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Kurdish Networks of Negotiation in the Twentieth Century

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FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

KURDISH NETWORKS OF NEGOTIATION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

By

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For My Parents

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the networks of negotiations cultivated by Kurdish elites in the early twentieth century and argues that Kurdish elites played an important role in shaping major political transformations in the Middle East and internationally. It investigates the specific networks used by elites in both the urban and tribal context and compares the different negotiations these groups made within their respective networks. Through the propaganda and the press, private petitions and negotiations, and international meetings such as the Paris Peace Conference, it shows how Kurdish elites worked within the changing political context before and after World War One by embedding themselves into new political networks to support their political goals.

INTRODUCTION

In May 1918, British Captain Charles Leonard Woolley met with Mahmud Beg Ibn Ibrahim Pasha, a leader within the Kurdish Milli tribe and an ardent nationalist with anti-Turk sentiments. The two discussed political and diplomatic issues between the British in the area and the Milli tribe, with Mahmud assuring Woolley that all tensions were the result of miscommunications, and that he and his tribe supported British presence in the region. In this conversation, Mahmud reminded Woolley of the critical importance of cooperating with a tribal elite to maintain control in a tribal society:

> The Turkish government sends down its Kaimakams and gendarmerie officers, but what use can these outsiders be if they try to act on their own? They could not know anything really about the tribes, whereas, of course, I do; it's my job. It is the same with you – if anything goes wrong, if a band of a dozen men or so raid some sheep … how are you going to catch these dozen amongst all my thousands? You might be sending troops in every direction and only shooting the wrong people. I can find the men, and either punish them or hand them over for punishment, and it's to my interest and to the tribe's interest that I should. I don't want trouble with the English, and the way to avoid trouble is to have frank and direct relations with them."[1]

This conversation, recorded by Woolley in a mission report, is one example of the many negotiations Kurdish elites made with British state-makers in the Middle East in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Like so many of the others, Mahmud sought to secure his place in the rapidly changing political context of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the first World War. As the British were in the process of constructing a mandate state in what would become Iraq, political officers were a unique network for Kurdish elites to cultivate a relationship with. Mahmud was one of many Kurdish nationalists who entered into negotiations with British state-makers to secure a Kurdish state with himself at the head. For the purpose of

[1] Captain C.L. Woolley, in "Report on Mission to Viranshehir," on his mission from 11–18 May 1918. In Anita L. P. Burdett, *Records of the Kurds: territory, revolt and nationalism, 1831-1979. British documentary sources* (volume 5. 1914-1920, Cambridge Archive Editions), 75.

his negotiations, he emphasized the value of a collaborative relationship: state-makers would be unable to control tribal society without the assistance of a tribal elite who already possessed intertribal networks and influence within that society. Scholars of the Middle East will be familiar with Sharif Hussein, who collaborated with British state-makers for Arab independence in this period. Why then is there not similar scholarly focus on the Kurdish elites who likewise collaborated with British state-makers for a share from the redrawing of the Middle East's borders after World War One?

This thesis examines such collaborative relationships between Kurdish elites from a variety of backgrounds and British state-makers. It focuses on the negotiations from multiple political and social contexts, demonstrating the diversity of experiences among Kurdish elites and highlighting how those distinctions both facilitated and tested their ability to exploit networks of negotiation in order to maintain their elite status in the transforming political structures of the Middle East. I draw on Actor Network Theory (ANT) to conceptualize these networks of negotiation. ANT posits that social phenomenon is shaped by continuously changing networks of relationships. This approach allows me to consider how various actors within in a network come together and act relationally to one another. I use it particularly as a tool to understand the relational shape of interactions and the process of generating cooperative possibilities between Kurdish elites and British political officers.[2] Mahmud's conversation with Woolley is a clear example of this approach. As Woolley searched for a powerful tribal elite's support to facilitate the expansion of British networks in the Middle East, Mahmud positioned himself as a valuable addition to that goal by way of securing a position of leadership in the new political order of a future Kurdistan. Both figures came together to generate cooperative

[2] "Actor network theory," In *Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, edited by Bryan S. Turner. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

possibilities that benefited both parties. Through networks, I conceptualize Kurdish negotiations as a collaborative endeavor that constantly changed shape in response to changing political contexts. The networks available to Kurdish elites in the imperial context did not disappear with the dissolution of the empire but were reoriented to generate new opportunities in transforming political systems. The cooperative nature of such networks likewise endured, as Kurdish elites continuously adapted to changing political possibilities, such as British tensions with Russia or concerns over regional stability in the Middle East, by representing themselves as the most effective network for British state-makers to engage with in their efforts to restructure the region. In prioritizing Kurdish networks of negotiation, the complex and contingent nature of this transformative historical moment is illuminated.

Many Kurdish elites, though certainly not all, proactively cultivated networks with British political officers in order to preserve or expand their power within those changing structures. The political structures of the Ottoman Empire were massively rearranged following World War One. In 1914, the Ottomans joined with Austria-Hungary and Germany as part of the Central Powers against the Allied Powers of Russia, France, and Britain. When the war ended in 1918 with victory for the Allies, the Ottoman Empire was set to be dissolved and partitioned according to European interests. As France and Britain determined how to split up the Middle East into their own spheres of influence, various ethnic groups that had previously existed under an imperial framework came forward with nationalist projects. In pursuit of their own nation-state, groups like Kurds and Armenians utilized American President Woodrow Wilson's principle of self-determination, which called for a reexamination of colonial ideas and advocated for individual groups to have the right to freely choose sovereignty without interference from

outside powers. It was in this changing political context from imperial rule to nation-state that Kurds used self-determination as a tool to negotiate with the international community.

Kurdish elites exploited numerous networks in pursuit of their political goals during this transformative moment. The press, nationalist organizations, Kurdish tribes, and British state-makers all served as networks for Kurdish elites from a variety of backgrounds to negotiate with. Each network possessed its own benefits and challenges, additionally unique to the individual seeking to exploit the network. For example, Sayyid Abdulkadir Semdinan and Mahmud Beg Ibn Ibrahim Pasha both leveraged their connection to Kurdish tribes in their negotiations with other political elites. For Abdulkadir, an elite who served in Ottoman state institutions in Istanbul, his connection to Kurdish tribes allowed him to ingratiate himself with Ismail Enver Pasha and the new CUP regime after the 1908 Revolution. Mahmud's position as a chief of the Kurdish Milli tribe offered a different kind of benefit – he aimed to leverage his influence among tribes as a tool for obtaining the top position in a Kurdish state, brought about by British state-makers. Despite working similar networks, different Kurdish elites possessed varying degrees of power in their own negotiations and distinct obstacles to the fullest exploitation of that network.

In order to more fully utilize these networks, Kurdish elites used a variety of tactics to cultivate opportunities and overcome obstacles. Though the power dynamics within these cultivated networks could be unbalanced, this thesis shows that Kurdish elites possessed a considerable degree of influence within their negotiations. I argue that rather than passively accepting the might of British state-makers, Kurdish elites leveraged their own influence and positions within Kurdish and Ottoman society in pursuit of their political goals. Kurdish elites did not enter into these negotiations as powerless parties – their positions as elites afforded them the ability to leverage their influence in British interests in the region. In some cases, such as

Mahmud's appeal to his position within intertribal networks, Kurdish elites even seemed to possess the upper hand. My analysis highlights the distinct ways various Kurdish elites overcame the obstacles that might prevent them from fully exploiting the available networks. For Kurdish nationalists from Istanbul who negotiated directly with British state-makers, the international opinion of Kurds proved a critical obstacle to overcome. Western presses like *New York Times* and *Times* in London overwhelmingly depicted Kurds as Muslim barbarians against Christian Armenians. In chapter two, I analyze how some Kurdish elites set out to rehabilitate Kurdish reputation in the west in order to combat discourses of Kurds as inherently uncivilized, which could be mobilized to argue for Kurdish inability to self-govern. While the press proved to be a powerful network for some urban Kurdish elites, for many tribal elites the reputation of Kurds as participants in the Armenian Genocide was rarely a point of contention within negotiations. While they did sometimes appeal to their tribe's friendly relationship with or protection of Armenians, their challenges primarily laid in justifying their value as a tribal leader with enough symbolic capital within tribal society to control other tribes.

This study focuses geographically on Kurds from northern and southern Kurdistan within the Ottoman empire, and eastern Kurdistan within the Persian empire. Kurds in southern Kurdistan, areas like Suleimaniyeh, were considerably open to British presence and more often opted to collaborate with them. Cooperate ventures with elites from eastern Kurdistan were also considered valuable, as these Kurds resided in strategic areas like the Wazna Pass that British political officers wanted to secure under British protection. As I discuss in detail in chapter three, some British state-makers even factored eastern Kurds into their negotiations as potential tools to influence southern Kurds. The elites from northern Kurdistan that I examine in chapter two likewise negotiated with the British, though notably from Istanbul, where rebellious Kurdish

leaders had been relocated earlier to facilitate closer surveillance by the Ottoman state. The breadth of the geographical focus of my study permits a broader view of Kurdish negotiations in this period, rather than privileging the elites of one context. In dealing with multiple different kinds of Kurdish elites, I draw on the definition proposed by Pierre Bourdieu, in which elites possess diverse forms of capital like social, cultural, or symbolic capital, to help perpetuate their elite status within society.[3] Bourdieu's framework is broad enough to provide sufficient space for nuancing elite-ness and extending it onto different categories of elite. Kurdish urban nationalist elites did not possess identical social, economic, cultural, or symbolic capital as tribal elites or tribal nationalist elites. However, the distinct kinds of elite-ness among Kurds did facilitate access to different networks of negotiations with British state-makers and the wider international community.

Historiography

The broader landscape of Middle East historiography prioritizes the study of groups with states, rendering stateless groups like Kurds often ignored as if irrelevant to the region. There is no shortage of scholarship on Middle Eastern populations that obtained a state after World War One. Turkish nationalism is one of the primary focuses of scholarship, particularly as Turkey is often considered the predominant successor state to the Ottoman Empire.[4] This focus has likewise shined a light on the Armenian case. Armenians did not obtain a state immediately after World War One but they did likewise participate in self-determination discourse and pursue

[3] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press), 1984.
[4] For a recent example, see Pınar Şenışık, "The Allied Occupation of İstanbul and the Construction of Turkish National Identity in the Early Twentieth Century," *Nationalities Papers* 46, no. 3 (May 2018): 501–13. See also Umut Uzer, *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism: Between Turkish Ethnicity and Islamic Identity* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016).

western support for a state. Scholars often put these two groups in conversation to examine their relational national projects, especially in such a way to consider the influence of Turkish nationalism on the Armenian Genocide.[5] Despite Kurdish influence in this period of national projects after World War One, as well as Kurdish direct negotiations with the subjects of these more popular historiographical focuses, the significant role of Kurds during this transformative period is generally neglected.

The questions scholars ask tend to betray a perceived parallel between statelessness and lack of influence.[6] Scholarship that does incorporate Kurds into the World War One context frequently possesses a narrow analytical scope, focusing only on the failure of the Kurdish national project. The distinction of Kurdish nationalism as 'failed' is often the primary lens with which it is viewed, thus preventing a deeper understanding of the distinctions and similarities with competing national projects. Additionally, the focus on failure invites discourses of betrayal by their great power negotiators. David McDowall's *A Modern History of the Kurds* perpetuates this view of betrayal by highlighting Britain's backpedaling on its promises of Kurdish autonomy.[7] More recently, Susan Pedersen's analysis of Kurdish and Assyrian negotiations with the British highlighted the former's "good reason to feel betrayed" when the provisions of the 1930 Anglo-Iraq Treaty did not include provisions for Kurdish autonomy.[8] This conceptual

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[5] Ronald G. Suny, "Religion, Ethnicity, and Nationalism: Armenians, Turks, and the End of the Ottoman Empire," In *In God's Name: Genocide and Religion in the Twentieth Century*, 23–61. New York, 2001. See also: Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (New York: Zed Books, 2004).

[6] The scholarly focus of the past several decades on Arab nationalism is a strong example of this trend. Coupled with a tendency to conceptualize the region as the "Arab Middle East," the field has largely asked questions centering on local groups' relationships with nationalism, and by extension their success or failure in acquiring a modern nation-state. While Arab nationalism has been a major point of analysis for decades (See *The Origins of Arab Nationalism,* (1991), an edited volume by Rashid Khalidi, et al.) more recent works like Michael Provence's *The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Arab Nationalism* (2009) put the rise of Arab nationalism more into conversation with the other competing nationalisms in the region.

[7] David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (New York: I.B.Tauris, 1996), see chapter 8.

[8] Susan Pedersen, "Getting Out of Iraq—in 1932: The League of Nations and the Road to Normative Statehood," *The American Historical Review* 115, no. 4 (2010): 993. This framework persists in other parts of the article. Pedersen's account similarly describes Britain's betrayal of Faisal and Iraqi nationalists (see pg. 981).

approach to Kurdish negotiations obscures their agency and draws attention away from the nuances of their negotiation. By focusing on failure as the end result, the cultivation of networks and the work of navigating those networks becomes irrelevant. In other words, statelessness as the primary lens leaves no room to consider Kurdish participation or contribution to key moments of political transformation. The failure of their national project is proof enough that their influence was miniscule. This in turn contributes to the historiographical focus on Arab states and the conceptualization of the Middle East as the 'Arab world.'

While this thesis considers the political endeavors of Kurdish nationalists, it does not privilege the effectiveness of the end result of their politicized action. Instead, it focuses on the networks which they cultivated in pursuit of their political goals. This places the focus on the Kurdish elites, rather than on nationalism itself. This thesis subsequently adds to the Kurdish historiography by shifting the lens away from nationalist ideology itself and treating the nationalist projects as merely one element of political maneuvering. A focus on nationalism privileges a linear account of pursuing a state and ultimately failing to obtain a state. It is by privileging the negotiations themselves, rather than nationalism in general, that a clearer picture emerges of Kurdish organizations of power and their responses to both foreign powers and the reorganization of political society. This approach builds on Hakan Özoğlu's work on Kurdish notables and nationalism.[9] While he acknowledged the networks available to Kurdish elites, Özoğlu's primary focus was the construction of Kurdish nationalism and identity. My focus takes the reverse: I acknowledge Kurdish nationalism and identity but primarily focus on the diverse networks Kurds cultivated in pursuit of political goals such as obtaining a state. Djene

[9] Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, SUNY Series in Middle Eastern Studies (State University of New York Press, 2004).

Rhys Bajalan's work does much to highlight Kurdish participation in the political realm, particularly as he highlights in his recent work the integral importance for separatist-nationalist political projects to attract international recognition and support, showing that Kurdish activists were "operating under highly unfavorable international conditions."[10] This is an angle I pursue strongly in my analysis of networks of negotiation. Yet his recent article concluded that Kurds' failure to obtain a state at the end of World War One was "primarily a result of factors that lay beyond their ability to influence," thus stripping their agency as if failure were predetermined.[11] Janet Klein's approach to Kurdish politics in this area highlights the center-periphery dynamic of co-optation through her focus on the Ottoman state's creation of and relationship with the Hamidiye cavalry.[12] I draw extensively on Klein's work, *The Margins of Empire,* which is organized to acknowledge that Kurds who were successfully brought into state institutions often desired to guard the power they had accumulated during transformative political moments like the 1908 Revolution.

This thesis also serves to situate Kurdish history within the World War One historiography. The treaties that came out of World War One triggered defining moments for the Middle East and, as I show, immediately transformed the power structures in the region. British political officers were interested in recruiting Kurdish militias for their military while Kurdish elites actively participated in the peace process following the war. The decisions that came out of the Treaty of Sèvres, which marked the partitioning and dismemberment of the Ottoman empire, had massive implications for the Kurds and other groups in the Middle East. Yet despite how

[10] Djene Rhys Bajalan, "The First World War, the End of the Ottoman Empire, and Question of Kurdish Statehood: A 'Missed' Opportunity?" *Ethnopolitics* 18, no. 1 (January 1, 2019): 15.
[11] Ibid., 24.
[12] Janet Klein, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011).

Kurdish negotiations contributed to European political discussions in the wake of World War Wone, Kurdish involvement has largely been ignored in the historiography until recently. The overwhelming majority of published works that situate the Kurds into this historiography are from the last decade alone.[13]

Two early examples exemplify this trend. Kamal Mazhar Ahmad's book, *Kurdistan During the First World War,* was an early attempt to situate Kurds into the world war historiography. However, it primarily focused on Kurdish relations with Ottoman non-Muslim populations, namely the Kurdish role in the Armenian Genocide, rather than unearthing the contributions of Kurdish elites during and after the war.[14] A similar blind spot for Kurdish contributions is found in Erik Goldstein's *The First World War Peace Settlements, 1919-1925.* The sole reference to Kurds in this book is a paragraph describing the tensions between Turkish and British desires for lands occupied by Kurds. Goldstein wrote: "The Kurds, thus, were spread over the territory of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Soviet Russia and their quest for an independent Kurdistan remains a vexatious issue in international relations."[15] In his account, Kurdish relevance to peace settlements after World War One can be summarized as an annoyance. Another reference, one sentence on the previous page, indicated their failure to obtain a state.[16] The state of the historiography would imply that, due to their statelessness, Kurdish influence on this period is unworthy of examination beyond acknowledging that failure. Other accounts fail to situate the Kurds into World War One at all. Eugene Rogan's *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East* depicts Kurds in opposition to Armenians, representing the

[13] A notable exception is found in Zharmukhamed Zardykhan "Ottoman Kurds of the First World War Era: Reflections in Russian Sources." *Middle Eastern Studies,* Great Britain: Taylor & Francis, 2006.
[14] Kamal Mazhar Ahmad, *Kurdistan during the First World War* (London: Saqi Books, 1994), 66-67.
[15] Erik Goldstein, *The First World War Peace Settlements, 1919-1925* (Seminar Studies in History, London: Routledge, 2002), 64.
[16] Ibid., 63.

relationship between these two groups almost exclusively in terms of tension, be they massacres or land disputes.[17] The broader role of Kurds in the World War One context is thus obscured in favor of religious tensions. This lack of wider representation of Kurdish involvement in the war context extends to other recent works, such as Leonard Smith's analysis of political geography and the European relationship with Ottoman "subject peoples." Smith makes no significant reference to Kurds despite the robust relationship between the British and the Kurds, one of the largest "subject peoples" in the empire.[18] As many works provide limited or no references to Kurdish negotiations or contributions to the broader war context in this period, this thesis aims to situate Kurds more fully into the political and social transformations that transpired in the Middle East during the World War One context.

It is extremely difficult to separate the Kurdish historiography from nationalism. In an article from 1995 on the state of Kurdish historiography, Mehrdad R. Izady lamented the state of the historiography that obscured and ignored Kurdish history.[19] He called for the excavation of Kurdish history out of the historiography and an enhanced discussion of Kurdish contributions. However, in doing so he simultaneously prioritized the nationalist angle of Kurdish history, saying "The Kurds must also popularize their history. All nations must connect to their past with popular celebrations and the pride that attends them. National heroes and proud histories emerge with depiction and description to a larger public … National heroes literally must be trumpeted…"[20] The interest in Kurdish nationalism continued to be prominent, even dominant, in the first decade of the twenty first century. Defining Kurdish nationalism's role in relation to

[17] Eugene L. Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2015), 33, 170, 174.
[18] Leonard V. Smith, "Drawing Borders in the Middle East after the Great War: Political Geography and 'Subject Peoples,'" *First World War Studies* 7, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 8, 13.
[19] Mehrdad R Izady, "The Current State of Kurdish Historiography," *Kurdish Life*, no. 16 (Fall 1995): 4-8.
[20] Ibid., 8.

Turkish nationalism took precedent, as did "making sense of nationalism."[21] In 2004, Hakan Özoğlu published *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries,* which sought to reestablish the origins of Kurdish nationalism, situating the political sentiment only after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The strict boundaries he suggested for determining the shift from pre-nationalist to nationalist received some backlash later due to the seemingly arbitrary and misrepresentative of the modern state.[22] My analysis acknowledges both the breaks and continuities between Kurdish elites in the imperial context, which I discuss in greater detail in chapter one, and those same elites as they actively pursued an independent Kurdish state. Rather than conceptualizing the Kurdish elites as intrinsically altered with the dissolution of the empire, I present them as acknowledging the new political order and cultivating opportunities to maintain their elite status within the changing political systems. The networks that they used to accomplish this are more aptly analyzed in this context of continuity that considers the overlap on either side of transformative political moments.

Sources

This thesis draws on a variety of English language sources to investigate Kurdish networks of negotiation in the early twentieth century. I examine letters and memoirs published

[21] For example, see Omer Taspinar, *Kurdish Nationalism and Political Islam in Turkey: Kemalist Identity in Transition* (New York: Routledge, 2005). See also David Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Opportunity, Mobilization and Identity*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[22] In particular, Amir Hassanpour asserts that Özoğlu's definition of nationalism, which requires the belief in a consistent Kurdish identity and the conviction of an unalienable right for self-determination in a historic Kurdish homeland (Özoğlu, 10), effectively blurs the boundaries between pre-nationalist and nationalist policies. Further, he argues that, contrary to Özoğlu, a platform of independence is not sufficient criteria for the status of nationalist, as independence does not necessarily translate to a modern nation-state with elected and representative government, citizenship, etc. Amir Hassanpour, "Ferment and Fetters in the Study of Kurdish Nationalism," *H-Net Reviews in the Humanities & Social Sciences*, September 2007, 1–1.

by some of the key state-makers who shaped British policy towards Kurds in this period. Their accounts of tribal dynamics and their perceptions of tribal elites like Adela Khanum illuminate the networks available for Kurdish tribal elites to exploit. While Kurdish motives and desires are not necessarily evident within British sources, British state-makers made their own motives and intentions for negotiation with Kurdish elites clear, which helps to investigate how Kurdish elites navigated the British network. I also review newspapers, petitions, and memorandums to consider how some Kurdish elites presented themselves to the international community, the British public, and British state-makers. These elites represented themselves in positive ways to rehabilitate their international reputation and justify British support. The bulk of my research comes from internal governmental documents to, from, and about Kurdish elites. I have privileged Kurdish voices where able, primarily in my chapter on Kurdish urban nationalist elites who authored newspaper articles, petitions, and attended public events. For Kurdish elites whose negotiations are preserved in British sources, I have invoked a creative reading of those sources to pull out the Kurdish perspective where possible. My focus on networks is one way I mitigate the issue of Kurdish silence; Kurdish elites' participation in negotiations demonstrate what they viewed as necessary for their collaboration with British political officers. By understanding the complexities of the networks Kurdish elites cultivated, I analyze how they navigated these networks of negotiation and draw out their potential goals and motivations.

Chapter Set up

Chapter one focuses on the imperial networks of Kurdish cultural organizations before and after the 1908 Revolution. It argues that many of the networks which Kurdish urban nationalist elites utilized after World War One were actually cultivated earlier in the imperial

context and were facilitated by the inclusion of Kurdish elites in Ottoman state institutions. As Kurdish elites were moved to the imperial center through a process of forced relocation, they entered into state political systems and developed ties to imperial networks of power. Chapter two concentrates on the post-World War One era and follows how Kurdish urban nationalist elites cultivated new networks of negotiation, shaped in part by the networks already established in the imperial context. It shows that Kurdish urban nationalist elites negotiated with British state-makers for political support in response to competing national projects and used networks like the press to help rehabilitate the negative perception of Kurds in Europe. The negative perception of Kurds risked damaging the viability of the Kurdish national project at the Paris Peace Conference, when European states redrew the borders of the Middle East. Chapter three turns to the tribal context and analyzes the response of Kurdish tribal elites to the presence of British state-makers in parts of Kurdistan. It investigates Kurdish motives for cultivating networks with this foreign power, as well as how some tribal elites negotiated to maintain their own influence and autonomy within the rapidly changing political structures.

CHAPTER 1

KURDISH NETWORKS IN THE IMPERIAL ERA

The 1908 Revolution in the Ottoman Empire was driven by political factions seeking to place limits on the autocratic government and restore the constitutional monarchy of 1876. In the aftermath, a more liberal political and intellectual climate emerged, leading to the establishment of numerous cultural and political organizations in the imperial capital Istanbul. Included among these were Kurdish cultural organizations which supported Kurdish national consciousness, education, and position within Ottoman society. The primary participants in such groups were Kurdish elites residing in Istanbul in the early twentieth century, after many elite families were forcibly relocated outside of Kurdistan and into the imperial capital only decades prior. Newly residing in Istanbul, such elites found employment in Ottoman state institutions, a fact which shaped the distinct networks and opportunities available to them as close participants in the Ottoman political tapestry. Many of these elites would join nationalist organizations following World War One, and their internal conflicts regarding how to define the ideal path forward for a Kurdish polity would be similarly shaped by these earlier distinctions.

The primary conflict emerged out of questions of the political path for Kurdistan – should nationalists pursue autonomy or independence? The autonomists tended to belong to the Ottoman religious establishment and desired to maintain the Islamic *umma* (community). Many members of this group believed it was important to maintain the Islamic identity of Kurds and that this was best achieved with autonomy within a larger Islamic state. The secessionists tended to be foreign educated and uncommitted to the sultan, as both political leader and caliph, the religious leader of the Islamic world. The distinctions among nationalist visions for a Kurdish polity following World War One have early roots within these cultural organizations. Prior to the

fall of the Ottoman Empire, however, Kurdish urban elites possessed a national consciousness and lobbied for Kurdish privileges and rights within society, but they did so from within the Ottoman state system and with the intention of remaining in that system. In this chapter, through investigating the pre-war period, I show that many Kurdish elites initially viewed themselves as important components of the Ottoman political establishment. Further, I demonstrate how many of the networks which Kurdish urban elites utilized during World War One were actually cultivated earlier in the imperial context, as many of these cultural elites became nationalists following the dissolution of the empire. This in turn allows me to more fully examine the networks available to Kurdish elites and explain how they were initially able to cultivate these networks.

Ottoman Modernity in the Long Nineteenth Century

Ottoman modernization took on several forms. In the nineteenth century, the Ottoman state sought to centralize its authority and bring Ottoman subjects more directly under its authority. In order to do so, the state needed to eliminate intermediating groups, like guilds, tribes, and religious communities, that came between direct authority. This process sought to transform the relationship between the state and its subjects to one of more direct ruling.[23] The brunt of this transformation occurred during the Tanzimat (Restructuring), a period of modernizing reforms to Ottoman society intended to develop a more centralized administrative system. This period saw changes to the military, systems of taxation, the bureaucracy, as well as social and political transformations within religious and peripheral groups. In order to reform the military into a modern army, the Ottoman state sought to expand revenue through encouraging

[23] Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, New Approaches to European History (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 65.

the cultivation of cash crops and restructuring of tax collection to increase revenues.[24] To expand administration and educate new administrators, the state set out to expand access to standardized education.[25] New technologies like the telegraph and railroads assisted the expansion of bureaucracy and the military, helping penetrate intermediary bodies that mediated control between the central state and the subject population.[26] One way to induce the transformation of relationship between state and subject was to challenge influential notables in the empire's periphery and bring them under increasing centralized control.[27] However, this process was not as neat as the Ottoman state extending its dominating control over provinces. A process of compromises and negotiations with local elites allowed for this expansion of control.[28]

Tanzimat reforms likewise impacted the position of ethno-religious groups in the empire. The Hatt-i Sharif (1839) and the Islahat Fermani (1856) decrees promised all Ottoman subjects religious liberty and equality, including non-Muslim subjects that had previously not benefited from equality before the law. The intention, according to James Gelvin, was to bind Ottoman subjects, now citizens, together in a community that transcended the allegiances of their respective religious communities.[29] However, this disruption of religious and political norms led to resentment among Muslim and Christian populations alike. Muslim elites resented the challenge to Muslim political and social predominance. Further, Muslims objected to the singling out of Christian communities and the possibility that special privileges might be extended to them, rather than Muslims, on account of their European intermediaries. These changes were

[24] James L Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 88
[25] Ibid.
[26] Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire,* 63.
[27] Metin Atmaca, "Resistance to Centralisation in the Ottoman Periphery: The Kurdish Baban and Bohtan Emirates," *Middle Eastern Studies* 55, no. 4 (July 4, 2019): 530-31.
[28] Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire,* 63.
[29] Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties,* 79-80.

triggered in part by intervention in Ottoman affairs by European states who claimed to represent the interests of Christian populations in the empire.[30] Various powerful European states actively shaped the Ottoman political arena in the nineteenth century – Destabilizing revolts in the Balkan, Anatolian, and Arab provinces emerged in this period, boasting the support and assistance of European Great Powers.[31]

Christians were similarly dissatisfied with the disruption to their position in Ottoman society; while not possessing total equality before the law, their lesser status did preserve them from requirements of modern citizenship such as military conscription. Additionally, modernizing reforms to education disrupted the separate religious communities' functions in the financing and operating of schools. The state built thousands of schools in the nineteenth century in order to provide a modern Ottoman education, a feat achieved increasingly at the expense of individual religious communities' ability to educate their children.[32] These reforms extended beyond education and into trade and commerce, health, and public works – all ministries that required trained specialists educated in Ottoman schools. Such modernizing reforms likewise reached into the Ottoman peripheral territories occupied by Kurds. The state wanted to transform its relationship with Kurdish subjects and increase centralized control in the periphery. Projects like the Hamidiye Cavalry, Kurdish militias established in 1891, were intended to secure the frontier lands, align Kurdish interests more with the state's interest, and act as a civilizing mission to settle nomadic and semi-nomadic Kurdish tribes with new land ownership and land-tenure practices.[33] Ottoman modernizing reforms aimed to challenge the autonomy of peripheral

[30] Ibid., 80.
[31] Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire,* 55.
[32] Ibid., 62.
[33] Klein, *Margins of Empire*, 5.

notables and increase centralized power, which contributed to new administrative policies in the early twentieth century to achieve these goals.

Early Relocation and Co-optation of Kurdish Leaders

The many Kurdish elites residing in Istanbul in the early twentieth century is due in part to a strategy of co-optation towards Kurdish nobility during these modernizing reforms. Numerous prominent Kurdish families were relocated out of Kurdistan and into Istanbul or exiled elsewhere. This was the case for the Bedirhan family, as the leader Bedirhan Beg's revolt in 1847 caused Abdulmejid I to tighten his grip over the Ottoman periphery. Bedirhan Beg ruled over the Bohtan emirate which controlled a significant amount of historic Kurdistan by 1846 and, along with it, a considerable degree of autonomy from the imperial center.[34] Tanzimat reforms were thus employed to centralize power in the periphery where Kurdish notables had consolidated power, particularly in the form of increased taxation and forced conscription.[35] Additionally, Bedirhan objected to Ottoman efforts to divide his emirate administratively.[36] He rejected attempts at extending Ottoman power into his territory; he is said to have even minted coins of his own and had Friday prayers said in his name, not the sultan's. This clear violation of Ottoman sovereignty triggered a state response, and in 1847 Ottoman troops were organized to attack Bedirhan and weaken Kurdish power concentrated in the margins of the empire.[37] As a result of this failed 1847 revolt, Bedirhan Beg and his family were exiled to Istanbul, then Crete.[38] This plan, to draw a powerful Kurdish family closer to the empire's center of power,

[34] Klein, *Margins of Empire,* 58.
[35] Sabri Ateş, *Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 76.
[36] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables,* 72.
[37] Ateş, *Ottoman-Iranian,* 78.
[38] Ibid.

allowed for co-optation into the institutions of the Ottoman government. The Bedirhan descendants were subsequently educated within the elite schools of the empire and recruited into the ranks of Ottoman state institutions. This was not the only elite Kurdish family caught in this process; it came as part of a wider mission to relocate and absorb Kurdish nobility into Istanbul, where they could be more easily monitored and incorporated into state institutions.[39]

Another method for co-optation and monitoring came during the Hamidian period (1876-1909), named for the Sultan Abdulhamid II. He established cavalry units, called Hamidiye, comprised of Kurdish militias from peripheral zones that were largely outside of the state's control. Janet Klein argues that this move was intended to incorporate Kurdish elites into state institutions, thus challenging local elites' monopoly on power and giving the Kurdish elites a vested interest in upholding the state's power. Many Kurdish tribes were enticed by the benefits of joining with the state, things like money, weapons, and status, and were thus willingly integrated, where previously they had rejected state authority. In this new role, the influence of powerful Kurds was meant to help stabilize the borderlands for the Ottoman state and render Kurds loyal to the state, as well as function as agents of expanding state power.[40] Through this process, troublesome tribal leaders were to be moved into the Ottoman sphere of influence and, by tying them to state institutions, incentivized to participate in statecraft.

These two processes of Kurdish relocation and co-optation, along with other contemporary attempts to expand state power into the periphery, were aimed at breaking up the power of Kurdish elites and moving them closer into the Ottoman realm of influence. However, this had the perhaps unintended consequence of allowing Kurdish elites access to Ottoman

[39] Özoğlu, 64.
[40] Klein, *Margins of Empire,* 129. Klein has many examples of this process, but she draws on Huseyin Pasha, a tribal leader and Hamidiye chief who became loyal to the state and helped stabilize the borderlands.

political networks, like near direct connection to international diplomats and modern education and careers, as seen in the case of the Bedirhan family that was relocated out of Kurdistan and then educated in the empire's elite schools.[41] These policies of relocation and the pull towards the Ottoman center of influence generated a collection of Kurdish elites who lived in Istanbul and were integrated into state institutions through their positions in the political and religious establishment. These elites were part of the transformation across the empire that resulted from modernizing reforms. As will be seen, many of these Kurdish urban elites were employed in the judicial system,[42] the senate,[43] or diplomatic positions abroad.[44] This provided them access to legitimate networks of negotiation, like powerful figures within the Ottoman state such as Ismail Enver Pasha, a leader of the Young Turks.[45] Further, diplomatic positions in Europe provided the ability to develop relationships and directly cultivate networks with European state representatives. Integration into Ottoman state institutions facilitated these influential positions in the empire and abroad, allowing Kurdish urban elites to benefit from such networks.

1908 Revolution Onwards

In the period after the 1908 Revolution, which restored the Ottoman constitution of 1876 and placed limits on Abdulhamid II's autocratic powers, a more liberal intellectual climate supported ideas of liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice among Ottomans. The destruction of the autocracy came partially at the hands of the Committee for Union and Progress, a previously underground organization that began as a liberal reform movement. Almost immediately after

[41] Djene Rhys Bajalan, "Princes, Pashas and Patriots: The Kurdish Intelligentsia, the Ottoman Empire and the National Question (1908–1914)," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 2 (April 2, 2016): 144.
[42] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables,* 95.
[43] Ibid., 90, 110.
[44] Ibid., 110.
[45] Ibid., 90.

the revolution, the CUP instituted reforms to the sultan's power, announced elections, released political prisoners, and lifted censorship.[46] The press particularly benefited from this more liberal political atmosphere, with 353 new newspapers and journals published in Istanbul in the first year after the revolution.[47] This similarly triggered the creation of a number of cultural and political organizations.[48] Numerous different ethnic and religious groups, including Kurds, Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians, likewise enjoyed the benefits of this more liberal climate.[49] It is in this political and intellectual climate that Kurdish societies began to crop up. In the first few years, Kurdish elites flocked to newly founded groups like the Ottoman and Kurdish group called the Society for the Mutual Aid and Progress of Kurdistan (*Kürdistan Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti*). Established in 1908, it counted among its membership some of the most prominent Kurdish families who would retain their ranks in the Kurdish intellectual elite for years to come. This organization quickly established the publication of a journal and an educational organization which aimed to set up a school for Kurdish children in Istanbul.[50] Similar clubs swiftly followed, such as the Society for the Propagation of Kurdish Education (*Kürdistan Nesri Maarif Cemiyeti,* 1910), the Society for the Friends of Kurdistan (*Kürdistan Muhibban Cemiyeti*, 1912), and the Kurdish Hope Student Organization (*Kürt Hevi Talebe Cemiyeti*, 1912). These organizations claimed to exist as representatives for the broader Kurdish experience and population, and in protection of communal interests. To that end, they focused on supporting the preservation and spread of Kurdish history, culture, language, and literature.[51] But the membership list tells a far less egalitarian story, one of elite social clubs for Kurdish notables to

[46] Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1997), 54.
[47] Ibid., 55.
[48] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables,* 18.
[49] Ibid., 52.
[50] Klein, *Margins of Empire,* 139.
[51] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables*, 18.

come together in the Ottoman capital. In the case of the Society for the Mutual Aid and Progress of Kurdistan (SMPK hereafter), the original administrative committee all came from prestigious families as a rule.[52] Likewise for most of the overall membership of the Kurdish Students' Hope Society; 24 of the 31 known members descended from aristocratic backgrounds.[53] Though the members of these organizations sometimes claimed to represent and advocate for the broader Kurdish population, the Kurdish intellectual elite remained hierarchical.

Most of the elites within these organizations, and especially those in high-ranking positions, were well-equipped to participate in Ottoman state structures. Membership in the SMPK was predicated on the ability to read and write in Turkish, with Kurdish being only recommended rather than a requirement. As Özoğlu argues, this indicates that Kurdish leadership were interested in including themselves in the Ottoman intellectual landscape, rather than establishing a distinctly separate Kurdish space.[54] Furthermore, as Turkish was the language of the empire, fluency in it facilitated engagement with other non-Turkish groups like Armenians. As integral parts of Ottoman society, and as elites operating at the imperial center, Turkish was the principal language needed for members of these Kurdish organizations in order to participate in statecraft and claim status as an elite. From this position, members of Kurdish cultural organizations could more easily negotiate for Kurdish interests from within the state. The SMPK intended to represent Kurdish interests at large through obtaining and leveraging political influence within the government.[55] This included highlighting problems in Kurdistan, such as land disputes between Armenians and Kurds, which would become increasingly pressing following World War One, or the unequal treatment of Kurdish provinces. Representatives from

[52] Bajalan, "Princes, Pashas and Patriots," 145.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables,* 79.
[55] Ibid.

Kurdish provinces like Dersim and Van complained of under-development, low-literacy, and lack of state attention.[56] Though the SMPK and other Kurdish cultural organizations often functioned as Istanbul social clubs for elites, the members could use their positions within state institutions to advocate for Kurdish interests.

The networks cultivated by Kurdish urban nationalists after the 1908 Revolution continued to be useful to those same figures a decade later, at the end of World War One. The Kurdish nationalist movement which began after 1918 was actually several different movements, with different goals and visions for the future home and governance of Kurds, championed by actors from diverse backgrounds. Many of the networks of negotiation which Kurdish nationalists would utilize were cultivated before World War One. The membership of the Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan (*Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti*, 1918), a nationalist party analyzed in chapter two, overlapped heavily with these earlier, pre-nationalist Kurdish organizations.

The remaining part of this chapter focuses on Sayyid Abdulkadir Semdinan, Mehmed Sherif Pasha, and Emin Ali Bedirhan. These men were prominent Kurdish figures within both the Ottoman state and budding cultural organizations. They served in the Ottoman political system throughout their careers and, prior to the collapse of the empire, considered themselves Ottoman citizens in much the same way they identified as Kurds. Their positions within the imperial system provided them access to networks of negotiations which they would carry over into their political endeavors during and after World War One. Additionally, these three Kurdish urban elites would become prominent members of nationalist organizations in the aftermath of the war. Their ability to negotiate with British state-makers and the international community was shaped by their elite status within Ottoman state institutions and the opportunities which those

[56] Ibid.

institutions afforded to them. By identifying their position within these imperial networks, we can more fully understand their access to networks and methods of negotiating within those networks in pursuit of a Kurdish state. Some biographical background on these elites will shed light on their initial opportunities within these imperial networks.

Sayyid Abdulkadir Semdinan (1851-1925)

Sayyid Abdulkadir served in Ottoman political institutions throughout his career. He was a member of the Ottoman senate and was appointed to the Ottoman upper chamber before 1910, where he remained until 1920, demonstrating his full integration into the Ottoman bureaucracy across a decade of massive historical changes to Ottoman politics.[57] Like other Kurdish elites, he possessed fluency in a number of critical languages. He spoke Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Persian, and possibly French. This made him a valuable piece of the Ottoman political tapestry. Abdulkadir's familial ties helped enable his participation in political life. He was a part of the Ottoman religious establishment, a fact which differentiates him from some other Kurdish urban elites in this period. Members of the religious establishment received traditional religious education and tended to place more value on the sultan's dual role as caliph, the spiritual head of Islam. Because of this connection to Islamic unity and the religious establishment, Abdulkadir attained considerable popularity with lower-class Kurdish workers in Istanbul. These Kurds had migrated to the city, primarily to work as porters and replace the Armenian porters who by this point had overwhelmingly fled from Istanbul and the empire.[58] This popularity with lower-class Kurds, the majority population of Kurds residing in Istanbul, strengthened Abdulkadir's

[57] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables,* 90-1.
[58] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables,* 90.

authority when it was challenged by the rival Bedirhan family.[59] When nationalism became the dominant discourse, Abdulkadir and other members of the Ottoman religious establishment tended to support Kurdish autonomy rather than independence.

Autonomists tended to believe that the Islamic identity of Kurds was worth preserving within an Islamic empire or state. One such example is the Naqshbandi faction, which Özoğlu identifies as a cohesive political camp within the SAK that supported autonomy.[60] According to Özoğlu, members of this faction derived their authority from the Naqshbandi religious elite. Naqshbandi sheikhs, who formed political alliances and networks to other Naqshbandi sheikhs, possessed considerable religious and political influence among Kurds.[61] Members of this political camp also tended to belong to the land-owning class within the Ottoman empire, thus incentivizing remainder within the empire. This group opposed secession but also contested complete autonomy from a Turkish state on account of preference for unity within the Islamic umma.[62] Abdulkadir's membership in this faction, and the Ottoman religious establishment more generally, contributed to his preference for autonomy, rather than secession.

Abdulkadir's early connection to the CUP, no doubt facilitated by his elite family connections, opened up multiple networks to him in the coming decade. He served as a member of the CUP while it was still underground and, following the 1908 Revolution, aided the legitimation of the new regime. Ismail Enver Pasha, a leader of the Young Turks and of the Ottoman empire itself, called a meeting with Abdulkadir to seek his assistance in convincing Kurdish tribes to accept the authority of the new CUP regime.[63] After much convincing,

[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., 110.
[61] Ibid., 124.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., 90.

Abdulkadir agreed to send telegrams to some of the Kurdish tribes that had not yet accepted the regime. The incident demonstrates two key networks open to Abdulkadir as early as 1908: CUP elites and Kurdish elites. This task indicates that Abdulkadir's position within organizations like the CUP provided him access to some of the most powerful figures in the new government. Further, the request for Abdulkadir to appeal to Kurdish tribes implies that he maintained some of his tribal networks and influence, even from Istanbul. Also in 1908, even as he worked within the CUP, he became one of the founding members of the SMPK. The political changes in this period thus provided Abdulkadir with powerful networks within the new regime, the religious establishment, and with his elite Kurdish peers.

An investigation of the usefulness of Abdulkadir's networks with tribal Kurds will permit a deeper view into this network the CUP and British state-makers sought to manipulate. His proposition from Enver Pasha for tribal outreach was not an exceptional example; rather, it was part of a larger strategy which Janet Klein identifies as "campaigns of persuasion," instigated by the CUP to convince leading Kurdish urban elites to work as emissaries in negotiating power relations with Kurdish chiefs.[64] Abdulkadir was specially selected for outreach to improve tribal loyalty to the regime due to his position as a Kurdish chief. The fact that Abdulkadir was largely separated from his tribal peers and had not resided in Kurdistan for many years did not deter the CUP planning. His reputation among Kurdish chiefs in the region was considered to still be 'in great repute,' demonstrating that some urban elites maintained a connection with tribal Kurds.[65] This connection could subsequently be exploited for political purposes.[66] In 1909, on behalf of

[64] Klein, *Margins of Empire,* 144.
[65] Ibid.
[66] For the British, the degree of connection was not necessarily as important as the perception of the connection itself. As discussed next, British state-makers considered the potential value of sending Sherif Pasha as an emissary to his native tribal lands to drum up support for British presence in the region. This in spite of the fact that he did not speak Kurdish and had not visited since his boyhood. His tribal connection was all but severed in practice, a fact which these particular British agents were either unaware of or unconcerned about.

the CUP, Abdulkadir traveled to Van, with its considerable Armenian and Kurdish populations, where he gave a sort of conference to regional Kurdish chiefs and influential Armenians in attendance.[67] He lectured on the Constitution and obedience to the new CUP regime, among other things. This episode clearly illustrates that Kurdish urban elites' connections to tribal Kurds were co-opted to legitimize political regimes among the provincial areas. A similar plot was considered by British state-makers in 1918: While planning to centralize southern Kurdistan's political affairs through a central council of chiefs under British auspices, it is suggested that Sherif Pasha could be relocated to southern Kurdistan to "place him in a position to exercise authority and influence in [British] interests and those of his compatriots."[68] With such value evident in the ability to exploit connections to tribal Kurds, Kurdish urban elites could likewise negotiate this network from their end to validate their own political value. Abdulkadir maintained his position within the Ottoman bureaucracy for the coming decade while participating in a number of Kurdish organizations. The networks available to him in this early period help show how Kurdish urban elites could leverage their influence among tribes as a critical negotiating tool.

Emin Ali Bedirhan (1851-1926)

Emin Ali Bedirhan came from the prominent Bedirhan family, as a son of the Kurdish notable Bedirhan Beg (1803-1868). The forced exile of Kurdish nobility under Sultan Abdulhamid II, as exemplified previously through the case of the Bedirhan Beg and his family, resulted in the forced relocation of many prominent families of Kurdistan. This process drew many powerful Kurdish family closer to the empire's center of power and allowed for their

[67] Klein, *Margins of Empire,* 145.
[68] Burdett, *Records of the Kurds*, 167.

eventual co-optation into the institutions of the Ottoman government. The inclusion of noble Kurdish families into state institutions gave them a stake in the state's success, thus tying them closer to the state. The Bedirhan descendants were subsequently educated within the elite schools of the empire and recruited into the ranks of Ottoman state institutions.[69]

Emin Ali was born in Crete after his family was exiled to the island following their initial relocation to Istanbul, and he grew up to speak French, Turkish, Arabic, and Kurdish. The Bedirhan family's connection within Ottoman institutions was particularly strong, as some 200 Bedirhan members received positions within the Ottoman administration upon the return from exile.[70] This was likewise the case for Emin Ali, who benefited from these connections early in his career by his position within the Ottoman judicial system. He worked within the Ottoman state as a public prosecutor, a judicial inspector, and a judge.[71] In this way, his career was closely tied to the state. Like Abdulkadir, this deep integration into the Ottoman bureaucracy did not hinder his participation in Kurdish organizations like SMPK and SAK, in both of which he became a founding member.[72] He freely participated in numerous other political organizations across this pivotal political decade in Ottoman history. Unlike Abdulkadir, however, Emin Ali favored secession over autonomy. He joined the decentralist Party of the Free (*Ahrar Firkasi*, established 1908) and the Freedom and Harmony Party (*Hürriyet ve Itilaf Firkasi*, 1911), both known for their opposition to the CUP.[73]

Emin Ali often found himself politically at odds with Abdulkadir, due in part to the distinctions in their upbringing and backgrounds. As a nationalist, Emin Ali would become a

[69] Bajalan, "Princes, Pashas and Patriots," 144.
[70] Ibid., 145.
[71] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables,* 95.
[72] Ibid., 98.
[73] Ibid., 99.

powerful voice for secessionists who objected to autonomy within a Turkish state, and therefore placed himself in direct opposition to Abdulkadir. Distinctions in religious alignment and educational experience likely contributed to this splintering. While autonomists, like Abdulkadir, were brought up with a more traditional Islamic education, secessionists like Bedirhan were largely educated in non-religious professional schools and studied abroad. As Özoğlu argues, educational differences contributed to the lack of unity found within early nationalist rhetoric.[74] This lack of emphasis on the strictly Islamic aspects of their identity put some secessionists at odds with more traditionally educated Kurdish elites. Instead, secessionists tended to feel limited loyalty towards the role of sultan and caliph within the Ottoman state. This difference in emphasis on religious identity helped justify the separation from the head of the Islamic world and would become a convenient justification for an independent state with particular Kurdish elites at the head as rulers.

When nationalism first became a dominant discourse among Kurds following World War One, Kurdish elites were not a united group, instead possessing a number of different factions and competing visions for the future of Kurdish society. These disagreements had far reaching implications for the political climate in Istanbul and among Kurdish elites. The debate for autonomy versus secession among SAK members came to a head in February 1920 when Abdulkadir, SAK president, provided an interview to the newspaper *Ikdam* advocating for an autonomous Kurdish administration with a Turkish hand in administration.[75] This angered Bedirhan, the vice-president, who attempted to dismiss and expel Abdulkadir from his role as president and from the SAK. In response, Abdulkadir dissolved SAK and called for a new election. The support of working-class Kurds in Istanbul allowed Abdulkadir to maintain his

[74] Ibid., 124.
[75] Ibid., 93.

position and ultimately win this episode of the split, forcing Emin Ali out. This episode sheds light on the conflicting visions these elites possessed for a Kurdish polity and how the networks cultivated in the pre-war era would continue to shape politics in the post-war nationalist context.

Mehmed Sherif Pasha (1865-1951)

Like Abdulkadir and Emin Ali, Sherif Pasha was a Kurdish urban elite with intimate ties to the Ottoman state. Unlike them, however, Sherif was not the descendant of a Kurdish family forcibly relocated to the capital after an uprising. Sherif was born in Istanbul, where his father, Said Pasha Kurd, served in various administrative and diplomatic positions of the Ottoman state, including foreign minister in 1883 as the Ambassador to Berlin.[76] Sherif was groomed for a similar position as his father within the Ottoman bureaucracy, and to that end he was educated in Istanbul and France. He spoke Turkish and French, and he may have spoken Arabic and English with some measure of fluency, but he did not speak Kurdish.[77] In this way, the international networks he had access to and gradually cultivated throughout his career proved significant assets in his negotiations, particularly with British state-makers. He boasted connections with foreign states, peoples, and media which other Istanbul elites simply did not possess. Early in his career he served in the Ottoman senate and joined the CUP in 1895, but he soon became the Ottoman military attaché to Berlin and Paris, and then an ambassador to Stockholm from 1898-1908.[78] He left the CUP after the 1908 Revolution and began to strike out a new role for himself among the Kurdish elites.

[76] Ibid., 110.
[77] Ibid., 111.
[78] Ibid., 110.

Sherif's prominent diplomatic position in the Ottoman state opened networks to him that were inaccessible to other Kurdish urban elites. He was incredibly well known in the international community, having received medals from the pope and one from the governments of Spain, Romania, Iran, and France.[79] He possessed access to the press early in his career and would continue to use the press in pursuit of his political goals throughout his career. In addition to capturing the attention of western newspapers like *Times* and *New York Times,* Sherif had been arguing for reform of the CUP in the pages of the newspaper Mesrutiyet (Mecheroutiette), a monthly review edited in French that began publication in Paris in 1909.[80] This idea of CUP reform began as early as 1910 and accompanied his underground organization, the Ottoman Society for Fundamental Reform.[81] He aimed to reform issues of bribery, secrecy, the army's involvement in politics, intimidation, and issues regarding the imposition of Turkish language and institutions on non-Turks residing in the empire.[82] Sherif's unique access to the press made him one of the most influential Kurds in the world, a fact which buoyed his nationalist negotiations with western states following World War One.

In addition to his own press, Sherif's life was frequently reported on by western newspapers, indicating the interest of a European audience in the affairs of this prominent Ottoman statesman. Sherif's expertise and status were apparently recognizable by his name alone; one article appealed to his expertise by highlighting Sherif's suspicion over the death of an Ottoman figure, titled "Thinks Prince Was Slain: Turkish Heir Apparent Was Assassinated, Cherif Pasha Declares."[83] In another case demonstrating his notoriety, while living in Paris in

[79] Ibid., 111.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Klein, *Margins of Empire,* 153.
[82] E. J. Dillon, "Turkey Governs by the Dagger. Attempted Assassination of General Cherif Pasha," *The Contemporary Review*; London, January 1, 1914, 278-280.
[83] "THINKS PRINCE WAS SLAIN.; Turkish Heir Apparent Was Assassinated, Cherif Pasha Declares," *New York Times,* New York, February 4, 1916, 20.

1914, an attempt was made on Sherif's life, apparently originating with the CUP. The story featured updates across multiple days and several articles, with details of the assailant's attack and defeat at the hands of Sherif's son-in-law.[84] Follow-up articles traced Sherif's account, the details of his wife's experience, and subsequent stalking by CUP agents.[85] Later, the papers similarly covered Sherif's supposed insult to an attorney who came to see him regarding the assassination attempt, which nearly triggering a duel.[86] It is clear that the press' account of Sherif's attempted assassination goes beyond simply reporting the attack of a diplomat. He was a figure of note whose name and presence were acknowledged in Europe. This notoriety would permit him access to a powerful network of negotiation – the opportunity to rehabilitate Kurdish reputation in western media. Sherif successfully manipulated this network from the reverse, by using the readers' interest in his life and his position in order to lobby for his own nationalist goals, as will be seen in the following chapter.

[84] Dillon, "Cherif Pasha," *The Contemporary Review; London*, January 1, 1914, 279-280.
[85] Marconi Transatlantic Wireless Telegraph to *New York Times,* "TURK SLAIN IN PARIS AS HE TRIES MURDER: Mortally Wounds Cherif Pasha's Valet and Is Killed by Cherif's Son-in-Law. WIFE'S PRESENCE OF MIND She Escapes by Feigning Death - Cherif Says Nine Bravos Were Sent to Paris to Kill Him," *New York Times*, January 15, 1914, 1.
[86] "ESCAPES PLOT, FACES DUEL.: Cherif Pasha Affronts Lawyer Who Warned Him of Assassins," *New York Times*, 19 January 1914, 2.

Conclusion

The leading figures in Kurdish cultural societies overwhelmingly came out of the elite class residing in Istanbul due to an earlier process of co-optation and relocation by the Ottoman state. While possessing a sense of national consciousness with their Kurdish identity, these elites considered themselves integral parts of the Ottoman political tapestry. They served in political and judicial positions throughout their careers in tandem with participation in Kurdish clubs. The figures considered in this chapter, Emin Ali, Abdulkadir, and Sherif, actively participated in Kurdish cultural organizations. Following World War One, the networks they had cultivated through such organizations and within state institutions remained with them. Their languages, education, relationship with fellow statesmen, and connections to foreign powers were carried as tools into their negotiations in pursuit of a Kurdish polity. Differences in upbringing and religious identity which played out during this pre-war era carried over and contributed to the splintering of nationalists into autonomists and secessionists. The networks they cultivated in this era would likewise maintain relevance and influence in the post-war era.

CHAPTER 2

KURDISH NATIONALIST NEGOTIATIONS IN THE POST-WAR ERA

The Kurdish cultural organizations that came out of the more liberal political climate following the 1908 Revolution provided a space for Kurdish elites in Istanbul to collaborate and cultivate powerful networks in state institutions and abroad. On 29 October 1914, the Ottoman Empire launched an attack on Russia ports, thereby officially joining with the Central Powers Austria-Hungary and the German Empire in World War One. Following the attack, the Allied Powers, France, Britain, and Russia, quickly declared war on the Ottomans. This period saw tremendous bloodshed both outside and inside the Ottoman Empire. Massacres against Ottoman Christian populations prompted public outcry in Europe and America, with the Armenian Genocide (spanning roughly 1915-1923) particularly triggering western outrage. Some Kurdish militias from the Hamidiye Light Cavalry were implicated in these massacres through missionary accounts and newspapers, thus fostering the mistrust of Kurds at large by European audiences. When Ottoman involvement in the war ended with the 1918 Armistice of Mudros, British, French, and Italian forces quickly occupied Constantinople. During this tumultuous period of political transformation, a number of competing nationalist organizations sprung up to take advantage of the changing political context in the Middle East. Armenian, Kurdish, Arab, and other local groups organized in pursuit of a nation-state. The Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920), where victorious Allied powers convened after the war to set the terms of peace for the Central powers, seemed to be their primary opportunity. In the Middle East, the peace conference set about the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire and helped establish a system of mandates by which certain territories were carved out of the empire under the pretenses of administering and guiding such territories towards eventual independence. This thinly veiled

colonial project provided France with mandates over Syria and Greater Lebanon, and Britain with mandates over Palestine and Mesopotamia (Iraq). For many members of the Kurdish cultural organizations discussed in chapter one, the imperial networks they cultivated would assist them to navigate this rapidly changing political context. As competing national projects possessed claims over territories with overlapping populations, such as Kurds and Armenians, Kurdish nationalists navigated existing and new networks of negotiation to secure British support for a Kurdish state.

Urban nationalist elites leveraged numerous negotiation networks locally, regionally, and globally, such as their political organizations, wider-based Kurdish elites, and international governments respectively. They used the press as a tool of propaganda to remedy their reputation by highlighting their friendly relations with Armenians, distancing themselves from Turks, lining up their interests with contemporary European interests, and demonstrated their suitability as European allies. This became a collaborative endeavor, with British-sponsored press emerging around the time of the Paris Peace Conference that helped rehabilitate Kurdish reputation. As shown in chapter one, Kurdish urban elites possessed access to many of these networks through their profound integration into the Ottoman state and political establishment. This chapter will analyze the period directly before and after the peace conference, acknowledging the importance for elites of cultivating networks in western power structures in pursuit of a Kurdish state.

Many of the Kurdish cultural elites in Istanbul would join overtly nationalist organizations following World War One. After Ottoman defeat and dissolution became clear, Kurds became one of many groups that organized along nationalist lines to establish a state. One major method for obtaining a state appeared to be western backing and international consensus at

the Paris Peace Conference. The decision to partition the Ottoman empire and apply the new mandate-system encouraged groups like the World Zionist Organization to submit proposals for new nation-states.[87] The peace conference therefore presented Kurdish nationalist elites with a unique opportunity to assert their claims for an independent Kurdish state before an audience of western powers. It would be the first time that major questions surrounding Kurds would enter the international arena. The major state-representatives from World War One attended the conference along with delegations from groups seeking a state. American President Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points," issued in January 1918, in part called for a reexamination of colonial ideas and advocated for the principle of self-determination, in which groups are said to have the right to freely choose sovereignty without interference from outside powers. Self-determination became a key tool for nationalist Kurds and other groups negotiating within the international community. Two such delegations traveled to Paris to represent Kurds and Armenians, wielding the principle of self-determination to defend their nationalist endeavors. Kurdish nationalists needed a powerful European ally to support their political goals, especially as they feared western sympathy with the victims of the Armenian Genocide would convince the European powers to award contested territories to the Armenians without consideration for Kurdish claims. They also needed to navigate existing European interests in the Middle East. The 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement, for example, was a secret treaty between Britain and France to define spheres of influence in the Middle East following the eventual partition of the Ottoman Empire. The negotiations made in this agreement laid the groundwork for the mandates that would emerge out of partition.

[87] "Statement of the Zionist Organization regarding Palestine," Given at the Paris Peace Conference 3 Feb 1919. https://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/2D1C045FBC3F12688525704B006F29CC

At the peace conference, Sherif Pasha represented the interests of nationalist elites as the head of the Kurdish delegation. In diplomatic telegrams by state representatives prior to the conference, references to Christian groups in the Ottoman Empire, such as Armenians and Greeks, often adopted language that presented Ottoman violence as interreligious fighting and the continuation of several hundred years of Christian oppression.[88] Kurdish elites, as professed Muslims, needed to dismantle this dichotomous, religion-centric approach to the genocide.[89] Sherif's legitimacy as representative of Kurdish nationalists was perhaps more aspirational than reality. Though a member of the newly established in 1918 Society for the Rise of Kurdistan (SAK), he was not chosen by his peers to represent Kurdish interests at the peace conference; rather, the Liberal Turkish Congress at Geneva appointed him the delegate to the Paris Peace Conference in January 1919.[90] His plans for a Kurdish state, as outlined in his proposal to the conference, were in opposition to some of the other visions of the Kurdish political project, particularly in terms of Kurdistan's contested borders with the Armenian delegation. This issue would elicit the most vocal rejection of his legitimacy as Kurdish representative: After his agreement in November 1919 with the president of the Armenian delegation, Kurds in Kurdistan began a telegram campaign to Paris denouncing the Kurdish delegation for its Armenian alliance.[91] Following this episode, Sherif resigned as president of the Kurdish delegation. Sherif's role as representative perhaps overstated his ability to represent this dis-unified group of Kurdish elites.

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[88] The Greek Legation's writings on the issue of Turkey particularly emphasized the dire state of Greek Christians in the Ottoman empire: "The Moslem population is now united and ready to attack the Christians as soon as the word is given" and "arms have been given out to all the Moslem population for use on the Christian population," 276. Also: "The massacre of Christians after the defeat of Turkey would be a crime. These people who have suffered so much for centuries are entitled to better attention now that the tyrant is overthrown" 277. See: *The Paris Peace Conference, 1919* (Washington, 1942). http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.b4055476.

[89] Ibid.

[90] "Imperial and Foreign News Items," *The Times*, January 20, 1919, 7.

[91] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables,* 112.

This chapter considers how urban nationalist elites based in Istanbul treated this conference as the answer to their nationalist endeavors, and potentially the destruction of such endeavors if Armenian aspirations were left unchecked. The negotiations directly before and after this conference culminated in the Treaty of Sèvres (1920). This treaty was meant to provide for a truncated Kurdistan, far smaller than the nationalists at the peace conference advocated for, yet nevertheless an independent one. While the proposals for borders were rejected in favor of borders which benefited British, French, and Persian interests, the work by nationalist elites brought international attention to the case of Kurdistan and helped ensure that some provision was made for an independent Kurdish state.

Press and Propaganda

Newspapers became a favorite tool of Kurdish urban nationalist elites to cultivate new networks and exercise existing ones. Through strategic use of newspapers, these elites drew both local and international attention to their political endeavors. A member of the Bedirhan family, Mikdat Midhat Bedirhan, was the founder and editor of the first Kurdish newspaper, *Kurdistan* (1898-1902) in Cairo.[92] This newspaper, published in both Kurdish and Turkish, provided an outlet for Kurdish elites to draw the sultan's attention to Kurdish issues. Mikdat himself published open letters to the Sultan in it. In addition to publication in Cairo, the newspaper's 31 issues were printed in major European cities Geneva, London, and Folkestone. Within the imperial capital, one of the most popular local Istanbul newspapers was *Ikdam* (1894-1928). Sheikh Abdulkadir provided an interview to this newspaper in which he advocated for an autonomous, not independent, Kurdish polity, thus triggering a massive split with Emin Ali

[92] Ibid., 103.

Bedirhan.[93] Sherif Pasha published his own newspaper, *Mesrutiyet,* from Paris beginning in 1909. Western newspaper like *New York Times* and London's *Times* also became valuable networks to provide interviews to or wrote op-eds for. As discussed in the previous chapter, Sherif Pasha especially utilized newspapers. As a public figure, his life and opinions were often covered in the news. Even more than his colleagues, this provided him a platform and audience with which to share his political messages.

The very public nature of these newspaper discourses invited all manner of responses from the communities being targeted for propaganda, however. Firsthand accounts from Europeans who claimed expertise in Kurdish barbarity challenged the propagandistic claims of Kurdish elites in newspapers. Claims of the modernizing capabilities of Kurds, their fraternity with Armenians, and oppression at the hands of the Turks met with counterclaims of the consistently uncivilized, barbaric treatment of Kurds against Armenians. As will be seen in the case of Sherif, contrary responses to Kurdish claims were sometimes published in the same newspaper within a handful of days. I argue that urban Kurdish nationalists acknowledged this discourse of uncivilized Kurds and either attempted to disprove it or accepted and twisted such claims for their own benefit. The nationalists who accepted these representations, such as Abdulkadir in the SAK, frequently referenced the "poverty, ignorance, and backwardness in culture and civilization" of Kurds in their negotiations, and urged British state-makers to assist the transition of Kurdistan into a modern, independent state.[94] While they overwhelmingly rejected the indiscriminate claims of Kurds as butchers, some nationalists acknowledged the

[93] Ibid., 93.
[94] Bejtullah Destani, *Minorities in the Middle East: Kurdish Communities, 1918-1974* (Slough: Archive Editions, 2006), 31.

claims of Kurdish cultural and societal inferiority, and reimagined this supposed fact as evidence of the need for British support.

Kurdish nationalists' relationship with newspaper propaganda dates back long before the peace conference, though often addressing the same themes that would continue to be relevant almost two decades later. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the increasingly interconnected state of world affairs incentivized international propaganda. Events in the Ottoman Empire could draw headlines across Europe, and vice versa, thus rendering the press a valuable tool for disseminating information. An early example of this is found in General Osman Bedirkhan Pasha, a leader of a 1878 Kurdish rebellion against Turkish authority in the Bohtan region.[95] Osman explicitly sought British support in Kurdish affairs in an interview reported in American newspaper *New York Times* and British newspaper *Times* in December 1900. In the interview, Osman, who had resided in London for some time, was returning to the Middle East to lead a military campaign against Turkish rule over Kurdistan.[96] In the short article he directly appealed for British financial and emotional support, saying: "I hope for British sympathy, if not for more material support in the struggle against despotic Turks, who, dominated by Russia, have compelled the brave, warlike Kurds to act the part of assassins toward their brother Armenians."[97] Further, he pledged to unite Kurds and Armenians under one banner and "free them from the demoralizing tyranny of the Sultan."[98] Three key elements emerge from this use of the media: An attempt to develop western awareness of and support for Kurds, Kurdish

[95] Wadie Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origins and Development* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 117.
[96] "THE THREATENED KURD RISING," *New York Times* (1857-1922); Dec 21, 1900, 3.
[97] Ibid.
[98] "The Sultan and the Kurds," *Times,* December 19, 1900, 5. *The Times Digital Archive*.

distancing from their Turkish 'oppressors,' and Kurdish backing of the Christian Armenians in the empire.

This show of unity with Armenians, and indeed the implementation of the other two elements, was critical for correcting a negative stereotype of Kurds at the turn of the twentieth century. The Armenian Massacres of 1894-1896, also known as the Hamidian massacres after Sultan Abdulhamid II, received international condemnation.[99] These massacres sometimes extended to other Christian groups in the empire, such as the killing of Assyrians during the Massacres of Diyarbakir in the same period. Newspapers like *Times* provided detailed coverage of the massacres and implicated Kurds in the Turkish plots against Armenians. These accounts described Kurds as tribal butchers, "devils in human form,"[100] who carried off any beautiful women, robbed the Armenians of their belongings, and slaughtered the remainders.[101] Stories of Kurdish and Turkish butchers trickled back to Europe, consumed by horrified readers of popular newspapers, describing the rape, pillage, and slaughter of Armenian innocents. It was this tragedy, followed by the Armenian Genocide that began in 1914, that Kurds would consistently have to account for in their negotiations for support from European audiences. Though newspaper articles often linked Kurdish and Turkish devilry, they did sometimes emphasize that Kurdish raids were instigated by, if not ordered by, the Turkish government.[102] However, brief fragments of nuance were overshadowed by the rest of the sensationalized accounts of Kurdish devilry.

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[99] For more on Hamidian massacres, see: Klein, *The Margins of Empire : Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011).
[100] "DEVILS IN HUMAN FORM: SELECTORS FROM RECORDS OF ARMENIAN OUTRAGES H.H. Van Meter, a Missionary, Confirms All the Terrible Stories of Kurd and Turkish Brutalities in and Near Sassoun," *New York Times,* 16 November 1896, 5.
[101] "The Armenian Atrocities," *Times*, April 25, 1895, 12. See also: "The Porte And The Armenians," *Times,* December 5, 1894, 5.
[102] "Devils in Human Form," *New York Times,* 16 November 1896.

Osman's short interview in *Daily Mail* is an early example of the formula Kurdish nationalist elites would use in their responses to hostile discourses. His interview came shortly after a series of salacious articles were published in *New York Times,* detailing the destruction of Christian villages, atrocities against Armenians, and the attack of a British vice-consul by Kurds.[103] Kurds already living in the west, like Osman, were naturally concerned about their image and the perception of Kurds at large. Armenian propaganda had no trouble reaching western audiences, who already sympathized with the massacres of this and other Christian groups in the Ottoman Empire. Largely beginning with the Armenian massacres at the end of the nineteenth century, the treatment of Armenians, and the Kurdish role in that treatment, was publicized to curious western audiences.[104] The rehabilitation of Kurdish reputation in the international community would become a pressing matter for Kurdish nationalists. As World War One came to a close and the Ottoman Empire seemed on the verge of collapsing, nationalists expanded their connection with the west through the medium of newspapers.

With the Paris Peace Conference scheduled to commence in January 1919, some British state-makers working with Kurdish nationalists and tribes to create an independent Kurdistan acknowledged the usefulness of propaganda in shaping public opinion. While the sanction of a Kurdish state by conference attendees was not predicated on public opinion, these discourses risked damaging the viability of British plans for Kurdistan, especially given the Armenian question that loomed over Kurdish nationalists**.** Kurdish and Armenian nationalists conflicted over overlapping border claims for their states. This rendered the international outcry over the Armenian Genocide, and the apparent role of Kurds in the massacres, dangerous to Kurdish

[103] See: "Kurds Destroying Villages," *New York Times* 17 Oct 1900, 9. See also "Kurds Attack British Official," *New York Times*, Aug 15, 1900, 6.
[104] Special Correspondent, "The Armenian Grievances," *Times*, 14 May 1913, 5.

territorial claims. A British governmental document from December 1918, written by Colonel F.R. Maunsell, illuminates the desires of some state-makers for correcting the negative portrayal of Kurds in the media. Maunsell wrote:

"It is unfortunate that the only section of the Kurdish race that has become known to the British public is that inhabiting the high Plateau between Erzoum and Van where they come in touch with Armenians and have gained a sinister reputation not always deserved . . . the true characteristics of the inhabitants [are] practically unknown in England. Compared with the Armenian the Kurd has never attempted any propaganda nor have they a press in which to place their views before Europe."[105]

The lack of Kurdish voices in European circles to defend against orientalist notions of Muslims and people of the Middle East may have prompted state-makers like Maunsell to seek out a public defender in the media. Such an arrangement would benefit both parties; for western acculturated Kurds, a rehabilitation of Kurdish reputation would assist their successful navigation of European society. For British state-makers, an independent, at least with nominal autonomy, Kurdistan could serve as a regional ally and buffer state for the valuable colony India.[106] The maintenance of regional stability was also a priority in support of British intentions to secure concessions over Iraq's oil resources.[107] It was to British benefit that the international community be accepting of Kurdish independence and knowledgeable of the issues surrounding a potential Armenian state.

The tone and content of propaganda changed during and after the Paris Peace Conference. Following the peace conference, which did not conclude with a binding treaty to confirm the establishment of any states, many questions remained regarding the future borders and states of the Middle East. It is within this context that a renewed effort to rehabilitate the

[105] Letter, F.R. Maunsell, London, to Mr Money, 29 October 1918, enclosing "Notes on the people on the Mosul road." In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 143.
[106] See discussion of Sureyya Bedirhan's petition in the following section.
[107] Sara Pursley, *Familiar Futures: Time, Selfhood, and Sovereignty in Iraq* (Stanford University Press, 2019), 34-35.

Kurdish image emerged in *Times.* This time, however, the propaganda came directly from British state-making agents. As I discuss in greater detail later in this chapter, Kurdish nationalist elites had been working behind the scenes prior to the peace conference, negotiating with British state-makers to support the construction of a Kurdish state. Through private petitions, these nationalists challenged many of the standard charges against Kurds as uncivilized. Their rebuttals of incriminatory claims against Kurdish society likely informed a series of articles published in late 1919 by the "Special Correspondent in the Middle East." In the articles, published after the conclusion of the peace conference, the author provided a continuous saga of the situation in the Middle East with a more palatable account of Kurds. Rather than barbarians and devils, he depicted the Kurds as innocent victims of Turkish and Russian plotting: "Before [World War One] the Kurds, though rather unwilling brides, were being gradually driven by Turkish misrule and coaxed by Russian overtures into Russia's arms."[108] This line of thought further allowed the special correspondent to underline a friendly relationship between British and Kurdish political figures: "Mustapha Pasha Bajlan, the Kurdish great man of the town and district, begged that a British officer might be sent to safeguard the interests of the inhabitants, whom he described as living under a reign of terror. The Russians, aware of the revolution at home, were absolutely out of hand."[109] By highlighting this appeal for British protection by a Kurdish elite, the special correspondent indicated to the reader that Kurds were not necessarily enemies. By framing Kurds as victims of Russian and Turkish aggression, he sanitized their reputation and justified a British alliance. Perhaps most significantly, the articles identified that some Kurdish chiefs were even British allies, seeking protection and aid against Russian tyranny. It was particularly effective to paint Kurds as the enemies, even victims, of Russia in late 1919.

[108] Special Correspondent in the Middle East, "The Case of Kurdistan," *Times*, 15 November 1919, 11.
[109] Ibid.

After Russia pulled out of World War One and Lenin rose to power, British fears of Russian control in Europe increased. By identifying the Kurds as victims of Russia, the special correspondent made a powerful statement about their relationship to Britain.

The special correspondent promoted a rehabilitated Kurdish reputation in the press, rejecting their supposed inherently uncivilized status. The article described the 'noble' history of the Kurd, their poets and many virtues, as well as the educated, politically-minded Kurds in Constantinople who sought an American-British protectorate.[110] Like the connection to Russia, this description demonstrated to the British public that Kurdish ambitions lined up with British goals in the region. In the process, this revisionist discourse aimed to promote Kurdish capability to self-govern. Many of the points made in the special correspondent's articles seemed to come from official government documents pertaining to British policy towards the Kurds. "The Case of Kurdistan" directly parroted the suggestions of the December 8, 1918 circular memo sent out by Major Noel from Suleimaniyeh. Noel indicated that Kurdish nationalists would not be keen on a Kurdish state's "connection with Baghdad," likely referring to the mandate authority Britain would have over Kurdistan.[111] Noel urged that British political officers should explain this connection as a matter of convenience of geography, and emphasize that the administration, language, and levies of a Kurdish state would be Kurdish.[112] The structure and wording of Noel's memo appear replicated: Where Noel stated "laws will be modified to conform with local custom

[110] Ibid.
[111] Circular memorandum from Major Noel in Suleimaniyeh, to APO's (at) Kifri, Kirkuk and Altun Keupri, 8 December 1918, No. 43. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 189-190. The connection is vaguely referenced in the original document. Noel stated that the "backward and undeveloped state of the country" required the maintenance of order and unity "as integral parts of our general administration in Mesopotamia … the prospect, however, of any connection with an Arab state is likely to prove distasteful to a considerable section of the ardent nationalists as well as the mountain tribesmen. It is only a few of the more enlightened members of the community who have the necessary perspective to see that connection with Baghdad is the most solid guarantee for material progress and development which is the only true foundation for autonomy and self determination."
[112] Ibid., 191.

and usage, and the system of revenue collection and taxes will be devised to meet the needs of the people,"[113] the newspaper article from almost a year later stated "Laws can be modified to conform with local custom, and a system of revenue collection is already being devised to meet the situation."[114] The similarities in wording and structure of these documents indicate that the plans for a Kurdish state before the peace conference were still in place afterwards, at least to some degree. This helps explain the motivations to cast Kurds in a far more positive light than European media had been. By correcting the reputation of Kurds as inherently uncivilized, British state-makers eliminated an argument against their ability to self-govern. This came at a critically important time, when the official fate of Kurdistan was yet undecided by European powers.

Predictably, the attempt at reshaping the perception of Kurds in the press incited backlash from those who helped propagate such a perception. In a letter to the editor, one Athelstan Riley responded to the special correspondent's articles, objecting to the depiction of "wild and lawless" Kurds in such a positive light.[115] Riley's polemical and damning assessments of Kurdish civilization rebutted the correspondent's depiction. He outright dismissed the correspondent's claim that a Kurdish state was the answer to local tensions, instead warning it would only permit Kurds to consolidate power outside of the reach of foreign powers. Further, he cast doubt on the thorny issue of religious coexistence among Kurds and neighboring Christian groups. If Kurds were left unchecked, Riley warned that Nestorians would cease to exist "even as slaves."[116] Appeals to the safety of Ottoman Christians from Muslim Kurds would have been especially pertinent and alarming for the western observer. He directly called European statesmen to action,

[113] Ibid.
[114] Special Correspondent, "The Case of Kurdistan," *Times,* 17 November 1919.
[115] Athelstan Riley, "The Case of Kurdistan," *The Times*, 20 November 1919.
[116] Ibid.

urging them to recognize the precarious position of Christians in Turkey and to no longer allow Britain to be singled out as the "solitary upholder of order and civilization in the Middle East."[117] He considered himself an expert on the brutal Kurdish society, primarily due to his experience in the region. While a student at Pembroke College-Oxford in 1884, Archbishop Benson of Canterbury had requested Riley travel to Northwestern Persia and Kurdistan to account for the situation of the Assyrian and Nestorian Christians.[118] Riley's rebuttal speaks to the qualms Europeans held for supporting Kurds and denotes the discourses which Kurdish nationalists and British state-makers needed to respond to and discredit. These discourses, usually centered on the Kurdish reputation in the west as butchers of Christians, shaped how nationalists engaged with a western audience.

The dominant Kurdish voice in the media belonged to Sherif Pasha, providing him the obligation of responding to many of these discourses. As we have seen in chapter one, Sherif possessed a unique position in western media to remedy European ignorance of Kurds, as he already possessed a degree of popularity and legitimacy in the media. Perhaps, in a way, he answered Maunsell's lamentations regarding the lack of Kurdish voices in the media. In early 1920, in a letter to the editor of *Times,* Sherif leveraged his reputation as expert and representative of Kurds, stating that "I ought to take in hand the defense of the legitimate interests of my race."[119] Indeed, Sherif may have been the only Kurd capable of utilizing the press as he did. He sought to remedy the "ignorance of the European circles concerning the Kurd" and the Kurdish equal right to self-determination.[120] In this way, he used the press as a

[117] Ibid.
[118] From Project Canterbury, "Narrative of a Visit to the Assyrian Christians in Kurdistan, by Athelstan Riley (1884)." Accessed February 1, 2020. http://anglicanhistory.org/england/riley/narrative1884.html.
[119] Sherif Pasha, "Kurdish Independence," *Times,* 10 March 1920, 12.
[120] Ibid.

tool for shaping public opinion of Kurdish statelessness in the west. Additionally, he comfortably used his position as a well-known public figure to alter public opinion and demonstrate the ways his goals of state-making fit into the framework of European politics. In public discourses, he acted as a representative of the Kurds with educated writing, which indirectly responded to figures like Riley who publicized a vicious, uncivilized image of Kurds to western audiences. The press was a valuable tool for Kurdish nationalists and their British supporters to remedy Kurdish perception abroad and exercise some measure of influence over the dominant discourses surrounding Kurds. As one of the primary networks which shaped western perception of Kurds, some Kurdish elites utilized the press to engage with narratives and reshape the perception of Kurds. This frequently took the reform of stressing the positive relationship Kurds held with Armenians and disassociating Kurds from the oppressive Ottoman state. These narratives were critical to engage with in order to effectively utilize the press as a network of negotiation by developing western awareness and support for Kurdish nationalism. Some British state-makers directly collaborated in this process of rehabilitating Kurdish reputation through the press, such as the special correspondent's article series. The use of such a public network naturally invited opposition in the reform of published responses, but the fact that people read and responded to articles written favorably about the Kurds demonstrates that such articles did reach the public eye. In this way, navigating the challenges and benefits of the press as a network allowed Kurdish urban nationalists elites to address the popular European knowledge of Kurds and present a new image, one more worthy of British cooperation and collaboration.

Petitions By Kurdish Nationalists

Not all negotiations by nationalist elites were available for public consumption. Many discussions occurred more directly with British state-makers, through private appeals, petitions, and memorandums addressed to officials. These were often facilitated by organized groups, rather than individual nationalists writing into a newspaper. In this section, I examine private petitions by Kurdish nationalists before and during the conference, as well as some of the British responses to these petitions. Using a number of negotiation tactics, these documents primarily attempt to sway British support for their nationalist cause through discourses agreeable to their western audience, such as modernization and self-determination. Another recurring theme was the issue of territories that overlapped with Armenian nationalists' interests. Fearing that the Armenians enjoyed western sympathy, these Kurdish elites felt it was critical to explain the Kurdish role in the Armenian genocide and why that role did not invalidate Kurdish claims to certain territories.

In December 1918, shortly before the Paris Peace Conference began, the Kurdish Committee of Independence, a nationalist organization based in Cairo and founded by Sureyya Bedirhan in 1914, sent out two petitions to foreign representatives of world governments. More specifically, these petitions addressed the foreign representatives in Britain and "all the governments of Europe" in protest against "the pretensions of the Armenians over Kurdistan," and "[demanded] independence for the Kurds in Kurdistan."[121] Members of this nationalist organization worked to create networks of support for their state-making project across

[121] Foreign Office minute, "Aspirations of the Kurds" covering dispatch No. 329 from Sir R. Wingate, British High Commissioner in Egypt, to A. J. Balfour, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 16 December 1918. In Destani, *Kurdish Communities*, 2.

international lines. A follow-up petition came a week later which singled out the British government as the recipient of Kurdish attention. In this petition by the Kurdish Committee of Independence (signed in French *Comite De L'Independence Kurde*), Sureyya, a son of Emin Ali Bedirhan, demonstrated a keen knowledge of contemporary politics, as well as his own negotiating prowess, by incorporating concerns over Russia into the document. Sureyya keenly raised alarms of supposed Russian imperialism that tested British holdings in the Middle East: "Russia who, wishing to add Kurdistan to her vast empire and open thus a [road] to Persia and India, was the first to foment the discord between the Armenians and Muslims."[122] Governmental documents show the value of raising such an alarm for British state-makers. Only two months prior, in October 1918, political officer Maunsell wrote, "it is of the utmost importance from the point of view of British interests to determine from the characteristics and moral value of the various races whether it is possible to utilize them to create a solid block of friendly peoples from the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea to thwart the Pan-Turanian movement of the Turks, which if left unchecked would certainly spread eastward and in time threaten the safety of our Indian Empire."[123] With a likely awareness of British interests in the Middle East, Sureyya's petition stated that the future Kurdistan would be "entirely under [British] influence" and a bulwark for England in Asia.[124] Sureyya's appeal to geopolitical issues reveals a knowledge of world affairs and the ability to deploy keen negotiation tactics in pursuit of British support.

[122] Ibid., 20.
[123] Letter, F.R. Maunsell, London, to Mr Money, 29 October 1918, enclosing "Notes on the people on the Mosul road." In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 126.
[124] Letter from Sureyya Bedirhan, Secretary General of the Committee for Kurdish Independence, to the British High Commissioner, Cairo, 16 December 1918. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 213.

Promises for the Kurds to modernize and become 'civilized' characterized Sureyya's petition, along with the financial enticements for the British of a wealthy, modern Kurdish state for a neighbor. In this petition, Sureyya reminded the High Commissioner that Kurdistan was "rich in raw materials," but lacking railways, roads, money and manpower.[125] He appealed to the British government to "help [Kurds] take a place in the civilized world."[126] Sureyya and the nationalist organization he represented believed that modernization was key to their nation-state and to securing British support. Sureyya's vision of a modern state, then, included harvesting of raw materials, industrialization, and the construction of infrastructure. Evidently, he believed that the plea for western assistance in 'civilizing' Kurdish society would be an effective line of argument.

This discourse of Kurds as uncivilized was commonly invoked against Kurdish elites, as we have seen in the press. But Kurdish nationalists and their British supporters found interesting ways of manipulating the discourse into a positive one. In an account of Kurdish and Armenian relations, Maunsell absolved the Kurds of culpability for intercommunal violence and shifted the blame to Turkish and German officials, calling the CUP the "real culprits" for the Armenian massacres. In a forty page document from 1918 titled "Kurdistan," Maunsell addressed the question of self-determination among minority groups in the empire, sought to illuminate the frequently overlooked role of Kurds in history, and acknowledge that their "rights for self determination [were] as valid as the Arab and Armenian, [though it] is often ignored entirely."[127] In this document, Maunsell supported orientalist views of Kurds as inferior, but provided a spin that supported British intervention in their political affairs: "it must be remembered that the

[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Letter, F.R. Maunsell, London, to Mr Money, 29 October 1918, enclosing "Notes on the people on the Mosul road." In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds*, 126.

Kurds are ignorant and unsophisticated and we should hesitate to utterly condemn this primitive race for crimes of religious fanaticism instigated by German and Turkish officials for their own ends."[128] In this way, a top British official similarly engaged in orientalist rhetoric that disparaged Kurds as uncivilized while simultaneously assuaging them of guilt on account of their supposed inherent inferiority

British Goals and Motives for a Kurdish State

A primary line of negotiation which Kurdish nationalists pursued was the strategic value of a Kurdish state for Britain. Sureyya Bedirhan's petition referenced Kurdistan's wealth of raw materials as a subtle reminder of the benefit in supporting an independent Kurdish state. Further, the region possessed substantial value as a neighbor to Iraq, as Kurds occupied strategic paths into Iraq, and much of the water supply the British mandate-state would depend on for irrigation traveled through Kurdistan.[129] According to some British state-makers, the need to maintain the flow of water into Iraq was reason enough to build a friendly neighbor state. Natural resources like petroleum, coal, and tobacco were also of considerable concern to British state-makers. In terms of its geopolitical value, Kurdistan was considered by the Indian Political Office to be valuable land for military recruiting. Similarly, a stable, peaceful Kurdish state was believed by some as critical to regional stability.[130] Further, a positive and collaborative relationship with Kurdish nationalists would help British state-makers to absorb valuable, desirable parts of Kurdistan into Iraq. In sum, there was considerable economic and geopolitical incentive to

[128] Ibid., 142.
[129] Note by the Political Department, India Office, "Kurdistan," 14 December 1918, by J.E. Shuckburgh, FO 371/4356. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 219.
[130] Ibid.

establish a loyal Kurdish state as a neighbor to Iraq, and Kurdish elites recognized their important position in these negotiations.

For the Kurdish nationalists who chose to cooperate with British state-makers, another line of negotiation became useful: the importance of ensuring that if a Kurdish state was created, it was loyal to Britain. Since not all Kurdish nationalists were interested in building a state loyal to Britain, those who did could leverage this fact as a reason to cooperate with them. Nationalists who sought to establish an independent state without British influence risked upsetting the stability and viability of Iraq, especially if such movements included the Kurds in Persian territories. These Kurds posed problems for British state-makers who supported Kurdish nationalists. In one governmental document, while discussing possible boundaries for Kurdistan, Maunsell wrote, "it would be advisable if possible to include the Kurdish districts of Persia in Kurdistan as outlined, for they contain many important tribes … but this could scarcely be done without destroying the integrity of Persia to which we are pledged."[131] Maunsell sought a political balance to establishing borders that neatly contained Kurds while maintaining good relations with Persia, a neighbor to Iraq. In the same document, Maunsell described apparent Kurdish desire for expansion, evident as recently as 1914, with the invasion of the Urmia plains by Persian Kurds "with the idea of creating a large Kurdish principality with themselves as rulers."[132] He similarly recounted an attempt in 1880 by Sheikh Obeydullah "to invade Persia and create there an independent Kurdish principality under Turkish protection."[133] Maunsell's concern with this apparent expansionism is evidence of larger unease with nationalist movements that did not draw legitimacy from British influence and the international community, as well as

[131] Letter, F.R. Maunsell, London, to Mr Money, 29 October 1918, enclosing "Notes on the people on the Mosul road." In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds*, 162.
[132] Ibid., 138.
[133] Ibid.

his desires to maintain regional stability to shield Iraq. Therefore, Kurdish nationalists who invited British influence in their political endeavors and were willing to negotiate in ways that would support both Kurdish and British interests were valuable allies to maintain.

It is worth noting that Sureyya Bedirhan's petition ultimately fell on deaf ears, as it did not align with British goals for Kurdish state-making. The official analysis of the petition mocked the Kurdish authors, writing that they must have assumed the British agents' "extraordinary naivete" that they should actually consider the borders proposed by the Committee.[134] Likewise, they mocked the apparent attempts by Committee members to claim that Kurds had never participated in Armenian massacres, and in one political officer's interpretation "[went] so far as to suggest that [the massacres] were themselves the product of the imagination of consuls and missionaries."[135] In this way, we see that while some nationalists, like Sheikh Abdulkadir, attempted to acknowledge and twist the discourses of Kurds as butchers, other nationalists may have downplayed or even dismissed the same discourses. The British response indicated that the petition was rejected on account of these issues, and the British were "unable to listen to this lot of Kurds who are not representative" of Kurdish nationalism.[136] In addition to the two petitions, the Committee had applied to British military authorities in Egypt for permission to send their delegate to Europe to attend the peace conference. The response, a resounding no, clearly indicates that British state-makers had a particular kind of Kurdish representative in mind that was not found in Cairo's branch of Kurdish nationalists: "There are

[134] Foreign Office minute No. 3063, 8-20 January 1919, entitled "Kurdish aspirations." In Destani, *Kurdish Communities,* 17.
[135] The petition specifically claims European missionaries converted Armenians and then convinced them to declare independence while stoking religious tensions. The Armenians supposedly then threatened to kill all Muslims in their territories (pp. 9-10). The petition also claims that in 1905 a British consul published a telegram in *Times* in which he lied about witnessing a Kurdish massacre of Armenians (pp. 12). Petition from Comite de l'Independence Kurde, of the National Kurdish League, Cairo, to Sir R. Wingate, 7 December 1918. In Destani, *Kurdish Communities,* 3-16.
[136] Ibid.

few Kurds in Egypt and the proposed delegates are not of importance. Permission to proceed will be refused."[137]

Competing Kurdish nationalist movements were recurrent problems for British state-makers. Governmental documents indicate major concerns over Kurdish independence without British authority and fears of a Kurdish federation prompted some political officers to actively prevent Persian Kurds from establishing one.[138] Noel documented the importance of keeping nationalist movements in check and shared some of his strategies with political officers in Kirkuk.[139] He and others feared that a conference held by Enver Pasha, a leader of the Young Turk Rebellion, was indicative of alternative political organizations Kurdistan could take. Maunsell described the invasion of the Urmia plains by Kurds seeking to create a large Kurdish principality as a spontaneous movement spawned by the steady growth of nationalism over the previous thirty years, and added "it may also have been the result of a conference held by Enver Pasha at Erzurum in September 1914 when he proposed to create a chain of buffer states under Ottoman suzerainty between Turkey and Persia."[140] This would have been only weeks before the Ottoman Empire entered World War One by attacking Russia's Black Sea coast in 1914. This intelligence may have come from Morgan Philips Price, a British journalist and special correspondent of *Manchester Guardian*, covering the Eastern Front. In 1918 he published *War*

[137] Telegram from the High Commissioner for Egypt, Cairo, to Foreign Office, 22 December 1918, No. 1919, regarding a request from the Comité de l'Independence Kurde, Cairo, for their delegates to be allowed to attend the Peace Conference in Europe [FO 141/810]. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 215.
[138] "It is understood that Sherif Pasha now wishes to link Ottoman Kurdistan to Persia in some form – presumably in order to get all Kurds into a single political group. The Persian Kurds have of course been reacting to self-determination, and have only been prevented by our political officers from joining the new Kurdish federation on the Ottoman side of the frontier." Foreign Office minute, "Future of Kurdistan," covering a letter from Sherif to Sir L. Mallet, Paris, 23 February 1919. In Destani, *Kurdish Communities,* 45.
[139] Circular memorandum from Major Noel in Suleimaniyeh, to APO's (at) Kifri, Kirkuk and Altun Keupri, 8 December 1918, No. 43. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 190.
[140] Letter, F.R. Maunsell, London, to Mr Money, 29 October 1918. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 138. Notably, this potential link to a conference held by Enver Pasha was crossed out in this document, perhaps implying that he no longer wished to present this as a valid link to the invasion of the Urmia plains.

and Revolution in Asiatic Russia, in which he linked Kurdish invasion of the Urmia plains in order to build a Kurdish kingdom with the rise of nationalism in the past thirty years and noted the plan of Enver Pasha and the Young Turks at a September 1914 Erzurum Conference.[141] The concern with Turkish leaders absorbing Kurdish nationalists into their ranks is clear in the document. The possibility of a Kurdish state under Turkish influence threatened British state-making interests in the region. Incidents like these reinforced the importance of working with controllable nationalist figures.

As Kurdish nationalists fostered networks of negotiations with British state-makers and political officers, they leveraged the political and regional needs of such officers within their negotiations. While these Kurdish nationalists sought British support for their nationalist mission, they did not enter the negotiations as powerless participants. British state-makers had substantial needs in the Middle East, namely maintaining stability for their mandate-state Iraq. The possibility of a Kurdish state under foreign influence threatened British plans in the region and incentivized collaboration with Kurdish nationalists in such a way that both parties benefited from the protection of their mutual interests.

Modernization Narratives

With the commencement of the Paris Peace Conference only days away in January 1919, Sheikh Abdulkadir submitted a petition directly to Colonel Balfour. As the head president of the Kurdish Committee, the document carried considerable weight with Kurds supportive of British aid. The document utilized many of the standard avenues of negotiation and ingratiating. Abdulkadir used the opportunity to remind the British political officers that the Kurds were

[141] Morgan Philips Price, *War and Revolution in Asiatic Russia* (London: Allen, 1918), 101. The similarities in wording of the entire paragraph in both Price and Maunsell's account implies a link.

"dragged" into the world war by the Union and Progress government and in response to Russian imperial aggression, answering potential concerns over Kurdish involvement on the side of the enemy and drawing on the current political tensions between Britain and Russia.[142] Revisited in this document, though perhaps more firmly, is the intention of the nationalist elites for Kurds at large to modernize under British influence. Abdulkadir lamented the "poverty, ignorance, and backwardness in culture and civilization" of the Kurds, blaming it on their oppressive governments.[143] Abdulkadir, as both a member of the Ottoman bureaucracy in Istanbul and a tribal head from a frontier-area, was surely referring to non-elite Kurds who did not enjoy the western acculturation of many elites in cities like Istanbul. The perception of Kurds as uncivilized became a negotiating tool, as by recognizing Kurdish supposed inferiority, he also acknowledged the virtues of the Kurdish race, "which, if well developed under an equitable and wise government" would allow them to "take their seat among the other enlightened nations of the earth."[144] Appeals for British aid in progress and civilization frequently characterized the dialogue between nationalists and British state-makers. By presenting Kurds as merely requiring a helping hand to modernize, nationalist elites helped assuage British anxieties that may have existed about the Kurdish road to modernization while concurrently legitimating British political officers' justifications for their neo-colonial project.

The dual utility of this modernization narrative was readily apparent to both parties. Since British political officers appealed to progress and development in the Kurdish and Arab context, Kurdish nationalists could take advantage and use it for their angle as well. As Partha Chatterjee has noted, development was the 20th-century idiom through which all postcolonial states sought

[142] Memoir from the Kurdistan Committee, Constantinople, to High Commissioner Henry Calthorpe, 2 January 1919, [FO 608/95]. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 234.
[143] Ibid., 235.
[144] Ibid.

to secure their legitimacy.[145] The progress narrative was often tied to the security and sustainability of the Mesopotamian state still in development. In a circular memo from Major Noel addressed to British officials in Kirkuk and Kifri, he described the backward and undeveloped condition of Kurdistan, with its dissenting tribes and lack of modern communication techniques.[146] Most importantly, he lamented that "only a few of the more enlightened members of the community have the necessary perspective to see that the connection with Baghdad is the most solid guarantee for material progress and development."[147] The backwardness and inability to self-govern was of critical importance to British state-makers who sought to present Kurdish modernization as a necessary rite of passage towards statehood. This approach helped justify the mandate system, as it highlighted the supposed uncivilized status of groups that could not be trusted with self-determination except with a European guardian. For the British, modernization meant a strong central government and all the trappings of state institutions. Noel recommended that officials in Baghdad would promote modern systems of education, agriculture, communications, and public works in Kurdistan, that in the process would help legitimize their presence in an autonomous Kurdish state. To that extent, though Major Noel indicated that Kurdistan would possess its own systems of governance, financial contributions would be made to the 'parent administration' in Baghdad.[148] According to Noel, the Kurds would achieve full autonomy only after they received education and preparation for self-governance. This process would be sped up by their beneficial "material and moral" connection to Iraq, the supposedly civilizing and modernizing force to which the Kurdish state would owe financial

[145] As quoted in: Pursley, *Familiar Futures*, 8.
[146] Circular memorandum from Major Noel in Suleimaniyeh, to APO's (at) Kifri, Kirkuk and Altun Keupri, 8 December 1918, No. 43. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 189.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid., 191.

recompense.[149] In this way, British state-makers wielded narratives of progress and modernity, thereby incentivizing nationalist elites to partake in those narratives.

Sherif Pasha is a primary example of a Kurdish urban nationalist who publicly employed such modernization narratives. In his February 1919 "Notes on the Claims of the Kurds," released in the midst of the conference and just before the Armenian affair was scheduled for discussion, Sherif identified himself as the authoritative voice and the only qualified defender of Kurdish interests in Paris.[150] Sherif's claim to be the defender of his race cast a wide net of supposed representation – he identified Constantinople elites, rural people, and even prisoners of war in central India, all figures who expected him, or so he claimed, to defend Kurdish interests at the conference.[151] This narrative cast Kurdish interests in a unified light that did not exist. Sherif's political goals as an urban elite did not necessarily match the interests of Kurdish elites from other contexts, such as non-urban and tribal elites. At times he argued for the inclusion of certain vilayets in a Kurdish state with the goal to promote economic development and "adopt modern civilization and abandon nomadic life."[152] Kurdish urban elites frequently used discourses of modernization and progress in their narratives, but sources indicate elites from tribal systems of governance, the ones who would need to 'abandon nomadic life' and their respective systems of governance in order to meet the needs of a modern state, did not partake in such discourses. His conceptualizations of a modern Kurdish state did not often line up with the expectations of the tribal and rural elites with which the British also negotiated, as I will discuss further in chapter three.

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[149] Ibid., 192.
[150] "Notes on the claims of the Kurds," Paris, 6 February 1919, communicated by Sherif Pasha, February 14, 1919, FO 608/95. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 256.
[151] Ibid.
[152] The vilayets in question were Diyarbekir, Kharpout, Bitlis, Mosul, and the Sanjak of Ourfa. Ibid., 258.

The Armenian Question

In March 1919, *Times* reported that Sherif was appointed president of the Kurdish delegation for the peace conference, having resigned his position with the Liberal Turkish Party.[153] As the head delegate, Sherif made a major negotiation with the Armenian delegation on overlapping territory claims through the province of Van. The potential borders for Kurdistan were by no means fixed, leaving plenty of room for negotiation. Kurdish nationalists and British state-makers, not to mention Armenian and Turkish nationalists, each identified the most suitable borders for their state. British state-makers similarly sought to protect their own interests and include valuable regions of Kurdistan into Iraq. Though Armenian and Kurdish nationalists were often assumed as rivals, partially on account of their overlapping territorial interests, they chose to issue joint delegations to the conference as one unit. In the process, Sherif made concessions with the head of the Armenian delegation, Bogos Nubar Pasha, over potential borders of the Armenian/Kurdish frontier.[154]

During the Peace Conference in March, Sherif released his memorandum *On the Claims of the Kurds,* in which he outlined the specifics boundaries and borders of Kurdistan which he based on ethnographic composition of the regions.[155] Notably, the boundaries did not include the province Van, a heavily contested region between Kurds and Armenians. This may have been a concession on Sherif's part to associate with the Armenians.[156] Özoğlu suggests that a dialectical process existed between Sherif Pasha and Bogos Nubar Pasha, the heads of the Kurdish and Armenian delegations respectively, in which the two parties conceivably reached an agreement

[153] "Imperial And Foreign News Items," *Times*, 27 March 1919, 11.
[154] Bajalan, "The First World War," 17.
[155] Sherif Pasha, "Memorandum on the Claims of the Kurd People," *International Journal of Kurdish Studies*, 2001, 130.
[156] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables,* 39.

on the contested political borders of the two states prior to the Peace Conference.[157] At the very least, it demonstrated a good faith relationship in front of the international audience. This incident reveals the sensitivity of Sherif Pasha to the issue of international reputation, and the need to assure the international community of the civilized and friendly relationship between Armenians and Kurds. Interestingly, while this negotiation was likely made in good-faith, Sherif later described it as if he had tricked Bogos Nubar Pasha through the agreement. Given the widespread public support for an Armenian state, in response to the western belief that "Kurdistan was merely a fanciful geographical expression," Sherif claimed he "[made] known the existence of a Kurdistan by our competitors themselves, in an act signed by the representatives of the Armenians to the Peace Conference."[158] In this way, he used the platform the Armenians already possessed to legitimize Kurdistan as a geographical reality. If European powers would not acknowledge Kurdish territorial claims, the joint statement by both delegations made it unavoidable.

Sherif's *Memorandum on the Claims of the Kurds* utilized similar discourses as other nationalist elites, though particularly aimed at the Armenian question. He spoke to the historical right of Kurds and their majority population in contested regions. Notably, he consistently cited European sources in pursuit of this claim. He appealed to Theoder Mommsen, a German scholar, Nuttall's English Encyclopedia, and the French geographer Élisée Reclus."[159] Further, he appealed to "Prince Lobanoff, Russian minister for foreign affairs, the last person one could accuse of being Kurdophile" for outside confirmation that Armenians were a minority in the Ottoman Empire.[160] Recognizing the precarious nature of Russian sources, he further pointed to

[157] Ibid.
[158] Sherif Pasha, "Kurdish Independence," *Times*, 10 March 1920, 12.
[159] Sherif Pasha, "Memorandum on the Claims of the Kurd People," 131-132.
[160] Ibid., 132.

a Russian handbook with "neutral character as far as the Kurds and Armenians are concerned," which he cited as evidence of Kurds outnumbering Armenians.[161] While previous nationalist elites had appealed to the demographic composition of regions, and indeed Sherif himself made similar claims that British political officers did not always believe, in this memorandum he set out to prove conclusively with European sources that Armenians had never possessed a majority status anywhere in the Ottoman empire and especially not Kurdistan. Since these supporting statements of Kurdish ethnographic majority were "made at a time when tragic events had roused the sympathy of all of Europe in favor of the Armenians," this proved that Armenians were a minority in the empire and Kurdistan, and therefore should not be awarded the lands of Kurdistan.[162] For Sherif, the Kurdish majority in these regions was a critical negotiating tool with British officers. It allowed him to demonstrate with presumably trustworthy sources that Kurds were the majority population. If Sherif suspected that British state-makers did not believe his claims of Kurdish majority, he was not far from the truth.[163]

The argument for Kurdish territorial rights on account of population majority allowed Sherif to play into the population politics that dominated state discourse in this period. Fuat Dundar identifies a "Kurdish problem" in this period, which was essentially a population problem. Kurds claimed to constitute the majority population in a given region, thus seemingly providing their mission legitimacy in the eyes of British idealized visions of an ethnically homogenous nation-state, yet they were considered uncivilized and incapable of self-

[161] Ibid., 133.
[162] Ibid., 133-134.
[163] British agents did discount his claims. The analysis from the Office of the Civil Commissioner responded to his claims: "The question of Northern Kurds and Armenians is not one which Sharif Pasha can usefully contribute nor one which is in my view susceptible of treatment on the lines of his proposal." Cypher telegram, from Sir Percy Cox, Political Officer, Baghdad, to Secretary of State for India, 30 October 1918, No. 9267, [AIR 20/512]. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 167.

government.[164] However, the other Ottoman minorities seeking states under the auspices of self-determination also grounded their negotiations in population data that affirmed their status as the largest ethnic group in the region.[165] Sherif's appeal to European experts, then, was likely in response to the many groups which put forward dubious population data, and an attempt to validate the authenticity of his own data through outside (European) sources.

Sherif's memorandum posited another layer of negotiation in regards to the Armenian question, in which he challenged the peace conference attendees to consider the real-world implications of a solution for the issue of overlapping territorial claims that too heavily favored the Armenians. In reviewing Sherif's documents addressed to world powers, I suggest that Sherif consistently acknowledged the numerical differences between Kurds and Armenians in part to subtly emphasize the potential for violence if a viable and sizable Kurdistan were rejected. Some instances were less subtle than others; In *Notes on the Claims of the Kurds,* published just before the Armenian question was discussed in February of 1919, he outlined potential borders for Kurdistan which he lamented would nevertheless be incomplete on account of pressure from Armenian claims which possessed "western sympathy," where Kurdish claims to land did not.[166] However, he warned against the dangers of depriving the Kurdish people of their sources of wealth, like herding in certain pasturages throughout the year, as it would force the Kurd to plunder border countries, i.e. Armenia, for "compensation."[167] In an even more straight forward warning, he cautioned that if a Kurdish majority were governed by an Armenian minority, "disorder would reign in an endemic form, unless the allies forever kept up a strong army, which

[164] Fuat Dundar, *StatisQuo: British Use of Statistics in the Iraqi Kurdish Question (1919-1932)* (Crown Center for Middle East Studies, 2012), 4.
[165] Ibid., 11.
[166] "Notes on the claims of the Kurds," Paris, 6 February 1919, communicated by Sherif Pasha, February 14, 1919, FO 608/95. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 258.
[167] Ibid., 259.

itself would be continuously exposed to the attacks of guerilla warfare."[168] This and other instances by Sherif advised European powers that Kurdish lands could not be so easily subsumed under Armenian leadership.[169] This illuminates one of the reasons he may have prioritized proving the ethnographic composition of Kurdish and Armenian territories. The principles of self-determination helped Sherif justify his version of a Kurdish state, but the threat of violence and need for European intervention to maintain peace, especially war-exhausted states following World War One, was a powerful tool for negotiating the inclusion of certain contested boundaries.

Conclusion

As the political climate became increasingly tense for Kurdish nationalists, they leveraged the international community as a tool for resolving conflict and winning support. For these elites, international acknowledgement was not the end-game of this publicity. Nationalists like those from the Society for the Rise of Kurdistan used newspapers, documents, and even the Peace Conference itself to either wield their international reputation or refine it. The international community became a network of critical importance for Kurdish nationalists, as they rightly recognized that European powers were reshaping the Middle East. These particular elites opted to engage with the new networks of power flowing into the region, rather than against them. Their hope, it seems, was to ingratiate themselves within these new networks and eventually enrich themselves.

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[168] Ibid.

[169] For another example, see Sherif's *Memorandum on the Claims of the Kurd People,* 134. "Even with the help of a European power, it would be rather vain on the part of the Armenian minority to hope to dominate this warlike and numerically superior element."

In order to exploit these networks, however, nationalist elites needed to engage with the orientalist rhetoric that disparaged Kurds as uncivilized, rehabilitate their reputation, and convince an unsympathetic international community of the critical importance of an independent and viable Kurdish state. Nationalist elites did this by separating themselves from 'uncivilized' Kurds, often while simultaneously claiming to represent their interests. They also pursued a variety of tactics to manage the Armenian issue. Sherif and Bogos Nubar demonstrated one tactic by their joint declaration at the peace conference, which demonstrated good faith between Kurds and Armenians on the international stage. Another tactic was to distance Kurds from the Armenian genocide and reframe the question into one of fairness and equal-treatment from western discourses of self-determination. It proved difficult for elites to elicit western sympathy with international and media focus on protecting and prioritizing Christian minorities. In the best case, nationalist elites needed to turn neutral parties into pro-Kurdistan associates. In the worst case, elites had to explain away stereotypes and discourses of inferiority for Kurdish civilization. Their management of these obstacles demonstrate the variety of tactics available to, or cultivated by, these urban nationalist elites.

CHAPTER 3

KURDISH TRIBAL ELITES AND THEIR NETWORKS OF NEGOTIATION

While British state-makers and political officers entered negotiations with urban nationalist elites, the focus of chapter two, they simultaneously developed strong relations with powerful tribal elites. I engage with the concept of tribe in this context at a broader level of analysis by referring primarily to tribes as political organizations. Such organizations are often based on kinship or genealogical connection, real or assumed, and tribes may at times be pastoral, nomadic, or semi-nomadic. Though these differences are useful to considering the socio-economic organizations of different tribes, I broadly focus on tribal leaders as political actors and explore their political roles. This chapter will consider British policy towards Kurdish tribes in the pre-war context and moving into the post-war context. The set of negotiations that occurred between tribal leaders and British political officers varied, but the discussions were typically distinct from negotiations with Istanbul nationalist elites. Tribal elites possessed powerful intertribal networks which were critical for maintaining regional stability. British state-makers, recognizing the importance of these networks for preserving peace in Kurdistan, sought to identify and pursue tribal elites who possessed access and influence within these networks. This demanded a thorough understanding of the complex structure of tribal society – a demand which was primarily met through surveys of territories, populations, and tribal sentiments towards the British. Only once these factors were made legible could British political officers confidently establish networks with powerful tribal leaders.

The heterogenous nature of Kurdish tribes contributed to the mixed responses of various tribal groups to the changing political context in the Middle East. As shown later in the chapter,

Kurdish political elites could have wildly different preferences for the political organization of a future Kurdish polity. Nationalist elites from a tribal background supported a Kurdish state, but often with the maintenance of tribal configurations of government. Debates also ensued regarding the nature of independence – some Kurds preferred a British mandate, connection to an Islamic Turkish state, self-rule, or even simply 'not France.' Responses to British state-makers also varied geographically, with southern Kurdistan ultimately being more open to British influence than the north. In the south, British administrative promises for Kurdistan proved suitable, and incentives for cooperation with British political officers were sufficiently enticing. I begin this chapter by describing British administrative policy in southern and eastern Kurdistan in the early twentieth century, and then explain how different Kurdish tribal leaders navigated these policies with their own political goals in mind. I analyze the negotiation tactics and challenges that pressed these tribal leaders and use those analyses to consider why elites may have chosen to cooperate with a foreign power that shared neither religion, language, nor culture. The tribal elites I examine responded to new networks of power flowing into the region from the introduction of the mandate-system and the cultivation of modern nation-states by European state-makers by embedding themselves within those networks in order to better advocate for their dependents and their own regional influence.

In the late Ottoman era, many Kurdish tribal elites were integrated into Ottoman state institutions. Numerous opportunities presented themselves for cultivating and solidifying regional power via these institutions. Elites could play off the tensions and competing interests of the Ottoman, Russian, and Persian empires at different times, seeking alliances with one over the other according to their own interests.[170] As many tribes occupied the borderlands between the

[170] Sebastian Maisel, *The Kurds: An Encyclopedia of Life, Culture, and Society* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2018), 119.

Persian and Ottoman empires, there was a certain fluidity to this loyalty, which in turn inspired a degree of autonomy for these tribes to operate under. In effect, borderland tribes helped these powerful empires to manage their peripheral areas better, or at least nominally so.[171] Kurdish tribal collaboration was thus a valuable exchange, though the empires would use this connection to extend state reach into semi-autonomous territories. This is evident in the case of Adela Khanum, a chief of the Jaf tribe who I discuss later in this chapter. Though Adela heavily resisted Ottoman influence, her husband Osman Pasha of the Jaf tribe served as an Ottoman administrator after Sultan Abdulhamid II placed him in his older brother's position. Her father was likewise a grand vizier of Persia and her uncles were viziers of the Ottoman Empire. It was not uncommon for tribal elites to participate in state institutions, sometimes to negotiate from within in order to maintain their power. Maisel shows that when these kinds of symbiotic relationship developed, regional tribal structures became engrained into the empires' structures, which were wiped out with the collapse of Ottoman rule.[172] The collapse thus contributed to a period of social and political upheaval that incentivized tribal elites to realign their power structures within the new regional networks of power, namely European mandates.

British Networks and Policy in Kurdistan

As shown in the previous chapter, British state-makers were actively planning for a Kurdish state in 1918 through their negotiations with Kurdish nationalist elites based in Istanbul. According to Cecil J. Edmonds, a British political officer in Mesopotamia and Persia, the intention of British state-makers in 1918 was "to set up semi-autonomous Kurdish provinces

[171] Ibid. See also Sabri Ateş, *Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[172] Maisel, *The Kurds: An Encyclopedia,* 119.

with the intention of linking them with a future system of administration for the area."[173] In order to establish these provinces, however, the area needed to be made legible. British political officers were extremely interested in the political organizations, private sentiments, and strategic locations of Kurdish tribes, and they shaped their negotiations accordingly. State-makers requested details of territories and the tribes tied to them, critical information for colonial strategies in the region and for understanding the complex political climate of tribal politics. For example, a document entitled "Report on to Mission Viranshehir," reported on nationalism among tribal elites and a list of some prominent elites interested in engaging with the British and the Turks.[174] More generally, the document included a breakdown of the population of Kurdistan with the names of tribes, the number of subtribes underneath each tribe, and the area they occupied.[175] A further breakdown indicated tribal chiefs and a section for notes on those chiefs – This might entail their principal villages, the borders of their associated territories, or the number of men believed to be in their armed forces.[176] In addition to this information, the document included more detailed descriptions of certain chiefs' appearances, demeanors, connections to various governments, even their language skills or the location of family members. Similar cataloguing endeavors by British political officers in the twentieth century helped illuminate the details of Kurdish tribal society.[177] This extensive knowledge of Kurdish tribes and their leaders helped British political officers navigate complex political configurations within those societies.

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[173] C. J. Edmonds, *Kurds Turks and Arabs: Politics, Travel and Research in North-Eastern Iraq 1919-1925* (Oxford University Press, 1957), 29.
[174] C.L. Woolley, in "Report on Mission to Viranshehir," on his mission from 11–18 May 1918. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 72-84.
[175] Ibid., 78.
[176] Ibid., 80-81.
[177] For an earlier example, see Mark Sykes, "The Kurdish Tribes of the Ottoman Empire," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 38 (1908): 451-486. His study accounts for Kurdish tribal organizations, religious proclivities, and the details of various tribes. His list included the number of families in a tribe, their status as nomadic, semi-nomadic, or sedentary, and other identifying details that helped British political officers gain familiarity with key tribes and figures.

Legibility of Kurdish tribes and territories helped facilitate British politics in the region. In February 1919, a telegram to Captain Reed by the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force headquarters requested detailed information about the Kurds living in and around the province Van, the contested region with overlapping Kurdish and Armenian populations.[178] The timing of this telegram is particularly interesting; Sherif Pasha released his "Notes on the Claims of the Kurds" in February 1919, just before the Armenians were scheduled to defend their nationalist mission at the Paris Peace Conference.[179] The request asked for the names of tribes in and around Van, their leaders, their supply of rifles and ammunition, the strength of any local independence movements, the degree of cohesion among the local tribes, and the tribes' sentiments towards Britain and other great powers.[180] The response came that there was no significant political cohesion among the tribes and that tribal elites should be left to rule their own tribes autonomously, under the guidance of good political officers, so that "there will be little chance for any independence movement that tries to get itself started."[181] The inquiry into the strength of independence movements and supply of arms indicates a fear of political upheaval as Kurdish and Armenian nationalists battled over Van. The degree of cohesion among tribes reflects a recurring British concern with tribal politics: the combined strength of multiple tribal groups could challenge British political ventures if such groups united against those ventures. This dynamic only intensified the need to procure support of powerful Kurdish tribes, with strong local connections, to help contain threats from uncooperative tribes. Therefore, as British

[178] Dispatch, General Headquarters, Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, to Captain Sands, 8 February 1919, [AIR 20/512]. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 261.
[179] "Notes on the claims of the Kurds," Paris, 6 February 1919, communicated by Sherif Pasha, February 14, 1919, FO 608/95. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 256.
[180] Dispatch, General Headquarters, Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, to Captain Sands, 8 February 1919, [AIR 20/512]. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 261.
[181] Ibid., 284.

political officers made the landscape more legible, they sought out tribes among the Ottoman Kurds which might be interested in negotiating.

Similar methods of gathering intelligence on Kurdish tribes is visible in the Persian context. The sort of Kurds which British political officers were interested in working with is illustrated in a November 1918 report on the "most important inhabitants" in the eastern Kurdistan.[182] From the British perspective, leading Kurdish figures in Persia were identified by their degree of wealth and land ownership, but families and individuals could also be defined as powerful on account of their perceived community influence, be it religious or political.[183] The agent described numerous individuals and families, governors and sheikhs, often indicating their political persuasion and some comment on their character. This detailed account of important men spanning seven pages illuminates the sort of leading figures British political officers ideally sought to cooperate with. In perhaps the most charitable description of one figure, the political officer wrote on one Haji Arfa Al Mulk: "Head of Police reappointed at my special request … Is a gentleman of breeding and very pleasant to deal with. A good friend and a good man for advice. Character weak."[184] The demeanor and character of important figures in Kurdish politics and society informed British decisions regarding which Kurdish agents to cooperate with.

In addition to individuals, knowledge of tribes more generally also proved pertinent. For example, territorial conflicts with the Mandoumis and Galbaghis earned the label "interference on their behalf is inadvisable," while the Milli and Mukri tribes were described as "friendly but have few dealings with us. We should endeavor to keep more in touch with them."[185] These

[182] Captain F.S. Greenhouse, Extracts from Sennah Report No. 3, 30 November 1918, notes handed over to Lieutenant Warren. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 176.
[183] Ibid. This document identifies some powerful families in town politics and seems to assign their power in terms of wealth and land ownership. "Historic" families, which appealed to what British agents perceived as tribal myths, similarly were considered important.
[184] Ibid., 178.
[185] Ibid., 181.

documents also indicated what kind of tribes would not be considered for British patronage and negotiation: "The Shaikh Ismailis, Sursuris, Gaehkis are all petty tribes deserving little recognition from us."[186] A foreknowledge of important figures' political persuasions, rivalries with other tribes, the perception of British political agents, and even the character of individual Kurds were all deemed important information for navigating the complex political landscape and deciding which tribes were considered valuable enough to enter negotiations with.

The geopolitical value of certain territories subsequently spurred British negotiations with tribes associated with those territories. The Bilbass tribe is one prominent example. This tribe occupied territory close to the Wazna Pass, a strategic location that led directly into north-western Persia.[187] Given the war-effort and the plans for constructing a British mandate state in the area, Britain sought to control strategic areas. Maintaining them under a British state or a friendly, reliant Kurdish state would be ideal. In July 1918, Colonel Maunsell identified the tribes under the Bilbass Confederation, headed by Baiz Agha at the upper end of the Wazna pass. He called these "the most important Kurdish tribes inside the Persian frontier," largely due to this strategic location[188] Further, the Bilbass held "a considerable place in Kurdish history, and seeing one of the principle features of the Kurdish character is loyalty to their hereditary chiefs, it follows that the chief of the Bilbass would be a most useful personage to win over."[189] The geopolitical value of the Wazna pass and the British perception of tribal configurations, simplistic though it was, convinced Maunsell that the Bilbass were worth cooperating with. Further, Maunsell believed that the perceived historic and societal value of the Bilbass tribe in

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[186] Ibid.
[187] Report from F.R. Maunsell, United Service Club, London to Money, 15 May 1918. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 85-87.
[188] Report by F.R. Maunsell, 15 July 1918, "Suggested Cavalry Raids through Kurdistan to Sakiz," on the strategic significance of the area and its physical geography [WO 106/64]. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 109.
[189] Report from F.R. Maunsell, United Service Club, London to Money, 15 May 1918. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 86-87.

Kurdish society would help influence smaller tribes along the frontier to join with the British. British state-making goals in the Middle East drove negotiations with key tribes in strategic locations.

British military strategy likewise spurred negotiation with Kurdish tribal elites. Maunsell was one of the key British political officers pushing for militarization and mobilization of tribes brought under British influence, writing in July 1918: "The following are some suggestions for bringing the Kurdish tribes of the Persian frontier districts under British influence and inducing them to take up arms against the Turks."[190] He included a number of schemes to convince Kurdish tribes of the power of British soldiers, even by passing a British cavalry through their districts into Persia in order to destroy the small Turkish garrisons and "impress [the Turkish Kurds] with an idea of the power and prestige of the British troops which perhaps they do not at present possess."[191] The intention by Maunsell to recruit Kurdish soldiers into the British military is further evidenced by his hope that the tribes of southern Kurdistan "might be induced to … form a force of Kurdish cavalry to be trained under British officers and NCOs [non-commissioned officers]."[192] Maunsell even planned for strategic potential places to station these Kurdish militias that could encourage other tribes to accept British rule. Further, it was directly assumed that the stability of the region relied on military cooperation with Kurdish chiefs. One document authored by the Civil Commissioner of Baghdad urged political officers: "it should be your object to arrange with local chiefs for the restoration and maintenance of order in areas outside the limits of our military occupation, for the exclusion and surrender of enemy agents

[190] Report by F.R. Maunsell, 15 July 1918, "Suggested Cavalry Raids through Kurdistan to Sakiz," on the strategic significance of the area and its physical geography [WO 106/64]. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 104.
[191] Ibid., 106.
[192] Ibid., 109.

and for the supplies of commodities needed by our troops."[193] The role of the military in British negotiations clearly influenced the networks presented to Kurdish tribes during this period, rendering negotiations with local tribal networks all the more worthy of cultivating.

Kurdish Motives to Cultivate Networks of Negotiation

While imperfect representations of the perspectives of Kurdish tribes, British governmental documents can aid in uncovering tribal political preferences. Kurdish tribes, though often characterized in British sources as homogenous, single-minded political entities, varied considerably in such preferences. In his mission report to Viranshehir, British military officer Captain C. L. Woolley assessed the Kurdish opinion of an Arab government under British auspices. According to Woolley, smaller tribes, such as the El Aun and Kitkan, which resided on the "edges of the Arab zone [were] naturally inclined to favor the Arab government and even invite British interference to secure them against the Turks."[194] Leaders from the Barasi tribe were said to prefer a Kurdish national government but doubted the practicality of such an endeavor, owing to the insufficient unanimity among the tribes.[195] Given this belief, Barasi tribal leaders claimed to prefer living under a Turkish power rather than an Arab one, a sentiment felt more forcefully in the north, wrote Wooley, where they sought their own government. Many Kurds in Woolley's experience desired a tribal system of government with a governing class composed primarily of Kurds and some Armenian collaboration.[196] These political preferences were further broken down along class lines: in the north, rural "lower classes" wanted as little

[193] Telegram, Political Officer, Baghdad, to Secretary of State for India, 31 October 1918, No. 9309 [AIR 20/512]. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 169.
[194] C.L. Woolley, in "Report on Mission to Viranshehir," on his mission from 11–18 May 1918. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 77.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibid., 78.

foreign intervention as possible, townspeople wanted foreign commercial assistance but not foreign control, and the "upper classes" were said to recognize the need for foreign assistance, even supporting a British mandate over a French one.[197] Kurdish tribal political preferences varied among tribes and were divided along class lines, with distinctions found in northern and southern Kurds.

It was the tribal elites that typically forged the networks of negotiation with British political officers. This may have been due to the abundant presence of political officers as they scouted, traced, and investigated political opportunities within their sphere of influence in the Middle East.[198] As we have seen, these officers devoted considerable time and resources to determining the most powerful or influential leaders of a given tribe. Mahmud Beg Ibn Ibrahim Pasha of the Milli tribe is one such elite. Mahmud was a "strong nationalist"[199] according to Woolley, accused of favoring the Turks, helping them acquire supplies during the war, and allegedly promising to help the Turks raise Kurdish tribal armies against British soldiers in the region. In Woolley's account of a conversation that occurred between him and Mahmud, the two sought to clarify Mahmud and the Milli tribe's position as either enemies or friends of Britain. Mahmud vehemently rejected a friendship with the Turks and posited him and his tribe as friends of Britain. Through this discussion, some interesting justifications emerge for Mahmud's decision to cooperate with British political agents. Mahmud reportedly said:

> "For my own sake and for the sake of my tribes I'm not going to be mad enough to seek a quarrel with the English. I have to consider my tribes first and foremost; what we need is

[197] Ibid., 77. The support for a British mandate in this case was perhaps less out of enthusiasm for a British system of governance and more out of distaste for the French. According to Woolley, the upper classes were prejudiced against the French due to Armenian soldiers, stories of French misdeeds in Beirut, and in response to French propaganda in Lebanon before World War One.
[198] As discussed in chapter two, the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement with France defined spheres of influence in the Middle East in anticipation of the partition of the Ottoman Empire. The negotiations made in this agreement laid the groundwork for the mandates that would emerge out of partition, including Britain's mandate for Iraq.
[199] C.L. Woolley, in "Report on Mission to Viranshehir," on his mission from 11–18 May 1918. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 73.

> peace and a chance for trade and development. If I made war on the English, I have plenty of tribesmen and could probably wipe out your little garrison at Urfa all right. Why haven't I done so if I am anti-British? Well, I have men, but I have no machine guns, artillery, aircraft or anything. You could smash me up, and I should simply be ruining my tribes for good. It is the tradition of my house to be on good terms with the English … and I hope to get their help in developing this country, but I'm acting in the interests of my people, not out of any professed friendship."[200]

From this quote, Mahmud's decision to negotiate with British state-makers appears heavily motivated by pragmatism and a foreknowledge of Britain's military capabilities. The desire to protect the wellbeing of his tribe was a reflection of the responsibilities of his role as a tribal leader, which in turn meant that preserving his tribe's existence similarly safeguarded his own power.

Mahmud's reasons for cooperating with British political officers can be more fully understood in light of his lack of military power. The Milli tribe's lack of machine guns, artillery, and aircrafts placed them at a considerable disadvantage in comparison to the might of the British military and its methods. Indeed, Mahmud's decision to negotiate with the British in at least some capacity was likely a pragmatic one in consideration of British military strategies in the region. In 1914, the British *Manual of Military Law* stated that "the rules of International Law apply only to warfare between civilized nations … they do not apply in wars with uncivilized states and tribes, where their place is taken by the discretion of the commander."[201] This policy would certainly have contributed to British military procedures regarding Kurdish and Arab tribes at this time. In December 1918, Major Noel described the intention of uniting more of the Kurdish state with Iraq, though he expected that a connection with an Arab state would be disapproved of by both ardent nationalists and mountain tribesmen. In light of this, he declared: "it will thus be realized that any outbreak of anarchy and opposition is to be prevented

[200] Ibid.
[201] *Manual of Military Law. War Office, 1914*. 6th ed. London, 1914. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015031059614.

at all costs, even at the expense of extending our favor and support to individuals whose methods are not altogether in consonance with British ideas of fair play and justice."[202] Noel likely was referring to British military tactics used in the Middle East in pursuit of colonial goals. According to Sara Pursley, such tactics included whipping, hanging, and collective punishments like bombing or the burning of entire villages whose residents had participated in insurgency. These were all well-practiced techniques used since the start of the 1914 occupation of Basra.[203] In light of such tactics and the superior British military, it seems likely that Mahmud's motivations to cooperate with British political officers were shared by other tribal elites.

Once Mahmud forged this network, he certainly attempted to utilize it. As a nationalist, he worked towards constructing his vision for the political organization of a future Kurdish polity, including himself at the top. He and some other Kurdish nationalists from a tribal background were interested in constructing what Woolley identified as "a Princedom of Kurdistan" under a foreign mandatory with limited powers.[204] This project was headed by the Milli and Bohtan tribes and two candidates for leader of the potential princedom were put forward: Mahmud Beg of the Milli and Abd el Rizaq Bedr Khan Beg of the Bohtan. Mahmud leveraged his tribal connections as the prime negotiating tool and grounded his legitimacy in tribal authority. He informed Woolley, "in the past, Abd el Rizaq's family was greater than mine, and in some ways I should consider him a greater man than myself. On the other hand, the recent generations of Bedr Khans have not done much or been very prominent; the family is not really Kurdish at all … and he would not be welcome by a large proportion of the Kurds."[205] This

[202] Letter, F.R. Maunsell, London, to Mr Money, 29 October 1918, enclosing "Notes on the people on the Mosul road" [WO 106/64]. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 161.
[203] Pursley, *Familiar Futures,* 39.
[204] C.L. Woolley, in "Report on Mission to Viranshehir," on his mission from 11–18 May 1918. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 78.
[205] Ibid.

glimpse into tribal legitimacy indicates the political framework nationalists elite from a tribal background operated under. Mahmud's understanding of the future Kurdish polity included the exercise of a tribal system of governance with a singular Kurdish leader capable of uniting all tribes under their authority. His opportunity to negotiate with British political officers, then, was grounded in his ability to prove he could serve in this role as unifier.

Mahmud continued this argument for legitimacy by highlighting his unique access and influence within intertribal networks. He informed Woolley that his tribe, the Milli, possessed authority over tribes far beyond the territory of the Milli, with influence over chiefs of other tribes who he claimed were also cadets of his house.[206] He then recounted a story to solidify his tribe's exceptional authority: that only twenty years prior, the Sultan had requested Mahmud's father's assistance in quelling a tribe, adding "[my father] simply wrote then his orders which were obeyed as a matter of course."[207] The obedience of another tribe, presented as a standard response to Milli authority, had powerful implications for British state-makers who needed a tribal ally capable of subduing resistance against British colonial ventures. Finally, he claimed that no tribes were against him in his pursuit of leadership over a princedom and even Abd el Rizaq's tribe, the Bohtan, would accept him cheerfully in Abd el Rizaq's place. This exercise in legitimacy politics illuminates Mahmud's vision for the Kurdish polity underneath a tribal head. After these claims, he concluded his argument by declaring the matter "in the hands of the Entente, and they ought to find out which of us the people want: I shall abide by that."[208] This closing line indicated his understanding that the Kurdish polity would be constructed and upheld with foreign support. By building a working relationship with the British, he centered himself

[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid.

closer to this new network of power that further extended into international networks of power. Though he was perhaps more coy than some nationalists, following a script that allowed him to maintain humble subservience to European will, it is clear that his decision to cultivate a network with the British allowed him to negotiate for his own position in the new system of governance.

As a Kurdish nationalist, Mahmud pursued a similar political goal as the urban nationalist elites discussed in the previous chapter. However, neither his strategies nor goals were identical to the urban nationalists. Mahmud's vision for a Kurdish state preserved the existing structures of tribal authority with himself at the head. The urban-based nationalist elites embraced an alternative vision of a modernized, sedentary Kurdish population. A case in point is Sureyya Bedirhan who appealed to the British government to "help [Kurds] take a place in the civilized world."[209] Serif Pasha similarly argued that certain vilayets in Kurdistan would promote economic development and lead Kurds to "adopt modern civilization and abandon nomadic life."[210] This contributed to a discursive difference in the negotiations of urban nationalist elites and tribal nationalist elites, wherein urban elites would claim the apparently uncivilized nature of most Kurds to justify foreign intervention and aid in modernization, while tribal elites like Mahmud tended to highlight their vital ability to navigate tribal society. Therein likes one the key differences between urban and tribal elites' negotiations with British state-makers. Urban elites tended to author petitions and publish memorandums to obtain British consideration of their national project. They presented convincing reasons to obtain British assistance in establishing a Kurdish state, but ultimately could not substantially contribute to the process on-

[209] Letter from Sureyya Bedirhan, Secretary General of the Committee for Kurdish Independence, to the High Commissioner, Cairo, 16 December 1918, referring to the previous appeal sent on 7 December 1918 [FO 141/810]. In Burdett, *Record of the Kurds,* 213.
[210] "Notes on the claims of the Kurds," Paris, 6 February 1919, communicated by Sherif Pasha, February 14, 1919, FO 608/95. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 258.

the-ground. In the previous chapter, urban elites appealed to Kurdistan's strategic location, its wealth of raw materials, and the British benefits of having a loyal "bulwark for England in Asia."[211] But these elites had varying degrees of influence among the extensive political organizations of tribal society in Kurdistan. Tribal elites could leverage their leadership positions and intertribal ties in negotiations, highlighting their unique ability to exploit those relations and help maintain order as British state-makers restructured the Middle East. There was perhaps more pressure on tribal elites to negotiate with the British, as they otherwise faced the daunting British military. Nevertheless, it seems that tribal elites like Mahmud were often negotiating on a more level playing field due to their established positions in tribal society.

Adela Khanum and the Jaf Tribe

Adela Khanum was one of the powerful tribal chiefs in Southern Kurdistan who opted to cultivate networks of negotiation with British state-makers. Unlike Mahmud Beg Ibn Ibrahim Pasha, her negotiations did not center on constructing a Kurdish state. Rather, she was more preoccupied with ensuring that her authority and autonomy endured the shift from Ottoman territory to Kurdish state. Adela originally came from the Ardalan tribe, a noble Kurdish emirate within the Persian empire. Her marriage into the Jaf tribe carried strategic value – both tribes occupied imperial borderlands, undefined territory that frequently exchanged hands between Persian and Ottoman rule. While Adela's specific diplomatic plans are difficult to access, her connections to a variety of British political agents resulted in documents that shine light on the networks she exploited. She was by no means the only female Kurdish tribal elite to play an

[211] Letter from Sureyya Bedirhan, Secretary General of the Committee for Kurdish Independence, to the High Commissioner, Cairo, 16 December 1918, referring to the previous appeal sent on 7 December 1918 [FO 141/810]. In Burdett, *Record of the Kurds,* 213.

active role in politics. Records exist of seventeenth century female leaders by both name and enshrined in law. In some of the more autonomous Kurdish regions in the Ottoman Empire, customary law held provisions for succession by daughters, and Turkish traveler Evliya Chelebi observed that succession by women was not uncommon and generally accepted by other Kurds.[212] Another traveler, an Italian fleeing Baghdad in the seventeenth century, passed through Persia and was taken in with great hospitality by the female Kurdish ruler Khanum Sultan.[213] Female Kurdish tribal leaders are known to have commanded armies in the seventeenth century and even during the Crimean War (1853-1856).[214] Soane even notes an unnamed woman who ruled over the Ardalan, Adela's tribe, with a "firm and just hand" at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[215] Once installed at Halabja following her marriage to Osman Pasha, "gradually the official power came into her hands."[216] As her husband traveled to attend to matters of government for the Ottomans, Adela began to govern locally for him in his absence. In this way she consolidated her power and began construction of a bazaar to support trade, a prison, and other local improvements.[217]

With Adela's accumulation of power in an already influential tribe, she marked herself as a valuable network for British state-makers. Major Ely Banister Soane, a British political officer in Suleymanieh, recognized the wide influence of Adela and the Jaf tribe. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Soane identified the Jaf tribe as possessing "more than semi-independence" from the Sultan and calling it unique in the ability of its chiefs to "agree and hold together."[218]

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[212] Martin van Bruinessen, "Matriarchy in Kurdistan? Women Rulers in Kurdish History," *The International Journal of Kurdish Studies* 6, no. 1 (Fall, 1993): 29.
[213] Ibid., 28.
[214] Ibid., 30-31.
[215] Ely Banister Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise: With Historical Notices of the Kurdish Tribes and the Chaldeans of Kurdistan* (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1914), 218.
[216] Ibid., 219.
[217] Ibid., 220.
[218] Ibid., 216.

He also highlighted Jaf influence among other tribes, writing "from time to time [the Jaf tribe] is called upon to undertake the chastisement of smaller tribes who may misbehave, and act for the Turks as wardens."[219] This influence was more than just the result of good relations among tribes – Soane pointed out that Adela's husband held such importance as a government figure of a frontier district that it "[necessitated] the possession of armed power."[220] In other words, Jaf leaders possessed significant sway in tribal society and considerable arms to reinforce their leadership. This fact would prove critically valuable for British state-makers during a rebellion in 1919, rendering political collaboration with Adela tremendously valuable.

Adela's collaboration with British state-makers is better understood by reviewing the negotiations, or lack thereof, she made with other major powers. Kurdish tribes in the Ottoman and Persian empires maintained varying degrees of autonomy at different times, depending on several political factors such as war and the interests of that particular sovereign. Kurdish tribes witnessed the modernization of the Ottoman state in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through projects of co-opting tribal power, as seen through the Hamidiye cavalry, as well as attempts at sedentarization of tribes.[221] Adela vigorously fought to maintain her tribe's autonomy from either empire. Major Soane reported that her town, Halabja, had been part of a prosperous Persian province in the past, but despite being an Ottoman territory in the twentieth century he identified it as "Persian except in name."[222] This speaks to the limited ability of the Ottoman state to extend its reach into Halabja. Indeed, Soane identified the Jaf Kurds as having "little or no subjectivity to the Turkish government."[223] Though the Ottoman state had attempted to place

[219] Ibid., 217.
[220] Ibid.
[221] For more on this, see Janet Klein, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011).
[222] Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan,* 213.
[223] Ibid.

a post and telegraph official in Halabja, the Jaf "with the worst possible grace tolerate the presence of the few Turkish officials."[224] Adela continued to restrain Ottoman advances at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Soane, the Turks "Grew jealous [of Halabja], and to obtain a hold over it, put up a telegraph line, to which the tribesmen objected", who then cut down the wire to manufacture chains and bullets.[225] Adela objected to the encroachment upon her territory as much as the tribesmen, as she "advised the Turks not to repair [the telegraph line] … and warned them that as fast as they built up telegraph wires her people should cut them down."[226] Adela battled against state encroachment on her tribe's territory and autonomy. While Jaf autonomy was by no means absolute, tribal elites like Adela put forth considerable effort to curb intrusion. It could not have been easily undermined by British state-makers.

Perhaps this degree of autonomy is why Major Noel was instructed by the Civil Commissioner in Baghdad in the summer of 1918 to "[explain] to the tribal chiefs with whom you enter into relations there is no intention of imposing upon them an administration foreign to their habits and desires."[227] These instructions were intended to prevent the tribal elites from viewing British state-makers as infringing on their autonomy. In December of the same year, while discussing nationalists, Noel echoed these sentiments of preserving Kurdish autonomy. He wrote to his colleague: "Kurdistan will have Kurdish language, personnel and administrators, levies, laws and regulations led by Kurdish custom, and the recognized chiefs will be allowed to carry on the tribal administrations of their clansmen as hereto."[228] While the intention for this letter was to help satiate Kurdish nationalists who called for complete independence without a

[224] Ibid.
[225] Ibid., 213, 220.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Telegram, Political Officer, Baghdad, to Secretary of State for India, 31 October 1918, No. 9309 [AIR 20/512]. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 169-170.
[228] Circular memorandum from Major E.W.C. Noel in Suleimaniyeh, to APO's (at) Kifri, Kirkuk and Altun Keupri, 8 December 1918, No. 43. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds*, 191.

period of British tutelage, this insight into the intended policy for Kurdistan helps contextualize why Adela may have cut down Turkish power lines but entered into negotiations with the British: they promised tribal autonomy.

The negotiations that occurred between the British and Adela were reasonably balanced, with neither party imposing their intentions on the other by force. Further, reviewing the negotiations demonstrates Adela's agency and proactive role in shaping the networks at her disposal. Adela easily proved her value to British state-makers through her role as a tribal elite within a massive and respected tribe. Like Mahmud Beg Ibn Ibrahim Pasha, her esteemed position within intertribal dynamics bolstered her importance. Intertribal dynamics and allegiances were negotiated and renegotiated with frequency. British state-makers required local assistance to operate within these political networks, making Adela's relationships with the neighboring tribes exceptionally valuable. With more than a dozen subtribes were under Jaf authority, Adela's regional influence was considerable. One pertinent example of her value to British state-makers is the Sheikh Mahmud rebellion in June 1919.[229] Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji presided over the first autonomous Kurdish government under British supervision in October 1918. Having resisted violently the imposition of direct British rule, he was overthrown and sent into exile by the British authorities in Baghdad in 1919. British agents had fought to contain Mahmud's rebellion, which included among the troops disaffected sections of the Jaf tribe, when the acting civil commissioner in Mesopotamia was informed of a plot by Mahmud to kidnap him from Halabja, Adela's town. He fled on horseback, accompanied by Jaf Chief Ali Beg and several other prominent tribal elites, who are reported to have greatly assisted him and left

[229] A more in-depth analysis of Sheikh Mahmoud and his connection to British state-makers would be a valuable addition to an expansion on this project, as it opens up numerous avenues for analyzing Kurdish networks of negotiation in this period.

behind their families and property to potential ruin. Adela, however, is given the greatest acclaim:

> "The person deserving especial praise is Adela Khanum, the Lady of Halabja, who acted splendidly throughout and did most excellent service in assisting me to keep law and order. It was largely due to her advice and influence that I succeeded so well… I had to leave my Indian clerk and 4 Indians behind as they could not ride. They are under the protection of the Khanum and will be quite safe with her."[230]

From this account, an impression emerges of Adela as a powerful, loyal asset to British state-makers. That the commissioner indicated the safety of his clerks under her protection signifies her position of power in tribal society. He clearly believed Adela and her tribesmen possessed influence and weapons enough to protect foreigners from a rebellion, or even that her influential position in tribal society meant Sheikh Mahmud would not take issue with her and the Jaf tribe. And the cooperation of her son Ali Beg with other prominent tribesmen implies the intertribal relationships that contributed to her power. She had clearly cultivated a significant position of trust with British state-makers. In fact, this event even made it into the November 1919 *Times* article by the Special Correspondent, discussed in the previous chapter. In it, while describing the troubles with Sheikh Mahmoud, he wrote: "On May 26 Halabja was sieged, but the British political officer and his staff were allowed to withdraw to Khanikin, thanks to the loyalty of that admirable Kurdish chieftainess, Adela Khanoum, who has since received an appropriate reward and title."[231] Her apparent 'loyalty' during a critical time, coupled with her influence within a massive tribe and in local intertribal politics, convinced the British she was worth investing in.

[230] "Report of the APO, Jaf, Halabja on the present Kurdistan Rebellion", 17 June 1919, by unnamed staff at General Headquarters to Baghdad [AIR 20/512]. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 403.
[231] Special Correspondent, "The Case Of Kurdistan," *The Times*, 17 November 1919.

Though the diplomatic ties between Adela and the British have clear benefits for the latter, Adela equally stood to benefit from their connection. The letters of Gertrude Bell, a British writer, traveler, and political officer, provide another vantage point for analyzing the networks available for Adela to exploit. From Bell's account, Adela seemed to have intended to embed herself in the developing state institutions: "Adela Khanum arrived, declaring that her love for me obliged her to see me again. Her real object was to induce me to intercede with Major Goldsmith in some private affairs of her own, but she didn't succeed for I knew a great deal better than to take a hand in local politics, moreover Major Goldsmith had told me all about these particular matters and I was therefore fully aware of what the Khanum's game was."[232] Bell's account shows that Adela pursued particular British political agents and attempted to use her connections with them to acquire information or even intercede in her affairs. Adela's willingness to use individuals as networks in pursuit of her political goals is acutely apparent in her relationship with Bell.

The 'private affairs' which Bell mentioned in her letter likely referred to the formation of Kurdish governing bodies by southern Kurds in the years after World War One in order to conduct their own local affairs. Adela sought Bell's intercession in November 1921, about one year after the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres (1920) which contained a provision for a Kurdish state.[233] Around this time, southern Kurds were forming governing bodies to conduct local affairs in areas like Kifri.[234] Only one month after Adela's intercession, in December 1921, the Suleimaniyeh division formed its own elective council, presided over by Major Goldsmith and

[232] Gertrude Bell, "Gertrude Bell to Her Father, Sir Hugh Bell," *Gertrude Bell Archive*, Nov 12. http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/letter_details.php?letter_id=523.
[233] The Treaty of Sèvres was never implemented and instead was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne which made no provisions for a Kurdish state.
[234] Saad Eskander, "Southern Kurdistan under Britain's Mesopotamian Mandate: From Separation to Incorporation, 1920-23," *Middle Eastern Studies* 37, no. 2 (2001): 166.

containing Kurdish representatives from four districts, including Adela's Halabja.[235] This council oversaw affairs of the economy, education, and other local issues. Adela likely intended to secure a place on the council for herself or one of her sons. Whatever her motivations, this case illustrates Adela's decision to cooperate with European state-making and embed herself into the fledgling institutions, thus appropriating power within the new political context. This was certainly not the only time Adela would take an interest in the rapidly changing political context of her region. In one letter, Bell described a conversation between she and Adela. Though briefly mentioned, it helps illuminate Adela's active role in negotiations. Bell wrote: "We carried on in Persian, a very complimentary talk in the course of which I managed to tell [Adela] how well 'Iraq was doing under Faisal and to assure [her] that all we wished was that our two children, 'Iraq and Kurdistan, should live in peace and friendship with one another."[236] Bell functioned here as a network between Adela and the British state-makers. She was staying in Halabja with a Captain Douglas, and her relationship with Adela seemed to help state-makers like Douglas connect with Adela. The women's friendship is implied in the same letter, with Bell writing "She has often written to me, feeling, I've no doubt, that we must be birds of a feather."[237] Through that friendship, Bell communicated the British desire for peace between Kurdistan and Iraq. While the details of their conversation are unfortunately omitted, this was certainly not idle conversation. Adela appears to have had an active role in negotiating for Jaf autonomy within the coming Kurdish polity.

[235] Ibid.
[236] Gertrude Bell, "Gertrude Bell Letter to Unknown." *Gertrude Bell Archive*, Nov 12. http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/letter_details.php?letter_id=522.
[237] Ibid.

Gendered Networks of Adela Khanum

An analysis of the networks cultivated by Adela would be incomplete without an investigation of the role gender played within these networks. Adela's role as a Jaf chief attracted the attention of British political agents while intersecting aspects of gender and orientalism became a tool for shaping the networks available to her. British imperialists frequently appealed to issues of gender and women's positions in colonized societies to help justify their imperial ventures. This fact would shape some of the discourse surrounding Adela specifically and the Kurds in general. An analysis of the gendered aspects of Adela's negotiations additionally reveal the ways Adela either transgressed or conformed to British understandings of women's gender roles. An understanding of this dynamic is key to the examination of how gender and orientalism intersected discursively to allow some political officers, such as Noel, to legitimize their political negotiations with Kurds.

Adela's position as a Jaf chief afforded her a degree of influence that made British political officers eager to engage with her. Her position and authority were both understood in gendered terms. According to Soane, her marriage to the Jaf chief Osman Pasha came as a result of her ties to the prominent Ardalan dynasty. The prestige she possessed from her family aided her in asserting a position of leadership in Halabja without opposition from her husband.[238] For Soane, then, her legitimacy as leader was initially staked in the prestige of her family ties but confirmed by the assent of her husband. Soane described how Adela began to govern for her husband in his absence, commencing construction projects, including a court of justice which she was president over, and she "so consolidated her own power, that the Pasha, when he was at Halabja, spent his time smoking a water pipe, building new baths, and carrying out local

[238] Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan,* 219.

improvements, while his wife ruled."[239] Soane acknowledged Adela's power in Halabja, even depicting her as the primary leader, but placed her leadership within the framework of deference to her husband. She ruled in his absence or in his lack of interest, meaning that she did so with his consent and did not transgress any gendered understandings of power.

This class distinction which helped assuage British discomfort with a woman ruler is further evident from Adela's dealings with Gertrude Bell. Genna Duplisea argues that though Bell faced difficulties navigating gendered expectations of a woman, she carefully navigated these potential pitfalls as a white, aristocratic, educated, professional British woman, and thus was able to employ masculine and imperialist strategies while appealing to her elite position within society to help assuage anxieties over her role in a traditionally masculine environment.[240] Piia Mustamäki expands on this by arguing that Bell was able to behave appropriately femininely even as she transgressed gender boundaries through participation in traditionally masculine activities, thus permitting her access to both feminine and masculine spaces.[241] I use this understanding of Bell's access to both spaces to consider Adela's own access and performance.

Adela facilitated some of her negotiations with British networks by navigating these gendered spaces. The case of Major Goldsmith described earlier by Bell is an example of one such instance. After a visit with Adela, Bell drove three hours by car to meet with Major Marshall and Major Goldsmith in Suleimaniyeh. Later that day, Adela arrived in Suleimaniyeh and found Bell, appealing to their friendship as the cause for meeting with her again.[242] In Bell's account, however, rather than engaging directly with Major Goldsmith, Adela attempted to

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[239] Ibid.
[240] Genna Duplisea, "Writing in the Masculine: Gertrude Lowthian Bell, Gender, and Empire," *Terrae Incognitae* 48, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 55–75.
[241] Pija Mustamäki, "Destination Levant: T. E. Lawrence and Gertrude Bell's Narrative Voice as Gender Transgression." *Neohelicon: Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum* 46, no. 2 (December 12, 2019): 552.
[242] Gertrude Bell, "Gertrude Bell to Her Father, Sir Hugh Bell," *Gertrude Bell Archive*, Nov 12. http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/letter_details.php?letter_id=523.

resolve her political business through this female friendship. Adela thus utilized Bell as an intercessor, allowing her to negotiate from within a perceived female space. While Bell was a valuable network for Adela in her own right, in this instance her female friendship permitted her to serve as a potential intermediary with the state-makers Adela had business with.

The intersection of gender and orientalism is visible in Adela's negotiations with the British. As Mrinalini Sinha argues for the Indian context, the place of women in a given society was frequently a justification for colonial rule.[243] British colonialists often highlighted indicators of 'social degeneration,' like child marriage and premature maternity, to justify their colonial projects. The 'backwardness' of a society was characterized by the poor treatment of women in society. For Sinha, the supposed backwardness and poor treatment of women disqualified Indians from self-government.[244] So too was the case for the British in the Middle East, who viewed the region as a backward civilization that could only develop into a modern, thriving state via colonial assistance. This lens is visible through British dealings with Adela.

Perceived differences in Kurdish society versus other Middle Eastern groups helped facilitate the negotiations that occurred with both tribes in general and Adela specifically. Some British political officers even verbalized their perception of Kurdish women as distinct from other Middle Eastern women. In his travel journal *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise,* Major Soane paid particular attention to the position of Kurdish women in society. He suggested that Kurdish women were distinct from other Islamic women, as in the absence of their husbands, they "entertained the writer, sat with and talked to him, never displaying any of the false shame or modesty of the Turk or Persian."[245] Kurdish women were further differentiated

[243] Mrinalini Sinha, *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire* (Duke University Press, 2006), see introduction.
[244] Ibid.
[245] Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan,* 397.

from other Islamic women by their lack of veils. In Maunsell's notes on the Kurds, he pointed out the position of Kurdish women in society in the following way: "the women do not veil and are allowed great freedom and converse freely with strangers, and this has an important affect on their social life."[246] This aspect of Kurdish society, Muslim women without veils who did not segregate themselves from men in the same ways as other Islamic groups, seemed to have made a significant impression. On the topic of head-covering, Soane wrote "the veil is absolutely unknown to the Kurds, and the women never hide their faces."[247] Even his observations on their relationships would isolate Kurdish women as unique in the Islamic world: "genuine affection between husband and wife[248] (so rare among the Islamic nations) is by no means unknown among the less savage tribes."[249] Governmental agents like Maunsell and Soane, who generally supported the creation of a Kurdish state, took note of the seemingly unique role of Kurdish women in Islamic society. This permitted a different approach to women and British colonialism than Sinha identified in the Indian context. Here, Kurdish women's supposed superior treatment in society prevented the typical appeals to social denigration.

Instead, this differentiation of Kurdish women became a sort of justification for pursuing a Kurdish national project. Women's position in Kurdish society became an anchor for Soane to divorce Kurdish society from the uncivilized Islamic world and link it to European ideals. Soane spoke of women like Adela, describing them as possessing power which could be equal to

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[246] Letter, F.R. Maunsell, London, to Mr Money, 29 October 1918. In Burdett, *Records of the Kurds,* 152.
[247] Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan,* 402.
[248] Afsaneh Najmabadi argues that the European connection of marriage with romantic love introduced heterocentrist paradigms into Iranian discourses and linked romantic marriage and heterosexuality with modernity, in opposition to procreative marriage and homosexuality. See chapter six of *Women with Mustaches and Men Without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
[249] Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan,* 397.

"or greater than many of the men of their own families… such can be solely the result of an understanding between the sexes more nearly approximating to our English ideas than obtains among any other Oriental race, and at the same time goes to show how little Islam has affected what must be the habit of ancient times."[250] This statement served the dual purpose of associating Kurdish women's gender roles with British virtues and of isolating Kurdish society from the Islamic world, treating it as if it did not likewise evolve within the Islamic and Middle Eastern context. Indeed, Soane identified Adela as "a woman unique in Islam."[251] The Kurdish woman's experience was dismissed as distinct from Islamic society, instead suggested as the leftovers of a pre-Islamic society. The diverse experiences of Islamic peoples in the Middle East were homogenized and essentialized into oppression of women, thus presenting the Kurdish woman's experience as more closely connected to British ideals. In this way, gender and orientalism intersected to legitimize British state-makers decisions to cooperate with Kurdish tribes. Analyzing how Adela navigated the gendered aspect of this network expands the understanding of Kurdish elites' maneuvering through obstacles that might prevent them from fully exploiting such political networks.

Conclusion

British negotiations with Kurdish tribal elites bore some similarities to their negotiations with urban nationalist elites, however the complex nature of Kurdish tribal organizations proved difficult for British state-makers to navigate without the assistance of tribal elites. Considerable time and resources were devoted to deciphering tribal political configurations and planning how best to integrate tribal leaders into British networks. Some Kurdish tribal elites identified the value of British networks and recognized the potential benefits of negotiating with them. Tribal

[250] Ibid., 398.
[251] Ibid., 216.

chiefs like Mahmud Beg Ibn Ibrahim Pasha recommended themselves to political officers on account of their access to and influence within intertribal networks of power. In the process, they aimed to situate themselves within these newly established networks of power. For Mahmud, this meant angling for a leadership position within a Kurdish polity. For Adela, this meant maintaining the autonomy and political configurations of her tribe. In both cases, Kurdish tribal elites negotiated through networks with British political officers in order to preserve their own intertribal power within the transforming political context.

EPILOGUE

The Fate of Kurdistan

As we have seen through the Special Correspondent to the Middle East's articles on Kurds in chapter two, after the Paris Peace Conference there was still British support for a Kurdish state. On 10 August 1920, the Ottoman Empire signed the Treaty of Sèvres, which marked the beginning of the formal partitioning of the Ottoman Empire. Britain and France began planning the empire's dismemberment, long before Sèvres and even the Paris Peace Conference, with the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement. An entirely new political structure for the Middle East emerged out of this treaty. Turkey ceded all non-Turkish territory to the Allied Powers, which allowed Britain to establish its mandate over Palestine and France's mandate over Syria and Lebanon. The negotiations by Kurdish nationalists for Kurdistan seemed to meet with some success through the treaty. It arranged for a referendum within six months from signing to plan "a scheme of local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas lying east of the Euphrates, south of the southern boundary of Armenia as it may be hereafter determined, and north of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia."[252] However, this meant that many of the borders which Kurdish nationalists had debated over would not be adopted. The treaty recognized Armenia as an independent state with borders that included the vilayet Van, which Sherif had discussing ceding to the Armenian delegation at the peace conference but other Kurdish nationalists vehemently rejected.

Further issues with borders arose in the treaty: the referendum on Kurdistan outlined borders that left out Kurds residing in French mandate Syria and British Mandate Iraq. The treaty

[252] "Peace Treaty of Sèvres - World War I Document Archive," 1920. Retrieved from https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Peace_Treaty_of_S%c3%a8vres.

arranged to revisit the subject of Kurdish autonomy within one year if the Kurdish people could show the League of Nations that "a majority of the population of these areas desires independence from Turkey, and if the Council then considers that these peoples are capable of such independence and recommends that it should be granted to them."[253] This represented a far cry from the independent state Kurdish nationalists like Sherif and Emin Ali had sought after. It was not such a loss for Kurdish elites who advocated for an autonomous Kurdistan, as Abdulkadir had done prior to World War One.[254] But the Treaty of Sèvres and its planned referendum on a Kurdish state never came to fruition, as the harsh terms and significant territory loss ignited a revolt by the Turkish Nationalist Movement headed under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. At the end of the Turkish War for Independence, peace negotiations concluded on 24 July 1923 and the new Treaty of Lausanne nullified the Treaty of Sèvres. In this new treaty, no provisions were made for a Kurdish state or autonomy of any kind. The rights of Turkey's minorities were reimagined as being based on religion, not ethnicity, which meant Muslim Kurds were not a recognized minority.[255] Kurdish nationalist movements like the SAK were thus suppressed and its members sent into exile.

This is not to say that the years of extensive negotiation and collaboration among Kurdish nationalists and British state-makers was futile. Their negotiations certainly contributed to the provision for Kurdistan in the Treaty of Sèvres, which otherwise would likely not have been considered were it not for the vocal and active negotiations of Kurdish nationalists with British state-makers and the international community. In terms of the political context of the Middle East after World War One, even these setbacks to Kurdish nationalism are evidence of Kurds'

[253] Ibid.
[254] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables,* 93.
[255] Omer Taspinar, *Kurdish Nationalism and Political Islam in Turkey: Kemalist Identity in Transition* (Middle East Studies: History, Politics, and Law. New York: Routledge, 2005), 77.

agency and role in shaping the political context. Because Kurds did not ultimately obtain an autonomous or independent region from these political negotiations, they can be wrongly conceptualized as irrelevant to the larger political imagery. However, Kurdish elites from a variety of backgrounds actively participated in nearly every level of negotiations for the fate of the Middle East. Urban-based elites sought out a powerful European supporter, finding success with British state-makers, and utilized both western presses and official petitions for peace. Nationalists from the tribal context like Mahmud likewise recognized the importance of the British as a network and leveraged the weight of their intertribal influence to motivate British support. It must surely have been easier for British state-makers who were interested in constructing a Kurdish state to justify the project with the support of powerful tribes in the region. While Adela Khanum may not have directly advocated for an independent state, she seems to have successfully lobbied for British support of her tribe's autonomy in a future Kurdistan. These and other conflicting projects by Kurdish elites, as indeed they each had distinct visions for the future political organization of Kurdistan, helped shape the global political project in the Middle East, and their significance should not be discounted on account of the failure to obtain a state.

The Ottoman Political Tapestry

Kurdish inclusion in the Ottoman political tapestry is a fitting place to begin an analysis of more than three decades of transformations in the Middle East and the world. Through the lens of Kurdish negotiations, this thesis has traced Kurdish involvement in some of the major political moments that reshaped the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East. The negotiations made by urban-based nationalists, tribal elites, and tribal nationalist elites illuminate the pressing

issues Kurdish elites faced as they attempted to reorient their elite status to fit into their changing political environment. While examined in different chapters, the negotiations of these elites were all interwoven in a broader picture of transformation, the analysis of which highlights Kurdish political agency and proactive roles in these processes.

Chapter one focused on the political transformations that moved Kurds into the imperial capital and provided them unique access to state institutions. Ottoman modernization in the long nineteenth century aimed to transform the relationship between state and subject by eliminating intermediaries and expanding centralized control into the periphery. Modernization and centralization contributed to the moving of rebellious Kurdish elites closer to the center to be better surveyed and co-opted into state institutions, under the assumption that people tied to the state would be less likely to rebel against it. The Bedirhan family was forcibly relocated to Istanbul after the failed rebellion of Bedirhan Beg. The relocation was meant to keep the Bedirhan family, which possessed strong intertribal connections in Kurdish society, under closer surveillance and within the state's reach. However, this process allowed members of the Bedirhan family, along with other prominent Kurdish families forcibly relocated to Istanbul, to embed themselves in imperial networks. Analyzing this period permits a closer look at changes to the Ottoman Empire and helps trace how Kurdish elites actively cultivated new networks of negotiation to facilitate the acquisition of power within a new context.

By the 1908 Revolution, Kurdish elites in Istanbul were thoroughly embedded in Ottoman state institutions, as demonstrated through the lives of Emin Ali Bedirhan, Sayyid Abdulkadir Semdinan, and Mehmed Sherif Pasha. With this new political transformation came a more liberal political and intellectual climate which Kurdish elites, now established members of the state bureaucracy, likewise participated in. Through cultural clubs such as the Society for the

Mutual Aid and Progress of Kurdistan (SMPK), Kurdish urban elites could use their positions in state institutions to promote Kurdish interests. Access to imperial networks facilitated Kurdish negotiations in the empire and abroad. It will be recalled that with the rise of the new CUP regime, Ismail Enver Pasha sought out Abdulkadir for his assistance in convincing Kurdish tribes to accept the authority of the new regime. This network was facilitated by Abdulkadir's position in the Ottoman bureaucracy as a member of the senate and upper-chamber. The position gave him access to other elites, even in moments of political change, that he could collaborate with. Similarly, Sherif Pasha's international career began before the 1908 Revolution, when he was the Ottoman military attaché to Berlin and Paris, and then an ambassador to Stockholm from 1898-1908. His international reputation earned coverage of his life in major newspapers like *New York Times* and *Times.* At the end of World War One, in another period of political transformation, he continued to utilize the press as a network in his political goals through publishing articles. The networks cultivated by these elites before the 1908 Revolution continued to benefit them across multiple political transformations.

Chapter two shifted to the World War One context, arguably one of the most significant political transformations in Middle Eastern history. Many of the Kurdish cultural elites from the pre-war era now adopted various forms of Kurdish nationalist ideology. This period witnessed Kurdish elites utilizing the networks cultivated during the imperial context to pursue a Kurdish nation-state. In this context, Kurdish nationalists faced a variety of new challenges to their political goals but continued to navigate their existing networks and cultivated new ones to overcome those challenges. With the many well-publicized massacres of Armenians, and the news of the Armenian Genocide shocking the west, Kurds like Sherif utilized the press to confront a new problem that emerged out coverage of the genocide: western sympathy for

Armenians and mistrust for Kurds. This issue would plague Kurdish urban nationalists who aimed to establish what they considered appropriate borders for Kurdistan. But as western support was largely for Armenians, Kurds needed to publicize their rightful claim to the overlapping territories. Some Kurdish elites, like Sureyya Bedirhan of the Kurdish Committee of Independence in Cairo, opted to send petitions directly to state governments, especially the British, to lobby for western support and minimize the role of Kurds in massacres of Armenians. These networks presented unique obstacles to fully utilizing them, namely orientalist rhetoric that disparaged Kurds as uncivilized. Elites engaged with these challenges a number of ways, such as Sureyya's petition to the British, or vows that Kurdistan would modernize with the help of a western power, or through public displays of amity, like Sherif's joint declaration at the Paris Peace Conference with the Armenian delegation.

These two networks, the press and petitions to the British, are some of the most significant indicators of Kurdish elites' participation in transforming political structures. They are evidence of the awareness of Kurdish elites of discourses about them abroad and examples of proactively reshaping the narrative to rehabilitate the Kurdish reputation and nullify claims of inherent inferiority. Kurdish elites were neither passive during these political changes nor powerless in their negotiations. As chapter two shows, British state-makers had significant incentives to construct a loyal Kurdish state as a neighbor to Iraq. Kurdistan represented regional stability, a buffer state shielding British Iraq and India, and a loyal partner that would fill the political vacuum before another Kurdish nationalist group, perhaps one that perceived the British less favorably, could take power. Keenly aware of these facts, Kurdish nationalists entered their negotiations well-equipped and saw success with their western partner.

In chapter three, the lens shifted to the tribal context to consider how other kinds of Kurdish elites negotiated with the British in before and after World War One. The negotiations which tribal elites made with British state-makers had a different flavor to them. For all the arguments urban elites made, they did not have the guaranteed support of powerful Kurdish tribes to back them up. If the Kurdish tribes in Kurdistan refused the political organizations being thrust onto them, it would be a costly and exhausting battle for Britain. Therefore, British state-makers set out to negotiate with tribal elites. Tribal elites like Adela Khanum and Mahmud Beg Ibn Ibrahim Pasha recognized the changes to the Middle East and sought to embed themselves in the new systems of government to solidify their influence in the rapidly changing political context. The negotiations by tribal elites illuminate some of the other obstacles to Kurdish negotiation. For tribal elites, the might of Britain's military was a significant factor in the decision to cooperate. Urban elites in Istanbul did not face the grave possibility of airstrikes or the burning of villages by British soldiers; tribes did. Nevertheless, the critical importance of Kurdish tribes accepting Britain's presence in the region meant that Kurdish tribal elites possessed a significant amount of leverage in their negotiations.

The analysis of Adela's negotiations added the distinction of a unique political vision and fresh set of negotiations. Unlike Mehmed, who openly identified as a nationalist, Adela did not intend to foist herself to the top of a Kurdish state. Rather, her negotiations were founded on the understanding that she would maintain her tribal autonomy in a Kurdish state. She took advantage of the political changes unfolding in southern Kurdistan to embed herself into British networks in order to better defend her and her tribe's needs. While Adela cut down powerlines built by the Ottoman state to prevent infringement on her territory, she acknowledged the new networks of power flowing into her region in the form of British state-makers and opted to

collaborate with them. She successfully navigated the gendered aspects of her negotiations with the British and made certain she had a hand in local affairs, as seen in the case of her intercession with Gertrude Bell and Major Goldsmith. Even as the political structures of southern Kurdistan and the Ottoman Empire transformed before her eyes, Adela cultivated new and existing networks to maintain her autonomy as a tribal elite.

The Kurdish elites in this thesis each played important roles in shaping the political contexts around them. Near the end of the nineteenth century and across the first two decades of the twentieth century, several major political transformations occurred in the Middle East. The modernizing reforms of the long nineteenth century saw the Ottoman Empire extend state reach out into the periphery and then pull with it some Kurdish elites to the capital through forced re-location. The liberalizing reforms of the 1908 Revolution allowed Kurds and other groups to organize more freely, establish newspapers, and advocate openly for their interests. World War One dramatically rocked the Middle East, permitting yet another moment for Kurdish elites to reorient themselves in the new political context. Kurdish elites responded to these changes across the decades, constantly resituating their positions in the political structures of the Ottoman Empire until its dissolution. Then, as European states organized at the Paris Peace Conference to completely reshape the Middle East, Kurdish elites likewise fixed their gaze on these states in order to determine how to situate themselves as elites in a new political context yet again.

This thesis has attempted to situate Kurds in the broader political transformations of the first quarter of the twentieth century and argued for their relational position in shaping and being shaped by those changes. The contributions of Kurds in this period are often obscured by historians due to a misinformed conceptualization of failure in a particular political project, namely state-making, as indicative of a lack of influence. Just as I have shown that Kurdish

cultural elites prior to World War One were parts of the Ottoman political tapestry, Kurdish participation in local, regional, and international negotiations influenced the complex web of interactions that has led the Middle East to its present political configuration. To borrow the tapestry imagery, Kurdish influence in these wide-scale political transformations is interwoven with the influences of other major powers. The Kurdish strands of the tapestry are threaded alongside the Ottoman, Armenian, British, and French strands. Their impact on these historical moments are unmistakable and should be understood within the broader context of these events. Like any tapestry, if you attempt to remove some threads the whole thing unravels.

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Conference Presentations:

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International Experience:

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