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The Kurdish issue: the Kurds between the historical dream and the ambiguous reality.

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Abstract

This paper attempts to shed light on the Kurdish question in both Syria and Turkey, where Kurds are among the largest minorities living in an area with no recognized geographical boundaries. Therefore, this paper addresses several pivotal points related to the Kurdish issue internally and externally. In addition, this paper attempts to reveal the main reasons that prevented the Kurds from establishing their own state. It also reflected the international and regional circumstances that contributed to the failure of the establishment of a Kurdish state and the realization of the Kurdish dream. More importantly, this paper attempts to explain the main factors that contributed significantly to the revitalization of the Kurdish political role regionally and internationally recently, and how these factors have a role in bringing the Kurds to dream of creating their own entity.

This paper had to resort to the theoretical framework to explain the Kurdish issue and examine the relationship between the parties involved in this issue. The theory of realism and balance of power has a role in explaining the factors that have contributed to the revitalization of the Kurdish political role recently. Intervention, the basic human needs theory, and the security dilemma examine the main reasons for the failure of the Kurdish state.

The findings of this study suggest that international interests and treaties concluded throughout history concerning this issue have played a major role in depriving the Kurds of their legitimate rights, such as the right to self-determination and citizenship. But because of changing political circumstances and the convergence of interests between the Great Powers and the Kurds at this stage, the Kurds have become a striking force representing the great powers and the international coalition in the region.

Moreover, the Kurds proved to be the only credible force in the region, especially after demonstrating their ability to confront terrorism (ISIS), and the involvement of most other militant factions in the region with terrorist organizations such as Al-Nosra Front and Daesh.

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List of Abbreviations

KDP: The Kurdistan Democratic Party.

PKK: The Kurdistan Workers' Party.

KDPS: The Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria.

HDP: The Peoples' Democratic Party.

HEP: The Peoples' Labour Party.

AKP: The Justice and Development Party.

YPG: The People's Protection Units.

SDF or QSD: The Syrian Democratic Forces.

PYD: The Democratic Union Party.

NATO: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

ISIL: Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

Introduction

I leave it to God's wisdom
The Kurds in this world's state
Why are they deprived of their rights?
Why are they all doomed?
See, from the Arabs to the Georgians
Everything is Kurdish and, as with a citadel,
The Turks and the Persians besiege them
From four sides at once.
And they both make the Kurdish people
Into a target for Fate's arrow. (Romano 2006:3).

The Kurdish poet Ehmed-e Xani illustrated the Kurdish situation through these verses. The Kurds are considered the largest stateless minority throughout today's world, with approximately 30 million Kurdish people dispersed among Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. In his book (Vision or Reality), the senior lecturer at Lund University, Borhanedin A.Yassin considered that the Kurds have existed in what is on ethnic grounds defined as Kurdistan for several thousands of years, tracing the origin of Kurds back to Medes (1995:35).

As the Kurds case in the four parts of Kurdistan is such an enormous question to discuss, this thesis focusing only on the Kurds in Syria and Turkey. The Kurds in Syria are the largest ethnic minority, formulating around 2 million people or 8% of Syrian society, where they stabilize particularly in north of Syria. The history of the Kurds in Syria extends back to prehistory, where the Kurds have been part of the Syrian society for thousands of years. The Kurds in Syria, like any Kurdish group around the Kurdistan parts, have their rights socially, politically, and culturally. Throughout history, these rights have been hindered by repression and persecution by the occupying powers and the Syrian government. After the withdrawal of the Ottomans from the Levant and Iraq in the First World War, the French and English troops occupied the region and divided the area up under the Sykes-Picot agreement in 1916.

This agreement deprived the Kurds from the right of self-determination as it divided Kurdistan between Turkey, Syria and Iraq. In his book *Historical Dictionary of the Kurds* Michael M. Gunter writes:

> "Originally, the Sykes-Picot Agreement gave most of the Kurdish areas in what became Turkey and Syria to the French and in Iraq and parts of Turkey to Russia, this agreement became a byword for British-French imperialist control of the Middle East and, with it, manipulation and control of the Kurds" (2011:282-283).

The events have been going on since the Sykes-Picot Agreement to this day, the Syrian government (Al-Baath Party) continues to suppress the Kurdish people and try to blur their culture and identity, refusing to recognize them as a major component of Syrian society. These arbitrary practices against the Kurdish people resulted in the birth of Kurdish parties such as 1957 Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria, demanding the legitimate rights of the Kurdish people in Syria. Jordi Tejel states that the role of the Kurdish parties in Syria was an exception, where they remained a marginal actor in the political arena. Moreover, he adds

> "Syrian Kurdish parties were unable to impose themselves as legitimate actors and open negotiations with the central government, a step which normally only takes place after a period of armed conflict" (Syria's Kurds.2009:85).

The situation of the Kurdish parties has changed since the beginning of the Syrian revolution in 2011. Some Kurdish parties took serious steps to obtain the legitimate rights of the Kurdish people. These legitimate rights include pluralism, democracy, public freedoms, human rights, constitutional recognition of the Kurdish people in Syria, recognition of Kurdish identity, and recognition of the Kurdish language, among others. These demands have been rejected by the Syrian opposition, who accused the Kurds of being separatists who have no rights to reside in Syria. This rejection from the Syrian opposition has provoked a reaction from the Kurdish side, with them declaring federalism in northern Syria and ruling their own regions with American military aids.

On the other side of Kurdistan, Kurds in Turkey make up almost 20% of Turkish society, where they are based in the south and southeast of the country. Kurds in Turkey like any

Kurdish group in other parts of Kurdistan have been subjected to injustice and marginalization. After the First World War, the Treaty of Sevres was signed in 1920 by the allied powers (France, Britain and Italy) and the central powers (the Ottomans, Germany, Bulgaria and Austria). This treaty came as a curse in spite of promise of independence for the Kurds from the Ottoman state. According to Gunter:

> "This Treaty represents a lost opportunity because it specifically provided for a local autonomy for predominantly Kurdish areas (Article 62), while Article 64 even looked forward to the possibility that the Kurdish people might be granted independence from Turkey" (2011:269).

The Kurds were divided and did not unite to obtain independence; and the West retreated from its promises to the Kurds. Under these circumstances, the Turks, led by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, strengthened their political position with the West by signing the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. This treaty was also unfair against the Kurds, creating the current border of Turkey. Yildiz says of the Treaty of Lausanne:

> It "ignored Kurdish claims to self-determination and recognized only religious minorities as in need of protection ... it was recognized by the Allies, and Turkish sovereignty was restored over the Kurdish dominated area accorded independence under the Treaty of Sevres" (2005:7).

By and large, these two modern history agreements along with other factors decided the fate of the Kurdish people, where it divided Kurdistan between four states and removed more than 35 million Kurds from their homeland.

Turkey's newly emerging state, led by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, played a chief role in smashing the hopes of Kurdish people. Ataturk enhanced Turkey's position in the international society through the London Conference of 1921. At the conference, the West (Allies) insisted on giving the Kurdish case its political dimensions and concessions, but the Turkish government insisted that the Kurdish case was an internal issue and could be resolved internally. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk ruled Turkey for approximately 15 years, introducing many autocratic lines, such as Turkification, eradicating non-Turkish allegiances, and suppressing Kurdish culture and identity. In his book *The Kurds in Turkey,* Kerim Yildiz

describes the practices of the Turkish government against the Kurdish community in Turkey, noting:

> "The Kurds were to become its primary target, as the organs of the state sought to break up the Kurdish community in the southeast through restrictive legislation and state-sponsored violence" (2005:14).

From its emergence of the Turkish Republic until today, the Kurds have been subjected to injustice, oppression, and suppression of political, cultural and social freedoms. The emergence of the Kurdish parties in Turkey were slow to form due to the political conditions that the Kurds lived in. The Kurdish parties and nationalist forces such as Kurdistan Workers' Party and Peoples' Democratic Party have formed to lead the struggle and fighting for the right to self-determination.

Based on the above information, this paper confronts the Kurdish case through both a theoretical and an analytical framework. Essential theories will be presented in this thesis that can elucidate the Kurdish case in Syria and Turkey. These theories will deal with the humanitarian, societal, cultural and political sides of the Kurds, and will reflect the Kurdish situation from after the First World War to the present day. In accordance with international relations theories, balance of power and security dilemma will deal with the Kurds-Turks and Kurds-Syrians relations. These two theories reflect primary dispute between both parties. Furthermore, how the Turkish and Syrian governments could suppress the Kurdish people from the perspectives of both theories will be analyzed from perspectives. The basic human needs theory will embody the humanitarian, societal and cultural situation of the Kurds in both states, and how these governments were able to suppress the freedoms and demands of an entire people. The aforementioned theories enable the interpretation and analysis the reasons for the failure of the Kurdish state in these two states (Turkey and Syria), and provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of this case.

On the other hand, realism and interventionism theory will deal with revitalization of the Kurdish role in recent international politics. Through realism theory, this thesis reflects the convergence of Kurdish, EU and USA interests in the region, as well as, the Turkish and Syrian practices against the Kurds and their parties. Furthermore, realism will clarify the Kurdish and Great Powers' relations before and after the Syrian crisis, and how the Kurds converted to be the only ally to be trusted and dependable in the region.

Interventionism theory through this paper will focus on the Kurdish and Great Powers' relations as well, but from another angle. The convergence of interests prompted the Great Powers to support the Kurds and cooperate with them, which consequently prompted these powers to intervene with internal Turkish and Syrian issues. Based on recent developments, it can be said that the Kurds are the only ally to be trusted on the ground for many reasons, fighting terrorism (ISIS), protecting their areas, and spreading democratic ideas in their cantons which can be a model for other warring parties in Syria. The British Independent considers, "The Syrian Kurds, the much-praised ally of the US and the international community against Isis" (Cockburn 3 Sep 2016).

Finally, the Kurdish diaspora in the West and the pressure exerted by the Kurdish parties in the diaspora on the international community, have played a role in making the Kurdish question become an international debate. In other words, due to the Kurdish diaspora, the world has become more familiar with the Kurdish issue, and has become convinced of the legitimacy and the right of the Kurdish demands in the region.

The following points will be discussed in the analytical chapter. This paper will first discuss the Kurdish historical background from the First World War until today. It will then clarify the role of the Turkish and Syrian governments in dealing with the aspirations of the Kurdish people. As well as, explain the role that has been played by the Kurdish parties internally and externally to achieve their desired goals. Lastly, it will explain the role of the

international organizations and Great Powers in advancing the Kurdish case as a result of the efforts of the Kurds in the diaspora.

The topic of this research is relevant and interesting, as it tries to analyze and explain the main reasons for the failure of the Kurdish state, and the chief factors that contributed to reactivating the Kurdish role in the international forums. The topic of this research mainly depends on personal experience, thus the main motivation is from a personal Kurdish experience. The Kurdish case has become an international debate, and because of this, the reader or the general public should to know more about it. Furthermore, the topic of this case concerns us all; especially the Kurds who are fighting terrorism on a regional level. The significance of this topic comes from addressing the needs of the readers and filling the gap of this case to expand the reader's knowledge and consequently add a new knowledge to the reader's view of the Kurds reality. This topic has both social and practical relevance that help us to understand and better relate to our reality or society. The practical side of this thesis adds value to the topic and suggests solutions that can be applied in certain groups within certain societies or organizations.

Research Questions:

Based on the above information, this paper examines the following questions:

Although the Kurds constitute the largest minority in Syria and Turkey, there are many reasons stood up to their aspirations for independence. What are these reasons, and how have the regional and international conditions addressed the aspirations of the Kurdish people for independence and the establishment of a Kurdish state in the region?

Recently, the Kurdish role has clearly emerged at regional and international levels, where the Kurds are considered the sole reliable ally on the ground. What factors have contributed to the revitalization of the Kurdish role in international politics recently? How have these factors functioned, and why?

Methodology

Research design: is considered as a framework for collecting and analyzing data in accordance to Alan Bryman (2012:46). It can be said that the research design is a mean or an instrument to achieve research goals and answer questions. Seemingly, David de Vaus shares the same point of view with Alan Bryman, considering the research design as a process "to ensure that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible" (2001:9). Research design refers to a strategy or a process that merges different components to answer research questions coherently and logically. This thesis will adopt the case study as a design which is also known as case research.

According to Bryman a basic case study "entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case. As Stake observes, case study research is concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question" (2012:66). The case study in this thesis will therefore investigate intensively a tentative phenomenon in real-life (the Kurdish case) within its natural environment politically, culturally and socially. Robert K. Yin argues that the case study research method is as an experimental inquiry "that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (1984:23 in Soy 1997). Case Studies drive us to understand sophisticated issues and objects comprehensively, which in turn expand our knowledge and experience to add new findings to what is already known and studied through previous research. Moreover, case studies as a research design are used to test or build theories, which consequently suit this thesis due to the development of the research steps in the coming stages. In other words, through analyzing data processes and testing theories, new findings and results confirm the applied theories and vice versa. Here, the case study will not build new theories but will test existing ones.

Emphasizing this point, Bryman argues that "case studies can be associated with both theory generation and theory testing" (Ibid 2012:71). After data has been collected and analyzed, it is possible to rephrase the research questions to suit the subject in accordance with the case study. Finally, by using the case studies as a method, the thesis will focus on the crux of this topic by positing questions about the Kurdish case in Turkey and Syria and define the objective of this research.

After selecting the case study method as a design for this research, this thesis will adopt the qualitative research method as its strategy. It is known that both qualitative and quantitative methods are the center of any research, but with regard to this research, the qualitative method will be used to explain the type of data produced in the analytical chapter. A qualitative research method usually assures words rather than quantifies them in data collection and analysis; at most, it emphasizes an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research (Bryman 2012:36). In contrast with qualitative research, the quantitative method employs digital data such as grades and measurements; moreover, it is used to quantify the problem by generating numerical data converting that data statistically. Therefore, the main goal for using the qualitative method is to understand the underlying reasons and opinions; furthermore, the qualitative method reveals orientations of opinions, and thoughts, and dives deeper into the research problem in order to uncover details and elucidate them. Sotirios Sarantakos summarizes the reasons behind selecting the qualitative data collection method, stating that the researcher "employs means and techniques (e.g. language) that are closer to the research situation, so that the everyday life situation is reflected fully and clearly in the findings" (Sarantakos 1998:295). In accordance with Sarantakos' statement, both research methods have the same purpose, but the content and intensity differ fundamentally, a qualitative researcher is more tolerant, flexible and understanding than a quantitative one.

Reliability, Replication and Validity of the Research: these three criteria that are the core of a research assessment. According to Bryman, reliability is "concerned with the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable" (2012:46). The fundamental idea behind reliability is to ensure that any result occurs is more than once, and be repeatable in its nature. In other words, reliability earns credibility when many researches have been done under the same conditions and generated the same findings, thus making the proposed hypotheses or propositions acceptable. Many researches have shed light on the Kurdish case generally, and many similar findings and results have been generated. Furthermore, some findings of this research are repeated due to many studies conducted in the Kurdish case.

Replication is very closely related to reliability, albeit more specific. Replication means to replicate others' findings from the researcher's angle and point of view, leading to new findings which befit the research questions. According to Bryman, there are many reasons to do replication "such as a feeling that the original results do not match others evidence that is relevant to the domain in question" (Ibid 2012:47). Concerning the topic of this research, this paper is going to replicate previous theories used in this case, depending on the recent political development. David de Vaus states that any study is subject to replication, and meeting this condition requires "that if other investigators conducted a similar study they would find the same patterns, […] successful replication is a safeguard against fraud" (2001:243). By replicating previous studies, this thesis will support the findings of the original studies and add new findings to them, but generalization in this case will be impossible due to the different settings. In other words, the results of a study on one or two groups cannot be an example of other groups and vice versa. Thus, generalization is restricted and therefore differs from one case to another.

Validity according to Bryman, is "concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research" (2012:47). Thus it can be said that validity is considered

the most significant criterion, which refers to credibility and believability of the research. Concerning this paper, the topic of this research to some extent is internally valid, due to the harmonization and matching between the findings and the reality from the author's perspective. Bryman asserts that "internal validity relates mainly to the issue of causality" (Ibid 2012:47). This research emphasizes how independent variables affect dependent variables, such as how Turkish, and Syrian governments and international treaties (independent variables) caused Kurdistan's division (dependent variables), or how Kurdish diaspora (independent variable) recently affected Kurdish roles (dependent variable). Internal validity focuses on the question of "whether a conclusion that incorporates a causal relationship between two or more variables holds water" (Bryman 2012:47).

The other type of validity is external validity, which is "concerned with the question of whether the results of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research context" (Ibid 2012:47). The main goal of external validity is to generalize the findings of research on a population, though these findings come from a small sample of the population. In this sense, the topic of this research is externally invalid, due to the findings of this research stemming from different settings and data. For example, the Kurdish experience in Syria and Turkey and what they have confronted is different than the Kurdish situation in Iraq and Iran. The only way to generalize the findings of this research on the Kurdish community is if all subjects of this community were to experience similar conditions under the same circumstances.

Data Collection: this thesis will largely depend on primary and secondary data. The method used to collect data will be the qualitative method, where it emphasizes words rather than quantifiable data. It could be said that qualitative data is more relatable than quantitative data, methods in qualitative research are "designed to bring the researcher closer to social reality and social interaction than are quantitative methods" (Sarantakos 1998:166). In accordance

with qualitative research, the reality comes from interaction between members of society; qualitative and quantitative methods have the same purpose concerning data collection, but vary in structure.

Primary data signifies the original information (first hand data) that has been collected for the first time, especially for the purpose of research questions. Concerning the primary data for this research, in-depth interviews were conducted with certain Kurdish characters, namely Per Rustem a Kurdish politician and writer, and Jian Badrakhan the legal advisor to the Kurdish Centre for Legal Studies & Consultancy in Bonn "Germany". Moreover, interviews with Salah Alamdari, a member of the political committee of the Kurdish Democratic Unity Party in Syria, and Nouri Dersemly, a platoon commander in the People's Protection Units (YPG) in Afrin canton, have also taken place. Finally, discussions ensued with Bahar Beser, a Research Fellow at the Centre for Peace, Trust and Social Relations via Skype concerning the recent role the Kurds in diaspora had in activating Kurdish politics within in the region. Observation methods from television programs, YouTube, questionnaires and the Kurdish language were also depended upon. Using the author's native Kurdish language, as well as the Arabic language, data was collected and analyzed from certain sources connected to this topic. Although collecting the primary data was a very complex procedure requiring large amounts of money, time and manpower, but the data is reliable and accurate, ensuring quality and meeting the needs of the researcher.

Secondary data is previously collected data for various purposes (second hand data) not collected for specific research. Therefore, I depended mainly on academic literatures (books, articles and journals), reports and websites to collect secondary data. The chief goal behind gathering secondary data is because the process of collecting it is prompt, easy, inexpensive and rapidly available.

Choice of Theories and Relationship to Data: a fundamentally deductive approach was used to analyze the collected data for this research. It is intended throughout this thesis to use existing theories as tools to guide the analysis (deductive approach). William Lawrence Neuman defined deductive direction as "an approach to developing or confirming a theory that begins with abstract concepts and theoretical relationships and works toward more concrete empirical evidence" (2006:59). The chief goal of this research was to test theories and apply their propositions on the collected data, not to generate new theories, making an inductive approach which begins with concrete empirical evidence and works toward more abstract hypotheses and theoretical relationships.

As mentioned in the research questions, this paper aims to examine the main reasons behind the failure of establishing a Kurdish state, and the chief factors which have contributed to revitalizing the Kurdish role in contemporary international politics. Many theories related to this topic have been employed in order to examine and analyze these questions. Through balance of power theory (Morgenthau, Waltz and Mearsheimer), security dilemma (Jervis and Herz) and basic human needs theory (Burton and Maslow) the Kurds situation in Turkey and Syria before the Syrian revolution 2011 will be illustrated. In addition, the aforementioned theories will depict the humanitarian and social situation of the Kurds from the First World War and to the present day. This thesis intends to examine the relationship between the Kurds and Turkish-Syrian governments, by connecting empirical data with the propositions of the aforementioned theories as well as explain and clarify in detail the first question of this research, in order to answer it in as much depth as possible.

On the other hand, realism (Morgenthau, Waltz and Mearsheimer) and interventionism theory (Walzer) will be tools to answer the second question of this research. Therefore, through both theories, this paper aims to uncover the reality through matching theory hypotheses with the collected data. In other words, the reality of realism and the

interventionism theory is to gain the power, which power comes from the convergence of the interests among states. Thus, it is the intention of this thesis to use realism and the interventionism theory to uncover the factors which reactivated the Kurds' most recent role.

Theory

The following section presents the theoretical framework utilized in this paper. Due to the limited number of pages of this thesis, the theories will not be explained in detail, but the essential hypotheses, propositions and issues will be outlined. Each of the chosen theory will therefore deal with a specific part of this thesis, and will provide a sufficient explanation for further discussion.

Realism theory: has been considered the dominated theory in the field of international politics for decades, it is a theory which considers power as the fundamental goal of interaction among states. Defensive realist Stephen Van Evera considers the realism as a paradigm and not a theory, which includes a collection of assumptions. These assumptions, as he claimed, "suggest the main determinants of international conditions, and suggest a research agenda for further inquiry about IR" (Frankel 1996). In other words, he assumed that "realism provides guidance for where the truth can be found, but not the truth itself" (Ibid 1996). Contrarily, Robert Gilpin, the neoclassical realist, realized that "realism…is essentially a philosophical position; it is not a scientific theory that is subject to the test of falsifiability and, therefore, cannot be proved or disproved" (Ibid 1996). States according to realist thought are considered the prime actors as compared to international organizations and institutions. In accordance with Hans Morgenthau, a main proponent of realism theory, political realism has been divided into six principles, all of which deal with the issues of human nature, interests and power and morality considerations. While each of these principles will be addressed the focus will be only on three principles which are connected to this thesis. Morgenthau assumes that "political realism believes that politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature" (Morgenthau 2006:5). He also believes that international politics function on the basis of specific, objective

laws. In order to build a rational and logical theory of international politics, it is important to understand these objective laws of human nature, the facts of human relations must be analyzed, as well as the history of human relations and actions. The analysis and investigation process can provide a rational and valid theory of international politics, which can be used by states in the field of international relations. The key point and the essence of Morgenthau's principles is his second principle. This principle centers on states using their power to secure their interests internally and externally. Morgenthau argues that "the main signpost that helps political realism to find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power" (Ibid 2006:5). The political relationships among states depend on their interests and actions, which are defined in terms of power. In order for a state to preserve its interests, it should act rationally through its foreign policy to boost its interests and reduce risk. Thus, realists place power at the heart of the relationship among states, where the power, as the realists, can guide the politics to protect the interests. Furthermore, realists consider military power to be the most dependable and significant tool of a state's power. The international system is anarchic according to realists, and the states' behavior of using the military power to coerce and control other states is justifiable and legitimate in order to preserve or achieve their desired interests.

Conversely, Kenneth Waltz, a pioneer of the realism theory, contradicts Morgenthau's assumption concerning power. He argues:

> "Only if survival is assured, can states safely seek such other goals as tranquility, profit, and power. Because power is a means and not an end, states prefer to join the weaker of two coalitions" (Waltz 2008:46).

Waltz considers survival the main goal of state, because only survival can guarantee a state's stability and security as well as increase the chances of maintaining benefits and interests. As the founder of defensive realism, Waltz rejects all kinds of power to keep interests because pursuing power brings states into conflict with each other. Moreover,

according to Waltz, states can attain national security in this anarchical system by accumulating a specific amount of power, which can be used for defensive purposes.

John Mearsheimer another proponent of the realism theory reconciles with Morgenthau concerning power. He argues that "great powers that have no reason to fight each other—that are merely concerned with their own survival—nevertheless have little choice but to pursue power and to seek to dominate the other states in the system" (Wagner 2007:13). In the absence of a world law and government, all states are able to use power and coercion against each other to achieve their desired interests. However, democratic states will not involve themselves in a war to coerce or increase their power at the expense of other states, instead; they boost their power by cooperation and maintain the interests of each other. Using power according to Mearsheimer is due to the anarchic system of international politics which push the states to act selfishly in order to keep their positions in the international system.

Contrastingly, Waltz has a different point of view concerning power and it means disagreeing with Mearsheimer and Morgenthau regarding power. He argues:

> "Even expansionist states cannot let power, a possible useful means, become the end they pursue. The goal the system encourages them to seek is security. Increased power may or may not serve that end" (Ibid 2007:16).

Waltz believes that moderate and reserved policies can maintain security but not using power to expand the gap between states. The choice of using power should be the last resort of a state, and maximizing security must be a state's priority instead of maximizing power. In the field on international system, Waltz has a more optimistic view than Mearsheimer and Morgenthau concerning states' policies. He claims that states maximize relative security instead of relative power and can attain security by adopting moderate foreign policies.

The third principle of political realism attempts to connect the moral principles and states' actions. In this regard, Morgenthau argues that "political realism is aware of the moral significance of political action. It is also aware of the ineluctable tension between the moral

command and the requirements of successful political action" (Morgenthau 2006:12). Morgenthau is quite aware that moral significance of political action is assumptive and that, abstract moral principles cannot be applied to the politics and actions of a state. Thus, moral principles have no place in international politics, and a state cannot apply moral principles as long as it is intertwined with its national interests and security. The main aim of a state is not to apply moral values, but to protect and secure its interests by way of national or international power if it is needed. The roles and values which can be applied by an individual cannot be applied by a state. For example, the sentence "Let justice be done, even if the whole world vanish" signifies that the individual can sacrifice for justice as a moral principle, but the state will not consider sacrificing in order to protect its national interests. Just Morgenthau stated, politics are not ethical, and politicians are not moralists. Finally, realism views states as depending mainly on prudence in their actions, meaning the only way to apply moral values to politics is to filter these values in proportion to time and space changes.

Mearsheimer claims that states pursue power and contend with each other due to a lack of trust each other; he argues that "states can never be certain about other states' intentions. Specifically, no state can be sure that another state will not use its offensive military capabilities to attack the first state" (Elman and Jensen 2014:179). States in the international relations cannot be entirely sure of other states' intentions; Mearsheimer believes that a state's intentions are changeable due to the change in the status quo, where these intentions are benign at times and hostile at others. Uncertainty and distrust among states are unavoidable, with intentions usually produced by statesmen. Thus, the real intentions are situated within the minds of statesmen which are impossible to uncover and measure. For example, the United States of America's foreign policy in relation to the Middle East in the era of Barack Obama's administration in contrast with Donald Trump's administration. The

United States has changed its foreign policy toward the regional power in the Middle East and has already begun to change its intentions toward certain states.

This chapter will mention the rest of the political realism principles by Morgenthau, though not in depth. Morgenthau states:

> "Realism assumes that its key concept of interest defined as power is an objective category that is universally valid, but it does not endow that concept with a meaning that is fixed once and for all" (Morgenthau 2006:10).

Morgenthau, through the previous quotation, made a connection between a state's interests and its power. He considers interests and power commensurate that complete each other where a state achieves power then interests will be realized, and vice versa. Moreover, Morgenthau adds that "political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe" (Ibid 2006:12). Morgenthau tries to differentiate between the aspirations and the law from a moral perspective. In other words, he tries to explain that the law and the interests of a state may conflict with its moral aspirations; moral principle dictates that we do something ethical, but the law and its interests drive us to do the opposite. Thus, morality and ethics have no place in realism theory, especially when it conflicts with the interests. Finally, Morgenthau realizes that "the difference then, between political realism and other school of thought is real, and it is profound" (Ibid 2006:13).

The realism theory through this paper will focus on the Kurdish case in terms of power and interests of the involved states in Syria and Turkey. This thesis will confront Syrian-Turkish relations concerning the Kurds and will deal mainly with the role of the Kurds in diaspora as well as the role of the US. Finally, through assumptions based on realism, I am going to elucidate the convergence of interests among the Kurds and EU, and the EU's responsibility towards the Kurds. Therefore, the realism theory's chosen assumptions in this research will answer the research questions through analytical framework.

Balance of Power: is considered to be one of the oldest and most essential theories in the field of international relations. Kenneth Waltz believes that the balance of power theory "assumes that the desire for survival supplies the basic motivation of states, indicates the responses that the constraints of the system encourage, and describes the expected outcome" (Waltz 2008:137). The balance of power theory is centered around one point, i.e., that states are fundamentally concerned with their own survival within the international anarchical system. Thus, states' actions are justified, because states act in regards to their own interests and aim to survive. From the point of view of a realist, Waltz argues that states are "unitary actors who, at a minimum, seek their own preservation and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination" (Elman and Jensen 2014:117). In order to survive or dominate, states have to use all available means to achieve this goal; which Waltz divided into two categories: the internal efforts and the external ones. He asserts:

> "Internal efforts (moves to increase economic capability, to increase military strength, to develop clever strategies) and external efforts (moves to strengthen and enlarge one's own alliance or to weaken and shrink an opposing one)" (Ibid 2014:117).

According to Waltz, the alliance of a state with other states militarily or economically strengthens the status and security of the allied state and prevents the emergence of any dominant power in the international system. This kind of balance of power could be misinterpreted, where each state attempts to keep or increase its power at the expense of another state and would stay at parity. Thus, this act could be interpreted as an aggressive action by the opposing state, which would consequently drive it to enhance its defensive capabilities as well.

Conversely, Morgenthau argues that the balance of power can be achieved through decreasing the weight of the heavier scale or by increasing the weight of the lighter one (Morgenthau 2006:190). He introduces different methods of the balance of power, such as divide and rule, compensations, armaments and alliances. Within this thesis only two

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methods will be discussed, divide and rule, and alliances, which relate to this case. In accordance with this case, divide and rule can be applied to the Turkish policy toward the Kurds. The basis of this method is to weaken and divide competitors for easy rule and control. Furthermore, the alliances among states are considered the most significant manifestation of the balance of power. According to Morgenthau, the competitors (states) have three options in order to keep or improve their relative power position. He supposes that "they (states) can increase their own power, they can add to their own power the power of other nations, or they can withhold the power of other nations from the adversary" (Ibid 2006:193). The first choice provokes states to maximize power through military means, but the second and third choices push states to maximize their power through alliances.

John Mearsheimer is a realist who believes that the relative power and variety of these powers among states determine the form of balance of power. In other words, preponderant power is more secure than the Great Powers due to the size of the power it has compared to other powers, none of the great powers will involve themselves in a war with the preponderant power because of an inevitable loss for the weaker party. From this principle, Mearsheimer states:

> "war among the lesser great powers is still possible, because the balance of power between any two of them will at least sometimes be roughly equal, thus allowing for the possibility that one might defeat the other" (Dunne, Kurki and Smith 2007:81).

It can be said that the American-Russian relationship illustrates this principle, where each of them tried to gain the Kurds as an ally to be the preponderant power. Moreover, Mearsheimer adds that "it is important not only to have a substantial amount of power, but also to make sure that no other state sharply shifts the balance of power in its favour" (Ibid 2007:72). Mearsheimer considers great powers as the main actors in the balance of power process. Thus, each actor in the international politics strives for its survival and security, and will not allow other actors that are balanced in power to dominate and undermine the power of other

actors. In this case, balance of power must direct states to relative gains rather than the absolute ones, according to Mearsheimer.

The balance of power theory will be illustrated in the analytical chapter through the Syrian-Turkish relations, and through the role that has been played by America to achieve the balance of power by supporting the Kurds (PYD-YPJ). Finally, through balance of power theory, the relationship between the Kurds and great powers will be illustrated, as well as the relationship between the Kurds and Turkey, and the role of the Kurdish cantons in balancing the power. The balance of power theory will answer the research questions through a correlation between all parties (the Kurds, Turks, Syrians and the West), and how they are functioning together to achieve the balance of power.

Security dilemma: plays an essential role in international relations theories that elucidate the competitions among states in the absence of international authority. The security dilemma is "what one does to enhance one's own security causes reactions that, in the end can make one less secure" (Posen 1993:28). As a proponent of this concept Herbert Butterfield argues that the security dilemma connected to a state's security may cause a war between two states, even if they do not want to be involved in war. He adds:

> "The greatest war in history can be produced without the intervention of any great criminals who might be out to do deliberate harm in the world. It could be produced between two powers, both of which were desperately anxious to avoid a conflict of any sort" (Tang 2009:589-590).

Stressing on this point, proponent John Herz defines the security dilemma as follows:

> "Groups or individuals who live alongside each other without being organized into a higher unity must be… concerned about their security from being attacked, subjected, dominated, or annihilated by other groups and individuals" (Wagner 2007:25).

Herz attempts to explain his point of view through this definition that the absence of the higher authority and law in the international system leads to doubt and mistrust among states.

Thus, each state should protect itself by increasing its power because of high probability of war in this case.

Contrarily, Robert Jervis tries to connect a state's security with its power. The crux of the security dilemma according to Jervis is that an increase in one state's security can make another state's less secure, not because of misperceptions or imaged hostility, but because of the anarchic context of international relations (Tang 2009:592). When a state feels insecure or threatened, it attempts to boost its power to enhance its security, which consequently affects the security of another state. Thus, states' intentions are the center of the security dilemma, where "states' uncertainty and fears about each other's present and future intentions is crucial for forming and maintaining the security dilemma" (Ibid 2009:592). Jervis asserts that states cannot trust each other concerning their security, because when the interests of two states contradict, the intentions change as well. Furthermore, when states start fighting each other for security measures, they subsequently lose trust in each other, and fear the increase of power and security of a state that could pose as a threat to the security and safety of another state.

The security dilemma in the analytical chapter will be illustrated in the relationship between the Syrian and Turkish governments and how these governments exploited Kurdistan Workers' Party to threat the security of each other.

Interventionism: commonly justifies and argues the arguments for the governments' right to interfere in other states' issues to serve its own interests. There are two types of interventionism: military interventionism and humanitarian interventionism. Military interventionism "take[s] place in a hostile environment, where the political order is contested and the national government does not have the capacity or the will to respond to the basic needs of people" (Seybolt 2007:6). On the other hand, humanitarian intervention "is a short term activity with limited political objectives, it is intended only to stop the worst suffering"

(Ibid 2007:6). Interventionism concerning the Kurdish case can be divided into two groups: domestic interventionism which can be classified under military interventionism, and foreign interventionism which can be classified under humanitarian interventionism. Domestic interventionism deals with the arguments of a state to practice coercion against its own civilians culturally, politically and socially, whereas foreign interventionism deals with states' justifications to interfere in another state's activities politically, economically and humanely. Concerning domestic interventionism Michael Walzer claims that "in most cases there is enough 'fit' between people and government to make injustice a purely domestic matter from which foreigners are excluded" (Keohane and Holzgrefe 2003:104). Walzer argues that a government may practice coercion and violence against its own citizens under the pretext of restoring security and safety, which consequently does not allow foreign powers to intervene in the internal issues of this state. In this case, only the citizens of that state can topple the illegitimate government. But according to Walzer, the foreign intervention could happen only "when the lack of fit is radically apparent, that intervention can be allowed. That will only occur in case of genocide, enslavement, or mass deportation" (Ibid 2003:104). Walzer claims that the international community should respect the sovereignty and borders of states and that foreign intervention should be allowed only if the majority of the state supports this intervention. Conversely, sometimes the majority in a state complies with the arbitrary practices and human rights violations against the ethnic minority within the same state. Or in this case:

> "Humanitarian intervention is justified even if the majority of the population of the state opposes it. An intervenor must abide by the duty to restore the rights of persons threatened by tyranny or anarchy" (Ibid 2003:107).

Regarding the Kurdish case, humanitarian intervention has two faces, one when the Turks and Syrians intervened in the Kurds' issues to suppress them, and another when the Americans did so but to support them.

Basic human needs theory: is centered on the essential needs of humans to attain happiness, rights and prosperity. The absence of human needs and rights in a society leads to conflicts and violence. Authors such as John Burton, Marshall Rosenberg and Abraham Maslow claim that violence occurs when specific human needs are not satisfied. The American psychologist Abraham Maslow created a human hierarchy of needs, a theory that motivates people to achieve basic needs when they are unmet. He posits out that some needs are more significant than others, and when one of these needs is achieved, the human moves to meet the second one. Maslow's pyramid of human needs contains five tiers "physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs and self-actualization" (McLeod 2007). These five tiers can be divided into three groups, the first group being basic needs including physiological needs (food, water, rest …etc.) and safety needs (security, law and stability). The second group, psychological needs, includes belongingness and love needs (work, acceptance and trust) and esteem needs (prestige, independence and feeling of accomplishment). The third group at the top of the pyramid is self-fulfillment needs and includes self-actualization (achieving one's full potential, including creative activities).

On the organizing of human needs, Maslow comments:

"At once other (and 'higher') needs emerge and these, rather than physiological hungers, dominate the organism. And when these in turn are satisfied, again new (and still 'higher') needs emerge and so on. This is what we mean by saying that the basic human needs are organized into a hierarchy of relative prepotency" (Ibid 2007).

By connecting Maslow's pyramid with the Kurdish case in Turkey and Syria, it is discovered that the Kurds could not move forward from the basic needs to the psychological needs. Thus, the Kurds, according to Maslow, are at the bottom of Maslow's pyramid and the Kurdish basic human needs are not being met under the Turkish and Syrian government.

In support of Maslow's human needs pyramid, John Burton's human needs theory functions even more effectively with political and social conflicts. Burton argues that human needs are generally marginalized by dominant parties, which in turn drive individuals or

groups to fight and participate in violence to meet these needs. A set of needs has been identified by Burton as well; his list of needs includes "distributive justice, safety, and security, belongingness, self-esteem, personal fulfillment, identity, cultural security, and freedom" (Danesh 2011). Comparing Burton's human needs with Maslow's pyramid, it is clear that both theorists have nearly the same assumptions, though they differ in the way they organize these needs. Burton considers all human needs to be equal and should be treated in one unit that should not be separated, while Maslow has a different point of view; he believes human needs should be organized in specific categories because some human needs are more important than others.

The difference between human needs and interests has been distinguished by human needs theorists, where human conflicts occur when the essential needs are frustrated and not satisfied, such as the conflict between the Kurds and the Turkish government. Human needs theorists argue that "conflict and even violence are inevitable because human needs are non-negotiable, while human interests are open to negotiation and compromise" (Ibid 2001). These theories will help to illustrate the Kurdish situation and how the Turkish and Syrian governments have tried to oppress the Kurds by depriving them of basic human needs.

Analysis

Historical background of the Kurds:

Before introducing the analytical section and applying the aforementioned theories, it is important to give a brief history of the origin of the Kurdish people. Most researches and studies confirm that the Kurds descended from Medes, a tribal group that lived in Media which was located between the Mediterranean Sea in the west and the Caspian Sea to the east, the Black Sea, the Taurus mountains in Asia Minor, the Ararat Mountains, and the Zagros Mountains extending from north to south near to the Northern Shores of the Arabian Sea). Based on the historical and linguistic evidence that he gathered, the Russian historian and linguist Vladimir Minorsky suggested that "the Medes, who widely inhabited the land where currently the Kurds form the majority, are likely to be the forefathers of the modern Kurds" (Minorsky, Median Empire). In the middle of the 7th century, Medes became a great power, gaining its independence and building the Empire of Media in the north west of Iran after a bitter war with Assyria. The Median Empire lasted for 150 years, until the Persians waged a war against Medes and overthrew the rule of Medes, thus eliminating the first Kurdish empire.

From that time until 1946, the Kurds did not stop defending their land, rights and culture. After the Second World War 1946, specifically in the far north-west of Iran, the first Kurdish republic was established, the Mahabad Republic of Kurdistan. This republic was supported by the Soviet Union, where the Russians occupied most of the extending areas in western and northern Iran to the Soviet region in the north. Regarding the occupying powers in the region, Britain and the Soviet Union, McDowall states:

> "[They] allowed a vacuum to occur in the intervening Kurdish lands from Mahabad to Saqqiz, this vacuum was contested by local forces as well as by the much weakened Iranian governments and allowed for the first autonomous Kurdish government" (McDowall 1996:231).

The crisis that broke out between the Soviet Union and America after the Second World War pushed Stalin to enhance the Soviet Union's position in the region and expand its influence with support of other entities to gain their loyalty. Interpreting the Soviet Union's situation and self-interest, McDowall asserts:

> "The Soviet Union wishing to safeguard its flank position in western Azarbaijan, wanted the Kurds to be more favorably inclined to themselves than to Tehran, but the desire to win Kurdish goodwill for so modest a purpose was liable to misinterpretation and this soon happened" (Ibid 1996:231).

The Kurds, led by Qadi Muhammad, with the cooperation of Mustafa Barazani the founders of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), tried to benefit from the weakness of Shah's government by announcing the Mahabad Republic of Kurdistan and after Shah fled into exile. The international interests were obviously stronger than the Kurdish will; the Iranian Shah put pressure on the United States, convincing Stalin to withdraw his troops from the Iranian territory, leaving the Kurds alone to face the Iranian government. McDowall adds:

> "The idea that the Republic of Mahabad was the critical moment at which the Kurds realized their freedom is arguably a rosy version of reality, it never had a hope without serious Soviet support and the Republic's leaders knew in their hearts that such support was not dependable" (Ibid 1996:246).

Thus, another Kurdish dream was eliminated because of the convergence of international interests at the expense of the Kurdish people.

The following chapter will use the basic human needs theory hypotheses by John Burton and Abraham Maslow to analyze the Kurdish case and the factors that stood against the evolution of this issue. This theory centers around the basic needs of humans to achieve happiness, security, development, and so on. Burton believes that basic human needs are the main reasons behind the conflicts between the dominant states and oppressed people. He adds that when the essential needs of humans are not met, violence and conflict result. Maslow conversely divided basic human needs into three categories: physiological needs, psychological needs and self-fulfillment needs. These needs are arranged in terms of importance, where physiological needs come first, then psychological needs, and finally self-

fulfillment needs; when one of these needs is meet, the human strives to achieve the second one.

The modern history of the Kurds is not entirely different from its ancient history. The Kurds have been exposed to all kinds of repression and persecution politically, culturally and socially. The modern history of the Kurds in Syria was from 1971 until the Syrian crisis in 2011. Hafez Al-Assad took power in 1971 and became the president of Syria after a very successful referendum, as the Baathists claimed. Throughout these important events, Syrian Kurds lived in a state of anxiety and apprehension concerning Al-Assad's coup d'état, especially since he represented Al-Baath's party and was considered a military man who could not understand the legitimate rights of the Kurdish people; Al-Assad was determined to take previous racist steps against the Kurds (Shakhki 2017:39). The Kurdish Parties at the time were The Kurdish Democratic Party and the Kurdish Progressive Democratic Party, which were powerless to confront Al-Baath's party because they lacked the ability to impose themselves as key participant on Syria's political map. Al-Assad's attitude from the Kurdish perspective seemed very obvious as he launched racist campaigns against the Kurds through the Arabization of the Kurdish areas and confiscation of their lands under the name of the Arab Belt. In the early 1980s the Muslim Brotherhood carried out armed operations against the Syrian Baathist regime, during which Al-Assad was in trouble. Nevertheless, the Kurdish parties denied the practices of the Muslim Brotherhood and sided with the Baathist regime. Despite the negative position of the Kurds from the Muslim Brotherhood Movement and the Kurds support for Al-Assad regime, it is stated:

> "Hafez Al-Assad insisted on his unjust policy against the Kurds at the height of the conflict with the opposed forces to his rule, but he did not find any reason to get closer to the Kurds and gain their support because he was not counted the Kurds as an active player in the country" (Ibid 2017:74).

Several Kurdish parties were formed in secret between 1957 and 2011; their role was almost absent due to the practices of Al-Baath party against them, and the absence of parties' law.

The Kurdish situation has improved slightly in the reign of Bashar Al-Assad compared to his father's rule. The government officially allowed the Kurds to name their children with Kurdish names and hold Kurdish festivals within a narrow range and allowed them to speak the Kurdish language in government institutions and departments. Shortly thereafter, however, Syrian government quickly reversed its decision and the Kurdish and Syrian government relationship began to worsen, particularly after the Qamishli events. The events of Qamishli broke out in March 2004 in the predominantly Kurdish city of Qamishli. The events led to the death and wounding of hundreds of Kurds with security forces arresting thousands of Kurds. According to Tejel:

> [The Qamishli revolt] "signified the beginning of a new era for the Kurdish populations of Syria… all players on the Kurdish cultural and political scene immediately abandoned any attempt to conceal the conflict… thousands of Kurds continued to openly defy the Ba'athist regime by means of mobilizations" (Tejel 2009:108).

These events are considered the turning point in the relationship between the Kurds and the Syrian regime, Bashar Al-Assad realized that the Kurds were politically active, especially after the echo of these events reached to the international community. For the first time "in the history of contemporary Syria, the protest movement had touched all of the Kurdish territories, thus reinforcing the symbolic unity of the Syrian Kurdish arena – 'Syrian Kurdistan'" (Ibid 2009:108).

The Kurdish history in Turkey is not better than the Kurdish history in Syria; indeed, the Kurds in Turkey have a history even worse than their counterparts in Syria. The history of the Kurdish issue practically began in the period after the First World War, when the Kurdish ministerial body submitted proposals to the Ataturk government to solve the Kurdish issue, including granting autonomy to Kurdistan. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk succeeded in circumventing these proposals through the Treaty of Lausanne and was able to deceive the West and the Kurds at the same time, he succeeded in establishing a Turkish state ignoring the Kurdish claims of self-determination and considered them citizens of the Turkish society

(Yildiz 2005:7). As soon as Ataturk received the West's support, he began to abolish the Islamic state of government and evaded not only the Sevres Treaty but also the Lausanne Treaty concerning the Kurds and other minorities' rights such as the Arabs and Armenians. This selfish and authoritarian act by Ataturk drove the Kurds to revolt in 1925, as stated below:

> "[They were] led by Sheikh Said, but this was brutally suppressed. Martial law was imposed in the Kurdish region, 52,000 Turkish forces were moved in and brutal reprisals were conducted by Turkish security forces with thousands of Kurds being killed or driven into exile" (Ibid 2005:15).

After the uprising of Sheikh Said, the Kurds staged several revolts to claim their rights, included the uprising in the Ararat and Agri mountains in 1930, led by the Kurdish General Ehsan Nouri Basha, and the Dersim uprising in 1938 led by Saeed Reza; but both uprisings were met with repression and violence by the Ataturk government.

During this period, as Kerim Yildiz claimed, "the Turkish army was deeply involved in developments in the Kurdish region and Kurds were subject to systematic destruction of their villages, forced displacement and mass killings" (Ibid 2005:15-16). The Kurdish revolutions after this period subsided until the emergence of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in 1980 led by Abdallah Ocalan, but this revolution, like its predecessors, was met with an iron fist; tens of thousands of Kurdish activists were arrested and hundreds of thousands left the country. The Kurdistan Workers' Party has engaged in the armed struggle against the Turkish government to demand the rights of the Kurds which continues to this day despite the arrest of the PKK leader Abdallah Ocalan in Kenya in 1999 with the help of Israel and America. For 25 years, the Turkish army has killed anyone who has even considered negotiation with Abdallah Ocalan and his revolution. The Turkish government assassinated General Ashraf Betlis, a senior commander of the Turkish army, who called for a political solution to the Kurdish issue. The Turkish government arrests any person who calls for the peaceful resolution of the Kurdish issue.

These arbitrary and repressive acts by the Turkish government demonstrate the dire humanitarian situation experienced by the Kurdish people under its rule. After the military coup in 1980 and the emergence of Kurdistan Workers' Party, several anti-human measures have been taken against the Kurdish people in the eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey, where the majority of the population is Kurdish. Some of these measures were represented in the instigation of martial rule in southeast Turkey in 1980, when the Turkish parliament declared a civil state of emergency in southeast Turkey in 1987, the same year a decree allowed the Kurdish villages to evacuate. This was accompanied with violent operations against the Kurds on the grounds that they did not support the Turkish government against the PKK (Ibid 2005:16-17).

By going back through history and looking to the present, we can note that the Kurdish humanitarian situation has not risen to its desired form. According to Maslow and Burton, human needs are controlled by dominating governments, thus, by marginalizing these basic needs, the individuals or groups revolt and engage in a violent conflict to meet these needs. Regarding the Kurdish issue in Turkey, it is clear that when the basic needs of the Kurdish people are not met, revolts and struggles ensue as a result of this deprivation, shedding more blood in order to meet those basic needs. Maslow's pyramid divided human needs into three categories. At the bottom of this pyramid are basic human needs, such as water, food, housing and safety. Without meeting these needs, people cannot progress to the next stage, which are the needs of belongingness, love and esteem. Concerning the Kurdish case in this paper, the governments that control the Kurds have not offered the basic needs to this people, such as safety and housing. For example, the evacuation of Kurdish villages and areas, the displacement of Kurds, the campaign of arrests and mass killings; all of these practices limit the ability of the Kurds to progress and demand their legitimate rights as people. This instability is the chief goal of both the Turkish and Syrian governments.

The Kurds in Turkey and Syria cannot move from safety needs (security, law, stability, ...etc) towards psychological needs (work, acceptance, trust…etc). It is known that the Kurdish areas in both countries especially Turkey lack to safety stability and law; where there are Kurds, there is destruction and lawlessness. Most of the Kurdish areas in Turkey have been destroyed under the pretext of fighting terrorism (PKK) as they claimed, and thousands of Kurds have been expelled from jobs and universities. Similarly, the Syrian government was no less despotic in treating the Kurds, where it deprived approximately 300,000 Kurds in Al-Jizera of Syrian citizenship, confiscating Kurdish lands and redistributing them to Arabs in an effort to Arabize Kurdish areas under the pretext of land reclamation.

The basic human needs theory offers logical explanations of the historical events that directly affect the non-existence of the Kurdish state, including reasons that stood against the Kurds aspirations.

Political, civil and cultural rights of the Kurds:

Through this chapter, Interventionism theory will be applied regarding the Kurdish case in Syria and Turkey. Interventionism in accordance with this topic can be divided into two categories: foreign interventionism and domestic interventionism. Michael Walzer, a proponent of the interventionism theory, argues that domestic interventionism deals with arguments and justifications of a state to practice coercion and repress its own civilians under the pretext of keeping security. He also claims that foreign interventionism can happen if there is a clear violation of human rights by a state against its civilians, such as genocides and massacres. In this case, the foreign forces can intervene in a state's internal affairs to maintain the humanitarian system and preserve it.

This section connects this topic to domestic interventionism, and discusses the political, civil and cultural rights of the Kurds in Syria and Turkey. From the First World War until the

present day, the Turkish and Syrian governments have intervened in Kurdish issues domestically and consider the Kurdish question to be a domestic issue. The intervention of the Syrian government in the activities of the Kurdish political parties in Syria began in 1957, when the first Kurdish party the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria, KDPS was established. This intervention expanded after Hafez Al-Assad assumed the power in 1971. The intervention in the Kurdish political issues included arrest, detention, torture and killing. According to Yildiz:

> "Political activities in the public sphere are very limited, reflecting the fear that people have of the security services and the fear that they will be arrested for any political activity" (Yildiz K 2005:107).

Thus, practicing politics is forbidden and any activity out of the Al-Baath party circle faces repression and detention. All of the Kurdish parties in Syria have been established secretly due to the absence of the parties' law and the repressive actions practiced against them because of their political views. Under the government of Hafez Al-Assad, Riamei states:

> "Arab nationalism became a founding principle of the 1973 Constitution. It became an essential component of political culture, whereas pan-Arab and socialist ideals gradually lost their significance. This meant that all Kurds were excluded from the state doctrine" (Riamei 2015).

The Kurdish parties in Syria did not call for independence or to establish a Kurdish state within Syria. On the contrary, the main goal of the Kurdish political parties in Syria was to receive Syrian recognition of the Kurdish population politically, socially and culturally as well as to push the Syrian government to encourage equality and justice among all Syrian people. Therefore, it can be said that the Al-Baath party, since its establishment and since the rise of Arab nationalists to power after French colonization, tried to crush the Kurdish political parties and movements in Syria in the crucible of Arab nationalism. The situation of the Kurdish political parties did not change when Bashar Al-Assad assumed power after his

father's death in 2000; as Kurdish political parties became more repressed and the number of political detainees increased in the jails of the Syrian regime.

The Kurdish civil and cultural situation in Syria was no better than the political situation. The Al-Baath party practiced discrimination against the Kurds in Syria and tried to eradicate the Kurdish identity and integrate it into Arabic society. The Arab nationalist regimes, after assuming the power in 1957 in Syria, tried to dominate the Kurdish civil and cultural situation, thus stating:

> "The legacy of state's 'Arabization' and nationalism campaigns of the 1960s and 1970s were conducted with the objective of gaining control of all internal social spheres by restricting political and civil rights in the name of internal stability" (Ibid 2015).

In 1962, a census was issued in northeastern Syria where the majority of the Kurdish population lived. Through this census, the Syrian authorities aimed to hit the Kurdish population. The result of this census abrogated and denationalized thousands of Kurds in northeastern Syria under the pretext that they accessed to Syria illegally from Turkey after the Sykes-Picot agreement in 1916. The Syrian authorities classified the denationalized Kurds as stateless or Al-Maktumen, it means Stateless in Arabic. According to Lynch and Ali:

> "As a result, they lost all rights of citizenship, including the right to vote and participate in public life, the right to travel outside the country, the right to private ownership, right to education and the right to employment in the public sector" (Lynch and Ali 2004:4 mentioned by Riamei L 2015).

It can be said that the Arabization policy practiced by the Syrian authorities continues to have a great influence on Kurdish identity and society. All kinds of discrimination have been practiced against the Kurds by Arab citizens and the government in Syria due to the Arabization policy.

The Arab Belt adopted by the Al-Baath party in 1965 is considered a clear violation of the civil, cultural and social rights of the Kurds. The main goal of the Arab Belt was to evacuate the border areas between Syria, Turkey and Iraq from the original Kurdish population and

separate them from each other and settle the area with Arabs instead of the Kurds. Concerning, the Syrian authorities' initial order, Yildiz notes:

> "[They] ordered families in Kurdish villages along the Syria-Turkey-Iraq border area to leave their homes and resettle in other interior regions of Syria that did not traditionally contain Kurdish populations. The authorities then began to move Arab families, who themselves had been displaced by the building of the Tabqa Dam and Lake Asad, into the areas vacated by the Kurds, effectively changing the demographic makeup of the Jazira and surrounding regions" (Yildiz 2005:36).

The Syrian authorities, through The Arab Belt, aimed to blur the features and identity of the Kurdish people. In other words, the Arab Belt came as a practical application of Muhammad Talib Hilal project against the Kurds in the province of Jazira, where the majority of the Kurds lives. Muhammad Talib Hilal was the head of internal security for Al-Hasakah province, and was known for his hostility to the Kurds. In 1962, he published a political report describing the Kurds as a malignant tumor which is developing in the body of the Arab nation. Therefore, he suggested a plan of twelve points to dissect this tumor from the body of Arab nationalism; as he claimed, the main points of his plan require displacing Kurds from their lands, depriving them from education, employment, voting and citizenship rights, as well as dividing the Kurds and ruling them by waging anti-Kurdish campaigns and resettling Arabs in Kurdish areas (Ibid 2005:34). This project and its subsequent implementation in the era of Hafez Al-Assad is considered the largest demographic change the region has ever witnessed. Notably, the Arab majority encouraged this policy and considered it a national project that served the interests of the Syrian state. This project has created a rift in the relationship between the two components in the Syrian society, the Kurds and the Arabs.

The Syrian government has not only interfered with the political and civil affairs of the Kurds, but has also intervened openly in the cultural affairs of the Kurdish minority. The cultural affairs of any society such as, language, music and literature are considered factors that preserve the identity of any society; factors which the Syrian government sought to

eliminate from the Kurdish culture in order to erase Kurdish identity in Syria. Several obstacles have been put in place by the Syrian government to eliminate the Kurdish culture:

> "The policy of suppressing Kurdish language and culture is intended to forcibly assimilate the Kurds into the majority culture of the respective country, within Turkey, the Kurds are described as Turkish, within Syria, the aim is to assimilate the Kurds to the Arab culture and identity" (Ibid 2005:116-117).

The Syrian and Turkish governments followed the suppression policy against the Kurdish language. It was forbidden to speak the Kurdish language in schools, streets and any public place; Kurdish schools were banned, while other minorities in Syria are permitted to have schools which teach in their own languages. Had it not been for the secret Kurdish schools held in private houses, the Kurdish language would have ended long ago. Despite these Kurdish private schools for teaching the Kurdish language and culture, the suppression of the Kurdish language by the Syrian government has had a great influence on the Kurdish society; almost 60 percent of Kurds do not know how to read or write the Kurdish language. After the separation from Egypt, "for the first time, Syria was proclaimed an Arab Syrian republic" (Tejel 2009:50). Since the new government came to power after the government unification with Egypt, it has attempted to dissolve all minorities in the crucible of Arab nationalism, thus openly declaring that Syria is an Arab republic that denies the rights of non-Arab minorities, such as Kurds and Armenians.

Every year on the 21st of March, the Kurds celebrate Newroz. This day represents the victory of the oppressed people over tyranny, as well as the New Year and freedom of the Kurds. The Newroz day is considered a national day for the Kurdish people, but as Yildiz states:

> [Celebrating this day] "has periodically been forbidden in Syria and even when permitted is subject to many restrictions. Kurds are often prevented from wearing the Kurdish colours of red, yellow and green and are also often prevented from travelling to celebrations" (Yildiz 2005:119).

Like the Kurdish language and tradition, the Kurdish music and art were banned by a ministerial decree from the Minister of Culture. The Syrian government considers Kurdish music and art to constitute a threat to Arab national security. Thus, the ministerial order came

> [Forbidding] "the playing and circulation of Kurdish music and videos [...] as sellers and distributors still face imprisonment if they sell Kurdish music which could be perceived as being political or nationalist in nature" (Ibid 2005:120).

It can be said that the Syrian governments have put several obstacles on Kurdish society. Therefore, the Kurdish community has been unable to withstand the restrictions and barriers set by the Syrian government. Consequently, these violations influenced the development of a Kurdish identity and influenced the political, civil and cultural rights of the Kurds. It was difficult for Western countries and America to recognize the Kurdish issue and Kurdish society in the light of this repression.

Throughout history, since the presence of the Kurds alongside the Turks in one geographical area, there have been confrontations and wars between the two parties which have led to the formation of the Kurdish political parties and movements demanding Kurdish rights. After the establishment of the modern Turkish Republic led by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, Turkey adopted a political approach centered on the obligation of all ethnic minorities in Turkey to integrate into the Turkish culture and learn the Turkish language. The result of this policy was the prevention of ethnic minorities in Turkey, including the Kurds, from practicing their religious and cultural rituals as well as prevent them from forming political parties advocating rights of the Kurds. Despite of the political approach that has been adopted by the Turkish government, several Kurdish revolutions have taken place and several Kurdish parties have been established, such as Kurdistan Workers' Party in 1978, and the Peoples' Democratic Party in 2012. Kerim Yildiz argues that "pro-Kurdish parties have particularly suffered, with every party which has sought to articulate Kurdish concerns in a peaceful, democratic forum since the 1970s having been condemned as 'separatist' and

closed down" (2005b: 59). By and large, from 1978 until today, the Kurds have followed all means to achieve their legitimate goals, including armed conflict and political solutions, but both methods have not been commensurate with the Turkish government; the first method has been met with death and destruction, and the second with repression and imprisonment. Moreover, Yildiz adds that the Turkish government resorted to laws and constitutions to limit the activity of the Kurdish parties legally, the objective of these laws being to silence the non-Turkish parties, especially the Kurdish ones by means of raids, threats and arrests, including the arbitrary detention and ill-treatment of any Kurdish politician or sympathizer by security forces under the pretext of incitement to secession (Ibid 2005b:61). It can be said that the Kurdish political situation in Turkey still exists in critical condition due to the policy of integration and Turkification, where most of the Kurdish parties' leaders and senior members in Turkey have been threatened and imprisoned. The Leaders of Peoples' Labour Party (HEP), Leyla Zana and Orhan Dogan, Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) Abdallah Ocalan and Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Selahattin Demirtas have been imprisoned.

The Kurdish cultural and civil rights were almost non-existent in Turkey until 1991, when the Turkish government linked these rights to the political rights. The deterioration of the political situation between the Kurdish parties and the Turkish government had a significant impact on these rights. The armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish army gave the Kurdish issue a huge size at the local and international levels; the Turkish authorities could not deny the existence of the Kurdish issue. According to Romano, and after seven years of armed conflict

> "In 1991, portion of the official ban on public use of the Kurdish language were repealed
> by Turgut Ozal, [the Turkish President at the time] and an effort was made to recognize
> that Kurds could possess a private Kurdish ethnic identity" (Romano 2006:121).

The Kurdish identity through the modern Turkish history has exposed several obstacles aimed to erase the Kurdish identity and rights. For example: president Gursel in 1961

announced that there was no nation called Kurds and that all citizens in the Turkish republic were racial brothers. The denial of the Kurdish identity provoked the anger of the Kurds, which they demonstrated in several Kurdish cities, such as Mardin, Diyarbakir and Bitlis. The demonstrators chanted 'We are not Turks, we are Kurds' and we demand our legitimate rights'. These demonstrations faced killing of 315 demonstrators and wounding 754 (McDowall 1996: 404-405).

Language and culture are the legacies of any nation. Without these two components, the existence of the nation is at risk, the denial of these two components is the denial of a nation. Recognition of the Kurdish civil and cultural rights constitutes a great challenge to the Turkish government; any official acceptance of the Kurdish rights provokes acute fear of the Turks decreasing territorial integrity. This fear drove the Turkish government to refuse to sign up any treaties guaranteeing the rights of minorities (Yildiz 2005b:64). Since the rule of military until Erdogan's rule, the Turkish authorities have sought to obliterate the Kurdish identity, which accounts for 23% of Turkey's population. The reasons for Turkey's fear of recognizing Kurdish rights are the result of this recognition, as the Turkish government considers any recognition of Kurdish rights opening the way for Kurds to demand other rights through autonomy or independence. Despite of the recent reforms by the Turkish government concerning humanitarian and social levels, it lacks the two most important elements of democratic values, tolerance and acceptance of alternative identities and viewpoints, which contribute the evolution of civil society (Ibid 2005b: 54). Finally, it is important to also mention Turkish violations against the Kurdish people in terms of a social, cultural, political, literary, and media context. As these violations are innumerable, and due to the limited pages of this research, brief overview will be given of the interference of the Turkish government in the Kurds' affairs.

The previous sections represent the domestic intervention of the Turkish and Syrian governments in the Kurdish issues. Both governments considered the Kurdish question a security problem which concerns the internal security of the state and does not allow any other country to intervene because any external interference in the Kurdish issue, as it is considered to be an interference in Turkish and Syrian internal affairs. The second point which confirms the hypotheses of the interventionism theory is the consensus on the state's violation of human rights. In other words, the violations by the Syrian and Turkish governments against the Kurdish people were accepted by public opinion. The majority of Arabs and Turks were not opposed to these violations and even supported their governments, causing any foreign intervention to support the Kurdish issue to be rejected. The proponents of the interventionism theory justified the external intervention in a state, as long as the majority of this state supports the violations of human rights within the same state. This is a good example of European intervention in Turkish internal issues concerning the human rights violations against the Kurds in the southeast of Turkey, where one of the conditions for Turkey's entry into the European Union is to resolve the Kurdish issue and stop violence against them within their areas and give them the necessary freedom as the largest minority in the country. Another example is the American intervention in the Syrian internal issues to support the Kurds and achieve human rights. It could be said that the American intervention came to protect its interests in the region, but we cannot deny that this intervention came as well to liberate a group of people who fight the terrorism of the region, granting American rights.

It can therefore be said that interventionism theory through the previous sections has tackled some of the principle reasons which limit the aspirations of the Kurds to achieve their liberty and establish their own state.

Syrian-Turkish relations and the Kurds:

Through this chapter I am going to operationalize the tenets of security dilemma theory which embodies the Syrian-Turkish relations of the Kurdish case from 1970 to the present day. According to security dilemma supporters, it is the risk to a state's security that could drive states into war even though they do not desire it. The Kurdish case constitutes a security problem in Syria and Turkey, and both states have attempted to exploit this problem for their own interests. Historically, the Syrian-Turkish relationship has been tense since Hafez Al-Assad took power in Syria in 1971, and began to support the PKK against Turkey with the assistance of the Soviet Union at the time. The Soviet Union hoped by supporting the PKK, to destabilize Turkey, which played a prominent role in the Cold War against the Soviets. On the other side, Syria aimed to recover territories occupied by Turkey in 1938 (the Alexandron Brigade) which was originally considered a Syrian territory and demanded an increase in its share of the waters from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The Kurdish writer and politician Per Rustem claimed in an interview I had with him that "the reason behind supporting the PKK in Syria by Al-Assad regime against Turkey is because the PKK leader Abdallah Ocalan announced that there is no Kurdistan in Syria, and the Syrian regime concerning to him was considered a friend who supports the Kurds in Syria against Turkey in order to liberate the Kurdish land in Turkey" (Rustem 3rd June 2017). Therefore, the Kurdish case, with the help of the Syrian government, has become a clear and explicit threat to Turkish national security. Turkey has attempted to solve this problem through political means, but it did not work with the Syrian government, causing Turkey to resort to harsher tactics, exploiting its rapprochement with Israel. Turkey has threatened to invade Syria from the north unless the Syrian government stops its support of the PKK and demands it expel PKK leader Abdallah Ocalan out of Syria. The political crisis reached a climax between two countries when the Turkish government mobilized its troops on the Syrian border. Thus, the

Arab League States, with the American assistance, intervened to solve this problem; without this intervention by the Arab League States, a war between Syria and Turkey would have taken place. Per Rustem adds

> "Without the external and Arab pressures, the Syrian government would not have abandoned the Kurds, especially since the Kurds are the greatest threat to the Turkish government, the enemy of the Syrian regime at the time. The Kurds are considered a trump card in the hands of the Syrian regime against the Turks" (Rustem 3rd June 2017).

The security problem between the two states ended with the expulsion of the leader of PKK by the Syrian government and a halt in its support of the PKK. The relationship between these two countries began to improve after signing the Adana agreement, which was secretly signed between Syria and Turkey to ensure the safety and security of both countries. Per Rustem argues

> "By expelling the PKK leader and closing the headquarters and camps of PKK in Syria, The Kurdish issue became a security dilemma related to the security and stability of Syria, where the Syrian regime sold the Kurds and sought to improve its relationship with the Turkish government" (Rustem 3rd June 2017).

The proponents of the security dilemma theory argue that states or individuals who live together within one region should be aware of the intentions of others in the area. In other words, they claim that in light of the absence of international law and organizations, a state should pay attention to another state's intentions which could change with a change of interests. This claim can be applied to Syrian-Turkish relations in Bashar Al-Assad's era, when Syrian-Turkish relationships were excellent between 1998, after the Adana agreement was signed until 2011 when the Syrian crisis began. The relationship between the two countries once again deteriorated due to change in interests which consequently affected intentions. Per Rustem comments on the sudden political changes that took place between the two countries, noting that, "the Syrian-Turkish relationship was a relationship of mutual interests, especially the common policy of both countries with regard to the Kurdish issue. With the deteriorating situation in Syria, however, and the inevitable end of the Syrian

government as the Turkish government claimed, Turkey began sever ties with the Syrian regime and sought to gain new allies to stand up to the Kurds who would once again demand their rights in Turkey with the support of the Syrian government" (Rustem 3rd June 2017). As the crisis began in Syria in 2011, the Syrian-Turkish relationship was deteriorating, but only slightly. Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, Turkey took a negative stance on the Syrian government, began to support the Syrian oppositions and provide them with weapons and security. The Turkish government advised that Al-Assad should not use violence against his people, but the Turkish statement did not receive any attention from the Syrian side. Moreover, to prevent Turkey from interfering in Syrian affairs, the Syrian government allowed the Kurds to establish Kurdish forces known as the Syrian Democratic Forces in northern Syria on the Syrian-Turkish border. The Turkish intervention in Syrian affairs has become especially difficult due to the presence of Kurdish forces in their areas on the Turkish border which will not allow any Turkish intervention into its territory. It seems that the Kurdish issue will remain a security dilemma for both Turkey and Syria, and this dilemma will continue to affect the power of both countries as well as their intentions toward each other.

The third argument of the security dilemma theorists is that when a state increases its security level, this increase will influence the security of another state, especially if there is no international law to protect and guarantee a state's security. For example, when the Syrian government increased its security by allowing Kurdish forces to be stationed on the Turkish border, it decreased Turkey's security. "At least 6 towns in northern Aleppo (Kurdish protection zones) have agreed to reconcile with the Syrian government after Russian advisors mediated between the parties" (Fadel 2017). Turkey therefore took a firm stance on Assad's regime and mobilized its forces on the Syrian border as a reaction to strengthening its security

and stability. It could be said that the Kurdish case formulates a security dilemma for both Syria and Turkey.

By adopting the security dilemma theory to explain the Syrian-Turkish relationship concerning the Kurds, a realistic interpretation can be offered on the nature of their relationship. The Syrian-Turkish relationship throughout history has been an obstacle to the establishment of the Kurdish state, both governments have pursued a policy to suppress the Kurds and deprive them of their legitimate rights.

The role of the Kurds in a balance of power:

The balance of power hypotheses will be applied in this chapter, where these hypotheses will act as guides to illustrate the relationship between the Syrian and Turkish governments to create a kind of balance in power at the expense of the Kurds. Through the balance of power hypotheses, an explanation will be given as to how the United States achieved a balance of power in the region by enlisting the Kurds as an active ally. Finally, through these hypotheses, a detailed explanation of the Kurdish and great powers relationships will be offered, including how this rapprochement worked to gain the Kurds a balance of power in Syria by declaring autonomy in their cantons.

Kenneth Waltz, an advocate of the balance of power theory, considers survival in an anarchical system as a key tenet of this theory, and believes states seek to maintain their own survival at the very least (Griffiths 2007:14). He claims that the states' acts are justified because of their interests, making a clear connection between survival and interests. By linking this hypothesis with this topic it is clear that the Syrian and Turkish governments' acts towards the Kurds are justified in according to Waltz, as each of them attempts to keep their interests secure, and consequently achieve a balance of power as they desire. Contrastingly,

the Kurds' acts are justified also, as they are trying to survive in this anarchical system socially, culturally and politically. Per Rustem comments on this point:

> "The Turkish state since its establishment practiced and is still practicing violence against the Kurds to erase the Kurdish identity under the pretext of securing the Turkish interests. The Kurdish case is considered a security file in both Turkey and Syria, where the Turkish government believes that the elimination of the Kurdish nationality will drive Turkey to achieve balance in all areas of the life, economically, socially and politically" (Rustem 3rd June 2017).

The Kurds are attempting to survive, especially at the moment in order to achieve a balance of power through its alliance with the Great Powers such as the United States and Russia.

According to Waltz, when a state seeks to survive or dominate, it should use all possible means. He divides these means into two categories: the internal efforts and the external efforts (Elman and Jensen 2014:117). Waltz claimed that through internal efforts, states endeavor to increase their economic and military capabilities and adopt intelligent strategies. This category, the internal efforts, reflects the nature of the relationship between the Syrian and Turkish governments and the Kurds, where both governments increased their economic and military capabilities internally and developed clever strategies such as: the Arab Belt project against the Kurds in Syria and the forced displacement of the Kurds in Turkey under the pretext of fighting terrorism. On internal efforts of the Syrian and Turkish governments' dominance over the Kurds, Jian Badrakhan comments:

> "The Turkish government resorted to a policy of weakening the Kurds in their areas by supporting the Turkish military presence in the Kurdish areas and destabilize the security and stability of the region under the pretext of fighting PKK, therefore, thousands of the Kurds have been displaced from their regions and the infrastructure of the Kurdish regions has been destroyed. The Turkish government has also neglected the economic side in an effort to starve and impoverish the Kurdish people, where it prevented the establishment of companies and factories in the Kurdish areas" (Badrakhan 6th June 2017).

These policies have been adopted by the Turkish government against the Kurds and have created a kind of balance in power. According to Waltz, the Turkish government increased its economic and military capabilities by decreasing the Kurdish rights and capabilities.

Concerning the Syrian government, Jian Badrakhan states:

"Since the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic in 1946 to this day, [The Syrian government] has sought to marginalize the Kurds economically and militarily, and has adopted several strategies that have led to the dismantling and weakening of the Kurdish society in an attempt to control it" (Badrakhan 6th June 2017).

The Syrian government resorted to employing Arab nationalists in the army in the pre-Al-Assad period and marginalizing the rights of other minorities in the army. During the reign of Al-Assad, the father and the son, the Baath government followed the policy of employing Alawites in the army and handing them sensitive positions to impose full control over the army which led to the marginalization of the Kurdish in the army. The Kurdish presence was limited to recruits only, and it was very difficult for any Kurd to be an officer in the army or the police. The Kurdish areas were run by Alawite officers and paramilitaries in order to control the Kurds and create a kind of balance in power in predominantly Kurdish regions.

On the economic side, Badrakhan adds

"The Syrian government like its Turkish counterpart has adopted a policy to impoverish the Kurdish people and neglect the Kurdish regions economically, where a law was passed in 2004 prohibiting the construction of any economic institution that would develop the economy of the Kurdish region under the pretext that these areas are border areas. Moreover, the Syrian government deprived thousands of the Kurds from their jobs, which led to enlargement of the economic gap in the Kurdish society" (Badrakhan 6th June 2017).

Balance of power according to Hans Morgenthau can be achieved by decreasing the weight of a heavier scale or by increasing the weight of a lighter one (Morgenthau 2006:190). Commenting on Waltz's categories, Morgenthau suggests several methods to achieve balance of power, but this paper will mention only two. Morgenthau's first method is very similar to Waltz's method where he suggests a divide and rule tactic to achieve balance of power. In other words, this method, divide and rule, represents the Syrian and Turkish governments' attempts to decrease the power of the Kurds through dividing and ruling them. Azad Ali, the director of the Rudaw Center for Studies in Kurdistan of Iraq, commented on the Syrian government's policy towards the Kurds in dividing them in order to rule them; he considers the project of the Arab Belt as a good example of these racist practices in dividing the Kurdish

people because the provisions of this project provides for the displacement of the Kurds, the invasion of their lands and the melding of Kurdish identity into Arabic society. He argues:

> "It had been planned for this racist policy at the highest political level. In this regard, the most serious decisions were taken at the third Baath Party conference in 1966. This decision provides for the confiscation of land by the state on the Syrian-Turkish border and for a length of 350 km and a depth of 15 km and considered as the property of the state. But the actual implementation of this decision and the decision of the census in Al-Jezira came in the era of Hafez al-Assad. Where the government confiscated the lands of the Kurds and gave them to the Arab settlers. Moreover, the Baathist government abandoned thousands of Kurds from their villages" (Ali 24 June 2015).

The second category of a state's means to survive or dominate according to Waltz is external efforts, meaning that by external efforts when a state strengthens its own alliances or weakens opposing ones. This category will illustrate the Syrian-Turkish relationship concerning the Kurds and how they approached each other in an effort to weaken the Kurds and achieve a balance of power. As mentioned in previous sections, the turning point in the Syrian and Turkish relationship began after the Adana agreement between the two governments. The Turkish-Syrian relationship has drawn closer in the era of Bashar Al-Assad and Erdogan. The leaders of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) have supported Syria's policy and been against the West's policy with regard to Syria. Moreover, they refused to participate in the policy of isolation and blockade that former United States President George W. Bush tried to impose on Syria. Furthermore, the members of the AKP played the role of mediator between Syria and various European governments which contributed to helping the Syrian Baathist regime to cross that difficult stage. On the rapprochement between Turkey and Syria, Salah Alamdari, a member of the Kurdish Yekiti Party in Germany, comments:

> "It has brought radical changes in the two countries' policies towards each other. The reasons for this rapprochement are: common interests between the two countries, where several trade, economic and industrial agreements have been concluded, but the underlying reasons for this rapprochement are to weaken the Kurdish entity and to ensure that the Syrian government will not support PKK again and to stand against the aspirations of the Kurdish people" (Alamdari 8th June 2017).

Indeed, this Syrian-Turkish rapprochement had negative impacts on the Kurds; the Kurds were denied to sell or purchase any piece of land along the Syrian-Turkish border and at a width of 40 kilometers on both sides, where most of the Kurdish villages are located. The negative impact of this convergence has tightened control over the Kurdish parties, and the imprisoned many of their members and leaders, and led to the freezing of Kurdish political activity. It can be said that both governments have succeeded in weakening the Kurds and strengthening their alliances with each other, which has subsequently led to a balance of power between the Syrian and Turkish governments.

The second method of Morgenthau to achieve balance of power is armaments and alliances, or rather, when a state is building alliances and arming itself at the expense of another state to achieve its own interests. We can link Morgenthau's method with the external efforts of Waltz, as both support the idea of alliance to weaken the other party and achieve a balance of power. The Kurdish political movement remained narrowly confined between the years 2004 and 2011 in both Syria and Turkey due to the rapprochement between both countries and their alliance to weaken the Kurdish movement. The crisis in Syria seems to have provided favorable conditions for the Kurds to reclaim the rights they could not claim previously. Alamdari argues:

> "The arming of the Syrian revolution by Turkey and its ally Qatar, and Erdogan's position on Al-Assad's policy since the revolution began led to the collapse of the Syrian-Turkish relationship again, as the situation between the two countries deteriorated and reached the stage of hostility. But it can be said that the biggest beneficiary of this Syrian-Turkish hostility is the Kurds, where they have established alliances at the international level with the great powers" (Alamdari 8th June 2017).

The Kurdish-American alliance came to meet the interests of both parties. The United States administration wanted to increase the weight of the Kurds scale to protect its interests and fight against ISIL. However, the Kurds' goal of building this alliance was to match the regional powers and achieve a balance of power with Turkey and Syria.

Waltz claimed that when a state seeks to increase its power in order to achieve a balance of power, this act consequently drives other states to enhance their defensive capabilities as well. Alamdari explained the nature of the relationship between the Kurds, the European Union and the United States in light of the latest developments after the Syrian crisis; he comments:

> "The Kurds had to exploit the weakness of the Syrian-Turkish-European-American relationship after the Syrian crisis. It was clear that the Syrian and Turkish policy toward the Kurds was a policy of obliterating the identity and rights of the Kurdish people. However, in the light of these developments in the international arena, the Kurds have gained the confidence of the international community and the West, where they played a significant role in redrawing the map of the region. It is possible to say that they achieved a balance of power through their alliance with the West and the US" (Alamdari 8th June 2017).

The orientation of the Kurds in their foreign policy toward the West and the United States was a reaction to the Syrian and Turkish internal policies against the Kurds. The Kurds turned toward the European Union and the United States after the Syrian crisis began, where they established alliances with them in the region in an attempt to strengthen their status as an effective power and to achieve a balance in power. It is important to note that the interests of the West and the United States intersected with the Kurdish interests in the region, which were manifested in the fight against terrorism (ISIL).

The Kurds in Syria have gained relative power through their alliances with the Unites States and the European Union since the Syrian crisis in 2011. In order to keep or improve this relative power, Morgenthau suggests three options, the first being that the states should increase their own power by military means. The military force of the Kurds in Syria is represented by the People's Protection Units (YPG) and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF or QSD); these forces "emerged after the civil war erupted in Syria and started to spill over into Syrian Kurdistan, now known as Rojava, or Western Kurdistan" (the Kurdish Project 2017). The second option suggested by Morgenthau is for a state to add its own power to the power of other states. The Kurds, as mentioned in the previous sections, had to build alliances

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with other powers to maintain their relative power and interests in the region. The People's Protection Units (YPG) and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) enjoy the rare distinction of being the sole groups that simultaneously enjoy U.S. and Russian support (Zaman 2016). The third option suggested by Morgenthau is to prevent increasing the power of the opposing state, which completes the first and second options. Concerning the Kurds in Syria, the power of Turkey and Syria decreased in the region in northern Syria by announcing the Kurdish cantons, Jezera, Kobani and Efrin, and by them building a defensive military.

The idea of Kurdish cantons uniting and enhancing the Kurdish entity on Turkey's border has been a hotly debated issue during the Syrian civil war. Turkey opposes the cantons feverishly, so much so that at times this opposition replaces its primary slogan of "Assad must go." (Bozarslan 2017). It can be said that by declaring Kurdish cantons, Turkey's power has been decreased in northern Syria despite Turkey's attempt to prevent establishing these cantons and connecting them with each other. The Turkish government launched Operation Euphrates Shield in northern Syria; "the official Turkish goal was said to be to push IS away from the Turkish border, it was obvious that the real purpose was to prevent Kurdish cantons from geographically uniting" (Ibid 2017). The Syrian army has been decreased to a great extent in the Kurdish regions as well as them fighting on several fronts, coupled with the unwillingness of the Syrian regime to escalate the problem with the Kurds who are being supported internationally. Moreover, the Kurds prefer Al-Assad to Islamist militant groups in Syria as the Syrian Kurdish leader Saleh Muslim has claimed (Cockburn 2015).

John Mearsheimer has a different view concerning the balance of power; unlike Morgenthau and Waltz, he considers the Great Powers as the main actors in the balance of power. Furthermore, he argues that each actor strives for its survival and security and will not allow other actors to dominate or undermine the power of others; thus, the balance of power achieves relative gains rather than absolute ones. Mearsheimer's viewpoint of the balance of

power embodies the U.S. and Russian relationship in the Middle East, where this relationship is reflected by the fact that each one of them maintains and secures its interests. The current political situation in the region prompts each of them to form alliances to expand their influence and impose their control over the powers in certain regions. Per Rustem considers the Kurds as a trump card as each party tries to benefit from another party. He asserts:

> "It can be said that the Kurds as a result of geostrategic conditions and interests have become a key player and a partner of the great powers in the region. The fact that the Kurds stood up against ISIL and fought it served the interests of the great powers in the region, so both America and Russia were quick to ally themselves with this new player who serves their interests. In response, the US and Russia abandoned Turkey (the NATO member) to the Kurds" (Rustem 3rd June 2017).

The Kurds in accordance to the current situation considered a trump card where great powers try to gain this card because having the Kurds as an ally in the region would improve the situation of the US and Russia, where neither one of them can dominate the other and undermine the other's power. Thus, the alliance with the Kurds creates a kind of balance of power between the U.S. and Russia, where each one of them will achieve relative gains instead of the absolute ones.

Through this analytical chapter on the balance of power theory, several points were discussed and analyzed which clarified the reasons for not establishing a Kurdish state. Furthermore, the current role of the Kurds was also clarified, as well as how they might play a key role and what factors have contributed to revitalizing their political role recently.

States interests in light of realists' hypotheses:

The political relationships among states are built on interests and actions, where both of them are defined in terms of power. In other words, states should act rationally in their foreign policy in order to keep their interests and decrease the risks among them. Morgenthau considers power as the essence of a relationship among states, and only power can protect interests. Based on that, Morgenthau considered military power as a significant tool of a

state's power, and the states actions of using this kind of power are justifiable because states will never achieve the desired interests unless they use military power.

By connecting Morgenthau's hypotheses with this case, it can be concluded that all states deal with each other depending on mutual benefits which protect their foreign interests. The Kurdish-American relationship is a good example of the mutual interests, for there are many reasons that drove both sides to collaborate. Former U.S. presidential adviser Douglas Olivent stated:

> "The reason for Washington's move to support the Kurdish people's protection units in Syria was because it looked to allies in Syria to fight the Islamic state, especially after its programs failed to train the moderate Syrian opposition" (Aljazeera 18 October 2015).

But the implicit goal of the U.S. administration is to weaken the Syrian opposition which has shown radical Islamist tendencies such as the Al-Nosra Front. The U.S. presidential adviser Douglas Olivent added:

> "Washington is deeply concerned that the overthrow of the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad will lead to the control of AL-Norsa Front over the situation in Syria, [he asserted that] the Syrian opposition deals with AL-Norsa Front" (Ibid 18 October 2015).

Moreover, the YPG proved their ability to confront ISIL after the battle of Kobani, singling them out to the U.S. administration as the only reliable partner on the ground under the current circumstances. The U.S. administration had to support the Kurdish forces in Syria militarily, where it provided the Kurdish forces with air support in battle, the Kurds with heavy and light weapons and established training camps for Kurdish fighters.

By providing the Kurds with weapons and establishing a good relationship with them, the American administration aimed to gain an effective ally in the region, and to establish a military base in northern Syria (the Kurdish regions), as well as prevent Russia from extending its influence in the region. The Kurds under these circumstances have no choice but to cooperate and ally with the U.S. for two reasons. According to Rustem:

> "The US is the only power that has proved to the Kurds its goodwill to support the Kurds to claim their legitimate rights. Second, the Kurds' intention to establish their own entity in

the north of Syria, where the Kurdish majority exist and they seek to survive in the light of these unstable conditions" (Rustem 3rd June 2017).

The Kurds have confirmed Waltz's hypotheses concerning power. Unlike Morgenthau, Waltz considers survival to be the main goal of states instead of power; by achieving survival, states can guarantee stability and security, as well as maintaining their interests. Moreover, Waltz as a defensive realist denies all kinds of power to keep interests, he believes that using power can sink states into conflicts, but instead, states can accumulate enough power for defensive purposes.

It is clear that the main objective of the Kurds behind the establishment of their cantons is survival; the Kurds are in a position that does not allow them to acquire power and think of expansion for their interests; survival is the only way for them to stabilize and preserve their interests. In order to survive and defend themselves, the Kurds had to declare their autonomous regions and establish a military force that could defeat possible hostilities. The constitution of Rojava cantons, which was drafted by the Kurdish Legislative Assembly, provides that "the Autonomous Regions shall not interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries, and it shall safeguard its relations with neighboring states, resolving any conflicts peacefully" (Civiroglu article No 10). Moreover, the People's Protection Units (YPG) considered:

> "The sole military force of the three Cantons, with the mandate to protect and defend the security of the Autonomous Regions and its peoples, against both internal and external threats. The People's Protection Units act in accordance with the recognized inherent right to self-defense" (Ibid article No 15).

We can observe through Rojava cantons' constitution that the main objective of the Kurds is survival and self-defense by accumulating a specific amount of power which is represented in The People's Protection Units. It can be said that the Kurds have somehow achieved survival and guaranteed their regions have enough stability and security. The inability of ISIL and other extremist Islamic forces backed by Turkey to enter the Kurdish cantons and destabilize their security and stability is proof of the Kurds' ability to maintain their safety.

Alamdari commented on Turkish attempts to intervene in the Kurdish cantons and the reaction of the Kurds, stating:

> "In spite of Turkey's numerous attempts to enter the Kurdish areas and thwart the continuity of these cantons which threaten the security of Turkey as they claim, but the Kurdish forces only defend these attacks and do not use the right of reply, because the Kurds are fully aware that the use of force under these circumstances against Turkey will plunge them into undesired conflict" (Alamdari 8th June 2017).

John Mearsheimer agrees with Morgenthau concerning power; he argues that all states use all kinds of power in order to keep their interests in this anarchical system. But he claims that democratic states will not become involved in conflicts to coerce or dominate other states in order to maintain their interests; on the contrary, democratic states should resort to cooperation to keep and guarantee the interests of each other. The Kurdish-E.U.-U.S.-Russian relationships illustrate Mearsheimer's hypotheses. The Kurds are a point of convergence of interests among the Great Powers in Syria, where all parties have resorted to a policy of cooperation to impose their control and move away from the policy of direct confrontation in order to maintain their interests. According to Rustem:

> "The convergence of U.S.- Kurdish interests has made cooperation between the two parties inevitable, and both sides have moved away from military confrontation, because the Kurds on the one hand have no ability to confront the United States and Kurds want to build alliances to serve their case. On the other hand, the US does not want to lose an effective partner on the ground, through which it can preserve its interests" (Rustem 3rd June 2017).

The U.S.-Kurdish rapprochement has frozen the U.S.-Turkish relationship. The relationship between the two countries has deteriorated because of the former's support of Kurdish forces, which are fighting to serve U.S. interests in the face of terrorism and Turkey's support of undesirable Islamist factions and forces. Despite Turkey's warning to the U.S. administration that any support for Kurdish forces would pose a threat to Turkey's national security, the U.S. administration has reassured Turkey that U.S. support for Kurdish forces was for the benefit of all parties and that the Kurds will not interfere in Turkey's internal affairs. The United States faces a real problem in its foreign policy in Syria, despite its

attempts to resolve the conflict between Turkey and the Kurds and ease the conflict between them; they have found it difficult to reconcile them. The U.S. administration believes that the long-term common goals between these parties should be a reason for improving and developing the relationship between the Syrian Kurds and Turkey; their goals should not only be temporary, aimed at defeating the Islamic state, but long-term in order to match their larger regional objectives (Pollock 2016: 1).

When Putin came to power in 2000, he directed his political compass to the Middle East and tried to build ties and alliances with the countries of the region, including the Kurds. The Russian-Kurdish relationship has an ancient history since the beginning of the Republic of Mahabad, from the era of the Soviet Union until the present day. Thus we find that the recent Russian-Kurdish rapprochement is not the result of present circumstances, but of the history of relations and interests between them. When the Syrian civil war began, Putin tried to exploit the opportunity to improve Russia's relations with the Kurds, especially after the Kurds had proved their military and political capabilities on the ground in facing ISIL. In December 2013, the Russian government invited the PYD co-chairman Salih Muslim to Moscow to improve the relations between them and cooperate on the ground in Syria. According to Borshchevskaya:

> "[The rapprochement] fit Putin's calculus of seeking to divide and weaken the West and prop up Assad. The inclusion of the PYD in the peace talks, from Moscow's perspective, would dilute the Syrian opposition with individuals who did not insist on Assad's departure as a precondition for negotiations. This move also reduced Turkey's—and therefore NATO's—influence in Syria and created broader leverage for Moscow against Turkey, while exacerbating tensions between Turkey and the United States" (Borshchevskaya A. 2016:49).

This Russian-Kurdish rapprochement has aggravated relations between Ankara and Moscow, which led Turkey to drop a Russian warplane in Syria, leading to a deteriorating relationship between the two countries and increasing Russian support for the Kurds in Syria and Turkey; this escalated after the Democratic People's Party, led by Salah-Alden Demirtas, won a number of seats in Turkish parliament. Finally, the Kurdish aim of alliance with Russia

is to win more alliances, especially with the Great Powers, which can provide Kurdish forces with weapons in their war against ISIL. On the other hand, "The Kremlin simply pays lip service to such support as it uses the Kurds to destabilize Turkey, drive a wedge between NATO allies to weaken the alliance, and keep Bashar al-Assad in power" (Ibid 2016:50).

It can be concluded from the American-Kurdish and the Russian-Kurdish rapprochement that all parties depend on the mutual interests in their relations among each other. The Kurds constitute a focal point of these relations due to their significant role on the ground in Syria as America and Russia attempt to bring the Kurds to their side in order to protect their own interests in the region. Democratic states such as the U.S. and Russia mainly depend on the Kurds' relationship for cooperation instead of coercion and domination to maintain and guarantee their interests.

Waltz agrees somewhat with Mearsheimer that while moderate and preservation policies can maintain security of states, using power against each other will undoubtedly expand the gap between states. States should therefore resort to use power as a last solution, maximizing security as a priority in their policies instead of maximizing power. Indeed, Kurdish areas are considered one of the safest areas in Syria at the moment. The reason for this security and stability is the Kurds' policy of managing their areas and, more importantly, their internal policy with the Syrian regime and foreign policy with Turkey. As Rustem asserts:

> "Despite the participation of the Kurds in the Syrian revolution since its inception and they called for the overthrow of the Syrian regime, they took a neutral position on the Syrian regime later after the revolution turned into an armed revolution run by the extremist Islamic groups supported by Turkey and Arab Gulf states, and after the Syrian-Turkish relationship has deteriorated" (Rustem 3rd June 2017).

The Syrian-Kurdish relationship has been based on mutual interests since 2011, or rather, after Erdogan's abdication of Assad, since the beginning of the Syrian revolution, when he called for Assad to step down from power, prompting the Syrian regime to change its alliances policy in the region. The Syrian regime returned to its former ally (the Kurds) for

two reasons, which were, to confront Turkey and to gain a strong ally on the ground in the north of Syria on the Turkish border. Rustem states:

> "The Kurds did not find a party in the Syrian crisis better than the Syrian regime to maintain their interests. After the adoption of Turkey and the Arab Gulf countries to the Syrian opposition and arming it, this opposition rejected the participation of Kurds in international conferences and meetings such as the Geneva Conference I and II" (Rustem 3rd June 2017).

The Kurds did not want to face the Syrian regime, which was supported externally by Iran and Russia, especially after the Kurds allied with Russia, which advocated for the Kurds' rights in Syria, and supported the idea of a federal government in Kurdish areas; they also supported the Kurds in their war against the Islamic state.

The Kurdish-Turkish relationship is based on a policy of deterrence. In other words, the U.S.-Kurdish-Russian alliance and the support of the International Coalition of Kurds in Syria have prompted Turkey to reconsider its policy against the Kurds and curb its military operations within the Syrian borders against the Kurds. Nouri Dersemly, a platoon commander in the People's Protection Units (YPG) in Afrin canton, argues that in its policy towards the Kurds in this period, Turkey does not want to confront great powers like the U.S. and Russia (the Kurds' allies) and does not want to convey to the world that it is fighting the Kurds who are fighting terrorism (ISIL). However, Turkey also does not want to be the reason for the international community's sympathy for the Kurds who may then support the Kurds against Turkey. In addition, the U.S. administration assured the Turkish government that it would withdraw its weapons from the Kurds after the elimination of the Islamic State in Syria, which prompted Turkey to condone Kurdish activities in Syria (Dersemly 24th June 2017). Despite the deterrence of the Great Powers and the international coalition of both the Kurdish and Turkish forces to confront each other, the Kurdish areas are not without some attacks by the Turkish army with artillery and direct intervention in Kurdish territory on the border.

When Dersemly commented on the Kurds policy toward Turkey, he added that the Kurds do not want to confront Turkey at this moment for several reasons; the first being their inability to militarily and politically confront Turkey and engage in a war against it. Second, the Kurds do not want to disturb their allies (the U.S. and Russia) or Western society because Turkey is still a NATO member. Third, the Kurds' desire to attract international sympathy to their cause in order to achieve their goals in the light of these divisions that have beset Syria (Dersemly 24th June 2017). Therefore, it can be said that both the Kurds and Turkey are trying to adopt a moderate policy towards each other and attempting not to get involved in armed conflict which could increase the gap between them. They are currently pursuing maximum security instead of maximum power.

Morgenthau argues that moral principles have no place in international politics, where states should act depending on mutual interests. The chief goal of states' interactions is not moral but utilitarian due to the mutual benefits and interests among them. Morgenthau asserts that states can apply moral principles and ethical standards in their dealings with other states, but that this depends on the changes that are emerging in the international arena. These changes drive states to apply moral principles in proportion to their interests. This hypothesis by Morgenthau reflects the Kurds situation in Turkey, where the Turkish-European-American relationship is based on the mutual interests, even though this relationship negatively affects the Kurdish situation in Turkey.

It may seem that Turkey is imposing itself strongly on the international community as a regional power; it is important to recognize that Turkey has military and political weight at the international level. Moreover, the Syrian crisis has made Turkey a key element and a part of the equation in Syria. Turkey, as a regional power, has attracted both the major European countries, the United States and Russia to ally with it, and as previously mentioned, since international relations are based on interests, there must be a scapegoat (Dersemly 24th June

2017). The Kurds of Turkey, despite benefiting from the Syrian crisis and from the development of relations between the Kurds of Syria and the West which has positively affected them, have become victims of alliances between Turkey and the West. Although the West has shown goodwill toward the Kurds in Turkey and demanded the Turkish government preserve human rights in Kurdish areas, they have not abandoned their alliance with Turkey. Both Germany and Britain also signed agreements with Turkey to sell them arms given the critical circumstances, despite knowing that Turkey will not hesitate to use these weapons against the Kurds (Dersemly 24th June 2017). It is therefore possible to say that the moral principles of states cannot be applied if they contradict with the interests of these states.

Concerning states' intentions towards other states, Mearsheimer argues that uncertainty and distrust drive states to pursue power and contend with each other. He asserts that states' intentions can change as international interests and circumstances change. States' intentions which are usually produced by statesmen can be benign sometimes and hostile at others depending on the changes. When we talk about states' intentions and how they change with the change of interests and circumstances, it is important to mention Russian and Turkish relations concerning the Kurds.

The nature of the relationship between Turkey and Russia before the Syrian crisis was a friendly relationship represented in trade between them. However, by the start of the Syrian crisis, Turkey changed its policy towards the Syrian government, (Russia's ally) and Russia's support for the Kurds and the alliance with them. This revitalization of the Kurdish role recently has led to the deterioration of the Russian-Turkish relationship (Rustem 3rd June 2017). In addition to these, Turkey dropped a Russian warplane which complicated the relationship between the two countries, and almost reached an armed confrontation between them. The Guardian stated that the Russian president Vladimir Putin argued "our military is doing heroic work against terrorism … But the loss today is a stab in the back, carried out by

the accomplices of terrorists (He refers to Turkey). I can't describe it in any other way" (The Guardian 24 November 2015). Turkey realized its mistake after Russia strengthened its alliance with the Kurds and opened a representative for them in Moscow and supported the right of the Kurds to self-determination and independence and called on the Kurds of Turkey to claim their rights, just like the Kurds in Syria. In addition, Russia went to Iran and allied with them at the expense of the Turks; the Turkish-Israeli relationship was almost non-existent due to the former's support for the Palestinian cause and the issue of the Turkish aid ship to the Gaza Strip. In the end, Turkey found itself outside the game in Syria and realized that it had made a serious mistake in severing its relationship with Russia. Turkey was quick to restore relations with Russia after months of disconnection; it secretly relinquished all of its previous red lines just to restore the relationship as it was in the past, and to reduce the Kurdish role in the region. (Rustem 3rd June 2017).

Turkey renounced Syrian opposition, reestablished relations with Israel and abandoned the Palestinian cause. More importantly, Turkish President Erdogan said that Bashar Al-Assad could remain in power and return to the table of political dialogue instead of using force and weapons. Turkish red lines have turned yellow and green over time, as the country relinquished several areas it protected in Syria, turning a blind eye to the bombing of opposition groups and Turkmen villages by Russian and Syrian planes in order to build ties with Russia and America (The Turkish Zaman Newspaper 5 March 2017). All of these red lines including the Palestinian issue, supporting the Syrian armed opposition, the direct Turkish intervention in northern Syria, and the belief that Al-Assad should leave, have been set up by Turkish President Erdogan. These lines have faded in order to impede the Kurdish role in the region and return Turkey as a party to the conflict in Syria to serve its interests. It is therefore possible to say that the intentions of both countries changed with their interests, affecting the relationship between them; the interests of the two countries later coincided and

changed their intentions towards each other. Mearsheimer's hypothesis may be considered realistic and correct concerning this case concerning the change in state intentions by changing their interests, although whether their intentions are benign or hostile is uncertain.

This chapter has offered explanations for the reasons or factors which have contributed to the revitalization of the Kurdish role regionally and internationally. Factors that have assisted the Kurds in calling for their legitimate rights in self-determination and autonomy, and why these factors served the Kurdish interests recently have been discussed.

The role of the Kurdish diaspora:

Due to their turbulent history and the arbitrary practices and deportations against them by the Syrian and Turkish governments, the Kurds form a large group of Kurdish communities around the world. Turkish and Syrian internal politics against the Kurds has led to a large Kurdish community in the West, which has become a direct threat to the Turkish and Syrian foreign policy (Beser 14th April 2017). The Kurdish movement in the diaspora is one of the reasons why the Kurdish plight has clearly emerged in the regional and international arena recently. The availability of the democratic atmosphere and appropriate living opportunities in Western countries has pushed the Kurds into intellectual, political and social progress. Kurdish political parties and Kurdish cultural institutions such as the Kurdish Institute of Paris have played an important role in defining the Kurdish issue in the West. Beser commented on the role of the Kurds in diaspora:

> "The Kurdish question is no longer a concern solely for countries in the Middle East, but, due to the Kurdish Diaspora, has increasingly become a European debate, [moreover] diaspora Kurds in Europe also participate in this claims-making process by following alternative strategies at the local, national, and supranational level" (Beser 2013 Abstract).

The Syrian crisis and the emergence of the Islamic State have helped the Kurds in defining their cause in the diaspora recently. In other words, the Western society in the past knew little about this people, but because of the Kurds' fight against the Islamic State and its threat to

humanity and Kurdish intellectuals, politicians and media, the Western and international community have become more aware of this people and their cause. The Kurds in the diaspora have conducted many activities throughout Europe to draw closer to the European community and define their cause. Beser has summarized these activities as follows:

"Protecting the 'Kurdish identity' against assimilation both in Europe and in Turkey, working on achieving full ethno-cultural recognition of their identity in Turkey and beyond as 'Kurds' and not as 'Turks' or 'Arabs'; affecting policy-making procedures both in Europe and in Turkey in favor of the Kurdish population, raising awareness about the Kurdish cause; and promoting identity-formation by working on issues related to the cultivation of culture and language, the standardization of the Kurdish language etc." (Ibid 2013:34).

Finally, the Kurds in the diaspora continue to play an essential role in defining their cause and encouraging the Western community to learn about their culture. The revitalization of the Kurdish role in the political arena regionally and internationally is due to the Kurdish activities in the diaspora.

Conclusion

Kurds around the world are among the largest minorities without a state of their own; they are split into four countries as a result of international agreements and treaties that divided the Kurds and Kurdistan into four parts. The Kurdish majority lives in Turkey, where they make up approximately 20%, or 15-20 million people of Turkish society with most living in the east and southeast parts of the country. The percentage of Kurds in Syria does not exceed 8%, or about two million Kurds, where they reside in the north of the country along the Turkish border. If we look deeply into the history of Kurds and Kurdistan, we find that these people have deep roots in the land between the east and southeastern Turkey, northern Syria, northern Iraq and western Iran. The history of the Kurds in the region dates back thousands of years, and historians consider the Kurds to be indigenous to this region.

It is peculiar and unfair to that the Kurdish people and the world's largest minority does not have a state or a sovereign homeland like the rest of the nations. On this basis I conducted this research in the attempt to reveal the reasons for the non-existence of a Kurdish state so far, and the factors that have stood in the way of the ambitions of the Kurdish people. Furthermore, this research intended to expose the factors that have contributed to the revitalization of the Kurdish role recently on the regional and international arena.

There are several factors that have led to the deprivation of the Kurds' state and rights, but through this research, some of the fundamental factors that have directly affected the realization of the Kurds' dream of establishing their state have been explained. International conventions and treaties such as Sevres, Lausanne, and Sykes-Picot formulated a turning point in the history of the Kurds. These agreements have played an effective role in marginalizing the Kurds, dividing up their lands and occupying their territories.

It can be said that the absence of the role of the Kurdish parties and Kurdish figures in the political arena at the time affected the political decision to marginalize the Kurds. Moreover, the common international interests of the Great Powers played a major role in depriving the Kurds of their rights. In addition to this, the internal policy of both the Turkish and Syrian governments towards the Kurds is a policy of repression of freedoms. Both governments have pursued the policy of persecution, murder, displacement and pillage against the Kurds to control them as well as deny them their rights.

There are several factors that have contributed to the revitalization of the recent Kurdish role within the political arena. The Syrian crisis has played an active role in the emergence of the Kurds both regionally and internationally; this crisis created the right environment for the Kurds to claim their rights. The emergence of the Islamic State in the region and the Kurdish fighting against them made the Kurdish presence in the region inevitable, making the realization of their demands unavoidable. The Kurds, with the aid of the international coalition, have achieved many victories against the Islamic State in Kobani, Jezira and finally in Raqqa, the alleged capital of the ISIL, where some regional powers have failed to do so. In addition, the Turkish and Syrian foreign policies have had an impact on the revitalization of the Kurdish role. Turkish relations with the West and the United States have been strained, because Turkey has involved in supporting warring parties in Syria that are likely to be terrorist groups. Moreover, Turkey's oppressive and tyrannical policy against the Kurds at home made the E.U. and the U.S. resent the Turkish government.

The Syrian crisis and the Syrian government's dependence on Russia and Iran in its alliances have led to the deterioration of Syrian-Western relations. Thus, the E.U. and the U.S. have directed their alliances toward the Kurds and supported them, particularly after the Syrian opposition failed to prove itself a Western ally against the Islamic State and the Syrian government.

It is important to note the international interests between the Great Powers and the Kurds in the region. These interests have made the Kurds an essential party and a partner in any treaty or agreement made with Syria. Lastly, the Kurds in the diaspora have played an active role in the emergence of Kurds in the recent political arena; the Kurdish community in the diaspora also played an important role in educating the Western community of the Kurds and their culture, language, case as well as their sacrifices against terrorism.

The Kurdish issue and the active Kurdish role have recently been an important issue on the international scene for several reasons, the first being the fighting of the Kurdish forces against ISIL, an organization that has proved its ability to confront the Great Powers and destabilize the security and stability of the major powers. The Kurdish forces achieved several victories against ISIL with the assistance of the international coalition, which prompted the international community to consider the Kurdish issue more seriously.

The international community has recently stressed the issue of supporting minorities to achieve their demands, and the Kurds are the largest minority in the world without a state. Because of this, the international community had to put the Kurdish issue on the table of dialogue in international forums again.

The third reason is a personal one. As a Kurdish person who has lived through the bitter Kurdish reality in Syria and experienced the practices of the Syrian government against the Kurds, I had to put this issue to discussion and let the Western world know more about the details of the Kurdish issue. I hope this will assist the Kurds to achieve their aspirations one day. This is the least I can do for my cause and the conflict of my nation.

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Appendix

I have had a fruitful interview with Per Rustem on the Kurdish situation regionally and internationally. Per Rustem is Kurdish writer and politician, lives in Switzerland. He is a Kurdish icon in literary and political work, where he has books, articles, blogs and poems in Kurdish and Arabic.

I have tackled many questions concerning the Kurdish case through this interview, but only the related questions to this project will be written.

1-In your opinion, what are the reasons for the failure of establishing a Kurdish state after the First World War to this day?

Rustem: It was a century from those events, tracks, treaties and maps that painted and divided the region and created new countries, which years before that date a dream for their people to achieve their political entity, but nevertheless the international interests have coincided with the interests of those components and nationalities for the establishment of these states and sheikhs and kingdoms in addition to The internal national factor provides a political awareness of a national intellectual elite that has benefited from European experience and experience to build parties and movements that have led their peoples to achieve freedom and independence and thus end an odious Ottoman occupation of nearly five centuries.

In return to that stage where the Ottoman Caliphate "Islamic" live the weakest historical stages and described the "sick man", which leads the West to return to the Middle East after eight centuries of their removal from them, following the terrible defeat in the Crusades, the Sultan of Saladin, "they return to re-subjugate the region to their influence and interests, but not from a religious point of view, but a commercial economy, and therefore we found the assignment of the masters of the world at the time _ the English and the French _ on the geography of the region and for the success of their political project was necessary. Some of the rights of the peoples of the region and in particular the Arab so that their stability and investment, particularly after the discovery of oil in the Gulf region.

In short, the convergence of Western interests with ethnicities and nationalities such as Arabs on the one hand or as a primary factor and the other; the political elites that are capable of leading their people at that stage have formed the basic bases for their political achievement. Unfortunately, our people have lost those leading elites capable of Leading the stage for several factors; the backwardness and subordination tribal reality of the Kurdish society as well as the dominance of religious thought on the national, all combined contributed to the failure of some national elites to deliver the Kurdish issue of the point and the desired goal; namely independence and the establishment of the homeland Kurdistan like other peoples liberated from the domination of the Ottoman Empire.

2-What factors have contributed to the revitalization of the Kurdish political role recently at the regional and international levels?

Rustem: There are certain factors that have contributed to the "revitalization of the Kurdish political role recently". On the one hand, the issue of education and the availability of the competent staff in various scientific and literary fields, after our people were deprived of intellectual intellectual elites for centuries. Religious and societal groups, which are long and elucidated, but most of them revolve around the issue of the "inferior contract" towards the dominant nationalities, where I find the absolute majority of those cultural elites masquerading as the Kurdish origin in favor of the foreign and sometimes even the national religion.

But as we said at the beginning and after the education opportunities for the children of the middle and poor segments of the society and the arrival of some of them to Western European societies and access to the experiences of the cultures and movements of these peoples, after the economic situation contributed to the dispatch of these children to those countries. Also the success of the Bolshevik revolution and adoption of the issue of support for liberation movements In the world, although our people in some parts became once again the victim of the interests of socialist countries and the Soviet Bolshevik communist state, the theoretical and philosophical side of the communist movement and the issue of support for liberation movements with the availability of cultural cadres, Toast to take advantage of the experience of the European revolutions to strengthen national sentiment, some members have directed the Kurdish elites to establish movements and political parties to lead the Kurdish national movement after it was driven from some of the clerics and sheikhs in the previous stages.

Thus, the emergence and formation of Kurdish political associations and parties after the Second World War, where the first Kurdish political party was founded in 1945, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, preceded this historic event and the establishment of some cultural and literary associations by intellectuals and enlightened people of this nation such as the Badrakhan family Is considered to be the right of the pioneers of Kurdish culture and media. If it can be said that the parties have contributed and are still actively contributing to the revitalization of the Kurdish political role, whether at the regional or international level where the Kurdish community in the diaspora countries and as part of partisan activity contributed to The Kurdish issue to others.

3-How was the Syrian government's relationship with Kurdish and Kurdish parties before and after the Syrian crisis?

Rustem: unfortunately, after the Ba'th party's domination of its racist ideology, the Syrian authorities dealt with the various issues and national issues, in particular the Kurdish issue, with a police security mentality. The fate of any Kurdish political activist was the

prosecution of security forces and the arrest and imprisonment on charges of "Part of the geography of the homeland and its attachment to a foreign country ". It ruled that our people and political and cultural party cadres were sentenced to years of imprisonment, torture and sometimes physical liquidation in those security cellars. Five "the logic of denial and denial" to the issue of national geographic and other people within the Syrian map. Such an exclusionary mentality, as a result of daily media pumping in the Syrian street, has become part of popular consciousness. Arab cultural and political elites, even the opposition, have promoted these ideas as "part of reality and truth" and that Syria is composed only of a single geographical, The existence of a Kurdish population and geographical and therefore find even those who suffered from the tyranny of the Syrian regime of Arab elites during the years of secret work, that he denies any Kurdish geopolitical presence in Syria, the fact that these convictions were established in the Arab mindset that "Syria is Arab land and people."

Of course, that mentality has not changed in the Arab elites - those that have remained with the regime or the opposition_ with some exceptions here and there as well as some shifts to the positions of others, but in general, that mentality is still prevailing in the Arab community in general and therefore according to that principle, The conflict with the Kurds on the basis that they are part of the problem and the dilemma and that the best way to deal with them is to migrate the Kurdish file and postpone the opening of the conflict with them for full-time to the basic conflict with the other party and after resolving the battle be full of this annoying element.

Thus, based on this conviction, the regime has handed over the Kurdish areas to a Kurdish political party - the democratic society movement - which aims to spare the opening of another front with the Kurds and thus affect the course of battles with the opposition and when the completion of the basic battle is easy for the Kurds to return them to appear and obey and submit again, The other dealt with this mentality with the file and the other Kurdish party _ the Kurdish National Council _ where the postponement of the project and file until after the disposal of the Syrian regime according to their claims and political elites.

4- In your opinion, has the Kurdish issue become a bargaining chip between regional and international powers in the region? Has the Kurdish issue or Kurds been exploited to serve their interests?

Rustem: Certainly, each party tries to benefit from the other parties or to use some parties as pressure and bargaining chips. The weaker party is always the one with the stronger hand. But sometimes as a result of the geostrategic conditions and interests make the weak party to become the other player and a key partner, as the circumstances assisted the Arabs a century ago, and thus formed Arab countries, the circumstances are in favor of the Kurds this time to become partners and new players with others Region. Therefore, despite the attempt by all parties to make the Kurds bargaining paper and exploit the political reality fragmented and weak them to be "Trojan horse" against the projects and agendas of others, but the championship of our people and his will and interests of the West and the Americans, made the Kurds one of the difficult numbers in the Syrian equation, after they were only a file

Security at the table of a Syrian security intelligence officer. Therefore, we can say that the Kurds are the most beneficiaries of the new reality, despite the talk of some that: ((Kurds are not more than a chess stone or card and will throw the Kurds with a political breakthrough in the country)), but forget that the wheel of history does not return. Thus, the Kurds will not return to the first box, as they were before the Syrian crisis.

5-How did the Western-Kurdish rapprochement affect the policies of the countries of the region? Did this convergence have an impact on the revitalization of the Kurdish political role recently?

Rustem: it can be said that the Western convergence of the Kurds form a kind of a backlash to this political tremor or volcano on the countries of the region in general and especially Turkey where we saw a significant changes in the compass of political alliances. Thus, we found new regional alliances such as the Turkish-Saudi rapprochement after the dispute between the two countries following their disagreement over the Egyptian file, where Turkey supported Morsi Brotherhood government, while the Saudis sided with Sisi and the military government and their coming to power, as well as Turkey's departure from its strategic ally (Israel), and went to reconcile with Russia. As for the impact of rapprochement or approach of the West and especially the US on the activity of the Kurdish role, I think I stood on it before and long and I said and returned and say: the Kurds have become an important number and a real player in the equations of the region and cannot be any future scenario to be successful in resolving the Syrian file without the Kurds a key partner and this is sufficient to know the extent of activity and the success of the Kurds during these recent years.

6- What is the role of the Kurdish community and the Kurdish parties in the Diaspora in defining the Kurdish issue?

Rustem: The Kurdish community and parties are required to move diplomatically and popularly in the European capitals and squares through various events with the aim of stripping the Turkish regime more and moving the Kurdish file and benefiting from the positive European atmosphere, especially after the image of the Kurdish is linked to the championship and the prestige and the fight against terrorism and Islamic extremism. After Turkey has become one of the countries that have embraced and financed - or still - those militant Salafist groups such as the Al-Nosra Front and even the ISIS. Thus, the Kurdish movement can achieve a lot of positions and points in favor of the cause of our people in all parts of Kurdistan, especially in both the "Rojava" and the northern region of Kurdistan (Turkey), when the political game is well mastered and managed by diplomatic skill and expertise.

7- In the end, and in general, what is the view of Per Rustem on the Kurdish situation in the region? Is Kurdistan coming or will remain a dream for the Kurds?

Rustem: Kurds go through their best historical stages and achieve many achievements and political gains, which were considered romantic dreams for many of our generation and not

generations of parents and grandparents. Therefore it is possible to emphasize that the Kurdish situation is at best and that in the near future it will be better.

As for the Kurdish state, Kurdistan is likely to remain a beautiful dream in the minds of the Kurds, as is the case with the Arabs and the Arab unity issue. Unfortunately, it is not in the interests of anyone to establish a state on a geographical area of about five hundred thousand square kilometers, where it spreads geographically on a large oil tank, and the two largest rivers in the region "Tigris" and "Euphrates" stem from it. In addition, the fertility of the land and agricultural areas and geographical location as a human barrier between a number of people and geographies. In sum, the reality of Western thinking is the fragmentation and weakening of all, in order to control them, we can even claim that even our parties are not in their interest to create a unified Kurdistan. Therefore, we can see a future like the Arab countries, a number of Kurdish countries and emirates, but certainly not the unified state of Kurdistan.