المجلة الأردنية في القانون والعلوم السياسية

اسم المقال: تأثير القوى العالمية والإقليمية على القضية الكردية
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رابط ثابت: https://political-encyclopedia.org/index.php/library/8227
تاريخ الاسترداد: 2026/11/02 07:36 +03

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تأثير القوى العالمية والإقليمية على القضية الكردية

هبه شاهر فايز المجالي*

ملخص

تعتبر القضية الكردية صراعًا طويل الأمد في الشرق الأوسط، حيث يسعى الشعب الكردي إلى الحكم الذاتي وتقرير المصير في أراضي أجدادهم. ويهدف هذا البحث إلى استكشاف تأثير القوى الدولية والمحلية على تطور القضية الكردية، ويركز البحث على وجه التحديد على دور الولايات المتحدة وإسرائيل والدول الاسكندنافية وإيران وتركيا في تشكيل تطور الصراع والتغيرات المفاجئة اتجاه هذه القضية.

يستخدم البحث مقاربة نوعية لفحص الانخراط التاريخي والسياسي والدبلوماسي لهذه القوى الدولية والإقليمية في القضية الكردية، حيث تكشف نتائج الدراسة أن الولايات المتحدة، كقوة عظمى عالمية، لعبت دورًا مهمًا في دعم القضية الكردية من خلال الوسائل العسكرية والدبلوماسية، ومن ناحية أخرى، كان لإسرائيل دور أكثر سرية، حيث زودت الشعب الكردي بالتدريب العسكري والدعم الاستخباراتي.

علاوة على ذلك، لعبت الدول الاسكندنافية دورًا حاسمًا في تسهيل مفاوضات السلام وتقديم المساعدات الإنسانية للشعب الكردي، ولكن في المقابل، عارضت كل من تركيا وإيران إقامة دولة كردية مستقلة، خشية أن يؤدي ذلك إلى تفكك بلدانهما وتشجع السكان الأكراد في كلتا الدولتين على السعي إلى الحكم الذاتي. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن القوى الدولية كان لها تأثير كبير على تطور القضية الكردية سلباً وإيجاباً، فقد أججت التوترات والصراعات في المنطقة. وبشكل عام، يقدم هذا البحث تحليلاً شاملاً لدور القوى الدولية في القضية الكردية ويبرز الحاجة إلى استمرار الجهود الدبلوماسية لحل الصراع من أجل تعزيز الاستقرار في الشرق الأوسط.

الكلمات الدالة: الأكراد، الولايات المتحدة، إسرائيل، الدول الاسكندنافية، روسيا، تركيا، إيران.

تاريخ الاستلام:2023/04/16
تاريخ المراجعة:2023/07/10
تاريخ موافقة النشر:2023/07/12
تاريخ النشر:2023/12/30

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جميع الحقوق محفوظة، فلا يسمح بإعادة طباعة هذه المادة أو النقل منها أو تخزينها، سواء أكان ذلك عن طريق النسخ، أم التصوير، أم التسجيل، أم غيره، وبأية وسيلة كانت: إلكترونية، أو ميكانيكية، إلا بإذن خطي من الناشر نفسه.

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The Impact of Global and Regional Powers on the Kurdish issue

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Received:16/04/2023
Revised:10/07/2023
Accepted:12/07/2023
Published:30/12/2023

DOI:
https://doi.org/10.35682/jjlps.v15i4.590

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Abstract

The Kurdish issue has been a long-standing conflict in the Middle East, with the Kurdish people seeking autonomy and self-determination in their ancestral lands. This research explores the impact of global and regional powers on the development of the Kurdish issue.

The research employs a qualitative approach to examine these powers' historical, political, and diplomatic involvement in the Kurdish issue. The study's findings reveal that the United States, as a global superpower, has played a significant role in supporting the Kurdish cause through military and diplomatic means. On the other hand, Israel has had a more covert involvement, providing the Kurdish people with military training and intelligence support.

Moreover, the Scandinavian countries have played a crucial role in facilitating peace negotiations and providing humanitarian aid to the Kurdish people; on the other hand, both Turkey and Iran have opposed the establishment of an independent Kurdish state, fearing that it could lead to the disintegration of their own countries and encourage their Kurdish populations to seek autonomy. The study concludes that global and regional powers have considerably impacted the Kurdish issue's development, both positively and negatively. While their involvement has helped the Kurdish cause, it has also fueled regional tensions and conflicts. Overall, this research provides a comprehensive analysis of the role of Global and regional powers in the Kurdish issue and highlights the need for continued diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict and promote stability in the Middle East. **keywords**: Kurds, US, Israel, Scandinavian Countries, Russia, Turkey, Iran.

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Introduction:

The Kurdish issue has surpassed its initial status as a regional and internal matter and has now become an international issue. It has created significant tension and disagreement between Turkey and various regional and international powers involved in the issue. Many international powers support the Kurdish cause for different reasons, making it a significant factor that affects the stability of several countries on the international level. Additionally, foreign interference has had a substantial impact on the regional security of the area.

As Kurdish movements emerged in the region, external interest arose as part of implementing projects that aligned with the various interests of these countries. Foreign interests have driven powers to support the Kurdish cause during the historical stages of its development. However, these same interests have driven political parties to abandon their support for the Kurdish movement through a policy of support and abandonment. The exploitation of the Kurdish issue by foreign powers has been one of the reasons for the movement's success, as well as its decline and failure in later stages.

This study aims to shed light on the role that the most significant global and regional powers in developing the Kurdish issue. Therefor the research will be divided into two main parts; 1. global powers (US, Britain, Russia, and Scandinavian countries), 2. Regional powers (Israel, Turkey, and Iran).

Methodology:

This study utilizes a qualitative data collection approach, drawing from a variety of sources including previous research, books, websites, and articles. The researcher employs three distinct methods:

First, a historical method is used to Construct a detailed timeline of key events and developments related to the Kurdish issue enables the identification of pivotal historical periods, including the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the emergence of Kurdish nationalist movements, and subsequent geopolitical transformations in the region. This historical context serves as a foundation for analyzing the direct and indirect influences of global and regional powers on the Kurdish issue. By focusing on specific case studies and conducting a comparative analysis of the actions and policies of influential actors, by employing the historical method, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the enduring complexities of the Kurdish issue and the role played by global and regional powers throughout its course of history.

Secondly, a descriptive-analytic method is utilized to gather data and information, this method emphasizes the objective and impartial examination of the subject matter, aiming to generate results that are not influenced by the researcher's personal biases. Through this approach, the researcher is collecting data from a variety of sources, including scholarly literature, reports, surveys, and other relevant documents. The data is then analyzed by the researcher using analytical tools and techniques to identify patterns, trends, and relationships within the collected information. By employing the descriptive-analytic method, the research aims to present a comprehensive and objective understanding of the impact of global and regional powers on the Kurdish issue, free

from any subjective interpretations or preconceived notions, therefore this method ensures that the research findings are based on sound analysis and contribute to the existing knowledge in an unbiased and reliable manner.

Finally, a case study method is employed, with the Kurdish case serving as the focus of study. Through this method, the researcher can explore the historical background, socio-political context, and key events that have shaped the Kurdish issue. This includes analyzing the actions, policies, and interventions of global and regional powers in relation to the Kurdish population. The researcher can investigate various aspects such as diplomatic efforts, military engagements, support or opposition to Kurdish nationalist movements, and the impact of regional conflicts on the Kurdish issue, by employing the case study method, the researcher can gather detailed empirical evidence, including primary sources, interviews, and official documents, to provide a robust analysis of the influence of global and regional powers on the Kurdish issue. This method enables a comprehensive examination of the specific interactions, power dynamics, and outcomes that have characterized the relationship between global and regional powers and the Kurdish population.

1. The Kurdish Identity

The Kurdish population is the fourth largest ethnic group in the Middle East, ranking after the Turkish, Arab, and Persian ethnicities. The researcher notes that the Kurds are a unique ethnic group, as they have a presence in more than one country, with their issue raised in each country where they are divided and distributed. Specifically, the Kurds have a minority group in each of the following four countries: Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Iran. Due to their unique circumstances, the Kurdish people differ from the original inhabitants of the countries where they reside, leading to an unstable situation for the Kurdish minority. Consequently, the Kurdish issue has persisted, and the Kurds seek to find a viable solution for it. This issue has been present since the Ottoman era in the Middle East and has not been resolved to this day. Additionally, there is a small group of Kurds who live in Armenia, although their presence does not present a problem for that country. (Yeşilbursa, 2020).

2. The Global interference in raising the Kurdish question

The analysis begins with global powers that have a long-standing history of involvement in global affairs, including the Middle East. By starting with these countries, you can provide a historical context and trace their early engagements with the Kurdish issue, this approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the evolving dynamics and policies over time.

2.1 The Role of the United States

The American role in the Kurdish issue is more recent than the role of Britain and the former Soviet Union. The American interest in the Middle East emerged and its role increased after the end of World War II. Many countries in the region, including Turkey, Iran, and Iraq, were considered by the United States as a "defense line" against the so-called Soviet threat in the region.

In addition, the United States' interest in the Kurdish region of Iraq increased after the decline of Britain and the Soviet Union's role due to its oil importance. This interest is also linked to the

requirements imposed by the Cold War circumstances. At first, there was no American intervention in the Kurdish issue because Iraq, Turkey, and Iran were allies within the framework of the Baghdad Pact and the NATO against the Soviet Union, especially during the period when the United States supported the Kurdish movement, particularly the Mahabad experiment. The United States considered this support a means for the Soviet Union to invade the Middle East. (Roumina & TaherBidar, 2018).

In 1972, Iraq signed a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union, which would increase the Soviet Union's influence in the region and thus threaten US interests. Based on this, the United States began to undermine Iraq as part of its policy of weakening countries that cooperated with the Soviet Union. This was evident in its support of the Kurdish movement, which was considered one of many issues that caused many problems in Iraq. (Roumina & TaherBidar, 2018).

On the other hand, the Otis Pike Committee report, headed by the US Congress, shed light on America's clear objective regarding the Iraqi Kurdish issue. (United States Congress, 1976) Their support for the Kurdish movement was driven solely by their own interests in the region. While the United States supported the Kurds in Iraq in order to support their cause and their right to self-determination, they aligned with Iran and Turkey in crushing the same Kurdish movement on their own territories. Turkey was given priority in deploying military bases and rapid intervention forces in Kurdish territories, along with the establishment of military barracks and launching bases. (İsmail, 2019).

Despite the support provided by the United States of America to the Kurdish movement, especially the Iraqi one, its ties to its interests with the countries in the region, especially Turkey, did not enable it to crystallize a decisive stance that serves the interests of the Kurds and achieves their national demands. The Kurdish issue has often been dealt with from a humanitarian perspective without considering its nationalist and political aspects, which the Kurdish movement aspired to. This was done to avoid any potential interference in America's interests in the region.

There are historical experiences and moments that make America's secret policy towards the Kurdish movement a military and political setback for the Kurdish cause, which has expressed to the Kurds the American betrayal of their national aspirations that they have defended for a long time. Meanwhile, American politicians constantly say in every Kurdish setback that they are doing their duty and that the Kurds should distinguish between missionary work and intelligence activities. At least, that's what former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger said when he responded to a plea from Barzani's father after the Kurds were defeated. Maybe the call by the leader of the Syrian Democratic Forces, "Mazloum Abdi," for President Joe Biden not to allow a Turkish ground attack on northeastern Syria, reminds us of what Kissinger said to Barzani's father half a century ago, especially after the US government pledged to protect its local allies, the Self-Defense Forces, from any threat or aggression. (Roumina & TaherBidar, 2018).

2.2 Britain's Role and Conflicting Policies in the Kurdish Question

Raising the Kurdish question on an international platform where a certain country holds significant power is evaluated to demonstrate the position of support or opposition to the Kurdish question. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire and World War I, the government of Britain strived to retain its dominance over the Kurdish government by providing directives for setting up a remote Kurdish administration. Furthermore, a promise was made by Britain in 1918, promising to provide financial and military support. Yet after the 1919 Paris conference on the Kurdish question, the government failed to provide adequate support to Kurds as their current political agenda was not aligned with them. Armed conflicts and rebellions were suppressed by the government, using military and political resources. Thus, the initial stages of the Kurdish movement and the desire for attaining self-governance were essentially betrayed by Britain government. (Yavuz, 2018).

The strategies implemented for foreign policies and in the Indian offices were conflicting, seen during British rule. As articulated by one author, the British policies for the establishment of the post-Ottoman empire were aligned with gaining political and military dominance over the Kurdish tribe, using the orientalist mentality to define the postcolonial approach adopted by the British. The true intention behind the development of favoring directives for supporting the administration by the British, however, played a crucial role in demanding attention for the Kurdish question. On the other hand, another author articulated that the success of the British takeover mission over Mosul city in 1918 sealed the fate of the Ottoman empire towards oppression. The political strategies employed for raising the Kurdish question post-1919 faced a conflict between the British and the Kurds as the British desired geopolitical domination over the Kurds tribe to utilize their resources, while on the other hand, Kurds initiated an intense rebellion to re-establish their position in the Middle East as a self-governing region. (Ferguson, 2019).

The geopolitical issues faced by the regions of the former Ottoman Empire and the interference of international powers have contributed to the conflict surrounding the Kurdish question. The British representation of the Kurds was based on orientalist ideas of the Middle East, leading to continued conflict between the Kurds and European foreign policies. The British attitude towards the Kurds was motivated by their demonstration of political and military power. The origin of Kurdish nationalism during 1831-1979 through sporadic rebellions was considered a territorial issue, and the first map outlining Kurdistan was drawn by Britain, further constraining the focus on the Kurdish question. The British saw it as their burden to bring civilization to Islamic minorities. The position of Britain in drawing the Kurdish issue as an opportunity to bring civilization and establish administration following a Western governance framework brought interference to the Kurdish question. The origin of ISIS and British foreign policies to address it exclusively as a national and international threat decreased the scope for support in raising the Kurdish question. The ideologies followed in the Kurdish movement were declared illegal in Turkey in 1999, and its violent approach held a significant impact in Britain, Germany, and other European countries. A strong tone (Yeşilbursa, 2020) of diaspora is associated with the Kurdish question as it has spread through European borders.

The role of Britain in opposing the growing violence and armed conflict on an international level thus works against the demands of the Kurdish question.

2.3 Russian-Kurdish Relations: Historical Dynamics and Contemporary Shifts

The interactions between Russia and the Kurds began during the Russian-Persian and Russian-Ottoman wars at the end of the 18th century and the early 19th century. Russia's interest in the Kurds stemmed from its strategic military vision, aiming to exert influence over the entire Middle East region by controlling the territories inhabited by the Kurds. However, Kurdish relations were not a top priority in Russian foreign policy during the 19th century. The Russian government primarily focused on supporting Slavic communities in Eastern Europe and had historical interests in the eastern Anatolia region due to the presence of Christian states, particularly the Armenians. (Pobedonostseva, 2017).

Despite attempts to establish communication channels and gain Russian support during the Kurdish uprising in 1880, where Kurdish leaders sought the support of Russia in their struggle against the Ottoman Empire, these efforts proved ineffective. However, Soviet-Kurdish relations gained momentum after World War II with Mullah Mustafa Barzani playing a key role. In 1946, Barzani's Kurdish factions received military training from the Soviet Union in exchange for their assistance in overthrowing the government in Iraq. The Soviet Union promised to support the establishment of a Kurdish republic at the intersection of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran, but these promises were not fulfilled. (Jelil, 1966).

After the military coup in Baghdad in July 1958, General Abd al-Karim Qasim came to power in Iraq and pursued a policy of rapprochement with the Soviet Union. Agreements were signed for the provision of weapons, military equipment, and training for the Iraqi army. However, Qasim accused Barzani of conspiring against the republic, which led to strained Soviet-Kurdish relations. The Soviet Union maintained a moderate stance during Saddam Hussein's rule in Iraq, sometimes acting as a mediator between Barzani and the Iraqi authorities. In 1974, the Soviet government proposed granting autonomy to Iraqi Kurdistan, but the Kurdish issue remained unresolved. In the 1980s, the Soviet Union focused on developing relations with the Iraqi government, leading to frozen Soviet-Kurdish relations once again. (Vertyaev & Ivanov, 2015).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian politics lost interest in the Middle East and the Kurdish issue. However, Russia continued to adapt its approach to the Kurdish issue based on its political and economic interests. There are two cases that exemplify this: the refusal to grant Abdullah Ocalan political asylum and the impact of the downing of the Russian SU-24 bomber on Turkish-Russian relations. The normalization of relations between Russia and Turkey in 2016 resulted in the freezing of Russian activities related to the Kurds. Russia prefers a neutral position on the issue of Iraqi Kurdistan's independence and focuses on enhancing economic relations in the region. (Vertyaev & Ivanov, 2015).

2.4 Turkey's Influence and Concessions: The Impact of Swedish and Finnish NATO Accession on the Kurdish Question

On May 18, 2022, Sweden and Finland officially submitted requests to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) considering the Russian -Ukrainian War, believing that NATO would provide them with a security umbrella to deter Moscow from taking any military action. However, since the moment Sweden and Finland announced their accession to the alliance, Turkey has objected, accusing both countries of supporting a Kurdish "terrorist" group and pointing to the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party, which has been waging war against the Turkish state since the 1980s to establish an autonomous Kurdish-governed region in southeastern Turkey, and Ankara has classified it as a "terrorist organization." Additionally, Turkey views the Democratic Union Party and its military wing, which it considers an extension of the Kurdistan Workers' Party in Syria, as terrorist organizations. (Magnus , 2022).

In an agreement described by Turkish observers as a victory for Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg announced the signing of a trilateral memorandum of understanding between Finland and Sweden. The memorandum includes meeting Ankara's main demands regarding the Kurds and opponents following the movement of the opposition religious figure, Fethullah Gulen.

It is evident that Turkey aimed to secure numerous concessions from Western powers regarding the matter at hand. On May 23, 2022, President Erdogan declared Turkey's imminent commencement of military operations to finalize the establishment of secure regions extending thirty kilometers along its southern border with Syria. He clarified that these operations would begin upon the completion of preparations, and the designated targets would be the areas where attacks against Turkey could be launched, thereby indicating the locations of armed Kurdish forces. (Arab Realist, 2023).

These concessions included lifting the arms embargo, supporting Turkey in its fight against the Kurdistan Workers' Party, withdrawing support from the Kurds in northern Syria by Helsinki and Stockholm, amending terrorism laws in two European countries, exchanging intelligence with Ankara, amending laws related to terrorism in both European countries, participating in intelligence-sharing with Ankara, handing over suspected terrorists, as well as supporting Sweden and Finland. Additionally, Turkey, Finland, and Sweden will establish a permanent joint mechanism to consult on matters of justice, security, and intelligence. The United States and the European Union have designated the Kurdistan Workers' Party, which has been fighting for independence from Ankara for decades, as a terrorist organization. However, Erdogan's concept of a terrorist organization extends to Kurdish groups such as the People's Protection Units, which are allies of Europe and Washington. (Norell, 2022, December 9).

3. The regional interference in raising the Kurdish question

Regional powers often have complex relationships with each other, including rivalries and conflicts. By analyzing their roles in relation to the Kurdish issue, you can explore how these

regional dynamics shape the treatment of the Kurdish population and influence the prospects for Kurdish autonomy or self-determination.

3.1 The Role of Israel

Within the framework of the connection between Israeli interests and those of the United States in the region, the Kurdish issue is not far from Israel's interests, as it is the first strategic ally of the United States. This is reflected in the United States' interest in the Kurdish movement, especially in Iraq, due to Iraq's stance on the Arab Israeli conflict and the involvement of the Iraqi army in various Arab-Israeli wars. Therefore, Israel tried to use the Kurdish issue to weaken Iraq first.

In 1966, Kurdish-Israeli relations entered an important stage with the Israeli decision to officially support the Kurdish movement in Iraq. This occurred after the visit of Prime Minister Eshkol and Foreign Minister Abba Eban to Tehran, with the aim of strengthening relations over time. Israel's support for the Kurds reached advanced stages, whether in terms of providing necessary training or providing weapons, through cooperation with Iran and the United States. (Baser & Atlas, 2021).

This relationship, which was not limited to training and arming the Kurdish army, known as "Peshmerga", has developed to include social and cultural aspects such as opening a field hospital and contributing to printing books and educational materials in the Kurdish language. However, this relationship suffered a setback in the mid-1970s after the signing of the Algiers Agreement between Iraq and Iran on March 6, 1975, between the Iraqi Vice President at that time, Saddam Hussein, and the Iranian Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, under the supervision of the then Algerian President, Houari Boumediene, which led to the cessation of Iranian support for the Kurds. This coincided with the outbreak of the October War between Egypt and Syria on one hand and Israel on the other, which led to Israeli disappointment at the Kurds' failure to intervene in their favor against the Iraqi army. (Bengio, 2021).

After former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed his support for the establishment of Iraqi Kurdistan and a 2017 referendum on the region's independence from Iraq, Kurdish-Israeli relations gained significant attention in the media. According to Professor Ofra Bengio, Israel has benefited from the Kurds' victory over ISIS and Islamic groups, as they are characterized by their loyalty to the West, moderate secular ideology, stability, and superior recovery, making them surpass other countries in the region. This sets them apart from the general atmosphere of instability and destruction that is currently engulfing the region. Bengio emphasizes that the Kurds hold Israel in high regard and have a deep emotional attachment to them. (Bengio, 2021).

3.2 The Role of Iran

The situation of the Kurds in Iran was similar to that of their counterparts in Kurdistan at large. The Russian invasion of northern Iran had a positive impact on the Kurdish national movement, and it contributed to an increase in the demand for Kurdish independence. The control of the central authority in Kurdistan was reduced, and a Kurdish political party called the Kurdistan Revival Association emerged, which later became known as the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

However, the Republic established by the KDP was ultimately doomed to fail due to changing political circumstances and the withdrawal of Russian support. The Republic collapsed on December 17, 1946. Despite this setback, the Iranian KDP continued its activities in secret. After Muhammad Mossadeq became prime minister of Iran from 1951 to 1953, the Kurds enjoyed a brief period of relative freedom and rights. (Hassaniyan, 2019).

However, this period did not last long. The United States and Britain allied with the Shah of Iran, Mohammed Reza, to overthrow Mossadeq. The Shah waged a campaign against free political parties and forces, including the Kurdish parties. The Kurdish people participated in the Iranian revolution on February 11, 1979, hoping to achieve greater freedom and equality within Iran, but their hopes were not fulfilled. This led the Iranian KDP to stage revolutions to oppose the new regime, with Abdul Rahman Qasimlou as its leader. (Bengio, 2021).

Mohammad Reza, the Shah of Iran, aligned himself with Kurdish political parties in opposition to liberal political forces. When the Iranian Revolution began on February 11, 1979, the Kurdish people took part, hoping to achieve greater freedom and equality within Iran. However, their hopes were not realized, leading to the establishment of the Kurdistan Democratic Party Revolution as a countermeasure against the new regime. Abdul Rahman Qassemlou was the leader of this party. (Bengio, 2021).

The Iranian Kurdish minority is a significant part of the diverse Iranian society. However, the dominance of Persian nationalism, which constitutes the largest proportion of the Iranian population, often disregards the distinct Kurdish identity, and instead views them as descendants of the same Aryan race as Persians. This perspective reinforces the notion that Iran only recognizes the Kurds living within its borders. Despite their shared ancestry, the Persian-dominated government has frequently resorted to violent measures to suppress Kurdish uprisings and revolutionary movements. (Akbarzadeh, Laoutides, Gourlay, & Shahab, 2020).

In 1979, the fall of the Shah's regime and the establishment of an Islamic state raised hopes among Iranian Kurds that their rights would be recognized and that they might receive greater autonomy, given their contribution to the revolution. However, these hopes were not fulfilled. (Akbarzadeh, Laoutides, Gourlay, & Shahab, 2020).

One key difference between Iran's approach to the Kurdish issue and that of other countries is that Iran often manipulates the Kurdish minority in neighboring Iraq to pursue its own political interests in the region. During the war between Iraq and Iran, Kurdish leaders such as Barzani and Talabani aligned themselves with the Iranian forces, taking advantage of the conflict to claim additional territory for themselves.

3.3 The Role of Turkey

The relationship between the Kurds and the Ottoman Empire improved as they fought together in World War I against Russian forces. However, following the end of the Ottoman Empire, Turkish nationalism grew and became the dominant force in the newly established Turkish Republic.

Since the 1990s, the Kurdish issue has become a crucial part of Turkey's internal and external policies, affecting its relations with numerous countries, international governments, and non-governmental organizations. With Turkey seeking to join the European Union, the Kurdish issue has become one of the most significant challenges facing the Turkish government, requiring the development of radical solutions that serve its interests.

Following the establishment of Turkey's borders and internationalization, which occurred after the Sykes-Picot agreement in 1916, Kurds were included within the country's borders. However, they were not recognized and were referred to as "mountain Turks" despite having a percentage of Kurdish nationalists.

Following World War II, a new era for the Kurds in Turkey began from 1958 to 1991. During this period, some Kurds were able to participate in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and the Turkish Parliament. In the 1960s, the Kurdish movement advanced to a stage of political organization, with the establishment of the Kurdistan Democratic Party in Turkey in 1963. However, this party was seen as an extension of the feudal trend and large landowners.

The Kurdish national identity has evolved into an ideological concept seeking a resolution to their issues, with supporters of this concept forming political organizations. One of the most prominent parties that believe in the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist ideology is the Kurdistan Workers Party, also known as PKK, which was officially established in February 1979. In 2002, during the party's eighth conference, members agreed to change the party's name to Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Conference (KADEK), also known as Kongre-Gel, meaning "meeting" or "invite a party". The PKK has resorted to using force and violence against military and civilian targets to achieve its objectives, leading to several military operations against Turkish facilities, government agencies, and Turkish army headquarters. This has sparked widespread reactions from the Turkish government and civil society, with Turkey allocating over 250,000 soldiers to protect the southeastern region of the country. The Kurdish issue remains one of the most significant problems in Turkey and a major concern for the Turkish people. (Özpek, 2019).

Turkey has been waging a military campaign against the PKK in northern Iraq, targeting their strongholds on both land and air. This campaign has weakened the party and forced them to declare a unilateral truce after the arrest of their leader, Abdullah Ocalan, on February 15. This was part of a high-coordination security operation called "Operation Abu," which involved Turkey, the United States, Israel, Greece, and Kenya. Ocalan was brought to trial on April 29, 1999, with the assistance of the United States. (Özpek, 2019).

The end of the Kurdish rebellion was aided by Iraq and Syria, and the PKK announced a ceasefire, leading to a period of relative calm. However, the ceasefire was broken in June 2004, and the United States provided intelligence support to Turkey to help them regain control over areas where militants were active. In 2012, the Erdogan government secretly negotiated with the PKK to reach a new ceasefire agreement. But the conflict in Syria prompted Turkey to intervene, and the Turkish government hardened its position on the PKK. The PKK's expansion of activity in Syria and their control over vast areas has revived hopes among Turkish Kurds that they could take control of their Kurdish lands in Turkey. (Yegen, 2022).

In 2013, the Turkish government and the PKK began peace talks aimed at ending the decades-long conflict between them. However, the peace process was short-lived, as tensions rose between the two sides, and in July 2015, the ceasefire collapsed, leading to a renewed outbreak of violence. The Turkish government has since escalated its military operations against the PKK, and the Kurdish issue remains a contentious topic in Turkey, with many Kurds still seeking greater political and cultural rights. Despite this, there have been some positive developments, such as the election of Selahattin Demirtas, a Kurdish politician, as the leader of the Peoples' Democratic Party in 2014, and the party's success in the 2015 general election. The future of the Kurdish issue in Turkey remains uncertain, but there are hopes that a lasting and peaceful solution can be found through dialogue and compromise. (Yegen, 2022). These developments have led to an escalation of armed attacks by the PKK against the Turkish army.

Conclusion:

The Kurdish question is associated with the Kurds community which is an Islamic minority and their lack of political autonomy and ethnic recognition after the fall of the Ottoman empire. The critical nature of the Kurdish question is a long-standing one on the regional and international levels. The role of regional powers such as Turkey, Iran and Israel as well as international powers such as Britain, US, Russia are investigated in the paper to assess their degree of interference. The necessity to raise and resolve the Kurdish question is essential to ensure that territorial violence and armed conflict are resolved. The cross-border issue faced by the Kurdish community is the lack of a stable geographical territory as they share borders with Iran, Turkey, and Iraq. Diasporic tendencies are also witnessed as the community crosses European borders.

The Turkish and Iranian government shows an ambiguous position where the Kurds are not allowed the rights and privileges of the nation, yet they cohabit as the population of the Kurds community is currently over 40 million. The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) was established yet failed to conclude the peace process in Turkey. The fluctuations of the AKP also contributed to the interference of the Kurdish question. On the other hand, the Kurdish community has been able to gain access to Iranian constitutions, utilizing the oil and gas policies to benefit their political stand. However, threats to national security on a regional level due to the armed conflict between the state and the Kurds have negatively impacted the relationship between the Iranian and Turkish governments. Furthermore, it is also seen that the religious sentimental alignment between the Zionist and Kurds is utilized by the Israeli government to seek restitution for their Jewish unification cause in the Middle East.

Regarding the international role, it is indicated that Britain had betrayed the Kurdish movement to fulfill their political ideologies. Britain, who had raised the Kurdish question initially in 1919 in the Paris Conference, later tried to suppress the movement. The Soviet Union also played a significant role in shaping the international dynamics surrounding the Kurdish issue. The Soviet Union's involvement in the region during the Cold War had an impact on the policies and actions of other countries, including the United States. US foreign policy and military intervention in the Middle East can be seen as a response to the acquisition of political supremacy, which emerged as a result of the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. Therefore, the result of the study indicates that international and regional interference, driven by specific political reasons among Turkey, Iran, Israel, the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union, constricts the scope of gaining political autonomy for the Kurds. The Kurdish nationalism suffers from a lack of proper support that denies their long-standing dream of gaining ethnic, political, and territorial autonomy in the Middle East.

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