

THE NÛBIHAR CIRCLE'S PERSPECTIVE ON
TURKEY'S KURDISH QUESTION



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İSTANBUL ŞEHİR UNIVERSITY

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THE NÛBIHAR CIRCLE'S PERSPECTIVE ON TURKEY'S KURDISH QUESTION

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BY

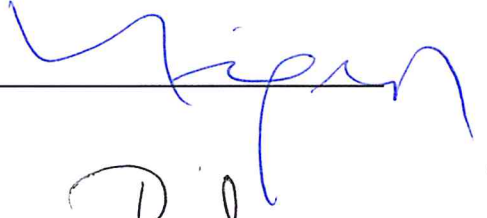


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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology.

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all materials and results that are not original to this work.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "E. Bayram", with a horizontal line underneath.

ABSTRACT

THE NÛBIHAR CIRCLE'S PERSPECTIVE ON TURKEY'S KURDISH QUESTION

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This thesis explores the Nûbihar Circle's perspective on Turkey's Kurdish question throughout the research question "What is the perception of the Nûbihar Circle about Turkey's Kurdish Question?" It considers ethnicity and nationalism and their interaction with Islam as central in understanding and analysing the Nûbihar Circle's perception of the Kurdish question. Thus, theoretical background examines relationship between religion and nationalism in general and Islam and nationalism in particular in the context of Turkey. The research's data is mostly collected through the primary sources by conducting elite interviews with the ten prominent members of the Nûbihar Circle. The group's own publications are also widely used as primary sources. On the other hand, secondary sources are written text of the active members of the Nûbihar Circle in books, seminar booklets, and Journals (such as *Yenizemin*). All sources of the Nûbihar Circle are examined through qualitative content analysis method with the focus on the Nûbihar Circle's perspective on the Kurdish Question. The main argument of the study advocates that by framing its nationalism within a religious context, the Nûbihar Circle defines the Kurdish question from an ethnic perspective. This allows group justifying its nationalist approach of the Kurdish issue through the religion [Islam] as well as making Islamic and Kurdish identities of the Nûbihar Circle gathered, idiosyncratic, and harmonious. Bediuzzaman Saidi Nursi's ethnic (Kurdish) and Islamic identities and müspet (positive/affirmative) nationalism understanding make a significant influence in determination of the Nûbihar Circle's perspectives on the Kurdish question. These identities provide the group an ethnic and Islamic centric standpoint in their defining of the Kurdish Question and its solution.

Keywords: The Kurdish Question, the Nûbihar Circle, Nationalism, Islam



ÖZ

NÛBİHAR ÇEVRESİ'NİN TÜRKİYE'DEKİ KÜRT MESELESİ ALGISI

Bayram, Esmâ

Sosyoloji Yüksek Lisans Programı

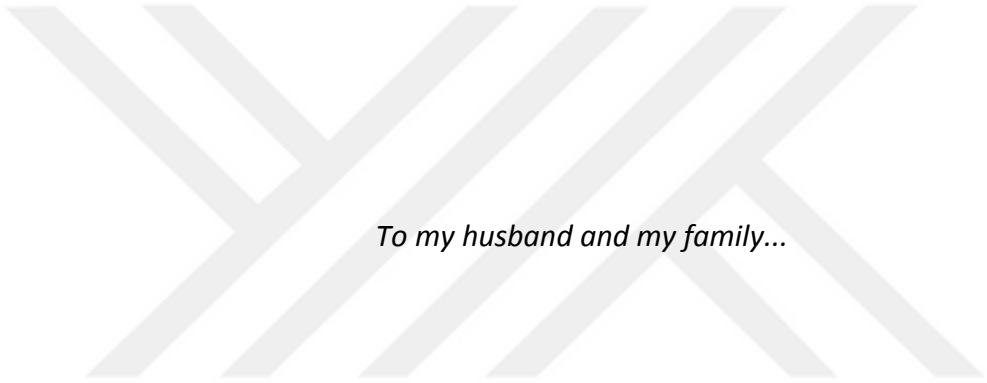
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“Nûbihar Çevresi'nin Türkiye'deki Kürt sorununa yaklaşımını nedir?” araştırma sorusuna yanıt arayan bu tez, Nûbihar Çevresi'nin Türkiye'deki Kürt sorununa bakışını inceliyor. Tez, etnik köken ve milliyetçiliği ve İslam ile olan etkileşimini, Nûbihar Çevresi'nin Kürt meselesinin algılanışını anlama ve analiz etmede merkez olarak görüyor. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın teorik altyapısı, genel olarak din ve milliyetçiliğin ve Türkiye bağlamında da İslam ve milliyetçiliğin ilişkisini incelemektedir. Araştırmanın verileri çoğunlukla, Nûbihar Çevresi'nin önde gelen on üyesiyle yapılan elit mülakat yönteminin gerçekleştirilmesiyle elde edilen birincil kaynaklara dayanmaktadır. Grubun kendi yayınları da birincil kaynaklar olarak yaygın bir şekilde kullanıldı. Öte yandan Nûbihar Çevresinin aktif üyelerinin kitap, seminer kitapçıkları ve (Yenizemin gibi) dergilerdeki yazıları da ikincil kaynakları oluşturmaktadır. Bu çalışma, nitel içerik analizi yöntemi ile Nûbihar Çevresi'nin tüm kaynaklarını değerlendirmektedir. Bu analizde odak noktasını oluşturan noktalar Nûbihar Çevresi'nin Kürt meselesi algısı ile ilgilidir. Bu çalışma, Nûbihar Çevresi'nin milliyetçiliği dini bağlamda şekillendirerek Kürt sorununu etnik bir perspektiften tanımladığını savunuyor. Bu, grubun Kürt meselesine karşı milliyetçi yaklaşımını din [İslam] aracılığıyla haklı kılmasını ve Nûbihar Çevresi'nin İslami ve Kürt kimliklerini, kendine özgü ve uyumlu bir hale getirmesini sağlar. Bediüzzaman Saidi Nursi'nin etnik (Kürtçe) ve İslami kimlikleri ile müspet (olumlu) milliyetçilik anlayışı, Nûbihar Çevresi'nin Kürt meselesindeki bakış açısının belirlenmesinde belirgin bir etkiye sahiptir. Bu kimlikler, grubun Kürt sorunu ve çözümünü tanımlamalarında etnik ve İslami merkezli bir bakış açısı kazanmalarını sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kürt Meslesi, Nûbihar Çevresi, Milliyetçilik, İslam





To my husband and my family...

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP: (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)	Justice and Development Party
HDP: (Halkların Demokratik Partisi)	People's Democratic Party
HUDAPAR: (Hür Dava Partisi)	Free Cause Party
ISID: (Irak ve Şam İslam Devleti)	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
MHP: (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi)	Nationalist Movement Party
NOM: (Milli Gorus Hareketi)	National Outlook Movement
PKK: (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan)	Kurdistan Workers' Party



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study thesis examines the Nûbihar Circle's approach to the Kurdish Question in Turkey with an additional purpose of analyzing and investigating the influence of ethnic identity on the ways in which the Kurdish Question is perceived in the Islamic circles. Indeed, the main objective of this study is to investigate the Nûbihar Circle's approach to the Kurdish Question in Turkey with the particular aim of questioning whether ethnic identity has an influence on the ways in which an ethnic question is addressed by Islamic communities.

There are three main objectives of choosing the Nûbihar Circle for this study: The first reason is that the Nûbihar Circle's members are mostly Kurdish speaking Turkish citizens. These members have been influenced by or witnessed the state's nationalist policies against the Kurds. As a result, this situation might reveal the impact of ethnicity and Islam much more and, answer the place of nationalism in Islam, in Turkey. That is why this point had an impact on the choice of the Nûbihar Circle. Secondly, the Nûbihar Circle's was chosen because of its interest in the Kurdish Question without losing its Islamic identity. The Nûbihar Circle paid a particular attention to the issues related to the Kurdish ethnic identity and Kurdish language in addition to its sensitivity to the Islamic values. This is, obviously, a significance factor for choosing the Nûbihar Circle to study. Finally, the reason to select the Nûbihar Circle is that it is a part of *Nurcu* Movements whose members read and follow Said Nursi's¹ works. Since this study aims to examine the impact of ethnicity on Islamic communities' approaches to the Kurdish Question, I chose to study one of the Kurdish

¹ Said Nursi is a Kurdish Shafii Muslim theologian. He wrote a Qur'anic commentary, the Risale-i Nur Collection. Nursi inspired a religious movement and his followers are often known as *the "Nurcu movement" or the "Nur cemaati"*. Said Nursi was born in the first half of 1870s, according to *Tarihçe-i Hayat*, in 1877, as the fourth child of a family of seven children in *Nurs* village of Hizan district of Bitlis (*Tarihçe-i Hayat*, 2006, p.959; Canlı & Beysülen, 2010, p. 45). The level of knowledge that Said Nursi had attained at a young age, which had proven to be the most effective by the famous scholars in the East, has all amazed. The scholars of the time gave him the title of honorific *Bediuzzaman* because of his difference; such as that he could understand the most difficult subjects immediately and could memorize the books once he read and even reviewed (Weld, 2006, p. 28). (for further information see appendix A)

Islamic communities in Turkey, the Nûbihar Circle which reads and follows Said Nursi's works. This community is known as a part of *Nurcu* Movement, meaning they read and follow Said Nursi's *The Epistles of Light* Collection and they attach importance to the words of the author of *The Epistles of Light* Collection, Said Nursi. This point is highly important because Said Nursi is a well-known due to his Kurdish and Muslim identity and he created the madrasah project called *Madrasatuz-Zehra*² in Kurdistan. Choosing an Islamic Community among *Nurcu* Communities would provide me an additional opportunity to examine their thoughts about Kurdish and Islamic identities of Said Nursi, and about Said Nursi's writings related to the Kurdish Question and *Madrasatuz-Zehra* project. Additionally, as long as this community is chosen among Islamic Kurdish communities, impact of nationality on Islam would be significant compared to investigation of Turkish Islamic communities' perspective on the Kurdish Question. It is because the Kurdish Islamic community would be able to evaluate events, problems, and Said Nursi's words by considering their Kurdish ethnic identity, their own problems, their experience, and their solutions about the Kurdish Question in Turkey. It is therefore that one of the Kurdish Islamic communities, the Nûbihar Circle which follows the Said Nursi's writings, has been chosen in this study. It is due to the above stated reasons that the Nûbihar Circle is chosen to investigate the influence of ethnic identity on the Islamic communities' approach to the Kurdish Question.

The following sources are used to investigate the Nûbihar Circle's perspective on the Kurdish Question: as primary sources; the publications of the Nûbihar Circle in Turkish, and the interviews conducted with the prominent members³ of the Circle are used. However, as I am not able to read in Kurdish, the study could not benefit from

² It is a madrasah/university project where religious science, mysticism, and social and natural science are in three languages: Arabic, Turkish, and Kurdish (Nursi, Kastamonu Lahikası,.21) (Münazarat sempozyumu, 569). This university was planned to start an educational campaign in Kurdistan for the sustainment of people's spiritual and mental needs. According to Said Nursi's plan, Arabic language should be *vacip* (obligatory) to raise a Muslim generation, Kurdish as the native language in Kurdistan should be *caiz* (formal/lawful/allowable), and Turkish as the formal state language should be *lazım* (required/necessary). Through trilingual education Said Nursi wants to avoid racism. (Nursi, İçtimai Dersler, 141) (Münazarat Sempozyumu, 577-8) In order to provide Kurdish scholars and to integrate Kurds into the state, people who know Kurdish and who are knowledgeable should be employed as lecturers. (Münazarat Sempozyumu, 628)

³ These people take part in decision mechanism of the Nûbihar Circle, follow the Circle for more than seven years, have enough knowledge related to the Nûbihar Circle, and they are active in the Circle's activities and organizations

the *Nûbihar Journal*, the main journal of the Circle. Nevertheless, this deficiency is filled through conducting interviews with prominent members of the Nûbihar Circle who take part in decision-making mechanism of the Circle. These members have reliable and valid knowledge about the Circle. On the other hand, as secondary sources, the works produced by the prominent members (İzzettin Yıldırım, Osman Tunç, Muhammet Siddık Dursun, Süleyman Çevik, Zekeriya Özbek, Osman Tekin, Osman Tunç, Adil Yılmayan, and Muhyeddin Zinar)⁴ of the Nûbihar Circle such as their books and writings in Journals (e.g.: *Yenizemin*) or in seminar booklets are evaluated.

This study benefits from two different methods: Elite interview method and qualitative content analysis method. Whereas elite interview method is used to get primary source of the Nûbihar Circle, the reason to choose the qualitative content analysis method is to examine all the sources of the Nûbihar Circle to search for specific information about the Nûbihar Circle's approach to the Kurdish Question within the documents. Also, through the qualitative content analysis method, the trustworthiness, validity, and reliability of the sources between the documents could be evaluated and compared. During qualitative content analysis, focus was on a) the Nûbihar Circle's defining of the Kurdish Question, b) its thoughts about the Kurds' demand for autonomy, federation, and independence, c) its solution for the Kurdish Question such armed struggle or non-violent methods, and d) its opinion about the political representation: the legal legitimacy of PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), HDP (the Peoples' Democratic Party), or other agents, and e) its view of Said Nursi's Kurdish and Islamic Identity.

Aiming to investigate the impact of ethnicity on Kurdish Islamic communities' approach to the Kurdish Question, I also examined the relevant literature investigating the relationship between religion and nationalism. Particularly, I examined the works of Anthony. D. Smith, Elie Kedourie, Adrian Hastings, Talad Asad, Derek R. Peterson and Darren R. Walhof, who point out the relation of nationalism

⁴Whereas İzzettin Yıldırım, Osman Tunç, Muhammet Siddık Dursun, and Süleyman Çevik are the founders of the *Nûbihar Journal*, Zekeriya Özbek, Osman Tekin, Adil Yılmayan, and Muhyeddin Zinar are referenced by the interviewees as the representative of the *Nûbihar Circle* and are decided after a detailed research about the *Nûbihar Circle*)

with religion, to understand the compatibility between religion and nationalism in general and Islam, and nationalism in particular. Rogers W. Brubaker's approach to the relationship between nationalism and religion was specifically beneficial for this study since he had different point of view to the issue. Brubaker focused on the question of "how the relation between religion and nationalism can fruitfully be studied", instead of focusing on the question "what kind of relationship exists between nationalism and religion". After analyzing the Nûbihar Circle's perspective on Turkey's Kurdish Question in the fifth chapter, this study will decide the appropriate approach of Brubaker for the Nûbihar Circle within his fourth approaches in order to study the relationship between nationalism and religion.

I have also examined the literature available on the relationship between Islam and nationalism in Turkey. In particular, I examined the works of Markus Dressler, Hakan Yavuz, Dov Waxman, and Kemal Karpat. However, none of these scholars investigates the influence of nationalism on Islam or more specifically the influence of ethnicity on Islamic' perspectives of the Kurdish Question, as I did. In this respect, although this study benefited from their work considerably, Gökhan Çetinsaya's work on nationalism in Islam and Islam in nationalism, Serdar Şengül's work on Islamism and the Kurdish question, and Mücahit Bilici's work on the Kurdish Question and Turkish Nationalism are quite remarkable. Whereas Çetinsaya examines the complex relationship between Islamism and nationalism in Turkey through Turkish Islamists' perspective on nationalism, Şengül analyzes Turkish and Kurdish Islamists' approaches to the Kurdish question. On the other hand, Bilici investigates the relationship between Turkish nationalism and Islam with a particular reference to the Kurds and the Kurdish Question. However, no one of the writers touch upon relationship between nationalism and Islam on Kurdish Islamists' perspective on the Kurdish Question as this thesis did.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. First chapter explains the main problem and the structure of the thesis. The second chapter is regarding the main argument of the study and the conducted methodology. The third chapter provides a compact examination of the Islamic movements in Turkey, the Nûbihar Circle, and the Kurdish

Question. The fourth chapter examines the literature on the relationship between religion and nationalism and the one between Islam and nationalism. Chapter five analyzes the Nûbihar Circle's approach to the Kurdish Question through content analysis of the works by and on the Nûbihar Circle and the interviews conducted with the prominent members of the circle. This chapter analyzes whether ethnicity has an impact on the Kurdish Islamic Communities' interpretation of Islam's approach to an ethnic question, in particular to the Kurdish Question. The thesis concludes with chapter six where I provide an overall analysis of my findings.



CHAPTER 2

THE ARGUMENT AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. The Argument

I will pursue in this work the question “What is the perspective of the Nûbihar Circle about Turkey’s Kurdish Question” with the purpose of questioning the influence of ethnicity and nationalism on the ways in which an ethnic question is addressed by one of the Kurdish Islamic Communities. Whether and to what extent nationalism and Islam are in relationship with each other in the context of Turkey and with a particular reference to the Nûbihar Circle’s approach to the Kurdish question is also investigated in this study. The thesis analysis the impact of Islamism, national identity (Kurdishness), and Said Nursi’s views and works on the Nûbihar Circle’s attitudes toward the Kurdish Question. In particular, it investigates how Islamism, ethnic identity (Kurdishness), and Said Nursi’s views and works have moulded Nûbihar Circle’s approach to such issues such as nationalism, political and representation of Kurds, and the resolution process within the context of how to deal with the Kurdish Question.

My argument is that the Nûbihar Circle describes and offers solution for the Kurdish Question in Turkey, by considering Kurdish and Islamic identity of Said Nursi. Highlighting Said Nursi, Nûbihar Circle claims that Kurdish question is related to lack of solidarity and national consciousness within the Kurds. They deem education, particularly Said Nursi's *Medresatüzzehra* model and Con-Federal Islamic World proposal, namely *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye*⁵, valuable in dealing with the Kurdish issue, since both models provides Kurds with their national rights within the Muslim World. Also, the Nûbihar Circle supports *müspet* (positive/affirmative) nationalism as opposed to *menfi* (negative) nationalism as Said Nursi suggests. That is to say, the Nûbihar Circle evaluates every subject, especially related to the Kurds, with the influence of their Islamic and [Kurdish] ethnic identities. Due to Islamic and Kurdish

⁵ A Regime Model proposed by Said Nursi in which the rights of Kurds are recognized, and Islamic rules, as Sharia, are applied. (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

identities of Said Nursi, the Nûbihar Circle pays more attention to the Said Nursi and his words since Said Nursi took religion as an imminent point in his understanding and approach of everything including the Kurdish question. This study argues that by framing its nationalism within a religious context, Nûbihar Circle defines the Kurdish question from an ethnic perspective. This allows the group justifying its nationalist approach of the Kurdish issue through the religion [Islam]. Hence, relationship between nationalism and Islam is harmonious, gathered, and idiosyncratic among the Nûbihar Circle.

2. 2. Methodology: The Elite Interview and Content Analysis

This thesis started its journey in 2014 in order to make a comparative analysis of the Nûbihar Circle and the Gülen Movement on their perspectives on Turkey's Kurdish Question. With the purpose of investigating whether nationality create a difference in their interpretation and perception of Islam, or vice versa, –just for the Kurdish Question, this study determined two Islamic communities in Turkey, which adopt and follow Said Nursi's works as the philosophy of their communities: The Gülen Movement and the Nûbihar Circle. The members of these Islamic communities were mostly from two different 'ethnic' groups, while members of the Nûbihar Circle were predominantly Kurdish-speaking citizens, the members of the Gülen Movement were predominantly Turkish-speaking citizens. Examining these two Islamic communities with different 'ethnic' identities, this study intended to examine the influence of ethnicity and nationalism on the ways in which the Kurdish Question was perceived in the Islamic circles. In other words, the main point of this study was to investigate the Gülen Movement's and the Nûbihar Circle's perspectives on the Kurdish Question with an aim to question whether ethnic identity creates a differentiation in the ways in which an ethnic question is addressed by Islamic communities. However, the occurrence of the coup d'état attempt on July 15, 2017 resulted in suspicion on the Gülen Movement whether it is an Islamic Community or not. Anymore, the sources of the Gülen Movement might be controversial. Hence, this situation has led a change in the research question of the thesis. Giving up to study the Gülen Movement, the thesis has been converted to an analysis of the Nûbihar Circle's perspective on Turkey's Kurdish Question.

What does the Kurdish Question mean to the Circle? What are the Circle's solutions for the Kurdish Question? Who should represent the Kurdish Question on the resolution process according to the Circle? What do they think about Said Nursi's Kurdish and Islamic identity, and his *Medresetüzzehra* project? They are questions that show the Nûbihar Circle's perspective on the Kurdish Question. These questions can find the most accurate answers through the writings and publications of the Circle and of the prominent members of the Circle as well as through written sources about the community and interviews conducted with the prominent members of the Circle. Therefore, this study follows the elite interview method and the qualitative content analysis that examines documents to search for specific data within the documents.

In order to get information about the Nûbihar Circle's perspective on the Kurdish Question, as primary sources, interviews conducted with ten prominent members of the Nûbihar Circle, and the group's own publications in Turkish have been used whereas the writings of the active members of the Nûbihar Circle in books, seminar booklets, or in journals about the Kurdish Question composed of the secondary sources of the thesis. Originally, the thesis could benefit from the main publication of the Nûbihar Circle, the *Nûbihar Journal*, as primary source. Nevertheless, this source could not be used since the writer is unable to read Kurdish. However, this deficiency has been filled out through conducting elite interviews with ten prominent members of the Circle. These people are called as prominent members since most of them take part in decision-making mechanism of the Nûbihar Circle, have actively been in the Circle for more than ten years, and even join in seminars, organizations, activities as the representatives of the Nûbihar Circle. Therefore, all of them have reliable knowledge about the Circle. These interviews were chosen from the prominent members of the Nûbihar Circle so that they could give the correct, reliable, and valid information about the Nûbihar Circle and the Nûbihar Circle's perception of the Kurdish Question. They, as well, not only tried not to give wrong information or to create a wrong understanding about the Nûbihar, but also supplied many sources to increase the reliability of their replies.

Due to the state of emergency related to coup d'état attempt on July 15, 2017, it was really difficult to find members of the Nûbihar Circle. These people hesitated answering my questions and even accepting to conduct interview about a political issue related to the Nûbihar Circle and its perspective on the Kurdish Question. Therefore, first of all, the problem of trust should be solved arranging people. These people have been offered by their friends who could give this trust to them. In this way, I could conduct interviews with them. Mesut Yeğen could give this trust to Süleyman Çevik by mentioning about this thesis. Before coup d'état attempt, on February 10, 2015 at the Nûbihar Publishing House in Fatih, İstanbul, a face to face interview was conducted with Çevik. Süleyman Çevik was chosen because he was the chief editor of the Nûbihar Journal. He was born in 1965 in Diyarbakır, and he took part in foundation process of the Nûbihar Publishing House and Nûbihar Journal; hence, he has been member of the Nûbihar Circle since 1992. On the other hand, Kaya Din was referenced by Süleyman Çevik as the representative of the Nûbihar Circle, and he also joined in some seminars as the representative of the Circle. Din was an investigative writer and was a member of the Nûbihar Circle for more than twelve years. He was in his forties. Although at the beginning he accepted my interview request, then seeing the interview questions, he refused. After e-mailing to each other, he accepted again to conduct interview on Skype on January 21, 2016. During interview, I recognized his sensibility towards the question asking his position within the Nûbihar Circle⁶. During interview, he was uneasy, cautious, and strict in order to get rid of a prospective misunderstanding. Hence his answers were short, clear (according to him), and a bit superficial. He was aggressive and reactive when I requested more explanation and details. However, he provided me reports of the Nûbihar Circle and some sources reflecting the Nûbihar Circle's perception about the Kurdish Question.

Until 2017, I could have found no members of the Nûbihar Circle. Then, I met Jegr Denise on an e-mail group, *Kurdish Studies Network*. Denise was in his forties and introduced himself as an ex-member of the Nûbihar Circle, but he had knowledge

⁶ Kaya Din and also other interviewees claimed that the Nûbihar Circle has a non-hierarchical structure. Therefore, everyone was equal and things such as position did not exist among the Circle.

about the Nûbihar Circle. We conducted an interview on Skype on March 4, 2017. Different than other interviews, Denise was the most objective person about the Nûbihar Circle and the Circle's thoughts about the Kurdish Question since he had a critical perspective on the Nûbihar Circle and its thoughts. Denise's nephew helped me to find members of the Nûbihar Circle. He arranged an interview with Karwan Nal on Skype on February 2, 2017. Nal was a writer in the *Nûbihar Journal*. He was about thirties and a member of the Nûbihar Circle for more than fifteen years. He also participated in seminars as the representative of the Nûbihar Circle. Moreover, since I live in Erbil, I found and met with Serhat Kanca, who was one of the responsible officers at the Erbil branch of the Nûbihar Publishing House. He was about thirties and member of the Nûbihar Circle for ten years. I conducted a face to face interview with Kanca in Royal Mall, Erbil on March 11, 2017. Especially, Kanca and Nal quoted reference from Said Nursi's words. Moreover, prominent members of the Nûbihar Circle paid a visit to the Nûbihar Publishing House in Erbil and Nûbihar stands in Erbil International Book Fair'17. Kanca arranged a face to face interview with Mehmet Ümit and Azad Eser on March 22, 2017 in Tablo Mall, Erbil. Eser was a tradesman in Sultanbeyli, İstanbul. He was about fifties and member of the Nûbihar Circle since 1992. Eser decided to join in the Nûbihar Circle by leaving one of the Turkish Islamic communities when he realized this Turkish Community's discriminative attitude against Kurds and Kurdish Journal, the *Nûbihar Journal*. Eser preferred the Nûbihar Circle since this circle gathered together Kurdish national identity and Islamic identity. On the other hand, Ümit was a doctorate student in Turkey and about thirties. He was obsessive about methods, especially about discourse analysis method. He insistently offered me to choose this method in my thesis. Ümit borrowed me his own seminar booklet (*Vefatının 50. Yılında Uluslararası Said Nursi Sempozyumu*) which no longer existed in the market. Sönmez Soner was recommended due to his active works in the Nûbihar Circle and adequate knowledge related to the Nûbihar Circle. I conducted an interview on Skype on February 26, 2017. Soner was a master student. I have doubt or his age whether he was about twenties or thirties. Currently his first task was to complete his master thesis. Soner expressed that even though they are members of the Nûbihar Circle for a long time, they had no idea on the name of Nûbihar Circle. According to Soner, the Nûbihar

Circle was a name given by other people including academicians and scholars. On the other hand, Kubat Rasul as the representative of the Nûbihar Circle was recommended by most of my interviews. As a result of our correspondence on e-mail, Rasul accepted to reply my interview questions via email; hence I sent him the questions and he sent me his replies on May 11, 2017. Therefore, I have no idea as to his characteristics since I did not meet with him. However, he was so sensitive about the Nûbihar Circle. So, he was always open to share the sources related to the Nûbihar Circle whenever he found and remember. At the end, he kindly requested my analysis on Nûbihar Circle's perspective on Turkey's Kurdish Question in order to check the validity and reliability of the given information. Finally, I found Recep Işık as a result of my research. He was active in the Circle's organizations and activities, and he was a member of the Nûbihar Circle all his life. Since he was trying to complete his final project to graduate from his university, we could conduct an interview on March 25, 2017. He was shy towards me, and it was really difficult to get an answer from him. Although I tried to make him speak and feel comfortable, the interview could take only forty minutes. Also, he promised me to arrange an interview with other prominent members of the Nûbihar Circle, neither did he nor did I force him to arrange.

As it can be seen, the interviewees were all men. Although I tried to find female interviewee representing the Nûbihar Circle, only Rasul gave me one contact for a woman. Nevertheless, there was no time to conduct an interview with her due to time limitation to complete the thesis. On the other hand, as a woman, these religious male members could not feel comfortable while speaking and answering the interview questions as face to face. Hence, I went to conduct interview with them together with my husband. This situation made them feel much more comfortable and relaxed. Also, my knowledge about Said Nursi and his words and my headscarf representing my religion gave them trust. Moreover, conducting interview on Skype seemed to give comfort and trust to the interviewees. They could have chance to answer my questions at their home in where they felt themselves comfortable. At the same time, I could observe their reaction, behavior, and gesture as conducting face to face interview. I saw that mostly all members of the Nûbihar Circle were

helpful and glad to contribute to such an academic study related to the Nûbihar Circle.

The secondary sources of the Nûbihar Circle are the written documents of the prominent members of the Nûbihar Circle in books, seminar booklets, or in journals (e.g. *Yenizemin Journal* –Med-Zehra’s journal) about the Kurdish Question. After a detailed research and consulting all interviewees about the names, İzzettin Yıldırım, Muhammet Sıddık Dursun, Süleyman Çevik, Zekeriya Özbek, Osman Tekin, Osman Tunç⁷, Adil Yılmayan, and Muhyeddin Zınar’s writings have been evaluated. Whereas İzzettin Yıldırım⁸, Muhammet Sıddık Dursun Seyhanzade⁹, Süleyman Çevik, and Osman Tunç were founders of the Nûbihar Circle; Zekeriya Özbek, Osman Tekin, Adil Yılmayan, and Muhyeddin Zınar came into prominence much more as the prominent members of the Nûbihar Circle. Therefore, these members’ writings and words could reflect the Nûbihar Circle’s perspectives about anything including the Kurdish Question. Hence, their words and conducted interviews as well as publication of Nûbihar Circle have been analyzed through qualitative content analysis in order to figure out of the Nûbihar Circle’s perspective on the Kurdish Question. Qualitative content analysis method is preferred in order to search specific information about the perspective of the Nûbihar Circle within the documents. Also, through this method, the trustworthiness, validity, and reliability of the sources between the documents could be evaluated and compared. During qualitative content analysis to learn the Kurdish Question perception of the Nûbihar Circle, focus was on a) the

⁷ Nûbihar Publishing House was established on March 1992 as “a project that appeared by İzzettin Yıldırım’s advisers and organizations, and by contribution and effect of Osman Tunç

⁸ İzzettin Yıldırım was a Kurd who was born in 1946 in Ağrı. He was a member of the *Nurcu* Movement, but in 1990, by criticizing Muhammed Sıddık Dursun Seyhanzade’s control over the Zehra Community, İzzettin Yıldırım and his friends, Zekeriya Özbek, Hüseyin Daşkın, Gıyaseddin Bingöl, and Yasin Yıldırım, separated themselves from the Zehra Community and established *Zehra Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı* (the Foundation of Zehra Education and Culture) which focused on matters such as education rather than being overly Kurdish nationalist (Yavuz & Esposito, 2003). In order to establish schools looking like Medresetüzzehra project of Said Nursi, Yıldırım supported financially in buying of the land of Medresetüzzehra University. Through this school, Yıldırım wanted to solve the education problem of the Kurdish region. He supported the solution of the Kurdish Question through non-violent methods in the framework of Muslim brotherhood. Hence, Yıldırım promoted his friends to publish a journal, *Yeni Zemin*, in 1993. İzzettin Yıldırım was kidnapped by unknown people on December 29, 1999, and found as death on January 28, 2000 in Kartal. (Retrieved from <http://www.ufkumuzhaber.com/izzettin-yildirim-hayati-ve-kisiligi-5751h.htm>)

⁹ Muhammed Sıddık Dursun Şeyhanzade was born in 1948 in Bingöl. He was a investigative writer, publisher, and founder and honorary president of the Med-Zehra Community. Establishing the Tenvir Publishing House, Şeyhanzade published Said Nursi’s works. He also wrote articles in *Dava Journal* that was published by himself. On July 5, 2017, he died due to renal insufficiency illness in İstanbul.

Nûbihar Circle's defining of the Kurdish Question and nationalism, b) the Nûbihar Circle's solution for the Kurdish Question such as armed struggle or non-violent method, c) the Circle's opinion about autonomy, federation, or independence, d) the Nûbihar Circle's imagined state's regime type when it is achieved an independent Kurdish State, e) the Nûbihar Circle's thoughts about political representation of the Kurds on the resolution process: the legal legitimacy of PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and HDP (the Peoples' Democratic Party) or other agents, and f) the Nûbihar Circle's thoughts about Kurdish and Muslim identity of Said Nursi and his impact on the Circle's thoughts about the Kurdish Question. On the basis of these questions, the impact of the Nûbihar Circle's Kurdish and Islamic identity and the Circle's approach to the Kurdish question as an Islamic community have been examined. The relationship between nationalism and Islam in the context of the Nûbihar Circle's approach to the Kurdish Question has been scrutinized.

2.2.1. The Content Analysis Method and Its Strengths and Weaknesses

Content analysis has been used in many disciplines such as sociology, criminology, education, journalism, art, psychology, and political science. It is "the study of recorded human communications, such as books, websites, paintings, and laws" according to Earl Babbie (2010, p. 530). Bruce L. Berg and Howard Lune define content analysis as "a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings" (Berg & Lune, 2014, p. 1). For Klaus Krippendorff, content analysis is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18). Jared J. Wesley describes content analyses as an examination of documents to research for specific bits of data in order to understand "important patterns existing within and between the documents" (Wesley, 2010, p. 3). It is a particular interpretation of a text and merely "one type of many readings" and not "inter-subjectivist" for Wesley, but it depends on the researcher to convince his readers of the persuasiveness of his analyses (Wesley, 2010, p. 4). Robert Bogdan & Sari Knopp Biklen, Michael G. Maxfield & Earl R. Babbie, and Janice M. Morse & Lyn Richards describe content analysis as a coding operation and data interpreting process (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Maxfield & Babbie, 2006;

Morse & Richards, 2002) since it is based on coding of the content as data in the shape that can be provided to address research questions, and it can be implemented on any human communication such as written documents, photographs, motion pictures or videotape, and audiotapes (Berg & Lune, 2014).

While Bernard Berelson and Nancy Burns & Susan Grove allege content analysis to be quantitative (Berelson, 1952; Burns & Grove, 2005), Claire Selltitz, Marie Jahoda, Morton Deutsch, and Stuart W. Cook assert that when content analysis comes down to numbers and excludes all accounts of communications which are not in the form of numbers, heavy quantitative content analysis may lose meaning (Selltitz, Jahoda, Deutsch & Cook, 1959). On the other hand, Berg & Lune suggest that content analysis “is not inherently either quantitative or qualitative and may be both at the same time” (Berg & Lune, 2014, p. 6). It can be both qualitative and quantitative. However, in this study, since documents and interviews will be analyzed to find specific information, a qualitative (interpretivist) approach -that seeks “illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations”-, which is different than quantitative methods -seeking “causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings”-, will be used (Golafshani, 2003, p. 600).

The Qualitative Content Analysis Process occurs in following stages:

- 1) Identify Research Question
- 2) Determine Analytic Categories (Sociological Constructs)
- 3) Read through Data and Establish Grounded Categories (Open and axial Coding)

(Straus suggests four basic guidelines when conducting open coding: (1) ask the data a specific and consistent set of questions, (2) analyze the data minutely, (3) frequently interrupt the coding to write a theoretical note, and (4) never assume the analytic relevance of any traditional variable such as age, sex, social class, and so on until the data show it to be relevant. (Straus, 1987, p. 30)

- 4) Determine Systematic (objective) Criteria of Selection for Sorting Data Chunks into the Analytic and Grounded Categories

- 5) Sort the Data into the Various Categories (revise categories or selection. Criteria, if necessary, after several cases have been completed)

*Count the number of entries in each category to descriptive statistics and to allow the demonstration of magnitude

*Review textual materials as sorted into various categories seeking patterns

*Remember, no apparent pattern is a pattern.

*Consider the patterns in light of relevant literature and or theory (show possible links to theory or other research)

*Offer an explanation (analysis) of your findings

*Relate your analysis to the extant literature of the subject (Berg & Lune, 2014, p. 25)

By evaluating the purpose of qualitative research, it can be asserted that the qualitative character of the content analysis makes the involvement of the researchers in the research unavoidable. Patton's statement also supports this claim, saying "in the qualitative method the researcher is the instrument" (Patton, 2001, p.14). Nahid Golafshani argues, the different purposes of quantitative and qualitative research result in different evaluation of their qualities. Hence, the quantitative method's terms, namely reliability and validity, that evaluate the quality of the research, should not be used in qualitative research. Similarly, Caroline Stenbacka states the misleading function of the concept of reliability in qualitative research: "If a qualitative study is discussed with reliability as a criterion, the consequence is rather that the study is no good" (Stenbacka, 2001, p. 552). Therefore, in order to make the quantitative method used to measure the accurate representation of the concepts in one's findings, Golafshani suggests the use of precision, credibility, and transferability instead of using reliability (which is used in the qualitative method for the evaluation of the consistency of a particular measurement when it is repeated under the same conditions), or he offers the use of credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness instead of the concepts of reliability and validity (Golafshani, 2003). Yvanna Lincoln and Egon G. Guba also support the usage of the concept of dependability instead of reliability, and the use of quality, rigor, and trustworthiness instead of validity, or the usage of credibility, neutrality/impartiality, consistency or dependability, applicability, transferability, and trustworthiness, rather than the terms of reliability and validity as the main criterion for the quality of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Wesley and Golafshani argue that, in order to be sure of the reliability or the accuracy of the findings in qualitative research, it is necessary to examine trustworthiness, which is "defensible" and establishes confidence in the findings (Golafshani, 2003) (Wesley, 2010). Trustworthiness in terms of reliability is measured through inter-coding testing, in which "measurements are checked against those of an independent

researcher” (Wesley, 2010, p. 3). Kimberly A. Neuendorf claims that intercoder reliability is a critical component of content analysis, as the aim of content analysis is the identification and recording of a relatively objective (at least intersubjective) characteristic of messages. Or it is because the formation of a high level of reliability provides the practical benefit to the researcher of dividing the coding work among many different coders (Neuendorf, 2002). According to Wesley (2010), while in quantitative research, the trustworthiness of reliability is measured through replicability, in the qualitative research it is measured through dependability. When the question “Would the same general conclusion be achieved if the same document is read under the same conditions?” receives a positive answer, the research is considered as dependable and hence reliable.

In this context, Wesley (2010) refers to the measurement of validity in quantitative research as credibility in qualitative research, taking into consideration that the authenticity of the analysis depends on the subjective evaluation of the analyst instead of some objective standard. Therefore, as Wesley (2010) argues, for considering a document analysis credible the authenticity of the research in the document analysis should be given importance, and an accurate reading of a particular document or the analyst should actualized the authentic interpretation of reality. The analyst should provide a believable interpretation of the meanings.

Wesley (2010) argues that a qualitative document’s analysis becomes transferable when it aims to convince the reader about transferability of findings to other documents from other sources, times or places. Wesley (2010) continues that under these conditions, the analysis can be generalized to broader questions. Weber argues similarly that the conformability of the document analysis is achieved as long as the analysis is objectively actualized in order to decrease the influence of the subjective interpretation of the analyst, and when it reflects the reality by focusing only in analysing the evidence at hand in the documents instead of predestinating the things. Taking into account of all the above related to content analysis, the researcher is aware of the fact that the analysis reflects her interpretation of the text, and as a result of that it is not inter-subjective. However, in order to conduct much more valid

and reliable research, the researcher has conducted a qualitative content analysis, by giving importance to credibility, neutrality/impartiality, consistency or dependability, applicability, transferability, and trustworthiness of my analysis in general.

2.2.2. The Elite Interview Method

The elite interview method is common in journalism and in academic disciplines including sociology and political science (Philips, 1998). Elites, for this study meaning prominent members of the Nûbihar Circle, are considered as the subject of the study in this research method in order to get valid and correct information related to the Nûbihar Circle and its thoughts about the Kurdish Question. Elite interviews are used to study those at the top of any stratification, they focus mainly on political and economic notables, give individual insights, first-hand accounts, and provides in depth analysis. Elite interview method aims to collect primary data, by revealing the subjective perceptions of the elite about the issue(s) under investigation, and hence it focuses on the specialized knowledge that the Deniseas. In an elite interview, format highlights the interviewee's description of a situation, and it is expected from the interviewee that s/he structures the account of the situation and presents her/his ideas on the most relevant thing instead of depending on the researcher's opinion of relevance (Odendahl & Shaw, 2002). Elite interviews vary according to their focus on privatized knowledge that the Deniseas (Dexter, 1970), and the method of open-ended interviews increase the probability that the interviewee will stress of his definition of a situation; structure it, and offer related data about it; compared to focused interview (Odendahl & Shaw, 2002).

Conducting a high quality elite interview and obtaining valid and reliable data from those interviews depend on the researcher's prior preparation, his/her construction of good questions, his/her establishment of a relationship with the respondents, and his/her knowledge of how take his/her his notes accurately (Goldstein, 2002). Therefore, in order to prepare well, the researcher should gather genuine information before the interview and research different perspectives. In order to determine the questions that will be asked to the respondent and how to address these questions, the researcher should already have prior knowledge before

interview and should predict what she/he wants to receive from the interviewees (Leech, 2002).

In this light Goldstein introduces three aims of the researchers while conducting elite interviews: 1) “gathering information from a sample of officials in order to make generalizable claims about all such official’s’ characteristics or decisions 2) discovering a particular piece of information or getting hold of a particular document 3) informing or guiding work that uses other sources of data” (Goldstein, 2002, p.669). Hence, according to Goldstein, the researcher should follow two steps: First, to specify the research question and the target population, and second to itemize a sampling frame/representative sample identical to the target population (Goldstein, 2002).

CHAPTER 3
ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS IN TURKEY, THE NÛBIHAR CIRCLE AND THE KURDISH
QUESTION IN TURKEY

3.1. Islamic Movements in Turkey

There is no definitional consensus on the term of “Islamic Movement”; it has been defined by different scholars in variable ways. According to Ayşegül Komşuoğlu and Gül M. Kurtoğlu Eskişar, it is “any movement, group and creation, which -in order to increase the use of Islam in politics, state governance, and in daily life and/or to expand people’s resort to Islamic sources- applies to political methods” or briefly as “a political movement that takes Islam as the main reference point in its ideology” (Komşuoğlu ve Eskişar, 2009, p. 9). Similarly Ali Bulaç defines it as “the sum of ideological and political procedures put forward by a group of Muslims, whom express their belonging and affiliation with their own religion” (Bulaç, 2004, p. 50) or an economic, intellectual, political, moral, societal, and inter-state movement based on Islam’s founding principles with the goal of making a “new” human, society, politics/state and imagination of world, which depends on a new social organization model and universal Islamic unity (Bulaç, 21 July 2012). On the other hand while Asef Bayat describes it as “homogeneous and coherent social units overlooking variations over time in religious perceptions, practice and institutions among different segments of the population within a given society and between different Muslim countries” (Bayat, 2005, p. 891), Beşir Eryarsoy defines it as individual or mass efforts in order to achieve the Islamic goal of ensuring the prevalence of Allah’s sharia in the world, by using tools legitimated by Islam (2012). However, İsmail Kara’s definition may be seen as one of the most comprehensive ones. According to this definition: Islamic movement is a movement that includes political, intellectual and scholarly works, pursuits, proposes, and solutions, realized in the 19th and 20th centuries in order to remake Islam -as a whole (belief, ritual, moral, philosophy, politics, law, education, and so on) - dominant over life, to civilize, to unite, to develop, and to save Muslim world from the Western

exploitation, from tyrants and despotic rulers, from slavery, imitation, superstition with a rationalist method (Kara, 2013, p. 17).

The above mentioned definitions show that political and ideological foundations are necessary to be considered as Islamic movements. When considering these two foundations the question of whether or not all religious movements in Turkey can be evaluated as Islamic movements comes to minds. According to Yasin Aktay, some religious movements in Turkey such as some *Nurcu* groups and cults cannot be considered as Islamic movements (Aktay, 2004, p. 17). Likewise, Nuray Mert hesitates identify the *Nurcu* Community and Gülen Community as Islamic (Mert, 2004, p. 415). However, Aktay asserts that as long as Sayyid's definition of Islamism -“(as a Muslim) to position the relations within historical formation and tradition of Islam; by putting these historical formation and tradition into behavioral logic (Sayyid, quoted in Aktay, 2004, p. 18)”-is accepted, any Muslim group that puts Islam into political practice can be called Islamic (Aktay, 2004, p. 18). On the other hand, Alev Erkilet suggests that when actors of Islamic movements in Turkey are handled as “a community that continually acts to create a change in the society or to obstruct change” (Quoted by Erkilet, 2004, p. 88), all of the movements can be accepted as Islamic movements. Following Erkilet's definition and using the term Islamic movement in its broader sense this study considers all Islamic communities as Islamic movements.

Burhanettin Duran and Menderes Çınar argue that the Islamic movement in Turkey has employed two different methods of Islamization. While the first method is the “Islamization from above through the capture of government”, which is used by the National Outlook Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi- NOM) and some intellectuals like Kısakurek, the second is the “Islamization from below through the fostering of civil societal elements and religious way of life”, which is used by religious orders and communities” (Duran & Çınar, 2008, p. 34). Duran and Çınar also claim that the Islamic movement in Turkey has manifested itself in different organizations, and this diversity can be depicted with the identification of five essential Islamic groups: 1) Political organization(s) such as the political parties of NOM; 2) Religious orders and

communities like several branches of the Nakshibendi order and of the Nurcu movement; 3) Intellectuals like Sezai Karakoç, İsmet Özel, Ali Bulaç, and Rasim Ozdenoren; 4) Business associations (Müsiad), trade unions (Hak-İş), and human rights associations (Mazlum-Der); 5) Independent small organizations around some journals, foundations, and associations (Duran & Çınar, 2008, p. 25). Of these Islamic groups, the *Nurcu* Movement will be the focus of the study.

As mentioned earlier, the main focus of this thesis is the *Nurcu* Movement (also known as *Nurculuk*), which is based on the writings of Said Nursi, *The Epistles of Light* Collection. The Nur identity is derived from Nursi's writings and cannot be reduced to any leader. Said Nursi reinterpreted Islam in accordance with the time's conditions by purifying Islam from *bid'at* (innovation) and *hurafe* (superstition). Hakan Yavuz & John Esposito (2003) perceive the *Nurcu* movement as different from other Islamic movements with its perception of Islam and its method of shaping society by raising individual consciousness. They describe the movement as farsighted and proactive due to its resistant character to the progressing statist modernization process in Turkey and due to its capability of updating Islamic concepts and strategies in order to form new solidarity networks and strategies to cope with modern challenges in everyday life (Yavuz & Esposito, 2003, p. 4).

According to M. Akif Beki, division in *Nur* Community started when Said Nursi stopped being interested in daily politics, which is described as "Said Nursi's second period (1921-1960)" by himself (Beki, 1968). This conflict, after the death of Said Nursi, resulted in struggle between the *Yeni Asya/ Neşriyatçılar/ Okuyucular* (publishers) and the *Yazıcılar* (scribes). The *Yeni Asya* separated themselves in the *Nurcu* Movement based on the word of Said Nursi "I find asylum in Allah instead of in politics (Yavuz, 2003, p. 172)". The *Yeni Asya* published *The Epistles of Light* Collection in Latin alphabet under the leadership of Zübeyir Gündüzalp with their interest in politics and media. However, Hakan Yavuz alleges the cause of divisions within the *Nur* Community as the pluralization of the Nur Movement along ethnic, class, educational, generational, and regional lines (Yavuz, 2003 & 2006). According to Yavuz, the *Nurcus'* commitment to Nursi's text resulted in the continuation of

collective *Nur* identity along with these pluralized *Nurcu* movements, and the first division in *Nurcu* groups took place as a result of the dispute over the question whether *The Epistles of Light* books would be printed in the old Ottoman alphabet or in the new Latin one, and whether they would be written by hand or printed (Yavuz, 2003). The scribes, *Yazıcılar*, on the leadership of Hüsrev Altınbaşak were separated from the *Nurcu* groups on the basis of their argument that while the use of a machine devalues a text's authenticity and depersonalizes it, copying by hand increases the authenticity and personality of the book and offers psychological satisfaction that ends the gap between author and readers (Yavuz, 2003, p. 172 & 2006, p. 153; Yavuz & Esposito, 2003, p. 16). Fulya Atacan also supports the same argument with Yavuz and says that the *Yazıcılar* was the first group separated itself from original *Nurcu* movement in 1962 (Atacan, 2001, p. 115). Also, while Said Nursi permitted publication of the *The Epistles of Light* in Latin alphabet during the life of Said Nursi, *Yazıcılar* insisted to write only in Arabic (Atacan, 2001, p. 115).

During 1970s and 1980s, another fragmentation occurred and one more group separated from the original *Nurcu* group, *Med-Zehra*, under the leadership of Muhammed Sıddık (Dursun) Şeyhazade. Emphasizing the importance of mass production and rapid distribution and supporting the centre, Justice Party and True Path Party (Atacan, 2001, p. 116), in 1960 the *Yeni Asya* group established Yeni Asya Publishing House and published the newspaper "*Yeni Asya*". This publishing house was founded in order to reproduce the *Nurcu* messages, to disseminate them in Anatolia, to "protect alternative views against communism and atheism; to support closer ties with the Western countries; and to develop close ties with other Abrahamic religions and institutions to create a common front against communism and atheism" (Yavuz & Esposito, 2003, p. 16; Yavuz, 2003, p. 173). After the death of Gündüzalp in April 2, 1971, people in Yeni Asya decided to govern the community by consultancy (Şentürk, 2015, p. 255). As explained by Hulusi Şentürk (2015, p. 255), after the death of Gündüzalp Mehmet Fırıncı would govern the *Yeni Asya's* communication with other communities whereas Mehmet Kutlular would govern the newspaper and publishing house. However, as Şentürk (2015, p. 255) argues, among this group the most powerful name was lawyer Bekir Berk, who had nationalist

discourses. Furthermore Şentürk (2015, p. 255) claims that the nationalist discourse adopted by the *Yeni Asya* Community had caused the separation of the Kurdish members from the *Yeni Asya*. Hence, *Med-Zehra* Community emerged. *Med-Zehra* asserted that *Yeni Asya* damaged the meaning of *The Epistles of Light* through their sanction of issues related to Kurds and Kurdistan, and declared their independence and established their own cultural foundations and published their own magazines (Yavuz, 2003), *Dava*, from 1989 (Atacan, 2001, p. 116). Apart from Yavuz and Atacan, emergence of *Med-Zehra* is also analysed by Yavuz & Esposito (2003). According to these researchers, as the Kurdish question grew and Kurdish nationalism expanded in late 1980's, the Kurdish Nurcus, who stressed the importance of education in Kurdish, started to gather around the *Tenvir Publishing House (Tenvir Neşriyat)*¹⁰, and criticized "the rise of the Turkish nationalist line in the *Nur* community" and the *Nur* community's attitude of not mentioning the terms "Kurdistan" and "Kurds" (Yavuz, 2003, p. 176 & Şentürk, 2015, p. 271). Sıddık Dursun -his pseudonym is Muhammed Sıddık Şeyhanzade (Şentürk, 2015, p. 271)- and his followers alleged that Said Nursi's books were distorted so as to be in peaceful relations with the state and that the Kurdishness of Said Nursi was consciously camouflaged (Beki, 1968). This group was organized as the *Med-Zehra* community and in April 1989 it published its Kurdish nationalist *Dava* magazine that questioned the relationship between Turkish nationalism and the Nurcu movement. Led by Muhammed Sıddık (Dursun) Seyhanzade, this group took an anti-secular and anti-Turkist state position and criticized the founding philosophy of the regime in the context of secular and Kurdish identity, sustained the cultural and political rights of Kurds and blamed other *Nur* communities for having anti-Kurdish inclinations and for being "Nihal Atsız Nurcusu"¹¹ and "Turkish nationalist" (Yavuz, 2006, p. 157)¹². In this context, Seyhanzade represented himself as "ümmetçi (loyal to Islamic identity, not to ethnicity) (Yavuz, 2006, p. 157). Seyhanzade's group represented Nursi as a Kurdish

¹⁰ At the beginning, they bought *Envar Publishing House (Envar Neşriyat)* in 1982 and then established *Tenvir Publishing House (Tenvir Neşriyat)* (Şentürk, 2015: 271)

¹¹ "Nihal Atsız is a racist and pan-Turkish activist who denounced Islam and championed a racist form of Turkish nationalism. Atsız constantly criticized Nursi as "an ignorant Kurd whose real motive is Kurdish nationalism." Atsız, *Türk Ülküsü* (İstanbul, 1992), p. 101,115, Atsız, *Makaleler III* (İstanbul, 1992), pp. 214, 451-452, 455, 469, 504" (Yavuz, 2006: 157)

¹² (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

nationalist while other Turkish Nurcus represented him as pan-Islamist (Yavuz, 2006, p. 157). Although Med-Zehra was established as an opposition to nationalist Turkish Islamic communities in Turkey and aimed to purify Said Nursi and his words from Turkish nationalism, during that time –presumably because of the the political conditions until 1990s in Turkey, with a good or bad grace and intentionally or unintentionally- they also gathered with Kurdish nationalism and blended the *Epistles of Light* with Kurdish nationalism¹³. However, after a while a group of younger Nurcus, under the leadership of Izzeddin Yıldırım criticized Seyhazade’s control over the movement and split from the *Med-Zehra* in 1990 and they established *Zehra Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı* (the Foundation of Zehra Education and Culture) and focused on matters such as education rather than being overly Kurdish nationalist (Yavuz & Esposito, 2003). This foundation has been publishing the *Nûbihar* magazine since 1992 in Kurdish (Yavuz, 2003; Şentürk, 2015, p. 271).

According to Hulusi Şentürk (2015, p. 257) another separation within *Yeni Asya* was witnessed in 1989. Some people in the community such as Mehmet Fırıncı, M. Emin Birinci, Bekir Berk, and Yavuz Bahadıroğlu were unsatisfied with the leadership of Mehmet Kutlular. Although Mehmet Kutlular was the leader of the community, Mehmet Fırıncı and M. Emin Birinci were the legal owners of the *Yeni Nesil* Newspaper, which was the newspaper of the *Yeni Asya* Community (Şentürk, 2015, p. 257). When Fırıncı and Birinci confiscated the newspaper, Kutlular and his group such as Mustafa Kaplan, Bünyamin Ateş, Burhan Bozgeyik, İsmail Mutlu, Şaban Döğen decided to publish the *Yeni Asya* Newspaper (Şentürk, 2015, p. 257). After this event, the group publishing *Yeni Asya* Newspaper was named as *Yeni Asya* Community whereas the group that published the *Yeni Nesil* Newspaper emerged by separating itself from *Yeni Asya* in 1982 with their declaration for their pro-Özal and more modern attitude and was named as *Yeni Nesil* Community (Şentürk, 2015, p. 257, 157). Fırıncı’s group, *Yeni Nesil*, argued that “the coup was necessary since it saved Turkey from social and political disintegration” and they declared to obey Kenan Evren’s rules (Atacan, 2001, p. 117). *Yeni Nesil* embraced a more critical reading of

¹³ (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

Said Nursi's writings and organized lots of seminars and conferences on *The Epistles of Light* (Yavuz, 2006, p. 157).

Another dispute within the Nur movement was witnessed with Fethullah Gülen. The foundation of this dispute was Gülen's demand to bring difference to the Nur movement. Gülen was not adopted by Kutlular's group due to Gülen's independent behaviors in the Nur Community and since Gülen's preaches had been listened more than *The Epistles of Light* Collection in the Gülen's *Işık* houses (Şentürk, 2015, pp. 258-9). Also, Gülen assumed a statist position basically after the 1980 military coup and supported it, which suppressed all dissident leftist movements of the time (Şentürk, 2015). Gülen group "re-imagined the Nur movement as a Turkish-Islam (Yavuz, 2006, p. 155)" and injected the ideology of nationalism in the Nur movement in order to get legitimacy and hence stressed their support of nationalism and national culture (Yavuz & Esposito, 2003; Yavuz, 2006). As a result of their political difference in the Nur movement, Fethullah Gülen specified his line and put into practice his Turk-Islam syntheses that he designed earlier (Beki, 1968). Gülen left *Yeni Asya* movement in 1974 with the claim that "*Yeni Asya* was too busy with politics to serve the people" (Atacan, 2001, p. 116). Gülen established a movement that stressed the significance of education (Yavuz, 2006, p. 155). In 1990s, Gülen preferred not to support *Refah* (Welfare) Party by standing by the state politics against *Refah* Party. In that sense Şentürk argues that, through this action Gülen was willing to secure itself against the state politics; however, he was influenced by 28 February Coup Attempt process and was accused of planning to overthrow the government by establishing a lodge (Şentürk, 2015, p. 261). That was the moment when Gülen left Turkey and started to live in the USA.

As stated by Yavuz (2006), there are currently eight major Nur communities according to their political positions and utilization of modernity. Yavuz's research (2006, p. 158) reveals that, while "the scribes, Mehmet Kirkıncı, and Mustafa Sungur represent a conservative outlook in their interpretation of the writings of Nursi and defensive attitudes toward modernity", "the modernist and progressive groups

include Yeni Nesil, Fethullah Gülen and Yeni Asya". On the other hand, Yavuz (2006, p. 158) argues that Med-Zehra is "the ethnic and radical group".

3.2. The Nûbihar Circle

Defining communities and circles is difficult due to judicial and sociological developments of Islamic communities in Turkey. It is because communities and circles are fundamentally religious organisms that also need proper definitions. Communities or circles should not be limited or described since they are not official institutions like parties or NGOs where members are registered. There is no limit or restrictions within them either. Therefore, while examining the Nûbihar Circle, how the Circle is limited and comprehended by its members, the Circle's founding reasons and its difference from other Islamic communities will be investigated and revealed.

First of all, the analysis should be on why the term of "Circle" is used instead of "community". Süleyman Çevik, the chief editor of the Nûbihar Journal, emphasized that the Nûbihar is not a community but a circle. According to Çevik¹⁴, since magazines naturally may create circles in time when they reach their followers and when they follow and subscribe them, they may lead people to gather and create a circle, but this does not mean that they also create a community¹⁵. Çevik¹⁶ continued that, "if there is a community, it is Zehra Community", as the supporters or readers of the Nûbihar are from communities such as Zehra community. For Çevik, despite the difference between the community and circle, people tend to call Nûbihar as a community since the name of Nûbihar moved ahead of the name of Zehra. According to Çevik¹⁷, since the relations within the Nûbihar Circle are much flexible and based on friendship instead of urge to people by unwritten rules as in the communities, The Nûbihar also separates itself from communities and should be considered as a circle.

The term "Circle" can be examined through the question of who is identified as members of "the Nûbihar Circle". According to Rauf Çiçek (2012), the president of

¹⁴ (Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

¹⁵ (Çevik, Personal Interview; February 10, 2015)

¹⁶ (Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

¹⁷ (S. Çevik, Personal Interview; February 10, 2015)

the Nûbihar Association for Education and Culture (Nûbihar Eđitim ve Kùltür Derneđi) and Çevik¹⁸, the Nûbihar Circle is a group that consists of the publishers and the readers of the *Nûbihar Journal*, which has been published in the Kurdish language since 1992¹⁹. However, Soner²⁰ claimed that not all people reading and following the Nûbihar Journal can be considered as part of the “Nûbihar Circle”. According to Soner’s observation, solely religious people reading and following the Nûbihar Journal are named as part of the “Nûbihar Circle” since the Nûbihar Circle is part of the Zehra Community²¹. Therefore, Soner explained that, the Nûbihar Circle and the Zehra Community are neither same nor they are different than each other. Denise²² also supports this and stated that the Zehra Community and the Nûbihar Circle are complementary of the same ideal, by standing from different points. Hence, if the Zehra Community is defined as a religious structure, the Nûbihar Circle should be described as an intellectual current that depicts and launches this religious structure to the public²³. In other words, they complete each other. This idea also support Çiçek’s idea who describes the Nûbihar Circle as the Group of Zehra/ Med-Zehra or Nûbihar Educational and Cultural Association²⁴ since according to him, they all consist of the same people. However, Şengül claims that even though at the beginning the *Nûbihar Journal* was followed by the Med-Zehra Group members, it respected Said Nursi –or (Mele or Molla²⁵) Said-i Kurdi as preferred by Kurds- as Med-Zehra Group did, in time the Nûbihar had reached wider followers (Şengül, 2005). Despite Şengül’s definition of the Nûbihar Circle, it is seen that the Nûbihar Circle is a part of the Zehra Community, meaning that it is sub-community of the Zehra Community. The Circle that started with the establishment of the publishing house in 1992, is the publishing house of the Zehra Community²⁶. That is to say, although it is called as the Nûbihar “Circle”, originally, it is the sub-community of the Zehra Community.

¹⁸ (Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

¹⁹ (Retrieved from <http://komaNûbihar.org/kurmanci/?P=161>)

²⁰ (Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

²¹ (Soner, Personal Interview; February 26, 2017)

²² (Personal Interview, 2017)

²³ (Denise, Personal Interview; March 4, 2017)

²⁴ (Retrieved from <http://komaNûbihar.org/kurmanci/?P=161>)

²⁵ Mele or mullah means Kurdish religious scholars who work as unofficial imam in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia

²⁶ (Nal, Personal Interview, February 2, 2017)

On the other hand, the difference between the Nûbihar Circle and the Zehra Community is tried to be clarified and emphasized by some interviewees including Çevik. Kanca explained this difference as follows:

Despite the fact that they both perceive the Epistles of Light as an intellectual work, while the Zehra Community afford to popularize the Epistles of Light as social-based educational and cultural activity, with *ummah* belief, the Nûbihar Circle intends to regain the usurped rights of Kurds about the Kurdish Question²⁷.

This explanation also supported their effort to separate the Circle from the Zehra Community by being aware of the fact that Nûbihar is sub-community of the Zehra Community. Also, the interviewees' description of the relation between the Nûbihar Circle and the Zehra Community was interesting. According to Çevik²⁸ and Kanca²⁹, the Nûbihar Circle and the Zehra Community did not have an official relation among them, but they had a strong connection to each other based on eternal love. They mean that they are not connected officially; nonetheless, they are still strongly connected to each other. The connection of the Nûbihar Circle with the Zehra Community is defined as that the Nûbihar Circle is sub-community, and the publishing house of the Zehra Community.

As explained by Yavuz (2003) and Şentürk (2015), *Zehra Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı* (the Foundation of Zehra Education and Culture) separated itself from the Zehra Community in order to focus on educational matter as well as establishing the Nûbihar Publishing House that started to publish the *Nûbihar* magazine in Kurdish in 1992 (Yavuz, 2003; Şentürk, 2015, p. 271)". Nûbihar Publishing House was established on March 1992 as "a project that appeared by İzzettin Yıldırım's advisers and organizations, and by contribution and effect of Osman Tunç³⁰". Nûbihar was founded to address and reach the Kurdish people in their own language and culture, to publish books that are suitable to religion of Islam and to Kurdish custom, to reveal Kurds' realities in Kurdish language, and to create cultural accumulation about

²⁷ (Kanca , Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

²⁸(Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

²⁹ (Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

³⁰ (Din, Kaya. Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

Kurdish³¹. It can be considered as “a reaction to assimilation, denial, and to existing order³², and “a reaction to the censorship of Kurd/Kurdistan matters which already mentioned in *The Epistles of Light*, too³³.” After eight months from its first publication, on October 1992, the *Nûbihar Journal* started to be published with the slogan of “the first Kurdish Islamic Literary Journal” and it had been “a platform where the Kurdish question was discussed in Islamic manner” (Şengül, 2005, p. 352). In its first issue, the *Nûbihar Journal* cited from the Qur’an, published some hadith, and the Sunnah (the life of Prophet Mohammed) and an article about life and struggle of Said Nursi (Şengül, 2005, p. 534). Executive editor of the *Nûbihar Journal*, Sabah Kara³⁴, in his interview with *Özgür Gündem* Newspaper expresses that “*Nûbihar* is a Kurdish journal that supports patriotic Kurds and Muslims who have Islamic belief and who perceive Islam as source of the salvation for Kurds and other nations” (Kara, 1993, p. 23; Şengül, p. 534). The process of the establishment of the *Nûbihar Circle* is also explained by Çevik as the following:

1980 coup d’état legally banned Kurdish with the act “It is forbidden to broadcast other than the official language of the state.” It was because Kurdish was second most spoken language in Iraq; the first was Arabic. Özal invalidated this act in 1991. Since that time, Kurdish broadcasts started to be published. In 1992, we established a publishing house.³⁵

The coexistence of Islam with Kurdish nationality in the *Nûbihar Circle* is a significant issue as it is expressed by Eser, Ümit, and Kanca³⁶ as they consider the foundation of the establishment of the *Nûbihar Circle*. According to these interviewees, it is because from the 1960s to the establishment of the *Nûbihar Circle*, the usurped rights of Kurds had only been defended by left-wing parties and Kurdish political movement had been organized in the left-wing parties³⁷. This traditional approach claims that: If Kurds are religious, they tend to act together with right-wing parties

³¹ (Çevik, Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

³² (Çevik, Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

³³ (Din, Kaya. Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

³⁴ Sabah Kara was the chief editor of the *Nûbihar Journal* before Süleyman Çevik.

³⁵ (Çevik, Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

³⁶ (Çevik, Personal Interviews, February 10, 2017)

³⁷ (Eser, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

while the Kurds supporting their own usurped rights -even though they were religious- tend to act together with the left-wing parties and they would be considered as unreligious people³⁸. In other words, in people's minds, religious Kurds could not support their rights and Kurds acting with left-wing parties were perceived as communist or socialist³⁹. However, Eser⁴⁰ claimed that the Nûbihar Circle proved that this idea was wrong in 1992 through its Kurdish and Islamic publications and declared that Kurdish people are not different than any other nations that have religious and ethnic identities at the same time. They could be Marxist Kurds, religious Kurds, socialist Kurds, or Jewish Kurds. The Nûbihar Circle proved the possibility of being a Muslim and a Kurd at the same time not only in theory but also in practice with its publications (e.g. *Yenizemin*), panels, conferences, and people that had been nurtured by the Nûbihar Circle⁴¹. In that sense, the Nûbihar Circle is also a stream of thought in Turkey that has offered different perceptions to the interpretation of religion Islam in the Kemalist system⁴². It is a circle with a certain approach to the Kurdistan and Kurdish Question⁴³. This Circle has brought nation, religion, and modernism together deeply respect the humanitarian values⁴⁴.

The main aim of the Nûbihar Circle is to study Kurdish culture and history, and contribute to the Kurdish language. In order to raise the awareness of people about writing and reading in Kurdish, they hold courses and provide trainings. Also, by organizing seminars about the prominent Kurdish historical figures who served the Kurdish language and history, such as Ehmedê Xanî⁴⁵ or Melayê Cizîrî⁴⁶, they intend

³⁸ (Eser, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

³⁹ (Eser, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

⁴⁰ (Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

⁴¹ (Eser, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

⁴² (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

⁴³ (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

⁴⁴ (Eser, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

⁴⁵Ehmedê Xanî is a Kurdish writer, astronomer, poet, historian, and Islamic scholar, who was born in 1651 at Han village of Hakkari and died in 1707 in Doğubeyazıt, Ağrı. He had education in Muradiye Madrasah in Beyazıt, and in madrasahs in Ahlat, Bitlis, Botan, Mesopotamia, Bagdad, Damascus, Aleppo, and Iran respectively. He was a good instructor and linguist and well-known about at literature, philosophy, and teology. He was influenced from the ideas of Şihabeddin Sühreverdî, Farabi, Feqiyê Teyran, Molla Ahmed-i Cezirî, Platon, Aristoteles, Muhyiddin İbn Arabi, Ali Hariri, Firdevsi, and Ömer Hayyam. Mem û Zîn, Nûbihara Biçukan, Eqîdeya Îmanê, Eqîdeya Îslamê, Fî Beyanî Erkanî İslam, Erdê Xweda, Dîwana Helbestan, Şêrên Filozofî are Xanî's works.

⁴⁶ His real name is Ahmed-i Cezirî. He is a Kurdish writer, poet, and imam. As stated by himself, he was born in 1570 in Cizre. He had education in Diyarbakır, Bingöl, Hasankeyf, and other places. He had been an imam for a long time in Diyarbakır's Serba Village, but then he came to Cizre and lived until his death in 1670. His famous work is *Divan*.

to raise people's historical consciousness and encourage them to think about these values. In that sense Çevik⁴⁷ explained the founding principle of the *Nûbihar Journal* as publishing about Kurds, their places in the society, their historical experiences, literature, culture, and classics without being biased towards any Kurds, Kurdish groups, Kurdish parties, or struggle, and without insulting Muslims, Islam, and their belief, and by searching for dialogue with others. Currently, the Nûbihar Circle has four branches in Mardin, Batman, Diyarbakır, and Van⁴⁸. As explained by Din⁴⁹, there are also organization and association structures under the name of Nûbihar and these structures aim to keep Nûbihar sources alive; to advertise them; to make lingual and cultural activities; to clarify some political thoughts; to declare it; and to express its own opinions in some organizations or platforms; by organizing symposiums and attending to Constitutional Consolidation Committee or conferences⁵⁰. Therefore, Din believes that the scope of the activities of the journal is not only publication; "Although it started as a journal and then it became a publishing house, currently it carries out its activities as an association⁵¹."

By considering the abovementioned scope, it is claimed that the Nûbihar Circle is different than others due to the followings. First of all, it consisted of a publishing house that prints books and a magazine in Kurdish. The publishing house is unique in the sense that, it is the only publishing house within the Islamic circle publishes in Kurdish⁵². The reason for publishing in Kurdish is that the publishers feel responsible to the Kurdish people and hence, they write and publish in Kurdish⁵³. However, according to Çevik, "to publish in a different language also does not mean that they oppose others. Other magazines can also write the same things in Turkish or in another language⁵⁴". Secondly, the Epistles of Light of the Nûbihar Circle is different than others' since the Nûbihar Circle perceives Said Nursi's words related to Kurds,

⁴⁷ (Retrieved from <http://www.ilkehaber.com/haber/suleyman-cevikle-soylesi-1-bolum-6855.htm>)

⁴⁸ (Çevik , Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

⁴⁹ (Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

⁵⁰ (Din, Kaya. Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

⁵¹ (Din, Kaya. Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

⁵² (Çevik , Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

⁵³ (Çevik , Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

⁵⁴ (Çevik , Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

regime, and political and social issues differently⁵⁵, and this is not just a literature difference, but a sign of difference in their mentality⁵⁶. Thirdly, this Circle reads and pays attention to Said Nursi's words related to autocracy, nationalism, and *Meşrutiyet* (Constitutional Monarchy) and talks about secularism and the Kurdish Question more than other Islamic Nurcu Communities, and hence it has more sensitiveness to such issues than other communities⁵⁷. Even the Nûbihar Circle adopts such subjects with its sensitivity to Islam and perceiving it as a responsibility of a religious Circle, it aims to include these issues to the Turkey's agenda and eventually solve them⁵⁸. Fourthly, the Nûbihar Circle claims that the decisions are taken through consultation procedure and all people are considered as equal in every aspect of its activities including their own positions within the circle. As free will is very important within the Circle, every person is free to declare her/his own ideas and no one has the power to silence and to suppress them and people are encouraged to ask questions and criticize rather than kowtow⁵⁹. Also, the Nûbihar Circle asserts that the Circle pays respect to all people's political choices and never suppresses or directs people about their votes in elections or it does not support any political party^{60 61}. The fifth reason for why the circle is different lies in its demands. Çevik⁶² says "we demand what other communities do not say or do not want to say." However, these demands do not include destroying others. Their demands are, according to Çevik⁶³, natural, Islamic, legal, and judicial. The other reason is that, the mass that they address are different. Since they broadcast in Kurdish, their readers and audiences are naturally Kurds. Çevik⁶⁴ says "As long as a Turk does not speak Kurdish, he/she cannot read our magazine. Also, those Kurds who do not speak Kurdish cannot read it either," Nevertheless, in the Circle, there are people from other ethnicities including Turks, Arabs, Yezidis, Alleviates, and so on, which means the

⁵⁵ (Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017 & Nal, Personal Interview, February 2, 2017)

⁵⁶ (Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

⁵⁷ (Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017 & Nal, Personal Interview, February 2, 2017)

⁵⁸ (Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

⁵⁹ (Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

⁶⁰ (Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

⁶¹ (Retrieved from <http://komaNûbihar.org/kurmanci/?P=2181>)

⁶² (Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

⁶³ (Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

⁶⁴ (Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

Circle is not restricted to one single ethnic group⁶⁵. However, it is a fact that mainly Kurds are in the Circle⁶⁶. The final reason is also language. Din⁶⁷ describes the difference of Nûbihar as their perception that they accept the mother tongue as their right; language right. As explained by Din⁶⁸, “Nûbihar is not only mentioned to use it in education field, but also in public field. At the same time, it mentions to use language right in all political and bureaucratic units, namely, in public fields; and it defends this to the full and declares.” In that sense, according to Din, their demand looks like the Said Nursi’s project entitled *Cemahiri Müttefika-i Islamiye*⁶⁹. This project, as mentioned by Din⁷⁰, is con-federal Islamic World which would be similar to European Parliament, or European Union. “Said Nursi claims a right to politicization of Kurds and desires to have the same right with other nations in Middle East or Islamic World, and to develop itself with those rights within this model framework⁷¹.” Din expressed that “Nûbihar thinks that Kurds should form their own status within their own sovereignty area, and act with realities to do it in a relationship of central society. Therefore, this movement does not intent to interpret the events as imaginary since it just has this dream. It has no doubt about clarification and recognition of Kurdish political situation⁷².”

Denise on the other hand mentioned that⁷³, the Nûbihar Circle is a religious and political structure that is based on Kurdish identity and culture together with Shafii madhhab. However, since its legal involvement in the politics is prohibited in Turkey, the Circle contorbuted to the politics through cultural codes, by harmonizing politics with its culture⁷⁴. It makes culture-politics and creates Kurdish political consciousness by promoting Kurdish culture, Kurdish history, Kurdish ethnicity, and even Kurdish identity among international are⁷⁵. This can be considered as a sign for a politic and

⁶⁵ (Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

⁶⁶ (Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

⁶⁷ (Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

⁶⁸ (Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

⁶⁹ (Din, Kaya. Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

⁷⁰ (Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

⁷¹ (Din, Kaya. Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

⁷² (Din, Kaya. Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

⁷³ (Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

⁷⁴ (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

⁷⁵ (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

religious identity of the Nûbihar Circle since there are political discussions and writings in the Nûbihar Journal⁷⁶. Because politics is legal presentation of ideas and thoughts through actors or symbols on the public field, the Nûbihar Circle's acts can be perceived as a political movement. In that sense Denise⁷⁷'s detection should be taken into consideration: "Speaking of Kurdish at home does not serve to politics, but use of Kurdish outside home on the public field serves to the politics and makes representation of politics⁷⁸. The Nûbihar Circle has always used its will within the Islamic community with the concern of justice even at the most troubled times of the Kurdish Question⁷⁹. The Circle promotes purification of the Kurdish Question from violence, and supports non-violent methods in the solutions of the Kurdish Question⁸⁰.

3.3. The Kurdish Question in Turkey

The Kurdish Question has different meanings for different people. There are variable ways one can explain the Kurdish Question; Mesut Yeğen lists them as follows:

- 1) a problem about right, which was born from the collapse of a multi-ethnic empire, but was seized (their solution is to gain the opportunity to establish a nation-state)
- 2) an occasional reactivated resurrection of social elements that were buried to the past by a tyrant political will (their solution is to continue discipline and banishment)
- 3) sum of obstacles to maintain authentic culture of an ethnic society (their solution is recognition of cultural rights)
- 4) a problem resulted from anti-centralist social forces that cannot be nationalized and that are uneasy about pervailance and increase of central and national administrative regime (their solution is to pursue regulations by strengthening union)
- 5) a problem about replacement of national integration logic (their solution is establishment of Islamic brotherhood exceeding national integration logic)
- 6) a problem about unequal distribution of national income among geographical regions (their solution is re-articulation of funds transfer). (Yeğen, 2010a: 13)

Kemal Kirişçi and Gareth M. Winrow indicate economic, social, and political (domestic and international) elements, and the influence of the "transformation of the society from a traditional one (in which identities were specified at a communal level) to a

⁷⁶ (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

⁷⁷ (Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

⁷⁸ (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

⁷⁹ (Retrieved from <http://www.timeturk.com/tr/2011/06/06/Nûbihar-dan-bulac-ve-tasgetiren-e-cevap.html#.vaydgpnv-ja>)

⁸⁰ (retrieved from <http://komaNûbihar.org/kurmanci/?P=2181>)

modern one (where the goal was to identify an individual's identity at the state level)" as lying behind the Kurdish Question (Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997, p. 89). In addition to that, Kirişçi and Winrow associated the Kurdish Question in Turkey with "the need for prominent Turkish politicians to address and grant recognition of 'Kurdish reality'" (Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997, p. 183). Despite these diversities, Yeğen also stresses the multilayered characteristics of the Kurdish Question, and defines it as "a multilayered social problem that has been exposed to history's suppression and masking performance, and that has 'been formed' in the construction and solution processes -such as accumulation, dissolution, suppression or revelation- occurred in social history" (Yeğen, 2010a, p. 13).

Yeğen further argues that, the diversity in the perceptions of the Kurdish Question is related to different agendas and politics of the Turkish state for the Kurdish Question throughout the Turkish Republic's history. The Turkish State, by viewing the Kurdish Question as "an issue about cultural and political rights" in pre-republican periods; as "a fatal rivalry with the backward" in the first half of the 20th century; as "a tension between the peripheral economy and national market" in the fifties and sixties; and in the seventies, as "a product of communist incitement" (Yeğen, 2009c; Yeğen, 2007, pp.119-151; Yeğen, 2010, p. 20). Therefore, during the process of dealing with the Kurdish Question, the Turkish state has used recognition, oppression, discipline, assimilation, and discrimination policies against Kurds respectively. As a result, evaluating the background of the Kurdish Question, it can be claimed that the Kurdish Question has mainly consisted of denial of an ethnic group's cultural rights and oppression when the group demands for their rights. In other words, it included denial of the rights and political and/or military oppression. Therefore, in the following how these rights have been denied or granted and how this issue has been dealt with the state's oppression will be explained in detail.

In the pre-Republican period until 1924, the Kurdish Question was considered as an issue about cultural and political rights. During this period, the Kurdish Question was dealt with the recognition politics. On the other hand, in the second period from 1924 to 1990, the cultural and political characteristics of the Kurdish Question and even

the ethnic aspect of the Kurdish Question were denied. The question was considered by the state a simple order or a social or economic issue. The prominent political activities during this period were revolution, oppression, and assimilation. From 1990 to the present, the state has denied the cultural and political character of the Kurdish Question, but began to accept the validity of the ethnic dimensions of the Kurds. The repertoire of state policies has expanded. The oppression and assimilation politics have been blended with discrimination and recognition policies (Yeğen, 2010b). In this context Metin Heper calls the state's strategy after the 1990s as "the non-recognition of the ethnic distinctiveness of the Kurds" (Heper, 2007, p. 6).

In 1920 when there was a state of dual power, both the Istanbul and Ankara both governments accepted the relation of the Kurdish Question to cultural and political rights, and promised to engage in the issue through politics of recognition (Unat, 1961, pp. 359-365; Yeğen, 2009b). On July 10, 1919, they promised Kurdish intellectuals that they would appoint a Kurdish governor and officers to Kurdistan. Mustafa Kemal, before the declaration of the Republic, also explained that the Kurds would be given cultural and self-government rights:

In accordance with our constitution, a kind of local autonomy is to be granted. Hence, provinces inhabited by Kurds will rule themselves autonomously. Anymore, while mentioning about people in Turkey, Kurds should be stated together. Otherwise, they may rebel anytime. Now, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey is composed of the deputies of both Kurds and Turks and these two peoples have unified their interests and fates. It is not true to attempt to draw a line. (as cited in Yeğen, 2009a, p. 599)

Hence, Kurds, according to the 1921 Constitution, would govern the areas where they were the majority. Before the establishment of the Republic, the Kurdish Question was treated as an issue about cultural and political rights, handled via recognition politics.

Following the victory of the Turkish over the Greek army, the Greeks' expulsion from Anatolia, and the signature of Lausanne Treaty, the founders of the Republic gave up following recognition policy towards the Kurds, and no longer recognized the cultural and political character of the issue (Tunç, 1992, pp. 42-43; Yeğen, 2010b, p. 3). The

State did forbid ethnic people to live in Turkey except the Turks (Barkey & Fuller, 1998; Yeğen, 2010b; Kendal, 1980, p. 60). David Romano expresses the denial of Kurdish ethnic identity, language, and culture after the establishment of the Turkish Republic as the following:

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

During that period The Kurdish Question was no longer a ethno-political problem, but rather a social issue generated by the Kurds' resistance against the present, or even an organization issue that should be solved through reforms (Yeğen, 2009b; Yeğen, 2010b), or a problem of socio-economic backwardness in the southeastern region (Sarigil, 2010, p. 532). Hence, the State focused on subduing the influence of Kurdish sheikhs, landlords, tribes, and bandits, disciplined and banished the opponents of the reforms, and invited others to assimilation and Turkification as a result of Kurdish rebellions (Van Bruinessen, 1992, p. 291; Romano, 2006, p. 35; Yeğen, 2009a: 598). In response to Kurdish rebellions, the Turkish State used severe military measures and finally exiled the Kurds to diverse parts of the country through forced migration and relocation. "The state became an oppressive institution –even an enemy- that denied their identity and deemed it appropriate to subject them to all kinds of atrocities" (Ensaroğlu, 2013, p. 9). For instance, Martin Van Bruinessen states the oppression of the state after the Shaikh Said Rebellion:

When government troops finally arrived in force and began to push back the rebels, a brutal campaign of repression occurred: Hundreds of villages were destroyed, thousands of innocent men, women and children killed. Special courts, established in accordance with the Law on the Reinforcement of Order, condemned many influential persons to death – including several who had no connection whatsoever with the revolt. On September 4, 1925, Shaikh Said and forty-seven other leading Kurds were hanged in Diyarbakir. Thousands of less influential Kurds were slaughtered without a trial. The population of entire districts was deported to the west. (Van Bruinessen, Agha, Shaikh and State, pp. 290-291)

On the other hand, David McDowall gives information regarding the state's propensity and capacity for oppression:

Shaykh Said's revolt marked the beginning of "implacable Kemalism". Systematic deportation and razing of villages, brutality and killing of innocents, martial law or special regimes in Kurdistan now became the commonplace experience of Kurds whenever they defied the state. The army, deployed in strength for the first time since Lausanne, now found control of Kurdistan to be its prime function and *raison d'être*. Only one out of 18 Turkish military engagements during the years 1924–38 occurred outside Kurdistan. After 1945, apart from the Korean war, 1949–52 and the invasion of Cyprus, 1974, the only Turkish army operations continued to be against the Kurds. (McDowall, 1996, p. 198)

During that period the state adopted assimilationist policies towards marginal/minority groups including the Kurds (Mardin, 1997, p. 71; Romano, 2006, 39). It alleged that Kurds lost their Turkishness and their Turkish language as a result of cultural exchange (Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997, p. 108). Therefore, massive forced resettlement policy was applied to the Kurds in order to Turkify them (McDowall, 1996, p. 195).

The Law of Settlement (*İskan Kanunu*) of 1934 divided the country into four zones: the first zone which included the regions to be intensified by those who had Turkish culture; the second zone which included the regions to be populated by those who had to be assimilated into Turkish culture; the third zone which included the regions to be inhabited by immigrants who had Turkish culture; and the fourth one which included the regions that were forbidden to settle in due to sanitary, economic, cultural, political, military and disciplinary reasons. Except for the second, all zones indicated regions that were already populated by the Kurds, while the second referred to the regions where the Kurds were to be deported. The Law also prevented those whose mother tongue was not Turkish from establishing villages, districts or artisan/worker groups in their newly-settled areas. With the task of the Turkification of Kurds, the Law worked to displace the Kurds from Kurdistan and disperse them among the Turks while settling more Turks in Kurdistan. The Law indirectly served to aid in the collapse of the traditional social structure of Kurdish society, which was based on the tribal authority and so in rival with the central one. (Uçarlar, 2009, p. 115)

A comprehensive repopulation policy for the Kurds was applied over ten years in order to gather 500,000 Turkish speakers together with the Kurds and to decrease the Kurdish population to the east of the Euphrates. To construct a homogenous Turkish cultural identity and hence to create a Turkish national identity, Turkish language was imposed as the most substantive instrument by the state (Uçarlar, 2009, p. 121). The existence of the Kurds was denied, they were dubbed "mountain

Turks”, speaking Kurdish in public was forbidden, restrictions on Kurdish language were enhanced with the law 2932 and with the Plan for Eastern Restoration (*Şark Islahat Planı*), Kurdish language publication was banned, the Ministry of Internal Affairs was authorized to change the names of places with the provincial administration law in 1949, with the Surname law (*Soyadı Kanunu*) no. 2525 in 1934 the use of the names of tribes, foreign races, and foreign nations as surnames was forbidden, and with the Population Law (*Nüfus Kanunu*) no. 1587 giving Kurdish newborns inconvenient names in accordance with our national culture was banned (Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997, p. 108; Romano, 2006, pp. 38-40). “Being a Turk” was equated with “being a citizen of Turkish Republic and having Turkish race” (Akyol, 2006, p. 118). The State established the *Halkevleri* (the Community Houses) and *Köy Enstitüleri* (Village Institutions) to integrate Kurds into Turkish society and to educate them with Turkish culture; and it opened schools in order to teach the Turkish language to Kurdish students (Kutlay, 2002; Koca, 1992). Following them, in the 1960s, a campaign to speak Turkish (“*Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş*” kampanyası) and a propaganda campaign to the effect that “there are no Kurds, everyone is Turks” were started (McDowall, 1996).

However, together with a relatively democratic base for political expression and increased individual rights and freedoms introduced by the 1961 Constitution, since the middle of the 1960s, the Kurds had showed their reaction against the assimilativist and revolutionary policies of the state (Dodd, 1990, p. 11). They founded *Türkiye Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi* (The Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan (T-KDP)⁸¹ in Diyarbakır in 1965. The party desired the recognition of a special area in Turkey as “Kurdistan”, the acceptance of Kurdish as the official language of the area, and representation of the area in parliament with a defined number of deputies (Akyol, 2006). “The 1970s witnessed a virtual explosion of new Kurdish nationalist organizations (Romano, 2006, p. 47)” such as *Beş Parçacılar* (1976)⁸², *Şivancılar*

⁸¹Türkiye Kürdistanı Demokrat Partisi (Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan) was succeeded by Kurdistan Democratic Party/North or Türkiye Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi (TKDP), or Partiya Demokrata Kurdistanê Turkiye (PDK-T), which is an illegal political party with an aim to create an independent state for Kurdish people.

⁸² *Beş Parçacılar* was established in 1975 with an aim to gather all Kurds in Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Armenia under one flag, by separating themselves from THKO (the People’s Liberation Army of Turkey (Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu)) in 1976. However, in 1979, *Beş Parçacılar* reunited with TDKP-İÖ (Revolutionary Communist

(1972)⁸³, *Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları* – DDKO - (Revolutionary Cultural Associations of the East) (1969)⁸⁴, *Devrimci Doğu Kültür Derneği* - DDKD – (Revolutionary Democratic Culture Association) (1975)⁸⁵, *Türkiye Komünist Partisi* TKSP – (Turkish Kurdistan Socialist Party) (1975)⁸⁶, *Kawa* (1976)⁸⁷, *Denge Kawa* (1977)⁸⁸, *Red Kawa* (1978)⁸⁹, *Rizgari* (1977)⁹⁰, *Ala Rizgari* (1979)⁹¹, *Kürdistan Ulusal*

Party of Turkey - Construction Organisation) that formally founded TDKP (Revolutionary Communist Party of Turkey (Türkiye Devrimci Komünist Partisi)) at a congress on 2 February 1980.

⁸³ *Şivancılar* was formally established in 1972 when the Sivancılar Group broke away from the TKDP (The Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan). Its founder is Dr. Sait Kirmizitoprak who drew supporters from TKDP and DDKO. It supported Masoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democrat Party until its defeat in 1975. It changed allegiance to the Patriotic Union of Talabani and became his supporter in Turkey. *Şivancılar* aims independence of the Kurds and adopted Marxist-Leninist ideology. In 1977, this group changed its name and called as Kürdistan Ulusal Kurtuluşçuları (KUK). However, in 1983, they escaped to Syria with the influence of coup d'état in Turkey on September 12, 1980. (Kurubaş, 2004)

⁸⁴ *The Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları* - DDKO (Revolutionary Cultural Associations of the East) were a Kurdish Marxist-Leninist organization of Turkey, which were founded in May 1969 in Ankara. The DDKO were the first specifically Kurdish political organization in decades. After the Azadi and the Xoybûn, which were active in the early years of the Turkish Republic, there was no "Kurdish" policy until the end of the 1960s. The DDKO opened representatives in Istanbul in 1969, in the eastern Turkish cities of Ergani, Silvan, and Kozluk in 1969, in Diyarbakır in 1971, and in Batman in 1971. The DDKO were active on a cultural level, so writers like Musa Anter and writers like İsmail Beşikçi wrote for the DDKO. After the military coup on March 12, 1971, the DDKO was banned and its members accused.

⁸⁵ *Devrimci Doğu Kültür Derneği* - DDKD – (Revolutionary Democratic Culture Association) was established in 1975 by former members of the DDKO and several other groups (including the *Şivancılar* group). It no longer exists. The DDKD gained many sympathizers with its illegal activities it pursued under the appearance of legality before 12 September 1980.

⁸⁶ *Türkiye Komünist Partisi* - TKSP – (Turkish Kurdistan Socialist Party) was founded in 1975 under the leadership of Kemal Burkay by former TIP members. Most of its members were intellectuals and students and the Party had numerous publications before the 1980 military coup. Many of its leaders fled abroad after the coup, and in 1993, the Party was renamed as the Socialist Party of Kurdistan. Now, it is a Social Democrat Oriented Party with the leadership of Kemal Burkay. The party rejects the use of violence to achieve its political goals. (Retrieved from http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/197001/301141_en.html)

⁸⁷ *Kawa* is the legendary name of a Kurdish hero. *Kawa* was established in 1976 when a group of DDKD members disagreed with the rest of the party over their relations with the Soviet Union. *Kawa* declared the USSR a social imperialist country. It emerged when Ahmet Zeki Okcuoglu, a member of the Ankara Revolutionary Democratic Culture Association (AYOD) and a suspected member of the Revolutionary Eastern Culture Club (DDKO), set up a publishing house in Istanbul and called it *Kawa*. The group later split (1977) into the *Denge Kawa* and *Kawa Redciler* groups following debates on Mao's Three World theory.

⁸⁸ The *Denge Kawa* was founded in 1977 by separating themselves from *Kawa* due to their pro-Maoist ideas. They published a magazine called *Denge Kawa* and adopted the same name for their group.

⁸⁹ *Red Kawa* or *Kawa Redciler* (The *Kawa* Rejectionalists) was established in 1978 by splitting themselves from *Kawa* a debate on Mao's Three World Theory. It is an anti-Soviet and anti-Maoist group in *Kawa*.

⁹⁰ *Rizgari* (Liberation) is formed in 1977 by a group who broke away from DDKD, and before DDKD from TIP (Prior to 12 March 1971 the *Rizgari* group were members of TIP. They left TIP to join the DDKD when it was formed, they broke away and join with other groups). In April 1979 the *Rizgari* group split when the *Al Rizgari* group broke away.

⁹¹ *Ala Rizgari* (Red Liberation) was created in March 1979 by a group split from *Rizgari*. Due to the differences within *Rizgari* over Talabani and Soviet Union, *Ala Rizgari* broke away from *Rizgari*. The split resulted in several killings *Ala Rizgari* is pro-Talabani and pro-Soviet. Prior to the publication of its own magazine in June 1979 the *Ala Rizgari* group split and a strong pro-Soviet group calling itself *Muhalefet* (opposition), emerged.

Kurtuluşçuları - KUK – (Kurdistan National Liberationists) (1978)⁹², *Tekosin* (1978)⁹³, *YEKBUN* (1979)⁹⁴, *Kürdistan Sosyalist Hareketi* - TSK – (Kurdistan Socialist Movement) (1980), and *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê* - PKK – (Kurdistan Workers’ Party) (1978). The PKK started in the 1970s as an organization of a group of Marxist university students under Abdullah Ocalan’s leadership and in 1978 it was named as the PKK (Workers’ Party of Kurdistan). The Kurds declared their loyalty to Kurdishness against the state’s assimilativist policies, with their support for T-KDP, the New Turkey Party (*Yeni Türkiye Partisi*) and PKK. However, the State responded to this situation with a policy of banishment: the military coups of March 12, 1971 and 1980 brought about the arrest, trials, and torture of the Kurdist leftist associations and Kurds.

Upon taking power, the Turkish military declared martial law and acted to restrict many of the freedoms introduced in the 1961 Constitution, especially freedom of the press, universities’ autonomy, and the right of some groups to unionize. In addition to the Turkish Workers’ Party, groups such as *Dev Genç*⁹⁵ were also outlawed. Dissidents, particularly from the left, were arrested and imprisoned in large numbers. (Dodd, 1990, p. 16)

Following the military coup the government declared a state of emergency -*sıkı yönetim*- between 1978 and 1987, which continued as emergency rule -*olağanüstü hâl*- from 1987 to 2002, which bordered on genocide with mass deportations, forced resettlement, the devastation of villages, and the destruction of the traditional Kurdish economy and society. Article five of the 1982 Constitution clearly defined one

⁹²*Kürdistan Ulusal Kurtuluşçuları* - KUK – (Kurdistan National Liberationists) was established in 1978 by former members of T-KDP. Following the defeat of Barzani in 1975, a pro-Soviet group describing itself as KUK emerged in the TKDP. It eventually broke away from the party in 1978 taking a fair degree of support with it. They regarded themselves as true representatives of the KDP and supported the struggle of the Iraqi KDP. Now, it has close relations with the TKSP and opposes the PKK.

⁹³ *Tekosin* is a Kurdish revolutionary socialist movement that was established under the leadership of Mahir Sayın and Mustafa Kaçaroğlu. The movement supports that the Kurds are a separate nation and that an independent state of Kurdistan should be established. Its center is in the city of Tunceli. *Tekosin* aimed to carry out military, political, regional, and rural work to start an armed uprising in the eastern and southeastern Anatolian regions, by achieving the support of the revolutionary democrats in Turkey. At the end of this armed movement, an independent socialist state of Kurdistan in Turkey would be established.

⁹⁴ *The Yekbun* is known to be an illegal separatist organization that was set up on the initiative of Pasa Uzun and Mahmut Cıkman, who left the DDKD in May of 1979. The organization chose the provinces and towns of Siverek, Urfa, Mardin, Derik, Kiziltepe, Bitlis and Diyarbakir as its area of activities. It has had links with the PKK and *Ala Rızgari*. Its publication is *Yekbun* magazine. The organization was known to be carrying out armed activities in Southeastern Anatolia toward realizing a democratic people’s war to liberate the Turkish part of lands they call Kurdistan. It aimed to begin an armed struggle against the Turkish Armed Forces, which they consider as obstructive elements, as well as against local feudalism and “United States imperialism.”

⁹⁵ *Dev Genç* or Revolutionary Youth was a radical, militant, student-based organization founded in Turkey in 1969. It was against imperialism, oligarchy, and fascism, and had mostly Turkish people, but also Kurdish members in the group. It helped creation of a number of radical leftist movements, such as the Kurdistan Workers Party. *Dev Genç* was formally closed down by the state after the military coup by memorandum in March 1971.

of the main duties of the Turkish state as to protect the independence and integrity of the Turkish nation, the indivisibility of the country, and the Republic. This article effectively banned any idea that could be interpreted as the recognition of Kurdish identity. Similarly, Article 26 of the 1982 Constitution stated, “no one can use a language that was banned by law to explain and spread ideas”. Furthermore, in 1983, a law (number 2932) was made by the parliament to forbid the Kurdish language from being spoken, however this law was abolished in 1991. The law prohibited “the declaration, circulation and publication of ideas in a language which is not the first official language of a state recognized by Turkey (Uçarlar, 2009, p. 134)”. The Kurdish names of the villages were changed to Turkish. Kurds were forced to give Turkish names to their children and also unrest raised among the Kurdish society. Against the increased oppression and pressure against Kurds in Turkey, since 1984, the PKK had started “Viet-Cong style guerrilla attacks on Turkish security forces, government personnel and facilities, and Kurdish feudal elites that supported the Turkish state”, and as a result, the PKK gained full attention of the Turkish state and of the society (Romano, 2006, p. 50). On the other hand, the Turkish state deployed a large number of its armed forces to the southeastern Kurdish regions of Turkey, and the state’s repression in the Kurdish regions consisted of “the destruction of thousands of villages and the forced evacuation of their occupants, mass arrests, torture, and all the curtailments of individual liberties that come with the maintenance of martial law (Romano, 2006, p. 54)”. As a result of the state policies against the Kurds, Kurds continued to resist against the state policies, and their behavior affected the state’s perception of the Kurdish Question.

First of all, in 1991 the Turkish Assembly removed the ban on publishing in Kurdish with law number 2932, “except in broadcasts, publications and education or public spaces such as government institutions and political campaigns” (Romano, 2006, p. 55). The Turkish government recognized the Kurds. However, this recognition policy came to the end with the armed struggle of PKK, and “the bloodiest period of the Kurdish Question took place” between 1993 and 1999 (Yeğen, 2009b). As a reply to the increased terror attacks, “under the Prime Minister Tansu Çiller, the state spent 8 billion USD on military operations in the southeast while at the same time more

moderate Kurdish representatives were banished from Ankara's National Assembly (McDowall, 1996, p. 441)". Eight Kurdish Deputies were arrested and sentenced to 15 years of prison. A policy of oppression and discrimination was applied against Kurdish citizens. "Unexplained murders and disappearances of journalists reporting on the Kurdish issue, as well as Kurdish political party officials and intellectuals, accompanied the official state repression (Avebury, 1996)". The two pro-Kurdish political parties, the People's Labor Party (HEP)⁹⁶ and the Democratic Party (DEP), were banned and closed by the Supreme Court in 1993 and 1994. At the end of 1990s, the situation changed with the capture of Öcalan and with the acceptance of Turkey's candidate to the European Union membership (Romano, 2006; Yeğen, 2010b, 2009b). During that period the PKK declared a cease-fire, and the state ended the two-decade-long state of emergency in Kurdish regions, and decreased the restrictions on the Kurds. This included the acceptance of Kurdish language education in private courses, permission to broadcast in Kurdish for half an hour at TRT and almost four hours a week in private channels, which also means that, "the seeds of a policy began to take shape" (Yeğen, 2009b).

TRT started broadcasting TV and radio in Bosnian, Arabic, Cherkesian and Kurdish (in two Kurdish dialects or languages, namely Kurmanji and Kirmancki/Zazaki) on 7 June 2004. TV broadcasting is in channel TRT3 from Monday to Friday at 7.30 to 8.00 a.m. while radio broadcasting is in Radyo 1 on same days at 6.10 to 6.45 a.m. Both in TV and Radio, the common name of programmes in Bosnian, Arabic, Kurmanji, Cherkesian and Kirmancki is 'Our Cultural Wealth'. The official website of TRT describes the aims of the programs as follows: 'to raise the consciousness of people as the citizens who know their duties and responsibilities to the Republic of Turkey which is a democratic, secular and social state that is respectful to human rights and the rule of law... to reinforce people's trust on and the respect for the State... to prevent the exploitation of religious, linguistic, cultural, racial differences... to settle the idea that the Turkish State, with its territory and nation, is an indivisible entity... to ensure correct information against various [disinformative] broadcasting and publication of other countries, especially neighbouring ones, towards our citizens at home and abroad'. (Uçarlar, 2009, pp. 119-120)

⁹⁶ The People's Labor Party (HEP) was formed in June 1990 by former SHP members who were expelled from Erdal Inonu's Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Partisi (SHP- Social Democratic Peoples Party) for attending a conference on "Kurdish National Identity and Human Rights" in Paris. It became the first legal Kurdish party to win representation in the Turkish parliament in modern times. When Leyla Zana and Hatip Dicle, two of these HEP members, refused to take the traditional oath of office for parliament, and Zana, wearing Kurdish national colors on her headband, declared "I take this oath for the brotherhood of the Turkish and Kurdish peoples," this party is perceived as a front for the Kurdistan Workers Party. HEP was banned in June 1993, but was succeeded by the Demokrasi Partisi (DEP- Democracy Party), which itself was banned in 1994.

However, after 2004 with the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq, the rise of national resistance against the reform demands of the European Union, and resumption of armed struggle on the part of PKK, the Turkish army limited the state's recognition policy for the Kurds. At the official and popular levels, discriminatory practices followed and suspicions of disloyalty against Kurdish citizens witnessed (Yeğen, 2010b, pp. 10-11). "This suspicion was stated through jargon such as 'pseudo-citizens', 'new model of belonging' or 'love it or leave it'"; for instance, the Turkish General Staff and then the Senate of Ankara University stigmatized the participants in the Newroz (Nevruz) demonstrations of 2005 as "pseudo-citizens", and Prime Minister Erdoğan in his visit to Hakkari in 2008 declared that ones who object to one nation, one flag, one motherland, one state should leave Turkey (Yeğen, 2010b, pp. 12-13). Even, the 2005 Regular Report of the European Commission noted that "Turkey continues to adopt a restrictive approach to minorities and cultural rights" whereas the 2006 Regular Report highlighted that "there are no possibilities to learn Kurdish today in the public or private schooling system" and that "there are no measures taken to facilitate access to public services for those who do not speak Turkish" (Uçarlar, 2009, p. 132). Nonetheless, in 2007, the discriminatory policies were ended, and the cultural and political characteristics of the Kurdish Question were recognized. Following this in 2009, publications in Kurdish was legalized, and the state TV channels broadcasting in Kurdish were formed (Uçarlar, 2009, pp. 150-151). The government has even permitted the performance Kurdish plays, the appointment of Kurdish-speaking officials, Kurdish ceremonies and sermons in mosques, speaking in Kurdish in prisons, and changing the names of districts, villages into Kurdish and so on.

After analysing the above-mentioned developments, it can be seen that the perception of the Turkish state and its preoccupation with the Kurdish Question have changed over the time. In the same way, the citizens', intellectuals', communities', and parties' perception of the Kurdish Question may differ from each other and their perception may also change over time. Apart from that, their perception of the Kurdish Question, of the causes and the solution of the Kurdish Question, and of the presentation of the Kurds on the resolution process may also show differences.

Therefore, this study explores the perception of the Nûbihar Circle, by focusing on the questions related to the Kurdish Question. As mentioned earlier, the Nûbihar Circle, as a part of the Zehra Community, publishes in Kurdish. It was founded (1) to address Kurdish people in their own language and culture, (2) to publish books that are suitable to Islam as well as the Kurdish custom, (3) to reveal Kurds' realities in Kurdish language, and (4) to create cultural accumulation about Kurdish aims to regain the usurped rights of the Kurds about the Kurdish Question. It was "a reaction to the censorship of Kurd/Kurdistan matters which already mentioned in *The Epistles of Light*; it supported patriotic Kurds and Muslims whom have Islamic belief and who perceive Islam as salvation of Kurds and other nations; organized seminars about the Kurdish elders that served the Kurdish language and history, they try to develop people's historical consciousness and encourage them to think about these values. However, the crucial question is whether all these activities of the Nûbihar Circle should be taken as being Kurdish nationalist? Even the Circle established all that without siding with any particular Kurds, Kurdish groups, Kurdish parties, or struggle, and without insulting Muslims, Islam, and their belief, and by searching for dialogue with others. Ümit⁹⁷ clarifies that "if the Nûbihar Circle mostly emphasizes and pays attention to the issues related to the Kurds and Kurdish Question, it is because of the fact that in Turkey mostly Kurds have had problems with using their mother tongue, with equality and human rights". Otherwise, according to Ümit⁹⁸, "the Nûbihar Circle always defends and supports humanitarian, Islamic, and other values and advocates fundamental rights and liberties⁹⁹". Eser¹⁰⁰ also states that "the Nûbihar Circle approaches all people equally by considering generally accepted humanitarian values, and there is no nationalism in Circle; the Circle also supports the rights of other minority groups without any discrimination". When considering this it should then need to be asked, how should Nûbihar Circle is evaluated: should it be evaluated as a Kurdish nationalist or non-nationalist? In order to get an answer to this question, the Nûbihar Circle's perspective of the Kurdish Question will be examined in the fifth chapter. How does the Nûbihar Circle evaluate Said Nursi, a Kurdish Sunni Muslim

⁹⁷ (Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

⁹⁸ (Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

⁹⁹ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

¹⁰⁰ (Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

theologian, his Kurdish identity, his perspective on the Kurds, and his advice for the Kurds? How do they evaluate the Kurdish Question? What do they view as the root of the issue? What kind of policies should the state adopt in order to deal with the Kurdish issue? What are their solutions for the Kurdish Question? Who should represent the Kurds during the resolution process? Do they demand independence and if they so what kind of a state do they imagine? How does the Nûbihar Circle describe nationalism and to what extent should nationalism exist among a nation? The answer to these questions will also reveal the answer of the question of nationalism's place in Islam in the fourth chapter.



CHAPTER 4

NATIONALISM AND ISLAM IN TURKEY

This study which analyzes the Nûbihar Circle's approach to the Kurdish question also investigates the influence of ethnicity and nationalism together by their interaction with Islam. In this sense, this chapter will address the relationship between Islamism and nationalism general with a particular focus in Turkey. This relationship may of course be examined in the broader context of the relationship between Islam and nationalism. In other words, I could examine the relationship between Islamism and nationalism in Turkey once I examine the relationship between Islam and nationalism. However, since this type of examination would require analyzing the primary Islamic sources such as the Qur'an and Hadith, which would go beyond the scope of this study, I intend to focus only on the relationship between religion and nationalism in general, and Islamism and nationalism in Turkey in particular. In other words, this study does not aim to seek answer to major questions such as "What is the relationship between nationalism and Islam? What is the place of nationalism in Islam? How is nationalism handled and evaluated in Islam?"

The chapter will first analyse the relevant literature on the relationship between religion and nationalism in general and then it will specifically have an eye on the relationship between Islamism and nationalism in Turkey.

4.1. Nationalism and Religion

Is there a relation between nationalism and religion? If yes, what is the nature of such relationship? The existing literature provides a huge amount of works in addressing of these questions. Elie Kedourie was one of the first scholars who examined the relationship between nationalism and religion. Kedourie argues that the relationship between nationalism and religion has been studied on the basis of three explanations/models. In the first model, nationalism is described as "a modern, secular, anthropocentric and subversive ideology", "secular replacement" of religion in order to sustain "the universal needs for stable belonging that religion and the

family can no longer fulfil”, a product of the Enlightenment and Romanticism, and “part and parcel of the philosophy of social and political progress” (as cited in Smith, 2000, p. 794). On the other hand, according to his second “neo-traditionalist” model, the original secular message of nationalism is adopted by non-European intellectuals and it is transformed by ethnic, tradition, and religion for the mobilization of the masses against colonial regimes. In the last model “of secular or ‘political religion’”, instead of being merely a secular ideology, nationalism becomes “a secularized version of medieval millennialism, a form of Christian heterodoxy” (as cited in Smith, 2000, p. 794).

While for Kedourie, nationalism is a “modern, secular political ideology” and a “secularizing ‘political’ religion that is the rival of traditional religions” (as cited in Smith, 2000, p. 794), Anthony D. Smith defines nationalism as

A religion both in a substantive sense, insofar as it entails a quest for a kind of this-worldly collective ‘salvation’, and in a functional sense, insofar as it involves a ‘system of beliefs and practices that distinguishes the sacred from the profane and unites its adherents in a single moral community of the faithful’ (Smith, 2003, pp. 4-5, 15, 26, 40-42).

Smith, by distinguishing three level of analysis in the relation between religion and national identity- official, popular, and underlying-, claims the comprehensibility of nation as a “sacred communion of citizens” whose sacred specialties facilitate the creation of coherent national identities and reveal the feeling of national self-reliance and exclusiveness (Smith, 2000). According to Smith the “official” level investigates the traditional classification of nation and nationalism by the elite of the time, throughout a secular-religious sight. This is the national identity that has been taught in schools and announced at state events. The “popular” level seeks the influence of religious rituals, motifs, and customs on the majority of the determined ethnic or national population, in order to see how religious practices and beliefs affect the feeling of national identity. Smith claims that these two levels equate religion with other-worldly salvation, and the combination of these levels defines nationalism as “a secular, this-worldly, anthropocentric ideology and movement, but at the same time it draws, in varying degrees, on motifs, symbols, and rituals of the religious

traditions of the designated 'national' population according to social constituency and political need" (Smith, 2000, p. 802). However, this definition of nationalism is very much similar to the Kedourie's definition of nationalism which takes part only worldly matters, and which does not have the ability to detect on invisible, metaphysical order describing human affairs.

On the other hand, the 'underlying' level, which is for Smith the most noteworthy for comprehend the relations between religion and nationalism within and between the states, is named as "the sacred properties of the nation" or "the sources and properties of the nation conceived as a sacred communion of its members" (Smith, 2000, p. 802). Smith also states that religious forms, religious images, rites, and ideals are used to give inspiration to the public and have been included in national ceremonies in secular manner. In this way, Smith asserts that the nation is a "sacred communion", "a community of presumed ethnic descent and a community of believers, an ideological union of those who share the same values and purposes", and who trace their genealogy to a significant place, time, and ancestor, and acquire their ethic and ideological identity from the holy properties of a community (Smith, 2000, p. 803). Adrian Hastings also believes in the role of religion in the continuity of nations with pre-modern social and cultural information and identities. Hastings perceives religion as an essential agent for the establishment of nations since it would form constitutional element of many cultures, ethnicities, and even some states (Hastings, 1997).

In contrary, Talad Asad argues that the study of nationalism –whether religious or not- cannot be reduced to making analogies to religion, and he historicizes religion as a concept (Asad, 2003, pp. 181-201). By not taking religion as a definite concept and by focusing on the historicity of the discourse of religion, Asad also examines the discursive roles of religion in various cases. He opens ways for the study of the role of religion in the establishment processes of diverse nationalisms, such as the study of Derek R. Peterson and Darren R. Walhof, who assert that "religious reform went hand in hand with the making of national politics, instead of religion being simply the predecessor to nationalism on a linear time scale." (Peterson and Walhof, 2002, p.

11). Asad also states that “nationalism necessitates the concept of secular to make sense, which depends on a concept of religion” (Asad, 2003, p. 193).

Scholars focusing on the relationship between religion and nationalism are not limited to the ones mentioned above. Many other scholars also work on this subject. For instance such as Rogers Brubaker, think that due to the variations in definitions of “nationalism” and “religion”, few claims on the relation between nationalism or religion are admissible and meaningful, and they find it logical to focus on the question of “how the relation between religion and nationalism can fruitfully be studied”, instead of focusing on the question “what kind of relationship exists between nationalism and religion” (Brubaker, 2012, pp. 1-2). By considering this different approaches, this study will mainly focus on the latter question, and will follow the approaches to studying the relation between nationalism and religion laid out in Rogers Brubaker’s study “Religion and Nationalism: Four Approaches”.

According to Brubaker, the relationship between religion and nationalism can be studied in four distinct ways:

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

Brubaker asserts that the first way of studying the connection between religion and nationalism as analogous phenomena can be used in different contexts; either when nationalism is identified as similar to religion, or when nationalism is defined as a religion. According to Brubaker, it can also be used, Brubaker argues, by associating both nationalism and religion with more general social structures and processes such as:

- 1) a mode of social and cultural identification (through describing oneself and others or analyzing sameness and differences or through placing oneself in association with others),
- 2) a mode of social organization-“a way of framing, channeling, and organizing social relations”-, and
- 3) a way of framing political

claims made in the name of ethnicity, religion, ethnicity, race, nationhood, for economic sources, political representation, symbolic recognition, or cultural production, and on the base of ethno-religious, ethno-national, ethno-racial, ethno-regional, or ethno-cultural identifications (Brubaker, 2012, pp. 4-5).

On the other hand, the second approach to study the relationship between nationalism and religion -by treating religion as a cause or explanation of nationalism,- can be used in many ways in accordance with how the origin, persistence, emotional power, content, or form of nationalism or the ideas, institutions, practices, or events of religion are explained. Some scholars identify how significant religious traditions have shaped forms of nationalism by focusing on particular cases. On the other hand the others focus on how religion –religious motifs, narratives, and symbols- has formed mainly the origins and development of nationalism “through the political appropriation of religious symbols and narratives, or by creating new modes of imagining and forming social and political relationships, encouraging literacy in and standardization of vernacular languages, and making polity and culture come into a tighter alignment (as the Protestant Reformation and the broader process of “confessionalization” influenced the development of nationalism)” (Brubaker, 2012, p. 8).

The third way of studying the relationship between religion and nationalism, according to Brubaker, considers religion “as so imbricated or intertwined with nationalism as to be part of the phenomenon” (Brubaker, 2012, p. 11). This normally happens when religious and national boundaries coincide, when religion is taken to supply the discursive or iconic representation of the nation such as myths, metaphors, and symbols, or when religion is transformed by its encounter with nationalism and the nation-state.

Brubaker’s last way of analyzing the relation between nationalism and religion is to consider religious nationalism as a distinctive kind of nationalism, which presents an explicit alternative to secular nationalism. According to Brubaker one should realize in this approach that;

Nationalist movements do not turn into specifically religious movements by the virtue of religious symbols, emphasizing religious traditions, or making religious affiliation a criterion of full membership of the nation”, and that “religious movements that pursue a comprehensive transformation of public life do not become nationalist simply by working through the nation-state; nor do they become nationalist by allying with secular nationalists in anti-colonial struggles or by deploying the rhetoric of anti-colonial nationalism (Brubaker, 2012, p. 24).

In order for the concept of nationalism maintain its power, it must be restricted to forms of politics, ideology, or discourse comprising a central harmony to the nation, but it cannot be expanded to cover all forms of politics that work in and through nation-states. As long as the nation is not comprehended as a major center of value, origin of legitimacy, and base of identity, it is not necessary to talk about nationalism. Nationalism does not have to have a primary role for the nation, such as in the case Islamism. According to Brubaker this claim of religious nationalism as a distinctive kind of nationalism, is most fully supported by Roger Friedland. Friedland defines nationalism as “a state-centered form of collective subject formation” and “a set of discursive practices through which the territorial identity of a state and the cultural identity of the people are constituted as a singular fact”, and this description, according to Brubaker, permits the understanding of nationalism as a form with variable content, and hence makes religious nationalism quite significant (Friedland 2002, p. 386).

Religious nationalism joins state, territory, and culture primarily by focusing on family, gender, and sexuality: by defending the traditional family, as the key generative site of social reproduction and moral socialization, against economic and cultural forces that weaken its authority or socializing power; by upholding traditional gendered divisions of labor within and outside the family; and by promoting a restrictive regulation of sexuality, seeking to contain sexuality within the family (Brubaker, 2012, p. 18).

While Friedland’s argument focuses on the content of the distinctively religious nationalist programs regulating public and private life, Brubaker adds the necessity of focusing on “the religious inflection of political rhetoric or the religious identities of those involved in political contestation” (Brubaker, 2012, p. 18).

While analyzing the relationship between nationalism and Islam with a particular reference to the Nûbihar Circle's perspective on the Kurdish Question in the chapter five, this study will also attempt to find the appropriate approach within Brubaker's four approaches. According to the result of the relationship between Islam and nationalism among the Nûbihar Circle, through which approach the relationship between Islam and nationalism can be examined fruitfully will be detected. If Islam is perceived as analogous with nationalism or vice versa, the first approach of Brubaker will be appropriate, whereas if religion is explained as cause or explanation of nationalism, Brubaker's second approach will be chosen. On the other hand, if religion is examined as imbricated or intertwined with nationalism, the Nûbihar Circle's analysis of the relationship between nationalism and Islam will be seen compatible with third approach of Brubaker. Lastly, if religious form of nationalism is taken as a distinctive kind of nationalism, Brubaker's fourth approach will be matching. Conclusion chapter six will focus on the appropriate approach of Brubaker according to the relationship between nationalism and Islam for the Nûbihar Circle's perception of the Kurdish Question.

4.2. Nationalism and Islam in Turkey

Ali Muhammed Nakavi investigates the relationship between nationalism and Islam in general, not in the context of Turkey. Nakavi asserts that Islam and nationalism conflict with and against to each other. According to Nakavi (2005), nationalism is a conspiracy of the imperialists in order to prevent the unity of the Islamic world and break the wisdom of the Islamic nation. The imperialists created the idea of racism in order to split the Islamic world into small groups and nations, then comfortably exploit them. As explained by Nakavi, the aim of nationalism is to establish national units whereas the goal of Islam is the unity of the world. Nationalism attracts people to their motherland by making people pay attention to geographical boundaries, racial supremacy, the historical traditions, personalities, culture, civilization, and ideas of their own nation; whilst Islam unites people with God and religion. Islam gives a broad view of human beings without limiting them to borders, races and tribes. Also, Nakavi makes additional explanation of the conflict between nationalism and Islam. As stated by Nakavi, nationalism is a political and social order that willing

to control one's individual and social behavior. On the other hand, Islam conflicts with nationalism since it is an independent ideology and political-social ecolé with its own infrastructures. If Islam was only a devotional religion, there would be no conflict with nationalism. Nevertheless, Islam is a religion that has a certain philosophy about social, economic, politics and life. In this sense, according to Nakavi, a Muslim cannot be both a Muslim and a nationalist at the same time. So, there is no relation between Islam and nationalism (2005, p. 86).

Evaluating the literature on the relationship between nationalism and Islam in Turkey, it is seen that this literature tends to focus on the role of religion in the formation of Turkish nationalism. In other words, what the literature covers is place of Islam in Turkish nationalism. Markus Dressler¹⁰¹ (2013, p. 89), for instance, argues that religion was the “driving force in the visualization and rationalization of Turkish nationalism”. The main reason why Dressler (2013, pp. 89-90) suggests that religion has had a role in the formation of Turkish nationalism is the Ottomanism –which was based on religion- was an essential prerequisite for the establishment of Turkish nationalism, and during the course of the Balkan Wars within the Young Turk Movement, religion supplied collectivist solidarity. Therefore, Dressler believes the role of religion in the formation of Turkish nationalism. Similarly Yusuf Akçura and Ahmet Ağaoğlu also think in the same way with Dressler regarding the role of religion in the genesis of Turkish nationalism. Akçura and Ağaoğlu support that “Islamic identity, ethnicity, and territoriality became intertwined” (as cited in Yavuz, 1993, p. 194), “the relationship between Islam and nationalism should be comprehended with regard to symbiosis rather than antagonism” (as cited in Yavuz, 1993, pp. 181; Shissler, 2003, p. 175). Akçura and Ağaoğlu believe that “power of religion in the articulation of ethnic and national distinctiveness” (as cited in Dressler, 2013, p. 91): When religion and the nation came together in Islam, differences based on ethnic and national identities would disappear (Akçura, 2005[1904], p. 56; as cited in Dressler, 2013, p. 92). Ziya Gökalp also believed in the power of religion as a means

¹⁰¹ In his article “Nationalism, Religion, and Intercommunal Violence”

to get the masses' participation in the establishment of a national consciousness (as cited in Dressler, 2013, p. 94).

In this context Hakan Yavuz also alleges that religious metaphors and symbols can mediate nationalism, as in the example of Turkish nationalism's roots in an Ottoman identity politics. According to him in the late Ottoman period, "the centralization of power, spread of education, and mass communication prepared the ground for the politicization of Islam, and this was moulded into a nationalist discourse by the seminal work of Yusuf Akçura" (Yavuz 1993, p. 207). Yavuz also argues that "Islam has been reinterpreted and reincorporated gradually and subtly into official Turkish nationalism. This process can be seen as an Islamization of Turkish nationalism, but also as the Turkification of the Islamic tradition" (Yavuz, 1998, p. 30). Similarly, Dov Waxman (2000: 4), who asserts that Islam had an important role in the formation of Turkish national identity, as well, describes the Kemalist nationalist process as "Islamization of Turkish nationalism, and the nationalization of Islam", or the "construction of a Turkish style of Islam and the Islamization of the Turkish nationalist ideology" (Waxman, 2000, p. 5). Waxman (2000: 9) argues that, the Kemalists created a kind of "Turkified Islam" with the aim of empowering the Turkish national identity. It should be noted here that Kemalist nationalism has had a dynamic strategic relationship with Islam. During the War of Independence, Islamic discourses were used in order to get popular legitimacy and to supply solidarity among the nation (Waxman, 2000, p. 9). Even though Article 4 of the Law of Settlement was supposed to be applied to those who belong to Turkish ethnicity and culture, it excluded the Orthodox Christian Gagauz Turks of Moldovo, however it included Albanians, Bosnians, Torbes, Pomaks, and Montenegrins Muslims (Waxman, 2000, p. 10). Then during the population exchange period between Turkey and Greece, not ethnicity or language, but religion was analyzed as the defining criteria of Turkishness (Waxman, 2000, p. 10). In that sense Kemal Karpat is also one of authors who believe the role of Islam in the emergence of Turkish nationalism. Karpat (1988, pp. 51-52) argues that "The Turkish nation is in some ways an extension of the Muslim nation that emerged out of the Muslim millet in the nineteenth century". Birol Akgün & Şaban H. Çalış (2009, p. 586) also allege the role of religion in the Turkish nationalism's

formation and history. According to Akgün & Çalış (2009, p. 588), the early period of the Turkish nationalism movement, there were observable similarities between Islamism and Turkism instead of having been a contradiction. On the other hand, İlhan E. Darendelioğlu (1968) alleges that even though Turkish nationalism emerged together with an Islamic spirit and was secularized by the Kemalist ruling elite during the time, after the late 1960s, Turkish nationalism returned to itself and regained its Islamic consciousness.

Although there are large number of studies that examine the role of religion in the formation of Turkish nationalism, investigations on nationalism in Islam in Turkey is very limited. Gökhan Çetinsaya's studies "Rethinking Nationalism and Islam: Some Preliminary Notes on the Roots of 'Turkish-Islamic Synthesis' in Modern Turkish Political Thought (1999)" and "İslamcılıktaki Milliyetçilik (Nationalism in Islam) (2005)" worth closer examination. Çetinsaya focuses in his studies the information about both the share/role of religion in nationalism and the share/role of nationalism in Islam. Çetinsaya approaches nationalism in Islam by evaluating the ideas of Turkist Islamic on nationalism. In order to analyse nationalism in Islam in Turkey, Çetinsaya's method can be accepted as relevant. In the below section discusses the Islamic' thoughts - M. Akif Ersoy, Babanzade Ahmed Naim, Said Halim Paşa, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, Nurettin Topçu, and İsmet Özel.

When looking at the poems of Mehmet Akif Ersoy (1873-1936), it is seen that he did not object to nationalism in any of his poetry until 1912 when national movements picked up between the Muslim components in the Ottoman Empire and when the Albanian and Arabian separation appeared (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 421; Çetinsaya, 1999, p. 96). It is evident that after this year, he vehemently criticized the Turkists (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 421) (Çetinsaya, 1999, p. 96). Presumably, he was afraid of the Turks' attitude that, by provoking other Islamic components, would result in disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, which was the last castle of Islam (Çetinsaya, 1999, p. 96; Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 423). Akif considered ethnic division as one of the most important problems of the Islamic world -but specifically of the Ottoman Empire since for him, nationalism was a trap that foreigners formed to capture Islamic

countries-, as the first step of the separation, and as the main cause of division that has brought last disaster to the Ottoman Empire (Çetinsaya, 1999, p. 96). According to Mehmet Akif, Islam should get rid of nationalism and racism and gathers all nations, whose race, language, neighborhood, customs, and so on were different than each other (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 421). Akif also believed that all nations living in the Ottoman Empire such as Albanians, Kurds, Bosnians, Arabs, Turks, and Circassians had lived in peace based on Islam which did not include nationalism (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 422).

Within the same line Babanzade Ahmed Naim (1872-1934) argued in 1914 that the case of nationalism had been denigrated and denied by Islam, and it was a case that belongs to the Period of *Jahilliyya* (Ignorance), and the greatest coup against felicity and welfare of the Muslims and against continuity of Islam (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 426). Babanzade also claimed that especially in a time of war damaging people's friendly relations with each other with their claims "I am Turk, I am Arab, I am Kurd, I am Circassians" was an insanity and anti-patriotic (Çetinsaya, 1999, pp. 96-7) (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 426). Since for Babanzade Turkish nationalism would result in the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, as in the example of the Albanians, Babanzade was against the Turkish nationalism (Çetinsaya, 1999, p. 97; Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 427). Dividing the supporters of Turkism as "Pure Turkists" and "Turkist-Islamics" (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 427), Babanzade advised the latter group that:

In one heart, two goals cannot take place. You should follow Islamic purpose. The Islamic goal saves Turkisness, but goal of Turkishness can never cover the Islamic world. Two opposites cannot be combined, at the same time one cannot support these two. For God's sake, give up turn of faces of the Turks from the Kaaba to Turan... Serve not for Turkishness, but for Turks, who are already Muslim. (Çetinsaya, 2012, pp. 428-9)

In contrary Said Halim Paşa (1863-1921), in his articles published after the Armistice of Mondros and collected under the title of *To Islamize*, accepted nationalism in the Islamic world (Çetinsaya, 1999, p. 97; Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 433). Cursing the selfishness of racism and nationalism, Said Halim Paşa stated that nationalism cannot be abandoned and it is suitable for Islam in the modern world (Çetinsaya, 1999, pp. 97-8; Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 433). Said Halim Paşa also argues that, Islam accepted humans

not as a constituent depend on race and origin, but as a social and political component, and this situation showed that Islam desires and accepts nationalism (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 434). The Nation was union of social and political components which for a long time have lived together, spoken in the same language, had common feelings and thoughts, and created literature and art belonged to themselves (Çetinsaya, 2012, pp. 434-435).

Necip Fazıl Kısakürek also (1905-1983) alleged that if Turkishness became servant instead of being the master, and Islam becomes master instead of being servant, it would then be acceptable (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 437). Dividing nationalism into false and real nationalism, Kısakürek defined real nationalism as Islamic nationalism or nationalism subject to Islam (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 437). Kısakürek claims that, nationalism existed in Islam, but had some limits: It looked not back towards the past, but forward towards the future (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 437). Therefore, this nationalism was related to race and land, but it was limited with Islam (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 438). According to Kısakürek, as long as someone is Muslim, he was also a Turk (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 439).

Nurettin Topçu (1909-1975) argues that, the nation was one of the stopping places in which human will believing in Allah rests. The Nation was like a human since it has a body and spirit and its body was composed of territory, history and fine arts. The most real thing that the nation relied upon was a homeland/national territory. This component was the skeleton of the national body. Land decided race and the condition of the land creates races. National history covers the skeleton of the national bod and the history was the source of the national spirit. Fine arts were the flowers of the national tree or the breath of the national body. This breath was the means of expression of the national spirit. The Nation was not only a union of territory and race but also a union of language and religion. It included the roots of all these components and it became the starting point of will belonging to the future (Çetinsaya, 2012, pp. 441-442). Topçu was against an Islam that ignored race and land and against a Turanism that ignored the homeland (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 442). He dated the beginning of nationalism to the Battle of Malazgirt in 1071 (Çetinsaya,

2012, p. 444). According to Nurettin Topçu nationalism has six principles: 1) the religion of Islam that has created the nation and its ethics, customs, and heart, 2) the land of Anatolia, 3) the Turkish race that retained its identity during its 900 years in Anatolia, 4) Turkish language, 5) the centralist, domineering, and responsible Turkish state that has kept people's will alive, and 6) the Turkish socialist financial system that supplies people's all social needs and that mobilizes all people with its work ethic (Çetinsaya, 2012, pp. 444-445)

On the other hand İsmet Özel (1944- defines himself as a Turkish nationalist whose ideological framework is the Turkish Independence March and he does not separate Turkishness from Islam and does not approve of ethnic separatism such as Kurdish or Alawite separatism (Çetinsaya, 2012, pp. 449-450). According to Özel, Turks have protected and will be able to protect their Turkishness by means of Islam, and Turkishness started with the feeling to protect the honor and greatness of Islam (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 450). In this sense, he is against anyone who isolates Islam from Turkishness or who discriminate based on nation or race, namely Kurdish nationalists and Turanists (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 451). For Özel, these people only serve imperialism, capitalism, and the Western desire to capture Turkey, which is the last hope of Islam (Çetinsaya, 2012, p. 451).

As can be seen above throughout the Çetinsaya's approach to investigate for nationalism in Islam, Islam and Turkish nationalism has no essential contradictions, but rather mostly overlapped with each other in Turkish political history (Çetinsaya, 1999, p. 94; Çetinsaya, 2005, p. 451). In other words Özel has not separate Turkishness from Islam. Turks will be able to protect their Turkishness by means of Islam, and Turkishness started with the feeling to protect the honor/greatness of Islam. Topçu could not think of nationalism against Islam since Islam has created the nation and its ethics, customs, and heart. Kısakürek defined real nationalism as Islamic nationalism or nationalism subject to Islam because according to him, this nationalism was not about race and land. Said Halim Paşa also argued that nationalism cannot be abandoned and it is suitable for Islam in the modern world. Babanzade Ahmed Naim, on the other hand, argued that the Islamic goal saves

Turkishness, but goal of Turkishness can never cover the Islamic world. Akif, supported Islam that made all nations brother and lived in peace. It is understood that all Islamic perceived Turkish national identity inseparable from Islamic context, as also Çetinsaya alleges.

After investigating nationalism in Islam in Turkey through Çetinsaya's method, Serdar Şengül's approach can also be evaluated through his article "Islamism, Kurds, and the Kurdish Question (İslamcılık, Kürtler ve Kürt Sorunu)". In this article, Şengül does not intend to search for nationalism in Islam, but rather to evaluate the perspectives of Islamic intellectuals on the Kurdish Question in 1990s. Discussions of the Kurdish Question have aroused the interest of Islamic Kurds and of political and academic groups from the 1990s to today, and these discussions thus have an Islamic component. Şengül's study offers details about nationalism in Islam because it presents the ideas of both Kurdish Islamic and of Turkish Islamic on a nationalist issue -Kurdish Question: Nationalism is questioned in two ways: by addressing a nationalist issue, "the Kurdish Question," and by directing questions to both Turkish and Kurdish Islamists. In this article, evaluating the perspectives of Kurdish and Turkish Islamic intellectuals on the Kurdish Question in the 1990s, Şengül argues that: 1) According to Islamists, the Kurdish issue has arisen due to the nationalism ideology that has spread with the Western intention into a division of the Islamic world, whereas according to Islamic Kurds, it is not true to interrelate the Kurds' struggle and their thoughts with the nationalist movements that developed in the Muslim world in the 19th century; 2) the Islam's identification of the Kurds with Kurds' ethnicity/the ideology of nationalism rather than with their Islamic identity has served the imperialists, and much more divided the Muslim world, than simply nationalism (Şengül, 2005, pp. 529-539).

In the 1990s, according to Şengül (2005), national conflicts appeared with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the Central Asia and with the break-down of Yugoslavia in the Balkans, the victimhood of Muslims in these conflicts, and the suppression of the Palestine revolt by force. Bosnian mujahideen and Palestinian children all were evaluated by an Islamic jihadi psychology (Şengül, 2005, p. 529). At

this point, the interest of Islamic Kurds and of political and academic groups started to the issue of “Why the same interest supplied to the Muslim groups mentioned above was denied from the Kurds that are as Muslim as them and as under oppression as them?” (Şengül, 2005, p. 529). This discussion was Islamized due to the objections and sensibility of Islamic Kurds that had Islamic identity, showed awareness on the Kurdish Question, and based the necessity of this sensibility and legitimacy about the issue on Islam’s basic principles (Şengül, 2005, p. 529). Therefore, the Kurdish Question has become a ground where Islamic intellectuals could discuss the domestic issues of the Islamic world (Şengül, 2005, p. 529).

Şengül (2005, p. 529) defines the reason of the Turkish Islam’s indifference to the Kurdish Question as the nationalist characteristics of the Kurdish movement and its antipathy towards the Muslim with *umma* consciousness. Therefore, for the Turkist Islamic, the issue should be taken not on the ground of Kurdishness or Turkishness, but on that of Muslim brotherhood (Şengül, 2005, p. 529). This claim is based on Şengül’s results and evaluation of Turkish Islam’s ideas about nationalism and Islam. Here are his findings on the ideas mentioned by the Turkish Islamic: Starting with Ali Bulaç, he asserts that the cause of the Kurdish Question is nationalism since Islam and nationalism are two separate incompatible facts and systems (Şengül, 2005, p. 529). In Islamism, there is an *umma* consciousness that rejects nationalism, and hence Muslim Turkish society does not accept Kurdish nationalism as they do other nationalisms (Şengül, 2005, pp. 529-530). However, according to Bulaç, since the Islamic movement in Turkey has awakened lately and the threat of communism during the Cold War forced Muslims to ally with nationalist groups, until the 1970s, Islamic and Turkish nationalism have been close to each other (Şengül, 2005, p. 530). For Bulaç, even though the *umma* consciousness protected the Muslims against Kurdish nationalism, they did not show the same success against Turkish nationalism (Şengül, 2005, p. 530). Bulaç names the struggle of the Kurds for their problem as nationalism and while disablement of Muslim Turks with nationalism does not remove them from the Islamic circle, Muslim Kurds are accepted as outside the Islamic circle (Şengül, 2005, p. 530). On the other hand, another Turkist Islamic intellectual, Ahmet Taşgetiren, states that today, not only Kurds, but also Muslims

are targets of Kemalism. Hence, the Kurdish Question can be solved, not by giving special rights to the Kurds, but by reforming society on Islamic basis (Şengül, 2005, p. 530). Şengül (2005, p. 530) alleges that Taşgetiren does not accept Kurdishness as a legitimate categories, and that as a result he underestimates the oppression that Kurds were exposed just because of their Kurdishness in Kemalist Republic. According to Şengül, Islamic authors believe that when the Westerners put forward the idea of nationalism, the Islamic connection between Muslims disappeared and they started to express themselves based on their ethnic identities. The Kurdish Question is a product of this period. Moving away from the Islamic identity that made them part of the ummah/religious community, they defined themselves based on their ethnic identity (Şengül, 2005, p. 531).

When Şengül investigates the perspective of the Islamic Kurds on the Kurdish Question, he finds that: According to Altan Tan, the Kurdish Question should be handled through two dimensions: The first and main dimension is the deprivation of the Kurds from the opportunity to protect and manifest their own identity, culture, and tradition. Historically, the Kurds have been divided between Turkey, Iraq, and Syria, and have been subjected to politics of assimilation, denial, and oppression (Şengül, 2005, p. 532). Imperialist powers have exploited the Kurds for their aims, and the Kurds have been trying to free themselves this game played on them by the imperialists (Şengül, 2005, p. 532). The second dimension is that, in order to prove that the struggle of the Kurds and their demand for rights cannot be named as nationalism or tribalism. Mehmet Pamak, another Islamic Kurd, defines the concepts of tribe/nation and tribalism/nationalism using the Qur'an and Hadiths (Şengül, 2005, p. 533). Pamak states that in the 13th verse of Hucurat Surah and the 22nd verse of the Rum Surah offer a rationale for the existence of different tribes/nations, for their interaction, and hence these tribes/nations should protect their tribal/national specialties, languages, and cultures (Şengül, 2005, p. 533). Pamak states that nationalism has caused serious problems within the Muslim World and the Kurds were naturally influenced from this. The Turkish Republic, by denying the Islamic tie that connects the parts Anatolian society to each other, tried to make Turkishness a common tie and saw the Kurds as an the most dangerous obstacle to this project.

They banned the Kurds' language, even forbidden the words 'Kurds' and 'Kurdistan', and denied the existence of the Kurds. Muslims have been silent against the state's denial policy of the Kurdish ethnic identity, and even blamed the Kurdish nationalists who criticized these practices against. In the end, Pamak alleges that the elimination of Kurdish language and culture is tantamount to starting a war against Allah's verses, and that a person who calls himself a Muslim should not act with ignorant measures such as a sense of Turkishness or of the integration of nationhood (Şengül, 2005, p. 533).

On the other hand, Mücahit Bilici's book¹⁰² is worth to be investigated since he evaluates the relationship between nationalism and Islam, especially between Kurdish nationalism and Turkish Islam with a particular reference to the Kurdish Question in Turkey. Bilici asserts that Islam is misused by nationalist Turks in order to protect the Turkish national unity in Turkey, by accusing Kurds of making nationalism, discrimination, and even racism, and breaking the Islamic unity (2017, p. 226). That is why, according to Bilici, is that Turks perceive "Kurdishness" of the Kurds as "Kurdish nationalism" whereas "Turkish nationalism" of the Turks as "Turkishness" (2017, p. 154). According to Bilici, in Turkey, Islamism is Islamic nationalism which is (mis)used by Turks in order to suppress Kurdishness of the Kurds. Islamic unity, pan-Islamism, is represented by Turks as making Kurds servant of the Turks by assimilating their Kurdishness within Islamism (2017, p. 242). In this sense, what Turks do is to make Islamic unity their nation, and to misuse and to exploit Islam on behalf of Turkish nation, according to Bilici (2017, p. 242). However, he underlined that the real Islamic unity can be realized through recognition of Kurdish nation and acceptance of the Kurds as citizens (2017, p. 169) since freedom, democracy, and unification can only be gained through Islam (2017, p. 226). If Islam cannot be democratic, it is immoralist and dictator (Bilici, 2017, p. 237). Bilici claims that the reason of the Turks not to accept individual rights and freedom of the Kurds is Turkish nationalism (2017, p. 190). According to him, although the feeling of nationalism can liberalize Kurds, this feeling may also blind them towards other nations' rights and freedom (2017, p.

¹⁰² Hamal Kürt: Türk İslamı ve Kürt Sorunu

190). However, as stated by Bilici, the Kurds need *müspet* (positive) *milliyet* (nationality with the meaning of owning their own Kurdish nation), instead of *menfi* (negative) *milliyetçilik* (nationalism meaning racism) thoughts (2017, p. 197). In this sense, the relationship between Islam and nationalism is perceived by Bilici as religious nationalism that is such a distinctive kind of nationalism. That is to say, nationalism includes religion and national feelings, It demands an Islamic unity too, (solidarity of Muslims and one of the *müspet* form of nationality) consisting of all nations.

As can be seen above, in the studies mentioned above, relationship between nationalism and Islam has rarely been examined. These studies, except Bilici's study, have reflected the thoughts of Islamists on nationalism or on a nationalist issue –the Kurdish Question. Gökhan Çetinsaya in his studies “Rethinking Nationalism and Islam: Some Preliminary Notes on the Roots of ‘a Turkish-Islamic Synthesis’ in Modern Turkish Political Thought (1999)” and “İslamcılıktaki Milliyetçilik (Nationalism in Islam) (2005)” discusses nationalism in Islam and evaluates the ideas of Turkish Islamic on nationalism. Şengül, in his article “Islamism, Kurds, and the Kurdish Question (İslamcılık, Kürtler ve Kürt Sorunu),” evaluates the viewpoints of Turkish and Kurdish Islamic intellectuals on the Kurdish Question in the 1990s. On the other hand, the relationship between Islam and nationalism is examined by Bilici through questioning of Islamists' perception of the Kurds and Kurdish Question. However, this thesis, as a continuation of Bilici's study, examines that nationalism in Islam can also be studied through an investigation on the perspective of one of the Islamic Kurdish Communities, the Nûbihar Circle, on the Kurdish Question in Turkey. The author believes that through an evaluation of an Islamic community from a Kurdish ethnic identity, the relation of ethnicity with Islam can be revealed through this community's perspective on the Kurdish Question. Whether nationalism and ethnicity have an influence in their interpretation and perception of Islam can be questioned while searching for relationship between nationalism and Islam or for nationalism in Islam among the Nûbihar Circle.

4.3. Nationalism and Islam in Said Nursi

Evaluating all works of Said Nursi, it is seen that Said Nursi divides nationalism into two: *menfi* (negative) and *müspet* (positive). However, Said Nursi combines *menfi* with nationalism and *müspet* with nationality, and calls them as *menfi* nationalism and *müspet milliyet* (nationality). He uses *müspet milliyet* (nationality) instead of *müspet* nationalism. For him, nationality can only turn into nationalism when being and acting *menfi* (Bilici, 2013).¹⁰³ That is to say, Said Nursi accepts *müspet* nationality as natural and not nationalist thing while perceiving *menfi* nationalism as negative, harmful, and nationalist. Also, in his matching, Said Nursi's defining of nationalism as racism is influential (Nursi, *Emirdağ Lahikası*, 2006, p. 394).

According to Said Nursi, *menfi* nationalism is harmful and bad, and is fed by nurturing enmity towards others, and by acting superior to others. Hence, it results in fights, hostility, racism, separatism, imperialism, and arrogance (Nursi, *Mektubat*, 2006, p. 323)¹⁰⁴. This kind of nationalism, as explained by Said Nursi, is especially used by European countries, in order to divide Asian and Muslim nations [such as India, Iran, Kurdistan, Arabia, and Turkistan] into small groups and to colonize them. However, Said Nursi suggests *müspet* nationality as a solution of *menfi* nationalism, and advises Muslim nations to be brother with each other through *İslamiyet milliyeti* (Islamic nationality) which is *müspet*, holy, and real public nationality (Nursi, *Emirdağ Lahikası*, 2006, p. 224)

Tâ ki İslâm kavimlerini, meselâ Arabistan, Hindistan, İran, Kafkas, Türkistan, Kürdistan'daki milletleri, menfî ırkçılık ifsad etmesin. Hakikî, müsbet ve kudî ve umumî milliyet-i hakikiye olan İslâmiyet milliyeti ile "Mü'minler ancak kardeşirler," ayetinin hükmünün tam inkişafına mazhar olsun. Ve felsefe fûnunu ile ulûm-u diniye birbiriyle barışsın ve Avrupa medeniyeti, İslâmiyet hakaikiyle tam musalaha etsin. (Nursi, *Emirdağ Lahikası*, 2006, p. 224)

There is also an anecdote¹⁰⁵ written by Said Nursi, which shows that Said Nursi is against *menfi* racist nationalism (Nursi, *Emirdağ Lahikası*, 2006, p. 139): One day, Said

¹⁰³ "Müspet olan milliyet menfileşmeden milliyetçiliğe dönüşüyor" (Bilici, 2013, retrieved from <http://hurbakis.net/content/menfi-milliyetçilik-karsi-musbet-milliyet>)

¹⁰⁴ "Menfi Milliyetçilik: Fakat fikr-i milliyet iki kısım: Bir kısmı menfidir, şââmetlidir, zararlıdır. Başkasını yutmakla beslenir, diğerlerine adâvetle devam eder, müteyakkız davranır. Şu ise, muhasamet ve keşmekeşe sebeptir."

¹⁰⁵ "Ben Van'da iken hamiyetli bir Kürt talebeme dedim ki: "Türkler İslamiyete çok hizmet etmişler. Sen onlara ne niyetle bakıyorsun?" Dedi : "Ben Müslüman bir Türkü fasık bir kardeşime tercih ediyorum. Belki (hatta) babamdan

Nursi asks one of his Kurdish students how he perceived the Turks. The Kurdish student replies that he preferred a Muslim Turk rather than a Kurd who commits a sin openly since the Turks serve for faith. Said Nursi was glad from this answer. After a while, when this Kurdish student came back from Istanbul, Said Nursi asks the same question and witnesses that the boy changes his answer. The student says "I prefer a religious or even an atheist Kurd rather than religious Turk." Then, Said Nursi blamed his racist opinion and tried to change his racist idea¹⁰⁶.

As opposed to *menfi* nationalism which is not approved by Said Nursi, *müspet* nationality is harmless, and occurs naturally through people's needs, results in cooperation and solidarity, and also supports and promotes Islamic solidarity (Nursi, *Mektubat*, 2006, p. 323)¹⁰⁷. Said Nursi asserts that *müspet* nationality should be servant and strength of Islam, and should not try to replace the place of Islam. Because Muslim brotherhood can continue hereafter, brotherhood of nationality should protect Muslim brotherhood without replacing it. Only by this way, together with Islam, national solidarity increases (Nursi, *Mektubat*, 2006, p. 324)¹⁰⁸. Briefly, according to Said Nursi, religion stands over ethnicity and nationality, and in this way this universal value makes people from different ethnicity and nationality brothers. Nevertheless, the idea of nationalism can never be successful for such a thing. Then, Said Nursi's *müspet* nationality is surrounding and unifying, rather than being separatist as *menfi* nationalism. Therefore, Said Nursi supports *müspet* nationalism

ziyade ona alakadarım. Çünkü tam imana hizmet ediyorlar." Bir zaman geçti (Allah rahmet etsin) o talebem ben esarete iken, İstanbul'da mektebe girmiş. Esaretten geldikten sonra gördüm. Bazı ırkçı muallimlerden aldığı aksü'l-amel (reaksiyon) ile o da kürtçülük damarı ile başka bir mesleğe girmiş. Bana dedi: Ben şimdi gayetfasık, hatta dinsiz de olsa bir Kürd'ü salih bir Türk'e tercih ediyorum" sonra ben onu birkaç sohbetta kurtardım. Tam kanaati geldi ki Türkler, bu millet-i İslamiyenin kahraman bir ordusudur."

¹⁰⁶ He also asks to the reader:

Ey sual soran meb'uslar! Şarkta beş milyona yakın Kürt var. Yüz milyona yakın İranlı ve Hintliler var. Yetmiş milyon Arap var. Kırk milyon Kafkas var. Acaba birbirine komşu, kardeş ve birbirine muhtaç olan bu kardeşlere, bu talebenin Van'daki medreseden aldığı ders-i dinî mi daha lâzım? Veyahut o milletleri karıştıracak ve ırktaşlarından başka düşünmeyen ve uhuvvet-i İslâmiyeyi tanımayan, sırf ulûm-u felsefeyi okumak ve İslâmî ilimleri nazara almamak olan o merhum talebenin ikinci hali mi daha iyidir? Sizden soruyorum. (Emirdağ Lahikası, 139)

¹⁰⁷ "*Müsbet Milliyetçilik*: Müsbet milliyet, hayat-ı içtimaiyenin ihtiyac-ı dahilîsinden ileri geliyor. Teâvüne, tesanüde sebeptir; menfaatli bir kuvvet temin eder, uhuvvet-i İslâmiyeyi daha ziyade teyid edecek bir vasıta olur."

¹⁰⁸ "Şu müsbet fikr-i milliyet, İslâmiyete hâdim olmalı, kal'a olmalı, zırhı olmalı; yerine geçmemeli. Çünkü İslâmiyetin verdiği uhuvvet içinde bin uhuvvet var; âlem-i bekâda ve âlem-i berzahta o uhuvvet bâki kalıyor. Onun için, uhuvvet-i milliyet ne kadar da kavî olsa, onun bir perdesi hükmüne geçebilir. Yoksa onu onun yerine ikame etmek, aynı kal'anın taşlarını kal'anın içindeki elmas hazinesinin yerine koyup, o elmasları dışarı atmak nev'inden ahmakane bir cinayettir".

that gathers idea of nationality and Islam together. Also, he warns Turks not to separate nationality and Islam from each other.

Şu halde ey Türk kardeş, bilhassa sen dikkat et! Çünkü senin milliyetin İslamiyet'le kaynaşmıştır, ondan ayrılması imkânsızdır. Ayırırsan mahvolursun! Senin mazindeki bütün mefahirin İslamiyet defterine geçmiştir, bu mefahiri, dünyada hiçbir kuvvet silemezken, sen şeytanların hilesine kanarak o mefahiri kalbinden silme! (Nursi, *Mektubat*, 2006, p. 324)

In this paragraph, Said Nursi especially warns Turks about this issue since for him, *hamiyet-i diniye* and the Islamic nationality were totally united within the Turkish and Arabic communities. Said Nursi perceives religious efforts as the most powerful, textual and sincere spiritual chain which is an unbreakable, and cannot be destroyed and defeated (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 64). As can be understood, Said Nursi adopts idea of nationality that increases to the commitment to religion without aiming to replace it. For instance, although Said Nursi is a Kurd, he claims that the concept of Kurdishness is meaningless claim since they are Muslims primarily (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 579). In this sense, Said Nursi instrumentalizes idea of nationality instead of instrumentalizing religion.

The relationship between nationality and religion is also stated by Said Nursi. He perceives religion and nationality as exactly the same things with a little worthless difference at a glance (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 63). Said Nursi claims that religion is life and soul of nationality (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 63). According to Said Nursi, if nationality and religion are viewed separately and differently, *hamiyet-i diniye* (religious efforts) includes the people and the elite whereas *hamiyet-i milliye* (national endeavors) belongs to only the one who sacrifices for his own personal benefits to his nation (*İçtimai Dersler*, p. 63). If so, according to Said Nursi, *hamiyet-i diniye* in public law should be fundamental whereas *hamiyet-i milliye* must be the servant of religious effort (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 63). It is because according to Said Nursi, Islamic nation can only achieve happiness on earth and hereafter solely with the truths of Islam, Islamic Sharia (*İçtimai dersler*, 2013, p. 70). Otherwise, justice and security breaks down, immorality emerges, and then liars take control to govern

(Nursi, *İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 68). Even, as stated by Said Nursi, people can sacrifice their lives for their nation as commanded by their religion Islam.

The word "I can die for my nation" comes from the truths of religion and faith. It is the property of the people of faith. The value of a person depends on his favor. If his favor is his nation, he is a small nation by himself. That is to say, whose favor is himself is not a human being since the essence of human is civilized. (Nursi, *İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 60)

In fact, according to Said Nursi, Islam has always protected the poor and the oppressed, and has not resulted in any hostility among Muslims while the Catholic sect has always supported the forerunners against the poor (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 73). Islam is something that forbids (negative, *menfi*) nationalism which blocks Islamic solidarity, and forbids negative supremacy of ones over others. This is, obviously detriment for Islam, as explained by Said Nursi (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, 579). According to Said Nursi, solely the freedoms in the frame of Shari'a. Consultancy appropriate to the Shari'a can show domination of real nationality. The essence and spirit of real nationality is Islam (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 58). Briefly Said Nursi perceives nationality as equal to Islam (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 156) and declares Islamic nationality as the absolute ruler of the world and of the hereafter (Nursi, *İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 65).

With the connection of this holy nationality, all of the Muslims become a single tribe. Like people among the tribe, all Muslims are also connected to each other by Islamic solidarity, and hence they are related to each other. They help each other spiritually and, if necessary, materially. Supposedly all the Islamic traditions are connected by a light chain. (Nursi, *İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 58)

The relationship between Islam and nationalism also reveals itself in Said Nursi's conception of *hürriyet* (freedom or independence). Said Nursi supports idea of nationality as father of *hürriyet* (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 105), which cannot exist without Islamic Sharia (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 68). Therefore, Said Nursi uses and calls *hürriyet* as *hürriyet-i şer'i* (*hürriyet* depends on Sharia). This *hürriyet-i şeri*, for instance, can awaken nations such as the Kurds, from *gaflet* (blindness), and prevent them from captivity (Nursi, *İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 12). According to Said Nursi, as long as *hürriyet* is based on Sharia, it can last forever, and national sovereignty dominates (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 13). However, its protection and maintenance

depend on and require *ittihad-ı kulub* (harmony) within the scope of Sharia, *muhabbet-i milliye* (patriotism), *maarif* (education), *say'ı insani* (human labor), and *terk-i sefahet* (abandonment of dissipation) (Nursi, *İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 13). By this way, *hürriyet* will protect everyone's justice, and prevent people from being forced by anyone or anything (Nursi, *İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 102). On the other hand, dissipation, wastefulness, violence, and sensual enthusiasm convert *hürriyet* into enslavement (Nursi, *İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 15). Said Nursi supports *Meşrutiyet* (Constitutional Monarchy) which brings *hürriyet* to people and all nations and Islamic unity and solidarity. He describes *Meşrutiyet* as follows:

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

Said Nursi makes *meşrutiyet* support Islamic unity with the existence and domination of nations. In this *meşrutiyet*, nationality will exist together with Islam. As can be seen above, the relationship between nationalism and Islam in Said Nursi is gathered and in such a harmony that "neither nationalism nor Islam can be separated from each other". He perceives religion as soul of nationality and nationality as the servant of religion. Therefore, he uses and supports the concepts of *İslami milliyet* (Islamic nationality) and *hürriyet-i şer'i*.

CHAPTER 5

THE NÛBIHAR CIRCLE: AN ISLAMIC AND A KURDISH COMMUNITY

This chapter analyzes the Nûbihar Circle's approach to the Kurdish Question. It also investigates the underlying motivations that make a strong impact on determination of the Nûbihar Circle's approach to the Kurdish Question, by considering ethnicity and nationalism. It takes, as well, into the consideration interaction of ethnicity and nationalism with Islam in understanding and analyzing the Nûbihar Circle's perception of the Kurdish Question. To this aim, mainly relying on the interviews conducted with the prominent members of the Nûbihar Circle and on the published materials of the prominent members of the Circle, the Nûbihar Circle's perspective on the Kurdish Question is examined through content analysis method. While the *Nûbihar* journal, published by the Nûbihar Circle, would have been the best source for such an analysis, my inability to read Kurdish prevented me from using it. However, I tried to compensate for this by conducting a content analysis of the writings of the Nûbihar Circle's prominent members in books, seminar booklets, and in the journals (e.g.: *Yeni Zemin*, which was published by the Zehra community, an umbrella community involving a few groups and circles, including the Nûbihar Circle). I examined all these documents and sources through qualitative content analysis method to search specific information related to the Nûbihar Circle's perception of the Kurdish Question and to see if there are some common patterns and themes within and between the documents.

Through qualitative content analysis of the interviews I conducted and the documents I studied, my examination is focused on the following questions: 1-How does the Nûbihar Circle define nationalism and the Kurdish Question? 2-What are the Nûbihar Circle's solutions to the Kurdish Question? 3-How does the Nûbihar Circle perceive the Kurds' demand for independence in Turkey? 4-What type of regime the Nûbihar Circle would establish if they achieved an independent Kurdish State? 5-Who should represent the Kurds throughout the resolution process according to the Nûbihar Circle: the PKK, the HDP or other agents? 6-What has been the Said Nursi's

(Kurdish and Muslim identity's) impact on the Circle's thoughts about the Kurdish Question? Is there an emphasis on his Kurdish identity?¹⁰⁹ It is on the basis of these questions that I examine the impact of the Nûbihar Circle's Kurdish and Islamic identity on the way they approach the Kurdish question as an Islamic community. Also, it is through such an examination that I have scrutinized the relationship between Islam and nationalism.

According to the result of this analysis of the Nûbihar Circle's perception of the Kurdish Question, the appropriate approach of Brubaker to study the relationship between nationalism and Islam for the Nûbihar Circle will be determined in the conclusion chapter. Whether the relationship between nationalism and religion is perceived (1) as "religion or nationalism as analogous phenomena", (2) as "religion as a cause or explanation of nationalism", (3) as "religion as imbricated or intertwined with nationalism", or (4) as "religious nationalism as a distinctive kind of nationalism", will be decided.

5.1. Importance of Said Nursi's Kurdish and Islamic identity for the Nûbihar Circle

It should be stated that the Nûbihar Circle is not only a publishing house; it is also the publishing house of the Zehra community, which approaches Said Nursi and his words in a different manner to the other Islamic communities.¹¹⁰ The Nûbihar Circle, as a part of the Zehra community, also follows Said Nursi's approach, and evaluates his works differently to other Islamic communities by emphasizing the Kurdish identity of Said Nursi along with emphasizing his Islamic and ideological side.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, the examination of the interviews with the members of the Circle and their publications reveals that Said Nursi has a major influence on the Nûbihar Circle and its perception of the Kurdish Question. This is actually an advantage for my work because Said Nursi has two identities: Kurdish and Muslim, which can also be used in the examination of relationship between nationalism and Islam within the Nûbihar Circle. While most Islamic communities read and follow Said Nursi's work, the Epistles of Light, by underestimating Said Nursi's old political writings and his Kurdish identity, the Nûbihar Circle evaluates every subject especially issues related to Kurds and Kurdish Question under the light of Said Nursi and his Kurdish and Islamic identity. It is due to this that I also examined throughout my work the influence of Said Nursi on the Nûbihar Circle's perspective of the Kurdish Question.

¹¹⁰ (Nal, Personal Interview, February 2, 2017)

¹¹¹ (Nal, Personal Interview, February 2, 2017)

Although Said Nursi is an important personality for the Nûbihar circle, due to his Islamic identity, his Kurdish identity also has a very important impact. The Nûbihar Circle perceives Said Nursi as the best scholar in the Islamic world over the last century, who played a major role in the Islamic awakening and in enlightenment in matters of faith.¹¹² However, when the replies of the Nûbihar Circle's members are examined, and the Zehra community members' reason to separate themselves from other Islamic Nurcu Communities – because other Nurcu communities underestimated Said Nursi's Kurdish identity and changed the Epistles of Light – are considered, it can also be claimed that the Nûbihar Circle emphasizes the Kurdish identity of Said Nursi in addition to his Islamic identity. In fact, almost all sources show that Said Nursi's Kurdish identity is of great significance to the Nûbihar Circle. This is possibly because other Islamic communities only accept Said Nursi's Islamic identity, and underplay or ignore his Kurdish identity, whereas “the Nûbihar Circle evaluates this situation as a conscious and systematic act; and hence tries to prove the reality of Said Nursi's Kurdish identity”.¹¹³ Below, Nal (2017) emphasizes the Kurdish identity of Said Nursi, and states that Said Nursi always uses his Kurdish nickname, “Said-i Kurdi,” when his respondents are not Kurds and when the issue is about ethnicity, nation or nationhood. According to Nal, this proves that Said Nursi consciously emphasizes his Kurdishness to Turks and to other nations:

Kürt kelimesi politik bir çağrışım yapsa da aslında bir gerçekliktir. Çünkü kendisinin kullandığı bir isimdir. Ve kendi yaşadığı dönemde kendi etnik kimliğiyle isimlendirilen, o isimle anılan birçok kişi var. Ama şunu da söylemekte fayda var: Saidi Kürdi'nin, -onun eski hayatını daha önce de çalışmış biri olarak söylüyorum- bu ismi kullanması ilginçtir, kullandığı yerler ilginçtir. Saidi Kürdi, Kürt olduğunda gerçekten ısrar ettiği için bu ismi kullanmıştır. Bunu çok rahat söyleyebilirim. Çünkü Saidi Kürdi, Kürtler içerisindeyken, yani 1907'ye kadar Kürtler içerisinde yaşadığı sürece -ilk kez 40 yaşlarında İstanbul'a gidiyor- ne kendisi ne de etrafındaki Kürtler tarafından kendisine Said-i Kürdi ifadesi kullanılmaz. Kendisine Mele Said denilir. Bir de lakap olarak Said Nursi deniliyor. Ama en çok kullanılan isim Mele Said'dir. Kendisi İstanbul'a geldikten sonra yaklaşık 9-10 dergi ve gazetede yazılar yazar. Bu dergi ve gazetelerin birkaç tanesi Kürt yayınıdır, çoğunluğu da Türklerin çıkardığı yayınlardır. Hatta Türklerin çıkardıklarında imzasını Said-i Kürdi diye atarken Kürtlerinkinde Mele

¹¹² (Çevik, Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

¹¹³ (Din , Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

Said diye atar.¹¹⁴ Buna bakarak Said-i Kürdi'nin "Ben Kürdüm" dediğini fark edebiliriz yani bunu çıkarmak zor değil. Mesela mecliste yaptığı konuşmalarda, uzun uzun yazdığı makalelerde var: Muhatabı Türkler olduğunda Kürtlüğünün altını çiziyor. Mesela "benim gibi bir Kürt" diyor, "Biz ki Kürtler" diyor, ama Kürtlerle konuştuğunda bunu vurgulamıyor. Zaten senin Kürt olduğunu bilenlere bunu vurgulamanın manası yoktur. Dolayısıyla Said-i Kürdi'nin bu ismi kullanması bir gelenek değil, Saidi Kürdi tarafından politik bir tavırla –bugünkü anlamıyla politik değil- bugünkü şartlarda kısmen politik diyebileceğimiz bir tavır almış. Çünkü Saidi Kürdi özellikle Kürdi mahlasını muhatabını Türkler olduğunda ve konu etnik ve millet ya da milli meseleler olduğunda kullanır.¹¹⁵

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On the other hand, Denise (2017), a person who ended his relations with the Nûbihar Circle and who is now critical of it, describes the Nûbihar Circle as "a structure that brings Said Nursi into the Kurdish sphere through its evaluation of Said Nursi and the Epistles of Light from [the viewpoint of] Kurdish identity and Kurdish culture".¹¹⁷ Denise (2017) defines this situation as the "politization of Said Nursi" by the Nûbihar Circle, resulting from the Nûbihar Circle's intention to represent Said Nursi in terms of his Kurdish identity and Kurdish nationalism¹¹⁸. This assertion by Denise can be proved through the Nûbihar Circle's efforts to change Said Nursi's words set down in the original Epistles of Light.¹¹⁹

Although people in the Nûbihar claim that "if Said Nursi had not been a Kurd, they would have read and follow Said Nursi's works" and that "his religious identity is more important than his ethnic identity",¹²⁰ they also confess that they feel affinity with

¹¹⁴ According to *İçtimai Dersler*, Said Nursi signed all his writings [in both Turkish and Kurdish newspapers and journals] as "Said-i Kürdi. In Kurdish journals, he sometimes used the name "Molla Said-i Kürdi or only in ones he used Molla Said-i Meşhur ("Kürdler Yine Muhtaçtır", in *Şark ve Kürdistan Gazetesi*, Vol: 1, December 2, 1908)

¹¹⁵ (translation)"Although when I say Saidi Kurd, it seems political, originally, it is a reality. It is because Kürdi is the name he uses. However, the times when Said Nursi prefers to use this name should be examined, since this timing shows his persistent choice to emphasize his Kurdish identity. When Said Nursi was together with Kurds – until 1907 – he never used Said-i Kürdi for himself. He and other Kurds called him Mele Said. However, after coming to Istanbul, and while writing articles in newspapers and journals, he preferred to use Said-i Kürdi. Even while he does use Said-i Kürdi in the Turkish newspapers and journals, he uses Mele Said in the Kurdish newspapers and journals. As a result, it can be claimed that Said Nursi emphasizes his Kurdishness to Turks. When his respondents are Turks, he emphasizes his Kurdishness by saying, "I am as a Kurd", "we are as Kurds" and so on. In contrast, when respondents are Kurds, he never says such words and never emphasizes his Kurdishness. Said-i Kürdi uses his Kürdi nickname especially when respondents are Turks and when the issue is about ethnicity, nation or nationhood."

¹¹⁶ (Nal, Personal Interview, February 2, 2017)

¹¹⁷ (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

¹¹⁸ (Denise, Personal Interview; March 4, 2017)

¹¹⁹ For further information see appendix B and C

¹²⁰ (Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

him and that they are proud of him, since he is also a Kurd like them.¹²¹ Denise's (2017) statement on this is worth evaluating:

Said Nursi'nin Kürt olması Zehra Cemaati'nin (Nûbihar'ın) de Kürtler arasında zemin bulması Said Nursi ile Zehra Cemaati'nin (Nûbihar'ın) buluşması için çok önemli bir sebeptir. Çünkü onlara göre evet, Said Nursi bir dünya âlimi, ama nihayetinde Bitlisli bizim Said Nursi'miz, bizden –Kürtler arasından- çıkmıştır. Şimdi Türk-İslam cemaatleri arasında da Said Nursi'nin Kürt kimliği büyük bir sorun. Mesela bu yüzden Türk cemaatleri uzun süre Said Nursi Kürt değil Seyyittir, Seyyit kökenlidir deyip Said Nursi'nin Kürt kimliğini boşaltmaya çalışmışlardır. Çünkü Seyyit demek peygamber soyuna dayanmak demek, yani bir nevi Arap demektir. Her iki tarafın da yaptığı Said Nursi'yi politik alan üzerinden kendi tarafına ve lehine çekmektir. Zehra tepki hareketi olduğu için ve Said Nursi'nin de sosyolojik bir gerçekliği var, Kürttür. Buna çok büyük bir yatırım yaptı Zehra. Örneğin Türk İslam cemaatleri Said Nursi'nin daha çok 1925 yılından sonraki hayatına, çalışmalarına, eserlerine ağırlık ve önem verirken, onu zinde tutarken; Zehra Cemaati (Nûbihar) bununla beraber daha çok Said Nursi'nin 1. Said dediğimiz 1925 yılı öncesindeki dönemine büyük bir atıf yapmaktadırlar. Bu bile Said Nursi'nin Kürt kimliğinin veya politik aktivitelerinin Zehra (Nûbihar) için nasıl önemli olduğunu, Zehra için Said Nursi'yi nasıl önemli hale getirdiğini göstermektedir. Eğer Said Nursi Kürt olmasaydı, eğer Said Nursi bir Osmanlı âlimi olmasaydı, eğer Said Nursi Türkiye topraklarında doğmasaydı, ama yine aynı Said Nursi olsaydı, yine aynı eserleri yayınlasaydı, Türkiye'deki cemaatler tarafından bu kadar önemsenmezdi. Çünkü Said Nursi artık bir politik rekabet aracına dönüştürüldü. Zaten Şerif Mardin'in de aslında bir nevi dokunmaya çalıştığı da budur. Said Nursi'nin politikleştirilmesi -Mehmet Hakan Yavuz da bu arada aynı şekilde değiniyor- ve herkesin kendi Said Nursi'nin yaratıp bunun üzerinden zemin bulmaya çalışması. Tabi Zehra (Nûbihar) da bu alana iyi oynuyor. Said Nursi'nin Bitlisli olması bu noktada önemlidir.^{122 123}

According to Denise, the Nûbihar Circle has focused on Said Nursi's Kurdish identity and benefited from this. It is understood that according to Denise's explanation, if Said Nursi had not been a Kurd, the Nûbihar Circle would not have valued Said Nursi so highly. So, by means of promoting Said Nursi's Kurdishness and his words, the Nûbihar Circle has united, influenced, and dignified themselves. That is to say, the

¹²¹ (Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017) (Çevik, Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

¹²² (translation) "The Kurdishness of Said Nursi and the Nûbihar Circle's prevalence among Kurds are important reasons for the togetherness of Said Nursi with the Nûbihar Circle. It is because, according to the Nûbihar Circle, Said Nursi is an important scholar; but he is their Said Nursi who came among the Kurds... The Nûbihar Circle has invested in the Kurdish identity of Said Nursi and has cited some of the earlier works of Said Nursi before 1925, in which Said Nursi mostly mentions issues related to Kurds and Kurdistan. This shows how Kurdish identity and Said Nursi's political activities are important to the Nûbihar Circle. If Said Nursi had not been Kurdish and an Ottoman scholar, and if he had not been born in Turkish territory, but otherwise been the same Said Nursi with the same works, he would never have been considered as an important figure by Islamic communities in Turkey as much as he is today. They create themselves by politicizing Said Nursi; it is really important that Said Nursi was born in Bitlis, and that he is a Kurd."

¹²³ (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

Kurdish identity of Said Nursi is very important for the Nûbihar Circle, in addition to his Islamic identity. Ümit's (2017) words also confirm this:

Said Nursi'yi bütüncül okuyan bir Nurcu ama herhangi bir komplekse girmeden kabul ediyorsa fikirlerini, ne İslami itikat noktasında bir problem yaşar hayatında. Bu şahsın Kürt olduğunu varsayarsak, hem de kendi milletinden nefret edecek ya da ondan dolayı küçümsendiğini hissedip komplekse girecek bir noktası kalmaz. Tamamen kendisiyle barışık konumda yer alır. Bir Türk olursa, Türkiye'de ve dünyanın başka yerlerinde Kürtlerin yaşamış olduğu hak ihlallerinin karşısında yer alacaktır ve bu noktada bir de Said Nursi üzerinden Kürtlerin bir hukuk destekçisi olacaktır.^{124 125}

Through this explanation, Ümit draws a picture showing that the Nûbihar Circle perceives a Said Nursi who makes Kurds proud of their Kurdish and Islamic identities, as well as makes Turks respectful towards Kurds and their rights. In other words, it can be claimed that Said Nursi's Kurdish identity attracts the Nûbihar Circle more than his Islamic identity. Said Nursi is important for the Nûbihar Circle in terms of both his Islamic and Kurdish identity, but with an emphasis on his Kurdish identity.

Also, the Nûbihar Circle's members describe Said Nursi as "their Said Nursi", a Kurdish person who was born and lived in a Kurdish region. Since, according to the Nûbihar Circle, Said Nursi had always struggled on behalf of the Kurds and their problems during his life, he became one of their most popular individuals – someone who cannot be ignored in the Kurdish history (Zınar, 2011).¹²⁶ According to Zınar and Yılmayan, Said Nursi's efforts on behalf of the Kurds were also declared by Said Nursi himself, as "Oh Kurds! I (Said Nursi) rejected the bribery of Abdulhamit in order not to bring Kurdishness into disrepute" (İçtimai Dersler, 2013, p. 35; Zınar, 2011, p. 136; Yılmayan, 2011, 25; Tekin, 2011, p. 69). From the time he was 15-16 years old, Said Nursi had tried to solve the problems in the Kurdish region and among the Kurds.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ (translation) As long as a person accepts every word [written by] Said Nursi, if he is a Kurd then he never hates his Kurdish society, never complains about his Kurdish identity, and never has a problem with his Islamic faith, but on the contrary he is proud of his Islamic and Kurdish identity; but if he is a Turk, he will support the Kurds and will be against the violation of their rights."

¹²⁵ (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

¹²⁶ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

¹²⁷ In İçtimai Dersler, Said Nursi also states his effort for Kurds and Kurdistan.

I perceived Kurds in Kurdistan so miserable, and its solution was modern science which should be taught by scholars in madrasahs. With this opinion, I went to Istanbul. I rejected the bribery of Abdulhamit in order not to bring Kurdishness into disrepute. I sacrificed my intelligence without giving up my freedom. For one and half years, I have been trying to spread education in Kurdistan. (İçtimai Dersler, 2013, p. 167)

For example, according to the Nûbihar Circle, Said Nursi had risked his life in order to bring the education system to the Kurds in their mother language (Zinar, 2011). These efforts made Said Nursi a valuable scholar, because he lived for the Kurds and tried to solve their problems. Hence, his writings (especially the two works *Divan-ı Harbi Örfi* and *Münazarat*^{128 129}) mostly address the Kurds and their problems, suggest theoretical solutions to those problems, and approach social issues in the Kurdish region where Said Nursi lived.¹³⁰

Saidi Nursi'nin ve Kürdi'nin eserlerine baktığınızda en az yarısı içtimai meselelere, içtimai olaylara, insanlar arasındaki ilişkilere, etnik, ekonomi boyutu da olan, çok boyutlu yönleri var. Ama bunlar, klasik ana akım Nurcular içerisinde bu yönler çok çıkarılmadı. Çünkü Saidi Kürdi bir sosyal meseleyi konuşurken bu meseleyi kendi içerisinde yaşadığı coğrafyada pratikleştiriyor, bunun üzerinde örneklendiriyor. Yani mesela farklı etnik grupların birbirlerine yaklaşımından bahsederken elbetteki vereceği örnek Türklerden çok Kürtler oluyordu. Haliyle bu argümanlar da Türkiye'de herkesin kulağına hoş gelmediği için bütün Nurcu gruplar bunları çok sık konuşmadı, bunlar üzerinde tezler geliştiremediler, bu fikirleri pratiğe dökemediler. İşte bu noktada Nûbihar ve Zehra dediğimiz camia ortaya çıktığı coğrafyada –ortaya çıkan bir sürü problemlerin coğrafyası olduğu için- bunların özellikle altını çizdi, bu sıkıntılar dile getirdi ve bu noktada Saidi Kürdinin çözümlerini esas aldı. Bunda biraz ısrar edince klasik bir nurcu değil, artık Zehra olan –özeldeki ismi Zehra- Kürtçe yayınlar çıkaran, Kürt dilinin de normal sosyal bir çevrede kullanılması

Also, in Istanbul, Said Nursi made an effort in order to make the problems of the Kurds known by the people by joining in foundations and writing in some Turkish and Kurdish journals and newspapers. Although Said Nursi was not an official member of *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Kurdish cooperation and progressive Community), he wrote articles in this society's newspapers (*Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi* & *Şark ve Kurdistan Gazetesi*) and was known as "an important and prominent person for the Kurdish Movement" (Canlı & Beysülen, 2010, p. 126). According to Canlı & Beysülen (2010), Said Nursi's writing in this newspaper may be related to the goals of this community since the constitution of *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* gives on to Kurds and Kurdistan (2010, p. 120-121). This Community pays attention to education in Kurdistan, publication of Turkish-Kurdish newspaper, making Kurdish as education language, and publication of all previous Kurdish works (Canlı & Beysülen, 2010, p. 122). In his writings in these newspapers, Said Nursi also mentioned about the Kurdish problems related to education, duties of the Kurds in the Ottoman Empire, and the future for Kurdistan that could be gained through national unity and education including modern and religious sciences (can be looked at his writings "Kürtler Yine Muhtaçtır" in *Şark ve Kurdistan Newspaper* on December 2, 1908 (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, pp. 507-508), "Bediüzzaman, Said Kurdi'nin Mebusana Hitabı" in *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Newspaper* on December 19, 1908 (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, pp. 513-517), "Kürtler Neye Muhtaçtır" in *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Newspaper* on December 12, 1908 (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p.p. 511-512) and "Bediüzzaman Molla Said'i Kurdi'nin Mebusana Hitabı in *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Newspaper* on December 26, 1908 (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, pp. 518-523)). Moreover, Said Nursi together with his friends attempted to publish a Turkish - Kurdish newspaper, *Ma'rifet ve İttihad-ı Ekrad* (Knowledge and Unity of Kurdish people) Newspaper, on February 2, 1909, but this offer was rejected. However, as can be understood from the name of the newspaper, the goal is unity of the Kurds (Canlı & Beysülen, 2010, p. 132). It is seen that after 1907, Said Nursi worked on issues with Kurdish people and tried to solve the problems of the Kurds.

¹²⁸ Münazarat is described by Said Nursi as "azametli bahtsız bir kıt'anın, şanlı talihsiz bir devletin, değerli sahihsiz bir kavmin reçetesi veya Bediüzzaman'ın Münazarat'ı (the receipt of a magnificent and unfortunate land, of a glorious unfortunate state, or of a valuable ownerless nation, or Münazarat of Bediüzzaman)" (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 77). That is to say, Said Nursi calls Münazarat as receipt of the Kurdish nation.

¹²⁹ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

¹³⁰ (Nal, Personal Interview, February 2, 2017) (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

gerektiğini; dini argümanlar içerisinde eğer anlatmak istersek, Kürtçe'nin Allah'ın bir ayeti olduğunu ve anadili bu olan insanların da bu dilde eğitim hakkı olması gerektiğini ve bu eserlerin de Kürtçe'ye tercüme edilip Kürtçe okumak isteyenlerin de faydasına sunmayı, bunları kendisine amaç edindi. Bunlarda yeterince ısrar da etti. Bu noktalar da Zehra'yı akabinde de Nûbihar'ı oluşturdu.^{131 132}

For the Nûbihar Circle, Said Nursi not only promoted ethnic and cultural Kurdish identity, but also tried to integrate Kurds into the civic and political sphere by developing Kurds' national consciousness in order to support their national unity (Zinar, 2011)¹³³. Said Nursi aimed to nationalize the Kurds, since he believed that "fıkr-i milliyet, hürriyetin pederidir^{134 135}" (Zinar, 2011; İçtimai Dersler, 2013, p. 105). In his work *Münazarat*, Said Nursi wrote that it was vital to develop literature, culture, politics, language, and history among the Kurds for the improvement of Kurdish national consciousness by protecting their Islamic identity (Zinar, 2011).

Specifically, "Said Nursi's Kurdish identity makes him more valuable and preferable in the eyes of the Nûbihar Circle. Another important characteristic of him for the Nûbihar Circle is his ability to practice his religious identity in his own Kurdish geography and in the service of the Kurdish Question's solution."¹³⁶ Therefore, the Nûbihar Circle values all of Said Nursi words, and approaches the Epistles of Light not

¹³¹ (translation) "When the works of Said Nursi are investigated, it is seen that at least half of them are multi-dimensional, and mention social, individual, ethnic and economic issues. Nevertheless, the facets that relate to the Kurds have been glossed over by mainstream classical *Nurcu* communities. In fact, Said-i Nursi, while speaking, practiced and exemplified the social issues that pertained in his motherland in the Kurdistan region. For instance, while mentioning the attitudes of different ethnic groups, he used Kurds as an example, rather than Turks. Yet, since these arguments have not been well-received by other *Nurcu* communities, these communities have not talked about, developed arguments about, or practised solutions to any of the issues related to Kurds. On that point, the Nûbihar Circle and the Zehra community have emerged, emphasized and stressed the problems of the Kurdistan region by taking into consideration Said Nursi's solutions."

¹³² (Nal, Personal Interview, February 2, 2017)

¹³³ Mücahit Bilici (2017) also states this situation and claims that Said Nursi indoctrinated *fıkr-i milliyet* (the idea of nationality) to the Kurds whereas he suggested *ittihad-ı İslam* (Islamic unity) to the Turks (2017, p. 63). In this sense, according to Bilici, Said Nursi suggested universality, equality, and brotherhood to the ones (the Turks) who had gotten used to establish superiority over and to govern others; while he indoctrinated selfdom, equality, equivalent to the ones (the Kurds) who had been suppressed by others (2017, p. 63). *İttihad-ı İslam* promotes solidarity of Muslims and awakening of all as a nation, and it is also an example for *fıkr-i milliyet*.

¹³⁴ (translation) "the idea of nationalism is the father of *hürriyet*"

¹³⁵ Bilici (2017) explains this sentence as follows: Collective freedom can only be gained through social solidarity (civility) (2017, p. 184). Nationality is collective form of the self, and nation, community, Muslimism (or Mohammedanism) are all forms of *milliyet* (nationality) (Bilici, 2017, p. 184). Whereas the idea of *milliyet* is *müspet* (positive), necessary, and natural, *milliyetçilik* (nationalism) is *menfi* (negative) and denialist (Bilici, 2017, p. 181)

¹³⁶ (Nal, Personal Interview, February 2, 2017)

only as a religious work, but also as a set of solutions to everyday life. Also, he is believed to have applied these solutions while reorganizing Kurdish and Muslim society,¹³⁷ so that, according to one scholar, “In accordance with Said Nursi’s solutions, the Nûbihar Circle tries to solve problems in Turkey and in Islamic World”.¹³⁸

5.2. The Influence of Ethnicity, Islam, and Said Nursi on Determination of the Nûbihar Circle’s Standpoints

In this part, the impact of Said Nursi, ethnicity, and Islam is evaluated on the Nûbihar Circle’s opinion about the definition of the Kurdish Question, solutions for the Kurdish Question, description of nationalism, imagined state regime, and about political representation of the Kurds on the resolution process.

5.2.1. Defining of the Kurdish Question

As a result of evaluation of the Nûbihar Circle’s sources, it is seen that the Nûbihar Circle defines the Kurdish Question as a problem relating to the denial of Kurdish identity, and as a problem resulting from Kurds’ lack of national solidarity. Below, these descriptions are detailed.

5.2.1.1. A problem relating to the denial of Kurdish identity

According to the Nûbihar Circle, Denise argues,¹³⁹ the Kurdish Question is a problem relating to the denial of Kurdish identity. This took the form of a betrayal, which occurred after the establishment of the Turkish Republic when Atatürk did not keep his promise to the Kurds to give them autonomy, but instead denied their existence/legal status. This was in line with the philosophy of the Turkish Republic, the main principles of which were Turkishness, Sunnism, Hanefism, and assertive secularism – secularism which imposed its own positivist ideologies on others by not respecting their ethnicities.¹⁴⁰ As Kurds come mostly from the Shafii sect, the establishing philosophy of the Republic excluded them and their denomination. The state

¹³⁷ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

¹³⁸ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

¹³⁹ (Nal, Personal Interview, February 2, 2017)

¹⁴⁰ (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017; Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

employed physical and psychological force, and even violence, against the Kurds, including legally denying their status. This created the Kurdish Question. As Denise put it, the Kurdish Question is the result of Turkish nationalism¹⁴¹.

Like Denise, Soner also describes the Kurdish Question as a problem of nationalism, but emphasizes that it is related to territory, irrespective of the economic and educational backwardness of Kurds and the Kurdish region in Turkey.¹⁴² According to Soner, it is also a problem that emanates from the ethnic identity of Kurds.¹⁴³

Türkiye’de Karadenizli bir insanın da sorunu var, İç Anadolu’nun da Ege’nin de, ama bunların köy yolunun bozuk olmasıyla Doğu’dakilerin köy yolunun bozuk olmasının sebebi aynı değil. Mesela orada idari bir problemken benim yollarımın yapılmama nedeni etnik. Bazı özerklik tipleri idari mekanizmayı rahatlatır, bazı sorunları çözer ama bu Kürtler için geçerli değil. Yaşadığı sorun vatandaşlık durumundan dolayı, etnik durumundan dolayı.^{144 145}

This means that, according to the members of the Nûbihar Circle, since the Kurdish Question results from Kurdish ethnic identity and its betrayal by the state, this problem cannot be solved, and will continue to exist, as long as the Kurds are not recognized by the state.

5.2.1.2. A problem resulting from Kurds’ lack of national solidarity

Kanca connects the main reason behind the Kurdish Question to the domestic problems of Kurds, saying: “Since Kurds cannot secure uniformity by themselves, namely, since national consciousness among Kurds is not provided, Kurds cannot successfully be and act as a nation”.¹⁴⁶ Hence, the Kurdish Question springs from the lack of national consciousness and national solidarity among Kurds. The Nûbihar

¹⁴¹ (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

¹⁴² (Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

¹⁴³ (Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

¹⁴⁴ (translation) “In Turkey, everyone has a problem. However, the reason for the poor routes between villages in Central Anatolia, the Aegean, and the Black Sea regions is not the same as in the Eastern Anatolia regions. While the former is an administrative problem, the Eastern Anatolia region’s is related to ethnicity. Some autonomous types can solve administrative problems, but this cannot be applied to Kurds. The Kurds’ problems result from their ethnicity and their citizenship situation.”

¹⁴⁵ (Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

¹⁴⁶ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

Circle thus takes Said Nursi's words into consideration in order to solve this problem.^{147 148}

5.2.2. Solution to the Kurdish Question

As a reply to the Nûbihar Circle's solution to the Kurdish Question, Nal emphasizes the need for multi-dimensional solutions (e.g., such as economic, political, religious, and educational solutions). However, according to Nal, any solution should take into consideration at least two of these dimensions.¹⁴⁹

In general, what the Nûbihar Circle offers as solutions to the Kurdish Question are as follows, as arranged in order by Kanca:

- 1-Kurds should be taught in their mother language
- 2-The state should remove all obstacles to Kurdish identity and culture
- 3- Kurdish identity should be defined in the Turkish constitution
- 4-The state should return the names of Kurdish places that have been changed
- 5-There should be a local parliament for the Kurds where Kurds can represent themselves
- 6-Kurds should establish their own educational and cultural foundations
- 7-Kurds should be able to elect their own governor
- 8-Kurdish geography should be defined by the state, although no fence or other kind of obstacle should be put between borders
- 9-Based on all these things, parliament and the constitution should accept the regional autonomous statute of Kurds¹⁵⁰

Çevik organizes these solutions as follows:

- 1-The right to education in the mother language
- 2-The opportunity for Kurds to govern Kurdish regions themselves without separating themselves from Ankara, the center
- 3-That changed names of villages should be returned, since to change names means to change the history
- 4-Representation of Kurds is in religious affairs. Kurds are mostly from the Shafiism sect. There is no department of religious affairs related to Shafiism
- 5-Kurdish religious men should preach sermons in Kurdish in Kurdish regions
- 6-People should invest economically in the Kurdish regions
- 7-The state should not discriminate against Kurds in cultural activities and studies. On the contrary, it should support them. [For instance, the state's

¹⁴⁷ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

¹⁴⁸ This issue will be detailed in the solutions to the Kurdish Question part (5.2.2.).

¹⁴⁹ (Nal, Personal Interview, February 11, 2017)

¹⁵⁰ (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

publication of Kurdish books itself is a positive thing. Three-four books have been published in such a way. Similar works should be serialized.]

8-Some statements in schoolbooks should be changed. For example, Kurdish heroes should be spoken of as highly as Turkish heroes. Kurdish children should see and find themselves inside the book when they read their schoolbooks, and should not be ashamed of their Kurdish identity.¹⁵¹

These are general solutions proposed by the Nûbihar Circle to solve the Kurdish Question. All of these proposals will be looked at in detail, taking into account the interviews, writings, publications and reports of the Nûbihar Circle's members.

5.2.2.1. Memory work of the Turkish state with Kurds

Nal sees the solution as the result of memory work conducted by the Turkish state with Kurds. This is because, according to Nal, the Turkish state has misinterpreted the Kurds and depicted Kurds as murderers to the Turkish people by misusing the media, press, and television since the establishment of the Republic.¹⁵² Hence, if the state truly intends to solve the Kurdish Question amicably, then, according to Nal, it must: 1- accept its crimes against the Kurds; 2- apologize to the Kurds; 3- denounce its misdeeds by saying "I have lied to you for 40 years"; and 4- persuade Turkish society that it has committed crimes against Kurds.¹⁵³

Devletin kendisinin yanlış yaptığını anlatması lazım! Bunu anlattıktan sonra işte o zaman diyaloglar, çözümler, aynı masaya oturmalar tuhaf karşılanmaz. İktidar değişimlerine sebep olsa da! Çünkü herkes diyecek; bak aslında yanlış olmuş, ama bak bir çözüm var. Konu bağlamında yeri geldiği ve meselenin daha iyi anlaşılması için bir örnek vereceğim: Mesela Oslo süreci neden gizli yapıldı? Mesela bugün Kolombiya'da tüm kameralar ve milyonların karşısında bu insanlarla el sıkıştılar. Bizimki neden Oslo'da oldu? Çünkü kabul edecek bir tabanın yok. Yani 50 yıldır farklı bir şekilde anlattığın ve inandırdığın bir milletin var. Sen bir anda bu milletin karşısına çıkamazsın. Çıkarsan ya gidersen ya değiştirirler ya vatan haini olursun. Dolayısıyla sorunun çözümünde ikna etmesi gereken aslında bir Yozgatlı, Çanakkaleli, bir Edirneli Türktür yani. Onun zihnen bu duruma getirilmesi, ikna edilmesi gerekiyor yani. O zaman muhatap sahibi örgüt müdür, PKK mıdır yoksa çok dindar Kürt mü, sosyalist Kürt mü; benim kanaatime göre mesele henüz buraya gelmiş değildir. Mesele bunun ikna edilmesi gereken Türklerin kendisidir. Onun adına da kısaca "yüzleşme" diyoruz, "Devletin yüzleşmesi". Eğer bu sağlandıktan sonra tabiki Kürtler de kendi içerisinde yüzleşecekler, onlar da hesaplaşacaklar, onlar da kim neye haksızlık

¹⁵¹ (Çevik , Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

¹⁵² (Nal, Personal Interview, February 11, 2017)

¹⁵³(Nal, Personal Interview, February 11, 2017)

yapmış, hukukuna tecavüz etmişse o da kendi içerisinde muhasebesini yapıp hesaplaşmasını yapacaktır.^{154 155}

This means that, only after the Turkish state accepts and publicly declares the mistakes it has made against the Kurds, can solutions to the Kurdish Question be thought out in a meaningful way. This attitude of the state will be the first step towards solving the Kurdish Question in accordance with the Nûbihar Circle.

5.2.2.2. Restitution of the fundamental rights of the Kurds

According to the Nûbihar Circle, Kurdish identity should legally be recognized and the Kurds should be granted rights equal to the other ethnic groups living in Turkey.¹⁵⁶

Soner¹⁵⁷ stated that it is nonsense to try to solve the problems of a non-existent nation, Kurds. When the Kurds are ethnically recognized by the state, then solutions for the Kurdish Question can be thought out and applied meaningfully:

Her şeyden önce Kürtlerin Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde varlıklarının kabul edilmesi lazım. Var olmayan bir toplumun sorunlarını konuşmak da çözümlenici olmaz. Anayasaya vatandaşlık bağıyla bağlı olan herkes Türk'tür. İlke böyleyse birine Kürtçe eğitim vermenin bir manası yok. O yüzden her şeyden önce vatandaşlık tanımını bir millet olarak, bir halk olarak tanımlanması, kabul edilmesi, içselleştirilmesi gerekir. Bunu kabul ettikten sonra ana problemler çözülür. Sonra teknik şeyler kalır. Bu milletin ihtiyaçları nelerdir, bunlar üzerinde yoğunlaşırsa çözülür. Bunlar da Kürtlere sorularak öğrenilebilir. Her bir grubun farklı önerileri talepleri var. Ama temel şeylerden biri anadilini serbest hayatın bütün alanlarında kullanması; bir de bir millet olarak bir statüye sahip olması. Günümüzün şartlarında bu statü özerklikten tutun da bağımsızlığa kadar gidebilir. Bunu da bir uzlaşma kültürü içerisinde halledebilirler. Ama dediğim gibi

¹⁵⁴ (translation) "The Turkish state should understand the mistakes it has made against Kurds, even if this situation results in the overthrow of the government. Only after that will dialogue, and meetings of the Turkish state with Kurdish side not give a bad impression to Turkish society, become meaningful and lead to solutions. In order to cover all of these issues, you should think about one thing: Why was the Oslo Process hidden? It is because Turkish society was not ready to accept this process. You have misinterpreted the Kurdish Question to your society and made them believe in what you said. You cannot bring it before them. If you do, either you will resign, or you will be overthrown by them, or you will become traitor. As a result, first of all, the Turkish state should persuade the Turkish society that it has made mistakes in dealing with the Kurds. We name this act the "memory work of the state". When the state accepts its own memory work, the Kurds will also face up to their faults in themselves, criticize themselves, and settle their account with people whom they have harmed or wronged; and, if necessary, they will apologize."

¹⁵⁵(Nal, Personal Interview, February 11, 2017)

¹⁵⁶(Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

¹⁵⁷ (Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

düğüm noktası etnik olarak kabul edilmeleri. Birileri Kürt sorunu yoktur deyince biz siz yoksunuz olarak algılıyoruz etnik bir sorun olduğu için.^{158 159}

The Nûbihar Circle asserts that the Turkish state should grant the fundamental rights to the Kurds that were violated by the state. The Nûbihar Circle restricts itself to promoting these rights for Kurds. The Nûbihar states that “Even though other Kurds and Kurdish groups have given up pursuing Kurds’ fundamental rights, the Nûbihar Circle will never accept this situation, and seeks to attain equal rights for Kurds”.¹⁶⁰ These rights are “irreplaceable” for the Nûbihar Circle, and are not open to be discussed and bargained over.¹⁶¹

Nûbihar temel hak ve özgürlükleri siyasal bir malzeme haline getirmenin karşısındadır. Mesela çözüm sürecinde çatışan taraflar arasında bir barış süreci olabilir, onlar kendi aralarında silahları susturma üzerine konuşabilirler, anlaşabilirler ne yapılacağı üzerine. Fakat temel hak hukuk meseleleri üzerine değil. Tartışma meselesi değil bu çünkü. Anadilde eğitim hakları, siyasi hakları, dilin bütün alanlarda kamusal alanda kullanımını hakkı gibi haklar tartışma bile gerektirmeyen haklardır. Bugün varsayın ki Kürt siyasi hareketi, PKK, Kürtlüğe ait bütün bu haklarından vazgeçtiğini düşünün. Kürtlerin bu hak hukuk şeyleri yerine gelmiş mi olacak? Hayır! Yine bu alanda bir eksiklik olacak. Diyelim ki Türkiye’deki siyasal iktidar, söz konusu haklar olunca hep PKK’yı nazara vererek diyor ki, bu silahlı bir mücadeledir, bir terör örgütüdür; bundan dolayı hakları hukukları hep sümen altı ediyor. Hâlbuki kendisi eğer gerçekten çözüm getirmek istiyorsa hiç tartışma götürmeksizin anadilde eğitimden, basın yayın özgürlüğüne kadar Kürtçenin bu alanlarda kullanımına kadar, siyasal kamuda kullanımına kadar ve siyasal haklar noktasında bütün bunları hükümetin bizzat

¹⁵⁸ (translation) “Unless Kurdish identity is recognized by the state, it becomes nonsense to talk about the problems of non-existent (Kurdish) society. As long as in principle the citizens defined in the constitution are called Turks, it is meaningless to allow for education in the Kurdish language. Therefore, first of all, the definition of citizenship should be renamed, both as a society and as a nation, and this should be accepted and interiorized. After that, the main problems can be solved, and the Kurds’ needs can be detected by consulting the Kurds, since every group has different solutions. However, some of the main solutions are: education in the mother language, the use of Kurdish language in the public sphere, and having a statute as a Kurdish nation in Turkey. This statute can reach as far as autonomy or independence, which will be declared through consensus culture. Nevertheless, as I mentioned, the vital point is acceptance of the Kurds and recognition of their ethnicity. When some people claim that there is no Kurdish Question, we, as Kurds, understand that there are no Kurds, since the Kurdish Question is an ethnic problem.”

¹⁵⁹ (Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

¹⁶⁰ (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

¹⁶¹ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

kendisinin, eğer gerçekten samimiyse, yapması gerekiyor. Nûbihar olarak da biz temel hak ve hürriyetleri ifade ediyoruz.^{162 163}

As can be comprehended, the Nûbihar Circle rejects the politization of fundamental rights, and argues that Kurds should have equal rights with Turks.¹⁶⁴ These rights, according to the Nûbihar Circle, include identity rights, education in the mother language, different versions of autonomy, and so on.¹⁶⁵ Only Kurds should be able to decide the type of regime that governs in their own region.¹⁶⁶

5.2.2.3. Use of the Kurdish language in the public sphere

Use of Kurdish in the public sphere is seen as one of the most important solutions to the Kurdish Question. The Nûbihar Circle was established in order to spread Kurdish via its publications in Kurdish, as well as to support the use of Kurdish in the social public sphere and education in the mother language.¹⁶⁷ This is because “the Nûbihar Circle thinks that language carries people from the past to the future”.¹⁶⁸ The Nûbihar believes that Kurdish is one of Allah’s verse forms, and so the Kurdish people should have a right to be educated in their mother language.¹⁶⁹ Hence, the Nûbihar Circle considers itself an important resource serving those Kurds who want to read books in Kurdish.¹⁷⁰

Also, according to the Nûbihar Circle, “the state should remove all obstacles to Kurdish identity and culture; the state should return the changed names of Kurdish places;”¹⁷¹ “Kurds should be represented in religious affairs as representatives of the

¹⁶² (translation) “The Nûbihar Circle rejects the politization of fundamental rights. For instance, on the resolution process, conflicting parties cannot discuss and bargain about these rights. These fundamental rights are not an issue that can be discussed. Education in the mother language, the use of the Kurdish language in public sphere, and Kurdish political issues, are rights which cannot be disputed. Imagine if the PKK gave up supporting and demanding all of the rights related to Kurds, then what would happen? It would be incomplete. If real solutions to the Kurdish Question are searched for, the government should allow education in the mother language, use of Kurdish in the public sphere, and freedom of the press to Kurds. We, as the Nûbihar Circle, express and support the fundamental rights of Kurds.”

¹⁶³ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

¹⁶⁴ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

¹⁶⁵ (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017; Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

¹⁶⁶ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

¹⁶⁷ (Nal, Personal Interview, February 11, 2017)

¹⁶⁸ (Eser, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

¹⁶⁹ (Nal, Personal Interview, February 11, 2017)

¹⁷⁰ (Nal, Personal Interview, February 11, 2017)

¹⁷¹ (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

Shafiism sect; Kurdish religious men should preach sermons in Kurdish in Kurdish regions".¹⁷² In addition, as expressed by Çevik¹⁷³, the state should not discriminate against Kurds in cultural activities and studies. On the contrary, it should support them. Çevik¹⁷⁴ talked about such developments that had come about in the state, and expected them as "The state's publication of Kurdish books recently is a positive thing. Three-four books have been published in such a way. Similar works should be serialized."¹⁷⁵

Also, Çevik suggested that the state should change some statements made in schoolbooks, since Kurds are either misinterpreted in lessons delivered to children, or Kurdish children do not see themselves in these books at all as follows "For example, Kurdish heroes should be written of as highly as Turkish heroes. Kurdish children should see and find themselves represented when they read their schoolbooks, and should not be ashamed of their Kurdish identities."¹⁷⁶

5.2.2.4. The autonomy, federation, independence of the Kurds in Turkey

When the Nûbihar Circle's demands about the future of the Kurdish region and its governmental type are truly listened to, then what some members of the Nûbihar Circle loudly express and what they demand in their hearts sometimes differ. While some members openly express their desire for independence, some state their wish for autonomy or a federation type of government in the Kurdish region. According to Çevik,¹⁷⁷ the Nûbihar Circle demands that Kurds are given the opportunity "to govern Kurdish regions themselves without separating themselves from Ankara, the center." Denise adds: "The state should clarify what comprises the Kurdish area, even though no fences are put between borders, and parliament and the constitution should accept a regional, autonomous statute for the Kurds."¹⁷⁸ Tunç (1993, April: 59) gives people some food for thought by explaining that a "federation means sharing a

¹⁷² (Çevik , Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

¹⁷³(Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

¹⁷⁴ (Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

¹⁷⁵ (Çevik , Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

¹⁷⁶ (Çevik , Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

¹⁷⁷ (Personal Interview, 2015)

¹⁷⁸ (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

political and administrative authority based on the rule of law, supplying the coexistence of varied tribes and nations, and can be applied to multi-national, multi-religion, multi-cultural, and multi-sectarian countries". On the other hand, Nal gives food for thought:

Bugün Güney Kürdistan'da ya da Irak Kürdistan'ında, şimdi arada ufak tepelerden oluşan bir sınır var. Bir tarafta Kürtler kendilerine ait bir bayrağı kendilerine ait bir eğitim, güvenlik sistemi var. Ama yukarıda maalesef üç rengi bir arada bir araya getirmenin sıkıntısını yaşıyoruz. Elbette bu durumun insanlar üzerinde bir etkisi olacak. Bir zamanlar aynı köy olan bu iki yer arasında nasıl bu kadar fark olabilir? Bazen bu fark insanlar arasında savaşa sebep olabiliyor, insanların kopmasına sebep olabiliyor, insanların farklı tavırlarının olmasına sebep olabiliyor. Dolayısıyla, evet, bir süredir Güneyde tam devlet olmasa da en azından o yolda bir adım olan bir federasyonun olması bazı şeylerin değişmesi gerektiğini, bu değişikliklerin aslında o kadar da zor olmadığını bizlere gösteriyor. Burada da ibret alması gereken aslında devlet, Kürtler değil yani.¹⁷⁹
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Çiçek also states the same thing as Nal: "Kurds in Turkey should at least have the same rights and conditions as Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan, and the Nûbihar Circle supports these ideas by taking Said Nursi's words into consideration, since Said Nursi offered very important solutions to the Kurds 100 years ago¹⁸¹."

Evaluating all the sources used by the Nûbihar Circle, even though its members – with some exceptions – propose autonomy or federation as a solution to the Kurdish Question, but cannot declare their demands openly, it can be asserted that what they really want is an independent state. Nevertheless, according to the Nûbihar Circle, the first step should be to achieve recognition of Kurdish rights, followed by autonomy, federation, and finally independence. Denise (2017) expressed this as:

Zehra'yı (Nûbihar'ı) iki şekilde ele almak zorundayız. 1-istediği model 2-koşulların el verdiği model. Bu konuda (Kürt meselesinin çözümü hakkında) şunu net söyleyebilirim Zehra Cemaati (Nûbihar) net. Yani kişiden kişiye göre

¹⁷⁹ (translation) "In the current world, there are low hills marking the border between Turkey and South Kurdistan or Iraqi Kurdistan. In Iraqi Kurdistan, Kurds have a flag; an education and a security system belong to them, whereas Kurds in Turkey find it difficult to bring together the three colors (white, green and red). Therefore, this situation will affect the Kurds. How could this difference have come about when these two regions in the past were the same community? Sometimes, such differences can result in war, coming from the conflicting attitudes between people. Hence, the existence of a federal system in the South leaning towards an independent state shows us that something should change in Turkey for the Kurds, and these opportunities are not so difficult to attain. The state should draw a lesson from this, rather than the Kurds."

¹⁸⁰ (Nal, Personal Interview, February 2, 2017)

¹⁸¹ There is a reference to Said Nursi's idea of *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye* model.

değişen bir cevap yok. Belki farklı kavramlarla ifade ediyorlar, ama netler. Dolayısıyla ne kadar farklı kavramlarla ifade etseler bile hepsinin istediği model uzun vadede bir federalizmdir, kesinlikle topraksal bir federalizmdir ve ileriki aşamada bağımsızlıktır, Kürt Devleti'nin kurulmasıdır.^{182 183}

That is to say, what the Nûbihar Circle aims for is definitely to secure independence. Soner (2017) also stated that “after Kurdish identity is recognized and the Kurds have equal rights with Turks, the Kurds’ statute can reach independence.”¹⁸⁴ “The Nûbihar Circle demands status for the Kurds, and even we (the Nûbihar Circle) perceive that federation and over-federation (independence) to be legal for Kurds.”¹⁸⁵ Din (2016) added much more detail to the goal of the Nûbihar Circle:

Nûbihar, anadil meselesini zaten bir tartışma konusu olarak görmüyor, bir temel hak olarak görüyor, dil hakkını. Onun kamusal alanda ifade edilmesi, yani sadece eğitimde kullanılmasından bahsetmiyor. Aynı zamanda onun bütün politik, bürokratik birimlerde, yani kamusal alanda kullanılmasından da bahsediyor, bunu sonuna kadar savunuyor, bunu işte her tarafta deklare ediyor. Fakat bir başka açıdan, aslında biraz da Üstad Said Nursi’in o Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye tezi var, yani bir nevi konfederal bir İslam dünyası. Yani bir Avrupa Parlamentosu’na, Avrupa Birliği’ne benzer bir sistem önerisi var. Daha doğrusu Amerika, Amerikan modeli diyebileceğimiz bir modelden bahsediyor Said Nursi. Yani bu model çerçevesinde aslında Kürtlerin de siyasallaşması, diğer Ortadoğu’daki veya İslam âlemindeki milletlerle eşit siyasal haklar çerçevesinde kendini inşaa etmesini bir hak olarak görüyor. Yani bu amaca ulaşmanın stratejisi veya araçları elbette bir PKK hareketiyle örtüşmeyebilir veya onun belirlediği her bir stratejiyi doğru görmeyebilir. Fakat Kürtlerin nihai emirde kendi statülerini oluşturmalarını, içinde buldukları mevcut egemenlik alanlarında, kendi statülerini oluşturmalarını hak olarak görüyor. Ama bunu, o merkez çevre ilişkisi içinde belirleyecekleri için realiteler üzerinden hareket ediyor. Yani bu hayali, bu ideali var diye olayları çok da hayale kapılarak yorumlama eğiliminde değil bu hareket. Fakat en azından şunu çok rahat

¹⁸² (translation) “The Nûbihar Circle is clear on the solution to the Kurdish Question, although they all propose it in different types and versions. Their desired model is, in the long run, federalism based on territory, and in an advanced stage it is independence through the establishment of the Kurdish state.”

¹⁸³ (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

¹⁸⁴ (Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

¹⁸⁵ (Din, Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

soyleyebilirsiniz: Kürtlerin siyasi durumunun belirginleşmesi ve tanınması konusunda hiç bir tereddütleri yok bu çevrenin.^{186 187}

Din openly supports the Nûbihar Circle's demand to establish Said Nursi's con-federal Islamic world, *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye*, and through this model – also according to Din – the Nûbihar Circle will give Kurds the same rights as other nations in the Middle East or in the Islamic World. Ay claims that “according to the Nûbihar Circle, establishment of Kurdistan is a must and it should be an Islamic state.”¹⁸⁸

Moreover, the Nûbihar Circle's suggestion that there should be a new constitution (Rêvebir, 2012)¹⁸⁹ demonstrates its demand for an autonomous or federal or independent state:

Çok ulusluluk ve çok kültürlülük bağlamında farklı olana onay verilmelidir. Farklı toplumsallık kültürlerini korumak için bireysel ve grupsal haklar çerçevesinde özyönetim hakkı, kültürel haklar, dilsel haklar ve özel temsil hakları getirilmelidir. Yurttaşların kendi anadilleriyle eğitim ve öğretim hakları en meşru hakları olduğu gibi bu dillerin kamusal birimlerde kullanılarak hayata geçirilmesini devlet düzenler. Bu konu devlet güvencesi altındadır. Bölgelerin idari ve siyasi talepleri göz önünde bulundurularak ya idari veya hem idari hem siyasi adem-i merkezîyetçi bir sistem tesis edilmelidir. Bu yolla devletin merkezîyetçi-bürokratik ve siyasi egemenliği merkezin tekeline alan hegemonik yapısı değiştirilmelidir. (Rêvebir, 2012)¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ (translation) “The Nûbihar Circle demands the use of the Kurdish language not only in education, but also in the public sphere. Originally, the Nûbihar Circle wants to establish Said Nursi's con-federal Islamic world, the *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye*, which would be similar to the European Parliament or the European Union. The Nûbihar Circle and Said Nursi, through this model, claims the right to the politicization of the Kurds, and desires to give the Kurds the same rights as other nations in the Middle East or in the Islamic World, and to develop itself with those rights within this model framework. Although the Nûbihar Circle's strategy and means to achieve its aims does not suit the PKK movement's, the Nûbihar Circle believes that the Kurds' actions in attempting to create their own status within their own sovereignty area are justified, and has realistic opportunities do so in a relationship with mainstream society. So, this movement does not intent to interpret the events as fanciful simply because it is idealistic. It has no doubt about the possibility to clarify and recognise the Kurdish political situation.”

¹⁸⁷ (Din, Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

¹⁸⁸ Retrieved from <http://www.ufkumuzhaber.com/dava-ve-Nûbihar-dergileri-6385h.htm>

¹⁸⁹ For further information, see appendix D

¹⁹⁰ (translation) “Different ones should be approved within the context of multi-nationalism and multi-culturalism. In order to protect different socio-cultural right to govern themselves, in the context of individual and social rights, cultural rights, linguistic rights, and private representational rights should be conferred. As education in the mother language is the most legitimate right of citizens, the state should organize and guarantee actualization of the use of these languages in the public sphere. Taking the governmental and political demands of regions, either a governmental, or both a governmental and politically decentralized, system should be installed. Through this, the hegemonic structure of the state, which monopolizes centralist-bureaucratic and political sovereignty, should be changed.”

It seems that the Nûbihar Circle adopts independence as its goal since, according to its members; independence is also Said Nursi's goal¹⁹¹. Ümit¹⁹² stated that "as a result of a deep analysis of Said Nursi's works, it is seen that Said Nursi proposes serious Kurdish cultural accumulation and a Kurdish mentality that has caught fire today, and this mentality will put the current Kurdish political structure forward to even attain an independent state structure."¹⁹³ As stated by Özbek (2011, p. 17), "for twenty years, Said Nursi gave up everything in order to achieve the goal of *hürriyet* (independence or freedom) in his heart and soul." According to Özbek (2011, p. 17), Said Nursi's demand for *hürriyet* also reveals itself in *Hürriyete Hitap*, his call to the people after the declaration of *Meşrutiyet* (constitutional monarchy):

Ey hürriyet-i şer'i...Benim gibi bir Kürdü tabakat-ı gaflet altında yatmışken uyandırıyor sun. Sen olmasaydın, ben ve umum millet, zindan-ı esarete kalacaktık. Seni ömr-ü ebedî ile tebşir ediyorum. Eğer aynü'l hayat şeriatı menba-ı hayat yapsan ve o cennette neşvünema bulsan; bu millet-i mazlume de eski zamana nispet bin derece terakki edeceğine müjde veriyorum. (İçtimai Dersler, 2013, p. 12, retrieved from Özbek, 2011, p. 18)¹⁹⁴

According to Özbek, in this declaration¹⁹⁵, Said Nursi ushers in *hürriyet* to have everlasting existence, and after this declaration, he offers a proposal for how *hürriyet* can be sustained among the (Kurdish) nation (Özbek, 2011)¹⁹⁶. Although Said Nursi

¹⁹¹ There is no direct quotation in Said Nursi's works and writings. However, Said Nursi tried to awaken the feeling of nationality and national solidarity among the Kurds, in his writing and in his speeches to the Kurds.

¹⁹²(Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

¹⁹³ (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

¹⁹⁴ (translation) "The order of *hürriyet* (freedom/independence)! You call us with such a beautiful precursory voice so that you wake up as a Kurd in woolgathering like me. If you did not exist, I and Kurdish nation would be condemned to captivity. I herald you with everlasting existence."

¹⁹⁵ In this declaration (Addressing to *hürriyet*), Said Nursi calls *hürriyet* as *hürriyet-i şer'i*, which means freedom dependent on Sharia. According to Said Nursi, *hürriyet-i şer'i* would awaken Kurds from *gaflet* (blindness, carelessness) and would prevent them from enslavement of people. As long as *hürriyet* is based on Sharia, it would last forever, according to Said Nursi, and national sovereignty would dominate. However, *hürriyet-i şer'i* should be protected and maintained through *ittihad-ı kulub* (harmony) within the scope of Sharia, *muhabbet-i milliye* (patriotism), *maarif* (education), *say'i insani* (human labor), and *terk-i sefahet* (abandonment of dissipation). *Hürriyet* could grow up when people obey the rules, Shari law, and good morals (at that point Said Nursi exemplifies the Era of Bliss (Asr-ı Saadet)) whereas dissipation, wastefulness, violence, and sensual enthusiasm could convert *hürriyet* into enslavement for the Kurds. (İçtimai Dersler, 2013, pp.12-25)

¹⁹⁶ Özbek may mean Said Nursi's advices for Kurdish scholars, Sheyhs, headmen, and Kurdish people (İçtimai Dersler, 2013, pp. 25-31). In these parts, Said Nursi advices the Kurds to serve for national unity and *Meşrutiyet* since the existence of the Kurds and even Islamic nations and Ottomans depend on national unity. Their disagreement and separation may benefit to others and may harm to Islam and all nation. Said Nursi wants them to protect their Kurdish honor and dignity and to serve for heroic Albanians, *Meşrutiyet*, and justice. According to Said Nursi, since Kurds are the tribes that have been damaged by period of autocracy, *Meşrutiyet* will help Kurds to establish madrasahs in Kurdistan. (İçtimai Dersler, 2013, p. 30)

Meşrutiyet is defined as a consultation ordered by Sharia, by Said Nursi in *Münazarat*. Said Nursi describes *meşrutiyet*'s heart as knowledge whereas its language is a friendly conversation. *Meşrutiyet* is the domination of the nation, not of people. Hence, Said Nursi shows the Kurds as also a master since it is the wisdom of all tribes.

demands and supports *hürriyet* based on Sharia, originally he did not use *hürriyet* in the meaning of independence. It is true that according to Said Nursi, *hürriyet-i şeri* can awaken nations such as the Kurds, from *gaflet* (blindness), and prevent them from captivity (Nursi, *İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 12), and as long as *hürriyet* is based on Sharia, it can last forever, and national sovereignty dominates (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 13). Nevertheless, Said Nursi states all these words since he believed that *Meşrutiyet* (Constitutional Monarchy) will bring *hürriyet* to people and all nations and Islamic unity and solidarity. Said Nursi's thoughts about *Meşrutiyet* are worth to be evaluated:

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

As can be seen above, Said Nursi advises the Kurds to support *Meşrutiyet* that would bring them *hürriyet*, a free environment, in which all nations could exist and participate in decision-making mechanism of the state through consultation. Hence, Said Nursi did not mean independence while using *hürriyet*. Also, Denise supports

Said Nursi supports that through *meşrutiyet*, all enthusiasm and willingness of the Kurds will be awakened, and the Kurds will find heaven on earth. *Meşrutiyet* will bring fortune to Islam and Asia, and make the Kurdish state eternal because it exists with the existence of the nations. Said Nursi advises to the Kurds who can be a sultan with freedom. As stated by Said Nursi, *Meşrutiyet* ties more than three hundred million Islamic people together like a tribe, and the Kurds should also protect this system. The consultation is open to every one. Hence nationality seems to come to action. According to Said Nursi, in nationality, Islam has been illuminated and acted. The spirit of nationality is Islam. (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 83)

While calling to hamals, Said Nursi mentions about three enemies of the Kurds: (1) poverty, (2) ignorance, (3) dispute. According to Said Nursi, poverty can be solved through national unity whereas ignorance can be overcome through human labor. On the other hand, dispute's solution is national love. By this way Kurds should want justice and accumulated law from the government. Therefore, Said Nursi demands from the Kurds to present their (Kurdish) strength and courage to the glorious Turks who have carried the banner for Islam for six hundred years. In this way, according to Said Nursi, the Kurds could also benefit from their intelligence and knowledge, and show their asymmetry. Said Nursi asserts that unity means strength; solidarity is happiness; and obedience to the government brings peace. (*İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 25-26)

that Said Nursi offered autonomy in which the Kurds would have rights and live according to their own culture¹⁹⁷.

After all, evaluating the replies given by Nûbihar Circle's members, it is seen that the Nûbihar Circle's solution to the Kurdish Question is independence, and they show this solution as Said Nursi's solution since they read and evaluate Said Nursi's works through their Kurdish ethnic identity.

5.2.2.5. Conferral of National Consciousness/National Solidarity among the Kurds

Although the Nûbihar Circle demands independence of the heart, the Nûbihar Circle is also aware of the fact that unless national consciousness is given to the Kurds, they cannot achieve independence. Hence, the first thing they need in order to attain independence is national consciousness and national solidarity, as also advised by Said Nursi.¹⁹⁸ Kanca (2017) reflected on this with his evaluation of Said Nursi's words, as follows:

What the Nûbihar Circle suggests as a solution to the Kurdish Question are 1-to give fundamental rights and liberties to the Kurds without bargaining on this issue, since all nations should have equal rights; 2-to give autonomy or federation to the Kurds; 3-to make the Kurds independent. Kurds alone should decide all these solutions, following the answers already provided by Said Nursi. In *Münazarat*, one of Said Nursi's works, the following things are written: the Kurds ask Said Nursi "We, as Kurds, are not comfortable either with the government or the Turks. How can we reach the pure water¹⁹⁹ not tainted by the Turks?" That is to say, how can they drink pure water instead of the water made dirty by the Turks? What does that mean? Is it not independence, being a state? It is something related to the emergence of a national consciousness. Said Nursi replies: "Through the *Meşrutiyet* (constitutional monarchy), government of a single nation ended, and henceforth everyone will choose their own deputies and send them to the parliament. Naturally, there is a pool, the parliament, and everyone can divert their water to this pool. I see you, Kurds: you do not have a spring to send to the pool." Namely, Said Nursi means that you do not have national consciousness. And Said Nursi continues: "According to the current constitutional monarchy, parliament is a pool below. We, the Kurds, have a spring, like other nations do. We discharge water to the pool. Even if this pool has been broken down, then as long as our spring is

¹⁹⁷ (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

¹⁹⁸ (Eser, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

¹⁹⁹ Said Nursi likens parliament to a pool to where all nations would discharge their own water (deputies). According to Said Nursi, as long as nations have spring (national solidarity, consciousness), they will be able to send their water to this pool. However, if this pool is above the springs, nations and their water will be influenced from any defect in the pool and get damaged.

strong, we are not damaged. However, if we are lower than the water, then the dirtiness of the water pollutes and damages us. Nevertheless, the main problem of Kurds is the deficiency of the spring. Therefore, you drink the cloudy water that comes from far away. You Kurds! Work hard to reveal your own spring! Otherwise, you will be like a beggar to others. If you must be a beggar, you should be beggar to yourselves, not to others.”²⁰⁰ What Said Nursi means is to strive in some way for independence. Again, Prince Sabahattin’s idea of “decentralization” is the most ideal solution for the Kurds. Said Nursi’s evaluation of this idea is that the “decentralization model is good principle, but its application takes time.”²⁰¹ Said Nursi says that the time for decentralization is not right²⁰². It is the 1990s, and at this time the nation’s educational level is not equal. Said Nursi advises that the government should make activities for all nations in order to reveal their own values, such as activities in the mother language, or cultural activities. The first idea of Said Nursi is Ottomanism, but after the collapse of the Ottomans, his idea changes to *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye* (United Islamic Republics), which looks like the European Union.^{203 204}

²⁰⁰ In original text, Said Nursi states that

Her tarafa şubeler salmış bir büyük çeşme başında bir tagayyürat olursa her tarafa sirayet eder. Fakat yüz pınarın ortasında bir havuz olursa o havuz pınarlara bakar ve onlara tabidir. Faraza o havuz tamamen tagayyür ederse veyahut –allah etmesin- bozulursa da çeşmelere tesir etmez. Eğer pınar pınar olursa... İşte bakınız, istibdadın hükümünce İstanbul ve hükümet bülağ başı idi. Şikayette hakkınız var idi. Şimdi ise hakikat itibariyle bilkuve İstanbul göldür, hükümet havuzdur. Türk zeyn-abd’dir veya öyle olmak lazımdır. Pınar bizlerdedir veya bizde olmak gerektir. Ey Kürtler! Görüyorum ki, pınar bizde yoktur. Onun için uzaktan gelen taaffün eden bir suyu içiyoruz. Eskisi gibi istibdadı görüyoruz. Öyle ise gayret ediniz, çalışınız. Sebeb-i saadetimiz olan meşrutiyeti takviye için fikr-i milliyeti haffar yapıp, marifet ve fazileti eline veriniz. Şu yerlerde de bir küngan atınız; ta bir kemalat pınarı bizde de çıksın. Yoksa daima dilenci olacaksınız, ya susuzluktan öleceksiniz. Hem de dilencilik beş para etmez. İnsan dilenci olursa nefesine olsun. Bence merhamet dilencileri ya haksız veya tembeldirler. Eğer siz insan olsanız, hükümet ve İstanbul ve Türkler nasıl olsalar olsunlar, size fenalıkları dokunmaz. Fakat iyilikleri gelir. (İçtimai Dersler, 2013, p. 94; Zınar, 2011, 141)

²⁰¹ Said Nursi evaluates the decentralization idea of Prens Sabahattin as good idea (Canlı & Beysülen, 2010, p. 129). The evaluation of Said Nursi is between modern and homogenous national system based on ethnicity and ethnic elements. According to Said Nursi, there must be a centre and a unity among the centre with the condition that the ones around the centre should be able to protect their own right to exist and also be supported by the state. In this sense, Islam should protect these rights of all.

(...) her kavmin mabihî’l-bekası olan adet-ı milliyeye ve lisan-ı kavmiyeye ve isti’dad-ı efkara muvafık, hükümet teşebbüsata başlamalı. Ta ki, makine-i teraakkıyat-i medeniyetin buharı hükmünde olan müsabakayı intac edecek bir hiss-i rekabet peyda olabilsin. Yoksa bu revabit ve mecariyi fekk edecek olan adem-i merkeziyet fikri; veyahut onun ammizadesi unsura mahsus siyasî kulüpler - zaten merkezden nefret var- istibdat ciheti ile ve şiddet-i ihtilaf-ı unsur ve mezhep sebebiyle birdenbire kuvve-i anil merkeziyeye inkilab edeceğinden, tevsi-i mezuniyet kabına vahşetin galeyanıyla sığmayacağından, Osmanlılık ve meşrutiyet perdesini birden feveran ile yırtacak bir muhtariyete ve sonra istiklaliyete ve sonra tavaif-i rnülük suretini giydiğinden hiss-i rekabet daiyesiyle vahşetin ve adem-i müsavatın mahsülü olan fikr-i istila yardımıyla bir mücadele-i keşmekeş intac edeceğinden, öyle bir zenb-i azlm olur ki, hürriyetteki hasene-i uzmaya –menafi-i umumi mizanıyla tartılsa - muvazi, belki ağır gelecektir. (İçtimai Dersler, 2013, p. 23).

²⁰² Said Nursi states this as follows:

Binaenaleyh, mizac-ı ittihad-ı millete arız sümum-u istibdat ile istidat ve meyl-i iftirak marazı izale veya tevkif lazım iken, adem-i merkeziyet fikriyle veyahud onun kardeşi- oğlu gayr-ı mahlut siyasi kulüpler sirayetine yardım ve önüne menfezler, kapılar açmak muhalif-i kaide-i hikmet ve tıb oldugundan, bir deha-i mücessem ki, fatiha-i zaferi istihsal, hasene-i uzma-yı hürriyet ve ittihad-ı milleti iken, böyle bir iftirak zenb-i azimiyle hatime çekmek, on üç asır evvel ölmüş asabiyet-i cahiliyeyi ihya ile fitneyi ikaz etmek ve Asya’nin mahall-i saadetimiz olan sema-yi müstakbeldeki cinanı, cehenneme döndürmek, hamiyet ve ulüv-u cenaplarına yakıştıramıyorum. Onun tevili güzel, fikren taakkul edebiliriz, amma istidadımızla amelen tatbik edemeyiz. Tatbikine çok zaman lazım.

Biz ki ekseriz, muvahhidiz; tevhidle miikellef olduğumuz gibi, ittihadi tesis edecek muhabbet-i milliyeye ile muvazzafiz. Eger unsur lazım ise, un- sur için bize islamiyet kafidir. (İçtimai Dersler, 2013, p. 24)

²⁰³ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

²⁰⁴ (original) “Kürt meselesinin çözümüne yönelik bizim net bir tanımlamamız yok, fakat şunu söylüyoruz. 1-temel hak ve hürriyetler var. Bu tartışma götürmez bir meseledir. Bunun pazarlığı olmaz. En az bütün hakların

Evaluating Kanca's statement and example, the Kurds are uneasy about the Turks and their government. They want to remove the Turks' influence, and ask how they can reach the pure water without feeling the influence of the Turks, namely, what they ask is how they can get independence, as also evaluated by Kanca. What Said Nursi says is that, although the governmental type permits the representation of every nation and looks like a pool below, the Kurds do not have a spring to send to this pool. As long as they, the Kurds, do not have a strong-running spring, they will be destined to be damaged and harmed. Therefore, the Kurds should work hard in order to reveal their own spring, as suggested by Said Nursi and stated by Kanca. Nevertheless, Said Nursi expresses the need for timing and for starting activities to reveal their own values. That is to say, the Nûbihar Circle evaluates Said Nursi's solution for the Kurds as independence, and that the Circle should try to reach the Kurds to achieve national consciousness among the Kurds, as suggested by Said Nursi. If the Kurds want to get independence, and not to be influenced by any other nations, they should reveal their own spring (national consciousness); and, after that, they will not be damaged, will

verilmesidir. Bir Türk hangi haklara sahipse diğer milletler de aynı hak hukuklara sahip olmalı eşitlik olarak. Bu birinci minimum olandır. İkinci özerklik temellidir ya da federasyon. Bu da Kürtlerin hakkıdır. Dilerlerse bunu da talep edebilirler. Üçüncüsü de bağımsızlık hakkıdır. Ve bunu üçünün de tercihini yapacak olan Kürtlerdir. Buna bizim adımıza başkası karar veremez. Ancak kendimiz karar veririz. Kürtler ayrılacak da aynı ümmetin parçasıyız. Üçünün de tercihini yapacak olan Kürtlerdir ve bunlardan hangisinin olacağına yanıtı Risale'de var. *Münazarat*'ta İstibdad-ı, hürriyeti, padişahı hepsini anlattıktan sonra şunu soruyorlar "Şu hükümet ve Türkler nasıl olsalar biz rahat edemiyoruz. Başımızı onların üstünden kaldırıp onlarla beraber elimizi safi suya uzatmak nasıldır?" Bazı Kürtler bunu söylüyor. Temiz su içmek istiyoruz, yani onlardan kirlenen suyu değil. Bu nasıldır, diyorlar yani. Bu ne demek? Bağımsızlık, devlet demek değil mi? Milli bilincin oluşumuna dair bir şeydir. Said Nursi'nin verdiği cevap şudur: "Meşrutiyet oldu, Meşrutiyet'in ilanıyla beraber bir ulusun yönetimi diye bir şey yok, herkes vekilini seçecek, meclise gönderecek. Doğal olarak herkesin meclisi, bir havuz oluştu, herkes o havuza su gönderecek. Görüyorum ki ey Kürtler, sizde pınar yok, oraya gönderecek bir pınar yok", diyor. Milli bilinç yok demek istiyor. "Şu anki Meşrutiyet'e göre meclis aşağıda bir havuzdur, biz ise bir pınarı; her bir millet bir pınara sahip. Oraya su akıtıyoruz. Orası bozulsa da eğer bizim pınar sağlam olursa bize hiçbir zararı olmaz. Ama su yukarıda biz aşağıdaysak şayet oradan bize su geliyorsa, orası ne kadar kirliyse bize de o kadar kirli su bulaşır, o kadar zarar gelir." Milli istibdadı örnek veriyor; istibdad yönetimini ve meşrutiyet yönetimini örnek veriyor. "Ama Kürtlerin temel problemi pınarın olmaması diyor. Bundan dolayı da kesin uzaktan gelen kokuşmuş bir su içiyorsunuz. Ey Kürtler, çalışın ta ki sizde de bir hakikat pınarı çıksın. Sondaj vurun burada bir pınar çıkarın, yoksa sürekli başkasına dilenci olacaksınız. İnsan dilenci olacağına da kendisine olsun, başkasına değil," diyor. Bu bağımsızlığa yöneliktir. Yine 1908'de Prens Sabahattin'in Âdem-i Merkeziyet fikri Kürtler için şu an en ideal olanı bir basamak noktasında budur aslında. Said Nursi bunu alıp değerlendiriyor ve değerlendirmesi aynen şöyle: "Âdem-i merkeziyet fikri aklen güzel düşünebiliriz, fakat tatbikine zaman lazım". Şu an Osmanlı dağılmak üzere etrafında diğer devletler onu paylaşmak üzere tartıştıkları bir dönem 1900'lü yıllar. Böyle bir dönemde böyle bir duruma gitmesi intihar olur, diyor. Niye karşı çıktığının bir temeli daha var: Osmanlı'daki milletlerin seviyeleri bir değil. Eğitim seviyeleri, nüfus oranları... Eğer ki böyle bir şeye gidilse -bir de milliyetçilik hareketleri var Avrupa'dan gelen- bunların hepsinin neticesinde çok büyük zulümler olur diyor. Bir birlik beraberlik var zaten diyor; gayri Müslimler, Türkler, çerkezler, hepsi Osmanlı içerisinde beraberler şu an. Hükümet acilen herbir milletin o milletin hayat suyu olan, o milletin temel özelliği olan değerler üzerine çalışmalar yapması lazım, diyor. Yani anadilde çalışmalar, kültürel faaliyetler vs. hükümet buna yönelik adımlar atmalı. Fikir de güzeldir, ama ortam müsait değil, diyor. Said Nursi'nin ilk fikri Osmanlıcılıktır, ama Osmanlı'nın ardından bu değişir. Birleşik İslam Cumhuriyetleri demiştir Said Nursi. Gidelim de kralın etrafında toplanalım dememiştir. Bugünkü Avrupa Birliği modelidir aslında. 1950'lerde Avrupa Birliği'nden önce böyle bir fikir atmıştır Said Nursi."

not get polluted by other nations' dirtiness, and will not have to become beggars to any other nations. However, as expressed above, the Circle members are aware of the fact that the Kurds need time to achieve independence in order to attain national consciousness.

The issue that Said Nursi means independence of the Kurds in the text as stated by Kanca above is debatable. It is because in the full text, Said Nursi talks about *Meşrutiyet* which refers to bring fortune to the Islam and Asia, and to make the Kurdish state eternal since it will exist with the existence of the nations (Nursi, *İçtimai Dersler*, 2013, p. 83). Binding more than three hundred million Islamic people together like a tribe, *Meşrutiyet* will realize *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye*. Although this idea of Said Nursi seems as an independent Kurdish state under the con-federal *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye* model, Denise (2017) asserts that the con-federal *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye* model is the Ottoman Empire. This model allows all nationality including the Kurds to live according to their own cultures under the Ottoman caliphate (Personal Interview, March 4, 2017). Additionally, Said Nursi's Manifesto to the Kurds, Said Nursi commands the Kurds to "bring the unified Kurd population into Ottoman society as a shining star under holy Islam, so that common harmony and stability can be kept". In this sense, Said Nursi supports that the Kurds should provide their national unity, but this unity should be under the Ottoman Empire, under the holy Islam. That is to say, according to Said Nursi, the independence of the Kurds relies on their freedom to live according to their own culture and tradition. Briefly, Said Nursi's solution to the Kurdish problem can be defined as autonomy under the Ottoman Empire, although the Nubihar Circle perceives Said Nursi's solution to the Kurds as a total independence only under Sharia.

On the other hand, Ümit²⁰⁵ expressed the belief that "if Kurdish politics and Kurdish society are to prepare for the independence of the Kurds in Turkey, we (the Kurds) demand a totally separate state and geography,"²⁰⁶ and perceived independence as

²⁰⁵(Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²⁰⁶ (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

their right. In order to get a national consciousness, the Nûbihar Circle pays attention to Said Nursi's words, since Said Nursi tries to bring the Kurds to a national consciousness²⁰⁷ that can be gained through education. So, the Nûbihar Circle especially takes Said Nursi's Manifesto to the Kurds into consideration while searching for ways to gain national consciousness.²⁰⁸ According to the Nûbihar Circle, Said Nursi clearly suggests ways to get national consciousness and independence in his Manifesto to the Kurds²⁰⁹. In this Manifesto, Said Nursi calls the Kurds to wake up

²⁰⁷ (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²⁰⁸ (Rasul, Personal Interview, May 11, 2017)

²⁰⁹ SAID NURSI'S MANIFESTO TO THE KURDS

Here, I would like say a few things to my nation, the Kurds.

Well, Asuris and Keyanis, brave Kurds who were pioneers and heroes during their sovereignty. That is enough, being asleep for 500 years. Wake up! It is morning time. Otherwise, you will disappear because of individualism and naivety through loneliness. Destiny has raised its hand above the horizon, and is giving orders; the divine reality and law of benefit are telling something to you: listen. That reality is both providing the order of the machine of the universe, and composing the shining laws of God as a telegraph line reaching the entire universe with its branches.

Oh Kurds! Do not be separated drop by drop. Unite in the patriotism and the power that you lost with the nationality idea. Control the greatness of the Kurdish population, creating a magnetic field that comprises everyone, like atoms drawn to each other through gravitational force. Then, bring this unified Kurd population into Ottoman society as a shining star under holy Islam, so that common harmony and stability are kept.

Freedom that relies on Sharia rejects living in captivity, and does not allow intervention in others' rights, it stands up as if on the top of the Subhan and Agri mountains and gives orders loudly to the nation, just as you lived in sleep and were destroyed in the past times.

Oh Kurds! Go forward for science and art, and struggle against ignorance and poverty!

Reality that has been in captivity and that obscures so far moves and revolts by removal of force, by overcoming ignorance and heedlessness. The messenger of realities is telling you that.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The reason for the confusion in the past was the individualism and agha regime among you. However, the happiness palaces of the future are innovation, invention, entrepreneurship, and the idea of freedom. It is time to turn those negative feelings that destroyed you in the past into the values of the future. Your madrasah, with a high voice, represents a scientific parliament rather than another's silent madrasah. Your celestial and spiritual whispers reading the Fatiha surah behind an imam represent that you are capable of madrasahs, denominations,

with his words “That is enough being asleep for 500 years. Wake up, it is morning time.” It is a call, warning them “to unite in their patriotism and the power that they lost with the nationality idea.” Namely, Said Nursi demands that the Kurds attain national consciousness, national unity, and national solidarity in which “everyone like atoms is drawn to each other through gravitational force,” but this unity should be “under Ottoman Empire, under holy Islam”. Said Nursi commands the Kurds to “bring the unified Kurd population into Ottoman society as a shining star under holy Islam, so that common harmony and stability can be kept”. This is because, according to Said Nursi, “freedom that relies on Sharia rejects living in captivity, and does not allow intervention in others’ rights.” In order to achieve national solidarity and unity, Said Nursi suggests that Kurds “Go forward for science and art, and struggle against ignorance and poverty.” Namely, it will be “time to march for education,” and “Kurds will be able to create their own future with science and art in the field of civilization” if Kurds want to get the chance to live freely that has “almost slipped from their hand.” “The thought of nationality can make Kurds a family,” and “each of them will

and being a nation. As if destiny indicates that you have republican capabilities. There is encouragement for special entrepreneurship, such as the interpretation of ayah: “there is nothing else apart from human works.”

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

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

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

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

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

Mother tongue: is a digital tool for the improvement and value of a nation.

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

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

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

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

This man (Motkans Halil Hayali Efendy) has presented a model of patriotic attitudes that has to be followed. He set up a rule about national language that waits for development. I recommend that you consult his work and follow his example.” (İçtimai dersler, pp. 188-191; Zinar, 2011, pp. 146-147-148-149)

be the representative of the life-mirror of all nations.” “They have to show that their existence is unifying, follow national patriotism, and make their common sense and thoughts united in heart and wisdom.” Hence, “Kurds have to produce their swords by science and the art of gem-cutting, and the mother tongue has a very important role in this.” That is to say, Said Nursi perceives the deficiency/inability of the Kurds to gain independence as part of the national consciousness, which can be achieved through education.

According to Kanca,²¹⁰ the lack of Kurdish national consciousness to achieve independence is also reflected in Said Nursi’s calling, since Said Nursi mentions national consciousness when his respondents are Kurds, not Turks; however, when the issue is racism, his respondents become Turks:²¹¹

Said Nursi ırkçılık manasındaki milliyetçiliği eleştiriyor. Kürdi yerlerdeki bütün muhatapları Türklere hitap ettiği ve milli bilinci uyandırmaya çalıştığı bütün yerlerde muhatap Kürtlere hitap eder. Milli bilinçten bahsediyor, Kürtleri uyandırıyor. Kürtlerde olmayan bir şey ve Kürtlerin problemi bu zaten... O problemin çözülmesi milli bilincin uyanmasıyla oluyor. Türklere zaten milli bilinç var. Bunun ileri aşaması ırkçılıktır zaten. Ve bütün eserlerini kıyaslıyorsanız, eski ve yeni Said dönemi eserlerini, bu farkı görebilirsiniz. Ne zaman ırkçılıktan bahsetse muhatap Türklere hitap eder. Onlara ırkçılığa devam ederlerse Kürtlerin isyan edeceğinden bahsetmiştir Said Nursi.^{212 213 214}

5.2.2.6. Education in the mother language

The Nûbihar Circle, as stated by Said Nursi, believes that the main problem for the Kurds is deficiency in national solidarity and education, and that these issues should be solved by creating national unification among Kurds and by popularizing religious

²¹⁰(Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

²¹¹ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

²¹² (translation) “Said Nursi criticizes nationalism in the meaning of racism. When Said Nursi addresses Kurds and tries to awaken national consciousness, his respondents are Kurds. Mentioning national consciousness, Said Nursi awakens the Kurds. National consciousness is what Kurds do not have, and that is the Kurds’ problem. Turks already have this national consciousness. Its further step is racism. Whenever Said Nursi mentions racism, the focus is Turks.”

²¹³ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

²¹⁴ Mücahit Bilici (2017) also states this situation and claims that Said Nursi indoctrined *fikr-i milliyet* (the idea of nationality) to the Kurds whereas he suggested *ittihad-ı İslam* (Islamic unity) to the Turks (2017, p. 63). In this sense, according to Bilici, Said Nursi suggested universality, equality, and brotherhood to the ones (the Turks) who had gotten used to establish superiority over and to govern others; while he indoctrinated selfdom, equality, equivalent to the ones (the Kurds) who had been suppressed by others (2017, p. 63). *İttihad-ı İslam* promotes solidarity of Muslims and awakening of all as a nation, and it is also an example for *fikr-i milliyet*.

²¹⁴ (translation) “the idea of nationalism is the father of *hürriyet*”.

and positive science among them (Zinar, 2011, p. 142). According to the Nûbihar Circle, correct education should free Kurdish children mentally and teach them the Kurdish language, culture, history, and literature, since only people with strong liberal, pluralist characteristics can solve Turkey's problems.²¹⁵ Hence, education of the Kurds is the aim of the Nûbihar Circle in order to produce a national consciousness leading to an independent state. All roads lead to education of the Kurds in Said Nursi's words, according to the Nûbihar Circle. Thus "Kurds have a problem centered on ignorance that can only be solved through the state's establishment of educational institutions in the mother language" (Zinar, 2011, p. 135).²¹⁶ According to the Nûbihar Circle, a correct education plan has been set out by Said Nursi. This plan suggests how education in the mother language of the Kurdish people will work:

In the Kurdish region, children cannot receive an education since education is not in the Kurdish language; hence, three regional schools in Beytüşşebab (on the Iraqi border), in Sason (on the Syrian border), and in Van (near to the Iranian border) should have been established to deliver education in the mother language alongside the official language of the state. In these schools, Kurdish ulemas, scholars, and officers who know Kurdish should work.²¹⁷ (İçtimai dersler, 2013, p. 507; Zinar, 2011, p. 142; Tunç, 2011, p.193; Şeyhazade, 2003, p. 48)²¹⁸

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

Said Nursi's plan to draw together positive science and religious science reveals itself in his higher education project *Medresetüzzehra*, where Arabic, Kurdish, and Turkish

²¹⁵ (Eser, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²¹⁶ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

²¹⁷ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

²¹⁸ Said Nursi states that as follows:

Numune-i imtisal ve sebep-i teşvik ve terğib olmak için, Kürdistan'ın nikat-i muhtelifesinden, biri Artuş aşairi merkezi olan Beytüşşebab cihetinde; diğeri Mutkan, Belkan, Sason vasatında; biri de Sipkan ve Haydaran vasatında olan nefis-i Van'da, medrese nam melufuyla ulum-u diniye ve funun-u lazime ile beraber, hiç olmazsa ellişer talebe bulunmak ve orada medar-i maişetleri hükümet-i seniyyece tesviye edilmek üzere üç darü't-talim tesis edilmelidir. Bazı medarisin dahi ihyasi maddi ve manevi Kurdistan'ın hayat-i istikbaliyesini temin eden esbab-i mühimmesindendir. Bununla maarifin temeli teessüs eder. Ve bu mebd-i teessüsten ittihad takarrür edecek, ihtilaf-i dahiliden dolayı mahv olan kuvve-i cesimeyi hükümetin eline vermekle harice sarfettirmek için hakkıyla müstahak-i adalet ve kabil-i medeniyet oldukları gibi, cevher-i fitriyelerini göstereceklerdir. (retrieved from Canlı & Beysülen, 2010, p. 508)

would be drawn together²¹⁹ (Tunç, 2011). This project is important for the Nûbihar Circle in moving towards independence. Din described this project as “an alternative to the standardizing educational project of Ottoman-Turkish modernization that adopts and prioritizes the sovereignty of one (Turkish) culture, one language, and one nation.”²²⁰ Din also stated that this project differentiates itself from others by gathering up modern and traditional science through multiple languages and cultures.²²¹ Also, Özbek and Yılmayan define the project using the Said Nursi’s words as

an Islamic University in which religious and positive science would be taught together, and which would be established as combining an Ottoman university (*darü'l-fünun*), a school, and a madrasah, looking like al-Azhar University at the center of the Islamic world, in Kurdistan, meaning in the middle of India, Saudi Arabia, Iran, the Caucasus, and Turkistan, in order to remove the negativity of racism among these Islamic countries. (Mektubat, p. 426; Emirdağ Lahikası, s.450, Zehra Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2007; Özbek, 2011, p. 24; Yılmayan, 2011, p. 25)

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

The Nûbihar Circle embraces and even adopts the *Medresetüzzehra* project, since it perceives the project as “an inter-civilizational project for Kurds, Kurdistan, and for Islamic world.”²²² The *Medresetüzzehra* project is even named by the Nûbihar Circle as *Cemahiri Müttefika-i Islamiye* (Association of Muslim Societies), since it regards it as a “Muslim version of the European Union.”²²³ This *Medresetüzzehra* project will save people’s faith and create a sense of an *Ummah* understanding among the people; ultimately, Islamic nations will establish a cultural unity, *Cemahiri Müttefika-i Islamiye* (Şeyhazade, 2003, p. 45). According to Din, *Medresetüzzehra* is a project that will correctly reflect Islam to Europe, or attribute value to the positive developments in the West in promoting them to the Muslim world.²²⁴ This means, as

²¹⁹ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

²²⁰ (Din , Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

²²¹ (Din , Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

²²² (Din , Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

²²³ (Eser, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²²⁴ (Din , Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

explained by Din, it is a project that has an international side, benefiting the Islamic world, and based on the Kurds' own social, educational, and political development. The *Medresetüzzehra* project also has a specific approach to the problem of reducing racism or negative nationalism among Islamic tribes.²²⁵ According to Kanca,²²⁶ "the aim of the project is the Kurds, and to guarantee the future of the Kurds and Kurdish scholars through education, and it is also a project for the Islamic world."²²⁷ As opposed to this idea prioritizing the aim of *Medresetüzzehra* to the Kurds, Denise claims that:

Said Nursi'nin sunduğu Medresetüzzehra modeli Kürt kimliğini esas alan bir model değil. Kürtler burada yanılıyor. Hiçbir şekilde öyle bir şey yok. Zaten Kürt dilini üçüncü sıraya koyuyor. Said Nursi'nin sunduğu Medresetüzzehra'nın temel amacı İslam ile bilimi bir araya getirip İslami bilimi yaratmaktır. Orada Kürt sorununu çözmek için, Kürtlere federasyon-özerklik vermek için bir amaç yok! Yanlış okuma yapılıyor. Temel amacı Osmanlı yıkılıyor, Osmanlı çöküyor ve Osmanlı'nın yıkılması-çökmesinin iki sebebi var. İki düzlemde okuyor bunu: politik ve ekonomik. Politik olarak diyor: Dünya siyasetini, dünya felsefesini, dünya medeniyetini, bilimi iyi anlamamız gerekiyor; politik olarak da içimizde barışımızı sağlamamız gerekiyor. Bu yüzden de İslam felsefesini yaratmamız gerekiyor. Medresetüzzehra projesini ortaya atıyor. Çünkü Medresetüzzehra ile İslam bilimi tanışacak ve çoğulcu Osmanlı fikriyatı entelektüel anlamda vuku bulacak bir proje ile sorunlarımız çözülecek. Projenin temel felsefesi de budur. Van'ı tercih etmesinin sebebine gelince Van bir Kürt şehri olduğu için değil, Van, Anadolu'nun göbeğidir o zaman Osmanlı çok geniş olduğu için. Bir tarafta Ermenistan'dır, bir taraftan İran'a sınırdır, bir taraftan Azerbaycan'a giden geniş bir alanda bir direk noktasıdır. Coğrafi konumundan kaynaklıdır. Etnik demografisinden kaynaklı değildir. Dolayısıyla burada da Said Nursi'yi bir Kürt kimliğine indirgemek doğru değildir, ama bunu da söyleyelim: Önerdiği modeller eğer uygulansaydı bilim ile barışık bir İslam, İslam ile barışık bir bilim, çoğulcu bir yapılanmayı esas alan bir siyasal yönetim Osmanlılık ve İslam etrafında olacaktı ve Kürt meselesi bu hale gelmeyecekti, etnikleştirilmezdi, çözüldü.²²⁸

²²⁵ (Din , Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

²²⁶(Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

²²⁷ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

²²⁸ (translation) "Medresetüzzehra project offered by Said Nursi is not based on Kurdish identity. The Kurds are mistaken about it. Even Said Nursi ranks Kurdish as the third language. The main goal of Medresetüzzehra is to create Islamic science that gathers positive and traditional science together. Said Nursi does not intent to solve the Kurdish Question or to give autonomy or federation to the Kurds through this project. The Kurds read and comment Said Nursi's words in a wrong way. Seeing the Ottoman collapsing, Said Nursi searches for reasons of collapse, and finds economic and political causes. Politically, he states that the Ottoman Empire should comprehend world politics, philosophy, civilization, and science, and should provide the internal peace. Therewith, Said Nursi offers Medresetüzzehra project. Through this project, Islam will meet with science and will improve itself intellectually so that all problems of the Ottoman collapse will be solved. It is the main philosophy behind the project. On the other hand, the reason of Said Nursi to choose Van as the place of the project is not since Van was one of the Kurdish city, but since Van was in the middle of the Ottoman land. It was about geography, not about its ethnic demography. Van has borders to Armenia, Iran, and to Azerbaijan. However, if this Medresetüzzehra project had been applied by the state, science would have had peaceful relations with Islam,

On the other hand, Nal²²⁹ gave details about the *Medresetüzzehra* project. According to Nal, why Said Nursi planned this project to take place in Van, in a Kurdish region, and why he demanded multilanguage education, should be examined. This project would gather together modern and traditional science, or religious science and positive science, in three languages: Kurdish – the language of the region, so as to increase the efficiency of delivery in the region; Turkish – the administrative language; and Arabic – the religious language (Şeyhanzade, 2003). According to Nal, the administration of the university will belong to the Kurds. Said Nursi replied to the question, “How will this project be covered?” with “You are Shafii and it is enough.”²³⁰

²³¹According to Nal, in the Shafii sect, people cannot give alms far from home, and they can give alms to educational institutions. Hence, people in the region will govern the university.²³² Since being Shafii means being Kurd in Turkey, as explained by Nal,²³³ Said Nursi assigned the administrative and economic governance of the *Medresetüzzehra* project to the Kurds, and planned this project in such a manner as to include the Islamic world, but especially the Kurds in the context of the educational language, as well as its content and economics.²³⁴ ²³⁵This means that, according to Çevik,²³⁶ through this project the Kurds would have a home, a homeland and a role,

a pluralist political regime would have gathered with the Ottomanism and Islam, and the Kurdish Question would not have been ethnicized and nationalized as that of today.”

²²⁹ (Personal Interview, February 2, 2017)

²³⁰ (Nal, Personal Interview, February 2, 2017)

²³¹ İçtimai Dersler or Münazarat does not support such a conversation. The original conversation is as follows:

S-Biz kuvvetimizi nasıl toplayıp namus-u milliyeyi muhafaza edeceğiz:

C— Fikr-i milliyet ile, milletin cevfinden havz-i Kevser gibi bir havz-i marifet ve muhabbet yapınız. Altındaki suyunu çeken delik-meliği maarif ile kapatınız. İçine su akıtan yukarıdaki mecraları fazilet-i islamiye ile açınız. Büyük bir çeşme var, şimdiye kadar su-i istimal ile şuristana dağılıp bazı seele ve acezeye neşv ü nema verirdi. Bu çeşmeye güzel bir mecra yapınız, sa’y-i şer’i ile şu havuza dökünüz. Sonra da bostan-i kemalatinize su veriniz. Bu, hiç bitmez ve tükenmez bir menbadır.

S— Nedir o çeşme?

C— Zekat. Siz şafiisiniz.

S— Nasıl?

C— ***Eğer ezkiya zekavetlerinin zekatını ve ağniya velev zekatın zekatını milletin menfaatine sarf etseler, milletin de başka milletlere yolda karışabilir.***

S— Daha başka?

C— İanat-i milliyeye-i islamiye denilen nüzur ve sadakat, zekatın ammizadeleridir, asabiyetini çekerler, hizmette yardım edecekler. (İçtimai Dersler, 2013, p. 127)

According to this conversation, Said Nursi advises Kurds to give their zakats for education in Kurdistan region, but this may not mean that government of Medresetüzzehra will be given to the Kurds in the region.

²³² (Nal, Personal Interview, February 2, 2017)

²³³ (Personal Interview, February 2, 2017)

²³⁴ (Nal, Personal Interview, February 2, 2017)

²³⁵ This issue is open to discussion since Said Nursi does not directly state so.

²³⁶(Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

and would live together with their brothers, alongside other nations, in this locale.²³⁷ It is likely because of this project's benefit to the Kurds that the founder of the Nûbihar Circle, İzzettin Yıldırım, wills to realize a project in Van like *Medresetüzzehra*.

Pointing out the current educational problem of the mother language in the Kurdish region, Nal²³⁸ emphasized the importance of the *Medresetüzzehra* project for the Nûbihar Circle. According to the Nûbihar Circle, the educational model for bringing independence to the Kurds is Said Nursi's *Medresetüzzehra* model, since education should teach them their own language, literature, culture, and history, and should give them free will by developing their characteristics and helping them become liberal, intellectual, and critical people.²³⁹ They also have made attempts to set up such education systems that look like *Medresetüzzehra* in Van and Bitlis that teach in the Zazaki language.²⁴⁰ Çevik²⁴¹ explained that the Turkish state's politics for the Kurds involves assimilation and denial of their religion, ethnicity, and culture,²⁴² since the first article of the constitution describes its citizens as Turks, Hanefi, and Sunnis, and promotes "assertive secularism"²⁴³.²⁴⁴ As long as Kurds cannot have education in their mother language, and Kurdish does not play a prominent role in their lives, these situations show that assimilation continues.²⁴⁵ According to Çevik, Kurds are further greatly exposed to assimilation due to the prevalence of technology.²⁴⁶ The younger generation grows up with no Kurdish language or culture, and with no relation to their own past; but this situation can be overcome through education in the Kurdish language.²⁴⁷

²³⁷ (Çevik , Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

²³⁸(Personal Interview, February 2, 2017)

²³⁹ (Eser, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²⁴⁰ (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017; Nal, Personal Interview, February 2, 2017; Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

²⁴¹(Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

²⁴² (Çevik , Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

²⁴³ Secularism type that does not respect others, but does impose its own ideas to others (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017)

²⁴⁴ (Denise, Personal Interview, March 4, 2017; Soner, Personal Interview, February 26, 2017)

²⁴⁵ (Çevik , Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

²⁴⁶ (Çevik , Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

²⁴⁷ (Çevik , Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

In addition, the *Nûbihar Journal's* aim serves to educate people in Kurdish culture, history, literature, and history, given that it was founded in order to address Kurdish people in their own language and culture, and to publish books that are suitable both to the religion of Islam and to Kurdish custom, to express the realities of Kurds' lives in the Kurdish language, and to create cultural accumulation about the Kurds.²⁴⁸ Since the Nûbihar Circle believes that the continuation of nations is dependent on their mother language and culture, the main focus of the Nûbihar Circle is on the Kurdish language and culture (Nal, 2013). Therefore, in order to increase the awareness of people about writing and reading in Kurdish, the Nûbihar Circle holds courses and trains people. Also, by organizing seminars about the Kurdish elders who served the Kurdish language and had influence in history, such as Ehmedi Xanî or Melayi Ciziri, it tries to develop people's historical consciousness and encourage them to think about their traditions and values.

5.2.3. Imagined State's Regime Type

Even though the Nûbihar Circle thinks about independence as a solution to the Kurdish Question, it seems that – through the sources used in the evaluation of the Nûbihar Circle – it plans to establish a democratic state in which all nations, Muslim or non-Muslim, will be able to live free and have equal rights. Yıldırım describes and explains this process as follows:

Since the Kurdish Question has been created by nation-states, firstly, those nation-states that deny other nations' existence and suppress their demands should be replaced with a multi-national state of law. According to the Nûbihar Circle, the solution to the Kurdish Question lies in the establishment of an egalitarian and tolerant ummah community in which all nations can exist with their own identities, so that they can develop their own cultures in a free environment. The Nûbihar Circle asserts that a social structure which excludes racist, denialist, and assimilationist politics, and bases itself on the voluntary togetherness/union of all nations in an equality framework, will solve the Kurdish Question. Without any doubt, Islam will gather all of us and empower our solidarity and cooperation. What the Nûbihar Circle demands is unification of all nations under a universal Islamic republic roof by having equal rights. The solution is Islam and Islamic government. (Yıldırım, 1992, pp. 341-343)

²⁴⁸ (Çevik , Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

Regarding Yıldırım’s statement, this imagined state will bring the “unification of all nations under a universal Islamic republic roof by having equal rights,” will have a “multi-national state of law,” will be “an egalitarian and tolerant ummah community in which all nations can exist with their own identities, so that they can develop their own cultures in free environment,” will be composed of “a social structure that excludes racist, denialist, and assimilationist politics, and bases itself on voluntary togetherness/union of all nations in an equality framework,” and will ensure that “Islam will gather all of us and empower our solidarity and cooperation.”

On the other hand, Ümit stated that the name of the Nûbihar Circle’s imagined system is *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye*, in which the rights of Kurds are recognized, and Islamic rules, as Sharia, are applied.²⁴⁹ Din (2016) stated this goal of the Nûbihar Circle:

Nûbihar, anadil meselesini zaten bir tartışma konusu olarak görmüyor, bir temel hak olarak görüyor, dil hakkını. Onun kamusal alanda ifade edilmesi, yani sadece eğitimde kullanılmasından bahsetmiyor. Aynı zamanda onun bütün politik, bürokratik birimlerde, yani kamusal alanda kullanılmasından da bahsediyor, bunu sonuna kadar savunuyor, bunu işte her tarafta deklare ediyor. Fakat bir başka açıdan, aslında biraz da Üstad Said Nursi’in o Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye tezi var, yani bir nevi konfederal bir İslam dünyası. Yani bir Avrupa Parlamentosu’na, Avrupa Birliği’ne benzer bir sistem önerisi var. Daha doğrusu Amerika, Amerikan modeli diyebileceğimiz bir modelden bahsediyor Said Nursi. Yani bu model çerçevesinde aslında Kürtlerin de siyasallaşması, diğer Ortadoğu’daki veya İslam âlemindeki milletlerle eşit siyasal haklar çerçevesinde kendini inşaa etmesini bir hak olarak görüyor. Yani bu amaca ulaşmanın stratejisi veya araçları elbette bir PKK hareketiyle örtüşmeyebilir veya onun belirlediği her bir stratejiyi doğru görmeyebilir. Fakat Kürtlerin nihai emirde kendi statülerini oluşturmalarını, içinde buldukları mevcut egemenlik alanlarında, kendi statülerini oluşturmalarını hak olarak görüyor. Ama bunu, o merkez çevre ilişkisi içinde belirleyecekleri için realiteler üzerinden hareket ediyor. Yani bu hayali, bu ideali var diye olayları çok da hayale kapılarak yorumlama eğiliminde değil bu hareket. Fakat en azından şunu çok rahat

²⁴⁹ (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

soyleyebilirsiniz: Kürtlerin siyasi durumunun belirginleşmesi ve tanınması konusunda hiç bir tereddütleri yok bu çevrenin.^{250 251}

Eser detailed this *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye* as follows:

Biz bu coğrafyada Avrupa'dan koparılmış bir İslam coğrafyası düşünün. Şimdi o coğrafyada ayakta kalmak çok kolay değil. Ya bir olacağız, birlikte hareket edeceğiz, ayakta kalacağız. Birlikte olmak demek Saddam Hüseyin'in düşünce tarzı değil elbette. İmha, inkar düşünce tarzı, zihniyet değil elbet. Nasıl olacak? İslam'ın birlikteliği. Ama diğerlerini dışlamayı, reddetmeyi de kabul etmiyor Nûbihar. Eğer Allah inanıp inanmama yetkisini insana vermişse, irade ve hürriyetini vermişse, Nûbihar Çevresi'nin etrafındaki insanlar da illa Müslüman veya Sünni veya Hanefi olacak diye bir kural yok. Yeter ki insani değerlere sahip olsun. Bir Yezidi de olabilir, bir Şafi de olabilir, bir Hanefi de olabilir veya Alevi de olabilir. Günümüzdeki sorunlardan bir tanesi mezhepçilik... Nûbihar Çevresi mezhepçiliği, mezhepçi dayatmayı, dinci dayatmayı reddeder. İnsani düşünceleri ön plana çıkarır ve ortak bir yaşamı ele alır. Müslüman halkların gönüllü birlikteliği: *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye*.^{252 253}

The *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye* model is adopted by Said Nursi²⁵⁴, and the Nûbihar Circle tries to apply what Said Nursi advises and shows them.²⁵⁵ “*Cemahiri Müttefika-*

²⁵⁰ (translation) “The Nûbihar Circle demands the use of the Kurdish language not only in education, but also in the public sphere. Originally, the Nûbihar Circle wanted to establish Said Nursi’s con-federal Islamic world, *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye*, which would be similar to the European Parliament or the European Union. The Nûbihar Circle and Said Nursi, through this model, claim the right to the politicization of the Kurds and desired to give Kurds the same rights as other nations in the Middle East or in the Islamic world, developing themselves with those rights within this model framework. Although the Nûbihar Circle’s strategy and means to achieve their aims does not suit the PKK movement, the Nûbihar Circle believes the justification of the Kurds’ actions to create their own status within their own sovereignty area, and to act with ability to do it in relation to mainstream society. So, this movement does not intend to interpret the events as imaginary just because it has this dream. It has no doubt about the clarity and recognition of the Kurdish political situation.”

²⁵¹ (Din , Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

²⁵² (translation) “Think of an Islamic geography separated from Europe. It will not be easy to continue in this place. Either we will move and stand together, but not through oppression and assimilation of anyone. Then, how will it be? It will be through the togetherness of Islam. Nevertheless, the Nûbihar Circle does not support exclusion and denial of anyone. If Allah gives free will and freedom to people to believe or not to believe in Allah, there cannot be a strict rule, such as that around the Nûbihar Circle: there will be Muslim, Sunni, or Hanefi. As long as people have individual values, they can be Yezidi, Shaafii, Alevi, or Hanefi. The Nûbihar Circle rejects sectarianism, or sectarian or religious oppression. On the contrary, it privileges individual thoughts and embraces common life: voluntary togetherness/union of Muslim society: *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye*.”

²⁵³ (Eser, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²⁵⁴ This model is taken from Said Nursi’s *Cemahiri Müttefika-i Amerika* model. Said Nursi believes that “after forty-fifty years, Arabian tribes will convert into the Cemahir-i Müttefika-i Amerika to spreading Islam domination all over the world (İçtimai Dersler, 2013, p. 59). According to this model, all nations would gather under Islamic unity by following their own culture, rights, and traditions. Its logic also can be seen through Said Nursi’s concept of *müspet* nationalism. *Müspet* nationality (occurs naturally through people’s internal needs) results in cooperation and solidarity, and promotes Islamic solidarity (Nursi, *Mektubat*, 2006, p. 323). Said Nursi asserts that *müspet* nationality should be servant and strenght of Islam, and should not try to replace the place of Islam. In this way, according to Said Nursi, religion stands over ethnicity and nationality, and this universal value makes people from different ethnicity and nationality brothers. Through the logic of *müspet* nationalism, con-federal *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye* model will emerge.

²⁵⁵ (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

i İslamiye means a united Islamic republics, and it is like the European Union.”²⁵⁶ This state will be ruled by Islamic rules and will be democratic, in which all people will have equal rights. There will not be oppression, tyranny, privilege, violence, pressure, or dictates, but freedom, equality, consultation, and so on. Tekin explains this regime in much more detail:

This state ruled by Islamic values will not be governed through oppression and tyranny. Issues related to people will not be decided by one person or governor; on the contrary, such issues will be consulted with relevant people, since consultation is the manifestation of equality, freedom of thought, and individual characteristics, since without consultation there will be oppression, suppression, mandates, and any types of dictatorship. Therefore, in this state, institutionalization of a council in the social and governmental sphere is very important in order to create dialogue between society and government. However, this council will be designed so that no one should oppress each other, or have privilege over others, and everyone should have equal rights with each other. (Tekin, 2011, pp. 79-80)

According to the Nûbihar Circle, the description of *Cemahir-i Müttefika-i İslamiye*'s constitution takes place in Said Nursi's *Münazarat*, and even the Nûbihar Circle names *Münazarat* the “prescription for the Kurds”²⁵⁷ or the “lost constitution of the Kurds” (Bilici, 2014).

This constitution guarantees equality of Armenians and Jews under the Islamic language. Against the authority of the caliphate, the caliphate of the people is privileged. Aghas and sheiks are overthrown from their positions with the condition that they can come back only after gaining the democratic consent of the people. Namely, in this constitution, sovereignty is given to the people by taking it from the sultan. From now on, the state will govern according to the freedom of the people. In this constitution, even an individual-based administration or one based on religious people's administration will be destroyed. For the establishment and institutionalization of democratic culture, the constitution both delivers and promotes the importance of national consciousness. This constitution expresses how democracy that looks like the situation of Sharia in non-Muslims' hands will change when it is in Muslims' hands. This constitution denies any type of oligarchy, including that comes through religious people. (Bilici, 2014)

²⁵⁶ (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²⁵⁷ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

However, as mentioned before, the Nûbihar Circle is aware of the fact that unless Kurds achieve national consciousness and achieve national solidarity among each other, this Islamic unity will not be obtained. Tunç reminds us of this with his words:

Said Nursi is one of the biggest supporters of Islamic unity. Asserting that “the biggest obligation of Muslims is Islamic unity,” Said Nursi explains that the nation is required to protect its own national identity, language, cultures, and traditions in achieving Islamic unity. For instance, Said Nursi supports the Kurds in developing their mother language, while reminding them of the necessity of integrity and unification with the Ottomans. (Tunç, 1994, pp. 58-59) Said Nursi’s Islamic unity is a real union, including the United Islamic Republics. According to Said Nursi, the Islamic unity is only possible when the reality of a nation is accepted. First of all, Islamic nations will prescribe their destiny and create federal or co-federal unions, as in the United States of America. After this, Islamic unity will be formed. (Tunç, 1994, February, pp. 58-59)

About the formal structure, organization, and regime structure of Said Nursi’s planned *Cemahiri Müttefika-I İslamiye* idea, this is expressed in Tunç’s writing:

The formal structure and organizations of the state are not strict, but on the contrary, they are allowed to be flexible, and will be decided according to the time, conditions, and general tendencies and consensus of society. From that perspective, the state model suggested by Islam is not strictly defined and framed. More than a state form, the political regime applied to state organization is important, since social life will be directed not by state form, but by political regime. Political regime will be more influential on society, and will give functional specialty and operability to society. About political regime and doctrine, Islam has a “sui genesis” structure. What is important and should be emphasized are the principles of Islam’s state philosophy. These principles include justice, consultancy, councils, and beneficence, which prevail in every period and time. Evaluating concepts like consultancy and councils, it can be asserted that this state never supports individual dictatorship, unilateral will, sole-command application, or the aristocracy of specific classes and elites. In this state, non-Muslims will neither morally nor physically be forced to be Muslim, nor to think as Muslim. As long as they respect the rules of the state, the state will guarantee constitutional equality among citizens, and will protect their life, property, honor, and religion. (Tunç, 1993, May, pp. 27-28)

Whereas Tunç states that in this Islamic unity, non-Muslims will not be forced to change their religion, but will live in peace as long as they apply the rules, elsewhere he asserts that the “Islamic Ummah consists of various races, tribes, and nations, but with a condition to accept religion of Ummah” (1993, October, p. 71), and continues to say that:

Not the ones that gather linked by ancestry, blood relation, or unity of country, but the ones that unite through ties of the same religion and same prophet around the same religion or dogma comprise an Islamic Ummah... Islamic unity is based on religion, and Ummah unification can easily gather dispersed Muslim communities. Races, tribes, and nations consisting of various languages and colors are part of the Islamic ummah. Such communities can be thought of as United Islamic Republics or a Federation of Islamic Communities. (Tunç, 1993, October, p. 71)

Therefore, looking at the sources of the Nûbihar Circle, although it is certain that no one will be forced into anything in this imagined Islamic republics, *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye*, the wholesale acceptance of non-Muslims in the republic is a question to bear in mind, due to the uncertainty of its treatment in the sources.²⁵⁸ However, all in all, taken as a whole, *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye* takes a stand on equality, freedom, consultation, and justice, and beneficence in denying individual dictatorship, unilateral will, the application of sole command, and the aristocracy of specific classes and elites. There will be a dialogue between society and government; also, no one will oppress another or have privilege over another, and everyone should have equal rights. On that point, Çevik's statements support the Nûbihar Circle's thoughts about its imagined state and politics about Kurds and others:

Kendimiz Kürdüz tabi. Kürtlere karşı fitri olarak bir sevgimiz var. Ama bu sevgimiz zulme haksızlığı savunur, her şeylerini olumlu görür bir şekilde de değildir. Biz Kürtler hiç kimseye –Müslümanlara, Hristiyanlara, vs- zulmetsin, haksızlık yapsın istemiyoruz. Kürtlere hizmet etmek isterim ama zulmedilmediği haksızlık yapılmadığı sürece. Biz herkesle yaşayabiliriz. Özgürlükçü, insanların kendilerini rahatça ifade edebileceği bir ortam istiyor, savunuyoruz biz de. Kürtlerin içinde de bunların yapılmasını istiyoruz. Kürtlerin bir fraksiyonu diğerlerine hâkimiyet kuracaksa biz bunu da kabul etmiyoruz. Bu anlamda Kürtler kendi içlerinde demokrat, liberal, özgürlükçü olmalı, birbirlerine baskı kurmamalı. Herkesin kendisini özgürce ifade edebileceği bir ortam olmalı.^{259 260}

²⁵⁸ It is because the sources states the Nûbihar Circle's rejection of sectarianism, sectarian or religious oppression, and acceptance of people with individual values with the example of Yezidi, Shaafii, or Alevi, or Hanefi. Originally, the sources give the impression that in this imagined state, they will accept and respect non-Muslims.

²⁵⁹ (translation) "Since we are Kurds, we love Kurds naturally. However, this love does not support the oppression of and cruelty towards any individual, including Kurds, over others. I want to serve Kurds, but only as long as they do not suppress anyone. The Nûbihar Circle demands an environment where all people, including Kurds, can express themselves freely. If one fraction of the Kurds dominates others, the Nûbihar Circle rejects this. In this sense, Kurds should not oppress each other, and should be democratic and liberal among them, so that everyone can express themselves freely."

²⁶⁰ (Çevik , Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

From Çevik's words, it is understood that the Nûbihar Circle has already adopted this philosophy and treats everyone and every nation equally; it is opposed to oppression, and it supports liberal thoughts and freedom of expression. Also, Çevik's ²⁶¹ explanation, using Iraqi Kurdistan as an example of the most democratic structure in the Middle East, may prove that the Nûbihar Circle patterns itself on Iraqi Kurdistan to some extent:

Barzani'nin kurduğu devlet Ortadoğu'da kurulan en demokratik yapıdır. Suriye'den, Katar'dan, İran'dan, Mısır'dan demokratiktir. Orda Türkmenlerin, Süryanilerin her şeyi var. Ermenilere adam sandalye vermiş. İslami partiler de var. Bir seçim olduğu zaman Avrupa'daki gibi oluyor. Orayı karıştıran birileri olmazsa ileride orası İsviçre olur. Kürtler zulüm gören bir millet olduğu için, haksızlığı çok fazla yaşadığı için diğerlerine zulmetmez, çünkü zulmün ne olduğunu bilir. Dil, kültür yasaklamanın ne olduğunu bildiği için onun dilini yasaklamaz. Yapsa kendiyle çelişir. ²⁶² ²⁶³

All these things mentioned above show that the Nûbihar Circle demands the establishment of a Kurdish democratic independent state in which all nations will be able to live free and have equal rights.

Even when evaluating the sources of the Nûbihar Circle and its thoughts about the representation of the Kurds in the resolution process, either the PKK or the HDP, it can be claimed that the Nûbihar Circle will start to introduce equality at the beginning of the independence process, i.e. the Kurdish Question. The following part will go into further detail on this.

²⁶¹ (Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

²⁶² (translation) "Iraqi Kurdistan is the most democratic structure in the Middle East, since in its structure Turkmens and Assyrians have everything; Armenians have the floor in the parliament; there are also Islamic parties, and elections are held just as in Europe. As long as no one interrupts this, Iraqi Kurdistan will become like Sweden. Kurds do not oppress others, since they have been suppressed themselves and deprived of their rights. Since Kurds know the meaning of the prohibition of one's language and culture, they do not do the same to others."

²⁶³ (Çevik, Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

5.2.4. Opinion about the Political Representation of the Kurds on the Resolution Process

5.2.4.1. The legal legitimacy of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), the HDP (the Peoples' Democratic Party) & other agents

First of all, when the Nûbihar Circle's perspective of the solution to the Kurdish Question, either through armed struggle or through diplomacy, is evaluated, it is seen that the Nûbihar Circle never supports oppression of anyone or any group. Hence, the Circle wants to solve the Kurdish Question not through armed struggle but through peaceful means (Denise, 2017). On the Nûbihar Circle's thoughts on this demand, Said Nursi's role is influential, and it quotes Said Nursi's rejection of armed struggle:

Said Nursi'nin temel görüşü şudur: İslam toplumu içerisinde silahlı bir mücadeleye kesinlikle karşıdır. Bunu da şu şekilde açıklıyor: Diyorlar ki sen neden siyasetten uzaksın? Diyor ki; her şeye karışsam ya iktidar tarafını tutacağım, o zaman zulme ortak olurum. Ya da muhalif olacağım. Muhalif olmak da iki türlüdür: ya silahla mücadele veya siyasal – fikirle- mücadele. Fikirle mücadeleye gerek yok; çünkü herkes zaten durumun farkında. Bir de söz dinleyecek bir kitle yok karşısında. Silahlı mücadele de bu zalim medeniyet – İngilizler, Ruslar ve Kemalist yönetim için kullanılan bir ifade- beşere öyle bir yetki ermiş ki bir tek köyden bir tek canı çıksa köyü çoluk çocuğuyla beraber yok etmeyi kendinde yetki görür. Eğer ki biz silahlı bir mücadele yapsak biz ancak vurana vurabiliriz. Biz ancak savaşanla savaşabiliriz. Bu şekilde de bizim başarıya ulaşma şansımız çok düşük. Biz bir kişiyi öldürürken onlar 30 köyü harap edecekler. Bu şekilde bir sürü masum insanı zarara atmaya din, merhamet izin vermez, diyor. Temel anlayışı bu... Ama biliyoruz ki Said Nursi Ruslar sınıra dayandığı zaman silahını alıp savunmuş, savaşmış birisidir. Cepheler net olunca ayrı. Said Nursi İslam toplumunda, topraklarında silahlı mücadeleye karşıdır.²⁶⁴

²⁶⁵

Tunç also writes of the influence of Said Nursi in the support of peaceful methods through education:

²⁶⁴ (translation) "Said Nursi is definitely against armed struggle. People ask Said Nursi: "Why do you not meddle in politics?" Said Nursi replies: "If I meddle in everything, I will either support the government, but so I will participate in the government's cruelty, or I will dissent against the government. There are two types of dissent: armed struggle and political/ideological struggle. Since all people are aware of everything, there is no need for ideological struggle. Also, no audience exists to listen and apply Said Nursi's words. On the other hand, in terms of armed struggle, this tyrannical civilization authorizes every citizen so that they can even burn the village, together with all of its habitants, merely to kill a guilty person in that village. However, you must only kill the person who shoots you, and fight against the one who fights. In this way, we have a lower chance to win. Our religion and mercifulness do not permit the harming of innocent people. It is Said Nursi's and the Nûbihar Circle's idea to oppose armed struggle in Islamic world."

²⁶⁵ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

Said Nursi supports a solution through education instead of armed struggle. According to Said Nursi, the biggest enemies of development are ignorance, necessity, and dispute, which can be countered with weapons of art, skill, and alliance. According to Said Nursi, governments which use brute force collapse quicker than those which are based on scientific education. For Said Nursi, in the modern world brute force has replaced the heroism of science. Said Nursi drives wisdom and science forward, and says that the Qur'an will govern the world. The future will only belong to Islamism, and its judge will be the Quran and the reality of faith. (Tunç, 1994, p. 34)

The main principles of Said Nursi's political understanding are his support for freedom, equality, and participation, which stand against any administration based on oppression, violence, and terror. Stating that constitutional monarchies and freedom will bring luck to Islam and increase the fortunes of Asia, Said Nursi limits freedom to the increase in Sharia training. This is because, according to Said Nursi, unlimited freedom includes encroachment, whereas freedom should guarantee individual rights and protect people from the oppression of others. (Tunç, 1994, p. 37)

Eser (2017) asserted that

Temel insani olmayan bir şeyi, dayatmayı kabul etmiyor Nûbihar. Silahlı örgütlerin bir yapısıdır, silah zoruyla insanları değişime zorlamak. Nûbihar bu tarz bir şeyi kabul etmiyor. Ama bunu kendi içsel dinamikleri ile yapıyor, birilerinin zorlamasıyla değil. Müspet hareketle yapıyor, Said Nursi'nin methodu gibi. Barışı, Müslüman halkların kardeşliğini kim savunursa onun yanında olur Nûbihar.^{266 267}

Din (2016) also stated that

The Nûbihar Circle always declares that the Kurdish Question cannot be solved either through the violence of the state or through the violence of the PKK. Different alternatives should be improved and employed, such as through dialogue, negotiation, or official constitutional reforms.²⁶⁸

Therefore,

Nûbihar'ın iddiası aslında Kürt meselesiyle ilgili olarak şu. Birincisi Kürtlerin içerisinde çıkan farklı ideoloji ve siyasette her kim olursa olsun bunlara düşmanlık etmiyor. İkincisi Kürtlere zarar veren hangi pozisyonda olursa olsun bunu gösteriyor. Şimdi birincisinden hareket edecek olursak bugün Nûbihar PKK ile aynı ideolojik paydada olmamasına rağmen PKK'nın yahut siyasi çizgideki HDP'nin çok da ortalıkta görünmeyen şahıs ya da grupların Kürtlerle ilgili

²⁶⁶ (translation) "The Nûbihar Circle never supports pressing people to change, as armed terrorist organizations do, but by being a positive/affirmative movement, like Said Nursi's method. The Nûbihar follows the same line as the one who supports peace."

²⁶⁷ (Eser, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²⁶⁸ (Din, Personal Interview, January 21, 2016)

kazanım noktasında her ne varsa Nûbihar bunları destekliyor. İkincisi Kürtlere zarar verecek konumda devlet olabilir, Kürtler içerisinde çıkan şahıs ya da gruplar olabilir bunları da eleştiriyor... Nûbihar ise şunu söylüyor: Benim bugün için hem insanlık adına hem de en yakın kendi halkı, Kürtler adına ihlal edilmiş olan haklar var, ben bu haklar için belli bazı prensiplerim var. Bu prensipler az önce özetlediğimiz eğitimde anadildir, kimlik hakkıdır ve kendini yönetmenin farklı versiyonları olabilir. Bunları hangisi dile getiriyorsa. Bugün MHP kalkıp dese ki “ben Türkiye’deki Kürt sorununun federalizm ile çözeceğim”, Nûbihar MHP’nin bu görüşünü savunur. HDP dese ki “ben Türkiyelileşmek istiyorum benim için Kürt sorunu çok mühim değil”, Nûbihar HDP yerine MHP’nin görüşünü savunur, HDP’nin çözümünü eksik bulur. HDP’nin hangi ideolojiyi savunduğu Nûbihar için önemli değildir. Önemli olarak Kürt sorununa çözüm olarak neyi dile getirdiğidir, neyi yaptığıdır. Bunu kendi çevresine de bu şekilde aktarıyor. Bir partililik yapmıyor. Partilere oy toplamaya çalışmıyor veya birilerinin karşısında da yer alın demiyor. Hatta başka grupların başka partilerin İslamı başka amaçlar için kullanarak Kürtleri kimliklerinden uzaklaştırma politikalarını yanlış buluyor. Din ayrı bir konumda yer alması lazım, hiçbir şekilde buna alet edilmemesi lazım, bu bilinci yaymaya çalışıyor. Ben size din veriyorum siz de Kürtlükten vazgeçin gibi düşünceyi zaten yanlış olarak kabul ediyor.^{269 270}

“Through this logic, if the HDP suggests better ideas on behalf of the Kurds, the Nûbihar Circle stands up for the HDP. If the MHP suggests a better idea, it will support the MHP and so on.”²⁷¹

HDP dese ki “ben Türkiyelileşmek istiyorum benim için Kürt sorunu çok mühim değil”, Nûbihar HDP yerine MHP’nin görüşünü savunur, HDP’nin çözümünü eksik bulur. HDP’nin hangi ideolojiyi savunduğu Nûbihar için önemli değildir. Önemli olarak Kürt sorununa çözüm olarak neyi dile getirdiğidir, neyi yaptığıdır.^{272 273}

On the other hand, the Nûbihar Circle’s approach to all legal parties, such as the MHP, HDP, ANAP, or AKP, and its approach to illegal structures such as the PKK, ISID, or

²⁶⁹ (translation) “the Nûbihar Circle supports those who try to bring benefit to the Kurds and to the Kurdish Question. The Circle already has no enemy, even from the state or the groups or peoples among the Kurds; it is against those who damage the Kurds, and criticizes such people, groups or structures... The Nûbihar Circle stands up for any person who reflects this and tries to do something for the violated rights of Kurds, such as their education in the mother language, equal rights, and self-governance, without partisanship... The Nûbihar Circle does not try to secure votes for any party, nor dissuade people from following any party. The Nûbihar Circle even finds groups or parties whose goal is to remove Kurds’ Kurdish identity by using Islam as a means. The Nûbihar makes effort to create awareness among people that religion should not be used as a path for politics. The Nûbihar asserts the wrongness of the idea that religion should be given in return of the withdrawal of Kurdishness.”

²⁷⁰ (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²⁷¹ (Eser, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²⁷² (translation) “If the HDP claims that the Kurdish Question is not important for their politics, and that it prefers to be Turkish, the Nûbihar Circle will not support them, and will prefer to stand up for another legal party’s politics with better ideas about the Kurds and the Kurdish Question.”

²⁷³ (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

HIZBULLAH, is the same – but this does not mean that the PKK is equal to the ISID.²⁷⁴ Its perception of legal parties is not the same as its perception of illegal ones.²⁷⁵ The Nûbihar Circle bases its support on positive/affirmative movements.²⁷⁶ According to Ümit,²⁷⁷ “the Nûbihar Circle’s system of thought, which stands up for good things for the Kurds and opposes bad things for the Kurds, actually develops the ability to detect problems in society and to find solutions.”²⁷⁸

The Circle’s idea to solve the Kurdish Question through representation of all Kurds can also be perceived in its demand to establish a democratic state. Çevik²⁷⁹ stated that

PKK; bölge içerisinde en güçlü olan, en çok mücadele eden, hareketli dinamik bir güç, Türkiye’de bugün söz sahibi olan, bedel ödeyen bir grup. Göz ardı edilemez PKK. Ama Kürtler sadece PKK’dan ibaret değil. Kürtlerin farklı grupları da var; inanç noktasında PKK ile uyuşmayan dindar insanlar var, solcu olmayıp liberal, demokrat olan insanlar var, PKK’li olmayıp da başka partilerde temsil edilen piyasada olan başka kişiler var, Kürtlerin pek çok sivil toplum kuruluşları var. Dolayısıyla Kürtleri sadece PKK’nın temsil etmesi, bu süreci sadece PKK üzerinden götürmek doğru bir şey değil. Ama PKK’yı da hiç hesaba katmamak olmaz. Mümkün mertebe herkese ortada duran akıl dediğimiz topluma makul insanlar üzerinden, onların ağırlıkta olduğu bir çözüm süreci içerisinde bulunarak, herkese rol vermek daha mantıklı bir şey. Herkesin bu konuda söyleyebileceği şeyler varsa söylemesi, yapabileceği şeyler varsa yapması temsil anlamında önemli. Ama PKK devletle çatışan güç durumunda. Yani silahların bırakılması, gerekli şeylerin yapılması anlamında elbette devletle görüşecek. En ağır silahları bırakma noktasında direk muhatabı PKK’dır. Ama hakları hukukları tanıma noktasında o şeyleri genişletmesi lazım, sadece PKK değil, bütün Kürt grupları, cemaatleri, fraksiyonları, aydınları, sivil toplum kuruluşları hepsinin içerisinde olduğu, bunların düşüncelerini rahatça söyleyebileceği sorunu masaya yatıracağı bir çözüm içerisinde, onlara da hak vererekten, söyleyeceği şeyleri varsa da söyleyerekten, herkese söz hakkı vererek, imkan vererek temsil sorununu halletmek gerekir.

PKK tüm Kürtleri temsil etmiyor, zaten AKP ye oy veren Kürtler oran olarak daha fazla. BDP ile AKP karşılaştı, AKP’ninki daha fazla. Sadece Hakkâri ve Şırnak’la sınırlamamak lazım ki orada da yine de birinci parti AKP değilse de ikincidir AKP. Her iki Kürtün de Kürtlerin geleceğine dair farklı talepleri olabilir. Radikal çözümleri yok. Ki sol grupların bazen PKK’dan daha fazla radikal istekleri

²⁷⁴ (Eser, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²⁷⁵ (Eser, Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²⁷⁶ (Eser, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²⁷⁷ (Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²⁷⁸ (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²⁷⁹ (Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

çözümleri olabiliyor. HÜDAPAR mesela. Ama PKK silahlı güç olduğu için insanlar PKK'nin daha büyük şeyler istediğini düşünebiliyor, ama işin özünde onlar daha fazla şey istiyor.^{280 281}

Bir taraf Kürtlerin hepsini temsil etmiyor. PKK da Kürtleri, onların bütün isteklerini talep etmiyor. HDP de hepsini talep etmiyor. Talabani tarafı da temsil etmiyor. Tüm siyasi Kürt grupların sivil toplum örgütleriyle beraber concensusa, fikir birliğine ulaşması gerekiyor. Uluslararası Kürt kongresinin oluşması bekleniyor birkaç yıldır, hala toplanamadı. Temel sıkıntı da her bir grup diğerine kendi fikirlerini dayatıyor. Zaten bundan dolayı bir araya gelemiyorlar. Bir araya gelip ortak bir çözüme varmaları lazım. Dört parçanın birleştiği bir Kürdistan mı, yoksa başka ne olacak?^{282 283}

Bugün diyelim ki HDP ile PKK'nın Kürt sorunu ile ilgili bir bakış açısı var. Bunlarla bizim örtüştüğümüz noktalar da var ama farklılaştığımız noktalar da var. Aynı şekilde bunların dışında bugün faydalı düşünceleri olan şahıslar, dernekler de var. Biz bu seslerin duyulması gerektiğini, bunu söylerken bunu masanın bir tarafında oturan devlete ve diğer tarafında oturan PKK veyahut HDP'ye de söylüyoruz.^{284 285}

As can be seen, by not oppressing anyone or any group, through peaceful methods the Nûbihar Circle aims to include all Kurds in the resolution process. Denise,²⁸⁶ as a person who can evaluate the Nûbihar objectively from outside the Circle, also accepts

²⁸⁰ (translation) "in the resolution process, the PKK cannot be ignored, since they are the strongest, the most challenging, the most arbiter, and the most dynamic power in the Kurdish region against the state; nevertheless, the PKK does not consist of and represent all Kurds. Besides, people voting for the AKP comprise more than the number of people voting for the HDP. Both these groups may have different solutions to the Kurdish Question. Also, sometimes leftist groups may have more radical solutions to the Kurdish Question than the PKK, such as the HÜDAPAR. The Kurds have various groups, such as religious people who are not on the same wavelength as the PKK, liberal and democratic people from right-wing parties, or Kurdish non-governmental organizations. Hence, the Kurds cannot be represented solely by the PKK in the resolution process. Together with the PKK, all Kurdish groups, communities, factions, scholars, and non-governmental organizations should be included in the resolution process, and they should have the right to speak their thoughts and offer solutions to the Kurdish Question. By any means necessary, these solutions should be strongly put forward by "wise men" who are no respecters of other persons, in order to give everyone the right to speak. It is really important that everyone should be represented in the resolution process, and should have a right to speak and to do something."

²⁸¹ (Çevik, Personal Interview, February 10, 2015)

²⁸² (translation) "No single side represents all the Kurds. Neither the PKK nor the HDP nor the Talabani side makes up all the Kurds' demands. All political Kurdish groups should achieve a consensus together with Kurdish non-governmental organizations. We have been waiting for the creation of an international Kurdish Congress for a few years, but the groups have not been able to come together. The main problem in this situation is that every group tries to impose its own ideas on others. All have to achieve a common solution, by taking the Kurds' minimum benefits into consideration. Will the solution be a state that includes Kurdish regions in Syria, Turkey, Iran, and Iraq, or something else? We will see."

²⁸³ (Kanca, Personal Interview, March 11, 2017)

²⁸⁴ (translation) "Today, the HDP and the PKK have ideas relating to the Kurdish Question that also overlap with those of the Nûbihar Circle, but sometimes oppose them. Nevertheless, out of these ideas have come many people and associations with beneficial thoughts. The Nûbihar Circle supports the fact that the ideas of such people and associations should also be listened to and expressed."

²⁸⁵ (Ümit, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²⁸⁶ (Personal Interview; March 4, 2017)

that the Nûbihar Circle's goal includes all Kurds' demands in the resolution process. Denise emphasized that "although the Nûbihar Circle hates Hizbullah or HÜDA PAR, the Nûbihar Circle also supports their inclusion in the representation process."²⁸⁷ Denise also explained the idea that the Nûbihar Circle is about the representation of Kurds in the resolution process, as the following reveals: "All Kurdish groups, such as the HDP, PKK, HÜDA PAR, and Azadi Foundation, and even the village guards and groups supporting the AKP, should be included in the resolution process, so that no Kurds will be able to say that that 'this was not my solution'."²⁸⁸

5.2.5. Description of Nationalism

The influence of Said Nursi is seen most clearly when the description of nationalism made by the Nûbihar Circle is researched. Just like Said Nursi, the Nûbihar Circle also divides nationalism into two, negative and positive/affirmative, and supports the second. This can be understood from statements made by Eser:²⁸⁹

Üstad'ın müspet milliyetçilik ve menfi milliyetçilik diye ele aldığı müspet milliyette kavmini sevmek, hayırda ve iyilikte güzellikte dayanışma içinde olması gerektiğini; menfi milliyetçiliğin de toplumun ve özellikle İslam'a çok büyük zararlar verdiği ile ilgili yüzlerce yazıları var. Nûbihar Çevresi biraz bunu da ele alıyor. Üstad Said Nursi'nin bu fikrini önemsiyor... Temel insani olmayan bir şeyi, dayatmayı kabul etmiyor Nûbihar. Silahlı örgütlerin bir yapısıdır, silah zoruyla insanları değişime zorlamak. Nûbihar bu tarz bir şeyi kabul etmiyor. Ama bunu kendi içsel dinamikleri ile yapıyor, birilerinin zorlamasıyla değil. Müspet hareketle yapıyor, Said Nursi'nin methodu gibi. Barışı, Müslüman halkların kardeşliğini kim savunursa onun yanında olur Nûbihar.^{290 291}

While giving information about this positive/affirmative nationalism made by Said Nursi, it is worth going into detail on Said Nursi's two categories. Negative nationalism is based on the denial of other races in favor of the supremacy of a single race (Yılmayan, 2011, p. 40; Şeyhazade, 2003, p. 336). Said Nursi perceives the

²⁸⁷ (Denise, Personal Interview; March 4, 2017)

²⁸⁸ (Denise, Personal Interview; March 4, 2017)

²⁸⁹ (Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

²⁹⁰ (translation) "Dividing nationalism into negative and positive, Said Nursi writes that, in accordance with positive nationalism, one should love one's own nation and should be in solidarity with each other in charity and favor. He also writes that negative nationalism harms society and Islam. The Nûbihar Circle cares about this, and takes this statement of Said Nursi into consideration... In line with positive nationalism, the Nûbihar Circle never accepts the imposition of nationalism, and never forces people to do anything through (armed) force, just as Said Nursi suggests."

²⁹¹ (Eser, Personal Interview, March 22, 2017)

assimilation of other nations under one ethnic identity as “racism,” since the religion of Islam decrees that neither can one’s guilt be generalized to other people, nor can an innocent person be killed to atone for one-hundred guilty men (Zinar, 2011, p. 160). On the other hand, the positive nationalism proposed by Said Nursi is not based on the denial of other races or the supremacy of one race; on the contrary, this nationalism adopts equality and freedom on the basis that all nations should be free to live according to their own culture, as foreseen by Islam (Zinar, 2011). “Said Nursi positively responds to the idea of nationalism, which means the politicization of ethnic groups, whereas he denies assimilationist nationalism. Namely, Said Nursi is against the suppression of non-sovereign ethnic groups and identities by sovereign ethnic identity.” (Zinar, 2011, p. 165)

The awakening of the nationalist idea is either affirmative, coming to life through mercy, and results in conversation and cooperation, or it emerges through racism, and becomes the cause of denial and obstinacy. Thus Islam opposes the second one, whereas affirmative nationalism mediates Islamic brotherhood. (Şeyhanzade, 2003, pp. 322-323)

As explained by Zinar, the positive type of nationalism, according to Said Nursi, includes the harmonious relationship between Islamic and national identities, since the Islamic identities owned by Muslim societies cannot be founded on the intention to assimilate national identities in positive nationalism. In this form of nationalism, Islam can neither be consolidated with nationalism, nor can nationalism be imposed through Islam, according to Said Nursi, since “nationalism does not have an eye on religion, accept the teaching of religion, or be connected with religion, and it does not believe assimilation of other nations to be beneficial” (İçtimai dersler, p. 556; Zinar, 2011, p. 165).

On that point, the Nûbihar Circle’s understanding of nationalism should be evaluated. According to Tunç (1993, July, p. 68), nation means religion and Sharia. So, “nation” has a broader meaning than ummah, community. “Every Muslim is a citizen of the Islamic nation” (Tunç, 1993, July, p. 68). However, “when s/he obeys an imam/preacher, then s/he becomes one of this imam’s ummah, but s/he continues to be citizen of the Islamic nation.” (Tunç, 1993, July, p. 68). In this sense, according

to Tunç, “there is no Turkish nation, Arabic nation, or Kurdish nation, but a Turkish ummah, Arabic ummah, and Kurdish ummah.” (Tunç, 1993, July, p. 68). “Ummah means community, which is based on the same root and shares the same religious values. Furthermore, ummah overlaps with the concept of “nation” mentioned in the Quran” (Tunç, 1993, July, p. 68). On the other hand, Tunç (1993, July, p. 68) accepts that “nationalism by its nature does not include a universal message.” Hence, he is aware of the fact that “it is impossible to extirpate the relation of people with institutions such as family, society, tribe, nation, and state, since people naturally love first their own self, then their family, their relatives, their tribe and nation, and ultimately all people” (Tunç, 1993, July, p. 69). Therefore, in the imagined state of the Nûbihar Circle, *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye*, all nations will protect their ethnic and local culture and traditions. They can also continue their existence as separate states in a United Islamic Republics:

Islamic communities (tribes, races, nations, and so on) from various ethnic roots form the wealth of an Islamic community by protecting their ethnic and local culture and traditions. On the path to Islamic unity, communities can structure themselves as separate states in order to complete this natural process. After completing this process, unification will get easier in the framework of the ummah law. The ummah community will gather societies, nations, and tribes from different cultures, traditions, languages, and religions in the Middle East under the single roof of the multi-cultural, multi-linguistic, and multi-religious state. “Another national characteristic of Islam is its openness to languages, tradition, culture, and folks.” This does not mean Muslim nations’ denial of their national identities; on the contrary, this means to accept that other national identities will be able to create rich and legal traditions in Islam. (Tunç, 1993, July, p. 69)

Evaluating all the aforementioned information relating to the Nûbihar Circle, all these things, including the Nûbihar Circle’s solution to the Kurdish Question and its methods, can be perceived as an application of positive nationalism suggested by Said Nursi. Even though the Nûbihar Circle tries to secure the deprived rights of Kurds from the Turkish state, along with achieving their solution for independence, it never supports the denial of other races or the supremacy of any race, or the suppression of non-sovereign ethnic groups and identities by a sovereign ethnic identity. On the contrary, the Circle, as positive nationalism suggests, adopts equality and freedom based on the idea that all nations should be free to live according to their own culture,

as foreseen by Islam. However, although the Kurds' country will be an independent state belonging to them, a nationalist state, it will be governed according to Islamic values, as in the example of the Era of Bliss; hence, all nations will have equal rights in everything. That is to say, it will be as Said Nursi suggests: positive nationalism. According to Said Nursi, in positive nationalism, Islam should neither be commensurate with nationalism, nor should nationalism be imposed through Islam. An appropriate concept of nationalism, for Said Nursi, does not have an eye on religion, accept the teaching of religion, or be connected with religion, and does not assimilate other nations for its benefit. As a result, in this positive nationalism, there is a harmonious relationship between the Islamic and national identities of the Nûbihar Circle. The Nûbihar Circle associates Islam with Kurdish nationalism, and justifies the Circle's relation to Kurdish nationalism together with Islam. In this sense, the Islamic and Kurdish identities of the Nûbihar Circle are unified, idiosyncratic, and territorial understanding.

5.3. Conclusion

In this chapter, the Kurdish Question perspective of the Nûbihar Circle was examined through the following points: 1-the importance of Said Nursi's Kurdish and Islamic identity to the Nûbihar Circle; 2-Said Nursi's views, ethnicity's influence, and Islam's impact on the Nûbihar Circle's thoughts about the Kurdish Question; 2.a) the definition/description of the Kurdish Question; 2.b) the Circle's proposed solution to the Kurdish Question; 2.c) the Nûbihar Circle's imagined state's regime type; 2.d) the Nûbihar Circle's opinion about the political representation of the Kurds during the resolution process, including the legitimacy of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), the HDP (the Peoples' Democratic Party) & others; and 2.e) the Circle's description of nationalism. The Nûbihar Circle's sources showed that the Circle always protected its Kurdish identity along with its Islamic identity replying the questions. Its request to secure their rights legally is to be allowed to use Kurdish in the public sphere, and to have educational institutions in which Kurdish would be one of the teaching languages. Another demand is to get independence to and to reveal the Kurdish ethnic identity of the Nûbihar Circle. On the other hand, the Circle's demand for autonomy, federation, or independence based on territory showed the impact of

Kurdish nationalism in the Circle. At the same time, the Circle is not prepared to put aside its Islamic identity, since its request is an education system in which Islamic and positive sciences will be taught, and demands an independent state under the United Islamic Republics, *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye*, which is governed according to Islamic rules.

In addition, the Nûbihar Circle's ethnic identity has an impact on its understanding of everything, including Islam and Islamic scholars. Said Nursi is an important figure to the Nûbihar Circle, since, according to its members, Said Nursi was a person who suggested solutions to Kurds' problems and to the Kurds who dedicated his whole life to finding these solutions as well as to those who seek solutions in line with their Islamic identity. Therefore, the Nûbihar Circle embraces all of Said Nursi's words as offering solutions to their problems, and pays sincere attention to him and his works, follows his example, and tries to apply his ideas. Because Said Nursi described the Kurdish Question as a problem resulting from the deficiency of national solidarity and consciousness among the Kurds and failings which could be solved through education, Said Nursi's *Medresatüzzehra* model, the Nûbihar Circle aims to establish such schools. Moreover, the Nûbihar Circle can think that Said Nursi planned to give the administration of *Medresatüzzehra* University to the Kurds, even though Said Nursi did not openly state so. Also, since Said Nursi imagined a con-federal Islamic world, *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye*, in which all nations would have the same rights in the Middle East or in the Islamic world, and would be ruled by Islamic values. The Nûbihar Circle also demands the same type of state model. In addition, the Nûbihar Circle also supports *müspet* (positive/affirmative) nationality, as Said Nursi suggested. That is to say, the Nûbihar Circle evaluates every subject, particularly related to the Kurds, through the influence of their Islamic religious and Kurdish ethnic identities. Hence, it can be claimed as the main hypothesis of this study, investigating the compability of nationalism and Islam among the Nûbihar Circle. The Circle associates Islam with its Kurdish identity, or justifies its relation to Kurdish nationalism together with Islam. The Circle Nûbihar Circle defines the Kurdish question from an ethnic perspective. This allows group justifying its nationalist approach of the Kurdish issue through the religion [Islam] and makes Islamic and

Kurdish identities of the Nûbihar Circle gathered, idiosyncratic, and harmonious. Saidi Nursi's ethnic (Kurdish) and Islamic identities and *müspet* (positive/affirmative) nationalism understanding make a significant influence in determination of the Nûbihar Circle's perspectives on the Kurdish question. These identities provide the group an ethnic and Islamic centric standpoints in their defining of the Kurdish Question and its solution.



CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This thesis pursued the question “What is the perspective of the Nûbihar Circle about Turkey’s Kurdish Question” with an aim of examining the impact of ethnicity and nationalism on the ways in which an ethnic question is addressed by one of the Kurdish Islamic Communities. While investigating the relation between nationalism and Islam, whether ethnicity impacted the Circle’s interpretation and perception of Islam or vice versa, –just for the Kurdish Question- among this Islamic Community was also questioned in this thesis. In order to answer my main research question of the Nûbihar Circle’s perspective on the Kurdish Question, some sub-questions were posed: 1-How does the Nûbihar Circle define nationalism and the Kurdish Question? 2-What are the Nûbihar Circle’s solutions to the Kurdish Question? 3-How does the Nûbihar Circle perceive the Kurds’ demand for independence in Turkey? 4-What type of a regime the Nûbihar Circle will establish if it achieves an independent Kurdish State? 5-Who should represent the Kurds throughout the resolution process: the PKK, the HDP or others? 6-What has been the Said Nursi’s impact on the Circle’s thoughts about the Kurdish Question? 7-What has been the impact of the Kurdish and Muslim identity of Said Nursi on this? Is there an emphasis on his Kurdish identity?

This thesis consists of six chapters. Before starting to investigate the impact of ethnicity on Islamic communities’ approach to the Kurdish Question, the first chapter explained the main problem and the structure of my work. The second chapter stated the main argument of my work and the methodology used in the thesis. In the third chapter, information for proposing a compact examination of the Islamic movements in Turkey, the Nûbihar Circle, and the Kurdish Question in Turkey was given. Examination of the relationship between nationalism and religion began in the fourth chapter in the literature review, one studying the relationship between religion and nationalism and one between Islam and nationalism. The fifth chapter was the main chapter. This chapter addressed the relationship between nationalism and Islam among the Nûbihar Circle through the analysis of the works by and on the Nûbihar

Circle. The interviews were also conducted with the members of the Circle. Chapter five aimed to find the answer to the question whether ethnicity and nationalism have impacts the Islamic communities' interpretation of Islam's approach to the ethnic question, in particular to the Kurdish Question.

Analyzing the compatibility of nationalism and Islam among the Nûbihar Circle, this study refers to use qualitative content analysis and elite interview methods, and benefited from the following sources: 1) the publications of the Nûbihar Circle in Turkish; 2) the works produced by the prominent members of the Nûbihar Circle; 3) the works on the Nûbihar Circle itself; and 4) the interviews conducted with the ten prominent members of the Circle. The main hypothesis of this study, investigating the relationship between nationalism and Islam among the Nûbihar Circle with the question, whether ethnicity and nationalism have impacts on religious perspective on the Kurdish Question, advocated that the Nûbihar Circle associates Islam with its Kurdish identity, or justifies its relation to Kurdish nationalism together with Islam. Then, the Islamic and Kurdish identities of the Nûbihar Circle show a unified, idiosyncratic, and harmonious understanding. According to the Nûbihar Circle's sources, the Circle always protected and kept its Kurdish identity along with its Islamic identity in replying to the questions. The Kurdish identity of the Nûbihar Circle revealed itself in its demands to secure Kurdish rights legally, to be allowed to use Kurdish in the public sphere, and to have educational institutions in which Kurdish would be one of the teaching languages, in order to get independence for the Kurds. Nevertheless, the Circle does not put aside its Islamic identity in its demands since it asks for an education system in which Islamic and positive sciences will be taught, and demands an independent state under the United Islamic Republics, *Cemahiri Müttefika-i İslamiye*, which is governed according to Islamic rules. Moreover, the Nûbihar Circle's ethnic identity has an influence on its understanding of Islam and Islamic scholars such as Said Nursi. Said Nursi is defined by the Nûbihar Circle as an important figure, who suggested solutions to Kurds' problems and to the Kurds who dedicated his whole life to finding these solutions, as well as to those who seek the solutions in line with their Islamic identity. Thus, all of Said Nursi's words are embraced and interrelated by the Nûbihar Circle as solutions to their problems. The

Nûbihar Circle pays sincere attention to him and his works, follows his example, and tries to apply his ideas. As Said Nursi suggested, the Nûbihar Circle tries to solve the Kurdish Question through supplying national solidarity and consciousness among the Kurds, and through establishing schools like Said Nursi's *Medresatüzzehra* model.

On the other hand, while the Nûbihar Circle makes an effort for Kurds and their rights, this situation should not be perceived as Kurdish nationalism that discriminates other races or nations. Since the Nûbihar Circle supports positive nationalism, the Nûbihar Circle is against a racist, negative type of nationalism that suppressed other nations for the sake of the supremacy of one sovereign nation. In this positive nationalism, all nations would have equal rights and no one would suppress any other. In addition, in the Circle's imagined state model, *Cemahiri Müttetika-i İslamiye* or United Islamic Republics, all nations would exist and would not be assimilated. That is to say, the Nûbihar Circle promoted the idea that nations secure and protect their national consciousness and national solidarity. The Circle planned an educational system that would give people to protect their own national consciousness. As a result, it can be asserted that, the Nûbihar Circle never segregates nations through racist thoughts and politics, although it makes an effort to protect its Kurdish and Islamic identities. On the contrary, the Nûbihar Circle adopts a harmless nationalist ideology, positive nationalism, which enables Kurds to have an independent state without harming others, but keeping their Kurdish culture, history, literature, and language, as well as their Islamic sides, alive. That is to say, the Nûbihar Circle demands and supports a nationalist idea that includes an inward Islamic side and Islam-enabling Kurdish side. To put it differently, the Nûbihar Circle associates Islam with its Kurdish identity, or justifies a relation between Kurdish nationalism and Islam. There is a harmonious relationship between nationalism and Islam among the Nûbihar Circle. That is to say, the Islamic and Kurdish identities of the Nûbihar Circle form a unified, idiosyncratic, and harmonious understanding.

Evaluating this relationship between nationalism and Islam among the Nûbihar Circle mentioned above, an appropriate approach of Brubaker to study the relationship between nationalism and Islam among the Nûbihar Circle can be decided. As can be

remembered (in chapter 4), Brubaker offers four approaches to study the relationship between nationalism and religion. The first approach perceives religion and nationalism together with ethnicity and race and approaches them “as analogous phenomena”. The second approach, on the other hand, designates religion to help clarify things about nationalism, such as “its origin, its power, or its distinctive character in particular cases”. Brubaker’s third approach treats religion as part of nationalism, and identifies the ways in which they interpenetrate and intertwine. Different than others, Brubaker’s fourth approach considers religious nationalism as a distinctive kind of nationalism, which presents an explicit alternative to secular nationalism. In this approach, nationalism does not have to have a primary role for the nation, such as in the case of Islamism. It may focus on the content of the distinctively religious nationalist programs regulating public and private life. It, as well, addresses the religious inflection of political rhetoric or the religious identities of involvement of the Circle in political contestation. Therefore, this fourth approach of Brubaker is accepted as the most appropriate approach while investigating the relationship between nationalism and Islam among the Nûbihar Circle. Among the Nûbihar Circle, nationalism is neither analogous phenomenon nor cause and effect of religion and neither is it intertwined with religion too. On the contrary, there is a harmonious relationship between nationalism and Islam among the Nûbihar Circle, namely the Islamic and Kurdish identities of the Nûbihar Circle form a unified, idiosyncratic, and harmonious understanding, which cannot be separated from each other. In this sense, this thesis can be accepted as an application of Brubaker’s fourth approaches perceiving religious nationalism as a distinctive kind of nationalism.

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APPENDICES

A. Short Biography of Said Nursi

Said Nursi is a Kurdish Shafii Muslim theologian. He wrote a Qur'anic commentary, the *Risale-i Nur* Collection. Nursi inspired a religious movement and his followers are often known as *the "Nurcu movement" or the "Nur cemaati"*. Said Nursi was born in the first half of 1870s, according to *Tarihçe-i Hayat*, in 1877, as the fourth child of a family of seven children in *Nurs* village of Hizan district of Bitlis (Tarihçe-i Hayat, 2006, p.959; Canlı & Beysülen, 2010, p. 45). The level of knowledge that Said Nursi had attained at a young age, which had proven to be the most effective by the famous scholars in the East, has all amazed. The scholars of the time gave him the title of honorific *Bediuzzaman* because of his difference; such as that he could understand the most difficult subjects immediately and could memorize the books once he read and even reviewed (Weld, 2006, p. 28). After Şirvan, Siirt, Bitlis, and Tillo, Said Nursi went to Mardin in 1894 and started to teach at Şehide Mosque. For the first time in his life, Nursi had heard the conceptions of *hürriyet* (freedom), *meşrutiyet* (constitutional monarchy) and learnt about political struggles that started in İstanbul in relation with these concepts. According to Canlı and Beysülen, in Van, Said Nursi for the first time in his life had explored existence of a world out of Kurdistan (Canlı & Beysülen, 2010, p. 84). After that, Said Nursi started to be interested in politics in Mardin, took place in many social activities. Nevertheless since Nursi generated discussion in the communities he participated, Said Nursi was taken out of Mardin's borders as a precaution by the tenant of Mardin (Weld, 2006, p. 41; Nursi, 1997, p. 31). In Bitlis, Said Nursi's scientific knowledge and different personality attracted the attention of the Governor of Bitlis, Omer Pasha, and Omer Paşa gave Said Nursi a room to stay and to continue his work. During the two years he spent his life in the province of Bitlis, Said Nursi became acquainted with science as well as religion. Then, Said Nursi went to Van where he had lived for twelve years. In Van, Said Nursi made great use of newspapers and magazines from the governor's, Tahir Pasha's, library [Tahir Pasha was known with his characteristics to pay attention to science and

scholars, and he had a very huge library (Canlı & Beysülen, 2010, p. 94)]. While reading books written in history, geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy and philosophy; Said Nursi also began to follow the developments that were closely related to the Islamic world and the Ottoman Empire. It seems that in Van Said Nursi focused on the causes of the Islamic world's backwardness and how to solve these problems, which, according to him, were caused by ignorance and conflict, and could be solved through education (Canlı & Beysülen, 2010, p. 100). In this sense, he took the first step again in Van, by setting up a madrassa which education method was prepared by himself. He even brought Oriental intelligence and intelligent talents to Van for a while. He started to give science and religious sciences together by ensuring that all the needs were met by the administrations of a foundation. In this training lasting for six-seven months, Said Nursi gave the lessons himself (Weld, 2006, p. 49). However, Said Nursi's main objective was to establish a university in Eastern Anatolia where the same method would be applied. In this university, named as "Medresetu'z-Zehra" by himself, religious and positive sciences would be taught together, and ethnic languages would be allowed (Abu-Rabi, 2003). Through Medresetu'z-Zehra project, Said Nursi not only aimed to fight against ignorance and backwardness in Van, Bitlis, and Diyarbakir, but he also believed that this project would be a solution for probable political and social problems (Tarihçe-i Hayat, 2006, p. 67). Said Nursi memorized fifty books in Van in addition to the forty books he memorized while in Bitlis. Said Nursi also learnt the Ottoman Turkish language in Van. In Van, Said Nursi was known with his title "*Molla Said-i Meşhur* (Famous Mullah Said)".

In order to realize his Medresetüzzehra project [Canlı and Beysülen shows Said Nursi's illness as a cause to go to Istanbul (Canlı & Beysülen, 2010, p. 104)], Said Nursi, in his thirties, went to Istanbul in November 1907 to be able to get the assistance of the official authorities. In May 1908, Said Nursi submitted his petition mentioning about his ideas on educational reforms to the Padishah Abdulhamit II. Said Nursi's reckless and courageous speeches that went so far as to criticize the current educational policies attracted attention of the governors, and hence, Said Nursi was kept under a strict supervision. With the claim that "a man who responds to every

question and brings such criticism to the Palace can be mad at all," Said Nursi was sent to the mental hospital (Weld, 2006, p. 70). Once the doctor rejected Said Nursi's mental disease, the governors immediately transferred Said Nursi to a prison as a way to remove him from Istanbul. However, Said Nursi did not stay in his first prison and was freed within the context of the political amnesty announced after the adoption of *Meşrutiyet* (Constitutional Monarchy). Then, he adopted himself to the propoganda of *Meşrutiyet*. He wrote in newspapers and journals such as *Şura-yı Ümmet* Newspaper, *Şark ve Kürdistan* Newspaper, *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki* Newspaper, and *Volkan* Journal about *Meşrutiyet*, the current situation of Islam and of the Kurds and Kurdistan, and necessity of a national unity, while addressing to the thousands of people in rally squares and conference rooms (İçtimai Dersler, 2013, pp. 505-582).

One of the group that was disturbed by *Meşrutiyet* was ulema and students, who claimed that the constitutional system and liberty were in contrast with religion (Nursi, 2012, p.339). Recognizing this, Said Nursi tried to reveal whether the constitutional legitimacy was not contrary to Islam by giving examples from the history of Islam and based on the classical sources of four right sects. While doing this, on the one hand, he sent letters to the journalists and to the magazines, and on the other hand, and made speeches at the places where the members of the madrasa were gathered. Said Nursi also informed influential figures and tribal chiefs in the east about *Meşrutiyet*, and stated that it would not cause any harm to religion, on the contrary would benefit and develop the religion. At that times, Said Nursi also participated in İttihadı Muhammedi Community as not official member of the community, but he wrote in this community's newspapers (Canlı & Beysülen, 2010, p. 132). Said Nursi was imprisoned due to the 31 March incident, but then he was released by being found innocent in May 23, 1909. Said Nursi went to Batum via the Black Sea and then to Van. Returning to Van, Said Nursi visited tribes immediately to explain the beauty of *Meşrutiyet* which was misunderstood by the tribes. During this trip, Nursi responded to the questions of the people about *Meşrutiyet* and then published these questions and answers under the name *Münazarat*.

In 1910, Said Nursi traveled to the South; to Hakkari, Bitlis, Mus, Urfa, Kilis, Diyarbakir, and then to Damascus. His aim to visit to Damascus was to go to Egypt in order to examine the education system of Al Azher University. However, the existence of a large number of Ezher graduates in Damascus to provide information about the Azher University, and the emergency to turn back to Istanbul as soon as possible prevented them from going to Egypt (Weld, 2006, p. 129). The aim of Nursi to go to Istanbul for the second time was the same again: The Medresetüzzehra Project. This time, Said Nursi would ask Sultan Reşad and the Committee of Union and Progress for the project and their supports. Participating in the reign of Sultan Resad as the representative of the Eastern provinces, Said Nursi travelled to Rumelia on June 1911 (Balci, 2003, p. 118), and could mention about his Medresetüzzehra project to Sultan Resad and to the officials of the Committee of Union and Progress. Nevertheless, Balkan Wars blocked their assistants to the project.

Said Nursi joint in Erzurum front of the army as voluntary preacher of a regiment and then as official commander of paramilitary groups in the First World War, and two years after on March 1916, he had been enslaved in Bitlis by Russians for two and half years (Weld, 2006, p. 151). Then, he escaped, and on June 1918 arrived in Istanbul. Upon invitation of Ankara government, Said Nursi went to Ankara in 1922 in order to do something for Medresetüzzehra project, but his offer was rejected in November 29, 1924. When Said Nursi decided to go to Van in April 17, 1923, he also determined to change his method [to use politics as a means for Islam] and started his new period, *Yeni Said* (New Said). Said Nursi states this feelings as follows:

Bitlis vilayetine tabi Nurs köyünde doğan ben, talebe hayatımda rastgelen alimlerle mücadele ederek, ilmi munakaşalarla karşıma çıkanları inayet-i ilahiye ile mağlup ede ede İstanbul'a kadar geldim. İstanbul'da bu afetli şöhret içinde mücadele ederek, nihayet rakiplerimin ifsadatiyla, merhum Sultan Hamid'in emriyle tımarhaneye kadar sürüklendim. Hiirriyet ilanı ve 31 Mart Vak'asındaki hizmetlerimle Ittihad ve Terakki hükümetinin nazar-i dikkatini celb ettim. Camiu'l-Ezher gibi, 'Medresetü'z-Zehra' namında bir İslam üniversitesinin Van'da açılması teklifiyle karşılaştım. Hatta temelini attım. Birinci Harbin patlamasıyla talebelerimi başıma toplayarak gönüllü alay kumandanı olarak harbe iştirak ettim. Kafkas cephesinde, Bitlis'te esir düştüm. Esareten kurtularak İstanbul'a geldim. Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-İslamiyeye aza oldum. Miitareke zamanında istila kuvvetlerine karşı bütün mevcudiyetimle İstanbul'da

çalıştım. Milli hükümetin galibiyeti üzerine, yaptığım hizmetler Ankara hükümetince takdir edilerek Van'da üniversite açılmak teklifi tekrarlandı. Buraya kadar geçen hayatım bir vatanperverlik hali idi. Siyaset yoluyla dine hizmet hissini taşıyordum. Fakat bu andan itibaren dünyadan tamamen yüz çevirdim ve kendi ıstılahıma göre 'Eski Said'i gomodüm. Büsbütün ahiret ehli 'Yeni Said' olarak dünyadan elimi çektim. Tam bir inziva ile bir zanian İstanbul'un Yuşa Tepesine çekildim. Daha sonra doğduğum yer olan Bitlis ve Van tarafına giderek mağaralara kapandım. (Nursi, 2004, pp. 615-616)

Although Said did not participate in Seyh Said Rebellion, he was accused of participating in the rebellion and imprisoned in İstanbul. Then, his imprisonment continued due to various reasons (from all Said Nursi was found innocent and released) respectively in Burdur (1926), Eskişehir (1935), Kastamonu (1936), Isparta (1943), Denizli (1943), and Afyon (1948). In March 19, 1960, Said Nursi went to Urfa and stayed in İpek Palas Hotel. In March 23, 1960, Said Nursi died.

The Map below (Starred Places) showing where Said Nursi had been:



In chronological order: Bitlis, Ağrı, Siirt, Tillo, Mardin, Van, İstanbul, Hakkari, Muş, Urfa, Kilis, Diyarbakır, Şam, Beyrut, Erzurum, Tiflis, Rusya, Leningrad, Germany, Petersburg, Warsaw, Vienna, Sofia, Ankara, Trabzon, Burdur, İzmir, Antalya, Isparta, Eskişehir, Kastamonu, Denizli, Afyon.



B. Falsifications on Kurdish Identity of Bediuzzaman: Ekrem Malbat's Perspective

Her asırda fikirleri eylemleri ve eserleri ile hem kendi zamanlarına hem de kendinden sonraki zamanlarda kendinden bahsettirecek, tutumları ve ile birçok insana cesaret verecek, eserleri ile sayısız insanlara yol gösterecek insanlar olmuştur. Son yüzyılda Bediüzzaman Said Nursi de şüphesiz bunlardan biridir.

Eserleri ve mücadelesi ile ilim ve siyaset dünyasına önemli katkılarda bulunmuş olan Said Nursi'nin bütün bir hayatı özenle üzerinde durulması gerekir. Said Nursi, cesaret ve mücadelesi ile kendi zamanına; fikir ve feraseti ile kendinden sonraki zamanlarda da kendisinden çokça bahsettirmiş ve ettirmeye de devam edecek. Çok zor şartlarda yazmış olduğu Risale-i Nur tefsiri ile İslami ilimler alanına büyük katkıda bulunmuş, aynı zamanda Nurculuk adından büyük bir dini hareketi de başlatmıştır. Gönül isterdi ki Bediüzzaman hakkın da yazılıp çizilenler onun mücadelesi ve ilmi kişiliği olsun. Ne yazık ki durum böyle değil. Eserleri bu gün ellinin üzerinde dünya diline çevrilen Bediüzzaman, aynı zamanda kendi etnik kimliğini özenle sahiplenen bir Kürt olması, kendisinden sonra, etnik kimliği ve bu noktadaki görüşleri hakkında sayısız spekülasyonlar yapılmıştır. Bediüzzaman'ı Kürt kimliğinden soyutlamak için bu güne kadar kaynağı meçhul bir sürü rivayet uydurulmuş. Kimileri daha da ileri giderek bu mevzuda Bediüzzaman'ın eserlerinde geçen bölümler ya tamamen çıkarılmış ya da değiştirilmiştir. Bundan daha acı olan ise bunlar çoğunlukla Said Nursi'nin kendi takipçileri tarafından yapılmış olması.

Bu zihniyette olanlar genel anlamda Eski Said'î (SeîdêKurdî) kürtlükle sabıkalı görüyordu. Onlar için Bediüzzaman'ın Kürt olması, hele Kürtler için Padişaha muhalefet etmesi, kabul edilir bir şey değildi. Bu yüzden Said-i Kürdî'yi bu Kürt mazisinden kurtarmak için gerekirse Türk yapılacaktı. Bu tutmazsa seyitlik üzerinden Araplaştırılacaktı. Buda tutmazsa en fazla, siyasetten ve kürtlükten bihaber bir dağ Kürdü olmalıydı. Bu yazımızda Bediüzzaman Seîdê Kurdî'nin "Eski Said" hayatından ve kendi ifadelerinden yararlanarak bu noktayı aydınlatmaya çalışacağız.

Seîdê Kurdî ve Kürdistan

1878’de Bitlis’in Hizan ilçesinin Nurs köyünde dünyaya gelen Said Nursi, çok kısıda olsa ilk eğitimini ağabeyi Molla Abdullah’ın yanında alır. Sırasıyla o dönem Kürdistan’ın ilim merkezleri olan Norşin (Bitlis), Bazîd (Ağrı) ve Tillo’da (Sürt) eğitimine devam eder. Henüz çok genç olmasına rağmen kısa sürede bölgede namı duyulur. Klasik Kürdistan medreselerinde okunan sıra kitapları normalden çok daha kısa bir sürede bitirir ve Doğubeyazıt’da Molla Muhammed Celali’den ilmi icazetini alır.

Kendisini hiçbir zaman içinde yaşadığı toplumun sorunlarından soyutlamayan SeîdêKurdî, Kürdistanı dolaşırken Kürtlerin içinde bulunduğu perişan durumu görüyor ve buna çareler düşünüyordu. O günler için şu ifadeleri kullanıyor: “Ben Kürdistan’da Kürtlerin halini perişan görüyordum. Anladım ki saadetimiz fununuceddideyi medeniye (pozitif bilimler) okunmasıyla olacaktır”.^[1]

Dönemin Van valisi Tahir Paşa’nın daveti üzerine Van’a geçen Bediüzzaman uzun yıllar Van’da kalır. Bu süre içinde Tahir Paşa’nın pozitif bilimler üzerine yazılmış eserler açısından oldukça zengin kütüphanesinden bir hayli istifade eden SeîdêKurdî fizik, kimya, matematik gibi temel bilimlerde önemli bir seviyeye ulaşır. Hatta cebir ile ilgili birde matematik kitabı yazar. Maalesef bu kitap çıkan bir yangında yok olur.

Bediüzzaman Seîdê Kurdî İstanbul’da

Bediüzzaman, Kürdistan’da iken gördüğü başlıca sorunlardan birisi Kürtler arasındaki klasik medrese usulü ile yapılan eğitimde pozitif bilimlerin eksikliği idi. SeîdêKurdî’ye göre Kürtlerin diğer milletler ile medeniyet yarışına katılabilmeleri için bu eksikliğin giderilebilmesi şarttı. 1908’de Kürt Teavün ve Terakki gazetesinde yayımlanan “Kürtler Neye Muhtaç” adlı makalesinde şunları söylemektedir: “Onbeş senedir ki düşündüğüm ihtiyacat arasında iki noktayı hedef-i maksat etmiştim. Bu ikiden maada Kürdistan’ın istikbalini temin edecek vesaiti görmedim. **Birincisi**, ittihad-ı milli. **İkincisi**, ulûm-u diniye ile beraber, fûnun-u lazîme-i medeniye (pozitif bilimleri) tamim etmektir”.^[2]

Aslında o dönemde Elazığ ve Van gibi yerlerde modern sayılabilecek okullar vardı; fakat bundan Türkçe bilmeyenler istifade edemiyordu. Burada yine Bediüzzaman’ın konu ile ilgili yazdığı bir makaleden öğreniyoruz. “Şu cihan-ı

medeniyette ve Őu asr-ı terakki ve műsabakatta, sair ihvan gibi yekâheng-i terakki olmak iin himmet-i hűkűmetle Kűrdistan'ın kasaba ve kurasında mekâtib tesis ve inŐa buyurulmuŐ olduĐu ayn-ı Őűkranla meŐhud ise de, bundan yalnız lisan-ı Tűrkűye aŐına etfal(ocuklar) istifade ediyor. Lisana aŐına olmayan evlâd-ı ekrad (Kűrt ocukları) yalnız medaris-i ilmiyeyi maden-i kemalât bilmeleri ve mekâtib muallimlerinin lisan-ı mahalliye (Kűrte) âdem-i vukufı(bilmemeleri) cihetiyle maariften mahrum kalmaktadır".[3]

Seidê Kurdî Kűrte eĐitim yapılmamasından kaynaklanan bu problemi ozmek iin İstanbul'a önemli bir proje ile gelir. Adına *Medresetűl ZehradediĐi* bu proje, dini ilimler ile beraber pozitif bilimlerinde okutulduĐu bűyűk bir űniversite projesi. Bu űniversiteyi birok aıdan Kűrdistan'ın merkezi olarak gűrdűĐu Van'da kurmayı öneriyordu. Projesini gerekleŐtirmek iin bűyűk űmitlerle geldiĐi İstanbul'da tam bir hayal kırıklıĐı yaŐayacaktı.

İstanbul'da hemen her fırsatta Kűrtler iin bu projenin zarurietini anlatan Kurdî, bizzat padiŐahla gűrűŐmeye alıŐtı. Ancak, buna műsaade edilmediĐi gibi, fikrinden vaz gemesi iin ikna edilmeye alıŐıldı. Devletin daha űnce sıka yaptıĐı yűntemlerden biri olan, maaŐ ve rűtbe karŐılıĐında taleblerden vazgeirme adeti Seidê Kurdî iinde denenmiŐ fakat Seidê Kurdî kabul etmemiŐtir.

Dűnemin önemli bir Kűrt entelektűeli olan ve durumu yakından takip eden Ahmed Ramiz, Saidê Kurdî'nin İstanbul'a geliŐini ve padiŐah idaresinin kendisine ne gibi muameleler yaptıĐını Őu sűzlerle anlatmaktadır:

1907 senesi zarfında idi ki; Kűrdistan'ın yalın, sarp ve yűksek daĐlarının arkasından ıkmıŐ Said-i Kurdî isminde nevalidir-i hilkatten nadir bir ateŐpâre-i zekânın İstanbul âfakında rűyet edildiĐi haberi etrafa aksetmiŐ ve meraklı olan bazı kimseler o harika-i fitratı ardarda gűrdűke, mader-i hilkatin hazâin-i lâ-tefnasındaki sehaveti bir tűrlű hazmedemeyenleri, Őu Kűrd kıyafetinde, o Őal ve Őalvar altında űyle bir kanun-u dehânın gizlenebileceĐini bir tűrlű anlamayarak, âtil ve műzevir olan ekseriyet-i hasise zelil olan hissiyat-ı umumiyesini bir kelime-i tezyifin mana-yı intikamında telhis etmiŐlerdi: "Mecnűn!.."

Evet, Said-i Kurdî İstanbul'a, Kűrdistan beldelerinin maarifsizlikle űldűrűlmek istenilen kâinat idrakinde yapamadıĐı kâŐanelere bedel Yıldız siyaset selhanelerini zelzelelere vermek azmiyle gelmiŐti. İstanbul'a gelmesiyle beraber Abdűlhamid tarafından da suret-i ciddiye tarassud altına aldırıldı ve bir ka

kere tevkif edildi. Nihayet bir gün geldi ki, Said-i Kürdî'yi Üsküdar'a, Toptaşı'na (akıl hastahanesi) yolladılar. Çünkü hapisanede ikaz edilecek kimseler bulunmak muhtemeldi. Bimarhaneden (akıl hastahanesi) ikide bir çıkarılır, maaş, rütbe tebşir edilir. Hazret-i Said: "Ben Kürdistan'da mektep açtırmak üzere geldim. Başka bir dileğim yoktur. Bunu isterim ve başka bir şey istemem." derdi.[4]

O gün durumu yakından takip ettiği belli olan Ahmed Ramiz'in ifadelerinden anlaşıldığı gibi Bediüzzaman'ın talepleri devlet idaresi tarafından makul karşılanmadığı gibi defalarca tutuklatılmış, bununla da kalınmamış deli denilip akıl hastanesine gönderilmiştir. Tımarhaneden sonra nakledildiği hapisanede iken, padişah tarafından gönderildiği belli olan Zaptiye Nazırı ile aralarında geçen bir diyalogu Bediüzzaman şöyle aktarmaktadır:

Zaptiye nazırı: *Padişah sana selam etmiş, bin kuruş da maaş bağlamış. Sonra yirmi-otuz lira yapacak.*

SeîdêKurdî: *Ben maaş dilencisi değilim, bin lirada olsa kabul etmem. Kendim için gelmedim milletim için geldim. Hem de bu bana vermek istediğiniz **rüşvet** ve **hakk-ı sukuttur** (sus payı).*

Z.N: *İradeyi reddediyorsun. İrade redolunmaz.*

S.K *Reddediyorum ta ki padişah darılsın beni çağırsın ben de doğrusunu söylüyeyim.*

Z.N: *Neticesi vahimdir.*

S.K: *Neticesi deniz olsa benim için geniş bir kabirdir. İdam olunsam bir milletin kalbinde yatacağım... (nazır hiddet etti)*

Ben dedim: Ben hür yaşamışım. Hürriyet-i mutlakanın meydanı olan Kürdistan dağlarında büyümüşüm. Bana hiddet fayda vermez boşuna yorulmayın. [5]

Yıllar sonra Bediüzzaman SeîdêKurdî Kürtlere hitap ettiği bir yazısında o günleri şöyle özetlemektedir: "Ey Kürtler! Aklımı feda ettim, tımarhaneyi kabul ettim ama hürriyetimi terk etmedim Kürtlüğülekedat etmek için iradeyi padişahı ve maaşı kabul etmedim." [6]

Bediüzzaman'ın bütün bu yaptıklarından, Bediüzzaman'ın bu mücadelesinden haberdar olmayan çok kişi var; Bediüzzaman'ın eserlerini okuyanlar da dahil. Bunun sebebi ise bütün bu yukarıda aktarılan malumatın Bediüzzaman'ın eserlerini

basanlarca sansürlenmiş olmasıdır. Şimdi, farklı nur guruplarının bastıkları eserlerde uyguladıkları sansür ve tahrifatları göstermek istiyorum.

Farklı yayınlarda Seîdê Kurdî kimliği üzerinde yapılan Tahrifatlar

Yukarıda da değindiğimiz gibi Bedüzzaman kendi ifadesi ile hayatını iki bölüme ayırıyor. 1925'e kadar olan kısmına "eski Said" diye ifade ederken, sonraki kısma ise yeni "Yeni Said" diyor. Her yönü ile bir hayatı bir bütün olan Said Nursi, fark olarak görebileceğimiz nokta sadece farklı zamanlarda farklı çözüm metodları kullanmasıdır. Bu bağlamda Eski Said döneminde toplumsal sorunların çözümünde daha çok o dönemde daha etkili olduğunu söyleyebileceğimiz siyaseti kullanmış. Bu yüzden kendisini Eski Said döneminde sıkça toplumsal içtimalarda sivil toplum kuruluşlarında ya da yazıları ile gazete köşelerinde görmek mümkün. Bu dönemde yaptıklarından bir kısmını yukarıda paylaştık. Şimdi Said Nursi'nin daha çok bu dönemde söylediklerinin hangi yayınlar tarafından nasıl değiştirildiğini göstereceğiz. Orijinal nüsha olarak Zehra yayınlarını esas alacağımız bu bölümde, önce metnin orijinalini sonrada değiştirilmiş halini vereceğiz.

Örnek:1

1907 senesi zarfında idi ki; **Kürdistan'ın** yalçın, sarp ve yüksek dağlarının arkasından çıkmış **Said-i Kurdî** isminde nevadir-i hilkatten nadir bir ateşpâre-i zekânın... Şu **Kürt kıyafetinde** o şal ve şalvar altında...(Zehra Yayıncılık.istanbul,2013,s.153)

1907 senesi zarfında idi ki; **şarkın** yalçın, sarp ve yüksek dağlarının arkasından çıkmış **Said-i Nursi** isminde nevadir-i hilkatten nadir bir ateşpâre-i zekânın... Şu **şark anadolu kıyafetinde** o şal ve şalvar altında (Envar N.s.13-Sözler N.istanbul,2009,s.6-Yeni Asya N.istanbul,2011,s.5)

Çok fazla yer kaplamaması için bir kısmını aktardığım yazının tamamında geçen "Kürt- "Kürdistan" ifadelerinin hepsi aynı şekilde değiştirilmiş.

Örnek:2

Ey şu şehadetnamemi temaşa eden zevat! Lûtfen, ruh ve hayalinizi misafireten, yeni medeniyete karışmış, asabî bir **Kürd talebesinin** hâl-i ihtilâlde olan ceset ve dimağına gönderiniz, tâ tahtie ile hataya düşmeyesiniz...(Zehra Y. istanbul,2013,s.156)

Ey şu şehadetnamemi temaşa eden zevat! Lûtfen, ruh ve hayalinizi misafireten, yeni medeniyete karışmış, asabî **bedevi bir talebenin** hâl-i ihtilâlde olan ceset ve dimağına gönderiniz, tâ tahtie ile hataya düşmeyesiniz...(Envar N.istanbul,2005,s.s.9) Sözlere N.istanbul,2009,s:10)

Bu örnekte de görüldüğü üzere “Kürt” ifadesi yerine “bedevi” ifadesi kullanılmış

Örnek:3

Geçen sene bidayet-i hürriyette elli-altmış telgraf umum **Kürt** **âşiretlerine** sadaret vasıtasıyla çektim... **Kürtler**itenbih ettim...(Zehra Y.istanbul,2013,s.158)

Geçen sene bidayet-i hürriyette elli-altmış telgraf umum **şark** **âşiretlerine** sadaret vasıtasıyla çektim... **vilayetişarkiyey**itenbih ettim...(Envar N.istanbul,2005,s.13-Sözlere N.istanbul,2009,s.14-Yeni Asya N.istanbul,2009,s.51)

Örnek:4

İstanbul’da yirmi bine yakın **Kürdler**, hammal ve gafil ve safdil olduklarından **zorbacıların** onları aldatmak ile **Kürd** kavmini lekedar etmelerinden korktum. **Kürdlerin** umum yerlerini ve kahvelerini gezdim... Komşularımız ve bizi teyakkuz veterakkiye sevk eden **Ermenilerle** kemal-i memnuniyetle dost olup elele vereceğiz. Zira husumette fenalık var...(Zehra Y.istanbul,2013,s.160)

İstanbul’da yirmi bine yakın **hemşehrilerim**, hammal ve gafil ve safdil olduklarından **particilerin** onları aldatmak ile **vilayet-i şarkiyeyile**lekedar etmelerinden korktum. **Hamalların** umum yerlerini ve kahvelerini gezdim... Ve bizi her cihette teyakkuz veterakkiye sevk eden **hakiki kardeşlerimiz olan Türkler ve komşularımız ile**elele vereceğiz. Zira husumette fenalık var...(Envar N.istanbul, 2005, s.15-Sözlere N.istanbul, 2009, s.16-Yeni Asya N.istanbul, 2011, s.57)

Bu örnekte ise tahrifattan “Kürt” ifadesi ile beraber “ Ermeni” ifadesi de nasibini almış ve yerine “Türkler” yazılmıştır.

Örnek:5

Ben ki sıradan bir **Kürdüm** ulemaya farz olan bir vazifeyi omuzuma aldım...(Zehra Y.istanbul,2013,s.160)

Ben ki sıradan bir **talebeyim** ulemaya farz olan bir vazifeyi omuzuma aldım...(Envar N.istanbul,2005,s.17)-Sözlere N.istanbul,2009,s.17)-Yeni Asya N.istanbul,2009,s.64)

Örnek:6

Bir **Kürd** talebesinin lisanına yakışacak lafızlar ile heyecanı teskin ettim...(Zehra Y.istanbul,2013,s.161)

Bir **köylü** talebenin lisanına yakışacak lafızlar ile heyecanı teskin ettim...(Envar Nistanbul, 2005, s.18)-Sözler Nistanbul, 2009, s.17)-Yeni Asya Nistanbul,2011,s.65)

Örnek:7

Fahr olmasın, derim ki: Biz ki **Kürd'üz** aldanırız, fakat aldatmayız...(Zehra Y.(s:169)

Fahr olmasın, derim ki: Biz ki **hakiki müslümanız** aldanırız, fakat aldatmayız...(Envar N.istanbul,2005,s:32)-Sözler N.istanbul,2009,s.32)-Yeni Asya N.istanbul,2011,s.39)

Örnek:8

Ey **Asuriler** ve **Keyanîler'in cihangirlik** zamanında **pişdar**, kahraman askerleri olan **arslanKürdler!** Beş yüz senedir yattığınız yeter. Artık uyanınız, sabahtır...(Zehra Y. istanbul,2009,s.188)

Ey eski çağların cihangir Asya Ordularının kahraman askerleri olan vatandaşlarım ve kardeşlerim! Beş yüz senedir yattığınız yeter. Artık uyanınız, sabahtır... Envar N.istanbul, 2005, s.50-Sözler N.istanbul, 2009, s.49-Yeni Asya N.istanbul,2011,s.168
SeîdêKurdî aynı yazının devamında, Kürtler içinden çıkmış tarihte nam salmış kişileri isimleri ile zikrederek, bu şahıslar ile aynı milletten olduklarının altını çiziyor. Şimdi bu noktada yapılan tahrifata bakalım.

Örnek:9

Hem de '**milliyet**' denilen, mazi derelerinden ve hâl sahralarından ve istikbal dağlarından hayme-nişîn olan Rüstem-i Zâl ve Salâhaddin-i Eyyubî gibi **Kürd** dâhi kahramanlarıyla bir çadırdaki oturan bir aile gibi...(Zehra Y.istanbul,2013,s.189)

Hem de "**İslamiyet milliyeti**" denilen, mazi derelerinden ve hâl sahralarından ve istikbal dağlarından hayme-nişîn olan Selahaddin Eyübi ve **Celaleddin Harzemşah, Sultan Selim ve Barbaros Hayrettin** ve Rüstem-i Zal gibi **ecdadalarımızdanemsaller** gibi dahi kahramanlar ile aynı çadırdaki oturan bir aile gibi...(Envar N.istanbul,2004s:52)-Sözler N.istanbul,2009,s.51-Yeni Asya N.istanbul,2011,s.174

Bediüzzaman'ın sansürlenmiş ifadeleri sadece Kürtler ile ilgili olanlar değil. O dönemde devletin, dolayısıyla padişahın yanlış uygulamalarına yaptığı eleştiriler de çok çarpıcı

bir şekilde tahrif edilmiş. Bu noktalarda yapılan tahfrifatla padişahı temize çıkaralım derken Bediüzzaman Said Nursi'ye hakarete varan ifadeler kullanılmış.

Örnek:10

... O vakit şimdi münkasımolan istibdatlar, umumen Sultan-ı mahlû'ateccesüm ettiği halde, onun maaş ve ihsan denilen **RÜŞVET**ve hakk-ı sukutu kabul etmedim, reddettim. Milletimin namını lekedar etmedim. Aklımı feda ettim hürriyetimi terk etmedim. Ona boyun eğmedim.[7]

... O vakit şimdi münkasım olan istibdatlar, **merhum** Sultan-ı mahlû'a **istinedildiği** halde, onun **zaptiyenazırülebanaverdiği** maaş ve ihsan-ı şahanesini kabul etmedim, reddettim. **HATA**ettim. **Fakat o hatam medrese ilmi ile dünya malını isteyenlerin yanlışlarını göstermek ile hayır oldu. Hürriyetimi terk ettim o şefkatli sultana boyun eğmedim...**(İhlas nur neşriyat,Ankara,2005, s,20)

Görüldüğü üzere Bediüzzaman padişah adınateklif edilen maaşı rüşvettir diyerek reddederken, takipçisi olduğunu iddia edenler, onun rüşveti reddeden bu tutumundan pişman olduğunu yazabilmiştir. Hem de kendi ağzından.

Bediüzzaman'ın talebeleri bu duruma ne diyor

Bediüzzaman'ın eserlerinde bu "Kürt ve Kürdistan" ifadeleri üzerinde yapılan tasarrufat gerçekten kim ya da kimler tarafından yapıldı? Bu sorunun cevabı Nurcular arasında uzun süre tartışılmış, bu noktada çıkan anlaşmazlıklar bazı kimselerin ayrılıp yeni yeni isimler ile Risale-i nur hizmetini devam ettirmiştir. Aslında yukarıda verilen örneklere bakıldığında sonradan müdahale edildiği açıkça belli oluyor; fakat kimileri bu ifadelerin bizzat Bediüzzaman tarafından sonradan gereksiz görülüp çıkarılmış ya da değiştirilmiş.

Peki gerçekten böyle mi?

08.04.2005 tarihinde vakit gazetesinde yayınlanan röportajda Adem Balta, Bediüzzaman'ın halen daha hayat olan iki talebesi: Said Özdemir ve Abdulkadir Badıllı'ya yayınlar arasındaki bu ifade farklılıklarını soruluyor. Birbirine tamamen zıt verilen iki cevabı burada aktarıyoruz.

Said Özdemir: *İhlas Nur, Envar ve Sözlere neşriyat dışındakiler korsan yayınevleridir. Kürt ve Kürdistan kelimelerini koyanlar Kürtlere karşı PKK'ya karşı meyli olanlardır. Bunlara itibar etmeyin. Bunların hepsi uydurma. Ve sonradan ilave edilmiş. Bunların*

yaptığı hainlik.İki mekteb-i musibetin şehadetnamesi adlı eserinde kullandığı ifadeleri, Cumhuriyet kurulduktan sonra kaldırıyor. Bunların hepsini değiştirdi. Bu ifadelerin yanlış anlaşılacağı ve Kürtçülüğe sebep olacağını söyledi. Bu ifadeleri vatandaşlarım ve kardeşlerim diye değiştirdi. Kürt kelimelerini bizzat kendisi kaldırdı.[8]

Said Özdemir, bir cemaat liderinin üslubundan son derece uzak olan bu ifadeler ile durumu anlatırken, yine Bediüzzaman'ın başka bir talebesi olan A. Badıllı ise tam tersi bir cevap veriyor.

A.Badıllı: ...13 yerde Kürt ve Kürdistan gibi göze çarpan kelimeleri Zübeyr abiler kaldırdı. O dönem İnönü iktidarını yaşıyorduk. Nurcuların Molla Mustafa Barzani ile ilişkileri olduğu haberleri basına yayılmıştı. **Kürdistan** kelimesi yerine **şark, Kürt'ü** de başba bir şey ile gösterdiler. 1979-1981 yılları arasında oldu bu olaylar. Bütün basın Risale-i Nur talebelerini Barzaniler ile ilişkileri olduğunu iddia adiyordu. Hizmetler zarar görmesin diye yapıyordu. O dönemde Kürtlere olan bakış Risale-i Nur camiasını da etkileyerek, **Kürt** ve **Kürdistan** kelimelerinin çıkarılmasına neden oldu. Ama bu yanlışti.[9]

[1]İki Mekteb-i Musibetin Şehadetnamesi (İstanbul: Zehra Yayıncılık,İstanbul,2013,s.167.)

[2]Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi, Sayı. 2, 1908, s.13.

[3]Şark ve Kürdistan Gazetesi, Sayı 1, 1908.

[4] İki Mekteb-i Musibetin Şehadetnamesi/ zehra yayıncılık/2013/s.153

[5] İki Mekteb-i Musibetin Şehadetnamesi/ zehra yayıncılık/İstambul,2013/s.186

[6] İçtimai Dersler/İstanbul,2013,s.35

[7] İçtimai Dersler, Zehra Yayıncılık,İstanbul,2013.s.167

[8] Adem Balta, Hangi Said,İstanbul,2010,s.239

[9] Adem Balta, Hangi Said,İstanbul,2010,s.311

C. Falsifications on Kurdish Identity of Bediuzzaman: Osman Tekin's Perspective

(Vefatının 50. Yılında Uluslararası Bediüzzaman Said Nursi Sempozyumu kitabında Osman Tekin'in aşağıdaki yazısı yapılan değişiklikleri göstermektedir.)

Bu eserlerin sonraki baskılarında sözünü ettiğimiz kısımlar genellikle çıkarıldı ve kitaplar o suretle basılmaya başlandı. Böylece kitaplar, siyasal ve kanunlara aykırı kısımlardan arınarak sadece dini açıklamalar şeklini almış oldu. Bazı tahrifat çeşitlerini örnekleyelim.

Münazarat kitabının ilk 20 küsür sayfası çıkarılmıştır ve ısrarla bunun Nursi'nin kendisi tarafından yapıldığı söyleniyor. Fakat yıllarca binlerce kişi bu nüshadan okudu, ona göre mana verdi ve ona göre bakış açisi şekillendi; sonradan da orijinal haliyle yeni denecek bir zamanda neşrettiler. Sormak gerekiyor; hani Ustad kendisi çıkarmıştı, oyleyse neden neşreldiniz?

Türkçe'ye tercümesi, Arapça'daki cezalet, belagat ve harika kıymetini muhafaza edememiş, bazen de muhtasar gitmiş. Onun için münafiklar hakkındaki uzun tafsilatm bir kısmim neşretmemeyi niyet ettim. Fakat Kur'an'a ait olması cihetiyle Kur'an'a ait bir zerrenin de kıymeti büyüklüğünde, belki bazılanna da faidesi vardır", Bu cümleye dayanarak 62 sayfalık münafiklar bahsi de risalelerden gikartılmıştır. "Bu haydut hükümet, zaman-i istibdatta akla husumet; şimdi de hayali adavet ediyor. Eger hükümet böyle olursa, yaşasin cünun! Yaşasin mevt!. . Zalimler için de yaşasin cehennem"... Haydut kelimesi çıkarılmıştı.

Kurdistan ile ilgili sözcük ve cümleler, bunların yazılışı günahmışçasına veya bunlar lanetlenmişcesine ya değiştirilmiş ya kısaltılmış ya da metinden kokarılmıştır... Kürtlük ve Kurdistan ile ilgili temalann ya da bunlari gagriştiran geylerin boylece unutturulmak istendigi açıktır. İlginç olan şu ki bunlar bu yaptıklarıyla Kürtlere karşı tam da "Kefere" diye bildikleri kişinin "inkarci" yolunu izlemişlerdir. "

Risale-i Nur'un bazı yerlerinde "Kurt, Kurdistan" gibi tabirlerin ba- zılarım kaldırdılar. Yerine "şarki Anadolu" gibi tabirler ile değiştirmişlerdi. Bu değiştirme ve tahrifler

Nurcuların akidelerinde ne gibi değişiklikler oluşturmuştur bu büyük bir vebaldir, Kürt gibi kelimeler çıkarılarak neşrediliyor. Yirmi sekizinci mektubun, altıncı meselesi olan Vehhabilere dair olan meselenin Mektubata konulmaması. Muhali talep etmek, kendine fenalık etmektir. Bir dağdan uçmak niyetiyle kendini havalandıran parga parga olur. Zira onların istedikleri şey, ya bir hükümet-i masumedir. Halbuki şimdi şahs-i vahid bile masum olamaz. Nerede kaldı zerrati günahkarlardan mürekkep bir hükümet tamarmıyla masum olsun. Demek nokta-i nazar, hükümetin hasenati, seyyiatına tereccühüdür. Yoksa seyyiesiz hükümet muhal-i adidir. Ben öyle adamlara anarşist nazariyle bakıyorum. Zira onlardan birisi —Allah etmesin— bin sene yaşayacak olsa adeta mümkün hükümetin hangi suretini gorse hülya ile yine razı olmayacak. Şu hülyamın neticesi olan mey- lü't-tahrip ile o sureti bozmaya çalışacak. (Haşiye) şu halde böyleler, fena zannettikleri Jöntürkler nazarlarında dahi mel'un, anarşist ve ihtilafci firkasından addolunurlar. Zira istedikleri şey muhal olduğu için, neticesi ihtilal ve fesattir. Münazaradaki haşiye çıkartılmıştır. Bu da Nurcuların yukarıdaki pasajı yanlış yorumlamalarına sebep olmuştur. Haşiye'nin aslı şudur: Komünist ve anarşist manasıyla Kemalizmi ve inkılab softalarını ve donmelerini görmüş gibi haber veriyor. "Ta ki ehl-i takva ve ehl-i ilim, entrikalara kapılmayıp; zararlı, tehlikeli teşebbüslere yanaşmasınlar (ve hükümetin) şahs-i manevisi nazar-i millette ithamdan kurtulsun. Yani ehli takva ve ehli ilimin şahsi manevisi hükümetin şahsi manevisi diye değiştirilmiş. Cemiyetin, yalnız yirmi milyon Türk cemiyetinin değil, yüzlerce milyon bütün İslam cemiyetinin imam namma bir Said değil, bin Said feda olsun" —cümlesi de öyle değiştirilmiştir: "Cemiyetin, yirmi beş milyon Türk cemiyetinin imam namına bir Said değil, bin Said feda olsun. "

D. Yeni Anayasa için Öneriler

Jî ALİYÊ RÊVEBÎR ON 10/01/2012 DANEZAN, DAXUYANÎ

Nûbihar Eđitim ve Kùltùr Derneđimizin Yeni Anayasa için Önerdiđi taslak metni yayınlıyoruz.

TBMM Anayasa Uzlaşma Komisyonu tarafından 06/01/2012 tarihinde derneđimize gönderilen davet üzerine, 09/01/2012 tarihinde derneđimiz temsilcileri tarafından hazırlık çalışmalarına başlanan yeni anayasa konusunda görüş ve taleplerimizi komisyon üyelerine sözlü ve yazılı olarak sunduk.

Komisyonla sunulan görüş ve önerilerimiz kamuoyu ile de paylaşıyoruz.

Saygılarımızla.

A-YENİ ANAYASANIN GEREKLİLİĐİ

Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin deđiştirilmesi planlanan 1982 anayasası defalarca kısmi deđişikliklere uğramasına rağmen bugüne kadar toplumsal uzlaşmayı ve kalıcı adil bir düzeni sağlayamamıştır. Kullanılan özgürlükler ve toplumsal gelişmeler de facto biçimde yasaların önüne geçmektedir. Kurulu düzen ve mevcut anayasa;

- Bütün bir toplumu tepeden tırnađa deđiştirmeye çabalayan totaliter ve otoriter karakteriyle,
- İnsan hakları, azınlık hakları ve güvenlik gibi en temel görevleri bile gerçekleştiremeyen aygıtlarıyla,
- Devleti kuran asli unsurlara yaklaşımda olduđu gibi vatandaşlarına yönelik bireysel hak düzenlemelerinde makul bir adalet teorisi tesis edemeyen hukuk sistemiyle,
- Resmi ideoloji empoze etme özelliđiyle,
- Hak taleplerine uygun biçimde toplumsal gruplar arasında paylaştırılmamış egemenlik anlayışıyla, sorunların ana kaynađı olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

1982 anayasası ruhu bakımından militarist, devletçi, ideolojik, üniter olduğundan sosyolojik dinamiklerin ortaya çıkardığı siyasal örgütlenmelerin hemen tümüne karşıdır. Bu durum özgürlüklerin genişletilmesine engel teşkil etmektedir. Yönetme iddiası taşıdığı halkların ve sınıfların deđerleriyle kavga etmeyip varlıklarını koruma altına alan ve insan hakları perspektifiyle hazırlanmış yeni bir anayasaya bu yüzden

ihtiyaç vardır. Yeni anayasa toplumsal uzlaşma ve kalıcı adil bir düzenin tüm aygıtlarıyla ortaya çıkmasını sağlamak için eski anayasadaki ideolojik fetişizmden, değiştirilemez maddelerden ve dolayısıyla Atatürk milliyetçiliği gibi ideolojik argümantasyondan tamamen uzak düşünölmelidir.

B-1982 ANAYASASINA İTİRAZ EDEN KESİMLER

- 1- Dinlerine uygun bir biçimde yaşamak istediklerinde ağır yasal baskılar ve yasaklarla karşılaşan dindarlar,
- 2- Ulus devletin veya resmi ideolojinin ulusal varlıklarını yok sayarak yasal baskılara maruz bıraktığı Kürtler,
- 3- Devletin ayrımcılığa dayalı resmi din politikasından rahatsız olan Aleviler,
- 4- Devletin kapitalist yapısına vurgu yaparak ekonomik düzene itiraz eden solcular,
- 5- Dinsel azınlıklar ve cemaatler,
- 6- Gelir dağılımındaki adaletsizliklerin doğurduğu varoşlarda yaşama mücadelesi veren kent yoksulları veya büyük kentlerde refaktan yeterli oranda pay alamayan taşralı kesimler,
- 6- Globalleşmenin beraberinde getirdiği yoğun ve hızlı rekabet şartlarında bürokratik işleyişin hantallığından ve ayıplı demokrasiden kaynaklanan siyasi kaos ve istikrarsızlıklar yüzünden yaşanan ekonomik krizlerden kurtulmak isteyen işadamları,
- 7- Demokrat aydınlar,
- 9- İnsan Hakları Savunucuları,
- 10- Çevreciler ve hayvan hakları savunucuları,
- 11- Dezavantajlı sosyal sınıflardır.

C-YENİ ANAYASADA OLMASI GEREKEN BAZI HUKUKSAL PERSPEKTİFLER

- 1– Yeni anayasa birey, grup ve sınıfları değil devleti sınırlamalıdır. Devlet, bireyler, gruplar ve sınıflar arasında hakem rolünü üstlenmelidir. Devlet, vatandaşına karşı son derece şeffaf, ulaşılabilir, etkilenebilir, değiştirilebilir olmalıdır.
- 2- Çok dinli ve çok etnisiteli olan genel toplumun herhangi bir grup kimliği esas alınarak tanımlanmaması ve bütün kimlikleri anayasal güvenceye bağlayan bir vatandaşlık tanımının yapılması gerekir. “Anayasal Vatandaşlık” farklı kimliklerin bir arada yaşamasını mümkün kılan hukuki bir bağ olarak tanımlanmalıdır. Bu anayasal

vatandaşlık tanımında Türklük gibi herhangi bir ulusal vurgu bulunmamalıdır. Üst kimlik, farklı olanlar tarafından “paylaşılan kimlik” olarak formüle edilmelidir.

1921 Teşkilât-ı Esasîye Kanunu, “Türk Devleti”nden değil, “Türkiye Devleti”nden bahsetmektedir (m.3, 10). Keza, Cumhuriyeti ilân eden 29 Ekim 1923 tarih ve 364 sayılı Teşkilât-ı Esasîye Kanununu değiştiren Kanun da “Türkler”den değil, “Türkiye”den bahsetmektedir. Aynı şekilde Osmanlı Saltanatını kaldıran 30 Ekim 1922 tarihli Meclis Kararında da “Türkiye Hükûmeti”nden bahsedilmektedir. Dahası Hilâfet ile Saltanatı birbirinden ayıran 1-2 Kasım 1922 tarih ve 308 sayılı Meclis Kararında da “Türkiye halkı”ndan bahsedilmektedir.

Madde Metni: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti sınırları içinde yaşayan herkes Türkiye Cumhuriyetinin eşit ve saygın vatandaşlarıdır.

3- Laiklik dini özgürlükleri kısıtlayacak bir yoruma işaret etmemelidir. Laikliğin “ne olmadığı” değil, ne olduğu açıkça belirtilerek tanımlanmalıdır. Bu bağlamda, din ve vicdan özgürlüğünü teminat altına aldığı ve tüm inanç gruplarına eşit mesafede olduğu vurgulanmalıdır. Ayrıca, laikliğin tanımı sadece inanç ve vicdan özgürlüğü temelinde dini özgürlüğü kapsamamalı aynı zamanda hukuksal, sosyal ve siyasal öneri ve tartışmalarda dini referanslı tezlerin işlenmesine izin vermelidir. Diyanet işleri başkanlığı farklı inanç sistemlerine açık bir tarzda yapılanmakla birlikte özerk bir hale getirilmelidir.

Madde Metni: Laiklik din ve vicdan özgürlüğünün teminatı olarak yorumlanır ve devletin tüm inanç gruplarına eşit mesafede bulunmasını temin eder. Tüm inançların korunmasını ve yaşanmasını güvence altına alır.

4- Çok ulusluluk ve çok kültürlülük bağlamında farklı olana onay verilmelidir. Farklı toplumsallık kültürlerini korumak için bireysel ve grupsal haklar çerçevesinde özyönetim hakkı, kültürel haklar, dilsel haklar ve özel temsil hakları getirilmelidir. Yurttaşların kendi anadilleriyle eğitim ve öğretim hakları en meşru hakları olduğu gibi bu dillerin kamusal birimlerde kullanılarak hayata geçirilmesini devlet düzenler. Bu konu devlet güvencesi altındadır. Bölgelerin idari ve siyasal talepleri göz önünde bulundurularak ya idari veya hem idari hem siyasi adem-i merkezîyetçi bir sistem tesis edilmelidir. Bu yolla devletin merkezîyetçi-bürokratik ve siyasal egemenliği merkezin tekeline alan hegemonik yapısı değiştirilmelidir.

Bu bağlamda, 1921 Anayasasının 11.maddesi gözönünde bulundurularak yeni bir metin oluşturulmalıdır.”: “Vilâyet mahalli umurda manevi şahsiyeti ve muhtariyeti haizdir. Harici ve dahili siyaset, şer’i adlî ve askeri umur, beynelmilel iktisadî münasebat ve hükûmetin umumi tekâlifi ile menafii birden ziyade vilâyata, şâmil hususat müstesna olmak üzere Büyük Millet Meclisince vaz edilecek kavanin mucibince evkaf, Medaris, Maarif, Sıhhiye, İktisat, Ziraat, Nafia ve Muaveneti içtimaiye işlerinin tanzim ve idaresi vilâyet şûralarının salâhiyeti dahilindedir.”

5- Sivil siyaset ve güvenlik bürokrasisi ilişkisi 1776 Virginia İnsan Hakları Beyannamesinde de yer aldığı gibi, “her halükarda askeri kuvvet, kesin surette sivil idareye tabi olacaktır” şeklinde düzenlenmelidir. Bu bağlamda Genel Kurmay Başkanlığı Milli Savunma Bakanlığına bağlanmalı, Jandarma Genel Komutanlığı da İçişleri Bakanlığına bağlanarak “kır polisi”ne dönüştürülmelidir.

Madde Metni: Genelkurmay Başkanlığı Milli Savunma Bakanlığına bağlıdır. TSK. Bünyesindeki Jandarma Genel Komutanlığı da İçişleri Bakanlığına bağlı olup, bu teşkilat “kır polisi” olarak kırsal alanda güvenliği temin eder.

6- Demokrasi sadece farklı siyasal eğilimlerin örgütlenebildiği bir sistem olarak değil aynı zamanda yargısal sistem çeşitliliğine izin veren bir sistem şeklinde yorumlanmalıdır. Bu bağlamda, kamu hukukunda ortak olunmakla birlikte, farkı inanç gruplarının özel hukukta kendi tabi olacakları hukuku seçmelerine imkan tanınmalıdır. Birden fazla tarafı olan ihtilaflarda, mağdurun tabi olduğu hukuk esas alınmalıdır. Yargının idari yapılanması da tarafsızlık ve eşitlik ilkesini gölgeleyecek tüm bağımlı mekanizmalardan uzak tutularak kurgulanmalıdır.

Madde Metni: Yargı tarafsız ve bağımsızlığı güvence altındadır. Kamu hukukunda ortak olunmakla birlikte, farkı inanç gruplarının özel hukukta kendi tabi olacakları hukuku seçmelerine imkan tanınır. Birden fazla tarafı olan ihtilaflarda, mağdurun tabi olduğu hukuk esas alınır.

7- Temel hak ve özgürlüklere ilişkin tüm uluslar arası sözleşmelere imza atılmalı ve çekinceler kaldırılmalıdır.

8- 1982 Anayasasının eşitliği düzenleyen maddesi aynen korunmakla birlikte aşağıda hususlar eklenmelidir.

Madde Metni: Kılık kıyafeti sebebiyle hiç kimse eğitim ve çalışma hakkından mahrum bırakılamaz.

9– Tüm inanç sahiplerinin kendi inançlarına göre çocuklarını eğitmelerine devlet imkan tanınmalı ve bunun tahakkuku için destek olmalıdır. Bu bağlamda tevhid-i tedrisat kanunu kaldırılmalıdır. Türkiye Cumhuriyetinin ihtirazi kayıt ile onayladığı, Avrupa İnsan Hakları Sözleşmesine ek 1 No. Lu Protokolün (20.03.1952, Paris) 2. Maddesinde eğitim hakkı; “hiç kimse eğitim hakkından yoksun bırakılamaz. Devlet, eğitim ve öğretim alanında yükleneceği görevlerinin yerine getirilmesinde, anne ve babaların çocuklarına, kendi dini ve felsefi inançlarına uygun olan bir eğitim ve öğretim verilmesini isteme haklarına saygı gösterir” şeklinde düzenleme madde metni oluşumunda esas alınmalıdır.

10– Anayasanın giriş kısmı olmamalı veya olacak ise insan onuruna ve temel haklara vurgu yapan, ideolojiden arınmış, ortak payda olan anayasal vatandaşlığa vurgu yapan bir metin şeklinde olmalıdır.

11-Türkiye toplumu çok dinli ve çok mezhepli bir toplum olup, kamuda çalışan vatandaşların dini görevlerini yapmaları anayasal güvence altına alınmalıdır. Bu bağlamda Müslümanların kamu görevi esnasında cuma namazı gibi farz olan ibadetleri yapamadıkları gözlenmekte olup, bu konuda bir düzenleme yapılmalıdır.

Madde Metni: Kamuda çalışanlarının görev esnasında ibadetlerini ifa etmeleri güvence altındadır.

Nûbihar Eğitim ve Kültür Derneği

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E. Information about the Interviewees

(The names, except Süleyman Çevik, are nicknames):

1. Süleyman Çevik.....Chief Editor of Nubihar Journal, Age 52
2. Jegr Denise.....Researcher, Age 40s
3. Kaya Din.....Investigative Writer, Age 40s
4. Azad Eser.....Tradesman, age 50s
5. Recep Işık.....Student, Age 20s
6. Serhat Kanca.....Responsible officer at the Erbil branch of the Nûbihar Publishing House, Age 30s
7. Karwan Nal.....Writer of *Nubihar* Journal, Age 30s
8. Kubat Rasul.....(no information about his job and age)
9. Sönmez Soner.....Master Student, Age 20s
10. Mehmet Ümit.....Doctorate Student, Age 30s