THE MANY SIDES OF SAID NURSI: AN EXPLORATION OF TURKEY'S KURDISH QUESTION THROUGH CONTRASTING INTERPRETATIONS OF ISLAMIC TEXTS

By

Esma BAYRAM

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University of Essex

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates "how is a political response to the Kurdish Question (KQ) justified and moulded through different interpretations of key religious sources in Turkey?". It takes into consideration the interaction of ethnic and national belonging with Islam in analyzing and comprehending the religious communities' (*jamaats)'* perspectives on the KQ. Therefore, taking Bediuzzaman's (the founder of the *Nur* Movement) words as the key religious source, this dissertation compares the perspectives of the mostly - Kurdish *Nûbihar* Circle and the mainly - Turkish *Hizmet* Movement, which benefit from the same religious sources, on the Kurdish Question. This study also questions the applicability of one of Brubaker's approaches, which argues that "claims made in the name of religion, political representation, economic sources, symbolic recognition or cultural reproduction can be thought alongside claims made in the name of ethnicity, race or nationhood", to this dissertation. The research uses primary and secondary data analysis methodology and gets primary sources by conducting elite interviews with the active members of the *jamaats*. The dissertation's central argument is that while legitimizing their thoughts about the KQ, both *jamaats* interpreted the religious sources so that they could keep their ethnic demands and achievements in line with their nationalist goals. As both *jamaats* framed their nationalism within a religious context, they present their perspectives on the KQ from an ethnic and Islamic-centric standpoint. Ultimately, this study faces many sides of Bediuzzaman, which reveals the role of religion in national life in Turkey from the perspective of *jamaats* and their fear of not being harmed by the Turkish state due to their political views.

Keywords: The Kurdish Question, Islam, Nationalism, Ethnic Identity, the *Nûbihar* Circle, the Gulen *Hizmet* Movement

Declaration

Declaration I declare that this thesis has been accomplished solely by myself for obtaining my PhD degree; therefore, I confirm that this thesis has not been submitted, in part or whole, for any other purposes. Except where I state otherwise by reference or acknowledgement, the work presented in this dissertation is entirely my own. I underline my copyright as the author of this thesis. Without my written consent, this thesis may not be reproduced in part or whole.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AP: (*Adalet Partisi*) The Justice Party

AKP: (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) Justice and Development Party

ANAP: (*Anavatan Partisi*) The Motherland Party

BDP: (*Baris ve Demokrasi Partisi*) The Peace and Democracy Party

CHP: (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*) The People's Republican Party

DDKO: (*Devrimci Dogu Kultur Ocaklari*) The Revolutionary Cultural Society of the East

DEP: (*Demokrasi Partisi***)** The Democratic Party

DP: (*Demokrat Parti*) The Democrat Party

DRA: (*Diyanet Isleri Baskanligi*) The Directorate of Religious Affairs

DYP: (*Doğru Yol Partisi*) The True Path Party

DTP: (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi)*** The Democratic Society Party

FP: (*Fazilet Partisi***)** The Virtue Party

HDP: (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*) People's Democratic Party

HEP: (*Halkin Emek Partisi*) People's Labour Party

HM: The *Hizmet* Movement

HUDAPAR: (*Hur Dava Partisi*) Free Cause Party

JITEM: (Jandarma Istihbarat ve Terorle Mucadele) Turkey's Gendarmerie Intelligence and Anti-Terror Organization

KCK: (*Koma Civakên Kurdistan***)** The Union of Communities of Kurdistan

KQ: The Kurdish Question

KUK: (*Kurdistan Ulusal Kurtulusculari*) Kurdistan National Liberationists

MIT: (*Milli Istihbarat Teskilati***)** The National Intelligence Organization, MIT

MHP: (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*) Nationalist Movement Party

MNP: (*Milli Nizam Partisi*) National Order Party

MSP: (*Milli Selamet Partisi*) The National Salvation Party

NC: The *Nûbihar* Circle

OHAL: (*Olaganustu Hal*) A Regional State of Emergency Governorate

PKK: (*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistane*) Kurdistan Workers' Party

RP: (Refah Partisi) Welfare Party

SP: (*Selamet Partisi*) The Felicity Party

TIP: (*Turkiye Isci Partisi*) Turkey Workers Party

Acknowledgement

TO MY FAMILY…

INTRODUCTION

For most of the last century (since 1928) Turkey has been a secular country, in which religious and political affairs have been separated from each other and the state has had no official religion (Albayrak, 2019, S. 5)[1]. However, as asserted by Celik (2018, S. 202), rather than separating religion from state affairs, secularism was used by the governments to keep the control mechanism of the state over religion and religious organizations. With the law on Closure of *Dervish Lodges*, *Zawiya, and Shrines*, passed on November 30, 1925, religious institutions (such as madrasahs [religious schools] and *tariqat*s [religious/Sufi orders] [2]) were closed and banned by the Turkish state (Kara, 2009, S. 347) (Torun, 2020, S. 84). It is to say, since 1925, religious institutions in Turkey were declared illegal structures by the Turkish state and the state tried to replace tariqas and *jamaats* with state-controlled religious institutions (Kara, 2008, S. 104). However, as advocated by Ciftci (2016) and Cakir (2022), despite such policies of the Turkish state, many religious communities (jamaats) [3] and religious orders (*tariqa*s) have succeeded to keep their existence in Turkey.

According to Ciftci (2016) and Cakir (2022), the *tariqa*s and *jamaat*s have kept their activities not legally but legitimately by establishing foundations and companies, associations, and unions.

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[1] The phrase "Religion of the Republic of Turkey is Islam" in the 1921 and 1924 Constitutions was abolished in 1928 with the order of the founders of the Turkish Republics.

[2] In general, *tariqats* are defined as "a social group defined by its unusual religious, spiritual, or philosophical beliefs, or by its common interest in a particular personality, object, or goal" (Zablocki & Robbins , 2001, S. 473). In Turkey, *tariqats* are used to state the ways of reaching and knowing Allah (Frager, 2018). The members of the *tariqats* use these organizations to discipline themselves religiously. The t*ariqats* in Turkey are *Naksibendi*, *Kadiri*, *Bektashi*, *Halveti*, *Rufai*, *Melami*, *Suhverdiyye*, *Cesti*, *Sazeliye*, *Mevlevi*, and so on, which develops among various classes and types of people in Turkey.
For more info, please check pp. 49-59

[3] *Jamaat i*s an Islamic community that comes together for an idea, book, sheikh, imam, guardian, scholar, or worship. J*amaats* are illegal structures in Turkey, but they are legitimate. The members of the *jamaats* do not have an official relationship with the *jamaats*. Therefore, it is difficult to detect the members of the *jamaats*, but it is estimated that more than 2.5 million people in Turkey have organic ties to a cult or *jamaats* (Yurtgazetesi 2020). People give *jamaats* their time, money or whatever they can, and in return, they experience a certain moral satisfaction and a sense of belonging to a group (Cakir 2022).
For more info, please check pp. 51-59

These legal institutions have been subject to state control (Ciftci, 2016; Cakir, Medyascope, 2022; Cakir, Medyascope, 2022). Cakir (2022) emphasizes that the activities of the *jamaat*s could not be excluded from such state control, and therefore, as claimed by Ciftci (2016) and Cakir (2016), the *jamaat*s have had to be very careful not to get too involved in politics by opposing the Turkish state, and even by being "quite statist" not to be harmed by the existing government.

As explained by Ciftci (2016), the instinct of the *jamaats* in Turkey to survive has resulted in their adoption of the Turkish national identity as their structural component. The *jamaats* have responded to this controlled-based rapprochement of the state in two ways, one in connection with the other (Ciftci, 2016). Firstly, as Cevik (2019, S. 5) and Ciftci (2016) claim, by bringing the state or the state's apparatus, especially the parties, closer to them, they could resolve the legitimacy crisis and use them to protect themselves and move away from the point of reactionism and opposition to the Republic. In this way, they could increase their demands for being included in the system as a normal extension of their understanding of religion and politics, which can be called the "statist" (Cevik, 2019, S. 5) (Kara, 2009, S. 352). Secondly, they could openly increase their religious activities and seek to be a political-economic entity (Ciftci, 2016). As a result, according to Ciftci (2016), an implicit relationship between these *jamaats* and the Turkish state has emerged. In other words, although the *jamaats* have displayed an ideological opposition to the 'assertive secularism[4]' character of the single-party government, they have not opposed all other ideological, organizational, and structural characteristics that have made the Republic of Turkey a state (Ciftci, 2016).

At this point, according to Ciftci (2016), the *jamaats* in Turkey have perceived the State as

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[4] Assertive secularism is the opposite of passive secularism, which necessitates the state to allow the visibility of religion in the public. Assertive secularism has a goal to exclude religion from the public sphere (Kuru, 2009).

an ideological "nursery" and have not thought to oppose it. Also, Uzun (2011, S. 29) highlights the non-existence of any serious conflicts between the Islamist movements and the government, but rather the existence of "an ongoing relationship around the agreement, tolerance, and bargaining". Kara (2009, S. 352) interprets that this mechanism has made *jamaats* more intertwined and side by side with the state and the logic of the state, and also given them opportunities to make themselves and their beliefs more credible and visible. According to Kara (2009, S. 353), they have seized material and cultural rewards. *Jamaats* in Turkey have become more "semi-official" by developing highly realistic and pragmatic ways of behaving. Also, Ciftci (2016) affirms that the *jamaats* even have adopted the Turkish national identity; they have been identified with the right-wing parties in Turkey; have prioritized nationalism and geography over any pan-Islamic consciousness or identity.

The situation of being "statist" and "adoption of the Turkish national identity", to some extent, can be accepted as normal for the mostly - Turkish *jamaats*. However, can such identification also be valid for the Kurdish-majority *jamaats*? Even though the Kurds have been the largest minority in Turkey, they have a long history of assimilation, denial, oppression, discrimination, and massacre perpetrated by the Turkish state[5]. Also, they have struggled for a long time to get their fundamental rights and to be recognized by the Turkish state. Therefore, one should ask the question of whether religious Kurds and Kurdish-majority *jamaats* in Turkey, unlike the Turkish majority jamaats in Turkey, can engage in politics specifically to support their rights. Do they feel the pressure to be at peace with the system by leaving their Kurdish nationality aside? Do only leftist parties or movements fight and clash with the system in support of minority rights? Can the mostly - Kurdish *jamaats* express freely their thoughts and solutions for their problems, especially for the Kurdish

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[5] For Details, please check Chapter Two

Question (KQ)? It is why the KQ is a sociocultural and ethnopolitical problem and a nationalist issue. Also, do the Kurdish-majority *jamaats* take part in the resolution process? If they struggle for their rights against the Turkish state, do they face the threat of the Turkish state ending the activities of these Kurdish *jamaats*? Or is there a method in these *jamaats* to justify their support for their rights?

It is highly possible that they can justify their political views based on religious interpretation. Therefore, with the questions above in mind and based on the context provided, this study investigates how different interpretations of the key religious sources are used to justify and mould a political response to the KQ. It questions whether ethnic differences create a dissimilarity in the *jamaats'* interpretation of the same religious sources for their justification of the KQ and nationalist feelings. In other words, this study examines whether the political responses or claims in the name of religion can be considered alongside claims made in the name of ethnicity, race, or nationhood. In this way, the role of religion in the national life of Turkey can be divulged from the eyes of the officially illegal but legitimate *jamaats* if they hide their ethnic and nationalistic demands behind their religious interpretations, especially for the KQ.

.Contribution of The Research

Evaluating the literature, it is seen that while the mostly Kurdish-populated eastern and South-eastern Anatolia, Northern Kurdistan or Turkish Kurdistan, is one of the most religious parts of Turkey (Houston, 2005)[6], the non-religious group, *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê* - PKK – (Kurdistan Workers' Party)[7], the Turkish military, and the Turkish elected governments have been mostly in

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[6] The majority of Kurds in Turkey are Sunni Muslim, with Alevi Shi'a Muslim, Christian, Jewish, and Yezidi communities (Houston, 2005).

[7] The Kurdistan Kurdish Party (PKK, or Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê) was founded by Abdullah Ocalan and his supporters in 1978. It aims to establish a state in the region covering east and southeast of Turkey, north of Iraq, northeast of Syria and northwest of Iran. It organizes attacks against military targets, village guards and civilians in Turkey to take possession of the remaining part of these lands within the borders of Turkey. The ideology of the PKK was based on Marxism-Leninism until 2005, but after it adopted the ideology of democratic confederalism.

the forefront in the public and social scholarly discussions about Turkey's Kurdish Question (Koc, 2013). However, as Berger (1999) has pointed out, Turkey has been a country with an influential role of religion in the political and social processes, and so, the role of religion regarding the KQ should have also been investigated in academic studies.

After a detailed search, it is founded that some studies evaluate the politics of political parties with Islamic roots and activities of the *jamaats* for the KQ. For instance, Koc (2013) examines the influence of the *Gulen* Movement's activities on the resolution process of the KQ. Like Koc (2013), Kalyoncu (2010) investigates the effect of the *Gulen* Movement on the participation rates of young people in Marxist PKK or radical Islamist Hezbollah in the ethnoreligious divided *Mardin* region in Turkey. Both authors focus on the impact of the educational activities of the *Gulen* Movement in the Kurdish region(s). They examine how these activities changed the minds of the Kurdish people against the PKK and decreased the support and sympathy for the PKK. In this way, the authors investigate how the educational activities of the *Gulen* Movement have shaped Turkey's KQ, which is also related to the violence and terrorism of the PKK.

In addition, Duran (1998), in his study[8], enquiries how the Welfare Party (RP)[9], one of the Islamic parties with Islamic roots, handled the KQ. Bahcheli and Noel (2011)[10] question the Justice

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[8] Duran (1998), in his study, argues that its way to handle the KQ was within secular nationalist settings with an emphasis on the economic side of the problem rather than its dimension of identity and cultural rights although this Islamist party always seemed to suggest Islamist solutions to the problem such as the establishment of ''Just Order'' (*Adil Duzen*) –which urges division of labor and equality among Muslims from all ethnic identities in Turkey. Originally, according to the findings of Duran (1998), the RP offered a new Kurdish policy incorporating the recognition of Kurdish identity and cultural (allowing education and broadcasting in the Kurdish language), political, and social rights of the Kurds; nevertheless, inflexible Turkish political system forced the RP to rearrange its priorities on the KQ and shifted its emphasis on the economic dimension of the problem.

[9] Welfare Party (RP) is the political party of the National Vision (*Milli Gorus*) movement, founded after the September 12 Coup. In 1987, Necmettin Erbakan was appointed as the chairman. It was closed by the Constitutional Court on 16 January 1998 on the grounds of "acting against the principle of the secular republic".

[10] Bahcheli and Noel (2011) assert that the AKP, remaining in between the demands of Turkish and Kurdish nationalists, has expanded the cultural rights of Kurds, and improved legal protections for Kurds through new

and Development Party (AKP)[11] another party with Islamic roots, and its policies for the KQ. Also, in a similar way to Bahcheli and Noel (2011), Yavuz (2009)[12] investigates the politics of the AKP government on the KQ. These studies, evaluating the impact of religious organizations/political parties with religious roots on the KQ, focus on the discourses and the politics of the political parties for the KQ. Especially, Yavuz (2009) mentions the Islamization of the KQ by the AKP government with the utilization of the KQ to blame the idea of secularism because the idea resulted in a division between Turks and Kurds.

This argument of Yavuz (2009) is repeated in the study of Sarigil and Fazlioglu (2013). Sarigil and Fazlioglu (2013) explain the causes of the increasing attention of several Islamic and conservative groups in Turkey (e.g., the ruling conservative Justice and Development Party, AKP) to the Kurdish issue. They also clarify the reasons for the more lenient attitude of left-oriented and secular Kurdish Ethno-nationalist groups (e.g., the PKK, which formerly distanced itself from religion) toward Islam. Getting data from semi-structured elite interviews and a public opinion survey, the scholars (2013) assert that Islamic discourses and ideas have been used by Turkish and Kurdish leftist and secular

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provisions if such incentives and reforms do not undermine Turkey's unitary state mechanism and keep Turkish the country's official language. However, according to Bahcheli and Noel (2011) the AKP government established a good relationship with the Kurdish Regional Government and other regional actors to internationally well position Turkey together with its Kurdish initiatives in Turkey with the goal to end the PKK insurgence resulting in thousands of lives.

[11] The Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi*, AKP) is a political party that was founded in 2001 under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and has been in power almost continuously since 2003. Its chairman is Erdoğan, who is also the President of Turkey.

[12] Yavuz (2009, S. 8) evaluates the AKP as a party "deeply involved in Islamic social ethics and cultural norms and stressing the religious values and interests" without any intention to religiously transform the state or society. According to Yavuz's search (2009), the AKP has had to adhere to secular regime guidelines of the Kemalist military and bureaucracy for exercising power to maintain its legal status. Yavuz (2009) asserts that the AKP has shifted the Kurdish problem from the military sphere to the social and political sphere and the confrontation between the Turkish and Kurdish societies. However, he (2009) argues that the AKP government failed to offer a coherent policy to solve the KQ but just Islamized the KQ by utilizing the Kurdish issue to blame the idea of secularism in Turkey as a reason for the division between Turks and Kurds (Yavuz H. , 2009). The AKP did it by relating the Kurdish problem not with nationalism, but rather with "forced secularism and its reaction to Turkish nationalism of the type enforced by Kemalist ideology", and as a result, common Islamic ties and brotherhood of both Kurds and Turks would end the conflict, according to the logic of the AKP (Yavuz H. , 2009).

Ethno- nationalist groups as a strategy to legitimize their political messages and their nationalist positions especially against "rising conservative actors in the Kurdish region (e.g., the AKP and religious orders, in particular, the pro-Turkish *Gulen* Movement's) (Sarigil & Fazlioglu, 2013, S. 562)". In addition, the authors (2013) argue that certain Islamic groups and circles also have instrumentalized the Kurdish issue and Kurds' rights and freedoms to get Kurds' support and legitimacy.

In the same way as Sarigil and Fazlioglu (2013), but focusing on the pro-Islamic challenge (e.g. "civilian Friday prayers[13]") of Islamist Kurds under the leadership of Kurdish *meles* (*imams*)[14] in the public sphere against the Turkish state, Cicek (2013) highlights the use of Islamic language at the level of discourse, practice, and representation by the left-oriented secular Kurdish movement. As stated by Cicek (2013), the Kurdish movement has adopted a new policy by supporting Civilian Friday Prayers and active involvement of Kurdish *meles* in South-eastern Anatolia. These *meles* have criticized Turkish-Islamic understanding and the state's control over religion in their sermons. In this way, the secular Kurdish movement has reacted against the AKP's instrumentalization of Islamist discourses to get the support of the Kurds and complicated the AK Party's management of the Kurdish Issue.

Moreover, Gunay and Yoruk (2019), in their article, goal to explain the cause of the electoral success of the Islamist political party (the ruling AKP) with the AKP's ethnic politics in Islamist

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[13] "Dagkapi Square in Diyarbakir, a Friday noon prayer time. Thousands of Kurds, who refused to pray behind the imams appointed by the Turkish state and listen to Turkish sermons prepared by the state's Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA), gathered to pray, and listen to Kurdish sermons not in a mosque, but in the very square where Sheikh Said and his friends had been hanged by the Turkish state in June 1925. This form of civil disobedience led by Kurdish *mele*s (imams), later called "civilian Friday prayers," has rapidly burgeoned in other Kurdish towns and cities and has been underway since March 2011. (Cicek, 2013, S. 159)"

[14] Kurdish Meles are defined by Cicek (2013, S. 557) as "Kurdish religious scholars and teachers, highly respected by the people in the region".

political mobilization. The scholars (2019, S. 13) advocate that the capacity of the Islamist political party to govern ethnic unrest has a significant impact on electoral success and their establishment of broader hegemony. Specifically, the authors (2019, S. 10-13) claim that the success of the AKP's electoral performance depends on the fulfilment or failure of their promise to resolve the KQ. It is why according to Gunay and Yoruk (2019), the resolution of the KQ has become more of an issue for the AKP to get the support of the Kurds. Eventually, the Kurds comprise 18 per cent of the Turkish population. To keep political stability, economic growth, and governmental legitimacy, the AKP government blocks the threat of possible Kurdish uprisings in Turkey.

According to Gunay and Yoruk (2019, S. 15), the AKP had a broader hegemony and increased its power when they presented a peaceful solution to the KQ by employing the religion Islam as a tool to bridge/erase ethnonational differences between the Turks and Kurds. However, when they failed to keep their promise to resolve the KQ and to bring equality between Kurds and Turks during the 2014 battle of Kobane[15], they lost the electoral support of Kurdish voters (Ozpek, 2019, S. 38). Nevertheless, at that point, using anti-Kurdish repressive politics, the AKP pursued its political hegemony by getting the votes of Turkish nationalists to replace Kurdish votes. Examining the AKP's approach to the KQ, Ozpek (2019, S. 37) in his study also argues that the inconsistent policies of the AKP towards Kurds and the KQ before and after elections look like the party's survival strategy rather than a policy deriving from a consistent national security paradigm.

Especially, the study by Sarigil and Fazlioglu (2013), the study of Yavuz (2009), the study of Gunay and Yoruk (2019), and Cicek (2013)'s study are very valuable for this study since they have shown that instrumentalization of both the KQ by the Islamist groups and the religious discourses

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[15] On September 13, 2014, the militants of Islamic State (IS) attacked on the villages under the control of the Kurdish fighters (the PYD) and forced all the civilians to flee into Turkey. Since then, the Kobane, the rural area in the Aleppo province of Syria, has been a battleground between IS and the PYD.

by the non-religious groups to get the attention of different groups. This study differentiated itself from previous studies by questioning the use of religious interpretations by the *jamaats* as a justification for their political response to the KQ. Furthermore, going deeper, this study wants to know the impact of ethnic differences on the *jamaats*' interpretation of the same religious sources. In this way, whether the political responses in the name of religion can be related to ethnicity, race or nationhood will be learnt.

In addition, the relationship between religion and ethnicity/ nationalism, just for the KQ, has been studied by some authors. Sarigil (2010), in his study, by using World Values Survey data, tests the pro-Islamic and socio-economic approaches to shaping Kurdish ethnonationalism in Turkish society. According to the statistical result of Sarigil (2010), although there is a negative relationship between religiosity and support for the Kurdish Ethno-nationalist tendencies as should be expected in the pro-Islamic approach, it is not statistically significant. Some Kurdish ethno-nationalists are heavily influenced by Islamic ideas and values such as the *Med-Zehra* (Sarigil, 2010). However, he (2010) finds out that as the level of income and education increases, the likelihood to support Kurdish ethnonationalism rises. Therefore, he (2010) argues that socioeconomic status much better explains individual support for Kurdish Ethno-nationalist formations and movements in Turkey than religiosity does. Hence, according to Sarigil, a socio-economic approach instead of a pro-Islamic approach more likely explains this relationship.

Criticizing Sarigil's methodology for his research design's internal invalidity emerging from using predominantly Turks in his sample, Ekmekci (2011) reproduces and expands Sarigil's model within a specific sample of Kurdish-speaking people in Turkey. That's why, according to Ekmekci (2011), Kurdish ethnonationalism can only be adopted by Kurds rather than Turks. Hence, the sample should consist of Kurds only. Ekmekci's findings result in the opposite of Sarigil's, and

Ekmekci (2011) argues that religiosity and political satisfaction much better explain individual inclination towards Kurdish ethnonationalism in Turkey than socio-economic factors do.

Besides, Tekdemir (2018) evaluates the relationship between religious identity and national will to identify the structure of Kurdish Islamic identity not in Turkey, but also in the Middle East. He (2018) analyses these agents' strategies and discourses to conceptualize the mobilization of Kurdish Muslims. He (2018, S. 590) affirms that there are many Kurdishnesses and Kurdish Muslim groups who use the discourse of Kurdish collective rights and challenge the hegemony of the PKK in the public sphere. Tekdemir (2018, S. 606), within a social constructivist theoretical framework, systematizes and maps four socio-political Kurdish Islamist identities about the influence of their Islamic interpretation, their understanding of Kurdishness, their discourses, and strategies, power relations, political organizations, and opportunity spaces. These are:

> (1) Kurdish-led *Hizbullah* (politically oriented Islamism), (2) statist or passive groups (economically oriented Islamism), (3) traditional tariqa and madrasa institutions (culturally oriented Islamism) and (4) pro-Kurdish groups, such as the *Zehra* and *Azadi* (socially oriented Islamism). (Tekdemir, 2018, S. 590)

Sengul in his article (2005), explores the perspectives of Turkish and Kurdish Islamic intellectuals on the KQ in the1990s. Sengul (2005) argues that: 1) According to Islamists, the Kurdish issue has arisen due to the nationalism ideology that has spread with the Western intention into a division of the Islamic world. However, according to Islamic Kurds, it is not true to interrelate the Kurds' struggle and their thoughts with the nationalist movements that developed in the Muslim world in the 19th century; 2) Islam's identification of the Kurds with Kurds' ethnicity/the ideology of nationalism rather than with their Islamic identity has served the imperialists and much more divided the Muslim world than simply nationalism (Sengul, 2005).

Moreover, like Sengul's logic of evaluating perspectives of the Islamist intellectuals on the

KQ, Atacan (2001) focuses on the *Med-Zehra* community, one of the Kurdish *jamaats*, and investigates its perceptions about many subjects including nationalism, KQ, Islamic unity, Bediuzzaman's *Madrasatuz-Zehra* projects, and so on. Atacan (2001) shows the *Med- Zehra* as an example to demonstrate the significant role of ethnicity and religion in the formation of Kurdish identity. She (2001) emphasizes that they appear to strengthen one another when ethnicity and religion overlap.

Also, Bilici (2017), in his book[16] full of essays, questions Islamists' perception of the Kurds and KQ. Bilici (2017) asserts that nationalist Turks misused and nationalized Islam on behalf of the Turkish nation to suppress the Kurdishness of the Kurds. However, he (2017) underlined that real Islamic unity can be realized through recognition of the Kurdish nation and acceptance of the Kurds as citizens since freedom, democracy, and unification can only be gained through Islam. According to Bilici (2017), the reason the Turks do not accept the individual rights and freedom of the Kurds is Turkish nationalism. Bilici (2017) suggests Kurds adopt *muspet* (positive) *milliyet* (nationality with the meaning of owning their Kurdish nation), instead of *menfi* (negative) *milliyetçilik* (nationalism meaning racism) thoughts.

It is possible to see the relationship between nationalism, ethnic identity, and religion Islam in the context of the KQ in the studies of Sengul (2005), Bilici (2017), and Atacan (2001), to some extent. Nevertheless, originally these scholars just aimed to reveal the perspectives of the Kurdish and Turkish Islamists on the KQ. Neither of them had the intention to examine the role of Islam in shaping the Islamic perspectives on the KQ together with an investigation of the relationship between ethnicity, nationalism, and religion. Therefore, it was enough for these scholars to

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[16] *Hamal Kurt: Turk İslamı ve Kurt Sorunu*

generalize their samples as Kurdish/ Turkish Islamists. It was unimportant for these authors whether these samples benefitted from the same religious sources or not. These samples were anonymous and indefinite. Nevertheless, in this study, since I intend to show how ethnic identity and nationalism influence and interact with the understanding of Islam in determining perceptions of the KQ, I care that my participants are comparable to each other. I mean, as I will explain in detail in the methodology part, I equalize the variable of religion by determining two *jamaats* that benefit from the same religious sources. However, to evaluate the impact of ethnic and national identity, I choose one of the mostly Turkish and one of the mostly Kurdish *jamaats*. In this way, it becomes fair to compare these *jamaats'* political answers to the KQ to relate a connection with their ethnic identity, nationalism, and religion.

In addition, Koyuncu-Lorasdagi (2010) investigates the interaction between nationalism and religion (Islam) in Turkey in the post-1990 period with a focus on the *Gulen* Movement. According to the author (2010), the *Gulen* Movement's adopted modernity is based on a nationalized version of Islam, in the name of 'Turkish Islam', which is an alternative to Kemalist modernization[17] that aims to get rid of Islam in the public sphere. Koyuncu-Lorasdagi (2010) asserts that Gulen synthesized traditional-religious and modern scientific values and revived the Turkish nation and culture by gathering Turkish nationalism with Islam. According to Koyuncu-Lorasdagi (2010), the relationship between Turkish nationalism and Islam in the *Gulen* Movement is instrumental in pious nationalism based on the mutual benefit of both sides towards each other. In this relationship, as asserted by Koyuncu-Lorasdagi (2010), Islam is the irreplaceable element of the discourse of nationalism in Turkey. The author (2010) claims that Gulen's model of Turkish Islam promoted the flourishing

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[17] For more information, please check Chapter One

of a modernist religious nationalism in Turkey with the historical background of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis. As alleged by Koyuncu-Lorasdagi (2010), the symbiotic relationship between religion and nationalism in the Turkish-Islamic synthesis tradition in Turkey has been performed by the 'Turkish Islam' notion of Gulen since the mid-1990s. The importance of religion is based on historical reasons and represents social and communal identity, meaning that Islam is identified with Turkey's roots in the Ottoman Empire and being Turk is equal to being Muslim in Turkey (Koyuncu-Lorasdagi, 2010).

Evaluating Koyuncu-Lorasdagi's study about this study, although the scholars give the relationship between nationalism and Islam for the *Gulen* Movement, it does not focus on the use of religious interpretations to justify and mould the political response to the KQ, unlike this study. Moreover, in this study, there is no ethnicity factor while establishing a relationship between religion and nationalism since the focus is only on the *Gulen* Movement. They do not reflect the perspective of a religious movement on the KQ based on an evaluation of the relationship between ethnicity, religion, and nationalism in contrast to this study.

Furthermore, Sakallioglu's study and his logic, to some extent, bear some resemblance to this study. Sakallioglu (1998) analyses how contemporary Islamist writers evaluate the relationship between Islam and nationalism, particularly how the writers formulate the role of Islam in Kurdish nationalism through the KQ. He chooses twelve prominent (ethnically) Kurdish and Turkish Islamist writers who mostly have written related to the various aspects of Kurdish nationalism in their writings since 1990. In this way, Sakallioglu (1998) tries to learn whether ethnic Kurdishness or Islamic credentials influence their understanding of Kurdish ethno- nationalism. The author (1998) concludes that whereas Kurdish-Islamist writers tend to find a space for distinctive Kurdish ethnic identity within the frame of the *ummah* (the *jamaats* of the faithful) formula, the Turkish-Islamist

writers tend to defend the integrity of the Turkish state instead of accepting the Kurdish ethnic identity.

Sakallioglu (1998) asserts that Islamist writers excessively emphasized the pivotal role of Islam as a permanent tradition as opposed to nationalism, but the role of Islam as a means of unifying Kurdish society changed and decreased due to the national, global, regional, and local pressures and interactions. According to Sakallioglu (1998, S. 86), in the current world, Kurdish identity is rather than based on Islam, based on "a set of cultural artefacts" springing from social relations, and Kurds evaluate Islam as playing "a binding role as a discursive tradition socially produced by Muslims themselves".

In comparison between Sakallioglu's study and this research, his study becomes too general due to his sample: There are just twelve people in total in his sample and Sakallioglu ignores the political, social, economic, or other perspectives that may influence their interpretation of Islam and nationalism. Nonetheless, in this study, to prevent such a probability, a different methodology will be followed. This study adopts a goal to investigate the impact of ethnicity and nationalism (on a nationalist question, the KQ) and their interaction with the understanding of Islam as factors in determining perceptions of the KQ. It will question how the same religious sources are interpreted by the *jamaats* and used as a justification for their political response to the KQ. In this way, this study will display the situation of the *jamaats* in Turkey when they express their political views, especially about Turkey's KQ. If the *jamaats* hide their ethnic and nationalistic demands about the KQ behind religious interpretations, this situation will reveal their fear of the power of the Turkish state. So, the role of religion in national life in Turkey from the perspective of the illegal *jamaats* will be comprehended. To our knowledge, there is no study examining this issue from this point of view, and this dissertation seeks to address this gap.

Research Objectives

Based on the context provided, this study poses the central questions:

1. "How are different interpretations of key religious sources used to justify and mould a political response to the KQ"

2. "Whether ethnic differences create a dissimilarity in the *jamaats* s' interpretation of the same religious sources for their justification of the KQ and their nationalist feelings?"

3. "Whether the political responses or claims in the name of religion can be considered alongside claims made in the name of ethnicity, race or nationhood?"

This study analyses how a political response to the KQ is justified through different interpretations of religious sources. It takes into consideration ethnic and national belonging. As well, it considers the interaction of ethnic and national belonging with Islam in analyzing and comprehending both *jamaats'* perspectives about the KQ, a socio-cultural, ethnopolitical, and nationalist problem. It is to say, whether ethnic identity and national belonging create differentiation in their interpretation of religious sources –just for the KQ- among these *jamaats*. Next, how the different interpretations of religious sources are used to legitimize a political response to the KQ? The key element which is investigated is the influence of Bediuzzaman's[18] views and words on the *jamaats'* attitudes toward the KQ. The impact of their ethnic and national belonging (Kurdishness or Turkishness) is also investigated in their interpretation of Islamic sources and the KQ. In this way, how different

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[18] Bediuzzaman (Wonder of Age), known as Sait Okur, or "Said-i Kurdi" or "Bediuzzaman" or "*Ustad* (Master)" (1878-1960), was a Kurdish Shafii Islamic theologian, commentator, and writer. In this study, this person will be called as "Bediuzzaman".

For more Information, please check Chapter Three

interpretations of religious sources, especially Bediuzzaman's words, can be observed to justify the perspectives of the KQ. Also, the role of religion in national life in Turkey from the perception of the *jamaats*, which can be harmed by the Turkish state at any time, can be displayed.

Methodology

This study attaches great importance to the study of Brubaker (2012) since in his study Brubaker provides valuable information about how the connection between religion and nationalism can be studied. The scholar (2012) offers four approaches, which are:

> 1) by approaching religion and nationalism, together with ethnicity and race, "as analogous phenomena", 2) by designating approaches in which religion helps clarify things about nationalism such as "its origin, its power, or its distinctive character in particular cases", 3) by treating religion as part of nationalism and identifying how they interpenetrate and intertwine, and 4) by assuming a disjunctively religious form of nationalism (Brubaker, 2012, S. 1).

This study is based on the first way of Brubaker, which treats the relationship between religion and nationalism along with ethnicity and race as *analogous* phenomena and considers religion and nationalism as "a mode of identification, a mode of social organization, and a way of framing political claims (2012, S. 4)". In this approach, it is asserted that religion and ethnicity influence one's understanding and identification of oneself, making sense of one's problems and predicaments, identifying one's interests and orienting one's actions (2012, S. 4-5). This approach of Brubaker (2012, S. 5) argues that "claims made in the name of religion, political representation, economic sources, symbolic recognition or cultural reproduction (using institutional or territorial autonomy, where institutional autonomy involves control of one's agencies of socialization) can be thought alongside claims made in the name of ethnicity, race or nationhood". Namely, this approach of Brubaker perceives political claims as "a part of the general phenomenon of politicized ethnicity, which is made based on ethnoreligious, ethnonational, ethno-racial, ethno-regional or otherwise

ethnocultural identifications (Brubaker, 2012, S. 5)".

Taking into this distinctive way of Brubaker, this study argues that ethnic factors (and national belonging) can have an impact and create differentiation in their interpretation of religious sources for their political response to the KQ. It argues that both the mostly Turkish *jamaat* and the mostly Kurdish *jamaat* use religious interpretation while justifying their political response to the KQ, but religious interpretations will be different from each other due to their ethnic difference. The reason for a different interpretation of key religious sources will be based on the situation that the mainly Kurdish *Jamaat* will support the autonomy/ federation/ independence of the Kurds whereas the mainly Turkish *Jamaat* will support the integrity of the Turkish territory. It is to say, by framing its religion within the ethnic context, the *jamaats* with different ethnic identities will reply with their political response to the KQ from a religious perspective. This will allow the *jamaats* to justify their nationalist approach to the KQ through the religion that is influenced by their ethnic identities. If this study receives this result, it will legitimize Brubaker's (2012, S. 3-5) approach that perceives religion as a way of identifying political claimants and that asserts political claims are made based on ethnoreligious, ethnonational, ethnoracial, ethnoreligious or otherwise ethnocultural identifications.

Nature of the Study

To test this hypothesis, this study needs to make a comparison of two *jamaats*, which use the same Islamic sources. However, these *jamaats* must belong to different ethnic identities to comprehend the variations in their interpretation of the sources and also to understand the diversity in the legitimization of their perspectives on the KQ. Since the KQ is a socio-cultural and ethnopolitical issue between the Turkish state and the Kurds in Turkey, one of the mostly Kurdish- populated *jamaats* and one of the mostly Turkish- populated *jamaats* are chosen and their perceptions of the

KQ are compared. In this way, the probability of the Kurdish-majority or the Turkish-majority *jamaats* supporting and fighting for Kurds' rights, and their interest/indifference to solving the KQ can be comprehended and how they use religious interpretation to justify their perspectives on the KQ can be learnt. Hence, whether ethnicity differentiates Islamic interpretation among these *jamaats*, and the impact of this difference on their perception of the KQ and their nationalist feelings can be examined. In this way, how the *jamaats* in Turkey use religious interpretations of key religious sources as a legitimization for their perspectives of the KQ can be investigated.

In considering the case study for the mostly Kurdish *jamaat*, the Med-Zehra Community was considered, which split up from the *Nur* Movement in 1989 by asserting that the *Nur* Movement has censored both the Kurdish identity of Bediuzzaman and the words in Bediuzzaman's books such as "Kurdistan" (Beki, 1968). However, it would be a problem to examine their perspective of the KQ for this study since this community is closed and secret and I had no channel to reach them. It would be also possible to choose the *Zehra* Community, which separated itself from the *Med-Zehra* Community in 1992, as one of the Kurdish-majority Islamic communities. It's why as expressed by Denise (2017), although the *Nûbihar* Journal has been the publishing house of the *Zehra* Community, the *jamaat* has denied its relation to the publication to protect its existence in Turkey. Therefore, this way of denying their sources would prevent me from evaluating their perspective about the KQ. As a result, rather than the *Zehra* Community, the *Nûbihar* Circle (**The NC**) was chosen for this study. As alleged by Bayram (Bayram, 2017), NC is "the sub-community/publishing house of the *Zehra* Community". It is also known that the name of the NC moves beyond the name of the *Zehra* Community since it is an intellectual current that depicts and launches the religious structure of the *Zehra* Community to the public. In addition, like the *Zehra* Community, the NC reads "original" Bediuzzaman's books, which have not been censored. It was also important for me that I had a

friend who was a member of this *jamaat*; in this way, I could arrange my elite interviews using this person. Therefore, the NC is taken as a Kurdish *jamaat* for this study.

This study needs to choose two *jamaats* that benefit from the same religious sources. Since the key religious sources of the NC are the Qur'an, hadith, and Bediuzzaman's books, the Epistle of Lights Collection (*Risale-i Nur* Collection-RNK), the other *jamaat* should have been one of the mostly *jamaats* that adopt these religious sources. In this situation, this *jamaat* could be selected inside the *Nur jamaats*[19], which benefit from Qur'an, hadith, and Bediuzzaman's books and have been inspired by the same religious influential scholar, Bediuzzaman. Inside the *Nur jamaats*, the *Gulen* Movement/ the *Hizmet* Movement (**The HM**)[20] as a mainly Turkish *jamaat* (E. Ozdalga 2005, 440)[21] is chosen due to the multiplicity of its resources, which is important while finding their perspectives about the KQ. The HM has a publishing house, the *Zaman* Newspaper, a magazine, the *Sizinti* Magazine, a media, the *Samanyolu* Television, and so on, which examines their perspective on the KQ. Besides, the HM differentiates itself from other Turkish *jamaats* by being very active all over the world, especially in the mostly Kurdish-populated regions in Turkey. It established schools, universities, study centres, and cultural centres there.

Moreover, it is also influential in the selection of the HM inside the *Nur jamaats* that the HM has been claimed to be influential in the resolution of the conflict in the KQ through its educational activities in Kurd-populated regions of Turkey (Koc, 2013, S. 179). Hence, the investigation of such

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[19] The *Nur* Movement was founded by Bediuzzaman and is based on the writings of Bediuzzaman, the RNK The sources of *Nurcu jamaats* are the Qur'an, hadith, and the writings of Bediuzzaman.

[20] Since the members of the Gulen *Hizmet* Movement demand the usage of "The *Hizmet* Movement" instead of "Gulen Movement", in this study I prefer to use "The *Hizmet* Movement" as a sign of my respect to its members.

[21] The *Nur* Movement was founded by Bediuzzaman and is based on the writings of Bediuzzaman, the RNK. The sources of *Nurcu jamaats* are the Qur'an, hadith, and the writings of Bediuzzaman.

a Turkish-dominant *jamaat* can be beneficial while evaluating how different interpretations of religious sources are used to justify and mould a political response to the KQ. However, it is worth remembering that there are Turkish people in NC and Kurdish people in the HM.

Examination of two *Nur jamaats* from different ethnic groups will be useful for this study while searching for the influence of ethnicity in their religious interpretation and perception of the KQ and their nationalist feelings. Thus, it can be understood how the *jamaats* use religious interpretations to justify and mould their response to the KQ. That's why is that the founder of the *Nur* movement, Bediuzzaman, is well known for his Kurdish and Muslim identity, and Bediuzzaman had the plan to build a madrasah called "*Madrasatuzzehra*[22]" in Kurdistan in South-eastern Anatolia. Bediuzzaman's words and his Kurdish and Islamic identities can be evaluated differently by his followers depending on their perspectives on the KQ.

Besides, there is also a fact that the NC comes along the Kurdish *Nurcu* tradition (the *Med-Zehra* and *Zehra* Community) which separated itself from the *Nur* movement in 1989 with the reason that the statements of Bediuzzaman about Kurds and Kurdistan have been censured and the Kurdishness of Bediuzzaman was deliberately camouflaged (Beki, 1968). Hence, although the HM and the NC seem to benefit from the same Bediuzzaman's works, originally the NC claims that they read the "original" works of Bediuzzaman in which words related to Kurds and Kurdistan have not been censored by the state. Such a difference will also create a difference in their religious interpretation and justification for their response to the KQ.

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[22] *Madrasatuzzehra* is a madrasah/university project where religious science, mysticism, and social and natural science are in three languages: Arabic, Turkish, and Kurdish (Arabic language would be *vacip* (obligatory) to raise a Muslim generation, Kurdish as the native language in Kurdistan would be *caiz* (permissible), and Turkish as the formal state language would be *lazım* (necessary)) (Nursi S. , 2006b, S. 21; Abu-Rabi, 2003) (2011, S. 569). This university was planned by Bediuzzaman to start an educational campaign in Kurdistan for the sustainment of people's spiritual and mental needs. To provide Kurdish scholars and to integrate Kurds into the Turkish state, people who knew Kurdish and who were knowledgeable were planned to be employed as lecturers in this university project by Bediuzzaman (2011, S. 628)

To what extent the *jamaats* use and are inspired by Bediuzzaman's words or any religious resource while justifying their perspectives on the KQ is important in this study. For instance, has there been an influence of the Bediuzzaman's words or other religious bases for the initiation of the *jamaats* into South-eastern Anatolia (mostly Kurdish-populated regions in Turkey)? It is a fact that both *jamaats* have established schools in these regions. Have they intended to realize Bediuzzaman's desire to establish "*Madrasatuzzehra*"? What do the *jamaats* think about the independence of the Kurds in Turkey? Does the HM perceive Kurdish autonomy or independence as a threat to the Turkish state? Are the solutions of the HM for the KQ have an imperial or dominant character undervaluing the Kurds and their culture? Or does NC want the independence of the Kurds in Turkey? Does NC aim to establish an exclusionist type of nationalist Kurdish state? Is there any difference in the perspectives of both *jamaats* on the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and HDP (People's Democratic Party)[23]? What are their solutions for the KQ (e.g., education, grant of fundamental rights to the Kurds, autonomy & federation & independence)? Which activities have the *jamaats* pursued by the Kurds and the KQ? More importantly, do the *jamaats* interpret Bediuzzaman's words or any religious sources in a way to justify their thoughts for the KQ? Such attitudes will be very useful to show how religious interpretations are used to justify the perspectives of the *jamaats* on the KQ.

In addition, it is very important to learn through which lens – Muslim or Kurdish- the *jamaats* interpret Bediuzzaman's words. If the *jamaats* deny or downplay the Kurdish identity of Bediuzzaman over his Islamic identity, and whether the *jamaats* have censored or left aside Bediuzzaman's words related to the KQ, such answers will also be evaluated as the impact of

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[23] It is a pro-Kurdish party in Turkey. It usually receives most of the votes in the provinces with a large Kurdish population and is dominant in the Kurdish region.

ethnicity on their religious interpretation. Moreover, how often and how they use the religious source to justify their perceptions about the KQ should be investigated to determine how religious interpretations are used to make a justification and to mould the perceptions of the *jamaats* for the KQ. However, it should be noted that this study is definitely not based on the interpretation of religious sources by the *jamaats*. But, rather the focus of the study is whether the communities will refer to religious sources when answering questions about the KQ, which is a political issue. Even if they show religious sources as references, it is not the purpose of this study to go to the original source and question its accuracy. But if the same religious discourses are interpreted differently by the *jamaats*, the possible reasons for this will be examined in this study.

Methods and Sources

These questions can find the most accurate answers through the examination of primary and secondary data of the HM and the NC. As the secondary data, the writings, and publications of the *jamaats* and their organizations/foundations, writings of their prominent members in journals, and newspapers, and speeches of their representatives in organizations and seminars are used. Moreover, this study creates its primary data from the interviews made with the active and prominent members of the *jamaats*.

To obtain information about the NC's perspective on the KQ, as the primary source, interviews were conducted with ten prominent members of the NC (Sonmez Soner, Jagr Denise, Husnu Asil, Mehmet Umit, Kaya Din, Azad Eser, Murat Aydin, Serhat Kanca, Recep Isik, Karwan Nal, and Kubat Rasul) have been used. These people are called prominent members since most of them have taken part in the decision-making mechanism of the NC, have actively been in this jamaat for more than ten years, and even join in seminars, organizations, and activities in the name of the NC. All of them have reliable knowledge about the NC, and hence, they can give the correct, reliable,

and valid information about the NC and its perception of the KQ.

As a secondary source, the NC's publications in Turkish, *Dava*[24], and *Yenizemin* Journals[25], and the written documents of the prominent members of NC in books, seminar booklets, or journals (e.g., *Dava* and *Yenizemin* Journal –*Med-Zehra*'s journal) about the KQ have been provided. After detailed research and consulting all interviewees about the names, Izzettin Yıldırım, Muhammet Sıddık Dursun, Suleyman Cevik, Zekeriya Ozbek, Osman Tekin, Osman Tunc, Adil Yılmayan, and Muhyeddin Zınar's writings have been evaluated. Whereas Izzettin Yıldırım[26], Muhammet Sıddık Dursun Seyhanzade[27], Suleyman Çevik[28], and Osman Tunc[29] were founders of NC; Zekeriya

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[24] *Dava* Magazine was a *Med-Zehra* Publication, which has been published between 1989 and 2002. While the Dava was a monthly magazine, since its 58th issue, it has started to be published every two months. In total, there are 95 issues. Its owner was Enver Becene and Mehmet Kaynun.

[25] *Yenizemin* Magazine was a monthly journal of culture and politics, which has been published between 1993 and 1994. The Yenizemin owned by Osman Tunc has published only 18 issues in total.

[26] İzzettin Yıldırım was a Kurd who was born in 1946 in Ağrı. He was a member of the *Nur* Movement, but in 1990, by criticizing Muhammed Sıddık Dursun Seyhanzade's control over the *Med-Zehra* Community, Izzettin Yıldırım and his friends, Zekeriya Ozbek, Huseyin Daşkın, Gıyaseddin Bingol, and Yasin Yıldırım, separated themselves from the *Med-Zehra* Community and established *Zehra Eğitim ve Kultur Vakfı* (the Foundation of Zehra Education and Culture), known as *Zehra* Community, which focused on matters such as education rather than being overly Kurdish nationalist (Yavuz & Esposito, 2003) To establish schools looking like *Madrasatuz-Zehra* project of Bediuzzaman, Yıldırım supported financially in buying of the land of *Madrasatuz-Zehra* University. Through this school, Yıldırım wanted to solve the education problem of the Kurdish region. He supported the solution of the KQ through non-violent methods in the framework of Muslim brotherhood. Hence, Yıldırım promoted his friends to publish a journal, *Yeni Zemin*, in 1993. İzzettin Yıldırım was kidnapped by *Hizbullah* on December 29, 1999, and found as death on January 28, 2000 (Ufkumuz Haber 1970).

[27] Muhammed Sıddık Dursun Şeyhanzade was born in 1948 in Bingol. He was an investigative writer, publisher, and founder and honorary president of the *Med-Zehra* Community. Establishing the *Tenvir* Publishing House, Şeyhanzade published Bediuzzaman's works. He also wrote articles in *Dava* Journal that were published himself. On July 5, 2017, he died due to renal insufficiency illness in İstanbul.

[28] He was born in 1965. He is a journalist, writer, and publisher. He is the editor-in-Chief of the *Nûbihar* Journal and *Nûbihar* Publishing House.

[29] *Nûbihar* Publishing House was established on March 1992 as a project that appeared by Izzettin Yıldırım's advisers and organizations, and by the contribution and effect of Osman Tunç. Osman Tunc was also the owner and editor-in-chief of the *Yeni Zemin* Journal.

Ozbek[30], Osman Tekin[31], Adil Yılmayan[32], and Muhyeddin Zınar[33] have aroused my interest since they have been represented as the active members of NC. Therefore, these members' writings and words could help us to make inferences about NC and were important for understanding the perspectives of the members of NC and of NC itself.

Nevertheless, this study knows personal views cannot be considered as the general view of this *jamaat*. Hence, the written words of the prominent members and those obtained through first-hand interviews, as well as the publication of the NC, will be analyzed through primary and secondary data analysis methods to determine NC's perspective on the KQ. Unfortunately, the NC's publication, the *Nûbihar* Journal, could not be used due to the inability of the author to read and understand Kurdish.

Besides, while investigating the perspective of the HM on the KQ, this study prefers to examine the speech and writings of the founder and spiritual leader of the HM, M. Fethullah Gulen, previous studies about the HM, the interviews conducted with fifteen prominent members of the HM (Ali Baris, Aslan Olmaz, Ahmet Resim, Huseyin Atik, Ramazan Su, Ali Ok, Murat Tas, Cemil Ala, Han Kar, Ali Ten, Islam Obek, Anil Kizil, Adem Duru, Mehmet Gul, Hasan Bakir[34]), and especially the columns of the HM's members in the *Zaman* Newspapers in Turkey. Fethullah Gulen is chosen because he started the HM, and the HM follows and is mostly shaped according to his

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[30] Zekeriya Ozbek is the head of the *Zehra* Education and Culture Foundation.

[31] Osman Tekin is the researcher writer and also it has been advocated that he was an active person in the *Zehra* Community and the *Nubihar* Circle.

[32] Adil Yilmayan is the researcher writer. He is also an active member of the *Zehra* Community and the *Nubihar* Circle.

[33] These are the real names since the relation of these people with the *jamaat* has already been known in Turkey and their publications are open public sources.

[34] These are not the real names of the interviewees. To protect their identity and not to put these people in any risky situation, pseudonyms have been given to these people.

speeches and writings. Besides, prominent members of the HM have been chosen according to their positions in the HM, their activeness in the HM, and their high interest, knowledge, and academic work related to the HM.

Furthermore, *Zaman* Newspaper in Turkey is chosen since it is the HM's institution and hence a primary source, which can directly show *the* HM's perception of the KQ. However, the writings of the pro-Gulen columnists in the *Zaman* Newspaper have been chosen while analysing the *Zaman* Newspaper. These columnists are Ekrem Dumanli[35], Ali Bulac[36], Ali Unal[37], Huseyin Gulerce[38] (an old prominent member of the HM), and Alpay Sahin[3940].

Primary data, which has been collected through the elite interview method, and secondary data of the *jamaats* have been enquired in this study through primary and secondary data analysis methodology.

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[35] Ekrem Dumanli (1964-) is a Turkish journalist. He started working as a reporter at Zaman Newspaper Culture and Art Service. Later, he worked as the Culture and Art Service editor and the General Publication Coordinator, respectively. From 2001 to 2015 he was the former editor-in-chief of Zaman Newspaper in Turkey. He was arrested due to his relation to the HM.

[36] Ali Bulac (1965-) is a sociologist, theologian, journalist, and writer. He organized the Istanbul office of Zaman Newspaper during the establishment phase and worked as the Istanbul bureau chief of the newspaper for a year. He wrote columns in Zaman Newspapers between 1993-94 and after 1998. He was arrested on the charge of membership of the HM.

[37] Ali Unal (1955-) is an author, columnist, and former chief writer of *Zaman* Newspaper in Turkey. He was sentenced to 19 years in prison with the accusation of establishing and managing the HM and being a member of the HM.

[38] Huseyin Gulerce (1950-) is a columnist, teacher, and an author. He had been in the HM for many years and worked as a columnist for Zaman Newspaper and as editor-in-chief of the Newspaper. After the 17-25 December 2013 operations, he left the HM and started to criticize the HM.

[39] Alpay Sahin (1944-) is a writer, journalist, and political scientist. He was a columnist for Zaman Newspaper from 2002 to 2016. From 2006 to 2016 he presented the program called "Akil Defteri" on *Mehtap* TV, one of the TV Channel of the HM. He was arrested in 2016 on the charge of being a member of the HM.

[40] These are real names of these people since their writings are open and public sources, and the relationship of these people with the HM is already known in Turkey. Also, I could show their writings as my reference.

The Elite Interview Method

I chose the elite interview method to get primary sources from the *jamaats*. By "elites", I am referring to interviewees, who take part in the decision-making mechanism of the *jamaats*. They have actively been in the *jamaats* for many (maybe more than eight) years and even some joined in seminars, organizations, and activities in the name of their *jamaats*. In other words, all these people have had correct and reliable knowledge about the *jamaats* and their perspectives on the KQ.

Husnu Asil, in his sixties, was an editor in chief of a major Kurdish journal and a member of NC since 1992. Kaya Din, in his forties, was referenced by Husnu Asil since he joined some seminars in the name of the NC. He was an investigative writer and was a member of the NC for more than twelve years. Jegr Denise was an academist in his forties and introduced himself as an ex-member of NC, and he had a very deep knowledge about the formation of the NC and its perspective on the KQ. Denise was the most objective person and had a critical perspective while reflecting on the perception of the NC on the KQ. Karwan Nal was a writer for one of the major Kurdish Journals. He was about in his forties and a member of the NC for more than fifteen years. He also participated in seminars in the name of NC.

In addition, Serhat Kanca was one of the responsible officers at one of the branches of the major Kurdish publication house abroad. He was about in his thirties and member of the NC for ten years. Azad Eser was a tradesman in their fifties and a member of NC since 1992. Eser decided to join the NC by leaving one of the Turkish Islamic communities when he realized this Turkish Community's discriminative attitude against Kurds and Kurdish Journal, the *Nûbihar* Journal. Eser preferred to join NC since this jamaat gathered both Kurdish national identity and Islamic identity together. Mehmet Umit was a doctorate student in his thirties and was a member of NC for more than eight years. Sönmez Soner was recommended due to his active work in NC and adequate knowledge related to NC. Soner was a master's student in his twenties and a member of NC for a

long time. Kubat Rasul as an active member of NC was recommended by most of my interviews. Recep Işık was active in NC's organizations and activities, and he was a member of NC all his life. Murat Aydin was a lawyer and was recommended by NC as one of the prominent members of NC. It must be noted that after the death of the founder of the *Zehra* Community, Izzettin Yildirim, NC does not reveal the positions of its members and defined NC as a non-hierarchical structure (Nal, 2017; Kanca, 2017).

Ramazan Su is one of the ex-presidents of a charity that belonged to the HM. Aslan Olmaz and Ali Baris in their fifties are academicians who made studies related to the HM and are also members of the HM. Ahmet Resim in his sixties is the former president of an association of HM. Cemil Ala and Han Kar in their thirties work in managerial positions in one of the Dialogue Centres of the HM. Anil Kizil in his forties with his Kurdish ethnic identity was a columnist for a major Turkish newspaper published abroad and is still an active member of the HM. Ali Ten in his fifties worked in a managerial position on a TV channel belonging to the HM. Murat Tas in the sixties was a rector in one of the universities of the HM abroad. Huseyin Atik in his forties was editor-in-chief of a major Turkish newspaper published abroad. Ali Ok in his thirties with his Kurdish ethnic identity works in an administrative position at one of the NGOs that makes studies about HM abroad. Islam Obek in his forties is a journalist and an active member of the HM. Hasan Bakir is a constitutional professor and an active member of the HM. Adem Duru in his forties with his Kurdish identity was an active member of the HM and a former teacher. He was working with the close friends of Fethullah Gulen abroad. Mehmet Gul in his seventies was a writer and a close friend of Fethullah Gulen and one of the most important people in the HM after Fethullah Gulen, but he is dead now.

Tablo 1

Information about the Interviewees

Pseudonym	Age Range	Occupation /Position	The Jamaat	Year inside the Jamaat	Sex
Husnu Asil	60s	Editor in Chief of a major Kurdish Journal	The Nubihar Circle	Since 1992	Male
Kaya Din	40s	Investigative writer	The Nubihar Circle	More than 12 Years	Male
Jegr Denise	40s	Academist	-	Ex-member	Male
Karwan Nal	40s	Writer	The Nubihar Circle	More than 15 Years	Male
Serhat Kanca	30s	Responsible Officer of a Major Kurdish Publication House	The Nubihar Circle	10 Years	Male
Azad Eser	50s	Tradesman	The Nubihar Circle	Since 1992	Male
Mehmet Umit	30s	PhD Student	The Nubihar Circle	More than Eight Years	Male
Kubat Rasul	-	-	The Nubihar Circle	-	Male
Recep Işık	20s	-	The Nubihar Circle	All His Life	Male
Murat Aydin	-	Lawyer	The Nubihar Circle	-	Male
Ramazan Su	50s	Ex-president of a Charity belonging to the HM	The *Hizmet* Movement	More than 30 Years	Male
Ali Baris	50s	Academics	The *Hizmet* Movement	-	Male
Aslan Olmaz	50s	Academics	The *Hizmet* Movement	-	Male
Ahmet Resim	60s	Former	The *Hizmet*	-	Male

		President of a HM Association	Movement		
Cemil Ala	30s	Managerial Position in one of the Dialogue Centres of HM	The *Hizmet* Movement	-	Male
Han Kar	30s	Managerial Position in one of the Dialogue Centres of HM	The *Hizmet* Movement	-	Male
Anil Kizil	40s	Columnist for a major Turkish Newspaper Published Abroad	The *Hizmet* Movement	-	Male
Ali Ten	50s	Managerial Position on a TV Channel belonging HM	The *Hizmet* Movement	-	Male
Murat Tas	60s	Rector in one of the Universities of HM abroad	The *Hizmet* Movement	-	Male
Huseyin Atik	40s	Editor-in-chief of a Major Turkish Newspaper Published abroad	The *Hizmet* Movement	-	Male
Ali Ok	30s	Administrative Position at one NGO that makes studies about HM	The *Hizmet* Movement	-	Male
Islam Obek	40s	Journalist	The *Hizmet* Movement	-	Male
Hasan Bakir	50s	Constitutional Professor	The *Hizmet* Movement	-	Male
Adem Duru	40s	Former	The *Hizmet*	-	Male

		Teacher	Movement		
Mehmet Gul	70s	Writer	The *Hizmet* Movement	-	Male

Especially after the "so-called" coup d'état attempt of the HM, the members of the HM either were arrested or fled abroad and the other *jamaats* in Turkey felt the fear that their ongoing relations with the Turkish state would come to an end and that they would disappear. Therefore, it has been hard to find members of both jamaats to make interviews, especially about a political and nationalist issue, the KQ. Therefore, first, I had to find a contact person from both *jamaats*, who trusted me and believed in my intention to make the interviews for academic goals. Through their answers, this study could reflect the real perceptions of the *jamaats* about Turkey's KQ. I have promised these people not to reveal their real names and instead to use pseudonyms in the study. In this way, I could protect them against any prospective threads. Also, they would be able to express their ideas to me more freely, without the necessity to censor or restrict their perspectives while answering my research questions.

Neither the participants were paid nor reimbursed. In this study, the participants were not forced to do anything and therefore, they did not feel obliged to take part in the research. On the contrary, they have been willing to participate in the research after getting the trust of their friends. They have been informed about the content and goal of the study and then their consent had been taken orally while recording the interviews. More importantly, before starting my field study, I got ethical approval from the University of Essex. I must confess that these interviews started after 2015 for a master's Project but continued as the Doctorate Project until 2019.

It was hard to find an interviewee in the NC since it was a hidden *jamaat* (especially compared to the HM) and after the death of Izzettin Yildirim, its members rejected to give information about the hierarchy and position of the members inside the NC. As a result, the researcher started to

make an interview with the visible faces of the NC in 2015. Through the names arranged by these people, I made interviews with two more people. After a year in 2016, I met a friend, Jagr Denise, whom I later learned that he was an ex-member of the NC and so had connections with the people from the NC. Denise helped me a lot to find interviewees and has given my trust to other interviewees.

The interviews have mostly been conducted via Skype meetings (face-to-face) or at a café or workplace face-to-face in Erbil/Iraq, or via WhatsApp application. Although I have not known their positions and duties in the NC, I have received satisfactory answers to the related questions from each of them. I learnt how long they have been in the NC, why they have participated in the *Nûbihar*, and so on. Through these answers they gave me, I have been sure that they had sufficient knowledge about the NC. During the interview, I felt their sincerity, and they replied to all the questions with a conscious of how important this study was for them and their *jamaat*. Moreover, since the NC is a hidden *jamaat*, and its border with the *Med-Zehra* Community and with the *Zehra* Community is anonymous, the interviewees helped me a lot to see its boundaries and relationships with each other. They also directed me to the appropriate sources for this study and even sent me books that were not in supply.

Compared to the NC, the HM was not a secret, but rather an open *jamaat* with clearer boundaries. In 2015, it was not too hard to find interviewees in prominent positions in the HM. I have made an interview with "the spokesperson of the HM"[41], who was the director of an organization of the HM in Turkey. In 2016, via Skype Application, I interviewed two academicians, who have made academic studies about the HM, and have been in connection with the HM. However, after 2018, it

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[41] This information was falsified by many prominent members of the HM. After all, this person was a prominent member in the HM.

became difficult to find a connection with the members of the HM. It is why after the coup d'état attempt allegedly made by the HM in 2016, most members, especially active and prominent members of the HM with high interest, knowledge, and academic works related to the HM, are forced to flee persecution and seek asylum abroad. Therefore, I tried to find a contact from the HM.

While trying to get the sources of *Zaman* Newspapers in Germany, I got a connection with one of the former chief editors of the *Zaman* Newspaper in Germany, Huseyin Atik, through social media, Facebook. When this person promised to arrange for other active and prominent members of the HM to make an interview, then with permission taken from the University of Essex, I went to Germany for field study. I would also review the *Zaman* Newspaper in Germany either in the Berlin Public Library or directly from the databases and archives of the *Zaman* Newspapers in Germany via Husayin Atik. As promised, Atik arranged some interviewees, I also arranged interviews by using the snowball sampling method, in which existing study subjects direct the researcher to future subjects. When the interviewee recruited future interviewees from among their acquaintances, the researcher preferred to benefit from this opportunity. In this way, the trust problem could be overcome.

I made interviewed the prominent members either at their workplace, at the cultural centre of the HM, or in cafés in Berlin, Heidelberg, or Frankfurt. Interviews have mostly been conducted face-to-face, but there are some interviews conducted via Skype (face-to-face) and WhatsApp. Normally, this study did not expect to interview the prominent members of the HM in such top positions. The luck of this study was related to its timing: The HM wanted to clarify and prove their innocence after being accused to make a coup d'état against the Turkish government. Therefore, I conducted interviews with really important members of the HM. Also, it was very nice that the interviewees helped me to reach the members with Kurdish ethnic identity so that I could hear all kinds of voices in the

HM.

I must emphasize that I was never forced to make an interview with definite people. Through the snowball method, from the interviewee, I got many names and contact information of many people suitable to my criteria to make an interview. Then, I chose these names and made a contact with them, but I could go them with a reference, which created a trusting environment with each other. All the interviewee was very helpful and sincere while answering my research questions and advising me about the resource that can be used for this study. I conducted interviews with all kinds of people with Turkish ethnic identity or Kurdish identity and even I interviewed people who criticized the attitude of the HM against the Kurds. I was very satisfied with the number of interviewees I conducted.

Positionality of the Researcher

First of all, it should be noted that this study has been written by a female researcher with a Turkish ethnic identity who is the mother of two children. When she started to conduct this study, she was 28 years old and it lasted five years to complete, including almost two years long intermission. She has come from a religious family familiar with Said Nursi and RNK. For this reason, the researcher was aware of the fact that the Jamaats perceive the RNKs as special books, which are interpreted differently each time according to the spiritual situation and general knowledge of each reader. The reason for this is that RNKs are mostly knitted with Arabic, Ottoman and Turkish words, and the poor content of the Turkish language cannot match the rich meaning of the Ottoman language. Therefore, the RNKs show a different meaning to the reader each time and so, the reader wants to read this book over and over again without getting bored. Not to spoil the richness of the content of the RNKs, the

readers avoid commenting on and so fixing the meaning of the RNKs in religious conversations. As a result of this pre-determined position, the researcher was aware of the fact that the RNKs are interpreted differently by everyone and so they could also be interpreted differently with the influence of different ethnic identities. This situation inspired the researcher in this study and caused her to question this situation and look for an answer.

Secondly, the researcher was born with a Turkish ethnic identity and raised in a place in the west of Turkey (in Zonguldak) where there were no Kurds around her. However, it must be emphasized that she did not have any prejudices about them either. If she had lived in the southeast or east of Turkey or one of the cosmopolitan cities in Turkey, she would surely have grown up with an idea about the KQ and Kurds. Her interest in the Kurds and the Kurdish issue started especially during her university years, and she has had Kurdish friends also in these times. The researcher's special interest in the KQ and the Kurds began with the Uludere incident or the Roboski massacre in 2011, in which 34 Kurds were killed by the Turkish Air Force, on the grounds that they were engaged in smuggling. In his master's thesis, the researcher first wanted to investigate why the Kurds did smuggling and their relations with the state, but later gave up on this subject for some reason. Afterwards, she started the first leg of her doctoral study by changing the master theme to the KQ perspective of the NC. It is also important to state that before starting her master's and doctorate studies, she had never met a Kurd who read the RNKs or was unaware of a Kurdish community reading the RNKs.

Furthermore, until her master's and doctorate studies, she was not aware that a jamaat that has not lost its Kurdish identity is a difficult feature to find. She got to know the NC with the information given by her supervisor in her Master, and during her Master's and Doctorate studies, she had the opportunity to get to know religious Kurds and developed her knowledge about Kurdish movements.

Since the family of the researcher belonged to a jamaat that read RNKs, she was used to this jamaat and its rituals. During her university years, she tried to get to know other Jamaats as well and had the opportunity to examine many Turkish-majority Jamaats. However, unfortunately, she had never had the opportunity to join and study the Kurdish-majority-jamaats and so had not possessed a priori knowledge about them. The researcher had no idea about some of their sensitivities and for this reason, an NC interviewer refused to meet with her. With this study, she got to know the NC, but without not getting to know them one-on-one by participating in their religious rituals. This study was shaped and interpreted by the information given by the interviewees.

It must be added that the researcher was an insider by being a Muslim. Because of her gender, she has made her Islamic identity visible during interviews with her headscarf. It is highly possible for the interviewees to trust the researcher due to this visible Islamic identity. In addition, the influence of gendered dynamics of a woman interviewing men due to religious tendencies cannot be denied in this study. Because of religious sensitivities, when meeting with the opposite sex, both the interviewers and the researcher preferred to make interviews either in crowded environments such as cafes or in official environments such as workplaces or cultural centres. Nonetheless, maybe being a man or interviewing with female members of the Jamaats could open new doors to this study and take it to a different point, and maybe both NC and HM could have included the researcher more among themselves.

The researcher was an insider to Turkish ethnic identity and Turkish language, but an outsider to Kurdish ethnic identity and Kurdish language. The researcher experienced the effect of her different identity the most when she started this study without having any idea about the Kurdish-majority Jamaat, NC. In order to make up for this deficiency, she had to ask the interviewers to inform her about the Jamaat. Also, since she had never heard of how the RNKs were interpreted by people

with Kurdish identity before, she also asked many questions in terms of understanding. However, other than such situations, the researcher did not feel the influence of her common or different ethnic identity on the interviewees during her interviews because the approach of both communities with different ethnic identities towards her was almost the same. She communicated with the interviewees and conducted interviews with them in the common language, Turkish. Nonetheless, it is possible that the interviewees with Kurdish ethnic identities would have felt more comfortable during the interview if the researcher had interviewed in Kurdish. It is also possible that the inability of the researcher to speak Kurdish might have prevented some Kurdish-identifying interviewees from participating in this study.

Primary and Secondary Data Analysis Method

In this study, all documents and sources, including the interviews conducted with the prominent members of the HM and the NC, the publications of the *jamaats*, the written text of the active members of the *jamaats* in books, seminar booklets, and Journals, have been investigated through data analysis method. In this way, both Jamaats' perceptions of the KQ are evaluated. Hence, how they use religious interpretations while justifying their political response to the KQ could be explored. Through the application of the data analysis methodology to all sources, both texts and talks (interviews) are investigated on 1- the Importance of Bediuzzaman's Kurdish and Muslim Identity, 2- their Definition of the KQ, 3-their solutions for the KQ (e.g., education, grant of fundamental rights to the Kurds, autonomy & federation & independence), 4- their Ideal State Model and 5-the political representation: the legitimacy of PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and HDP (People's Democratic Party) or other agents. It is based on these themes that the impact of the *jamaats*' ethnic and national belonging on the way they interpret the religious sources, and approach the KQ as Jamaats were

explored. It was also possible to see political answers that are not based on religious sources of the two *jamaats*. The main issue here was how both Jamaats would give their answers. Accordingly, it is through such analysis that the relationship between nationalism and ethnicity together with the religion Islam has been scrutinized and the influence of the political environment on the jamaats in Turkey would be revealed.

Analytical challenges

The first analytical challenge of this study was to choose the HM, which has been accused by the current Turkish government to make a coup d'etat attempt against it, as one of the *jamaats*. Although this study would be an academic unbiased study, which would only evaluate the sources and conclude it accordingly, I could not take the risk to go to Turkey with the fear to be misunderstood by people due to the topic of my dissertation. It is to say, there has been a high risk of arrest because of the sensibility of the topic. My supervisor was also aware of this situation and the risk I got; thus, we decided not to visit Turkey during my PhD period and not to make a field study in Turkey. It was a difficult sacrifice to do since all my relatives live there, but I hope it is worth the sacrifice I made.

The second challenge of this study was to find and decide to make interviews with the prominent members of the HM. To get a better result from this study, it was necessary to get primary sources from interviews conducted especially with the active and prominent members of the *jamaats* with correct, reliable, and valid information about the *jamaats*. However, after the coup d'état attempt allegedly made by the HM, especially prominent members of the HM either were arrested or fled. It would be really hard to find someone to interview with. Also, interviewing such people could have put me in danger too even abroad if they have been followed by the National Intelligence Organization (*Milli Istihbarat Teskilati*, MIT). Nevertheless, the German government would not

allow such a thing to happen in its own country and would supply a secure environment for such people. Also, these people had taken refuge status in Germany and felt safe there. As a result, my supervisor and I have found it less risky to make interviews with these people in Germany and so, I have tried to find active and prominent members of the HM in Germany. Before going to Germany, I contacted only one prominent member of the HM, who promised to arrange other interviewees. I sought ethical approval from the University of Essex Ethics Board, and they did approve the kind of risks I took for myself and my interviewees. After going to Germany, the rest of the interviewees have been arranged and decided, but in every step, I was in contact with my supervisor and acted accordingly.

Thirdly, it was risky for members of the *jamaats* to be identified with a religious institution and to express their opinion about one of the political issues, the KQ. In Turkey, religious organizations have already been unofficial institutions since 1925 and as I have expressed before, they have tried to exist by being careful not to get too involved in politics and even by being quite statist. As a result, it would be risky and unethical to use the real names of the members of both *jamaats* that I interviewed. Therefore, to prevent the interviewee from any prospective risky situation, I have promised not to use their real names in this study to create them freer environment to express their perspectives on the KQ. Moreover, the members of the HM fled abroad not to be arrested in Turkey; therefore, it was also highly important for them to hide their names in this study. So, I have anonymised the names of the interviewee and used pseudonyms for each of them. However, I have used the real names of the authors/columnists among the active and prominent members, whose writings were already open to the public and whose relationship with their *jamaats* has already been known by everyone. Moreover, it would be unavoidable not to give citations from their writings in the newspapers, seminar/ conference booklets, magazines, or their books; all these

sources should have been presented in detail to convince the readers.

The other challenge of this study was access to the *Zaman* Newspaper in Turkey. After I understood that the *Zaman* Newspapers in Germany were not the correct sources to be used for this study due to their deficiency in the columns or news related to the KQ in Turkey, I gave up using these sources as my secondary sources. Reaching the *Zaman* Newspaper in Turkey was very difficult, especially after the coup d'état attempt allegedly made by the HM. In Turkey, people have been afraid of being accused of being a member of the HM by the Turkish state since people related to the HM have been in custody or imprisoned by the Turkish state. Therefore, people preferred to get rid of the materials related to the HM such as books, newspapers, magazines, and CDs. The libraries in Turkey also got rid of books, newspapers, and magazines of the HM with the order of the Turkish state. As a result, finding the *Zaman* Newspaper to use for this study has been very difficult.

I could reach the *Zaman* Newspaper in Turkey archive by using my contact to the prominent members. These members, who have acknowledged the importance of the study and who wanted to exonerate the name of the HM, have reached the contact names abroad and connected me with these people. They have supplied a link to me to reach all archives of the *Zaman* Newspaper in Turkey for a limited period. They arranged visitor access to their database for me for a certain period, so I could download the newspapers belonging to different years. However, I had to download every newspaper page by page, which slowed down my work and research quite a bit. Then, I evaluated these pages to get beneficial information while finding the answer to the research question.

The last point that must be known by the reader is the fact that neither the HM nor NC does have a definite perspective on any topic, including Turkey's KQ. These institutions include people from all types of ideas; thus, it is impossible to find homogenous answers for the same topic. There are basic rules of the *jamaats,* which are religious principles and values, and people are expected to

obey these rules. Other than that, *jamaats* do not direct people's behaviours and ideas by giving their principles and thoughts. Furthermore, both *jamaats* do not have representatives/spokespersons, who could authoritatively represent the communities on any topic, including the KQ. Although I expected the HM to show Fethullah Gulen, the spiritual leader of the HM, as the representative of the HM, its members have rejected it. It is because as explained by Kar (2018), the HM has had the freedom to apply or ignore or even reject the ideas of Fethullah Gulen. Although at the last period of the HM, the Journalists and Writers Foundation (*Gazeteciler ve Yazarlar Dernegi*) had been declared as the representative of the HM, some members of the HM rejected it too. That's why according to Kar (2018), everyone in the HM had their own opinion and no one could force his opinion on others in the HM. Therefore, the answers of the Journalist and Writers Foundation could not be used as a definite perception of the HM about the KQ.

The same situation expressed for the HM also applies to the NC. Its members have stated that in the NC, a person does not speak on behalf of the *jamaat* since individualism has been essential in the *jamaat* (Nal, 2017). As stated by Nal (2017), a member of the jamaat, everyone in the NC has been free to express their own opinion, but no one could make a definite judgment on how the whole *jamaat* thinks. Even the Editor-in-Chief of the *Nûbihar* Journal refused to be perceived as the representative of NC. Its basis was explained by Asil (2015) as the following: After the death of Izzettin Yildirim, the founder of the NC, it was forbidden in the NC to choose a representative or a president. Otherwise, it could result in fatal consequences as happened in Izzettin Yildirim's brutal suicide[42]. As a result, it had to be admitted that the NC had no representative and that the NC is a non-

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[42] İzzettin Yıldırım was a Kurd who was born in 1946 in Ağrı. He was a member of the *Nurcu* Movement, but in 1990, by criticizing Muhammed Sıddık Dursun Seyhanzade's control over the Zehra Community, İzzettin Yıldırım and his friends, Zekeriya Ozbek, Huseyin Daşkın, Gıyaseddin Bingol, and Yasin Yıldırım, separated themselves from the Zehra Community and established *Zehra Eğitim ve Kultur Vakfı* (the Foundation of Zehra Education and Culture) which focused on matters such as education rather than being overly Kurdish nationalist (Yavuz & Esposito, 2003). To establish schools looking like the *Madrasatuz-Zehra* project of Bediuzzaman, Yıldırım supported financially in

hierarchical structure (Asil, 2015).

As can be understood from the explanations above, both *jamaats* have had neither official representative nor homogenized perspectives about any topic. Their members answered the interview questions by emphasizing that they declared their own opinions or their observations of their *jamaats*. This study does consider this situation and wants to reveal all types of ideas of the members about the KQ systematically. Hence, reflecting the heterogeneity among the ideas of its members is very beneficial for this study.

Outline of the Dissertation

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 are theoretical and background chapters. Chapter 1 focuses on the relationship between secularism and Islam in Turkey. In this chapter, the secular and Islamic politics of the Turkish Republic are evaluated to show the uncertain but indispensable place of Islam in the "secular" Turkish Republic. How Islam and religious organizations have always been controlled by the Turkish state since the early Turkish Republican period and how religious organizations have reacted and survived are explained in detail in this chapter.

Chapter 2 examines the Kurds and the Kurdish Question. How the Kurds as the biggest minority of Turkey have been exposed to the Turkish state's nationalistic politics and how they have been kept apart from other ethnic minorities in Turkey such as Greek Orthodox Christians, Jews, and Armenians since they share the same religion with the Turks, namely, the importance of religion

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buying the land of *Madrasatuz-Zehra* University. Through this school, Yıldırım wanted to solve the education problem of the Kurdish region. He supported the solution of the KQ through non-violent methods in the framework of Muslim brotherhood. Hence, Yıldırım promoted his friends to publish a journal, *Yeni Zemin*, in 1993. İzzettin Yıldırım was kidnapped by unknown people on December 29, 1999, and found as death on January 28, 2000, in Kartal. (Ufkumuz Haber, kein Datum)

for the Turkish Republic while determining the status and rights of the minorities are shown in the second chapter. Also, this chapter examines the Kurdish rebellions and Kurdish movements and the state's reactions against them and state policies in the mostly Kurdish-concentrated regions as a part of the Turkification policy of the Kurds. At the end of the chapter, the Kurdish Question in Turkey is described.

Furthermore, Chapter 3 focuses on Bediuzzaman, who lived during the early Turkish Republican period with his Kurdish and Islamic identities. How Bediuzzaman with his Islamic and Kurdish ethnic identity has perceived the reforms and nationalist politics of the Turkish state and how he has been influenced by them are answered during this chapter. Also, this chapter investigates Bediuzzaman's *Madrasatuzzehra* project, and his relation to politics, and gives information about the division in the *Nur* Movement after the death of Bediuzzaman.

Chapters 4 and 5 are the presentation of the data. The perspectives of NC on Turkey's KQ are presented in Chapter 4 whereas that of the HM takes place in Chapter 5. In these chapters, the *jamaats*' descriptions of the KQ, their solutions for the KQ (e.g., education, fundamental rights to the Kurds, autonomy & federation & independence), their thoughts about the resolution process and the legal legitimacy of the PKK, the HDP and other agents. Their ideal state models are explained in detail based on the primary and secondary sources of both *jamaats*. Also, the importance of Bediuzzaman's Kurdish and Islamic identity together with his dominant identity for each *jamaat* is discussed in these chapters.

After the presentation of the data related to the *jamaats*, there is a conclusion part in Chapter 6. In this part, the extent to which the *jamaats* use religious interpretations and the influence of Bediuzzaman and his words while justifying their perspectives on the KQ are investigated. Besides, it is through such analysis that the impact of the *jamaats*' ethnic and national belonging on the way

they interpret the religious sources and how they approach the KQ as *jamaats* are inquired. Therefore, the relationship between nationalism and ethnicity and religion Islam is analyzed and related to Brubaker's theory. Whether religion and ethnicity have an influence and create differentiation in the *jamaats*' interpretation of religious sources for their political response to the KQ is analyzed. This chapter also includes the study's general contributions to the existing literature.

CHAPTER ONE

THE SECULAR AND ISLAMIC POLITICS OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC

Before the establishment of the Turkish Republic, in the Ottoman Empire[43], as Ortayli (2005) asserts, Islam, especially Sunni Islam[44], was the founding ideology of the state and social relations, and the state was the patron of Islam and Muslims in the political arena. Sultan[45] had to be a Sunni Muslim and having had the literal authority of the Caliph, he held the highest position in Islam, the *caliphate* (Mardin S. A., 1971). Sunni clerics had a great impact on government and had authority over the regulation of the economy. The *Sheykh* of Islam (*Sheykhulislam*) had the supreme clerical position and the power to advise the Sultan on religious issues, appoint judges, and legitimize government policies (Mardin S. A., 1971). As put by Ortayli (2005), although one-third of the Ottoman population (in the 19th century) was a non-Muslim minority, the Ottoman Sultans never imposed religious uniformity. Rather, the Ottoman Empire showed great tolerance and acceptance of the non-Muslim population from different ethnicity and religion (Pappé, 2014, S. 17). As a

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[43] Ottoman Empire was founded in 1299 and turned into an empire after Constantinople's conquest by Sultan Mehmed in 1453. It dominated much of North Africa, South-eastern Europe, and Western Asia. It started to decline after 1699 and was destroyed in 1922 with the abolition of the Sultanate.

[44] Sunni Islam is one of the branches of Islam and is followed by almost mostly Muslims in the world. Sunni Islam comes from the word Sunnah, meaning the behavior of Prophet Muhammad. Namely, people with Sunni Islam follow and apply the behavior of the prophet to their lives. The cause of the division of Sunni Islam and Shia Islam goes back to the death of Prophet Muhammad when the dispute arose over who would rule the Muslims and as a result, Muslims were divided into two main parts: Sunnis and Shias. Accepting the caliphate of Abu Bakr, Sunnis followed and applied the behavior of the prophet Muhammad to their lives. However, the Shias rejected the caliphate of Abu Bakr and others and believed that Ali and his family were the ones who should take over the Islamic world after the death of the prophet. Hence, Shias followed Ali. Shiites follow the line of imams and believe that these imams were chosen by the prophet and Allah. Whereas the percentage of Muslims in the world is estimated to be between % 85 and % 90, in Turkey, Sunnis make up % 74 of Muslims (2019). It is believed that the total Shiite population of the world is between 120 and 170 million (Euronews, 2020). 1 out of 10 Muslims is a Shia believer. It is common in Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Yemen, Bahrain, Qatar, Turkmenistan, and Lebanon. In addition, 15% of Saudi Arabia, 25% of Pakistan and 27% of Afghanistan are Shia. Alevi in Turkey and Syria make up most of the Shiite population (Euronews, 2020). About 95 of Turkey's Shiites are Alevi. For this reason, the word Alevi in Turkey is incorrectly used to describe all Shiites.

[45] Sultan means "owner of the power" and was generally used by the Sunni part of Muslim rulers who declared their independence.

prerequisite of the *millet* (nation) system, the Ottoman Empire took religion rather than ethnicity while categorizing each *millet*, but the Muslims were not defined as a *millet* (Pappé, 2014). It is to say, this system identified people according to their religion first and ethnicity second. Most importantly, as advocated by Mardin (1971), in this multi-ethnic and religious-based social structure of the Ottoman Empire, the Muslim population came first in the social hierarchy.

Other religious groups such as the Greek Orthodox, Armenians, and the Jews were regarded as individual communities with a certain degree of autonomy. They were allowed to use their language, pursue their traditions, customs, and religious practices, establish their institutions (churches, schools, hospitals, and so on), and elect their religious figure to lead them, who set and enforce their own religious rules on their people (Sugar, 1977, S. 5-7). The Sultan controlled the minority groups through their leaders, who were supposed to report to the Sultan. The minorities had their legal courts, in which they were allowed to rule themselves (but not the cases regarding any Muslim); collected; and distributed their taxes (Sugar, 1977, S. 5-7). In return for their recognition of state authority, their loyalty, and their payment of the *jizya*[46], the poll tax, they were protected, given religious freedom, and freed from persecution, and their needs were fulfilled by the Ottoman Empire. It was part of the Muslims' religious law regarding the status of non-Muslims.

The founders of the Turkish Republic[47] perceived Islam as the reason for the decline of the

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[46] It is a type of tax collected from non-Muslim men in Islamic countries once a year. Those who paid the *jizye* tax were taken under the protection of the state in terms of their property and life security and all kinds of rights, and they were released in their religion, daily life, and economic activities.

[47] These people, called "Kemalists", were mostly young males from urban areas, could speak at least one foreign language, received their education in Western-styled institutions, rather than a religious education at the religious institutions (*Madrasahs*), and had a military history in the Ottoman Empire (Durham, 2017, S. 33) (Zurcher, 2010, S. 107). None of them had peasant or working-class backgrounds (Durham, 2017, S. 33) (Zurcher, 2010, S. 107) and most of them came from the areas of the Ottoman Empire, which were lost in 1911-1913, which pursued them to nationalist ideology. These people took "Europe as the standard while measuring the progress of Westernizing reforms" and their perspective of the West shaped their opinions (Durham, 2017, S. 27).

Ottoman Empire and pursued a more Western perspective. They preferred to sever themselves from the Ottoman era and Islam (White, 2008, S. 359). As a result, while founding the Turkish Republic, these elites under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk[48] registered and implemented the political rejection of Islam. They perceived the existence of strong religious institutions as "the greatest threat and obstacle to the development of the Westernized and modern Turkish Republic (Celik, 2018, S. 198)". To ban the religious institutions of the Ottoman Empire and de-Islamize the Turkish Republic (Celik, 2018, S. 195-200), Ataturk implemented secularism, later called laicism (the separation of religious and political affairs by the state's constitution) as state ideology (Albayrak, 2019, S. 5). Turkey officially turned into a secular/ laic country with the constitutional amendment in 1928. Then, Ataturk strengthened secularism through reforms.

Ataturk adopted the ideology of Kemalism/Ataturkism, with six intertwined components (known as "the Six Arrows") –nationalism, secularism, republicanism, reformism, populism, and étatism/ statism[49]- as "a socio-political doctrine of the new Turkish Republic" (Celik, 2018, S. 198)

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[48] Mustafa Kemal Ataturk is the founder and the first president of the Turkish Republic. Following the Ottoman Empire's defeat at the war's end, he led the Turkish National Movement symbolized by the War of Independence. He established the Ankara Government during the Turkish War of Independence. After building on the war's success, Mustafa Kemal founded the Republican People's Party under the People's Party and became its first leader. After the proclamation of the republic on October 29, 1923, he was elected as the first president. He served as president for four terms until his death in 1938. Since the Turkish state perceived Mustafa Kemal as the father of the nation, he took the surname Ataturk ("father of the Turks") in 1934. Ataturk was idolized by the Turkish nation since he established the Turkish Republic from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire. There are statues or structures of Ataturk in public institutions or in towns in Turkey.

[49] 1-Turkish **Republicanism** is the understanding that finds the source of sovereignty in the nation.
2- Turkish **nationalism** adopts the understanding of pluralism, respects all ethnic and cultural identities, and is based on the equality of all citizens before the law, regardless of their origin, language, and beliefs.
3- According to **Populism**, the basis of political legitimacy is the will of the people.
4- **Statism** makes the state for the citizen, instead of the citizen for the state. It gives the state a regulatory and supervisory role.
5- **Secularism** is the separation of religion and state affairs. According to this principle, the state has no religion. In this way, neither the politicization of religion nor the religiosity of politics occurs.
6- **Revolutionism** requires the adaptation of innovations through the opening to contemporary ideas and transformation of adapting innovations through the opening to contemporary ideas and transforming them into a way of life. (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Programı, 1976)

(Hendrick 2013, 16). These six Arrows were officially included in the Turkish Constitution in 1937 by the Turkish Parliament and they were used to suppress Anatolia's Ottoman- Islamic tradition by taking control over the application of education, religion, law, social life, and state order in Turkish society (Hendrick 2013, 16) (Zurcher, 2004, S. 182). Among the six principles, secularism was more important. Secularism/laicism was not only widespread in the political sphere but also in the socio-economic and education fields. Ataturk made socio-political reforms based on a Westernize-nationalist approach to supply the fulfilment of the socio-religious transformation of the Turkish Republic into a secular western country and "to decrease the risk of any kind of religious insurrection within traditional Turkish society (Celik, 2018, S. 197)" (Heper, 2012).

Celik (2018, S. 201) advocates, "Although Islam was not entirely banned in the new Republic, it was strictly redefined to fit Kemalist ideology". To exclude religion from public life, in 1925, the Hat Act (*Sapka Kanunu*), forced people to wear western styles of clothing and prohibited people from wearing religious clothes including headscarves, a common practice, or bringing religious practices and symbols to the public sphere since they were claimed to be against secularism (White, 2008, S. 360). The Arabic script that had been used for centuries was replaced with the Latin-based Turkish Alphabet in November 1928 (Celik, 2018, S. 197).

Having made primary education compulsory for all children, the early Republic weaved their secular reforms and principles into students` curricula and so into the children's thoughts and reasoning (Dunham, 2017, S. 39). The Republic declared the Turkish language as the official language of the state and the education system to (Colak, 2004, S. 72). It forced people to learn the new Latin alphabet and speak the Turkish language through a system of mandatory adult education and the 'Citizen! Speak Turkish!' campaign (Dunham, 2017, S. 41). Since 1924, religious lessons at public schools were removed and religious schools were eliminated or felt under the supervision of the Ministry of

Education (Durham, 2017, S. 39). Eventually, between 1933 and 1945 no religious institutions were providing religious education in Turkey, even in the mosques (Albayrak, 2019, S. 5). At the end of February 5, 1937, the Turkish State was declared the laic Turkish Republic with the second article of the Constitution (Celik, 2018, S. 198).

As stated by Celik (2018, S. 202), further analysis asserts that laicism in Turkey, which was used to claim the separation between the state and religion, did not aim to separate religion from the state, but rather "it was subdued under the weight of the state". The goal behind laicism was the transformation of the Turkish Republic into a secular Westernized modern state and the conversion of the traditional and conservative society into a secular Westernized modern society. Therefore, laicism was implemented by Ataturk and the militarist elite class from the top down and in an authoritarian model (Albayrak, 2019; Kuru, 2009). Having banned other political parties with the claim that they exploited religion, these elites created their "authoritarian, state-central, anti-religious, and nationalist (Celik, 2018, S. 203)" single-party government of the People's Republican Party (CHP)[50] (Albayrak, 2019, S. 6) and made themselves authoritarian guardianship of secularism (Albayrak, 2019; Kuru, 2009). They closed all opposition newspapers and took the power to monitor any press organ that made publications contradicting the general policies of the country (Hendrick 2013, 39).

The earlier Republican state kept tight control of religion and religious organizations. For

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[50] The People's Republican Party (CHP) was founded on September 9, 1923, as the founding and first legal political party of the Republic of Turkey under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and is still active in Turkey. This political party adopts the principles of republicanism, secularism, nationalism, statism, populism and revolutionism. The Republican People's Party remained in power continuously from 1923 to 1950 and generally implemented a single-party rule until 1946. It is the longest-ruling political party in Turkey.

instance, the *sultanate*[51] and the *caliphate*[52] were abolished, and the Islamic laws of the Ottoman Empire were abandoned in 1924. Instead, the Swiss Civil Code and the Italian Penal Code were adopted. In the same year, the religious institutions (such as *tariqats*-, madrasahs-religious schools, sects, and *jamaats*) were closed, banned, blocked, suppressed, and destroyed by the Turkish state (Kara, 2009, S. 347) (Torun, 2020, S. 84). The state tried to replace tariqas and *jamaats* with state-controlled religious institutions and established the Directorate of Religious Affairs (DRA) in 1925. It introduced the law on the Unification of Education (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat*), which centralized all educational institutions (Kara, 2008, S. 104). With the establishment of the DRA, all mosques and their prayer leaders were appointed by the government and the state, could be controlled by the state, and so became state property (Cevik, 2019, S. 1) (Kara, 2008, S. 97). The DRA had no authority over religious publications or any religious decisions; rather, it became an institution controlled and directed by the state's demands (Albayrak, 2019).

1.1. The Religious Institutions against the State's Policy

According to Albayrak (2019, S. 7) and Yukleyen (2008, S. 382), although all religious groups were banned by the state during the single-party period, they kept their existence by remaining out of sight. Tariqas were one such religious institution. They are defined by Tatlioglu (2009, S. 110) as orderly institutional structures in which the teaching of Sufism is applied. Zablocki and Robbins (2001, S.

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[51] Sultanate is the name given to the form of government in the Ottoman period. The form of government is based on the apparent absolute sovereignty of the sultan, who is a member of the Ottoman Dynasty. In the Ottoman dynasty, 36 sultans ruled for a total of 623 years.

[52] The caliphate was a political office created after the death of Muhammad. The heads of this political office were called caliphs (successors). While the office initially defined a political authority, it later turned into a political-spiritual authority and assumed the representation of the Sunnis. In 1517, the Ottoman Empire claimed the caliphate, by taking over the caliphate and by conquering and unifying Muslim lands –especially Mecca and Medina- (Nafi, 2016, S. 183). However, because of the secular reforms of Ataturk, in 1924, the caliphate was abolished.

473) identify *tariqas* as a social group defined by its unusual religious, spiritual, or philosophical beliefs, or by its common interest in a particular personality, object, or goal".

Tariqas are claimed to include those who want to practice the teaching of Sufism in the company of spiritual leaders called "murshids" (Alparslankuytul 2020). According to the findings of Tatlioglu (2009), those who enter the path (disciple) and those who follow the path discover the principles of the teaching of Sufism in their depths through the practices they do (dhikr, contemplation, connection, supererogatory worship, etc.). The members of the *tariqats* use these organizations to discipline themselves religiously. In addition, as advocated by Tatlioglu (2009), tariqas are more hierarchical and traditional structures, and their leadership is based on family ties. As affirmed by Alparslankuytul (2020), their members can be in one-on-one contact with their sheikh, and most of the activities are not collective activities. Frager (2018) argues that in Turkey, different Sufi orders have developed among various classes and types of people: According to him (2018), while the *Bektashi* order has mostly addressed the villagers and soldiers, the *Naqshbandi* order appealed to theologians and scientists. Those who have artistic tendencies with the music and poems have engaged in the *Mevlevi* order (Frager, 2018).

After the abolition of the caliphate and the closing of dervish lodges and zawiyas with the establishment of Republican Turkey, the religious institutions including tariqas stayed underground and tried to maintain their existence secretly (Akın 2017). As advocated by Akyesilmen and Ozcan (2014, S. 30), the ruling Republican People's Party (CHP) approached religion "as the scapegoat for the backwards of the Ottoman Empire" and took religion under strict government control to make Turkey a laic state. In this period, according to the findings of Tas and Guvendi (2020), the tariqas determined a method, formed conversation circles in their houses and communicated with the masses through mosque conversations by serving as *imam* (preacher) in a mosque. They were assigned to

official positions in mosques, and took their conversations out of mystical form, highlighting Islamic awareness. Tas and Guvendi (2020) assert that through this method, these tariqas transformed themselves into *jamaats*. Therefore, Tas and Guvendi (2020) perceive *jamaats* as the continuation of the tariqas or as a different version adapted to the economic-political conditions of the period.

Cakir (2022) defines *jamaats* as a group of people that come together for an idea, book, imam, guardian, scholar, or worship. As stated by Mardin (1989), the members of the *jamaat* usually share a common ideology or a sense of identity and come together to read a religious book or to share their religious opinion. *Jamaats* differ from the *tariqas* by the lack of a certain dhikr method and the absence of a sheikh-disciple relationship, but after all, *there is* a kind of hierarchy in the *jamaats* (Akyesilmen & Ozcan, 2014). Akyesilmen and Ozcan (2014, S. 33) affirm that "*jamaats* address educated, urbanized power and have economic and intellectual power". The HM, the *Yeni Asya* Community, *Suleymanci* Community, the *Med- Zehra* Community, the NC, the *Milli Gorus* (National Sight) Movement, and the *Yazicilar* Community are some of the *jamaats* in Turkey (Ogreten, Deutsche Welle, 2019).

There is no membership system neither in *tariqas* nor in *jamaats* because they are illegal structures since the enactment of the law on the Closure of *Dervish Lodges*, *Zawiya, and Shrines* on November 30, 1925 (Mardin S. , 1989). Rather, as informed by Mardin (1989), people have organic ties to these illegal religious institutions. Therefore, it is difficult to detect the members of the *jamaats*, who do not have an official relationship with the *jamaats*. After all, the report prepared by education policy expert, Prof. Dr Esergul Balcı, in 2018, reveals that more than 2.6 million people in Turkey have organic ties to a tariqa or *jamaat* (Ogreten, Deutsche Welle, 2019). It is learnt from Cakir (2022) that people give *jamaats* their time, money or whatever they can, and in return, they experience a certain moral satisfaction and a sense of belonging to a group.

Cevik (2019) describes the political environment after the transition to the multi-party system in 1945 with the Democrat Party (DP)[53], which promised to decrease the taxes and state intervention, and used Islam as a channel to gather support in Anatolia. As alleged by Cevik (2019, S. 3), the pressure on religious institutions decreased and these religious groups, being illegal in theory, continued their activities in social and religious life. In this changing political environment, religious freedoms such as public calls for prayer in Arabic and religious education in high schools were supported by the new ruling Democrat Party (DP) (Akyesilmen & Ozcan, 2014, S. 31). As Tas and Guvendi (2020) advocate, partial freedom, which started with the transition to multi-party life in the period between 1945 and 1960, opened space for the conservative religious world in society and public administration and became a vector for the revival of Islamist movements, *tariqas*, and *jamaats*.

Moreover, Akin (2017) claims that not only the change in the political structure, but also the change in the economy, education, and settled structure due to the migration from rural to urban areas in 1950 resulted in the active participation of religious institutions in this transformation process in the cities. According to Akin (2017, S. 14), the *jamaats* actively helped people adapt to city life and ensured the continuity of the traditional Islamic understanding for people to keep their existence. As Akin (2017) puts it, the Turkish state, which takes the control of everything since the establishment of Republican Turkey, could not control this process and the central role of the religious institutions in this modernization. As a result, since the 1950s the human potential and the power of *jamaats* increased through their ability to provide educational services to people, find jobs, and include people in a ready communication network (Akın 2017).

As Cevik (2019) states, even though the state's strict policies started to decrease regarding

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[53] The Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*, DP) was founded in 1946 as a moderately right-wing political party, and by winning the 1950 elections, the party ended the 27-year single-party period of the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP). Having won also the 1954 and 1957 elections, it remained in power for 10 years (1950-1960). It was overthrown and closed in 1960 after the military intervention of 27 May 1960.

religious issues (such as the removal of the ban on pilgrimage, and the reopening of some tombs of saints) during the multiple-party government, originally, the state pursued its control over religion and after the Cold War, it became more interested in Turkey's *jamaats* and *tariqa*s. According to the findings of Kara (2009, S. 351), Uzun (2011, S. 207), and Sakallioglu (1996, S. 248), the Turkish state decided to keep them under its control to transform and to benefit from them (with a slightly more optimistic interpretation, to lead to a controlled Islamization; to use them against communist movements; and, to create a more compliant generation). However, Turgut Ozal (Prime minister of that period)'s[54] liberalization policies "freedom of speech", "freedom of enterprise", and "freedom of religion and belief" replaced the authoritarian secularism, which restricted belief and expression of religion in the public sphere, with a passive understanding of secularism (Kara, 2009).

As stated by Sarikaya (1998), this liberal environment encouraged the development of religious values in the public sphere and increased the power of the Islamic middle class. After the partial permission of cult activities with Article 24 of the Constitution in 1983, the *jamaats* and tariqas made use of official institutions or establishing institutions to organize or gain supporters (Sarikaya 1998). According to the findings of Kuru (2005, S. 259), the spread of communication technologies with the end of the state monopoly on television and radio stations in the early 1990s provided *jamaats* with the opportunity to set up their economic, media, and educational institutions and they became more visible in the public sphere. They continued to increase the numbers of their supporters by providing education services (i.e., high schools, universities, dormitories for students, preparatory courses, private teaching institutions, or scholarships for the students), through media activities (such as periodicals, magazines, newspapers, private radio, TV activities), and health

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[54] Turgut Ozal (1927-1993) was a politician and engineer. He was the 8th President of Turkey from 1989 to 1993, but before the presidency, he served as the 26th Prime Minister of Turkey as the leader of the Motherland Party (ANAP).

service (Sarikaya 1998).

When the rise of the Islamic movements and the growing power of the Islamic middle classes disturbed the military, which perceived themselves as the protector of secularism (laicism), the military directly intervened in politics (soft coup d'état) on 28 February 1997 by getting the support of the media, the judiciary, and the high bourgeoisie (Kuru 2005, 260) (Heper, 2013, S. 143). As Mutluer (2018, S. 8) asserts, after the coup, Islamic activities were weakened, and restrictions and budget cuts were applied to the DRA. Religious education was prohibited for those under 12 years old; the use of headscarves was banned in public and private institutions such as private schools or hospitals (no distinction between the public/visitors/patients or employees/students or even customers in some restaurants); and pro-Islamic cooperation and banks were forced to stop their financial support of Islamic movements (Kuru 2005, 260). During this period, hundreds of religious people were expelled from the military due to their religious preferences (Albayrak, 2019, S. 7) (Eğitim-Bir-Sen, 2014, S. 23).

According to Kuru (2005, 260), such constraints directed the Islamic movements to search for alternative international opportunities. Kuru (2005) gives the example of the HM that started to establish educational and media institutions and business networks abroad. It is revealed in Balcı's report that one-third of 10 thousand 53 private education institutions together with more than half of four thousand private student dormitories in Turkey (2,480) are affiliated with a *tariqa* or *jamaat* (Ogreten, Deutsche Welle, 2019). As stated by Sarikaya (1998) although *tariqas* and *jamaats* have contributed financially to a certain extent from all these activities, they have generally benefited from Islamic forms such as *zakat*, donations, *fitra*, alms and sacrificial skin that have brought financial gain through the foundations they have established under them to the maximum extent According to Cakir (2022), the activities of the *jamaats* have been financed primarily by their adherents, especially those who are in good financial standing. Cakir (2022) states that if the *jamaat*s

have been in good relations with the political powers, they have also benefited directly or indirectly from the state facilities.

According to experts and former followers, some tariqas and *jamaats* have offered job opportunities to their followers and received a share of their earnings (Ogreten, Deutsche Welle, 2019). In these ways, as affirmed by Sarikaya (1998), on the one hand, they have contributed to the country's economy, and on the other hand, they could combine small income groups that could not be effective alone around the company and- or group of companies, providing a significant capital accumulation and making more serious investment initiatives. Also, Sarikaya (1998) adds that they had the opportunity to support Muslims in Islamic countries and their actual struggles. It is a fact for Sarikaya (1998) that religious sects and *jamaats* could survive in Turkey when they could adapt to the developing and changing socio-political and socio-economic conditions, otherwise, they would have disappeared.

According to Akyesilmen and Ozcan (2014), many *jamaats* preferred to support the strongest right-wing parties in all elections in Turkey to obtain their legitimacy at the political level, supply their security against the laic regime **to** prevent the CHP from taking over Turkey's administration again, and fight against communism, which was recognized as one of the most serious dangers to society. Akyesilmen and Ozcan (2014) emphasize the importance of the considerable human and vote potential of the jamaats that attracted and forced the political parties to care about them. Akin (2017) asserts that their relations with the politicians provided political support to the parties and created the *jamaats* new opportunities in areas such as the economy and education by ensuring their maintenance by growth. As a result, Akin (2017, 15) showed *jamaats* as "important political actors in Turkey's democracy experience" since "they have always been the addressees of the coups in Turkey, directly or indirectly". Akin (2017, 15) shows the HM as an example because the HM

increased its dominance in bureaucracy and entered into a direct conflict with the AKP government by trusting the power it acquired in the bureaucracy, media, and civil society, being "the direct actors of the coup attempt on 15 July 2016".

According to Kara (2009, S. 362), some *jamaats* have become highly engaged in politics and even established a political party such as the National Order Party[55] or the National Salvation Party (with the knowledge, approval, and encouragement of the *Iskender* Pasha branch of the *Naqshbandis*), and some *jamaats* were left out of the politics (Cakir, 2016). Or like the *Nur* movement, they have been interested in politics, but have preferred to support the right-wing party closest to the government (DP, AP[56], ANAP[57], AKP) instead of doing the politics itself[58]. Also, they have avoided publicly giving their direct support for the National Order Party, which was founded in 1969 under the leadership of Erbakan[59] and with prominent religious-national emphasis, and the

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[55] National Order Party (*Millî Nizam Partisi*, MNP) was founded in 1970 by Necmettin Erbakan as an Islamist political party. However, the party was enclosed by the state in 1971 on the ground of carrying out activities contrary to secularism (Manaz, 2005). It was succeeded by the National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, MSP) in 1972. The views that were put forward by the MNP program formed the general framework of the programs of all parties that were founded by Erbakan and his friends under the name of "National Vision (*Milli Gorus*)" in the following years (Manaz, 2005)

[56] The Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*, AP), as the descendant of the Democrat Party, was founded in 1961 and operated until the military coup on September 12, 1980. The Party made its real debut in Turkish political life with the election of Suleyman Bakirel as the chairman in 1964, who served six times as prime minister in Turkey (Sherwood 1955). The AP was re-established as the True Path Party (*Dogru Yol Partisi*, DYP) in 1983.

[57] The Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*, ANAP) is a former political party founded by Turgut Ozal in 1983. The party remained in power uninterruptedly from 1983 to 1991 and took part in various coalition governments between 1996 and 2002 (Cleveland, 1994, S. 265). It merged with the Democratic Party on October 31, 2009.

[58] The community of *Suleymanci* has always followed the tradition of supporting the center-right parties closest to power. In the 1960-1980 period, they supported the Justice Party (AP), after supporting the Democratic Party for a short time (Uzun, 2011, S. 76). After 1980, they supported the Motherland Party (ANAP) and then since its weakening in the early 90s, they turned to support the *Doğruyol* Party (DYP, The True Path Party). Since 1994, they supported the Welfare Party even though their worldviews did not match at all and they always kept their distance from the National Vision line (Uzun, 2011, S. 76). After February 28, they stood by the strong and supported the Justice and Development Party (AKP) (Uzun, 2011, S. 76). The *Suleymancılar* has always negotiated with the politicians before each election and ensures that they bring one or more "brothers" into the parliament every term (Uzun, 2011, S. 77). However, the political aims of the *Suleymancı* are not to have a say in the policies of the system, but to prevent their institutions from being harmed by the state (Uzun, 2011, S. 77).

[59] Necmettin Erbakan (1926-2011) was a Turkish politician, engineer, and academic. He was the Prime Minister of

National Salvation and Welfare parties (Kara, 2009, S. 362). This political support was also political calculations to keep their existence. For instance, as stated by Kara (2009), it is a well-known fact that *Nur*, *Suleyman Hilmi Efendi/ Suleymancilar*[60], and *Huseyin Hilmi Işık/ Isikcilar*[61] communities publicly supported Suleyman Demirel[62] and the AP for many years. They had even the power to appoint Demirel (Eligur, 2010, S. 63) (Kara, 2009, S. 362).

Kara (2009, S. 363) explains the reason for the weak sympathy towards the Erbakan movement in the lower layers of the *jamaats* as follows: These *jamaats* thought that "even if they win in the election, no one gives them power" or "if they win, there will be a revolution (which could lead Turkey into chaos)". However, when the National Salvation line abandoned its religious claims with the "just order" project, approached the centre right, and adopted liberal thoughts by also alliancing with some nationalist parties. Especially, in the 1991 elections, the *jamaats* supported them so that they could receive more votes from the *jamaats* -the final stage of this process is that the AKP almost gathered the votes of this coalition- (Kara, 2009, S. 362).

It is stated by Kara (2009, S. 363) that the *jamaats* in Turkey have waited for the time and the ground to benefit from the opportunities and environments provided by the forces and devices of the system they supported politically. According to Kara (2009, S. 363)'s assertion, the *jamaats* also

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Turkey from 1996 to 1997. He is the founder of the political ideology and movement of *Milli Gorus* (National View), which calls for the strengthening of Islamic values. With his *Milli Gorus* ideology, he was the founder and leader of the National Order Party (MNP), the National Salvation Party (MSP), the Welfare Party (RP), the Virtue Party (FP), and the Felicity Party (SP).

[60] *Suleymancılar* is a Turkish-based *jamaat*. It takes its name from Suleyman Hilmi Tunahan, whom they describe as "master". In the early 1990s, it had an estimated two million members in Turkey, and it has branches in the United States and Germany.

[61] *Işıkcılar* Community is a *jamaat* that follows the path of Huseyin Hilmi Işık and his principles in his book "Tam İlmihâl Seâdet-i Ebediyye". They reject the perfection of religion and read-only main books of Islam.

[62] Suleyman Demirel (1924- 2015) was an engineer, politician, and the 9th president of the Republic of Turkey. He worked as the prime minister in seven different governments between 1965 and 1993. He was also the leader of the Justice Party from 1964 to 1980, and the leader of the True Path Party between 1987-1993.

determined their political preferences with the thought that their various political preferences were based on religion. Otherwise, wrong decisions could lead Turkey into an unstoppable division and strife (Kara, 2009, S. 363). Kara (2009, S. 363) and Kirkinci (2004, S. 223) give the example of the time when forty per cent of the world entered the sphere of the influence of communism and Communist Russia was threatening Turkey. In this situation, the *jamaats* in Turkey preferred to go towards the system and the state in the direction of practical and pragmatic choices (Kara, 2009, S. 363) (Kırkıncı, 2004, S. 223). For instance, as stated by Kirkinci (2004, S. 223) and Firinci[63], the *Nur* Community supported the AP instead of Erbakan's religious party due to the Communist threat at that time. They believed that if they did not support the centre-right party, the Justice Party, the Communists would have come to power (Kırkıncı, 2004, S. 223). As a result, for Kirkinci (2004, S. 223), the *Nur* Community was obliged to support the AP to preserve the unity, integrity and solidarity of the homeland and nation.

Moreover, Kirkinci (2004, S. 246) also explains their approval of the 1982 Constitution was not to turn into their previous situation. According to Kirkinci (2004, S. 246), if those who made this constitution had not come and had not prevented anarchy and terrorism, it would not have been possible for the politicians to cope with this. Because the government was in complete weakness on that day, if the soldiers had not done this revolution, the communists would have made another revolution anyway (Kırkıncı, 2004, S. 246).

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[63] In his interview with Nuriye Akman (2006b), Mehmet Firinci confesses the *Nur* Community's support of the Democratic Party (DP) and then of the Justice Party (AP) against the Republic People's Party (CHP) of Ecevit after 7 May Revolution. According to Firinci, since all socialist and communist groups engaged in the People's Party, they were afraid of the CHP's potential strength to dominate the country (Nursi S. , 2006b). Therefore, they preferred to support the Demirel's Justice Party (AP) to prevent the CHP to come to the power. Firinci expresses that:

> Our aim was not Demirel, but that the Republic People's Party did not come to power. Because when it comes, everything turns upside down. The Nationalist Front broke down in 1977. Ecevit received the support of 11 deputies and formed the cabinet. In 18 months, the country became a complete mess. We wanted to prevent this. (Nursi S. , 2006b)

It is asserted by Firinci (2006) that while justifying their political support of the AP to preserve the unity, integrity and solidarity of the homeland and nation from any probable division and strife the *jamaats* benefited from the state resources. As explained by Firinci (2006), for instance, the *Nur* Community, in return for their political support for the AP, benefited from the Ministers of National Education for the appointment of teachers. In addition, Firinci (2006) states that to increase the number of *Imam-Hatip* High Schools, they ensured that Demirel spoke on the side of the religious people. According to Firinci (2006), they warned Demirel when there was the slightest miscommunication.

Aydin (2018, S. 78) argues that with the establishment of the Democrat Party (DP), Bediuzzaman supported the DP against the Republican People's Party (CHP) in 1950. According to Aydin (2018, S. 78), in his support, his intention to actualize the goals he pursued during the Old Said period played an important role. It is known that Bediuzzaman met the government in many different fields for the establishment of his *Madrasatuzzehra* project and the publication of *RNK* by the DRA (Aydin E. , 2018, S. 78). Uzun (2011, S. 69) argues that the main factor of Bediuzzaman's support for the DP was the easier printing and distribution of his books, the RNK. Also, it is a fact that he could easily publish and distributed his books during the DP period (Eligur, 2010, S. 58; Karabasoglu, 2004, S. 279; Yavuz H., 2004, S.2004). It was the subject of a lawsuit in the *Yassıada* Court, where the DP government had printed the books with covert funds (Uzun, 2011, S. 69)

According to Mutluer (2018), after the Justice and Development Party (AKP)'s ascension to the government in 2002 with members coming from the *Milli Gorus* (National Outlook or National Vision) tradition[64], the relationship between religion and the state changed. As Mutluer (2018) puts

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[64] Necmettin Erbakan is the founder of the political ideology and movement of *Milli Gorus* (National Vision), which calls for the strengthening of Islamic values. With his *Milli Gorus* ideology, he was the founder and leader of the National Order Party (MNP), the National Salvation Party (MSP), the Welfare Party (RP), the Virtue Party (FP), and the Felicity Party (SP).

it, the AKP government introduced a series of reforms that have reinstituted the rights of the Muslim majority and minorities. Erdogan recognized the identity of the Alevis and discussed with them their demands and the status of their worship place (*cemevi*) and leaders (*dede*) (Mutluer, 2018). The AK Party removed the bans on the use of religious dress (e.g., headscarf) and religious symbols in universities and public institutions (Mutluer, 2018). It strengthened the position of the DRA by continuously increasing its budget and personnel numbers[65] as well as by stepping up the DRA's status in the state hierarchy (Mutluer, 2018, S. 4), helped IHHS, and removed the disadvantaged positions of the IHHS students[66] (Cevik, 2019, S. 2).

As explained by Mutluer (2018, S. 4-5), the scope of the DRA's responsibilities has been expanded from religious matters to health institutions, prisons, youth detention centres, and seniors' residences. Even family has been made "one of the key areas of interest" in the activities of the DRA (Mutluer, 2018, S. 4-5). The DRA has started to work collaboratively with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Family, the Ministry of Youth, and the Ministry of Health[67] (Mutluer, 2018, S. 3). Thus, as claimed by Mutluer (2018, S. 15), the AKP provided a link between the state, community, family, and market using the DRA, by keeping the secular structure of the state. The DRA has been

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[65] Cevik argues that:
> According to the 2019 proposed budget, the DRA's cadres exceed 140,000 employees, and its annual budget, according to the current exchange rate, is approximately €1.7 billion, comprising 1.2 per cent of the total budget. This means that both the number of personnel as well as the DRA's share in the total budget have doubled since the AKP came to power in 2002. (Cevik, 2019, S. 2)

[66] The importance of IHHS has increased in the education system and the rules for university entrance exams have been changed. Before the rule, the graduates of IHHS were in disadvantaged positions and had losses when they preferred departments other than theology (Their coefficients were multiplied by 0.3 whereas the coefficients of those studying at other high schools were multiplied by 0.8). Nevertheless, the changing education system has removed the disadvantaged positions of the IHHS students' (Cevik, 2019, S. 2). Also, some regular schools have been converted to IHHS schools to attract more students to IHHS (Cevik, 2019, S. 2). Therefore, the visibility of the DRA and IHHS has been increased in public life (Cevik, 2019, S. 2).

[67] The result of this cooperation is explained by Cevik as the following:
> the DRA is active in various spheres of social life such as celebrating religious nights at university dormitories, solemnizing marriages (which was exclusively regulated by the municipalities in the past), providing educational support in elementary and high schools, providing social and psychological counselling at hospitals, marriage counselling, etc. (Cevik, 2019, S. 3)

authorized "to make political statements and to engage in politics to further AKP's policies in the Kurdish and Alevi Questions and gender relations". In this wise, according to Gozaydin (2014, S. 13), the AKP and its leader Erdogan have used the DRA as an administrative tool to instil and spread the official ideology regarding Islam. Using the DRA, the AKP has continued to control religion and even more spheres (Gozaydın, 2014, S. 13). Besides, the AK Party has made religious courses compulsory in regular schools' curricula to provide religious training to all students in Turkey (Cevik, 2019).

Moreover, even though the AKP government has led the existence of the *jamaats* during its governance –in theory, they have been illegal-, as argued by Cevik (2019), the AKP has kept the control mechanism of the state over religion and religious organizations going, including *jamaats*. The AKP, which already had a structure included members, followers, representatives, and sympathizers of many tariqas[68] (Cinar, 2017), has increased its link with the *jamaats* deeply and forced the *jamaats* to be active in the political framework designed itself. As advocated by Cinar (2017), since the beginning, the Naqshbandi Tariqa has been very influential within the AKP and Erdogan has had a very close relationship with the *Iskenderpasa* Lodge. Cinar (2017) also advocates that the Adıyaman-based *Menzil* community, which is a branch of the Naqshbandi community, has always been known as one of the influential communities within the AKP. According to Cevik (2019, S. 5), the Party has forced *jamaats* to declare their support for the AKP even though it has had a little electoral effect. Nevertheless, Cevik (2019, S. 5) defines this situation as the symbolization of the religious organizations' assimilation into the AKP government and for him, it has blurred the lines

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[68] Cinar states that:

> 9 of the 25 ministers in the cabinet have sect connections. 52 per cent of the cabinet belongs to the İskenderpaşa Lodge of the Naqshbandi sect, and Tayyip Erdoğan is affiliated with the same lodge. 16 per cent is Nurcu…Approximately 80 of the AKP's 350 deputies are members of the Naqshbandi community. (Cinar, 2017)

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separating the government and religious organizations.

Besides, according to Cevik (2019, S. 3-5), to pursue its control over the *jamaats*, the AKP government has invested greater amounts of resources and has made state resources available to some *jamaats* "(providing land, giving financial support for formal institutions built up by religious organizations, opening up state cadres or providing them access to state institutions and schools and giving them a certain role in the governance of education) in exchange for their electoral support". It is asserted that since 2002, the AKP preferred to ally with the HM against military domination and the secular elite since 2002 (Agency, 2016; Hendrick, 2009; Turkish Minute, 2016). As stated by Akyesilmen and Ozcan (2014), during this alliance, in return for the electoral support of the HM, the members of the HM were positioned within the state machinery into key positions within the jurisdiction, the education system and academia, and the police forces. The HM became "the most popular and influential Islamic movement in Turkey (Akyesilmen & Ozcan, 2014, S. 35)" or "one of the most powerful and controversial Islamic movements in Turkey (E. Ozdalga 2003, 61)".

However, Cevik (2019, S. 4) affirms that if the AKP could not receive the expected support from the *jamaats*, it would apply the divide-and-rule tactics or enforces outright oppression. According to the findings of Cevik (2019, S. 4), it has either wanted to ally with the dissenting figures of the *jamaats* to take over or control the *jamaat*[69] or limited the influence of the *jamaat* with the creation of intra-communal conflict or limited the resources of the *jamaats* or defamed them. For instance, as Akpinar (2022) and Bilici (2013) put it, when the HM did not approve of every policy of the AKP, did not give their allegiance to the "accredited bureaucratic pool of the AKP", which important appointments would be made

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[69] Cevik (2019) exemplifies such situations:

> AKP governments supported figures in the past such as Mehmet Denise-Olgun of the *Suleymancı* community and Kemalettin Ozbakir of the HM. These individuals had their charisma and claims for the leadership of these *jamaats*. By supporting them and their leadership claims, the AKP aimed to control these groups as well.

only from here, and started to shape the country's internal and external policy through its bureaucratic power, the AKP showed the evil face to the HM. Perceiving the HM as a "parallel structure", Erdogan dismissed and imprisoned the members of the HM in the state bureaucracy, seized the companies affiliated with the HM (Aydin, 2013), and declared them a terrorist organization or Parallel State Organization (Evrensel, 2016).

As claimed by Akpinar (2022), the *Furkan* Community[70], which stopped supporting Erdogan after the disclosure of the corruption operations of the AKP, and his leader Alparslan Kuytul, who preferred to openly criticize the political power and policies of the AKP on social media, faced a harsh reaction from the government. They could not find places to hold a meeting, their events were banned by the provincial governors, and their public actions and meetings were intervened harshly by the police (Akpınar, 2022). Together with its 28 members, Kuytul has been detained in the operation against the *Furkan* Foundation, and then, he was arrested because of his statements against the government and was prosecuted on charges such as "Preventing the exercise of freedom of belief", "incitement to disobeying the law", "incitement to commit a crime" and "resistance to fail to do one's duty" (Karatas, 2021).

In addition, as stated by Cevik (2019, S. 4), the event of *Beykoz* branch of the *Ismailaga Community*, which has tried to protect and preserve its autonomy without openly challenging the AKP government, was abolished by the Istanbul Municipality without any court decision in 2016. However, Cevik (2019, S. 4) argues that the *Carşamba* branch of the *Ismailaga* Community, which

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[70] The founder of the *Furkan* Education and Service Foundation, Alparslan Kuytul, and his *jamaat* came to the fore with their stance during the conflict between the HM and the AKP government in 2015. Although the government called on the *jamaats* to stand behind them, Kuytul preferred to openly criticize the political power of the government on social media. As a result, he was exposed to the accusation of 'FETO' in media outlets close to the government when he increased the criticisms against the AK Party and Erdogan (Karatas 2021). Kuytul took a position on social media, with serious views, against the policies of the government on the issues such as the Syrian war, the downing of the Russian plane, the Afrin operations, and so on. He also ran a 'No' campaign in the April 16 constitutional referendum (Bilgici 2018). It was the only *jamaat that* openly opposes and criticizes the political power (Bilgici 2018). As a result, Kuytul and his *jamaat* faced a harsh reaction from the government (Karatas, 2021).

has been in full accord with the AKP's rule, has received all the benefits of a full accord with the government, as state institutions and resources have all been opened for the group in the last few years.

Cakir (2019) accuses the AKP and Erdogan to force Islamic communities to support and even to identify themselves with the AKP government, which never happened before. Akpinar (2022) asserts that Erdogan gave tenders, opportunities and authority to the leaders of communities and tariqas, involved them in their dirty work, and made them vulnerable to blackmail and threats. According to Akpinar (2022), the base of these communities was exposed to heavy political propaganda through the management of the communities. As claimed by Cakir (2019), due to the fear of the authority of the state, there are very few communities independent from the state in Turkey. He (2019) says "90 per cent of the Islamic community in Turkey is controlled by the political power, Erdogan".

According to the assertion of Akpinar (2022), Erdogan paved the way for those who supported him. He pledged to other Islamic communities the collapsing properties and opportunities of the HM and distributed some of it to them (Akpınar, 2022). *Ismailaga* and *Menzil* became two tariqas that benefitted from such opportunities (Haber Sol, 2022). In return for providing electoral support and legitimacy ground to the party and its leader (Solaker, 2022), the communities benefited from municipal opportunities, strengthened their economic power, their foundations were supported, sometimes land was allocated, immovables were rented at very low prices (Cakir, Medyascope, 2019). They have equated so much of their wealth with the government and Erdogan (Cakir, Medyascope, 2019) and became integrated with the AKP. Therefore, the agenda of these communities became to protect their gains (Akpınar, 2022). There is no opportunity for them to separate themselves from the Erdogan regime (Akpınar, 2022).

Moreover, Torun (2020) reveals the fact that in the recent past, the scientific study of tariqas

and *jamaats* was forbidden and talking about them in Turkey has meant talking about a forbidden subject. As stated by Torun (2020), religion, devotion, worship, and guidance in Turkey have been quantitatively and qualitatively limited.

1.2. Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the place of the religion Islam in the Republic of Turkey. It begins by showing that the religion of Islam was the founding ideology of the state and social relations during the Ottoman Empire. It reveals how the Ottoman state, with the application of the millet system, categorized each *millet* based on religion rather than ethnicity, made the Muslim population first in the social hierarchy, how it ruled non-Muslim minorities without imposing religious uniformity. The chapter follows how this system in the Ottoman Empire changed with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. It informs how the founders of the Turkish Republic, who perceived Islam as the main reason for the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, turned Turkey into a secular country and implemented socio-political reforms to secularize the state. However, it is stated in this chapter that secularism has not aimed to separate religion from political affairs, but rather it was used as a state control mechanism over religion and religious institutions. Focusing on religious communities, this chapter reveals how the illegalization of religious institutions by the state has been used as a state control mechanism over them. Explaining the changes and institutionalization steps that the jamaats went through to keep their existence in Turkey, this chapter displays how communities are turned into the voting potential for political parties, and how the jamaats have been allowed to guide the religious Turkish society. In addition, in this chapter, if religious communities oppose this order, the situations that they live or may experience are tried to be brought to the fore with examples according to the political history of Turkey. It is emphasized throughout this chapter that the Turkish state's

policies on religion have always been ambiguous, and complex, but ultimately seek to control religion. Despite the secularist rhetoric of the state, Turkey has been a country where religion and the state are intertwined, and religious institutions have been under state control, which made it impossible for religious institutions to get out of this swamp.

CHAPTER TWO

KURDS AS THE MUSLIM MINORITY AND THE KURDISH MOVEMENTS

Kurds are the largest minority group in Turkey including approximately 25% of the population

(approximately 20 million) and one of the world's largest transnational and stateless ethnic groups. They are mostly concentrated in eastern and southeastern Anatolia (Kurds also name the region Northern Kurdistan) and do not constitute a linguistically or religiously homogenous group (Calisar, 2013, S. 30; Unal M. C., 2016). The majority of Kurds today are Shafii[71] within Sunni Islam, but there are also Alevi and Shiite Kurds (Bois, 2023) and a significant number of Yazidis and a small number of Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian populations among the Kurds (Kreyenbroek, 1992).

According to Ince (2019), there is a great harmony between Shafi'ism and Kurdish culture. As clarified by Ince (2019), because of their tribal life style and their circular nomadism, the Kurds did not need state authority, have always preserved their originality in their own geography, while recognizing higher authorities such as Iran, Rome, Seljuks and Ottomans throughout history. Therefore, for Ince (2019), Shafiism has been the most suitable sect for the Kurds. Nevertheless, Ince (2019) ascribes the Hanafism, a state sect, to the characteristics of the Turks -which social structures are not organized in the form of tribes and so preserve their existence by gathering around the state-.

The importance of religion Islam for the Kurds is so much that as explained by Caglar (2016), Kurdistan madrasahs were under the influence of the Naqshbandi sect and Naqshbandiism became increasingly widespread and effective through madrasas. Also, Yavuz (2001) shows how important religion was for the Kurds by defining them as "kinship-based, regionally oriented, and religiously shaped solidarity groups". It is because, as explained by Yavuz (2001), the life of the Kurds was

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[71] The Shafi sect takes its name from Imam Shafi, who was one of the important Islamic scholars. Those who follow the Shafi madhhab are called Shafi. Shafiism is one of the four major sects of Islam. The way that Imam Shafi showed from the Shari'a evidences is called the Shafi sect. The Shafi sect is quite common in the South East region of Turkey. The Shafi madhhab is based on the Qur'an, sunnah and qiyas as evidence. Zahari (Zahari, kein Datum) clarifies the difference between Shafii and Hanefii as follows:

'Shafii', 'Hanafi', 'Maliki' and 'Hanbali' are the founders of the main four schools of thought in Islam namely Imam Abu Haneefah, Imam Shafii, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal and Imam Malik. The verdicts they issued were all derived from the Holy Quran and the hadith of Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, when a person informs that they are either 'Shafii' or 'Hanafi' means they are referring to the school of thought they are following, but they are only having differences of opinions in fiqh matters which are not plentiful.

tribally structured and was led by *agha*, also known as a *sheikh*, *seyda*, *alims*, *sayyid* or *mullah*, who were the head of the *Naqshbandi* Sufi tariqa and "almost the spiritual father and wise person of the society he lived in (Caglar, 2016)". Cevik (2012, S. 88) informs that the *sheikhs* were perceived as "Kurdish intellectuals who were trained in madrasas from where indeed most of the Kurdish nationalist movements flourished". According to Tekdemir (2018, S. 598) and Yavuz (2001, S. 3), the *sheikh* had dual authority over his tribe and the power to articulate the religious life of people and to mobilize civil society. As advocated by Caglar (2016), the *seydas* handled all kinds of disputes and lawsuits that arose among the people according to the Shariah (Islamic rule), and they also took on the task of establishing peace and agreement between the parties. As Caglar (2016) puts it, in small settlements such as villages and towns, people were reluctant to involve the state in their disagreements when there was a thing and saw this as a great shame and immorality. Before the establishment of the Republican regime and its secularization in the following years, *Seydas* were almost naturally in the position of 'Kadi' in Kurdistan, as in other parts of the Ottoman Empire (Caglar, 2016). Namely, as Caglar (2016) alleges, with this feature, *Seyda/Sheikh* was a leading figure who was the most listened to in Kurdistan, respected among the people and trusted without limit. However, there were many *seydas* in the Kurdistan region and so, many tribal structures, which as Yavuz (2001, 3) advocates, prevented the Kurds from forming a Kurdish unity by keeping them fragmented.

In addition to the religious-based tribal structure, according to Yavuz (2001, 4), another source of fragmentation of Kurdish identity was geography. Because the Kurds lived in the rugged, mountainous border region between the Persian and Ottoman Empires, they had a loose connection with the centre, which gave them a high degree of autonomy (Calisar, 2013; Yavuz, 2001, 4). However, as Yavuz (2001, 4) puts it, these rugged geographical conditions prevented the formation of Kurdish unity by separating each society from the other and Arabs, Persians and Turks, and sub-ethnic identities became stronger than Kurdish consciousness. Neither tribe allowed another tribe to

lead the Kurdish movement, and for this reason, the tribes were used against each other by the central governments (Yavuz 2001, 4).

Moreover, Yavuz (2001, 4) shows the religious-cultural (sectarian) divide between Sunni and Alevi Kurds, which was the basis of different political tendencies, as one of the dividing forces among the Kurds. Whereas Sunni Kurds have accepted the caliphate of Abu Bakr and follow and apply the behaviour of the prophet to their lives, Alevi Kurds have adhered to Alevism that follow Ali and the line of imams, by rejecting the caliphate of Abu Bakr and others, and specifically follow the mystical teachings of Pir Sultan Abdal (1480-1550, an important religious figure in Alevism) (Wakamatsu, 2013, S. 72). As Yavuz (2001, 4) claims it, while the Alevi Kurds intensively gave their support to the reforms of the early Republic of Turkey and leftist ideology, the Sunni Kurds preferred to support anti-Kemalist Islamic movements.

The Kurds, which always lived autonomously in the Ottoman Empire, were divided among four countries (Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey) during World War I. As stated by Tunc (1992, S. 42-43) although they were promised by the new Turkish state to be given their cultural and self-government rights in the areas where they were the majority in Turkey on July 10, 1919, before the Turkish War of Independence, the founders of the Turkish Republic gave up keeping their word to Kurds following the victory of the Turkish over the Greek army. Calisar (2013) details this time and promise:

> During the formation of the Turkish Republic, the founders stated that the republic was established by the partnership of the Kurds and Turks. The Kurds were told that they were equal partners of the new state, and the 1921 constitution drafted right at the beginning of the Anatolian Resistance talked about autonomy for the Kurds. Five of the twenty-three articles of the 1921 constitution were devoted to autonomy. Article 11 of this constitution defined areas of autonomy in the provinces as "schools, education and health systems, economy, agriculture, public works, and social welfare will be under the governance of provincial councils. (Calisar, 2013, S. 30-31)

As Dunham (2017, S. 31) expresses, the early Kemalist regime "used Islam to mobilize the Muslim

population, including Kurds, to join the war efforts and as a way to create a sense of unity among those fighting in the war". Rather than giving autonomy, the founders of the Turkish Republic followed a different minority policy in Turkey (Barkey & Fuller, 1998; Kendal, 1980).

2.1. The Early Turkish State's Policy against the non-Muslim Minorities

As stated by Dressler (2015), before the establishment of the Turkish Republic, in the Ottoman Empire, non-Muslims were an organic part of the Ottoman Empire with their protected citizenship rights with the reconstruction of nations as religious minorities and national others. However, the early Republic preferred to exclude non-Muslim minorities. The purpose of this policy is described by Yavuz (2009, S. 25) and Berkes (1998) as to create a homogenous nation-state by repressing both ethnic and religious identities, which was the opposite of the religious-ethnical pluralism in the Ottoman Empire-. In the Treaty of Lausanne, the national identity was based on religious-territorial identity rather than ethnicity and non-Muslims were shown as 'minorities' (Yavuz 2001, 7). According to Dressler (2015, S. 21), having linked Sunni Islam to the concept of nationhood and citizenship and drawing ethnoreligious boundaries, the early Republic politicized and nationalized religion. Thus, as Yavuz (2001, S. 7) affirms, "Islam remained embedded both within and outside and continued, for the most part, to provide the hidden identity of the Turkish state".

As claimed by Rodrigue (2013, S. 42-43), the early Republic recognized the difference between non-Muslim religious minorities (Greek Orthodox Christians, Jews, and Armenians) and granted minority status, definite rights, and the protection tied to that recognition. Nevertheless, as advocated by Tunaya (1988, S. 585), the early Turkish Republic delineated the Turkish nation as a "social and political formation including citizens linked together by the community of language, culture, and ideal." As a result, non-Muslim religious minorities were "often accused by the

nationalist discourse of being disloyal to the state as well as the nation and pursuing hidden agendas (Dressler, 2015, S. 18). There was "a distinction between citizenship and belonging. Therefore, non-Muslims and non-Turk minorities were not accepted as fully Turkish belonging to the Turkish nation although could be Turkish citizens (Dunham, 2017, S. 37)". Instead, as identified by Dressler (2015, S. 15), they were perceived as "a distinct ethnoreligious community/citizens outside the body of the Turkish nation".

Yavuz (2001) draws attention to the non-Muslim minority policy of the Turkish state and the reduction of the number of non-Muslim minorities in Turkey through the ethnoreligious homogenization policy of the Turkish state, especially against the non-Muslim Armenian minority. As advocated by Bloxham (2003, S. 141), starting in late 1914, during their invasion of Russian and Persian territory, "the Turkish government implemented an increasingly radical program of deportation and murder for Armenians" so that "Armenians would not side with advancing Russian troops and declare independence in the eastern part of the empire (Yavuz 2001, 6). According to Derderian (2005, S. 3), the Armenian soldiers in the Ottoman military were disarmed and prominent members of the Ottoman Armenian community and civilian Armenian men were arrested and/or murdered for the elimination of the community's intellectual and political leadership. As Bloxham (2003, S. 142) and Derderian (2005, S. 3) put it, Armenian women, children, and elderly were forced to deportation to south-eastern desert regions in Syria and Iraq, along the way, most of them died due to starvation, thirst, exposure, exhaustion, illness, and outright killing. Bloxham (2003, S. 142), on the one hand, alleges that during the Armenian Genocide of 1915-17, "at least one million Armenians died, more than two-thirds of those deported, and many of the kidnapped, some of the other surviving women, and an indeterminate number of orphans were forcibly converted to Islam". Ayata and Hakyemez (2013, S. 133), on the other hand, advocate the death of more than 1,5 million

people including the Assyrian, Yezidi, and Pontic Greek communities together with the Armenian Community during the Armenian Genocide.

Bloxham (2003, S. 146) perceives the Armenian Genocide as a part of the demographic Islamization policy of the Turkish state, which at that time struggled with developing nationalist movements amongst the Ottoman peoples, the influence of great power into the Ottoman affairs, and loss of territories (Bloxham, 2003, S. 153). As advocated by Bloxham (2003, S. 148), the Turkish State perceived the Armenians as "an internal obstacle to ethnoreligious homogeneity" and demanded to clean Anatolians from Christian elements. Bloxham (2003, S. 146-153) shows the expulsions of ethnic Greeks, who were suspected of supplying enemy submarines with provisions and fuel, to Greece from the Aegean Islands, Thrace, and then the Western Anatolian coasts in 1913-14 and the float of Muslim refugees from the Balkans and the Caucasus to Anatolia in 1915 as the demographic Islamization policy of the Turkish State. According to Bloxham (2003, S. 153), in this way, the Turkish state aimed to replace Christian elements with more reliable Muslims. Also, Yavuz (2001, S. 6) claims that there were few non-Muslim minorities left in Anatolia after the Armenian genocide.

It is claimed by Bozdaglioglu (2014) that the early Turkish Republic followed this ethnoreligious homogenization policy also through the compulsory Turkish- Greek Population Exchange, which was approved in the Lausanne Conference (January 30, 1923). According to Bozdaglioglu (2014, S. 13-14), through this exchange, the remaining Orthodox Greek population was exposed to the compulsory exchange and so, the number of Greeks, "one of the most populous of the Christian minorities in the Turkish Republic" would be reduced. Also, as claimed by Zurcher (2003, S. 4), this population exchange was carried out based on religious criteria, instead of neither language nor ethnic origin between Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion settled in Turkish

lands and Greek nationals of Muslim religion settled in Greek lands (excluding the Greeks residing in Istanbul -Greek people of Istanbul- and Muslims residing in Western Thrace) (Bozdaglioglu, 2014, S. 19).

Albayrak (2019, S. 9) also emphasizes that "the forced migration policies adopted in the first Republican period made clear that the definition of Turkishness in practice was based on religion rather than ethnicity". Moreover, according to the findings of Bozdaglioglu (2014, S. 20), Turkey excluded some Greeks from the exchange, 1- those who received military and humanitarian aid to the Turkish Republic during the War of Independence/ The Greco- Turkish War[72], 2- those who saved the Turks from the Greek atrocities, and 3- who spied on behalf of Turkey. Bozdaglioglu (2014, S. 13-14) claims the reduction of the numbers of Greeks in Turkey, especially those who wanted to maintain Greek irredentism, by the Republic with this methodology. As affirmed by Bozdaglioglu (2014, S. 29), this exchange helped the homogenization policy of the Turkish Republic together with the Armenian Genocide. According to Ayata and Hakyemez (2013, S. 133), if the Armenian Genocide and the Turkish-Greek population Exchange in 1923 were not carried out, the number of Christians would constitute forty per cent of the population; nonetheless, it was diminished to 2,6 per cent (Dunham, 2017, S. 38).

2.2. The Early Turkish State's Policy against the Muslim Minorities

There were "Muslim minorities" in the Turkish Republic such as non-Sunni Muslim Alevis or non-Turkish Muslim Kurds. As Dressler (2015, S. 17) alleges, the Republic refused to count them as a minority since they were considered "the founding members of the state regardless of their ethnic

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[72] The Turkish War of Independence was "a military resistance led by the Turkish nationalist movement against the ethnic Greek inhabitants of Anatolia to protect Anatolia and to emphasize that Anatolia was the homeland for the Turks (Dunham, 2017, S. 31)".

and religious particularities". This differentiated them from the Sunni-Muslim Turkish mainstream (Dressler, 2015, S. 21). Therefore, the nationalist fixation on ethnic and religious homogeneity worked toward the Turkification of the non-Turkish Muslims (e.g., the Kurds), and the Sunnification of the non-Sunni Muslim population (e.g., the Alevis), respectively (Dressler, 2015, 24; Dunham, 2017,36). Dunham (2017,S.36)states that "the Kemalists never stopped attempting to force inhabitants into accepting a Turkish identity through the adaptation of culture and language", and "did not hesitate to crack down on non-ethnic Turkish and non-Muslim groups (Dunham,2017,S.38)."

The early Republic denied the Kurdish identity and culture (Yegen, 2010). Romano expresses the denial of Kurdish ethnic identity, language, and culture after the establishment of the Turkish Republic as follows:

> Those who aspired to Kurdish autonomy or independence came face to face with a state that would deny the very existence of a Kurdish people, language, and culture. The newly institutionalized political system would only accept those who, in public, set aside their Kurdishness. Kurds had to become Turks. (Romano, 2006, S. 30)

Also, the early Turkish Republic denied the autonomy and even the existence of the Kurds with the new Turkish Constitution of 1924. In this way, as interpreted by Romano (2006), they could construct a homogenous Turkish cultural identity and hence create a Turkish national identity.

After the removal of the *caliphate* in 1924, the closure of religious institutions such as madrasahs [religious schools] and *tariqat*s [religious/Sufi orders] in 1925, and the capture and execution of hundreds of scholars in madrasahs on the gallows by the early Republic, the religious Kurds started to rebel against the modernist, secular, and nationalist policies of the Republic (Yavuz M. H., 2001, S. 7). *Sheikh Said* Rebellion, as identified by Yavuz (2001, S. 7) was the first ethnoreligious Kurdish rebellion, which was supported by Islamic networks including the other *Nakhsbandi* sheikhs and some anti-secularist Sunni-Turks, but due to tribal rivalry and religious divisions, it could not unite all Kurdish groups. The aim of this rebellion was clarified by Cevik (2012, S. 90) as "to preserve the *caliphate*

system and to establish an Islamic state because the foundation of the Republic sheared off the strongest tie between *Nakhsbandi* sheikhs among the Kurds and the caliphate". It's why, according to the Kurds, the *caliphate* system ensured "the multi-ethnic polity and authority and the unity of Muslims as a faith-based community and allowed local autonomy and the religiously sanctioned religio-tribal structure of the Kurdish region (Yavuz M. H., 2001, S. 7)". *Sheikh Said* Rebellion, as stated by Atacan (2001), was oppressed harshly by the Turkish military and was followed by the rebellion of the organization of the Kurdish National League in 1930 and after these rebellions, the Republic exiled some Kurdish tribal chiefs to Western Turkey.

Ayata and Hakyemez (2013, S. 134) put forward that from 1930, the early Turkish Republic started to focus on Dersim, in which the majority of the people were non-Sunni Alevi Kurds, known as *Zazas,* and was already "a thorn in the eye of the state", with the thoughts "to get rid of them through military means". Hur (2008) also shows the report of the government in 1926 in which Dersim was defined as "the abscess of the Republic that required surgery" due to their disobedient actions against the state authority. The state enacted a law in 1935 to change the name of Dersim to Tunceli and to govern it by special decree as a reaction to the state's assimilation policy, the Alevi Kurds in Dersim province rebelled against the Republic in 1937 (Hakyemez & Ayata, 2013, S. 134). The Turkish state reacted against this rebel by bombing Dersim, massacring approximately 10,000-15,000 Alevi Kurds, sending thousands into exile to different areas in Western Turkey, erasing Dersim from the map (Mcdowall, 1996, S. 209; Candar, 2013), disarmed tribes, and kidnapped girls and gave them to Turkish families (Hakyemez & Ayata, 2013, S. 135).

As affirmed by Yavuz (2001, S. 8), the Republic legitimized its reactions against the Kurds by showing the Kurdish tribal structure as "reactionary, backward, and dangerous" and the Kurdish people as "socially tribal, religiously fanatic, economically backward, and as a threat to the national

integrity of the Turkish Republic". In this way, the Republic could construct itself as "a modern, secular and progressive (Yavuz 2001, 8)", "broke up the tribal structure in mostly- Kurdish regions, which often resulted in armed rebellion, cooperated with tribal leaders to control these rebellious areas, and used one tribe against another to divide and rule them (Yavuz 2001, 3)".

As a part of the Turkification process, the Republic forbade speaking Kurdish in public and restricted the Kurdish language with Law no. 2932 (Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997, S. 108). The Plan for Eastern Restoration (*Şark Islahat Planı*) banned the publication in the Kurdish language. Also, the Population Law (*Nufus Kanunu*) no. 1587 banned giving Kurdish new-born inconvenient names by Turkish national culture (Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997, S. 108) (Romano, 2006, S. 38-40). The State established the *Halkevleri* (the Community Houses) and *Koy Enstituleri* (Village Institutions) to integrate Kurds into Turkish society and to educate them in Turkish culture; and it opened schools to teach the Turkish language to Kurdish students (Koca, 1992; Kutlay, 2002). In addition, as Ayata and Hakyemez (2013, S. 133) allege, "large resettlement plans were applied to break the Kurdish homogeneity in South-eastern Anatolia, and missionaries, soldiers, teachers, civil servants from Western Turkey were sent to the East to ''civilize'' and assimilate the Kurdish population into the nationalist project".

Durham (2017) informs that the Kemalist regime did not show tolerance to the resistance of non-Turkish and non-Muslim minorities to adopt its reforms and cracked down on them without any hesitation. According to Durham (2017, S.41), it created an environment in 1930, in which the government could easily arrest hundreds of people for speaking languages other than Turkish and Turkish speakers harassed non-Turkish speakers and violently forced them to speak Turkish. Moreover, through the implementation of emergency decrees and martial law for the mostly Kurdish-populated areas in Turkey, Hakkari, Siirt, Van, Mardin, Urfa, Diyarbakir, Elazig were taken under the control of the Turkish state until 1952 (Jongerden, 2007, S. 53).

2.3. Kurdish Movements in Turkey

As Cevik (2019) puts it, during the multi-party government after 1945, Kurdish identity was transformed and secularized with the influence of socialist ideology by particularly Alevi Kurds. As a result of a relatively democratic base for political expression and increased individual rights and freedoms introduced by the 1961 Constitution, Kurdish nationalists could find a place in Turkey Workers Party (*Turkiye Isci Partisi*-TIP), Turkey Kurdistan Democratic Party (TKDP), and the new Kurdish nationalist organizations (Cevik Y. , 2012; Gunes M. T., 2015). Modern Kurdish intellectuals appeared, who shaped Kurdish identity by expressing the existence of the Kurdish people in the East of Turkey, putting the Kurdish identity question in a socialist tone to promote Kurds' right to self-determination, and suggesting solutions in the leftist groups (Yavuz 2001, 9) (Romano, 2006, S. 47). Thus, the Kurds could show their reaction against the assimilationist and revolutionary policies of the state (Dodd, 1990, S. 11).

In 1969, the Revolutionary Cultural Society of the East (DDKO) was established to raise the consciousness of the Kurdish people through their stress on unequal economic development within the regions of Turkey (Yavuz 2001, 9). DDKO mobilized the youth by blending the ideology of Marxism with Kurdish nationalism to bring social justice until it was outlawed with the military coups of March 12, 1971(Yavuz 2001). In 1973, Abdullah Ocalan, who took part in DDKO activities, organized a Marxist group intending to make a proletarian revolution in Turkey "by liberating and uniting all parts of Kurdistan that was colonized by the ruling classes of the states (Bruinessen 2016, 7)". In the years between 1975 and 1979, the leftist Kurdish nationalist movements started to declare the Kurdish problem, took a position against the state and the feudal system of Kurdistan, and saw Islam as an obstacle to the development of the Kurds (Cevik Y. , 2012,

S. 92).

In 1978, Ocalan and his friends established the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK-*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistane*) with the goal "to found an independent and united Kurdish state with Marxist-Leninist principles in Iranian, Iraqi, Syrian and Turkish territories (Cevik Y. , 2012, S. 92)", by "destroying the traditional Kurdish societal structure and tribal elite, who were the collaborators in the colonization of Kurdistan and to create a socialist pan-Kurdish state (Yavuz 2001, 12)". As Gunes (2015, S. 257) puts it, the PKK differed from other Kurdish organizations due to its direct confrontation with powerful landlords instead of only criticizing land inequality in the region. It aimed to represent the exploited class (Bruinessen 2016, 7) and targeted especially the middle class and urbanized Kurdish university students, "who had doubts about finding a job and are faced with a new socio-economic life in cities and have few opportunities to benefit and participate (Yavuz 2001, 11)". The PKK gave them an identity and participated in the restoration of Kurdish identity and justice (Yavuz M. H., 2001). However, as asserted by Bruinessen (2016), the PKK never discriminated against its participants according to ethnicity, but rather cooperated with non-Kurdish organizations, and was proud of its non-Kurdish founding members and political leaders. As stated by Tezcur (2015, S. 254), although in the 1970s Kurdish political nationalism was "an urban phenomenon, only the PKK gained significant influence of the peasantry who lived in villages under the thumb of the landlords and tribal leaders".

The PKK reached its objective to destroy the traditional Kurdish societal structure and tribal elite through armed struggle against the Turkish state and feudal tribes (Cevik Y. , 2012). It became "the leading Kurdish nationalist organization in Turkey" by attacking powerful landowning families, fighting against other Kurdish organizations, and marginalizing and disappearing other Kurdish groups (Gunes M. T., 2015, S. 256). One such marginalized organization was Kurdistan National

Liberationists (KUK), which was supported by Kurdish tribes in Iraq and Syria (Gunes M. T., 2015, S. 253). The KUK's attractiveness among the students and peasants in the border provinces disturbed the PKK and they engaged in violent clashes until 1980 (Gunes M. T., 2015, S. 253).

As expressed by Cevik (2012, S. 93), in its first years, the PKK could not get much support from the Kurds due to its secularist, Marxist, and anti-Islamist discourses that perceived Islam as an obstacle to the foundation of a Kurdish state and Kurdish freedom. However, after the 1980 military coup, of which one of the goals was to control the Kurdish and religious movements, the PKK found an environment to get the support of the Kurds (Cevik Y. , 2012, S. 93). It's why, as claimed by Cevik (2012, S. 93), most of the Kurds and Kurdish nationalists, activists, and politicians were prisoned and tortured by the military officers in the Diyarbakir Military Prison. Yavuz (2001, S. 9) asserts that after the military coup in 1980, "Kurdish nationalism was identified by the state along with radical Islam and the left as a divisive force and all forms of cultural expression were banned". Therefore, it is stated by Mcdowall (1996) that the 1980 coup destroyed the organizational power of the Kurdish leftist associations and Kurds and this situation resulted in the politicization and empowerment of the Kurdish identity among the Kurdish people. The PKK offered them an opportunity to fight for their rights against the state by undermining the religious-tribal structure of the region (Yavuz 2001). It changed its discourses toward Islam to get the support of the Muslim Kurds by understanding the importance of religion and the power of the *Nakshbandi* order on the Kurds (Cevik Y. , 2012, S. 93). The PKK raised their political consciousness and recruited militants through its establishment of a web network in and outside Turkey (Yavuz 2001).

Since 1984, the PKK launched an armed uprising and started "Viet-Cong style guerrilla attacks on Turkish security forces, government personnel and facilities, and Kurdish feudal elites that supported the Turkish state" (Romano, 2006, S. 50). On the one hand, as advocated by Bruinessen

(2016, 7), in fifteen years of its guerilla war, the PKK abolished the feudal exploitation in the region and transformed the social relations. On the other hand, the PKK targeted the educational infrastructure in the region, killed two hundred teachers, destroyed 150 schools 'to stop assimilation', killed both Turks and 'assimilated' Kurds, and forced families to give their one child to serve the PKK (Yavuz 2001, 12). Looking at such actions of the PKK, Yavuz (2001, 12) accuses the PKK to adopt a goal "to destabilize Turkey and to create an independent Kurdish state with the support of some foreign countries, like Syria, Greece, and Russia". Moreover, according to Yavuz (2001, 12), the PKK has been involved in heroin traffic throughout Western Europe to create investments for its activities and supported its London-based MED-TV and funded Kurdish organizations in Europe and North America.

As a reply to the increased terror attacks, the government declared a Regional State of Emergency Governorate (known as OHAL -*sıkı yonetim*-) between 1978 and 1987, through which the state destructed thousands of villages in the Kurdish regions, forced their occupants to resettlement, committed genocide, made mass deportations, destructed the traditional Kurdish economy and society (Mcdowall, 1996), and killed 4,302 civil servants, 5,018 soldiers, 4,400 civilians, and 23,279 PKK terrorists (Yavuz 2001, 13). According to Yavuz (2001, S. 13), it was because "OHAL regions were subject to special decrees of the government and these decrees were not subject to the supervision of the Constitutional Court". The Kurdish names of the villages were changed to Turkish, and Kurds were forced to give Turkish names to their children and unrest was raised in Kurdish society (Yavuz M. H., 2001). "Unexplained murders and disappearances of journalists reporting on the Kurdish issue, as well as Kurdish political party officials and intellectuals, accompanied the official state repression (Avebury, 1996)". The two pro-Kurdish political parties,

the People's Labor Party (HEP)[73] and the Democratic Party (DEP), were banned and closed by the Supreme Court in 1993 and 1994 (Avebury, 1996).

As Yavuz (2001, S. 11) alleges, the PKK terror campaign deepened Turkish nationalism in Turkish society, which was criticized and used by Kurds to legitimize their separatist nationalism. Thus, as the oppression of the Turkish military increased, the popularity of the PKK grew and the PKK used the new generation, who were born and grew up in the bloody and violent OHAL environment (Yavuz M. H., 2001). Yavuz (2001, S. 14) affirms that these Kurdish youth were forced out of their villages by the state and relocated to cities, but they could not find any job, could not turn back to their village in ruin, had no hope for the future, and in the end, increased the crime rate in the cities. According to Yavuz (2001, S. 14), the PKK gave them hope and identity to fight against the state.

In the early 1990s, the PKK changed its objective to use its reputation for military prowess as political capital by building civil society and legal party activities within the Turkish social and political system, but it would be active in other parts (Bruinessen 2016, 12). As advocated by Cevik (2012, S. 95), it was because "the PKK and its party organization DTP (BDP later) were seen as an offspring of the un-Islamic movements by most of the practising Kurds in the region" and most of the Muslim Kurds supported Islamist parties (e.g., the Welfare Party and the AKP). Thus, the PKK used Islam in politics to increase its supporters and turned to a post-nationalist movement by leaving

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[73] The People's Labor Party (HEP) is a political party that operated in Turkey between 1990-93. HEP has been the first representative of the Kurdish political movement in Turkey. Its main ideological orientation has been described as "pro-Kurdish" or Kurdish nationalism. HEP supported education and broadcasting in the mother tongue, a democratic environment to freely discuss the Kurdish question, the removal of the State of Emergency Regional Governorship (OHAL), counter-guerrilla activities, village guards, repeal of anti-terrorism laws, return to the village, and collective bargaining right to strike. On July 3, 1992, the Office of the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Supreme Court requested the closure of the HEP with the allegation that "it has the aim of disrupting the indivisible integrity of the state with its country and nation" and "being the focal point of unlawful political activities".

its ideal of an independent Kurdish nation-state (Cevik Y. , 2012, S. 95). Rather the PKK supported

the establishment of self-government and the confederation of local councils, which would not be

based on ethnic or state boundaries like the autonomous structure in Iraq and "Kurdistan would be

defining the geographical identity of the movements as a whole (Bruinessen 2016, 8)".

In the 1990s, the Turkish state preferred to cooperate with religious fanatics while fighting

against the PKK (Bruinessen 2016, Yavuz 2001). *Hizbullah or Kurdish Hizbullah, in which* members

were Kurds and communicated with each other in Kurdish, was the most aggressive and violent

religious organization and was founded by Huseyin Velioglu in Batman in 1979 (Tekdemir, 2018).

Although "from the foundation until the establishment of the *Ilim* Bookshop in 1983, "the *Ilim* and

Menzil groups cooperated in becoming organized in universities and organizing religious gatherings

(*sohbet*s) and activities in mosques, in 1987 they separated from each other due to "sharing of the

financial aid sent by Iran and the rivalry that unfolded between the two groups (Kurt 2017, 26)". After

a long brutal armed struggle between the *Menzil* wing, the *Menzil* wing rejected the armed struggle

and the *Ilim* wing[74] started to represent *Hizbullah* (Tekdemir 2018, 598).

Being organized in high schools and universities and organizing its recruitment activities in

mosques during the increased forced migration from South-eastern Anatolia, *Hizbullah* rapidly got

an unprecedented level of members (Kurt 2017, 24). As asserted by Kurt,

> Those *imam*s who did not allow Hizbullah to recruit in their mosques were routinely
> threatened and subjected to violence. Such incidents created an atmosphere of fear among
> mosque officials and as a result, they remained quiet and showed little resistance to
> *Hizbullah*'s recruitment efforts. (Kurt 2017, 24)

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[74] Kurt (2017, 20) informs that because "members used the *İlim* Bookshop as the center of their social activities, for a time it was known as the *İlim* group". According to Kurt,

> "It was quite common in this period in Turkey for Islamic groups to become organized around bookshops and
> publishing houses. For example, *Menzil Kitabevi* (Menzil Bookshop), around which the Menzil group
> subsequently formed, was established in 1978. (Kurt 2017, 23)"

Hizbullah aimed to establish a sharia-based Islamic state in Kurdistan by overthrowing the regime in Turkey (Kurt 2017, 6), and therefore, it got the support of Iran, received military training, and justified its use of violence via religious terminology in mosques and other places (Kurt 2017, 27). Although *Hizbullah* claimed to reject any nationalism (Cevik Y. , 2012, S. 95), its members, who were described as "soldiers of Allah (Tekdemir 2018, 596)", were Kurds and communicate with each other in Kurdish, and it used the network of Kurdish madrasahs to organize support (Bruinessen 2016, 13). This situation created a highly politicized Islamic Kurdish identity (Tekdemir 2018, 596).

Perceiving the Kurds as the victims of the Western-style modernist and secular nationalism policy of the Turkish state, *Hizbullah* adopted the duty to help Muslim oppressed Kurds and believed that the Ummah would be the perfect solution (Tekdemir 2018, 595). This formulation let *Hizbullah* engage in armed conflict against the secular leftist PKK, whom *Hizbullah* believed to cooperate with Armenians to divide the Muslim people of Turkey (Tekdemir 2018, 596). As claimed by Kurt (2017, S. 6), despite its goal to overthrow the Turkish state, *Hizbullah* had never targeted the state. Rather, "*Hizbullah* operated in broad daylight in mainly Kurdish regions in Turkey together with the Turkish intelligence and security forces", the *JITEM* (Turkey's Gendarmerie Intelligence and Anti-Terror Organization), and killed the PKK militants and anyone against the Islamic Republic of Kurdistan (Kurt, 2017) (Yavuz 2001, 14). As a result, in the 1990s *Hizbullah* was called "the *Hizbi*-counter group (counter-guerilla/paramilitary group) (Tekdemir 2018, 595)" and lost its societal base among the Kurds (Cevik Y. , 2012, S. 95). It carried out 17,000 'murders by unknown perpetrators' (faili *mechul cinayetleri*) (Kurt 2017, 31). The acts of *Hizbullah* violence were permitted by the state if they supported the state's interest (Kurt 2017, 38).

In addition to the PKK, *Hizbullah* also targeted other Kurdish Muslim groups like the *Zehra*

Community[75], whose leader (Izzettin Yildirim) was killed by *Hizbullah*, and the Islamist *Menzil* group (Bruinessen 2016, 14). *Hizbullah* saw the tariqas, madrasas, and sheikhs as backward and ignorant because, for *Hizbullah*, these institutions neither taught Islamic values nor truly represented Islam (Tekdemir 2018, 597).

At the end of the 1990s, the situation changed with the capture of Ocalan, the PKK's founder and leader, in 1999 and with the acceptance of Turkey's candidate to the European Union membership (Romano, 2006; Yegen, 2010). During that period the PKK declared a five-year-long cease-fire and democratized its structure, and the state ended the two-decade-long state of emergency in Kurdish regions and decreased the restrictions on the Kurds. In 2000 with the decrease in the PKK's actions, the police conducted a major operation against *Hizbullah*, which ended with the death of its leader and the imprisonment of thousands of its members (Tekdemir, 2018, S. 597; Cevik Y. , 2012).

These new processes created a more liberal and plural environment at the end of the 1990s and early 2000s, allowing for the rise of various Kurdish Islamic sub-groups (Tekdemir 2018, 593). With the governmental power of the AKP that followed Islamic-oriented policy, the Kurdish Islamist groups transformed their political discourse with their rejection of the idea that Islam was an obstacle to Kurdish national unity and adopted an Islamic identity within a Kurdish national identity (Tekdemir 2018, 593). As declared by Tekdemir (2018, S. 593), they have supported Kurdish Islam rather than Turkified Islam due to the continuing *madrasa* tradition in the Kurdish regions. According to them, "Madrasas ensured the survival and transmission of the Kurdish-Islamic identity and Kurdish national awareness against the Turkifying and secularist policies of the state (Tekdemir 2018, 599)". Tekdemir alleges that

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[75] Uslu (2008) shows the leadership struggle of Kurdish Islamism as one of the most important reasons for *Hizbullah*'s targeting of Med-Zehra luminaries.

some (of these Kurdish groups) politically mobilized in the cities around publishers, bookstores, and student halls, others mobilized in rural areas within tariqas and madrasas, while some members were involved with political parties and others operated socially in the civil or business organizations. (Tekdemir 2018, 595)

As informed by Tekdemir (2018, 595), all these Muslim Kurdish groups have acted against the state's laicism, authoritarianism, and nationalism, the nationalist interpretation of Islam, and hegemonic left-wing secular Kurdishness.

Sarihan (2013) claims that the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government, in the beginning, followed a peaceful policy against the Kurds to be accepted as full members of the European Union and to meet the EU's criteria. Many democratic Kurdish groups such as the Peoples' Democracy Party (HDP), Kurdistan Freedom Party (PAK), Freedom and Socialism Party (OSP), Kurdistan Democratic Party Turkey (PDK-Bakur), and Socialist Party of Kurdistan (PSK) were founded in this period (Tekdemir 2018, 591). The government let establishment of private Kurdish-language schools in 2004, lifted the state of emergency (OHAL) in the last two remaining provinces in 2002, decreased the intensity of the armed struggle against the PKK, restored Kurdish names to Kurdish villages, increased the political rights for Kurdish politicians (Sarihan, 2013).

As a result of the AKP's encouragement of Islamic movements around civil society organizations, *Hizbullah* transformed itself into a civil society organization, *Mustazaflarla Dayanisma Dernegi* (Association for Solidarity with the Oppressed), under new leadership in 2003 "to struggle against the restrictions of the human rights and against the oppressions on society, culture, religion, and education (Cevik Y. , 2012, S. 96). This Association started to organize mass meetings for the support of Palestine or during the birth week of the Prophet Muhammed (Bruinessen 2016). However, it was closed down in 2012 by the government due to furthering *Hizbullah*'s agenda (Kurt 2017, 43), but the members of *Hizbullah* founded the Free Cause Party (Huda-Par) "with an Islamic agenda to gain legitimacy and hegemonic power in the Kurdish periphery (Tekdemir 2018,

597)". It diversified its activities by establishing *Rehber* TV, *Dua* Publishing House, *Dogru* Haber Newspaper, *Ilke* News Agency, the Magazines of *Kelha Amed* and *Inzar*, religious and private schools, and student dormitories (Kurt 2020, 768).

As asserted by Kurt (2020, S. 767), *Hizbullah*'s legal operations encouraged other Kurdish Islamist groups to initiate their organizations by not being afraid of the PKK's attempt. Many Islamist organizations such as the *Azadi* Initiative (*Hak, Adalet ve Hurriyet iciin Kürdistan IIslami İnisiyatifi*) were founded and challenged the AKP's policy in the Kurdish-dominated region (Tekdemir 2018, 591). The AKP supported some Kurdish Islamist movements to create "a form of religio-nationalism" through pan-Islamist political agendas (Kurt 2020, 765). As a response, the PKK, incorporating Islam, changed its objective to "create a democratic nation welcoming religious freedoms and representations as a part of its democratic autonomy and diversity project (Kurt 2020, 765)".

As supported by Gunes (2010), when the AKP won the local elections in some Kurdish regions in 2004 by taking the support of the Kurdish bourgeoise, increasing its political reforms for the Kurds, and using state resources ("material inducements -i.e., food and coal aid to the poor- and public services (Gunes, 2010, S. 782)"), it was perceived by the PKK as the 'silent reconquest of Kurdish provinces' (Gunes 2010, 781). The increasing support for AKP threatened the PKK's hegemony in the Kurdish region (Gunes 2010, 781). When the AKP explicitly denied the claim of the PKK to be the real representative of the Kurds (Gunes 2010, 782), the fight between the PKK and the Turkish military intensified (Gunes 2010, 781).

In 2007, the PKK founded the Union of Communities of Kurdistan (*Koma Civakên Kurdistan-KCK*) as an umbrella organization to act as a quasi-state authority in economic, social, political/ideological, and self-defence realms in preparation for establishing situational/de facto autonomy in the region (Bruinessen, 2016, S. 9; Yegen, 2016). With the KCK, the PKK resorted to

urbanized terrorist attacks (targeting civilians, kidnapping of businessmen, teachers, and government staff, and extortion) in addition to its guerrilla attacks. As a result, the AKP had to negotiate a resolution to end the violence. It initiated a secret dialogue with the PKK known as the Oslo Process in 2007 in coordination with third-party, but the Oslo Process failed due to the incompatibility of the primary goals of both sides (Cicek, 2008).

The AKP government officially inaugurated the Kurdish Opening (or Democratic Opening) on August 1, 2009; the prime minister and the president declared a "general amnesty" for the members of the PKK (Calisar, 2013) and introduced the 'Return to Village and Rehabilitation Project' "to provide a framework for the repatriation of internally displaced Kurds to their original homes in the east (Weiss, 2016, S. 573)". The government founded a government-controlled Kurdish- language television station, TRT 6, in 2009, removed taxes for new business investment in the Kurdish-populated area, and let Kurdish institutes and language departments open in universities and elective courses in private schools (Sarihan, 2013). However, the Democratic Opening started to fail when the AKP backed off its 'Return to Village and Rehabilitation Project', and conducted anti-KCK operations consisting of the disclosure of the DTP by the Turkish Constitutional Court in 2009 and the arrest of 400 civilian Kurds including lawyers, activists, civil society members and members of the DTP –who were in organic ties with the KCK (Pope, 2013).

When the de facto autonomy- the success of the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) in Northern Syria created fear in the Turkish government by raising the probability of the PKK controlling the Kurdish regions in Turkey, the Turkish government had to attempt to negotiate with the PKK. In 2012 to end this intermitted fight and violence between the government and the PKK, a new negotiation period "The Resolution Process" - "a publicly known series of meetings between Ocalan and the PKK under the arbitration of the MIT and Kurdish political actors from

BDP[76], whose members were transferred later to the People's Democratic Party (HDP) started in 2013, - began (Weiss, 2016). Nonetheless, in July 2015, after the national elections, the government ceased this one-promising horizon for peace, strafed PKK hideouts and training camps in the Qandil Mountains, and imposed curfews and sieges on insurgent strongholds in the Kurdish-populated south-eastern Anatolia (Weiss, 2016).

After that, "radicalized youth affiliated with the PKK (e.g., *Yurtsever Devrimci Barislik Hareketi* (The Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement, YDGH) asserted autonomy in Cizre and several other Kurdish-majority towns in South-eastern Anatolia (Weiss, 2016, S. 568)". During the armed struggle between the PKK-linked militants and police and soldiers in South-eastern Anatolia in 2016 (in a state of emergency declared after the coup d'état attempt of the HM), 400,000 residents have been forced into displacement, and hundreds of unarmed residents including children were killed or injured (Report, 2017).

> Blanket curfews continued for many months during security operations in Cizre and other towns and neighbourhoods, impeding access for journalists and human rights investigators. Authorities demolished large areas of the majority Kurdish cities of Diyarbakır, Şırnak, Nusaybin, and Yuksekova. In June, the government introduced a law making any prosecution of the military and public officials, including the police, engaged in counterterrorism operations dependent on administrative permission. The law effectively grants immunity from prosecution to the security forces for abuses committed in the recent operations in South-eastern Anatolia in violation of Turkey's duty to investigate such abuses. (Report, 2017)

Moreover, in a state of emergency,

> in May 2016, the government secured the lifting of the parliamentary immunity of 148 deputies, 53 of them members of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democracy Party (HDP) facing an investigation on terrorism charges. In August, the government introduced a decree appointing trustees to take over 28 municipalities (24 of them in South-eastern Anatolia), removing elected mayors and council members from office. By mid-November, 53 had been dismissed and 39, including Gultan Kışanak and Fırat Anlı, co-mayors of Diyarbakır, were arrested pending investigation. In November, nine HDP members of parliament including party leaders Selahattin Bakirtaş and Figen Yuksekdağ were arrested and placed in pre-trial

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[76] The Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) is a social democratic and social liberal-minded political party founded in Turkey in 2008. On July 11, 2014, it changed its name and became the Democratic Regions Party. BDP has been founded after the closure of the DTP.

detention. (Report, 2017)

The Republic of Turkey has still been condemned by the European Court of Human Rights for abusing human rights. These issues are about executions of Kurdish civilians, torturing, forced displacements, systematic destruction of villages, arbitrary arrests, and disappeared Kurdish journalists. On the other hand, today it is still forbidden by the constitution to have an education in the Kurdish language. The Turkish constitution forbids Kurds from forming political parties on their ethnic basis. Also, there are studies demonstrating inequalities between Kurds and Turks in levels of poverty, unemployment, fertility, educational attainment, and literacy (Koc, Hancioglu, & Cavlin. , 2008). As a result, the Kurds in Turkey struggle to pursue greater autonomy besides cultural and political rights.

2.4. Turkey's Kurdish Question

The KQ is a long-standing problem of the Turkish state that exists since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. According to Kanat (2013, S. 103), the KQ is not only a domestic problem of Turkey, but also "a problem that has been internationalized due to Turkey's formal integration into the Western world through membership in international organizations", and hence it influences Turkey's foreign policy. Yegen (2010) defines the KQ as a sum of 1) the Kurdish minority group's struggle to get their cultural and identity rights and 2) their demand for autonomy "on where they want to share sovereignty with the central government of Turkey (Candar, 2013, S. 69)" and 3) the Turkish state's oppression against these demands.

The reason for the state's oppression of Kurds and their demands is considered against the founding principles of the Turkish state (Gozler, 2000, S. 115). As stated by Gozler (2000, S. 115), the third article of the Turkish Constitution defines the Turkish Republic as "a unitary state with a whole country and nation". In this unitary state, there is one state, one nation (without linguistic,

religious, or ethnic distinction), and one sovereignty (whole country). Gozler (2000) interprets that 1-regions of the state do not have the right to separate themselves from the state, and 2-the country cannot be divided to create more than one state - although the state is divided into regions, these regions are dependent on the sovereignty of the unitary state-, and 3-this unitary state denies federalism or cooperative federalism either by dividing into federations inside the state or by integrating itself to other countries or international organizations[1]. Therefore, not only independence but also the autonomy of any ethnic group living in Turkey is not possible if the state does not change the Turkish constitution. In this sense, the KQ, as expressed by Keyman and Ozkirimli (2013), is trapped in a vicious circle of ethnic Kurdish and Turkish nationalism.

The cause of the trapped situation of the KQ in the vicious circle of ethnic Kurdish and Turkish nationalism can be explained through the "nationalism" description of Hastings (1997). According to Hastings (1997), nationalism derives 1) when and where a particular ethnicity or nation believes that its own ethnic or national tradition is in danger and threatened regarding its proper character, either by external attacks or by the state system of which it has hitherto formed part and needs to be defended at any cost through the creation or extension of its nation-state or 2) when a state seeks to advance the supposed interests of its own 'nation-state' regardless of other considerations.

These supposed interests of the nation-state are clearly explained by Smith (2010) as national autonomy, national unity, and national identity, which would promote the well-being of the nation. As a result, Kurdish people in Turkey feel their ethnicity, tradition, culture, beliefs, and nation threatened by the Turkish state system throughout history. Thus, they seek to defend their values through the creation of an autonomous, federal, or independent Kurdish state. However, the Turkish state comprehends this situation as a threat to its integrity and country. As a result, it attempts to

defend itself against the demands of the Kurdish people at any cost. All these feelings and attempts trap the KQ in the vicious circle of ethnic Kurdish and Turkish nationalism and make the KQ a nationalist issue. Also, the Kurds' demand to get an education in their mother language, Kurdish, is against the Turkish constitution. The twenty-sixth article of the Turkish constitution forbids anyone to give education to Turkish citizens in the non-Turkish mother language.

Furthermore, today, the KQ is also about ending the violence and terrorism issuing the political demands of the Kurdish people. It is because of the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (PKK-Kurdistan Workers' Party)[1], which is a threat to the territorial integrity of the Turkish state with its demand for (an independent Kurdish state until 1999, and then) democratic autonomy for the Kurds within Turkey. It resulted in the death of forty thousand people including five thousand civilians and the displacement of over three thousand villages by the Turkish state due to Turkish security reasons, advancing Kurdish nationalism (Calisar, 2013). Then, it can be asserted that the KQ has two dimensions: the first one is the restitution of Kurds' basic identity and cultural rights together with (at minimum) autonomy, and the second one is the disarmament of the PKK. All these things make the KQ a socio-cultural, ethnopolitical, and nationalist problem.

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the Kurds the largest minority group mostly concentrated in eastern and South-eastern Anatolia not constituting a linguistically and religiously homogenous group. It reveals the sources of the fragmented Kurdish identity, which are the tribal structure, geography, and the religious-cultural (sectarian) divide between Sunni and Alevi Kurds. Different state policies against Muslim and non-Muslim minorities are evaluated in this chapter with a focus on Armenian Genocide

and the compulsory Turkish- Greek Population Exchange to understand the state's goals to decrease the number of non-Muslim minorities in Turkey and to create a homogeneous nation-state. It also examines how the Turkish Republic segregated the Kurds from other ethnic minorities because of their Muslim identity by basing the national identity on religious-territorial identity, but followed a Turkification policy against them and denied their Kurdish ethnic identity, language, and culture as a part of the homogenization policy. The Kurdish Rebellion such as Sheikh Said that emerged as a result of these policies and the state's violent response, the massacre of the Kurds in Dersim by the Turkish state, and large resettlement plans of the state to break the Kurdish homogeneity in South-eastern Anatolia are the subjects examined in this section. Later parts of the chapter focus on the Kurdish movements -such as the Revolutionary Cultural Society of the East (DDKO), the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), and *Hizbullah*- that started with the multi-party rule and the state's reaction against these movements. The chapter ends with a description of the Kurdish Question in Turkey.

CHAPTER THREE

BEDIUZZAMAN WITH HIS KURDISH AND ISLAMIC IDENTITY

Sait Okur, known as Bediuzzaman or Said-i Kurdi or *Ustad* (Master) (1878-1960), was a Kurdish Shafii Islamic theologian, commentator, and writer (Nursi S. , 2006b, S. 959; Canlı & Beysülen, 2010). The level of knowledge that Bediuzzaman had attained amazed everybody (Akyesilmen & Ozcan, 2014). He is well-known and well-respected even by his non-followers. Bediuzzaman attained a high level of knowledge at a young age with his ability to comprehend even the most difficult subjects immediately and to memorize the books when he read and even reviewed them (Weld, 2006, S. 28).

Participating and proving his knowledge in the scientific debates -one of the Ottoman period madrasah traditions-, Bediuzzaman gained the title of the honorific "*Bediuzzaman* (Wonder of Age)" by the scholars of his time and then, became famous for this title (Mardin S. , 1989). He also became famous by his name "Said-i Kurdi" at the beginning since he came from Kurdistan and was a Kurdish (Mardin S. , 1989). He used this name in many of his early works. However, due to the Turkish nationalism policy after the establishment of the Republic, he changed it to Bediuzzaman to prevent this situation from being used against him and from misunderstandings (Nursi S. , 2006b, S. 202). He is the author of the *RNK,* a Qur'anic commentary, and inspired a religious movement, *the "Nur movement"* or *the "Nur Community".*

Bediuzzaman was born in *Nurs* village in Bitlis in Turkey, which was then part of a larger region that included the provinces of Erzurum, Van and Bitlis (Mardin S. , 1989). Dividing his life into "Old Said", "New Said", and "III. Said" (Nursi S. , 2006b), Bediuzzaman described the period from his birth to 1923 as the Old Said. During the old Said period, he exhibited a personality that was very interested in politics and that directly took initiative in solving social and political problems (Weld, 2006). Said Nursi was one of the founders of the society known as the *Ittihad-i Muhammedi* (Muslim Union). As stated by Mardin (1989, S. 139), the Society had undertaken the tasks of "awakening Islamic political and social thought" in all states where Muslims were under "political captivity" and of making sharia the source of parliamentary legislative activity.

Said Nursi was also a member of the Society of Advancement of Kurdistan (*Kurt Teali Cemiyeti*) which mostly emphasized the Kurdish identity and culture (Cevik Y. , 2012). He, "putting forward his Kurdish ethnic background that did not carry the nationalistic views (Cevik Y. , 2012, S. 90)", wrote in newspapers and journals (*Şura-yı Ummet* Newspaper, *Şark ve Kurdistan* Newspaper, *Kurt Teavun ve Terakki* Newspaper, and *Volkan* Journal) in favour of *Mesrutiyet* (Constitutional Monarchy)[77] and freedom, and about the situation of Islam, the problems of the Kurds and Kurdistan, and about the necessity of national unity (Nursi, 2013, S. 505-582) (Akyesilmen & Ozcan, 2014, S. 34). Also, he tried to convince the influential Kurdish people about the benefit of the *Mesrutiyet* for the Kurds and the religion Islam and published them in his book *Munazarat*.

According to Bediuzzaman, the Constitutional Monarchy would give freedom and great power to every nation including the Kurds to keep control of their region (Mardin S. , 1989, S. 140-141). According to him, without freedom, the nations would remain in a prison of captivity and would not progress. Also, Said Nursi emphasized poverty, ignorance, and anarchy as the three main enemies of the Ottomans and proposed national unity, human effort, and national solidarity in eliminating these enemies (Mardin S. , 1989, S. 140).

As claimed by Cevik (2012, S. 90), with his crucial role in the development of Islamic ideals and modernization of Islam via rationality, Said Nursi became an important figure among Kurdish society and Kurdish Islamic movements because he attempted to improve Kurdish regions and educate Kurds. Cevik (2012, S. 91) advocates that Said Nursi was not a pro-Kurdish nationalist and did not want an independent Kurdish state, but he had the idea of an autonomous state in the Ottoman era when the statement of ethnicity was not a problem.

Bediuzzaman sent a petition to the Sultan, in which he detected the problems in the eastern

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[77] Constitutional monarchy or parliamentary monarchy is a form of government in which the powers of the monarch are restricted by the constitution and the parliament is elected by popular vote. It has been used in the sense of a parliamentary sultanate-caliphate in the Ottoman Empire since the 19th century.

regions of the Ottoman Empire and offered solutions for them. The first problem was that the local population could not benefit from the new schools in these regions because the teacher could not speak Kurdish (Mardin S. , 1989, S. 130) and as a solution, he requested the government to follow a "reverse discrimination" policy supporting the Kurdish-speaking section to receive education in the secular Ottoman school system. According to Bediuzzaman, the existence of Turkish education and more diversified education scholarships would eliminate the faction conflicts between the tribes and make the members of the tribe good Ottoman citizens (Mardin S. , 1989, S. 131).

According to Bediuzzaman, the reason why the Ottomans could not make progress in science was the existence of three different trends in the field of education: Madrasah, lodge, and school system. The only way to bring creativity back was to reintroduce religion classes to schools, add science-based research to madrasah education programs, and bring competent ulama into dervish lodges (Mardin S. , 1989, S. 133). As a solution, he decided to establish a university, *Madrasatuzzehra*, in Van, where religious science, mysticism, and social and natural science would be taught together in three languages: Arabic, Turkish, and Kurdish (Arabic language would be *vacip* (obligatory) to raise a Muslim generation, Kurdish as the native language in Kurdistan would be *caiz* (permissible), and Turkish as the formal state language would be *lazım* (necessary)) (Abu-Rabi, 2003; Nursi S., 2006b,S. 21; Beg, 2011, S. 569).

This university was planned by Bediuzzaman to fight against ignorance and backwardness in South-eastern Anatolia and also as a solution for probable political and social problems (Nursi S. , 2006b, S. 67). He thought of it as a start for an educational campaign in Kurdistan for the sustainment of people's spiritual and mental needs. To provide Kurdish scholars and to integrate Kurds into the Turkish state, people who knew Kurdish and who were knowledgeable were planned to be employed as lecturers in this university project (Beg, 2011, S. 628). In addition to being a model for national education, this university would "revive a sense of Turkish centrality in the Muslim world by providing the umma (community of believers in Islam) with an intellectual hub (Hendrick 2013, 64)". Bediuzzaman spent his "old Said period" trying to realize his *Madrasatuzzehra* project (Nursi

S. , Tarihçe-i Hayat, 2006b; Vahide, 2019). He tried to find funding and permission from the official authorities, wrote a petition to Padishah Abdulhamit II, and asked Sultan Reşad and the Committee of Union and Progress to get support for his project (Balci & Tetiker, 2003, S. 118).

The "New Said" period started after 1923. After World War I, Nursi came to Ankara at the invitation of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 1923 to make politics, but he could not find the atmosphere he was looking for in Ankara (Hendrick 2013, 64) because the new state was not an Islamic one (Cevik Y. , 2012, S. 91). As stated by Mardin (1989, S. 61), Nursi was disturbed by the fear that Turkish society would be dissolved if the republican administration puts Islam aside and continues to promote materialism and secularism. He called the new government to base the political regime of the new Republic on Islamic principles (Atacan 2001), but Kemal Ataturk, who was aware of the influence of Bediuzzaman, tried to convince him by offering him a state religious position (Hendrick 2013, 64). In return, Bediuzzaman declined this offer and returned to Van by deciding to renew himself and change his method and moved away from social and political issues (Nursi 2006). This period was named "New Said" by Bediuzzaman himself. He comprehended that the most important duty was to strengthen faith. Therefore, during this period, instead of serving religion through politics in the "old Said period", Bediuzzaman preferred to turn away from politics and the world and went into seclusion by focusing on religion only (Nursi S. , 2006b).

Bediuzzaman had problems with the political authorities after the Republic since he opposed the reforms of the Kemalist regime, which banned people from wearing religious clothes including headscarves or turban (*Sarik* or *Takke*) or bringing religious practices and symbols to the public sphere especially the closure of lodges (*tekke*) and zawiyas (Nursi S. , 2006b). Despite the compulsions of the Kemalist regime, Bediuzzaman rejected to remove his turban (Sarik) from his head and cut his beard. Although there were too many religious men who were executed due to their rejection of such reforms, Bediuzzaman escaped execution thanks to his persuasive speech in court

(Nursi S. , 2006b). He was accused of participating in *Sheikh Said* Rebellion[78] by the Kemalist regime, but Bediuzzaman persistently rejected this accusation and even claimed that he tried to prevent it (Mardin S. , 1989, S. 155). However, since Said Nursi himself was perceived as a source of concern and as a danger to the new secular policies by some of the founders of the Turkish Republic, Bediuzzaman was arrested and forced to reside in Burdur in 1926 and then in the village of Barla in 1927 (Mardin S. , 1989, S. 61).

As alleged by Mardin (1989, S. 47), the *Nur* movement, which follow Said Nursi's view and read Said Nursi's books, was formed for the first time in the 1920s in Barla, a small town in Isparta, where Said Nursi was forced to reside by the government of the Republic. He started to write his books, the RNK, and the Quranic commentary, which would increase the faith level of people. Mardin asserts that to spread the Qur'an, Said Nursi had to overcome the language barrier and explain the Qur'an in Turkish ("not in Arabic or Kurdish (Hendrick 2013, 68)") which he could learn after the age of twenty (Mardin S. , 1989, S. 62). The number of people who spread the messages Said Nursi had increased considerably. The followers started a tradition to meet regularly in small groups to discuss and study the RNK.

Mardin (1989, S. 46) claims that the *Nur* Movement got some of its strength from the failure of Republican secular ideology to replace Islam as a worldview. "The success of the *Nur* movement, together with its rhetoric, which includes Islamic mysticism, coincided with the practical worldview and spiritual demands of the Turks (Mardin S. , 1989, S. 46; Hendrick, Gulen: The Ambiguous Politics of Market Islam in Turkey and the World, 2013)". The increase in the number of followers and students, who became more and more known as "*Nur* students", must have motivated the government that Bediuzzaman was taken from Barla and brought to Isparta in 1934 and 1935 he was imprisoned in Eskisehir (Mardin S. , 1989, S. 136). The imprisonment of Bediuzzaman lasted due to varied causes in Kastamon (1936), Isparta (1943), Denizli (1943), and Afyon (1948).

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[78] For more info, please check pp. 75

"The third phase of the Said Nursi period" started when in 1956, under the Democrat Party government that was more benevolent to Islam and did not look at the *Nur* Movement negatively. In this period, Said Nursi declared that his followers were obliged to support this party, and encouraged his followers to be interested in politics, but he stayed away from politics at this stage (Mardin S. , 1989, S. 159). *The RNK* could be published, and the pamphlets were printed in printing houses in the Democrat Party period (S. Nursi 2006, 527). Because of its publication in Arabic letters, the *RNK* was prosecuted until 1956. However, in 1956 the *RNK* could legally be published in the Latin Alphabet for the first time (Atacan 2001, 114) with the permission of Bediuzzaman obtained by Tahsin Tola (Mardin S. , 1989, S. 163). Bediuzzaman died on March 23, 1960, in Sanliurfa.

3.1. Divisions in the *Nur* Movement

The death of Bediuzzaman was followed by many divisions in this movement due to differentiation in their perceptions of how to interpret his legacy and, also, how to engage with politics (Akyesilmen & Ozcan, 2014, S. 35). Yavuz and Esposito (2003, S. 15) advocate that "the *Nur* Movement pluralized along ethnic, class, educational, generational, and regional lines. Despite this pluralization, as Hendrick (2013, S. 68) puts it, they united in practice to "meet regularly in small groups to discuss and study the RNK in their *jamaat*s". The first division in *Nur* groups took place because of the dispute between the Scribes, *Yazıcılar*, and the *Yeni Asya* over the question of whether the RNK would be printed in the old Ottoman alphabet or the new Latin one, and whether they would be written by hand or printed (Yavuz H., 2003; Hendrick, 2013). The *Yazıcılar* were separated from the *Nur* groups in 1962 based on their argument: the use of a machine devalues a text's authenticity and depersonalizes it, copying by hand increases the authenticity and personality of the book and offers psychological satisfaction that ends the gap between author and readers (Yavuz H., 2003, S. 172; Yavuz H., 2006, S. 153; Yavuz & Esposito, 2003, 16). Since Bediuzzaman supported DP, *Yeni Asya* has also supported the parties and published the daily newspaper (Akyesilmen & Ozcan, 2014, S. 36).

In the early 1970s, another conflict occurred within the *Nur* movement due to the publication of a newspaper in the name of *Nurcus* and political involvement (Atacan, 2001). This dispute within the movement resulted in the fragmentation of two groups: The *Yeni Asya* movement and the *Med-Zehra* community. The *Yeni Asya* published *the RNK* in the Latin alphabet and published the *Yeni Asya* Newspaper with their interest in politics and media first under the leadership of Zubeyir Gunduzalp and then Mehmet Kutlular in 1971 (Hendrick 2013, 66). However, the *Yeni Asya* community was criticized by a group under the leadership of Muhammed Siddik (Dursun) Seyhanzade due to their Turkish nationalist discourse while publishing *the RNK* during the 1970s and 1980s (Senturk, 2015, S. 255). This group was organized as the *Med-Zehra* community by taking its name from Said Nursi's *Madrasatuzzehra* Project in Van (Bruinessen 2016).

Criticizing *Yeni Asya* because of their active involvement in day-to-day politics and their support of political parties which defend Western principles consisting of the democratic parliamentary system, the *Med-Zehra* took an anti-secular and anti-Turkish state position and supported none of Turkey's political parties (Atacan, 2001). The group perceived "political parties as a by-product of European philosophy and evaluated involvement in everyday politics as an obstacle to focus on the real aim, which is to make Islam the dominant force in all areas of life (Atacan, 2001, S. 119)". However, they supported Islamic politics and thought that "Islam cannot be separated from politics because Islam determines every aspect of one's life (Atacan, 2001, S. 119)".

In addition, the *Med-Zehra* Community asserted that *Yeni Asya* distorted Bediuzzaman's books in the Latin alphabet editions in such a way as to keep peaceful relations with the Turkish state (Beki, 1968). As advocated by Bruinessen (2016, S. 14), their notice of the fact that the Kurds have not been treated equally either by the state or by the *Nur* movements increased the awareness of their Kurdish identity. According to the *Med-Zehra*, the Kurdishness of Bediuzzaman was consciously camouflaged in the Turkish nationalist interpretation of Nursi's writings. For them, certain words such as 'Kurd' and 'Kurdistan' were consciously replaced from the original text with

such words as 'peasant', 'people from the east', and 'tribe' (Atacan, 2001, S. 123; Beki, 1968). As a result, they have criticized the other *Nur* movements for their neglect and denial of the Kurdish ethnic identity of Said Nursi (Atacan 2001, 112), and, as stressed by Bruinessen (2016, S. 14) preferred to stress Bediuzzaman's Kurdish identity by giving significant importance to his earlier works in which he was involved in Kurdish political activities.

To publish the uncensored "original" version of the RNK, Seyhanzade had to take the permission of one of the Said Nursi's first students, who were "the spiritual inheritors of the RNK", and to donate one-fifth of the profit to the *Nur* students, who devote their lives to the *Nur* service, due to the established custom within the *Nur* Movement (Atacan 2001, 121). He agreed with Abdulkadir Badilli of Kurdish ethnic origin, but since Badilli was not accepted as a publisher of the RNK, although he was Said Nursi's first student, they took the permission of Husnu Bayram to establish the *Envar Nesriyat* Publishing house in 1979 for the publication of RNK (Atacan 2001, 121). When Husnu Bayram wanted to take control of the *Envar Nesriyat*, Seyhanzade established *Tenvir Nesriyat* Publishing House in 1982 with the approval of Mustafa Acet, who also first Said Nursi's student and "provided Seyhanzade with an original text corrected by Bediuzzaman himself (Atacan 2001, 122)". It published an uncensored version of the *RNK* based on original copies and their Kurdish *Dava* (Cause/Invitation) Magazine that questioned the relationship between Turkish nationalism and the *Nur* movement (Atacan 2001, 112).

After a while, a group of younger *Nur* students, under the leadership of Izzeddin Yıldırım criticized Seyhanzade's control over the movement and split from the *Med-Zehra* in 1990. They founded *Zehra Eğitim ve Kultur Vakfı* (the Foundation of Zehra Education and Culture), known as the *Zehra* Community, and established the *Nûbihar* Publication House (Tekdemir 2018, 603), which has published the *Nûbihar* Journal since 1992 in Kurdish (Senturk, 2015, S. 271; Yavuz H., 2003). As claimed by Tekdemir (2018, 603), the majority of previous Med-Zehra members participated in the *Zehra* Community and so the Med-Zehra has had to continue with a much smaller membership.

Yanmis (2017, S. 30) asserts that they have discriminated against themselves from the *Med-Zehra* by having adopted Muslim fellow and *Nur* identity as the upper identity instead of ethnic identity. According to Tekdemir (2018, S. 603), the *Zehra* left the Med-Zehra in the Kurdish Islamic public realm and focused on matters such as education rather than being an overly Kurdish nationalist (Yavuz & Esposito, 2003).

As Tekdemir (2018, S. 603) puts it, thanks to its intellectual activity to justify Kurdish identity within a Kurdish and Islamic discourse, the *Zehra* became "the dominant Kurdish *Nur* group in the Kurdish Islamic consciousness" and attracted everyone including the *Hizbullah* group. Highlighting Bediuzzaman's earlier works, they have attributed an ethnic identity to Said Nursi by referring to him as 'Said-I Kurdi' (Tekdemir 2018, 603)[79]. Sarigil and Fazlioglu (2013, S. 555) advocate that "Constituting the pro-Kurdish wing of the conservative *Nur* Movement, the *Zehra* has positioned itself against the pro-state and pro-Turkish wing (e.g., the HM), and embraced the mission of promoting Kurdish language and culture". As claimed by Bayram (2017), there is also another Kurdish Islamic group, the NC. This group consists of the publishers and the readers of the *Nûbihar* Journal, who are at the same time members of the *Zehra* Community (Bayram, 2017). According to its members, the NC is an intellectual current that depicts and launches the *Zehra* Community into the public (Bayram, 2017). In this sense, this group is defined by Bayram (2017) as "a part of the *Zehra* Community" or as a "sub-community of the *Zehra* Community".

Furthermore, another separation within the *Nur* movement happened by Fethullah Gulen in the 1970s with his claim that "the *Yeni Asya* was too busy with politics to serve the people (Atacan, 2001, S. 116)". The foundation of this dispute was Gulen's demand to bring a difference to the *Nur* movement: Yavuz (2006, S. 155) claims that the *Gulen* group "re-imagined the *Nur* movement as a

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[79] As Tekdemir (2018, S. 604) informs it, the *Zehra* states that:
> Said-i Nursi (or as they prefer Said-i Kurdi) in his *Social Recipes* book writes of his Kurdishness and Kurdistan. For instance, in the passage: 'Hey! Kurds even though I accepted treatment as a mental patient and am lying in a mental hospital, I rejected the Sultan's proposed salary because I wanted to keep my honour and Kurdish identity.' Indeed, even in Ottoman documentation his nationality is described as Kurdish and on his certification, he is also called Said-i Kurdi. (Tekdemir 2018, 604)

Turkish-Islam" and injected the ideology of nationalism into the *Nur* movement to get legitimacy. Hence, as claimed by Yavuz (2006) and Esposito & Yavuz (2003), they supported the Kemalist state ideology that the Turkish nation includes one ethnicity, one flag, and one language, and stressed their support of nationalism and national culture. In this sense, the Movement was described in 2008 as "the group who can combine the statist-nationalist beliefs of Ataturk's republic with a traditional but flexible Islamic faith (Masood, 2008)". At the same time, Gulen supported the cooperation of different religions including different sections of Islam such as Sunnism or Alevism. Also, as Senturk (2015) puts it, Gulen always supported the policies of the state, which suppressed all dissident movements but especially the leftist ones, basically after the 1980 military coup. As a result of their political difference in the *Nur* movement, Fethullah Gulen specified his line and put into practice the Turk-Islam syntheses that he designed earlier (Beki, 1968).

As stated by Atacan (2001, S. 116), "Gulen's group has always been very careful not to identify itself with any Islamic group or political party and has neither identified himself with the *Nur* movement nor openly referred to the *RNK,* although he was once a *Nur* Movement's member." Hendrick (2009) states that some *Nur* groups also deny the relation of the HM with other *Nur* groups since Gulen's thoughts drawn from his published books shape the group ideology. According to Ozdalga (2000, S. 94-95), the HM differentiated itself from the *Nur* tradition with Gulen's call for action. As stated by Ozdalga (2000, S. 94-95), Nursi emphasized personal obligations and personal responsibility, which included spiritual development, the maturation of their personality, and the construction of a social sphere autonomous of the state. However, different from Bediuzzaman, Gulen encouraged and called the believer to do good works collectively (E. Ozdalga 2000, 94-95). These works included "the building of schools instead of mosques, investing in secular education instead of religious instruction, encouraging economic enterprises and requiring them to invest in education, encouraging educational and economic enterprises to support each other, promoting individual and collective self-criticism, and supporting critically minded planning for future projects (E. Ozdalga 2000, 95).

The HM was shaped in the 1970s in Izmir by Fethullah Gulen, who served as a religious functionary in the mosques in Izmir. He made an impression on the faith-minded local businessmen in Izmir around him through "his passion and ability to intellectually link an applied understanding of Bediuzzaman's teachings with the challenges of late-industrial Turkey (Hendrick 2013, 3)". He promoted students' faith and education in the natural/physical sciences and mathematics by organizing summer camps (Barton 2014, 293)". After the military intervention in 1971, Gulen was imprisoned for several months with the accusation of "leading a secret *jamaat* that threatened the integrity of the laic Turkish Republic (Hendrick 2013, 5)", and then he was released. After that, he kept a low profile and instead of establishing mosques, he preferred to deal with educational activities such as establishing study centres and student dormitories, organizing summer camps, and assisting poorer students to get an education (Barton 2014, 293)".

Gulen became the leader of the HM, which was at that time "a social network of young men who were inspired by Fethullah Gulen 's applied articulation of the teachings of a preceding Turkish faith-community leader, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Hendrick 2013, 3)". Hendrick (2013, 2) defines the HM as "a transnationally active, Turkish and Muslim-identified education, media, and business network whose actors and institutions span well over one hundred countries". Ozdalga describes the HM as "a religious organization based on individual membership between people who have united around a common religious cause, or mission (E. Ozdalga 2000, 100)", "not based on patron-client relationship (i.e., family and tribal-like organizations) (E. Ozdalga 2005, 435)". As explained by Hendrick (2013, 26), the hierarchy of the HM is organized under the direct leadership of Fethullah Gulen.

As explained by Hendrick (2013, S. 19), the HM is called "a social movement" because "it shares specific constitutive criteria: 1- Making systematic collective claims on target audiences, 2- organizing collective protests, demonstrations, and 3-other 'claim-making performances', and advertising their worthiness in the public sphere". Since the Gulen affiliated actors "(1) organize their broadcasts, schools, media, and business endeavors according to Turkish and host country laws and in line with the logic of global

capitalism", "(2) do form organizations and associations in an effort to put Gulen's teachings into action to show themselves as the representative of the 'pluralization and moderation of the Turkish Islam' in general", and "(3) spend their time and money advertising their worthiness to the Turkish and international public to advance their own interests", according to Hednrick (2013, S. 19) they are defined as a social movement. For Hendrick (2013, 22), the goal of the HM is "to passively increase 'the Muslim share' in the production and reproduction of social power in Turkey". In addition, as Yavuz (2006, S. 155) puts it, the HM stressed the significance of education.

By the mid-1980s, the economic liberalization period started, and capital markets appeared, new economic actors and new interest groups emerged (Hendrick 2013, 31). "The HM became more visible in the public sphere. "Gulen-inspired schools" earnt countrywide recognition by winning national scholastic competitions (Hendrick 2013, 3)". Hendrick (2013, 45) explains that the reason for the HM's success in private education was the state's neglect of the education system and its inability to meet the needs of the urban youth population. The HM developed its operations in five separate fields. First, the HM started to establish private schools in Turkey. Second, the HM has made a considerable number of investments in media. The HM had *Feza* Media Group that owns and operates several TV channels (*Samanyolu TV*, *STV Haber*, *Mehtap* TV, *Yumurcak* TV, *Ebru* TV), *Zaman* Newspaper, *Today's Zaman* Newspaper, *Cihan* News Agency (CHA), *Burc FM* Radio, and several magazines such as *Yeni Umit*, *Aksiyon*, *Sizinti* (Barton, 2014; Akyesilmen & Ozcan, 2014; Hendrick, Gulen: The Ambiguous Politics of Market Islam in Turkey and the World, 2013). As alleged by Ozdalga (2000, S. 93), all of HM's media emphasized the argument that there is no contradiction between science and religious belief, which was also the idea of Bediuzzaman. Thirdly, the HM engaged in finance and for-profit health clinics and was also active in education, interfaith dialogue, and humanitarian aids (White J. B., 2002). The HM established business support agencies such as PASIAD (The Society for Social and Economic Solidarity with Pacific Countries, which assisted Turkish and Asian businessmen to contact each other (Barton 2014, 295). Also, two of the biggest business organizations in Turkey -

TUSKON and *Asia Bank*- and the Journalists and Writers Association that aimed to discuss every political and ideological subject with leading intellectuals belonged to the HM (Akyesilmen & Ozcan, 2014, S.35; Hendrick, 2013).

It is stated by Kuru (2005, S. 263) that in the 1990s, the HM took a positive attitude toward globalization and emphasized interfaith dialogue, religious tolerance, and compatibility of Islam with democracy. Fethullah Gulen met with religious leaders such as Pope John Paul II, the Panahriot Greek Patriarch Bartholomeos, and Israeli Sephardic Head Rabbi Eliyahu B. Doron (Kuru 2005, 264). The HM expanded its education, media, and business initiatives abroad, firstly focusing on the former communist countries. They established institutions abroad with the help of international opportunity structures in Central Asia and the Balkans, and later in Russia, Australia, Southeast Asia, and Africa (Kuru 2005, 263, Barton 2014). It had business interests and hundreds of schools and private courses all over the world and in Turkey, which were famous for their high-quality, modern, and secular education, following local state curricula in every country they operated and teaching no religious courses (Barton 2014, 293). Hendrick (2013, 4) informs that parallel to these moves, the HM made the advertisements of its activities through the mechanism of mass media, public relations, and interfaith outreach.

Ozdalga (2000, 97) asserts that "schools abroad are established on a financial basis". Hendrick (2013, 4) also advocates that these schools were opened for business abroad. According to the data given by Ozdalga (2000, 97), with the establishment of schools abroad, small entrepreneurs, who lacked resources themselves, were encouraged to establish businesses with the support of "religiously motivated donations (*himmet*) as start-up capital for profit-driven enterprises (Hendrick 2013, 8)" and in return, they supported the schools financially and morally. According to Hendrick (2013, S. 57), it is because, from the beginning of the HM, Gulen encouraged his followers, especially businessmen, to give alms (religious donations -*himmet*) to be used for faithful cause (i.e., "to pay for a student's scholarship, to provide start-up capital for a new school, to send a group of influential Americans on a two-week trip to Turkey, to sponsor an academic conference devoted to

Fethullah Gulen (Hendrick 2013, 152)") as their faithful obligations. Therefore, as claimed by Hendrick (2013, 57), this situation provided an economic background for the HM's expansion, and the HM institutions could emerge "autonomously, connected via a loose network of social and financial ties, and had the opportunity to deny institutional and social network connectivity, financial overlaps, economic opportunism, and politically motivated self-promotion (Hendrick 2013, 58)". As a result, the HM could grow for three decades uninterruptedly.

Hendrick (2013, 173) also advocates the importance of Gulen schools abroad "whose activities provide anchor the HM's transnational enterprise, and whose existence provide affiliated businesses with new opportunities to expand to foreign markets". Moreover, as stated by Ozdalga (2005, 436), the HM is full of the idea of competition, whether between individuals, businesses and/or schools. The goal of this challenge is higher profits and better academic results. The ultimate power behind this impulse is the principle of worldly asceticism: To do more for Allah (E. Ozdalga 2005, 436).

After the 1997 military memorandum (Post-modern coup) precipitating the resignation of the Islamist prime minister Necmettin Erbakan of the Welfare Party and the end of his coalition government, the military aimed to crack down on all Islamic movements including the HM. In 1999, Fethullah Gulen was charged with leading an organization which directly threatens the integrity of the Turkish state[80]. According to the accusation, he "cooperated with the Islamic regime in Afghanistan, deceived and indoctrinated young pupils, and finally plotted against the state to seize the state power (E. Ozdalga 2000, 99)"[81]. This accusation was supported by the video films of

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[80] "The primary evidence in the case was a video excerpt leaked to the press, within which Gulen instructed his *jamaat* to 'move in the arteries of the system, without anyone noticing your existence until you reach all the power centres. You must wait until you have gotten all the state power until you have brought to your side all the power of the constitutional institutions in Turkey.' Gulen eventually responded as follows: 'because of conversations which were edited and intentionally misquoted in written articles, I am facing execution without trial'." (Atacan, 2001, S. 346)

[81] Ozdalga (2005, 440) summarizes these accusations as follows:

1-Fethullah Gulen is trying to infiltrate important state institutions like the judiciary, the police, and the military.

2-The purpose behind that is to prepare the ground for a seizure of state power.

Gulen's speeches that had been televised on one of the major channels. It was followed by media campaigns in all the media, including newspapers, TV, and radio through their presentation of these cassettes as the main topic (E. Ozdalga 2000, 100). Gulen fled to the USA: Nonetheless, in 2006 Gulen was acquitted of all charges against him (Hendrick, 2009, S. 346).

In the 2000s during the AKP government, with the expression of Hendrick (2013, S. 18), the HM "matured to become a profoundly effective actor in Turkey's political economy, and a nonpartisan social and economic network whose organizational capacity to invest material and social capacity has become second to none in Turkish civil society". As also claimed by Hendrick (2013, S. 197), Gulen actors also engaged in a transnational project "to lobby powerful interests around the world" that resulted in a global public relations campaign working in coordination with Gulen schools and Turkish merchants and manufactures and extending from Turkey to abroad.

It is advocated that the HM had a tactical alliance with the AKP against military domination and the secular elite since the AKP came to power in 2002 (Agency, 2016; Hendrick, 2009; Turkish Minute, 2016). In this alliance, both the AKP and the HM aimed to

> (1) bridge social conservatism with international neo-liberalism (e.g., popular Islam with democracy, free markets, human rights, etc.), and (2) align the AKP's foreign policy of 'strategic depth' (e.g., its policy to broaden Turkey's bilateral relations with its regional neighbours, and with developing countries in Africa and Southeast Asia) with the GM's

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3-The struggle for the final takeover of the state has been going on for a long time and takes place in great secrecy.

4-Fethullah Gulen's strategy is to pretend that he and his adherents fully favour Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and the existing regime, while in reality, he is preparing himself and his followers for an Islamist revolution.

5- What is so disturbing about Gulen is that he has been so skilful in hiding his real purposes from the public.

6-Fethullah Gulen controls "gigantic" sums of money. How and where these resources are appropriated is unknown. Since he lives in the US, it is hinted that he is supported by this superpower (allegedly to undetermined the interests of his native Turkey).439

7-In the schools, dormitories, and home-like student houses (*isik evleri*) set up in the name of Gulen, students are pressured to accept his teachings (Brainwashed).

8- Gulen and his adherents constitute a greater threat to the regime than either the Kurdish "terrorist organization" PKK and Abdullah Ocalan or the Welfare Party and its most militant demagogue Sevket Yilmaz. The fact that the Welfare Party functions openly must count in its favor compared to Gulen's secretiveness. (E. Ozdalga 2005, 440)

> effort to deepen Turkey's cultural and economic relationships with developing countries the world over. (Hendrick, 2009, S. 351)

> infiltrating into bureaucracy - both civil and military ones -, to shape politics, influence and even lead the country's internal and foreign politics via bureaucratic channels (Bilici, 2013).

During this alliance, the HM increased its existent influence. Its members have been positioned largely within the state machinery into key positions within the jurisdiction, the education system and academia, and the police forces, and "infiltrated into bureaucracy -both civil and military ones- (Akyesilmen & Ozcan, 2014, S. 35)", "as a part of the war against the Kemalist-secularist elites within these institutions (Azeri, 2016, S. 466)". As a result, they started to "shape politics, influence and even lead the country's internal and foreign politics via bureaucratic channels (Akyesilmen & Ozcan, 2014, S. 35)", and were shown as "the most popular and influential Islamic movement in Turkey (Akyesilmen & Ozcan, 2014, S. 35)" or "one of the most powerful and controversial Islamic movements in Turkey (E. Ozdalga 2003, 61)". Nonetheless, this infiltration resulted in the political conflict between the HM and the AK Party government (Bilici 2013).

Disputes and disagreements between the HM and the AKP, which was presented as a power struggle between pro-Gulen police and judiciary and the AKP, started at the beginning of the 2010s but became visible in 2012 (Arsu, 2012; Azeri, 2016; Karaveli, 2012). There was tension between the AKP government and the HM about the closure of the study centres. It followed with 17-25 December Corruption and Bribery Operation of the HM. The HM initiated investigations of corruption operations of bureaucrats, ministers, and family members of the AKP, starting on December 17, 2013. These people were prosecuted with the charges of "bribery, abuse of power, bid rigging and smuggling". Prime Minister of the time, Erdoğan, claimed that the members of the judiciary and the police, who conducted the investigation, were led by the HM, and were involved in the "parallel state" structure. Also, he accused the HM to attempt to overthrow the AKP government through a judiciary coup by using corruption investigations (Aydin, 2013; Azeri, 2016; Williams, 2013). Many personnel in the Police, the Judiciary, and some public institutions such as TİB, and TRT were dismissed or their places of duty were changed on the grounds of precaution against the alleged

"parallel state structure" (Kurt and Kizilkoyun 2014, Haberturk 2014). Then, the HM exposed the trucks of the National Intelligence Organization (MIT), which were loaded with weapons, in Adana and Hatay (Independent, 2019).

After the victory of the AKP government in the local elections held on March 30, 2014, Erdogan promised to fight against the "parallel structure[82]" (Cumhuriyet, 2014). In December 2014, a simultaneous police operation was carried out in 13 provinces, including Istanbul. With the claim of fighting against the HM, hundreds of police, judges, journalists, and prosecutors, which according to the AKP tried to bring down the AKP government, were dismissed or imprisoned (Aydin, 2013). The Turkish government seized several companies affiliated with the HM. On December 11, 2015, the HM has been declared a "terrorist" organization, Gulenist Terror Organization (*Fethullahci Teror Orgutu, FETO*) or Parallel State Organization (*Paralel Devlet Yapilanmasi, PDY*) (Evrensel, 2016) due to the accusation of launching a bloody coup attempt against the people and the government.

On July 15, 2016, the HM has been claimed to carry out an unsuccessful military coup attempt against the AKP within the Turkish Armed Forces to overthrow the AKP government (Azeri, 2016). The coup attempt failed to result in 250 deaths, 72 civilian deaths, 2196 casualties, a declaration of a state of emergency suspending certain basic rights and freedoms, and closure or confiscation of newspapers, schools, universities, or holdings related to the HM by the Turkish government. Also, it was followed by the discharge and arrest of thousands of military personnel, high-ranking officers, and public employees affiliated with the HM (Azeri, 2016)(Daily Sabah 2016, McKenzie, and Sanchez 2016, Yeni Safak 2017). Nevertheless, Fethullah Gulen denied HM's involvement in the coup (Saul 2016). Also, the 15 July Report of the EU Intelligence Centre (INTCEN) claims that Erdogan allegedly planned the purge of the army before the July 15 Coup d'état attempt (BBC News, 2017; Kocijancic & Smerilli, 2018). This report argues that the members of the HM have reached a

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[82] An expression that describes organizations that resemble the state in terms of management, organization, and structure but is not a legal part of the state or government.

power that can control Erdogan's movements and affect the country, but its members in the Turkish army were not strong enough to make a coup. In this sense, this report finds the claims of the Turkish government contradictory (BBC News, 2017; Kocijancic & Smerilli, 2018). Therefore, it is still indefinite whether the HM made this coup, or the current Erdogan government planned it. Therefore, when this study mentions this event, it prefers to use the "so-called" coup d'état attempt of the HM".

3.2. Publication of *Risale-i Nur Kulliyati* (Collection of Epistle of Lights)

Risale-i Nur Kulliyati[83] (RNK-Collection of Epistle of Lights) is a collection of books and booklets that were started to be written by Said Nursi in 1925 on contemporary, Islamic and faith issues, and completed in 24 years. Bediuzzaman wrote his old works[84] during the period of Old Said in 1911 and 1912, which were copyrighted for a long time, and printed in 1912 by Bediuzzaman in Istanbul (SorularlaRisale, 2010). RNK was first copyrighted in Arabic letters and reproduced by handwritings of Said Nursi's students such as Ahmet Husrev Altınbaşak, Hafız Ali, Hafız Tevfik from Şam and Tahiri Mutlu. Later on, with the permission of Said Nursi after their arrangement by Said Nursi, from 1946 to 1950, the collection was reproduced through three duplicator machines, after 1950 it started to be printed in Turkish with Latin letters in printing presses and 1957 the entire collection was published in Latin letters (SorularlaRisale, 2010).

The cause of Said Nursi's rearrangement/corrections of the RNKs before its publication in Latin letters is explained as "Bediuzzaman's wisdom to generalize and universalize the RNKs and also to convert the aspects of the old works (the social and national issues that Bediuzzaman tried to realize in his old Said period) to the RNK profession (the profession of faith and Qur'an service that

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[83] These collections include the books *Sozler, Mektubat, Lem'alar, Sualar, Tarihce-I Hayat, Barla Lahikasi, Kastamonu Lahikasi, Emirdag Lahikasi, Isaretu-l I'caz, Mesnevi-I Nuriye, Sikke-I Tasdik-I Gaybi, Asa-yi Musa, Zulfikar, Sirac-un Nur, Tilsimlar*, and *Iman ve Kufur Muvazeneleri*.

[84] These works are *Asar-I Bediiyye, Kizil Icaz, Rumuzat-I Semaniye, Muhakemat, Munazarat, Hutbe-I Samiye, Iki Mekteb-I Musibetin Sehadetnamesi*.

he started and opened in the New Said chapter, proving and spreading the principles of faith and creed, which are the common property of the general Islamic world (Sorularla Risale, 2007)". It was "the situation of leaving the old services to the third and fourth plan in terms of carrying out the big and broad and first-degree necessary issues such as riveting the issues targeting the unity of Islam and the Islamic Union without obstacles (Sorularla Risale, 2007)".

It is claimed that although Said Nursi examined one hundred copies of the same collection, he could not make the same arrangement in another copy of the same collection (Sorularla Risale, 2010). As a result, two different copies have appeared resulting in different RNKs according to the copy chosen by the publishing houses (Sorularla Risale, 2010). Both versions are accepted as correct. In addition, although Bediuzzaman requested that some appendix letters be published over time, some publishing houses did not apply this request. As a result, there are some differences in the RNKs according to the publishing houses they are published, and there are many publishing houses that make the publication of RNK such as *Envar Nesriyat*, *RNK Nesriyat*, *Hayrat Nesriyat*, *Tenvir Nesriyat, Zehra Yayincilik, Yeni Asya Nesriyat, Ihlas Nur Nesriyat, Soz Basim Yayinlari, Sahdamar Yayinlari*, and *Mutlu Yayincilik*.

It is also asserted that the publication of the RNKs has only been made through the permission of the people whom Said Nursi bequeathed permission to publish (Sorularla Risale, 2010). One of the briefs belongs to Bediuzzaman in the manuscript version of *Emirdagi Lahikasi* on the 215th page is shown as an example:

> "... But in twelve pieces (parts of Nur prepared for Tarihce-I Hayat), I allow them to remove the sentences they do not find appropriate, and I refer the improvement to them..." (Manuscript *Emirdaği Lahikasi*, p. 215) (Sorularla Risale, 2007)

Also, Bediuzzaman, when he sent his work *İki Mekteb-i Musibetin Şehadetnâmesi* to Ankara to publish it in its final form after revisions and savings, added the following inscription to its beginning.

> Dear Brothers, you can reproduce this corrected style with the consultation of the first students. A copy of this *musahhah* can be sent to İnebolu, and if it is compatible with the old letters, it can be duplicated. Since it was written twice in ancient times, no one objected to it... Besides, some words that could relate to it were changed, and the same truth is a collection.

> You can publish with the approval of your special friends, but on condition that you pay full attention to their health. It may be a complete lesson of this time rather than the old one. (Sorularla Risale, 2007)

However, "such permissions are claimed to belong to the time Bediuzzaman was alive and to the things he had in mind (Sorularla Risale, 2007)". Said Ozdemir, a student of Said Nursi, supports this argument as follows:

> After the establishment of the Republic, Bediuzzaman removed the expressions he used in his work titled *Iki Mektebi Musibetin Sehadetnamesi*. It changed all of that. He said that these statements would be misunderstood and would cause Kurdishness. He changed these expressions with "my citizens" and "my brothers". He removed the Kurdish words. (Malbat, 2014, S. 33)

Nonetheless, Abdulkadir Badilli asserts that the changes in the RNKs were made after the death of Bediuzzaman:

> At that time, we were living in the Inonu government. The news that the *Nurcu*s had relations with Mullah Mustafa Barzani had spread to the press. Instead of the word Kurdistan, they showed the Orient and Kurd with something else. These events took place between 1979 and 1981. All the press claimed that *Nur* students had relations with the Barzanis. Such changes were done so that they would not be harmed. The view towards the Kurds at that time also affected the *Nur* community, causing the words "Kurd" and "Kurdistan" to be removed. (Malbat, 2014, S. 33)

Some people among the Nur Communities, specifically the *Med-Zehra* Community and the *Zehra* Community or the NC, believe that rather than Bediuzzaman himself, some of Said Nursi's first students after the death of Said Nursi changed or removed the parts of Bediuzzaman's works in which he referred to Kurdishness or his Kurdishness to isolate Said Nursi from his Kurdish identity (Malbat, 2014). According to Malbat (Malbat, 2014), the word "Kurd" was replaced with "villager", "porter", "Bedouin/Bedevi", "real Muslim", or "villager of the East", and the word "Kurdistan" with "the Orient"[85].

As a result, there are two types of *Nur* Communities: 1- The ones that support the publication of Bediuzzaman's works in their new form permitted by Said Nursi himself since they believe that some expressions in some of the old works of Said Nursi were overhauled and some words were removed by Said Nursi himself (Sorularla Risale, 2010). 2- Another that supports the publication of

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[85] For detailed info please check Malbat's (2014) article.

old works of Said Nursi in their first unchanged original form (Sorularla Risale, 2010) since they believe that the changes in Bediuzzaman's works were made after the death of Bediuzzaman. For example, *Envar Nesriyat* belongs to the first category whereas *Zehra* Publishing House of the *Zehra* Community and *Tenvir Nesriyat* of the *Med-Zehra* Community falls into the second category (Malbat, 2014, S. 28).

Due to such differentiations in the publications of the RNKs, in this study, I have avoided using the RNK of a particular publication not to discriminate any of them from another. Since it was difficult to reach such sources abroad, I used the ones to which I had access. However, I must state that such a necessity to use the RNK emerged when a part inside the RNK was referenced by the Islamic communities. In this way, I tried to ensure that an entire part inside the RNK is visible correctly and unmodified.

3.3. Conclusion

This chapter sheds light on the life of Bediuzzaman, who divided his life into three parts "Old Said (1878-1923)", "New Said (1923-1956)", and "III. Said (1956-1960)", and the divisions in the *Nur* movement after his death. It primarily examines the political activities of Bediuzzaman in the Old Said period, when he preferred to serve religion through politics and became an important figure in Kurdish society because he attempted to improve Kurdish regions and educate Kurds. Then. It focuses on the "New Said" period when Bediuzzaman moved away from politics and went into seclusion by focusing only on religion by realizing that the most important duty is to strengthen the faith, and started the *Nur* Movement. This chapter also investigates the II. Said period started with the declaration of Bediuzzaman that his followers were obliged to support the Democrat Party, and encouraged his followers to be interested in politics, but he stayed away from politics at this stage. This chapter also concentrates on how Bediuzzaman with his Islamic and Kurdish ethnic identity has perceived the reforms and nationalist politics of the Turkish state and how he has been influenced by

them. The remainder of the chapter examines the divisions within the *Nur* movement that started with the death of Bediuzzaman, revealing their reasons. These divisions continue as follows: the dispute between the Scribes, *Yazıcılar*, and the *Yeni Asya* Community in 1962, the conflict between the *Med-Zehra* community and the *Yeni Asya* in the 1970s, the division of the *Zehra* from the *Med- Zehra* Community in 1990, and separation of the HM from the *Yeni Asya* in 1970s. At the end of the chapter, the RNK of Bediuzzaman and its publication is focused on, and the differences that can be seen between publications are examined. It is shown how the RNK was changed by Bediuzzaman himself before its first publication in the Latin alphabet, how the RNK can be published only with the approval of the people whom Bediuzzaman bequeathed, and how some Kurdish Islamic communities rejected this order, which was left in the hands of the Turkish majority *Nur* communities, and found the RNK not original.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE *NÛBIHAR* CIRCLE

4.1. Definition of the Kurdish Question

When the NC's description of the KQ is evaluated, it is seen that mostly its members define the KQ as **a problem relating to the denial of Kurdish identity and the inhuman treatment of the Turkish Republic against the Kurds**. According to Denise (2017), it took the form of a betrayal. This betrayal, for Denise (2017), occurred after the establishment of the Turkish Republic when Ataturk did not keep his promise to the Kurds to give them autonomy. Instead, he denied their existence and legal status.

Denise (2017) and Soner (2017) argue that the Kurdish identity has been denied when the founding principles of the Republic -Turkishness, Sunnism, Hanefism, and assertive secularism- have been imposed on others. In this way, as asserted by Denise (2017), the Kurds that come mostly from the Shafii sect in Turkey have been excluded by the Turkish state. Soner (2017) also states that the definition of citizenship and the structure of the state have been established based on the nation-state, which has excluded the Kurdish nation from this definition. Namely, as expressed by Soner (2017) and Denise (2017), the founding principles and philosophy resulted in the emergence of the KQ in Turkey through the denial of the Kurds as a nation. Therefore, as Kaya (2012) puts it, the NC perceives the KQ as a "historical crisis caused by the process of the republican cadres, which transformed their collective rights, identity, culture and homeland into Turkish identity, culture and homeland through a widespread organization, traditional dynamics, and military power".

In addition, Denise (2017) and Asil (2015) advocate that the Turkish state's enforcement of its ideology to the people has also created the KQ. According to Denise (2017), the physical and psychological force and even violence of the Turkish State against the Kurds and its legal denial of their status resulted in anger and broken emotions/heartbreak for the Kurds. It created the KQ. Denise (2017) defines another dimension of the KQ as being heartbroken, betrayed, legally rejected, and denied. Asil (2015) expresses that the nationalistic attitude of the Turkish Republic against religious people and people from different ethnicity has formed the KQ. It's why, according to Asil (2015), unlike other nations in Turkey only the Kurds have rebelled and resisted their rights and

demands but were suppressed brutally. Therefore, as Denise (2017), Soner (2017), and Asil (2015) put it, the NC perceives the KQ as the result of Turkish nationalism.

Besides, the KQ is also described by the members of the NC as **a disunity problem resulting from the Kurds' lack of national solidarity and national consciousness**. Kanca (2017) connects the main reason behind the KQ to the domestic problems of Kurds. According to Kanca (2017), since the Kurds cannot secure uniformity by themselves, they cannot successfully be and act as a nation. The uniformity, for Kanca (2017), can only be gained when national consciousness among Kurds is provided. Therefore, Kanca (2017) perceives the main cause of the KQ as the lack of national consciousness and national solidarity among Kurds. Eser (2017) advocates that this problem was detected before by Bediuzzaman. As explained by Kanca (2017), whereas Germany achieved unity and reached national awareness after dissolution or Italy ensured its unity of small states, the Kurds could not provide or complete its nationalization process. According to Seyhanzade (1992, S. 9), the main reason for the disunity and separatism expressed by Bediuzzaman was the lack of equality and the fact that someone had a privilege. Because Seyhanzade (1992, S. 9) claims that the Kurds were exploited by the Turkish administration of that day, leaving them ignorant and poor, and trying to be assimilated. Therefore, as advocated by Seyhanzade (1992, S. 9), Bediuzzaman believed in the impossibility of talking about the brotherhood of Islam, unity and solidarity in such an environment without disunity.

Kanca (2017) is worried about the existence of no study to bring a solution to this disunity dimension of the KQ. As a result, as Kanca (2017) advocates, to compensate for this deficiency among the Kurds, Bediuzzaman, who has aimed to bring Kurds to the national consciousness, is considered important and his words are taken into consideration by the NC in a solution of the KQ.

4.2. Solutions to the Kurdish Question

According to the NC, the first solution for the KQ should be **memory work conducted by the**

Turkish state with Kurds. Nal (2017) argues that having mispresenting the Kurds in the media and press, the Turkish state has shown the Kurds as murderers to the Turkish people since the establishment of the Republic, and hence, Turkish citizens have been misinformed about the Kurds for years. As a result, as Nal (2017) puts it, if the Turkish state truly intends to solve the KQ amicably, first, it should accept and publicly declare its previous mistakes against the Kurds. Also, it should realize its duty to persuade Turkish society by denouncing its misdeeds by declaring "I have lied to you for 40 years" (Nal, 2017). Nal (2017) describes this process as the "Confrontation of the Turkish State". and argues that only after the Turkish state confronts Turkish society, can solutions to the KQ be thought out in a meaningful way. And for Nal (2017), this attitude of the state will be the first step toward solving the KQ.

More importantly, the NC stresses the key point to solve the KQ, which is **ethnical recognition of the Kurdish nation** (Kanca, 2017; Soner, 2017; Umit, 2017). According to Soner (2017), it would be nonsense and meaningless to try to solve the problems of a non-exist nation as long as everyone who is bound to the Turkish Constitution with the bond of citizenship is defined as Turkish, not as Kurdish. Therefore, as Soner (2017) asserts, it is very necessary for the NC that the Turkish state should arrange the definition of citizenship in the constitution, and the Kurds must be accepted and internalized as a nation, as a people. Therefore, it is meaningful for Soner (2017) to produce solutions for the KQ after the ethnical recognition of the existence of the Kurdish nation by the Turkish state.

Another solution suggested by the NC is the **reinstitution of the fundamental rights** of the Kurds that were violated by the state for years. According to Kanca (2017), Asil (2015), and Umit (2017), Kurdish identity should legally be recognized, and the Kurds should be granted rights equal to the other ethnic groups living in Turkey. As Kanca (2017) and Umit (2017) put it, "the NC never gives up promoting the fundamental rights of the Kurds and seeks to attain equal rights for Kurds even though other Kurds, Kurdish groups, or the Kurdish political movements, e.g., the PKK, have

given up pursuing Kurds' fundamental rights". Kanca (2017) presents these rights as "irreplaceable" and "close to discussion and negotiation" for the NC. Namely, as advocated by Kanca (2017) and Asil (Asil, 2015), the NC rejects the politicization of fundamental rights. For Kanca (2017), a real solution can be supplied when the fundamental rights of the Kurds are provided to the Kurdish nation in Turkey.

Besides, it is comprehended that it is very important for the NC not to give fundamental rights to the Kurds with the mercy of the Turkish state. According to Kanca (2017) and Nal (2017), it is already "an obligation and duty of the Turkish state to compensate for the deprived rights of the Kurds". Nal (2017) advises the Turkish State to address all those dimensions with a sense of responsibility while solving the KQ. As argued by Nal (2017), the KQ is "not a problem of compassion, but rather the responsibility of the Turkish State". Nal (2017) believes that even in current human law in world conditions, the KQ can be resolved without being used by current political warfare. According to Nal (2017), the KQ should be resolved in administrative law, but still not as mercifully as the government loan. It should not be like they will stop again if the credit runs out (Kanca, 2017).

After the evaluation of the solutions of the members of the NC, the content of the fundamental rights can be represented as 1- identity rights, 2- education in the mother language, 3- the use of Kurdish in the political public for political rights, 4- the use of the Kurdish language in the public sphere including the media, and 5- different versions of autonomy, and the establishment of autonomy/ federation/ independent state. As advocated by Kanca (2017),

> Only Kurds should be able to decide the type of regime that governs their region. The needs of this nation can be solved if they are focused on. These can also be learned by asking the Kurds. Each group has different requests for proposals. But one of the main things is the use of the mother language in all spheres of free life, and to have a status as a nation. Under today's conditions, this status can range from autonomy to independence. The Kurds can handle this in a culture of consensus. (Kanca, 2017)

Education in the mother language is declared as one of the fundamental rights of the Kurds in and close to the discussion (Asil, 2015; Aydin M. , 2018; Denise, 2017; Kanca, 2017; Umit, 2017). Asil

(2015) argues that if Kurds cannot teach their children in their mother language and if Kurdish is not a dominant part of their lives, the assimilation of the Kurds by the Turkish State continues. Asil (2015) approaches the issue from a different perspective:

> In the past, Kurds could protect themselves in their villages when they were far from technology, but now they cannot since technology is everywhere. They are assimilated much faster with different things, from the Internet to the phone to the computer. This process of assimilation in 20-30 years has not been possible in 100 years. There is nothing left of people's language to culture. He says he is a Kurd, but there is no language, no culture. There is no loyalty to its roots in the past. (Asil, 2015)

Nonetheless, according to Asil (2015), this assimilated situation of the Kurdish people by technology can be corrected if the educational languages are in Kurdish and become official. He (2015) gives the Israeli sample, whose official language was taught to everyone even though this language, Hebrew, was a language used only by rabbis when Israel was founded. Therefore, Asil (2015) emphasizes the importance of education in the mother language in solving the KQ.

Umit (2017) stresses that the NC does not only support education in the Kurdish mother language with its words but also cultural and traditional activities. As expressed by Umit (2017), the NC has already established two *Hurriyet* (freedom) educational institutions and two colleges in Van and Bingol. Umit (2017) highlights that this educational institution established by the NC is the first school in Bingol that provides Zazaki education in the Turkish Republic. Also, as stated by Umit (2017), the children of those who have the highest rank in the state system of Turkey - for Van - from the police organization, military system or any other system go to the *Hurriyet* College in Van and take Kurdish lessons to learn Kurdish. Umit (2017) also emphasizes that there is no discrimination in these schools and even the children of the Turkish police can learn Kurdish.

Moreover, it is also declared by its members that the use of Kurdish in the public sphere is one of the fundamental rights. As expressed by Nal (2017), the NC was established to spread Kurdish via its publications in Kurdish, as well as to support the use of Kurdish in the social public sphere. As Eser (2017) put it, this is because "the NC thinks that language carries people from the past to the future". Also, Nal (2017) claims that "Kurdish is one of Allah's verse forms" and therefore, the NC

serves the books in Kurdish for the Kurds. In this way, according to Kaya (2012), the NC supports education in the mother language and the use of the Kurdish language and culture in the public sphere. As Nal (2017) and Asil (2015) put it, believing that the continuation of nations is based on their mother language and culture, the NC focuses on the Kurdish language and culture, holds courses and trains people and organizes seminars about the Kurdish elders who served the Kurdish language and had influence in history, such as *Ehmedi Xanî* or *Melayi Ciziri*. In this way, the NC considers itself to develop people's historical consciousness and make them think about their traditions and values (Asil, 2015).

Moreover, as alleged by Denise (2017), the NC supports the removal of all obstacles to Kurdish identity and culture and the withdrawal of the changed names of Kurdish places by the state. Asil (2015) declares the requirement of the Kurds' representation in religious affairs as representatives of the Shafiism sect and the need for Kurdish religious men to preach sermons in Kurdish regions.

Asil (2015) affirms the support of the Kurds in cultural activities and studies by the Turkish State. According to Asil (2015), rather than discriminating against them, the state should support them. On the one hand, he (2015) shows the state's publication of Kurdish books as an example of such support. He (2015) states that "Three-four books have been published in such a way. Similar works should be serialized". On the other hand, Asil (2015) suggests the need for change in some statements in schoolbooks:

> The names of the Kurds are only mentioned in one place in the history books, it is something like the *Kurdistan Teali* Community; nevertheless, it is included in harmful associations in the books. Hence, the reader perceives the Kurds as harmful whereas originally that association did not have such a function. However, this association was founded by the Ottoman Empire and the man at the head of that association was also the head of the Council of State, that is, the head of the Council of State. However, the Turkish Republic regime counts it among harmful associations. Therefore, Kurdish children must have historical names in which they can find themselves in textbooks, and only in that way, they can feel belonging. (Asil, 2015)

As can be comprehended from Asil's statement, he (2015) attracts attention to the deficiency of the true representation of the Kurds in the schoolbooks so that Kurdish children can see

themselves in these books at all. It is to say, he (2015) highlights the requirement of schoolbooks, in which Kurdish heroes are written off as highly as Turkish heroes, and in which Kurdish children see and find themselves represented while reading these schoolbooks. As advocated by Asil (2015), only in this way, they would not be ashamed of their Kurdish identities.

Besides, the NC perceives the establishment of a regional autonomous government for the Kurds as one of the fundamental rights. Denise (2017) expresses that there are two models that the NC demands: 1-its desired model and 2-the model that conditions allow. According to Denise (2017), the NC is very clear and the model they all want is long-term federalism: Territorial federalism, and independence in the future with the establishment of the Kurdish State. However, as alleged by Denise (2017), since the current situation does not allow it, they want autonomy, a soft form of federalism. For Denise (2017), it can be called a regional model or regional autonomy, or it can also be comprehended as federalism. According to Denise (2017), these are the models in the minds of all members of the NC, which do not vary from person to person but maybe can be expressed in different terms.

Kaya (2012) advocates that the NC does not demand a Kurdish nation-state or the type of autonomy based on ethnicity and land. According to Kaya (2012), the NC demands political status for Kurds, which means "the freedom to determine all cultural, political, economic, and other processes in line with the demands of the people, not by the imposition of the sovereigns". As stated by Kaya (2012), it includes the right of the Kurds to decide their right to determine their national destiny in a political formulation without breaking away from the Turks and the peoples of Turkey. Asil (2015) states the same things as Kaya with his words:

> Together with the Turks, it can be dissolved in this geography based on brotherhood. It is necessary to name this brotherhood, but also to put the law of rights. The law of this is that I also have what you have. Let the state be ours, let us express ourselves comfortably within the state, and read and write our language in schools, our administrative powers belong to us in our regions; we should be given more authority in administrative matters. (Asil, 2015)

Asil (2015) suggests allowing Kurds to govern their regions and strengthen local administrations. However, this autonomous/federal region of the Kurds, as stated by Asil (2015), should not be

separated from the centre. He (2015) shows Canada, Ireland, Spain, Corsica, and Kuwait with similar practices, where local people have the right to govern themselves, without leaving the centre, as examples. Denise (2017) and Kanca (2017) also advocate the same things: "The state should clarify what comprises the Kurdish area, even though no fences are put between borders. And parliament and the constitution should accept a regional, autonomous statute for the Kurds (Denise, 2017)." In addition, according to Kanca (2017), there should be a local parliament for the Kurds, where Kurds can represent themselves; Kurds should establish their own educational and cultural foundations, and Kurds should be able to elect their governor. Furthermore, Tunç (Tunc, 1994, S. 59) gives people some food for thought by explaining that a "federation means sharing a political and administrative authority based on the rule of law, supplying the coexistence of varied tribes and nations. It can be applied to multi-national, multi-religion, multi-cultural, and multi-sectarian countries".

Moreover, Nal (2017) states the necessity of the Turkish State to give the Kurds a federal structure in Turkey with his example of Iraqi Kurdistan. According to Nal (2017), although there is a border of small hills between Iraqi Kurdistan and South-eastern Anatolia/ Northern Kurdistan, there is a huge difference in between them. Nal (2017) affirms that although the Kurds in Iraq have a flag of their own, an education and security system of their own. Unfortunately, the Kurds in Turkey have trouble combining the three colours. Therefore, Nal (2017) advocates that such difference sometimes results in a war between states and nations. He (2017) invites the Turkish state to take a lesson from Iraqi Kurdistan to make a change for the Kurds in Turkey. Çiçek (2013) also states the same thing as Nal: "Kurds in Turkey should at least have the same rights and conditions as Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan. According to Nal (2017), the NC supports these ideas by considering Bediuzzaman's words since Bediuzzaman offered very important solutions to the Kurds 100 years ago," which is *Cemahiri Muttefika-i Islamiye* (United Islamic Republics) model.

Bediuzzaman's solution mentioned above by Nal, which is named the model of *Cemahiri Muttefika-i Islamiye,* is detailed by Din (2016). According to Din (2016), this model is "a kind of

confederal Islamic world". As stated by Din (2016), there is a system proposal for a European Parliament, like the European Union. Within the framework of this model, the politicization of the Kurds is seen as a right to build themselves within the framework of equal political rights with other nations in the Middle East or the Islamic world. Din (2016) affirms that the strategy or means of achieving this goal may not coincide with a PKK movement. However, Din (2016) believes it is a right for the Kurds to establish their status in the final order and to establish their status in their current sovereignty. Din (2016) openly supports the NC's demand to establish Bediuzzaman's confederal Islamic world, *Cemahiri Muttefika-i Islamiye*, through this model. According to Din (2016), the NC will give Kurds the same rights as other nations in the Middle East or the Islamic World. Ay (1970) claims that "according to the NC, the establishment of Kurdistan is a must and it should be an Islamic state." Denise (2017) also states that the NC wants the establishment of a new state model for the Kurds based on the Kurdish-Turkish brotherhood and togetherness, inspired by Bediuzzaman's as the final formulation for the KQ.

According to Denise (2017), fifty-sixty per cent of the members of the NC are prone to independent Kurdistan or autonomy projects and projects in the sense of political status. Nevertheless, as asserted by Denise (2017), emotionally the NC are more loyal to Bediuzzaman's positive nationalism (*muspet milliyetcilik*), the unity of Islam, and the Middle East federation style as the solution of the KQ. As advocated by Denise (2017), what the NC aims for is to secure independence. Soner (2017) strengthens such claims with his words "after Kurdish identity is recognized and the Kurds have equal rights with Turks, the Kurds' statute can reach independence." Din (2016) also asserts the same: "The NC demands status for the Kurds, and even the NC perceives that federation and over-federation (independence) to be legal for Kurds." According to Resul (1991, S. 15) who does not find the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in the region to the benefit of the Kurds in the first place, the federative state system is compatible with the spirit of Islam as it is based on the principle of sharing rights equally without harming the collective integrity of the Kurds. As asserted by Resulan (1991, S. 15), in a federative system, the Kurds will not only get all their human rights but also will not be

tricked by the colonial imperialists.

Moreover, the NC's suggestion for a new constitution (Rêvebir, 2012) demonstrates its demand for an autonomous or federal or independent state:

Different ones should be approved within the context of multi-nationalism and multi-culturalism. To protect different socio-cultural rights to govern themselves, in the context of individual and social rights, cultural rights, linguistic rights, and private representational rights should be conferred. As education in the mother language is the most legitimate right of citizens, the state should organize and guarantee the actualization of the use of these languages in the public sphere. Taking the governmental and political demands of regions, either a governmental, or both a governmental and politically decentralized, system should be installed. Through this, the hegemonic structure of the state, which monopolizes centralist-bureaucratic and political sovereignty, should be changed. (Rêvebir, 2012)

As can be seen above, it seems that the NC adopts independence as its goal since, according to its members; independence is also Bediuzzaman's goal. Umit (2017) states that

because of a deep analysis of Bediuzzaman's works, it is seen that Bediuzzaman proposes serious Kurdish cultural accumulation and a Kurdish mentality that has caught fire today. This mentality will put the current Kurdish political structure forward to even attain an independent state structure. (Umit, 2017)

As stated by Ozbek (2011, S. 17), "for twenty years, Bediuzzaman gave up everything to achieve the goal of *hurriyet* (independence or freedom) in his heart and soul." According to Ozbek (2011, S. 17), Bediuzzaman's demand for *hurriyet* (freedom/independence) also reveals itself in *Hurriyete Hitap* (Appeal to Freedom), his call to the people after the declaration of *Meşrutiyet* (constitutional monarchy):

Appeal to Freedom

O freedom of sharia (religious law)! You call with the such magnificent but beautiful and good news that you wake a Bedouin like me while he is lying under a layer of heedlessness. If it weren't for you, I and the whole nation would have been stuck in prison. I congratulate you on your eternal life. If you make sharia the source of life and find happiness in that paradise, I give you the good news that this oppressed nation will progress a thousand degrees compared to the old times. If it guides you properly and does not disgrace you with its personal and intellectual revenge...

O, Lord! What a blissful doomsday and what a beautiful recollection this time depicts for us a small example of the truth of resurrection after death. Namely:

The ancient civilization, buried in the corners of Asia and Rumelia, began its life; those who seeks his interests in the general public and those who desired tyranny began to say,

"What would it be if I were soil?" Since our new Constitutional Monarchy was born like a miracle, we will hopefully have the secret of "They started talking to a baby in the cradle" within a year. It is the reward of silence for thirty years of Ramadan, which we have kept silently and patiently, that it has opened the doors of paradisal progress and civilization to us. The shari/religious law, which is the acquittal of the sovereignty of the national, invites us to duh, like the treasury of Paradise.

O oppressed brotherhood of homeland! Let's go get involved! Its first gate is the unity of hearts in the section of sharia; second, the love of the national; third, education; fourth, human work; the fifth abandonment. I refer the others to your mind.
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Do not be afraid, O homeland brothers! Do not kill again with licentiousness and vulgarity in religion. And against all evil and evil morals, evil devils and adulation; The main law, which was established on the great and bright Sharia, came under the rule of Azrael and killed them.

Do not be afraid, O homeland brothers! Do not revive it again with extravagance, the falsity of sharia and legitimate flavours! So by now, we were in the grave, rotting. Now, with this union of nation and constitutionalism, we have passed to the womb, and we will find prosperity. From the distance, we have lagged for a hundred and so years, if Allah lets us, with the Prophet of Miracle, we will get on the train of sharia law, operationally and intellectually. We will compete for a shoulder to shoulder with the mile-i-mumeddine, although this savagery-gizzard field will be destroyed in a short time. Because they sometimes got on an ox cart and went to the road. All of a sudden, we will get on the river like a ferryboat and a balloon, and we will pass. Maybe we will go through leagues with the help of the Islamic truth, which is the moral goodness of the mosque, the natural disposition, the fayz-i faith, and the teshil that the violence of hunger gives us. How we passed the time.

With the duty given to me by studentship and the edict of freedom, I warn that:
O ebna-yi homeland! Do not interpret freedom as such, so that it does not escape us. And let the deceased not suffocate us by making us drink the old captivity in another container.

{(Hashiye): Yes, with a more terrible tyranny, they made us drink a very bitter and poisonous bondage.}

For, freedom is realized and arises with the rules of the law, the morals of the Shari'a and the good morals. (Nursi S. , 2006b, S. 55-57)

According to Ozbek, in this declaration,

Bediuzzaman stated that "*hurriyet-i şer'i*", which means freedom dependent on Sharia, would awaken Kurds from *gaflet* (blindness, carelessness) and would prevent them from the enslavement of people. If *hurriyet* is based on Sharia, it would last forever, according to Bediuzzaman, and national sovereignty would dominate. However, *hurriyet*-i şer'i should be protected and maintained through *ittihad-ı kulub* (harmony) within the scope of Sharia, *muhabbet-i milliye* (patriotism), *maarif* (education), *say'i insani* (human labor), and *terk-i sefahet* (abandonment of dissipation). *Hurriyet* could grow up when people obey the rules, Shari law, and good morals (at that point Bediuzzaman exemplifies the Era of Bliss (*Asr-ı Saadet)*) whereas dissipation, wastefulness, violence, and sensual enthusiasm could convert

hurriyet into slavery for the Kurds. (Ozbek, 2011, S. 18)

Ozbek (2011) claims that in this declaration, Bediuzzaman ushers in freedom to have an everlasting existence. According to Ozbek (2011), after this declaration, Bediuzzaman offers a proposal for how freedom can be sustained in the (Kurdish) nation. As Ozbek (2011) puts it, the NC interprets the declaration below

> *Meşrutiyet* is a consultation ordered by Sharia. *Meşrutiyet* 's heart is knowledge whereas its language is a friendly conversation. *Meşrutiyet* is the domination of nations, not of dictators. You (the Kurds) are a master even. It is the wisdom of all tribes. You will also find heaven on earth. Through *Meşrutiyet*, all enthusiasm and willingness are awakened. You should also wake up and be fully human. *Meşrutiyet* will bring fortune to Islam and Asia and make our state eternal. It exists with the existence of the nations. You also try to be a sultan with freedom. *Meşrutiyet* ties more than three hundred million Islamic people together like a tribe. You also protect this system. The consultation is open to everyone, and hence nationality seemed to come into action. In nationality, Islam was illuminated and acted. The spirit of nationality is Islam. We do not look like any other nation. (Nursi, 2013, S. 83)

that Bediuzzaman offered an alternative to the Kurds, which was *Meşrutiyet* (Constitutional Democracy) at that time, to bring them *hurriyet*, a free environment. Denise (2017) also draws a Bediuzzaman who offered autonomy in which the Kurds would have rights and live according to their own culture.

As can be comprehended above, it is seen that the NC's solution to the KQ is independence. They show this solution as Bediuzzaman's solution since they read and evaluate Bediuzzaman's works through their Kurdish ethnic identity.

Moreover, the NC also asserts the **conferral of national consciousness/national solidarity among the Kurds** as one of the solutions for the KQ. As Eser (2017) put it, although the NC demands independence of the heart, it is also aware of the fact that unless national consciousness is given to the Kurds, they cannot achieve independence. Hence, Eser (2017) emphasizes the importance and requirement of national consciousness and national solidarity to attain independence. Eser (2017) shows it as the advice of Bediuzzaman.

Kanca (2017) states the importance of Bediuzzaman's words in *Munazarat*, one of Bediuzzaman's works

…Question: No matter how this government and Turks are, we cannot relax, we cannot

rise. What is it like to raise our heads and contemplate the world over them, and to stretch our hands to pure water with them, to show ourselves that we are a people too? Because the government and Istanbul are more blurred.

Answer: The constitutional monarchy is the nation. That is, the deputy, who is the embodiment of your public opinion, is the judge; government is sovereign and servant. If so, thank yourself; You would be very deceived by putting all the blame on the government and the Turks.

I will tell you an example: If there is a change at the head of a big fountain that has branches everywhere, it will spread in every direction. But if there is a large pool in the middle of a hundred springs, that pool looks at the springs and is subject to them. Suppose, that pool does not affect the fountains, even if it is completely blocked or if it breaks down for God's sake. If the spring becomes a spring.

Here, see: Under the rule of tyranny, Istanbul and the government were the head of the pool; You had the right to complain. Now, Istanbul is a lake, the government is a pool, a Turk is a jewel or it must be so. The pool is with us or it is necessary to be with us? O Kurds! I see that we do not have a spring. That's why we drink water that comes from afar. We see tyranny as before. So strive, work; To strengthen constitutionalism, which is our reason for happiness, make the national idea boiler/digger and give it ingenuity and virtue. Throw a bow at these places; May a fountain of perfection arise in us too. Otherwise, you will always be a beggar, or you will die of thirst. Besides, begging is not worth it. If a person becomes a beggar, let him be to himself. I think beggars for mercy are either unjust or lazy. If you are human, whatever the government, Istanbul and Turks are, they will not harm you, but good things will come.

Question: Why should goodness not come? The two are friends.

Answer: Hey! We said: Now, the government and Istanbul are or will be a pool in a pit. The pool is below. Badness is calm, it does not roll upwards (provided that it is not tempted by ignorance). Goodness is light, it reflects up… (Nursi S. , S. 17)

Kanca interprets these words of Bediuzzaman as follows:

The Kurds ask Bediuzzaman "We, as Kurds, are not comfortable either with the government or the Turks. How can we reach the pure water not tainted by the Turks?" It is to say, how can they drink pure water instead of the water made dirty by the Turks? What does that mean? Is it not independence, being a state? It is something related to the emergence of national consciousness. Bediuzzaman replies: "Through the *Meşrutiyet* (constitutional monarchy), the government of a single nation ended, and henceforth everyone will choose their deputies and send them to the parliament. Naturally, there is a pool, the parliament, and everyone can divert their water to this pool. I see you, Kurds: you do not have a spring to send to the pool." Namely, Bediuzzaman means that you do not have national consciousness. And Bediuzzaman continues: "According to the current constitutional monarchy, parliament is a pool below. We, the Kurds, have a spring as other nations do. We discharge water to the pool. Even if this pool has been broken down, then as long as our spring is strong, we are not damaged. However, if we are lower than the water, then the dirtiness of the water pollutes and damages us. Nevertheless, the main problem for Kurds is the deficiency of spring. Therefore, you drink the cloudy water that comes from far away. You Kurds! Work hard to reveal your spring! Otherwise, you will be like a beggar to others. If you must be a beggar, you should be a beggar to yourselves, not to others." What Bediuzzaman means is to strive in some way for independence. (Kanca, 2017)

To be clear, according to Kanca (2017), the Kurds were uneasy about the Turks and their government. Thus, they wanted to remove the Turks' influence and asked Bediuzzaman how they can reach the pure water without feeling the influence of the Turks. Kanca (2017) commentates that the Kurds asked how they could get independence. As Kanca (2017) puts it, Bediuzzaman detected the problem of the Kurds not being able to get their independence, which is their lack of national consciousness and national solidarity. As interpreted by Kanca (2017), the NC evaluates Bediuzzaman's solution for the Kurds as independence, which can be achieved through national consciousness among the Kurds. Namely, according to Kanca (2017), Bediuzzaman states that if the Kurds want to achieve independence, and not be interrupted and impacted by any other nations, they should attain their national consciousness. Only after that, they will not be damaged and will not have to become beggars to any other nations. Also, Kanca advocates that the first idea of Bediuzzaman is Ottomanism, but after the collapse of the Ottomans, his idea changed to *Cemahiri Muttefika- i Islamiye*.

According to Denise (2017), the NC misinterprets these words of Bediuzzaman in *Munazarat*. It is because, in the full text, Bediuzzaman talks about *Meşrutiyet* which binds more than three hundred million Islamic people, including the Kurdish nation, together like a tribe, and will realize *Cemahiri Muttefika-i Islamiye* (Denise, 2017). Although this idea of Bediuzzaman seems like an independent Kurdish state under the con-federal *Cemahiri Muttefika-i Islamiye* model, Denise (2017) asserts that the con-federal *Cemahiri Muttefika-i Islamiye* model is the Ottoman Empire. This model allows all nationalities including the Kurds to live according to their own cultures under the Ottoman caliphate (Denise, 2017). Additionally, as Denise (2017) advocates, in Bediuzzaman's Manifesto to the Kurds, Bediuzzaman commands the Kurds to "bring the unified Kurd population into Ottoman society as a shining star under holy Islam, so that common harmony and stability can be kept". In this sense, according to Denise (2017), Bediuzzaman supports that the Kurds should provide their national unity, but this unity should be under the Ottoman Empire, under the holy

Islam. It is to say, as Denise (2017) puts it, according to Bediuzzaman, the independence of the Kurds relies on their freedom to live according to their own culture and tradition. Denise (2017) defines Bediuzzaman's solution to the Kurdish problem as autonomy under the Ottoman Empire, rather than total independence only under Sharia as advocated by NC.

Kanca (2017) believes that the lack of Kurdish national consciousness to achieve independence is also reflected in Bediuzzaman's calling since Bediuzzaman mentions national consciousness when his respondents are Kurds, not Turks; however, when the issue is racism, his respondents become Turks[86]. To get a national consciousness, the NC pays attention to Bediuzzaman's words, since Bediuzzaman tries to bring the Kurds to a national consciousness (Umit, 2017). Rasul (2017) stresses the importance of "Bediuzzaman's Manifesto to the Kurds" for the NC while searching for ways to gain national consciousness. This manifesto is as the following:

BEDIUZZAMAN'S MANIFESTO TO THE KURDS
Here, I would like to say a few things to my nation, the Kurds.
Well, Asuris and Keyanis were brave Kurds who were pioneers and heroes during their sovereignty. That is enough, being asleep for 500 years. Wake up! It is morning time. Otherwise, you will disappear because of individualism and naivety through loneliness. Destiny has raised its hand above the horizon and is giving orders; the divine reality and law of benefit are telling something to you: listen. That reality is both providing the order of the machine of the universe and composing the shining laws of God as a telegraph line reaching the entire universe with its branches.
Oh, Kurds! Do not be separated drop by drop. Unite in the patriotism and the power that you lost with the nationality idea. Control the greatness of the Kurdish population, creating a magnetic field that comprises everyone, like atoms drawn to each other through gravitational force. Then, bring this unified Kurd population into Ottoman society as a shining star under holy Islam, so that common harmony and stability are kept.
Freedom that relies on Sharia rejects living in captivity, and does not allow intervention in others' rights, it stands up as if on the top of the Subhan and Agri mountains and gives orders loudly to the nation, just as you lived in sleep and were destroyed in the past times.
Oh, Kurds! Go forward for science and art, and struggle against ignorance and poverty!
The reality that has been in captivity and that obscures so far moves and revolts by removal of the force, by overcoming ignorance and heedlessness. The messenger of

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[86] "Bediuzzaman criticizes nationalism in the meaning of racism. When Bediuzzaman addresses Kurds and tries to awaken national consciousness, his respondents are Kurds. Mentioning national consciousness, Bediuzzaman awakens the Kurds. National consciousness is what Kurds do not have, and that is the Kurds' problem. Turks already have this national consciousness. Its further step is racism. Whenever Bediuzzaman mentions racism, the focus is Turks [97] (Kanca, 2017)"

realities is telling you that.

Oh, Kurds! It is time to march for education and teaching irrigated by the water of life and to make your character hidden deep in your identity appear through your destiny. If you do not irrigate them, those capabilities and seeds of character will be desiccated or destroyed.

A necessity that is the father of civilization and founder of progression is teaching us how to improve ourselves, and telling us:

If you either leave your freedom to the destroyers in the loneliness lake or will create your future with science and art in the field of civilization, you can get the chance to live freely that has almost slipped from your hand; then you can direct this opportunity to the centre of developments to get the benefit of them.

The thought of nationality can make you as a family since it leads everyone to become aware of honour and honourable emotions. This family lives in a tent that is pitched in the brooks of the past, the lowlands of today, and the mountains of the future; it has prominent Kurdish heroes like Rustem-i Zal and Selahaddin-i Eyyubi. The thought of nationality inherent in the existence of each nation is strictly ordering you.

Oh, Kurds! Each of you must be the representative of a life mirror of all nations, the protector of happiness, and a real role model. You will currently grow as much as a nation than as an individual because politeness will grow by nurturing purpose. Morale, as well, will ripen and grow through rising national patriotism.

We must take a lesson from the republican period, which enabled the national will to be sovereign, and guaranteed wellness and happiness for the nations. Legitimate constitutionalism as a core of life that relies on religious counselling and saves our free will from dictatorship calls you to the test area.

Oh, Kurds! The republic is asking you to show that you do not need tutelage and that you are at the age of consent. Be truly ready for that test. You must show that your existence is unified. You must follow national patriotism and make your common sense and thoughts united in heart and wisdom. Otherwise, the republic as a freedom regime will put a zero on your test paper and will not give you your freedom diploma.

The reason for the confusion in the past was the individualism and agha regime among you. However, the happiness palaces of the future are innovation, invention, entrepreneurship, and the idea of freedom. It is time to turn those negative feelings that destroyed you in the past into the values of the future. Your madrasah, with a high voice, represents a scientific parliament rather than another's silent madrasah. Your celestial and spiritual whispers reading the Fatiha surah behind an imam represent that you are capable of madrasahs, denominations, and being a nation. As if destiny indicates that you have republican capabilities. There is encouragement for special entrepreneurship, such as the interpretation of ayah: "There is nothing else apart from human works."

The national honour and bravery that are founders and protectors of each single phenomenon order:

Oh, Kurds! You have combined wisdom with power so far, making a way from your brain to your heart. You have moved forward with bravery, and you have gained your education that comes from the golden script on swords. Now you open a breach that leads from the heart to thoughts. Send the power behind wisdom and send the emotions behind thoughts. In this way, national honour will be saved from being trampled in the age of bravery and civilization. You must produce your sword by science and the art of gem cutting.

Mother tongue: is an area of reflection that national feeling belongs to lustre.

Mother tongue: is a word tree that gives fruit to literary works.

Mother tongue: is the blood in the veins of education and the life of teaching.

The mother tongue is a digital tool for the improvement and value of a nation.

Mother tongue: is the most effective way for learning that directly goes to the conscience and puts meanings into the mind like radium rays.

Oh, Kurds! Your language has been insufficient in literature for civilization because of your negligence, even though it can be the tree of life of heaven. So, it was desiccated and became miserable and has been tremendously inordinate. Your Kurdish language which has been broken because of your negligence complains about you to your national honour:

The sign of destiny for humans is language. The aspect of humanity is illustrated by the expression of a fresco on language papers. It will not be difficult to find words for the mind, since the mother tongue is natural. The mind does not bifurcate since the exchange of ideas is made by meaning. The information that flows into the mind via the mother tongue is permanent, like a fresco that is made of stone. Whatever is covered by national culture and clothes will be known and friendly.

Oh, Kurds! I would like to present a prominent character from our patriotic world. It is Motkans Halil Hayali Efendy. He was a pioneer in the national language field too, while he was also a pioneer in national patriotism. Our language has created the alphabet and grammar that are fundamental to Kurdish. I can tell that patriotism is made through struggle and sacrifice, which coincide with the feelings of protecting the weak. We are hopeful that we will face people valuable like gemstones who have such patriotism in Kurdistan society. Such people will brighten our future.

This man (Motkans Halil Hayali Efendy) has presented a model of patriotic attitudes that has to be followed. He set up a rule about national language that waits for development. I recommend that you consult his work and follow his example." (Zinar, 2011, S. 146-9) (Nursi B. S., 2013, S. 188-191)

According to Zinar (2011, S. 142), in this Manifesto Bediuzzaman highlights the main problem of the Kurds, which is the deficiency in national consciousness and education and its solution, as stated by Bediuzzaman, is to create national unification among Kurds and by popularizing religious and positive science among them. According to Eser (2017), correct education should liberate Kurdish children mentally and teach them their language, culture, history, and literature. It's why only people with strong liberal, pluralist characteristics can come up with a solution for Turkey's problems. Hence, as Eser (2017) puts it, the education of the Kurds is the aim of the NC while producing a national consciousness that leads them to an independent state. Zinar (2011, S. 135) argues that all roads bring the Kurds to education in Bediuzzaman's words: "Kurds have a problem centred on ignorance that can only be solved through the state's establishment of educational institutions in the mother language" (Kanca, 2017). Kanca (2017) claims that the correct education plan has been set out by Bediuzzaman: education in the Kurdish mother language with the leadership and help of the Kurdish ulemas, scholars, and officers who know Kurdish. Zinar (2011, S. 136) shows the words of

Bediuzzaman as proof:

> I (Bediuzzaman) understood that our social welfare will be supplied through the new science of civilization. However, this science should be taught by ulemas in madrasahs, since the most influential dynamic among Kurds is scholars. Having not been contaminated yet, madrasahs stand as a source of science. I try to popularize education in Kurdistan. (Nursi, 2013, S. 167), retrieved from (Zinar, 2011, S. 136)

> In the Kurdish region, children cannot receive an education since education is not in the Kurdish language; hence, three regional schools in Beytuşşebab (on the Iraqi border), in Sason (on the Syrian border), and Van (near the Iranian border) should have been established to deliver education in the mother language alongside the official language of the state. In these schools, Kurdish *ulema*s, scholars, and officers who know Kurdish should work. (Kanca, 2017) (Nursi, 2013, S. 507) (Seyhanzade, 2003, S. 48) (Tunc, 2011, S. 193) (Zinar, 2011, S. 142)

Tunc (2011) and Kanca (2017) argue that Bediuzzaman's plan to draw together positive science and religious science reveals itself in his higher education project *Madrasatuzzehra*, where Arabic, Kurdish, and Turkish would be drawn together. According to Seyhanzade (2003), Kurdish was chosen because it was the language of the region and to increase the efficiency of delivery in the region; Turkish was chosen because it was the administrative language; and Arabic was the religious language. Tunc (2011) and Kanca (2017) believe the importance of this project for the Kurds' progress to gain their independence. Din (2016) described this project as "an alternative to the standardizing educational project of Ottoman-Turkish modernization that adopts and prioritizes the sovereignty of one (Turkish) culture, one language, and one nation.". Din (2016) also stated that this project differentiates itself from others by gathering modern and traditional science through multiple languages and cultures. Also, Ozbek (2011, 24) and Yılmayan (2011, 25) define the project using Bediuzzaman's words as

> an Islamic University in which religious and positive science would be taught together, and which would be established as combining an Ottoman university (*daru'l-funun*), a school, and a madrasah, looking like al-Azhar University at the centre of the Islamic world, in Kurdistan, meaning in the middle of India, Saudi Arabia, Iran, the Caucasus, and Turkistan, to remove the negativity of racism among these Islamic countries (Nursi S., 2007, S. 450) (Nursi S., 2006a, S. 426).

In this sense, as explained by Tunç (2011, S. 196), *Madrasatuzzehra* has a cultural, sociological, political, and strategic side oriented towards bringing peace to the Kurdish region.

As Din (2016) put it, the NC embraces and even adopts the *Madrasatuzzehra* project, since it perceives the project as "an inter-civilizational project for Kurds, Kurdistan, and for the Islamic world." As stated by Seyhanzade (2003, S. 45), it is believed that this *Madrasatuzzehra* project will save people's faith and create a sense of Ummah understanding among the people; ultimately, Islamic nations will establish a cultural unity, *Cemahiri Muttefika-I Islamiye*. Din (2016) explains *Madrasatuzzehra* as a project that will correctly reflect Islam to Europe or attribute value to the positive developments in the West in promoting them to the Muslim world. This means, as explained by Din (2016), it is a project that has an international side, benefiting the Islamic world, and is based on the Kurds' own social, educational, and political development. Din (2016) argues that the *Madrasatuzzehra* project also has a specific approach to the problem of reducing racism or negative nationalism among Islamic tribes. According to Kanca (2017), "the aim of the project is the Kurds, and to guarantee the future of the Kurds and Kurdish scholars through education. Therewithal, it is also a project for the Islamic world too."

As opposed to this idea of prioritizing the aim of *Madrasatuzzehra* to the Kurds, Denise (2017) claims that the NC has misinterpreted the *Madrasatuzzehra* project of Bediuzzaman. According to Denise (2017), even Bediuzzaman ranks Kurdish as the third language. Denise (2017) argues that the main goal of *Madrasatuzzehra* is just to create Islamic science that gathers positive and traditional science together, not to solve the KQ or to give autonomy or federation to the Kurds. Therefore, for Denise (2017), the NC reads and comments on Bediuzzaman's words in the wrong way. As expressed by Denise (2017):

> Seeing the Ottoman collapse, Bediuzzaman searches for reasons for the collapse and finds economic and political causes. Politically, he states that the Ottoman Empire should comprehend world politics, philosophy, civilization, and science, and should provide internal peace. Therewith, Bediuzzaman offers the *Madrasatuzzehra* project. Through this project, Islam will meet with science and will improve itself intellectually so that all problems of the Ottoman collapse will be solved. It is the main philosophy behind the project. On the other hand, the reason Bediuzzaman chose Van as the place of the project is not that Van was one of the Kurdish cities, but because Van was in the middle of the Ottoman land. It was about geography, not about its ethnic demography. Van has borders to Armenia, Iran, and Azerbaijan. (Denise, 2017)

However, Denise (2017) accepts that if this *Madrasatuzzehra* project had been applied by the state, science would have had peaceful relations with Islam, a pluralist political regime would have gathered with the Ottomanism and Islam, and the KQ would not have been ethnicized and nationalized as that of today.

Furthermore, Nal (2017) gave details about the *Madrasatuzzehra* project. According to Nal (2017), why Bediuzzaman planned this project to take place in Van, in a Kurdish region, and why he demanded multi-language education, should be examined. Nal (2017) asserts that the administration of the university would belong to the Kurds. The reason why Nal (2017) thinks this is the answer given by Bediuzzaman to the following question: "How will this project be covered?" Bediuzzaman answered, "You are Shafii, and it is enough."[87]According to Nal (2017), in the Shafii sect, people cannot give alms far from home, and they can give alms to educational institutions. Hence, Nal (2017) believes that people in the region would govern the university. Since being Shafii means being Kurd in Turkey, as explained by Nal (2017), Bediuzzaman assigned the administrative and economic governance of the *Madrasatuz-Zehra* project to the Kurds. He planned this project in such a manner as to include the Islamic world, but especially the Kurds in the context of the educational language, as well as its content and economics. This means that, according to Asil (2015), through this project, the Kurds would have a home, a homeland, and a role, and would live together with their brothers, alongside other nations, in this locale. It is likely that the founder of the NC, İzzettin Yıldırım, might

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[87] The original conversation is as follows:

Q-How will we gather our strength and preserve national honour:

A— With the idea of nationality, create a pool of ingenuity and conversation, like the *Kevser* pool, for the nation. Close the hole that absorbs the water under it with education. Open the above channels that pour water into them with the virtue of Islam. There is a large fountain. This fountain used to spread to some beggars and helpless people by being abused until now. Make a good channel for this fountain and pour it into this pool with good faith. Then water your maturity orchard. It is a never-ending and inexhaustible source.
Q— What is that fountain?
A— Zakat. You are the chief.
Q— How?
A— If the smart people spend their intelligence and the rich spend their zakat for the benefit of the nation, your nation may mix with other nations on the way.
Q— More?
A—Vocation and loyalty, called national and Islamic aid, are the friends of zakat, they provide social bonds, and they will help in the service. (Nursi, 2013, S. 127)

have wanted to realize a project in Van like *Madrasatuz- Zehra* by foreseeing this project's benefit to the Kurds.

Nal (2017) emphasized the importance of the *Madrasatuz-Zehra* project for the NC. According to Eser (2017), the NC takes Bediuzzaman's *Madrasatuz-Zehra* as its educational model. Umit (2017) states that the NC has made attempts to set up education systems that look like *Madrasatuz-Zehra* in Van and Bitlis that teach in the *Zazaki*[88] language.

4.3. Ideal State Model of the *Nûbihar* Circle

Through evaluation of the sources of the NC, it is seen that the NC perceives the solution to the Kurdish Question as the establishment of "an egalitarian and tolerant Islamic *ummah* community (Yıldırım, 1992)". In this community, all nations, including Muslims and non-Muslims, will be able to live with their own identities. They will be given a free environment to live and develop their own cultures by having equal rights (Yıldırım, 1992). In this state, non-Muslims will neither morally nor physically be forced to be Muslim, nor to think as Muslim (Tunc, 1993). If they respect the rules of the state, the state will guarantee constitutional equality among citizens. This guarantee will protect their life, property, honour, and religion (Tunc, 1993). On these thoughts, the idea of "If Allah gives free will and freedom for people to believe or not to believe in Allah, there cannot be a strict rule (Eser, 2017)" is influential. Therefore, as Eser (2017) put it, the NC supports the inclusion of non-Muslims, Muslims, Sunni, Yezidi, Shaafii, Alevi, or Hanafi.

Eser (2017) emphasizes that "the NC rejects sectarianism, or sectarian or religious oppression, but privileges individual thoughts and embraces common life, voluntary togetherness/union of Muslim society: *Cemahiri Muttefika-i Islamiye* (Eser, 2017)". Therefore, as advocated by Eser

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[88] *Zazaki* linguistically belongs to the Iranian branch of the Indo-Iranian main group of the Indo-European language family. *Zazaki* is the language spoken by approximately 4 to 6 million people in the Upper Euphrates and Tigris basins of Eastern Anatolia, although the exact numbers are not known. According to some linguists (Peter Lerch, Friedrich Muller, Albert van Le Coq, E. B. Soane, K. R. Ayyoubi and I. A. Smirnova and Gulsat Aygen), *Zazaki* is a dialect of Kurdish.

(2017), Seyhanzade (1993), and Yildirim (1992), in this imagined society, there will be no exclusion or denialist, racist and assimilationist politics, but rather this social structure will be based on "a multi-national state of law" that supports the voluntary togetherness of all nations' inequality framework.

Yildirim (1992) believes that Islam has the power to gather all nations and supply solidarity and cooperation. Only Islamic rules can support the voluntary togetherness of all nations' inequality framework (Seyhanzade M. S., 1993; Yıldırım, 1992). As stated by Tunc (1993, S. 71), this Islamic *Ummah* will unite dispersed Muslim communities through ties of the same religion: the religion of *Ummah*, Islam. According to Tunc (1993, S. 71), these communities will not have a link with each other by ancestry, blood relation, or unity of the country. They will be the United Islamic Republics or a Federation of Islamic Communities and will be ruled democratically by Islamic rules (Tunc, 1993, S. 71). Yildirim (1992) dreams of "unification of all nations under a universal Islamic Republic roof with equal rights". Namely, according to the NC, the solution to the KQ lies in Islam and the Islamic government. Umit (2017) defines the ideal state model of the NC as *Cemahiri Muttefika-i Islamiye*. Din (2016) and Umit (2017) explain that *Cemahiri Muttefika-i Islamiye* is a con-federal Islamic world or a united Islamic Republic.

As explained by Tekin (2011), instead of oppression, tyranny, privilege, violence, pressure, or dictates, there will be justice, councils, beneficence, freedom, equality, and consultation:

> This state ruled by Islamic values will not be governed by oppression and tyranny. Issues related to people will not be decided by one person or governor; on the contrary, such issues will be consulted with relevant people, since consultation is the manifestation of equality, freedom of thought, and individual characteristics since without consultation there will be oppression, suppression, mandates, and any types of dictatorship. Therefore, in this state, the institutionalization of a council in the social and governmental sphere is very important to create a dialogue between society and government. However, this council will be designed so that no one should oppress each other, or have privilege over others, and everyone should have equal rights with each other. (Tekin, 2011)

Tunc also states that "this state never supports individual dictatorship, unilateral will, sole-command application, or the aristocracy of specific classes and elites (Tunc, 1993)." According to the NC, the

Cemahiri Muttefika-i Islamiye model is adopted by Bediuzzaman and the NC tries to apply what Bediuzzaman advises and shows them (Tekin, 2011). Moreover, as asserted by the NC, the constitution of the *Cemahiri Muttefika-i Islamiye* takes place in Bediuzzaman's *Munazarat*, and hence, the NC calls *Munazarat* the "prescription for the Kurds (Kanca, 2017)" or the "lost constitution of the Kurds (Bilici M. , 2014)".

4.4. The Legal Legitimacy of the PKK & Resolution Process

It is understood that the NC supports a solution through peaceful means, e.g., dialogue, negotiation, or official constitutional reforms, instead of armed struggle or violence of the state/ the PKK (Denise, 2017; Din, 2016; Eser, 2017). Tunc (1994) and Kanca (2017) express that in the NC's thoughts on this demand, Bediuzzaman's role is influential. As expressed by Tunc (1994), taking the example of Bediuzzaman's main principles of political understanding, the NC opposes administrations based on violence, terror, and oppression. It promotes freedom, equality, and participation. That is to say, as Umit (2017) put it, the NC has no enemy, even from the state or the groups, or peoples among the Kurds, and it stands up for those who are useful to the Kurds and the violated rights of Kurds and animadverts people, groups or structures that damage the Kurds. Thus, the NC neither secures votes for any party nor dissuades people from following any party (Umit, 2017). Rather, the NC stands up for the representation of all Kurds in the resolution process (Kanca, 2017; Asil, 2015).

Furthermore, Asil (2015) emphasizes the indispensability of the PKK in the resolution process because "they are the strongest, the most challenging, the most arbiter, and the most dynamic power in the Kurdish region". However, the NC is also aware that people voting for the AKP comprise more than the number of people voting for the HDP. Therefore, Asil (2015) and Kanca (2017) argue that no single side represents all the Kurds; neither the PKK nor the HDP nor the Talabani[89] side

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[89] Celal Talabani (1933- 2017) was an Iraqi Kurdish politician who served as the Iraqi president from 2005 to 2014.

makes up all the Kurds' demands. As a result, for Asil (2015), the Kurds cannot be represented solely by the PKK in the resolution process.

Highlighting the existence of various Kurdish groups (such as religious people who are not on the same wavelength as the PKK, liberal and democratic people from right-wing parties, or Kurdish non-governmental organizations), Asil (2015) and Umit (2017) support the inclusion of all Kurdish groups, factions, scholars, non-governmental organizations, and the PKK into the resolution process to offer their solutions to the KQ. Namely, as stated by Denise (2017) and Kanca (2017), all political Kurdish groups should achieve a consensus together with Kurdish non-governmental organizations and they should not try to impose their ideas on others. In this way, no Kurds will be able to say that 'this was not my solution' (Denise, 2017; Kanca, 2017).

4.5. Importance of Bediuzzaman's Kurdish and Islamic Identity

Nal (2017) and Asil (2015) claim that for the NC, the Kurdish identity of Bediuzzaman is important after his Islamic identity; however, almost all sources show the opposite. These sources assert that Bediuzzaman's Kurdish identity has great significance for the NC and the NC emphasizes the Kurdish identity of Bediuzzaman more than his Islamic identity. As stated by Din (2016), the NC thinks that other Islamic *jamaats* only accept Bediuzzaman's Islamic identity and underplay or ignore his Kurdish identity. Hence, as stated by Din (2016), the NC tries to prove the reality of Bediuzzaman's Kurdish identity by evaluating this situation as "a conscious and systematic act". For instance, in his study, Nal (2017) tries to show that Bediuzzaman consciously emphasizes his Kurdishness to Turks and other nations by always using his Kurdish nickname, "Said-i Kurdi". Namely, according to Nal's research (2017), Bediuzzaman makes use of this nickname especially "when respondents are Turks and when the issue is about ethnicity, nation or nationhood".

> The times when Bediuzzaman prefers to use this name should be examined since this timing shows his persistent choice to emphasize his Kurdish identity. When Bediuzzaman was together with Kurds – until 1907 – he never used Said-i Kurdi for himself. He and other

Kurds called him Mele Said. However, after coming to Istanbul, and while writing articles in newspapers and journals, he preferred to use Said-i Kurdi. Even while he does use Said-i Kurdi in Turkish newspapers and journals, he uses Mele Said in Kurdish newspapers and journals. As a result, it can be claimed that Bediuzzaman emphasizes his Kurdishness to Turks. When his respondents are Turks, he emphasizes his Kurdishness by saying, "I am a Kurd", "we are as Kurds" and so on. In contrast, when respondents are Kurds, he never says such words and never emphasizes Kurdishness. Said-i Kurdi uses his Kurdi nickname especially when respondents are Turks and when the issue is about ethnicity, nation or nationhood. (Nal, 2017)

Furthermore, according to Denise (2017), the NC is "a structure that brings Bediuzzaman into the Kurdish sphere through its evaluation of Bediuzzaman and his books from [the viewpoint of] Kurdish identity and Kurdish culture". Showing NC's efforts to change Bediuzzaman's words set down in the original RNK[90] as an example, Denise (2017) accuses the NC to politicize Bediuzzaman and making nationalism. Besides, Soner (2017) claims that "if Bediuzzaman had not been a Kurd, the followers of the NC would have read and followed Bediuzzaman's works". Nonetheless, it is understood that the NC feels an affinity with him and that they are proud of him, since "he is also a Kurd like them and "he is their Bediuzzaman who was born and lived in a Kurdish region, in Bitlis (Denise, 2017)" (Soner 2017).

Denise (2017) avows that "if Bediuzzaman had not been a Kurd, the NC would not have given value to Bediuzzaman so highly". So, as expressed by Denise (2017), both *Zehra* Community (the *Nûbihar* Circle) and Med-Zehra have made a huge investment in this and have made the Kurdish identity of Bediuzzaman very important than his Islamic identity. According to Denise (2017), it is observable in their high emphasis on Bediuzzaman's period before 1925. For Denise (2017), "even this shows how Bediuzzaman's Kurdish identity or political activities are important for *Zehra* (*Nûbihar*) and how Bediuzzaman is important for *Zehra*".

> The fact that Bediuzzaman is a Kurd and that the *Zehra* Community (Nûbihar Circle) finds ground among the Kurds is a very important reason for Bediuzzaman and the *Zehra* Community (Nûbihar) to meet. That's why is that according to them, Bediuzzaman is a world scholar, but ultimately our Bediuzzaman from Bitlis came from us – among the Kurds. Now, Bediuzzaman's Kurdish identity is a big problem among Turkish- Islamic communities as well. For example, for this reason, Turkish *jamaats* have long tried to evacuate

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[90] For further information, https://ekremmalbat.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/24-33-nivisa-e-malbat.pdf

Bediuzzaman's Kurdish identity by saying that Bediuzzaman is not Kurdish, he is Sayyid, and he is of Sayyid origin. Because Sayyid means to be based on the line of the prophet, that is, it means a kind of Arab. Both sides draw Bediuzzaman to their side and favour the political arena. Since *Zehra* is a reaction movement and Bediuzzaman has a sociological reality, he is Kurdish, *Zehra* made a huge investment in this. For example, while Turkish-Islamic *jamaats* gave weight and importance to Bediuzzaman's life, works, and works after 1925, the *Zehra* Community (Nûbihar) mostly refers to Bediuzzaman's period before 1925, which we call the first Said. Even this shows how Bediuzzaman's Kurdish identity or political activities are important for *Zehra* (Nûbihar) and how Bediuzzaman is important for *Zehra*. If Bediuzzaman had not been a Kurd if Bediuzzaman had not been an Ottoman scholar if Bediuzzaman had not been born in Turkey, but if he had been the same Bediuzzaman, had he published the same works, it would not have been given such importance by the *jamaats* in Turkey? It is to say, Bediuzzaman has now been turned into a tool of political competition. After all, this is what Şerif Mardin is trying to touch upon. The politicization of Bediuzzaman - Mehmet Hakan Yavuz mentions it in the same way – and emphasizes everyone's creation of their own Bediuzzaman and tries to find the reasons for it. Of course, *Zehra* (*Nûbihar*) also does the same and uses Bediuzzaman for political goals. It is important for the *Zehra* (*Nûbihar*) Community that Bediuzzaman is from Bitlis.(Denise, 2017)

Nal (2017), Zinar (2011), Tunc (1993), and Kanca (2017) also support this theory of Denise with their confession that the NC appreciates Bediuzzaman since he practised his religious identity in Kurdish geography and always struggled on behalf of the Kurds and their problems during his life.

Zinar (2011), Yilmayan (2011), and Tekin (2011) show Bediuzzaman's efforts for the good of the Kurds with Bediuzzaman's words:

Oh, Kurds! I (Bediuzzaman) rejected the bribery of Abdulhamit in order not to bring Kurdishness into disrepute. I sacrificed my intelligence without giving up my freedom. For one and half years, I have been trying to spread education in Kurdistan (Nursi B. S., 2013, S. 35; Yilmayan, 2011) (Tekin, 2011, S. 69) (Zinar, 2011, S. 136)." It is seen that for the NC, there is a Bediuzzaman whose writings (especially the two works *Divan-ı Harbi Orfi* and *Munazarat*) mostly address the Kurds and their problems. And who produces solutions to those problems (Kanca, 2017; Nal, 2017).

Nal expresses this situation as the following:

When the works of Bediuzzaman are investigated, it is seen that at least half of them are multi-dimensional, and mention social, individual, ethnic, and economic issues. Nevertheless, the facets that relate to the Kurds have been glossed over by mainstream classical *Nurcu jamaats*. Bediuzzaman, while speaking, practised and exemplified the social issues that pertained to his motherland in the Kurdistan region. For instance, while mentioning the attitudes of different ethnic groups, he used Kurds as an example, rather than Turks. Yet, since these arguments have not been well-received by other *Nur jamaats*, these *jamaats* have not talked about, developed arguments about, or practised solutions to any of the issues related to Kurds. On that point, the NC and the *Zehra* community have emerged, emphasized, and stressed the problems of the Kurdistan region by taking into consideration Bediuzzaman's solutions. (Nal, 2017)

As advocated by Zinar (2011) and Kanca (2017), the NC has a high opinion of Bediuzzaman because he was "the one who had risked his life to bring the education system to the Kurds" or because he was "the one who taught Kurds to be proud of their Islamic and Kurdish identities". And he was "the person who demanded respect from Turks against the Kurds and Kurdish rights (Umit, 2017)". Tunc (1994) finds it wrong to present Bediuzzaman as a Kurdish nationalist or to purify him from being a Kurd by presenting him as a person who is unaware of the Kurdish problem.

Besides, Zinar (2011) reveals another reason Bediuzzaman is valuable in the eyes of the NC: Bediuzzaman's struggle to integrate the Kurds into the political and civic area by raising their national consciousness to gain their national unity. Bilici (2017, S. 63) also states this situation and claims that Bediuzzaman indoctrinated *fikr-i milliyet* (the idea of nationality) in the Kurds and suggested *ittihad-ı Islam* (Islamic unity) to the Turks. In this sense, according to Bilici (2017, S. 63), Bediuzzaman suggested universality, equality, and brotherhood to the ones (the Turks) who had gotten used to establishing superiority over and governing others. He indoctrinated selfdom, and equality, equivalent to the ones (the Kurds) who had been suppressed by others (Bilici, 2017, S. 63). *Ittihad-I Islam*, as expressed by Bilici (2017, S. 63), promotes solidarity among Muslims and the awakening of all as a nation, and it is also an example of *fikr-i milliyet*. As a result, as Zinar (2011) and Kanca (2017) put it, he became one of their most popular and valuable scholars who cannot be ignored in Kurdish history. Therefore, as stated by Nal (2017), the NC appreciates all of Bediuzzaman's words and approaches his books not only as religious work but also as a set of solutions to everyday life. Namely, it is comprehended that Bediuzzaman's Kurdish identity attracts the NC more than his Islamic identity.

4.6. The Interpretation of Religious Sources by the *Nubihar* Circle

The NC presents a Bediuzzaman, for whom the solution of the KQ is independence. The NC asserts that Bediuzzaman demands the independence of the Kurds. With this logic in its mind, the NC perceives independence as the most important solution for the KQ and as one of their fundamental

rights that must be given by the Turkish state. Also, the NC is highly aware that the Kurdish nation has the problem of ignorance, poverty, and disunity as stated by Bediuzzaman. It is to say, the Kurds are ignorant since they do not have a national consciousness and national solidarity to act as a united nation. The NC, therefore, defines the KQ as a problem resulting from Kurds' lack of national solidarity and national consciousness. According to the NC, Bediuzzaman also detected the deficiency of national consciousness and solidarity among the Kurds as their cause, not to attain their independence. As a result, to raise the national consciousness of the Kurds and to gain their national unity, as suggested by Bediuzzaman, they adopt a high opinion of education in Kurdish and educational activities and establish institutions and schools. They take Bediuzzaman's *Madrasatuz-Zehra* project, in which positive and religious science are taught together and in which there is education in three languages: Kurdish, Turkish, and Arabic, as an example and try to make it real. Namely, for the NC, the KQ is a problem that can only be solved through the conferral of national consciousness/national solidarity among the Kurds, ethnical recognition of the Kurdish nation and restitution of the fundamental rights of the Kurds, including the independence of the Kurds.

Also, there is a Bediuzzaman for the NC, who demands independence from the Kurds and who tries to find solutions and give advice for the problems of the Kurds. They interpret Bediuzzaman's ideas in a way that Bediuzzaman offers them solutions by protecting their ethnic and religious identity and realising their ethnic and religious demands at the same time. In this way, they do not have to give up their ethnic demands and can keep their religious values. They justify their demand for independence by claiming that Bediuzzaman advises them to become independent. However, this independence is not only the independence of the Kurds, but it is the establishment of a con-federal Islamic unity, *Cemahiri Muttefika-i Islamiye,* that gives all Islamic nations independence, equal rights, and sovereignty area to each nation to create their status. And this achievement is only possible when national consciousness and national solidarity are attained by the Kurds. Also, just education that gathers Islamic and positive science together, like the *Madrasatuz-Zehra* project, can give this national consciousness to the Kurds. It is to say, it depends on Islamic improvement. Besides, the NC,

as asserted by Bediuzzaman, conditions the continuation of *Cemahiri Muttefika-i Islamiye* to the application of Islamic rules. It is because for NC and also for Bediuzzaman, Islamic rules will supply equality, tolerance, democracy, and respect among nations by preventing them from dictatorship and tyranny. In other words, an ethnic demand (independence) is dependent on religious improvement and religious structure.

It can be evaluated that the NC interprets religious sources in a way to legitimize their political response to the KQ and their demands for the Kurds. The NC interpreted Bediuzzaman's words from an ethnic perspective, in terms of his Kurdish identity and Kurdish nationalism. Commentating on Bediuzzaman's words to support the independence of the Kurds in Turkey, they could easily justify their thoughts and activities about the KQ. We should especially point out that Bediuzzaman's Kurdish and Islamic identity gave them such opportunity to interpret it as they wished. The NC already state it in these words: They would not have appreciated Bediuzzaman and his words so highly if he had not been a Kurd. Namely, the NC, by basing its political ideas on religious sources, has not put itself at risk in the conditions of Turkey.

4.7. Conclusion

This chapter presents the perspectives of the NC on its definition of the KQ, its solution to the KQ, its ideal state model, the legal legitimacy of the PKK and resolution process, and the importance of Bediuzzaman's Kurdish and Islamic identity. It is seen that the NC defines the KQ as a problem relating to the denial of Kurdish identity and the inhuman treatment of the Turkish Republic against the Kurds and as a problem resulting from the Kurds' lack of national solidarity and national consciousness. The solutions of the NC to the KQ are therefore memory work conducted by the Turkish state with Kurds, ethnic recognition of the Kurdish nation, the reinstitution of the fundamental rights of the Kurds, and the conferral of national consciousness/national solidarity among the Kurds. The fundamental rights, according to the NC, include 1- identity rights, 2- education in the mother language, 3- the use of Kurdish in the political public for political rights, 4-

the use of the Kurdish language in the public sphere including the media, and 5- different versions of autonomy, and the establishment of autonomy/ federation/ independent state.

According to the NC, as advised by Bediuzzaman, if the Kurds attain national consciousness and solidarity among themselves, they can get their independence. The ideal model of the NC is defined as Bediuzzaman's con-federal Islamic unity model, *Cemahiri Muttefika-i Islamiye*, which would give all nations equal rights and independence. It is seen that the NC appreciates Bediuzzaman because of his Islamic and Kurdish identity, but it is a fact that if he had not a Kurdish ethnic identity, the NC would not value him and his words so highly. This chapter concludes that the NC interprets Bediuzzaman's religious sources from an ethnic perspective so that it can justify their perspectives and demands for the Kurds and the KQ.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE *HIZMET* MOVEMENT

5.1. Definition of the Kurdish Question

It is understood that the HM defines **the KQ as a problem resulting from the nationalist politics of the Turkish Republic against the Kurds**. As Olmaz (2015) and Obek (2018) put it, the influence of the Turkish Republic's nationalist politics against the Kurds cannot be denied in the creation of the KQ. Olmaz (2015) affirms the unfulfilled promises of the Turkish Republic in the War of Independence, and the subsequent abolition of the articles on the strengthening of the local administration, and autonomy in the first Constitution by the Turkish Republic have intensified the KQ. Obek(2018), also with his Kurdish identity, reminds the reality that the Kurds lived in the current Turkish territory as an empire in 721 BC. He states that the Turks deceived Kurds by using them in the War of Independence with the promises of brotherhood and autonomy. According to Obek (2018), the existence of Kurds was sacrificed to the brotherhood of Islam and their basic rights were taken away from them. It is why, as asserted by Obek (2018), the Turkish Republic cheated them with the words that "we are Muslim, and we already have a state, and you do not need another state".

As another nationalist policy of the Turkish state resulting in the KQ, Alpay (2008a), Bulac (2008a) and Bakir (2018) show the definition of citizenship and the structure of the state based on a nation-state, which has turned the Kurds into a nation outside this definition. As stated by Alpay (2008a), in the multi-religious, multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire, the "nation system" was valid. In this system, subjects were divided into "nations" based on religion (Alpay, 2008a). Every "nation" had freedom of religion and autonomy within itself (Alpay, 2008a). Together with Turks and Kurds, Arabs, Albanians, Bosnians, and other Muslims, they were part of the "nation of Islam". However, as stated by Alpay (2008a), nationalist currents led to the disintegration of first the "nation system" and then the "Islamic nation".

As stated by Alpay (2008a), the War of Independence was fought and won on behalf of the

Anatolian and Rumelia Muslims and the Kurds participated in this war with the promise that their language and culture would be respected and that they would have autonomy in their regions. According to Alpay (2007b), although the Republic of Turkey was established as the homeland of Turks and Kurds (and other Turkish people), the single-party administration established in 1925 put into practice the project of creating a "Turkish nation" from Anatolian Muslims -that consisted of many ethnic and religious groups- who speak the same language (Turkish) and adhere to the same faith (Islam). Alpay (2008a) perceives the forced assimilation and Turkification of the state against the Kurds as the root of the KQ. Also, Bulac (2008a) lists the internal causes of the KQ as the rejection policy of the first republican administration against the Kurds through the replacement of Islam with a national" ideology.

Moreover, Bulac (2008a), Kar (2018) and Obek (2018) believe that the insistence of the Turkish state to make people adopt its ideology -by applying physical and psychological force and even violence against the Kurds- also resulted in anger and broken emotion/heartbreak of the Kurds and created the KQ. As expressed by Bakir (2018) and Duru (2018), the Kurdish names of places, Kurdish names given to children, and speaking in Kurdish all were forbidden, which has led to victimization. Also, as stated by Duru (2018) and Bakir (2018), the children who spoke Kurdish until they went to primary school were beaten by their teacher[91], which increased their anger and hatred against the state and state institutions.

Duru (2018), a Kurdish member of the HM who lived in South-eastern Anatolia, gives examples of the nationalist politics of the Turkish state. As shared by Duru (2018), until 1995, the Turkish state used physical torture against the Kurds by torturing, kidnapping, and killing them. Kar

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[91] Original Story "When we came to Erzurum, I had taken one year of Turkish in my previous school, and my Turkish was still weak. The teacher asked my name and surname on the board. When I replied, the whole class started laughing at me. Because you are using very wrong Turkish. It's obvious. You are using Turkish combined with Kurdish. This time, the insult of your teacher together with the laughing and kidding of the students make you hate school. (Duru, 2018)"

(2018) reminds physical and mental torture against the Kurds in the Prison Diyarbakir. Duru (2018) advocates that after 1995, although there was no physical torture such as kidnapping and killing, the Kurds have been psychologically suppressed by the politics of the Turkish state. They could not speak their language, sing a Kurdish song, or read a Kurdish newspaper or journal (Duru, 2018). As stated by Duru (2018) and Kar (2018), they have been underestimated and otherized in society in hospitals, prisons, the military, and in schools by teachers[92], and were accused of terrorism and abundance. Duru (2018) asserts that since there was no proper education system and institutions to prepare students for the universities in the mostly Kurdish-populated regions of Turkey until 1995, there was not a Kurdish student that had a chance to go to a university in Turkey[93]. According to Duru (2018), as a result of such dismissing, marginalizing, and otherizing actions of the people and the state against the Kurds, Kurds have felt redundant in Turkey, which fed the KQ.

Moreover, Duru (2018) and Kar (2018) advocate that both the Turkish state and the members of the PKK have made the Kurds hate the Turks and join the PKK by confusing people's minds. Duru (2018) advocates that Kurdish families in South-eastern Anatolia were put in a position between the Turkish State and the PKK. As Duru (2018) put it, every day they had to give their food to the Turkish soldiers and at night to the members of the PKK. Otherwise, according to Duru (2018), they got beaten by the PKK guerrillas at night or by the soldier (at that time JITEM[94] was sent to this region)

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[92]Duru (2018) shares his experience with his grandmother. He says that his grandmother who did not know Turkish was taken to the doctor's room alone although he insisted to be with her to translate her problem to the doctor. Moreover, she was exposed to the doctor's physical and psychological torture since she could not speak Turkish. Another experience of Duru with his grandmother happens during their visit to the nephew of her grandmother in the military. As told by Duru (2018), the soldiers stood beside them and did not let his grandmother, who only knew Kurdish, speak in Kurdish with her nephew. No one was permitted to translate.

[93] "At the end of the 80s and 90s, you couldn't enrol in university as a young Kurd, because you couldn't win the exam! First, there was no proper training. But after 1995, schools were opened, teachers came, and it became a field of education, even if it was in Turkish, the opportunity to get an education appeared. Maybe it was not true, but okay. You could take it and evaluate it and turn it in favour of your nation. After 95 years, you could go to school at all, as they gained a little bit of a presence in society. You could work, but not only was taught in your language but your values were not respected. But there was no physical intervention to you as before. (Duru 2018)"

[94] JITEM, or Gendarmerie Intelligence and Anti-Terrorism Group Command, was an organization, which was established by the Gendarmerie General Command's initiative without the approval of the Ministry of Interior and without consulting the General Staff and carried out activities within the scope of the fight against terrorism.

day after day[95].

As promoted by Kar (2018), in the 1970s the Turkish state consciously sent teachers with *Ulkucu* (Idealistic)[96] nationalist ideology to the Kurdish villages, who believed that the Kurds were originally Turkish people who have forgotten their originality and named themselves later Kurds after walking in the Mountain with the sounds "Kart, Kurt". As expressed by Kar (2018), the Turkish state has followed policies to relate the Kurdish identity to the Turkish identity and to otherize the Kurds in Turkey. It has never wanted the Kurds to have a connection with the people who could establish a bridge between the Turks and the Kurds by understanding the language and the culture of the Kurds (Kar, 2018).

Duru (2018) shares his experience that shows how the Turkish state prevented the Kurds from loving the Turkish people: Duru (2018) had a Turkish primary school teacher, who was very kind to the Kurdish children and tried to improve their education condition of the children by taking care of them. Even he tried to learn Kurdish to communicate with them. According to Duru (2018), it was the first time that they loved a Turkish person. As stated by Duru (2018), the PKK, which was disturbed by this situation and love, threatened, beat, and tortured his teacher, and his house was raided at night by the PKK. Even so, he was accused by JITEM to help the PKK and was killed by JITEM in front of the children[97] although he opposed this accusation by explaining himself (Duru,

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Although the existence of JITEM has not been confirmed by state institutions for a long time, the state officially accepted the existence of the JITEM (Radikal, 2011). JITEM is responsible for many unsolved murders in the Southeast.

[95] "These soldiers were not normal soldiers. At that time, there was JITEM. Each of them was around 35- 40 years old. The types with such broad shoulders, side caps, hide moustaches, and large glasses. Three-four of them were enough for one village anyway. People would look for holes with fear. (Duru 2018)"

[96] These people believe that the Kurds were originally Turkish people who have forgotten their originality and who have named themselves later as Kurds after walking in the Mountain with the sounds "Kart, Kurt".

[97] Original story by Duru: "Towards the end of the second year, when we were in class, Cemal Temizoz was from Ergenekon at that time, I think he was a Brigadier General at that time, he was the commander of our sanctuary there. It could be a Major or Colonel, I don't remember exactly. But I guess he was like the one in charge of JITEM back then. One day, while we were in class, two pick-up JITEM cars came to the front of the school. They kicked and went in. They told to Ahmet teacher that we will arrest him. The reason was that he aided and abetted terrorism! Of course, Ahmet teacher had shocked. He said that I am a teacher who graduated

2018). This showed, for Duru (2018), that the PKK and JITEM aimed to make people hate the Turkish state. Moreover, Duru (2018) adds that his aunt was raped by one of the JITEM soldiers in front of him. His uncle was beaten so he had a brain haemorrhage and was paralyzed from the waist down to [98]. Obek (2018) also shares the same story experienced by the Kurds in South-eastern Anatolia:

> Imagine that in the morning your father is taken from the house, you know that the state is taking over, and a week later you take your father's body parts in a black garbage bag. The following year, your sister is raped by JITEM in the tank and as a woman, she is thrown into the street. And she commits suicide. (Obek, 2018)

In the same way as Kar, Bulac (2008a) advocates that the founders of the Turkish Republic declared the Kurdish population as "a double target" for the Republic because they were Kurdish and more religious. So, as advocated by Bulac (2008a), the Kurdish region faced practices such as executions, reprimands, menaces and forced resettlement by the Turkish state. From this point of view, according to Bulac (2008a; Bulac, Kandildeki PKK, 2008b), PKK terrorism, which has displaced millions of people of the region and forced them to migrate, in a way has served both Turkish state's compulsory resettlement policy and the evacuation of South-eastern Anatolia.

As advocated by Bulac (2008a) and also by Unal (2011a), the operations of the Turkish state to suppress PKK terrorism (in 1992, in Sirnak, in 1993 in Lice, Mardin Derik, Batman Heybetli village, Sirnak's Kumçati, Sapaca, Gever, Çağlayan and Hisar villages, Hakkari Semdinli, Tunceli

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from the university of this country, appointed by the national education here. He said that he tried to embarrass thousands of terrorist threats every day to protect these students. Just two days ago, they raided his house and caught him in a mess. On the other hand, he objected that they were making such an accusation against him, and he does not accept it. They said they would arrest him and two of them came and wanted to handcuff the teacher. There was a clash and Ahmet teacher was killed in front of 24 students. For the first time, you feel love for a Turk and the soldier of the same nation kills him because he served the Kurdish people. You can't understand. If the Kurd becomes a terrorist, you will understand, but you cannot understand it. You say that these men are enemies not only to the Kurds but also to everyone good… They burned the school; they kicked and slapped us." (Duru 2018)

[98] "It was normal at that time because, in the name of taking people to the mountain, one side tells you that this country does not let your language and tortures you. Join us, fight with us on behalf of the Kurdish nation. One side is doing their best to send you to the mountain and tortures cruelty. What happened is not normal. They raped my aunt in front of my eyes. JITEM's man did it under the Turkish flag. My brother-in-law attacked to rescue him, but they hit him with a butt so that he still lives in a wheelchair. that he had a brain haemorrhage and was paralyzed from the waist down. (Duru 2018)"

Yukari Karatas village, Diyarbakir Lice, Hakkari Yuksekova), some practices (in Diyarbakir Kunuklu, Kaledibi, Silvan Dutveren village, Adakli Kazlik village and Diyarbakir Hazro villages) took place at the point of all resentment of the people, who were against the state, rather than preventing terrorism. For Bulac (2008a), incidents of torture, unsolved murders, extrajudicial executions, disappearances, and deaths because of mine explosions, especially in prisons, as well as the excessive use of force, were consciously planned by the Turkish state to make the Kurdish people join the PKK. According to Bulac (2008a), suspicions, abuses, and everything was mixed in the region consciously to create a terror environment. Bulac (2008a) also supports his thought with the expression of Ocalan, which is "A small action we do with our military force opens an area for us. The excessive use of the army, force, torture and arrests by the Turkish state caused the people to support the PKK in an influx. Cizre and Nusaybin are clear examples of this."

Unal (2011a) gives extra information about the state's attitude that fuelled the PKK's terrorism. According to Unal (2011a), Turgut Ozal (the president at that time) was forced into an operation within the ruling party of the time, ANAP, and Mesut Yılmaz was appointed as the head of the party. As advocated by Unal (2011a), the established Yılmaz government served for only three months and then decided on early elections. Unal (2011a) promotes that in these three months, this government changed all the people inside the Police Special Operations teams, which had been fighting against terrorism very successfully in South-eastern Anatolia until that moment. Unal (2011a) also claims that Chauvinist[99] (radical nationalistic) elements were placed in the teams and special zones were created for the gendarmerie. According to Unal (2011a), after that events that fueled terrorism began to emerge. The Kurdish people were exposed to unsolved murders committed through the state institutions, and their reactions were violently suppressed, resulting in the death of

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[99] People who show an aggressive attitude towards other races and defend racial superiority are called "chauvinists".

many people, and the destruction of the city, village, residences and workplaces (Unal, 2011a).[100]

As Unal (2011a) put it, even Ocalan stated the state's help in recruiting PKK members as follows: "If we had struggled for 50 years, we could not have brought Cizre to our side. The excessive use of the army/force caused the people to support the PKK in an influx." Unal (2012a) also proves this situation through the report of the TGNA Investigation Commission on Unsolved Perpetrators, especially in 1993.

In addition, the KQ is also described by Bakir (2018), Olmaz (2015), Resim (2015), and Su (2018) as **a problem resulting from poverty, ignorance, and disunity**. According to Resim (2015), Olmaz (2015), and Fethullah Gulen (Gulen, 2012a, S. 70-73) (Gulen, 2003d, S. 158), these problems have also been formularized by Bediuzzaman before in his books. On the one hand, the founder and spiritual leader of the HM, Fethullah Gulen (2003g, S. 70), uses ignorance as the meaning of "Not knowing God, not knowing a prophet, being indifferent to religion, not seeing Turkish material-spiritual historical dynamics" and shows it as the most important reason for the national misery and social problems of Turkey. For Gulen (2003h, S. 23), every nation that struggles to survive and wants to reach the future can only continue to exist to the extent that it is based on its sources of power: its spiritual roots, its religion, its faith, and its determination. Ignorance has prepared for the devastation of every nation. As asserted by Gulen, the backwardness of the Muslim world results from their alienation from their historic, religious, and cultural heritage (Yavuz H. , 2013, S. 94)

Bakir (2018), Kar (2018), and Gulen (2003b, S. 209) define disunity as the polarization of Turkish society as Kurds-Turks, Alevis-Sunnis, and secular-anti-secular by the superpowers that

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[100] As informed by Unal (2011a),

> Diyarbakır Provincial Head of the BDP was taken from his house at night and his body was found on the Ergani-Mardin road two days later. Aydın's funeral turned into a big demonstration and around 30 people lost their lives in the event. This incident constituted one of the most important turning points for the PKK to find a base in the region. Şırnak was kept under fire for 48 hours, starting on the night of 18 August 1992, in response to a harassment fire in the city. After 48 hours, the city resembled post-earthquake landscapes. At least 30 people died during the events that took place in Lice on October 22-23, 1992. 401 residences and 242 workplaces were burned or destroyed to a large extent, and many vehicles became unusable. Again, many villages were raided by gendarmes, planes bombed, and many more villages were shelled. (Unal, 2011a)

constantly interfere with the stability of the Turkish nation (Gulen, 2004, S. 67). According to Gulen (2003d, S. 156), these superpowers do want to keep Turkey at a certain level and prevent it from becoming a partner in the new world to be established. These actors, as asserted by Dumanli (2007c; Dumanli, Şimarikligin Bedeli, 2011d), aim to crush Turkey inside, breed bad blood between Turks and Kurds in Turkey, block investments for the Kurdish region, reverse/downgrade the steps for democratization, ensure ethnic segregation and to convert it to a social conflict. They do not want Turkey to get rid of the scourge of terrorism and to turn into an element of balance in the region (Dumanli, 2007c, 2013b; Gulen, 2003b, S. 211).

> The opposing forces, which could not attract our nation's leap into greatness and are envious [preventing the great nation of the future from taking its place in the interstate balance (Gulen, Prizma, 2003a)], will continue to commit the same evils as they have done until today." (Gulen, 2003a, S. 211)

> Another factor in this plan is those who want the steps taken towards normalization and democratization to stay current. Many purposes -to strike Turkey from the inside, to turn our people against each other, to scatter seeds of discord among the people, to undermine investments in the region, to regress the steps taken towards democratization, to ensure ethnic separation and to turn this into a social conflict- are put forward at once and terrorist incidents have been used like a mask. (Dumanli, 2007b)

> For Unal (2010), these actors want 1- to fuel the Turkish-Kurdish separation in the name of a

formation that would relieve Israel in the region; 2- to alienate our Kurdish brothers from Turkey; 3- to direct regional policies and especially Turkish domestic politics, and 4- to prevent Turkey from jumping on the ramp of greatness as a powerful country. In this way, for Gulerce (2011; 2013c), these actors prevent Turkey from becoming a global actor as a shining star in Islamic geography and the Turkish world.

As advocated by Alpay (2005), Unal (2010), Bakir (2018), Dumanli (2012; Dumanli, PKK ne yapmak istiyor, 2007b), Gulerce (2012a; 2012b; 2011d; 2000; 2012a; 2007b), and Gulen (2011), the PKK is a "terrorist" [101] organization that foreign countries (Israel, the USA, the UK, Germany,

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[101] The term "terrorist" is used by HM with the meaning of "the unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims".

Syria, and Iran)[102] u s e d as a tool against Turkey's stability, democratization, and development.

> The existence of opponents who do not want Turkey to be a great state that is a balancing factor in the international arena and that is eye-catching in the region should not be ignored. Such a rivalry was previously reserved for some colonial European countries. Today, the divided, fragmented states around us and in the Middle East, which have established their systems based on their philosophies, cannot attract your growth. We do not know who is currently supporting that mountain. Otherwise, where will they buy all these weapons... where will they find all these opportunities... the mountain does not give birth to them... Someone is helping them to bring you to their knees and to bargain. A nation facing such an all-around siege must act very cautiously and cautiously. (Gulen, Ozgur Herkul, 2011)

Dumanli (2011d; 2007b) claims that the PKK has wanted the public to stir up; the Kurdish-Turkish conflict to emerge; ethnic discrimination to occur by turning the Kurds enemy of everyone in Turkey; as well as the confrontation between the state security forces and the people in the region to arise. Gulerce (2012c; 2007b) shows Turkey as a country being stopped and dragged into weakness by the bloody "terrorist" attacks of the PKK and being forced into a civil war with PKK's attacks. Unal (2011b; 2012a) specializes in the goal of the PKK since 1996 to separate South-eastern Anatolia from Turkey and unite it with the Kurdish regions of Iraq and Syria, to establish a so-called Kurdish state in the heart of the Islamic world, as a form of a second Israel.[103] Unal (2012b) also expresses the

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[102] Gulerce (2013c; 2011; 2012c) and M. Fethullah Gulen (2003a, S. 229-231) argue that PKK is supported by Israel, the USA, the UK, Germany, Syria and Iran, and internal powers. According to Gulen, the reasons for these countries to support the PKK are expressed as the following.

> "The effort to become a superpower and maintain its status sometimes indirectly and sometimes directly leads America to terrorism. Germany to be a superpower perceives Turkey as a potential rival. On the one hand, since the day it was founded, Iran has always dealt with the Islamic world. Syria, on the other hand, has been an enemy neighbour to Turkey (America) from the point of view of those who currently govern them. The purpose of the establishment of Israel has been to be a western police station in the middle of the Islamic world. While some of the internal powers do this within an ideological framework, some do it purely for political and economic interests." (Gulen, 2003a, S. 229-231)

[103] This is the conspiracy theory about the American "Greater Middle East Project (*Buyuk Ortadogu Projesi*)", which guided US foreign policy in the Middle East and Africa and expanded the US's spheres of influence and interest in these areas (Isik, 2018). Although the main objectives of the BOP Project are presented as follows;

1. To ensure stability in the countries covered by the BOP,
2. to resolve the Palestine-Israel conflict,
3. Fighting countries that support terrorism,
4. Contributing to democratization and economic development in the Middle East countries.

However, the real goals of this project have been interpreted as:

- To ensure Israel's existence and security.
- To destroy the weapons of mass destruction in the hands of states that they consider as terrorist states.
- To prevent disruption of oil shipments.
- To eliminate terrorist groups and their supporters.
- To eliminate opposition elements and governments against the United States.
- To make the moderate understanding of Islam dominant in the region.

words of Ocalan in his letter to Kandil, which states that for the sake of the establishment of a second and great Israel, the PKK is ready to start a civil war and crush the Kurds first.

As a result, as advocated by Gulen, there is no unity (a method and system that all generations can share) in the feelings, thoughts, and lifestyles, which makes it impossible for Turkey to talk about national unity and solidarity today and tomorrow. However, as claimed by Gulen (2003g, S. 123), in any system, national logic, rational thought, rational reasoning, and spirit are very important. Gulen (2003g, S. 123) asserts that a system of thought can only occur to the extent that it originates from the nation's mind, its conscience, and its realm of feeling -the nation's unity of feeling, unity of logic, unity of reasoning and peace of living together-. Also, according to Gulen (2008, S. 134), the survival of the generation depends on its ability to stand on its own, maintain its contact with its spirit, and feed on its resources. Gulen (2008, S. 134) gives examples of nations that deny their values disappeared from all history. He (2008, S. 134) emphasizes that the cultural values that every nation trusts from the past are at the level of its blood and soul. As a result, Gulen (2003g, S. 71) argues that if people ignore the national and religious dynamics, isolate themselves from national character and deprive themselves of historical consciousness, morality and virtue, Turkey will not get its power to lead the Islamic world. Therefore, the HM highly cares about the struggle against disunity.

5.2. Solution to the Kurdish Question

5.2.1. Provision of the Fundamental Rights to the Kurds

- Extending US influence in the region (Isik, 2018).

It's to say, as also asserted by Isik (2018), the real aim of "Greater Middle East Project" is perceived as to prevent the US from using oil and oil routes by other countries and to preserve the existence of Israel. Nonetheless, some people argue that the target of this project is to realize the "Greater Israel Project" through the "Second Israel" (Erol, 2017) and it is believed that this grave game is being applied to the region through the Kurds (Cavidbeyli, 2019). It is asserted that the Kurds are deceived to be given Greater Independent Kurdistan, where Kurds in Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria would gather together under one roof (Cavidbeyli, 2019). Actually, as declared by Cavidbeyli (2019), the Greater Middle East Project has decided to use the Kurdish separatists as experimental vanguard units.The terrorist and aggressor organizations included in this scope mainly consist of IKDP (the Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party) in Iraq, PKK, PJAK (The Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan- Partiya Jiyana Azad a Kurdistanê-) in Iran, and PYD (Democratic Union Party- *Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat*) in Syria.

Almost all resources of the HM show that the HM supports the provision of fundamental rights to the Kurds. Resim (2015) advocates the basic rights of the Kurds should be legally guaranteed by the state to equalize them with a Turkish citizen living in the western part of Turkey. However, Resim (2015) highlights that fundamental rights should not be given to the Kurds with the mercy of the Turkish state, but as an obligation and duty, to compensate for the deprived rights of the Kurds.

Fethullah Gulen (2011; 2016) asserts that education in the mother language is one of the basic rights that Bediuzzaman had offered a century ago: to establish a university in Van where Kurdish would be one of the education languages.

> When Bediuzzaman offered to establish a university in Van under the name of *Madrasatuzzehra* during the Constitutional Period, he said that Arabic should be considered obligatory, Turkish as obligatory and Kurdish as permissible, and that they should all be taught together. Why was it not allowed to teach Kurdish in schools? Turkish is taught as an elective course in our schools abroad, even in the United States, and no one prevents it. This is the peculiarity of being a great state. (Gulen, 2011; 2016)

Resim (2015) advocates that the Kurds, who have been deprived of their basic human rights, have the right to education in their language. He (2015) confesses that the HM could recently reach the truth that Bediuzzaman drew attention to the teaching of Kurdish as a permissible language there a century ago[104]. Gulerce (2013a) asserts that Turks should defend the right of Kurdish citizens to receive education in their mother language for three reasons:

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[104] Fethullah Gulen (2018) also supports the education in mother language as advised by Bediuzzaman:

> A century ago, the Spokesperson of the Age (Bediuzzaman Bediuzzaman) talked about a university in Van. A century ago… A university has been built much later, but a university has been established far behind the aim he put forward as a dream. He said, "Arabic, religious duty (*farz*)!" there. Why? Because the book and the Sunnah, which are the basic pillars of the religion, are in Arabic. "Turkish, obligatory (*vacip*)!" says. Karamani Mehmet Bey, "Turkish is permissible (*caiz*)!" and adopted Turkish as the state language. Until then, the state spoke Persian until Karamani Mehmet Bey. You see, even gigantic people like that Mevlânâ wrote their books in Persian during the Seljuk period. But Hazrat Bediuzzaman Bediuzzaman said a century ago, "Turkish is obligatory!" says. "Kurdish is permissible!" says; that is, as an optional language, anyone can learn it as well. We couldn't deliver that horizon. That recipe was also included in the content: "Open that door wide in schools, so that people can easily learn their own language there!" Language develops with use and becomes a language of science. The language of science is a very important factor for the rise of that society. It is not possible to do science or technology with an undeveloped language. You cannot cope with begging for a language from here, a language begging from here, and you cannot get rid of begging. (Gulen, 2018)

1. Language is one of Allah's verses. It is their human right, a requirement of democracy, for our Kurdish citizens to speak, write, defend, and put their place names in Kurdish in municipal councils.

2. I believe in the power of Turkish as an official language in this land. With the right to education in Kurdish, our Kurdish citizens living and studying in Turkey will not give up learning, speaking, and writing Turkish. Especially today, when the Turkish Olympics are held and Turkish has become a world language, I trust our Turkish.

3. The right to education in Kurdish will open the way to integration, not division. Our Kurdish citizens will be freed from the feeling of being second-class citizens by granting their most natural rights. The biggest trump card will be taken from the hands of the terrorist organization and those who make Kurdish nationalism based on race. (Gulerce, 2013a)

Dumanli (2013c) highlights the result of the ban on the use of the Kurdish language and states the necessity of education in the Kurdish mother language for the improvement of this language:

Those who built the Kurdish language ban in a way to deny the experiences in history also afflicted us with racist terrorism. After the September 12 Coup, mothers who could not speak any language other than Kurdish were forced to speak Turkish with their children in prison. The result is dire: mother and son just exchanged glances and cried. Not being able to defend in Kurdish in court was also a big mistake. It had to be fixed. It was necessary to eliminate bureaucratic obstacles and legal problems... Fortunately, the state acted, even to prevent abuses, and the right to defend in the mother tongue was opened. After? Here is the view from Erzurum! People who spoke Turkish like their mother tongue insisted that I would defend in Kurdish in court. When the ban was lifted, the smoke screen over the landscape dissipated. The 15 defendants who gave up after 3 hours said, "Enough, brother!" and started to state Turkish. Banning Kurdish (or any other language) was not a practice compatible with reason, conscience, and justice… Let people learn Kurdish; Who will be harmed by this? …The ban had no logic; moreover, it was causing the black propaganda of that forbidden organization. (Dumanli, 2013c)

Su (2018) shows cultural rights as basic rights by criticizing the time the Kurds had experienced in the past,

The Kurds had no television, no newspaper in their house. They could not buy or listen to their book or could not sing their songs or could not sing their lullaby in their native language. When they sing their song in Kurdish, forks were thrown at them[105]. The right to sing their

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[105] In these words, Su attributes to an event of Ahmet Kaya of Kurdish origin. I, as the researcher, want to briefly summarize the event: On the date of the Magazine Journalists Association's award ceremony on February 11, 1999, Kurdish noble Ahmet Kaya, who would receive an award that night, stated that he was looking for a brave TV personality to broadcast the clip of his new song in Kurdish (Semender, 2019). After his speech, he started to get a bad reaction and Turkish anthems were sung in unison and forks were thrown at him. After that event,

songs and freedom of the press in the mother language, all were fundamental rights of the Kurds. (Su, 2018)

According to Su (2018), although the Kurds' right to have education in their mother language has been a problem in Turkey due to the unitary structure of the country, for him, this right is one of the basic rights of the Kurds. Showing Switzerland, where four languages are mandatory in schools and where German, French, Italian, and Romansch are included in the constitution as the official language, as an example, Duru (2018) emphasizes that if this country is not divided, Turkey cannot be divided with the application of education in Kurdish. Duru (2018) also supports that Turkish should be given as a secondary language like a foreign language. According to Bakir (2018), if Kurds learn also Turkish, which is the official language of Turkey, in addition to education in Kurdish, they will increase their job-finding opportunities in Turkey. He (2018) gives the example of the University of Wales, where education is bilingual, Welsh and English. As advocated by Bakir (2018), if only Welsh were taught to students, they could neither find a job nor survive beyond Wales. Therefore, in Turkey, Turkish should be taught to Kurdish students while taking education in the Kurdish mother language (Bakir, 2018).

As Ala (2018), Bakir (2018), and Su (2018) put it, the HM, which accepts education in the mother language as one of the basic rights, opposes and does not perceive independence or federalism or autonomy of the Kurds in Turkey as the basic rights of the Kurds. Resim (2015) promotes that according to the HM, it would be enough to prevent the Kurds from being otherized by no one anymore. Hence, Resim (2015) finds it enough to provide the Kurds equality in education and education in their mother language; equality in economic investments for the Kurdish regions, and to assure the security of the Kurdish regions. As Bakir (2018), Baris (2016), and Su (2018) argue, what is very important for the HM is the protection of the unitary structure of Turkey. Namely, they just want to give the Kurds their social and political rights, but not their independence or autonomy/federal

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Ahmet Kaya went to Paris and after one year, he died due to a heart attack. (Semender, 2019)

governance (Bakir, 2018; Baris, 2016; Su, 2018). A c c o r d i n g t o K i z i l (2018), the logic of the series "Tek Turkiye (United Turkey)", published in one of the HM's media sources, STV (*Samanyolu* Television), empowers this assertion. As Kizil put it, even though this series had been criticized by the Kurds inside the HM, including Kizil (2018) and Duru (2018), due to its Turkishness and statism idea, STV did not stop publishing. On the contrary, it was stated that it is watched by the followers of the HM. This situation, according to Kizil (2018) shows that the general idea among the HM is that they are supporters of a united Turkey, and against any possibility of the Kurds' division from the Turkish state.

Kar (2018) loudly expresses that Fethullah Gulen himself does not want a Turkey divided into four or five parts on the political map. He (2018) states that nobody in the HM accepts the nations in Turkey to divide from Turkey, which would bring economic crisis and so chaos. According to Kar (2018), rather than division, Fethullah Gulen demanded Turkey be part of the European Union to integrate Turkey into the world, unite humanity around the world, and get rid of hatred among people.

> If we look at the idea of Fethullah Gulen, he never wants Turkey to be torn apart. He does not want a Turkey divided into four or five parts on the political map. Therefore, members of the HM do not want such a thing either. As a result, let Turkey be a separate country, let the Kurdistan region go aside, let the Greek Pontus state be re-established, and Rize and Trabzon should come together, of course, nobody wants this in the HM It is because every social movement has a source of power that it fits into. That fragmentation also causes difficulties for the pieces I will tell. What does it mean for Turkey to be fragmented? It means economic crisis, which means chaos. Why did he say this, it is to say, he says; Turkey says to integrate with the world, it says let's unite, let people hate something that has been going on for thousands of years, let them see each other, come, and go, we are human beings after all. He tried to achieve this. He went and visited the pope, he tried to make it. A man who allows a country to be integrated into the whole world does not want a country to be divided. (Kar, 2018)

The reason for the HM not to accept the autonomy/ federation/ independence of the Kurds in Turkey is expressed by Su (2018) as the necessity of the HM to be apolitical in such political issues (independence/Autonomy of the Kurds). As stated by Su (2018), since the HM includes many types of people with different thoughts, different acceptance and values, different education, and different

ethnicity, political decisions of the HM might divide people inside the HM or even it may cause the HM to break down.

Furthermore, another reason for the HM not to support independence or federalism or autonomy of the Kurds is stated by Su (2018), Bulac (2014), Duru (2018), and Kizil (2018) as "its prospective consequence to lead a chaos in Turkey and to divide the Turkish society". Su (2018) thinks that many things are uncertain for the Middle East: 1- which policies have been followed by whom and with which ambitions, 2- who is in cooperation with whom, 3- what is the Middle East Project, 4- who wants the independence of the Kurds, and 5- what will happen after their independence. Hence, taking any political decision about the KQ may be harmful to the HM.

In addition, as advocated by Kizil (2018), the HM, which has always been in favour of a united Turkey and has never accepted the division of Turkey, had concerns about the autonomy of the Kurds in Turkey due to its uncalculated results. Kizil (2018) asserts that giving autonomy to the Kurds might result in the division of Turkey and even the PKK might take control of the Kurdish region. Resim (2015) states that acceptance of autonomy of the Kurdish region may result in the same demand of other nations in various regions in Turkey, which could lead to very serious tensions and mutual unpleasant events in the society. Kizil (2018) argues that the HM can only accept the independence of the Kurds if the HM were sure of that after autonomy: 1- there would be no fight and 2- both nations would live happily in peace together, and 3- no one will demand a division in Turkey.

According to Bulac (2014), on the one hand, it is impossible for the Kurds to be fully independent and to establish a unified Kurdistan since this idea lost its meaning. It's why, for Bulac (2014), the nation-state had to cede part of its sovereignty to local, regional, and global actors and in such a world, the Kurds will not be fully independent. On the other hand, as Bulac (2014) puts it, if the Kurds want to establish alliances with global powers (such as the USA) against the countries of the region, this situation would necessitate taking the risk of conflict with the people of the region

in the short and long term. This option, as asserted by Bulac (2014), would not bring peace and happiness to the Kurds or the region. However, according to Bulac (2014), it would be also an option for the Kurds to establish a Kurdish state, even a Great Kurdistan and to exist under the protective wings of Turkey, like Cyprus. Nevertheless, Bulac (2014) predicts that this situation would not bring peace and happiness to both Turks and Kurds due to oil wells and national strategic calculations.

As advocated by Bulac (2014, 2015b, 2015a), the global powers would not want to allow any opportunity since their priority is Israel and the security of its oil wells. Bulac (2014, 2015b, 2015a) promotes that in the long run, oil greed and the calculation of national interest would cause the spread of hostilities not only between states and governments but also among Muslim peoples. Nonetheless, according to Bulac (2015b), if Muslim tribes and countries in the long term mobilize themselves on the ground of Islam, justice, common prosperity, and regional integration, they can be a great power in the region and cannot be defeated by the global powers. Bulac (2015b) asserts that this unity of the region can be supplied if all tribes and countries 1- join in the union in proportion to their human strength, 2- combine their interests, 3- have equal rights with each other, under the circumstances they do not be superior to the other. In this unity, any religion, sect, or ethnic elements should not be purified; everyone should express their identity and use their mother tongue in every field (Bulac, 2015b). It is to say, for Bulac (2015b), the salvation of the region depends on the joint Islamic cooperation of Turks, Kurds, Arabs, and Iranians rather than pitting them against each other with religious nationalism. As a result, for Bulac (2014), the best option for the Kurds is to live in peace and brotherhood with the Turks together.

It is comprehended that due to the causes expressed above, the HM prefers to support and makes activities in the Kurdish region in Turkey for the continuation of the togetherness and brotherhood of Kurdish and Turkish nations. Su (2018), Resim (2015), and Gulerce (2013a) also support HM's position favouring the solution and the continuation of 1000 years of cooperation with the Kurds. Dumanli (2010) advocates that those who rant about the Kurdish problem with the

language of violence are putting the Kurdish people in a difficult position. Therefore, as a solution to that, Dumanli (2010) affirms brotherhood out of spite, peace, democracy out of spite, and endurance out of spite. According to Gul (2018), Bediuzzaman, in his books, advised the Kurds to live in peace as brothers with the Turks (Gul, 2018). Fethullah Gulen (2003g, S. 69) himself states that "Bediuzzaman almost always spoke of our unity and solidarity and did not leave our nation alone even for a moment in the depressed days."

Duru (2018), nonetheless, claims that his opinion about the independence/federation/ autonomy of the Kurds is different from the general idea of the HM. Promoting the establishment of a federation-style structure in South-eastern Anatolia, Duru (2018) states that there is already such a structure and it needs only legitimization.

> Such situations have been experienced: In South-eastern Anatolia, a person establishes an association in Diyarbakir by saying my association is for the benefit of society and I aim to carry out the cultural activities here. He collects and brings ten Kurdish youths to the municipality and presents a project. He says that within the scope of this project, I will exchange these people with ten others in Northern Iraq, in the name of intercultural dialogue, and hence, it gets support from the municipality. Originally, he takes ten young people in South-eastern Anatolia and brings them to Kurdistan, Northern Iraq. He gives them weapons training there while giving city education in Turkey to ten people coming from Northern Iraq. I know that because I had gone to the Kandil[137]. Such a system has existed. (Duru, 2018)

As expressed by Duru (2018), since such a federal structure has already existed in South-eastern Anatolia, this federal structure should be legalized, but not the independence of the Kurdish region through the division of the Turkish Republic. Its legalization, for Duru (2018), can happen by sending administrators, who know the education, culture, language, and values of the indigenous Kurdish people there, and who can comprehend the Kurds' emotions, thoughts, and real demands and find a solution according to their demands. However, Duru (2018) stresses that the federal structure demanded by him is not the same as Ocalan's demand of "Democratic Confederalism/ Kurdish communalism or Aphorism[106]". According to Duru (2018), Ocalan's solution of Democratic

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[106] Democratic confederationism is the libertarian socialist political theory theorized by PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. According to this system, society should be independent, and the nation should be independent. However, the main objective should be for independent nations to form a democratic nation community together and equally within the confederal system. It is based on the equality of nations. (Ocalan, 2015)

confederalism, after one step, necessitates independence. Nonetheless, for Duru (2018), what the Kurdish people demand is not an independent state, but to have welfare and a peaceful life, which can be obtained if they can use their mother language freely, take an education in their mother language, have their flag, choose the names of the cities where they live mostly in Turkey, and if signs are also put/ given with their Kurdish translation, especially in places where the population is mostly high and speaks Kurdish. Duru (2018) suggests that a federal structure in which each principality has its council as that in Germany can be applied and the president of the principality can exist with the condition to be dependent on the centre.

5.2.2. Educational and Dialogue Activities as Solution

As promoted by Bakir (2018), Olmaz (2015), Su (2018), and Resim (2015), the HM has just taken the Bediuzzaman's formularization for the Kurds' illnesses, which are ignorance, poverty, and disunity, into consideration while going to the mostly Kurdish populated regions in Turkey. Bulac (2008a), Gulen (2014a), Bakir (2018), Olmaz (2015), Resim (2015), and Su (2018) believe that the HM has struggled with the three illnesses/ problems with different instruments and produced solutions and projects for these illnesses of the Kurdish geography as detected by Bediuzzaman.

Resim (2015), Olmaz (2015), and Su (2018) claim that the HM has carried out two works while fighting against poverty: One of them, as Resim (2015) put it, was to provide infrastructure and employment for domestic and foreign economic activities to the businessmen such as Businessmen Associations and TUSKON (Turkish Businessmen and Industrialists Confederation). Resim (2015) advocates that in this way, they could make great strides by making significant investments in Turkey and abroad or by providing capital associations. The second was activities such as the Association of *Kimse Yok Mu*,[107] -which used seventy per cent of its general donation to

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[107] This association continues its activities under the name of "Time to Help". For more info, please check the website https://timetohelp.eu/

assist the Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia for Kurds (Su, 2018). As stated by Resim (2015), Olmaz (2015), Gul (2018), and especially by Su (2018) -one of the former presidents of the Association of *Kimse Yok Mu*-, the *Kimse Yok Mu* association helped those in urgently and in the long term by establishing the study centres or job courses and providing regular financial support to them to increase job opportunity of the people, by providing the material and moral educational assistance to children in need and providing aid for the people in need[108] (by giving special cards to supply their needs free of chance in the supermarkets -full of food and drink- and clothing stores, by repairing or renovating their houses, and by helping ill people in the treatment of their illnesses), and by supporting them to get a profession through workshops and vocational courses[109].

As stated by Resim (2015), Olmaz (2015), Su (2018), Duru (2018) and Bakir (2018), educational activities of the HM *are* composed of the central point while fighting against the ignorance of illness. As Duru (2018) puts it, realizing the low number of students enrolling on the university in the Southeast compared to the West due to the scarcity of teachers and the low quality of the teachers and the lessons in the Southeast, the HM provided education services to the region and established dormitories, schools, study centres, and private teaching institutions in the South-eastern Anatolia. Gul (2018) shows education also as a part of the fight against poverty and disunity. Gulen (2016) also demanded from the volunteers of the HM, who were appointed to that region, to handle education very seriously, since, according to Gulen (2016), when the education problem is solved, many problems would be solved.

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[108] As stated by Su (2018), people really in need were detected in eastern and South-eastern Anatolia after a detailed social examination and there were 80,000 families in these regions.

[109] As explained by Su (2018), the Association has established workshops for many mothers to make them take part in social life so that they can make money and contribute to production. Su (2018) argues that the Association has supported many families in the field of agriculture and animal husbandry. In other words, according to Su (2018), rather than perceiving joining the PKK and taking up arms in despair as the only choice in their lives, these people had two sheep and two cows and got milk, yoghurt, and eggs from them to make money.

The cause of the educational activities of the HM is explained by Gulen (2003c, S. 98) as the realization of mental and logical unity since according to Gulen (2003g, S. 70), both the Kurds and the Turks have been alienated from their historic, religious, and cultural heritage. To put it in other words, for Gulen (2003g, S. 70), both the Turks and the Kurds are "ignorant" of the meaning of "Not knowing God, not knowing a prophet, being indifferent to religion, not seeing Turkish material-spiritual historical dynamics". So, as stated by Gulen (2003g, S. 74), there is disunity in the feelings, thoughts, religion, faith, and lifestyle, and no national unity and solidarity and those who cannot unite mentally could not maintain their togetherness for a long time. Hence, Gulen (2003g, S. 74) (2003c, S. 98) alleges that education must unite the consciences so that the hearts and hands can unite later and bring generations to the consciousness of national thought and history. According to Gulen (2003c, S. 126), through education, the deep effects of centuries-old suffering adopted beliefs and cultures will be announced in the consciences of generations. Gulen (2003c, S. 126) believes that through education a general mobilization would be declared against ignorance, imitation, and ignorance of national culture and fame.

As Gulen (2003c, S. 126) puts it, if such education can be supplied, after a generation or two, no one will think of looking for a foreign source other than their own spiritual and spiritual dynamics. Only in this way, for Gulen (2003c, S. 126), Turkey can prepare itself for its eternity by kneading its life, all elements of which it brought from the past, in its cultural route with the light of religion and dignity. And Turkish nation can act with a strong sense of unity and reach a point that will be envied among the nations of the world - with the indication of Turkey's recurring character in the past (Gulen, 2003c, S. 56). As a result, education, which is perceived by Gulen as "the only path to fully knowing the Creator and his creation possible (Yavuz H. , 2013, S. 94)", is the focal point for Muslim reform and development, and especially the HM highly cares about education in the Muslim world (Yavuz H. , 2013, S. 4). It is claimed by Yavuz and Esposito (2003, S. 50) that the goals of Gulen's educational concept derive from the vision of Bediuzzaman, who believed that through education it

was possible to raise a generation both deeply rooted in Islam and able to participate in the modern, scientific world.

As suggested by Gulen (2003g, S. 90), the fulfilment of Muslim reform and development through education is only incompatible with the existence of heroes, who own the destiny of the country, the history, religion, customs and all the sacredness of our people. Therefore, for Gulen (2003g, S. 107), this country needs heroes who are armed with faith, full of love and excitement, and who can get rid of material- spiritual grudges. These heroes should be the apostles of science, morality, and virtue, more than parties and sectarianism (Gulen, 2003g, S. 107). As Gulen (2003g, S. 90) puts it, it always depends on the presence of heroes on duty, with the love of science, in tension with the idea of construction, sincerity, religion, nationalism, and with a sense of responsibility. Hence, as stated by Yavuz (2013), Gulen himself aims to educate a new elite and the masses that will enable progress and development in the Muslim world. "The new educated elites will constitute a new generation of technocrats and intellectuals who are expected to be motivated not by material interests, but rather by concern for the well-being of their *jamaat* (Yavuz H. , 2013, S. 94)."

As promoted by Gulen (2003g, S. 90), thanks to these heroes and their efforts, the thought to live as a nation will dominate people. In every one, the feeling of dedicating his soul to the service of society will come to the fore together with the revival of the idea of division of duties and mutual assistance. Gulen (2003g, S. 92) calls their educational campaign "the struggle for knowledge, morality and justice" or "spiritual jihad". Through this educational mobilization with efforts for love, tolerance, and dialogue, Gulen (2003g, S. 92) aims to bring together all parts of the Turkish nation, which has shared the same experience and felt the same pain and suffering in different parts of the world for years. In this way, he (2003g, S. 105) wants to activate the spiritual power resources of the Turkish nation. Perceiving the feeling and thought of separation as one of the main elements that destroy a nation, Gulen (2003b, S. 210) finds this movement of tolerance and dialogue, the HM, an

important movement to reunite a divided Turkish society against the attempts of some enemy states that try to divide Turkey. It performs its historical mission of being the protector of the Islamic world like its ancestor the Ottoman Empire. According to Gulen (2010, S. 108), the HM makes the Turkish nation an important and powerful country in the world and also achieves stability in political, economic, and cultural fields (Gulen, 2004, S. 67).

As Gulerce (2006) puts it, acknowledging that Turkey has been pushed into a vortex of division, the HM fights against disunity and reinforced the fraternity of the people through education and dialogue activities. As clarified by Olmaz (2015), Resim (2015), and Su (2018) the dialogue activities of the HM aim to bring the religions, cultures, beliefs, and people in the east and the west closer to know, love and hug each other, and to enable them to empathize with each other's democratic rights and demand. In this way, according to Duru (2018), Bakir (2018), Gulen (2014b), Unal (2008), Olmaz (2015), and Resim (2015), the HM tries to balance the inequality in the conditions in the region, to create a brotherhood environment between the Kurds and the Turks, and to disseminate information by making people get to know each other and come together with the thought of "man is the enemy of the unknown".

As claimed by Fethullah Gulen (2003b, S. 212) and Alpay (2006e), there are no two brotherly peoples in the world as close to each other as the Turks and the Kurds. According to Alpay (2006e) and Gulen (2003b, S. 212), the religious, destiny, and historical unity of Turks with Kurds has a very important role in this:

> When we must overcome an external and internal enemy, sharpened by age-old grudges and hatreds, we must be wise and rational so that we can safely pass the tunnel. If our God is one, our prophet is one, our book is one, our country is one, and our nature is one, then there is no logic in fighting. we, as citizens of this country, have always shared the same fate; We experienced the same conviction, the same victimization, and the same oppression. Because it was the same people who pierced our ship, in which we were together, and we shared the same fate with this pierced ship for centuries. When our homeland was occupied, we lived together during those days of occupation when my honour was violated, and our honour was shared. And again, we expelled the enemy from our homeland together. It is very wrong behaviour to cling to divisive thoughts such as "He is Sunni, this is his flame" despite all the unity that we share and are in contact with this fate that comes from history." (Gulen, 2003b, S. 212)

Alpay (2006e) promotes that during the Ottoman period, Turks and Kurds were not treated differently as members of the "Islamic nation" and over the centuries, they fused by marrying each other. However, Ala (2018) claims that disunity between the Kurds and Turks was created through the Turkifying projects of the state for centuries and such projects just reminded Kurds of their ethnicity by increasing their Kurdish consciousness and nationalism. Also, Alpay (2005), Gulerce (2012a; 2007b; 2013b), Unal (2010; 2012b), Bakir (2018), Kar (2018) and Gulen (2003b, S. 86), show the PKK as the cause of disunity between the Kurds and Turks since for them, the PKK is created by foreigners to divide the Turkish nation into two groups: Kurds and Turks. According to Unal (2012b; 2011b), since 1996, PKK terrorism in this corner aims to separate Southeastern Anatolia from Turkey and unite it with the Kurdish regions of Iraq and Syria, to establish a so-called Kurdish state in the heart of the Islamic world, in the form of a second Israel. Therefore, as Alpay (2007c), Bakir (2018), and Kar (2018) put it, as opposed to polarizing politics of the PKK to divide the Turkish nation, the HM has highlighted the discourse of togetherness in the Southeastern region while fighting against the disunity.

Alpay (2007c) and Gulen (2003b, S. 197-198) believe the solution to defeating the armed rebellion and terrorism of the Kurdish ethnic nationalist PKK is through reinforcement of Turkish-Kurdish brotherhood and friendship, instead of the application of Turkish ethnic nationalism against the PKK. Gulen (2003b) claims that they got this solution from Bediuzzaman:

> Especially for the last couple of centuries, the great powers that dominate the world balance, and some internal forces that acted with them knowingly or unknowingly, negatively evaluated this diversity of our society and caused problems from it, and started to form hostile camps within the country, and certain segments of them constantly clashed with each other. Turkey was almost intended to be turned into an arena for fighting… the continuation of our unity and order from now on requires the creation of an environment of fraternity, which is not only emotional brotherhood but also nourished by logical principles. In the words of a great thinker (Bediuzzaman), our God is one, our prophet is one, our faith is one, our book is one, our country is one, our history is one, our destiny is one, the place we live on and the sky we are shadowed under are one. As of today, with the additions we will make – our enemy is one, our oppression is one, our victimization is one, our conviction is one, all kinds of

embargoes are being tried to be put on us are the same, and our troubles are the same, our problems waiting for a solution are the same, and our air and water are the same. Our history is one and the future we walk together in the same country and under the same conditions is one; it is to say, our destiny is also one. All of this should be well-composed, and it should be constantly emphasized among different segments of society, and the feelings and emotions of the past should be emphasized, and our ongoing brotherhood and unity should be reached to intellectual, logical, and intellectual depths." (Gulen, 2003b, S. 198-199)

Bakir, Ala, Su, and Gulerce (2013a) also approve of the use of religious discourses by the HM such as "We are all Muslim, and religious brothers so that our religion, prophet, and holy book are the same (Bakir, 2018)", "we are citizens of the Republic of Turkey, also we've been together for a thousand years since the Ottoman Seljuk, we are brothers, we are equal (Su, 2018)". Also, Bulac (2011) affirms that the KQ could be solved on the ground of Islamic brotherhood between the Turks and the Kurds. That is why is, for Bulac (2011), "religious brotherhood" is stronger than racial and racial brotherhood. As also expressed by Bakir (2018), these discourses aimed to protect the union of land, keep boundaries, and put an end to the PKK's terrorism by preventing the Kurdish people from joining the PKK. However, the members of the HM reject that they had no goal to protect the union of land or to prevent people from joining the PKK (Su, 2018).

The aim of the HM's activities in Southeastern Anatolia is described by Gulen (2016) as "reconstruction of hearts, bringing man back to the horizon of the divine calendar, reminding man of what nature he was created in; explaining the dynamics of that nature and equipment... and reuniting the heart of man with God". Gul (2018) expresses the intention of the HM as to give the Kurdish people morals, virtue, and the love of the country through education. Unal (2008) mentions "the probability to eradicate ignorance and ignorant thoughts and customs, to educate the people, to eliminate internal conflict, rivalry, and jealousy, and to give people human perfection through education" and "educators, who represent the religion with their own lives, whose minds are sciences, whose heart is enlightened with religious science and values, and whose life is adorned with good morals". Moreover, Gulerce (2005) praises the members of the HM working in the Southeastern region since they devotedly provide education and prevent thousands of young people from joining

the PKK by establishing dormitories, private teaching institutions, and colleges, and by giving the best examples of true brotherhood.

Su (2018) claims that the PKK has never been the goal of the HM in its initiation to Southeastern Anatolia and the Kurds. As advocated by Ala (2018) and Atik (2018), the HM has tried to turn the Kurds into people who have taken good education, who are beneficial to society, and who can express themselves in society to make the Kurdish region economically integrated into the Turkish economy. Duru (2018) also defines the purpose of the HM in Southeastern Anatolia as to recruit and train people to make them qualified. Duru (2018) expresses that "The aim is not to make them lose their Kurdish nationalist feelings, but to bring them to positions that will solve the Kurdish problem". In this sense, Duru (2018) perceives the solutions of the HM as long-term solutions performed over a generation of 30-40 years. The HM would raise a generation who would solve the Kurds' problems one day. As expressed by Duru (2018), if the HM could have continued its activities in the South-eastern for another 10 years, there would not have been a problem in South-eastern Anatolia. It would have resolved on its own.

Bakir (2018), however, argues that the activities of the HM especially have been made mostly in the Southeastern to prevent the Kurds from joining in the PKK's violent and paramilitary activities. As advocated by Bakir (2018), the HM reinforced the brotherhood between the Kurds and the Turks. Bakir (2018) argues that the HM has tried 1-to ensure that the Kurdish students go to school by holding pens in their hands, rather than falling into the trap of terror by taking a gun into their hands, and 2- to show that the Kurds and the Turks are not nations hostile to each other as claimed by PKK or some Turkish nationalists, but two nations who live in the same land and are devoured by the same culture.

Although it is not definite whether the HM did activities in Southeastern Anatolia to block the recruitment of the Kurds to the PKK, as Bakir (2018) and Su (2018) put it, it is a fact that after the activities of the HM in the region, the PKK could not find new militants among the Kurds and accused

of the HM. As argued by Unal (2013), the PKK itself knew that the PKK is disturbed by the education and brotherhood activities of the HM. According to Bakir (2018) and Kar (2018), the PKK saw that: the Kurds, who worked for the PKK or children and who were nominated for the PKK, gained an identity, liked to be beneficial to society, integrated into the society, and freed themselves from hate after going to the study centres of the HM. Then, as supported by Bakir (2018), the PKK perceived such attempts of the HM as a contribution to the assimilation of the Kurds, perceived the existence of the HM in Southeastern Anatolia as a threat, and made it its target (Bakir, 2018). Also, according to Kar (2018), the PKK comprehended that the HM have blocked their polarizing politics to divide the Turkish nation through its activities for the Kurdish children. As a result, Bakir (2018) advocates that a conflict appeared between the PKK and the HM. Hence, in the 90s, the PKK began to burn and bomb the study centres of the HM and started to threaten the members of the HM (Bakir, 2018).

5.3. The Legal Legitimacy of the PKK & Resolution Process

As stated by Gulen (2020), Kar (2018), Duru (2018), Ten (2018), Su (2018), and Resim (2015), the HM supports the solution of the KQ through peaceful methods and demands the representation of all Kurds in the resolution process. Gulen says:

> Problems that were thought to be solved by using brute force, crushing, and digesting have never been solved permanently. For example, you can take into consideration the problem that has been experienced in our Southeastern provinces for years. Blood was shed constantly, and war and violence were resorted to, but the problem could not be overcome. Even when they said, "we fled", they came back stronger and continued their struggle with the new strategies they created. They constantly tried to be crushed, but each time they stood up again. As the issue went on by applying force and force, they also tried to find outside helpers by evaluating the psychology of oppression and victimization, and they were successful in this. However, if the problem had been approached with a holistic view, if its causes had been diagnosed very well and then appropriate remedies had been found, this problem would have long since disappeared. If diplomatic means could be used instead of force and oppression, bloodshed would not occur, hostilities would not occur, and grudges and hatred would not be inherited by the following generations. Here is to stay away from violence, to stop rude behaviour, not to oppress people, and not to put pressure on them; On the contrary, solving problems with gentleness, intelligence and diplomacy is one of the requirements of positive action. (Gulen, Ozgur Heykel, 2020)

However, some members of the HM do not want to include the PKK in the resolution process since they do not perceive the PKK as the representative of the Kurds. Dumanli (2012; 2007b; 2012d), Gulerce (2012a; 2012b), Alpay (2005), Unal (2010), and Gulen (2011) define the PKK as a "terrorist" organization that is used by foreign countries to breed bad blood between Turks and Kurds in Turkey, block investments for the Kurdish region, reverse/downgrade the steps for democratization, ensure ethnic segregation and to convert it to a social conflict. Alpay (2006a; 2013), Celik (2018), Dumanli (2007c; 2011c), Unal (2010; 2008; 2006), Bakir (2018) assert that neither the PKK, the BDP, or the KCK are the representative of at least most Kurds and accuse them not being sincere parties in resolving the "Kurdish issue". Gulerce (2012b) advocates that

> PKK-BDP-KCK... they are not fighting for the solution to the Kurdish problem, for the peace and tranquillity of the Kurdish people. They don't want peace; they want lands encompassing provinces in the East and Southeast of Turkey... They will not give the right to life to anyone but themselves. They are trying to subdue and intimidate our Kurdish citizens who do not support them already. They openly say, "Kurds who are not PKK members do not have the right to live in Kurdistan...". They say, "If you're Kurdish, you have to be with us..." (Gulerce, 2012b)

According to Gulerce (2012b) and Dumanli (2011c; 2011a), these organizations do not make activities to defend the rights of the Kurdish people or to work for the freedom of the Kurds and the happiness of the Kurdish people.

> There is a deep cadre working to make the Kurds an enemy to everyone living in Turkey. This is especially necessary for the Kurds to understand. Some of these dark cast dress and speak like the Kurds. Although they do not represent most Kurds, the public usually remembers them when the Kurds are mentioned because of the noise they make. Therefore, it is necessary to pay close attention to the games played until the election. It is the actors of the same game that affirms and supposedly "nationalist" reaction to it. There are also large masses who are caught in a stream and unfortunately do not know what is behind the scenes. Now they want to pave a new path for themselves: to incite ethnic racism by pitting Kurds against other non-Kurdish Turkish citizens. (Dumanli, 2011a)

On the contrary, Bakir (2018), Kar (2018), and Su (2018) assert that by monopolizing the Kurdish political movement, the PKK misuses the Kurds' problems with the Turkish state by making it a means of violence. Duru (2018) states the real demand of the PKK as follows:

> Now divide Turkey and give the Kurdish region to the PKK! It will not want to govern. Why will it use its advantage and how will it make the trafficking of weapons, drugs, and human beings? All of these have been done by the PKK. They also accept it themselves. They will

say that we need money to continue this struggle and we get it this way. (Duru, 2018)

As Dumanli (2007c) advocates, the PKK tries to turn the possible wrongdoings of the Turkish state

into its new propaganda and to break down the resolution process.

Dumanli (2011a; 2009a) believes that since the PKK has fed from the conflict between the

Kurds and the Turkish state, any steps of the Turkish State towards democratization and peace have

weakened the PKK. Therefore, Dumanli (2011b) asserts that the PKK was frightened by the state's

activities for the benefit and rights of the Kurds – such as helping the poor Kurds, building roads,

and providing water and health services to the Kurdish region. Hence, for Dumanli (2009c; 2009b),

the PKK was afraid of Turkey's Peace Process and attempted to block this peaceful process through

its violent activities against civilians and its pressure on the Kurdish parties. Dumanli says:

> Until recently, the lifting of the Kurdish ban was a dream. A Kurdish language course was
> opened. It should not be forgotten how the bureaucracy resisted in order not to give licenses
> to those courses. Kurdish songs will be sung, TV channels broadcasting in Kurdish will be
> established, even TRT (Official State Channel) will open a channel and broadcast in Kurdish
> etc. These developments were unimaginable. However, those who take "Kurdish" writers
> seriously have generally preferred to remain silent in the face of the steps that reinforce the
> Kurds as first-class citizens in this country. Why? For trembling from the terrorist organization
> PKK. The DTP claimed to represent the Kurds, but he did not give an iota of support to the
> government that guaranteed the rights of the Kurds by law. Why? Because the fear of Ocalan
> engulfed their whole being. More than that, it happened in this country. The "unsolved"
> murders, which the PKK abused, and the DTP did not let go of, were dealt with through the
> judiciary. Active officers were arrested, lime pits were opened, eyewitnesses and the accused
> were confronted in the courtroom… No clicks from the DTP. Why? Because the subjects to
> be exploited were being taken from them one by one. The Kurdish citizen in the middle could
> not understand the sacrifice made. He was once afraid of the state. Now he feels the
> compassionate hands of the state on his back; but this time, the mask of the organization fell,
> and its wild face was revealed. The truth is this: The extremists that fuel the Kurdish-Turkish
> conflict want the country to be dragged into a state of emergency, martial law, coup, and chaotic
> environment. Those who are hostile to Kurds by saying "the homeland is being divided" share
> the same sin by showing the street as an address. (Dumanli, 2009c)

Therefore, Unal (2010) emphasizes that the Kurdish people have suffered the most from PKK

terrorism. Also, for Unal (2010), the policies of the PKK and the BDP that aim to establish the great

Kurdistan state will continue harming the Kurds the most and oppress the Kurds in the name of

Israel's interests. Dumanli (2009a) believes that if Turkey's Peace Process had resulted as expected,

the PKK would not have been able to find support from the Western countries or neighbouring

countries and so it would weaken.

However, according to the statement of Olmaz (2015), the PKK should be included in the resolution process since one should make a peace with the one with whom it fights. Olmaz (2015) argues that the PKK cannot be destroyed with bombs/ force since the Turkish military destroyed the PKK six times and killed 35,000 people. Olmaz (2015) emphasizes the internal and external support of the PKK: the PKK has been an organization of 5,000 people and it still exists because it could renew itself. According to Olmaz's (2015) thought, the activities of the PKK are not only connected to terrorism but also, have sociological dimensions and there are/will be always sympathizers of the PKK who perceive it as the defender of the Kurds and their rights. Therefore, Olmaz (2015) supports the negotiation of the Turkish state with the PKK to be able to disarm the PKK in Turkey. Baris (2016) also asserts the necessity of the Turkish State to talk to the PKK in the resolution process. According to Baris (2016), since there is "an interlocutor with a gun", the PKK, in front of the Turkish state, hence, the state should negotiate with the PKK. However, Baris emphasizes that during these negotiations with the PKK, the entire security of the region should not be left to the PKK. Otherwise, according to Baris (2016), the Kurds start to migrate from the region with the fear that the PKK will dominate there.

Referencing the supporting words of Bediuzzaman about *Mesrutiyet* (Constitutional Monarchy), Bulac and Gulerce (2010) show the Parliament and legal arrangements under it as the address of the solution for the KQ, instead of the PKK. According to the statement of Bakir (2018), the HM has repeatedly conveyed to the government and the authorities that a resolution process only with the PKK would legitimize the PKK and would leave the Kurdish people in the southeast completely in the hands of the PKK. Hence, Alpay (2009b; 2015), Dumanli (2007a) , Atik (2018), and Ok (2018) argue that the Turkish state should solve the KQ with the legitimate representatives of the Kurds in Turkey: with Kurdish deputies from the HDP and the AKP (which consists of many Kurdish deputies) and other parties in the parliament, but not with the PKK.

As asserted by Alpay (2005a; 2009b) and Bakir (2018), all democratic countries, Spain, Britain, and France, which had to deal with separatist movements resorting to terrorism, succeeded in at least marginalizing separatism and violence by expanding democracy and freedoms. Perceiving the PKK is not the only representative of the Kurds in Turkey, Gulerce (2010), Unal (2011b), and Bakir (2018) think that there are also other representatives of the Kurds –such as opinion leaders of non-governmental organizations, religious leaders, the ideas of other Kurdish parties such as HUDAPAR[110]-. Thus, as Alpay (2005a; 2005b; 2010a) and Ok (2018) put it, the HM supports the representation of the legal Kurdish parties in the Parliament. Therefore, Alpay (2006d; 2005b) argues that the 10 per cent national threshold should be reduced to 4-5 per cent with an election law amendment to remove the obstacles that prevent the Kurdish people from expressing their problems and troubles in the Parliament. In this way, according to Alpay (2007a; 2006b; 2006c) and Yilmaz (2015a), the parties representing Kurdish demands can enter in Parliament and freely express their problems and demands without being subjected to any pressure or ban on the PKK. As a result, as Alpay (2007a; 2006b; 2006c) and Yilmaz (2015a) put it, the PKK's effectiveness and pressure on the Kurdish people can also be decreased. However, Alpay (2011; 2010b; 2009) and Yilmaz (2015b) hope that the Kurdish parties, which can enter the Parliament, gain an identity independent of the PKK and make a great contribution to the peaceful and democratic solution of the KQ. Gulerce (2011) expresses that as follows:

> Is the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) an important party? Could the BDP have a role in solving the Kurdish problem? Does the BDP's involvement in the social consensus in the preparation of a new constitution make any sense or benefit? I answer "yes" to all three of these questions. Of course, for this, the BDP needs to be freed from the tutelage of the PKK, and even from PKK captivity. BDP cannot do this on its own. Because KCK, PKK, and BDP are intertwined structures. Without the separation of this tripartite structure, the BDP cannot become an actor in the solution to the Kurdish problem... As the terrorist organization weakens, the civilian position of the BDP will strengthen. Only then will the "New BDP", which has been freed from mortgage and tutelage, express a value in the Parliament. Turkey needs the new BDP, which takes responsibility for the new constitution and provides

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[110] The Free Cause Party (*Hur Dava Partisi*, HUDA PAR) is a political party that was founded on 19 December 2012 and operates in Turkey. HUDA PAR is a political party that became official in 2013 and has a base mostly in eastern and South-eastern Anatolia.

meaningful support for real social reconciliation. New BDP may not be a party that is racist, thinks about politics only through the Kurds, or is placed under tutelage, but is a party that cares about being Turkey's party and seeks solutions for Turkey's basic issues only within the democracy. That's when the words "peace" and "democracy" in his name gain a ground of sincerity. (Gulerce, 2011)

Alpay (2008b) did not approve of the attitudes of the DTP that engaged in politics over blood/by benefiting from the "terrorist" actions of the PKK.

5.4. Ideal State Model of the *Hizmet* Movement

By evaluating especially, the words of Fethullah Gulen, the founder and spiritual leader of the HM, it is seen that there is "a new world" that wants to be achieved by Fethullah Gulen himself, and maybe by the HM. Gulen dreams to bring Turkey into a powerful position by making it the leader of the Muslim world like the Ottoman Empire. According to Gulen (2003d, S. 129), Muslim Turkish ancestry, which started with the Alp Arslan[111], and continued with the Ottoman Empire, has always had a mission of being the protector of the Islamic world for nine centuries and defended them against other countries. Hence, as stated by Yavuz and Esposito (2003, S. 24), Gulen asserts the Turkish nation, which subsurface credit is very rich, "are destined to serve Islam and to lead their religion" and must perform its historical mission, which it once performed with the states, at least in its region (Gulen, 2003f, S. 322). Even Gulen demands the Turkish nation to be very important and powerful in the world (Gulen, 2010, S. 108) and to achieve stability in political, economic, and cultural fields (Gulen, 2004, S. 67). That is why is explained by Gulen (2010, S. 108) as the following:

> In its soul are an idea of justice, a sense of direction and a notion of compassion inherited from its ancestors. This is needed for the peace of both the people of that region and the Turkish people. Therefore, the HM strongly desire that the Turkish nation becomes powerful once again with its values and resurrects the statue of its soul. (Gulen, 2010, S. 108)

Nevertheless, Gulen (2003f, S. 324) emphasizes that when he says the Turkish nation, he does

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[111] He is the military commander and ruler who was the second sultan of the Great Seljuk Empire and directed the arrival and struggle of the Turks from Central Asia to Anatolia. He is known for his success in the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 with the Roman Diogenes, the ruler of the Byzantine Empire.

not make racism since for him, "Anatolia is not a nation to be divided into such a race." Some of the Anatolian people are *Laz*, some are Georgians, some are Kurds, or people came from Asia or Mesopotamia or the Balkans. Namely, for Gulen (2003f, S. 324), today, "Turkey is the cradle of a glorious nation made up of people who are interlocked with each other". So, the Turkish nation means all the Anatolian people, completely staying away from racist considerations. Nevertheless, Yavuz and Esposito (2003, S. 24) argue that "for Gulen, those Muslims who live in Turkey, share the Ottoman legacy as their own, and regard themselves as Turks could be considered as Turks." This makes Islam "the basic criterion of national identity and loyalty" and makes "being a Muslim a sine qua non for being Turk" (Yavuz & Esposito, 2003, S. 24). After all, Yavuz and Esposito (2003, S. 24) advocate that "Gulen's nationalism is an inclusive one that is not based on blood or race, but rather on shared historical experiences and the agreement to live together within one policy". Moreover, according to Gulen (2003f, S. 322-3), the revival of the Turkish nation means the revival of other Muslim nations, and it is very important for the reshaping of the world of the future:

> One day, this nation will shake off, experience its final metamorphosis, and take shape according to its essence and then, other nations that now imitate others will imitate this nation in goodness and well-being and will fall behind it. Therefore, the resurrection of this nation will be the resurrection of not only a nation, but also the Islamic world, and then the balancing of the whole world. (Gulen, 2003f, S. 323)

Gulen (2003d, S. 147) dreams of integration and industrial, commercial, and cultural cooperation of Turkey with the Central Asian countries -such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan- without making any distinctions, without making any sub-identity-superior-identity problem. It is why, as Gulen (2003a) advocates, these Central Asian counties have shared the same values as the Turks in feelings, religion, race, language, history, culture, thoughts, understanding, philosophy, and logic. "They also have been bitterly sipped by communism for 70 years (Gulen, 2003a, S. 86)". Gulen (2003d, S. 129) emphasizes that "this union is not something, in which a nation oppresses another one or takes another nation under cultural imperialism or act as a big brother".

As stated by Gulen (2003d, S. 129), "Turkey does not expect any material-spiritual things from them, rather it will share everything with them. Turkey will be experiencing the immense joy of finding its brothers and sisters". According to Gulen (2003d, S. 155), it will be a political, economic, administrative, and cultural unity that can prevent the attempts of foreign powers. Gulen (2003d, S. 155) believes that through this unity, the words of Muslim countries can be heard by other powerful countries. It's to say, according to Gulen (2003d, S. 155), these countries can have a say in this new world and even they can build a new world on science and technology that they can develop. Also, as claimed by Gulen (2003d, S. 147), only with this identity, Turkey can take a strong position in the world and come to the level of superpowers today. Thus, it can become a strong pillar for the states in need; and can be followed by them step by step (Gulen, 2003d, S. 156).

Gulen (2004, S. 67), however, is aware that Turkey is now in a weak position since some countries constantly interfere with the stability of the Turkish nation to keep Turkey at a certain level and prevent it from becoming a partner in the new world (Gulen, 2003d, S. 156). Gulen (2009) states that some countries have been trying to divide Islamic society by putting forward different theories on behalf of the concept of nationalism and resurrecting racial considerations since the day it started to rule in the geography where Muslims live. These countries were able to polarize Turkish society as Kurds-Turks, Alevi-Sunnis, and Secular-anti-secular (Gulen, 2003b, S. 209). Nevertheless, according to Gulen (2003g, S. 107), the members of the HM have been armed with faith, full of love and excitement and could get rid of material-spiritual grudges, by being the apostles of science, morality, and virtue, rather than parties and sectarianism. They made educational and dialogue activities to re-unite the divided Turkish society mentally and spiritually and to bring Turkey into a strong and important position in the world that can act with a sense of unity (Gulen, 2003g, S. 105).

Furthermore, Gulen (2004, S. 69) thinks that Turkey cannot survive or keep its existence in the future if it isolates itself from the world. In this sense, for Gulen (2004, S. 69), these global

educational activities guarantee the future of Turkey. According to Gulen (2004), through the HM, people, who truly love their nation and who are full of religious thoughts, seek to promote the values Turkey inherits from history to the whole world using education and dialogue. They evaluate every opportunity, from education to the media, to instil the spirit of the nation and our awareness of history into society (Gulen, 2003e, S. 79). As stated by Gulen (2003e, S. 79), the members of the HM do not want the nation to become over-materialized, let materialistic thoughts dominate Turkish people, erode the truth of religion, and destroy Turkish cultural traditions. These people, as advocated by Gulen (Gulen, Ozgur Heykel, 2009; Gulen, Isigin Gorundugu Ufuk, 2003e), believe that only through this way, Turkey will get rid of its internal crises, become stronger in the world, and make its voice heard in the face of cruelty and injustice against it. They call on everyone for tolerance and dialogue and demand from them to welcome differences, respect every thought, and give more importance to education (Gulen, 2003e, S. 79). Gulen (Gulen, Yasatma Ideali, 2012a; Gulen, Ozgur Heykel, 2012b; Gulen, Ozgur Herkul, 2014b) claims that they act with the motto of "accepting everyone in their position and respecting everyone regardless of their religion, belief, sect, language, race, and difference of opinion (Gulen, 2003e, S. 212)".

Moreover, according to Gulen (2003e, S. 59; Gulen, Ozgur Heykel, 2012b), if Turkey wants to take a place in the world worthy of itself and its history, it should solve the education problem as a nation, make its own culture dominate the cultural life of humanity, and universalize its language and turn it into a language of science. "Turkish nation's ability to explain itself to the whole world and to be able to prove itself depends on making Turkish the "world language" (Gulen, Ozgur Heykel, 2009)". Therefore, Gulen (2009) perceives it necessary to carry out serious studies on subjects such as giving Turkish lessons in universities in different countries abroad. Also, for Gulen (2012b) every language enters with its own culture while penetrating another country. The material used to teach that language will certainly lead to the spread of the culture (Gulen, 2012b). Evaluating the Turkish

Olympics (International Festival of Language and Culture)[112] as an introduction to Turkish culture and core values to the whole world along with this language teaching activity.[113] Gulen (2012b) asserts that Turkey is "promoted almost everywhere, from the east to the west, thanks to Turkish language teaching and language Olympiads".

5.5. Importance of Bediuzzaman's Kurdish and Islamic Identity

Bakir (2018), Duru (2018), Su (2018) and Olmaz (2015) assert everyone in the HM knows and accepts that Bediuzzaman is Kurdish, that he was born and raised among the Kurds, and that his mother language was Kurdish. However, it seems that they have evacuated Bediuzzaman's Kurdish identity by saying that "Bediuzzaman was Seyyid (one of the descendent of the Prophet Muhammed) (Ala, 2018; Olmaz, 2015; Resim, 2015; Su, 2018)", meaning he is originally a kind of Arab. As affirmed by Olmaz (2015), Bediuzzaman eventually became Kurdish, that is, he became an individual belonging to Kurds by staying among the Kurds. He (2015) says that "when we talk about the Kurdishness and Arabness of the Master, we are talking about an influence, not in the sense of race, but in the sense of culture, the environment in which he emerged". Su (2018) also states that Bediuzzaman was ethnically a person of Arab ancestry, but due to the reunification and marriage of his family members with the Kurdish nation and the geography he lived. So, Kurdish identity became a part of his identity in a racial sense. Even, one of the first followers of the HM, Gul (2018) rejects the Kurdish identity of Bediuzzaman. Gul (2018) describes a Bediuzzaman who could not be a Kurd, and whose faith comes before his nationality even though he was a Kurd:

It is unclear whether the Master (Bediuzzaman) was a Kurd. In a time when persecution was

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[112] For more info, please check https://intflc.org/

[113] "Although the activities carried out under the name of the Turkish Olympics today are evaluated through language education, since there is a language flag in the orbit of the work, in fact, our own culture and core values are introduced to the whole world along with language teaching. (Gulen, 2012b)"

perpetrated, people fled to save their lives and settled in the highest peaks of some countries in such villages. To protect and preserve themselves. The master is not known to be the absolute Kurdish. Even the mother of Hodja Effendi is based in Medina. So, the probability of the Master being an Arab with high probability calculations outweighs. After all, let's admit that he was a Kurd, but no matter what nationality he belongs to, faith is always in the foreground rather than his race. A person like the Master who drags millions after him cannot act against Islam, he has not." (Gul, 2018)

Furthermore, Olmaz (2015) reveals the fact that if there was more emphasis on the Bediuzzaman's Kurdishness in the HM, if his Kurdishness had come to the fore, the members of the HM would probably have been disturbed by such a thing. Ala (2018) also argues that if Bediuzzaman had been in a nationalist movement; the HM might not have accepted it and would not appreciate the words of Bediuzzaman as a source of inspiration. It is possible to express this situation with the evaluation of Ok (2018): the people at the basis of the HM have preferred to follow a Turkish nationalist line and they became uneasy with the Kurdish people who spoke Kurdish among themselves. However, Ok (2018) emphasizes that the members at the higher positions in the HM were against this logic and rather preferred to establish schools in the North of Kurdistan and did not have a problem with the idea of Kurdistan.

Furthermore, as argued by Resim (2015), the HM believes that Bediuzzaman was against discriminatory nationalism and defined it as a tradition of ignorance. In other words, Bediuzzaman neither emphasized his Kurdish ethnic identity nor approved of the separation of people based on nationality (Resim, 2015). Su (2018) also affirms the impossibility of finding any discourse on ethnicity in Bediuzzaman's works. On the contrary, as affirmed by Su (2018), Bediuzzaman struggled to raise strong individuals with strong/investigative faith (*tahkiki iman*) through internalization of the basic truths of religion and the realization of religion. In this sense, the HM adopts Bediuzzaman, puts Bediuzzaman's Islamic identity forward and appreciates the books of Bediuzzaman. Ala (2018) and Duru (2018) assert that as a sign of respect, the members of the HM put the books of Fethullah Gulen under the books of Bediuzzaman, which means Bediuzzaman's books are more valuable than the books of Fethullah Gulen.

In addition, it is also a sign that "the HM perceive him as the mujaddid[114] of his century (Duru, 2018)" to prove the priority of the Islamic identity of Bediuzzaman in the HM. In this way, they can claim that "Fethullah Gulen is the mujaddid of this century (Duru, 2018)". Duru (2018) argues that "Bediuzzaman described a person who will come after him and what he would do on the 11th page of his book of *Sikke-i Tasdiki Gaybi*".

> The most important and greatest and most valuable of the three duties of the person who is expected by the *ummah* and who will come at the end of time, in terms of spreading the faith and saving the people of faith from misguidance, they saw that most important duty exactly in *RNK*. Persons like Imam-i Ali, Gavs-i Azam and Osman-i Khalidi pointed to this point as if they had discovered the station of that future person in the spiritual personality of the *RNK*. Sometimes they gave that spiritual person to one of their servants, and they looked at that servant indignantly. It is understood from this truth that the next blessed person will publish and implement the *RNK* as a program. The second duty of that person is to execute and apply the Shari'a. Although the first duty is not with material strength, with strong belief, sincerity, and loyalty, this second duty requires great material strength and dominance so that the second duty can be implemented. The third duty of that person is to serve the religion of Islam by building the caliphate of Islam on the unity of Islam and allying with Christian spiritualists. This duty can be implemented with great reign and power and millions of sacrifices. The first duty is three or four degrees more valuable than those two duties. But since those second and third duties are in a very bright and wide circle and a magnificent style, they seem more important in the eyes of the public and the common people. It is a cause of alarm for the people of the world and the people of politics to put forward the ideas of those special Nurists and those of our brothers, some of whom are awliya, in need of expression and interpretation, which leads to their attacks. Because they cannot see the truth and value of the first duty; they move in other directions. (Nursi S. , 2016, S. 11)

According to Duru's interpretation (2018), Bediuzzaman described the HM there. Hence, Fethullah Gulen is the next person that came after Bediuzzaman, namely, the mujaddid of this century (Duru, 2018). Moreover, Duru (2018) asserts that "Bediuzzaman knew that the prescription (*Madrasatuzzehra*) he presented to solve the three diseases of the Islamic geography (ignorance, disunity, and poverty) would be implemented by the next *mujaddid* (F. Gulen)". It is to say, as stated by Duru (2018), "Bediuzzaman wrote the prescription and Fethullah Gulen put it into practice":

> His Excellency Ustad came just at a time when the Kurdish language was banned, the Qur'an was banned, the azan was made Turkish, and the lodges were abolished. That's why it's a

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[114] Mujaddid: It is defined in the Wikipedia as a person who appears at the turn of every century of the Islamic calendar to revive Islam, cleansing it of extraneous elements and restoring it to its pristine purity (Wikipedia, kein Datum).

solution for people who have thought of long-term solutions. He was a master who did not look for a short-term solution. For this, he put three diseases and presented their solutions. He said that the first disease is ignorance, the solution is education, and the second disease is the separation between Kurds and Turks- and the solution is spirit, the third disease is poverty, and the equivalent in economics. Ustad wrote the prescription, and Hodja Efendi (Fethullah Gulen) brought it to life. (Duru, 2018)

For example, Bakir (2018), Gul (2018), Kizil (2018), Su (2018), and Ten (2018) believe that they have accomplished the *Madrasatuzzehra* project of Bediuzzaman by establishing hundreds of schools like *Madrasatuzzehra* in the East. Kizil (2018) asserts that the HM established hundreds of schools like *Madrasatuzzehra* in the East, including the *Serhat* College in Van. Besides, the HM founded Selahattin Eyyubi University in Diyarbakir, but again this university did not give an education system in which all three languages (Kurdish, Arabic, and Turkish) are taught, as *Madrasatuzzehra* project of Bediuzzaman, due to the legal restrictions in Turkey (Tas, 2018). However, as stated by Ten (2018) and Tas (Tas, 2018), after the removal of the ban on the Kurdish language in education, this university applied to open a department of Kurdology at YOK (Higher Education Institution), which could not be realized due to the political situations in Turkey.

As can be understood, the HM belauds Bediuzzaman by putting his Kurdish identity behind him. They do it by using Bediuzzaman's arguments. According to them, Bediuzzaman was against discriminatory nationalism based on race, and he rejected the separation of people according to their nationality. However, they can still advocate that Bediuzzaman was originally Sayyid of origin, but not of Kurdish origin. Besides, Bediuzzaman's Islamic identity is used by the HM to assert that their founder and spiritual leader, Fethullah Gulen, is the next person that came after Bediuzzaman, namely, the *mujaddid* of this century. In this way, Fethullah Gulen is shown as an important religious scholar and the path/doctrine of the HM is the most accurate doctrine among the Islamic movements.

5.6. Interpretation of Religious Sources by the *Hizmet* Movement

The HM interprets the words of Bediuzzaman in a way that for them, Bediuzzaman was against the

independence of the Kurds and hence, they are also against it. Rather the HM draws a Bediuzzaman who supported the creation of a brotherhood environment between the Turks and the Kurds. As the HM puts it, the independence of the Kurds in Turkey cannot bring peace and happiness to both Turks and Kurds. It could lead Turkey into chaos and divide Turkish society. Or it could leave the whole control of the Kurdish region to the PKK or could make the region the focus of the global powers due to oil wells and national strategic calculations. Therefore, rather than the division of Turkey, the HM demands the unification of Turkish society as one of the solutions for the KQ, and as Bediuzzaman's solution for the KQ.

In addition, the HM presents Bediuzzaman, according to whom the KQ results from three illnesses/problems. These problems are poverty, ignorance, and disunity. Interpreting the ignorance term of Bediuzzaman as "Not knowing God, not knowing a prophet, being indifferent to religion, not seeing Turkish material-spiritual historical dynamics", the HM fought against ignorance through educational activities, through which generations would be brought to the consciousness of national thought and history and through which a general mobilization would be declared against ignorance, imitation, and ignorance of national culture and fame. In addition, as commented by the HM, there was disunity in the feelings, thoughts, religion, faith, and lifestyle, and no national unity and solidarity. As a result, according to the HM, Turkish society needed the reunification of all Anatolian people by getting its national consciousness and national solidarity. And this reunification, for the HM, could be supplied, as derived from the vision of Bediuzzaman, only through educational activities. In this way, as HM advocated, the Turkish nation could act with a strong sense of unity and all parts of the Turkish nation, which shared the same experience and felt the same pain and suffering in different parts of the world for years, could come together. Therefore, these educational activities of the HM were defined by the HM as "the struggle for knowledge, morality and justice" or "spiritual jihad". Moreover, the HM also believed that as a result of its educational activities, Turkey would be brought into the position of being the protector of the Islamic world like its ancestor the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish

nation would be an important and powerful country in the world.

Furthermore, the HM interpreted the disunity discourse of Bediuzzaman as a division among the Turkish nation. According to the HM, some global powers through their agents such as the PKK and also the Turkifying projects of the Turkish state divided the Turkish society as Alevi-Sunni, secular-anti-secular, or Turks-Kurds. Also, as asserted by the HM, the PKK tried to create a Turkish-Kurdish conflict in Turkey to divide two nations: Kurds and Turks and to establish a so-called Kurdish state in the heart of the Islamic world, in the form of a second Israel. Therefore, as advised by Bediuzzaman, the HM had a goal to fight against disunity between the Kurds and Turks through the reinforcement of Turkish-Kurdish brotherhood and friendship through its educational and dialogue activities. The HM drew a Bediuzzaman who did not want the independence of the Kurds from the Turkish state, but rather supported the brotherhood of the Kurds in Turkey and made activities accordingly. This Bediuzzaman supported the unitary structure of Turkey and detected the illnesses of the Turkish nation not to become the leader of the Islamic world. Hence, the HM struggled to reunite all Anatolian people - Laz, Georgians, Kurds, and people who came from Asia, Mesopotamia, or the Balkans- in feelings, thoughts, and lifestyles. It has become the enemy of any group or anyone who demands the independence of the Kurds. The HM aimed to achieve national unity and national solidarity through its dialogue and educational activities, which are "the only path to know the Creator and his creation to the fullest extent possible". In this way, the Turkish nation could act with a strong sense of unity and could be one of the superpowers that would be able to lead the Islamic world. It is to say, the HM interpreted Bediuzzaman's words in a way that Bediuzzaman's solution of the KQ became the unification of the Kurds with Turkish society.

It seems that the HM has used the religion and brotherhood discourse of Bediuzzaman as a tool to legalize their approach to the Kurds and the KQ by putting forward their ethnic and national ambitions. The members of the HM have claimed to come up with the formularization and solutions of Bediuzzaman for the Kurds while helping the Southeast. Nonetheless, normally, they aimed to re-

unite the polarized Turkish society to bring Turkey into a strong position in the world. Through educational and dialogue activities, the HM tried to give the Kurds historical and national consciousness, and unity of thought, religion, belief, and faith. It aimed to make them remember their common specialities and common history, religion, and culture with the Turks. In this way, the Kurds would give up their demands to establish an independent state or federal/ autonomous structure in the Turkish territory and the unitary structure of Turkey could be protected. Also, unity in the feelings, thoughts, and lifestyles could be supplied, and the Kurds would be willing to include themselves in the national unity and solidarity among the Turkish society. It is also clearly expressed by some members that they intended to give the Kurdish people morals, virtue, and the love of the country through education and tried to integrate the Kurdish region economically into the Turkish economy and the Kurds into Turkish society. The HM tried to bring the Kurdish children to positions that would solve the Kurdish problem, but this solution could not be based on the independence of the Kurds. That's why the HM originally aimed to give them the love of the country and injected the brotherhood discourses. Therefore, these children would not demand an independent Kurdish state. They would prefer to live in peace together with the Turks in Turkey using this love of the country. Namely, it is more likely that from the beginning, the goal of the HM was to go to the Kurdish regions and to help the Kurds based on ethnic causes. The HM aimed to block the division of Turkey and the Turkish nation as the Kurds and the Turks, by decreasing the participation rate of the PKK. The HM legalized their goals and their approach to the KQ through religious discourses of brotherhood and friendship between the Kurds and the Turks. Their solution excluding the PKK in the resolution policy can also be thought of as supportive of this idea. However, it must be highlighted that the HM has always goals to unite everyone, especially Muslim communities, and to make the Turkish nation one of the superpowers in the world and the leader of the Islamic world. Therefore, the HM should have united not only the Kurds in Turkey but also other nations to supply the unity of all Muslim nations. Therefore, originally in every attempt and discourse, the HM encouraged brotherhood, peace, and

fraternity and they have always been against division, separation, and violence.

Furthermore, it is seen that the HM ignored the Kurdish identity of Bediuzzaman and pushes it into the background. According to the HM, Bediuzzaman was Seyyid (one of the descendent of the Prophet Muhammed), meaning he is originally a kind of Arab (Ala, 2018) (Olmaz 2015, Su 2018, Resim 2015). With the argumentation that Bediuzzaman was against discriminatory nationalism (the separation of people based on nationality), they annihilated the possibility of emphasizing the Kurdish identity of Bediuzzaman. Rather, the HM put Bediuzzaman's Islamic identity forward by appreciating the books of Bediuzzaman and by showing him as the *mujaddid* of his century. In this way, the HM could advocate that Bediuzzaman has shown the founder and spiritual leader of the HM, Fethullah Gulen, in his books as the next person that came after him, as the *mujaddid* of this century (Duru, 2018). Thus, this caused the aggrandizement of Gulen by the HM using the Bediuzzaman's religious identity. The HM interpreted Bediuzzaman's religious sources from their ethnic identity to legitimize and mould their ethnic demands and their political perspectives on the KQ. Namely, the HM converted Bediuzzaman's words in a way that they could still pursue their ethnic goal: to protect the unitary structure of Turkey on this ground with the big purpose to be the leader of the united Islamic world. It is to say, it is understood that the HM comes to the fore of their ethnic identity when the issue is the KQ and uses religion as a tool to achieve their nationalist goal (to prevent Turkey and the Turkish nation from any division). Also, it seems that they disregard the Kurdish identity of Bediuzzaman and benefit from Bediuzzaman due to his Islamic identity.

5.7. Conclusion

This chapter presents the perceptions of the HM on its definition of the Kurdish Question, its solution to the KQ, its ideal state model, the legal legitimacy of the PKK, the HDP, and other agents, and the importance of Bediuzzaman's Kurdish and Islamic identity. It is seen that the HM describes the KQ

as a problem resulting from the nationalist politics of the Turkish Republic against the Kurds and as a problem resulting from ignorance, poverty, and disunity claimed also by Bediuzzaman. And these problems, for the HM, should be solved through the provision of their fundamental rights (identity and cultural rights, the use of the Kurdish language, and education in the mother language) through educational and dialogue activities to create (Islamic) brotherhood environment among the nations in Turkey. According to the HM, these solutions are also advised by Bediuzzaman. The HM drew Bediuzzaman who opposed the independence or federalism or autonomy of the Kurds in Turkey and who supported the brotherhood between Turks and Kurds. Evaluating the Bediuzzaman's term of ignorance as the source of disunity in the feelings, thoughts, religion, faith, and lifestyle, and no national unity and solidarity among the Turkish society, the HM aimed to unite all nations in the Turkish society through educational and dialogue activities. In this way, no nation including the Kurds would not separate themselves from Turkey with independence demands and the HM could unite everyone, especially Muslim communities, and make the Turkish nation one of the superpowers in the world and the leader of the Islamic world. The ideal model of the HM also supports this claim. This chapter concludes that the HM commentates on religious sources in a way to justify their political perspectives on the KQ and uses religion as a tool to achieve their nationalist goal (to prevent Turkey and the Turkish nation from any division). In this way, the HM expresses its ethnic demands in the conditions of Turkey and does not confront any nation with ethnic discourses.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

In Turkey, there has always been a control mechanism of the state over religion and religious organizations going, including religious communities, and *jamaats*. The *jamaats*, which are officially

illegal, still try to keep their existence against the enforcement of the current AKP government to support them. There are great amounts of resources invested by the government to encourage religious organizations. The *jamaats* that reject allying with the government face the evil face of the state. As a result, the *jamaats* always worry to take the wrong step against the Turkish state. They try to protect their assets by not attracting the attention of the state and by staying away from doing politics or from using political discourses. In this environment, it would be highly possible especially for Kurdish *jamaats* to hide their nationalistic opinions through their religious interpretations. In this study, evaluating Turkey's KQ perspective of mostly Turkish-populated HM and mostly Kurdish-populated NC, I have witnessed what a justified expectation I had. Both *jamaats* interpreted the religious sources in a different way to legitimize their political replies to the KQ and their ethnic and nationalist demands.

The differentiation between the NC and the HM in their perceptions is especially visible in their different interpretation of Bediuzzaman's words for the KQ. Although both jamaats almost show Bediuzzaman's formulation as the illnesses of the Kurds, which are ignorance, poverty, and disunity, their interpretation differs from each other. Benefiting the same sources of Bediuzzaman, the HM understands ignorance as the ignorance of the Kurds and the Turks whereas, for the NC, it is the ignorance of the Kurds. In other words, the NC interprets that the Kurds are ignorant because they do not have a national consciousness and national solidarity to act as a united nation to attain their independence. However, the HM commentates that both the Turks and the Kurds are ignorant because they are disunited in their feelings, thoughts, religion, faith, and lifestyle, and cannot have national unity and solidarity and a brotherhood environment with each other. Therefore, with this logic, the NC presents the independence of the Kurds as a solution for the KQ by showing it as the solution of Bediuzzaman. Nonetheless, the HM draws a Bediuzzaman who is against the independence of the Kurds and who demands the brotherhood of the Kurds in Turkey. Namely, the HM's Bediuzzaman supports both the reunification of the polarized Turkish society and the unitary structure of Turkey. Despite these separate

Bediuzzaman interpretations, both jamaats take Bediuzzaman's education model, the *Madrasatuzzehra* project, as an example and struggle through their educational activities while fighting against the problems of ignorance, poverty, and disunity. Moreover, the NC was able to show the model of Bediuzzaman's *Cemahiri Muttefika-i Islamiye*, a con-federal Islamic unity, as an ideal state model. This model gave all Islamic nations independence, equal rights, and sovereignty area to each nation to create their status. Even if the HM could not express this, the model they proposed showed a similar structure. but the only difference is that in the model of the NC, the Kurds would be one of the free nations in the alliance and would not have any privileges, while in the model of the HM, the Turks would take on the task of being the leader of the Islamic world.

Evaluating the differentiations in the interpretations of the jamaats, it is understood that both *jamaats* believe in the same religion and benefit from the same religious sources, but their interpretation of religious sources, especially Bediuzzaman's books, shows the difference in the KQ. Both *jamaats* use Bediuzzaman's words in their perspective of the KQ, but they present us with completely different sides of Bediuzzaman and interpret his words differently to justify and mould their political response to the KQ. The HM converts Bediuzzaman's words in a way that they can still pursue their ethnic goal: to protect the unitary structure of Turkey on this ground with the big purpose to be the leader of the united Islamic world. It is to say, it is understood that the HM comes to the fore of their ethnic identity when the issue is the KQ and uses religion as a tool to achieve their nationalist goal (to prevent Turkey and the Turkish nation from any division). Also, it seems that they disregard the Kurdish identity of Bediuzzaman and benefit from Bediuzzaman due to his Islamic identity. Furthermore, the NC appreciates Bediuzzaman. He is their Said-i Kurdi because he has the same ethnic identity. It is also beneficial for them to use Bediuzzaman's words for their ethnic demands and achievements. Interpreting Bediuzzaman's words to support the independence of the Kurds in Turkey, they can easily justify their thoughts and activities about the KQ based on Bediuzzaman. It seems that the NC adopts Bediuzzaman's ethnic identity and his words promoting their

independence, but in fact, they cannot get free themselves from their Islamic identity. Therefore, they come up with solutions by gathering their Islamic and Kurdish identity. Namely, it is understood that Bediuzzaman is valuable to the NC due to his Kurdish and Islamic identity. Nevertheless, it is also a fact that they would not have appreciated Bediuzzaman and his words so much if he had not been a Kurd.

Both *jamaats* frame their nationalism within a religious context and present their perspectives on the KQ from an ethnic perspective. This situation allowed the *jamaats* to legitimize their nationalist approach to the KQ through religion. The Islamic and Kurdish identities of Bediuzzaman give the *jamaats* an advantage in adopting an ethnic and Islamic-centric standpoint in legitimizing their thoughts about the KQ. Namely, ethnic, and religious identities play an important role in both *jamaats*' interpretation of the religious sources and their perspectives of the KQ. Both *jamaats* use Bediuzzaman's words to justify and mould their perspective of the KQ with different intentions. This result legitimizes and matches with the accuracy of the theory of Brubaker (2012, S. 5) that religion and ethnicity influence one's understanding and identifying oneself, making sense of one's problems and predicaments, identifying one's interests and orienting one's actions. As can be seen, ethnic factors (and national belonging) have had an impact and created differentiation in the *jamaats*' interpretation of religious sources for their political response to the KQ. As claimed by Brubaker (2012, S. 5), political claims have been made based on ethnoreligious, ethnonational, ethno-racial, ethno-religional or otherwise ethnocultural identifications.

Although both *jamaats* benefited from the same words of Bediuzzaman, I faced two completely different sides of Bediuzzaman. These responses did not belong to them, they were the thoughts of a religious person, Bediuzzaman. No one could accuse them because of their religious interpretation. Originally, this difference in the presentation of Bediuzzaman has reflected more importantly a fact related to the role of religion in national life in Turkey. The *jamaats* do not have a free environment to express their political thoughts about any subject, at least for the KQ. They

have had to hide their political thoughts behind religious interpretations and try to legitimize their political views through religious interpretations. After all, they have had to be careful about their explanations as *jamaats* since they should not attract the attention of the Turkish state. Otherwise, they may face sanctions and the evil face of the state and can be destroyed, divided, removed, or maybe labelled as "a terrorist organization". After all, they have been illegal structures whose legislation falls into the hands of the state.

This study contributed to the gap in the existing literature in many ways. First, there are few and limited previous research that examined the NC. In this study, primary sources for the NC were created through the elite interview method. Both the NC and its perspective on the KQ were presented. Furthermore, this study is valuable since it provides data on the HM which is difficult to present after 2016 since it has been outlawed and inhibited. Moreover, what makes this study important is that it revealed the political and social environment of the *jamaats* in Turkey and the difficulties they are facing while expressing their political views. This study shows how religion and religious interpretations are used by the *jamaats* to justify and mould their political replies, especially to the KQ. In this way, this study contributes to the gap in the existing literature.

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