these cross-border support by Syria to PKK until 1998, when it finally decided to deter the Syrian government by ‘threat of war’. The Iraqi Kurdish connection, however, has been traditionally circumstantial, as the KDP and PUK acted as provisional interlocutors to both sides, the Turkish government and the PKK, depending on their own circumstance.

Where is ethnicity in all this? At societal level, in terms of inter-ethnic relations, Kirişçi and Winrow argue that the expansion of its targets by the PKK to include the civilians seemed that they intended to polarize society along Kurdish and Turkish lines.⁷³⁰ Was it the case? White argues that it was, as observed in the public hatred expressed during the funerals organized for the members of the security forces killed in action against the PKK. For McDowall though, despite the years of armed violence that affected the country as a

⁷²⁹ On 27 May 1983, the Turkish security forces crossed for the first time the border three kilometers into Iraq. This operation was severely criticized by the KDP of Barzani, who immediately signed a collaboration protocol with the PKK in July. A second cross-border security operation by Turkish security forces into Iraq started on 5 July 1985. This time operation was based on Turkish-Iraqi security protocol signed on 5 October 1984, allowing “hot-pursuit” against the terrorist elements across the border. On 4 March 1987, the Turkish security forces, in a third major cross-border offensive, passed the border into Iraq, leading the KDP denounce its collaboration protocol with PKK in April. When the PKK’s ‘popular rebellion’ strategy took pace by the Newroz riots in March 1991 in the southwestern towns, the Turkish security forces carried out another incursion into northern Iraq to sweep the PKK bases. In October 1991, April 1996 and May 1996, Turkey undertook other extensive cross-boundary operations in northern Iraq.

⁷³⁰ Kirişçi and Winrow (1997), p.127.

whole, the conflict ‘curiously’ had never assumed an inter-communal dimension.⁷³¹

On the ‘diplomatic side’, the PKK relied on an assumption that international legitimation was a readily-lent, objective status. For one, this assumption was built around the post-war decolonialist ‘self-determination’ legacy that extended into as late as 1970s by guerilla wars. For another, there had been enough evidence that it was received positively in the Western Europe.⁷³²

The ERNK had mediated an effectively-steered Kurdish civil society in Europe, particularly in Germany where a large community of emigrant workers lived. The German state was indeed receptive to political refugees since 1977, when the criteria for asylum-seeking had been de-territorialized by a decision of the German Federal Administrative Court. The PKK became the prime beneficiary of this rule, in converting all immigrants smuggled into Germany by its international network into its ‘voluntary’ supporters and members of its affiliates. The only feasible way to obtain permanent residence in Germany for the Turkish immigrants was ‘to become a Kurd’, by way of membership in the PKK network organizations.⁷³³

The PKK strategy aimed at ‘balancing’ the international legitimacy of the Turkish state at a ‘treshold’ where the latter would yield to repeated calls from governments, international organizations or non-governmental organizations, for a ‘political settlement’ to which the PKK would be a natural party. This

⁷³¹ McDowall [1996], p.449.

⁷³² The ERNK had been contacted by officials from the EU and NATO countries. “NATO, PKK ile görüştü” (NATO conferred with PKK), *Özgür Gündem*, 2 September 1993.

⁷³³ This sympathy to the Kurdish cause by the German authorities survived until 1995, when a federal court decision in 1996 finally separated ‘Kurdishness’ from the more restrictively-defined ‘membership’ of violent separatist movement in Turkey. The change, however, was induced by the increased unlawfulness and violence by the PKK members in Germany, rather than a ‘refined’ legal-evidential perception by the German courts. For a discussion of PKK mediation in ‘refugee-migrants’ and the relevant German court decisions that legitimated this relation, see Başçeri (2000), pp.184-95. Başçeri notes that the structural restrictions to their

would lift the PKK's guerilla action up to a higher status by way of official recognition of its "freedom-fighting" legitimacy. It failed to be recognized as such for two reasons: One was the international institutional legitimacy of Turkey, despite severe criticism in the Western world. Hence, any recognition as such would necessarily mean a denial and exclusion of its sovereignty integral to its legitimate presence within the Western world. The 'cost' would be far greater for the international community⁷³⁴ than it was meant originally as a means of conflict resolution. The PKK was far too weak to overcome this structural dilemma.⁷³⁵

Secondly, the PKK was far from satisfying the criteria internationally established by the Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions (1949, 1951) regarding 'internal conflicts' which required armed groups to carry their arms in open, not attack civilians and control part of territory of a state.⁷³⁶ The conditions of international legitimacy also change, rendering the 'freedom-fighting' armed groups' assumptions false.⁷³⁷

participation in the German political system was also a factor which helped their politicization over the Turkish politics in the diaspora. Ibid., p.230.

⁷³⁴ McDowall argues that the "European states, particularly the NATO members want[ed] no trouble with Turkey –a fellow member. Nor do they wish to damage trade relations". And "no other contracting party, i.e. another European state, has brought a case against Turkey [in the European Court of Human Rights]" (*sic*). McDowall (1999). The reality was, they (four Scandinavian states vs Turkey in 1994 and Denmark vs Turkey in 1997) did. The problem is that the European as well as international system to enforce human rights was designed to protect individual, rather than collective rights. The latter has been in the making, which again required full consent of the contracting States Parties, rather than the ECtHR jurisprudence on individual cases. Gilbert (2002), see sections "X. Self-Determination and the European Convention?" and "XII. Conclusion".

⁷³⁵ Esim admits to this in a parallel he draws from Yugoslavia and Kosovar Albanians to Turkey and Kurds: "*we need only to look to one of the member countries of the alliance to see the utter hypocrisy of the NATO claim of humanitarian intentions in response to ethnic cleansing and oppression*". Esim, S., "NATO's Ethnic Cleansing: The Kurdish Question in Turkey", *Monthly Review*, Vol.51(2), June 1999.

⁷³⁶ We must note however that the international law has evolved in the 1990s to cover the 'gray area' left by the humanitarian law in internal conflicts. One example is that Article 8-2f of the Status of the International Criminal Court rather boldly defines this area: "*armed conflicts between the armed forces of a State and organized armed groups within the territory of that State*".

⁷³⁷ The PKK strove hard to overcome the diplomatic dilemma, i.e. to remain on the 'legitimate' side of the thin line that divides 'armed action' from the 'terrorist action'. In the 'age of globalized terrorism' that suddenly began following the Al-Qaeda attacks in New York and

4.4.3 Re-legalization, Non-Parliamentarianism and the ‘Peoplehood’ Project

The Kurdish nationalist movement re-legalized in the 1990s. Contrary to what the title of this section suggests, the course that the ‘legal’ Kurdish nationalist movement followed since it re-surfaced in 1990 can be divided into two in terms of its strategy. The first period involves its parliamentary strategy from its inception in 1990 to the loss of the parliamentary membership of the Democracy Party deputies (Demokrasi Partisi –DEP, formerly HEP) in June 1994 when the Constitutional Court ruled the closure of DEP. From then onwards, upon a legal trajectory of a total of 11 political parties,⁷³⁸ the legal Kurdish nationalist movement had assumed a ‘non-parliamentarist’ character,

Washington on 9 September 2001, the international community turned abruptly radical against ‘terrorism’. UN Security Council Resolutions established a Counter-Terrorism Committee (1371/2001), supported it with an ‘Executive Directorate’ (1535/2004) and introduced ‘country visits’ for compliance by States on new rules on fighting terrorism. See UN Doc. S/2006/276. The PKK decided to evade the ensuing “witch-hunting” by the Western international community. It first changed its abbreviated title to KADEK and then to KONGRA-GEL and KNK (Kurdistan National Congress), and back to PKK again within four years in the early 2000s. All these new titles have been marked by the Western community (the European Union and the US) as the continuation of the PKK, previously branded as a terrorist organization. See EU Presidency Statement, 5 May 2004. The PKK and KNK applied to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) demanding the annulment of the proscription decisions taken by the EU Council within the framework of the ‘global fight against terrorism’ [Case C-229/02 by Osman Öcalan (PKK) and Şerif Vanlı (KNK)]. The ECJ –Court of First Instance rejected their application. Official Journal of the European Union OJ C 143, 11.06.2005, p.34. In their appeal against this decision [Case C-229/05 P], the applicants were apparently frustrated that the Court ruled “that the PKK had dissolved for all purposes, including the purpose of challenging proscription” and that it was “oppressive, disproportionate and contrary to the rules of *natural justice* for a court to completely shut out an applicant”. Official Journal of the European Union OJ C 243, 1.10.2005, pp.2-3.

⁷³⁸ Main trajectory, other than the transitional parties, involve HEP (1990), DEP (1993), HADEP (1994), DEHAP (1998), DTP (2005). Except the last, they were all sued for closure at the constitutional court for becoming focal to separatist activities. While the first three could not escape closure, DEHAP, pending a decision by the Constitutional Court, decided to terminate its political life and join in the newly formed DTP in 2005. In all cases, elected figures, i.e. parliamentary deputies and mayors left the previous one to become a member of the other, except in the case of Zana *et al.* when the prosecutor general ‘caught’ them by submitting his case to the Court before they left the DEP. Yücel (2006), pp.93-169. This figure involves A. Firat’s conservative nationalist party as well as the transitional ones established by the DEP tradition, which followed HEP, in order to avoid losses and personal indictments at the courts.

deliberately maintained to strengthen the ‘territoriality’ and a separate popular legitimacy sought for by the nationalist project.

In his address to a conference on the cultural identity and human rights of the Kurds held in Paris on 14-15 October 1989, İbrahim Aksoy, a former Socialdemocrat People’s Party (SHP) deputy expelled from his party for criticizing Turkey’s Kurdish policy earlier in January at a EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Commission meeting that year, said:

[N]either the Joint Commission nor the European Parliament itself reacted on my punishment for expressing my opinions and essentially reflecting on the situation of the Kurdish people. By remaining silent, they have approved what was done [to me]. And after this, the Socialist International at its Stockholm meeting in June 1989, rewarded the SHP by admitting it as a member. You have of course every right to embrace a party that does not allow its deputies to the Paris conference where the problems of the Kurdish people would be discussed. Because, it is more important to grow in number and hence, champion the human rights. Congratulations, on your fresh member who denies the existence of 17 million Kurds.⁷³⁹

There were, in fact, seven deputies from the SHP attending the said conference in their ‘personal’ capacity rather than as a party delegation. They had consulted the party chair İnönü, who agreed to their attendance. They did not address the conference, nor they intervened at the deliberations. But on their return to the country, following the public criticism coupled with a media fervor against the ‘French interference’ with the Kurdish issue, they were expelled from the party. This was followed by resignations of the 19 ‘left wing’ deputies from the party, joined by 12 mayors from the southeastern towns.

They established the “People’s Labor Party” (Halkın Emek Partisi –HEP) in June 1990, with 11 deputies in their ranks. Was this a repetition of the divorce by the Kurdish revolutionary nationalists from the Turkish left, just like in the

⁷³⁹ The text of the address by İbrahim Aksoy at the conference, reprinted in *Deng* (1), December 1989.

early 1970s? This was different than the first one in two broad ways. Firstly, when the divorce happened in 1970, there had already been a parallel and equally legal organization (the DDKOs) involving a revolutionary Kurdish nationalist one, organized separately by those who were also the members of the TİP. This was a symbiotic relation, whereby the Kurdish revolutionary nationalist movement cloned the Turkish left in terms of its organization and ideology, simply by substituting the Turkish revolutionary re-liberation by Kurdish national liberation theses. Whereas in 1990, it was a ‘split’ mainly by the more radical members from the national mainstream left, which led to a ‘new formation’ aiming to rival the parent movement with a radicalized discourse. Hence, they called themselves the “New Democratic Formation” (Yeni Demokratik Oluşum –YDO).⁷⁴⁰

Secondly, the political and ideological environment that surrounded the Turkish party politics was considerably restrictive in the 1980s from the democratic expansion the TİP and the DDKOs enjoyed after the 1961 constitution. The military coup in 1970 had illegalized the revolutionary Kurdish nationalism, whereas the 1980 coup had criminalized it, with a ban on the use of Kurdish language, in addition to many other legitimate means of expression.⁷⁴¹ Hence, the YDO declared that more democracy was needed to remedy the common problems of the society including the Kurdish question. The framework for such democratic expansion was to be found *within* Turkey

⁷⁴⁰ “Siyasi Niyetler Bildirisi” (Declaration of Political Intentions) signed by 16 former SHP deputies, including A. G. Gürkan, A. Baştürk, F. Işıklar, T. Koçak, A. Türk, C. Canver, İ. H. Önal, M. Kahraman, A. Ekmen, S. Sümer, M. Alınak, A. Sağ, M. A. Eren, K. Sönmez, İ. Binici and İ. Aksoy. *Cumhuriyet*, 12 January 1990.

⁷⁴¹ On 22 October 1983 (two weeks before the first general elections following the coup), Law No.2932 On Publications in Languages other than Turkish officially banned Kurdish, based on Constitution articles 14 (integrity of the state), 26 (proscribed languages) and 42 (language of education). The 1980 coup had actually entailed a general project of repression that by far detailed than mere constitutional arrangements. See a useful comparative analysis of the detailed legislative work undertaken by the National Security Council in 1980-1983 in İnan and Ozansoy (1986). Also see the relatively ‘compact’ project by the 1971 military-induced government, which included the amendments in forty articles of the 1961 constitution in “Anayasanın kırk maddesi değişiyor” (“Forty articles of the constitution to be amended”), *Cumhuriyet*, 6 June 1971.

in its political unity and integrity, by means of *more* rights and freedoms, in a *more* civilian and sociable environment.⁷⁴² The YDO was aiming to fill a structural democratic gap in Turkish politics.⁷⁴³

In March 1990, the YDO organized a working conference. There arised the first conflict on the organizational problems. One group was aiming to have the new party organized as a ‘mass party’ (A. G. Gürkan *et al.*), whereas the other (F. Işıklar *et al.*) wanted to suffice with what they had for a beginning.⁷⁴⁴ The latter group went ahead to establish the HEP in June 1990 as the party was born on this dilemma: an intended mass discourse,⁷⁴⁵ but a resulting marginal presence, later to be claimed by the Kurdish nationalism alone.

Demir argues that the HEP, with its eleven deputies in the parliament, brought a ‘democratizing effect’ to the parliamentary politics. The SHP, alarmed by the growing electoral appeal of the HEP,⁷⁴⁶ established a party commission to look into the Kurdish issue. Meanwhile, the government took an initiative to abolish the ‘language ban’.⁷⁴⁷ In the run-up to the general elections on 20 October

⁷⁴² *Idem.*

⁷⁴³ This stance alarmed the SHP for the upcoming general elections in terms of electoral support and urged it to prepare a “Southeast Report”. Indeed, the SHP sought to contain the damage caused by the ‘divorce’ of the Kurdish issue from the party. See Demir (2005), p.95. For Ekinci, the ‘real’ damage was done to the social democracy as represented at the time by SHP, which had had the potential to contribute to the democratization in Turkey, including the Kurdish problem. Ekinci (2004), p.37.

⁷⁴⁴ Belge (1996), pp.40ff.

⁷⁴⁵ Indeed, in his address to the first party conference on 8 June 1991, F. Işıklar, the party chair, defined the party membership was composed of those who were the “most oppressed and the worst exploited”. Işıklar said “despite all our statements, if they insist on classifying the HEP as a ‘Kurdish party’, that means the Kurds are the most oppressed and worst exploited. And if the HEP assumes itself being a party of the most oppressed and worst exploited, it follows that it will be honored to be the party of the Kurds too.” Demir (2005), pp.117-8. Being one of the leading founders of the party, Işıklar could keep his seat only for a further six months when, at an extraordinary conference called by a group of members, F. Yazar took over as the new chair. Among the conference guests, there was Esma Öcalan, PKK chief’s mother, who received the HEP deputies. *Cumhuriyet*, 17 December 1991.

⁷⁴⁶ Demir argues that this was because that the SHP chair İnönü had seen for himself the weakening electoral support to his party in his campaign trip to the southeast for the upcoming elections in 51 constituencies on 3 June. Demir (2005), p.95.

⁷⁴⁷ On 12 April 1991, Anti-Terrorism Law was promulgated repealing the ban on public use of Kurdish language (law no.2932 dated 1983) and on communist and religious parties. But the new Law introduced, in its notorious article 8, ban on terrorist/separatist propaganda.

1991, the SHP leaders were eager to strike an alliance with the HEP for the upcoming elections.

It was not only the parties who had been alarmed by the HEP and its immediate impact over the electorate. In a later interview with Küçük, the PKK chief Öcalan said:

There was also a political *vacuum*. There arose [certain] circles who wanted to benefit from our influence at no cost. That means, they wanted to develop a *collaborationist Kurdish party*. There the HEP was tried to be settled. We thought we should make some interventions on this basis. We did not think of something like “it is ours, the PKK’s party”. But [the Party] was aiming at setting [itself] on *our base*. We could not remain disinterested, thus *we put our hand on it*. What does this mean? It means we tried to engage with it, we went in it, we went out of it, we criticized it, we supported it. The result was the birth of their election alliance with the SHP. Hence we had to support it too.⁷⁴⁸

The HEP entered the said elections on the SHP ticket and won 22 seats. But the problem was that the HEP group, aiming at bringing in the parliament an effective opposition, became *part of the government bloc* when the SHP became the minor partner of the coalition.

Yet, the HEP group within the SHP went ahead with the ‘original plan’. Wearing symbols and colors of the Kurdish ‘national flag’, they refused to read out the text of the oath to swear in as parliamentary deputies at the first session of the plenary. The previous day, they had handed in a list of ‘urgent demands’ involving Kurdish rights to İnönü, the SHP chairman. İnönü joined on 8 December Prime Minister Demirel in a trip to Diyarbakır, where Demirel said that he ‘recognized’ the ‘Kurdish reality’. Despite these steps by the government leaders, however, it was now clear that the HEP was not willing to stay long within the SHP ranks.

⁷⁴⁸ Öcalan and Küçük (1995), p.335 [italics added]. Demir notes that M. Karasu, a leading PKK member in the Ceyhan prison at the time, said that the HEP was too quick to sit on their project before they initiated their own project. Demir (2005), p.101.

By the third month following their election, the HEP group resigned from the SHP, joining back to the HEP ranks. By the sixth month, a prosecutor of the State Security Court appealed to the parliament for the removal of their parliamentary immunities for trial on the charges of separatism. The prosecutor general too brought a case at the Constitutional Court for the closure of HEP. The HEP deputies had already left the party when the prosecutor general appealed to the Constitutional Court. The deputies wanted to evade personal indictment. They joined the DEP, which was also to be sued against for closure on similar grounds. The Court ruled the closure of DEP. The immunities of the deputies were voted and lifted in the parliament, on the initial appeal by the State Security Court. The parliamentary enterprise of Kurdish nationalists had thus ended.⁷⁴⁹

The HEP deputies left the SHP ranks in 1991. But, what was the reason that their initial strategy and activism changed considerably into a radical confrontation with the ‘system’? The Gulf Crisis resulted in the PKK’s transfer into northern Iraq and the adoption of its ‘popular disloyalty’ (*serihildan*) and ‘liberated areas’ strategy. This was met by the ‘territorial control’ strategy by the state security forces. By 1993, the HEP/DEP deputies, unlike others in the parliament, were *questioning the legitimacy of the state*, calling for ‘peace’ and if not, the implementation of the laws of war (the Geneva Convention). In the words of Hatip Dicle, in his address to the first extraordinary congress of DEP convening in Ankara on 12 December 1993 to elect him as the second and the last chairman of the party, six months before its closure by the Constitutional Court:

⁷⁴⁹ On 2 March 1994, Parliamentary immunities of nine DEP MPs lifted by the parliament. They were detained, on 17 March arrested and finally on 8 December, convicted to prison terms from 3.5 to 15 years (Türk, Zana, Doğan, Dicle, Sadak for 15 years, Yurtdaş to 7.5, Alınak and Sakık 3.5 –released). Kaya fled to Europe. Appeals Court ratified decision on Sadak, Doğan, Dicle, Zana, but released Türk, Yurtdaş, pending re-trial with Alınak and Sakık.

We have been frequently posed with one question; ‘How do you see the PKK?’. Our answer is the Worker’s Party of Kurdistan [PKK] is a political party [...] that had to opt for violent means, because that the democratic channels are not open in Turkey. [...] For us, the PKK is not a terrorist organization. How can you see a party which, according to the government’s own accounts [sic], has 15 thousand guerillas and 50 thousand armed militia [sic] and millions of sympathizers, and which has integrated with the people, found a place in the world’s agenda, as a terrorist? This definition suggests Nelson Mandela and Yasser Arafat as ‘terrorists’, the African National Congress and the Palestinian Liberation Organization as ‘terrorist organizations’. We do not accept this definition.⁷⁵⁰

Hatip Dicle’s argument marked a beginning of a new phase of non-parliamentarianism by the Kurdish nationalists. It had been a result of a conscious choice by the Party [reads the ‘PKK’ here] of *one* of the three main strategic options in the period between 1991 and 1994. The first was to organize a *legal and legitimate* movement along with the popular discontent ensuing from the brutal response by the security forces to the PKK’s spreading violence.⁷⁵¹ M. Alınak, a leading HEP deputy of the time, refers to the PKK-instigated urban demonstrations and Newroz riots in 1991 to suggest that the HEP group should have left the SHP immediately after the elections in October 1991. Their departure, he argues, would have been welcomed by a ‘mass mobilization’ for *more democracy*, which could have lifted the state of emergency and the anti-terrorism law.⁷⁵² His propositions had been flatly rejected by the part chair Işıklar, who disqualified Alınak as an ‘agitator’.

⁷⁵⁰ H. Dicle’s address to the DEP 2nd Extraordinary Congress on 12 December 1993, quoted in Demir (2005), p.286.

⁷⁵¹ In his ‘first statement’ after he was elected to the HEP chair, Ahmet Türk said that they will visit Öcalan for a bloodless solution to the Kurdish problem. Whereas the ‘bloodless solution’ represented the legal side of his argument ‘in favor of the state’ [“of course we are not going to him with any clandestine deal in our minds”], his wish to engage Öcalan constituted the legitimization strategy, ‘in favor of the PKK’ [“but in search for the remedies, there is the need to resort to all kinds of options to clear the way for a dialogue”]. “Apo’yla görüşeceğiz” (We shall talk with Apo), *Özgür Gündem*, 21 September 1992. This stance was supported by A. Birdal, the new chair of the Human Rights Association, who said that they would do their part to stop the bloodshed, including negotiating with the PKK. “İHD: Barış için PKK ile görüşürüz” (We can talk with the PKK for peace), *Özgür Gündem*, 27 October 1992. Birdal later clarified their project, which involved international initiatives to have the international humanitarian law apply in Turkey. “Birdal: Savaş koşullarının uygulanması için uluslararası girişimlerde bulunacağız” (Birdal: We shall conduct international initiatives to have the international humanitarian law apply), *Özgür Gündem*, 1 November 1992.

Işıklar originally planned to pursue, as another strategic option, the ‘urgent demands’ they had handed to the SHP chair, which could have brought a relief to the situation, by lifting of the state of emergency in the region.

There was also a third line, as propounded by Ahmet Türk and Leyla Zana. In his address to the second extraordinary party congress on 29 September 1992, Türk said he wanted to “promote HEP in international diplomacy”.⁷⁵³ Strikingly, for Alınak, this was nothing but a recurrence of the misery suffered by Vet. Nuri Dersimi, who left Dersim in 1937 to “promote the cause of the Dersim Kurds at the international platform”.⁷⁵⁴ What Alınak did not understand, was probably the beginning of a new era, one that would be constituted over a ‘local-to-international’ axis. The HEP and its successors would deliberately opt out from the parliamentary politics at the ‘national level’, in order to seek for international legitimacy for their ‘local’ [which reads ‘territorial’ here] project.

In the latter half of 1993, the party [DEP], now chaired by Yaşar Kaya, started getting radicalized. It was under constant pressure by the security forces and trials, while trying to continue its discursive war with the government that centered on the latter’s legitimacy.⁷⁵⁵ By autumn 1993, the DEP was debating its future strategy in the parliamentary life, referring to options that involved an annexation to the newly forming “Kurdistan National Front” by the illegal parties in Europe.⁷⁵⁶ The lifting of the parliamentary immunities of the DEP deputies by the parliament in 2 March and their immediate arrest was followed by the party’s boycotting of the local elections in March 1994. This was an enforced departure from the parliamentary politics, which justified the party’s claims for democratic deficiency in the Turkish politics. On the one hand, this

⁷⁵² Alınak (1996), p.11.

⁷⁵³ Alınak (1996), p.41.

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid., pp.42-4.

⁷⁵⁵ “DEP: Seçimler BM gözetiminde yapılsın” (DEP: Elections must be held under UN supervision), *Özgür Gündem*, 22 August 1993.

⁷⁵⁶ “DEP ne yapacak?” (Quo vadis DEP?) *Özgür Gündem*, 24 September 1993.

was called as a “civilian coup” instigated by the military.⁷⁵⁷ Whereas on the other, the PKK was prepared to seal off the southeast to all parliamentary politics, declaring a total ‘ban’ on the coming local elections.⁷⁵⁸ The PKK now felt itself stronger in its call for negotiations with the government, since the call for boycott decreased the voter turnout in the southeastern constituencies.⁷⁵⁹ The non-parliamentarianism of the legal Kurdish nationalist party politics had started on this pattern of electoral delegitimation.

The problem with the claims by the Kurdish parties as to the illegitimacy of the Turkish government, at least with their ‘boycott project’, was that they could bring the democratic representative legitimation in Turkey to a halt. The PKK backed this project by enlarging it to a complete ‘ban’ on the voting practice in the region. The party and the ERNK intensified its ‘diplomatic efforts’ in Western European countries, alleging that the democratic system would not function without their presence in its processes.⁷⁶⁰ In the run-up to the parliamentary by-elections to be held for the seats, majority of which were those emptied by the DEP deputies, the HADEP chair announced that they will boycott the elections claiming that they will not be democratic without their “full competition”.⁷⁶¹ For the Constitutional Court, though, it was the absence of a proper electoral register (i.e. the voters), rather than the voluntary absence of one of the parties, that made an election unconstitutional.⁷⁶² The constitutional benchmark imposed by the Court in assessing the legal legitimacy of the system went unchallenged by HADEP.⁷⁶³

⁷⁵⁷ Demir (2005), pp.299ff.

⁷⁵⁸ “PKK’den boykot kararı” (Boycott decision from the PKK), *Özgür Gündem*, 2 March 1994; “ERNK: Seçim yaptırmayacağız” (ERNK: We will not allow the elections), *Özgür Gündem*, 3 March 1993

⁷⁵⁹ Lowest turnout was observed in Tunceli with 21%, Diyarbakır 51% and Şırnak 62%.

⁷⁶⁰ “Kürtler diplomatik atakta” (Kurds in diplomatic offensive), *Özgür Ülke*, 30 April 1994.

⁷⁶¹ Demir (2005), pp.349-51.

⁷⁶² The Court ruled unanimously that without the renewal of the electoral registers, which had been outdated due to intra-regional migration, relinquished the citizens from their right to elect. *Ayın Tarihi*, November 1994.

⁷⁶³ Demir (2005), p.351.

For the Constitutional Court the problem of legitimacy, as propounded by the Kurdish nationalist parties, has been a different one. The Court considered the claims of illegitimacy of the Turkish state (based on the ethnic negation of Kurds) by the Kurdish nationalist parties [HEP and DEP] as *unnecessary*. The Court ruled that the fact that the land was named ‘Turkey’ for centuries and the people living on it as ‘Turks’ “does not mean a negation of the different ethnic groups present within a national integrity”.⁷⁶⁴ The citizenship of the state and national identity, does not mean the negation of the ethnic origins of the citizens, the Court adds. The Court strikes the balance by arguing that the “Equally, allegiance to ethnic origins should not harm the citizenship and the national identity and should not be made a grounds for claims to be a separate nation based on ethnic origins”.⁷⁶⁵

The question of legitimacy for the Court in terms of the state has been a non-issue since that the state had every legitimate and legal right to defend itself against any threat to its independence and sovereign integrity as “no state can be a state if that state fails to protect itself with its territory and nation”.⁷⁶⁶ That the “state is ‘single’, the country ‘integral’, the nation is ‘one’”.⁷⁶⁷ Also that “there has not been a discrimination against the citizens of Kurdish origin vis-à-vis the other citizens, and they have been benefiting from individual rights and freedoms in an unrestricted manner. There has not been any right denied, reserved or restricted [on them]”.⁷⁶⁸ Hence, for the state, there was not a legitimacy problem.

⁷⁶⁴ “DEP Gerekçeli Karar” (Merits of the Case on DEP), ES: 1993/3, KS: 1994/2, 16.06.1994, <http://www.anayasa.gov.tr>, accessed on 24.01.2006. The ‘nation’, the Court argues, has been a phenomenon of living in unity as a consequence of the historical and social development. It is different than the narrowly framed religious conception of *ümmet* (religious community) as well as the anthropologically or linguistically defined conception of race. “Within thus defined structure of a nation, it does not fit to facts to argue for a racism-instigated national separation [discrimination] like Turks, Kurds. Also see “HEP Gerekçeli Karar” (Merits of the Case on HEP), ES: 1992/1, KS: 1993/1, 14.07.1993, <http://www.anayasa.gov.tr>, accessed on 24.01.2006.

⁷⁶⁵ “Merits of the Case on DEP”, <http://www.anayasa.gov.tr>, 1994.

⁷⁶⁶ *Idem*.

⁷⁶⁷ *Idem*.

⁷⁶⁸ *Idem*

In the post-1994 period, the ‘diplomatic project’ of HEP/DEP assumed three inter-related dimensions. Firstly, the parliamentary activism was no more essential.⁷⁶⁹ The fact was that, a non-parliamentarist activism was expected to garner better recognition of the ‘illegitimacy’ of the Turkish government in the Kurdish region. Accordingly, the ‘genuine popular will’ of the Kurds would be displayed as one excluded from the ill-fated Turkish democracy.⁷⁷⁰ In doing so, the PKK called for the establishment of a “Kurdish Parliament-in-Exile” (PKDW) with alternative ‘elections’ in Europe.⁷⁷¹ A ‘call for convention’ by the PKDW Organizing Committee said the initiative was needed:

[T]o represent the people of Kurdistan at the international level, to end the prevailing chaos by conducting *real diplomacy*, to steer this historical flow of the people of Kurdistan, to direct the national liberation policy with a capacity to speak on behalf of the people of Kurdistan in order to take its own destiny in its own hands on behalf of the Kurdish people [...]⁷⁷²

The ‘elections’ however, according to the call, would be performed by ‘conferences held in every village, neighborhood, town and province’. The delegates elected by the conferences would form an *electoral caucus* to determine their regional members to the parliament. Should the conditions for conducting elections be absent in a place, then the relevant provincial committee [of the PKK] ‘supervised’ by the organizing committee would

⁷⁶⁹ In a statement after the arrest of the DEP chair Y. Kaya, the ERNK’s European representative Kani Yılmaz said that the DEP must now ‘go back to its people’, which would be a better answer to the ongoing process [of oppression]. “Kani Yılmaz: DEP, Ankara’dan çekilmelidir” (Kani Yılmaz: DEP must now withdraw back from Ankara), *Özgür Gündem*, 18 September 1993.

⁷⁷⁰ In March 1994, DEP boycotted local elections on the grounds that the party was being harassed in its propaganda activities by the security forces. They also denounced the elections to be fake, creating a democratic deficit, as the representativeness of those elected in the absence of DEP candidates would be questionable. In November that year HADEP announced its withdrawal from entering parliamentary by-elections to be held on 4 December in 13 southeastern constituencies for 22 seats.

⁷⁷¹ When the ‘parliament’ convened in Amsterdam, its members had been the ones drawn from the PKK/ERNK-led organizations in Europe. The parties participating in the parliament, other than the PKK, were the Communist Party of Kurdistan and the Islamic Party of Kurdistan, with no real presence among the Kurds in Turkey.

⁷⁷² “Kürdistan’da ulusal meclis çağırısı”, *Özgür Gündem*, 27 June 1992.

determine the representatives from among the “honest and patriotic” people with allegiance to the national liberation struggle.⁷⁷³ As it seems from the above, the project had confused at its beginning the *diplomatic representation* with a *democratic representation*.

The project involved the ultimate aim of convening a “Kurdistan National Congress” in northern Iraq to lay its claim on the Kurdistan territory in Turkey.⁷⁷⁴ The ‘exiled parliament’ convened in Amsterdam in April 1995.⁷⁷⁵ But the diplomatic nature of this project in Europe stood no chance with its democratic rival in the southeastern Turkey where the Welfare Party won a sweeping victory in the general elections in December the same year.

Secondly, this local/territorial and international conjunction was tried to be justified by the presence of a ten percent the national electoral threshold. The first national elections that the legal Kurdish nationalist trajectory [HADEP] entered on its own ticket had been the one held in December 1995.⁷⁷⁶ Its votes stood at 4.2 per cent, well below the national threshold,⁷⁷⁷ failing to challenge it as yet another ‘illegitimately ethnicist design’ of the Turkish government. HADEP candidates did not take the option of running as independent

⁷⁷³ “Kürdistan’da ulusal meclis çağırısı”, *Özgür Gündem*, 27 June 1992. The ‘elections’ for the electoral caucus was conducted in Europe by means of meetings attended by ‘thousands’. “Kürt Ulusal Meclisi seçimleri Avrupa’da başladı” (Elections for the Kurdish National Parliament began in Europe), *Özgür Gündem*, 22 October 1992.

⁷⁷⁴ The PKDW survived with some irregular meetings held in other locations in Europe before it finally dissolved into a “Kurdistan National Congress” (KNK). This was another non-elected entity established by the PKK in 1999, which had changed its name into a short-lived “Kurdistan People’s Independence Congress” (KADEK). This in turn dissolved into Kurdistan People’s Congress (KONGRA-GEL), which was again a short-lived experience, before it claimed back the original name of PKK. The circle was complete, the ‘alternative project of national representation politics’ was over.

⁷⁷⁵ In January 1995, PKK’s Fifth Congress convened and resolved establishment of a ‘parliament-in-exile’. The ‘parliament’ convened in April 1995 in Amsterdam was later presided by former DEP deputy Yaşar Kaya.

⁷⁷⁶ In fact, HADEP, which replaced DEP in May 1994 participated in December 1995 elections with three marginal leftist parties with no electoral significance, in an alliance called “Labor, Peace, Freedom Bloc”.

⁷⁷⁷ Demir argues that if it were not to the national threshold, the party could have won 23 seats in the parliament. He does not, of course, account for the reason why, given the local electoral support in the region, the party candidates did not run on their own to deny the threshold.

candidates, in which way they could have easily by-pass the national threshold and be elected to the parliament from their constituencies, where they stood up to 30-40 per cent of the local votes. The same pattern, however, was repeated in April 1999 and November 2002 general elections when HADEP garnered 4.7 and 6.2 per cent of the national votes cast respectively. The party [DEHAP] was in near-turmoil with the multiplicity of ‘self-criticisms’. A vivid suggestion came from Duran Kalkan, a member of the presidency council of the PKK, who said: “the 3 November [2002] elections have shown to us that leading a party and standing as candidates for establishing a parliamentary group are two different things”.⁷⁷⁸ The expected illegitimacy of the Turkish democracy was not forthcoming. But the legitimacy involved in the parliamentary process was pressing.⁷⁷⁹

The third dimension, however, satisfied the means for creating the ‘evidential requirement’ for the legitimacy of the Kurdish project at the level of local administrations. The April 1999 local elections concomitantly held with the parliamentary elections had been the first local elections a Kurdish nationalist party participated. Paradoxically, HADEP’s votes stood at 3.2 per cent at the national level, while scoring a genuine success by winning 37 municipalities, seven of which had been cities including the metropolitan Diyarbakır. Similarly, at the local elections held on 28 March 2004, the party raised its electoral performance declined to 5 percent, whereas its total win of mayors increased to 6 cities and 63 towns.

⁷⁷⁸ Quoted by S. Erdem in “Özeleştiri” (Self-criticism), *Yeniden Özgür Gündem*, 11 November 2002.

⁷⁷⁹ At the beginning the PKDW had been perceived, at least by its ‘newly-elected’ enthusiasts, a total project which involved a ‘Kemalist model’ with full functions of a parliamentary government and a constitution drafted for this purpose. See interview with M.S. Çürükkaya, Z. Dere and İ. Özden in *Özgür Gündem*, 3 January 1993.

Demir argues that the party [the DEHAP-backed HADEP] never strove in the 1999 elections as a party that genuinely desired to enter in the parliament.⁷⁸⁰ To transpose this argument in a question: has it really been intended to be in the parliament? In a ‘self-criticism’ HADEP chair Bozlak indicated three main reasons for failing at the 2002 general elections: failure in organizing nationwide [read Turkey-wide, not Kurdish-wide], not taking up the option of running as independent candidates and also failure to draft an election manifesto that would display the Party’s arguments on Turkey’s domestic and international issues.⁷⁸¹ Bozlak, however, did not mention that these ‘failures’ had not been unintended.

What then, could have been the party’s plan when ‘committing’ these ‘intended failures in the parliamentary elections? We have already suggested that the party wanted to remain out of the parliament to forge an illegitimacy around the Turkish government. In doing so, the party already had a plan to cater for its own legitimacy through the local administration. In its manifesto for the local elections in October 1992, HEP announced that they intended to bring “an administration in which the ‘will of the people’ would be superior”. The party deputy Alınak explained how this “popular will” would be mediated arguing that “there should be neighborhood committees formed to interact between the people and the municipal administration. The people shall participate at and determine the municipal services themselves”.⁷⁸² This,

⁷⁸⁰ It ranked the first in 11 provinces. In the 2002 elections, it [DEHAP’s] prevailed over others in 13 provinces, with votes exceeding 10 percent in 18 provinces. But he also notes that it remained under 10 percent in 63 provinces. Demir (2005), pp.511ff.

⁷⁸¹ Demir quotes the election bloc party chairs (DEHAP, HADEP, SDP, EMEP) in a discussion into the electoral failure. Demir (2005), p.514.

⁷⁸² “Halkla birlikte politika”, *Özgür Gündem*, 12 October 1992. Far from being an original idea, the ‘neighbor committees’ was inspired from an enigmatic example set by Fikri Sönmez, an independent revolutionary who won the mayoral election in October 1979 in Fatsa, a small town on the Black Sea coast. Sönmez, who was in turn inspired by the ‘revolutionary resistance committees’ during the Paris Commune, established 11 neighborhood committees to work with the town dwellers. The resulting success in Fatsa was being reminded in the Kurdish nationalist media at the time the HEP announced its local administration program. *ÖzgürGündem*, 2-3 November 1992. Also see “Hatip Dicle: Demokrasi Belediyeleri Kuracağız” (Hatip Dicle: We shall establish municipalities of democracy), *Özgür Gündem*, 2 January 1994.

according to the PKK, was the “real strategy for coming to power in Turkey and Kurdistan”.⁷⁸³

Ahead of the general and local elections to be held in April 1999, the former HADEP chair Bozlak said that their strategy was to be “in power at the local administrations [to be] the power for the solution.”⁷⁸⁴ For Dicle, HADEP was not meant to be a *Herri Batasuna* or *Sinn Fein* since neither its structure and ideology, nor Turkey’s conditions as well as the party’s ‘tempo’ would permit this. Instead of insisting in remaining legal, the party should aim at legitimacy. Because legality would mean a surrender to the system. The party should foster participation from the grassroots as much as possible, since *no single anti-establishment party* could survive without mediating popular support.⁷⁸⁵ For the party’s chair in Istanbul branch, the responsibility to *create its people* fell on the municipalities to be held by the party,⁷⁸⁶ since the Kurdish people wanted to “rule their city to rule themselves”.⁷⁸⁷ The local election success in April 1999 proved an enormous challenge to the HADEP mayors, led by the metropolitan mayor of Diyarbakır, Feridun Çelik who later complained that part of their job was to keep strong contacts with the Western government representatives.⁷⁸⁸ For Demir, the real problem laid with the fact that the party [HADEP] never managed to become a “party of Turkey”. But it never became a “Kurdish party” either.⁷⁸⁹ The question is, given the anti-parliamentarian strategy of the party in general elections, had the party ever *needed* to be a “party of Turkey”?

⁷⁸³ See “Yerel yönetimlerin başarısı iktidara yürüyüşü belirleyecektir” (The success in local administrations shall determine the march to power) *Serxwebun* [PKK’s official journal], 235, July 2001.

⁷⁸⁴ Bozlak’s message to the Diyarbakır Party Congress. “HADEP Kürt illerinde iktidar” (HADEP in power in the Kurdish provinces), *Ülkede Gündem*, 24 August 1998.

⁷⁸⁵ Hatip Dicle “Nasıl bir HADEP”, *Ülkede Gündem*, 1 December 1997.

⁷⁸⁶ Address by the party chair. *Demokrasi Partisi 1. Olağanüstü İl Kongresi (9 Ocak 1994): İstanbul İli Yönetim Kurulu Çalışma Raporu*, T. Geyik and Z. A. Kızılyaprak (ed.s), İstanbul: DEP, 1994.

⁷⁸⁷ Demir (2005), p.455.

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid., p.458-9.

Following the 2004 local elections, which basically returned a similar ‘success’ to the party [DEHAP] with that of 1999 local elections, the party went in a restructuring toward the formation of yet another party, the *Democratic Society Movement/Party* (Demokratik Toplum Hareketi/Partisi –DTP).

At the strategic level, the signal for a new movement was given in a declaration by the Kurdish Institute of Paris to the international public opinion, listing the demand of the Kurds in Turkey. Issued in an international daily, days before the EU Summit in Brussels, where the EU member states were expected to give the final go ahead to Turkey’s accession talks with the Union, the declaration demanded Kurds be provided a new democratic constitution, recognizing the existence of the Kurdish people, a [Kurdish] public schooling system, a general amnesty [for the guerillas] and a vast program of development for the ‘Kurdish region’. The Kurds, said the declaration, wanted “the same rights that the Basques, Catalans, Scots, Lapps, South Tyroleans and Walloons enjoy in the democratic countries of Europe –and which [Turkey was] itself demanding for the Turkish minority of Cyprus.” [sic]⁷⁹⁰ Following the ensuing media fervor in Turkey, the four former DEP deputies who had been among the signatories of the said declaration, issued a press statement which read

some Kurds may offer Spain, Ireland, Italy and even Cyprus as a sample model for a solution to the Kurdish problem. But an overwhelming majority of Turkey’s Kurds as well as the political mission we represent is of the opinion that federative solutions involving autonomy does not fit in today’s [...] conditions in the solution of the Kurdish problem of Turkey. Since the Helsinki Summit in 1999, [...] we have been conducting an intensive diplomatic activity for Turkey’s membership to the European Union, along with our defending of the rights and expectations of our people. In our diplomatic activities, we do *not* suggest ideas behind closed doors as different from what we do before the public opinion. [...] If we need to reiterate: the integration process with the European Union has opened new horizons of hope to the society of Turkey and provides an opportunity for *a democratic peaceful*

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid., p.463.

⁷⁹⁰ Kurdish Institute of Paris, [co-signed by many], “What do the Kurds want in Turkey?”, *International Herald Tribune*, 9 December 2004 [italics added].

solution of the Kurdish problem within the [existing] borders of [the] state.⁷⁹¹

The statement said “Turkey’s Kurds” supported Turkey’s entry in the EU. But it failed to account for what ‘rights and expectations’ exactly they had been defending along with this EU membership for Turkey. Hence, these ‘rights and expectations’ should have been the ones laid out in the declaration. There *was* an implicit dual tone (local ‘statement’ versus international ‘declaration’), which they rigorously rejected in their statement: they had asked the European leaders to convene within days from the declaration was published, to make the EU entry conditional for Turkey, on a *Kurdish criterion*. There *was not* in the statement, on the other hand, what they *really* meant by ‘the rights and expectations’ of ‘their people’.

At the practical level, Osman Baydemir, the new mayor of Diyarbakır, ‘re-ordered’ the chaos in the party’s strategic ‘local-international’ axis of activity. This involved a two-pronged effort: on the one hand he used his position as the President of the Union of the Southeastern Municipalities (USEM) of Turkey to *define a region*. On the other, he used this definition for his diplomatic initiative to become a member as the USEM at the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in 2005. This was reportedly turned down by the Congress as such applications must be channeled through the relevant member governments.⁷⁹²

⁷⁹¹ L. Zana, H. Dicle, O. Doğan and S. Sadak, *Basın Açıklaması* (Statement to the Press), 10 December 2004. The ‘minority of the Kurds’ the statement referred probably meant the “Democratic Alliance of the Northern Kurds” involving PSK (K. Burkay), PWD (O. Öcalan, the PKK-splitter), PIK (the Islamic Party of Kurdistan), HAK-PAR (A. Fırat), KAWA and others who issued another declaration to the members of the European Parliament, demanding a “*federal status* for the Northern Kurdistan [i.e. Turkey] by means of a regional parliament and a local administration. See the declaration titled “The Democratic Alliance of Northern Kurds”, undated, distributed at the EP in March 2005.

⁷⁹² Personal communication with CLRA official. Elsewhere, in a statement to the “Second International Conference on EU, Turkey and the Kurds” organized by the EP Communist group at the European Parliament premises on 19 September 2005, the Deputy Chair of DEHAP admits that O. Baydemir had ‘certain contacts’ in Strasbourg, for which he was now being prosecuted. At the same conference, Baydemir was quoted as saying the problem was a ‘democratization problem’ which needed an extensive civil initiative to answer the economic,

In a subsequent letter to the CLRA, he informed the latter with the problem of under-representation at the Congress of ‘his area’ which is ‘home to the majority of the Kurdish population in Turkey’. His party had been a victim of the national threshold of 10% at the parliamentary elections. Hence a major part of the Kurdish population was *excluded* from the parliament in Turkey due to the anti-democratic election system that denied his party eight out of the ten seats allocated to Diyarbakır in the last elections. Being the President of a Union [USEM], which covered a *working area* of 317 municipalities and some 30 per cent of the population in Turkey [sic –as these figures involved the southeastern *and* the eastern unions combined], he asked for the conferral of an *observer status* for participating at the congress proceedings [as a *separate entity* than the official Turkish delegation]. His letter also enclosed a report with maps, titled “Urban and Regional Socio-economic Problems, Democratization in Turkey and the Kurdish Question: Suggestions for and Expectations from the Turkey-EU Negotiating Process” dated 1 September 2005.⁷⁹³

Functionally, there are *no* differences between Baydemir’s letter and report [i.e. the ‘project’] of 2005 as described above and the letters of Emin Ali Bedirhan or Sherif Pasha, the self-styled Kurdish delegate, to the other delegations at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. But *politically*, Baydemir’s effort is not a private project. The territory and the people referred to by Baydemir are defined in terms of popular representation, despite the one defined by Bedirhan in terms of historical or racial circumstances to support his private kingdom. The concept of ‘underrepresentation’ in Baydemir’s

social and cultural issues of the Kurdish problem. But he also affirmed that the ‘problem’ was political and without defining it as political, none can be achieved.

⁷⁹³ Letter dated 25.10.2005 by Osman Baydemir to the President of the CLRA [the ‘report’ enclosed therein]. Baydemir also visited Washington in February 2006, presenting the same report he sent to the CLRA President, to an audience of officials and academics at a seminar organized by the Brookings Institution on “Internal Displacement in Turkey” on 8 February

definition constitutes the mediation in his claim for popular and territorial exclusion.

A similar ‘territorial’ and ‘populist’ effort is also observable in the organization of the ‘new’ party, DTP. In terms of the ‘national’ organization, the DTP established six organizing committees covering the southeast, east, Marmara, Aegean, Çukurova (eastern Mediterranean region) and central Anatolia, in other words the areas where the Kurds live or have traditionally immigrated. This scheme ‘excluded’ the entire Black Sea and the western Mediterranean region, in other words, the areas which are *not* traditionally inhabited or immigrated by the Kurds.⁷⁹⁴ The organizational model foresees an “extended assembly-type organization [with] general and local assemblies”⁷⁹⁵

The ‘party objectives’ as laid out in the “Party Regulation” involves the ‘democratic will of the people’ as a basis for a ‘libertarian democratic struggle’ to ensure ‘social peace’.⁷⁹⁶ Also the party sees the “EU process not only as a community of states, but also a *community of the peoples*”.⁷⁹⁷ The party “declares that the Republic of Turkey has been established by the Turks, the Kurds and other *ethnic identities* [...] and sees the solution of the Kurdish problem in the free [voluntary] union in a common homeland and in a Democratic Republic”⁷⁹⁸

2006. “Washington’la Baydemir krizi” (Baydemir crisis with Washington), *Sabah*, 6 February 2006.

⁷⁹⁴ “Örgütlenme Komisyonlarımız” (Organization Committees) in <http://www.dth-web.com> accessed on 9 February 2006.

⁷⁹⁵ Article 4(b), “Regulation of the Democratic Society Party”, *ibid.* These assemblies involve neighborhood, town, sub-provincial and provincial level assemblies in all three categories, i.e. women, youth and [general] council, parallel to the executive committees of the party. Articles 16-31, *ibid.*

⁷⁹⁶ Article 3(a), *idem.*

⁷⁹⁷ Article 3(b), *idem* [italics added].

⁷⁹⁸ Article 3(c), *idem* [italics added].

The ‘party program’⁷⁹⁹ emphasizes firstly that the Turkish state had lost initial, pre-republican legitimacy which stressed on the unity of the Turkish and Kurdish peoples in the immediate aftermath of the republic. Therefore the program promises to ‘restore’ this legitimacy by introducing a new constitution for a Democratic Republic, where the Turks, Kurds, Circassians, Lazs and the Arabs (“all peoples”) will be guaranteed in terms of their “fundamental rights and freedoms, which include all three generations of rights”⁸⁰⁰ [sic] under a constitutionally defined “Citizenship of the Republic of Turkey” as a *supra-identity*.⁸⁰¹ The ‘third generation rights’, i.e. collective rights, thus made ‘fundamental rights’, the program alleges that their constitutional inclusion is not a voluntary, but a universally compulsory necessity for a ‘democratic republic’.

Along with this confusing rhetoric on rights that molds into its populist project, rather than the universal framework of international rights, the DTP also tried to ‘pluralize’ its activity by adding in new fronts, in order to multiply the ‘circumstantial evidence’ to support the nationalist self-legitimation efforts. Accordingly, a similarly interesting twist, like the one on rights, is included in the party program and the organizational scheme on *gender* and *ecology*, bookmarked as main agenda items.

The gender issue is discussed in universal terms, i.e. sexual and material exploitation and suppression, the need for positive discrimination and female participation. But there is no reference to the bleeding issue of the ‘honor killings’ which has been registered as a ‘Kurdish problem’ *par excellence*.⁸⁰²

⁷⁹⁹ All discussion relating to the party program refers to the “Program of the Democratic Society Party” in <http://www.dth-web.com> accessed on 9 February 2006.

⁸⁰⁰ The “Program”, *ibid.* The “Program” later implicitly corrects this mistake by offering “abolition of all obstacles before political, social, and cultural rights *together with* those before the fundamental rights and freedoms” [italics added]. But the confusing jargon prevails elsewhere.

⁸⁰¹ *Idem.*

⁸⁰² F. Aygün, “5 Kürd, 5 Kadın, 5 Gül, 5 Yürek” (5 Kurds, 5 Women, 5 Roses, 5 Hearts”, *Rızgari Online*, <http://www.rizgari.com>, posted on 15.10.2005, accessed on 09.02.2006; L.

The final declaration of the Party's conference on women also had nothing to say on the issue.⁸⁰³ The gender problem for the DTP does not involve a much-needed anti-tribal dimension, but is certainly at par with the international organizations in its jargon.

On *ecology* too, the DTP emphasizes the international environmentalist goals, makes the "struggle for *ecological* democratic society"⁸⁰⁴ [sic] a membership requirement. There is only one reference to the 'local' situation which involves the "destruction of the green areas and the historical texture by the armed conflict in the last fifteen years in the eastern and southeastern regions"⁸⁰⁵ These problems "shall be addressed with the participation of the local people".⁸⁰⁶ Ecology, thus been added into the rhetoric as to multiply the another dimension pluralizing the populist project, also introduces a territorial definition to the Party's 'ecologism'.⁸⁰⁷

Pervizat "Devlet feodal ve erkek mi?" (Is the state feudal and male?), *Radikal*, 10.08.2004, Pervizat rejects the definition of the problem as one solely belonging to the eastern and southeastern regions which denotes the 'Kurdishness' of the problem, as referred to in a draft report by the Parliamentary Commission to Investigate the 'Honor Killings'. Kırıkkanatö however, urges the Kurds 'confess' the 'Kurdishness' of the problem, along with other 'Kurdish problems', such as urban Kurdish mafia and the juvenile crime gangs, the lumpen militancy, guerilla violence targeting public services and employees, in a 'parasitic coexistence' with the Turks, which the Kurds opt to deny nowadays. M. Kırıkkanat "Asalak kardeşlik" (Parasitic brotherhood), *Vatan*, 7.12.2005. The non-governmental organizations defined it as a tribal problem in the southeast. A. Durukan "Töre.Namus Komisyonu'na Aşiret Eleştirisi" (Tribalism critique to the Honor Commission), BIA News Agency, posted on 26.12.2005, <http://www.bianet.org>, accessed on 09.02.2005. Ironically, however, the sporadic instances show that the sheikhs, rather than the 'Party', enjoyed the 'social authority' in 'justice' and mediation on gender issues where the women found refuge. S. Boran "'Töre mahkumu' kadın Şeyhin dergahına sığındı" ('Honor victim' woman found refuge at the Sheikh's hearth), <http://www.kurdistaninfo.de>, accessed on 09.02.2005.

⁸⁰³ "DTP Kadın Toplantısı Sonuç Bildirgesi", 18-19 February 2006, <http://www.dth-web.com>, accessed on 24.02.2006. There are however demands that "Mr Abdullah Öcalan" be released from prison or the "pseudo-legal counter-guerilla activity" be dismantled along with a call to a demonstration to "Say Stop to War and to Murdering of Women" on Women's Day of 8 March.

⁸⁰⁴ Article 5 "Membership requirements", The "Regulation", <http://www.dth-web.com>.

⁸⁰⁵ The "Program", *ibid*.

⁸⁰⁶ *Idem*.

⁸⁰⁷ The 'nationalist ecologism' in fact has a larger literature in Kurdish nationalist activism. The Kurdish nationalist opposition to the Ilisu Dam project was succesful in persuading the leading firm (Balfour Beatty, UK) withdraw from the consortium in 2002, worrying the financial credits would not be forthcoming under intense counter-propaganda by the NGOs. The NGO-forum involved, along with the 'affluent' international Kurdish nationalist

Regarding the ‘Kurdish Problem’ *per se*, the DTP shares the generic vision of the Kurdish nationalists since the 1970s, arguing that the democratization in Turkey is of utmost importance and *to do that* the Kurdish problem needs to be solved.⁸⁰⁸ Hence, for the ‘new party’, it is again the ‘perennial formula’ that reverses the democracy and nationalism debate, which is a ‘must’: the ‘national question’ first, and only after then the democracy. The nationalist project this time has been intertwined in a rhetoric of international rights, seeking legitimacy in terms of ‘separate peoplehood’. Its *evidential* content has been *locally compiled* by the party to be referred to the international community for *more* recognition and *more* legitimacy.

organizations (i.e. the Kurdish Human Rights Project –London, Kurdistan National Congress – PKK, Kurdistan Student Association –PKK, Halkevi –PKK, London and others), the international ‘thematic’ NGOs apprehensive on water issues and export credits, which were successfully knit-together by the former group at the international level. A weirdly eclectic ‘report’ produced by the “Ilisu Dam Campaign” [<http://www.ilisu.org.uk>] involved the technical benchmarks of ‘best practice’ argument internationally propounded by the ‘thematic’ NGOs, with impressionistic ‘evidence’ by local Kurds on how ‘brutally they had been oppressed by the Turkish security operations *at the dam area*’. See “The Ilisu Dam, the World Commission on Dams and Export Credit Reform, The Final Report of a Fact-Finding Mission to the Ilisu Dam Region, 9-16 October 2000”, <http://www.khrp.org>, accessed on 12.02.2006. A similar campaign was organized by “Baku-Ceyhan Campaign” against the Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline project [<http://www.bakuceyhan.org.uk>] supported by (again) the similar ‘affluent’ Kurdish organizations in the UK and the international ‘thematic’ NGOs against hydrocarbon resources. But this time the project involved the British interests (the British Petroleum) and the campaign failed.

⁸⁰⁸ *Idem.*

5. CONCLUSION

In this study, I have tried to discuss the complex relationship between the Turkish modernity and Kurdish nationalism. In doing so, I tried to mediate the two over the question of legitimacy as the contextual area. This context constitutes *the first area* that the findings of this study has culminated. As I have suggested, the said context has changed in time and place, which brought a multiplicity of perceptions as to its meaning for different nations and nationalisms. Yet, the political/functional nature of the ‘national project’ remained intact, along with its ability to devise and transform its resources and instruments for the purpose of sovereign nation-statehood.

When different national projects overlap in time and space, as they did with the rapid multiplication of ‘nation-states’ in the post-Second World War era, the area they overlap serve as a domain of power struggle between the competing projects of legitimation. The modern international system reacted to ‘regulate’ this struggle, which in turn affected the course and content of the nationalist projects themselves. Therefore, ‘legitimacy in a sovereign statehood’ for nations is a question of power and capability.

The changing context of modernity in this respect, transforms only the resources and instruments that legitimation projects utilize for their high ends. This is the context where ideologies become ‘functional’ for the nationalist projects. They justify, negate, confirm, converge, transform and fabricate ‘things-in-themselves’ into politically viable ‘resources’ for nationalistic legitimation. The ‘thing-in-itself’ does not mean that I attribute an objective ontology to any social or cultural entity. This conception rather denotes a ‘secluded’ resource, one ‘untapped’ by modernity.

In the preceding text, I have excluded the Dersim ‘rebellion’ of 1937-38 from among the ‘other’ instances of Kurdish nationalism, since the ethnic dimension involved in Dersim revolt was of a ‘secluded’ nature, a rural one. Any further study into the Dersim case as suggested herewith should be able to subtract the presence and influence exerted by the ‘private nationalists’ like Vet. Nuri Dersimi and Alisher (or Alishan in some sources) on the ethnic/tribal reaction involved there. Such subtraction must also discredit such Kurdish nationalist mythologies, like the faithful ‘letter’ ‘written’ [tactfully in French] by the ‘rebel leader’ Seyyid Rıza [and curiously posted from Damascus] to the British government (Anthony Eden).

Ethnicity is but one of the resources of nationalism, viability of which is defined by the changing context of international legitimacy. In the late 19th and early 20th century, it had been rarely mentioned in a world ‘more viable’ sources, such as faith, race and class, for nation-statehood projects. By the end of the 20th century however, ethnicity replaced almost everything that could not be clearly defined otherwise. In that sense, ethnicity as a political category constituted in the post-Helsinki era a grandiose national project *par excellence*. If not read as such, the *analytical* mind will be likely to be overwhelmed by the *ideological* one. Insofar as the nationalist teleology, established on the paradigm of ethnicity since the mid-1970s, has been able to translate this analytically vague phenomenon into a powerful devise to ‘analyze’ the ‘relations between the nations’. In my research, I preferred to call this nationalist teleology ‘ethno-relationism’ or [ethno-] relational analysis and argued that the Kurdish nationalist discourse that has appeared in the literature mainly in the 1990s was not immune to this ideological bending.

The findings of this study suggest that the relations between nations do not historically and analytically develop on an ethnic or ethno-relational basis. Instead, it is *the* nationalist ideology that chooses to counterpose nations in terms of a politically-loaded, yet equally ambiguous ‘ethnic categories’ of

exclusion, oppression or assimilation. These categories, however, do not belong to ethnicity more than they belong to modernity.

Hence, if there would still be a ‘relational framework’ involved in the analysis of the relations between the ‘Kurds’ and ‘Turks’, it may prove more ‘convincing’ if it involves a *comparative framework* with ‘other’ cases of nation-building (i.e. ‘ethnic assimilation’) such as the ones in France or Germany between 1850s to 1960s. Indeed, I have found the Kurdish nationalist literature I have surveyed throughout this research, as one which has been *extremely reluctant* in ‘indulging’ in *comparative* analysis. I do concede to the fact that the Kurdish nationalist literature is not immune to the nationalist tic of the ‘chosen-people’. But, there is an ample need for comparative research on Kurdish nationalism, rather than producing new ‘action-reaction type’ argumentative monographies recounting the readily available ‘myths’ (i.e. the Amasya Protocol, İnönü’s reference to Kurds in Lausanne, the Law on the Resettlement, the language ban and others). Lack of comparative insight in the Kurdish nationalist discourse cannot be bridged by different methodological frameworks ‘adopted’ to ‘tell’ the usual story, i.e. Beşikçi’s Fanon, Yeğen’s Foucault, Yıldız’s Anthony Smith.

Alternatively, the new research in this field may adopt a third, but contextual category, over which the ‘Kurds’ and ‘Turks’ can be ‘related’ economically, culturally, historically and politically. This research has recovered many examples in terms of ‘economic underdevelopment’ as the third, but necessarily a contextual category, starting from Beşikçi’s earlier work that suggested the ‘under-underdevelopment’ thesis. But other than the ‘economic underdevelopment’ theme, which later tied into the anti-colonialist paradigm, I have found *none* in the nationalist literature.

In fact, as argued in the first chapter, this was one of the original motivations behind this study, which tried to discuss the subject over the question over a contextual and independent category, i.e. legitimacy. It is believed that new

research based on other possible contextual categories such as demographic studies, religion, education, law, political violence and gender may contribute to our understanding of Kurdish nationalism and its place in and relation to Turkish modernity.

A second area where the findings of this study converge has been the nature and the historical evolution of Kurdish nationalism. This indicates that Kurdish nationalism has moved in tandem with the international context. The initial theoretical framework suggested in this study has been that the nations and nationalism have been the making of modernity. As such, the emergence and development of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey has also been a product of modernity, rather than a ‘recovered’ or ‘awakened’ primordial or perennial ties of ethnicity.

Kurdish nationalism in Turkey converged three times with the modernity-induced contextual change in the international system. The first one was the ‘disorganized Kurdish proto-nationalism’ in the period of 1919-1930. The second one was the ‘decolonialist stance’ that developed throughout the 1960s. The last one was the period of ‘implied self-determination’ in the 1990s. In each of these, Kurdish nationalist ideology had to engage in a legitimacy struggle with Turkish modernity. It tried to delegitimize the latter, *while* legitimating simultaneously its own project. The simultaneity in this legitimization behavior has also been ‘regulated’ by the international context. The problem here is that the international context, however universal, does not provide an ‘ideal-type’ of legitimization versus delegitimation pattern. The Turkish state might have lost ground in the post-1980 coup period in terms of its legitimacy, due to its ensuing democratic deficiencies. But it did not mean that the Kurdish nationalist project, i.e. ‘Kurdistan’, was to be simultaneously conferred an international recognition.

This study dissects *three dominant aspects* of the Kurdish nationalist ‘trajectory’. The first one is the *territoriality*. Territoriality had been the major

cause of division among the Kurdish nationalists, who tended to see it as a ‘private project of their own, at least until the 1960s. This had been the major policy tool for the Ottomans and the republican government until the 1950s used to the detriment of the private claims for sovereignty. The ‘rebel elite’ was suppressed and incorporated into the system after they were sent to ‘exile’ to other parts of the country. After 1960s, the territoriality re-surfaced in the form of decolonization.

In 1990s however, it was the ‘implied’ tool of the Kurdish people’s ‘right to self-determination’. The “Komal Press” based its anti-colonial strategy on liberation, *before* the moment the Kurdish people would have used its right to self determination. This rendered the ‘Kurdish right’ to self-determination a ‘secondary’ nature vis-à-vis other decolonizing nations. The Komal editors ‘knew’ that the Kurdish people did not qualify as a *subject* by the international ‘law of decolonization’. The Kurds had been, at their most, ‘non-colonial minorities’, if not of course considered to have used their right to self-determination once, with the Turks in 1923. Hence, instead of propounding a disqualified target of colonial self-determination, Komal circle and later the PKK went ahead with guerilla liberation strategy, where territoriality is almost *the* single norm.

The aspect of *territoriality* is observable in the legal facet of the revolutionary Kurdish nationalism that re-surfaced in the 1990s. The ‘legal’ Kurdish parties and politicians have repeatedly stressed on the ‘need to solve the Kurdish problem’ to solve the ‘democratic problem’ that rendered democracy a ‘secondary’ status to the Kurdish rights. Other than sporadic instances of non-violently expressed demands for autonomy, the Kurdish parties refrained from officially declaring the definitive extent meant by ‘Kurdish rights’. Instead, they ‘implied’ it, particularly in the context of local administrations with election mottos like “we shall run our own affairs, as we run our own towns” (“kentimizi de, kendimizi de biz yöneteceğiz”). The ‘democratic partnership’

lately propounded by the DTP is thus different in content from the republican modernist universalism of equality before the law.

The issue of *territoriality* is also observed in the guerilla violence, albeit with a different dimension. The guerilla strategy pursued by the PKK in the 1980s and 1990s was based on the typical trilogy of ‘defense, balance and offense’ over the claimed territory. But the guerilla action also depended on a ‘clandestine territory’ where it could initially base itself until the offensive stage, by controlling liberated areas over the claimed territory. The Turkish government, through the long years of protracted armed violence, had gradually lost a considerable legitimate ground. The new strategy of ‘territorial [area] control’ was effective, but not enough. When the Turkish government decided in 1998 to threaten Syria with [a long-legitimated] use of force, there was hardly a reaction from the international community.

The second aspect is the project aiming to create a *separate peoplehood* concerning the Kurds. In the years following the First World War, the Kurdish nationalist elite had claimed the distinctiveness of the ‘Kurdish race’ from the Arabs and Turks. But the minority protection scheme selectively and arbitrarily applied by the Western powers failed to detect a ‘moral obligation’ to protect the Kurds as they did for the Christian subjects of the empire. In 1960s, the revolutionary Kurdish nationalism modernized on the basis of defining ‘a people’ in its own right to self-determine.

In the 1990s, the Kurdish parties deliberately *opted out* from the parliamentary politics (i.e. the national level), using the ten per cent national election threshold as a pretext, which they could easily by-pass by standing as independent candidates at the elections. But they, by contrast, aggressively ran for local/mayoral offices. The emphasis was made on a theme involving an ‘ethnically-denied people’ which was expected to qualify for international legitimacy. Hence, they established a legitimation pattern based on a local-to-international axis, through which they sought for becoming *ius cogens* as ‘a

people' in the international law. To become one, they had to *define* the 'self' in terms of minority rights before qualifying for an 'implied' right to self-determination that was entailed in the newly burgeoning minority rights law.

Their proposed local government structure involved an active engagement of the 'popular will', that was intended to have mediated by the neighborhood committees, town and city councils. Yet the Kurdish nationalist parties had only one 'legitimate' means to test the success this strategy and that was the democratic elections. The more the universally pertinent democratic parliamentary process they wanted to evade imposed itself on the legal Kurdish nationalism, the more visible their ethnic emphasis become evident in the Turkish politics. Hence, the 'legal' revolutionary Kurdish nationalism has gained a structural place in Turkey, not as 'a people' but as the voters of an 'ethnically-owned' party. The PKK violence served as a synchronizing force that suppressed other legitimate means, imposing the 'national question' before the 'democratic development'.

The third aspect is the inherent *dilemma between Kurdish particularism and Turkish universalism*. Whatever one may name it, Kurdish ethnic nationalism is a particularist project by nature. The mediation of the particularist demands into the universal rights had increasingly been problematic in the international system for two basic reasons. One of these was the initial reluctance of the states in the post-Second World War era to make provisions for the minorities in the universalized international law that carried the risk of a failure the League of Nations had suffered.

The minority rights came under international focus, only after the process of decolonization was de facto completed in the 1970s. The minority treaties burgeoned after the 1970s carried with them, in effect, a contractarian principle, rather than a universal nature, binding only on the signatories. But on the other hand, the universal *political* organization under the UN framework expanded to become much more apprehensive and perceptive toward the rights

of the 'vulnerable groups' in terms of the implementation of the universal rights. The UN established through the 1980s and more visibly in the 1990s committees, sub-committees, working groups and appointed special rapporteurs assigned on rights themes, to report on country practices, violations and receive appeals from rights defenders and even from the individuals.

By the end of the 20th century, the UN system had assumed an overwhelmingly intrusive role vis-à-vis the states. The states could opt out from the minority treaties, but *not* from the universal political framework of the UN organization. Hence, in terms of the universal rights and freedoms enshrined in the UN Charter, there was an effective political control. The problem was the respective position of the states toward this political intrusion, that challenged the governmental legitimacy of the states with democratic and rights deficiencies. The Turkish state, due to its historical reliance on international legitimation, remained in allegiance with the universal project of international legitimacy.

The *third area* the findings of this study converge relates to the legitimation capacity of the Turkish state. The UN system from its inception had been based on a wholesale conferral of legitimacy on its members by way of recognition of its sovereignty. Franck states that, contrary to a national system of law where there is an authority to enforce it, one cannot speak of enforcement in the international system through a single/central legal authority due to the principle of sovereign equality of states. Therefore, according to Franck, the effectiveness of the international law relies in fact not on the individual enforcement of its rules, but in its potential capacity to cause embarrassment to the states not complying with its rules.⁸⁰⁹

In his criticism of the Weberian concept of legal rational authority, Habermas points to the problem of the *relation of legitimation to truth*. The rational

authority cannot be deemed legitimate only because it is legal. In the absence of facts, values legalized by a positivistic framework of laws, can only have a psychological significance.⁸¹⁰ The gap between the ‘nominal’ and the ‘actual’ performance of every individual member of the new international system became the area of operation for questions regarding the legitimacy of states. In a domestic system, there is only the state who has the nominal and actual power to make and enforce laws. But its cultural tradition (i.e. the liberal democratic, bourgeois ideals) endorses freedom and equality for its subjects as a universalistic morality,⁸¹¹ which causes a gap between the norms/values and the actual performance.

In order to bridge the gap, the state needs to expand its area and depth of involvement within the society. In certain circumstances, the state may face a legitimization crisis.⁸¹² The importance of such crises lies not in their dynamics, as their respective analysis may start from different basic assumptions (i.e. pluralist or Marxist), but in the ways the states respond to them. As Habermas put it, the ensuing procedure itself is under pressure for legitimation,⁸¹³ mainly because of the programmatic demands that it has placed on itself.⁸¹⁴

As such, the project of Turkish modernity had been based on a legitimization trajectory, an important part of which lied in its international commitments. It could afford opting out from the individual conventions such as the European Framework Convention on Minorities, but it would be detrimental to its legitimacy if it chose to remain a relativist vis-à-vis the universal values. Hence, it could resist the particularist demands of Kurdish nationalism, by its continued reference to universal rights and freedoms. But its deficiencies in

⁸⁰⁹ Franck (1988).

⁸¹⁰ Habermas [1976], pp.97ff.

⁸¹¹ Habermas [1976], p.86ff.

⁸¹² Held [1996], pp.242-53.

⁸¹³ Habermas [1976], p.98.

⁸¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.69.

expanding its area of operation have created a space where now the ‘legal’ Kurdish revolutionary nationalist parties operate.

It is believed that there is a need for further comparative research as to why and how these structural deficiencies in democratic expansion prevented Turkish politics from further incorporation of Kurds within the democratic system. One classical argument in line is the oppressive nature of Turkish modernity, enforced by the recurrent military coups. Another one that relates the 1990s is the PKK violence that prevented democratic expansion. But neither of them explains, for example, why the modernization discourse of the Kurdish right (i.e. the YTP in the 1960s) failed to gain an upperhand, similar to the Quebecois example after the 1950s in Canada or the Catalan nationalists in the post-1980 period in Spain. It is not implied here that the ‘Turkish model’ should assume a Quebecois or Catalan ‘solution’ to the ‘Kurdish problem’. But, was there an imminent competition as to the leadership of the national mainstream right in Turkey in the 1960s, over the problem of choice in allocating the scarce resources within the capitalist accumulation processes? Was it not a matter of choice by the state in answering to the problem of relating its legitimation to truth? Finally, was it not a voluntary choice by the Kurdish nationalism in articulating ‘a thruth’ to the legitimation of its project?

To conclude, the findings of this study steers us toward more existantial questions. Does Kurdish ethno-nationalism exist? To the extent that ethnicity forms the common code of operation for the contemporary nationalist movements, it does. To the extent, however, that ethnicity is but one resource utilized by all nationalist ideologies and polities as commanded by the contemporary international paradigm, it does not. This dilemma is inherent and obvious in Kurdish ‘ethno-nationalism’.⁸¹⁵

⁸¹⁵ In response to a rather unexpected question from the panel hearing the DEP case at the Constitutional Court in 1994, Remzi Kartal, a longtime Kurdish revolutionary activist, said that the Kurdish identity is the “free usage of rights that flow *naturally* from birth, induced by own language and culture” [italics added]. “Merits of the Case on DEP”, <http://www.anayasa.gov.tr>,

For Kurdish nationalists the issue of ethnicity, which is based on non-contextual ethno-relational analysis, is a powerful critical device against the legitimacy of the Turkish state. But it is equally weak and ambiguous, since there is no established link, according to the definition of modern nationalism, between ethnic communities and nations. More importantly, it is also devoid of a 'modern' promise for statehood in terms of the international context since, despite all the literature produced on it, ethnicity by itself does not constitute a 'circumstantial evidence' that leads to international political recognition. The international context also does not confer 'natural rights' to ethnicities. As I have discussed in this study, the Kurdish nationalist discourse is bound by the international context as a reflection of modernity. It is the 'modernity' which now imposes change on the ethnically-motivated Kurdish nationalism toward 'more' universal categories, such as citizenship, fundamental rights and freedoms, in terms of its theoretical/ideological assertions *and* political practice.

1994. The similar 'natural rights' argument is also obvious in political ideologists of Kurdish nationalism such as Yeğen, arguing for 'natural ethnic rights'. A distinctive, natural and objective ontological base is presumed (or produced) to exist behind this argument.

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TURKISH SUMMARY

TÜRK MODERNLİĞİ VE KÜRT ETNİK MİLLİYETÇİLİĞİ

Bu doktora tezinde çağdaş Türkiye’de Kürt milliyetçiliğinin oluştuğu bağlam ve söylemi incelenmektedir. Bazı seçilmiş Kürt milliyetçiliği kuramları eleştirel biçimde tartışılarak, milliyetçi söylemin Türk modernliği karşısında izlediği tarihsel ve bağlamsal değişim çözümlenmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu nedenle çalışma, Kürt milliyetçiliğinin Türkiye dışında aldığı biçimleri, benimsediği söylemleri kapsamamaktadır.

Çalışma, millet ve milietçiliklerin modernliğin siyasal bir ürünü olduğu temel yaklaşımına dayanmaktadır. Milletler ve milli devletler 16-17. yüzyılda Batı Avrupa’da ortaya çıkan mutlakiyetçi devletlerin ve laik milli siyasetin yarattığı modernlik ortamında, bir tarihsel deneyim olarak belirmiş, modernliğin çalışma kategorilerini oluşturmuştur. Devletlerarası hukuk, bu yeni siyasal birimi özne olarak kabul etmiş ve özneleri tarafından biçimlendirilmiştir. Bu biçimlenme, ulus-devletlerin ortaya çıkış sürecini ve kurallarını içermiştir.

Tanıma, bu sürecin temel noktasını oluşturur. Ulus-devlet olmak isteyen bütün siyasal topluluklar bu “sıfır noktasına” doğru hareket edegelmiş, devlet olarak tanınan bütün varlıklar da bu noktadan hareketle ulusunu inşa sürecini başlatmıştır. Hangi siyasal varlığın hangi noktada egemen bir (ulus-)devlet olarak tanımlanacağı ise modernliğin o dönemdeki tarihsel aşaması ile o siyasal varlığın bu aşamada geçerli ölçütleri ne kadar karşıladığına bağlı kalmıştır. Dolayısıyla uluslaşma ve egemenlik, kapsamı, içeriği ve ölçütleri modernlik tarafından belirlenen bir siyasal oluşumdur. Bu oluşumun siyasal varlığının tanınması ise o tarihsel bağlamdaki ölçütlerin ne kadar karşılandığına bağlı olmuştur.

Zaman içinde, modernlik ölçütleri değişmiş, bu arada Batı Avrupa'daki örneklerinden farklı koşul ve biçimlerde ulus-devlet olmayı amaçlayan toplulukların varlıklarının tanınması da farklı ölçütlere tabi hale gelmiştir. Bu ise modernliğin yeni ve Batı Avrupa'da ortaya çıkan deneyiminden farklı bir deneyimi ortaya çıkarmıştır. Modernliğin bu farklı deneyimi, millet ve milliyetçiliklerin farklı biçimlerde de ortaya çıkmasını beraberinde getirmiştir.

Milliyetçilikler, ideolojik olarak, modernliğin ölçütlerine ulaşma çabası içinde olmuştur. Bu nedenle milletler ve milliyetçiliklerin kuramsallaştırılması çabasında bilimsel bir kargaşa hüküm sürmektedir. Bu kargaşa, tarih 'biliminin' milletlerin ve milliyetçiliklerin ortaya çıkışındaki farklılaşan deneyimlerini analitik düzlemde incelerken, ideolojik yönelim olarak modernleşme deneyiminin getirdiği söylemsel biçim ve yönelimleri de modernlik kategorisi içinde değerlendirmesinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Oysa bir ideoloji olarak modernleşme, ulus-devlete doğru bir yönelimdir. Varolan modernlik durumunu ifade etmez. Modernleşme, eldeki sosyal varlığın modern bir ulus olarak tanımlanması için, içinde bulunduğu tarihsel bağlamın tanıma gereklerini yerine getirebilmek amacıyla, varlığını meşrulaştırma çabası içinde hareket eder. Bu nedenle meşrulaştırma, modernleşerek tanınmaya çalışan, egemen devlet kurmayı amaçlayan siyasal bir proje olarak milliyetçiliklerin ortak hareketidir.

Siyasal bir proje olarak milliyetçilik işlevsel bir yapıda hareket eder. Nihai hedefi olan egemenliğin tanınması için, bulunduğu dönemde modernliğin tanıma koşulları neyi gerektirirse, toplumsal, kültürel, siyasal ve ideolojik 'kaynak'larından o biçimde yararlanır. Etnisite de bu kaynaklardan biridir.

Etnisite, bu kavramı tarihsel bağlamından soyutlayarak bütün zamanlara yaymak isteyen primordialist (ilkselci, özcü) ve perennialist (ölümsüz, süreğenci) kuramlar tarafından ulus olma duruma geçişin bir ögesi ve aşaması olarak görülür. Connor, ulusçu projeyi esas olan etnik projeye karşı bir durum

olarak görür Ona göre, bütün ulusçuluklar etniktir, dolayısıyla etnik projeyi kendi tanım ve koşullarından saptıran ulusçu projenin resme katıldığı etnik-milliyetçilik yanlış bir kavram olarak değerlendirilmelidir.

Geertz ve Grosby gibi primordialistler, etnisitenin insan topluluklarının ilksel bağlarını içerdiğini, duygu, toplumsal ve ruhsal duygu ve edimlerle kuşaklardan kuşaklara aktarıldığını ileri sürer. Bu tanım izlenecek olursa, uluslar etnik bağların ve varlığın genişlemiş halleridir. Primordialistlerin etnik toplulukların öznel açıdan tanımladıkları özsel niteliklerine karşılık, perennialistler insan topluluklarında rastlanan etnik ilişkilerin kültürel ve diğer (maddi ve manevi) semboller yoluyla tanınabileceğini öne sürer. Bu sembollerin sürekliliği, perennialistlere göre ulusların da tarihsel sürekliliğine işarettir.

Primordialistlerin ve perennialistlerin etnik nitelikli ulusların sürekliliğine vurgu yapan söylemi, meşruiyetini tarih içinde yayarak güçlendirmeyi amaçlayan milliyetçiliklerin siyasal projesi için yararlı birer araçtır. Milliyetçiler bu aracı hem siyasal hem de ‘bilimsel’ söylemlerinde bolca ve vurgulu biçimde kullanır.

Millet ve milliyetçilik olgusuna modernist yaklaşımıyla bilinen Hobsbawm, bu çabayı bilimden ayırdeder. Hobsbawm’a göre tarihçi ile milliyetçi tarihçi arasında anlamlı bir fark vardır. İkincisi, milliyetçiliğin ideolojik söylemiyle sınırlıdır. Her yazdığı Kitab’ın ruhuna ve ‘bilgisine’ katkıda bulunur, ama tarih yazımına katkı sağlamayabilir. Tarihçilerin kendilerini bu ideolojik sapmadan koruması bilimsel bir sorumluluktur.

Hobsbawm, Gellner ve Wallerstein gibi modernistler ise ulusların belirli tarihsel koşullar altında, modernlikle ve modernliğin bir gereksinimi olarak ortaya çıktıklarını savunur. Bu kapsamda sayılabilecek Marksistler, ulusların kapitalizmin tarihsel oluşum koşulları içinde ortaya çıktığını, kapitalist gelişmenin ulus-devleti tanımladığını savunur. Onlara göre, mutlakiyetçi devlet

sayesinde kapitalist sınıfların hizmetindeki siyasal toplum (ulus-devlet) sivil toplumdan (halk) ayrışarak, ‘ulusal çıkar’ kavramının ulus-devletçe gözetilen ve korunan, ulusallaştırılmış bir kurum olması sağlanmıştır. Bu süreçte halk yığınları ve başlangıçta sadece vatandaş sayılan bireyler, ulusal kimlik kazandırılmış, kapitalizmin devlet üzerinden yeniden tanımladığı çıkarlarına ulusal çıkar olarak bakabilmeyi ‘öğrenmişler’ ve sınıflarının değil, milletlerinin birer bireyi olmuşlardır.

İnsan topluluklarını farklı ontolojik temelde tanımlayan sınıf ve millet kavramları arasındaki kuramsal çatışma, özellikle milliyetçilik ideolojisinin sosyalist ideolojiyle birlikte yaygınlaştığı ve köktenleştiği 20. yüzyıl başlarında ulusal ve uluslararası siyasete damgasını vurmuştur. Birinci Dünya Savaşı öncesi ve sonrası sosyalist akımlar, Avusturya-Macaristan İmparatorluğu’ndaki ‘tüm’ işçi sınıfını birleştirmeyi hedefleyen Otto Bauer’in imparatorluğun milliyetleri arasındaki çekişme ve ayrışma nedeniyle yaşadığı ikilemi yaşamıştır. Milli bir devrim mi, yoksa sosyalist bir devrim mi?

Birinci Dünya Savaşı yukarıdaki soruya iki ayrı ideolojik kanattan verilen ortak yanıtın zemin kazanmasını sağlamıştır. Kendi kaderini tayin hakkı, Wilson’a yeni ulus-devletlerin uluslararası ticaretin yeni birimleri ve pazarları olarak ortaya çıkmasını, Lenin’e göre ise yayılmacı emperyalizme karşı durulmasını sağlayacak bir ilke idi. Savaş sonrasında sözkonusu ilke devletlerce yeni kurulan Milletler Cemiyeti’nin kurucu anlaşmasına dahil edilmemiştir. Ancak bir ilke olarak izleğini İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrasında kurulacak Birleşmiş Milletler’e devretmiştir.

Kürt etnik milliyetçiliği söylemi, Türkiye’de geleneksel olarak Türk devleti ve modernliğinin bir eleştirisi biçiminde gelişmiştir. Bu söylem içinde Bender gibi primordialistler, Yıldız gibi perennialist ve etno-sembolistler, Beşikçi gibi modernistler ve Yeğen gibi post-yapısalcılar bulunmaktadır. Bunlar Hobsbawm’ın tanımladığı milliyetçi tarihçilerdir. Bilim adına, kendi siyasal programlarını ve ideolojilerini yazmakta ve savunmaktadırlar. Bunların

yanında, yine ‘tarafsız’ sayılamayacak olmakla birlikte, pozitivist gelenekten fazlaca uzaklaşamayan, Olson, Gunter, McDowall, Van Bruinessen gibi Batılı ‘tarihçiler’ de vardır. Aralarındaki fark, birinci grubun ulusal masal ve mitler yaratma ve yeniden üretilmesine özel katkıda bulunma çabası içinde olmasıdır.

Primordialist Bender, Kürt ulusunun tarihini zaman içinde tanınmayan masalsı noktalara kadar uzatmakta, Nuh peygamberin, Zerdüş’tün Kürt olduğunu, tekerlek, yazı ve tahıl tarımının Kürt buluşları olduğunu, ne var ki ‘Kürt’ adına sadece Gutilerde (Qurti) rastlanabildiğini, Kürtlerin yaşadığı yerlere başka yerden gelmediğini, bulundukları toprakların ilk sahipleri olduğunu savunmaktadır. Türk ulusunun primordial varlığını savunan Çay ve Türkdoğan gibi araştırmacılar ise, bu savları reddetmekte, yazılı bir kültürel varlığı tarihte bulunmayan Kürtlerin bu iddiasının geçersiz olduğunu, Kürtlerin ata bildiği Gutilerin Türkçe “kut” sözüne denk geldiğini, Kürtlerin Türklerle kaynaşmış kardeş boylar olduklarını savunmaktadır.

Perennialist Yıldız, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nin kuruluş sürecinde etnik ve dinsel sınırlar oluşturduğunu ve Kürtlük kategorisini dışladığını, yok saydığını ve asimile etmeye çalıştığını, bu nedenle Kürtlerin ayaklandığını, sembol ve metinlerden derlediği söylemsel örneklerle savunmaktadır. Yıldız’ın kuramsal çerçevesi etniler arasındaki ilişkiselliğe dayanmakta, modernlik, meşruiyet gibi başkaca bir kategorinin varlığına gereksinmeksizin, Türklük ve Kürtlük arasında etnik etki-tepki şeması kurulmaktadır.

Yıldız’ın perennialist sembolizmi Izady tarafından Kürtlerin ‘ortak ulusal sembollerinin’ tamamını, yorucu örneklerle açıklamaya çalışan, kendi içinde karşılaştırmalı bir çalışmada kullanılmakta, fakat bu kez dairenin dışı değil içi doldurularak, çizilen Kürtlük alanı dışında kalan her etki ve unsurun dışsallığı ve yapaylığı vurgulanmaktadır. Izady, biraz da Acem etkisi görülen çözümlemesinde, Kürtlüğün etnik içeriğini, yoğun örneklemelerine karşın, tekil ve bütüncül, çevresindekilerden farklı bir ulusal yapı olarak sunmakta, Kürt milliyetçiliğine fazlaca söyleyecek bir şey bırakmamaktadır.

Beşikçi ise iki ayrı döneme ayrılabilir. “Geri geri-bırakılmışlık” tezini ileri sürdüğü ‘erken dönemlerinde’ sorunu daha çok Türk modernliğinin ‘yanlışlarına’ dayandırmakta, bu arada giriştiği Kürt sosyolojisi ve ekonomi-politiği içinde belirlediği ‘en ezilen’ ve ‘dışlanan’ sosyal katmanın ‘Kırmançı’ler olarak adlandırıldığını belirtmektedir. Böylece bir grubu sınıfsal ve etnik nitelikleriyle kendine örtüştürmekte, etnik projesine sınıfsal temel kazandırmaktadır. Beşikçi, ‘sonraki döneminde’ bu tezini ve yaklaşımını tümünden reddetmekte, 1970-71 Doğu Mitingleri ve Davalarının kendisini ve Kürtleri ‘uyandırdığını’, sorunun ırkçı, baskıcı, asimilasyonist, ayrımcı Türk sömürgeciliğinden kurtulma mücadelesi olduğunu savunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, gerilla yöntemiyle ulusal kurtuluş mücadelesi stratejisiyle hareket eden PKK şiddetini övmektedir.

PKK ise, 1960’larda Türk radikal solunun ‘ulusal demokratik devrim’ tezinden esinlenen Kürt ulusal demokratik devrimi teziyle gerilla mücadelesine başlamış bir şiddet örgütüdür. Şiddeti devletin otoritesine karşı önce ‘savunma’, sonra ‘denge kurma’ ve ‘saldırı’ olarak üç aşamalı biçimde tanımlayan PKK, öncelikle temsil ettiğini savunduğu ‘Kürt halkı’ ile rakip Türk ve Kürt örgütlere, sonra da devlete yönelmiş, terör yöntemiyle sağladığı ‘meşruiyeti’ uluslararası alanda tanınmak için kullanmıştır. Bu kapsamda planladığı devrimin ulusal ile demokratik (sosyalist) yönleri arasındaki çelişkiyi, ulusal sorunun çözümüne öncelik vererek aşacağını, demokrasinin bundan sonra ‘kendiliğinden’ geleceğini savunmuştur. Dolayısıyla, aslında, ‘Kürt halkını’ dönüştürerek özgürleştireceği savı, ‘gerilla savaşının günlük gerekleri’ arasında yokolmuştur. Bu nedenle, her gerilla hareketinde görülen korku ve terör, her gerilla hareketinin iddia ettiği modernleştirici etğini özünden sorgulanır kılmış, aslında PKK da ihtiyaç duyduğunu iddia ettiği ‘ulusal cepheyi’ kurmaya çaba da göstermemiştir. Zira PKK şiddeti, terör yoluyla her meşru ve demokratik farklı sesi bastırmış, ‘Kürt ulusal mücadelesini’ eşsesli hale getirmiştir. Bu bir modern harekettir, ama modernleştirici, dönüştürücü

değildir, sınırlar dışında yerleşik ve Suriye hükümetince desteklenir haliyle, temsili de değildir.

Yeğen ise Türk modernliğinin kapsamlı bir Foucault'cu eleştirisini yapmıştır. Yazara göre Türk milliyetçiliği etnisist, ayrımcı, ırkçı, asimilasyoncu, baskıcıdır. Bu edimin arkasında kişiler ve yönetimlerden ziyade, Türk modernliğinin Kürtlüğü eşkiyalık, gericilik, aşiret direnci gibi farklı kategoriler üzerinden 'yeniden kuran' kategorik 'iptali' yatmaktadır. Türk modernliğinin erken metinlerini çözümleyerek bu sonuçlara varan Yeğen, eserinin sonunda giriştiği 'sosyoloji denemesiyle' 19. yüzyıldaki Osmanlı modernleşmesinin 'Kürtlüğün oluştuğu tarihsel ve toplumsal uzama' saldırdığını, bu saldırının Türk modernleşmesinde de sürdüğünü, Kürtlerin de bu dönemden başlayarak etno-politik direnç gösterdiğini ve etnik varlıklarından çıkan doğal haklarının peşine düşüklerini savunmaktadır. Etnik oluşum sosyolojisini Kürt mirlerinin yarı-bağımsız alanlarına Osmanlı tecavüzüne, bunu izleyen şeyhlerin siyasal sembole dönüştüğünü ve Türk ırkçı modernliğinin hedefi haline geldiğine dayandırmaktadır.

Yeğen, bu tarihsel etki-tepki şeması içinde, örneğin, Kürtlüğün oluştuğu uzamın içindeki Kürtlüğün neyi içerdiğini, bir Sünni kurumu olarak Şeyhliğin nasıl Alevi (ki Aleviliği hiç anmamaktadır) Kürtlüğün de sembolü sayılması 'gerektiğini', Türk ırkçılığına malettiği asimilasyon, baskı, dışlama gibi kategorilerin, analizinin taşıdığı 'Foucault'cu tik' nedeniyle, aslında etnisizmden önce modernizmin birer kategorisi olduğunu anmamaktadır. Kendi 'diliyle' okunduğunda Yeğen'in 'söylemsel boşlukları', bize onun Beşikçi'den miras aldığını söylediği 'özgürleştirici ahlakının' aslında 'Kürdiliği' kendi kategorileriyle nasıl 'yeniden kurduğunu' göstermektedir.

Yeğen ayrıca geçmişini bugünün ölçütleriyle 'yeniden kurmakta' ve Foucault'cu eleştiriyle 'yeniden bozmaktadır'. Buna Berger ve Luckmann, bilim sosyolojisinde 'göreliliğin yükseklik korkusu' adını takmaktadır. 'Arkeolojiyi' tarihin yerine geçiren, anolojiyi de analizin yerine koyan her yazarın kolaylıkla

öğrenebileceği bu yöntemle ‘şimdiki zamanın tarihçiliği’ öğrenilebilir bir ‘davranış’ olmaktadır. Yıldız’ın da düştüğü kimi maddi ve bağlamsal hatalar, aslında yazarların tarih bilgisinin yokluğundanm kaynaklanmamakta, bunların milliyetçi projelerinden ‘akmaktadır’. Bu hatalar, Mumcu’nun Beşikçi’nin de yaptığını gösterdiği, ‘doğru’ hatalardır. Yeğen’in Beşikçi’de övdüğü ‘bilimin [özgürleştiren] inadı’ aslında kendisinin de, Foucault’culukla da yapılmış olsa, hatta bazen ‘korkulan’ konularda ‘Ahmet Mesut’ müstear ismiyle de yapılsa, olmak istediğidir.

Kürt milliyetçi söylemi ve ‘söyleyicileri’ aslında, her milliyetçi ideolojinin gerektirdiği bir görevi yerine getirmekte, masal ve efsaneler kurmakta, gerçeği evirmekte, dönüştürmekte ve yeniden imal etmektedir. Bunu da ırkçılık, ayrımcılık atfettiği Türk modernliği üzerinden yapmakta, ‘yol işaretlerini’ tekrarlamaktadır. Bu milliyetçilik davranışdır ve mutlaka mücadele alanı ‘kurduğu’ karşıt meşruiyete yönelmelidir. Oysa, modernlik, etnik dışlama, ırkçılık gibi evrensel geçerliliği olan kategorilerde, karşılaştırmalı hiç bir analize yer vermemiş olması sorgulanmalıdır. Zira kendi kurduğu bağlamın dışına çıkmak, kendi analizinin geçerliliğini sorgulanır kılacaktır. Bu nedenle Türk ‘ırkçılığını’ karşısına alarak, ikili bir ilişkisellik kurmakta, bunu da sadece etnik kategori içine yerleştirmektedir. Neden sadece etnik kategori?

Çünkü etnisite, ulus-devlet isteyen ayrılmacı hareketlerin, uluslararası paradigmaya kendini tanıtabilmenin *günümüzdeki* kategorisidir. 1970’lerden sonra hızlanarak gelişmiş, 1990’larda Soğuk Savaş sonrasındaki çözümlerle uygulama olanağı da bulmuş olan azınlık hukuku, uluslararası toplumun devlet olmayı, uluslararası hukukun öznesi ya da nesnesi olarak tanınmayı ‘düzenleyici’ işlevinin sonucudur. Kürt milliyetçileri de 1919’daki öncüllerinin haberdar bile olmadığı bu ‘etnikçilik’ yöntemini bu nedenle benimsemiştir. Bu ‘etnikçilik’ bir bilim yapma durumundan çok, bir milliyetçi zenaattır.

Osmanlı/Türk modernliği bir meşrulaştırma sistemi olarak da görülebilir. Bu kapsamda Kürt milliyetçi söyleminin Kürt ‘etnik direncini’ yaymaya çalıştığı

tarihsel süreç, gerçekte Osmanlı'nın parçalanmaktan kurtulmak için Avrupa devletler hukukunca tanınma, meşruiyetini sağlamlaştırmaya çalışma sürecidir. Kürt milliyetçi söyleminde Kürt etnik direncinin görüngüleri olarak sayılan 1815-1834 Ravanduzlu Mehmet (Muhammed) Paşa 'ısyanı', 1840-1845 Bedirhan 'ısyanı' ve 1880-1882 Şeyh Ubeydullah 'ısyanı' aslında Osmanlı'ya karşı birer ayaklanma olmaktan çok, bu yerel kuvvet odaklarının kendi özel alanlarını genişletme hareketleridir. Ortak yönleri Osmanlı'nın askeri açıdan zayıf düştüğü dönemlerde patlak vermeleri, ülkesel genişleme hevesleri, yerel Hristiyanlara karşı giriştikleri katliamlar, ve (son ikisinde) büyük devletlerce müdahale edilen Osmanlı'nın bastırma hareketiyle, önderlerinin sürgüne razı olmasıdır. Osmanlı'nın modernleşme ve merkezileşme çabaları 1850'lerden sonra hız ve etkinlik kazanmıştır. Bu zamana kadar gerçekleşen Kürt 'ısyanlarının' Osmanlı'nın merkezileşmesi ve 'Kürtlüğe saldırmasının' bir sonucu olduğu savı bugünkü Kürt milliyetçi söyleminin teleolojik projesinin bir parçasıdır. 1880'lerde gerçekleşen Şeyh Ubeydullah 'ısyanı' da aslında Osmanlı'ya değil İran'a yöneliktir.

1908 devrimi sonrasında İstanbul'da kurulan romantik milliyetçi Kürt derneklerinin hemen tamamı, sürgünlerden dönerek İstanbul'a yerleşmiş olan ikinci kuşak Kürt önderleridir (Bedirhan'ın oğulları ve torunları, Şeyh Ubeydullah'ın oğlu Seyyid Abdulkadir ve onun oğulları –Şemdinanlar, Babanlar). Bunlar şahsi ülkesel projelerinin gerçekleştirebileceğine 1918'de Osmanlı'nın çöküşüyle inanmış, bu nedenle projelerini mütareke sonrasında derhal siyasallaştırarak (*Kürt Teali Cemiyeti*) büyük devletlere sunmuş ve tanınmayı beklemiş Kürt seçkinleridir.

Hakkında çok şey yazılmış olan Kürt Şerif Paşa ise bir İttihatçı düşmanıdır. Herhangi bir aşiretsel bağı olmayan, bazı kaynaklarda Kürtçe dahi bilmediği kaydedilen Şerif Paşa, kendi kendine dahil olduğu Paris Barış Konferansı'nda muhayyel bir Kürdistan'a dair siyasal niyeti formüle etmiş ve savunmuştur. Meslekten gelen diplomatik becerisi ve hırsı, kurulması düşünülebilecek bir Kürdistan için kendini Devlet Başkanı olarak aday göstermeye kadar

götürmüştür. Ne var ki ülkesel projenin asıl sahibi Bedirhan ve Şemdinanlardır. Şerif Paşa'nın asıl 'hizmeti' büyük devletlerin gözünde, Ermeni devletiyle toprak talebi örtüştüğünden, meşruiyeti kuşkulu Kürdistan devletinin sınırlarını Ermeni projesiyle uzlaştırmak olmuştur. Ermeni heyetinin başkanı Boğos Nubar Paşa'yla imzaladığı muhtıra, Kürt ülkesinin sınırlarını Van Gölü'nün güneyinden geçirdiği ve fazlaca topraksal taviz verdiği için Badirhanlar, Ermeni 'gavuruyla' uzlaştığı için de Şemdinanlar tarafından reddedilmiştir. Kürt Şerif Paşa bunun üzerine çekilmiş, hatta Padişah'a bir mektup yazarak bağlılığını sunmuştur. Bedirhanlar ile Şemdinanlar arasında bu şekilde çıkan ayrılık, Kürt milliyetçiliğinde daha sonra derinleşecek olan devrimci laik gelenek (Bedirhanlar, Babanlar) ile gelenekçi dinci gelenek (Şemdinanlar, Seyyid Abdulkadir) ikiliğine yol açmıştır.

1923'de Erzurum'da görev yapan aşiret alayı kökenli Cibranlı Albay Halit ve Hasenanlı Halit tarafından kurulan *Azadi* adlı askeri örgüt, bölgede Osmanlı ordusundan kaçan Kürt subaylarla (Yüzbaşı İhsan Nuri) birlikte Betüşşebap'da bir kalkışma düzenlemiştir. Cumhuriyetin kuruluşu ve ardından 1924 yılında girilen laikleştirici reformlar, Azadi'nin Şeyh Said'in infialini 'devşirebilmesini' sağlamıştır. Ancak, bu hareket, sözkonusu aşiret önderlerinin önceden çatışmalı olduğu Alevi desteğini alamamıştır. Aleviler ayrıca, laikleştirici reformlar konusunda Sünni Şeyh'in infialini paylaşmamaktadır. İsyan bastırılmış, bu durum ülkede yeni cumhuriyet rejiminin yerleştirilmesi ve her türlü muhalif odağın susturulması için olanak yaratmıştır. Tepki ve intikam amaçlı kalkışmalar 1930'lara kadar sürmüştür.

1923'de cumhuriyetin kurulmasıyla birlikte Bedirhanlar yurtdışına (Şam, Kahire) çıkmıştır. İstanbul'da kalan Seyyid Abdulkadir ise 1925'de Şeyh Said İsyanı'yla ilgili görülerek idam edilmiştir. Bedirhanlar, Diyarbakır'da güçlü Cemilpaşazadelerle güçbirliğine giderek 1926-27'de Ermeni Daşnak destekli *Hoybun Cemiyeti*'ni Lübnan'da kurmuştur. Bu örgüt 1929-30'da Ermeni Daşnak desteğiyle Ağrı isyanını örgütlemiş, konuyu uluslararası platforma taşımıştır.

Cumhuriyet sonrası ‘Kürt isyanları’ 1930’larda son bulmuştur. ‘İsyan’ niteliği atfedilen 1937-38 Dersim olayları ise bir kanun ve düzen harekatıdır. 1920’lerde Koçgiri ve Koçuşığı ‘isyanlarıyla’ kendini gösteren ve 1930’ların başında vergi ve asker vermeyen, soygun ve kaçak yeri haline gelen Dersim yöresine yönelik tedbir ve harekat planlı ve bilinçli bir harekattır. Dersim Alevi aşiretlerinin direnci ise, bu yörede ‘saklı’, kırsal etnisitenin direncidir. Bu özellikleriyle Sünni aşiret ve dinsel önderlerin şahsi ülkesel projelerinden ayrı düşünölmelidir.

Dersim olaylarından sonra, kalkışmacı Kürt önderleri sürgün edilmesi, cumhuriyet hükümetine katılanların da siteme bütünleştirilmesiyle 1960’lara dek sükunet muhafaza olmuştur. Ancak, bu süreçte yeni bir siyasal Kürtçü aydın grubu yetişmiştir. Bunlar (Anter, Kaya, Şerefhanoglu, Karahan, Kırmızıtoprak, Bucak ve diğerleri) 1919-1930 arası gelişen siyasal projelerden haberi, bu projelerin müellifleriyle ilişkili, kendi aralarında bütönlöklü (Dicle Öğrenci Yurdu) ve savlarını ‘ulusal sorun’ olarak nitelendirmeye niyetli, basıp dağıttıkları dergilerle bu konuları, kısıtlı da olsa, kamuoyunda tartışan bir ‘yayın milliyetçiliği’ grubudur. Bu grup, daha sonra, 1959’daki ‘49’lar’, 1962-63’deki ‘23’ler’ tutuklamalarına hedef olmuş, populist bir siyasal projenin savunucusudur. Bunlar da kendi aralarında devrimci sosyalist ve sağcı/gelenekselci olarak ikiye ayrılmışlardır. Birinci grup 1960’larda Türkiye İşçi Partisi bünyesindeki Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları etkinliklerine katılacak, ikinci grup ise Barzani’nin etkisi ve desteğiyle Türkiye Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi’ni kuracaktır.

Kürt milliyetçiliği, tanınma hedefini güttüğü uluslararası toplum ve onun meşruiyet ölçütleriyle, ‘başlangıcından’ bu yana üç kez kavuşmuştur. Birinci Dünya Savaşı sonrasında Kürt aşiretsel/dinsel önderlerinin ‘özel projeleri’ olarak ortaya çıktığı ilkinde, büyük devletlerin keyfi ve öznel çıkarlarına uymaya çalışmış, ancak 19. yüzyıl azınlık korumacılığı davranışını yalnızca Osmanlı’nın Hristiyan tebasına yaymakla yetinen büyük devletleri ikna

edememiştir. Bu devletler, Anadolu'ya baktıklarında milliyetçi seferberlik olarak karşılarında Kürt seçkinlerini değil, Kürtleri de başarıyla yanına almış olan Kemalist hareketi görmüşler, devlet davranışını ve uluslararası hukuku ona göre uygulamışlardır. Bunu bugünkü Kürt milliyetçi söylemi de reddetmemektedir, reddettiği daha sonra kurulan tekil cumhuriyettir.

İkincisinde, 1960 sonrasında oluşan demokratik siyasal yaşamda, Türk devrimci solu içinde yasallaşan bir Kürt milliyetçiliği sözkonusudur. Yine devrimci söylemle Türkiye İşçi Partisi'ne katılan, ancak bu partinin kapatılması aşamasında ondan ayrılarak, 'Kürt bölgelerindeki' paralel örgütlenmesini (DDKO) canlandıran Kürt milliyetçiliği, ilk kez bu dönemde kamusal bir proje niteliği kazanmış, uluslararası alandaki anti-sömürgeci mücadeleyle kendini meşru kılmaya çalışmıştır. Ancak sömürge toplumu olmadığı için bu bağlamda tanınma olanağı bulamamış, 1960 ve 1970'lerde hızlanan, Çin ve Doğu Bloku destekli gerilla hareketlerine doğru evrilmiş, 1971 darbesiyle yasallığını yitirmiştir.

1990 sonrasında da hedef ulusal özgürlük için gerilla mücadelesidir, zira uluslararası hukuk sömürge olmayan toplumları bağımsızlığa aday görmese de, silahlı devrimi ya da ana devletçe tanınan ayrılıkçılığı gayrimeşru saymamaktadır. Sorun, PKK ile hız kazanan hareketin meşruiyetidir. Başlangıcında açıkça devletler arasında iyi ilişkiler ve dostluk ilkelerine, BM yasasına aykırı biçimde Suriye tarafından desteklenen PKK, bu desteği Avrupa'da oluşturduğu Kürt sivil toplumu yoluyla gizlemeyi ve halkın gerillası gibi görünmeyi başarmıştır. Türkiye 1998'e dek Suriye'ye karşı meşru müdafaa hakkına başvurmamıştır. Bu gecikme PKK'yı denge ve saldırı aşamalarına geçmeyi denemesini sağlamış, sivil itaatsizlik ve kurtarılmış gerilla bölgesi denemeleri yapılmıştır.

1990'larda Türk solundan koparak yasal gelişen Kürt partisi de kısa sürede PKK'nın etkisi altına girmiştir. Halkın Emek Partisi'nin koptuğu Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti (SHP) ile girdiği seçim ittifakıyla Meclis'e

seilen HEP milletvekilleri, Krtlge ynelik ‘demokratik aılım’ taleplerini ilk gnden bařlayarak ve sistemi btnyle sorgulayan, kimi ynleriyle de reddeden biimde dile getirmeye bařlamıřtır. Devrimci Krt milliyetilięinin bu radikal biimiyle yeniden-yasallařması, 1990’ların bařında yoęunlařan řiddet ve terr ortamında sistemin geniřlemesini deęil, dralmasını teřvik etmiřtir. Yasal Krt particilięi, DEP (eski HEP) milletvekillerinin dokunulmazlıklarının kaldırılarak Meclis’den ihracıyla, ‘parlamenterlik-dıřı’ bir strateji izlemeye bařlamıřtır.

Bu strateji, ilerleyen yıllarda, Krt partisinin yerel seimlerdeki bařarısı ile birleřmiř ve yzde onluk temsil barajının adil temsili nledięi sylemiyle, Trk parlamenter demokrasisinin meřruiyetini sorgulama, ařındırma siyaseti haline dnřmřtir. PKK bu durumu 1990’ların ortasında giriřtięi, ‘srgnde’ meřru parlamento projesiyle kullanmak istemiřtir. Yerel ynetimler, Parti’nin siyasal ‘bir halk’ yaratma projesini uygulama aracı olarak ngrlmřtir.

Burada iki sorunla karřılařılmıřtır. Bunlardan birincisi, PKK ve yasal Krt partilerinin projelerine iliřkin stratejinin uluslararası alanda aradıęı meřruiyet otomatik olarak gerekleřen bir meřruiyet deęildir. 1960’lardan sonra ‘smrge olmayan halklar’ kategorisinde bulunduęunu idrak eden Krt milliyetilięi, egemen baęımsızlık projesinde kullanmayı umduęu kendi kaderini tayin hakkı iin ncelikle ‘kendini’ tarif etmek durumundadır. Bu da Krt milliyetilięi syleminde kendi kaderini tayin hakkının kullanımını zorunlu olarak ikincil duruma indirgemektedir. Krt milliyetilięi, esasen 1970’lerden bu yana durumun farkındadır. Komal yayınevi evresince savunulagelen kendi kaderini tayin stratejisinde, bu hakkın kullanımı ‘ncelikle zgrleřmeyi’ ngrmektedir. Bařka deyiřle, kendi kaderini tayin zgrleřme/kurtuluř yntemi olmaktan ıkmıř, silahlı mcadele tek etkin yntem olarak benimsenmiřtir. Bu bir ‘ima edilmiř’ kendi kaderini tayin hakkı sylemidir.

Burada uluslararası alanda 1970'lerin ortalarından başlayarak gelişen azınlık haklarına (ve genel olarak bütün üçüncü kuşak haklara) atıfta bulunmaktadır. Ancak ne azınlık hakları kendi kaderine tayin hakkına geçişi garanti etmekte, ne de azınlık haklarının evrenselliği devletlerce kabul edilmektedir. Azınlık partikülarizminin bulunduğu devletlerden edinebileceği haklarla, bu devletlerin temel evrensel hak ve özgürlükleri tanıyor ve uyguluyor olması iki ayrı meşruiyet alanı yaratmaktadır.

Kürt partileri azınlık ve toplu haklar söylemine yaptıkları vurguya rağmen, halk indindeki meşruiyetini, iç ve dış kamuoyuna Türk demokratik seçim sistemi üzerinden kanıtlamak durumundadır. Uluslararası meşruiyet, işleyen bir parlamenter sistemi öngörmektedir. Ulusal barajı bağımsız adaylarla geçebileceği halde, parlamento seçimlerinde 'başarılı olmak istemeyen' bir partinin seçmenleri, uluslararası hukuk tarafından 'tanınabilecek' bir topluluk teşkil etmemektedir.

Kürt partilerinin sonuncusu (DTP), 'demokratik ortaklık' teziyle yola çıkmıştır. Bunu yaparken azınlık ve toplu haklar kavramını, evrensel temel hak ve özgürlüklerin tamamlayıcı bir parçası olarak göstermeye çalışmıştır. DTP için Kürt sorunu bir demokratikleşme sorunudur. Ancak sıralama, Komal'ın tezindeki gibi, tersinedir. Evvelce Kürt haklarına ilişkin anayasal düzenleme yapılmalıdır. Demokrasi bununla gelecektir. Burada da 'ima edilmiş' bir kendi kaderini tayin söylemi bulunmaktadır.

DTP yerel ve uluslararası ekseninde faaliyet göstermekte, ulusal düzlemi bilerek atlamakta, bu yöntemle kendisine uluslararası meşruiyet aramaktadır. DTP yerel yönetimlerinin en önemlisi Diyarbakır Belediyesi'dir. Belediye Başkanı Baydemir partisinin bu stratejisini uluslararası düzlemde uygulamaktadır. Avrupa Konseyi Yerel ve Bölgesel Yönetimler Kongresi başkanlığına yaptığı başvuruda, Güneydoğu Anadolu Belediyeler Birliği başkanı olarak, Doğu Anadolu ile birlikte Kongre'ye katılan Türk heyetinde temsil edilmediklerini, bu suretle dışlanan Kürtleri Kongre'de temsil edebilmek için, Türk heyetinden

ayrı bir *gözlemci statüsü* verilmesini talep ettiklerini bildirmiştir. Bu başvuruya eklediği bir raporda da bölge belediyelerinin ve halkının sorunları ile Kürt sorunun çözümüne yönelik düşüncelerini iletmiştir. Bu girişim bir ülke ve halk tanımlamaktadır. Bu halkın ulusal sistemde temsil edilmediği savıyla birleşince, bir meşrulaştırma çabasına dönüşmektedir. Baydemir aynı çabayı her uluslararası temas ya da ziyaretinde yinelemektedir.

Sonuç olarak, bu çalışmanın bulguları üç grup halinde izah olunabilir. İlk olarak millet ve milliyetçiliğin modern birer siyasal olgu olarak, kendilerine kaynak teşkil eden her türlü niteliği dönüştürme ve işlevsel olarak kullanabilme yeteneği, Kürt milliyetçiliğinin etnik olguyu kullanabilme özelliğinde ortaya çıkmıştır. Burada, siyasallaşmamış, kendi halindeki etnisitenin direnci için Dersim olayı bir örnek olarak düşünülmeli ve bu yaklaşımla çalışılmalıdır.

Etnisite, Kürt siyasal projesinin 1970'lerden bu yana geçerli hale gelebilmiş bir araçtır. 1919'daki Kürt milliyetçilerinin uluslararası toplumdan kabul görebileceği kategoriler arasında ise sadece din, ırk ve bir ölçüde dil vardı. Oysa 1990'larda etnisite, başka türlü ifade edilemeyen herşeyi anlatır oldu.

Burada dikkat edilmesi gereken nokta, etnisitenin yüklendiği ideolojik görevdir. Bu kavram, bilimsel çalışmalarda tarihsel, sosyolojik ve siyasal bağlamı ortadan kaldıracı bir söylemsel güce sahiptir. Bu sayede, örneğin Türk modernliği ve Kürt etnik milliyetçiliği arasındaki bağlama hakim olabilmekte, konuyu etniler-arası ilişkilere indirgeyebilmektedir. Bunu 'bilim adına' yaptığını söyleyen Kürt milliyetçilerinin yazdıklarında karşılaştırmalı bir çerçeveden ve analizden özellikle uzak durmalarını anlamlı buldum. Örneğin Türk 'etnisist, ırkçı, asimilasyoncu' uygulamalarını Fransa ve Almanya gibi başka çok-etnili ülkelerde 1850'lerden 1950'lere dek görülen ulusallaşma uygulamalarıyla karşılaştıran bir Kürt milliyetçi söyleme literatürde rastlamadım. Bunun iki sebebi olabilir. Birincisi sözkonusu literatürün henüz fazlaca gelişmediği, ikincisi, ki daha açıklayıcı olabilir, Kürt milliyetçi söyleminin gayrimeşrulaştırmaya çalıştığı Türk modernliği üzerinden

meşrulaştırma çabası. Bu nedenle etno-ilişkisel bağlam, Kürt milliyetçi söylemi için Türk modernizmini ‘ele almak’ bakımından çekici bir yöntem oluşturmaktadır. Ancak bu sebepler etno-ilişkisel yöntemi yine de geçerli kılmamaktadır. Zira etnik dışlama, asimilasyon, ırkçılık gibi Türk etnisizmine atfedilen kategoriler, etnisiteden çok modernliğe aittir. Bu nedenle, Kürt etnik milliyetçiliğinin hem Türk modernizmini anlamak, hem de kendini kavrayabilmek açısından karşılaştırmalı çalışmaların gerektiğini düşünüyorum.

Bu çalışma yukarıda belirtilen karşılaştırmalı inceleme ihtiyacından kaynaklanmıştır. Nüfus bilimleri, din, eğitim, siyasal şiddet ve cinsiyet çalışmaları gibi başka kategorileri esas alan tematik karşılaştırmalar da yeni araştırmalar için önerilebilir.

İkinci grup bulgular ise Kürt etnik milliyetçiliğinin ‘doğası’ ve ‘gelişim çizgisine’ ilişkindir. Burada öncelikle Kürt milliyetçiliğinin de diğer milliyetçilikler gibi, primordial ya da perennial bir etnik genişlemeye ortaya çıkmış olmaktan ziyade, modernliğin yarattığı bir olgu olduğunu kaydetmek gerekir.

Kürt etnik milliyetçiliği modernitenin belirlediği koşullar çerçevesinde, uluslararası sistemdeki bağlamsal değişimle üç kez ‘buluşmuştur’. Bunlardan ilkinde, 1919-1930 döneminde ‘organize olamamış bir ön-milliyetçilik’ görünümü almıştır. İkincisinde, 1960’larda gelişen anti-sömürgeci tutum almıştır. Üçüncüsünde ise, 1990’lardaki azınlık ve toplu haklar bağlamında kendini tanımlamaya çalışan, ‘ima edilmiş’ bir kendi kaderini tayin dönemine girmiştir. Bu dönemlerin her birinde Türk modernliğinin meşruiyetiyle mücadele etmiş, eşzamanlı olarak da kendi projesini meşrulaştırmaya çalışmıştır. Bu meşrulaştırma çabasının içindeki eşzamanlılık uluslararası bağlam tarafından ‘düzenlenmiştir’. Burada sorun, bu sürecin bir ideal-tip içermemesidir. Türk devleti demokratik eksiklikleri nedeniyle bu süreç içinde meşruiyet zeminini kısmen yitirmiş olabilir. Ancak bu durum, Kürt projesine otomatik olarak meşruiyet atfolunacağı anlamına gelmez.

Bu çalışmada Kürt milliyetçiliği dağarcığında üç boyutun öne çıktığı anlaşılmaktadır. Bunlardan birincisi *ülkeselliktir*. Ülkesellik, 1960'lara kadar, Kürt projesini kendi kişisel projesi olarak gören Kürt milliyetçileri arasında önemli bir bölünme nedeni olmuştur. Bu durum, sürgün siyasetleri yoluyla Osmanlı ve Türk hükümetlerince, kişisel egemenlik iddialarına karşı etkili biçimde kullanılmıştır. İsyancı önderler, sürgünden dönüşlerinde sisteme bütünleştirilebilmiştir.

Ülkesellik 1960'lar sonrasında sömürgecilikten kurtuluş biçiminde yeniden ortaya çıkmıştır. Ancak 1990'larla birlikte ülkesellik 'Kürt halkının' kendi kaderini tayin hakkının 'ima edilmiş' bir aracı durumuna dönüşmüştür. Komal çevresi, kurtuluş stratejisini Kürt halkının kendi kaderini tayin hakkını kullanacağı anın öncesine koymuştur. Komalcılar bunu yaparken Kürt halkının anti-sömürgeci hukukta tanımlanmış bir özne olamadığını biliyorlardı. Kürtler, en iyimser bakışla, kendi kaderini tayin haklarını 1923'de Türklerle birlikte kullanmış sayılmamak şartıyla, sadece bir sömürge-olmayan azınlık sayılabileceklerdi. Bu nedenle, hak kazanamadıkları bir anti-sömürgeci kendi kaderini tayin hakkı yerine, Komalcılar doğrudan gerilla kurtuluşçuluğuna yöneldiler. Bu kategoride de ülkesellik neredeyse tek norm idi.

Ülkesellik 1990'larda yeniden yasallaşan devrimci Kürt milliyetçiliği içinde de gözlenebilir boyuttadır. 'Yasal' Kürt partilerinin demokratikleşme sorununun halli için öncelikle 'Kürt sorununun' çözümü zorunluluğuna vurgu yapmaları, demokrasiyi 'Kürt hakları' karşısında ikincil bir konuma indirmiştir. Ancak Kürt partileri 'Kürt hakları' ile tam olarak neyi kasedtiklerini resmen tam olarak hiç açıklamamışlardır. Bunun yerine, "kentimizi de, kendimizi de biz yöneteceğiz" sloganlarıyla gittikleri yerel yönetim seçimleri sırasında bunu 'ima etmişlerdir'.

Aynı ülkesellik gerilla şiddetinde de, değişik bir biçimiyle, gözlenmektedir. Gerilla stratejisi üzerinde hak iddia ettiği topraklar için üçlü bir 'savunma,

denge ve saldırı' planı öngörmüştür. Ancak aynı zamanda, saldırı aşamasına dek üsleneyeceği bir 'gizli ülke'ye de bağımlıdır. Türk hükümeti PKK tarafından Suriye topraklarının bu amaçla kullanılmasına uzun süre sessiz kalmıştır. Uzayan silahlı mücadele sırasında meşruiyeti aşınmış, 'alan kontrolü' yaklaşımıyla bir oranda üstünlük sağlamış, ancak Suriye'ye karşı çoktan meşru hale gelmiş olan meşru müdafaa hakkını uzun süre kullanmamıştır. Bunu 1998'de kullandığında da uluslararası toplumdan tepki almamıştır.

İkinci boyut ise *ayrı bir halk* boyutudur. Birinci Dünya Savaşı sonrasında Kürt milliyetçileri kendilerini çevreleyen ırklardan farklı olduklarını büyük devletlere kanıtlamaya çaba gösterdiler. Ancak bu dönemde son derece keyfi olan algılama biçimleri daha çok imparatorluğun Hristiyan tebasını seçebilmişti. Büyük devletler Kürt halkına yönelik bir 'ahlaki sorumluluk' hissetmemişti. Oysa 1960'larda devrimci Kürt milliyetçiliği böyle 'bir halkın' kendi kaderini tayin hakkıyla varolduğu tanımını yaparak bu kavramı modernleştirdi.

1990'larda ise Kürt partileri, yüzde onluk ülke barajını bahane ederek, parlamenter siyasetin dışında kalmayı seçtiler. Bağımsız adaylarla kolayca aşabilecekleri bu engeli bilinçli biçimde aşmayarak, Kürtleri 'ulusal düzlemde dışlanan bir halk' olarak göstermeyi ve uluslararası alanda kendilerine meşruiyet kazandırmayı hedeflediler. Böylelikle yerel-ulusal ekseninde bir meşruiyet yapısı kurmayı, 'bir halk' olarak uluslararası hukukun bir öznesi olabilmeyi umdular. Bunu başarabilmek için Kürtlerin kendi kaderini tayin hakkını kullanacak 'kendisini' tanımlamak gerekiyordu. Yerel yönetimde 'halk iradesinin' etkin biçimde katılımını öngören bir yapı önerdiler. Bu yapı belde, mahalle, ilçe ve il meclislerini içeriyordu. Ancak Kürt partileri bu stratejinin başarısını meşru biçimde ölçebilmek için yine seçimlerden geçmek durumundaydı. Yasal Kürt partilerinin kaçınmak istediği 'kısır döngü' bu şekilde kendini onlara kabul ettirdi. Onlar da kendilerini Türk siyasetine kabul ettirdi. Yasal Kürt milliyetçiliği Türkiye'de kendine yapısal bir yer edindi,

ancak bunu ‘bir halk’ olarak değil, etnik bir partinin seçmenleri olarak başarabildi.

Üçüncü boyut ise Kürt milliyetçiliğinin partikülerizmi ile Türk demokrasisinin evrenselliği arasındaki çelişkidir. Kim nasıl adlandırırsa adlandırınsın, Kürt milliyetçiliği partikülerist bir projedir. 1970’ler sonrasında gelişen azınlık hakları, 1945 sonrasında evrenselleşen temel hak ve özgürlüklerin aksine, sözleşmesel bir nitelik kazandı. Türkiye, diğer devletler gibi, bu sözleşmesel sistem dışında kalmayı seçebilir, ancak meşruiyetini tamamlayan evrensel ilkelerden vazgeçemezdi. BM sistemi 1990’larda siyasal etkinliğini bu evrensel kategoriler üzerinde artırdı. Bir çok ülke BM’nin bu siyasal etkinliğine karşı koymadı, kimileri ise görece bir tutum benimseyerek evrenselliğin dışında kaldı, meşruiyetinden ödün verdi. Türkiye, evrenselliğe bağlı kalarak, sistem dışına çıkmadı. Bu ise, partikülerist istemlere meşru biçimde karşı durabilme yeteneğini güçlendirdi.

Franck, uluslararası sistemde, ulusal sistemlerdekine benzer bir yaptırım gücü bulunmadığını, bunun yerine uluslararası hukuka devletlerin uymasını sağlayan yaptırım gücünün, uymama durumundan kaynaklanan ‘utanç’ olduğunu savunur. Habermas ise, meşruiyetin gerçek duruma ilişkisi sorunu irdelerken, nominal ve gerçek koşullar arasındaki farkın meşruiyetin işleyiş alanı olduğunu anlatır. Devlet içeride kanunlar yaparken, temsil ettiği [demokratik] kültürel geleneğin üzerine bindirdiği ağırlığı taşıyabilmek için işleyiş alanını genişletir. Aradaki fark büyüdükçe, devlet meşruiyet kriziyle karşılaşabilir. Burada sorun, devletin kendi üzerine aldığı yüklerden kaynaklanan sürecin de meşruiyet baskısı altında olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır.

Türkiye’de neden Kürt sağının (1960’lardaki Yeni Türkiye Partisi gibi) modernleşmeci projesinin gerçekleştirilemediğinin sorgulanması gerekmektedir. Kebek ve Katalan milliyetçiliklerinde gözlenen modernleştirici/kalkındırıcı işlevin, Türkiye’deki Kürt sağının modernleşmeci projesi tarafından hangi tercihler neticesinde üstlenilemediği sorulabilir.

Sonu olarak, bulgular bizi daha varoluşsal sorular sormaya itmektedir. Eęer etnik nitelik bir ideolojik vurguysa, bu alıřmanın bařlıęı yanlıřtır. Ancak eęer etnisite gnmz milliyetiliklerinin ortak iřleyiř dilini ifade ediyorsa, doęrudur. Bu ikilem Krt etnik milliyetilięinde de vardır. Etnisite Trk modernlięini eleřtirmek iin Krt milliyetilięinin elinde kuvvetli bir aratır. Ancak, kendi projesini gerekleřtirme yolunda ise, egemen ve baęımsız bir devlet sz veremeyen, aynı oranda gsz ve bulanık bir sylemdir.

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2002-2004	Embassy of the Republic of Turkey, London, UK	Second Secretary
1999-2001	Embassy of the Republic of Turkey, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	Third Secretary
1999	Cabinet of the Minister, Min. of Foreign Affairs of the Rep. of Turkey	Attaché
1998-1999	Military Service	
1996-1997	Human Rights Department, Min.of Foreign Affairs of the Rep. of Turkey	Attaché
1995	Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TICA), Ankara	Program Coordinator for Bosnia and Herzegovina
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1993-1994	Program Coordination Office, TICA, Bishkek, Kyrghyzstan	Program Coordinator
1992-1993	İmbat Exhibitions Co., Ankara	Coordinator
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