THE BATTLE OVER KIRD/ZAZA IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN ÇEWLİG/BİNGÖL (1980-2015)

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the identity construction of Kird/Zaza in Çewlig/Bingöl. It will track how the Kird/Zaza identity is being constructed, and who the main actors of this identity formation are. This research will also analyse how the political and cultural battle over Kird/Zaza identity has been conducted in Çewlig/Bingöl between 1980 and 2015. Furthermore, it will examine how the Kird/Zaza identity is being constructed by different political actors and groups in Çewlig/Bingöl.

This research argues that the process of 'identifying' the locals has begun by the Turkish state taking a direct position in identity politics. Since 1930s, the Turkish state has introduced the idea of 'the Zazas are not Kurds'. This idea was opposed by the Kurdish movements' counter-argument claiming that Zazas have always been one of the main pillars of Kurdishness. Since 1980s, the Zazas have initiated to become a subject group of these identity discussions that have been played over them. Thereby, the main timescale focus in this identity formation will be between 1980 and 2015. Thus, this research will, particularly, focus on the construction and consolidation of Kird/Zaza identity.

The analyses of the thesis will be based on the case study analyses of the Kirdki/Zazaki-speaking group in Çewlig/Bingöl. Besides, it will take Çewlig/Bingöl as its geographical study area. There are Zazaki and Kurmanji speaking groups as well as Sunni Muslim, and Alevis as religious groups in and surrounding areas of Çewlig/Bingöl. Therefore, it will also explore the neighbouring areas such as Dersim/Tunceli, Elazig, Diyarbakir and Mus to compare local identity dynamics. This research has been based on interdisciplinary approach, applying theories of political anthropology, cultural anthropology, political sciences, sociology, ethnicity and nationalism. This study will adopt qualitative research approaches and main aspects of qualitative research, such as interviews, observation, participant observation and discourse analysis are used in this research. Finally, the analysis of this thesis is accomplished through examination of various contemporary resources such as identity literatures, governments` reports, books, journals, websites, and interviews.

Acknowledgement

Abbreviations

AKP: Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)

ANAP: Anavatan Partisi (Motherland Party)

AP: Adalet Partisi (Justice Party)

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

CHP: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republic People Party)

DBP: Demokratik Bolgeler Partisi, (Democratic Regions Party)

DP: Demokrat Parti (Democrat Party)

DTK: Demokratik Topluluk Kongresi (Democratic Society Congress)

DTP: Demokratik Toplum Partisi (Democratic Society Party)

DEP: Demokratik Partisi (Democratic Party)

DEHAP: Demokratik Halk Partisi (Democratic people Party)

DSP: Demokratik Sol Parti (Democratic Left Party)

FP: Fazilet Partisi (Virtue Party)

GAP: Guneydogu Anadolu Projesi (Southeastern Anatolia Project)

HAK-PAR: Hak ve Ozgurluk Partisi (Rights and Freedom Party)

HDK: Halkin Demokratik Kongresi (Democratic People congress)

HDP: Halkin Demokratik Partisi (Democratic People Party)

HEP: Halk Emek Partisi (People Labour Party)

IHD: Insan Haklere Dernegi (Human Rights Association)

JITEM: Jandarma Istihbarat ve Terorle Mucadele (Gendarmarie Intelligence Centre and Fight Against Terrorism)

KCK: Koma Civaken Kurdistan (Unions of Communities in Kurdistan)

KURDI-DER: Komeleya Lêkolîn û Pêşvexistina Zimanê Kurd (Kurdish Language Development Association)

MEZLUM-DER: İnsan Hakları ve Mazlumlar İçin Dayanışma Derneği" (Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People)

MHP: Milliyet Hereket Partisi (National Movement Party)

PKK: Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers Party)

RP: Refah Partisi (Welfare Party)

SP: Saadet Partisi (Felicity Party)

TBMM: Turkiye Buyuk Millet Meclisi (Turkish Grand National Assembly)

(TIP): Turkiye Isci Partisi (Turkish Labour Party)

(KDP-T): Kurdistan Demokrat Partisi-Turkiye (Party of Turkish Kurdistan)

(DDK0): *Devrimci Dogu Kultur Ocaklari, (*Cultural Hearths of Revolutionary East)

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction, Research Question, Methodology and Theoretical Framework

As maintained by Michael M. Gunter, the Kurdish issue is currently at the centre of most of the political discussions in Turkey[1]. The ways in which Zaza/Kird[2] identity is constructed and perceived by different political actors forms an important part of these discussions. The aim of this research is to explore the dynamics of contemporary Kird/Zaza identity construction in the area of Çewlîg/Bingöl in eastern Anatolia/Turkey or Turkish Kurdistan[3]. I will trace and analyse how the political and cultural battle over Kird/Zaza identity has been played out in Çewlig/Bingöl since 1980s until the present day, and how the Kird/Zaza identity is being constructed by different political actors and groups in Çewlig/Bingöl. My analyses will be based on the case study analyses of the Kirdkî/Zazakî-speaking group in Çewlig/Bingöl. This thesis does not classify itself in diaspora studies. This study does not aim to include the Kird /Zaza speakers in diaspora as one of the main identity subject group. However, it will cover how those in diaspora have played a role, especially in the first two decades from 1980. The majority of the intellectuals that played a role in the 1980s and 90s have returned to Turkey in the late 1990s and early 2000s following the democratisation process during the Turkey EU negotiations as part of Turkey's EU membership. Furthermore, I will analyse 'how the Kird/ Zazas of Çewlig/ Bingöl identify themselves in contemporary discussions of identity. The thesis will attempt to limit its analesis with Çewlig/ Bingöl mainly but in a dialogue with the other Zaza speaking city (Dersim/ Tunceli) and other towns of other surrounding cities.

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[1] Gunter, Michael M. `The Kurdish Problem in Turkey`, *Middle East Journal,* 42:3 (1988), 389-406.

[2] Kird is a term that the locals of Çewlig/ Bingöl use to identify themselves. Zaza is the version that the Turkish state prefers to use in an attempt to point out this group of people as different ethnicity from broather Kurdishness. Term Zaza has become the dominant one over decades and it is now the overall accepted version to identify this group of people internationally. The locals prefer to call their city Çewlig or Çewlik. This thesis will use both the local and the international version throughout the paper. This research suggests that one should respect the self-identifying of locals in their historical way of expression.

[3] Bingöl/*Çewlîg* is a city in Eastern Turkey. The city is surrounded by mountains and a large number of glacier lakes, hence the name (Turkish for *a thousand lakes*). Bingöl is the centeral name of Bingöl province. It is one of the 81 provinces of Turkey currently. Cewlig/Bingol was announced as an administrative city in 1936 and was named Capakcur. In 1946, the administrave name was changed from Capakcur to Bingol. Çewlig/ Bingöl's neighbouring provinces are Tunceli, Erzurum, Muş, Diyarbakır, Erzincan and Elazığ. The majority of the province's population is Kurdish Zazaki, for more about the history, geography and socio-political and cultural compositon of the people of Bingöl/*Çewlîg,*

See; Arda, Akif, *Bütün Yönleriyle Çewlik Bingöl*, Turkey; Doz, 2006.

Turkey, between Europe and the Middle East, comprises a plethora of ethnicities and minority groups. There is, however, very little official data about many of its main minorities[4]. The Zazas are one such group: a Kurdish group of people speaking the Zaza dialect, and living as a distinct community in the eastern Anatolian provinces, or the 'Kurdistan' region, of Turkey.[5] Although originally the territories of today's Turkish republic used to hold many diverse groups of different ethnicities and religions, this area has been assembled into one nation state.[6] As Andreopoulos mentions, since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the state ideology has been based on the notion of one nation, one flag, and onenation *(tek devlet, tek millet, tek bayrak).* This policy of nation building in Turkey resulted in a comprehensive policy of assimilation enforced by Turkish nationalist having Ataturk[7] as their leader. In Latif Tas' words as part of the national-state building process;

Attempts were made to transform the vibrant diversity of the early and mid-Ottoman periods into a monolithic identity. In the pursuit of 'One language, one identity, one nation, one flag (*tek dil, tek kimlik, tek millet, tek bayrak*), many different reports between the 1920s and 1940s proposed various assimilation policies… The assimilation policies cost many individual lives and divided many Kurdish families. The state incurred huge debts and deep divides were created between communities. Some Kurds surrendered while others chose to erect barriers and retreat quietly behind them[8].

The creation of the new state has resulted in the Kurds living within a nation, which, up until 1991, not only banned Kurdish names, but also restricted the practical use of Kurdish language. This has, contrary to other ethnicities in Turkey, resulted in the growth of Kurdish nationalism, which has grown in response to the official state policy

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[4] For more information of the minority statues, particularly the statues and civil rights and challenges of the ethnonational and religious communities in Turkey
See: Kaya, Mehmed S. *The Zaza Kurds of Turkey: A Middle Eastern Minority in a Globalised Society*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2011.
[5] Arakelova, Victoria. The Zaza People as a New Ethno-Political Factor in the Region, *Iran & the Caucasus,* 3:4 (1999/2000), 397-408
[6] Andreopoulos, G. J. *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997, p. 11.
[7] Mustafa Kemal Pasha who was an army commander during the late Ottoman era became the charismatic leader of Turkish Liberation Movement during the fight against the allied power of WW1 and founded the Republic of Turkey as the founder president in 1923. By Surname law introduced in 1934, Mustafa Kemal was honoured with Ataturk (means Ancestor of Turks) for his surname by the Turkish Parliament.
[8] Tas, Latif. *Legal Pluralism in Action: Dispute Resolution and the Kurdish Peace Committee,* Routledge, 2014, p. 55.

of 'Turkification.'[9] Led from 1923 to 1938 by Mustafa Kemal Pasha, later known as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the new Republic sought a homogenous state with a single Turkish identity, despite the fact that today's Turkey is home to the largest number of ethnic Kurds in the region,[10] who constitute around twenty per cent of the population.[11] This policy of Turkey challenged and located the Kurdish identity and identity formation in a hard position. Mesut Yegen describes the condition of enforcing Turkification as following;

> [The] Kurds were considered as outside of the circle of Turkishness, and were left subject to the discriminatory practices of citizen ship. In general, however, Kurds have been regarded as a part of the circle of Turkishness and have been subject to intense Turkification. In other words, the idea that Kurds are prospective-Turks has worked almost as a meta-image during the Republican period.[12]

The province of Çewlîg/Bingöl borders with Elaziğ, Dersim/Tunceli, Erzincan, Erzurum, Muş and Diyarbakır. These areas are within the two administrative regions of Eastern Anatolia and South-Eastern Anatolia. Çewlîg/Bingöl is mainly populated by Kirdkî/Zazakî speakers[13], predominantly Sunni Muslims[14], but there is also a small number of Alevis[15] in the areas situated in the vicinity of Dersim/Tunceli and Erzincan provinces, who make up around 15% of the population of Çewlig/Bingöl, according to unofficial estimates. There are also a small number of Kurmanji speakers in this area, who make up around 20% of the population of Çewlig/Bingöl.[16] This study does not aim to discuss on linguistic aspect of the field extensively as that field is a vast one, which would need a focus in primarily linguistic field. There are discussions whether Zazaki should be classified as a dialect of Kurdish or as a separate language and it helps in shaping of this identity formation process. The dominant argument is that Zazaki is a dialect of Kurdish. However the Turkish State have begun to advocate for Zazaki

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[9] McDowall, David. *A Modern History of the Kurds,* New York, I.B. Tauris, 2004, p. 127.

[10] Van Bruinessen, Martin, *Agha Sheikh and State,* London & New Jersey, 1992, p. 14

[11] As no official census has been conducted in Turkey regarding the number of Kurds living there. This was parallel to the idea that as far as the state was concerned Kurds were simply 'mountain Turks'.

[12] Yegen, Mesut. `Prospective-Turks or "Pseudo-Citizens, Kurds in Turkey`, *Middle East Journal*, 63:4 (2009), 597-615.

[13] Paul, White. Ethnic Differentiation among the Kurds: Kurmancî, Kizilbash and Zaza, http://members.tripod.com/~zaza_kirmanc/research/paul.htm (Last accessed 26 April 2017).

[14] Sunni is a Muslim sect, and majority of population in Turkey is Sunni.

[15] Alevi means followers Ali, one of the four main caliphs after Prophet Mohammed's era. There are both Kurdish and Turkish Alevis live in Turkey.

[16] Akif, Arda. *Bütün Yönleriyle Çewlik Bingöl,* Turkey; Doz, 2006.

being a separate language lately. As there are different judgements about what are the limits of a dialect or a language in the world over all. Acccording to many Zazaki should be branded as one the Kurdish dialects. Nevertheless, there are also some small-scaled discussions that Zazaki could be a language on its own. This is a rather complex issue and therefore this thesis will not take a decisive position but rather will benefit from the arguments around it.

Map 1: Map of Turkey, Source: Turkish Ministry of Education.

Map 1 illustrates that Turkey is divided into seven main administrative regions, as following (clockwise); Doğu Anadolu Bölgesi/Eastern Anatolia region (big majority of the Zaza population live in this region, including the two main Zaza provinces: Çewlig/Bingl and Dersim/Tunceli), Southeastern Anatolia (there are several towns in this region that have a considerable number of Zaza population, e.g., Lice, Hani, Hazro, Çermik, Egil, Dicle, Siverek, Gerger, etc.). Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi/South-eastern Anatolia Region, Akdeniz Bölgesi/Mediterranean Region, Ege Bölgesi/ Aegean Region, Marmara Bölgesi/Marmara Region, Karadeniz Bölgesi/ Black Sea Region and İçanadolu Bölgesi/ Mid- Anatolia Region (that is in centre of all regions, coloured in blue). Eastern Anatolia and Southeastern Anatolia Regions are manily Kurdish populated and referred as Turkish Kurdistan, Kurdistan region of Turkey or *Bakur* (means North in Kurdish terminology in referenece to the Greater Kurdistan. The other regions of the Greater Kurdistan are: *Bashur*/Southern, *Rojhelat*/Eastern and *Rojava*/Western), that are used by the Kurdish nationlists and the non-Turkish nationalists or international academia.

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Map 2 shows the main areas where the Zaza (Kird, Kirmanj, Dimili) people live.

There are only two provinces in Turkey where mainly populated by the Zaza. Those provinces are Çewlig/Bingöl and Dersim/Tunceli. The 'red highlighted' area indicates the mainly populated region of Zaza inhabited areas. There are also some towns of other cities in the region that are majorly populated by the Zazas in this red highlighted area of the map. Due to the lack of ethnicity information of Turkish Census Survey, the certain number of Zaza population is unknown.
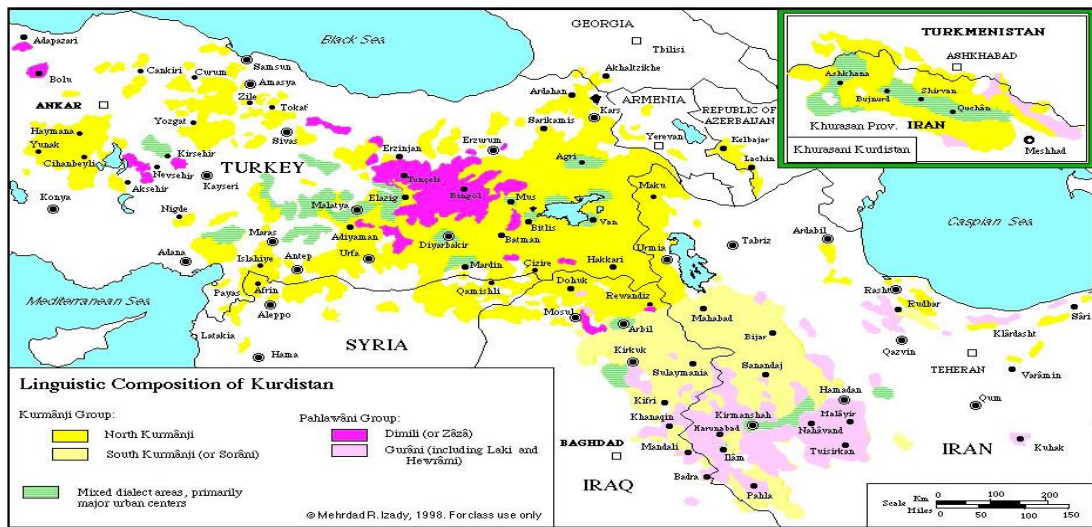
Map 3, Mehrdad Izady's language distribution map of Kurdish languages. ©Mehrdad Izady 1998.

The purple highlighted areas of above map indicate the Zaza populated cities, towns and areas all around Turkey.

1.1 A Brief Definition of Kirds/Zazas

Although the word Zaza, which was historically used in Elaziğ[17] province, has become the dominant name for this group of people, there are three other names for them depending on which area is being referred to.[18] Since the main area of this research is Çewlîg/Bingöl, for an in-depth study of identity dynamics locally, I will refer to them the way they name themselves in Çewlîg/Bingöl – Kird, with the language or dialect they speak accordingly called 'Kirdkî'. The word 'Kird' was largely unknown internationally until recently, as not only were the Kirds/Zazas hidden from view, but also Kurdishness itself was hidden in Turkey until the 1960s. Although certain prominent researchers such as Malmisanij and Ihsan Espar suggest otherwise, Zaza/Zazakî has become the accepted term to identify this group of people internationally.[19] Moreover this word is becoming dominant one to use due to the Turkish state's promotion in favour since the it has all the state institutions and media means to use as tools. The state prefers this version- Zaza as it does not contain any linguistic similarity or reference to Kurdishness as oppose to other three versions Kird, Kirmanc and Dimilî. Therefore, this version (Zazaki and Zazas) will be used in this study when the group is mentioned as a whole, and Kird(ki)/Zaza(ki) will be used in discussion of the smaller area of Çewlig/Bingöl.[20] Even though Zazas did not mobilise politically until the 1980s, there was always a distinct Kird/Zaza-ness in Çewlîg/Bingöl, both socially and geographically. Moreover, starting in the 1980s, there has been an identity-focused movement, claiming that Zazas have their own position in identity discussions of the region. This could be regarded as the 'third' position in reaction to 'Turkishness' and even to 'Kurdishness'.

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[17] Elazig is a province, located on the west border of Çewlig/ Bingöl. It was historically majorly Zaza populated but vastly assimilated in the 20th century and became stronghold of Turkish Nationalism.

[18] There are four different ways to call the subject group of people for this study. These are Kird/Kirdkî (In Çewlîg/Bingöl and most towns of Diyarbakir where Kirdkî is spoken); Kirmanc/Kirmanckî (in Dersim, Erzincan and Varto - Muş); Dimilî/Dimilkî (in Siverek- Urfa, Gerger- Adiyaman Çermik and Çüngüş- Diyarbakir); and Zaza/ Zazakî(in Elaziğ province).

[19] Andrews, Peter. *Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey*, Reichert, 2002.

[20] Interview conducted with Malmisanij, who is considered an expert on the language and political aspects of the Kirdî/Zazakî, on 23th September 2011, he suggested this himself and the standardizing group for Zazakî dialect not really sure what you mean here. Vate would strongly recommend that one should avoid using the term Zaza to name this group, since that is what the Turkish state would prefer because makes it easier to claim that the Zazas are not Kurds, but a different ethnic group.

The 1980s coincides with the trend in many other countries regarding the rise of local identities.[21] Elise Massicard argues that there was a trend in demands over identity. Particularly the Kurds and the Islamists wanted their differences to be recognised by the Turkish state.[22] Since the 1990s, the Zazas have not been as invisible in the identity politics as before. The most obvious proof of this is that the Turkish state makes reference [23] to them more often, and the Kurdish movement regards them as a dynamic power group within the movement.[24]

Çewlîg/Bingöl is one of the 81 cities in Turkey, located in Eastern Anatolia, one of seven administrative regions. Together with South-Eastern Anatolia, the region is also called Turkish Kurdistan. It is a mountainous area where the way of traditional subsistence is pastoralism. Çewlîg/Bingöl was once a rural area, which was declared a city only after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, in 1936. In the 1945, the administrative name of Çabakçur was changed to Bingöl as the part of the Turkification[25] of place names. It is worthy to mention that the preferred local name for Bingöl is Çewlîg, which will be used alongside Bingöl throughout this thesis. The demographic picture of Çewlîg/Bingöl contains several sub-identities both on religious and linguistic levels. There is the majority of Sunni Zazas, but also Alevi Zazas, and Sunni/Alevi Kurmanj inhabitants[26]. One of the main reasons that encouraged me to undertake this research is the fact that Çewlîg/Bingöl holds all these micro identity features.

Unlike most other areas in Turkey, there are no Turkic tribes or people who speak Turkish as their mother language in Çewlîg/Bingöl province. I would like to examine the multiple processes of identity construction and of "Kirdki/Zaza-ness", in

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[21] Fearon, James D. and Laitin, David D., `Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity`, *International Organization* 54:4, (2000), 845–877.

[22] Massicard, Elise. *The Alevis in Turkey and Europe: Identity and Managing Territorial Diversity,* New York, Routledge, 2013, p. 2.

[23] Zazalar kimdir? Kürt mü, Türk mü, ayrı bir millet mi?, https://www.timeturk.com/tr/2012/12/22/zazalar-kurt-mu-turk-mu-ayri-bir-millet-mi.html (Last accessed 12 May 2016).

[24] Wilgenburg, van Wladimir. Is Ankara Promoting Zaza Nationalism to Divide the Kurds? *https://jamestown.org/program/is-ankara-*promoting*-zaza-nationalism-to-divide-the-kurds/* (Last accessed 27 July 2017).

[25] Jongerden, Joost. `*Crafting Space, Making People: The Spatial Design of Nation in Modern Turkey`*, *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, 10, (2009), 2- 20.

[26] Kaya, Mehmed S. *The Zaza Kurds of Turkey: A Middle Eastern Minority in a Globalised Society*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2011.

Çewlîg/Bingöl in particular. Currently, there are three main views on Kird/ Zaza origins among people in Çewlîg/ Bingöl, which are used to identify them both by themselves and the 'outsiders': firstly it is claimed that Zazas were originally a Turkic tribe (this the formal Turkish state's discourse used since the 1930s which seems to have gain some support mainly in Elazig province). Secondly, it is argued that, Zazas are neither Turks nor Kurds but a separate people. Finally, Kirds/ Zazas are a Kurdish identity group who speak one of the main dialects of the Kurdish language. These three main views currently still dominate the academic and political discussions around the Kurdish issue debates. The research will also focus on the historical aspect of the Zazakî-speaking Çewlîg/ Bingöl area's political and cultural characteristics and trends under the Republic of Turkey.

The Turkish state, beginning in the 1930-40s, has claimed that the Zazas are not Kurds as part of its political programme. [27] In response to this, the Kurdish national movement[28] argued that Zazas were indeed a sub-group within the Kurdish nation. In these early decades, the Zazas were only the objects of this political conflict, in which they did not have much say in the construction of their own identity. It was only in the1980s that the Zazas themselves started to take part in becoming the subject in this identity formation process, a rather tense issue in Turkey that has ultimately resulted in armed conflict. Until the Zazas themselves became an active component in the diametric identity construction of being Kurds or not being Kurds, they did not separate between one or the other.[29] With the Zazas as the third subject group of the rapidly shifting identity construction process in Çewlîg/Bingöl, the avenues of expression of local identity have now become much more diverse.

This thesis will critically analyse the ways in which the Kird/Zaza and/or the Kurdish identity have been politicised in the Republic of Turkey, as part of the conflict between the state and the Kurdish movement(s).[30] This condition put the Kird/Zaza in an extraodrdinary challenged position where according to Krisztin Kehl-Bodrogi;'

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[27] Interview conducted with Ercan Cagdas in Çewlîg/Bingöl. August 2013.

[28] There are a number of Kurdish groups in history of modern Turkey. They are refered as Kurdish Movement as a whole.

[29] Interview with Mehmed Selim Uzun, during the field trip in Sweden. 2011.

[30] Tezcür, Güneş Murat. `Kurdish Nationalism and Identity in Turkey: A Conceptual Reinterpretation`, *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 10, (2009), 2-19. This article shows that how the Turkish state on

Throughout this century, the Zazas have been the subject of two competing political ideologies. Both Kurdish and Turkish nationalists still lay claim to the Zaza as a constituent part of the Kurdish and, respectively, Turkish nation. However, both ideologies define 'nation' as an entity of people having common language, cultural and historical origins. This means that claims to the Zazas deny their distinct ethno-linguistic position.[31]

Furthermore, it will question whether there ever was one homogenous Kurdish identity including the Kird/Zaza group. Although scholars such as Van Bruinessen and Tezcür have suggested otherwise, most of the literature regarding Kurdishness in Turkey presents the Kurds as one unified entity.[32] Therefore, the analyses laid out in this thesis will focus on the Kurdish identity as a whole, including the Kird/Zazas, until the late 1970s. The thesis will aim to explore the reasons why some Kirds/Zazas have been ethno-nationally mobilised within Kurdishness, whilst others respond more to religious and/or social rhetoric, which can be regarded in the context of the whole of the Kurdish region in Turkey. The research will therefore explore two aspects of identity and/or identity mobilisation in the region. These are the ethno-national identity and the religious identity.[33]

The local identity of Çewlîg/Bingöl is 'an object' identity for what appears to be a political identity struggle between the Turkish state (Turkishness) and the Kurdish movement (Kurdishness) from the 1980s. With the 1980 army coup, the dynamics in politics shifted majorly. In the conservative cities like Çewlîg/Bingöl, the new political parties such as the Motherland Party (ANAP), the True Path Party (DYP), and the Welfare Party (RP)[34] have become the main political/institutional parties in this shift of

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one hand used the policy on full annihilation of the Kurdish identity and their struggle for improving their rights of equal citizenship, on the other hand the state through different polities attempt to manipulate and divide the Kurds (Kurmanji, Alevei and Zazaki).

[31] Kehl-Bodrogi, Krisztina. `Kurds, Turks, or a people in their ownright? Competing collective identities among the Zazas`, *The Muslim World*, 89:3,4 (1999). 439-454. cited in p. 444.

[32] Wilgenburg, van Wladimir. Is Ankara Promoting Zaza Nationalism to Divide the Kurds? *https://jamestown.org/program/is-ankara-*promoting*-zaza-nationalism-to-divide-the-kurds/* (Last accessed 27 July 2017).

[33] This is not to argue that the regional identity is limited only to the above-mentioned main aspects; several other possible sub-identities, such as gender and class identities, are omitted from the research.

[34] ANAP and DYP were central right political parties who had different times of forming governments as single party and took part in coalition party governments for two decades following the 1980 Turkish Army Coup. RP was a religious party who had a religious ideology. It took part in coalition governments in late 1990s.

political features.[35] Therefore, the two main areas of focus of this thesis will be on ethnic identity and religious identity. The linguistic aspect will mainly remain in the ethnic identity area, and sometimes will overlap with the domain of religious identity. Furthermore, the other sub-identities, such as gender identity, clan identity and social class identities will remain secondary in these analyses.

The analysis will begin in 1925, when the first major Kurdish revolt took place in the history of the Turkish Republic[36], and it will conclude with the local elections of March 2014. The time selection will serve one main purpose, which is indeed to focus on the Kirdkî/Zazakî identity. If there is a differentiation between Kird/Zazas and the Kurds, it is likely that the first identity arguments could be connected to the 1925 Sheikh Said revolt, which took place in the studied region. Even though some Sunni Kirds/Zazas argue that the Sheikh Said revolt did not receive enough support from other parts of the Kurdish areas in Turkey, or even from the Zaza Alevis and/or Sunni Kurmanjs[37], the pattern of the development in this period provides with events and evidences that showing further politicization and institutionalisation of the political mobilisation of the Kurdish ethnic-national identity, especially from the 1970s and until the present. For the phenomenon of Kirdkî/Zazaness, this study will work from the hypothesis that such mobilisation started only in the 1980s and onwards. Furthermore, it will be argued that the 1980s witnessed the new phenomenon of the Zazas, when they themselves became active subjects of Zaza identity construction.

The other major revolt which is often referred to, is the 1937-1938 Dersim uprising, which was led by the Alevi Zaza Seyyid Riza from Dersim.[38] This revolt is often used to claim that no unified political aim exists to hold the Kurds or Zazas together as a nation. For instance this issue has been highlighted through Mehmet Orhan's study of the Kurdish movement in Turkey contemporary to the time of the formation of the Turkish republic. Orhan refers to the lack of a common political claim since the Seyyid

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[35] Interview conducted with an Imam of a mosque in Solhan, a town of Çewlîg/Bingöl. August 2012.

[36] Olson, Robert. *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880–1925,* Austin*:* University of Texas Press, 1991.

[37] O'Shea, Maria Theresa. *Trapped between the Map and reality, Geography and Perceptions of Kurdistan,* New York: Routledge, 2004. p. 38.

[38] Dersim or by its Turkified name Tunceli is the other majorly Zaza populated province along with Çewlig/ Bingöl. Vast majority of it is Alevi and it holds a Kurmanji speaking population too. Dersim borthers with Çewlig/ Bingöl.

Riza's revolt suffered from lack of integrity related to including/gathering the different actors and section of the Kurdish movement under the same roof.[39]

As with Sheikh Said's movement, some Dersimi Zazas and Turkish state officials often point out that Seyyid Riza's Dersim uprising received hardly any support from Sunni Zazas or the Kurds in general.[40] David McDowall asserts that the Sunni Zazas and Alevi Zazas did not support the two mentioned revolts as a national movement.[41] One could argue that the lack of support from different fractions for the two revolts should not be judged with today's context. It could be argued that the lack of communication in those times was an important difficulty for any plotical mobilisation. It was difficult to send any 'dangerous' message due to the state's security structure. Furthermore, both of the revolts began without a proper organisation, and the short durations of each revolt, could be counted as strong reasons why they did not garner wider support and why they failed to succeed.[42]

For the majority of Sunni Kirds/Zazas and Kurds, supporting a Kurdish political movement(s) became a way of showing opposition to the Kemalist regime of the Turkish state, which existed until the 1960s, when conservative parties seized the power from the Republican People's Party, in Turkish *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, (CHP).[43] Thus, this period represents a critical time in the identity formation of the Kurds in Turkey in general[44]. The secular party CHP, which was founded by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, formed single party governments until 1950, but the secular face of state controlled the state burocracy for a further period after the single party era. The secular dominant era was a considerably easier period for Alevi population in Turkey for their religious identity. However, a liberal environment had begun after 1950s when the conservative Democrat Party (DP) won the first multi- party elections in 1950. Although DP formed a single party government in 1950, the state burocracy was still vastly controlled by the secular state institutions such as army, education, and judiciary. The Turkish Army and Judicary have always been dominant in Turkish state structure.

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[39] Orhan, Mehmet, `Kurdish Rebellions and Conflict Groups in Turkey during the 1920s and 1930s`, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 32:3 (2012), 339-358.
[40] Sevgen, Nazmi. *Zazalar ve Kizilbaşlar,* Ankara, Kalan Publications, 2003.
[41] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds.*
[42] Kahraman, Ahmet, *Kürt Isyanlari,* Istanbul, Evrensel Basim Yayin, Place and Year, 1992
[43] Teymuroğlu, T.,*Çewlig/Bingöl'de Bir Halk,* Istanbul, Peri, 2007
[44] Gunter, Michael M., `The Kurdish Problem in Turkey`, *Middle East Journal*, 42:3 (1988), 389-406.

These Kemalist Turkish Army and Judicary system were harsly reactionary towards anything or any group that risked the Kemalist regime and the 'unity of Turkish Nation'. Furthermore, they reacted harsh against the Kurdish Movements' mobilisation attemts. Therefore it was difficult for the Kurdish political groups to mobilise. From 1960s and 70s some conservative and non-secular Kurdish groups begun to affiliate with the conservative governments in Turkey. This considerably freer period in Turkey's history led to many previously silent groups such as Kurdish Movement's freactions and Turkish leftist groups, who opposed the state, to develop a form of oppositional fronts. The state reacted to the strong opposition by force, and the army took control with a coup in 1980.[45]

Finally, the period from the 1980s to the current day has witnessed a noticeable transition in the politics of Turkey. After the military coup of 1980, which led firstly to a period of security policies, a new stage for political Islamic and conservative parties to grow in Turkey has opened. The election of Turgut Özal in 1983, the charismatic prime minister who was internationally recognised as a liberal politician, opened the way for a sizeable number of Islamic parties to come into the mainstream political arena.[46] Under the banner of Islamic unity it has become easier to mobilise a large number of Kurds, who had disregarded the state for decades. This can be clearly observed in Çewlîg/Bingöl, and also for the majority of Sunni Zazas in Turkey. On 25th February 1994, in a political campaign speech in Bingöl, Necmettin Erbakan, the leader of the Islamic party the Welfare Party, stressed that 'Kurds should not have to say we are Turks, they should be able to stress their ethnic identity which indeed is Kurdish'.[47] Erbakan's aim here was to assert Muslim unity as the primary identity and, at least in the Kurdish region, to convince the citizens that ethnicity is either not important, or comes after religious identity. Before the 1990s, publically identifying oneself as being a Kurd led to an automatic exclusion from legal politics, but with the rise of Islamic parties on the political scene, Kurds could find legitimate commonality under the inclusive idea of a Muslim brotherhood. Religious parties such as the Welfare Party

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[45] Berberoğlu, Berch, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict, Class, State and Nation in the Age of Globalisation,* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Maryland, 2004, pp, 61, 62.

[46] Gunter, Michael M., `Turgut Ozal and the Kurdish Question` in Marlies Casier and Jost Jongerden (eds,), *Nationalism and Politics in Turkey,* New York, Routledge, 2011.

[47] Ersoz, Salih Sedat. Bugun_Dunden Bir Adim Daha Öndeyiz, http://www.memleket.com.tr/bugun-dunden-bir-adim-daha-ondeyiz-17909yy.htm (Last accessed 15 February 2017).

(RP), the Felicity Party (SP) and the Justice and Development Party (AKP), all institutionally found a way of using religious identity in gaining Kurdish support. After the decades of oppression following the Sheikh Said revolt, this was an exit strategy for the Çewlîg/Bingöl area of Sunni Muslim inhabitants. On the other hand, the same period also witnessed a revival of the Alevi identity, which has led Alevi Kurds to question their identity, as well as raising questions of loyalty to the state and to the Kurdish movement. This, as a result, positioned some Alevis closer to the Kurdish Movement and others closer to the Republican Peoples Party (CHP) or secular state ideology.[48]

There are several reasons for choosing to focus on the ethnic and religious identities. As in this case linguistic identity overlaps on both of the identity markers in various ways, it prevents the linguistic identity from being identified as the third marker, but rather a factor that finds itself in both of the main identity markers above. Firstly, for the Kurds in 20th Century, ethnicity has proven to be a powerful political commodity, as the Turkish state focused on applying the assimilation policy to diminish all ethnicities other than Turks. As maintamend by Ahmet Icduygu;

the Turkish-Kurdish conflict has caused an international division in Turkish society which arose from the Kurdish question during the republican period in response to aggressive assimilation towards Kurdish minorities, the dominance of Turkish culture and identity and the dismissal of Kurdish identity.[49]

As the aggressive policy that deployed by the Turkish state reveals the Kurds were the principal objects to this policy. The state did not tolerate the other ethnic groups to promote their linguistic and cultural rights. In fact, it applied a harsh and direct assimilation policy towards the other ethncies rather than Turkish-ness to establish its so-called unity. This can be attributed to the fact that Turkey is an ethnically diverse nation state in which the state has displayed intolerance towards the non-Turk ethnicities, which is indoctrinated in state policy.[50] As a reaction to this intolerance, the

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[48] Interview conducted with the co-chair of the Çewlîg/Bingöl region for the pro-Kurdish movement the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), Halis Yurtsever, who is an Alevi, Kurmanj Kurd. August 2012.
[49] Quoted in Janet Lambert. `Racialization in Turkey and the exclusion of Kurdish identity`, https://cers.leeds.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/97/2016/04/Racialization-in-Turkey-and-the-exclusion-of-Kurdish-identity-Janet-Lambert.pdf (Last accessed 25 March 2017).
[50] Tezcür, Gunes., M., *Kurdish Nationalism and Identity in Turkey: A Conceptual Reinterpretation,* in European Journal of Turkish Studies, 2009.

Kurds began to seek a way to form their own nation/ethnic identity following the establishment of the Turkish Republic[51]. The very nature and history of Turkish politics have allowed the politics of ethnicity to take centre stage rather late for the Kurds. Moreover, this still continues to form an unwavering point of reference for the other ethnic groups of Turkey. Furthermore, following both the WWI and WWII, the trends of ethnic identities and nation/nation state building influenced the Kurds to seek to follow this trajectory.

The history of Zaza and Kurdish in ethnicity relations ground has been in conflict with the new Turkish state since the Sheikh Said revolt in 1925.[52] With the arrival of the socialist wave's effects in the region from the 1960s to the1970s, the hopes of gaining ethnic rights for the Kurds were boosted once again. The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)'s arrival on the political stage in the late 1970s, which tended to tolerate the minor identities within 'Turkish Kurdistan' territories, led the sub-identity groups to form their own institutions. On the other hand the publications on identity, ethnicity and nationalism, together with the new media means have helped to bring to light the struggles of the Kirds/ Zazas in Çewlig/ Bingöl and other parts of Turkey. They also served another purpose, namely the collectivisation of the Kurdish identities and particularly the Zaza identity. As such there are continual references to the Kird/ Zaza, Sunni-Zaza, Alevi-Zaza, Zaza- Kurd, Kurdish, Turkish citizen identities. Furthermore, Kurdishness in the sense of a greater Kurdistan has become an attractive goal among the Kurds.

This line of research not only reaffirms ethnic differentiation, but also does not ignore the most fundamental questions regarding the nature of the ethnic identity, which in this case are:
- Who are we?
- What makes us who we are?
- What is it like to be us in a nation state that takes its name from another ethnic group?

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[51] Romano, David. The Kurdish nationalist movement: opportunity, mobilization, and identity, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

[52] Interview conducted with Dr Nevzat Çaglayan in August 2013 in Çewlîg/Bingöl (have not been included in the bibliography yet)

All the above questions will be dealt with in reference to studies on identity, especially those that have a special focus on Turkey and Kurds, such as studies by Mehmet M. Kaya, Cengiz Güneş, Denise Natali, Henri J. Barkey, Michael M. Gunter, Ömer Taşpinar and Lois Whitman.

It is simply not enough to study the politics of ethnicity in Turkey; this is a well-trodden path and can offer very little to the ongoing debates regarding the nature of ethnicity. To find out what it means to be a Kird/Zaza or Kurd to the people of the Kurdish areas in Turkey, there needs to be a deconstruction of the Turkish and Kurdish ethnic identity. In regards to Çewlîg/Bingöl, it can be said that there are several identities which can be identified locally/nationally in Turkey, and internationally. For instance as held by Krisztin Kehl-Bodrogi "the lack of a common ethnicity among the Zazaki-speaking population is evident even in the lack of a common ethnonym".[53] These are: Zazas that are happy to express themselves as Turks when they are outside the context of Çewlîg/Bingöl; Kirds/Zazas that express themselves with a sense of Zazaness as a people on its own; and Kirds/Zazas who see themselves as part of Kurdishness and acknowledge Kirdki/Zazakî as a dialect of Kurdish alongside the other dominant dialect, Kurmanjî.[54] Furthermore, political Islam has become an identity factor in the last two decades in Çewlig/Bingöl. All of the above mentioned groups could be regarded as a part of the new phenomenon of identity construction in the region. This new phenomenon of identity is due to the Turkish state's attempts to implement a sense of Turkishness, and, as a reaction to this, the Kurdish movement's counter-argument, which stresses that Zazas are Kurds. Furthermore, Zazas have themselves entered the stage to claim that they are their own identity makers since the 1980s.[55]

By looking specifically at how these identities have been politically mobilised by both the Turkish state and those who react to or resist it from the Kurdish side, it is almost impossible to ignore the current efforts of the locals for becoming the constructors of contemporary identity. One should bear in mind that the trend of discussions of identity arrived in the region later than in the modern or the Western World. After all, it is only from the 20th Century onwards to see it is obvious through the scope of ethnicity that the politics of languages, gender, class and religion have been negotiated in the region.

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[53] Kehl-Bodrogi, `Kurds, Turks, or a people in their own right?`, 439-454.
[54] Kehl-Bodrogi, `Kurds, Turks, or a people in their own right?`, 439-454.
[55] Interview conducted with Mehmet Malmisanij in Sweden. September 2011.

To this end the thesis project will contain a detailed discussion on debates surrounding ethnicity in Turkey. Following that, there will be specific definitions of the Zaza(ki) language, social class, gender and religious identities. The research project aims to make a significant contribution to the existing debates regarding who the Zazas are within the Kurdish struggle in Turkey and in Turkey's colourful ethnic diversity.

1.2 Research Question

The aim of this research is to explore the dynamics of contemporary Kird/Zaza identity construction in the area of Çewlîg/Bingöl in Eastern Anatolia/Turkey or Turkish Kurdistan. In order to do this, an examination of how the political and cultural battle over Zaza identity is played out in Çewlig/Bingöl will be undertaken, with a particular focus on the role that Kird/Zazas play in the process themselves. Thus, the key research question that will be asked in this thesis is:

How is the Kird / Zaza identity constructed by different actors in Çewlig/Bingöl?

In addition to this there will also be an analysis of how the locals of Çewlig/Bingöl identify themselves in contemporary identity discussions of the region. The second research question which will be put forward in this thesis is, how have the local Kird/Zazas become important players in the battle over this identity construction in Çewlig/Bingöl?

Sub-Research Questions

In order to answer these two main research questions, three main sub-themes/questions will be investigated.

1. Who are the actors in the battle over Kird/Zaza identity? To answer this question the role of three Zaza groups will be analysed; those who are pro-Turkish state, those who are pro-Kurdish movement and those who have a localist tendency, i.e. pro-Zaza.

2. How is the battle waged on the ground? In order to answer this question, the actions and methods of the varieties of three actors previously mentioned needs to be analysed and their daily discourse with regards to identity needs to be closely examined.

3. Why has there been a recent surge in the battle over the Zaza identity? What are the factors in the recent surge of this identity construction? With an aim to look into

to locals of Çewlig/ Bingöl residents' perspective of the new identity trends, this study aims to shed a light on the Kid/ Zaza identity construction process.

There is a need to address the reasons behind the recent surge in the distinct Kird/ Zaza identity and to inquire whether it was a result of political engineering by the Turkish state and/or Kurdish Nationalism, or an expression of a wider localist tendency that the world has witnessed since the second half of the 20th century. In order to answer this, an examination into the political advancements in Turkish Kurdistan due to the political struggle and global occurrences (such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, the EU-Turkey negotiations, and the end of Cold War) also has to be undertaken. Moreover, Turkey's desire to become part of the Europian Union has lead to a democratisation process to a certain extend.

The main research question of this thesis is concerned with the dynamics of contemporary identity construction in Çewlîg/Bingöl. In order to seek an answer to this overlying identity problem and/or to answer, *"how have the locals became the contemporary identity constructors in Çewlîg/Bingöl and what are the outcomes of this",* several areas need to be examined. Furthermore, what is the motivation point for each of the three groups should also be looked at. This is important as there are links between the position of each group, either parallel with each other or in counter position one to another. The Turkish State backed group was the only advantaged group on the ground for some decades in its identity engineering process over the Zazas. The pro-Kurdish Kird/ Zaza group gained a strong position following the empowerment of the Kurdish movement from late 1970s and onwards. And the third emerged group of pro-Zazas appeared with their so-colled third position that says they are neither Turkish nor Kurdish.

Firstly, to examine the historical path to the Çewlîg/Bingöl local identity, the thesis will aim to explore the question of *when and how did the modern Kird/Zaza identity of Çewlîg/Bingöl emerge, and what are the dynamics of its construction.* As part of this, several factors need to be considered, for instance, who the actors in this formation are, and what its components are. The issue will be addressed through looking at the political, social and economic factors, which may have triggered this identity

construction. Also, it will examine the roles of insiders and outsiders [56] from the Çewlîg/Bingöl perspective of Kird/Zaza identity.

Secondly, to elaborate on the 'cultural actors' of the Çewlîg/Bingöl ethnic picture, the question of identifying the main cultural characteristics of the Kirdkî/Zazakî speaking people and their 'identity constructors' in Çewlîg/Bingöl will be explored. To answer this, the local oral culture including music and folklore, and state and NGO institutions, will be investigated for signs of these particular characteristics. Furthermore, the study will explore the details of how this culture has evolved in recent times due to the process of political engineering.

Finally, the question of *the existence of a distinct Zaza nationalism* will be dealt with. This could be argued within the framework of political nationalism versus a cultural nationalism.[57] The project will compare this possibility with the tendencies of local identity of pro-Turkish or pro-Kurdish nationalisms. Altogether, by raising these questions about the numerous facets of ethnic identities, the project aims to allocate and define the local Kird/Zaza identity of Çewlîg/Bingöl.

1.3 Conceptual Framwork

Theoretical Approach to Identity Construction

Different scholars, who have argued for the relevance of the self-definition of a nation, have concluded that a nation is imagined, invented or constructed. A nation has been depicted as an "imagined political community" that emerged with the development of print capitalism, which enabled vernacular languages to spread faster.[58] Another similar approach argues that the nation depends on an "invention of tradition" by means of attempting to establish continuity with a "suitable historic past".[59] Moreover, a nation is defined as a product of nationalism, which in itself is the product of particular economic and social circumstances connected with the emergence of industrial

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[56] See chapter I, on the theories of ethnic identity construction.

[57] Hutchinson, John, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State*, Unwin Hyman, London, 1987.

[58] Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, London, Verso, 1991.

[59] Hobsbawm, E., J., and Ranger T., (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

societies. In the Kurdish or Zaza case, similar factors can be identified in the creation of a Kird/Zaza 'identity'.

Both Anderson and Hobsbawm have said that a nation is constructed by certain elites. The elites are able to organise the masses. In other words, the masses appear to adhere to the national engineering of these elites. In addition to this, Anthony Smith argues that the creation of a nation actually involves the reconstruction of a past with which the masses must be able to identify.[60] These views are in line with the views of Pierre Bourdieu's theories on elite power and the naturalisation of a social field,[61] and the structuration theory of Anthony Giddens.[62]

My research will explore these theories further to provide a foundation for the analyses of identity and nation building in the Kird/Zaza case.

Eric Hobsbawm defines 'invented tradition' as "a set of practices normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to include certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past".[63] Invented traditions are used by political institutions, ideological movements and groups to create foundations for their movements. Moreover, as Hobsbawm says: "all invented traditions, as far as possible, use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion"[64]. In other words, history becomes part of the founding knowledge for the ideology of the nation, state or political movement.[65] This history is not what has actually been preserved in popular memory, but what has been "selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalized by those whose function it is to do so".[66] In the case of Kird/Zaza identity, the Sheikh Said revolt, an event of capital importance for the Kird/Zaza, will be examined as one of the

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[60] Smith, Anthony. *'The Golden Age and National Renewal'* in Hosking, Geoffrey, and Schöpflin, George. (eds.), *Myths and Nationhood,* New York: Routledge, 1997, p. 45.

[61] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice,* translated by Richard Nice, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

[62] Giddens, Anthony. *The Constitution of Society: Outline of a Theory of Structuration*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1984.

[63] Hobsbawm, and Ranger, (eds), *The Invention of Tradition,* p. 10.

[64] For a similar example concerning Nazi Germany before World War II.
See Arnold, Bettina. `The past is propaganda: Totalitarian Archaeology in Nazi Germany`, *Antiquity*, 64, (1990), 464-478.

[65] Jongerden, `*Crafting Space, Making People`: 2- 20.

[66] Hobsbawm, and Ranger, (eds), *The Invention of Tradition,* p. 10.

most significant examples in showing how Hobsbawm's ideas can apply in exploring how popular memory and official histories (Turkish, Kurdish, Zaza) may differ. Benedict Anderson, who labels nations as 'imagined communities,' also considers the concept of the nation as an ideological construction. He points out that, "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship".[67]The construction of national or ethnic identity(-ies) in Çewlig/Bingöl also fits in the above-mentioned view, so I will explore extensively the relevance of Benedict Anderson's ideas to my own research.

The work of Brass, who considers ethnicity and nationalism not as givens, but as social and political constructions, and who focuses on the mechanism of these constructions, is also applicable in terms of the aims of this study. Brass assumes that the rise of ethnic identities and their transformation into nationalism is not an inevitable process.[68] In addition, he states that it is only possible to use cultural identities as a political tool under certain conditions. Ethnic conflicts do not arise from cultural differences but from a broader political and economic environment. Ethnic identities are a product of the process of an ethnic identity formation, and this process necessitates the very definition of the ethnic group and its social continuity. At this point, cultural practices of politicised ethnic groups become political resources for elites in the struggle for power and prestige.[69] To return to Benedict Anderson, his idea of print capitalism is another argument that would fit in Kird/Zaza case. Printed materials[70] were extensively used both by the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement in the identity 'battle' over Kird/Zazas. Especially, the Turkish state and its institutions have published bumerous books, magazines and propaganda leaflets aiming a direct assimilation policy.

1.3.1 Ethnicity as an Identity Marker

Much academic work has been conducted on the nature of ethnicity. Hutchinson and Smith's definition of ethnic identity as "the individual level of identification with culturally defined collectivity, the sense on the part of the individual that he or she

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[67] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 6.
[68] Brass, Paul. R., *Ethnicity and Nationalism, Theory and Comparison,* London: Sage Publications, 1991, p. 17.
[69] Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism,* p.15.
[70] Anderson, *Imagined Communities.*

belongs to a particular cultural community,"[71] is generally repeated among scholars whose interests lay in the area. Kurds generally claim that they are decedents of the Medes,[72] although this is the subject of much debate.[73] For the Kurds, in reference to them being decedents of the Medes, Martin Van Bruinessen argues that, although there has been some continuity in the population of the area as a whole, there is not enough historical evidence to support this idea. He goes on, stating that it is not clear when a distinctly Kurdish identity emerged, although the ethnic label 'Kurd' was first encountered in Arabic sources from the first centuries of the Islamic era, referring to a specific group of pastoral nomads. The term was eventually used to describe a nomadic group speaking an Iranian language and inhabiting the mountainous region around Lake Van and Lake Urmia in the Causcasus [74] Over the years, these 'Kurdish tribes' encountered 'Turkish nomads', and tribal confederacies emerged.[75] This does not imply that the argument of Van Bruinessen should be left unexamined and uncompared to the findings of my own fieldwork. The fact that Kurdish language and culture are still alive despite the documented repression and assimilation policies[76] in their history is a strong indication that the social structure of tribal alliances has a solid foundation. Furthermore, the reason that the language and the culture are still alive despite repression might be attributed to the 'closed' and/or 'close' ties of tribal society among the Kurds in general. In addition to this, one could not draw a difference between Zazas and Kurmanjs or Kurds in this respect. This has been further compounded by the rise in Kurdish nationalist consciousness, where there is an increasing attempt by Kurdish nationalists to construct an ancient past in an attempt to make nationalist claims. This phenomenon

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[71] Hutchinson, John and Smith, Anthony. D., (eds), *Ethnicity,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 5.

[72] Maisel, Sebastian. (ed*), The Kurds: An Encyclopedia of Life, Culture, and Society,* Santa Barbara, California; ABC-CLIO, (2018), pp. 3-4.

[73] According to Vladimir Minorsky, the Medes inhabited the current days` Kurdish homeland and, might have been the forefather of the modern Kurds. Minorsky suggests that the Medes who invaded the region in the eighth century BC, linguistically resembled the Kurds. This view was accepted by many Kurdish nationalists in the twentieth century. However Bruinessen, argues against the attempt to take the Medes as ancestors of the Kurds. He maintains that "Though some Kurdish intellectuals claim that their people are descended from the Medes, there is no evidence to permit such a connection across the considerable gap in time between the political dominance of the Medes and the first attestation of the Kurds".
See Özoğlu, Hakan. *Kurdish notables and the Ottoman state: evolving identities, competing loyalties, and shifting boundaries,* Albany: State University of New York Press, (2012), pp. 24-26.

[74] Bruinessen, M, von, *Kurdish Ethno- Nationalism Versus Nation- Building States,* The Isis Press: Istanbul, 2000, p. 16.

[75] Bruinessen, *Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism Versus Nation*, p.16.

[76] Bruinessen, M, von.., Race, Culture, Nation and Identity Politics in Turkey, a talk delivered at the Princeton University April 1997.

is not unique to the Kurds alone, and the Turkish state has adopted similar tactics. In other words, whole histories have been constructed to legitimise nationalist claims.[77] In this respect, my study will also make use of the work of Frederick Barth, Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Jeffrelot & Dieckhoff. One could argue that the Kurds or Zazas follow a similar path to the Turkish state in 'designing' a national history of their own to use as a tool in a national identity formation.

Rogers Brubaker's central argument about the study of ethnicity and identity is that ethnic groups and formation of their identity should be treated as a processual, situational, relational and contextual dynamics of identification, and not as a marker signifying essential traits or indicating membership of static, internally homogeneous, externally bounded groups out there. This case could be applied in Kird/ Zaza case as there can be a shift between the three main Kird/ Zaza groups of identity groups in Çewlig/ Bingöl. Brubaker has expanded this view even further by attacking the cliched constructivism which dominates the analyses of cultural difference where one finds 'constructivist and groupist language casually conjoined' and where some academics are ridden by the tension of maintaining their scholarly cool headedness while simultaneously shifting to essentialist foundationalism that political mobilisation requires.[78] Although the considerably new identity process, Kird/ Zaza identity formation, could fall in the area of constructivism, Brubaker's theory contributes greatly in this thesis.

Highlighted by Brubaker the term identity is "richly-indeed for an analytical concept, [yet] hopelessly-ambiguous. But one can identify a few key uses". Based on Brubaker's categorization of the use of identity, this term (identity) can be understood as a basis for social and/or political action, and it is often opposed to "interest" in an effort to highlight and conceptualize noninstrumental modes of social and political action. Within such as conceptualization the term 'identity' is used "to underscore the manner in which action-individual or collective-may be governed by particularistic self-understandings rather than by putatively universal self-interest".[79] In the local identity arguments of Çewlig/ Bingöl often borrow these trended theories but not in an

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[77] O'Shea, Maria Theresa. 'Tying Down the Territory: Conceptions and Misconceptions of Early Kurdish History`, in Jaber, F.A., Dawod, H., (eds.), *The Kurds*, London, 2006, p. 115.
[78] Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without groups*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004, pp. 3-4
[79] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without groups*, pp. 33-34.

academic style. Each of the three groups, especially the pro-Zaza group and the pro-Kurdish group of local identities elites tend to make references to similar examples in the world. This is done to legitimize their identity position in the on-going identity discussions.

Identity is understood as a specifically *collective* phenomenon denotes a fundamental and consequential *"sameness"* among members of a group or category. This sameness is expected to manifest itself in solidarity, in shared dispositions or consciousness, or in collective action. This usage is found especially in the literature on social movements[80]; on gender; and on race, ethnicity, and nationalism. Political divisions in identity discussions play an important role in Middle Eastern societies. This misinterpretation of identity building process leads complex cases like Kird/ Zaza identity process. However the 'sameness' common ground that pointed out in Brubaker's ideas still dominates importantly.

Another usage of identity in the study of groups' ethnic/national belonging and self-identification is that this concept is understood as a core aspect of (individual or collective) selfhood or as a fundamental condition of a social being. One would find a convincing ground to identify her/himself or on a collective level. In this context, identity is invoked to point to something allegedly *deep, basic, abiding, or foundational. In this case,* Brubaker asserts that identity is;

> Distinguished from more superficial, accidental, fleeting, or contingent
> aspects or attributes of the self, and is understood as something to be
> valued, cultivated, supported, recognized, and preserved. This usage is
> characteristic of certain strands of the psychological (or psychologizing)
> literature, especially as influenced by Erikson, though it also appears in
> the literature on race, ethnicity, and nationalism. Here too the practical
> and analytical uses of "identity" are frequently conflated.[81]

Moreover, as an element of self-identification, identity is a product of social or political action, invoked to highlight 'the *processual, interactive* development of the kind of collective self-understanding, solidarity, or-and "groupness" that can make collective action possible. In this usage, found in certain strands of the "new social movement" literature, "identity" is understood both as a contingent product of social or political

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[80] Alberto Melucci 1995 cited in Brubaker, *Ethnicity without groups*, p, 34.
[81] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without groups*, p. 34.

action and as a ground or basis of further action.[82] This, in the example of Kird/Zaza identity process, could be interpreted within the pro-Kurdish group of identity component. This group functions in a social movement structure.

According to Brubaker's furthering categorization of 'identity' understood as the evanescent product of multiple and competing discourses, "identity" is invoked to highlight the *unstable, multiple, fluctuating, and fragmented* nature of the contemporary self. This usage is found especially in the literature influenced by Foucault, post-structuralism, and post-modernism (e.g., Hall 1996). In a somewhat different form, without the poststructuralist trappings, it is also found in certain strands of the literature on ethnicity-notably in "situationalist" or "contextualist" accounts of ethnicity.[83]

In the words of Brubaker "strong conceptions of identity preserve the commonsense meaning of the term-the emphasis on sameness over time or across persons. And they accord well with the way the term is used in most forms of identity politics".[84] It can be concluded from Brubaker's categorization of the term 'identity', that a: identity is something all people have, ought to have, or are searching for, b: identity is something all groups (ethnic, racial, or national) groups have, or ought to have, c: identity is something people/groups can have without being aware of it.[85] In this perspective, identity is something to be *discovered,* and something about which one can be *mistaken.* Nevertheless, strong notions of collective identity, among people/groups imply strong notions boundedness and homogeneity. Within the existence of such a 'strong' sense of collectiveness/sameness, a clear boundary between inside and outside.[86] Along with the above elements of identity, religion is another strong identifier, taking account the identity choices among Muslim societies of contemporary Turkey. The Kird/ Zaza identity case lays a relevant ground for this discussion.

Despite the presence of a variety of ways of classification and categorization of identity and its formation form of identity it is important to bear in mind that one actor

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[82] Calhoun 1991; Melucci 1995; Gould 1995 cited in Brubaker, *Ethnicity without groups*, pp. 34-35)
[83] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without groups*, p. 35.
[84] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without groups*, p. 37.
[85] In this perspective as highlighted by Brubaker "identity is something to be discovered, and something about which one can be mistaken. The strong conception of identity thus replicates the Marxian epistemology of class", in Brubaker, *Ethnicity without groups*, p. 37.
[86] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without groups*, p. 37.

more than others plays an important role in this regard. The state is the most dominating actor having a powerful 'identifier' along with its political agenda, especially in the nation state structure of the Middle East society. In Brubaker's words "not because it can create "identities" in the strong sense in general, it cannot-but because it has the material and symbolic resources to impose the categories, classificatory schemes, and modes of social counting and accounting with which bureaucrats, judges, teachers, and doctors must work and to which nonstate actors must refer".[87] The Turkish State has always been the dominating power with all its state institutions regarding the identity issues. It is indeed an experienced Nation State that has assimilation policies in its one-century history. Though, pointing the state as a powerful identifier does not mean absent of other actors and institutions. Some other actors too, including families, firms, social and national movements, would differently leave an identifier impact on individuals and groups' identity and self-identification.[88]

The social anthropologist Fredrik Barth is also relevant to this study due to his distinguished perspective on ethnic and national identity. Chiefly, Barth rejects the prevailing notion that describes ethnic groups rigid and bounded entities, formed through responses to ecological factors (primordialist bonds and biologically determined), and defined by territorial boundaries and objective cultural traits. Barth's theoretical framework sets out a different perspective mainly based on the presence of the interconnectedness of ethnic identities and the continuity of ethnic groups.[89] Barth's (and some on other scholars of ethnicity and nationalism, e.g., Leach, Moerman, etc.) studies of identity and ethnicity provide the groundwork for what later become the 'constructivist' approach' to identify. Mainly, Barth's *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* pays attention to people of communities that for different reasons and under different circumstances have changed their ethnic identity. In addition to this flexibility/changeability of identity within ethnic groups, as asserted by Barth, they are also capable of promoting their own, new cultural identity, even as their old identity is eroded.[90] This angle of Barth's theoretical work offers a parallel perspective to this paper. Although, in Kird/ Zaza identity formation, their old/ wider identity (Kurdish-

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[87] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without groups*, p. 43.
[88] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without groups*, p. 43.
[89] Fredrik Barth (ed) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Culture Difference*, (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget; Allen & Unwin), pp. 9-38.
[90] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, pp. 9-38; 117-134.

ness) is not eroded, it still helps to understand the complex issue of this new identity process. In this case, it is mainly the state (Turkish) that appears on the stage that wants divide the Kirds/ Zazas from broader Kurdishness as part of their divide and rule policies.

Concepts of 'ethnic and inter-ethnic *processes*' are among instrumental terminologies that Barth in his studies of identity within different ethnic groups in different parts of the world. These processes include the emergence, continuation, and change of inter-ethnic relations.[91] Here, Barth contributes with a valuable stance to this thesis. Applying it to the Kird/ Zaza field, this identity process has reached to the stage two of the three pointed out by Barth above. It has passed the emergence stage and is exploring the stage two of continuation. Taking into account Barth's models and conceptualization of identity within ethnic groups, it is identifiable that his three major and fundamental assertions on this topic has challenged the established anthropological conceptions of ethnicity. According to Barth; a: ethnicity is not defined by culture, but it is a social organisation, b: ethnic identifications are based on ascription and self-identification, and therefore any change within it can be situationally dependent, and c: the roots of this social organisation are not cultural content but *dichotomization*, so that the ethnic boundary is a social boundary formed through interaction with 'others'. However, despite the change and transition of identity and cultural features the ethnic group continues its existence via "continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders".[92] In this context what matters for the boundaries is "the assignment of particular social meanings to a limited set of acts". In addition, establishment and maintenance of social controls and sanctions, as some crucial elements of inter-ethnic relation depends on its relationship with other 'ethnic groups', defined as 'us' and 'them', in which inclusion of the first is tantamount to the exclusion of the second.[93] Along with its identity formation process, the 'us' and 'other' phenomena is also in the making in the Kird/ Zaza case. It is still in search of finding its shape and it is in a constant shift due to the main two political (Turkish State and Kurdish movement) players' positions and political strengths and weaknesses.

In the ethnic and inter-ethnic relation, language is a critical cultural feature that provides a revealing example that culture and ethnicity are interrelated but *not*

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[91] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, pp. 36-37.
[92] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, p. 14.
[93] Blom cited in Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, pp. 73-75.

interchangeable concepts. According to many, the Zazaki is a dialect of Kurdish, which has certain differences, compared with general Kurdish language (other three main dialects of Kurmanji, Sorani and Hewrami). The language element is also used vastly both in an attempt of unifying the Zazas with Kurds or when arguing it is a different ethnic group with its own language.

According to Barth ethnic groups are socially determined and socially constructed and the ethnic boundary is a social boundary. This articulation of ethnic gives reason to suggest ethnic identities to be relative and situational, dependent on different spheres of interaction and behavioral management.[94] Assumed by Barth ethnicity is the product of specific kinds of inter-group relations. This interaction a product of a specific kind of need. Also, an ethnic group cannot exist in isolation, therefore its formation and continuation dependent on interaction with the 'others'. This interaction with others can be counted as an element of ethnic processes.[95] Since the identity construction process is still an ongoing one, it would make the ground for the discussion of whether the Zazas could be regarded a separate ethnic group or not is to be witnessed in the coming decades in Zaza populated areas. Therefore, Barth would be a reference to apply.

There is a lack of ethnic identity definition due to the practices of Turkish state in Turkey. This situation is more complicated in the eastern and southesatern Turkey. Let alone the definition of Zaza ethnic identity, the definition of a Kurdish ethnic identity can arguably be referred to as a near impossible task, as there is not a Kurdish state that could function as the political unifier. In this case it should be considered that Kurds live in several nation states, and have arguably built a unified counter-identity in opposition to the suppression they have faced during recent history, particularly in the last century in the greater Kurdistan. The trend of local cultures and identities has flourished with the use of sovial media and new media means in the recent years.
Michael Moerman suggests that the voice should be given to the 'object' group itself.[96] In this case, if Kurds or Kirds/Zazas refer to themselves as Kurds or Zazas, they should simply be allowed to state whatever they would like to express as their identity. In

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[94] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, pp. 14-24.
[95] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, pp. 9-10.
[96] Moerman, Michael. *Ethnic Identification in a Complex Civilization: Who are the Lue?, American Anthropologist,* 67:5 (1965). 1215 – 1230.

relation to Moerman's argument, the present study highlights that the majority of the Zazas do not argue a distinct ethnicity apart from 'Kurdish'.[97] To claim that the Zazas are a different ethnicity to Kurds is a recent trend following the active assimilation policies of the Turkish state in response to Kurdish nationalism becoming a powerful ideology, after the establishment of the Turkish Republic. This has become more apparent, especially following the announcement of the 1924 nationalist Turkish constitution. The outcomes of the fieldwork are a strong indicator to back this argument.[98] David Romano points out that the ethnic identity issue is usually dependent on whether an ethnic group has a nation state to which they do not have a problem of belonging.[99] Since neither the Kurds nor the Zazas have a nation state of their own, or any other form of autonomous structure in Turkey, it can be misleading to compare them with ethnicities that have a nation state, such as the Turks in Turkey or Greeks in Greece. The cultural definition of the Kirds/Zazas, both on a national and a regional scale, must therefore be sought elsewhere.

Although it is generally accepted that ethnic groups must share certain commonalities, there is less agreement on the nature and definition of ethnicity. Two prominent strands of thinking have emerged from the debate, from those scholars who use what is called the primordial approach, and those who use a structuralist framework. The cases of the Sunni Zazas and Alevi Zazas stand as a good example in this regard. Although they would be expected to have common identity interests, the Sunnî Zazas are culturally closer to Sunni Kurmanjs, and even to Sunni Turks, compared to their cultural affinity with the Alevi Zazas and vice versa.[100] The political parties' support bases in the region can be a source to use here. Currently, the CHP (representative of secularism in Turkey) is the dominant political party in Dersim (a predominantly Alevi Zaza city) and the AKP (known as the Sunni Muslim representative of political Islam in Turkey) is the dominant party in Çewlîg/Bingöl. Dersim and Çewlîg/Bingöl are the two provinces in Turkey that are known to be the two majorly Zaza cities. Çewlîg/Bingöl has always stood with its Sunni conservative identity, and Dersim with its secularist/left identity.

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[97] Zilan, Bilal, and Malmisanij, M., http://www.zazki.net/haber/tarx-xonamekerdis-kirdan-1300.htm (Last accesssed 24 July, 2017)
[98] See fieldwork section for details.
[99] Romano, *The Kurdish National Movement*, p. 7.
[100] Outcome of a group interview that was conducted with a group of teachers, in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2013.

The Turkish State has systematically used this division as a tool and kept the neighbouring provinces in a position of 'othering one another'.

For structuralists, ethnicity is an imagined identity, which has been constructed through generations. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* deals with many of these issues, arguing that communities are socially constructed using past fictions and myths, and thus nationalism and national identity are not fixed facts but a collection of imagined traditions. Anderson assesses how the development of the printing press in Western Europe began to influence the masses, and books/publications were used in the creation of a national culture.[101] Thus, this entity can be used by some groups and individuals, to make certain political, economic and social claims in the case of structuralist views of identity.

1.3.2 Religious Identity

In the second half of the twentieth century, religion has grown in prominence as a tool of ethnic mobilisation and separation in Turkey. As religion plays a dominant role in most ethnic boundaries in the Middle East, ethnic groups have had to accept the reality of its highly factionist nature, especially in a world where one's religious identity increasingly takes precedence over other forms of identification[102]. Elise Massicard argues that each ethnic-political group in Turkey such as the Turkish State, Kurdish nationalist groups, and even Zaza nationalists, use religion for their own political identity programs.[103]

Religion as an identity marker has become even more significant given the many contemporary conflicts, such as in Northern Ireland, Central Nigeria and the former Yugoslavia, where conflicts which started along nationalistic and ethnic lines took on a religious dimension with the use of religious symbolism.[104] Turkey is a different case, as there is no definitive partition along religious lines. Also, where there is conflict involving religion, it is manifested in the continuous dialogue/conflict between religious conservatives and the secular state. According to surveys, the vast majority –

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[101] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*,

[102] Tezcür, `Kurdish Nationalism and Identity in Turkey`, A Conceptual Reinterpretation`, 2-19.

[103] Massicard, *The Alevis in Turkey and Europe*, 2013.

[104] Stewart, Frances. 'Religion Versus Ethnicity as a Source of Mobilisation: Are There Differences?', https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1495152 (Last accessed 15 May 2017).

around ninety per cent – of Turks and Kurds living in Turkey consider themselves as Muslims. [105] Looking at the Kurdish and/or Zazas specifically, in particular the Kurdish/Zaza Sunni Muslims, the situation becomes rather peculiar, given the current political environment. The Kurdish religious identity has been mobilised by Turkish Islamic parties which were also historically and constitutionally opposed to the Kurdish national and ethnic identity. This has been the case, especially from the 1970s until the present day.

Islam has historically been a strong catalyst of mobilisation and control[106]. This mobilization/control capability of Islam is identified with different society within the Middle Eastern community, in which in the case of the Kurds and the Kurdish movement religious leader of Kurds particularly before the 20th century and the raise of politicization of Kurdish nation identity and the Kurdish national movement the Kurdish religious leader were the those who led the movement against the Kurdish superior regimes in Iran and Turkey. This mobilization came to expression in different forms for instance as a means of mobilising for an uprising, negotiation or settling/intermediation peace within the Kurdish society or between the Kurds and its counterparts. For instance, Michiel Leezenberg describes the role of Islamic religious leaders of Kurds in the premodern era and before the 20th century as following;

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, it was the Sufi orders that were a prime vessel for social organization and mobilization, and it was primarily their charismatic leaders, the shaykhs, that were the leaders of the early Kurdish rebellions. The shaykhs were particularly well-placed to act as middlemen in conflicts, and hence to act as leaders or figureheads for broader Kurdish nationalist movements, as they were in a position to overcome the tribal divisions that had increased in importance since the Ottoman authorities had abolished the local Kurdish emirates in the mid-19th century.[107]

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[105] The censuses have been conducted in the Republic of Turkey every ten years. It has never been included to request information on religious affiliation, other than to ascertain whether the respondents are Muslim, Christian, or atheist.
See Shankland, David. *The Alevism in Turkey: The Emergence of a Secular Islamic Tradition*, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003, p. 35.
[106] Leezenberg, Michiel. `Political Islam Among The Kurds`,
 http://home.hum.uva.nl/oz/leezenberg/PoliIslamKurds.pdf (Last accessed 25 July 2017).
[107] Leezenberg, `Political Islam Among The Kurds`,
 http://home.hum.uva.nl/oz/leezenberg/PoliIslamKurds.pdf (Last accessed 25 July 2017).

David McDowal points out that, during the Ottoman era and after, the Kurds became an important provision to the Islamic armies fighting Byzantium, Armenians and the Crusaders. Currently, it is estimated that over seventy-per cent of the Kurds living in Turkey are Sunni Muslims, and a similar percentage would apply for the Zazas as well.[108] Following the Ottoman policy of centralisation, Turkomans living in Eastern Anatolia (today's East and South-Eastern Turkey) who adhered to an conservative extreme and heterodox form of Shiite Islam (known in Turkey as Alevism), led by the Safavi order in Azarbaijan, were brought into the fold of Empire.[109] As mentioned, there are Alevi and Sunni Zazas and Kurmanjs in Turkey. Within these different branches there have been issues of mistrust and non-recognition historically. David Shankland has observed that in many of the villages he visited, he witnessed very little social contact between Alevi and Sunni neighbourhoods. This will be discussed for the Çewlig/Bingöl region as well, especially in the towns of Kiği, Yayladere and Yedisu, the towns of Çewlig/Bingöl bordering the Dersim province. Shankland goes on to highlight that this separation is often expressed in religious terms, and reinforced by mutual distrust. For instance, in some Sunni villages, claims were made that the Alevi were not proper Muslims because they did not pray in mosques, and that their women were promiscuous. On the other hand, the Alevis tend to regard all Sunnis as fanatics.[110] The two groups have taken politically opposite sides, with the secular and the Sunni influences of the Turkish state working against each other. Furthermore, for the same reason, the number of marriages between Sunnis and Alevis in Çewlig/Bingöl and the surrounding areas is still small.[111]

According to Krisztin Kehl Bodrogi "about half of the Zazas are religiously affiliated with the Shafi'i school of Sunni Islam, while the other half profess Alevism [112]". Çewlig/Bingöl has a strong element of conservative Muslim inhabitants. The fact that religion has always played a significant role in the region indicates that it has always had its part in the politics of identity regionally. One could argue that it is still the

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[108] It is difficult to estimate the precise number of Muslim Kurds or Zazas, as there is no consensus differentiating between Turks and Kurds.

[109] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds,* pp. 21-22.

[110] Shankland, *The Alevism in Turkey,* p. 35.

[111] Interview conducted with Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) co-chair of Çewlig/Bingöl, Halis Yurtsever, an Alevi Kurmanj. August 2012.

[112] Kehl-Bodrogi, Kurds, Turks, or a people in their own right?, p. 441.

biggest identity marker for the Çewlig/ Bingöl province. As well as having a majority of Sunni Kird/ Zazas, the region also has numerous (around 15 or 20 per cent of the population) inhabitants who are Zaza Alevis, Kurmanj Alevis and Sunni Kurmanjs.[113] Taking all these identities in consideration, the Kurdish and/or Kird/ Zaza ethnic identity provides a wealth of opportunity to analyse some of the debates and theories that appear in the field of social identity construction. Given that the Kurds are likely to have originated among various nomadic groups who encountered each other around the same geographical location, it stands to reason that within this collection of tribes and groups there was and still exists much diversity and division. Firstly, the introduction of Islam to the Kurds added a new and significant facet to the Kurdish ethnic identity. Secondly, there were various tribal conflicts, which were not helped by the informal system of the Ottoman Empire, which allowed tribal chiefs a certain degree of autonomy giving them the opportunity to do as they pleased. Finally, the historical linguistic diversity underlines the variation of Kurdish expressions of identity.[114]

1.3.3 National Identity

The Kurdish national identity in itself is a relatively modern construction. The intensification of its politicization started develop and spread around the breakdown of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the modern day Middle Eastern states, the majority of which have been based on dominant ethnic groups.[115] According to Hakan Yavuz, the gradual process of politicization took place in lines with the rise of dissatisfaction and emergence of deprivation within the semi-confederative Kurdish system under the role of the Ottomans, mainly as result of the Ottomans attempt of centralising power. This periods has been categorized as the first stage (1878-1924) of the Kurdish national movement, however, the politicization and formation in a more modern sense of nationalism is a process accelerated mainly following the deconstruction of the Ottoman empire and formation of the Turkish nation state on the hand Mustafa Kamal Ataturk, also a nation building process that resulted in exclusion of the Kurds of Turkey from the rights of equal citizenship and equal partnership. Yavuz describes the second stage (1925-61) of Kurdish national movement in Turkey.[116]

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[113] Önal, Ahmet. *Bingöl Dengbêjleri,* Peri Yayinlari, Istanbul, 2007.
[114] Malmisanij, M., *Kırd, Kırmanc Dımıli Veya Zaza Kürtleri*, İstanbul, 1996.
[115] Hutchinson, and Smith, (eds), *Ethnicity*, 1996.
[116] Yavuz, M. Hakan, `Five stages of the construction of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey`, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics,* 7:3, 2001, 1-24.

Ethnicity and ethnic groups have thus gained a huge amount of political importance in the region, unlike during the Ottoman era when ethnic groups, although recognised, remained submissive.[117] Since the Ottomans did not aim at direct assimilation and Turkification of the ethnicities in their territory [118], especially among the Muslim groups, the division of 'us' and 'them' was less likely to be addressed. Let alone Zaza or Zaza-ness, Kurdish culture as an identity can only be regarded as an obvious cultural unit from the late 19th century or/ and from the beginning of the 20th century. The politicisation of this identity took place even at a later stage. For the Kird/ Zaza identity, as it was previously mentioned in this paper, the process of political identity only started in the 1980s.[119] The politisiation of Zaza by temselves only seen towards the end of 20th century.

The politicisation of the Kurdish ethnic identity and the growth of a national, Kurdish consciousness is a topic of much debate among scholars and Kurdish nationalists. Some, mainly among the latter, go back as far as three hundred years, pointing to the work of Ehmedê Xanî, the seventeenth century Kurdish writer and philosopher, whose writings dealt with the Kurds as a separate unity making the distinction between 'the others' and 'us'.[120] Others such as Robert Olson, point to figures such as Sheikh Ubaydulla of Nihri, who reportedly sent a letter to British Consul-General (for instance his letter in the 1880) explaining that "(… The Kurds are) a nation. Their religious practices are different and their laws and customs are distinct". The letter goes on by saying that "we want our affairs to be in our own hands." Sheikh Ubeydulla's words are important, as this appears to be the first time such an important figure has singled out the Kurds as a people. Olson marks it as the first stage of a greater consciousness of Kurdish nationalism.[121] Sheikh Ubeydulla's nationalism could be pointed as the first institutional nationalism and as the seed of Kurdish nationalism.

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[117] Hutchinson, J., Smith, A.D., (eds), *Ethnicity*, Oxford ., p.11
[118] Bali, Rifat N. `Politics of Turkification during the Single Party Period`, in Hans Lukas-Kieser (ed), Turkey Beyond Nationalism: Towards Post-Nationalist Identities, London: I.B. Taurus, 2006.
[119] Yavuz, `Five stages of the construction of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey`, 1-24.
[120] See Bruinessen, Martin van. 'Ehmedê Xanî's Mem u Zîn and its Role in the Emergence of Kurdish National Awareness, in Vali, Abbas., (ed.), *Essays on the origins of Kurdish Nationalism*, Mazda Publishers, 2003.
[121] Olson, The *Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism,* p. 52.

Despite these points of contention, it is probably more accurate to conclude that the Kurdish national awareness as a mass popular nationalism only emerged around the time of the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire in the second decade of the 20th Century.[122] For the Kurds, the political and social climate of the time provided the conditions for the renewed focus on their ethnic identity, which manifested itself into a strong, nationalist perception. The loss of an empire, which had caused so many regional Kurdish chiefs and tribes to flourish, the political strategies involving competing ethnic groups and the rise in Turkish nationalism and, consequently, the claim for the independence, meant that Kurdish identity became a powerful factor. Kurdish elites and nationalists began the process of mobilisation in an attempt to regain regional power, which they had lost as a result of defeats in a series of revolts following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. Along with a number of other revolts, both the Sheikh Said in 1925 (in Sunni Zaza areas) and Seyyid Riza in 1938 (in Alevi Zaza areas) are counted among the Kurds' lost battles against the young Turkish Republic.[123]

The recent surge of Kurdish national identity was a response to the changing political situation between the 1930s and 1980s. It has flourished as a reaction to the nationalist policies of Turkey. Despite the Kurds still being a people without a nation state, it is precisely because of this that the Kurdish national identity has taken precedence over other forms of identification. However, it follows that such a national identity could not exist without an ethnic base, as the Kurdish national claims are along ethnic lines. Both the pro-Kurd Kird/Zazas, and the Kurdish national movement, have continually stressed that the Kurds are one distinct ethnic group who have been denied their own nation state, and that the 'outsiders' influence the identity issue in a negative way. By using ethnicity as the foundation for their claims, Kurdish nationalists have been able to draw upon cultural traditions, imagery, myths, a shared land, and a shared pain and destiny to successfully construct and mobilise the Kurdish ethno-national identity. For

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[122] Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism,* p. 52.
[123] Reynolds, Michael A. The Ends of Empire Imperial Collapse and the Trajectory of Kurdish Nationalism, http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/rp/publications/no14/14-04_Reynolds.pdf,
(Last accessed 2 August 2018).

the group of pro-Turkish Zazas and pro-Zazaist Zazas,[124] this is not the case. In fact, identity construction is being carried out as opposition to the pro-Kurdish Zazas and the Kurdish nationalist movement(s).[125]

Today's identity formation in the Kurdish region generally bears a link to political mobilisation. Birgitta Nedelmann points out that mobilisation is generally defined as "the development of relationships between individuals and the institutionalised representatives of a political elite".[126] This definition entails several problems. Firstly, it assumes that the 'actor' has to be an institutionalised representative of a political elite, i.e. government. However, various actors, as is seen in Turkey, can pursue political mobilisation. For instance, during the 1960s various leftist organisations, responding to the social and political inequalities at the time, mobilised individuals who had long felt marginalised by the state policies. On one hand, as Cengiz Güneş argues, the PKK and Union of Kurdistan Communities (KCK) movement continues to mobilise a large number of Kurds both at home and in the Diaspora.[127] On the other hand, Islamic organisations and parties, which had long been denied their places in mainstream politics due to the Turkish government's secularist policies, have used religion as a tool for mobilisation from 1970s and especially from the 1980s and onwards. In this example, political mobilisation can be seen on a micro and macro level. In the present Çewlig/Bingöl, the micro levels of religious and national/ethnic identities are in co-existence and at the same time clash with each other. During my fieldwork in 2011, an interviewee stressed that he sees himself both as a Kurd and as a Sunni Muslim, and he does not want to choose one of his identities over another. He pointed out that he feels that both the Kurdish movement and the current Turkish Islamic government push the locals to choose one or another, when they feel both Kurd and Muslim. He went on saying "the Turkish State has, for decades, tried to impose on us that we, the

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[124] With pro-Zaza, I mean the third group that has evolved as the last local identity 'subject' group. They argue that Zazas are neither Kurds nor Turks. In conservative areas they point to Islam as their identity marker, and in Alevi areas they point to Alevism as their identity marker.

[125] Massicard, *The Alevis in Turkey and Europe,* 2013.

[126] Nedelmann, Birgitta. 'Individuals and Parties: Changes in Processes of Political Mobilization', *European Sociological Review,* 3:3 (1987), p. 181.

[127] Güneş, Cengiz. *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey: From Protest to Resistance,* New York: Routledge, 2012.

Kirds/Zazas, are not Kurds. But we are aware of the fact that the state is doing this as part of 'divide and rule'.[128]

As a politically loaded phenomenon, identity itself is easy to mobilise through different actors, both individuals and groups. As highlighted by Francesca Polletta and James M. Jasper "Collective identity seemed to capture better the pleasures and obligations that actually persuade people to mobilize. Identity was appealing, then, as an alternative to material incentives".[129] I have witnessed that, during my fieldwork, in many cases, claiming one identity automatically created a counter-identity, in the case of those who did not conform to that particular identity they feel they belong to. A lady interviewee of this research informed that, she used to be a lot more active in the pro-Kurdish party's political activities. However, she wanted to keep her religious identity side too and continue practising it. This was not greatly respected by her comrades and it annoyed her she expressed. She added; "I will still vote for my party but I will not take part in the political activities as active anymore".[130] Nevertheless, just because identity is already pre-politicised, this does not necessarily mean that it will automatically lead to mobilisation. After all, many societies have individuals and groups co-existing with multiple identities. Where there is a political cleavage, there is often social and political unrest. Gabriel Almond describes the term political as "national, ethnic, linguistic and religious divisions that affect political allegiances and policies."[131] Although these divisions may not lead to conflict, if one group feels marginalised, or if another monopolises control of certain state resources, the two groups will be facing a possible conflict. This applies to the Zaza – Kurdish case in Turkey. The groups that place themselves as oppositional to the Turkish state have felt the consequences, and consequently have less access to the state resources, and this creates a tension between the pro-Kurdish groups and pro-Turkish state groups of Zazas. An example of this took place in Çewlig/Bingöl during the earthquake of May 2003. One of my informants who is a public worker and a member of the Human Rights Association (IHD) Bingöl branch committee, told me in a personal conversation: "The humanitarian aid was distributed

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[128] Interview conducted with Ahmet Dag in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2011.
[129] Polletta, Francesca. and Jasper, James M. `Collective Identity And Social Movements`, *Annual Review of Sociology,* 27 (2001), p. 284
[130] Interview conducted with Aysel Korkmaz during field trip in Genç, town of Çewlig/ Bingöl. Summer 2012.
[131] Almond, Gabriel A. *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, New York: Pearson, 2004.

according to those who were in support of the government party AKP, which led to a tension directed towards the government institutions".[132]

1.3.4 Local Identity: 'Us' and 'Others'

In the field of social sciences, it is often noted that identity is used as an umbrella term to describe an individual's comprehension of his- or herself as a discrete and separate entity. Thomas Hylland Eriksen argues that the first fact of ethnicity is the application of systematic distinctions between 'insiders' and 'outsiders': between 'us' and 'them'.[133] An individual can then use his or her identity to join like-minded groups to mobilise against the 'others'. The shift in the identity construction is a dynamic process, which rapidly changes. In an attempt to apply this to my research field, the identity choices of individuals and sometimes groups can change depending on political developments nationally and locally. The constant shift in preference of political parties (mainly two sides: advocates of ethnic identity/pro-Kurdish movement, and of religious identity/pro-Turkish state) in the elections could be pointed out as a strong indicator.

To define identity in this way is not to say that all groups or individuals that share the same characteristics are automatically opposed to the 'others' or indeed gravitate towards each other. 'Others' can differ depending on the conditions. For instance, during the socialist wave of the 1960s and the 1970s in Turkey, Turkish activists mobilised against the state policies regarding class equality. At the time, to be identified as an 'extreme leftist' meant one would automatically be referred to as a 'communist/infidel' and denied certain citizen rights, whilst on the other hand the 'white Turks'[134] enjoyed most of the benefits offered by the state. Rogers Brubaker rise the complexity and in some regards vagueness associated with the usage of the term of 'identity. For instance he asks that "'what do scholars mean when they talk about "identity"? What conceptual and explanatory work is the term supposed to do?".[135] Then Brubaker responding this questions asserts that how to deploy the term identity

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[132]A personal communication with Mr Ridvan Kizgin, the ex-chair of Human Rights Association (IHD), in Çewlig/Bingöl. June 2008.

[133] Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. *Ethnicity and Nationalism Anthropological Perspectives*, London: Pluto Press, 1993, p.18.

[134] White Turk or white Kurd is an accepted term, which is used for those who always work in co-operation with the state ideology in Turkey and benefit from the state sources to a considerable extent.

[135] Brubaker, Roger. *Ethnicity without Groups,* Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 2004, pp. 33-34.

depends on the context of its use and the theoretical tradition from which the use in question derives. According to Brubaker the concept of identity can be used in different respects and contexts, however generally speaking;

Identity is "Identity is something all people have, or ought to have, or are searching for … Identity is something all groups (at least groups of a certain kind-e.g., ethnic, racial, or national) have, or ought to have … Identity is something people (and groups) can have without being aware of it. In this perspective, identity is something to be discovered, and something about which one can be mistaken. The strong conception of identity thus replicates the Marxian epistemology of class, [or identity is] strong notions of collective identity imply strong notions of group boundedness and homogeneity. They imply high degrees of groupness, an 'identity' or sameness between group members, a clear boundary between inside and outside.[136]

Roger Brubaker argues that the terminology of identity "is also used by political entrepreneurs to persuade people to understand a political program they aim to apply, their interests and their predicaments in a certain way; to persuade certain people what they are (for certain purposes), whether they "identical" with one another (us) and at the same time different from 'others', and to organise and justify collective action along certain lines. In these ways the term "identity" is implicated both in everyday life and in "identity politics" in its various forms".[137] This shows that identity has multi-faceted functions. It can be used by several sub-groups within a certain group, or by a certain group against other groups. This point of Brubaker is a valuable contribution to thesis. Zazas are one the several sub-groups within Kurdish identity and they also see themselves as the group against the other sub-groups of Kurdishness. Thus, the issue of 'us' versus 'them' comes from the notion of identity, and how to perceive this notion from within and outside any particular group.[138] When applied to this research, a Kird/Zaza in Çewlîg/Bingöl could consider him/herself as part of his tribe, or belonging to Kird/Zaza-ness, Sunni Zaza-ness, Kurdishness etc.

In the Zaza case, the 'other' for the Sunni Zazas is often considered to be the Turkish state/the Kemalist regime, or the Alevi Zazas, or even, in some cases, the Kurdish

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[136] Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, p. 37

[137] For an additional example, see Brubaker, R. *Ethnicity without Groups,* Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 2004, p. 32.

[138] Elias, Norbert. Scotson, John. *The Established and the Outsiders: A Sociological Enquiry into Community Problems,* London: Sage Publications, 1965.

movement.[139] Çem argues on the other hand, the 'other' for the Alevi Zazas can be the Turkish state's pro-Islamic governments or institutions/bodies, the Sunni Zazas, and in some cases the Kurdish movement or the PKK.[140] All these factors, in the considerably small province of Çewlîg/Bingöl, shape the research topic as a complicated case. Over the decades the term Zaza-ness has earned more acceptance, not only by the 'outsiders' but also by the 'insiders'- the Zazas themselves. One could argue that the political project of Turkish State did work in certain angles on this topic. The Turkish State had planned from early stages for the term Zaza to be used as oppose the other three versions (Kird, Kirmanc and Dimilî) that were/ are used by the Zazas themselves. This would contribute to divide the Zazas from the Kurds as the other three versions of this identity names have direct links to over all Kurdish language and make reference to the Kurdishness.

The apparently uneven distribution of state power and benefits led to demonstrations and violent clashes between the 1960s and the 1980 army coup. For instance At the beginning of the 1960s decade, Turkey was challenged by several forms of financial difficulties, such as irregular inflation, high level of unemployment, large deficit in the balance of payments, and escalating urban violence between leftist and right wings political groups. Consequently, the national army intervened in Turkish politics by different means among them warning the government about the potential threat of such as domestic problematics facing the Turkish state and society. However by the escalation of the condition what the Turkish society and surrounding world were witnessing emerging a military coup in the early 1960s that altered the entire political landscape in the country[141]. Then as things were getting worse and shown to be out of control in the Turkey has in September 12, 1980 experienced another however more controversial military coup, where Turkish Armed Forces launched a military coup d'état –the third in the history of the Turkish state. This coup was a product of the following domestic condition cross the whole Turkey, also;

In the late 1970s, Turkey erupted into a low grade civil war. The civilian government was helpless to stop it. Terrorism, assassinations, riots, and open battles with the military became

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[139] Çem, Munzur. *Dersim Merkezli Kürt Aleviligi: Etnisite, Dini Inanç, Kültür ve Direnis,* Istanbul: Vate, 2009.

[140] Munzur. *Dersim Merkezli Kürt Aleviligi,* p. 577.

[141] Weiker, Walter F. *The Modernization of Turkey: From Ataturk to the Present Day*, New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1981, pp. 9-20.

commonplace. In 1979 and the first nine months of 1980, there were nearly 9,000 violent incidents. Over four thousand were killed and more than ten thousand wounded. By 1980, almost half of Turkey's 67 provinces contained so-called "liberated zones," or pieces of territory under the control of non-state armed groups. Political parties and the security services are said to have had shadowy connections to the militants. Some of these groups set up governance and dispute resolution structures. This conflict met most standards of what constitutes a civil war, although it is not often recorded as one.[142]

Following the 1980 coup, the issue of class differences had become more apparent. This notion offered more problematic and multi dimensional approaches to the way of considering other-ness by a particular ethnic group (Zazas). Furthermore, the economic factors have started playing a role in the identity in formation for the last three decades. In terms of their religion, Alevis are mainly considered as 'others', no matter if they are Zaza or Kurmanj or even Turks. Thus, the notion of otherness can be regarded as including multiple issues. In the forthcoming discussion, in the analytical chapters, this notion will be elaborated in detail.

The 'them' and 'us' scenario becomes more prevalent as the power balance becomes more established. This scenario has been played out globally throughout history where identity has continually been used as a political and social marker. This is also the case in Turkey, where the Kurdish identity and the Kirdkî/Zazakî identity have been politicised by both the state and Kurdish national movement(s). In the Kird/Zaza example, if one chooses to identify oneself as a pro-Kurd in Çewlig/Bingöl, one is immediately labelled as 'other/outsider', from the perspective of the state and by pro-Zaza groups. On the other hand, for the perspective of pro-Kurdish Kirds/Zazas, the position is the opposite; they would find 'others' in pro-Turkish state groups and among groups who claim that Zazas are a people on their own. This phenomenon is even clearer in the current norms of the societal structure in Çewlig/Bingöl. The group(s) that distance themselves from the pro-Kurdish stance enjoy the monopoly of power, acting as the established.

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[142] Evans, Ryan. `The 1980 Coup And A Slow Transition: The Real Turkish Model For Egypt?`, 2013, Https://Warontherocks.Com/2013/07/The-1980-Coup-And-A-Slow-Transition-The-Real-Turkish-Model-For-Egypt/ (Last Accessed 2 October 2017).

In the case of current Turkey, the outsider always has the opportunity to be assimilated into the established group on the condition of relinquishing their ethnic identity as Kurd and assuming the Turkish culture.[143] However, for the last two decades, the rise and militarisation of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey/Turkish Kurdistan has been a tool to prove that, despite facing political and social marginalisation, many Kurds are strongly opposed to surrendering this identity. This could be said for the case of pro-Kurdish Kird/Zaza group(s).

In the field of anthropology, the common stance is that the ethnicity is an optional identity, which is often overshadowed by other identities, such as regional, gender, religious and class identities[144]. The mainstream argument is that the Kurdish ethnic identity consequently stands as one of the most important of identities, and will be used in this instance as the 'umbrella' for all other sub-identities[145]. It is also vital to point out that this does not necessarily mean that the ethnic identity always takes precedence over others. In the example of Çewlig/Bingöl, the religious/Muslim identity can be considered the 'umbrella' identity holder in some cases. Both the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement as the two main 'outsider' political players on the stage of policy making in the current Çewlig/Bingöl, can be considered successful in their programmes: the Turkish state/the AKP government applying the religious entity of Muslim unity, and on the other hand the Kurdish movement (KCK) suggesting a Kurdish nation as the umbrella identity to gather people together for a common goal.[146] The Kurdish movement is applying new strategies on a grassroots level, such as introducing the KCK social movement structure and maintaining that it will accommodate all ethnic,

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[143] Tezcür, `Kurdish Nationalism and Identity in Turkey`, 2-19.
[144] Lorenz, Chris. Representations of Identity: Ethnicity, Race, Class, Gender and Religion. An Introduction to Conceptual History,
http://www.culturahistorica.es/chris_lorenz/representations_of_identity.pdf (Last accessed 14 July 2016).
[145] This is an assumption Khdhir H. Dilshad maintain's and investigate in his PhD dissertation.
Khdhir, Dilshad H. `Dynamics of Kurdish identity formation in the Kurdistan region-Iraq between 1991 and 2014`, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Nottingham, (2015).
http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/47221/1/PhD_thesis_D_Khdhir_pdf.pdf (Last accessed 16 May 2018).
[146] It is worth mentioning that the PKK movement is transforming into a mass social movement under the name of Union of Kurdistan Communities (KCK) which is considered as an umbrella establishment including different ethnicities, religious beliefs and languages that are still present in the 'greater Kurdistan'.
See Saeed, Seevan. *Kurdish politics in Turkey: from the PKK to the KCK*, London: Routledge, 2016.

religious and social differentiations and empower local governments. This new project is aiming towards the creation of a unified nation where the people are 'Kurds'.

1.4 Literature Review

Although there are no shortages of sources related to the theoretical discourses on identity in general, and Kurdish identity in particular, there is limited published material work focusing specifically on Zaza-speaking Kurds in Turkey. In most of the literature dealing with the 'Kurdish question', Zazas are principally referred to in terms of their linguistic difference. Zaza-related identity issues only account for a very small part of the literature. Scholarship on the Zazas such as Mehmed S. Kaya's book on Zazas (2010), Elise Massicard's book on Alevis and Identity (2013), Arakelova's article regarding Zazas (1999) and Van Bruinessen's book *Agha Sheikh and State* (1992) will be extensively utilised throughout this thesis as they cover many aspects of this research topic. Although not directly focused on Zaza identity construction, other sources such as Lale Yalçin-Heckman's *Tribe and Kinship Among the Kurds* (1990) Carol Delaney's *The Seed and The Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society* (1991) and Paul J. Magnarella's *Tradition and Change in a Turkish Town* (1982) will be used, mainly for their anthropological perspectives on identity. These sources are explained in more detail below, in the literature review section. They contribute immensely to this research since they deal with similar topics and/or geographical and social community structure in Turkey and Turkish Kurdistan.

All the above-mentioned works play an important role as they offer direct information to this relatively new topic in academia. The further sources presented in the literature review, although they lack in presenting direct relevancy to the topic, also contribute significantly since they deal with similar topics or geographical and social community structure.

One of the main works focusing on the Kird/Zazas is Mehmet S. Kaya's book, *The Zaza Kurds of Turkey: A Middle Eastern Minority in a Globalised Society* (2010). The fact that Kaya himself comes from Çewlig/Bingöl makes his work more important for my own research since it deals with same geographical and therefore social structure. It is also one the latest publications on the region - irrespective of specific subject - and it is

a work of social anthropology. The book presents some insightful information regarding the Kird/Zaza society's structure; it contains general information on class and religious aspects of different groups, kinship, gender relations, tribal relations and economic dynamics in Çewlig/Bingöl. It is therefore one of the most relevant sources for my research. Although it contains some structural limitations, this book is the most relevant both socially and geographically. It is also similar in its methodological perspectives.

The work of Kaya, which is based on field research about the Kird/Zazas, attempts to illuminate how the Zaza people carry on their way of life and maintain their cultural identity despite the influence of globalisation. Kaya argues that the premise of his study was to analyse how the Kird/Zazas perceive their own identity. He looks mainly into this group's cultural aspects, such as customs, tradition and folklore. Kaya argues that although Kird/Zazas have a distinct way of practicing certain cultural traditions such as music, dance and festivals on a local level, one could not argue that it differs from the Kurdish cultural practices in the broader picture. Furthermore, he points out that there is a common sense (with Kurdishness) of feeling in reaction to the Turkish state's policies applied in the region.

Kaya's study has become one of the main available sources of general information on the Kird/Zazas. It presents the local picture in a detailed way, which allows the book to offer the readers detailed information about the region. However, Kaya's book focuses mainly on the area of Solhan, one town of Çewlig/Bingöl province. It therefore, presents only a limited picture of Kird/Zaza identity and culture. In contrast, my research will aim to look at the identity issue of Zazas more broadly. In other words, I will mainly carry out my research based on Çewlig/Bingöl province but will also consider the bordering provinces of Diyarbakir, Elazig, Dersim and Muş so as to better frame and assess Çewlîg/Bingöl's identity dynamics. This comparative perspective will include an examination of the various religious, ethnic, linguistic, folkloric identities and micro-identities (in terms of local specificity).

Although Kaya's work is the most directly involved in my research field, he has not utilised extensive fieldwork data. His work may be limited in presenting different

perspectives, which results in a narrow analytical discussion. Moreover, his book contains a limited bibliography that restricts the perspective of the research. Another factor that could be down side to his work is, the fact that he has been living in Europe for most his life, which in a way makes him an outsider researcher. Thus, when he analyses his data, it is usually done from an 'outsider' perspective, which could be counted as a limiting factor in his case.

"The Zaza People as a New Ethno-political Factor in the Region" (1999), an article written by Victoria Arakelova, is another important work on Turkey's Zazas. Arakelova points out that, for various reasons, the Kurds (or/and the Zazas) started becoming aware of their ethnic specificity only in the 20th century, under the rule of the Turkish Republic. Victoria Arakelova emphasizes that the Zazas are victims of assimilation policies applied by the Turkish state. Arakelova presents an informative overlook of the Zazas in Turkey, but she hardly mentions the Zazas of Çewlig/Bingöl, which limits the usefulness of the article for my case.

Arakelova emphases that in the 1990s the Turkish state, by giving Alevis more freedom than before, wanted to encourage the left to politically adapt to the Alevis. On the other hand, it wanted to create opposition, by encouraging the right-wing/conservative groups to affiliate themselves with the Sunnis. This argument takes into account the Turkish state's 'rich history' in dividing oppositional groups in various ways. This is relevant to the Zaza situation in modern Turkey. Therefore my thesis will adopt a similar style of analysis to understand further why the identity dynamics are so various in my research area.

During the 70s, 80s and 90s, there was a group of intellectual Alevi (mainly Kurish Alevis) advocating for separatism or cultural rights, often immigrants in Europe, trying to attract international attention to their agendas of claiming a distinct identity as Alevism. Zaza intellectuals followed much the same path, with immigration mainly to Sweden. One of the leaders of this movement was Ebubekir Pamukçu who created the *Serbestî* (meaning independence) movement which explicitly announced that it was a Zaza movement in the early 1980s. Arakelova argues that the term 'Zazaistan' was first used by the founder of the Zaza movement Pamukçu. This term has increasingly

acquired academic legitimacy. Arakelova's attempt in presenting Pamukçu as an important Zaza movement leader is similar to the efforts of the Turkish state. It was apparent in the court documents of the Ergenekon case[147] that Pamukçu worked in co-operation with the Turkish state as part of the state's political agenda against Zazas/Kurds.[148]

Although its lack of updated information, the article is nonetheless still highly informative and useful to my own research. Arakelova is successful in presenting a clear picture of identity politics of the separatist groups of Zazas. The analysis that she presents about the Zaza nationalist groups in her article would, therefore, make a valuable contribution to my research. In general, although her article is limited in some ways, the fact that there is a paucity of directly relevant sources in this field points her work as a valuable source for this research.

Despite being a valuable addition to the scholarship on the Zazas, Arakelova's research also raises some points for concern. She presents Zazas as if all of them were Alevis, and mostly ignores the existence of the Sunni Zazas. The fact is, Zazas are not all Alevis; in fact the majority of the Zazas are Sunni Muslims, as in the example of Çewlig/Bingöl, where 80 per cent of the population is Sunni Muslim.[149] She did not base her article on fieldwork, and neither did she conduct enough interviews to allow different voices within Zaza communities to be heard, ultimately making her analyses factually contestable. Furthermore, the information in her article is mostly not relevant to the current picture (politically and socially) of Zaza identity.

Arakelova primarily adopts a political focus, in her attempt to make implicit political connections between the Zazas and Armenians prior to the Armenian Genocide in 1915, during Ottoman rule. Her approach is simply political, containing a discourse of

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[147] The Ergenekon case was one of the most important issues in Turkey since 2007. The Ergenekon movement is a Kemalist and Nationalist movement, which attempted to take down the current AKP regime in Turkey. However, the government arrested senior members of it, and it was no longer a serious threat.
[148] Ergenekon Davasi ve Bazi Zazacilari, http://www.zazaki.net/haber/ergenekon-davasi-ve-bazi-zazacilar-829.htm (Last accessed 18 July 2017).
[149] Interview conducted with Serdest Kar, a sociologist and writer from Bingöl. August 2012.

political propaganda. Therefore, this article stands weak in academic style, as the political stance is the primary goal.

The anthropological works that have been written about the cultural aspects of Kurds, or more generally about Turkey, are taken into account to help the framework of this thesis. One of these works is Lale Yalçin-Heckman's study, *Tribe and Kinship Among The Kurds* (1990). Lale Yalçin's book gives an informative insight regarding tribal and semi-nomadic society in Hakkari. Hakkari is a predominantly Kurdish province in Turkey bordering Iran and Iraq, frequently referred to as 'stronghold of pure Kurds and Kurdish tribes'. This geographical position (an important Kurdish city in Turkey) makes the book crucial for my study. It is important to question how the region has seen the interaction of outsiders and insiders. How did this affect political and economical factors? And finally, what sort of role did these different elements play in the dynamics of identity?

During her anthropological fieldwork, Lale Yalçin Heckman chose to stay in a small village where she was hosted by a lower class family, rather than a more prestigious one. She notes that she deliberately chose to stay with a more lowlyfamily, so that she could have closer contact with the inhabitants of the village. In the structure of village life, it is easy to access all aspects of daily life, including men's routines as they mostly gather in a central house in the evenings, from which the women are not excluded. On the other hand, in cities (such as Hakkari's city centre), men mostly have their meetings/gatherings in tea houses during the day, with women not having such an easy access to these discussions. The above-mentioned picture applies in many ways to my fieldwork experiences. I also chose to interview people in the settings of daily life, such as tea houses, summer leisure parks, and home gatherings. These environments are helpful in the sense of having a less formal environment, which encourages the participants to speak their thoughts more naturally.

One of the main aims of Heckman's book is to examine how the Kurdish identity is being shaped by the effects of the political awareness, or the on-going assimilation policies applied by the Turkish state. Yalçin also wants to observe the differences between the Kurdish and Turkish cultures/customs. Moreover, she focuses on how

Kurdish groups contribute to the economic, political and social structures of modern Turkey.

Taking in account Hakkari's leading role in the Kurdish national movement's history, the stages that its society went through in the 1980s could give an idea of how the social structure is shaped for areas such as Çewlig/Bingöl and its towns. Although globalisation is constantly present in terms of changing the local customs and traditions, Bingöl's being close to Hakkari geographically and culturally, makes it advantageous for my research to benefit from this example. Thus, using Yalçin's book will help in making general judgments.

Even though Yalçin's work deals with a similar area, her centre of attention is more on cultural aspects. On the other hand, my research will rather focus on the construction of identity, also in a political sense. This is to emphasise that the main focuses are different. Therefore, my approach will be different and may lead to different results.

For the aim of contextualizing the case of Zaza people theoretically, some works, such as Carol Delaney's *The Seed and The Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society* (1991) and Paul J. Magnarella's *Tradition and Change in a Turkish Town* (1982) will offer valuable contributions for this research.

In her book *The Seed and the Soil,* Carol Delaney reveals the powerful meanings condensed in the seemingly innocent words, 'seed' and 'soil'. Conducting her work in a Turkish Sunni Muslim village in mid-Anatolia, she shows the readers that images are categorically different. She argues that the different ways in which the creation of a child is understood in Turkey is a way of understanding the people's attitudes toward sexuality and gender, honour and shame, time and space, inside and outside, open and secret. In addition, the symbols and ways with which they represent protection, provide the means for understanding of elements such as the family, house, village, nation, religion, this world and the next world. Delaney points out that these symbols do not seek to beautify reality; they provide the key to a particular conception of reality, a conception which helps bring coherence to social life.

Delaney's anthropological work looks into the ordinary village life in Turkey. The main motivations in her research are gender, power and religion. The fact that God has been symbolised as masculine, indeed affects how the village people think about man and woman, the nature of authority and the structures of power, the share in daily life. The symbolism of the seed (man) and the soil (woman) indicates that one would not be able without the other. Man appears to provide the creative spark of life, and the essential identity of a child, while woman, like soil, contributes the material that sustains it.

Paternity has meant a begetting, primary, creative, engendering role, and it is the same no matter whether the male is a human being or God 'the father'. If one can identify a difference between the two, it is not the role that they play, but the human and divine realms. On the other hand, even though a woman has an important and necessary role in procreation, her role has been imagined as secondary and not superlative, not that of a creator or co-creator. Many elements that Delaney presents in her argument are relatively applicable to my research in some ways.

Delaney started to do her field work in 1980, in a Sunni Turkish village in mid-Anatolia. The army coup, which took place during her fieldwork in Turkey, made conditions more difficult for her, but as she states, 'life itself was not put on hold'. In this sense it did not make a difference for her research fieldwork. Her book discusses the theory of procreation, as it constructs notions of embodied persons, both man and woman. It then goes on using the symbols and meanings of procreation to review the Mediterranean concepts of marriage, which includes the complex of attitudes and practices known as the honour code. Life of an individual, family and village are analysed in detail. In her research, she uses the symbols and theory of procreation to illuminate the lives of the locals (villagers), notions of how people are related to each other through time (descent) and space (how near or how distant they are). She then goes into more detail dealing with actual lived space (the house, the village, the country and the world), the division in daily routine work for reproduction on the household, and the rhetoric of nationalism. All these elements are examined within the framework of Islamic life.

The relations within the family structure, the way that the family members contribute the daily work, and the fact that the region is a Sunni Muslim area, are similar

phenomena to the Çewlig/Bingöl area. Thus, Delaney's work will contribute to certain extent to my research.

Looking in depth to the internal (domestic) cultures of mid-Anatolia and Eastern Turkey, one could say the ways of practising religion are different, more conservative in the Bingöl area. Also, the 'belonging relationship' ties with the state are obviously different between the two regions in Turkey. Mid-Anatolia, identifying themselves as Turkish Muslims, have a much stronger 'belonging relationship' compared with the non Turkish Muslims of the Çewlig/Bingöl area. In addition to the above reasons, the time difference (over three decades) between the two pieces of research may be another disadvantage for my research when questioning whether Delaney's book can be useful or not for my work.

One of the older anthropological books written on Turkey is Paul J. Magnarella's *Tradition and Change in a Turkish Town*, which also introduced some remarkable ideas about routine life in Turkey at the time. Magnarella argues that the modernisation process is usually encouraged by the international arena in underdeveloped countries. Experts such as economists, political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists and historians contribute to this process.

Magnarella argues that for Muslim societies in Turkey, the radical changes within family life only started changing in the second half of the 20th century. The marital and kinship relationships also started being reshaped by the society or 'social engineers'. This could be said more clearly for Western Turkey from the 1950s and onwards. Magnarella gives some detailed information on the historical and geographical aspects of Susurluk, a town in Balikesir province, in the West of Turkey. The writer moves on, giving the political picture of the Turkish state during the era of the Democrat Party's power in 1950s. Democrat Party (DP) took the power in the first election of the multi-party period in Turkey. Therefore, it is important for the history of Turkish state, in terms of the DP's role in changing the society's life.

The changes in the economic structure also started contributing to the dissolution of the traditional patrilocal household. Newly married sons established separate household as

soon as they were financially able. People who were employed in some official government jobs were regarded as members of the 'official class' (*memur sinifi*). With change in the community's economic and working structure, increased integration with Turkey's modern urban centres, closer contact with the West, and the adoption of the Western civil code, alterations in this system were inevitable.

Magnarella points out that one of most remarkable phenomena in the changing social structure is the process of individualization (the emergence of the individual from the larger kin group). These elements are important for individuals and groups shifting identity. In my case study, strong reference could be made in this regard.

In the Ottoman period, Islam influenced all areas of daily life, such as kinship, the market, politics, and education. Given this, one could argue that the aforementioned conservative structure controlled everything and reduced the flexibility and range of human behaviour. The reformers who established the new state of the Republic of Turkey, believed that their revolution could be successful only if Islam's prominent position as the central influence was significantly weakened/eliminated. The secular ideology of the state started to have an impact on people's daily life, much more significantly in some parts of Turkey than others.

As Magdarella argues, Susurluk's example fits a general pattern of change shared by various small communities throughout Turkey. With establishment of the new state, Susurluk's economic and social life improved rapidly. Formerly characterised by agriculture and a limited market economy, this small town was transformed into an industrial, commercial, and governmental centre, having a greater regional and national position. This new role of Susurluk encouraged people from surrounding rural areas to move to the city. The new arrivals in cities had to change their former peasant lifestyle into a new urban socio-cultural heterogeneity.

It could be argued that the speed of change in the norms of society between Susurluk in 1970s and Çewlig/Bingöl's in the 1980s and 90s are similar. The difference in period could be explained by the ethnic difference and even the differences of religious practices between the two areas. Similarly with Delaney's case, because of the

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difference in feelings of 'belonging', the situation in Susurluk could differ from Çewlig/Bingöl. Although there is time and field difference between Magnarella's study and mine, I could still apply a similar approach for my fieldwork and analyses.

Magnarella tends to present a number of cases for his study as facts for the whole of Turkey, which is a down side to his analyses. In other words, because fieldwork takes place in a specific time and place, analysis of the research should avoid making generalisations.

Martin Van Bruinessen is one of the pioneers in the field of Kurdish studies. He has written a number of books and articles on Kurds of all areas. Van Bruinessen is one of the most referenced academics in the world within Kurdish studies. He still produces a high volume of work in the field, and more importantly his publications are still relevant to the Kurdish issue and sub-groups of the Kurds. His publications on Kurdish identity(-ies) offer broad information to explore the issue from historical, linguistic and anthropological angles. Van Bruinessen explains the struggle of Kurds and the historical formation of Kurdish identity in Turkey. He has visited many areas of 'greater Kurdistan', including the Zaza populated areas, which gives him a broad perspective on Kurds. Thus, his observations and fieldwork data are valuable for the field of Kurdish studies.

Martin van Bruinessen's book *Agha Sheikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (1992) is one of his main works for my research subject. This work underlines a perspective about the nature of the Kurdish national struggle. Further, it also draws a picture of social class in the Kurdish communities. Van Bruinessen highlights important aspects of Kurdish perspectives in their struggle against the Turkish Republic since it was established in 1923. Furthermore, he covers the issue of assimilation policies applied by the Turkish State. The areas that he covers in Kurdish studies significantly overlaps with the main concerns of my own study.

One of the main focuses in his work, which could be counted as a direct source for my research area, is the revolt of Sheikh Said (a Sunni-Zaza from Palu, a tawn between Elazig and Çewlig/Bingöl) which largely took place in my research area, in 1925.

Bruinessen highlights the question of whether the revolt of 'Sheikh Said' was religious or nationalist. He then argues that the revolt was a mix of both elements. He also writes vastly about the Dersim revolt in 1938, another major revolt against the Turkish state led by Seyyid Riza (an Alevi Zaza from Dersim). He offers insightful information about the revolt and seeks an answer to whether the main theme of that revolt was national or religious. The way he seeks for an answer for the above question involve issues of identity formation that are directly relevant for my research topic. Thus, his collection of academic works stands out as extremely valuable for my research.

One major criticism could be that Van Bruinessen has undervalued the importance of the social and political outcome of the Sheikh Said revolt. Arguably, Sheikh Said's revolt has had an important influence on Kurdish-Turkish relations throughout the twentieth century in Turkey. Van Bruinessen does not stress this enough in his analyses regarding 'Turkey's Kurdish issue'.

In order to understand the case of Kird/Zazas, the question of Kurds in Turkey has to be examined thoroughly. The Zazakî speaking group has mostly been mentioned as part of Kurdishness until recently. However, in a number of important academic works by McDowall, Van Bruinessen and Kirisçi, the main two uprisings (Sheikh Said and Dersim revolts) of Kurds in the early era of the Turkish Republic have been labelled as 'Zaza uprisings' rather than Kurdish. This was done for analytical purposes, rather than to argue that there is a separation between Zazas and Kurds from a political identity perspective. My study will benefit from the abovementioned books both for their methodological and historical information. However, the information can be regarded as data that is not directly parallel with the main interest of my study, since Kird/Zaza identity has not been dealt with in a specific way.

The Alevis in Turkey and Europe: Identity and Managing Territorial Diversity (2013) written by Elise Massicard, is one of the newer books published which can significantly benefit this research, primarily for its similar way of dealing with the structural framework. Although this book's focus seems to be on religion, with a closer look it can be regarded as having a similar approach to the current thesis, as it also uses religion for the purpose of identity concerns. Moreover, since the religious marker of identity is

mentioned as one of the main identity markers, the analyses will have similarities in this respect. Alevism, like Zaza-ness, is extensively used by the Turkish state to stress that the Alevis are 'not a different ethnicity (Kurdish) but are Turks'. Unlike the case of Çewlig/Bingöl's Sunni Zazas, it is the Kemalist face of the Turkish state which convinces them or attempts to convince them to stress Turkishness in their identity.[150] This strategy has worked well in Dersim, known to be Alevi-Zaza city. Election results in Dersim are a strong indicator for this argument. Currently, both (only two as it is a small city) of the Dersim MPs are members of pro-Kemalist party, the Republican People's Party (CHP), the party that was founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1924.

Elise Massicard's book offers valuable information, as well as an interesting framework for my own research. For example, the notion of 'identity without identity' can be fruitfully adjusted to my study of identity construction. The book also introduces a well-structured outlook on Alevi politics and contains serious anthropological observations and data concerning Turkey in general, but also Turkish Kurdistan. It moreover makes references to certain processes of asserting collective identities from the 1980s onwards that may also be observed in my own fields of research. Such processes, the book shows, have put an – at least partial – end to the invisibility of some groups in Turkey.

Massicard's terms of '*Aleviness and Alevism*' can be applied to Zazaness and Zazaism. She defines these two (-*ness* and –*ism*) as different things, the first referring to identity itself and the second to an identity claim made by a group. Alternatively, the first may be what outsiders consider a separate group, and the latter is the identity claim made by the group itself. Applying this to my case, one might argue that –ness refers to a permanent social and cultural reality seen by outsiders such as the Turkish state, while –ism has appeared since the 1980s.

Massicard sets 1980 as the breakthrough point in Alevi identity, in Turkey and Europe, which is also true of my subject. Comparing my finds to hers will provide me with useful research standards. Massicard is one of those who see Alevism as a higher identity over ethnic identity (that is over Kurdishness, Turkishness or Zazaness). She

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[150] Alevism in Turkey mainly highlights the secular face of the state, as opposed to the Sunni Muslims' religious stance.

regards Alevism as a kind of ethnic identity, which contrasts with my own findings on Zazaness. This contrast will provide standards and points of comparison and reflection in my own study. In all, Massicard's book offers a parallel perspective to my research, and it will be of great help to my work, providing certain guidelines (concerning for example identity shifts, geographic considerations, etc.) in the way this study will deal with in its analytical chapters. It also offers a number of examples of, and paradigms on how, the politics of identity construction are structured at a popular level.

Güneş Murat Tezcür's article *Kurdish Nationalism and Identity in Turkey: A Conceptual Reinterpretation* in the European Journal of Turkish Studies (EJTS) in 2009 is valuable for my study, especially in the way it conceptualizes its topic. Tezcür argues that the development of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey contains many uncertain and controversial sides. He stresses that it is difficult to draw clear lines between different political stances in the relations between the Kurds and the Turkish state.

Tezcür claims that it is specific organizations rather than ethnic groups in general that should be the focus of scholarly analyses. He critically questions the analyses that rely on the dichotomy of ethnic nationalism versus civic nationalism as well as the dichotomy of state versus society. Tezcür believes that neither of these two approaches adequately capture the richness and ambiguity of the broader Kurdish political identity in Turkey. His idea that it is more the organizations that have an impact in designing identity choices, seems to also apply in Çewlig/Bingöl, as the battle over Kird/Zaza identity by different political groups is an ongoing one.

Tezcür points out that Turkish nationalism, which is perceived to promote a Turkic ethnicity at the expense of other ethnic groups, has fostered and radicalized ethnic Kurdish nationalism. There is a similar argument made by the pro-Zazaist groups in Çewlig/Bingöl, which claim that it is not only the Turkish state that applies assimilation policies to the Zazas, but also the Kurdish movement. This multiplicity creates a dynamic puzzle over identity debates in Çewlig/Bingöl.

The article underlines the existence of different views on identity among the Zazas (as in my study, Tezcür places the pro-Turkish-state Zazas mainly in Elaziğ province, a

Turkified Zaza area). He bases his assumptions on his fieldwork, which produces results comparable to my research. He speaks about general identity dynamics in Turkey as well as about Kurdish identity(-ies) in particular. However, Kird/Zaza identity construction is not central to Tezcür's article. Moreover, although he mentions the Zazas, his paper does not present different Zaza groups' prespectives, especially in what concerns the Kird/Zazas of Çewlig/Bingöl. Furthermore, Tezcür does not consider the role of the Zazas in the Kurdish nationalist movement, which weakens his analyses on the interactions between the Zazas and the general Kurdish movement.

Peter Alford Andrews' *Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey* (1989) is another pioneering book that is important for my work. Andrews argues that groups are recognized by the way they produce themselves in successive generations, as distinct from other (usually neighbouring) groups. In this sense, he makes a point of not confusing ethnicity with nationality. In the context of Turkey, it is particularly important to emphasise this difference, since the ethnic group upon which the Republic is based has, since its earliest years, integrated the use of the word 'Türk' in an ethnic, as well as a national sense, without any very clear distinction between them. The Turkish Republic intentionally misuses the civic use of belonging, citizens of the Turkish Republic for its political agenda. Therefore, many Zazas/Kurds and other ethnic groups, especially under the influence of Ankara's assimilation policies, consider that 'citizen of Turkish Republic' is equivalent to the term 'Turk'.

Andrews argues that there is no attempt made to condone the fiction by which it is pretended that these groups in Turkey are ethnic Turks. He also points out that for the Zaza or the Kurdish case, the Turkish state has called them *Dağ Türkleri* (mountain Turks) *or Türk Kürtleri* (Turkish Kurds), treating them as if they have somehow confused their identities and therefore call themselves Kurds or Zazas. This argument will be discussed and analysed in my work.

In his book, Andrews points out that although the Sunni Zazas are different from Turks and even from Alevi Zazas, their religious practices are similar to the Sunni Kurds in the same region. Except for the people who have learned both dialects (Zazakî and Kurmanjî-Kurdish), Zazaki is sufficiently different from Kurmanjî to prevent effective

communication between the two groups. In spite of this, Andrews goes on, the majority of Zazas regard themselves as Kurds. My paper tends to take a parallel viewpoint, based on my own research.

There is some useful information in Andrews' book that my research will benefit from. The book gives some factual data such as the religious and linguistic composition of different ethnic groups in Turkey and especially in Turkish Kurdistan. He presents an estimated the number for the Zazas' population, two million in Turkey but he then stresseses that it is only an estimated number. The Turkish censuses, after 1965, have not included the question of ethnic origin, since all the population in Turkish Kurdistan is considered as Turkish. All in all, Andrews' book will be important to my study for its content of detailed data and identity analysis.

On the other hand, Andrews' book is not unchallenged for some points. It has been two-and-a-half decades since the book was published. Therefore, the analyses with regards to identity dynamics that are made in his book are in a sense out of date, as the shift in identity construction in Kird/Zaza identity is by scholars dealing of this subject considered to be a new and ongoing process. Political identity construction for the case of the Kird/Zaza started in the 1980s, which coincides with the date of the publication of Andrews' book. Since then, the identity dynamics for Çewlig/Bingöl or/and all the Zaza population have changed, which weakens the contribution of this book to my research.

Abbas Vali's article "Genealogies of the Kurds: Constructions of Nation and National Identity in Kurdish Historical Writings" in his book *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism* (2003) has a great deal of information and a different perspective that could potentially contribute to this paper. Vali argues that, although nationalist discourse recognises the present fragmentation of the nationalist political plan resulting from the division of Kurdistan, it retains the idea of uniform community and identity, conceived as expressions of the common origin, which supersede the existing political boundaries and the structural diversity of Kurdish societies in the region. This is similar to the stance of the pro-Kurdish movement of the Kird/Zazas in the case of my study.

In his article, Vali points out that notions of Kurdish community and identity are both premised on the common constituent elements of Kurdish national origin and identity. His article arguably attempts to posit a political identity as opposed to the assimilation policies of all the four states (Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria) where indigenous Kurds live as citizens of the countries. Ethnicists' construction of the common origin thus provide the discursive field for the construction of national identity, which always involves essentialist claims to the common origin. This set of the discourses of origin and identity in the ethnicity method means that ethnic categories alone define the boundaries of the Kurdish community. Moreover, they explain a historically and culturally defined zone of inclusion and exclusion which persistently affirms the uniform identity of the Kurdish community by contrasting its ethnic origin to those of the surrounding Turkish, Arab and Persian communities.

Vali's argues that the denial of Kurdish identity and the destruction of civil society in Kurdistan were the necessary conditions of the construction of a uniform national identity in these multi-ethnic nation-states. This allocates a specific character to Kurdish nationalism, setting it apart from classical nationalism in Europe. The shift in the Kird/Zaza identity in Çewlig/Bingöl or in wholly Zaza-inhabited areas in Turkey seems to follow this path too. Therefore, the article will be used to broaden the analytical perspectives in my thesis.

Vali's article presents a perspective that includes references to identity in historical bases, a style that does not exist in much other contemporary research in the field of Kurdish studies. It attempts to make connections to the past, to the key historical events and key personalities, which could help in the argument sections of this thesis. Furthermore, it makes references to the Sheik Said revolt in 1925, an important historical event as a base for Kird/Zaza identity, from which my research will make connections and benefit stylistically. Nevertheless, Vali's article includes limitations, especially applied to my research. Although he counts Zazas as a Kurdish sub-group, he rarely makes direct references to the Zazakî speaking group in his paper. This reduces the potential usefulness of his paper.

I.5 Methodological Considerations

1.5.1 Broader Research Context

The 20th century proved to be a difficult period for researchers within all disciplines concerned with ethnic minorities within the Turkish territories. Significantly, research regarding 'the other' (sunni)Muslim ethnicities was mainly supported directly or indirectly by the Turkish state in order to prove that 'the others' were not actually that different from the Turks but, in fact, were originally Turks or Turkic tribes. This was more obvious in the rural areas. The Kurds, including the Zazas, are mainly Sunnis, like most Turks, but constitute, nevertheless, the biggest ethnicity after the Turks in the Turkish Republic[151]. The state has attempted to Turkify them for decades. It has been a process started from the very early of the establishment of the Turkish nation state, however, this process in the 1908s stepped into a new form[152]. What is the hallmark of this new era is that this Turkification has in this period in addition to the assimilation policy aimed also at dividing the Kurds as best as possible.

Çewlîg/Bingöl's Kird/Zaza identity is a field where hardly any academic research has been conducted. Although several academic and non-academic studies have been carried out on the subject in a broader sense (on Kurds generally or on Dersim's Alevi Kirmanc/Zaza identity)[153], there is hardly any work dealing with Çewlîg/Bingöl's Sunni Muslim Kird/Zaza identity. Furthermore, given the topic's academic novelty, as well as its political sensitivity, my research approach has been adjusted so as to better address these two issues, as will be presented below.

Identity construction has only recently become important for the inhabitants of Çewlig/Bingöl. The subjects of this identity, who previously were mainly the 'objects'[154] in these identity debates, the local Kirds/Zazas themselves, were not asked to define their own identity. Until the early 1980s, this was rather done by 'outsiders' such as the Turkish state and the Kurdish nationalist movement, which made identity

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[151] Yavuz, `Five stages of the construction of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey`, 1-24.

[152] Bruinessen, Martin van `Genocide in Kurdistan? The suppression of the Dersim rebellion in Turkey (1937-38) and the chemical war against the Iraqi Kurds (1988)`, in George J. Andreopoulos (ed), *Conceptual and historical dimensions of genocide*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994, pp. 141-170.

[153] Alevi Kirmanc/Zazas live mainly in Dersim/Tunceli province, which is one of the main Zaza cities along with Çewlig/Bingöl in Turkey.

[154] The outcome of my fieldwork concludes that there was not the awareness of a separate identity among the people in Çewlig/Bingöl until the 1980s.

considerations rather detached from the people whose identity was being debated. In the results of my fieldwork, this assertion is clearly visible. One can also mark a reaction to 'outsider' identity constructors on the ground.

1.5.2 Research Methods

This study will mainly adopt qualitative research approaches: as will be shown, such approaches can better make sense of the multiplicity of data available without compromising validity or credibility. As Brady and Collier suggest, such research should "maximize the validity of measurements".[155] In other words, it should use reliable data-collection procedures that, if applied again, should yield almost the same data. Although studies in identity construction may not be measured on a scientific level, the case in my fieldwork area tends to be in line with the above argument of Brady and Collier.

The present study on the construction and consolidation of Zaza identity, can be methodologically placed within the tradition of sociology, as well as political and cultural anthropology.[156] Although the main approach of this study aims to take advantage of the political anthropology field,[157] it will also benefit from other disciplines, such as sociology and political sciences, and subject fields where identity construction research topics can be placed.[158]

For methodological purposes, the study will draw on the multi-disciplinary approach of general qualitative research.[159] It is worth further explaining the importance of a qualitative research approach in gathering and analysing data. Denzin and Linkoln have defined qualitative research as: "multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This would mean that qualitative researchers study in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in

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[155] Brady, Henry E. and Collier, David. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, Rowman and Littlefield, Maryland, 2010, p. 133. ADD to Bibg
[156] Giddens, Anthony. *Sociology,* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006, p. 2.
[157] Balandier, George. *Political Anthropology,* Harmondsworth: Penguin Press, 1967, pp. 1-5.
[158] Kottak, Conrad Phillip, *Cultural Anthropology, Appreciating Cultural Diversity,* New York: McGraw Hill, 2011, p. 4.
[159] King, Gary, Keohane, Robert O. and Verba, Sidney. *Designing Social Inquiry,* Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 3.

terms of the meanings people bring to them".[160] They then argue that qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials - case studies, personal experience, introspectives, life stories, interviews and observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. This definition clearly links qualitative research methods with my own research needs, thus demonstrating the importance of this method for my own study. The main aspects of qualitative research, such as interviews, observation, participant observation and discourse analysis, will be used extensively in this work, which further explains why the qualitative method has been selected.

One important point to consider is the way of analysing data through an interpretive process within the qualitative approach. As Brady and Collier suggest, the research should "maximize the validity of measurements".[161] Furthermore, researchers "should use reliable data-collection procedures which, if applied again, would yield the same data".[162] Finally, there are many elements that need to be considered when designing qualitative research in the social sciences,[163] such as the rationale for choosing certain methodologies, and how one contends with the obstacles which will inevitably arise during the research process.

This research makes use of several methodological tools: semi-structured interviews, observation and participant observation, group interviews and discourse analysis. Since the study will tackle different identity markers, such as cultural, national, religious, linguistic and political features amongst the Kirdki/Zazakî speakers of Çewlîg/Bingöl, it urges the researcher to consider both individual and collective levels of identity. Moreover, the fact that I come from the area, speak Kirdkî/Zazakî, am a Sunni Muslim, and have lived there most of my life, has partly defined my choice of study and, coupled with the relative lack of published sources, has led me to prioritise primary sources.

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[160] Creswell, John W. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design,* Sage Publications, 1998, p. 15.
[161] Brady, and Collier. *Rethinking Social Inquiry,* p. 133.
[162] Brady, and Collier. *Rethinking Social Inquiry,* p. 133.
[163] Creswell, Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design, p. 174.

Qualitative approaches are also preferable due to the local specificity of the topic, especially considering the great number of variables, which are present in the local identity construction. As Creswell points out, "qualitative researchers rely on a few cases and many variables".[164] Moreover, this study has three methods of collecting data, which are all qualitative. Firstly, it uses discourse analysis. Secondly, it benefits from interviews, both semi structured and open-ended. Finally, it makes use of observation and participant observations.

When using secondary sources such as historical accounts on Çewlîg/Bingöl, 1925 will be taken as main starting point. This is the year when the Sheikh Said revolt against the Turkish Republic took place, two years after the Turkish Republic's establishment. It is an extremely important moment for the Kurdish and Zaza identity construction, and also on a political level, and is still referred to today. That moment is considered, particularly among the elderly generation in the region, as an important breakthrough point in the region's history. They argue that this moment was the beginning of a new era when Kirds/Zazas and/or Kurds in the region started to seek a future apart from Turks.[165] This, in a sense, could be pointed out as one of the significant times for the Kird/Zaza identity, since the revolt took place in Çewlig/Bingöl and in the neighbouring areas.

My study will try to specifically examine the most important turning point in local identity construction: how the Turkish state applied policies of Turkification in the area, and later on how the state conceptualised Zazas as being a separate people, mainly by stressing the religious marker of identity and undermining the ethnicity marker. By undermining the ethnic identity of the Kird/Zazas, the Turkish state was aiming to separate them from the Kurmanjs[166] or Kurds in the region. In addition to this, this thesis will also deal with language as a marker of identity, examining the role of language in defining the potential Kurdishness of the Zazas. Furthermore, it will also examine the identity discourses utilised by intellectuals and politicians in the region.

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[164] Creswell, Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design, p. 16.
[165] Interview conducted with Baba Isaqij in Solhan/ Bingol. August 2012. Although he was uneducated person, this elderly person's inputs were valuable as his conversation was arcilated in a way that only an academic could do. The lived experience in real life motivated him to stress his thoughts in such a way.
[166] Kurmanjs are one of the main four sub-group of the Kurds and one of the two Kurdish sub-groups with Zazas in Turkey.

Other significant factors such as folklore, music, dances and celebrations, will also be analysed as part of the Kird/Zaza identity. To what extent does localised culture differ from that of the surrounding Kurmanj, Alevis and Turks? More importantly, who uses what discourse and how do they use it, when it comes to discussing identity matters in the region or in the discussions regarding the Kird/Zazas? It is significantly important to highlight these different perspectives in Çewlig/Bingöl, as they will support the main arguments that this thesis asserts.

I have conducted over forty interviews with politicians, intellectuals, public servants, writers, researchers and members of the public to acquire as many perspectives as possible, from whoever has had a say on the identity of Kird/Zazas in Çewlîg/Bingöl. I have a total of forty five hours of interviews during my seven fieldwork trips for this study. Interviews were held in Çewlîg/Bingöl and in the surrounding region, other areas of Turkey, and in Sweden. Secondly, I have many audio records, tapes, recordings, photos etc., which I have collected during my fieldwork trips. Thirdly, I have analysed written sources such as books, journals and magazines. Finally, this study analyses audio and visual sources, including videos from social media, musical records, videotapes and maps from the Internet. Creswell points out the importance of audio and visual sources in such studies.[167]

One of the main methods of collecting data in this thesis is through interviews. There are over twenty semi-structured, open-ended interviews with important personalities in the construction of Kird/Zaza identity. Silverman suggests, "interviewing provides a way of generating empirical data about the social world by asking people to talk about their lives. In this respect, interviews are special forms of conversation".[168] This applies especially during face-to-face interviews. The whole dynamics of the interview, sometimes beyond the word, are assessed: how the respondent(s) act(s) during the interview, how they react to the questions and how they convey meaning through body language. Thus, a combination of the verbal and non-verbal information, as well as general observation, can give a fuller image of the dynamics in place. Thus, the

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[167] Creswell, Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design, p.120.
[168] Silverman, David. *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice,* London: Sage Publications, 2004, p. 140.

researcher must carefully take the social and political circumstances into account while conducting interviews. This is also the case when the researcher observes a speech, a political or cultural gathering, a meeting, etc.

Oral history sources are of great use for research that focuses on ethnic identity, as in the case of this thesis. Since this research makes extensive references to the past, as far back as 1925 when the Sheikh Said revolt took place, the importance of collecting data from oral history means cannot be ignored. On the other hand, oral history/memories have a number of critics in the field of social sciences. Sometimes memories are flawed, and there are specific political/cultural/social motivations to why people remember certain things and forget others. Arthur Marwick and Eric Hobsbawm[169] tend to critique oral accounts as sources. Jan Vansina on the other hand argues against these scholars, and instead suggests that oral history is valuable for such studies.[170] There is a tendency to make more use of oral history in contemporary studies, and this thesis argues that oral history can be of great benefit when examining the construction of identity in this case.

Having stressed the importance of face-to-face interviews, it is crucial to make use of visual data during political discourses, where all the reactions of the informants can be observed. Moreover, during a face-to-face interview, it is likely that interviewer and interviewee interactive, much more involved in the subjects that concern the research. Silverman stresses that face-to-face interviews are mainly "collaborative accomplishments, involving participants in meaning-making work in the process".[171] This was the case in many examples for my fieldwork.

As a native of the area being researched, it should be noted that, my whole life experience there is in some way participant observation. I have made extensive use of both participant and non-participant observation during my field trips. These were mainly conducted in politically tense times, during cultural activities, educational activities etc. In group gatherings such as seminars, conferences and social activities, it

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[169] In J. Baxendale, C. Pawling (1996) Narrating the Thirties: A Decade in the Making, 1930 to the Present, Macmillan

[170] Vansina, Jan. *Oral Tradition as History,* Oxford: Marshton Book Services Ltd, 1985.

[171] Silverman, *Qualitative Research*, p. 140.

was always informative to observe not only what was being said, but also how it was said, and how the activities were presented/visualised. I believe I have collected substantial and insightful information from these experiences, which I will make use of extensively throughout this thesis. The fieldwork data will present a clear perspective of Kird/Zaza identities, and how they are lived, negotiated, presented and voiced in Çewlîg/Bingöl. Finally, the data will contribute greatly to the further main analytical chapters.

1.5.3 Positionality: Advantages and Disadvantages of Being an 'Insider'

Since I am a local of Çewlig/Bingöl myself, which helps me to have an insider perspective in identity building, I have an informed knowledge of the actors and contributing sources in identity construction in the region, as well as the ways to best approach informants and material. The correct selection of informants is always important. Earlier stage of my life as the researcher, gives an insigt that an outsider would not possibly have as an advantage. The author of this thesis was grown in the region, his identity was sahped by the events and cultural inputs and as a result he chose to study this topic. The politisition of this topic was less in the earlier decades; it became politised with political actors taking a more direct role and with the accessibility of media means. In this selection the voice is given to all the different parties for the desired outcome of the fieldwork. What they say would contribute fundamentally in the this study.

On the other hand, being a local also entails some disadvantages. Firstly, it can compromise neutrality, which is crucial to research. However, every researcher will carry a certain amount of bias.[172] This is therefore an obstacle every social scientist will have to overcome. Secondly, the informants may know who you are, which can easily lead them to label you either as 'other' according to local levels of micro-identities, or 'local-from us' enough to know all the answers they could possibly offer. This can put the researcher in difficulty to access all the sides equally. Moreover, participants might, for instance, expect you to act as an activist, a family member or a friend, rather than as an academic researcher. In all of these cases, the researcher's relation to the locality

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[172] Hermeneutics, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermeneutics/ (Last accessed 10 January 2016).

may also result in informants' adjusting or limiting the provision of information. In addition, they might not be aware of the procedural ethics of academia or may simply not give as much priority to these rules as a researcher would.

Thirdly, if the researcher-local displays a neutral stance, this can result in the informants regarding him/her as someone who holds different political views from themselves, which may again limit his/her access to relevant informants. Finally, delicate issues like identity construction can put the researcher's informants, friends and family members in a politically difficult/dangerous situation.

However, being a researcher who is a native to the region being researched also has several advantages. One of the main benefits is being able to speak and understand the relevant languages, in this case Kirdkî/Zazakî, Kurmanjî, Turkish and as well as in my case English, which is of great value for any social research. Moreover, familiarity with the socio-political landscape of the area will help me to access the most relevant places or people of interest for the research topic. Also, if the informants trust the researcher and believe that the study will make an academic contribution which is beneficial to them, they may share the information to the best of their knowledge. Lastly, travels and accommodation for a local researcher are less complicated. I, as an insider researcher, will no doubt reflect my ideas throughout the thesis. However, I will aim to respect the ethic aspect of a social sciences research and bare that in mind. The reflection a life experience will be part of the thesis and it is tolerated to a certain extend.

1.6 Fieldwork Undertaken From 2011 – 2013
Criteria in Choosing My Sources:
While choosing the relevant primary and secondary sources, I considered what is relevant according to the research questions of my thesis. In particular, while choosing the primary sources and informants, I always had in mind the three main identity actor perspectives: pro-Turkish state, pro-Kurdish nationalism, and the pro-Zaza nationalist groups. I have also considered the sub-groups of these three main stances. Furthermore, I followed the same criteria in the selection of local media, social media, satellite sources, journals etc., thus aiming to give voice to all the actors of Kird/Zaza identity in Çewlig/Bingöl. I tried to access as many different perspectives as possible, since this

identity construction phenomenon is still relatively new and is an ongoing process in the region. The selection of the informants does play an important role in this thesis as this identity process is a new and still ongoing one.

1.6.1 Some Data Collected from Fieldwork Trips Undertaken (2011 – 2013)

I went to observe an international two-day conference on the Dersim genocide held at the European Parliament in Brussels on the 26-27 May 2011. This was the fourth conference held in Europe on the genocide. There were presentations by intellectuals from Dersim, journalists from Turkey and Kurds in the diaspora, who stated that it was a part of a systematic ethnic cleansing campaign. Furthermore, they stated that as a result of this campaign, tens of thousands of people lost their lives and many more of Dersimis[173] were forced to migrate. I also met two prominent figures from Çewlig/ Bingöl whom I interviewed Kadir Armanc, an ex member of pro-Turkish state state religious group and a writer stressed that;

Over yaers of dealing with Turkish state closely, I came to realise that he Turkish state was always aiming for disappearance of any form of Kurdish existence. The Conference we are attending here in Brussels would not be allowed to orginise in our home state, Turkey. This is because it wants to hide the crimes against its own citizens. This conference laid out the crimes commited against our Dersim people by the Turksih, once again. This state could do these crimes again, even in this 21th century.[174]

The data extracted from the interviews in the early stage of this thesis, contribute in a way that reperesents the local voices which essential for such a study. By eessentiality I mean that local people via interviews have been given chance to express their understanding of this process which this thesis includes in the identity discussions of Kird/ Zaza and Zazaness. My first fieldwork trip was to Çewlig/Bingöl, the region being studied in this thesis, where I stayed from May until August 2011. I was acting as an interpreter, for the UK election delegation, which was there to observe the 2011 parliamentary elections. This allowed me to do a participant observation. In these meetings with the local political individuals, parties, NGOs, associations, activists and

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[173] People from Dersim (Tunceli in Turkish), a province, one of the main two Zaza populated provinces in Turkey.

[174] Interview conducted with Kadir Armanc in Germany, May 2011. Kadir Armanc is political writer and from Çewlig/ Bingöl who has a Political Islam background but now opposing that political agenda, as he described.

other actors, I was not only translating the questions and conversations, but also including my own questions which I aim to benefit from as part of my thesis fieldwork. Taking part as a translator allowed me access to inside information, which the subjects would not be likely to share if I went there to meet them as an individual researcher.[175] I suggest this could be considered as me being the participant observer as I was raising questions, not only as the translator but also as a researcher during those meetings. I had informed the interviewees for each group meeting we conducted during the trip that I was going to use the information for my research.

During the election campaigns, I mainly observed the two leading political parties' election propaganda meetings. The two main parties are the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), which also share the majority of the votes in Çewlig/Bingöl.[176] For this research it was important to observe what kind of rhetoric they were using in their political speeches, which arguments they applied to attract the voters, and which language they actually employed in speeches.

Although Zazakî was used, parallel with Turkish, for invitations to their main election meeting, the AKP would use only Turkish in their political speeches. The rhetoric was centred on the economical improvements which they had succeeded in implementing since they came to power in 2002. The BDP on the other hand, mainly used Zazakî alongside Kurmanjî and Turkish in their election propaganda. Their arguments mainly focused on how the Turkish state did not deliver the same services in the Çewlig/Bingöl region as they did in the West of Turkey, and how the state administration did not aspire to give collective rights to the Kurds as the second biggest ethnicity after the Turks within the Republic. They proposed to the inhabitants that, "we should vote ourselves to manage ourselves" locally. They also suggested that the dominance of central government should be diminished.

On the same trip, I interviewed academic researchers and intellectuals such as Wisif Zozanî (a researcher and writer in Bingöl), Hisar Özsoy (an academic from Bingöl who lives in the US), Newzad Dodanij, Ercan Çagdas, Firat Tas (all academics from Bingöl

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[175] See part about the researcher's bias.
[176] Bingöl 2011 Genel Seçim Sonuçlari (Bingol 2011 General Selection Results http://secim.haberler.com/2011/bingol-secim-sonuclari (Last accessed 25 March 2017).

working at the University of Muş), Dogan Karasu (a teacher from Bingöl, and the outhor of *Dinya'd Yew Darê Ma)*, Bayram Özdemir (a teacher and human rights activist), Mehmud Nêşite (a Zazaki teacher), Bilal Zîlan (an author in the field of Zazaki studies), Rosan Lezgîn (a writer in the Zazaki field) and Necati Azak (a teacher of theology at a high school in Bingöl). Most of the interviews took place in Çewlig/Bingöl and two in Diyarbakir. The main theme of the conversations was the importance of mother tongue and why it should become the language of education, not only on private courses but also in the public state schools. The majority of the interviewees stressed that Zazakî is a dialect of Kurdish, not a language of its own. Furthermore, they stressed that the Kurdish movement should not make the same mistake as the Turkish state in prioritising the language, and that the same prominence should be given to Zazakî as that of Kurmanjî today.

On the same visit, I managed to meet with MPs Idris Baluken (the BDP represenative for Çewlig/Bingöl), Altan Tan, Demir Çelik, Ayla Akat Ata, Aysel Tugluk, Hasip Kaplan, Adîl Zozanî and Nazmî Gür. All of the delegates above were the BDP's elected MPs in the 2011 parliamentary elections, four of whom are native Zazakî speakers. In the 2011 election, the BDP elected 36 MPs, eleven of whom were Zazakî speakers. Most of the MP interviewees argued that the only difference between Zaza and Kurmanj was that they represent dialects of Kurdish (along with Sorani and Hawrami/Goranî) that are spoken in greater Kurdistan. All these different dialects form the language called Kurdish, and therefore, help to form Kurds as a nation. They argued that the fact that Kurds do not have their own state makes it easier for the Turkish state to interfere in discussions of identity and to lead those discussions for its purpose of divide and rule.

As part of gathering the political data of my field research, I attended the Democratic Society Congress (DTK) in Diyarbakir to observe the language, rhetoric and discourse used there. There were representatives from each city from Turkish Kurdistan, including Çewlig/Bingöl. This organisation acts as the umbrella institution for many of the pro-Kurdish organisations in the legal arena in Turkey. Some of the Kurdish groups opposing the KCK movement do not take part in this umbrella structure. Attending this meeting, I observed that the contemporary Kurdish movement plays the role of a mass social movement that takes a role as an umbrella movement to function as an alternative

governing system to the Turkish central government. This organization stresses the importance of all Kurdish dialects, including Zazakî, as equal.

My second round of fieldwork was a trip to Sweden in September 2011 for ten days. I chose Sweden because many Kurdish intellectuals, many of whom fled Turkey during and after the army coup in 1980, have permanent residency there. In Sweden, I visited the Kurdish Library in Stockholm where I met with the predominant researcher in the Zaza/Zazakî field, Mehmed Malmisanij. He introduced me to the archival collection in the library. Alongside Malmisanij, I interviewed some other important figures in the field such as Cemil Gündoğan, Ihsan Espar and Mehmed Selim Uzun, who are the founder members of the VATE group. VATE is a voluntary group of intellectuals all of whom are Zazakî speakers from different areas in Turkey, which they themselves call 'North Kurdistan'. They meet every six months to work on a standardisation of the Zazakî language, so that it can be written in a form that all Zazakî speakers in Turkey can use as their common written and spoken language. Bearing in mind that Zazakî is not a language of education in its homeland and that it is classified as 'vulnerable'[177] in the UNESCO list of endangered languages, this standardisation group seems vital to keep it alive. Furthermore, this group also plays an important role in discussion of discussion. The group currently have a publishing house, Vate, which publishes extensively on the field of Zazakî. They also organise conferences, seminars and panels regarding identity issues.

For a third phase of fieldwork, I went on a short trip to Çewlig/Bingöl in December 2011 for two weeks to conduct further interviews with local 'common citizens'. Once there, I met with local citizens for both one-to-one and group interviews.[178] These people had not previously reflected seriously on the local identity issues. What the 'big' names (such as MPs, academic staff of the Universities, and directors employed in the state institutions) said in the media and in academia regarding 'who we are' did, however, matter to them. These profiles are usually the local figures that work in co-operation with the AKP government, and whom are locally well known, often on a

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[177] UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger
http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/index.php (last accesed 10 April 2017).
[178] I tried to meet these people as naturally as possible, sometimes in tea houses/gardens, sometimes through friends and people I knew as I come from the region. I conducted four individual and five group interviews. I informed the participants that I might use the information for my PhD research.

personal level. Nevertheless, when I asked questions with regards to cultural aspects such as what music they listen to, what folklore they think of as theirs, and which traditions they carry forward, the answer was generally that they consider themselves 'Kurds' and/or 'Eastern',[179] indicating that they consider their culture is different from Turkish culture.

I went on my forth trip to Çewlig/Bingöl in August 2012 for four weeks, where I carried on interviewing locals regarding the research topic. There I managed to interview common citizens, who were not involved in formal politics, including four elderly people from whom I gained valuable information regarding the perspective of an elder generation.

The fifth research trip which I took was in February 2013 to Istanbul for two weeks. My aim for this trip was to arrange an interview with the Vate publishing house, which was established in 2003, and publishes mainly in Zazakî. As previously mentioned, Vate is also the name for the Zazakî standardization group, which was founded in 1996 in Sweden. I failed to meet with Deniz Gündüz, the founder of the publishing house, due to unexpected schedule changes. Instead, I managed to arrange an interview with Süleyman Çevik, the editor-in-chief for Nûbîhar magazine and publishing house, who is a Zaza from Diyarbakir himself. This publishing group has publications in both Kurmanjî and Zazakî. The Nûbîhar magazine is known for its religious perspective and pro-Kurdish tendency in Turkey, and it has been publishing journals and magazines since 1992. In my interview with Çevik and two other of his colleagues, they expressed in short their opinion that Kurmanjî and Zazakî together form a Kurdish language, and difference of dialect is not a marker to distinguish the speakers of these two dialects as two different ethnicities. In fact, they stated, "there is richness to this language, which should be secured through education in the mother tongue". They made a strong reference to their Kurdishness as the Zazakî speakers of the Kurds.

I went on my sixth field trip in June 2013 and stayed Çewlig/Bingöl and the region for three months. There I conducted some further interviews with intellectuals, academics and politicians that I failed to meet on my previous trips. I collected extensive data,

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[179] 'Eastern' is a less problematic label used instead of 'Kurd' in Turkey.

which I made use of in my analytical chapters. There was shift in the politics of the region as the BDP party began securing its place in the political arena of Çewlig/Bingöl following the position that it gained in the last parliamentary election. It dominated the local politics along with the government party the AKP.

1.6.2 The Visit To Observe the Parliamentary Elections Çewlig/Bingöl Province (30/05/11 – 24/06/11)

My visit this time, apart from Solhan - a town in Çewlig/Bingöl where most of the populations speak Kirdki/Zazakî - took me to Çewlig/Bingöl, Diyarbakir, Mardin, Batman, Lice (town of Diyarbakir/border of Çewlig/Bingöl with its Kurmanjî and Kirdki/Zazakî speaking population), Genç (town of Bongöl, Kirdki/Zazakî speakers), Karliova (a town of Çewlig/Bingöl and predominantly Kurmanjî speakers) and certain villages in Solhan, Çewlig/Bingöl and Karliova. I spent a week in Solhan and Çewlig/Bingöl talking with a selection of their inhabitants, to get their perspectives on the elections. It seemed to me that everyone knew everything about the local politics and identity dynamics, or at least they thought they knew. I then moved on to Diyarbakir on the 8th of July, to meet the British Delegation to observe the elections.

On the first day of the visit with the delegation, I went to Mardin with two members of the group. I had the chance to visit Mardin Artuklu University. Although under the name of 'the living languages', a department there was one of the first Kurdish departments in Turkey, established in late 2009. This holds a historic importance in Turkish academia since the establishment of the state in 1923. At the Artuklu University, the academic staff including Prof Kadri Yildirim, Dr Ibrahim Bor and Dr Abdurrahman Adak, welcomed us warmly. Furthermore, I met with some teaching assistants and postgraduate students, some of whom were working on Zazakî in personal and academic capacities. We were informed about the work that the department carries out, as well as discussing the interest shown amongst the students. Bearing in mind that up until recently Kurds were not even able to speak their language within their own homeland, or declare themselves as Kurdish, this small achievement seemed to all of them as significant. The overall view there was that Kurmanjs and Zazas are sub-groups of Kurds in Turkey.

On the 9th of June, in Batman we briefly met Serhat Temel (who was replacing Nejdet Atalay, the imprisoned mayor as part of the Peoples' Confederation of Kurdistan (KCK) trial) and the two Batman MPs who were running as independent candidates, Ayla Akat Ata (a Kird/Zaza from Dicle/Diyarbakir) and Bengi Yildiz. They briefed us on the main BDP principles: a) reducing the 10% parliamentary threshold in order to give voice more political parties in the national assembly; b) the right to use the Kurdish language; c) stopping the military operations in the region; and d) the release of so-called Kurdistan Societies Congress (KCK) suspects from prison, in particular the elected politicians. I also had the chance to briefly interview Ayla Akat Ata, a Kird/ Zaza herself, about their party's tolerance policies towards the Zaza identity. She said in short that:

> The Kurdish movement and their party, BDP, does not make any differentiation in terms of identity. The fact that the Kurdish language has sub-dialects does not mean that they are different identities; it is indeed a richness that Kurdish language and the culture consist of, and they would keep it alongside with the variety of cultures in Mesopotamia.[180]

The presence of Turkish state security forces was not as obvious as in Çewlig/Bingöl. However, it could be observed that there was mistrust between the people and the state's security forces.

In Lice, I observed the Friday prayers as part of civil disobedience, and an alternative way of locals conducting their religious activity. The locals told us that Lice was destroyed twice, in 1993 and 1994, for its support to the PKK, and its population has been reduced by almost a half because of this. The pro-Kurdish movement people there had chosen alternative prayers organised by the Democratic People's Congress (DTK). They prayed outside the mosque with their backs turned to the mosque. We were told that this was an alternative against the Turkish state's mosque prayers. They added saying "the state uses the mosques for its political propaganda and uses religion as a tool to assimilate the Kurdish people". The prayers were conducted in Kurdish and without the standard Friday speech, which we were told, is written by Ankara clerics in line with the central state policies. In his speech, the Imam was simply pointing out the

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[180] Interview conducted with Ayla Akat Ata who was the BDP MP for Batman. August 2012. Ayla Akat is a Kird/ Zaza and from Diyarbakir. She is one the many prominent figures of the Kurdish movement and the stresses her Zaza-ness openly. This is valuable for this thesis as it goes against the arguments (that the Kurdish movements tries to diminish the Zazaness) of Turkish state and the Zaza-ist group Zazas.

importance of a mother language, self-determination and the struggle for homeland, and he backed all his speech with references either from the Qur'an or Islamic religious leaders.

As a local of Çewlig/Bingöl, I have witnessed all the election campaigns for the last 20 years in the Kurdish region, particularly in my hometown of Çewlig/Bingöl. For the last five elections – accordingly in 2002, 2004, 2007, 2009 and 2011. I   have been acting either as an interpreter or as a member of the various election delegations/observers from different countries in Europe. Those election campaigns have always been exciting and colourful, full of political discussions, which were always in line with my current research topic. This has also helped me to shape my research project.

When I arrived to the region two weeks before the elections in 2011, surprisingly, the election campaigns were not as apparent on the streets in comparison to previous elections. This was probably because of the new methods of the campaign. The new media, such as local newspapers, websites, Facebook and Twitter, were now being used as the main way to deliver political messages. When it got closer to the Election Day, the campaign started to become more apparent on the streets as well.

Traditionally, the ruling parties have always used the state resources to gain the votes. For instance related to this kinds of deploy of state resources amied at gaining or remaining in power Sabri Sayari holds that

> The DP, which came to power in 1950 and remained the governing party for a decade, played a major role in the growth of party-directed patronage in Turkish politics. The DP's leadership understood the importance of party patronage and used its access to state resources to broaden its popular support by rewarding rural communities which voted for it (or pledged to vote in the next elections) with new roads, electricity, water, and various public works [for instance] during the 1950s, political clientelism and patronage increasingly became established facts of Turkish political life.[181]

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[181] Sayari, Sabri. `Clientelism and Patronage in Turkish Politics and Society`, http://research.sabanciuniv.edu/16988/1/Mardin_Volume.pdf (Last accessed 11 July 2016).

The ex-Diyarbakir MP, a representative of the Republican Peoples Party (CHP), Mesut Değer, informed the press that the AKP has manipulated the election by giving the voters direct benefits from public funds.[182] Those resources were/are promising jobs, delivering services, promising contracts for state projects (to family and business leaders), and giving gifts such as white goods for households, food packages, money etc.[183] In Çewlig/ Bingöl, on the local scale, there were also claims by inhabitants in line with Mr Deger's argument. During the local interviews in Çewlig/ Bingöl, Mr Yanilmaz pointed out that this bribery mostly takes place in the last weeks of the election campaigns, and it has become more systematic during the AKP's period of rule in the last nine years.[184]

In Çewlig/Bingöl province, the AKP won all the three MP seats in the 2002 parliamentary elections. It nominated three different candidates and won all the seats again in the 2007 elections, and it nominated only one of the previous candidates alongside two new members for the 2011 parliamentary elections. All those changes of candidates in each election were due to the dissatisfaction of their voter base in Çewlig/Bingöl. The local intellectuals stressed that, by losing one parliamentary seat, the AKP would start losing more of its popularity to the BDP or other pro-Kurdish political parties in the future elections.[185]

The independent/BDP candidate, now MP, is a doctor who worked at the Çewlig/Bingöl's state hospital for five years before he moved to Diyarbakir in 2009. He has a good reputation among the people in Çewlig/Bingöl, most of which comes from his time in service at the hospital as a medical doctor. An old citizen in Çewlig/Bingöl pointed out: 'He was one of us, sharing our values, talking in our own language when needed, who genuinely cared about us'. I have witnessed several people saying: 'even though I will not vote for him, I have nothing to say against him'. In

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[182] CHP'li Eski Diyarbakır Milletvekili Değer: "Seçimlerde AKP Bölgede Altın, Para ve Beyaz Eşya Dağıttı, DTP ile İşbirliği Yaptı". http://www.haberler.com/chp-li-eski-diyarbakir-milletvekili-deger-haberi (Last accessed 3 September 2013).
[183] Kanepeler de dağıtıldı
http://gundem.milliyet.com.tr/sonra--font-color-darkblue-oy-at---font-/guncel/gundemdetay/06.02.2009/1056178/default.htm (Last accessed 3 September 2013).
[184] Interview conducted with Mehmet S. Yanilmaz, ex chair Human Rights Association (IHD) of Bingöl branch. August 2012. As the chair of an important NGO in the city, his input was valuable.
[185] Interview conducted with Serdest Kar in Çewlig/Bingöl. July 2013. Mr Kar is a respected local who is a social science degree holder and vocal in local identity politics.

contrast to the previous elections, this time the BDP candidate carried out an intensive election campaign, visiting all the towns including many villages, and having one-to-one contact with as many people as he and his team could.[186]

The state has always paid massive attention to Çewlig/Bingöl province, as it is geographically, socially and politically in a crucial position. Being situated between Elaziğ (mostly Turkified), Dersim (mostly in line with the Kemalist CHP with its predominantly Alevi population), Muş (a large percentage of its population being ethnically Kurd and generally pro-Kurdish movement) and Amed/Diyarbakir (the symbolic city/unofficial capital of the Kurdish struggle in Turkey), Çewlig/Bingöl holds an important position both for the Turkish state and for the contemporary Kurdish movement. Ironically, the Turkish state seems to have 'succeeded' in assimilating most of the Elaziğ province and huge area of thef Dersim provinces where the two major Kurdish revolts (the Sheikh Said revolt in 1925 and Seyyid Riza's Dersim revolt in 1938) took place following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. The state had a special focus on the region, applying assimilation methods by using various policies. The state had used education for its assimilation strategies. Furthermore, it introduced the ban of the Kurdish, language and the ban of cultural rights. This left a traumatic effect on today's older generation. An informant said "I remember when the uprisings started taking place in other parts of Kurdistan in the 1990s, older people were saying: 'Even the great Sheikh Said could not overcome the cruel state, how dare the Kurdish movement is standing up against the Turkish state!'[187] This was simply a sign of lack in confidence on individual and collective levels. For the older generation who had witnessed the "historical defeats" of the Kurds, it was dangerous even to dream about any sort of self-determination for their ethnic and national existence.

The PKK started spreading in Çewlig/Bingöl later than it did in many other provinces in South-Eastern Turkey. Therefore the mobilisation of this region, in the form of awakening their national feelings, was also delayed. This was the first time that a pro-Kurdish nationalist party elected an MP in Çewlig/Bingöl province. The supporters of the BDP welcomed the results of the 2011 parliamentary elections with great pleasure.

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[186] Observations during fieldwork trips of 2011 and 2012 summers in Çewlig/Bingöl.
[187] Mehmet Kaya, an informant from Solhan, a town of Bingöl during, the field trip in August 2013.

The evening following the Election Day in Çewlig/Bingöl was a historic event with much passion, anger, happiness, and finally a great eruption of joy just after midnight when the local results were finally announced formally. Çewlig/Bingöl, one of the smallest cities in Turkey, which holds only three out of 550 seats of the general parliament in Ankara, was the last city along with Urfa (another city in the Kurdish region holding 12 seats) to have its election results announced in the whole of Turkey. Çewlig/Bingöl's election results were delayed for four hours after the final results came in for the major cities of Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Diyarbakir, and people were beginning to worry, telling each other of 'bad experiences' from the previous elections, and 'of votes being stolen', including in the last local elections in 2009. Between 5000 and 7000 locals gathered outside the Çewlig/Bingöl branch of High Election Board building, where the final vote counting took place (with the aim of 'protecting their votes from the state'), and around 20,000 waited in front of the BDP's main election office in the city centre, sometimes dancing, sometimes crying, hugging friends and strangers out of joy or sadness and anger. This went on throughout the evening and night of the general election day in 2011.[188]

When the newly elected MP Dr Idris Baluken finally went on the balcony to deliver the 'victory speech' at 1 am, the main street became a massive festival area with groups of people dancing around the drum and pipe players. The individuals were simply shouting out "this is the beginning of the end for the AKP and central governments; we will win the next elections", referring to the 2014 local elections. They went on saying, "we will elect Firat Anli as our mayor in 2014". Firat Anli was one of the famous KCK trial prisoners in Diyarbakir prison who was the previous candidate for the local elections in Çewlig/Bingöl in 2009. When the KCK wave of arrests took place following the 2009 local elections, he was among the first arrests. He was released in early 2013 after nearly four years of the trial period that he spent in Turkish state prison.

The police and the army forces in the city were on alert during the election campaign in Çewlig/Bingöl. A few incidents happened before and after the elections. For instance, following the BDP's main election meeting in Çewlig/Bingöl, on the 10th of June 2011, just two days before the election a well-known lawyer Ömer Faruk Ersöz, the previous

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[188] Please see my fieldwork trip report within the fieldwork section of 2011.

Democratic Society Party (DTP) and BDP chair of Çewlig/Bingöl (whose candidacy for the local elections of 2009 was rejected by the High Court) was tortured by the civilian polices on the outskirts of Çewlig/Bingöl. When his lawyers met him after three days in the local state prison, they discovered that he was left with his nose, arm and ribs broken, and had marks all over his body.[189] This was once again a sign that whoever stands to represent a pro-Kurdish party would be under a threat from the state's security forces.

During the election campaigns, the AKP used a religious rhetoric to gain votes. Çewlig/Bingöl is known for its religious identity. The AKP, in its electoral campaigns during the last decade, argued that the BDP does not respect Çewlig/Bingöl's religious identity. Its main emphasis has been that the AKP represents the actual identity of Bingöl, as it sees the Muslim unity as the primary identity.[190] On the other hand the BDP stressed that the Kurds do not need 'the others/outsiders' as their religious teachers. The BDP argued that the locals were aware of their religious identity, which is Islam.[191] The BDP have also stressed the importance of the democratic autonomy project to solve the Kurdish issue, suggesting that, Ankara's central governments do not share resources equally and that the Kurdish region was always disadvantaged compared to the other areas in Turkey.

To sum up, the emotions of both sides (the BDP voters and the Turkish state forces/institutions) were interesting to observe. There were clearly two completely different perspectives: neither of the sides felt they belonged with the other, and it was a clear 'us' and 'them' situation that one could observe. Moreover, the people in the Kurdish area with a pro-Kurdish perspective were losing their 'belonging' relationship with the Turkish state.

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[189] Interview conducted with lawyer Cevat Isak in Çewlig/Bingöl. June 2011. A well-known lawyer who defends many political cases and active in Human Right Assocation and Bingöl Law Bar.
[190] Outcomes of a group interview during the field work conducted in Çewlig/Bingöl. June 2011.
[191] BDP MP Altan Tan's public election speech, which was organised by the BDP during main election campaign in Çewlig/Bingöl. June 2011. Altan Tan is a pro-Kurdish MP who reperesnted the religious part of the BDP and known with his both pro-Kurdish and religious personality.

1.6.3 Interview with Mr Idris Baluken, the MP of Çewlig/Bingöl for the pro-Kurdish party BDP

The current MP of Çewlig/Bingöl, Idris Baluken, is the first MP that has ever been elected from any pro-Kurdish party's list in Çewlig/Bingöl. He is a local and a Kirdkî/Zazakî speaker. The importance of this selection of interview comes from his election, which is seen as a beginning of new dynamics in local politics. The interview was conducted during my fieldwork trip in 2011 following the general elections in June, when he was elected as a member of the general parliament. The general topic for our conversation was why and how he was elected as the first ever pro-Kurdish representative in Çewlig/Bingöl. It was important to get his perspective, as his membership in the Ankara parliament is a strong sign of the shifting identity of Çewlig/Bingöl.

One of the main pieces of information that came out of our conversation, was when Baluken stated that the Turkish state had a special focus on Çewlig/Bingöl and Dersim, the two dominantly Zazakî speaking main cities in Turkey, in order to diminish the memories of the political heritage of their two legendary leaders, Sheikh Said and Seyyid Riza, and their revolts against the Turkish state. However, he said, the Kurds are loyal to their leaders and will follow their path until they earn their freedom. Baluken argued further saying that "if the Turkish state came to accept giving some of the collective rights to the Kurds, it is not because it was in its democratisation program but it was indeed a result of the continuous resistance that Kurds performed insistently". He pointed out that the state uses the differences of dialect and religion as tools to 'confuse' the identity phenomena to empower their political agenda that 'Zazas are not Kurds'. Further, he pointed out that Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has, for the first time intentionally, used 'Zazas' and 'Kurds' separately in a speech during his public meeting in Hakkari, in 2009 and later in Çewlig/Bingöl in 2011. Furthermore, Baluken said that normally Zazas and Kurmanjs together form Kurds in Turkey, and the reason that the current government started using the discourse of two ethnicities is just an indication that they are re-formulating the old type of state policies. They now rather apply it not via security means, but with a more professional level of assimilation-aimed techniques. He added that the BDP along with other pro-Kurdish organisations will work closely with their people to break through the Turkish state's political tricks,

and that internal and external improvements will not allow the state to apply the old harsh practices again.

Chapter 2: The Historical Background

Taking the historical aspect for this thesis is essential since there are strong references in history of the Kird / Zaza speaking areas that indicate this group of people are a sub-group of the Kurds. Common history is an important marker when questioning whether groups of people are part of same nation or not? The "us" element in the region clearly included both Kird / Zaza and Kurmanj as sub-groups of Kurds until recent decades. Historically, a clear differentiation between Zazas and Kurmanjs or Kurds in general could not be identified even if the before mentioned claim can be s controversial assumption however the literature of the Kurdish studies provide with example that underlines my assumption. For instance as Jaffer Sheyholislami through his study of Kurdish identity, discourse and new media shows, despite the difference of the dealted however the sense of self-understanding as' Kurds' is an visible and stroge factors within the Zazaki and Hawrami speaking Kurdish communities in Sheyholislami's works.

The Internet has also fostered the maintenance and promotion of Kurdish speech varieties such as Hawrami and Zazaki, which have fewer speakers compared to Kurmanji and Sorani. There are several websites, for example Hawraman (www.hawraman.com), that that actively use the Hawrami variety and promote its status. Other sites, such as *Dibistana Kurdî* (Kurdish School) (modersmal.skolutveckling.se/ nordkurdiska/zazaki/start.htm), use Dimli or Zazaki as their communication medium and they teach the language. There are sites that are entirely or predominantly in Zazaki (e.g.,www.zazaki.net). It is important to note that while these websites are very keen in presenting Hawrami or Zazaki as distinct languages, they do insist on their Kurdishness[192].

A clear dispute is identifiable related who to articulate and view the identity of the Zaza. For instance this confusing is clearly reflected in the study of Krisztin Kehl-Bodrogi which is partially related to 'the problem of ethnic identity of the Zazas.' Kehl-Bodrogi words;

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[192] Sheyholislami, Jaffer. *Kurdish Identity, Discourse, and New Media,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp. 162-163.

If it ever took notice of them, the world outside generally regarded (and mostly still regards) the Zazas as Kurds. This notion becomes less certain, however, when one examines the indigenous categories of collective identity in the region based on religious affiliation rather than on language or historical origin, the operative social boundary running between orthodoxy (Sunni Islam) and heterodoxy (Alevism).[193]

However based on my assumption as has in the previous chapters been justified/clarified would, the historical background of this study will deal with thesis in a manner of common history (for Zazas and Kurmanjs/Kurds in Turkey) until 1970s. One of this thesis's main emphases is that, following the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, which was followed by a new (second) constitution in 1924, the Turks were proclaimed as the liberators and founders of the state. This has resulted in unrest among the Kurds. Kurds began their oppositional stance against the Republic of Turkey, and various revolts took place between 1925 and 1937. The Turkish state reacted in a rather defensive way and suppressed the uprising of the Kurds militarily. After the triumph over the Kurds, the Turkish state designed policies of divide and rule. The state institutions initiated a political engineering project to 'persuade' the Zazas that they were not Kurds. This policy served its designers in some areas of Zaza-inhabited areas of Elazig, Dersim, and in minor areas of Diyarbakir, Bingöl and Muş. Moreover, it impacted even some groups of Kurmanj speakers with a sense of assimilation.

The thesis will group the Zazas together with the Kurds until late 1970s in the literature. From the late 1970s, some individuals of the Zaza elite and connected groups have taken a role as active actors or subjects towards the position that suggests that "Zazas are not Kurds". Thus, the research will differentiate the Zazas from the Kurds after this date, and therefore the literature will be discussed in accordance.

The Kurds, like many other ethno-national groups in the world, are comprised of various different social groups, dialects and religious groups. The emergence of several nation state following the First World War, in particularly in the Middle East, led to the weakening of ethnic identification, as national identities were strengthened[194]. In the

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[193] Kehl-Bodrogi, `Kurds, Turks, or a people in their own right?`, p. 441.
[194] Owen, Roger. *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*, Third edition, New York: Routledge, 1992.

Republic of Turkey, the nationalist project resulted in the creation of a strong Turkish national identity at the expense of ethnic minority groups such as the Kurds and Armenians during the first few decades of the Turkish state. In the Kurdish case, 'Turkification' has served as a divisive tool emphasising intra-ethnic groupings each concerned with their specific political, economic and religious grievances.[195] This process of 'divide and rule' strengthened Turkish nationalism while at the same time reinforcing linguistic and religious differentiations among the Kurds, especially between the Zaza and the Kurmanj, and the Alevi and the Sunni. It can be said that the Turkish state has been the architect of a highly coherent and strong nation state, cultivated from the elimination of opposing ethno-national identities.

2.1 Kurdish History towards the End of the Ottoman Empire

It is hard to discern a strong Kurdish identity under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire was kept united by the idea of *millet,*[196] which allowed different cultures, ethnicities and religions to live freely under Ottoman rule without being subject to intervention in their domestic affairs so long as they fulfilled their economic responsibilities. Therefore, not only for the Kurds as an ethnic group within the phenomena of *millet* under the Ottoman rule, but also for many other ethnicities, local identities were not sources of discontentment. This was the case until the beginning of 19th century. Following the 1789 French revolution, the world entered into the new era of nation states. By the 1830s the direct effect of this event appeared in the Ottoman Empire when non-Muslim nations such as the Serbians, Greeks and Romanians began to separate from this body to set their own states. This brought the idea of *millet,* which was a project to keep the empire with a multi-religious and multi-national form together, to an end.[197] George Joffé argues that under Ottoman rule, every individual or group of people were able to practice rather freely when it came to religion. He stresses that the Kurds', Turks' and Arabs' sense of belonging was stronger as they were Muslim.[198] After it had lost its Christian territories, the Empire had applied the idea of *umma* −

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[195] Bernard, Lewis. *The emergence of modern Turkey*, 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

[196] *Millet* is an umbrella term to cover all the ethnic and religious groups of people in the Ottoman territories, which was later modified by the Republic of Turkey.

[197] Robben, A. M., and Suarez-Orozco, M. M., *Cultures under siege: Collective violence and trauma,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 228-229.

[198] Joffe, George. *Islamist Radicalisation in Europe and Middle East,* London: I. B. Tauris & Co, 2013, p. 248.

people who shared the same religious belief – to keep the remaining peoples (Arabs, Kurds, Circassians, and other Muslim peoples) within the Ottoman Empire. The *umma* idea later also came to a collapse with the breaking away of the Arabs from the Ottomans.[199] This then caused a nationalist reaction in the Empire, leading to the Young Turks revolution of 1908, which had an influence on Mustafa Kemal Pasha, later, the founder of the Turkish Republic.[200] Zurcher also makes a strong reference to the Young Turks' influence on Ataturk and the way this influence was used in forming the new state of the Turkish Republic.[201]

Until the end of the First World War (WWI), the majority of the Kurds lived within the Ottoman Empire, whilst the remainder resided in Persia. The *vilayets* (administrative provinces) of Bitlis, Dersim, Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Mosul, Elaziz (Elaziğ) and Van, were areas mostly populated by Kurds.[202] In these areas Kurds lived as subjects in communities which were both feudal and tribal in nature.[203] The Kurds living under Persian rule were in a similar situation to the Ottoman Kurds. When WWI broke out in 1914, the Ottomans chose to ally themselves with the Germans against the Allied powers. The Central Powers lost WWI, and as a result of this, two major Empires ended – those of the Ottomans and the Austro-Hungarians. As a direct result of WWI, the map of the Middle East was re-drawn and most of the Kurds were divided into four different countries, three of which were established out of the Ottoman Empire following WWI: Turkey, Iraq and Syria. The fourth main country, Iran, maintained its territory, although there was a regime change. A small community of Kurds found themselves under Soviet rule in the southern Caucasus, today mainly in Armenia. In other words, the results of WWI led to the Kurds being dispersed amongst five states.

National awareness emerged in the 19th Century amongst the different groups in the Ottoman Empire. Because of the common religious ties with the Ottoman establishment,

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[199] Robben and Suarez, *Cultures under siege*, p. 227.
[200] Landau, Jacob M. *Atatürk and the Modernisation of Turkey,* Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1984, pp. 17-18.
[201] Zurcher, Erik, J., and Atabaki, Touraj. *Man of Order: Authoritarian Modernisation Under Atatürk and Reza Shah,* London: I. B. Tauris, 2004, p. 3.
[202] Klein, Janet. *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone,* California: Stanford University Press, 2011.
[203] Kirişçi, Kemal. and Winrow Gareth. *The Kurdish Question and Turkey, An Example of Trans-state Ethnic Conflict*, London and New York: Routledge, 2003, p. 67.

the Kurds, especially the Sunni Kurds, were one of the last groups to start challenging the rule of Ottoman Empire. The religious element had a great influence on the 'us as religious Muslims' identity, and 'them as non-Muslim' other. This closeness with the Sunni Turks continued during WWI and the creation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. However, after the creation of the new state, the Kurds felt that their rights as a founding group of the Republic, alongside the Turks, had been ignored. This became clearer with the new constitution introduced in 1924. The first two decades of the young state were therefore marked by a series of Kurdish uprisings. The first uprising was the revolt of Sheikh Said (from Palu, a town of Elazığ close to Çewlig/Bingöl), which is regarded as a Sunni Zaza uprising by scholars such as Ahmet Kahraman,[204] McDowall,[205] and Kirişçi.[206] The last in the series of initial Kurdish revolts after the creation of the Republic was the revolt of Seyid Riza (in the Dersim area), which was mainly an Alevi Zaza uprising.[207] After the uprisings, two decades passed that for Kurds were characterised by a sense of psychological defeat by the Turkish state.[208]

Evolving from Empire to nation state, it can be argued that the new state has denied the total existence of any ethnicities other than Turk, in line with its mono-ethnic characteristic state policies. The desire to create a mono-ethnic state was stressed in the 1924 Turkish constitution quite clearly[209]. The reality of this principle is still very much alive in the current constitution of the Turkish Republic. The state did not want to consider ethnic and other differences as contributing to cultural richness, and they were rather considered to be a serious threat to unity.[210] The state's tendency of seeing the other minorities as a threat was similar towards most of the minorities. It had its different tactics designed specifically for each minority group.[211] Depending on which minority the Turkish state dealt with, it applied an appropriate policy accordingly.

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[204] Kahraman, Ahmet. *Kürt Isyanlari: Tedip ve Tenkil,* Istanbul: Evrensel Basim ve Yayin, 2003.
[205] McDowall, A Modern History of the Kurds,
[206] Kirişçi, and Winrow The Kurdish Question and Turkey, 2003.
[207] Leezenberg, M., in *Turkey's Alevi Enigma: A Comprehensive Overview* (ed. White, P., and Jongerden, J.), Brill, Leiden, 2003.
[208] Bruinessen, Martin van. *Agha, Shaikh and State,* London: Zed Books, 1992, p. 291.
[209] Bernard, *The emergence of modern Turkey*, 2002.
[210] Tekin, Günel G, Beyaz Soykirim: Türkiye'nin Asimilasyon ve Dilkirim Politikalari, Istanbul: Belge Publishing, 2009, p. 58.
[211] Barkey, Henri J., and Fuller, Graham E. *Turkey's Kurdish Question,* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Maryland, 1998.

2.2 The Kurdish Resistance to the Early State Policies, and an Era of Silence

The Turkish state, since its creation, has applied a systematic campaign of nationalisation, pursuing a state-endorsed policy of 'ethnocide' against minority groups such as the Kurds, Armenians and Arabs.[212] The historical process of this began towards the end of the Ottoman Empire; the Young Turk Revolution in 1908 laid the groundwork for modern Turkish nationalism.[213] According to the Young Turks movement, a nation should consist of one language, one state and one religion.[214] Binbaşioğlu argues that Atatürk's nationalist ideas did not materialise out of thin air, but that he was greatly influenced by the Young Turks Movement, particularly its important member Ziya Gokalp, a Kurdish sociologist from Diyarbakir.[215] Turkish nationalist ideas shaped the ideology (which would later be called the Kemalist ideology) of the Republic of Turkey,[216] which resulted in the state ignoring the existence of all other ethnic minorities. Thus, Kurds have had to live within a state that has not only banned their language, but also to a large extent denied them their own ethnic identity. These policies of denial continued until the 1990s.[217]

Following the end of WWI, the victorious Allies dismantled the Ottoman Empire, and it looked as if the Turks would be left without a state of their own. Inspired by the Young Turks movement, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, who in November 1934 became known by law as Atatürk (meaning "father of the Turks"), took the leadership of a new war against the Allied powers.[218] Atatürk organised the Liberation War (as it would be known as in Turkey) in such a professional way, that the people who live in today's Turkish territories came together under a common goal, which was to "clear" the country of the "infidels", such as the Greeks, Armenians, French and British. This policy towards a common goal included the different Muslim nations such as the Turks, Kurds, Arabs and Circassians. Following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey

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[212] Andreopoulos, George .J, *Genocide: conceptual and historical dimensions*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997, p. 11.
[213] Kurdistan Tarihi (the History of Kurdistan), http://www.rojaciwan.com/modules.php?name=Sections&op=viewarticle&artid=27 (Last accessed 5 May 2010).
[214] Kili, Suna. *The Atatürk Revolution: A Paradigm of Modernisation*, Istanbul: Sefik Matbaasi, 2003, p. 103.
[215] Binbasioglu, C. *Turkiyede Egitim Bilimleri Tarihi,* Istanbul, 1995, p. 121.
[216] Zurcher, Erik., *Turkey: A Modern History*, London: I. B. Tauris & Co, 2004.
[217] Gunes, Cengiz. and Zeydanlioglu, Welat. (eds.), *The Kurdish question in Turkey: new perspectives on violence, representation, and reconciliation*, London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2014.
[218] Kili, The Atatürk Revolution, p. 112.

in 1923, contrary to what he had promised to non-Turkish ethnic groups – in particular the Kurds who constituted the second highest population after the Turks – Atatürk introduced policies that aimed at transforming Turkey into a Turkish nation, based on one nation, one language and one flag.

The Kurds had fought against the 'infidels', backing Atatürk's liberation war. When the Turkish state was established in 1923 as a result of this war, the sense of 'belonging' was not very problematic for the Kurds. Atatürk introduced the new (second) constitution in 1924, which aimed to diminish everything but Turkishness. The idea was based on the ideology of the new state on a mono-ethnic basis. Atatürk's new stance, not surprisingly, resulted in widespread dissatisfaction among the Kurds, and this dissatisfaction resulted in the 1925 revolt led by Sheikh Said. Olson points to this rebellion as one of the main events in the Kurdish history.[219] The fact that it was the first revolt in its time, and that it was born from the heartland studied in this thesis, make it valuable starting point in relation to this research topic. A series of Kurdish revolts followed the Sheikh Said revolt, such as the Agirî revolt, the Mutki revolt and the Zîlan revolt. The Agirî revolt was one of the most effective. Similar to the Sheikh Said and Dersim revolts, it was effective in its area (Agirî), and the Khoybun movement backed its leader[220], Ihsan Nuri Beg, subsequently known as Ihsan Nuri Pasha.[221] Those revolts were harshly defeated and the leaders were executed. The last of the revolts in this era of tensions in the first two decades of the young Republic was Seyyid Riza's Dersim revolt, which also ended with the same fate as the leader Seyyid Riza and six other friends of his were executed in November 1937.[222] Seyyid Riza was an Alevi Zaza from Dersim. One of the main characteristics of the Dersim revolt was it being a Zaza-Alevi movement rather than a Zaza-Sunni one, as opposed to Sheik Said's revolt in

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[219] Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880–1925.*

[220] Khoybun (Independence) was a pan-Kurdish party formed in Bhamdoun in Lebanon in October 1927 by Kurdish intellectuals of aristocratic background and living in exile. Jaladet Bedir Khan of the famous Bedir Khan family served as the first president, and the Heverkan confederation figure Hajo also was a leader. Its permanent headquarters were established in Aleppo in Syria and then Frencj authority. The Khoybun sought to establish a strong Kurdish national liberation movement with a trained fighting fore that wouldnot depend on the traditional tribal leaders. It instigated the unsuccessful Ararat uprising of the Kurds in Turkey.
See Disney, Donald Bruce, Jr. *The Kurdish nationalist movement and external influences,* *https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/36710864.pdf* (Last accessed 26 April 2016).

[221] Jwaideh, Wadie. *Kurdish National Movement, Its Origins and Developments*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006, p. 211.

[222] Dersimi, M. Nuri, *Kurdistan Tarihinde Dersim*, Istanbul: Dam Yayınları, 1996, p. 52.

1925. Similar to the Sheikh Said revolt, the prominent characteristic of Seyyid Riza revolt was its being labelled as a Zaza movement rather than a Kurdish movement by some. Furthermore, in both the revolts the Palu and the Dersim areas did not display enough solidarity to each other due to the religious differences.[223] Moreover David McDowall points out that there was a lack in support from the Dersim area to the Sheikh Said revolt.[224] As a result of the uprising, the state proceeded with its mass army operations in Dersim, which led to the killing of tens of thousands of people and the deportation of groups to western parts of Turkey.[225] The defeat of the Dersim revolt resulted not only the loss of a battle, but also a loss of hope, which as previously mentioned begun an era of silence in Kurdish history in Turkey for two decades.

The revolts, along with other uprisings outside of Kurdish areas, may have led to the state taking some further steps in creating new policies of assimilation. It could be argued that the state was victorious in defeating all uprisings against it through military actions. The state passed new laws aiming to re-structure all the bodies of society in order to strengthen its Kemalist ideology. In the same decade (the 1930s), Atatürk and his political team brought in various changes such as election rights, womens' rights, and substantial changes in education and law[226]. Some of the changes, which took place in the 1930s, are a source of pride for the history of the Turkish Republic on the international arena. Among some of these reform policies approved in the Turkish parliment and implemented into the real life, one can refer to; the ratification of the Turkish Republic's first constitution and the unification of different kinds of schools under a single and homogenous national education system in 1924; the clothing code inspired by the Western way of live, the introduction of secular educational system and the adoption of the Western calendar and timing system in 1925; adoption of the so called 'Swiss Code' (the Civil Law) in 1926; introduction of the Latin alphabet instead of the Arabic one and the change of language (from Arabic to Turkish) of the Islamic

[223] Bruinessen, Martin van. 'Aslini inkar eden haramzadedir! The debate on the ethnic identity of the Kurdish Alevis', in Kehl-Bodrogi, K., Kellner-Heinkele, B., and Otter-Beaujean, A., (eds.), *Syncretictic Religious Communities in the Near East: Collective Papers of the Symposium*, Berlin, and Leiden: Brill, 1997, pp. 1-25.
[224] McDowall. A Modern History of the Kurds, p. 194.
[225] Nigogosian, Aram. *Turkey's Kurdish Problem in the 1990s: Recent Trends*, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996.
[226] Unat, Nermin Abadan. `The Modernization of Turkish Women`, *Middle East Journal,* 32:3 (1978), 291-306.

call to prayer in 1928; the withdrawal of Persian and Arabic language courses from the schools in 1929; granting women's right to vote in local elections in 1930, and participating in general elections and the adoption of the Law on Surnames in 1934, etc. All these mentioned reforms as highlighted by Şule Toktaş were initiated aimed at realizing the process of "a) nation -building; b) secularization; c) modernization and westernization; d) democratization; and e) state formation", in Turkey following the collapse/abolition of the Caliphate of the Ottomans.[227]

The Turkish Republic's founders considered the new Republic as the successor of the Ottoman Empire in certain respects. Having lost its constituents during the late period of the Ottoman Empire, the new Republic's policy of keeping the remaining constituents led policymakers to focus on mono-ethnic policies for the sake of the unity of the Turkish state. Kurds as a group were a complicated case, as they were the biggest minority in the new territories. In the case of Zazas/Zazakî, it is known that in the early days following its establishment, the Turkish state perceived Zazakî speakers as Kurds geographically, linguistically and ethnically.[228] From the second decade following its establishment and onwards, there were certain views (as part of 'divide and rule' policies) promoted by Turkish policymakers, including scholars and intellectuals, stressing that Zazas are Turks/a Turkic tribe, and later that 'Zazas are a separate people [from the Kurds]'.[229] Such firmly ingrained ideas were going to be the basis for the Turkish state's approach towards Zazas in the later decades.[230]

After the Dersim revolt, the Turkish state applied harsh repression policies towards the Kurds in all the Kurdish areas, and moved many of the Kurdish tribes and families towards the West of Turkey in line with their deportation policy. These groups were accused of being responsible for and taking part in the revolts.[231] Ismail Beşikçi

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[227] Toktaş, Şule. `Political parties, elections and democracy: A close -up on the political history of Turkey www.cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.ojs-issn...10.../6353-4493.pdf (Last accessed 2 March 2017).
[228] Interview conducted with Ercan Cagdas in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2013.
[229] The state's intention of creating a mono-identity society has shifted since its establishment. It could be said that it is still shifting up to today.
[230] Interview conducted with Ercan Cagdas in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2013. Ercan Çagdas is an academic who is a reference in the local identity field.
[231] Dersim Info. Dersim info is an online website that produces vastly about the local identity politics in Dersim/ Tunceli.

describes the Turkish government's way of 'solving' the Dersim issue as genocide.[232] Bozarslan stresses that with important Kurdish activists either being executed or exiled, the Kurdish national movement entered a silent period.[233] There were around three decades of silence for Kurdish movements following the Dersim revolt. During these three decades, basic rights such as the use of language, cultural rights, and religious madrasas, were denied. From the end of the 1930s, Kurdish villages above a certain population were put under the control of a gendarme office, and Kurdish language, clothing, and folklore were completely banned.[234] It was during this era that the state established a rule that all activities, including worship, could not be in Arabic and/ or other languages. The majority of Turkish citizens are Muslim, and they traditionally worship in Arabic, as the language of the Qur'an. With the new implementations, the language of all practices would be in Turkish, in line with the states secularist/Kemalist ideology[235].

Besides the signs of a new hope in Turkey, there had been some other political improvements in other parts of Kurdistan. Despite its short life, the Republic of Mahabad, in the region of Iranian Kurdistan, made a great nationalist impression on Kurds elsewhere.[236] Kurds proved that they could operate state institutions and govern themselves. There were state/nationalist elements, such as the national anthem (Ey Reqib), the national flag (with colours of red, yellow and green) and the Kurdish state, which were introduced with the birth of the Republic of Mahabad in 1946. This helped future Kurdish movements.[237] The national elements that were created by the birth of the Mahabad Republic are very influential for all the Kurds in of terms of national aspiration. It can be said that some Zazas also take pride in these historic elements. Meanwhile, it was still hard for the Kurds in Turkey to mobilise, because during the mid-20th century, the state continued to keep the Kurds in Turkey under strict control.[238]

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[232] Beşikçi, Ismail. *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi,* Istanbul: Belge Yayinlari, 2013.

[233] Bozarslan, Hamit. *Kürt Milliyetçiliği ve Kürt Hareketi (1989- 2000),* in *Modern Türkiyede Siyasi Düşünce,* Cilt 4: Milliyetçilik, Istanbul: Yayinlari, Iletişim, 2002, p. 54.

[234] Bruinessen, Martin van, *Kürdistan Üzerine Yazilar,* trans. By N. Kiraç, Istanbul, Iletişim Yayinlari, 2002, p. 340.

[235] Wilson, M. Brett, `The First Translations of the Qur'an in Modern Turkey (1924-38)`, *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 41:3 (2009), 419- 435.

[236] Xebata Vate. Vate Group is the group of intellectuals that produce linguistic materials in Zazaki and is the main group who have regular meetings to standardise Zazaki.

[237] Bozarslan, Kürt Milliyetçiliği ve Kürt Hareketi, p. 54.

[238] Xebata Vate/ Vate Research Group. I have intervied the members of this group in Sweden and in Turkey.

However, due to the Kurdish movement under the leadership of the charismatic Mustafa Barzani becoming stronger, and Iraq acknowledging the Kurdish flag, Kurdish language and culture in 1958, paired with the slight improvement of conditions in the Turkish parts of Kurdistan, the conditions became more favourable to revolutionary ideas.

In the 1950s, Turkey for the first time in its history had a second political party along with the Republican People's Party (the CHP, founded by Atatürk) which was the Democrat Party (DP). Taha Akyol, the lead writer of the prestigious *Milliyet* newspaper in Turkey, argues that the CHP was losing its popularity, and therefore people were ready to welcome the DP into the Turkish political arena.[239] Not long after its foundation, the DP won the elections and assumed power. The Democrat Party era of 1950-60 was an era of the rapid integration of Turkey into world capitalism, and the further development of the bourgeois class. The DP came into power by promising democratic rights, which were partially delivered, and a new sense of freedom came into being. At this same time there was a 'socialist wave' around the world. As for the Middle East including Turkey, this was a new phenomenon from the second half of the 20th century. According to Naci Kutlay, some had the new idea that the Kurds could achieve many rights with the support of the Soviet Union, and socialist organisations started to gain popularity especially amongst the educated class.[240] Due to the new government and this socialist wave, people who were not satisfied with the standards of democracy in the country started to seek new outlets for expression, such as the founding of new political parties, NGOs, student associations, and labour syndicates in order to improve social conditions. Ağaoğullari states that the increased politicisation of the oppressed classes, the spread of revolutionary ideas amongst the youth, and the quick passage from leftist theory to practice, shook the foundations of bourgeois rule

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[239] Akyol, Taha. HSYK Kavgasi, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/taha-akyol/hsyk-kavgasi-1286580/. Taha Akyol is a prominent conservative Turkish columnist for Milliyet newspaper. http://www.milliyet.com.tr/hsyk-kavgasi/taha-akyol/siyaset/yazardetay/08.09.2010/1286580/default.htm (Last accessed 5 November 2012).

[240] Kutlay, Naci. *Kürt Kimliginin Oluşum Süreci,* Ankara: Belge Yayinlari, 1997.

in Turkey.[241] After the silent era in the second half of the 20th century, the shift in the social and political arena was speeding towards major changes.[242]

The economic, social and political changes of the 1950s paved the way for the later acceleration of the socio-political mobilisation of society in Turkey. After 1946, when the state elites chose their side with the Western bloc, a preference towards economic liberalization backed by private capital began. Students, peasants and labourers were very active politically in the form of boycotts, meetings, protests, labour strikes, factory, and occupations of land and academic faculty buildings. Therefore, it is arguable that political activity was popularised and the masses were politicised, including the Kurds.[243] Organised grassroots political activity was prevalent in the form of students clubs, labour unions and associations especially in urban areas like Istanbul and Ankara. This atmosphere also led to the emergence of a new generation of Kurdish political activists. In the 1960s, the Kurds generally took positions within the leftist Turkish-Kurdish groups, and believed that they could achieve some of their cultural rights within the leftist idea of 'freedom to all minorities'.[244] The Kurds began publishing newspapers and periodicals in which they tried to reflect the backward situation of the East, Kurdishness and Kurdish culture. Following the 'socialist wave', and having had the opportunity to read the translated publications about socialist doctrine, Kurds were also inspired by the anti-imperialist movements in third world countries such as Vietnam, Palestine, Africa and Latin America.

This phenomenon led to the notion that the 'misfortune' of the Kurds was not unique to the Kurdish people, but was a result of the same cause of the aforementioned cases, which is imperialism. Also, it is arguable that the revolt in Iraqi Kurdistan, launched in 1959, gave a 'new soul and inspiration' to the Kurdish activists of the period. During the 1960s, the Kurds were mostly acting within organisations of the '68ers' which was

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[241] Ağaoğullari, Mehmet Ali.'The Ultranationalist Right' in C. Schink and Ertugrul Ahmet Tonak, (eds.), *Turkey in Transition: New Perspective,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 192.
[242] Watts, Nicole F. *Activists in Office: Kurdish Politics and Protest in Turkey,* University of Washington Press, 2010, p. 35.
[243] Cemal, Hasan. *Kürtler,* Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2003.
[244] Kutschera, Chris. *Kürt Ulusal Hareketi,*(trans. by Fikret Başkaya), Istanbul: Avesta Yayinlari, 2001, p. 395.

a group of leftists of that era were named after 1968[245]. In the pre-era of the formation of the 60ers organization thousands of people crowded the cities and squares in different parts (cities and provinces) of the Kurdish populated region of the country (as well as in Ankara) organized collective protest actions such as strikes, student sit-ins, factory and campus occupations, peasant riots etc., these protest actions took place against state policy of remaining the Eastern and Southern Anatolia in economic backwardness and state's discriminatory political, economic and social policy in these parts of Turkey. These protest actions owed mainly its emergence to th emergence of the mid-1950s and 1960s wave of Kurdish political dynamic began among Kurdish intellectulas and university students in Ankara and Istanbul, maintained by Zeynep Gambetti, Joost Jongerden "this dynamics mainly stemmed from a young Kurdish generation who had the opportunity to receive education in institutions located in the regions urban areas, such as Village Institutes *(Köy Enstitüleri)* and Teachers' School *(Öğretmen Okulları)*, or in the country's largest cities Ankara and Istanbul."[246]

However, alongside the socialist stirrings, there were also tendencies of nationalism amongst the Kurds. In short, after 1965 the Kurdish political movement developed along two main paths: the first was the Kurds with socialist tendencies, who were mainly organised around the Turkish Labour Party (TIP); the second was the nationalist Kurds who established the 'illegal' Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan (KDPT).[247] These types of organisations raised feelings of solidarity amongst the Kurds, regardless of which group they belonged to. An important example of this is that these two branches, despite their different worldviews and prognoses of the situation, could nevertheless coordinate and organise meetings, which were called the Eastern Meetings.[248] By 1969, discussions between the national-democratic revolutionaries, and the socialist revolutionaries, could not provide the Kurds with solutions for the problems of East Turkey. This witnessed the birth of a new organisation, called

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[245] Gurpinar, Dogan, `Myths and Memories of the 1968 Events in Turkey: 1968 as the Mirror of 2008` *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 12:3, 2011, 451-474.

[246] Gambetti, Zeynep. and Jongerden, Joost (ed.), *The Kurdish Issue in Turkey: A Spatial Perspective,* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015.

[247] Kahraman, Ahmet. Uprising, Suppression, Retribution, The Kurdish Struggle in Turkey in the Twentieth Century, London: Garod Books Ltd, 2007, pp. 245- 258.

[248] Gündoğan, Z. Azat, `The Kurdish Political Mobilization in the 1960s: The Case of 'The Eastern Meetings', unpublished MA dissertation, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, 2005. Add to bib

Devrimci Dogu Kultur Ocaklari, Cultural Hearths of Revolutionary East (DDKO), based in Ankara and Istanbul.[249]

2.3 The 1960s to 1980s

The wave of new hope throughout all of Kurdistan also arrived in Çewlig/Bingöl. This created a group of activists from the social elites, such as Said Elçi, Zeki Adsiz, Rençber Aziz, Cihat Elçi and Idris Ekinci that acted as the representatives of the pro-Kurdish movements in local politics.[250] This era was right before the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) came onto the stage as the dominant movement, and at this point there were divisions between Kurdish political groups. The influence of pro-Kurdish political activists was a continuous phenomenon locally in the Çewlig/Bingöl social dynamics. Some of the key personalities of the early PKK cadre were locals, such as Mehmed Hayri Durmus, Mehmet Karasungur and Ibrahim Incedursun. On my field trips, I often encountered references to these key personalities in locals' attempts to take ownership of the current Kurdish movement as being led by people from Çewlig/Bingöl. This was the stance of the locals who felt close to the PKK movement, and believed that the Kird/ Zazas are Kurds.[251]

In August 1984, a previously largely unknown party, the PKK, launched a series of attacks and ambushes on the Turkish forces in the Kurdish region.[252] The immediate steps taken by the Turkish state against this "handful of bandits"[253] was to answer these attacks with harsh military operations. However, in terms of politics, Ankara did not take these attacks seriously at first, and believed that they were being conducted by the remnants of a pre-1980 coup terrorist group. As Ismet G. Ismet argues:

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[249] Umit Firat, 'Devrimci Dogu Kultur Ocaklari' in Sosyalism ve Toplumsal Mucadeleler Ansiklopedisi, Ertugrul Kurkcu (ed.) vol.7, Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 1998, p.219

[250] Interview conducted with Niyazi Azak, the former chair of Peoples Democracy Party (HADEP) in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2011. Niyazi Azak has been in politics within all the pro-Kurdish parties locally since 1980s in Çewlig/ Bingöl.

[251] Group interviews conducted in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2012 and August 2013. This was a politically active, young and middle aged group of people in city centre of Çewlig/ Bingöl.

[252] Chailand, Gerard, (ed.), *A People Without Country, the Kurds and Kurdistan*, Newyork: Olive Branch Press, 1993 add to bibg

[253] Özcan, Ali K., *Turkey's Kurds: A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Ocalan*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, p. 8.

Turkey's enforced mono-ethnic identity was so well carved into millions of minds that no one even questioned the roots of the PKK [...] whether the ethnic connection in the name was anything further than a Marxist ploy to gain regional support.[254]

In the early 1990s, certain events occurred simultaneously, such as the breakup of the Soviet Bloc, the first Gulf War, and the heavy cost of the war between the Turkish state and the PKK. These happenings enforced both the Turkish and Kurdish sides to change their stance. The first signs of civil solutions were revealed in the year of 1992, which allowed new social dynamics to come forward. On a local level, following the army coup in 1980, the political space was opened to liberal and Islamic parties. Considering that Çewlig/Bingöl is a conservative Sunni Muslim area, which has been sidelined by the dominant secular politics in Turkey since the Republic's creation, this paved the way for a more democratic form of local politics. The demography of political representation has changed accordingly.[255]

The region's political representation has shifted extensively since the 1980s, which has first allowed liberal parties, then Islamic parties and finally pro-Kurdish parties, a voice in local politics. This has led the local identity trends to the forefront of the complex debate of who the Kirds/Zazas are. This shift is of great importance for the present project, to be grounded in today's political identity dynamics. This topic will be elaborated on further in the analysis part of this thesis.

2.4 References to Kirds/Zazas in Historical Sources

In order to illustrate the matter of the phenomenon of belonging regarding the Zazas historically, there are several elements, which could be taken as the focus points. These are language, culture, social life and religious practices. However, in the Zaza case, contemporary reference is mostly made to language in the majority of cases. This misleading approach can be regarded as a new phenomenon, which was not followed historically in the oral literature, folklore and religious practices of the region. On the contrary, the history proves that this is the wrong path for trying to reach a conclusion. In all the historical sources of Arab, Persian, Seljuk and Ottoman literature, Zazas are

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[254] Imset, Ismet G. *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili*, Ankara: Turkish Daily News Press, 2002.
[255] Karasu, Dogan. *Düzenin Zencisi Olmak,* Istanbul: Peri Yayinlari, 2010.

stated as a sub-ethnic group of the Kurds. All the relevant sources prove that they were either perceived as Kurds, or a group within the Kurds.[256] As well as the Arab and the Persian sources, in the Ottoman archives, yearbooks/annuals and censuses, the Zazas are recorded together with the Kurds, not as a separate group. During the Ottoman era, the Kird/Zazas[257] are referred to as Kurds in the writings of important figures such as Serefkhan, Evliya Çelebi and Katip Çelebi. In his book Serefname, Serefkhan names the principalities in today's Zaza populated areas such as Çapakçur (Bingöl), Egil, Genç, Çemisgezek, Palu, Pertek, Siverek, Çermik etc., as the Kurdish principalities, and moves on giving more details about them.[258] Accordingly, the oral history interviews that have been conducted for this study are another vital indicator in helping to clarify the idea that the Zazakî-speaking group of people has seen itself as part of Kurdish identity.[259]

In an interview conducted in Çewlig/Bingöl, an elderly local stressed that until recent years, the discourse of identity was more straightforward. The Turkish Republic which has introduced different ideas in convincing the Zazas that they are not Kurds, has historically agreed with the idea of Zazas' actually being Kurds. The new phenomenon of stressing that Zazas are not Kurds is something which the state began promoting in line with its mono-ethnic project of dealing with the 'others' in Turkey, as a divide and rule policy of the state.

Establishing itself after the fall of Ottoman Empire, the new Republic of Turkey introduced new policies towards the religious and ethnic minorities. The new Kemalist regime took political steps to eliminate or assimilate the religious minorities. On the other hand, using the state's tools such as education, transport and media, it applied the assimilation policies to create a monoculture society throughout the country. These policies worked well in some regards for the policymakers of the state. However, those policies did not work towards the Kurds to the extent that state desired. The young state

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[256] Çaglayan, Ercan, `Osmanli Belgelerinde Zazalar ve Zazaca Üzerine Notlar`, Uluslarasi Dil Zaza Dili Sempozyumu [13-14 May 2011], Çewlig/Bingöl Universitesi Yayinlari, Ankara, 2011; Çaglayan, Ercan, `Zaza Tarihinin Kaynaklari [Arap ve Fars Kaynaklari]`, Uluslararasi Zaza Tarihi ve Kültürü Sempozyumu [4- 6 May 2012], Çewlig/Bingöl, 2012.
[257] Interview conducted with Mehmed Malmisanij during the field trip to Sweden .October 2011.
[258] Han, Serafeddin. *Serefname*, c. 1- 5, Istanbul: Yaba Yayinlari, 2010.
[259] Interview conducted with H. Ahmed Çelikel in Çewlig/Bingöl. May 2013.

took further steps to find a formula, which would be successful in assimilating the Kurds. Ankara ordered numerous reports to be prepared by its institutions and individuals working in line with the state's goals. Those reports were named Eastern reports, South-Eastern reports, Kurdish reports and so on. They were sometimes compiled directly for the need of the central government, or for a political party, governmental institution or NGO. In the preparation of the reports, prime ministers, ministers, MPs and other high-positioned individuals took part. Also governmental institutions such as the gendarmerie, state general inspectorship, the special Turkish national institute "Turkish Hearts" (*Türk Ocaklari*), and People's Houses (*Halkevleri*), have taken leading positions to Turkify the Kurds.[260] The 'Kurdish' reports earlier in the Republic of Turkey contain detailed information about historical, geographical, anthropological, social, economical and linguistic details of the Kurds. In the earlier reports, Zazas were always mentioned as constituent parts of Kurdishness, and their language was regarded as a part of Kurdish.

During the early Republic era, the first piece of work on the Zaza was written by Ziya Gokalp in 1922. He was a Zaza from Diyarbakir, and a well-known sociologist and Turkolog in Turkey.[261] This study was published after Gokalp's death in 1924 with the title *Kürt Asiretleri Hakkinda Sosyolojik Tetkikler* (A Study of the Kurdish Tribes). In his study, Gokalp stresses that Kurds are comprise of five main groups, the Kurmanç, Zaza, Soran, Goran and Lurs. Furthermore, Gokalp argues that members of these five groups find it difficult to understand each other linguistically, but the tongues of all the

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[260] See Akçura, Belma. *Devletin Kürt Filmi: 1925 - 2009 Kürt Raporlari,* New Age Yayinlari, Istanbul, 2009; Bayrak, Mehmet, *Kürtlere Vurulan Kelepçe: Sark Islahat Plan*i, Ankara: Ozge Yayinlari, 2009; Akaekmekci, Tuba and Pervan, Muazzez. "Dogu Sorunu" Necmeddin Sahir Silan Raporlari [1939-1953], Istanbul: Tarih Vakfi Yurt Yayinlari, 2010; Yildirim, Tugba. *Kürt Sorunu ve Devlet: Tedip ve Tenkit Politikalari [1925- 1947],* Istanbul: Tarih Vakfi Yurt Yayinlari, 2011.

[261] In the everyday the science of Turkology, Turcology, or Turkologie is a complex of humanities sciences studying languages, history, literature, folklore, culture, and ethnology of people speaking Turkic languages and Turkic peoples in chronological and comparative context. This includes ethnic groups from the Sakha in East Siberia to the Balkan Turks and Gagauz in Moldova, however according to Liaisan Şahin's definiation of this discipline "Turkology is an illustrative case within the discipline of Russian Orientalism, wherein the turning points and contradictory tendencies of Russian Oriental Studies can easily be traced. At the same time, Turkological studies also have their own character. Turkology, the study of the Turks, is a subfield of Türkology, the study of the Turkic peoples, which is the oldest and one of the most developed branches of Russian Oriental Studies. Due to the fact that the Russians lived side by side with the Turkic peoples since ancient times and the Russian state expanded by conquering majority of Turkic lands and peoples, Russian Orientalist science began with studies on the Turkic peoples".
See Şahin, Liaisan. `Russian Turkology: From Past to Present`, *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi,* 8:15, 2010, 591-644, cited in 592.

groups are derived from old Kurdish, as he refers to it, 'Kûrdiî Kadîm'.[262] Gokalp points out that Zazas perceive themselves as Kird, and the term they use for Kurmanjs is Kirdasî. He points out that the term Zaza was given by the neighbouring Turks to Dimilî Zazas.[263] It should be stressed that, although Ziya Gokalp was one of the main policymakers for the new state and the Kemalist regime (he drew inspiration from the Young Turks movement at the beginning of 20th century), he still did not use a discourse of total denial regarding the fact that the Zazas were a group within general Kurdishness.

One of the reports of early date (1926) is *Kürtlere Dair* (In Relation to Kurds), which was prepared for the Ministry of Education of Turkey. The report stated that it was the Şafiî Zazas who mainly supported the Sheikh Said revolt. This group called themselves 'Kird'[264] and they called the Zazas in Siverek, Gercüs, Elaziğ and northwest of Diyarbakir, Dimêl/Dimilî. Kirdasî was the term that they used for the Kurmanj speakers. The report also pointed out that Sorani and Luri were the other main dialects of Kurdish. The same report states the other minor dialects as Kelhuri, Gorani (which are pointed out as being close to Zazaki) and Bakhtiyari as a dialect close to Sorani.[265]

Although, some information in the reports may be misleading, it is interesting to see how the state's discourse has shifted throughout the 20th century. This discourse began changing from 1935, with different policy goals arising. In the late 1930s, the state changed its strategy and discourse regarding the Zaza case, from stating that 'Zazas are part of the Kurds', to 'Zazas are a Turkic tribe' starting in the 1930s, and later that 'Zazas are a separate people' starting in the 1970s. Those policies have had some success for the state's purposes. Elaziğ would be a good example to note here, as the assimilation policies worked best there among Zaza inhabited areas. The majority of Elaziğ's population would proudly stress Turkishness as their identity.[266]

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[262] Gokalp, Ziya, *Kürt Asiretleri Hakkinda Sosyolojik incelemeler,* Ankara: Komal Yayinlari, 1975, p. 49.
[263] Gokalp, Ziya, *Kürt Asiretleri Hakkinda Sosyolojik Tetkikler*, pp. 32- 34.
[264] Kirt: The Zazakî speaking group in mainlyÇewlig/Bingöl and Diyarbakir call themselves Kirt or Kird, and they name the dialect/language Kirdkî.
[265] Yildirim, Tugba, *Kürt Sorunu ve Devlet: Tedip ve Tenkil Politikalari [1925- 1947],* Istanbul: Tarih Vakfi Yurt Yayinlari, 2011, pp. 40-49.
[266] Interview conducted with Mehmed Selim Uzun, in Sweden. October 2011. M. Selim Uzun is a Kird/ Zaza from the area who moved to Sweeden but visits Turkey on regular basis. He is within the Vate Group and he contributes to standardising Zazaki.

Another important figure who produced reports containing information regarding the Zazas, was pro-Kemalist Hasan Reşit Tankut. He presented his report in 1935 to the Republican People's Party (CHP), and to Prime Minister Ismet Inönü. This report was later published as a book, *Zazalar Hakkinda Sosyolojik Tetkikler* (A Sociological Study of the Zazas). The book was mainly based on fieldwork in Zaza-populated areas from 1925 to 1936. Tankut's reports focuses on Zazas' social, economic and religious structure. Despite the fact that he stresses that Zazas are Turks at some points in the text, he still could not resist writing that 'no matter what, none of them are really Turks but they are enemies of the Turks and I don't agree with those who think otherwise'.[267]

There is an obvious contradiction in his views. Later in his report following the army coup of 27th May 1960, Tankut suggests that the state should create a line corridor between the Zazas and the Kurmanjs by settling accommodating Turks brought from Anatolia. He argues that creating a corridor of approximately 50 km between them will make it easier to Turkify the Zazas. His planned line would be from Erciyes (Kayseri) to Dersim, and would keep the Zazas on the north side of the line called 'the Turkish dam'.[268] As can be seen, there has been a constant attempt to find the most suitable way for the state on a governmental level to convince Zazas that they are not Kurds. Thereby, one could argue that the current picture of the assimilated Zazas is a result of what was done in those years. Moreoveer, it could be stated similar attempts have been made against all the Kurds in Turkey, including the Kurmanjs. However, the assimilation policy towards Zazas has been slightly different when compared with the Kurmanjs. On one hand in the Zaza case it was applied with somewhat mild policies, which resulted in self-assimilation process. On the other hand, the state applied a more direct and harsher assimilation practices in regard to the Kurmanjs.

One other important source on how to deal with 'the problematic Kurds', and in particular with Zazas, is the notes of a meeting of general superintendents on 5th-22nd of 1936. One of the important topics of this meeting was on how to Turkify the non-Turkish population of Anatolia'. The most important outcome of that meeting for the

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[267] Tankut, Hasan Resit, *Zazalar Üzerine Sosyolojik Tetkikler,* Istanbul: Kalan Yayinlari, 2000, pp. 22-23.
[268] Bayrak, Mehmet. *Açik- Gizli / Resmi-Gayriresmi Kürdoloji Belgeleri,* Ankara: Ozge Yayinlari, 1994, pp. 220-230. Add to bibl

Eastern Anatolian region was the government took the decision to establish Çewlig/Bingöl as a new separate province. The decision extended Çewlig/Bingöl's territory to include some town from Mus and Erzincan. Çewlig/Bingöl (other names Çapakçur, Çewlig/Çolig) used to be a small district as part of the Diyarbakir province in the 17th–18th centuries under Ottoman rule. In 1881, Çewlig/Bingöl with Genç (currently a town of Çewlig/Bingöl) were included in Bitlis province with a new law. In the early days of the Republic of Turkey, Çewlig/Bingöl was a town of Genç. Çewlig/Bingöl was appointed as town of Elaziğ in 1926, and later as town of Mus, and finally was announced as a city in its own right in 1936.[269]

Çewlig/Bingöl was the centre of the Sheikh Said revolt, and it needed to be 'taken care of'.[270] On the other hand, another superintendent attending the series of meetings, Abdullah Alpdogan, suggested that the state should create lines of Turkish or Turkified population settlements which would act as a barrier for the Turkish state. If these lines of population were financially, politically and socially supported, they could become both a source of power and security, and a role model to be taken up by the locals. The policymakers of the Turkish state have been extremely 'creative' in designing policies to help the structure of the new state change into a mono-ethnic structure. As previously stated, by moving new waves of population to and from certain areas they tried to secure their assimilation and security policies. Furthermore, during further meetings, it was decided that the population of the region should be thought of as Turkish, and 'a soul of Turkishness had to be injected' to the populace. They should be given Turkish surnames, and place names could also be renamed in Turkish. The state should also open *Halkevleri* (People's Houses)[271] and the people should be modernised through

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[269] Arda, Akif. *Bütün Yonleriyle Çewlik-Bingöl,* Istanbul: Doz Yayincilik, 2006, p. 94.

[270] Varlik, M. Bülent. Umumî Müfettisler Toplanti Tutanaklari 1936, Ankara: Dipnot Yayinlari, 2010, p. 129.

[271] Halkevleri or people's houses was a sort of community centres, that the time of this inittitive can be dated back to 1932, however through three following different periods; 1932-1951 (1st era), 1963-1980 (2nd era) and after 1987, different function/agendas were attributed to this initiative. In the 1932, branches of Halkevleri were opened in the 17 following cities; Adana, Ankara, Bolu, Bursa, Çanakkale, Denizli, Diyarbakır, Eskişehir, İstanbul, İzmir, Konya, Malatya and Samsun, and towards 1950, the total number of these subsections exceeded 4000. In the second era (1963-1980). The Halkevleri acted as an umbrella organisation of leftist movements. The leftist organization Devrimci Yol (Revolutionary Path) was most active involved organization in the Halkevleri branches. This was one of main reasons for the closing of Halkevleri with the 1980 Turkish coup d'état. Karpat, Kemal H. `The Impact of the People's Houses on the Development of Communication in Turkey: 1931-1951`, *Die Welt des Islams New Series*, 15:1/4 (1974), 69-84.

watching mobile cinema and theatre shows, so that they can pick up the idea of Turkishness faster and easier.

In a meeting on 9th November 1936, a security (police) chief, Sükrü Sokmensüer, presented this information regarding the Zazas: 'The Zazas are originally from Azerbaijan and they have settled around Çewlig/Bingöl. Their main economic activity is animal breeding; they are clearly are not Kurds, but they are Turks'.[272] As seen in this case, sometimes the agents of the state were not even concerned whether their statements were at all logical.

In the same meeting, superintendent Abidin Ozmen argued that, 'we cannot treat Zazas separately from the Kurds'.[273] There have been contradictions in views of the members of state organisations, differing from time and place in the two decades following the establishment of the state. This is significant in a way that there has been a "planned process" in line with the state's social engineering, policies which were introduced from the late 1930s.

The most important reports regarding the first decades of the Republican era are those authored by Necmeddin Sahir Sılan. He was MP for Dersim and Çewlig/Bingöl between 1939 and 1954. Having lived in Zaza areas for 15 years, helped him to collect a valuable archive relevant to this research, and his reports were published by Turkish History Foundation. Moreover, Sılan is one of the pioneers of the idea that the Zazas 'are not Kurds but mountain Turks' policy. Thererby, he stressed that when one goes to the Zaza-inhabited areas as an outsider, it is supposedly obvious that they are nothing but Turks. According to his reports, the Kurds have never lived in Turkey's territories, and they do not have a common history, literature or language that belongs to them.[274] As a result, it could be argued that the state's policymakers in assimilation policies have moved forward systematically in trying to prove the denial of the Zazas/Kurds.

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[272] Varlik, Umumî Müfettisler Toplanti Tutanaklari, pp. 176-177.
[273] Varlik, Umumî Müfettisler Toplanti Tutanaklari, p. 190.
[274] Akekmekçi, Tuba, and Pervan, Muazzez. *Dersim Harekati ve Cumhuriyet Bürokrasisi [1936- 1950],* Istanbul: Yurt Yayinlari, 2011, pp. 3-29.

2.5 How Kird/Zazas Identified Themselves Until 1980

Feeling a sense of Kurdishness seems to have been largely the case among Zazakî speakers themselves historically in Turkey. Since 1980, traditional outlooks on local identities have started becoming increasingly complex, and questions of Zaza cultural/ethnic identities acquired new qualitative as well as quantitative characteristics. These shifts occurred for a number of reasons, including an army coup (1980), which changed some of the political structures of the Turkish state, and the political/military establishment's relation to "East and South-East Turkey" in particular. Furthermore, Turkish schooling and the spread of Turkish media in Turkey's Kurdish areas led the process along a more complex route. The age at which schooling begins dropped to as young as age three, in the early 2000s.

Historically, there is a harmony of different ethnic and religious groups of people that living in Turkey. In the 20th century, on one hand, the stress of local identies have become visible, but on the other hand the young Turkish Republic was motivated to assimilate and diminish this different identities. This was done in a way to serve their monoethnic state ideology. In the eastern part of Turkey, there were Arabs, Turks, Turkomans, Kurds, Kurmanjs, Zazas (Kird, Kirmanc, Dimili), Asuris, Yezidis and Alevis as names to identify different groups of people with different identities.

Zaza as a term is the newer and now dominant term that is used for the group of the second dialect of Kurds in Turkey. Historically, Kird/Kirdkî, Kirmanc/Kirmanckî, and Dimilî/Dimilkî were the names used for this group of people, depending on which area they were residing. The term Zaza was the version used in Elazig province, which is currently majorly Turkified.[275] The fact that the dominant words in naming themselves are Zazas and/or Kurmanjs, would not mean that these groups necessarily differ in ethnicity. A similar situation is the case in other parts of 'greater Kurdistan'. In Iraqi Kurdistan, internally, Soran, Badini, and Hawrami are used more than Kurd(s) as terms to identify people from the different regions. The term Kurds is often used in the international arena, not only by the non-Kurds but also by the Kurds themselves. There is a usage a similar situation in Iranian Kurdistan. Interestingly, the Kurds of each part

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[275] Interview conducted with Mehmet Selim Uzun in Sweden. October 2011.

generally prefer to call the Kurds of other parts 'Kurds' without going into further details of which group (Kurmanj, Soran, Zaza, Badini, Hawrami, Goran etc.) of Kurds.

Politically, the self-identification process in Turkey, and especially in the Kurdish part, came under considerable influence dictated by the Turkish state. One could say that Turkey is 'experienced' in designing assimilation policies using different methods. Until the beginning of the 20th century, the map of different ethnicities and/or spoken languages in today's Turkey (then the Ottoman Empire) was rather colourful. When the Turkish Republic was established in 1923, the founding clique decided that a multi–ethnic structure was a threat to the unity of the state, and could result in the division of the country. In the following decades after its establishment, the Turkish state implemented its vast assimilation policies towards all the groups of the people which were seen as 'others' by the policymakers of the new state. In the Zaza and Kurdish case, the state firstly denied that they were Kurds by arguing that they were 'mountain Turks'. In the later stage, it introduced various strategies to diminish anything other than Turkishness.

Following the Crimean War between the Ottoman Empire and Russia in 1856, researcher Peter Lerch visited a prison camp in which Russia kept the captives from the Ottoman army. Among them there were Kird/Zazakî-speaking soldiers. Lerch studied the Zazakî speakers of that camp and collected some linguistic data.[276] His study was published in Russian and it was translated into German at a later stage. Lerch mentions a fight between a Kirdki/Zazakî-speaking Kurdish group, and a Turkish group. In an attempt to motivate his small group of fighters, the Zaza leader Xelef Agha announced that they may be more than us in number, but do not forget that they are Turks, and you are all heroes of the Kurds and your tribes, therefore they cannot defeat you.[277] This example clearly displays that there was no differentiation between Kurds and Zazas in earlier times in the region. Xelef Agha clearly considered himself and his fighters as Kurds. Likewise, Ehmedê Xasî, in the concluding remarks of his *Mewlid*, states that the

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[276] Kurij, Seyîdxan. Zazalar ve Zazaca Yazını, http://www.zazaki.net/file/zazalar_v...pdf (Last accessed 17 July 2016).

[277] Kurij, Seyîdxan. Zazalar ve Zazaca Yazını. Seyithan Kurij is a Kird/ Zaza from Çewlig/ Bingöl and is a writer. He mainly writes about historical and anthropological topics around the Sheikh Said revolt.

language of his *Mewlid* is the Kirdkî/Zazki dialect of Kurdish.[278] Currently, most Zazas still see themselves as Kurds, but there are still local differences in certain respects.

The Zazakî-speaking population is mainly based in Eastern and South-Eastern Turkey. There is also a considerable Zaza population in Marmara, on the Aegean and in mid-Anatolia due to migration, mainly in the last few decades. The state forced some groups of Zazakî-speaking people to move to the Western cities in Turkey following the Sheikh Said and Seyyid Riza uprisings. The main Zaza cities are Çewlig/Bingöl, Dersim (Tunceli), Diyarbakir, Elaziğ, Erzurum, Sivas, Urfa, Bitlis, Mus, Siirt and Adiyaman. There are Zaza speakers also in Malatya, Kayseri, Nigde, Aksaray, Kars, Ardahan and Gümüshane. Due to the migration of the Zaza population from the 1960s onwards, there are Zazas in the main Turkish cities such as Istanbul, Bursa, Izmir, Kocaeli, Sakarya, Ankara, Konya, Mersin, Antalya, Adana, Gaziantep and Osmaniye today. Besides, Zazas have also moved to live in Western European countries[279].

Zazas name themselves and the dialect they speak differently depending on where they live or where they come from. Those names include Kird/Kirdki; in Çewlig/Bingöl and some of the Diyarbakir towns (Lice, Dicle, Kocakoy, Egil, Hani, Hazro and Silvan), Kirmanc / Kirmancki; in Dersim, Erzincan and Varto-Muş, Dimilî/Dimilkî; in Urfa, Siverek); in Adiyaman, Gerger; in Diyarbakir, Çermik, Çüngüş; and Zaza/Zazakî in and around Elaziğ.[280] The word Zaza is a widely preferred version that is used in all areas in addition to the local names for each group due to a number of reasons.[281] In the researched area of this thesis, in Çewlig/Bingöl, the preferred name is Kird/Kirdkî. Malmisanij stresses that, from the 19th century, there are two main sources documented that state that Kird/Kirdkî was also historically used to name the Zazakî speakers of Çewlig/Bingöl.[282]

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[278] Lezgîn, Rosan, Mewlidê Kirdî, http://www.zazaki.net/haber/mewlid-neb-y-ehmed-xas-57.htm (Last accessed 17 July 2016).

[279] Arakelova, Victoria, `The Zaza People as a New Ethno-Political Factor in the Region`, *Iran & the Caucasus,* 3:4 (1999/2000), 397-408.

[280] Although the word Zaza is an accepted term today, historically it was the least used version. The more popular ones were Kird, Kirmanc and Dimilî depending on the areas where those referred to lived. I think this is an important point and you should put it in the main body of the thesis.

[281] Nusret, Aydin, http://www.zazaki.net/haber/among-social-kurdish-groups-general-glance-at-zazas-503.htm (Last accessed 2 March 2018).

[282] Interview conducted with Mehmed Malmisanij in Sweden. January 2012. Mehmet Malmisanij is the most important figure who leads the Kirdki/ Zazaki standardising mainly with the Vate group and he has a lot to say about all aspects of this identity topic.

The Turkish state's argument that the Zazas are not Kurds, is a massive problem facing Kurdish identity and a huge challenge to create unification among different section of the Kurdish society. The process of ethnic identity building in Çewlig/Bingöl is an ongoing one. The idea was originally begun by the Turkish state, claiming that the Zazas are not Kurds, but are Turks and/or a Turkic tribe; this was later developed by suggesting that the Zazas are a separate people themselves. With the two above groups of Zazas embracing the idea for economic reasons and directly given benefits from the states, they can be said to have been 'buying' the ideas that Turkish state has tried to sell to them for decades. On the other hand, the Kurdish movement's approach to these two groups is usually not welcoming, which leads the groups drawing closer to the state. The Kurdish political party has labelled almost all the Kurds who do not vote for them or do not share the same ideological beliefs, as state collaborators.[283] These factors make the issue more complex in local politics. Furthermore, linguistically, one cannot finalize the argument by saying definitively that Zazakî is a dialect of Kurdish, or that it is a language independent from Kurdish. On the other hand, the group that says Zazas are not Kurds, disregards the importance of common history, geography, social structure, etc. Moreover, politically, one could not draw a clear line between Zazas and Kurds in general. As the definitions for what is a language and what is a dialect are not clear, it would be wrong to label a group by only what they speak[284]. Besides the language, there are other important markers such as history, traditions, homeland, religion, sense of national purpose, and common festivals to indicate whether a group of people is a separate ethnic group or not.[285] The trend of local identities makes the case more complex and interesting.

During the early years of the Republic, there were some reports published based on surveys. One of the most significant was authored by Basri Konyar, called *Diyarbekir İl Yıllığı* (the Yearbook of Diyarbakir). In these studies, the Kurdishness of the Zazas was not yet denied and Zazas were treated as a group among the Kurds. The suggestions

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[283] Interview conducted with Wisif Zozani in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2011. Wisif Zozani is one the leading figure who from and lives in Çewlig/ Bingöl and contributes vastly in the local identity debates and produces material in Kirdki/ Zazaki.
[284] Çiçek, Cuma. `Kurdish identity and political Islam under AKP rule, *Research and Policy on Turkey*`, 1:2 2016, 147-163.
[285] Kaya, Mahmed S., The Zaza Kurds of Turkey, 2011.

of the report advised that the state should teach 'the modern language, culture and way of life' to the Zazas, but their existence was nevertheless not totally denied.

Apart from the various reports, there were also population censuses, which took place periodically after the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Most significantly, in the censuses between 1927 and 1950 there are strong indications regarding Zaza Identity. The mother tongue was one of the main questions in the Turkish censuses until 1965. The Institute of State Statistics (DIE) has released the data from the censuses that took place between 1927 and 1965. The 1927, 1935, 1940 and 1945 censuses in all of the Zaza-inhabited cities and towns gave the native tongue as Kurdish. In the 1950, 1955, 1960 and 1965 censuses, the language column had Kurdish with its dialects options, which were Kurmançca (Kurmanji), Kirdasça (Kirdasî, the preferred dialect for the Zazakî speakers of Dersim area) and Zazaca (Zazakî). [286]

In the censuses of 1950 and 1965, the majority of the Zazas in Çewlig/Bingöl, Elaziğ and Dersim registered their native tongue as Kurdish. For example, in the 1965 census, the population of Dersim was 150,000, and only seven households identified Zazakî as their language in the language column. As a conclusion from the censuses, one can argue that the Zazas perceived themselves as Kurds or as part of the Kurds.

2.6 Important Figures in the Formation of Zaza Identity

Zazakî speaking intellectuals and activists have taken their places within Kurdish uprisings, from Sheikh Said's rebellion to the contemporary Kurdish movement(s). The Sheikh Said revolt was suppressed by the state and the group of 47, most of whom came from Çewlig/Bingöl and surrounding areas, were executed in 1925 as a result. Some of other well-known figures that were from Çewlig/Bingöl and/or Zazakî speakers, are Sheikh Şerif, Sheikh Abdullah, Commander Yado, Sait Elçi, Zeki Adsiz, Rençber Aziz, Hayri Durmuş, Mehmet Karasungur, Cihat Elçi, Idris Ekinci, and Ibrahim Incedursun. A well-known singer, a blind person who had to flee to Germany during the army coup of 1980, Rençber Aziz is a symbolic personage in Çewlig/Bingöl's oral history.[287] Rençber devoted many songs to societal issues and interests. Rençber Aziz wrote songs

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[286] TCBIGM, 22 Ekim 1950 Umumi Nüfus Sayimi, Istanbul, 1961, pp. 113-177.
[287] Rencber Eziz Uzerine, http://www.zazaki.net/haber/rencber-ezz-uzerine-499.htm (Last accessed 12 May 2016).

referring to the identity of Zazas as Kurds[288]. On the other hand, the Turkish nationalists also managed to convince individuals from Çewlig/Bingöl to co-operate with them. During the dark conditions of the late 1970s, a candidate from the extreme Turkish nationalists, the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), managed to win the mayoral election in Çewlig/Bingöl. These were the years when Çewlig/Bingöl displayed a tendency to become like Elaziğ politically. Elaziğ's political tendency had changed due to the assimilation programs applied by the state.[289] Furthermore, one of the most mentioned, if not the most mentioned name with regards to extreme Turkish nationalism and deep state-JITEM,[290] Mahmut Yildirim also known as 'Yeşil', is a Kird/Zaza from Çewlig/Bingöl.

This phenomenon that some Zazas began to see themselves as separate from the Kurds and sought to produce a new literature to support this notion, first started in Europe, mainly in Sweden, following the army coup in Turkey in 1980. The founder of this marginal group was Ebubekir Pamukçu, a high school teacher and a Zaza from Çermik, a town of Diyarbakir. From 1976 and onwards, Pamukçu and his group published two magazines called *Piya* and *Ayre*. The publications started out featuring linguistic debates and pro-Kurdish politics, but, later on, the political articles of their magazines became a pro-Zaza foundation of a separate movement. In my interview with Malmisanij in Sweden, he argued that Pamukçu's views on both Kurdish nationalism and Zaza nationalism changed completely after a short imprisonment period in Turkey before he fled to Sweden. Malmisanij added that Pamukçu became hostile to Kurdish movements and did not oppose the Turkish regime to the same extent after the 1980s.[291] Martin Van Bruinessen argues that Ebubekir Pamukçu is the main leader of the Zaza movement, indicating that the Zaza 'separatist' movement can be dated back only to the 1980s.[292]

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[288] Among some of Rençber Aziz's songs relevant Zaza and zaza identity one can refer to Aziz's, Çıra çıra (why why), in which he expresses his wonder about some zaza Kurds undermine and fall into the Turkish policy of assimilation and divide and role, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuY2m_jukf0 (Last accessed 15 May 2018).

[289] Interview conducted with Mehmed Selim Uzun in Sweden. October 2011.

[290] JITEM is a branch of the Turkish army, which acted as a secret service body.

[291] Interview conducted with Malmisanij in Sweden. October 2011.

[292] Bruinessen, Martin van. `Kurds, Turks and the Alevi Revival in Turkey`, *Middle East Reports,* 200, 1996, 7-10.

The 1980 army coup resulted in many intellectuals fleeing to Europe, mainly to Sweden, France and Germany, where they formed groups and associations working on linguistic and literary productions. This period in Europe resulted in some divisions and ideological clashes among the pro-Zaza groups and pro-Kurdish groups in general, which often influenced developments back in Turkish Kurdistan.

Some pro-Zaza online portals in Çewlig/Bingöl, such as Zaza-Der[293] and Tavz-Der,[294] often refer Pamukçu as a great Zaza leader from whom they take their inspiration. There were also many references to Pamukçu in the conference on Zaza identity which Çewlig/Bingöl University held in 2011. Turkish state institutions have recently seemed to take the ownership of 'Zazaism' as opposed to Kurdish nationalism, on a local level including in Çewlig/Bingöl. The central state in Ankara is keen to invest in this counter-nationalism, for the purpose of its efforts to harm the Kurdish movement(s).[295]

Chapter 3: The Political Battle: Çewlig/ Bingol Bteween the Turkish State and the Kurdish Movement

The process of identity shifting in Çewlig / Bingöl is a phenomena that has political actors who have hopes for different outcomes from it. These political actors are the Turkish state and Kurdish movement as argued in this thesis. The pro- Zaza group stands as the third group as it is the group that appeared latest as reaction to the first two groups. The Turkish state had its political agenda on this identity topic throughout the earlier decades. This was done in a way to divide and rule against Kurds over all. As it has been referred to throughout the thesis, there are various sources indicating that the state had its political engineering program from 1930's regarding the Zazas. This was done in a way to manipulate Zazas that they are a Turkic tribe or at least that they are not Kurds. They have somehow succeeded to manipulate or create confusion among the Zazas, mainly in Elazig and the surrounding. The Kurdish movement was struggling with the broader aspect of exisitance in the earlier decades of the Turkish State history following the major defeats of the Kurdish revolts in 1920s and 1930s. During the

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[293] Komela Ziwan U Kulturê Zazayan–Zaza Dil Ve Kültür Derneği, http://zazader.org/category/makale (Last accessed 28 Ocotober 2016).
[294] http://www.tavzder.org/ (Last accessed 11 November 2016).
[295] http://www.zazaki.net./ (Last accessed 12 November 2016).

relatively more relaxed era in 1970s and onwards the Kurdish movement gained a poltical strength and claimed the ownership of all the Kurdish sub-groups including the Zazas. The Kurdish movement argued that the Zazas are one of the main sub-groups of the Kurdish nation. However, the Zazas themselves appear on this poltically pulling battle and claim that they will decide for their own faith.

The history of taking position in this complex identity started with the Turkish state's taking a reactionary position towards Zazas with a political agenda. This begun following the two major revolts of Sheikh Said Revolt (1925) and strengthened even further after Seyyid Riza / Dersim Revolt (1937-38). The state applied harsh security policies along with politically designed assimilation policies. The aim of these assimilation policies was aiming to persuade the Zazas that they are historically a Turkic tribe. This approach was welcomed by some Zazas, mainly by those who lived between Turkish Kurdistan and Turkey (close to Turkish inhabited areas/ the border with Turkish population) between Turkish Kurdistan and Turkey. Elazig was the main field for practising this policy.

The Kurdish movement came up with a position to this stance. It argued that Zazas are Kurdish group of people and they speak a Kurdish dialect that is called Kirdki, Kirmanjki, Dimilî or Zazaki depending on the specific areas they lived within northern Kurdistan. According to this stance, the Turkish state had a political agenda of 'divide and rule' and marginalise the Kurdish movement's resistance against the 'oppressor Turkish state'. The Kurdish movement pointed out Amed/ Diyarbakir, where a good proportion of the population is Zaza, as a role model province for Çewlig/ Bingöl.

The Zazas in general and Çewlig / Bingöl's Kirds, after decades of being object of this identity challenges, started becoming the subject of it since 1980s. The Shafi'i school of Sunni Islam religious identity has always been strong in Çewlig / Bingöl. The political Islam's popularity has an increase in Turkey since the 1980 army coup and is being used as a tool to approach the Kurds, especially in the conservative cities like Çewlig / Bingöl in the region. This has become more obvious during the AKP rule since 2002. The identity dynamics on the ground were also in parallel with the new trend of local identities in the World. This, along with the increasing use of social media among

the youth particularly, has brought about a new and further complex to the whole identity debates in Çewlig / Bingöl. The locals tend to have a Zaza identity that points out religion as the main pillar of their identity or affiliate their Zazaness as sub-identity either with the Turkiishenss and Turkish state or with the Kurdishness and Kurdish movement.

3.1 The Turkish State's Social Engineering Plan for the Zazaki Speaking Areas: The Case of Elazig

Until recent decades, there was not a clear separation between Zazas and Kurds in terms of ethnicity in Turkey. There were minimal differences between the two in terms of linguistics and folklore. One could argue that religious divisions were more important in the Kurdish region of Turkey, mainly the division between Sunnis and Alevis. Looking back at the history of the region, it is notable that since 1920s, the policies of denial towards the Kurds have been in practice on the ground. Kurds who disagreed with the Turkish policies were brutally oppressed via security policies. This was the case for Zazaki-speaking areas too. The two most outstanding uprisings in Zazaki-speaking areas against the Turkish state's policies were the 1925 Sheikh Said upraising and the 1937-38 Seyyid Riza uprising. These revolts were suppressed by force to ensure that no further revolts or any sort of mobilisation for cultural rights would ever be planned by the inhabitants of the region. The region became militarized massively in an extent that any individuals, intellectuals and groups of people for who engaged in any social, cultural and political (even civil society) activities were considered and treated as threat to the Turkish state' security, despite some minor changes of the Turkish state's means of militarization of the Kurdish region, the approach (viewing the Kurdish question through a securitized lenses) is still a the same, after more than nine decades since the Sheikh Said's uprising.[296] The Kurds and Kurdish speakers were generally by state officials considered as threat and they encouraged the army and other political and intelligent institutions to pay considerable attention to the Kurdish region for instance. For instance as during the Senem Aslan's study of the Kurdish question from the early decades of the twentieth century has been highlighted, in Turkey;

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[296] Geri, Maurizio. `The Securitization of the Kurdish Minority in Turkey: Ontological Insecurity and Elite's Power Struggle as Reasons of the Recent Re-Securitization`, *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 26:1, (2016), 187–202.

[the] Kurdish speakers were perceived as a major threat, especially after the first revolts in Kurdish areas in the early 1920s. What the state elite feared most was the rise of a Kurdish nationalism allied with an imperialist Western power with the aim of seceding from Turkey. Almost every report sent to Ankara from the Kurdish areas addressed this fear and contained comments about Kurdish speakers' questionable loyalty to the republic. "People of this province do not yet believe that they are part of the Turkish nation," wrote a parliamentarian who inspected Siirt, a city in southeastern Turkey, in 1940. "They look at Ankara with awe and admiration, but Ankara does not lie at all in their hearts. Therefore, during insecure times we should pay more attention to and act prudently about this province.[297]

Tasks were given to state officials, ruling party CHP officials, bureaucrat-writers and army officials, to produce written materials to serve the State's assimilation policies. Some examples are as below:

- Süleyman Nafiz Pasa, *Van Tarihi ve Kürtler Hakkinda Tetebbuat* (History of Van and Research about the Kurds), 1928.

- Albay (colonel) Faiz Demiroglu, *Van ve Çevresinde Tarihi Incelemeler* (Historical Researches in and Around Van), 1985.

- Albay (colonel) M. Riza: *Benlik ve Dilbirligimiz* (Us and the Unity of our Language), Istanbul, 1933.

- The work by the army official Dr Mehmet Sükrü Sekban, *Kürt Sorunu* (Paris, 1933) was produced in a brochure-style publication while the author was seriously ill in Paris. This document was circulated to state offices, and later to all civil offices after 1960. After 1960, it was re-published with the addition of forewords of army chiefs and officials under the emergency law in Turkey. This piece is purely a state propaganda publication.[298]

- Army Major Hilmi, M. Kânunî Sultan Süleyman'ın 1533-1535 Bağdad Seferi, Askeri Basımevi, İstanbul, 1932. (Kanuni Sultan Süleyman's Baghdad Expedition).

- Army Staff Major Burhan Özkök, *Osmanli Devrinde Dersim isyanlari* (Dersim Revolts During the Ottoman Era), 1937.

- Gendarmerie General Command, *Dersim* (100 copies were distributed)

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[297] Aslan, Senem. `Everyday Forms of State Power and the Kurds in the Early Turkish Republic`, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 43:1 (2011), 75-93. cited in p. 81.
[298] Bayrak, Mehmet. *Kürt Sorunu ve Demokratik Çözüm,* Ankara: Özge Yayinlari, 1999, p. 355.

- Gendarmerie Colonel Nazmi Sevgen published a periodical called *Tarih Konusuyor* (History Speaks), where he published numerous articles about the Kurds since 1950.

- Gendarmerie Colonel Nazmi Sevgen: *Doguda Kürt Meselesi* (The Kurdish Question in the East of Turkey), Istanbul, 1970.

- Gendarmerie Colonel Nazmi Sevgen, *Dogu ve Güneydogu Anadolu'da Türk Beylikleri / Osmanli Belgeleri ile Kürt – Türkleri Tarihi, Türk Kültürünü Arastirma Enstitüsü Yayini* (The Turkish Principalities in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia/ Ottoman Documents and Kurdish Turks' History), Turkish Cultural Research Institute Publications, 1982. This book includes some of Sevgen's publications and articles that were published beforehand such as, *Zazalar: Tarih Dünyasi* (Zazas: History World), Kürtler: Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi (Kurds: Turkish History Magazine with Documents), Kürt Meselesinin içyüzü (An Insider on the Kurdish Question), *Irak-Barzani Antlasmasi ve Muhtemel Neticeleri* (The Iraq- Barzani Agreement and its Possible Outcomes).

- Gendarmerie Colonel Nazmi Sevgen, *Zazalar* (Zazas)*, Zaza Kültürü, Ankara, 1995.

- Army Dr Mehmet Çapar, *Dogudaki Asiretlerin Türklügü* (Turkishness among the Tribes in Eastern Anatolia), Istanbul 1972.

- Army Dr Mehmet Çapar, *Dogu Asiretleri ve Emperyalism* (Eastern Tribes and Imperialism), Istanbul, 1975.

- Army Staff Colonel Bekir Tümay, *Menderes Devri Anilari: Gördüklerim, Bildiklerim, Duyduklarim* (Menderes-Era Memories: What I Saw, Knew and Heard)

- Army General Kenan Esengin: *Milli Mücadelede Hiyanet Yarisi* (The Treachery Race in National Struggle, Ankara, 1969.

- Army General Kenan Esengin, *Milli Mücadelede Ayaklanmalar* (Revolts During National Struggle)

- Army General Kenan Esengin, *Kürtçülük Sorunu* (The Pan-Kurdish Problem), Istanbul, 1976.

- Army Dr Ibrahim Etem Gürsel, *Kürtçülük Gerçegi* (Reality of Kurdishness), Ankara, 1977.

- Major General Abdullah Kuloglu, *Bölücü Davranislar ve Türk Devleti* (Divisive Behaviours and the Turkish State), Ankara, 1981.

- Colonel Sadi Koças, *Kürtlerin Kökeni ve Güneydogu Anadolu Gerçegi* (The Origin of the Kurds and Reality of South-Eastern Anatolia), Istanbul, 1990.

- Lieutenant Colonel Kadri Kemal Kop, *Anadolu'nun Dogu ve Güneydogusu* (Eastern and South-Eastern Anatolia), Ankara, 1982.

- Colonel Resat Halli, *Türkiye Cumhuriyetinde Ayaklanmalar* (The Uprisings in the Turkish Republic), Chief of Staff Publications, Ankara, 1972.

Some other important names among the Kemalist army staff and writers are Hasan Resit Tankut, Sükrü Kaya Seferoglu, Kemal Türközü, Ismet Parmaksizoglu, M. Fahrettin Kirzioglu, Mehmet Eröz, Aydin Taneri, Tuncer Gülensoy, M. Salih San, Edip Yavuz, M. Serif Firat, Ahmet Arvasi, Kazim Mirsan, Abdulahaluk Çay, Yasar Kalafat, Ismet Alparslan and Hayri Basbug. Hayri Basbug is an interesting figure who should be discussed in more detail. He sometimes uses M. Tetik as his pseudonym when he publishes. He is a Zaza from Diyarbakir who works closely with state institutions. Mehmet Bayrak argues that he is a Turkish State agent who publishes to serve state propaganda. [299] Basbug was the chief editor of both *Zaza Kültür Yayinlari* (Zaza Cultural Publications) and *Zaza Gençlik Dergisi* (Zaza Youth Magazine). He was active in *Türk Dünyasi Arastirmalari* (Research on the Turkish World) *and Türk Kültürünü Arastirma Enstitüsü* (The Institute of Turkish Cultural Research).

When it became obvious that these institutions were directly state funded, the same group of researchers tried to act under another institution, which was named *Bogaziçi Yayinlari* (Bogaziçi Publications)[300]. This group of people and their institutions used to focus on the argument that the Kurds are actually Turks or a Turkic tribe. When this idea became outdated and did not serve their purpose, they came up with the project of 'Zazism'. This project aimed at spreading the idea that Zazas are not Kurds, but a Turkic tribe and a people of its own. Hayri Basbug, under the name M. Tetik, managed the propaganda publications project himself from Ankara. The group would send these propaganda publications to recipients in Turkey and Europe. This project was clearly part of the state's assimilation policies and/or divide and rule tactics.

Looking at the case more closely, it bears a strong similarity to the early decades of the Turkish Republic. The originator and one of the most prominent advocates of the 'Sun Language Theory' was Professor Hasan Resit Tankut. Tankut was appointed as a state

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[299] Bayrak. *Kürt Sorunu ve Demokratik Çözüm,* p. 356
[300] Scalbert-Yücel, Clémence and Le Ray, Marie. `Knowledge, ideology and power. Deconstructing Kurdish Studies`, *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 5, 2006. https://journals.openedition.org/ejts/777 (Last accessed 11 December 2017).

advisor to the eastern provinces following the 1925 Sheikh Said revolt. He produced a vast number of publications from the region in the service of state interests.[301] In his reports he outlines the assimilation and divide and rule tactics in detail. He argues "the Kurdistan region of Turkey should be divided as a T-shape based on the Euphrates River. Initially the Kurds should be divided as Alevi Zaza residents in the north of the T, and Sunni (Safii) Zazas in the south of the T. Later, as a whole, there should be a dam (line) of Turkish population placed between the Zazas and Kurmanjs.*[302]*

The linguistic argument of whether Zazaki is a dialect of Kurdish or a separate language is another vast study area. To judge this, one should know all main four Kurdish dialects in detail. Also, this judgement should take into consideration the fact that the Kurdish language has been passed down to the modern era primarily orally and by cultural means. With the Zazaki case, it is generally argued that different areas (cities and towns) of Zazaki-speaking residents find it difficult to communicate to each other. According to some, these linguistic divisions in Zazaki could not be explained by mere differences of accent, and could be considered as wholly different dialects. Some Zazas in Dersim refer to their spoken version of Zazaki not Zazaki, but "Dersimki/Dersimi" or "Zonê Ma" (our language).[303]

The political attempts at controlling the local society have gone hand in hand with other means to "assimilate" Zazaki speaking groups, such as education, language, economy and schooling.[304] The policy of assimilating particularly through attributing huge attention to 'language' as an effective means of assimilating the non-Turks took place in a hasty way right following the establishment the modern Turkish nation state. As highlighted by Fuat Dundar:

> Only a few years before the Turkification campaign, the different languages were visual and public in Anatolia, in the field of communication, in trade companies, place names (especially villages), stores names and so on. All these were forbidden by a

[301] Bayrak, Mehmet. *Kürtler ve Ulusal- Demokratik Mücadeleri (The Kurds and their National-Democratic Struggle)* , Ankara*:* Özge Yayinlari, 2013, pp. 510-523.

[302] Bayrak, Mehmet. *Kürdoloji Belgeleri (Kurdology Documents),* Özge Yayinlari, 2014, pp. 220-245.

[303] Bayrak. *Kürt Sorunu ve Demokratik Çözüm,* p. 357.

[304] Dundar, Fuat. `Measuring Assimilation: 'Mother Tongue' Question in Turkish Censuses and Nationalist Policy`, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 41:4, 2014, 385-405.

series of codes. Through the 'Speak Turkish Campaign', non- Turkish languages were excluded from the public sphere and those who spoke non-Turkish languages had to assimilate.[305]

These are not new policies applied by the Turkish state, but have been part of state policies since the 1930s in various ways. The main aim of these policies is almost the same as at the beginning, but the way they are applied has shifted according the broader needs of the state since the early years of the Republic of Turkey. The Turkish state developed its schooling policies and built many schools in the Kurdish areas in the second half of the 20th century, especially in the last quarter of the century. For example, Welat Zeydanlıoğlu refers to this process as following;

> Boarding schools were built in particular in the Kurdish provinces […], in order to cut off Kurdish children from their families and community and as in other educational and military institutions, they were strongly encouraged and more often forced to forget their mother tongue and exposed to propaganda that Kurds were "bad", "dirty" and "primitive", while at the same time also maintaining that there were no such things as Kurds.[306]

However, the finalising of the assimilation through schooling would be the era following the 1980 army coup. But at about the same time, the establishment of the PKK was to make waves in the battle over political identity in the region. It is argued that if it had not been for the establishment of the PKK in 1978 and its political mobilisation which followed, the Kurds and especially the Zazakî-speaking group, would have been successfully assimilated by the Republic of Turkey. The PKK is widely criticised for its cultural and language policy towards Kurds, in the sense that it did not focus on promoting Kurdish language, culture and folklore, but instead focused mainly on political activities. Since the 2000s, the PKK and its organisations started to pay more attention to the cultural areas of the Kurdish identity.

Along with the above-mentioned "tools" employed by the Turkish state, religion has become an important means of creating a sense of strong belonging for the inhabitants

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[305] Dundar, `Measuring Assimilation`, 385-405.
[306] Zeydanlıoğlu, Welat. `Turkey's Kurdish language policy`, *De Gruyter Mouton*, 217:99 (2012), 99-125 cited in pp. 107-108.

of the region towards the state. As Çewlig/Bingöl is a predominantly Sunni Muslim region, it had a tendency of opposition towards the early period of the Turkish Republic led by Atatürk and later by his followers within the Republican Peoples Party (CHP)[307]. From the 1950s onwards, Turkey has seen the governments of conservative parties for decades until the present times, with the exception of short periods in which social democratic political were in government or formed coalitions with conservative parties to form governments.

In this era of conservative governments, the region has won some forms of freedom, up to certain limits, compared with the historical barriers of the Kemalist Turkish state's "red lines". This exchange has built a sense of strong belonging towards the Turkish state for some inhabitants. These ties have become even stronger in the last three decades, the era following 1980 coup. In 1983, the Motherland Party (ANAP), led by the prominent liberal figure Turgut Özal[308], won the first general elections held after the coup to form the government. His party had built strong relations with religious and tribal leaders. As emphasized by Ersin Kalaycıoğlu "it seems as if there is a definite popular attraction of "conservatism" (*muhafazakarlık*) in Turkish politics, which can be converted into remarkable electoral support at the poll".[309]

Through these society leaders, it seemed that he was willing to share some of the power of central government with the region. This was done more directly than ever before in the history of the Republic of Turkey. As a result of these policies, Özal managed to win vast support in the region in a considerably short time.[310] This phenomenon was visible in Çewlig/Bingöl, similarly to the majority of the Kurdish areas of Turkey. Tunceli or Dersim in its broader historical boundaries could be indicated as almost the only region where he could not get as much direct support, as it is the only province in the Kurdish area that is Alevi-inhabited, apart from some scattered towns spread in other areas. Therefore, it had strong ties with secular political parties, mainly the CHP. Although during the second part of the 20th century mostly conservative parties had power at the governmental level, the state's regime was mainly Kemalist. The state

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[307] Cagaptay, Soner. *Islam, secularism, and nationalism in modern Turkey: who is a Turk?,* London: Routledge, 2006 .
[308] Kalaycıoğlu, Ersin. `Politics of Conservatism in Turkey`, *Turkish Studies*, 8:2, (2007), 233-252.
[309] Kalaycıoğlu, Ersin. `Politics of Conservatism in Turkey`, p. 233.
[310] Kalaycıoğlu, Ersin. `Politics of Conservatism in Turkey`, p. 234.

institutions, particularly the army, either served as an opposition to conservative governments, or more directly dominated the political atmosphere.

The political tendency (also the ability of the conservative political parties in gaining the public support) in this thesis is often mentioned in relation to the two main example cities bordering Çewlig/Bingöl, which are Elazig (addressed as a symbol of Turkified city) and Diyarbakir (addressed as a symbol of Kurdish resistance towards the state's attempts of Turkifiying the region). This game of push and pull is still ongoing in Çewlig/Bingöl by the two dominant political players, the state and the Kurdish movement. The political contest has its shifts over the decades, with each of the political players getting stronger or weaker. The factors that decide which side is ascendant change depending on local and regional aspects, and global trends.[311]

3.1.1 Attempts to 'Divide and Rule': Policies by the Turkish State

Studying the development of the Kurdish question in Turkey reveals that the Turkish state has mainly relied on the following three competing policies in its relation to the Kurds and the Kurdish movement; firstly, a policy of assimilation by breaking down tribal structure, which usually resulted in armed rebellion; secondly a policy of co-optation of tribal leaders with the purpose of controlling these unruly regions; and thirdly, a policy of divide and rule using one tribe against another. Particularly, the policy of divide and rule has shown to be an effective instrument in weakening/fragmenting the Kurdish movement.[312] The divide and rule policy has been a vital instrument for the Turkish state to apply it to its "Kurdish problem" since 1930s. This has mainly been done by using differences in language and religion among its Kurdish population. There are two different dialects of Kurdish, and two main different religious sects among the Kurdish citizens of Turkey. The 'divide and rule' strategies date back to the late 1920s, mainly after Sheik Said's revolt.

The Turkish state has honed and sought to improve its tactics of divide and rule. The early design of these policies over the Kurds dates back to the late 1920s and early 1930s. There was a rise in these policies after the Seyyid Riza revolt of Dersim in 1937-

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[311] Somer, Murat. `Turkey's Kurdish Conflict: Changing Context, and Domestic and Regional Implications`, *Middle East Journal,* 58:2 (2004), 235-253.
[312] Yavuz, `Five stages of the construction of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey`, pp. 3-4.

38. This era witnessed harsh policies as the state perceived a serious threat since two major revolts (the 1925 Sheik Said and 1937 Seyyid Riza revolts) took place in mainly Zaza-populated areas. Not only did the state use security tactics against the people of the region, it also used 'social tactics' in provoking groups against each other[313]. The 'other' would sometimes be Alevi or Sunni, and sometimes would be Kird/Zaza or Kurmanj. Speaking to an elderly local on my field trip, he said "There is a neighbouring village that is Alevi in Çewlig/Bingöl's *Sancak*. The head of Army in the area would come to us telling how badly the Alevi village thought of us and how hostile they were to us. We have lived in the same area over generations with the same village in peace. We found out that the same Army official was doing similar propaganda in the Alevi village against us. Still, some of the villagers would tend to believe this negative propaganda, which was problematic, but some would choose to side with power of state".[314]

A similar example can be found in the Çewlig/Bingöl region's town of Kaniresh/Karliva town over the linguistic differences. Kaniresh/Karliova is the only majorly Kurmanj-populated town of Çewlig/Bingöl. There are some Kird/Zaza villages in the town's area neighbouring areas Çewlig/Bingöl and the town of Solhan. I have witnessed similar stories told by locals where the state officials took active role and used the linguistic differentiations usually against the Kurmanjs. Kurmanjs and Alevis are set as minorities against Kirds/Zazas and Sunnis. Similarly to numerous cases in the wider region of Mesopotamia and the whole Middle East, vague state propaganda against the 'other' is common. Sentiments regarding the supposed superior cleanliness of Kirds/Zazas compared to Kurmanjs, or the immorality of Alevis contrasted to Sunnis, can be heard.[315] Whenever there is ground for it, difference is used as a tool, especially by those who do not believe that 'the other' is not part of their community. This, in many cases, is supported by those in power, as it is easier to manage a divided community.

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[313] Yavuz, `Five stages of the construction of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey`, pp. 4-8.
[314] Interviewed elderly villager during my filed trip in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2012. The input from this elderly villager gives an insight from the ground of the "common people" and therefore is valuable.
[315] Kehl-Bodrogi, `Kurds, Turks, or a people in their own right?`, 439-454

3.1.2 An Overview of Education, Language and Assimilation Policies in the Region

Culture in its wider meaning includes its materialistic and spiritual angles. These are important pillars of identity among different ethnicities. Culture and identity on one hand prevent an ethnicity from diminishing, and on other hand help the diversity and the richness of the multicultural society of a state and the world in a wider perspective[316]. In other words, if an ethnic group loses its cultural elements, then it starts losing its identity, assimilating into a more dominant identity, usually which geographically surrounds it. This process of smaller or politically weaker cultures being diminished and becoming parts of bigger and/or politically stronger cultures lead the world towards a monocultural and single-identity planet.

Applying this phenomena to the Zaza case, although a pro-Zaza group may sound as if they advocate for the construction of a positive Zaza identity, in reality this ideology functions to serve the Turkish state's divide and rule and assimilation policies. The Turkish state used secular Turkification up until the 1980s, which found some strong ground in Dersim and Elazig, mostly among the Alevi Zazas. In a polarised atmosphere, the Sunni Zazas identified secularism with Turkishness, since secularism was part of the Kemalist regime's political agenda along with a strong sense of Turkish identity.[317] This conception of the identity did not allow for much other than these two elements. After the 1980s, the political space was opened to the conservative political groups. This new model of the Turkish state, inevitably, started to attract Sunni Kurds/Zazas. The mostly Sunni Zaza-populated Çewli /Bingöl begun to picture itself as part of the Turkish State. The Turkish State was no longer 'the other' as clearly as it had been before. This phenomena became even clearer towards the beginning of 2000s, and the pro- Zaza and pro-Turkish groups of the Kirds/Zazas of Çewlig/Bingöl identified themselves along with the Turkish state as 'us'.[318] This has a similarity with the Ottoman Empire's policy of Ummah with Kurds in its last two centuries. This approach emphasised the Ummah (Sunni brotherhood) over ethnic identity, as a phenomena vital to keep the Muslim peoples of Empire together.

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[316] Nagel, Joane. `Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture`, *Social Problems,* 41:1, (1994), 152-176.

[317] Gumus, Burak. `The Turkish Debate on the "Tunceli Incidents", *International Journal of Arts & Sciences*, 5:7 (2012), 459–499. Cited in 464.

[318] Tezcür, `Kurdish Nationalism and Identity in Turkey`, p. 7.

The richness of different languages is under serious danger. There are various reasons why nation states choose to weaken the use of "other" languages within their territories. These reasons could be seen as colonialist policies, the reaction of nation states to their minorities, and globalism. Turkey does not hide its desire for a monolithic nation by proudly stressing its one language, one religion, one nation, one flag etc. mono-ethnic strategies. The Turkish state designs all its policies towards all varieties of "otherness" with these motivations. It has zero tolerance towards other ethnic groups when they attempt to promote their cultural, linguistic and social identity. The Turkish state since its creation has had a special focus on assimilating Kurds, and especially Zazas. Zazas were a weak target for the Turkish state, as there were some differences, especially linguistic, which could be used as a useful tool in its divide and conquer policies.[319]

The *Köy Enstitüleri* (Village Institutions) which were established in April 1940 played a vital role in the Turkish state's education policies[320] . As part of this projwere established in the Kurdish regions, which, according to many, were part of the assimilation project through the means of education. Another state sponsored institutuion, which had the task of spreding and promoting state ideology and in the Kurdish region strictly controlled and fund by the state as part of the Turkification and assimilation policy of the state in Kurdistan in the soc-called 'people's house. In Senem Aslan words;

> One institution whose activity reports have been critical to this research was the People's Houses, founded in 1932 by the single party with the aim of spreading the ideals of the regime to the masses. Through its activities, which ranged from organizing conferences and theater performances to establishing libraries, it played a major role in the attempts to modernize the region and assimilate Kurdish speakers into Turkishness. By 1949, there were 76 People's Houses and 759 People's Chambers, as they were called in the rural areas, operating in the eastern and southeastern provinces.[321]

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[319] İnal, Kemal. `Kültür, Kimlik ve Dil`, *Anadilde Eğitim Sempozyumu*, 30-31 Mayıs 2009, p. 9.
[320] For more about the history and function of the in Turkey
See Kucuktamer, Tugba. and Uzunboylu, Huseyin. `The conditions that enabled the foundation of the Village Institutes in Turkey and a comparison with today`, *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 185 (2015), 392–399.
[321] Aslan, Senem. `Everyday Forms of State Power and the Kurds in the Early Turkish Republic`, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 43:1 (2011), 75-93. Cited in p. 77.

In these institutions, it was forbidden for children to speak Kurdish, and those who attempted this would be punished, sometimes physically punishment. In his book *Kürt Sorunu ve Demokratik Çözüm,* Mehmet Bayrak writes: "In my primary school, three of my teachers were graduates of Village Institutions. My class teacher was a Turkish teacher who had never seen a Kurdish village until his arrival in our village. He had his spies amongst his pupils, who would report to him the children that spoke Kurdish at school, on the streets and in their homes. I found out later that one of his spies was my brother who was at the same school as me. I, too, stopped talking in Kurdish and improved my Turkish".[322] Speaking Turkish was seen as essential part of maintaining a good quality of life among middle class Kurds in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The Village Institutions were closed down in 1952 but similar policies continued, especially in the Kurdish areas.

The Sun Language theory was introduced in 1930[323], claiming that the Turkish language was the primordial language of humanity and is the basis for most of the world's languages. As part of a similar trend during the same decade, it was claimed that both Kurds and Zazas were Turks or Turkic tribes. Attempts to "prove" this idea scientifically were made by various bodies of state institutions. In his book *History of Varto and Eastern Provinces,* Mehmet Serif Firat claims that the Zazas are a Turkish group of people, and Zazaki is a dialect of Turkish. He then argues "Zazas were originally Turkish, but they were falsely identified as Kurds by the Ottoman rulers. Therefore, they were misled into thinking of themselves as a "foreign" (non-Turkic) ethnic group. This group of people have lost their actual ethnic belonging and were confused in the mountainous area and so they were disconnected from their roots".[324] The pro-state publications were as non-sceintific as this example in the earlier decades. This can be regarded as a desperate and manipulating political argument.

Firat continues making claims about Zazaki by saying, "it is 50% Persian, 40% Turkish and 10% Arabic. Most of the vocabulary is originally Turkish and one can see the words

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[322] Bayrak, *Kürt Sorunu ve Demokratik Çözüm,* p. 353.
[323] For more information about the theory of Sun Language and the ideological intention behind its emergence. See Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform A Catastrophic Success,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
[324] Fırat, M.Şerif. *Doğu İlleri ve Varto Tarihi,* İstanbul: Kamer Yayınları, 1998, p. 32.

have been altered from the original and become formatted differently. In some cases, it is obvious that the first word is Turkish while the last word is Persian or Arabic".[325] Ideologically speaking, it is Nazmi Sevgen who is the father of the idea that Zazas are Turkish and Zazaki is a dialect of Turkish language. Sevgen was an army officer in the Turkish Army, and he took an active role in suppressing the Kurds during the Dersim uprising in 1937. During his service he carried out some "research" on the Zazas and Zazaki of Dersim province. In the following years, his articles and a book on the topic were published.

Another important figure in the engineering policies of the state towards the Zazas was Hayri Başbuğ, with his several publication related to this subject. Başbuğ,'s publications became available and coughed the interest of the public since the early 1980s. He claims that both Zazas and Kurmanjs are a Turkic tribe. He states "No doubt, Zaza Turks are descendants of Sumer (Sumerians), Subar or Suvar, who were ancient Turks. The strongest connection that links today's Zaza Turks to the said Sumerians (Turks) is the fact that the Sumerians resided in the river basin of the Tigris and the Euphrates, and the Zazas still do".[326] As in this case, the arguments are usually vague. Başbuğ first argues that the Sumerians were ancient Turks, and then makes a connection by claiming that the Sumerians are the ancestors of Zazas. This "research" was devised to serve the assimilation agenda of Turkish state and its internal policies, and therefore was made without regard to academic accuracy or ethics.

In another publication, Hayri Başbuğ makes some further linguistic comments in his attempt to relate Zazakî to the Turkish language. He claims "Zazaki and Kurmanji take their roots from the old times and they are dialects of Turkish. These two dialects should be given more importance and value as they are two precious treasuries for our language (Turkish). Moreover, they are both important sources for research on the old Turkish language".[327]

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[325] Fırat, *Doğu İlleri ve Varto Tarihi*, pp. 39-40.
[326] Başbuğ, Hayri. *İki Türk Boyu Zaza ve Kurmanclar*, Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1984, pp.17-19.
[327] Başbuğ, Hayri. *Göktürk-Uygur Zaza Kurmanç Lehçeleri Üzerine Bir Araştırma*, Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1984, p. 11.

Another scholar of that era of fabrication is Professor Tuncer Gülensoy, who published similarly on the same topic. In his *Research on Kurmanji and Zazaki Turkish*, Gülensoy argues that "Eastern Anatolia (where the majority of Kirds/Zazas reside) is the beating heart of Turkishness. The large majority of residents of this area speak a Turkic dialect and they are no doubt Turkish. They have always had a Turkish life style with their culture, folklore, handcrafts, etc. People of the Eastern Anatolian region have never felt different or parted from Turkishness".[328]

Professor Orhan Türkdogan also took a role in shaping that trend of the assimilation planning project. Türkdogan in his publication *The Place of Zazas and Kurds in Turkish Society* often refers to Zazas as Zaza Turks, and Zazakî as Zaza Turkish. Türkdogan argues "Zazakî no doubt is a Turkic dialect which is part of the Oğuz dialect of old Turkish. It is scientifically proven that Zazakî is Turkish".[329] In another section of his book, Türkdogan argues that those who are working on the study of Zazakî abroad have a political agenda and that they are trying to construct an identity.

One more important personality claiming that Zazas are Turkish and Zazakî is a Turkic language is Mahmut Rişvanoğlu. In his published work *The Hidden Reailty, The Identity of Kurmanjs and Zazas 1*, Rişvanoğlu argues that "Kurmanjî and Zazakî have many differentiations but they both are Turkic dialects. For many centuries, Turkic groups of people in different areas of the world have been using different varieties of dialects. Kurmanjî and Zazakî are also dialects of old Turkish and have seen some changes over the time".[330]

Other writers, politicians and state personages have claimed that Zazas are Turks. Along with the previously named sources, it is worthwhile investigating research on identity and languages in Turkey, and how these works approach Zazas and Zazakî. *The Languages and Ethnic Groups in Turkey,* published by Professor Ahmet Buran and Berna Yüksel Çak, touches on the ethnic arguments about the Zazas. The authors argue "There are various sources about the population of Zazas. The Zaza population is one

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[328] Gülensoy, Tuncer. *Kürmanci ve Zaza Türkçeleri Üzerine Bir Araştırma*, Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1983, p. 9.
[329] Türkdoğan, Orhan. *Türk Toplumunda Zazalar ve Kürtler*, Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010, p. 243.
[330] Rişvanoğlu, Mahmut. *Saklanan Gerçek: Kurmanclar ve Zazaların Kimliği-1*, Ankara: Tanmak Yayınları, (1995), p. 214.

million according to Ali Tayyar Önder and two million according to Ali Riza Özdemir. Mesut Keskin claims that the Zaza population is between four and six million.[331]" In the last population census, which included a question on what language/dialect one spoke at home, the number of Zazakî speakers was 150,644, with the number of speakers of Zazakî as a second language being 92,288. Since the 1965 population census, this question was not included, and so this statistic could not be drawn upon. In the 1965 population census many Zazas clearly considered themselves Kurds, for the population of Zaza Kurds is far higher than 150,644[332]. As highlighted through the study Servet Mutlu;

> Given the dispute and the lack of an agreed-upon definitive study on the issue, the best view may be that there are Kurdish languages as there are Romance languages. Here, the pertinent observation is that most Zaza speakers regard themselves as Kurds and have been etically designated as such.[333]

In his book *The Ethnic and Religious Groups Living in Turkey*, Cemal Şener touches on the issue of Zazas and their origins. He points out that both sides of the debate will reference the relevant historical sources suiting their political agendas. Zazas have two main religious beliefs, which are Sunni and Alevi. The total population of Zazas is indicated as 300,000 in some sources in 1970. The population of Zazas who can still speak Zazakî is believed to be between 700,000 and one million at the beginning of 2000s. Around 60% of them are Sunni Zazas and 40% are Alevis.[334] The percentage of Sunni Zazas is higher in Çewlig/Bingöl. The smaller towns of Kigi, Adakli, Yayaladere and Yedisu that border Tunceli/Dersim province are mainly Alevi, and the other larger towns and the Çewlig/Bingöl city centre are mainly Sunni.

Peter Alford Andrews, in his study of *The Ethnic Groups in Turkey,* argues that there are some disputes about Zazas. He emphases the misleading nature of the 1965 population census and claims it could not be a good base for questioning the population

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[331] Buran, Ahmet., Çak, Berna Yüksel. *Türkiye'de Diller ve Etnik Gruplar*, Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 1.edition, 2012, p. 230.
[332] Mutlu, Servet. `Ethnic Kurds in Turkey: A Demographic Study`, *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 28:4 (1996). 517-541, cited in 520.
[333] Mutlu, `Ethnic Kurds in Turkey`, p. 519.
[334] Şener, Cemal. *Türkiye'de Yaşayan Etnik ve Dinsel Gruplar*, İstanbul: Etik Yayınları, 5. edition, 2006, p. 126.

of Zazas, as they simply regarded themselves as Kurds and selected that option in the census.[335]

When looking at the group that claim Zazas are Turks and that Zazakî is a dialect of Turkish, the following statements become clear:

a) The group of scholars making these arguments had a diverse array of views of the origins of the Zazas within the Turkish people. In other words, they failed to devise a unified theory.

b) Linguistically, there are also different views of positioning Zazakî and where it took its roots from. The scholars failed to come up with a scientifically accepted opinion.

c) The most commonly-argued idea has been that Zazas are not Kurds and Zazakî is not a Kurdish dialect. The ideologically motivated scholars ascribing to this idea then take the case further with some vague arguments that the Zazas are Turks and Zazakî is a dialect of Turkish.

d) The majority of these scholars also consider Kurmanjî as a dialect of Turkish and Kurmanjs/Kurds as Turks.

e) There is a contradiction between the state-sanctioned claim that Zazakî is a dialect of Turkish, and that the Zazas are a Turkish people, and the state's banning of the Zazakî language (along with Kurmanjî) in eastern and south-eastern Turkey for decades. If the state really accepted that Zazakî is a Turkish dialect, logically the language may have been promoted and supported with educational means instead of being banned.

3.1.3 The Role of Religion after the 1980s

Despite the existence of different views and opinions toward the role of religion and its impact on the Kurds identity and self-udenrstanding Kurds, it is arguable to claim that religion and particularly Islam has been a major been a strong force of identification among the Kurds. For instance as defined by Ali Ezzatyar;

> The role that Islam has played in Kurdish political movements historically is equally paradoxical and seemingly contradictory […] the role of Islam in Kurdistan differs signifi -cantly from Islam's role in the rest of the Middle East as well as most of the Muslim world. In Kurdish society today, many Kurds identify as Muslim while at the same time, counterintuitively, disowning any brotherhood or commonalities with their Arab, Persian, or Turkish neighbors. Many seldom attend the mosque and ignore

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[335] Andrews, Peter Alford. *Türkiye'de Etnik Gruplar*, Istanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1992, p. 168.

standard instructions on daily life that many other devout Muslims follow or at least are aware of.[336]

They chose to remain loyal to the Islamic Caliphate and the Ottoman Empire while many other ethnic groups under Ottoman control struggled for independence and formed their own states, such as Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and other Balkan states. Çewlig/Bingöl is a conservative Sunni Muslim-dominated city in the east of Turkey. When the Sheikh Said revolt begun in 1925 in Dicle, a town of Diyarbakir province, Çewlig/Bingöl participated actively in the revolt and showed a clear support for the uprising. During the secular rule of the CHP from 1923 to May 1950, Çewlig/Bingöl's relationship with the newly established Turkish state was problematic. Following the single party government era of the CHP from 1950 and onwards, Çewlig/Bingöl started to interact with the state in a more direct manner through important local figures such as religious leaders and prominent landowners such as Aghas and Begs (those who own large portions of land and wield local power). The role of religious leaders and sheikhs' families became more apparent after the 1980 army coup. Turgut Özal, the leader of Anavatan Partisi/Motherland Party (ANAP), used these religious figures as strong tool for his voter base. He took power in a single party government in the first democratic election following the 1980 coup. Certain families became mediators between the state and locals. The families that took active roles in the Sheikh Said revolt and provided leaders, decades later were taking side with the rulers unlike their fathers and grandfathers.[337] This was the trend in most of the Kurdish region apart from the Alevi Dersim/Tunceli, where locals tended to side with the opposition party, the secular CHP, which had been the ruling party until 1950.

3.1.4 The Atempts of the Turkish State in Turning Çewlig into Another Elazig (Model of a Turkified City in the Region)

The Turkish state has historically focused on assimilation policies since the 1930s. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, state officials and CHP party officials planned and executed the process of assimilating the Zaza areas of the eastern and south-eastern

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[336] Ezzatyar, Ali. *The Last Mufti of Iranian Kurdistan Ethnic and Religious Implications in the Greater Middle East*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. p. 10.
[337] Interview with a member of a family that took an active role in Sheik Said revolt. His grandfather Sheik Abdullah was the regional leader/commander in the revolt, and was executed along Sheikh Said in June 1926. In Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2013.

regions of Turkey. The title of this section notes that Elazig is the example of the Turkish state's 'successful' assimilation policies in the area. In the early years of the Turkish Republic, the state officials aimed and planned a systematic assimilation process. Ismet Inönü, then the prime minister, said in 1927 "Our task is to turn whoever lives in our land into Turks", i.e. to Turkify all the non-Turkish inhabitants of Turkey.[338] Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the founder of Turkish state, argued that the Turks and Kurds had equal responsibility in creating this new state. Right after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, Ataturk said "we are clearly Turkish nationalists. This republic's ethnic identity is Turkish and Turks back it. The more the society of this republic is enlightened by Turkish culture, the stronger the Turkish republic will become".[339] The two very clear statements by two highest state officials indicate the Turkish state's tendency towards the Kurds, also a contradiction between the discourses and practices from the early stages of the creation of the modern Turkish nation state revealed the exclusionary intension of the elites - above all them Mostafa Kemal's – Turkish state. That tendency is to diminish Kurdishness, eliminate their ethnic identity and make them accept the Turkishness as their only identity. This would sometimes be via milder assimilation policies, sometimes via denial policies, and sometimes by force if and when they thought it needed.

Elazig was a historically Kurdish province with the majority of its population being Kird/Zaza. The reason why this thesis chose Elazig as example is because Elazig stands vital for various reasons. Its province territories borders both with Çewlig / Bingöl and Dersim, the two only majorly Zaza cities in current Turkey. Also, both Sheikh Said (in Elazig, Çewlig / Bingöl and Diyarbakir) and Seyyid Riza (in Dersim) revolts took place in the surroundings of Elazig province. It is for these reasons why the officials targeted Elazig in first place to assimilate and Turkify which they mostly succeeded until the current day. In Elazig the 'other' element is usually Kurdish rather than Turkish.[340]

During the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, it was Ziya Gökalp, a Zaza himself, who was pioneer of Turkish nationalism, and he "acted as a key social theorist behind

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[338] Bayrak, *Kürt Sorunu ve Demokratik Çözüm,* p. 352.
[339] Bayrak, *Kürtler ve Ulusal- Demokratik Mücadeleleri,* p. 526.
[340] Kaya, Mehmed, S., *The Zaza Kurds of Turkey,* 2011.

the origins of the Turkish state ideology and nationalism and gave clarity to the transformation from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic in the early twentieth century".[341] Also as Cemal Gürsel (a high ranked Turkish military officer and the fourth president of Turkey) stated *Trust me [gentlemen], without Ziya Gökalp, this state would not exist today! (15 May 1961)*".[342] Following his death at a young age in 1924, Nihal Atsiz continued his ideological path in leading the Turkish nationalist social engineering. Nihal Atsiz is still the main inspiration of the modern Turkish nationalism and the main Turkish far-right political party, the Nationalistic Movement Party (MHP).[343]

The aim of this chapter will be to investigate and explain the political dynamics and mobilisation of the identity formation in Çewlig/Bingöl from 1980 to 2015. This will be conducted by looking specifically at three facets of identity formation and three different groups of actors in Çewlig/Bingöl. These three groups are the Turkish State, the Kurdish Movement, and the local inhabitants themselves. In an area such as Çewlig/Bingöl, a politically tense region of Turkey, the politicial development ansd the issue of identity is very complex field of study. The people of this region have been a subject of massive state policy of constructing and deconstructing identity and culture. Most importantly is the way that the Turkish state desires to "convince" the locals that the only way of their living a prosperous life is through accepting Turkishness as a homogenous Turkish-ness and unitary identity. In addition due to their resistance to the state policy these region has several time been experience demographic engineering conducted by the state. For instance The Kemalist government passed a *Law on Resettlement* (*Iskan Kanunu*) in 1934 to settle people with Turkish origin in that region, to forcibly relocate Zaza- and Kurdih-speaking tribes".[344] Particullary the policy of demographic engineering[345] has been a policy where the state occupying different parts of Kurdistan have relied hugely on. Also, due to the challenge of the Kurdish movement, the Kurdish population has been a target of the Iranian state's policy of

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[341] Nefes, Türkay Salim. `The Sociological Foundations of Turkish Nationalism`, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies,* 20:1, (2018) 15-30, cited in p. 15.

[342] Nefes, `The Sociological Foundations of Turkish Nationalism`, p. 15.

[343] Uzer, Umut. `Racism in Turkey: The Case of Huseyin Nihal Atsiz`, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs,* 22:1 (2002), 119-130.

[344] Gumus, `The Turkish Debate on the "Tunceli Incidents`, p. 466.

[345] Bookman, Milica Z. `Demographic Engineering and the Struggle for Power`, *Journal of International Affairs,* 56:1, (2002), 25-51.

demographic engineering. This policy has left a variety of negative effects within Kurdish society. At present, due this policy Kurds are suffering from issues such as identity and geographical fragmentation. For instance contemporary to the reign of Ata Turk Reza Khan has in Iran in order to defeat the Kurdish movement followed massive policy of the demographical compassion of the Kurds in Iran. Cronin writes that;

Reza Shah's massive experiment in social engineering – the settlement of the nomads and the complete political, social and cultural integration of tribal population into broader Iranian society – was brought to an abrupt end by the Anglo-Soviet invasion of August 1941 and his own enforced abdication the following month.[346]

The best example could be pointed out is the case of Elazig, the bordering city to Çewlig/Bingöl, where the Turkish state "succeeded" in a Turkification process through the above-mentioned means such as schooling, the economy, language policies, demographic engineering, etc.

It is obvious that the state is at an advantage in the battle to gain political support on the ground, as it is indeed the power that has full control of the economic levers, which it uses for sculpting the society in line with its desire for a mono-ethnic state structure. This trend has grown even stronger since the army coup in 1980. The Turkish state started to play a more direct role in shaping the political structure in the last three decades. The government's intervention is despite the fact that Çewlig/Bingöl was the leading province in the NO vote of 1982 constitutional referendum, by 32%. The total results in Turkey as a whole were 92% YES and 8% NO. This difference between Çewlig/Bingöl and rest of Turkey demonstrates a considerable gap, bearing in mind the political atmosphere following the army coup in 1980. The newly established conservative Motherland Party (ANAP), with its charismatic leader Turgut Özal, won the first general elections held following the army coup and the new constitution, in November 1983.[347] This was an easy win by 45% of the vote, both in Turkey as a whole, and in the Çewlig/Bingöl region, which led ANAP to form a single party government. Çewlig/Bingöl was and is known for its religiously conservative culture, and the

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[346] Cronin, Stephanie. *Tribal Politics in Iran; Rural conflict and the new state 1921-1941*. London: Royal Asiatic Society Books, (2006), p. 191.

[347] Varol, Ozan O. `The Turkish "model" of civil–military relations`, *International Journal of Constitutional Law (I-CON), 11:3, (2013),* 727–750, cited in 743.

inhabitants welcomed the new government which was of a different stripe to the overly secular CHP and seemed to open a space for a plurality of identities. Özal's government gave a great priority to the economy, with its liberal reforms.

In the earlier period of the Turkish Republic, there were a number of reports regarding Kurds prepared by state bodies including the prime minister, ministers, MPs and other leading personalities and institutions working for the state. Along with the above-mentioned, there were also inspectors from the ruling CHP (the Republic of Turkey was under a single party regime until 1950), the general command of gendarmerie, general inspectors that served the state with their reports on Kurds including today's Kird/Zaza-inhabited areas. The information in the reports concerned their ethnic, cultural, sociological, anthropologic and linguistic structures. Zazas were clearly regarded as part of broader sense of Kurdishness and their language as Kurdish in the reports of the early era. There was an increase in nationalistic Turkish state policies in 1930s. In parallel with the context of policies, the Kirds/Zazas became regarded as "mountain Turks". In the 1936 general inspectors' meeting held in Ankara, there were major discussions on Zazas held by these state bodies.[348] It was suggested that the state should focus on schooling, peoples' houses and settlement projects in order to Turkify them as part of the newly launched assimilation policies.

In 1942, the general secretary of the CHP, Memduh Sevket Esendal, prepared a report about the region where he referred to the spoken language, Kurdish, as the "language of home" or "indoor language". Some reports suggested that there should be created a "corridor" of 50 km between Kurmanj and Zazas, into which should be a transferred Turkish-speaking population, as part of divide and assimilate policies. This would serve the state's argument that the Zazas are not Kurds, but either Turks or a people of their own. This would also help diminish the speaking of their language, marginalising it quicker and easier.

Another important source in the early times of Turkish republican history, is the series of five population censuses that took place between 1927 and 1950. In these reports,

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[348] Loizides, Neophytos G. `State Ideology and the Kurds in Turkey`, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 46:4 (2010), 513-527.

Kirds/Zazas were regarded as Kurds and the column of mother language was noted as Kurdish. In the first two decades of the republic, Kirds/Zazas were viewed as Kurds in all sorts of formal state publications. Some of these publications by important state figures were Ziya Gökalp's *Kürt Aşiretleri Hakkında Sosyolojik Tespitler* (Sociological Findings Regarding Kurdish Tribes), Hasan Reşit Tankut's *Zazalar Üzerine Sosyolojik Tetkikler*[349] (Sociological Surveys Regarding Zazas) and Basri Konyar's *Diyarbekir İl Yıllığı* (The Yearbook of Diyarbakir). These works are important sources for the region at the time.

The first study during the Republican era is Ziya Gökalp's *Kürt Aşiretleri Hakkında Sosyolojik Tespitler* (Sociological Findings Regarding Kurdish Tribes). This work was written in 1922 as Gökalp was asked to produce this by Dr. Riza Nur, and was published only after the death of Gökalp. In his book, Gökalp argues that Kurds consist of five main groups that are Kirmanj, Zaza, Goran, Soran and Lur. Gökalp states that the dialects of these groups are not mutually intelligible, but stresses that all five dialects are derived from old Kurdish. Gökalp points out that Zazas call themselves Kirds and Kirmanjs call themselves Kirdas; most significantly, he argues that the appellation Zaza is primarily applied to them not by themselves, but by the Turks.

Çewlig/Bingöl had distanced itself from the Kemalist regime in the past. The new Turkey after 1980 offered a space for the liberal and conservative policies. The state could therefore earn support from the "others" who had been targeted by Kemalist policies. Both the new government and the citizens in Çewlig/Bingöl and other provinces were happy with new exchange of mutual support.

3.2. *The Kurdish Movement's Reaction Against the State's Policies: The Case of Amed/Diyarbakir*

In the 1960s and 1970s, Kurdish political resistance in Turkey made a new attempt after two decades of inactivity. The PKK announced its establishment in 1978, and introduced itself as the unifier of Kurdish resistance against the Turkish state. The PKK entered the stage as a movement of armed struggle that challenged the Turkish state's

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[349] Tankut, Hasan Reşit. *Zazalar üzerine sosyolojik tetkikler,* Kalan Basım Yayın Dağıtım, 2000.

authority in the region the referred to as Kurdistan in Turkey.[350] For instance David Romano on PKK's success and contribution to reviving and refreshing the Kurdish movement in Tukey, following many decades of Kurdish deprivation and desperation in Turkey says;

> If there is one thing that every observer of the conflict, be the Turkish generals, Kurdish peasants, or western academics, generally agree on, it is that the PKK succeed in bringing the Kurdish issue back into the limelight of public discourse in Turkey.[351]

The oppressive policies during the 1980 army coup, and especially the torture that took place in Diyarbakir prison, helped the PKK to extend its support base among the Kurdish population in Turkey vastly. This period also witnessed the institutionalisation of the political mobilisation of the Kurdish ethnic-national identity. For many people in the region, supporting the PKK became a way of showing opposition to the acutely nationalistic state apparatus which has strived, not only to eradicate the Kurdish ethnic identity, but which also created the unequal social and economic conditions which aggrieved so many. This period thus represents a critical time in the political mobilisation of the Kurds in Turkey.

3.2.1 The Current Kurdish Movement's Policies towards Zazas (1980s to 2010s)

Although Turkey has a free market economy, the State plays an important role in economic structure. The economy in eastern and south-eastern (the Kurdish) areas is not as advanced as other areas and especially the western areas of Turkey. These are remote areas and far from mainstream marketing fields of large cities in the west of Turkey such as Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, Kocaeli, Bursa, Adana, Mersin etc. Traditionally, there not many economical activities which make the economy more vulnerable and more dependent on direct role of state. With affects of globalism and global economy, the local economical activities are diminishing and becoming more dependant on 'outside' economy majorly. This chapter will discuss that; the Turkish state uses the weakness in economy of the Kurdish region as an instrument for its political agenda. Thus, it uses this weakness to further its assimilation policies. It is beneficial for an individual or a group of people to side with the absolute authority, the

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[350] Saeed, Seevan. *Kurdish politics in Turkey: from the PKK to the KCK*, London: Routledge, 2016.
[351] Romano, David. *The Kurdish National Movement*, p. 159.

Turkish state, in the region is preferable for those who do not give much importance to politics.

The Zaza and locally (in Çewlig / Bingöl) Kird / Zaza identity position is vastly discussed alongside with the Kurdish related one in Turkey. This is the case both by the Kurdish and Turkish political perspective. Zazaness is mainly pointed out as the counter-position with Kurdishness by the Turkish Nationalists or by the pro-Zaza nationalists that do not see it as great problem being affiliated with Turkishness as oppose to Kurdishness. The pro-Zaza nationalists see Kurdishness as a threat to their own existence. This goes hand in hand with the Turkish state's most recent goal over 'Zaza Identity Construction'. Its initial goal over this identity construction was to 'convince' the Zazas that they were a Turkic tribe which they achieved in places like Elazig and Dersim / Tunceli mainly.

The period from the early 1980s to 2015 witnessed a noticeable transition in Kurdish policies in Turkey. Following the military coup of 1980, which ushered in a period authoritarian policies, the election of Turgut Özal, a prime minister praised internationally for his liberalism, also heralded the entry of a number of parties with conservative and religious tendencies into the mainstream political arena. Under the banner of Muslim brotherhood, these parties were able to mobilise a large number of Kurds who had for so long been marginalised by the state. Whereas before, identifying oneself as being a Kurd led to automatic discrimination and exclusion from participating in any political activates now, one could find legitimate commonality with their Turkish counterparts under the 'inclusive' guise of religion. Parties such as the Welfare Party[352], Virtue Party and Justice and Development Party (AKP) have cleverly utilised the Islamic religious identity to mobilise the Kurds for their own political gains For example, the Welfare party in the 1980s mobilized voters who were ignored by other parties in Turkey. Developed to integrate vulnerable and excluded groups into the political system, the welfare party helped to resolve one of Turkey's foremost problems by including the Islamic-oriented periphery and the large Kurdish population in. this kind of "inclusion was not costly because the Islamic periphery did

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[352] Yavuz, M. Hakan. `Political Islam and the welfare (Refah) party in Turkey `, *Comparative Politics*, 30:1 (1997), 63-82.

not request the immediate redistribution of political power. Rather, it was primarily an outcome of the changing parameters of the state after 1980 caused by a growing economy and liberalization". [353] In addition, it could be argued that 1980s also witnessed a revival of Alevi identity, which caused Alevi Kurds to question their identity as well as raising questions of their ethnic belonging.

The Kurdish issue has always been part of political discussions and problems in Turkey. This became much more apparent and visible with the influence of the media over last three decades.[354] It seems like this issue always contemporary and a solution to it is being postponed, or being treated along with security policies. Since it is always a "hot" issue, it has drawn the attention of academicians, research centres, media institutions, and some NGOs, which have mostly taken a political approach to it. The majority of these bodies have a political agenda or preconceived opinion about the Kurds; therefore, these parties frequently produce misinformation, complicating the study of the Kurds and Zazas in Turkey as it is a considerably a new research area.

Those who work on this subject primarily emphasise the violence of the Kurds' relations with the Turkish state, and the fact that the Kurdish question has not been solved over decades. Few analytic works of sociology have been produced, and many of the figures from media organisations, NGOs and politicised institutions work without a scholarly perspective and do not consider the cultural and ethnic realities of the Kurdish people. Publications related to the area, by both Turkish and Kurdish intellectuals, usually only focus on the contemporary aspects of topic. This leads them to base these analyses on current conditions, ignoring the historical and cultural angles.

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[353] Yavuz, `Political Islam and the welfare (Refah) party in Turkey `, p. 66.
[354] Gecer, Ekmel. `Media and Democracy in Turkey: The Kurdish Issue`, unpublished PhD thesis Loughborough University, 2014.
 https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/dspace-jspui/bitstream/2134/16450/1/Thesis-2014-Gecer.pdf (Last accessed 8 February 2017).

Some writers who have written on the Kurds in Turkey are Hasan Cemal,[355] Cengiz Çandar,[356] Mustafa Akyol,[357] Prof Dogu Ergül,[358] Belma Akçura,[359] Ugur Mumcu,[360] Bejan Matur,[361] Orhan Miroglu,[362] Muhsin Kizilkaya,[363] and many other intellectuals, who emphasise the modern-day situation. Along with above mentioned, there are other publications that have a more direct perspective on Kurdish history, their origin and languages. These publications grow in number in the late 20th century and current times. Some prominent names are Kemal Burkay,[364] Altan Tan,[365] Fethullah Kaya,[366] Mehmed Emin Zeki Beg,[367] Mehrdad R. Izady,[368] Abdurrahman Qasimlo,[369] Martin van Bruinessen,[370] Robert Olson,[371] and a still growing list of important names which have authored important scholarly publications that help understand the issue further.

As part of Kurdish studies, Zazas are generally mentioned as part of the Kurds, and Zazakî as a dialect of Kurdish. Furthermore, the Kurdish political movement(s), Kurdish media, Kurdish intellectuals, Kurdish politicians, and some universities that have instituti Although while there are studies of ethnolinguistic and identity that either reject the Kurdness of Zaza or put a question mark with the claim. However studies of scholars as for instance Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Jaffer Sheyholislami and Amir Hassanpour that highlight the Kurdness of the Zazas.[372] Another example of Kurdish intellectual and scholars support to the idea of the Kurdishness of Zaza and Zazaki is

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[355] Cemal, Hasan. *Kürtler*, Istanbul: Doğan Kitap Yayınları, 19. Baskı, 2010; Cemal, Hasan. *Kürt Sorununa Yeni Bakış: Barışa Emanet Olun*, Everest Yayınları, Ekim, 2011
[356] Çandar, Cengiz. *Dağdan İniş-PKK Nasıl Silah Bırakır?,* TESEV Yayınları, 2011.
[357] Akyol, Mustafa. *Kürt Sorununu Yeniden Düşünmek*, Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 4. Baskı, 2006.
[358] Ergil, Dogu. *Kürtleri Anlamak*, İstanbul:Timaş Yayınları, 2. Baskı, 2010.
[359] Akçura, Belma. *Devletin Kürt Filmi*, Istanbul: New Age Yayınları, 1.Baskı, 2009.
[360] Mumcu, Uğur. *Kürt Dosyası,* Uğur Mumcu Araştırmacı Gazetecilik Vakfı. 1993.
[361] Matur, Bejan. *Dağın Ardına Bakmak*, Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul: 3. Baskı, 2011.
[362] Miroğlu, Orhan. *Silahları Gömmek*, Everest Yayınları, İstanbul, 1.Baskı, 2012.
[363] Kızılkaya, Muhsin. *Bir Dil Niye Kanar*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2. Baskı, 2011.
[364] Burkay, Kemal. *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, Diyarbakır: Deng Yayınları, 4. Baskı, 2008.
[365] Tan*, Altan. *Kürt Sorunu*, İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2.Baskı, 2009; Tan, Altan. *Değişen Ortadoğu'da Kürtler*, Cira Yayinlari, 2015.
[366] Kaya, Fetullah. *Kürt Basını*, İstanbul: Hivda Yayınları, 2010.
[367] Zeki Beg*, Muhammed Emin. *Kürtler ve Kürdistan Tarihi*, İstanbul: Nûbihar Yayınları, 4. Baskı, 2012.
[368] Izady, Mehrdad R. *Kürtler*, Istanbul: Doz Yayınları, 3. Baskı, 2011.
[369] Qasımlo, Abdurrahman. *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2009.
[370] Bruinessen, Martin van. *Ağa Şeyh Devlet*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003; Bruinessen, Martin van. *Kürdistan Üzerine Yazılar*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 7.Baskı, 2010.
[371] Olson, Robert. *Kürt Meselesi ve Türkiye İran İlişkileri*, İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2010.
[372] Hassanpour, Amir., Sheyholislami, Jaffer., and Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove. `Introduction. Kurdish: Linguicide, resistance and hope`, *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2012:217 (2012), 1-18.

Pervine Jamil a well-recognized scholar of identity and ethnolinguistic claim's clearly that Zazaki is a sub-Kurdish dialect, not an independent language.[373]

The main group of intellectuals that see Zazas as Kurds are themselves Zazas, and they are members of the VATE Studies Group.[374] This organisation is a group of Zaza people who first started working together in Sweden 1996. They formed the VATE group in Stockholm in 1996 and held their first meeting. They started publishing a periodic journal with same name, VATE, in 1997. They held 22 meetings up until 2012.

Following the era of democratic opening in Turkey since 2003, different cultures and language groups found more space available to work and publish in their languages. Again, in the same period, VATE Publishing House extended its activity from diaspora to Istanbul in 2003, announcing that they will work in line with the VATE Studies Group, and started publishing mainly in Zazakî. The VATE Studies Group has produced publications dealing with the standardisation of the Zazakî language. It has published Zazakî vocabularies and other Zazakî publications in the last two decades.[375]

When the VATE journal starting publication in 1997, its preface stated "This journal's aim is to improve and advance the Zazakî dialect. When reading VATE, one should not expect to see a standard accent. We all long for a standard Zazakî but we should be aware that this will not be possible to achieve in one day, month or even year. This work will be on a voluntary basis, will take a long time, needs a passionate focus and most importantly will require a group of self-sacrificing people. Our intellectuals and writers will need to have a good level of the Zazakî dialect and a good level of the

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[373] Ucarlar, Nesrin. `Between Majority Power and Minority Resistance: Kurdish Linguistic Rights in Turkey`, unpublished PhD thesis, Lund University, (2009), p. 201.
http://lup.lub.lu.se/search/ws/files/4283150/1486821.pdf (Last accessed 11 April 2017).

[374] The Vate Publishing House in an initiate of Kurdish intellectual and scholars established in 1996. As a forum for promoting Kurdish language, a group of writers from different regions, writing in the Kirmanckî dialect of Kurdish gathered in the Swedish capital of Stockholm under the name of Grûba Xebate ya Vateyî (Vate Working Group). The main taks of the Vate pulishing house is about standardization of Kirmanckî. This group has held 28 meetings between 1996 and 2016. In these meetings, they did not limit themselves to generating dictionaries, but also fixed the rules for proper writing, publishing a book called Rastnuştişê Kirmanckî (Proper Kirmanckî Writing) and publishing a Vate journal since 1997. As the publication organ of this group, the Vate journal has produced 48 issues between 1997 and 2016; Vate Publishing House http://www.kurdilit.net/?p=2572&lang=en (Last accessed 8 June 2018).

[375] Vate Çalışma Grubu, *Türkçe-Kırmancca (Zazaca) Sözlük*, Vate Yayınları, İstanbul, 2011; *Ferhengê Kırmanckî (Zazakî) – Tirkî,* Vate Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2011.

accent of their areas they come from. They should ideally have a good understanding of reading and writing in Zazakî too. We can then seek for a most common ground and format of standardising our dialect".[376] It is clear that they see and stress that Zazakî is a dialect of Kurdish and see themselves as Kurds. When VATE announced the outcome of its 22nd meeting,[377] they declared that they have so far standardised 10,000 words.[378]

The pioneer of VATE is M. Malmîsanij who fled to Europe following the 1980 army coup in Turkey. When VATE was formed he acted as editor of the journal. In his first vocabulary he prepared from Kirdkî/Zazakî to Turkish in 1987, in the introduction he points out that, "Kirdkî / Dimilî (Zazakî) did not even have its own [published] vocabulary despite the fact that it is spoken in thirteen provinces of Turkey either on a major or minor scale. Those who speak this dialect name themselves Kird or Kirmanc and name their dialects Kirdkî or Kirmanckî. The Kurdish speakers of Kurmanjî [the main dialect of Kurdish in Turkey) them Dimilî or Zazas".[379]

Deniz Gündüz in Istanbul established Vate Publishing House in 2013. It has been more than a decade that Vate publishes publications mainly in Zazakî in general. It also publishes in Kurmanjî Kurdish, Turkish and a limited number of Kurdish studies publications in English.

The director of VATE Publishing House Deniz Gündüz, in his work *Kirmanckî/Zazakî Language Classes,* writes "Zazakî, which is also known as Kirmanckî, Kirdkî or Dimilkî, is the Kurdish dialect which has suffered from most severe banning and assimilation policies of the Turkish state over the decades. Furthermore, it the last dialect that has seen any sort of standardisation work or professional studies carried out. As a result, it is the most degenerated and damaged dialect of Kurdish. Moreover, Kirdki/Zazakî is the last dialect which started its written history. It has only been in the

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[376] Vate Çalışma Grubu, "Vate", 1.Sayı, 1997, Stockholm, p. 3-4.

[377] 2012`de yayimlanan Kirmancca (Zazaca) Kitaplar,
http://www.zazaki.net/haber/2012de-yayimlanan-kirmancca-zazaca-kitaplar-1364.htm (Last accessed 2 May 2017).

[378] Bir Daha Kırmancca (Zazaca) Kürtçe mi Değil mi Tartışması Üzerine
http://www.haberdiyarbakir.com/kirmancca-zazaca-kurtce-mi-degil-mi-tartismasi-uzerine-52587h
(Last acceessed 3 May 2017).

[379] Malmisanij, *Zazaca-Türkçe Sözlük*, Jina Nû Yayınları, Uppsala, 1987, p. 8.

last three decades that it began being written systematically, whereas the start of work on the systematic standardisation of Kurmanjî goes back at least one century".[380]

Another group that sees Zazakî as a Kurdish dialect is Tzp-Kurdî (Tevgera Ziman u Perwerdehîya Kurdî – the Kurdish Language and Education Movement) which held a conference in Çewlig/Bingöl from 30/06/2012 to 03/07/2012. In that conference, they stressed that Kirdkî/Zazakî is a dialect of Kurdish and its speakers are Kurds. The conference, in its final declaration, asserted that that "The first Kird/Kirmanckî conference delegation sees itself as part of the national language conference and therefore accepts all the decisions taken in the national language conference. The delegation strongly opposes those who attempt to present the Kirdkî/Kirmanckî dialect of Kurdish as a separate language and the speakers of it as a separate people. It sees these attempts as politically motivated and part of works that aim to divide Kurdish people".[381]

The academic works produced in Artuklu University (based in the Mardin province of Turkey) also claim the Zazas as Kurds and Zazakî as a Kurdish dialect. The head of the Living Languages Department (it was not named as Kurdish Language Department for political reasons), Professor Kadri Yildirim, stressed in an interview: "We accept Zazas as a Kurdish group and Zazakî as a Kurdish dialect. The Kurdish language consists of the main dialects of Kurmanjî, Zazakî, Goranî, Soranî and Lurî. Therefore our classes are held in both dialects of Kurdish that are spoken in Turkey, Kurmanjî and Zazakî, and we benefit from this strategy greatly".[382]

Kadri Yildirim, in another of his interview, points out that "The vast majority of Kurmanjs and Zazas identify themselves as Kurds and see Zazakî as a dialect of

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[380] Gündüz, Deniz. *Kırmancca/Zazaca Dil Dersleri*, Istanbul: Vate Yayınevi, 2. Baskı, 2009, p. 27.

[381] Delegasyon sonuç bildirgesini yayınladı. The TZP Kurdi (Kurdish Language Education Front) is langauge group that established many branches throughout the Kurdish cities held language courses in different Kurdish dialects including Zazaki. It was established in early 2010s and later closed and banned by the Turkish state.
http://www.bingolonline.com/Haber/Delegasyon-Sonuc-Bildirgesini-yayinladi-41000.html
(Last accessed 16 May 2017).

[382] Etnik Yaklaşimlar Bağlaminda Zaza Kimliği
http://zazaistan.weebly.com/uploads/4/2/3/7/42370503/etnik_yaklasimlar_baglaminda_zaza_kimlig.pdf
(Last accessed 19 May 2017).

Kurdish."[383] Mardin Artuklu University hosted the 20th meeting of the VATE group working on the standardisation of Zazakî between 30/10/2011 and 02/11/2011. Immediately before this, the University held a conference titled 'Zazakî Literature and the attempts of standardising Zazakî'. In this conference, the head of Mardin Artuklu University, Serdar Bedii Omay, said, "we have been aware of the VATE group's valuable work on Zazakî for a while now. Although there is no Zaza population in our area (the Mardin province and surroundings), the importance of helping Zazakî is still incumbent, as it is under threat of dying as a dialect or language".[384] Speaking in the same panel, Professor Kadri Yildirim pointed out "we have had a discussion in our academic work. As a result, we have decided that the dialects Kurmanjî and Zazakî should be studied together. This will help overcome the existing problems and decrease the vague arguments that they are not dialects of same language. We have started using this method in our department, and we believe that this method will create a useful model in this area of Kurdish language".[385]

The Institute of Living Langauages at Mardin Artuklu University, and some writers of VATE journal, have published a co-edited work titled "Edebîyatê Kirmanckîra Nimûneyî/An Anthology of Kirdkî/Kirmanckî Literature". In the introduction of this edition of the journal, they stressed, "Kirds/Zazas are a branch of Kurdish society. Depending on their area of origin, they name themselves as Kird, Kirmanc, Dimilî and Zazas; and they speak Kirdkî, Kirmanckî, Dimilî and Zazakî".[386]

TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation) began Kurdish broadcasting in 2009 on the TRT6 channel; it devotes some hours of the week to Zazakî programs. In its programs, TRT6 treats the Zazas as Kurds and Zazakî as a Kurdish dialect. It has a liberal tendency towards those who claim that Zazas are a separate people and Zazakî is a language of its own. Groups claiming this also have their programs broadcast on

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[383] Yıldırım, Kadri. *Nûbehare Biçûkan- Ehmedê Xanî Külliyatı*, Avesta Yayınları, 1.Baskı, İstanbul, 2008, p.107

[384] Etnik Yaklaşimlar Bağlaminda Zaza Kimliği http://zazaistan.weebly.com/uploads/4/2/3/7/42370503/etnik_yaklasimlar_baglaminda_zaza_kimlig.pdf (Last accessed 19 May 2017).

[385] Grûba Xebate ya Vateyî Mêrdîn de Kom Bîye http://www.zazaki.net/haber/grba-xebate-ya-vatey-mrdn-de-kom-bye-989.htm (Last accessed 19 May 2017).

[386] Yıldırım, Kadri. Bingöl, İbrahim. Lezgin, Roşan. *Edebîyatê Kirmanckî Ra Nimûneyî*, Mardin: Mardin Artuklu Üniversitesi Türkiye'de Yaşayan Diller Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1. Baskı, 2012, p.11.

TRT6.[387] A prominent publication, the Nubîhar Journal, also sees Zazas as a Kurdish group. Nubîhar has published tens of volumes in Kurmanjî, and it dedicated all of its 118th volume to Zazakî (the volume was written solely in Zazakî). The editor of Nûbîhar, Süleyman Çevik, in his introduction to the volume, points out "until now the Kurmanj Kurds did not pay enough attention to Zazakî and Zazas, they did not focus on the language aspect. Zazakî is a major dialect of Kurdish and it has millions of speakers. Kurmanjs make the effort to learn many other languages, but not Zazakî. This is wrong, and we should give a higher priority to learn Zazakî. Kurds should learn to speak and write in Zazakî as it is under serious threat".[388]

Another prominent publication that sees Zazas as Kurds and Zazakî as Kurdish is Azadîya Welat (Freedom of Homeland). It publishes a paper of eight pages every Monday called Veroj, which is a Zazakî word meaning sun-facing. The editor of the Zazakî section, Ahmedê Bıra, explains that "this newspaper will be mainly publishing news and introducing the Zazas. Zazakî is a dialect that is under danger of diminishing. Therefore our people should support the newspaper. We expect all Kurdish people to support this idea and newspaper, should read it, and get it to be read by the masses. Furthermore, we encourage more writers to write in Zazakî. We have a team of 15 writers, and depending on the demand, we may publish daily instead of weekly in the future".[389]

When thinking about the group that sees Zazas as part of Kurds and Zazakî as a Kurdish dialect, the following points become clear:
- Those who regard Zazakî a dialect of Kurdish have instituted a collective action aiming to save the language from shrinking and disappearance, and search for ways to increase its use in everyday life to protect it from the assimilation policies of the Turkish state.

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[387] Varol, Murat. `Etnik Yaklaşımlar Baglamında Zaza Kimligi`, Kimlik, Kültür ve degişim Sürecinde Osmanlıdan Günümüze Kürtler Uluslararası Sempozyumu (6-8 September 2012), Bingöl Üniversitesi Yayınları, Bingöl, 2013, pp. 450-475.
[388] Çevik, Süleyman. `Na Rey Nûbihar bi dimilî veng dano!, *Nûbîhar*, 118 (2012), p. 3.
[389] Etnik yaklaşımlar bağlamında Zaza kimliği, https://tiptiktak.com/etnik-yaklamlar-balamnda-zaza-kimlii.html (Last accessed 19 May 2017).

- They believe that the view that the Zazas are a separate nation and Zazakî is a separate language from Kurdish, is the product of a project planned by the state, or at least supported by the Turkish state and its institutions.

- According to the group which upholds that the Zazas are Kurds and Zazakî is a Kurdish dialect, the Zazaist group (the group that believes Zazas are a people of their own and Zazakî is a separate language) does not produce anything that will serve Zazakî and Zazas survive for future centuries. They only have a vague political argument which suggests Zazas are not Kurds and their language is not part of Kurdish, which is why this group receives support from the Turkish state. The state does this in line with its 'divide and rule' strategy.

- The pro-Kurdish Zazas accuse the some western scholars and saying most of the time these scholars have not based their arguments on proper research. They instead went with the arguments backed by the Turkish state and fabricated academic productions. On the other hand, they praise the group of western scholars and researchers that see Zazas as Kurds and Zazakî as a Kurdish dialect.

- The historical sources that regard Zazas as Kurds and Zazakî as a Kurdish dialect are mostly the older ones that date from before 20th century. The group of sources which claim otherwise have mainly been authored in the 20th and 21st centuries, coinciding with the period of the Turkish state (established in 1923).

- The pro-Kurdish groups of Zazas do not belong to one political trend. VATE, the main group which puts most work into the linguistic area and make attempts to preserve Zazakî, consists of a group of intellectuals who have major differences in their political motivations. Some of the prominent members of the group tend to oppose the KCK trend of politics. One would expect the KCK and its institutions to be the dominant group in all areas of Kurdishness in Northern Kurdistan/Turkish Kurdistan.[390]

3.2.3 The Use of Language and Culture as a Tool by the Kurdish Movement

Although the group supporting the Turkish state claims that the Kurdish movement has an agenda of diminishing the use of Kirdkî/Zazaki language, it is the pro–Kurdish movement Kirds/Zazas who have expended the most effort on producing works in

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[390] Interview conducted with M. Malmîsanij (the main figure of VATE and a respected figure in the field Zazakî language productions) in Sweden. Ocotber 2011, he stressed that in the rules of the group, and all members are obliged to leave aside their political beliefs when they act as part of the group. The main aim of this group is to preserve and produce the Kirdkî/Zazakî dialect of Kurdish.

Zazaki and worked on standardising the language as a dialect of Kurdish. The most prominent group of these intellectuals are the group called VATE (which means "saying" in Kirdkî/ Zazaki). This group of people first came together in Sweden, where they were mainly political refugees, most of whom had been there since the 1980 army coup in Turkey. Starting in the mid-1990s, they have accomplished a significant amount of language production and standardisation. When I met with Mamoste[391] Malmisanij, the leading figure of VATE, in Sweden on one of my field trips, he stressed that Kirdkî/Zazakî was under serious threat. He added "it is not used among its speakers as much as it should be. Moreover, due to the lack of institutions to promote it, this dialect/language has been massively disadvantaged. Therefore, we founded the VATE group to promote Kirdkî/Zazakî. We gather periodically about every six months and try to standardise one subject area in each gathering".[392] Many of those engaged in work on Kirdkî/Zazakî claim that if this dialect/language will ever survive, the biggest credit should go to the VATE group and especially to Mamoste Malmisanij[393]. VATE consists of 20 to 30 individuals. They come from different regions of all the Kirdkî, Kirmanckî, Dimilî and Zazakî speaking areas. When they decide if a word should become standard, they first give priority to the originality of the word, whether it can be shown to be genuine Zazakî. If the word does not exist within Zaza history and culture, they may then borrow it from Kurmanjî, Goranî or Soranî. If it is a new or technical word, they then borrow it from Turkish, Persian, Arabic, English or other European languages.[394]

3.2.3 The Attempts of the Kurdish Movement to Turn Çewlig/Bingöl into Another Diyarbakir (Symbol of Kurdishness in the Region)

The Zaza identity and language quickly became politicized with Kurdish movements appealing to them, with the most recent being the PKK.[395] It could be argued that Diyarbakir and Elazig became the symbols of the policies of the opposing sides, the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement(s), towards the Zazas.

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[391] Mamoste means teacher, master or expert in both Zazakî and Kurmanji.
[392] Interview conducted with Mamoste M. Malmîsanij during my field trip in Sweden. October 2011.
[393] M. Malmisanij `The Past and The Present of Book Publication in Kurdish language in Turkey`, http://www.npage.org/IMG/pdf/Turkey.pdf (Last accessed 21 May 2017).
[394] For more information about the Vate Publishing House see; KurdîLit: Network for Kurdish Literature and Publishing in Turkey, http://www.kurdilit.net/?page_id=2607&lang=en (Last accessed 24 May 2017).
[395] Yavuz, `Five stages of the construction of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey`, pp. 7-11.

To give an example from my personal experiences, I worked as an English-Turkish-Kurdish interpreter for an Italian delegation on a trip to Çewlig/Bingöl to observe the 2009 elections in Turkey. On 24th of March 2009, during an interview of this delegation with the former chair of the Human Rights Association (IHD) Bingöl branch, Mr Ridvan Kizgin mentioned how the PKK attempted to connect the Kirds/Zazas to Diyarbakir, which is predominately Kurdish populated and known as the most significant city in the Kurdish area for the Kurdish nationalist movement. It is regarded as the unofficial capital of northern Kurdistan. There are also Zazas living in Diyarbakir. By contrast, the Turkish state has attempted to incorporate the Zazas into Elazig, which borders Diyarbakir. Elazig is strategically placed as it also borders Bingol and Dersim, major cities the population of which is mainly Zaza. Elazig's population is a mixture of Zaza, Kurmanj and Turkish inhabitants.[396] Sheikh Said himself was from Palu, a town in Elazig; after his revolt, the state's focus of assimilation in this region was successfully executed. To some extent, this is also applicable to the Dersim region where the Seyid Riza revolt also resulted in a state policy of assimilation, turning Dersim into a pro-Kemalist region with a secular character.

While the assimilation policies in both Dersim and Elazig were nationalistic in character, the assimilation policies in Elazig have followed religious lines, mainly that of keeping the city predominately Sunni and thus pro-Islamic Turkish nationalisation.[397] Given these considerations, it is perhaps unsurprising that there has been heated debate academically as well as politically regarding Zaza identity. This has manifested itself in debates on the Zaza language, which has been used as a political marker for both Kurdish and the Turkish state (to argue that Zazas are not Kurds but a Turkic tribe), as well as some Zazas who identify with neither identity.

Of the three conflicting arguments regarding Zaza identity, the first is that the Zazas are Turks, an argument that has been introduced and encouraged by the Turkish state as part of the assimilation policy. The base of this argument is that the Zaza is a Turkish tribe. It is still possible to see people in Zazaki-speaking areas identifying themselves

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[396] Grimes, B. F., Grimes, J. E., *Ethnologue, Summer Institute of Linguistics*, *(14th Ed)* (Dallas: SIL International, 2000): pp. 638

[397] Mr Ridvan Kizgin has served as the chair of Human Rights Association, Çewlig / Bingöl branch. I have spoken to him on this debate several times and have informed him that I had the intention to use our talks in my academic work.

with the Turkish identity, arguing that Zazas were an important Turkic tribe throughout Turkish history.[398] In 1991, at a conference in Solhan, a town of Bingol province where the large majority of the population is Sunni and Zaza, the head of the Turkish army used three common words in Zazaki and their equivalents in Azeri/Azerbaijani to "prove" the connections between the Zazas and the Turks.[399] Another example of this is the previously mentioned situation in Elazig.

The argument that Zazas are neither Turkish nor Kurdish, but that they are Zazas as a separate people, has a linguistic basis. Lezenberg states that in 1909 the German scholar Oscar Mann, on entirely linguistic grounds, asserted that the varieties of Zaza(ki) were not dialects of Kurdish, but belonged to a distinct branch of the Indo-Iranian language family.[400] This argument is politically endorsed by people who are alienated not only from the Turkish identity but from the Kurdish identity as well. Those who take this stance are generally non-political people who focus more on their day-to-day lives and are indifferent to nationalistic and political sentiments. While an argument can be made that by taking this seemingly controversial stance they are contributing to the politicization of the situation, it should also be noted that this group identifies more with religious affiliations, as to whether they are Sunni or Alevi. A relevant example of this is that Metin Kahraman, the famous Zaza singer, recounts consciously performing different identities in different settings. While the population of Dersim tends to become 'Kurdish' in opposition to 'Turkishness', when faced with 'Kurdishness' they become 'Alevi' or 'Zaza' instead.[401] That being said, politically the group has been recently backed by some ex-PKK members who have set up opposition groups in Germany. An example is Selim Curukkaya, a Kird/Zaza from Çewlig/Bingöl and a former high-ranking member of the PKK. He argues that the PKK and its leader Abdullah Öcalan have used the Zazas for their own political gains, claiming that if the PKK were to gain political power, the Zazas would be oppressed as they have been by the Turkish state.[402]

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[398] http://www.nazimiye.com/printable/tunceli/bilgiler/zazalar-tuerktuer.html
(Last accessed 20 February 2011).
[399] http://www.abihayatgazetesi.com/arsiv/haber-html (Last accessed 20 October 2010).
[400] Lezenberg, Michiel. `Kurdish Alevis and the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s`, in White, Paul J. and Jongerden, Joost. *Turkey's Alevi Enigma: A Comprehensive Overview,* Boston: Brill Leiden, 2003, p. 201.
[401] Neyzi, Leyla. `Zazaname: The Alevi Renaissance, Media and Music in the Nineties`, in White, Paul J. and Jongerden, Joost. *Turkey's Alevi Enigma: A Comprehensive Overview,* Boston: Brill Leiden, 2003, p. 122.
[402] http://www.kurdistan-aktuel.org/yazarlar/selim-curukkaya/2103-adrenalin- neden- yukselir.html
(Last accessed 10 May 2016).

The third argument is that the Zazas are Kurds. The Kurdish nationalist movement has stressed this idea throughout the history of the Republic of Turkey. The Kurdish Movement had a stronger need to stress this in recent decades, as its political rival the Turkish state has made efforts to convince the Zazas that they were not Kurds. Some scholars such as Zülfü Selcan[403] and Paul Ludwig[404] have sometimes differentiated between the Zazas and the Kurds by claiming some linguistic differentiations. It is also pointed out by the group who claim Zazas are a separate people, that the Sheikh Said and the Seyid Riza rebellion were known as Zaza and not Kurdish rebellions. On the other hand, the majority of academics in this field such as David McDowall,[405] Amir Hassanpour, Michael Gunter [406] and Martin Van Bruinessen, do not differentiate between the Zaza and the Kurds. Moreover, in the first Zazaki publication in history, in 1899, Molla Ehmede Xasi in his Kirdkî/Zazaki Mewlud (a religious epic honouring the Prophet Mohammed's birth) *Mewludê Kirdî* (1899), clearly stressed that the Kirds/Zazas were Kurds. This source is important for this discussion, as it is the first publication in the literary field by a Kird/Zaza intellectual of the time. The Kurds and Zazas also have the same common aspirations and thus identify with each other as one ethnic group. The Kurds and Zazas also inhabit the same geographical region, which it has been argued further cements their connection to each other. This argument has always been influential, even more so since the rise and influence of the PKK.

From the early 1990s, the PKK was able to expand its influence in Zazaki-speaking areas such as Çewlig/Bingol, Dersim /Tunceli, Dicle, Genc and Lice to name a few. Recent elections in Turkey have also helped to back the view that the Zazas see themselves as Kurds. In the last two local elections in Dersim (a predominately Zaza region), the mayor of the city was elected from the pro-Kurdish Parties the Democratic Regions Party (DBP), formerly known as the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) and the Democratic Society Party (DTP).[407] This marked a shift in voting patterns, as pro-

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[403] Selcan, Z. Zaza Ulusal Sorunu, (Zaza's National Question)
 http://www.zazaki.de/zazakide/ZazaUlusalSorunu2004.pdf , (Last accessed 15 December 2011).
[404] Ludwig, Paul, The Pozition of Zazaki the West İranian Languages,
 http://www.kavehfarrokh.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/zazakipositionof.pdf.   (Last accessed 2 Novermber 2011).
[405] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 2007.
[406] Gunter, Michael M. *The A to Z of the Kurds,* Scarecrow Press, 2009, p. 179.
[407] AKP Loses Points, CHP, MHP and DTP gain
http://bianet.org/english/local-goverment/113466-akp-loses-points-chp-mhp-and-dtp-gain
(Last accessed 12 July 2013).

Kurdish party members had never been elected to the position of mayor in the city until the 1999 local elections in Turkey. Similarly the percentage of votes for the pro-Kurdish parties has continued to increase in Çewlig/Bingöl. The city also managed to elect a mayor from a pro-Kurdish party, Mr Feyzullah Karaaslan, in the 1999 local elections. This pattern shows a constant rise for Kurdish nationalism and can also be seen in most of the other Zazaki-speaking areas. Moreover, there has always been between 20 and 30% of Zaza members of parliament within the pro-Kurdish parties represented, in the Turkish parliament in Ankara.[408] Compared with the Zaza proportion of the Kurdish population of Turkey, this Zaza representation in the Kurdish political arena is higher than its percentage of the population. This trend has continued in elections up until 2015. There is a regular rise in Zazas' appearance more actively in cultural activities such as Newroz (the major Kurdish festival, and recently a political activity), the local convivial organised by pro-Kurdish organisations, and in the rallies of Kurdish political parties.[409] The fact that the Zazas are voting for pro-Kurdish parties and becoming more active in generally Kurdish activities, shows in some way that they are identifying themselves not only with the Kurdish identity but also to some extent, the Kurdish national movement in Turkey.

3.3 The Political Structure of the Kird/Zazas in Contemporary Identity Formation: Finding Their Own Identity

Feeling a sense of Kurdishness seems to have been largely the case among Zazakî speakers themselves historically. Since 1980, traditional outlooks on local identities have started becoming increasingly complex, and questions of Zaza cultural/ethnic identities acquired new qualitative as well as quantitative characteristics. For a number of reasons, including the army coup (1980), which changed some of the political structures of the Turkish state, and the political/military establishment's attitude to east and south-east Turkey" (Turkish Kurdistan) in particular. Furthermore, the increasing presence of Turkish schooling and media in Turkey's Kurdish areas led the process along a more complex route. The schooling age dropped to as young as age three. This new schooling policy, along with the ban on speaking Kurdish as a language at schools

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[408] Interview conducted with Idris Baluken during the field trip, when was elected as Çewlig / Bingöl's first MP for city's first pro-Kurdish party member in history of general elections. August 2011..

[409] Interview conducted with Siyabend Welat who was the head of Cultural Activities on behalf of Diyarbakir Municipality then. August 2013.

in Turkey, meant that the state used schooling as a tool for its assimilation policies. A primary school teacher, who is a Kird/Zaza himself, stressed that the Turkish state uses all and each of its institutions to assimilate minorities and especially the Kurds in recent decades.[410]

3.3.1 The Importance of Religion and the Religious Leaders in Identity Formation in Çewlig/Bingöl

Çewlig/Bingöl, as stated before, is a predominantly Sunni Muslim area with strong religious traditions. The city had a high level of participation in Sheikh Said's movement, both for religious and ethnic reasons. Çewlig/Bingöl's result in the constitutional referendum of the 7th of November in 1982 is also significant. This anti-democratic constitution was designed under the control of the Kemalist army officials after the 1980 coup; major parts of it are still in use in the 21st century. In that referendum, Çewlig/Bingöl had the highest turnout to reject the vote in all Turkey, with a 32% vote against the proposal. The vote to reject in all Turkey was only 8%. The high level of resistance was significant at a time of severe army restrictions, and Çewlig/Bingöl was labelled as "the brave city".[411] This was mainly because of the religious position of Çewlig/ Bingöl, and the role of religious leaders opposing the Kemalist and secular army regime under the military's chief of staff Kenan Evren, who led the coup in 1980.

In the November 1983 general elections, the Anavatan Partisi/Motherland Party (ANAP), under its charismatic and liberal leader Turgut Özal, won the election and was able to form the government as a single party government.[412] Özal managed to win vast support from the more religious areas of Turkey, including Çewlig/Bingöl which supported him with 45% of the vote.[413] The religious leaders then affiliated themselves in a wave with ANAP. This would give them strength to locate a space where they would have more freedom in their religious activities. Furthermore, they were now in a position where they could benefit from the state 'opportunities' directly.

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[410] Interview conducted with A. Bilmez, a teacher at Solhan primary school in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2014.
[411] https://m.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/118223-cesurbingol-anayasaya-hayir-diyecek-kadar-cesur-muydu, (Last accessed 10 August 2017).
[412] http://politikakademi.org/2011/02/6-kasim-1983-tarihli-genel-secim-ve-anavatan-partisi/, (Last accessed 13 March 2012).
[413] http://www.secim-sonuclari.com/1983/bingol, (Last accessed 22 December 2015).

3.3.2 The Role of Tribes and the Tribal Leaders of the Kird/Zazas in Çewlig/Bingöl

Along with the religious leaders, traditional tribal leaders had an important role local society since the Ottoman times in the region. The Ottoman Empire used to manage its Kurdish population via these intermediary tribal leaders and religious figures. This trend continued in a more indirect style during the Republic of Turkey era until the 1980s. The rise of the PKK led the Kurdish movement to diminish the power of these individuals; but because the PKK took longer to establish itself in some Kurdish areas than others, some traditional leaders enjoyed a longer period of influence than others. The pro-Kurdish movement was successful in mobilising the mass youth. This then started to create a new generation that would not accept the power of those traditional individuals. Although those society leaders have lost the vast majority of their power, they are still a resort to which the traditional Turkish political parties would go to seek support, mainly during elections. Therefore they still have a considerable negotiating power with the ruling parties, where they use their mediating position between their group of people and high party or state representatives. Thus, they have the access to state means such as getting the state bids and helping their supporters to get jobs in state institutions or contracts from the state. They sometimes receive these benefits directly for themselves and for their close relatives, or smaller benefits for their wider circle.

3.3.3 The Role of NGOs/Institutions from both State and Kurdish Movement Perspectives

The locals of Çewlig/Bingöl, after finding themselves caught between the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement over the course of decades, have begun to take part in the formation of their own identity only after the 1980s. For Çewlig/Bingöl, neither side easily represented the local residents; they had been in conflict with the Turkish state's policies since the start of the republican era, but also the secular leftist ideology of the PKK did not seem to suit the city's strongly Sunni Muslim character. The Kurdish movement, to gather support and become a serious rival to the Turkish state, started to mobilise via NGOs in all the areas in which Kurds lived in Turkey.

Politically, the self-identification process in Turkey and especially in the Kurdish regions has been considerably influenced by the Turkish state. Turkey has much

experience in assimilation policies using different methods. Until the beginning of the 20th century, the map of different ethnicities and/or spoken languages in today's Turkey (then part of the Ottoman Empire) was rather colourful. When the Turkish Republic was established in 1923, the founding group decided that a multi–ethnic structure was a threat to the unity of the state, and could be a reason for the feared division of the country, as the Ottoman Empire itself had been fragmented over the past centuries. In the decades following its establishment, the Turkish state implemented vast assimilation policies towards all groups of people which were seen as 'others' by the policy makers of the new state. In the case of the Zazas and Kurds, the state firstly denied that they are Kurds by arguing that they are 'mountain Turks'. In the later stage it introduced various strategies to diminish anything other than Turkishness.

The Zazaist group has been supported by the Turkish State, even more so during the 21th century in which the Justice and Development Party (AKP), after forming a government as a single party in 2002, have taken control gradually at the governmental and later the state levels.

As part of this political project, there have been two new state universities established in two mainly Zaza inhabited cities, Çewlig/Bingöl and Tunceli/Dersim. In both universities there are Zazakî departments producing material in line with the current regime's political tendencies, sometimes acting as pro-state propaganda tools. The staff of these departments are chosen among certain academics who mainly support state policies towards Kirds/Zazas. The conferences organised by these departments are mainly designed in an attempt to serve the political needs of the state. The academic production is also a result of this tendency.[414] On my field trip in in 2012, I met a high positioned member of academic staff of Bingöl University. In this meeting he stressed that there was no space for a different voice in the academic atmosphere at the university. One would not be able to argue anything contradicting the state-sanctioned views openly in the classes, panels and conferences. It would lead the individual going through a disciplinary process, resulting in their losing the position at the university and

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[414] While on my fieldwork trip in Çewlig/Bingöl in summer 2011, several of my interviewees (Serdar Zana, Wisif Baluken, Cihad Brusk, Zerya Çolîgij, Hesen Zozan, and Fatma Kaya) informed me that the Zaza Language Symposium, which was held by the University of Bingöl in May 2011, was primarily a propaganda exercise for the agenda of the Turkish state. This explains how a language symposium can be used as a propaganda.

possibly more.[415] Similarly to other state institutions, universities in the region are used as strongholds for the state propaganda for in its assimilation policies. The state does not allow locals space for their search for finding and building self-identity.

Chapter 4: The Localist Tendency towards Idenity in Çewlig/Bingöl for the Kirds/Zazas; Economy, Culture and Identity, an Overall Analysis

As the Zazas themselves becoming the decisive subject group in the new trends of local identity, they argue that it should be them who must decide how this identity process shifts. Moreover, they claim that identification of Zazaness should be decided by the Zazas not the "others". The "other" in Çewlig/ Bingöl case is mainly the Kurdish movement and sometimes the Turkish state. The local political factors play prominent role in this identity construction process. This process is politicised to theextend where the Çewlig/ Bingöl inhabitands chose different cities in the region for economic interactions, for touristic purposes, cultural activities etc. In the following, this chapter will aim to shed a light on how these dynamics can become a tool in such identity processes can be affected. Moreover, the Turkish State, practises all its state institutions to serve its assimilation policies or take a direct role in how this identity process evolves.

Along with the economical structure there also religion, language, culture with its folklore, traditions and customs, which hold an importance to this identity construction battle. Although Çewlig/ Bingöl is dominantly inhabited by Kird/ Zaza and Sunni Muslims, there are also a smaller percentage of Kurmanj and Alevi inhabitants. The identity formation phenomenon is an ongoing process that still being shaped by the political groups on the ground. What is still making it possible for all the three said local identity groups to come together is the cultural pillar of this identity. The residents of Çewlig/ Bingöl still manage to meet in same platforms such as wedding parties, cultural festivals, religious festivals etc.

4.1 Economy and Its Role in Identity Construction in Çewlig / Bingöl.

Turkey is divided into 81 provinces, and the province of Çewlig / Bingol situated in eastern Anatolia / Turkey. The city is located in the upper Euphrates region of eastern Anatolia which bears the traces of many civilizations in the lands of Çewlig / Bingöl as the history of the city goes back to B.C. 4000-5000.[416] Bingöl became a province in 1936, and its name has been changed from Capakçur to Bingol, which basically means a thousand lakes from *bin* 'thousand' and *göl* 'lake', a reference to the great number of lakes in the region.[417] Çewlig / Bingöl is a small sized city in the region, and does not

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[415] Interview conducted with Ercan Cagdas in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2012.
[416] Bingol Tarihcesi, http://www.bingol.gov.tr/tarihcesi (Last accessed 12 August 2016).
[417] Bingöl Tanıtım, http://fka.gov.tr/bingol-tanitim# (Last accessed 14 August 2016).

have a historical city culture compared to its neighbor cities such as Diyarbakir, Elazig and Erzurum. Therefore, the economic activities in the city are not based on urban style financial dynamics. Thereby, it is still primarily dependent on traditional economic activities such as; animal husbandry, agriculture and beekeeping. This research argues that the traditional economy has a direct reflection on the identity construction of the area, and it has kept identity rather a 'closed' one towards to external influences. In what follows, I will provide a general overview of the city in terms of population, geography, and history. The research will then analyse how economic regional disparities have an influence on individuals' social identity.

Çewlig / Bingöl is at an intersection point in the eastern Turkey as the road from Ankara to Iran border and the road from South-Eastern Anatolia to the Trabzon Port in Black Sea Region interconnect at Bingöl. In addition, it had been affected by many different civilizations until settlement was established.[418] Thereby, there are historical remains such as castles, tombs, caves and churches, among which the Quba remains, Kralkizi Castle and Kigi Castle. There are also numerous gravestones and a few ancient churches around Kiği. A large part of the historical remnants within the province's boundaries are found in the southern parts of Genç, Kigi, Adakli and Solhan.[419]

The province covers an area of 8.125 square kilometres, and it is surrounded by mountains, with peaks over 2500 metres in height, and connected by deep valleys and plateaus of tectonic origin. In addition, Çewlig / Bingöl province is one of the least populated and poorest provinces in Turkey.

Table 1: The Population of Çewlig / Bingöl in 2017

County	Population
Central	157.921
Genç	33.613
Solhan	33.130
Karlıova	30.619
Adaklı	8.221

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[418] Can, M. Fatih and Pirim, Lokman. *Bingol Investment Opportunities*, Bingol, 2011, p. 2.
[419] Can and Pirim, *Bingol,* pp. 22-24.

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Kiğı	5.097
Yedisu	2.825
Yayladere	1.928
Total	273.354

Source: Bingol Valiligi, Nufus ve Dagilim.[420]

Population density of Bingol is 33 (people per km^2) compared to Turkey`s national average of 104. According to Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK), as can be seen in table 1, Bingol has eight counties, and its population is 273.354 in 2017. The most crowded county is Central, with 157,921 residents while least crowded county is Yayladere.[421] Adakli (04/07/1987), Yayladere (04/07/1987) and Yayladere 20/05/1990) were announced as counties mainly in line with the state's security projects following the rise of PKK in the region. Otherwise these counties do not have enough population to become counties according to the average population standards in Turkey. This is the case especially for Yedisu and Yayladere.

4.1.1 Domestic Economic Means

Bingol is a small city, which surrounded by Diyarbakir to the south, Erzurum and Erzincan to the north, Tunceli and Elazıg to the west, and Mus to the East, and more than half the population live in small villages and hamlets. Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia is generally characterized as an agricultural region since the establishment of Turkey, and the economy of Çewlig / Bingöl is also based on agriculture and stockbreeding, includes sheep, goat and cattle, and it does not have a developed industrial sector. In addition, there is a lack of both state and private investment in Çewlig / Bingöl, which explains why eastern Turkey is more rural and has less infrastructure, compared to other regions in Turkey. Low and inadequate level of state and private investment are one of the significant factors for the persistence of the regional income disparities between Kurdish regions and the rest of the country. Economic development is a multidimensional issue, but the development of a region or a city is tied to the amount of investment in there. During the AKP government, in 2006,

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[420] Bingol Valiligi, Nufus ve Dagilim http://www.bingol.gov.tr/nufus-ve-dagilim (Last accessed 14 August 2018).

[421] Turkish Statistical Institute is the Turkish government agency commissioned with producing official statistics on Turkey. It was founded in 1926, and has its headquarters in Ankara, the capital of Turkey. http://www.tuik.gov.tr/ilGostergeleri/iller/BINGOL.pdf (Last accessed 10 August 2018).

only 5.78% of the subsided investment went to Kurdish regions, and even the combined subsided investment of Kurdish cities was lower than Bursa, a city of west of Turkey, between 2002 and 2006.[422] Because of poor infrastructure, it is not an ideal place for firms to investment as unit expenditures of manufacture are expected to be higher. As a result, this situation has a negative impact on the long term economic enlargement of Çewlig / Bingöl.

Table 2: Presence of Land in Çewlig / Bingöl

Presence of Land	Area (ha)	Rate (%)
Total presence of land	825.300	100
Agricultural land	59.140	7.17
Irrigated	28.646	3.47
Non-irrigated	30.494	3.70
Pasturage area	414.407	50.21
Meadow area	18.064	2.19
Forest area	263.829	31.97
Forest area	263.829	31.97
Afforestation area	49.865	6.04
Other areas	20.000	2.42

Source: Çan, and Pirim, *Bingol Investment Opportunities*.

Agriculture is main economic activity in Çewlig / Bingöl like most provinces in the southeast of Turkey. Beekeeping has become another major economic activity in the city in the recent decades. As can be seen in table 2, total agricultural land of Çewlig / Bingöl is 59.140 hectares, and 28.646 hectares of the area is being irrigated. Processed agricultural lands, which were 29.740 hectares in 2001; has been increased to 35.341 hectare with an 18.83% growth rate. Animal husbandry is also having a great potential in the economy of the province due to wide pasturage areas, 50.21% of the total lands. As a result, people mostly engage with agricultural and animal husbandry economic activities in Çewlig / Bingöl.

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[422] Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia's Socio-economic Problems and Recommended Solutions. Diyarbakır: Union of Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia Region Municipalities Publication (USARM), (2009), p. 35.

Table 3: Number of Animals in Çewlig / Bingöl (2007-2012)

Animal Type	2007	2008	2009	2011	2012
Sheep	389.268	393.855	254,680	281,272	297,000
Goat	140,248	124,033	74,740	124,592	140,800
Cattle	64,717	66,000	64,758	97,961	106,704
Poultry	160,645	222,065	123,035	129,344	150,019
Beehive	91,502	82,468	82,224	96,958	94,952

Source: Bingöl Directorate of Provincial Food Agriculture and Livestock.[423]

Live animal breeding has the greatest portion in animal husbandry in Çewlig / Bingöl, and table 3 shows that people generally breed sheep, and goat. The number of sheep had the highest percentage between 2007 and 2012 regarding animal husbandry in Çewlig / Bingöl. Moreover, apiculture and honey production are also significant fields of economic activity. The chronic lack of private and the state investment leads the local economy of Çewlig / Bingöl to rely heavily on agriculture and animal husbandry. Furthermore, as is often the case in such situations of underdevelopment, the economic improvement problems increased the level of underdevelopment issue. Economic development is a multidimensional issue, and the development of a region or a city does not only depend on the level of economic investment. However, the scarcity of both private and government investment in Çewlig / Bingöl makes it difficult in the best of economic improvement to attract more economic infrastructure, as a result, it has lagged behind in terms of industrial and commercial development in Turkey. It should be notes, this is not only the case in Çewlig / Bingöl but also in most eastern and south-eastern and eastern cities of Turkey, where most of the Kurdish population live in Turkey. For instance, in terms of gross domestic product (GDP), the eastern and south-eastern regions of Turkey where Kurds live are considered the least developed areas in the country. Pro-Kurdish politicians and academics argue that this is a deliberate policy by the state officials in line with the state's general tendency towards the region as a whole. Hasip Kaplan, a prominent politician and MP of Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) in an interview with him argued that; *"the governments of Turkey previously*

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[423] Bingöl Directorate of Provincial Food Agriculture and Livestock, https://bingol.tarim.gov.tr/Menu/49/2012-Istatistikleri (Last accessed 11 August 2016).

and now, deliberately left the Kurdish region behind in their economic and development policies. This is obvious when we compare the region with the other regions of Turkey".[424] This is a vastly used argument by the inhabitants, intellectuals, politicians and academics of the region. As a result, the economic statistics of the Kurdish regions are used as a strong reference to point out that there is a strong discrimination against the Kurdish regions of Turkey.

Table 4: The GDP Share and Rankings of the Eastern Provinces in Turkey, 1965 and 1979

Provinces	1965		1979	
	Share (%)	Ranking	Share (%)	Ranking
Diyarbakir	0.78	43	0.83	34
Siirt	0.75	45	0.44	51
Mardin	0.72	47	0.58	46
Adiyaman	0.42	57	0.41	53
Agri	0.35	61	0.33	61
Mus	0.33	63	0.32	62
Tunceli	0.18	65	0.16	66
Bingol	0.16	66	0.18	65
Hakkari	0.13	67	0.11	67

Source: Sönmez, M. *Doğu Anadolu'nun Hikayesi.* [425]

As can be seen table 4, the GDP share of Çewlig / Bingöl and some cities in the southeast of Turkey are quite low, and Çewlig / Bingöl`s GDP share is only 0.16% and 0.18% in 1965 and in 1979. In addition, Çewlig / Bingöl`s ranking is 66 and 65 out of the 67 provinces in 1965 and 1979 respectively. This chronic economic issue is still a problem of Çewlig / Bingöl, and it is one of the least developed cities in Turkey. In the early 1950s, Turkey was an overwhelmingly rural country whose economic activities were heavily based on agricultural. Approximately 50% of the national income originated in agriculture, and as much as 80% of the economically active population

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[424] Interview conducted with Hasip Kaplan. He was elected as the BDP Parliamentary group deputy chairman following the 12th July 2011 general elections in Turkey. August 2011.
[425] Sönmez, Mustafa. *Doğu Anadolu'nun Hikayesi Kürtler ve Sosyal Tarih,* (Ankara, 1992), p. 190.

was employed in agriculture.[426] Starting in the mid-1950s, an extremely rapid process of urbanization and industrialization led to a substantial structural transformation of the economy. In the mid-1970s, the industrial and urban sectors began to dominate the Turkish economy.[427] As a result, many poor economic conditions in the Kurdish region led many Kurds left their villages to move mainly to western provinces, such as Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Adana, and the nearest urban centres where living standards were better. However, these poor economic circumstances were not the only reasons why people migrated from Çewlig / Bingöl, and this will be discussed in next subsection.

The late 1990s marked a shift in the Turkish state's Kurdish policies, and new political space opened as Turkey began adopting EU-required democratic reforms. Thereby, the EU made an important positive start in 1998 by amenably naming the Kurdish issue and citing its resolution as a requirement to Turkey's attainment of EU membership.[428] More importantly, European Union pressure in the 2000s led the government to lift the state of emergency that had crippled civic life in the Kurdish regions.[429] Turkish State has applied a number of security policies in order to 'solve' its Kurdish issue in 1990s. There was a lack of stability in governments; the ruling governments rapidly changed from one political party to another, and the political structure resulted a coalition party governments. There was a blockage in the political system which resulted in the February 2001 economic crisis in Turkey. There were also global reasons to this socioeconomic crisis, but it was mainly related to the lack of stability in Turkish political structure. Furthermore, the Turkish economy was weakened due to the war between the state and the PKK since mid-1980s. This led the voters seeking for a new alternative, and the AKP was formed in the best possible time for a new political party. It won the general election in November 2002 and formed single party government following an era of coalition governments in Turkey. Although they were a party that broke out from the religious Welfare Party- RP (later Virtue Party- FP), they firstly

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[426] Imrohoroglu, Ayse and Selahattin Imrohoroglu, and Murat Ungor. `Agricultural Productivity and Growth in Turkey`, *Macroeconomic Dynamics*, 18 (2014), 998-1017.

[427] Dervis, Kemal and Sherman Robinson. `The Foreign Exchange Gap, Growth and Industrial Strategy in Turkey: 1973-1983`,
http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/492391468779376270/pdf/multi0page.pdf (Last accessed 13 August 2016).

[428] Yadirgi, Veli. *The political economy of the Kurds of Turkey: from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic,* (Cambridge, 2017), p. 229.

[429] Updegraff, Ragan. `The Kurdish Question`, *Journal of Democracy* 23:1 (2012), 119-128.

appeared with a more liberal party programme when they established the AKP in August 2001.

Following the period between 1999 and 2002, Turkish economy was challenged massively, and it witnessed a peak point by 2001 economic crisis. However, the Turkish economy witnessed a notable recovery, after falling by 9.5% in 2001, and Turkey's GDP increased, annual average growth rate of GDP in the years 2002–11 (5%) were compared to that of the years 1989–95 (4%) and 1996–2001 (1%).[430] Following economic challenges in 2001, Turkey enjoyed five years of rapid economic growth, driven in large part by structural changes, both politically and socially.[431] Nevertheless, socioeconomic policies that applied by Turkish governments have not been able to overcome the persistent regional inequalities between Kurdish regions and the rest of the country including Çewlig / Bingöl. The eastern and south-eastern (mainly Kurdish areas) regions continued to be the most disadvantaged areas of Turkey. For instance, since the mid-1980s, the GDP shares of the Kurdish provinces are the lowest when compared with the rest of the regions in the country.[432] The economies in these regions of Turkey overly depend on agricultural production for economic growth as it was emphasised previously. In eastern Turkey, 64% of the population is employed within the agricultural sector while central Turkey employs 46.8% of its labour in agriculture.[433] Even though the GDP per capita of Çewlig / Bingöl has increased from $2,301 to $5,858 between 2004 and 2014, this number is still below the average GDP per capita of Turkey. As seen in table 5, the GDP of Elazig and Tunceli, neighboring cities of Çewlig / Bingol, are $5,858 and $10,198 respectively. In other words, the GDP of Tunceli is almost two times more than of Çewlig / Bingöl. Furthermore, the GDP per capita of Çewlig / Bingöl is approximately 50% less than Turkey's average. As a result, existing socioeconomic regional disparities persisted throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century. Although the ruling party AKP suggests that it will solve the

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[430] Pamuk, Sevket. `Estimating Growth in the Middle East since 1820`, *The Journal of Economic History,* 66:3 (2006), 809-828.

[431] Acemoglu, Daron. and Murat Ucer. `The Ups and Downs of Turkish Growth, 2002-2015: Political Dynamics, the European Union and the Institutional Slide`, http://www.nber.org/papers/w21608.pdf (Last accessed 15 August 2016).

[432] Kirisci, Kemal. and Gareth M. Winrow. *The Kurdish question and Turkey: An example of a trans-state ethnic conflict*, (London, 1997), pp. 123-25.

[433] Altug, Sumru. and Filiztekin, Alpay, `Productivity and Growth, 1923-2003`, in Sumru Altug and Alpay Filiztekin (eds.), *The Turkish Economy: The Real Economy, Corporate Governance and Reform,* (London, 2006), p. 45.

Kurdish issue with economical developments, the statistics do not necessarily prove their point. In the June 2011 general elections, the Prime Minister and AKP's chairman Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in a political rally (held on 8th of June 2011 in Çewlig / Bingöl's city centre) said; "we know what the problems of Bingöl and we will solve them. He then went on with his economic election promises."[434] The 2011 general elections were held on 12th June and the local results in Çewlig / Bingöl resulted in AKP gaining two seats of three and the third MP was Mr Idris Baluken, who was the 'independent' candidate but represented the pro Kurdish party BDP.[435] Idris Baluken is a doctor and a Kurd / Zaza from Çewlig / Bingöl. This was the first time that a pro- Kurdish party representative was elected as the MP of Çewlig / Bingöl, in the history of this city.

Table 5: The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in Turkey ($)

Years	2004	2009	2014
Turkey	5 961	8 980	12 112
Malatya	3 428	5 341	6 954
Elazig	3 570	5 914	7 749
Bingöl	2 301	3 827	5 858
Tunceli	4 543	7 273	10 198

Source: TUIK, Ulusal Hesaplar.[436]

Socio-economic development of Çewlig / Bingöl, as a result, is well below the country average, and it is relatively one of the less developed provinces in the southeast of Turkey, the least developed region in Turkey. This issue has been argued at different levels by both Kurdish intelligentsiapoliticians and Turkish state. Turkish governments generally maintain that the problem is related to socio-economic activities and traditional feudal structure in the region. Whereas, Kurdish groups usually claim that poverty and the reasons of less development of the regions, including Çewlig / Bingöl, are the outcome of the decades-long systematic nationalistic policies of the Turkish

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[434] I have observed the 2011 general elections during my filed trip in Çewlig / Bingöl and the region.
[435] The pro- Kurdish parties used to support these 'independent' candidates until the 2015 general elections due to the anti-democratic 10 % national election trash hold. In the 2015 general elections, they stood as members of the Peoples' Democratic Party HDP and managed to pass the 10 % Turkish National election trash hold by 13.1 % as a pro-Kurdish political party for first time.
[436] TUIK, Ulusal Hesaplar, https://biruni.tuik.gov.tr/medas/?kn=116&locale=en (Last accessed 15 August 2016).

state. These regions have been neglected for centuries, and it became a zone of deprivation. This negligence started during the Republican era, even though it has a background to Ottoman Empire.

4.1.2 The reasons for Underdevelopment of Çewlig / Bingöl and Its Surrounding Areas

At the time of the announcement of the Republic, the Turkish economy was weak, and its infrastructure had been destroyed during the struggle for National independence (1919-1923). As Richard D. Robinson points out, the economy at the time was "…an underdeveloped, backward, village economy, weakened by a half a century of foreign control and smashed by decades of war." [437] Moreover, it relied on the social and economic legacy of the Ottoman Empire; and the empire, during the early twentieth century, was almost devoid of financial wealth. As a result, the establishment Republic of Turkey did not usher in an industrialist country. On the contrary, its economic productivity was, mainly, based on agriculture with feudal ties, with a very limited industry.

Table 6: Labour Force from 1927 to 1950 in Turkey

Sectors/Years	1927	1935	1950
Agriculture	80.9	76.4	77.7
Industry	8.9	11.7	10.3
Services	10.2	11.9	12.0

Source: Agriculture and Economic Development in Turkey, 1870-2000.[438]

As reflected in the table above, the portion of the labour force in agriculture was 80.9%, 76.4%, and 77.7% respectively, in 1927, in 1935, and in 1950. Furthermore, the Republic of Turkey largely depended on farmers, and agriculture constituted 41.7% of the GDP in 1927. Moreover, nationalist ideologies such as Yusuf Akçura and *Ziya Gökalp* point out the creation of national (Turkish-Muslim) bourgeoisie as a necessary

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[437] Robinson, Richard D. *The First Turkish Republic: A Case in National Development,* (Cambridge, 1963), p. 110.

[438] Pamuk, Sevket. 'Agriculture and Economic Development in Turkey, 1870-2000' in Pedro Lains, Vicente Pinilla (eds.), *Agriculture and Economic Development in Europe Since 1870,* (New York, 2009), 375-394.

component of the strong national state.[439] Yusuf Akcura asserts that foundation of the modern state is the bourgeoisie class. Contemporary prosperous states came into existence on the shoulders of the bourgeoisie, businesspersons and bankers. If the natural growth of the Turkish bourgeoisie continues without damage or interruption, we can say that the sound establishment of the Turkish state has been guaranteed.[440] As a result of this nationalist discourse, the leaders of new Republic of Turkey started to marginalise the non-Turkish people in the economy.

The trend of managing or miss- managing Turkish state has started since its different ethnic groups with a main focus area of assimilation. "The endless dialogue between "the present and the facts of the past"[441] stands out as a relevant example. Economic polices since the establishment of the Republic have generated both economic growth and increasing regional inequalities, as the most underdeveloped regions, namely east and southeast of Anatolia, coincide with the areas with the greatest concentration of Kurdish population.[442] The transformation of a multi-national (Ottoman) empire into one (Turkish) nation state involved a financial re-construction along nationalist lines, and Turkish nationalism has become Turkey's official and hegemonic ideology since 1923. Therefore, following the establishment of the new Turkish Republic (1923), the displacement and resettlement of Kurds into predominantly Turkish regions of Anatolia started as a result of this ideology. During the administration of the Republican People's Party, led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, a series of steps was taken in an attempt to eliminate the Kurdish presence in the new Republic of Turkey through legal assimilation progressively.[443] Thus, Turkish government enacted a law in 1927 with the

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[439] Akçura, Yusuf, *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset,* (İstanbul, 1995); Gökalp, Ziya. *Türkçülüğün Esasları,* (İstanbul, 1968); Gökalp, Ziya. *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civizilation: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp,* trans., Niyazi Berkes, (London, 1959); Gökalp, Ziya. *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak*, fourth edition, (İstanbul, 2017).

[440] Turk Yurdu, No. 63 (April 3, 1914). 2102-3. quoted Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, (London, 1998), p. 425.

[441] Carr, Edward Hallett, *What is History?,* (New York, 1961), p. 35.

[442] Aydin, Zulkuf. *The Political Economy of Turkey*, (London, 2005), p. 225.

[443] Atatürk was the founder of the Turkish Republic. He served around fifteen years as president of Turkey and adopted western style of modernization by abolishing the system of Caliphate, bringing secularism to education and government's institutions, giving voting rights to women, bringing Roman alphabet while abolishing the Arab alphabet, and implementing many developments in areas of science, technology, agriculture, and education.
See Gunter, Michael M. `Turgut Ozal and Kurdish Question, in Marlies Casier and Joost Jongerden, *Nationalism and Politics in Turkey: Political Islam, Kemalism and the Kurdish Issue,* (New York, 2011), p. 86.

title "law concerning persons being moved from the east to the west" announced that 1500 residents and 80 families were to be displaced.[444] Despite the lack of accurate data, some scholars claim that from 1925 to 1928 more than 500,000 people were deported of whom some 200,000 were estimated to have perished in the aforementioned provinces.[445] Another settlement law was enacted in 1934 when the Turkish parliament passed the Law on Resettlement (Law No. 2510), which regulated the settlement of immigrants and resettlement within the country. The law divided Turkey into three zones in accordance with adherence to Turkishness.[446] Tekeli reports that 25,831 people from 5,074 households were transferred from Bingol, Tunceli, Erzincan, Bitlis, Siirt, Van, Diyarbakir, Agri, Mus, Erzurum, Elazig, Kars, Malatya, and Mardin, to Western Anatolia.[447] Throughout the Republican era, in the words of an official report of the ruling Republican People Party's General Secretariat in 1939–40, the aim of the new government was to "dismantle the territorial unity of Kurds" and to "Turkify the Eastern population."[448] As a result of these assimilations policies, many people had been forced to evacuate their home in Kurdish regions where people mostly engaged with agriculture economic activities to meet their needs.

On 14 May 1950, after three decades long single party ruling era, the first democratic elections in the history of the Turkish Republic took place. The transition to multi-party rule, however, did not lead to a qualitative shift in the Kurdish regions, including Çewlig / Bingöl. The government programmes during the 1950s and 1960s promised to diminish the economic disparities divergences between the Kurdish regions and the rest of Turkey.[449] Democrat Party (DP) government used Marshall Plan aid to subsidise the importation of agricultural machinery, particularly tractors, whose number soared from 1,756 to 43,727 between 1948 and 1956.[450] However, the availability of tractors

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[444] Tezel, Yahya Sezai. *Cumhuriyet Doneminin Iktisadi Tarihi (1923-1950),* (Ankara, 1982), p. 346.

[445] Yadirgi, *The political economy of the Kurds,* p. 170.

[446] Celik, Ayse Betul, Migrating onto Identity: Kurdish Mobilization through Associations in Istanbul, unpublished PhD thesis, Graduate School of Binghamton University, State University of New York (2002), p. 110.

[447] Tekeli, Ilhan, Involuntary Displacement and the Problem of Resettlement in Turkey from the Ottoman Empire to the Present, in Seteney Shami (ed.), *Population Displacement and Resettlement: Development and Conflict in the Middle East,* (New York, 1994), 202-226.

[448] Bulut, Faik. *Kürt Sorunanda Çözüm Arayısları: Devlet ve Parti Raporlari, Yerli ve Yabanci Oneriler*, (Istanbul, 1998).

[449] Yegen, Mesut, *Devlet Söyleminde Kürt Sorunu,* (Istanbul, 1999), pp. 159-70.

[450] Margulies, Roni and Ergin Yıldızoglu. Agrarian Change: 1923–70, in Irvin C. Shick and Ertugrul A. Tonak (eds.), Turkey in Transition: New Perspectives, (Oxford, 1987), pp. 269–92.

provided by the USA through Marshall Aid did not achieve what it intended. In fact, it resulted in the displacement and dispossession of many Kurdish peasants in the 1950s.[451] Hundreds of thousands of Kurds left their land and migrated to other regions of western Turkey where they became seasonal migrant workers, street vendors, construction workers, factory workers or part of the reserve army of industrial labour.[452]

Systematic denial of Kurds and unequal economic development of the Kurdish regions in Turkey have not changed in 1960s. For instance, General Cemal Gursel, fourth president of Turkish Republic, after the military coup in 1960, in Diyarbakir stated that; "there are no Kurds in this country. Whoever says he is a Kurd, I will spit in their face".[453] As a result, despite the main economic development strategy centred on successfully bringing about significant economic growth, the underdevelopment of the predominantly Kurdish provinces deepened in the 1960s and the 1970s. The growth of GDP more than doubled from 4.9% to 6.4% between 1960s and 1980s. However, even with this extraordinary economic performance, the socioeconomic inequalities between different geographic zones inherited from previous decades deepened more. The governments of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s promised to alleviate economic disparity between geographic zones.[454] Likewise, the 1960s government stressed the issue of "the development of the eastern region," adding that it was necessary to introduce "special measures", it was underlined, was not to create privileged regions.[455]

On 24 January 1980, the government announced a new stabilisation programme based on neoliberal economic policy, and the task of managing this programme was given to Turgut Ozal.[456] The military regime came to power (12 September 1980) due to socioeconomic and political instabilities at that time. Surprisingly, they endorsed the neoliberal economic policies and made a point of keeping Turgut Ozal in the

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[451] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds,* p. 401.
[452] Sönmez, Mustafa. *Doğu Anadolu'nun Hikayesi Kürtler ve Sosyal Tarih*, (Ankara, 1992), p. 166, and Bruinessen, Martin van. *Ağa, Şeyh, Devlet,* (İstanbul, 2003), p. 32.
[453] Muller, Mark. `Nationalism and the Rule of Law in Turkey: The Elimination of Kurdish Representation during the 1990s`, in Robert W. Olson (ed.), *Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s. (*Kentucky, 1996), 173–99.
[454] TBMM, Hukumetler ve Programlari, V. II, (Ankara, 1988), TBMM, p. 104.
[455] TBMM, Hukumetler ve Programlari, V. II, (Ankara, 1988), TBMM, p. 1.55
[456] Önis, Ziya, `Turgut Ozal and his Economic Legacy: Turkish Neo-Liberalism in Critical Perspective`, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 40:4 (2004), 113-134.

government as the deputy prime minister in charge of economic affairs. [457] Ozal liberalised the capital account and destroyed the difficulties to international capital inflows, which made the Turkish economy extremely defenceless to sudden outflows of international capital.[458] Since the late 1980s, the world economy is becoming more integrated as national economies turned into market economies due to capital flows across the national borders. Therefore, competitiveness issues are more important than they were before due to mass international products. Thus, Ozal's neoliberal policies mostly have deteriorated small business, workers, farmers, and peasants who have worked in agricultural sector, and this was a spark of economic crises of Turkey during 1990s. Furthermore, economic crises that Turkey had faced have largely been paid for by the agricultural activities as a result of the authoritarian neoliberal restructuring of Turkey during the military regime. However, the most detrimental change occurred in the agricultural sector, and in Kurdish regions, because of their traditional agriculture activities. One of the neoliberal policies at that time was the fundamental abolition of subsidies and price support programmes for agriculture. As such, the reforms under Prime Minister Ozal caused economic destitution on labours, the unemployed, small producers, sharecroppers, and these groups were excessively represented in south-eastern and eastern of Turkey.[459] Kirschenman and Neckerman claim that employers consider the residential location of the applications as an important part of employment screening.[460] In other words, access to larger job markets often is important for escaping poverty, and geographic marginalization into non-productive, often agricultural, regions often means continued poverty and economic discrimination.[461] As a result, the lack of accessing to better job opportunities and the suppression of Kurdish identity persisted the level of poverty in Kurdish regions due to neoliberal policies in the 1980s.

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[457] Ataman, Muhittin, `Ozal Leadership and Restructuring of Turkish Ethnic Policy in the 1980s`, *Middle Eastern Studies,* 38:4 (2002), 123-142.
[458] Ataman, `Ozal Leadership`, 123-142.
[459] White, Paul J. `Economic Marginalization of Turkey's Kurds: the failed promise of modernization and reform`, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 18:1 (1998), 139-158.
[460] Immergluck, Daniel, `Neighborhood Economic Development and Local Working: Th Effect of Nearby Jobs on Where Residents Work`, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1944-8287.1998.tb00111.x (Last accessed 16 August 2016).
[461] Lane, Todd Michael, `Left out in the Cold: Economic Discrimination of Turkey's Kurdish Minority`, http://diam.uab.ro/istorie.uab.ro/publicatii/colectia_auash/annales_14_I/22_todd_lane.pdf
(Last accessed 16 August 2016).

Following the military coup in 1980, a governor-general was appointed over the eight overwhelmingly Kurdish regions, in Çewlig / Bingöl, Elazig, Hakkari, Siirt, Diyarbakir, Mardin Tunceli and Van, in which a state of emergency was declared. The governor-general, in order to fight against the PKK guerrillas, was given an extensive power under special law. He was equipped with a wide range of authorities, including the forced evacuation of villages where it was assumed necessary. Thereby, by the end of 1989, the number of forcibly displaced villages had reached about 400.[462] Following state of emergency, in six Kurdish cities which were under the state of emergency, Tunceli, Hakkari, Siirt, Sirnak, Diyarbakir, and Van, and five nearby cities Çewlig / Bingöl, Batman, Mardin, Bitlis, Mus 820 villages and 2,345 hamlets were evacuated, and 378,335 residents were forced to leave.[463] In addition, the US Department of State's human rights report on Turkey for the year 1994, asserts that the Turkish government military forces forcibly evacuate 2297 villages, and displaced around two million people.[464] The strategy of banishing the Kurds from their ancestral homelands was the unending aim of the Turkish state. As a result, the Turkish authorities generally tend to see Kurds as either the enemy or at least a potential enemy, and this is the one of the main reasons why the socioeconomic and political consequences of the involuntary migration of Kurds have not been changed since the establishment of Turkey. Mass evacuations of villages in Kurdish regions and the unfavourable neoliberal policies during the 1980s deteriorated economic improvement of people in the regions. A villager, Mr Burhan Badan, spoke about his experience of being forced out from his village in 1990 in Solhan, a county of Çewlig / Bingöl during my Summer 2012 field trip; "the army came to our village and told us we had a week to choose either become the state paramilitary forces called 'village guards' or to migrate from the village! My family and I chose to leave the village while most of the villagers did not have the financial means to migrate and stayed to become 'village guards'."[465] There are similar examples seen extensively in the Kurdish regions. The locals in many geographically critical villages had two options; to stay and become part of Turkish State's security

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[462] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 426.

[463] Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Report of the Committee of the National Assembly to Inquire the Problems of the Citizens, Who Migrated as a result of Evacuations in Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia, and to Determine Solutions (10/25/1997).

[464] US Department of State, *Turkey Human Rights Practices,* (1995).

[465] Interview conducted with Burhan Badan in Hamburg on my field trip to Germany. March 2014. He moved to Istanbul in 1990 and later to Germany where many others moved as a result of Turkish State's oppression policies in 1990s in the region.

forces or to migrate, mainly to western capital cities, where they would go through a 'natural' assimilation process. These policies were, once again, the Turkish state's political tactics on the ground towards its Kurdish or Zaza population, as it would refer. As a result, the unending assimilation policy of Turkey has increased internally displacement people in the Middle East areas. According to the Global Trends report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by the end of 2017, 68.5 million people were displaced, including 40 million internally displaced across the world. Furthermore, UNHCR`s figure shows that one person is forcibly displaced every two seconds because of conflicts or persecutions across the world.[466]

In the late 1980s, the Turkish state started to build dozens of dams along the Euphrates River to alleviate regional socioeconomic disparities, and this plan called South-eastern Anatolia Project, known as Güneydogu Anadolu Projesi (GAP) in Turkish. The GAP was implemented in 1989 with a big expectation but it did not achieve what it intended. To illustrate, only 9 dams were finished by 2008 instead of building 22, and only about 261 thousands of hectare land was irrigated out of 1.6 million hectare. The project intended to increase irrigation methods for Kurdish farmers, but massive hydroelectric power produced by the dams was transferred to western parts of Turkey, or the state sold to some of Turkey`s neighbour countries.[467] The implementation of the GAP project in the Kurdish regions caused more displacement of Kurds due to building dams. Moreover, a conversation between President Turgut Ozal and Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel shows the main aim of building dams in the Kurdish regions:

> "Starting with the most troubled zones, village and hamlets in the mountains of the region should be gradually evacuated [and] resettled in the Western parts of the country according to a careful plan…Security forces should immediately move in and establish complete control in such areas. . . . To prevent the locals' return to the region, the building of a large number of dams in appropriate places is an alternative".[468]

At first glance, the South-eastern Anatolia Project (GAP) seems to have been implemented in order to find a solution to the economic hardship of Kurdish regions,

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[466] Figures at a Glance, http://www.unhcr.org/uk/figures-at-a-glance.html (Last accessed 2 December 2017)

[467] Ciment, James. *The Kurds, state and minority in Turkey, Iraq and Iran,* (New York, 1996), pp. 143-44.

[468] Yildiz, Kerim. *The Kurds in Turkey: EU Accession and Human Rights*, (London, 2005), p. 79.

including Çewlig / Bingöl, however it may be seen as discriminative intention of the GAP against the Kurds by "looking awry," in the words of Slavoj Žižek.[469]

Ismail Besikci provides another reason of why the Kurdish regions remained in poverty. Besikci maintains that the massive underdevelopment of Kurdish regions and the regional disparities are linked to the colonial policy of the state since the establishment of Turkey. According to his theory, Kurdish provinces, including Çewlig / Bingöl, are colonised in order to provide for the needs of Turkey's industrialised cities; "like most colonized regions, Kurdistan's stores of raw material, its vast natural wealth in petroleum, copper, coal and phosphate, soil, forests, and water are exploited and marketed for industry."[470] Furthermore, according to the proponents of the view exploitation of the Kurdish regions' natural and human resources for the benefit of the west of Turkey due to discriminatory economic policies of the country as the underdeveloped regions are not only a source of labour for the industrialised regions; they are also a significant market. Kemal Burkay also highlights that "Kurdistan is the region that provides the cheap workforce for the west; the capital accumulated in this region is flowing to the west. Kurdistan became a very convenient market for the bourgeoisie to introduce its products."[471] Therefore, it is claimed that the "East [Kurdish regions] had been neglected."[472] As a result, predominantly Kurdish provinces like Çewlig / Bingöl suffer from economic exclusion due to nationalistic socio-economic policies of the Turkish state.

4.1.3 The Reflections of Economic Market on Identity Tendencies

Studies the political economy of the Kurds have largely ignored the Kurdish periphery, and disregarding the less densely Kurdish cities, like Çewlig / Bingöl, may impoverish our understanding of Kurdish politics. Moreover, the unresolved Kurdish issue has led to widespread both voluntary and involuntary migration of Kurds to other countries in the Middle East and the Caucasus, as well as to Europe and North America.[473] The

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[469] Žižek, Slavoj. *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture,* (Cambridge, Mass.; London, 1991).

[470] Besikci, Ismail. *International Colony Kurdistan,* (London, 2004), p. 19.

[471] Burkay, Kemal, *Seçme Yazılar-1*, (Istanbul, 1995), p. 5.

[472] Mutlu, Servet. `Economic Bases of Ethnic Separatism in Turkey: An Evaluation of Claims and Counterclaims`, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 37:4 (2001), 101-135.

[473] Ayata, Bilgin. `The Politics of Displacement: A Transnational Analysis of the Forced Migration of Kurds in Turkey and Europe`, unpublished PhD thesis, The Johns Hopkins University, (2011), p. 138.

Kurdish issue has become an international problem as more than half a million Kurds now live in Europe, particularly in Germany, and conflicts between the Turkish and Kurdish residents of European states affect the law and order of those countries.[474] As a result, studies of less developed Kurdish cities may reveal new outcomes in regard to better understanding of Kurdish issue.

The Turkish state ideology emphasises the supremacy of Turkish language, culture, education, and history since the establishment of Turkish Republic in 1923.[475] Turkish state, particularly, has focused on the unending assimilation of Kurds by relocating them. Ismail Besikci points out that denial of the Kurds as an ethno-political community and forced settlement were the main policies of Turkey.[476] This has meant that relocations mandated by the Turkish governments were to assimilatehe country's subordinate ethnic populations. Despite legal actions to force Kurds to leave their regions, which started during the establishment of Turkey, most Kurds continued to live in the eastern and south-eastern areas of Turkey until after the waves of migration occurring first in the 1980s.[477] As a result, the displacement of Kurds from their home to western regions of Turkey has been one of the more significant internal migrations of the Middle East, and Çewlig / Bingöl started to lose its population towards industrialised metropolises such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir.

Table 7: The number of in-migration and out-migration in Çewlig / Bingöl from 1975 to 2014.

Years	Population	In-migration	Out-migration	Net migration
1975-1980	190 193	6 148	16 826	- 10 678
1980-1985	205 716	7 703	16 989	- 9 286
1985-1990	216 793	9 878	29 766	- 19 888
1995-2000	222 139	13 795	25 202	- 11 407
2007-2008	256 091	8 977	10 192	- 1 215
2008-2009	255 745	6 986	10 726	- 3 740

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[474] Aydin, *The political economy of Turkey*, p. 242.
[475] Aydin, The *Political Economy of Turkey,* p. 232.
[476] Besikci, *International Colony Kurdistan.*
[477] Paech, Norman. `International Law and Struggle for Freedom`, in Ferhad Ibrahim and Gulistan Gurbey (Eds.), *The Kurdish conflict in Turkey*, (New York, 2000), p. 167.

2009-2010	255 170	8 453	10 448	- 1 995
2010-2011	262 263	9 292	10 782	- 1 490
2011-2012	262 507	7 569	11 145	-3576
2012-2013	265 514	10 968	10 940	28
2013-2014	266.019	9.400	12.852	-3.452

Source: Bingol Valiligi, Nufus ve Dagilim.[478]

These economic conditions forced people to migration, and table 7 shows the change in migration in Çewlig / Bingöl between 1975 and 2014. As it can be seen in table 7, there is a stabilization of population in Çewlig / Bingol since 1990s although the population of Turkey continues to increase. According to Turkish Statistical Institute, Turkish population almost increased 100% from 40.348 million to 80.810 million between 1975 and 2017 whereas Bingol`s population increased only 50% at the same time.[479] The rate of out-migration in Çewlig / Bingöl increased, as can be seen in figure 7, especially after the 1980s due to the conflict between the Kurdish insurgents and the Turkish military. Kurds' movements within Turkey have taken place since the establishment of the Turkey for various reasons, but one of the key reasons is to assimilate Kurdish groups into Turkish culture. Another reason of migration during the 1980s was neoliberal policies of the Turkish state which cut the subsidy on agricultural activities. Therefore, between 1985 and 1990, almost 10% of the Çewlig / Bingöl population migrated to mostly big cities in the west of Turkey where they hoped to find a better job. As a result, the demographics of migration have deteriorated socioeconomic instabilities and social unrest in Kurdish regions. The wealth in the east and southeast regions in Turkey were directly targeted with tragic social and economic nationalism of the Turkish state. When economic indicators are examined across Turkey, regional disparity in regards to sectoral employment as well as investment into education is evident, with the greatest inequality between 'developed west' and the Kurdish east. [480] Therefore, Kurdish scholars have examined existing regional

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[478] Bingol Valiligi, Nufus ve Dagilim http://www.bingol.gov.tr/nufus-ve-dagilim (Last accessed 14 August 2016).

[479] Turkish population and demography, http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1047 (Last accessed 16 August 2016).

[480] Lane, `Left out in the Cold: Economic Discrimination of Turkey's Kurdish Minority`, http://diam.uab.ro/istorie.uab.ro/publicatii/colectia_auash/annales_14_I/22_todd_lane.pdf (Last accessed 16 August 2016).

inequalities to prove their argument; that the economic policies of the Turkish governments have been exploitative, and discriminatory.[481] In this disadvantageous position, Kurds would either stay in their homelands or remain poor, or they move to west of Turkey to work in a service industry in the service of the non- Kurds. By working in the west, the Kurds have begun to lose their culture and language ability. This, in every sense, would work well in line with the Turkish state's assimilation policies and would be a "win win" case politically.

Kurdish economic exclusion is due to the distance from the industrialized centre of Turkey, lack of social services such as education, and not having heavy industry which has resulted in less economic development. These chronical socioeconomic problems reinforced Kurdish economic exclusion since the establishment of Turkey.[482] Moreover, Kurds who migrated either by force or voluntarily from their villages to bigger cities have faced socioeconomic problems and confusions with regards to their ethnic identity. While some Kurds see assimilation as the easiest and quickest way to enhance their socioeconomic condition, others blame the Turkish state's assimilation policies for their poor socioeconomic situation and react by becoming more attached to their Kurdish identity.[483] Seda Kartal has conducted a research to analyse personal emotions as a measure of the effectiveness of assimilation policies of Turkish state, and socioeconomic "reforms", which have influence on Kurds. The result shows that "participants who have high hopes about retaining their Kurdish identity tend to be primarily Kurdish, the ones with low hopes tend to be primarily Turkish."[484] In addition, the majority of Kurds, those who migrated to industrialized cities of western Turkey, became part of the marginalized and criminalized urban poor population.[485] Thus, in many Turkish cities, migrant Kurds have dealt with the problems of adjusting to urban life. There are also studies which show how identity influences economic outcomes.

[481] Aydin, The *Political Economy of Turkey,* p. 224.

[482] Lane, `Left out in the Cold: Economic Discrimination of Turkey's Kurdish Minority`, http://diam.uab.ro/istorie.uab.ro/publicatii/colectia_auash/annales_14_I/22_todd_lane.pdf
(Last accessed 16 August 2016).

[483] See Henri J. Barkey, and Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish question, (*New York, 1998); Kemal Kirisci, and Gareth M. Winrow. *The Kurdish question and Turkey: An example of a trans-state ethnic conflict*, (London, 1997).

[484] Kartal, Seda. `Ethnic Identity of Turkey's Migrant Kurds in Urban Provinces`, published PhD thesis, Department of Political Science Northern Illinois University, (2008), p. 156.

[485] Kosukoglu, Nazife. `Criminalizing the Dangerous Others in İstanbul: The Middle Class and the Fear of Crime in the 2000s`, unpublished MA dissertation, Boğaziçi University, (Istanbul, 2011); Gönen, Zeynep. *The Politics of Crime in Turkey: Neoliberalism, Police and the Urban Poor,* (London, 2017).

For instance, following 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA, people showed heightened patriotism and amplified prejudicial attitudes towards Muslims, and they became more conservative. They have increased their support for leaders such as Bush and radical anti-terrorist acts.[486] At the same time in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks some Muslims became more radical and showed increased support for Islamic fundamentalism.[487] In a similar fashion, Barkey and Fuller observe that when Kurds settle in urban provinces of western Turkey, they have, in some cases, realized the socioeconomic discrepancies between their hometown and provinces they had migrated from. Therefore, some Kurdish migrants have reacted to socioeconomic differences by accentuating more their Kurdish identities. As a result, the unending assimilation policies of Turkish state have influenced not only the socioeconomic standards of migrant Kurds but also, perhaps inadvertently encouraged the Kurds to embrace their ethnic identity.

Economy is an important measure in Çewlig / Bingöl in terms of where the locals choose to go to in the surrounding cities when there is the need for a bigger market city. There are two outstanding choices in terms of the cities to go to and once again they are either Elazig or Diyarbakir. The state prefers a flow between them and Elazig while the Kurdish movement's choice is Diyarbakir as the bigger market city for Çewlig / Bingöl. The road between Çewlig / Bingöl and Elazig is well made modern road while the one connecting to Diyarbakir is not. Both cities are about 150 km distance to Çewlig / Bingöl. The same goes for greater hospital needs, bigger airports needs, and some state institutions that do not have a branch in Çewlig / Bingöl etc. A local businessman in Çewlig / Bingöl, Sait Ölmez, in an interview said; "Of course, I would prefer to go to Diyarbakir (compared to Elazig) to buy my construction business material as long as they have it there. My money would go to my people, not to those support our

[486] See Coryn, C. L., Beale, J. M., and Myers, K. M. `Response to September 11: anxiety, patriotism, and prejudice in the aftermath of terror`, *Current Research in Social Psychology,* 9:12, (2004), 165–184; Landau, Mark J., Sheldon Solomon, Jeff Greenberg, Florette Cohen, Tom Pyszczynski, Jamie Arndt, Claude H. Miller, Daniel M. Ogilvie, and Alison Cook, `Deliver us from evil: The effects of mortality salience and reminders of 9/11 on support for President George W. Bush`, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin,* 30:9 (2004), 1136–1150; Dominic Abrams, and Milica Vasiljevic, Future Identities: Changing identities in the UK – the next 10 years: DR11: What Happens to People's Identities When the Economy is Suffering or Flourishing?, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/2757 70/13-513-peoples-identities-when-economy-suffering-or-flourishing.pdf (Last accessed 15 September 2016).

[487] Rabasa, Angel M., Cheryl Bernhard, Peter Chalk, C. C. Flair, Theodore Karasik, Rollie Lal, Ian Lesser, and David Thaler, *The Muslim World after 9/11*, (Santa Monica, 2004).

oppressors (the Turkish state)."[488] On the other hand, another interviewee argued that; "Diyarbakir is dangerous for us to go for our needs. The roads are sometimes controlled by 'the terrorists' and the money we spend there probably goes to the PKK supporters".[489] These comments could be heard from different people in a similar style for variety of necessities they would need for their day-to-day life. These daily movements give great opportunities for the two major political actors (Turkish state and the Kurdish movement) use this arena for their political propaganda and mobilisation. The Kurdish movement uses the rhetoric of nationalist economy and culture.

4.2 Zazas Identity Position between Kurdishness and Turkisness

4.2.1 Expression of Turkishness

Since the Turkish State begun its assimilation policy in its early decades, following the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, it desired to 'Turkify' the Zazas and divide them from the Kurmanjs. The Kurmanjs were referred as Kurds in this content to be pointed out as the only Kurdish group in Turkey. The Zazas are Turks, an argument that has been introduced and encouraged by the Turkish state as part of the assimilation policy. The practising area of this theory was firstly the area where Zazaki speaking people and Turkish-speaking people were neighbouring. The state took this position as the first and perfect solution, to Turkify all the ethnic groups of Anatolia or whoever lived in its state territories. This was more vital in the Zaza case as it also wanted to 'convince' them that they were not Kurds. This project found a considerable ground in its immediate practice field, mainly in the neighbouring areas with Turkish speaking provinces. Therefore this thesis argues that Elazig is the symbol of assimilated / Turkified area where there was dominantly a Zaza speaking province in the history. Although there is still a proportion of Elazig's residents that do not see themselves as ethnic Turks, the majority of the population there would side themselves with the Turks / Turkey. This is the case, both ethnically and politically.

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[488] Interview conducted with Sait Ölmez in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2013. There are different reasonings why the locals choose to trade in Diyarbakir when there is the need to travel to a bigger city. This illustrates how and why people with different political views chose the pro-Kurdish cities or the pro-Turkish cities to trade.
[489] Interview conducted with Hanifi Konar in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2013.

The Turkish state has implemented as politically and economically sponsored agenda towards the Kird / Zazas. The institutionalization of this agenda which mostly has been about "purifying" Eastern Anatolia of its indigenous Kurdish and Zaza population has endangered the development of the Zazaki more as they are minority both in Turkey and in Turkish Kurdistan region compared with Kurmanjs.

Considering the above-mentioned development and challenge facing the Zaza people's identity and those disputes and contest that is related to whether they are a people / language of their own or are they part of greater Kurdishness like other Kurdish groups Kurmanji, Sorani, Hewrami etc., one could argue that while the Kurdish language has been an important source of identifying the Kurds as a distinctive nation, the existence of variety of Kurdish language has been used as an element of fragmenting the Kurdish people by outsiders, and creating division among the different sections and communities of the Kurdish nation. The critical aspect of deploying the diverse nature and existence of variety of dialect within the Kurdish language has through the contemporary history of the Kurdish people, mainly in lines and as result of the creation of the nation states in Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria, reveals that these nations-states have massively relied on the policy of divide and rule in order to weaken and destroy the Kurdish movements. This argument is applicable in the case of the Kird / Zaza case in Turkey. Deploying similar policy is identifiable in both Iran and Iraq, where in Iraq the ruling the regimes tried to label the Kurdish Izzadis as well the Kurdish Faylis (a Kurdish Shiite community) as not Kurds[490], in modern Iran different ruling regime (e.g., the Pahlavi and the Islamic republic) used the policy of demographic engineering and investing the religious affiliations of non-Sunni Kurds as an element of splitting off the Kurdish population and curtailing the potential of Kurdish movements.[491] For instance this problematic approach is evident for the Iranian Kurdish movement both during the post-revolutionary periods in the 1980s when the Iranian Kurdistan was under massive attack of the Islamic regime's army and generally through the four decades of the national movement in the Iranian Kurdistan since the 1979. David Romano highlights the linguistic and religious division and/or diversity and its effect on the capability of

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[490] Taneja, Preti. Assimilation, Exodus, Eradication: Iraq's minority communities since 2003, Report; Minority Rights Group International, 2007.
[491] Entessar, Nader. `The Kurdish Conundrum and the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1979-2003` pp. 307-318, in Gareth Stanfield and Mohammed Shareef (eds.) *The Kurdish Question Revisited,* Glasgow; C. Hurst & Co. Ltd, (2017).

the (Iranian) Kurdish movement as following; "Failing to mobilize especially Shiite Kurds, to attract substantial non-Kurdish support in Iran or sufficient international assistance, the confrontation of battlefield went badly for Kurds".[492] Despite the existence of a critically complex attitude of the Turkish state towards the Kird / Zazas, it is possible to identify two major approaches/patterns both of which, regardless of the mechanisms/strategies that have been deployed, have left negative effect on firstly the Kird/Zazas' identity, self-understanding, culture, and society. Even more critical is that it has resulted in significant fragmentation of the Kurdish identity and Kurdish national liberation movement in Turkey.

4.2.2 Expression of Kurdishness

The third argument is that the Zazas are Kurds. This view has been used by Kurdish nationalists throughout the history of the Republic, especially more recently. While some scholars have sometimes differentiated between the Zazas and the Kurds by claiming some linguistic differentiations and pointing out that, the Sheikh Said and the Seyid Riza rebellion were known Zaza and not Kurdish rebellions. On the other hand the majority of academics in this field such as David McDowall, Hassanpour, and Martin Van Bruinessen do not differentiate between the Zaza and the Kurds. Moreover, in the first Zazaki publication in history in the late nineteenth century Ehmede Xasi in his Zazaki Mewlud (a religious oral tradition honouring of the Prophet Mohammed's birth) argued that the Zazas were Kurds. The Kurds and Zazas also have the same common aspirations and thus identify with each other as one ethnic group. As well as this, they share the same geographical boundaries further cementing their connection to each other. This argument has always been strong politically even more so today with the rise and influence of the PKK. Since the early 1990s, the PKK was able to expand its influence in Zazaki speaking areas such as Bingol, Dersim, or Tunceli, Dicle, Genc and Lice to name a few. Recent elections in Turkey have also helped to back the view that the Zazas see themselves as Kurds. In the last two local elections in Dersim, (a predominately Zaza region) the mayor of the city was elected from the pro-Kurdish Party the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), formerly known as the Democratic Society Party (DTP).[493] This shows a shift in voting patterns as pro-Kurdish Party

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[492] Romano, *The Kurdish National Movement*, p. 244
[493] AKP Loses Points, CHP, MHP and DTP gain
http://bianet.org/english/local-goverment/113466-akp-loses-points-chp-mhp-and-dtp-gain

member had never been elected to the position of Mayor in the city. Similarly the percentage of votes for the BDP has continued to increase in Bingol. This pattern can also be seen in most of the other Zazaki speaking areas. Moreover, in the present Turkish assembly, the percentage of Zaza members of parliament is always between twenty and thirty percent in the total number of MP's who represent pro-Kurdish party. Today, Zazas also appear more actively in Cultural activities such as Newroz (the major Kurdish festivity and recently a political activity), the local convivial organised by pro-Kurdish organisations, and in the Kurdish political parties parallelly. The fact that the Zazas are voting for pro-Kurdish parties and becoming more active in generally Kurdish activities shows in some way that they are identifying themselves not only with the Kurdish identity but also to some extent, in the Kurdish national movement in Turkey.Jongerden argues that the revival of Kurmanji through the media resulted in attempts to revitalize Zazaki as a written language.[494] The Vate Studies Group, as stressed previously in this thesis, has played a similar role to those who conducted a standardising work for Kurmanji decades earlier. The linguistic works on Zazaki started rather late and those who devote their time have a number of problems to deal with. Those who devote their time do all the work on voluntary basis. Hence, not only should they have the intellectual background in linguistic areas they also need to be in a secured financial position to be able to work voluntarily.

4.2.3 Zazas in Europe: Designing the Identity from Europe

The process of immigration of many leftist groups following the 1980 coupe, among them any zaza Kurds left significant effect in the development of Zaza identity either as a people / language on their own or just a section of Kurdish nationalism, and another dialect of the Kurdish language.[495]

One can trace the rise of Kirdki / Zazaki publication to the 'exiled' community of Zazaki's living in western European countries, among them the large Kurdish diaspora community in Germany and Sweden.[496] Although there is a smaller community living

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(Last accessed 12 July 2013).

[494] Jongerden, J., *Kurdish Alevis and the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s,* in White, P., Jongerden, J., *Turkey's Alevi Enigma, A Comprehensive Overview,* Brill Leiden- Boston, 2003.

[495] Paul, Ludwig `The Position of Zazaki among West Iranian Languages`, *Old and Middle Iranian Studies* Part I, ed. Sims Williams. pp. 163-176. *Proceedings of the 3rd European Conference of Iranian Studies (held in Cambridge, 11th to 15th September 1995).* Wiesbaden.

[496] Seyidxan Kurij, a Kird / Zaza intellectual / writer argues that the diaspora intellectuals played a major role in Kird / Zazas' modern identity formation, especially politically.

in Sweden, it seems like it was the country constituted the main 'nests' for a community of Zaza intellectuals.

According to Ludwig Paul the first exclusively Zazaki journal named AYRE (mill) has been published in 1984 by the pioneer of Zaza nationalism Ebubekir Pamukcu. It is noteworthy to mention, that Pamukcu's role and his published Zazaki journal has been an issue of dispute, particularly among those who consider Zazaki as a sub-dialect of the Kurdish language. However, despite this contest, which was related to Pamukçu's identification of the Zazaki's, his initiative resulted in the emergence of political and cultural debate around the Zaza identity and their linguistic and ethnical roots. In Ludwig's words, "considered as an outsider among the Zaza, or even a "Turkish agent" trying to split off the Zaza from their Kurdish sister people, Pamukçu finally saw some fruits of his labour when in the early nineties a stronger awareness of their own cultural identity started to gain a foothold among the speaker of Zazaki".[497]

The Kurdish nationalism has a history of transferring nationalist ideas from Europe. This was mainly the case when individual from aristocrat families had an intellectual exposure to nationalist ideas in France since the Ottoman era. A small number of intellectuals moved from Turkey to Europe before the 1980 army coup. This was the case for those who moved from Kurdish areas of Turkey, too. Van Bruinessen argues that there is a strong connection between exile and nationalism.[498] Kurds who live in diaspora also witness different nationalities and ethnicities live together in harmony. Moreover, one can, in most cases, freely express their identity unlike in their home country. The most outstanding work on Zazaki linguistically has been carried out by the intellectuals who have formed Vate Zazaki Standardising Group in Sweden in 1996. Mehmet Selim Uzun, when pointing out the vital role this group has played said: "if one day Zazaki makes it to survive it will be thanks to the work that Vate group has done over the last two decades. It is still under a serious threat and more work has to be done for it to survive.[499] Similar works have begun on Kurmanji in the late 19th century

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http://www.zazaki.net/haber/seydxan-kurij-ile-zazaca-ve-vate-uzerine-soylesi-1217.htm (Last accessed 20 November 2014).

[497] Paul, `The Position of Zazaki among West Iranian Languages`, 163-176.

[498] Bruinessen, Martin van. *Exile, Nationalism and Kurdish Journalism in Kürdolojinin Bahçesinde*, Istanbul: Vate Yayinevi, 2009, p.181.

[499] Interview conducted with Mehmet Selim Uzun in Sweden. Autumn 2011.

and early 20th century and therefore Kurmanji is in a better position as dialect of Kurdish in terms of studies and standardization.

4.2. Localist Expression: 'I am a Zaza'

Zazas name themselves and the dialect they speak differently depending on where they live or where they come from. Those names include: Kird/Kirdki; in Çewlig/Bingöl and some of the Diyarbakir towns (Lice, Dicle, Kocakoy, Egil, Hani, Hazro and Silvan), Kirmanc / Kirmancki; in Dersim, Erzincan and Varto- Muş, Dimilî/Dimilkî; in Urfa (Siverek), Adiyaman (Gerger), Diyarbakir (Çermik, Çüngüş) and Zaza/Zazakî; in and around Elaziğ.[500] The word Zaza is a widely preferred version that is used in all areas in addition to the local names for each group due to a number of reasons.[501] In the research area of this thesis, in Çewlig/Bingöl, the preferred name is Kird/Kirdkî. Malmisanij stresses that, in 19th there is two main sources documented that addressing Kird/Kirdkî was also historically used to name the Zazakî speakers of Çewlig/Bingöl.[502]

The argument that Zazas are neither Turkish nor Kurdish but simply Zazas has a base linguistically according to some academicians. The German scholar Oscar Mann asserts that, on entirely linguistic grounds, the varieties of Zaza were not dialects of Kurdish, but belonged to a distinct branch of the Indo- Iranian language family.[503] This argument is politically endorsed, by people who were alienated not only from the Turkish identity but also from the Kurdish identity. Those who take this stance currently are generally non-political people who focus more on their day-to-day lives and are indifferent to nationalist and political sentiments. While an argument can be made that by taking this seemingly controversial stance they are contributing to the politicization of the situation, it should also be noted that this group identifies more with religious affiliations, as to whether they are Sunni or Alevi. A relevant example to this is: Metin Kahraman, the famous Zaza singer, recounts consciously performing different identities in different settings. While the Dersimli tends to become "Kurdish" in opposition to

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[500] Although the word Zaza is an accepted term today, historically it was the least used version. The more popular ones were, Kird, Kirmanc and Dimilî depending on the areas where they live.

[501] Aydin, Nusret, http://www.zazaki.net/haber/among-social-kurdish-groups-general-glance-at-zazas-503.htm (Last accessed 2 May 2016).

[502] Interview conducted with Malmisanij in Sweden. January 2012.

[503] Lezenberg, `Kurdish Alevis and the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s`, p. 201.

"Turkishness" when faced with "Kurdishness" they become 'Alevi' or "Zaza".[504] That being said, politically the group has been recently backed by some ex-PKK members who have set up opposition groups in Germany. One of the most outstanding figure of this group is Selim Curukkaya, a Zaza from Çewlig / Bingol and also a former high-ranking member of the PKK. He argues that the Zazas have been used by the PKK and Ocalan for their own political gains, claiming that if the PKK were to gain political power the Zazas would be oppressed as they have been by the Turkish state.[505]

There was rise of a movement around the idea of distinctness of Zaza identity and language, the Zaza's political and ideological movement for establishing a sense of independent national identity, that they are neither Kurds nor Turks, but Zaza, was mainly seeded in Europe and supported by the Turkish state in 1980s. This movement, on the other hand, suffers from fragmentation and internal controversies and dispute. The anti- PKK group of Zazas (such as ex-PKK commander Selim Çürükkaya) that see themselves as Kurds, blame the PKK-led movement for the emergence of a distinct Zaza movement. They believe that the PKK had an agenda of suppressing and diminishing Zazas and Zazaki among the Kurdish society of Turkey. However opponents of this assumption argue that "the solidarity was not formulated directly against the Zaza identity, but rather that the Kurmanji dialect became the area in which the power within the movement expressed itself".[506]

Since the 1950s and by the rise of the industrial movement in Turkey that have resulted in the intensification of urbanization, a tendency of shifting category of collective identity among Zaza Alevis is identifiable. This process which was initiated by a massive move/transmission and integration of the Zaza Alevis in other everyday life and cultural context has also resulted in interruption of practicing Alevism and emergence of far-reaching secularization and politicization of Alevi youth in the 1960-70s. Alevi youth groups devoted themselves to leftist ideologies in far-reaching secularization, which was vigorously supported by a general politicization of Alevi youth, who, in the 1960s and 1970s, devoted themselves to leftist ideologies. These politicization and socio-political transmission among a new generation of particularly

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[504] Neyzi, `*Zazaname*`, p.122.
[505] http://www.kurdistan-aktuel.org/yazarlar/selim-curukkaya/2103-adrenalin- neden- yukselir.html, (Last accessed 11 December 2013)
[506] Ucarlar, `Between Majority Power and Minority Resistance`, pp. 220-221.

Zaza Alevis and their political affiliation meant that "By reinterpreting its history and traditions, Alevism was declared the ideological source of communism and being an Alevi became nearly synonymous with being a communist".[507]

This process regarded as a comprehensive move resulted in the alteration of the self-image of Zaza Alevis. This new form of self-image and self-understanding benefited the PKK lead Kurdish movement. As evidences show following this period where the Kurdish movement in Turkey ushered into a new phase with gaining new strength at the late 1970s and early 1980s, supporting the Kurdish movement (from the Zaza Alevi's perspective) appeared logical. Consequently many Zaza and Kurmanji speaking Alevi's joined/supported the movement and embraced Kurdish national identity[508]. Meanwhile the older generation of the Zazaki- and Kurmanci speaking Alevis have, as Krisztin Kehl-Bodrogi maintains, continued to view religion "as the main source of their collective identity and to reject Kurdish ethnicity. As a result, a split in the definition of we-group identity has emerged between the older and the newer generations".[509]

The formation of PKK opened a new chapter in the identity shifts in the region. The initial founding group of the PKK consisted activists, intellectuals, University students from various ethnic and religious groups in Turkey. Among them there were members from Çewlig / Bingöl who were Zaza and Kurmanj, Alevi and Sunnis. This was going to be a common ideological ground where the youth followed to become strongly politicised. It did not take long until Çewlig / Bingöl started to affiliate itself with the new-leftist PKK- led Kurdish movement.

4.3 Çewlig/Bingöl's Ethnic and Religious Identity

4.3.1 An Overview of the Ethnic Structure of Çewlig/Bingöl and the Role of Language in Identity Construction

Kurdish nationalism and the Kurdish language and sociocultural identity values and symbols have been a constant target of the Turkish nation state since the very early days

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[507] Kehl-Bodrogi, Kurds, Turks, or a people in their own right?, p. 445.
[508] Erman, Tahire and Göker, Emrah. `Alevi Politics in Contemporary Turkey`, *Middle Eastern Studies,* 36:4 (1999) 99-118.
[509] Kehl-Bodrogi, Kurds, Turks, or a people in their own right?, p. 447.

of the establishment of the modern Turkish nation state.[510]Compared to mainstream Kurds, the Zaza population in Turkey and their identity has had experienced more difficult conditions. The contemporary history of development of Zaza identity shows that the Zaza's have been the subject of two competing and antagonistic political ideology, the Turkish state and the Kurdish national movement, in which both the Kurdish and Turkish nationalist claim that the Zazas are respectively a constituent part of Kurdish and Turkish identity. Each of these two ideologies have their own agendas. For the Turkish state, merging the Zazas into Turkish nationalism is about assimilation and annihilation as well as fragmenting Kurdish nationalism to smaller elements and reducing/deconstructing the Kurdish national movement. While for the Kurdish nationalists, this claim is an attempt of creating/maintaining unification among the different subsections of the Kurdish nationalism aimed at improving the capability of Kurdish national movement and in the worst case make the survival of Kurdish identity under the tough political circumstances created by the Turkish state more possible.[511]

While scholars who raise questions regarding Zazaki being a subdialect of Kurdish, a form of unanimity among Kurdish linguistics scholar bring technical evidences that underline the argument of Zazaki as a sub-dialect of Kurdish. For instance, in their examination of the condition of Kurdish language, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Jaffer Sheyholislami and Amir Hassanpour even claim that, while due to the existence of a variety of sub-Kurdish dialects in *Bashur* (Iraqi Kurdistan), the Kurdish language is suffering from a certain form fragmentation,

Kurdish in Turkey is not as fragmented as it is in Iraq or even Iran; with the exception between two to four million Zaza speakers, all northern Kurds speak Kurmanji. It might be easier to declare Kurmanji as the official or national language of Kurdistan-Turkey while granting linguistic rights to Zaza speakers[512].

Another example of Kurdish intellectual and scholars supporting the idea of the Kurdishness of Zaza and Zazaki is Pervine Jamil a well-recognized Kurdish scholar

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[510] Yeğen, Mesut, `The Kurdish Question in Turkish State Discourse`, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34:4 (1999), 555-568.

[511] Bruinessen, Martin van. `Shifting national and ethnic identities: the Kurds in Turkey and the European Diaspora`, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs,* 18:1, 1998, 39-52.

[512] Hassanpour, Sheyholislami, and Skutnabb-Kangas, `Introduction. Kurdish`, 1-18.

(and the Chair of the Kurdish Bureau for Liaison and Information in Brussels), that argues Zazaki is simply a dialect of Kurdish but not a separate language; in this regard Jamal highlights that;

> Sure, it is a dialect, not a language for us. But if a Zaza person calls her/himself Zaza but not Kurdish, then we should sit and talk… if there are many Zazas, then, as a different minority, like Arabs and Turks, they should be given rights. I mean beheading does not help but minimum discipline is necessary.[513]

The Turkish state, similar to other states occupying Kurdistan have always relied heavily on a policy of divide and rule, in addition to their other mechanisms of defeating Kurdish nationalism and the Kurdish national movement. This approach has been considered by the Turkish state in the case of the Kird/Zaza. The Turkish state and its institutions have sponsored and underlined the process of assimilation of Kurds aware of the existence of the linguistic differences not only between Kurdish and Turkish but also between the two major sub dialects of Kurdish in Turkey (Kurmanji and Zazaki) clearly expressed to transfer these difference in their own benefit while they are fragmenting Kurdish nationalism. Hasan Reşit Tankut, a persuaded Turkish nationalist and the Turkish Republic's expert on "ethnopolitics", suggested state apparatus to deploy the Kurmanji-Zazaki distinctness as an advantage for state politics. Tankut suggested that state by using the Zazaki speaking in building up/creating a "Turkish barrier" against the Kurds, the state would be able to make the Kird / Zazaki speaking population aware of their ethnic distinctness.[514] Aimed at realizing its policy of fragmenting Kurdish identity the supported Tankut in carrying out a field research prior to the military campaign against Dersim of 1937-38. As highlighted in Mehmed S. Kaya study

> Tankut, who had been "inspector of East Anatolia" for the nationalist Turkish Hearths association and an expert at the Turkish Language Institute, believed that the assimilation of the Kurds would be accelerated if Zaza and Kurmanci speakers were first separated. In the wake of the 1960 military coup, he proposed to the ruling junta a massive project of population resettlement, to create a 50 kilometre-wide corridor[515].

[513] Ucarlar, `Between Majority Power and Minority Resistance`, p. 201.
[514] Kehl-Bodrogi, Kurds, Turks, or a people in their own right?, pp. 444-45
[515] Quoted in Bruinessen Martin van; Review of Mehmed S. Kaya, *The Zaza Kurds of Turkey: A Middle Eastern Minority in a Globalised Society* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), p. 181

The example of Tankut[516] reveals this reality that the Turkish state viewed the existence of linguistic/dialectic difference between in one hand Kurmanji and Zazaki as well as religious difference between Sunni Zazaki and Alevi Zazaki as a powerful tool for weakening the Kurdish struggle in Turkey.

It is noteworthy to mention that through the Turkish state's process of fragmenting the Kurdish identity through giving the Zaza a distinct ethnonational roots, Politics and Logisticians, the studies of western scholars that have concluded that Zaza are not Kurds have served the Turkish policy. Through many occasions and examples the Turkish state in promoting the distinctiveness of the Zaza identity as an identity different from Kurdish reflected on the findings of studies of western scholars such as Karl Hadank, D.N. MacKenzie and Ludwig Paul. Interestingly these claims found significantly more acceptance among the Alevi than among the Sunni Zazas. More recently, the Armenian scholars Garnik Asatrian and Victoria Arakelova have weighed in heavily in these debates, insisting that the Zazas are a people distinct from the Kurds, even though they may only recently have become aware of this distinctness. However it has resulted in different debate among Kurdish scholar where for some historical reasons many Kurdish intellectual and nationalists hold by Mehmed S. Kaya

> Have perceived the emerging Zaza nationalist movement to be a creation of either the Turkish state or Armenian nationalist interests, or an invention of Christian missionary interests … In short, the study of Zaza history, culture and society is a highly politicised and polarised field. The leading Zazakî writers and their journal *Vate* (which began publication in Stockholm in 1996 and moved to Istanbul in 2003), have to tread carefully in this field, wary of being associated with at-tempts to divide the Kurds while remaining dedicated to preserving and de-veloping the Zaza language and cultural traditions.[517]

For instance in his studies of Kurdish language and the policy of linguicide particularly implemented against the Kurdish language in Turkey Amir Hassanpour maintains that

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[516] Tankut's secret report was first published by Mehmet Bayrak in his important collection of documents, Bayrak, Mehmet. *Açık-Gizli Resmi-Gayrıresmi Kürdoloji Belgeleri*, Ankara: Öz-Ge, 1994. Sevgen's articles were reprinted by a publisher specialising in books on Dersim: *Zazalar ve Kızılbaşlar*, Ankara: Kalan, 1999.; Bruinessen, Martin van. Review of Mehmed S. Kaya, *The Zaza Kurds of Turkey: A Middle Eastern Minority in a Globalised Society* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), p. 181

[517] Quoted in Bruinessen, Martin van. Review of Mehmed S. Kaya, *The Zaza Kurds of Turkey: A Middle Eastern Minority in a Globalised Society* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), pp. 181-182.

"the harshest policy of linguicide in our times is probably practised in Turkey, where the entire state machinery is mobilized in order to eliminate the language in both speaking and writing[518]". Hassanpour under the subtitle; "De-politicized" descriptions of Kurdish, argues that some studies have been use by Turkey to annihilate and fragment the identity of the Kurds[519]. For instance regarding the researches of western scholars David N. MacKenzie, David (1986) and Ernest McCarus, (1958 and 1992) on Kurd and Kurdish language that have been subject of elf censorship and have not mentioned those difficulties the Kurdish language are suffering from in the hands of the Turkish state. As Hassanpour clearly acknowledges the research criteria of the studies of MacKenzie and McCarus he has in very detailed manner highlighted some critical (ethical) aspects of their studies;

> The two major works, in English, on Kurdish language, McCarus (1958) and MacKenzie (1961), do not refer to the suppression of the language in any of the countries where it is spoken. Both were excellent doctoral dissertations based on field work conducted in Iraq. The former is a study of the grammar of the Sorani standard in Iraq. The latter was intended to be a descriptive study of the Kurdish dialects of Iraq and Turkey. Since the Republic of Turkey does not allow linguists to conduct field research on the language, MacKenzie was denied a research permit. However, there is no information in the book about the suppression of the language in Turkey, although the author refers to the closure of the 'field' in depoliticized language that reduces it to an accident, a technical problem of communication: 'It was originally intended to spend an equal period of time in the Kurdish-speaking areas of Turkey and Iraq.[520]

However despite the Turkish state exploitation of Zaza identity and language for creating more split between Kurds, the Kird/Zaza have been awarded a special states that protect them from force immigration persecution and assimilation, yet, for the most

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[518] Hassanpour, Amir. `The Politics of A-political Linguistics: Linguists and Linguicide`, http://www.kurdishacademy.org/?q=fa/node/180 (Last accessed 10 February 2018).
[519] Some other Kurdish intellectual and scholar of Kurdish literature and linguistics among them Jaffer Sheyholislami critics the western scholar's study that have been used by regimes occupying Kurdistan, among them, Turkey in dividing the Kurdish identity, for more about similar argument related to this argument see for instance Jaffer Sheyholislami in sociolinguistic reflect in Amir Hassanpour's writings, published in pp. 200-221, in Derwaze (April 2018) Kurdish Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, Special Issue 2, the Intellectual Legacy of Amir Hassanpour (1943-2017)
[520] Hassanpour, Amir. The Politics of A-political Linguistics: Linguists and Linguicide http://w3.salemstate.edu/~jaske/courses/readings/Linguists_and_Linguicide_The_Case_of_Kurdish.htm (Last accessed 12 December 2017).

part, the Turkish state and its army have not dealt with the Kurdish and Zazas differently and consequently both groups have been subjects of the same assimilation policy.[521]

4.3.2 An Overview of the Religious Picture of Çewlig/Bingöl and Its Surroundings

Mainly the Zazas in Turkey are either practising Sunnism or Alevism. There is no reliable record of either ethnic or religious group in Turkey. Zaza population is said to be between two and four million but it is mostly referred as three million as population. According to the Sunni Zazas, there are about three quarters of Sunni Zazas most of whom are in Sahfii school of Sunni Islam. On the other hand, Alevi Zazas believe the half of whole Zaza population believe in Alevism.[522] The picture in Çewlig / Bingöl is that majority of population is Kird / Zazaki speaking and majority of those are Shafii branch of Sunni- Muslim.

In the case of the Zaza, religion has played an important and in some regarding diving role in how people identify themselves. This problematic has resulted in evident fragmentary effect on how Zaza's identify themselves. As different studies of 'we-group identity' among the Zaza's show that religious criteria have traditionally outweighed linguistic considerations. This assumption is more applicable in the case of Alevi and Sunni Zazas relation. In this relation a form of 'otherness' than 'we-ness' is identifiable. For instance the Sunni Shafi'i Zazas rely on religions criteria for their self-identification has resulted in excluding the Alevi Zaza to a great extent. For instance as hold by Krisztin Kehl-Bodrogi; regardless of their language, Sunni neighbours designate all Alevis with the pejorative term "Kizilbas (literally 'redhead"). Alevis are considered heretics and, as such, ritually unclean. Social interaction between the two groups has been, until recently, extremely limited. Sunni disdain for the Alevis has taken forms of rejection from intermarriage to the refusal to eat an animal slaughtered by Alevi hands. The degree of ostracism has weakened in the course of the last several decades, though the boundary between the Alevi and the Sunni Muslims still exists. This boundary between the Alevis and the Sunni Muslims corresponds with a strong

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[521] Bruinessen, Martin van. `Kurdish society, nationalism and ethnicity, refugee problems', in Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Stefan Sperl (eds), *The Kurds: a contemporary overview*. London: Routledge, 1992, 33-67.
[522] Kehl-Bodrogi, `Kurds, Turks, or a people in their own right?, p. 441.

sense of separateness on the part of the Alevis, who, as a whole, consist of Turkish-, Zazaki-, and in smaller numbers, Kurmanjs peaking adherents.[523]

Çewlig / Bingöl is known with its conservative Sunni Muslim identity. Kaya argues that religion has one the central topics in sociological and anthropological research since the 1800s.[524] The Ottoman State ruled these remote areas of its Empire via its local 'society leaders' in those days' conditions. One could argue that the religious leaders are still powerful in the region. This was not the case only in the era of the single party government under the Republican People's Party (CHP) between 1923 and 1950. Although CHP lost the power as single party government, its Kemalist ideology still controlled the state institutions.

The religious leaders had vital role in Çewlig / Bingöl society since the creation Turkish Republic, their position was opposing the regime to start with and it had delivered a vast support to the religious – national Sheikh Said revolt in 1925. It was Çewlig / Bingöl who voted NO, by a record percentage in Turkey, against the new constitution referendum following the 1980 army coup. The Kemalist regime's chief of staff had taken control through a military coup and his team designed the proposed constitution for a referendum. The religious leaders have a stronger prestige in the society compared with the local Aghas.[525] After the rise of leftist Kurdish movement, which opposes these religious and feudal leaders in the region and also with global trends emerging, these individuals and families popularity is decreasing dramatically.

4.3.3 Identity Expression: Marked by Religion or Ethnicity

The self-identifying element has an interesting trend both in Çewlig / Bingöl (Sunni Zazas) and in Dersim / Tunceli (Alevi Zazas). Dersim was the area where systematic assimilation policies were firstly practised following the state's suppression of the 1937-38 Seyyid Riza. Due to the city's more secular (compared with other Kurdish areas) and Alevi identity, the state approached with its secular- Kemalist policies. This new secular face of new state was more preferable after centuries of Sunni- Muslim Ottoman rule.

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[523] Kehl-Bodrogi, `Kurds, Turks, or a people in their own right?, p. 442.
[524] Kaya, *The Zaza Kurds of Turkey,* p. 190.
[525] Teymuroglu, *Bingölde Bir Halk,* p. 42.

The very same state, this time with its Sunni- Muslim face approached the Sunni- Muslim Zaza city of Çewlig / Bingöl in the second half the 20th century. The new policy is at its peak times especially following the 1980 army coup and is on-going for last three decades. Since the AKP took power as single party government in Turkey in 2002, the Sunni- Muslim state approach towards Çewlig / Bingöl has became even more apparent. This trend was at its very peak point since 2007 when the AKP started to control whole state institutions, beyond being only a government party.

The state managed to create confusions in terms of how people identify themselves. The field work trips for this thesis has given both examples of identity expressions when asked what their their ethnic identity; "I am neither Kurd nor Turk but I am an Alevi"[526] or "I am neither Kurd nor Turk but I am a Muslim".[527]

Based on such as formation of "self-identification and self-understanding" within the Zazaki community it is arguable to claim that difference in religious affiliations within different sub-Zaza communities has been a matter of division than unification. Such historical development has meant that the Alevi Zaza too have relied on their religious affiliation as a strong source of self-identification. Historically the (sociocultural) process of identity formation among the Alevis has ended with formation of a distinct Alevi identity. The Alevis historical relation within the state as well as Muslim communities around them show that the Alevi communities around Turkey has large historical memory of being supressed, therefore they view themselves as a despised and persecuted religious minority. This historical failure of interaction with other elements of the Turkish/Kurdish society has meant that the Alevis have developed a particular for (A particular what of identity primarily with massive rely on religious criteria rather than language similarity. Therefore, regardless of their language, Alevis across Turkey share and show remarkable cultural similarity. Alevi ethnicity thus crosses ethno-linguistic boundaries, as a fact becoming most apparent in the demand for group

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[526] Interview conducted with a group Republican People's Party CHP youth branch in Çewlig / Bingöl. August 2011. Although the CHP is a marginal political party in the region now, it had played an important role in the earlier part of Turkey history and in Kurdish areas.

[527] Interview conducted with a group of Sunni Muslim Zazas in Çewlig/ Bingöl. August 2011. What the local religiously conservative people have to say is important to this thesis as they shape one the major groups locally.

endogamy. While no restrictions limited marriage between Alevis speaking different languages, marriage with a non-Alevi resulted in exclusion from the community. The principle that membership in the Alevi community could not be achieved by conversion but only by birth further strengthened the sense of unity among the Alevis. Only those born into the community had access to the secret doctrine of Alevism.[528]

Historically, due to social and cultural development relation between the Sunni Zaza and Alevi Zaza – also a relation based on religious difference – despite their common language, Sunni and Alevi Zazas have a very weak sense of seeing themselves as one ethnic group historically. It is worth noting that while the Shafi'i Zaza's mainly consider themselves as Kurds, the degree of considering themselves as Kurds ethnically vary within different Zaza Alevi communities. Consequently, despite the Alevi's massive participation and contribution to the Kurdish movement in Turkey[529], self-labelling as Kurds among the Alevi Zaza's in some areas of Turkey is an absent element at all[530]. The Alevi's have suffered from the Turks far before their Sunni fellow Kurds. This relation has in historical roots backed in the time were the Alevi's were often persecuted by the Ottomans, mainly due to two major reasons, firstly for their heterodoxy and secondly because the Ottoman accused them of having pro-Iranian sympathies. As emphasized by van Bruinessen, Alevi communities based on their (described circumstances) "chose to live in inaccessible mountain villages, relatively isolated from their Sunni neighbours. Since the 1950s many have migrated to the towns, where they compete for housing and jobs with the local Sunnis".[531]

Despite the historical background of these religious clear line differences, with rise Kurdish national movement in Turkey and its mobilisation in the recent decade(s), the Alevi and Sunni Zazas and overall Kurds now have strong common ground to come together around same interests. The number of inter-marriage is in a visible rise in the

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[528] Kehl-Bodrogi, `Kurds, Turks, or a people in their own right?, p. 442.

[529] As highlighted by Mehmed S. Kaya; Zazakî speakers, Sunni as well as Alevi, had taken part in the Kurdish movement from its inception in the early twentieth century, Quoted in Martin van Bruinessen; Review of Mehmed S. Kaya, The Zaza Kurds of Turkey: A Middle Eastern Minority in a Globalised Society (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), p. 181.

[530] Erman, and Göker. `Alevi Politics`, 110-111.

[531] Bruinessen, Martin van. `Kurdish society, nationalism and ethnicity, refugee problems', in Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Stefan Sperl (eds), *The Kurds: a contemporary overview*. London: Routledge, (1992) pp. 33-67.

region, the two communities often come together for Kurdish cultural celebrations, Kurdish music concerts, political protests etc.

4.3.4 'Us' and 'Them' Elements (who is who) in Çewlig/Bingöl Currently

Many Kird / Zazas consider themselves and their identity to be under pressure from two sides; both the Turkish state / Turkisness and Kurdish movement / Kurmanji speaking Kurdish population in Turkey. This means that there is among some Zaza communities the feeling of being subject of Kurdish Kurmanjis assimilation policy is identifiable, in a way that they blame the Kurdish Kurmanjs for hindering the development of Zazas' social and cultural development. For instance the study of Nesrin Ucarlar shows that some self-declared Zaza nationalists highlight their ethnic and language distinctiveness and explain the reason for the historical participation of the Zaza's in the Kurdish movement;

> The Kurds and the Zaza are two distinct peoples; they have distinct languages and cultures … However, the Zaza people regarded themselves as Kurds in the 1970s when they inevitably attended the Kurdish political movements that were separated from the Turkish revolutionary movement.[532]

Broadly speaking, such claims of 'Zaza nationalist' are denied by Kurmanji speaking intellectuals. They argue that the reason why Zazas feel that they are captured under suppressive condition that has resulted in underdevelopment in their society and culture due to the historical processes and circumstance surrounding the Zazas. This was the case for the Kurmanji speaking Kurds until the recent decades but the danger over Kurmanji dialect and their culture is not as great as it is for the Zazaki and Zazas in the current times. The Kurmanji has a number of advantages compared with Zazaki. Firstly, it is the only Kurdish dialect that is spoken in all parts of greater Kurdistan (in Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran and even in Armenian Kurdish speaking parts) while Zazaki is only spoken in Turkish part of Kurdistan. Secondly, the speakers of Kurmanji in Turkish Kurdistan alone, who share the same geography with the Zazas, are about five times as much as Zazas. Thirdly, Kurmanji, with help of the said above advantages, has started its standardising works about a century long before Zazaki and hence its publication and later broadcasting has started a lot earlier.

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[532] Ucarlar, `Between Majority Power and Minority Resistance`, p. 219.

The Turkish state's argument that 'the Zazas are not Kurds' is being stressed increasingly which is proving to be problematic identity shift in the region. The process of ethnic identity building in Çewlig/Bingöl is an ongoing one. The idea was originally started by the Turkish state, saying 'the Zazas are not Kurds but are Turks and/or a Turkic tribe' later being 'marketed' by suggesting that the Zazas are a separate people themselves. With the two above group of Zazas, embracing the idea for economic reasons and directly given state benefits leads them 'buying' the ideas that Turkish state has tried to 'sell' for decades. On the other hand, the Kurdish movement's approach to these two group is usually not welcoming which leads them being closer to the state. The Kurdish political party labelled almost all the Kurds who do not vote for them or do not share the same ideological belief as state collaborators.[533] It could be argued that the current Kurdish movement sacrifices the identity construction to its current political successes by using a wrong tactic. These factors make the issue more complex in the local politics. Furthermore, linguistically, one cannot finalize the argument by saying 'Zazakî is a dialect of Kurdish or that it is a language on its own independent from Kurdish'. On the other hand, this group (who says Zazas are not Kurds) is disregards the importance of common history, geography, folklore, sociology etc. Moreover, politically, one could not make a clear line between Zazas and Kurds in general. As the definitions for what is a language and what is a dialect are not clear, it would be wrong to label a group by only what they speak. Besides the language, there are other main common markers such as history, traditions, homeland, religion, common goal and common festivals to point out in stating whether a group of people is a separate ethnic group or not.[534] The trend of local identities makes the case more complex and interesting.

4.4 The Cultural Aspect in Identity Construction in Çewlig/Bingöl

4.4.1 The Cultural Similarities and Differences between Kird/Zazas and Kurmanjs in Çewlig/Bingöl

Çewlig / Bingöl is a small sized city according to the standards in Turkey and Kurdish region. Besides, there was not a distinct social class difference due to the lack of

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[533] Interview conducted with Wisif Zozani in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2011.
[534] Kaya, The Zaza Kurds of Turkey, 2011.

diversity in economical activities until recently. Therefore, one could not point out major differences between Kurmanjs and Kird / Zazas in the region. A difference was more apparent between the Alevi and Sunnis in the region until recent decades. Çewlig / Bingöl's Dersim (Alevi city) neighbouring counties Kigi, Adakli, Yayladere and Yedisu are all smaller than the other three, dominantly Sunni, towns of Genç, Solhan and Karliova. The four small counties have a mix of Alevi and Sunni population which brings the over all Alevi population in Çewlig / Bingöl to about 15 or maximum 20 % of total population in the province.

Similar to many other micro – identities, there are some minor cases suggesting the Zazas and Kurmanjs see each other as 'them'. Some Zazas claim that the Kurmanjs are less clean while some Kurmanjs think Zazas the same way. This can be seen in many other societies where local identities live together in a society. There are number of cases for religious groups in this respect. Sunni- Alevis, Muslims- Christians, Muslim Kurds- Yezidis are the examples in Middle East to point our as example.

I have raised the question whether there were any conflicts or local fights which was labelled as fight of Zazas and Kurmanjs to mostly elderly interviewees. Only one of the elderly interviewees pointed out that his elderlies told him that there was a fight in early 1900s called 'şêrr Gulê' in in Girvas village (Arakonak currently in Turkish) of Solhan county. Gulê is a name for women and şerr is fight / war in Zazaki and Kurmanji. He added;

> The fight broke out because Gulê (who is a Kird / Zaza from Solhan) was married to Miheme (a Kurmanj from neighbouring villages with Muş province). They had a fight and the husband used violence against his wife Gulê. Gulê left for her family in her Zaza village and her large family went take her revenge. There, the two sides had a big fight but there were not any fatalities. It was later resolved via a peacemaker that had that function in the society".[535]

The woman has a stronger position in Kird / Zaza community compared with the Kurmanj community locally in Çewlig / Bingöl area. The above battle between Kird / Zazas and Kurmanjs could be borrowed as an example to back up this argument. In

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[535] Interview conducted with Mahmud Baz in Solhan in Bingol. August 2012.

patriarchal societies of the region, this woman would be advised to back to her husband and respect him.

4.4.2 The Identity in Oral History and Folklore

Oral History is generally an important resort to look at for such local identities. One of the ways in transferring the culture and local identities is to explore folklore of these regions. Heci Xelil Agha, the carismatic leader of Çomergi tribe in Solhan, one Çewlig/ Bingöl's town in an interview with Yusuf Ziya Döger (a sociligist and writer from the same area) talks about how they were naming themselves and the Kurmnajs locally;

We always named ourselves 'Kird' locally along with Çewlig/ Bingöl, Dara Yêni (another town of the province, Genç as Turkish administrative name), Hani, Dicle, Egil, Lice and Palu. We also had a few Kirdasi or Kurmanj families such as Cibran, Xalit Beg and Hesenan families Solhan. Kirds and Kurmanjs always lived together with no problems here. During the revolt of Sheikh Said, Kird and Kurmanjs of this area and Xarpêt (Kurdish name for Elazig) acted together fighting the state.[536]

Personalities such as Heci Xelil Agha are important for their oral history contribution for such a study as in how the locals identified themselves historically. In one of my field interviews, Dayê Mehbê spoke of her story;

We have always known ourselves here in the region as Kirds and the Kurmanji spaeakers as Kirdas or Kurmanjs. I am aware that Kurds is a term that includes both Kurmanjs and us. Our region is called Kurdistan and our leader was Sheikh Said who was killed by our enemy state. The Turkish state will never allow our rights and they want our grand children to forget our language. I cannot speak Turkish and I would never want to speak in any language other than Kirdki with my grandchildren.[537]

There is a rich folklore in Çewlig/ Bingöl and it stands one the most important elements of the local identity of the area.[538] Culture in broader function, is the base for a group

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[536] https://www.facebook.com/zazaki.kirdki/videos/663091317065377/UzpfSTE4Nzg5NjA1NDI3Njox MDE1NTg5NTMwMDQ4OTI3Nw/ (Last accessed 20 April 2014). Heci Xelil Agha was born in 1920 and lived almost a century. He was a well known Agha and a society leader who travelled a lot in the region. Therefore he had a valuable knowledge abouth the region's society structure.

[537] Interview Dayê Mehbê during my filed trip of Summer 2011. Dayê Mehbê was born in 1927 and died in 2012. She was from Solhan, the town of Çewlig/ Bingöl. She had a bright memory and remembered amny historical events. It was also important to see how she named herself, as Kird.

[538] Alay, Okan. *Kültür Dünyamizda Bingöl / Bingöl in our Cultural World,* Universite Kitabevi, Elazig, 2006, p.19.

of people to come together on the basis of a common interest, feeling and belonging. Kaya suggests that these are the elements that make an identity.[539] The researches state that folk dances have, in centuries, developed gradually and found their current styles. We understand that the dance tradition dates back to old centuries by observing sculpture and wall embellishments in Anatolia.[540] There are specific names to these dances in Anatolia and Mesopotamia areas. The dominant dance style in Çewlig / Bingöl, Diyarbakir, Mus, Elazig and Bitlis is 'halay'.[541] 'Delilo' is another important dance that is played in Çewlig / Bingöl and in its surrounding areas. Although it is the same dance it still has some specific differences in its moves compared with the broader region.[542] Okan Alay argues that Çewlig / Bingöl's dance style copies its moves from the geographic character of the province. The region has range of high mountains and they line up around Çewlig / Bingöl. During the dance, people line up in a dance row. Dance moves are usually quick and sharp.[543]'Çepik', 'Kartal' and 'Qila Çep' dances are good examples of the above argued lines. They are quick, sharp and harsh dances. Elderly people have to stop playing it after certain age as the quick rhythms could be harmful if the player is not fit enough.[544]

The folklore in Çewlig / Bingöl is in many ways has its own characteristic style, especially with its traditional celebration dance. The wedding celebrations are the main arena for such performances. The over all style is still vastly in line with the broader Kurdish dance but it has some regional specific moves that are only seen in Çewlig /Bingöl.

4.4.3 Cultural Celebrations: The Practice of Identity

One of the most important definers that differentiate one ethnic group to another is the cultural activity. Smith points out culture as an important element when he discusses

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[539] Kaya, *The Zaza Kurds of Turkey,* p. 146.
[540] Ruhi, U. *Türk Halk Oyunlari / Turkish Folklore,* Kültür Bakanligi / Culture Ministry, Ankara, 1994, p. 8.
[541] Alay, *Kültür Dünyamizda Bingöl,* p. 149.
[542] Interview conducted with Cihan Encu, a dance teacher at the Cigerxwin Cultural Centre, a branch of Diyarbakir Municipality who is originally from Çewlig / Bingöl in my 2012 summer field trip. This centre is a prominent one in terms of Kurdish Movement's cultural activities where they thought a variety of cultural activities to the pupils from local Kurdish (Kurmanj and Zaza) families.
[543] Alay, *Kültür Dünyamizda Bingöl,* p .149.
[544] Interview conducted with elderly local H. Mihemed on my summer 2012 filed trip in Genç, a town of Çewlig / Bingöl. The locals described him as a very good local dance player, especially when he was younger.

the formation of an ethnic group. He continues; "the most shared or differentiated areas are language and religion. Furthermore, traditions, institutions, laws, folklore, architecture, clothing, music and art and /or differences in colours and physical appearances can be decisive.[545]

Religion is an important element in Kird / Zazas identity formation. Religion was mentioned vastly in the previous sections of this thesis and therefore it will not be covered in detail again. Family, similar to many other traditional ethnic groups in the region, holds an important role in Kird / Zazas culture. This society is a vastly patriarchal society and traditional. On the other hand, those who live in urban areas change their lifestyle and give more importance to modern education. Despite being modernised, marriages and forming a family in a traditional style are still important in the local culture in Çewlig / Bingöl. The families still play the main role in these cultural activities. Asking for a girl to marry, engagement, marriage ceremonies processes are still arranged by two side's families. Compared with Kurmanjs, polygamy is less common among the Kird / Zazas in Çewlig / Bingöl.[546] The wife is usually chosen from a similar social class. Kaya argues that, therefore, kin marriages can be a common trend in certain areas. [547] Especially in the rural and traditional areas, the number of endogamy-trended marriages can be seen more. One of the important reasons for this is, because the individuals and families do not want to become separated and smaller families in a traditional economy structure. Endogamy would help to keep the land in the same great family and also keep the family 'together'. Therefore, there are still a considerable number of cousin or second cousin marriages among Kird / Zazas. This is sometimes due to will of the two individuals and sometimes it is their families' demand. The traditional trend is decreasing in number, as there is a shift from traditional to modern life style. The kin marriage is less than previous decades in the Kird / Zaza society.

Engagement parties, marriage parties, Newroz Celebration[548] are the main celebrations and those who attend perform the traditional dance. Majority of the society know how

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[545] Smith, A., *Uluslarin Etnik Kökeni,* Istanbul: Dost Kitapevi, 2003, p. 51.
[546] Çaglayan, Ercan. *Tarih, Kültür ve Kimlik,* Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayinlari, 2016, p. 129.
[547] Kaya, *The Zaza Kurds of Turkey,* p. 227.
[548] Newroz is a spring celebration that is celebrated throughout many middle-eastern societies, mainly around Iran and its neighbouring areas in every 21th of March. It was a tradition that was dying out in

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to dance the traditional dance. This, in a way, is a celebration of identity. There is a rich list of dance styles played in Çewlig / Bingöl such as; govend, hilo (kartal), qila çep, du ling, hewaye siwarkirina bukê, hewayê xilasbuna dîlanê (vêwi), delilo, çepik, çaçanê etc.

Newroz celebrations have become a mass celebration since the Kurdish movement have gained a massive support in the last three decades. Especially from 2000s and onwards, these celebrations take place with masses of people in the entire Kurdish cities and big cities in the west of Turkey where Kurds moved to due to political or economic reasons. Newroz is celebrated in Çewlig / Bingöl every year unless there is special case when the Turkish state ban these celebrations. It is celebrated also in the towns some years, if the political atmosphere is not too tense. The Newroz is usually celebrated right before or after the 21th March (the official day for it) in Çewlig / Bingöl. This is to allow and encourage the masses to take part in the main celebration in Amed / Diyarbakir on every 21th of March. Amed / Diyarbakir is seen as 'the capital of Kurdistan' and the celebration there is named 'the final celebration' every year. The shift from a traditional celebration to political style celebration is a visible indication of politicisation of identity in the region. This goes hand in hand with "the political pulling game" between the Kurdish Movement and the Turkish State over Çewlig / Bingöl. In this case, Çewlig / Bingöl is being "pulled" towards Kurdishness and its symbol city Amed / Diyarbakir by the Kurdish Movement.

4.4.4 The Evaluation of Modes of Cultural Identity

Groups of people in the eastern part of Turkey/Turkish Kurdistan name themselves depending on where they come from; what are their ethnicity and religious views and what language or dialect they speak and finally what are their tribal structure and other factors. In the eastern part of Turkey, there are Arabs, Turks, Turkomans, Kurds, Kurmanjs, Zazas (Kird, Kirmanc, Dimilî), Asuris, Yezidis, Alevis as names to identify different group people.

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many parts of Turkish Kurdistan until the PKK movement started its political activities and mobilisation. It started revive in Çewlig / Bingöl in 1980s and became popular again only in 1990s. It was only allowed to 'legally' celebrate in 2000 in masses. It is mostly celebrated by the Kurdish movement supporters or its sympathisers.

Zaza as a term is the newer and dominant version that is used for the group of second dialect of Kurds in Turkey after the bigger dialect of Kurmanji of Kurdish. Historically, Kird/ Kirdkî, Kirmanc / Kirmanckî and Dimilî / Dimilkî were used for this group of people depending on which area they were residing. The term Zaza was the version, which mostly used in Elazig province, that is currently majorly Turkified.[549] The fact that the dominant word in naming themselves is Zazas and / or Kurmanjs would not mean that they necessarily differ in ethnicity. A similar situation is the case in other parts of 'greater Kurdistan'. In Iraqi Kurdistan, Sorani, Badini, Hawrami are used more than Kurd(s) as term to identify them internally. The term 'Kurds' is often used in the international arena, not only by the non-Kurds but also by the Kurds themselves. There is a very similar situation in Iranian Kurdistan as well. Interestingly, the Kurds of each part would rather call the Kurds of other parts as 'Kurds'; they would not go into further details of which group (Kurmanj, Soran, Zaza, Badini, Hawrami, Goran etc.) of Kurds.

The Zazakî speaking population is mainly based in Eastern and South- Eastern Turkey. There is also a considerable Zaza population in Marmara, Aegean and in mid-Anatolia due to the population move, mainly in last few decades. The state had forced some groups of Zazakî speaking people to move to the western cities in Turkey following the Sheikh Said (1925) and Seyyid Riza's uprisings (1938). The main Zaza cities are Çewlig/Bingöl, Dersim (Tunceli), Diyarbakir, Elaziğ, Erzurum, Sivas, Urfa, Bitlis, Mus, Siirt and Adiyaman. There are Zaza speakers also in Malatya, Kayseri, Nigde, Aksaray, Kars, Ardahan and Gümüshane. Due to the population move during the 1960s and onwards, there are Zazas in main Turkish cities such as Istanbul, Bursa, Izmir, Kocaeli, Sakarya, Ankara, Konya, Mersin, Antalya, Adana, Gaziantep and Osmaniye today. Besides, they also moved to live in western European countries.

The practice of cultural identity among the Kird / Zazas changes depending on their political position. If an individual or a family is sided by the Kurdish movement, the local traditional cultural codes seen as an identity element to look up to. It could be argued that this is the case for all the cultural practices such as food culture, clothing, dance, celebrations etc. On the other hand, those who support the Turkish state, will follow all the state dominated practises. They would watch the pro- state TV, look up

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[549] Interview conducted with Mehmet Selim Uzun in Sweden. October 2011.

the dominant Turkish culture as an upper identity form and will try to imitate that. The Turkish state and its institutions use every means of propaganda tools. The Turkish TV series have become important 'tools' for injecting the Turkish Culture for last two decades. They are professionally produced and they play an important role in the cultural assimilation, now also outside of Turkish State territories such as Middle East, Balkans, some old Soviet territory countries and Arab countries. They are also becoming popular in the other three parts of 'grater Kurdistan' parts; Iran, Iraq and Syria.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored Kird/Zaza identity politics in in Çewlig/Bingöl in the period 1980-2015. It did so by focusing primarily on Çewlig /Bingol as a case study. It also looked at oter Zaza populated areas in Turkey and especially the Kurdish region in Turkey. The thesis resorted to a variety of research methods, namely ethnographic fieldwork which I carried out in Turkey, Sweden, and Germany for a period three years, conducted intermittently between 2011 and 2014.

This thesis has argued that identity construction shift in Çewlig/Bingöl has led to the creation of a space in which identity is discussed on collective and individual levels. It challenged the traditional ways of self-identifying by focusing not only on the group in question and how they identify themselves, but also by looking at the different players who are manipulating those discussions for their political interests. The localist trend is being merged with the political actors in identity discussions arena, and this tendency brings a complex self-identifying process. The Kird/Zaza identity construction process is an on-going development that is at a crossroad in Çewlig/ Bingöl. It is a process in which multi political players take part. Thereby, the amalgamation of challenges discussed earlier leads to this specific identity construction. A number of internal and external dynamics shapes identity construction process in the context of Çewlig/Bingöl. Moreover, the political actors in this identity route have different interests, and therefore they have different 'political projects' over the Kird/ Zaza identity construction.

Additionally, this thesis argued that the Turkish state started pursuing their interest of assimilating the Kurds since the establishment of Turkey in 1923. Even though the Kurds have fought against 'the common enemy' along with the Turks during the Turkish War of Independence between 1919 and 1922, led by Mustafa Kemal Pasha (later known as Mustafa Kemal Ataturk).[550] After the establishment of Republic of Turkey, the Kurds demanded their rights, but the Turkish leaders consistently denied their promise which was to create a Kurdish autonomous administration. Consequently, tensions have led to endless conflict in the decades that followed.

To further contextualize the Kird/Zaza identity issue, this thesis provided a historical background in the second chapter, which primarily revisited the Sheikh Said and Seyyid Riza revolts. These were major rebellions that begun in mainly Zaza populated areas of Çewlig/Bingöl and Dersim/Tunceli. However, the Turkish state took a punitive position and suppressed the series of uprisings in Kurdish regions. Due to the brutal response of Turkish government against Kurdish revolts, there was a "period of silence" for over two decades, following the 1938 Seyyid Riza Dersim rebellion.[551] Furthermore, the Turkish state has adopted a strict security policy towards its Kurdish population. For instance, the Turkish state banned speaking in Kurdish, and it advanced its assimilation policies in the Kurdish regions, east and southeast of Turkey. The single party era of Republican People`s Party (CHP) came to an end in 1950 when the Democrat Party (DP) won the first multi-party elections held in young Turkish Republic's history. This radical transition has lead towards an era of more space for different political activities, particularly for Kurds, from the 1960s and onwards. It can be said that the seeds of Kurdish movements' revival were spread from the 1950s onwards, following the two decades silent era since the defeat of Seyyid Riza rebellion in 1938. These seeds began to grow, and Kurdish movements appeared on the Turkish political stage again. In this era, the Kurds firstly affiliated themselves with some Turkish leftist groups that opposed the regime. Since the 1970s, the Kurds found their own political institutions.

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[550] In this context common enemy refers to Allied Powers, those countries allied in opposition to the Central Powers which including the Ottoman Empire during the World War I.
See Allied Powers, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Allied-Powers-international-alliance (Last accessed 10 May 2017).
[551] Aras, R., *The Formation of Kurdishness in Turkey: Political Violence, Fear and Pain,* New York: Routledge, 2014, p.62

In 1978, Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) was founded. It started to dominate the Kurdish political field vastly. Among the founding group of the PKK, there were members from Cewlig/Bingol such as M. Hayri Durmus, Mehmet Karasungur and Mazlum Dogan. This factor functioned as strong connection between the PKK and Çewlig/Bingöl.

Furthermore, this chapter drew on historical literature to elucidate the case of Kird/Zazas. The few historical sources on the Zazas in Turkish, Arabic and European literature are worthy for exploring the historical background of this complex identity issue. The majority of the references available about Zazas suggest that they were seen as a sub-group of Kurdish identity. Furthermore, the way that Kird/Zazas of Çewlig/Bingöl identified themselves until recently also indicates that they were closely related to broader Kurdishness. [552] These historical findings support the Kurdish movements' argument, suggesting that the Zazas are a Kurdish group, and Zazaki is a Kurdish dialect. Since the 1980s, there are Zaza individuals and groups, both in diaspora and at home country, attempting to take part in their own identity construction as a subject of 'building their identity' process. This is a reactionary position towards the other two main politically interested groups, the Kurdish movement and the Turkish state.

Following historical examination of Kird/Zaza identity, the third chapter of the thesis ventured to discuss/study the current and ongoing political battle over the Kird/Zaza identity in Çewlig/Bingöl. In particular, the third chapter looked at the Turkish state vested interest in the Zaza identity issue, its official discourse, and other assimilating strategies. The findings of this chapter is the 'winner' of this identity battle is still not decided, and it might take decades until this process of identity construction settles. The Turkish state has a vested interest in keeping its position in this identity debate. Although it did not succeed turning Çewlig/Bingöl into another Elazig province and Turkify it with its assimilation strategies, the Turkish state attempts to at least persuade the people of Çewlig/Bingöl that they are not Kurds. The Turkish state considers it as a 'win win' case to apply its Elazig model to Çewlig/Bingöl. This strategy would either

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[552] The field trips for this research found that there was a strong sense of common feeling with the Kurds in Turkey and in other parts of greater Kurdistan in historical context.

work directly and Turkify the locals of Çewlig/Bingöl or at least convince them that they are not Kurds, both of which at the same time, will serve the state's divide and rule for its broader Kurdish issue. In doing so, the Turkish state uses its institutions such as education, language policies, and religion policies in the region. All these elements turn into valuable assimilation instruments in favor of the Turkish state.

In the formal state discourse, the Zazas are now used alongside the Turks, Kurds, and Lazes as separate group of people, different from the Kurds. This will serve the Turkish state's divide and rule policies for its century-long Kurdish question. The Kurmanjs are pointed out as the Kurds; the name Kurmanjs is used less and less in the political terminology. This is done for a systematic political purpose to allow the term Kurd being affiliated with Kurmanji speakers only, at least in Turkey. Thus, the 'other' to point out for Kurmanjs/Kurds would be the Zazas and vice versa. The term "Kurd" was, historically, the unifier term to include Kurmanjs and Zazas under the same umbrella, as 'us' in Turkish part of Kurdistan. The unifier word "Kurd" is being deconstructed by the Turkish state in a way that excludes Zazas from this category. The state does this for its divide and rule tactics.

The Turkish state's political engineers use education and language as two strong tools for their assimilation plans over Zaza population. The age of education in Turkey is now as young as three including the majority areas of Zazas. The pre-school classes are being promoted and many families send their children to these classes. The language in all the education levels is strictly only Turkish. Zazaki and Kurmanji (Kurdish) alonf with other languages is banned as an education language. As a result of this assimilation policy, the use of Zazaki language among new generation, who were born in 2000s, is decreasing dramatically. Zazaki is under serious threat as it was classified as 'vulnerable' in the UNESCO's Atlas of World Languages.[553] The pro-Zaza groups that claim Zazas are not Kurds do not carry out any significant work to preserve the Zazaki, which they claim that it is not a dialect of Kurdish but it is a language on its own. It is the pro-Kurdish Zazas, who see Zazaki as a dialect of Kurdish, have considerable studies to preserve and improve Zazaki language. The most known group of this field

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[553] UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/index.php (Last accessed 10 April 2017).

is Vate Studies Group that works as a group of intellectuals to standardise Zazaki. They stress that language is an important pillar of identity and pointed out that, without the linguistic side of it, an identity would be diminished.

The Turkish state used to have a more direct and physical assimilation policies in education and language policy in the Kurdish region throughout the 20th century. The sate did this, in some cases and decades, as far as banning the use of language in public space and even in private spaces like local shops. Towards the end of 20th century and in the 21st century, the state started to apply its language and assimilation policies in a softer way.

Çewlig/Bingöl area is majorly known with its conservative religious demography. Following the 1980 army coup in Turkey, conservative parties gain further strength in the Turkish political arena. This was the case in eastern and southeastern provinces like Çewlig/Bingöl too. At the same time the PKK's appearance was gaining further strength in the region. The PKK is a leftist and socialist movement. The Turkish state used the argument of PKK's non-religious ideology being a threat to the locals' religious belief. When the current government of Justice and Development Party (AKP) took power with its political Islamist ideology in 2002, it also used this argument extensively. The AKP, in its first decade of power, succeeded in its economic policies and became a powerful government, where the party begun to take the absolute control of all state institutions such as army, judiciary, education and foreign policy. This was the first time in the Republic of Turkey that a political Islamist party becomes this powerful within the state, and it can be said that some religious group of people in Kurdish region and in Turkey supported this new political atmosphere in Turkey.

In an attempt of pointing Elazig province case as the way out for Çewlig/Bingöl by the Turkish state, which was indeed to Turkify Çewlig/Bingöl province, would see a political reaction. The Kurdish movement came up with its reactionary position against this political goal of the Turkish state. The Kurdsih Movement argued that, Kird/Zazas are Kurds, and this was a historic reality according to the Kurdish movement. The Zaza-ist group did not exist in the political identity discussions in Turkey prior to 1980s. It was more of a political battle between two political rivals; the Turkish state and the

Kurdish movement in Turkey. If it is considered that Elazig is a role model for the Turkish state, it is Amed/Diyarbakir that the Kurdish movement desires as a solution role model for Çewlig/Bingöl as a political identity option. There is a considerable pro-Kurdish movement of Kird/Zaza population in Diyarbakir province which strengths the argument of the Kurdish movement that the Zazaki speaking group of people are Kurds who speak a dialect of Kurdish.

The Kird/Zazas of Çewlig/Bingöl, at the crossroad of politicised identity discussions, begun to have a say in their own identity construction. The division engineered by the Turkish state historically seems to gain some ground in this identity process. There are different political views among the locals of Çewlig/Bingöl reflecting all the three political identity stances. This is a result of these identity constructing political projects, especially of the two main political rivals on the ground. The political battle between the Turkish state and the Kurdish movements has gained support among the locals. The reason why Turkish state's stance gathered support is mainly an economically liberating one; those who side themselves with the state have an easier and prosperous life. On the other hand, those who support the Kurdishness and Kurdish movement face various difficulties. They are those who are disadvantageous group in everyday life dealing with the state. Their stance is the more political one, which chooses identity position as opposed to leading an 'easy life'.[554]

The older generation does not have much hope that the Kurdish movement can defeat the Turkish state and change 'Kurdish fate' in the Turkish part of Kurdistan. They usually point out the Sheikh Said revolt's defeat, as a reference in this context. In other words, they mean that even if the great Sheikh Said was not able to defeat the Turkish state, how anyone else can do so. Furthermore, the older generation is more religious and conservative, and they give great importance to the religious and tribal leaders. The PKK lead movement, on the contrary, believes the revolution can only be possible from ground and including all the classes of society, as in the socialist paradigm. Therefore, the youth tends to side more with the Kurdish movement while the older generation

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[554] During the election campaign of March 2014, the AKP candidate for Çewlig/ Bingöl, said; if you vote us you will have an easy and prosperous life. The families who warn their children to stay away the 'dangerous' political activities also use the 'easy life' terminology. Such discourse is used extensively by the pro-Turkish state politicians and state institutions.

tends to side with the Turkish state, at least in the legal politics arena. The PKK-led movement mainly mobilises through the NGOs, which again, goes hand in hand with the leftist style mobilisation of leftist movements. It has been a space that the PKK has used extensively in reaching its target area of society.

Having examined the current conflict of Kird/Zaza identity between the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement, the fourth and final chapter paid attention to the economic aspects of the Zaza identity and how it shapes it. Moreover, it looked at the liminal status of the Zaza, that is, being positioned between Turkish and Kurdish discourses of identity. The local identity dynamics has its economic dimensions too. This research found that different political stances choose to interact with different provinces in the region. The pro-Kurdish group choses Diyarbakir when they need to go for greater market city in the region while the pro-Turkish group choses to go to Elazig for similar purposes. The motivations behind this is usually either "our money should not go to the 'separatists'" (addressing the Kurdish movement by the pro-Turkish state group) or "we should have our own internal economic structure" (addressing to the pro-Kurdish movement followers should have an internal economic dynamics).The pro-Kurdish group believes that the Turkish state applies a 'negative discrimination' towards its Kurdish population and stronghold cities of Kurdish movement. Therefore, they believe that by having these economic relations they will side with their identity and support their movement.

The Zaza population in general and in Çewlig/Bingöl position differs depending on general developments and overall identity dynamics in the region and Turkey. For some, those are less involved in politics; the Zazaness has become a more folkloric identity. This is in a way a nostalgic way of stressing their identity. They see the cultural pillar of identity as common space with other Zazas. This is the group that seen as less 'harmful' by the state and there is an open space for their non-political activities. Referring back to earlier parts of this thesis, the political identity discussions had started by the Turkish state itself and therefore it desires to be the only identity constructer in the field. This brought the Kurdish movement into this battle with its counter position to the state's idea. The results of the 1980 army coup have started to re-shape the political structure over local identities. There were intellectuals who fled to Europe and

started forming political or intellectual groups. These groups were mainly politically motivated and therefore they took even a greater part from a distance about the identity battle over their own identity in their home country. The Kird/Zazas started to play a role in their own identity construction process from the 1980s. It is a process that still is in search of its direction in the coming decades. As it constantly has different political players involved in this 'pulling battle', it will remain undecided, and identity will therefore most likely not be homogenous. These three main stances over Kird/Zaza identity will remain for a while, as there is the ground for their own arguments about the identity formation in Çewlig/Bingöl. The main reason to this is the political approach of the Turkish state, which still desires to assimilate its 'others', especially its Kurdish population.

The latter part of the fourth chapter also studied cultural, religious, and ethnic elements of identity construction. The ethnic, cultural and religious pillars of identity are expected to be the unifier elemnts for a group of people in Middle Eastern style societies. However, they seem to have become sources of disagreement in Çewlig/Bingöl case. It is the cultural pillar of identity that seems to still be able to bring more people togeteher on common ground in Çewlig/Bingöl. Ethnic belonging of some Zazas is being played on by the Turkish state's assimilation policies. Therefore the future generation of those groups might not consider themselves as Zazas any longer. In order to be able to use it as assimilitaion tool, religion has become vastly politicised by the Turkish state. This reserch argues that the Turkish state with its new 'owners', the AKP government, with its politicised Islam ideology is taking a more apparent stance in this identity constructing dynamics locally in Çewlig/ Bingöl. The AKP-led Turkish state, with all its institutions, is not practising harsh policies, unlike the Kemalist regime, especially in Sunni Islam dominant Çewlig/Bingöl. Even though it pursues its society engineering plans over identity politics in a softer way. While the way the AKP approaches the Zazas is softer, the ultimate goal is still the old Turkish state approach, which is to assimilate or divide and rule.

The 'us' and 'them' elements in Çewlig/Bingöl still hold many angles to it. It is still being discussed, measured and is undecided. As the Kurdish Question is still as controversial as ever, the Kird/Zaza case will continue being part of political

discussions in parallel with the Kurdish Question. Along with the internal developments, it is also the global developments such as the identity trends in the region and in the world, the developments of Kurdish Question in the neighbouring countries and political changes in Turkish republic will decide the direction of this hot political debate. As it stands, the tendency of building the Kird/Zaza identity among the locals is trending. The Zazas might have different and diverging political views of 'who we are' and 'what makes us who we are' but this does not distance them from the current issue of constructing their identity, mainly based on the cultural grounds.

Ultimately, this thesis argues that the formation of Kird/Zaza identity is not only the outcome of local discourses that is Kird/Zazas' way of imagining their community. In addition, it is also highly dependent on external forces and discourses, namely the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement's aspirations and attempts to use the political capital of Kird/Zazas. The construction of Kird/Zaza identity has been in a constant shift over the last four decades. The literature and field research suggest that the direction of this identity formation will continue to depend on the socio-political developments. Furthermore, this thesis argues that unless there will be a Kurdish state emerging in the region the fate of Zaza identity formation will depend solely on whether Turkey will become a western style democracy or not.

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Appendix: Interview

Turkey
Group interviews conducted in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2012 and August 2013.

Interview conducnted with Niyazi Azak, the former chair of Peoples Democracy Party (HADEP) in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2011.

Interview conducted with a group of Sunni Muslim Zazas in Çewlig/ Bingöl. August 2011.

Interview conducted with a group Republican People's Party CHP youth branch in Çewlig / Bingöl. August 2011.

Interview conducted with A. Bilmez, a teacher at Solhan primary school in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2014.

Interview conducted with Ahmet Dag in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2011.

Interview conducted with an Imam of a mosque in Solhan, a town of Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2012.

Interview conducted with Ayla Akat Ata who was the BDP MP for Batman. August 2012.

Interview conducted with Baba Isaqij in Solhan/ Bingol. August 2012.

Interview conducted with Cihan Encu, in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2012.

Interview conducted with elderly local H. Mihemed in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2012.

Interview conducted with Ercan Cagdas in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2013.

Interview conducted with H. Ahmed Çelikel in Çewlig/Bingöl. May 2013.

Interview conducted with Hanifi Konar in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2013

Interview conducted with Hasip Kaplan. He was elected as the BDP Parliamentary group deputy chairman following the 12th July 2011 general elections in Turkey. August 2011.

Interview conducted with Idris Baluken during the field trip, when was elected as Çewlig / Bingöl's first MP for city's first pro-Kurdish party member in history of general elections. August 2011.

Interview conducted with lawyer Cevat Ishak in Çewlig/Bingöl. June 2011.

Interview conducted with Mahmud Baz in Solhan in Bingol. August 2012.

Interview conducted with Mehmet S. Yanilmaz, ex-chair Human Rights Association (IHD) of Bingöl branch. August 2012.

Interview conducted with Nevzat Çaglayan, in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2013.

Interview conducted with Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) co-chair of Çewlig/Bingöl, Halis Yurtsever, an Alevi Kurmanj. August 2012.

Interview conducted with Sait Ölmez in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2013

Interview conducted with Serdest Kar, a sociologist and writer from Bingöl. August 2012.

Interview conducted with Siyabend Welat who was the head of Cultural Activities on behalf of Diyarbakir Municipality then. August 2013.

Interview conducted with the co-chair of the Çewlig/Bingöl region for the pro-Kurdish movement the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), Halis Yurtsever, who is an Alevi, Kurmanj Kurd. August 2012.

Interview conducted with Wisif Zozani in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2011.

Interview with a member of a family that took an active role in Sheik Said revolt. His grandfather Sheik Abdullah was the regional leader/ commander in the revolt, and was executed along Sheikh Said in June 1926. In Çewlig/ Bingöl. August 2013.

Interviewed elderly villager during my filed trip in Çewlig/Bingöl. August 2012.

Outcomes of a group interview during the field work conducted in Çewlig/Bingöl. June 2011.

Interview conducted with Aysel Korkmaz during field trip in Genç, town of Çewlig/ Bingöl. Summer 2012.

Sweden

Interview conducted with Mehmed Malmîsanij (the main figure of VATE and a respected figure in the field Zazakî language productions) in Sweden. October 2011.

Interview conducted with Mehmed Selim Uzun in Sweden. October 2011.

Interview conducted with Cemil Gundogan in Sweden. October 2011.

Germany

Interview conducted with Burhan Badan in Hamburg on my field trip to Germany. March 2014.

Interview conducted with Kadir Armanc in Germany. May 2015.