

The Revolt of Sheikh Ubeydullah (1880-1881):

An Instrumentalist Study of A Nationalist Movement

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Abstract

At the end of the 19th century, between 1880-1881, Sheikh Ubeydullah, the leader of the Naqshbandi sect, attacked the cities and villages of the border regions of Iran and the Ottoman Empire and caused many killings and loots in the Qajar Empire's Azerbaijan state. The reason for the beginning of this rebellion was the jeopardy of the Sheikh's personal interests. The sheikh lost the right to own several villages, which were actually a gift from Shah Qajar to his father. In the following, the signing of the Berlin Treaty and the Sheikh's fear of creating an Armenian state in his claimed territory were added for this reason. Sheikh needed supporters and followers to maintain his power and wealth. By creating ethnic and religious symbols and distorting the existing symbols, he provoked the people and mobilized supporters. Therefore, it can be said that Sheikh as an elite, by creating ethnic symbols and abusing them, was able to bring the heads of Kurdish tribes and their citizens with him and try to protect his interests under the title of Kurdish nationalism. In this article, the method of discourse analysis with inductive approach is used. In the historical study of the movement, it has been tried to use more first-hand sources and government archives.

Keywords: Iran; Ottoman; Qajar; Sheikh Ubeydullah

INTRODUCTION

When I was a child, my grandmother, to calm us down, used to shout that (sheikh geldi). We did not know what this meant, but as soon as we heard it, we knew very well that we had to sit quietly in a corner. Because we were afraid even to imagine what he would do to us if we misbehaved and that sheikh came. Later, when I was a university student, I came across the word (sheikh geldi) by chance in a book (Alizade, 1379), and I understood what my grandmother was talking about. Seyyed Hasan Taghizade, one of the politicians and intellectuals of Iran, who lived in Tabriz as a child in those years, wrote in his memoirs: “My mother always left some bread in the well in the garden. So that if the Kurds attack the city, we can hide in the well” (Alizade, 1379, p. 365).

Between 1880 and 1881, the sheikh of the Naqshbandi sect called Sheikh Ubeydullah, attacked Iranian lands and in this attack, he also massacred the local population and plundered their assets. These terrible events were called the (sheikh geldi) incident among the people of the region and remained in people's memories for years.

An analysis of the Sheikh Ubeydullah movement in 1880 is attempted in this study. His movement seems to be a result of religious disputes between the Ottoman and Qajar empires. He is a prominent Naqshbandi-Khalidi sheikh in the sect. By now, both states were attempting to negotiate their borders. As the Kurdish issue has garnered more attention recently, his movement has become the most frequently cited example of the first Kurdish movement with national aspirations. This is Sheikh Ubeydullah's letter, which is most famously reported by Dr. Cochran, addressed to William Abbott, the British Consul General in Tabriz:

“The Kurdish nation, consisting of more than 500,000 families, is a people apart. Their religion is different [from that of others], and their laws and customs are distinct The Chiefs and Rulers of Kurdistan, whether Turkish or Persian subjects, and the inhabitants of Kurdistan, one and all are united and agreed that matters cannot be carried on in this way with the two Governments [Ottoman and Qajar], and that necessarily something must be done, so that European

Governments having understood the matter, shall inquire into our state. We also are a nation apart. We want our affairs to be in our own hands....” (John, 1961, pp. 109-110).

The central Ottoman authority was also disturbed by these remarks. The Ottoman government actually took a long time to verify the letter's validity. Based only on the letter, the authorities did not discover any evidence of a conspiracy; however, the sheikh was banished when they started to suspect that he was unable to use his power to support the Ottoman authority. There did not seem to be any political goals behind his movement. It was a movement that came out of nowhere at such a delicate moment and garnered a lot of attention.

The idea that the sultan was attempting to instigate a Kurdish issue against the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire arose from the Armenian question following the Treaty of Berlin. In view of this, the Sheikh's nationalism needs to be reexamined. The Sheikh was not hesitant to pursue other matters on behalf of the Kurds, even if he stated that he had his own land dispute with the Qajar Empire. Opponents of his claimed he was planning something else besides reclaiming his property.

RESULT

Theoretical and Historical Overview of Nationalism

The Nationalism Project is a prominent online archive that was founded by the Association for Research on Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Americas. It highlights three primary discussions that surround the study of nationalism: first, the issue of defining terms such as nation, nationality, nationalism, nationhood, ethnicity and ethnic group; second, the discussion of the historical context of the formation of nations; and third, the reason for and mechanisms behind historical changes in nationalism and nations (Zuelow, 2017). These three key concerns have united nationalism experts, who differ in their premises, in an attempt to make sense of what is certainly the most highly discussed phenomena of the post-modern era.

Do nations exist as eternal occurrences that coexisted with the genesis of humanity? Or are these items from the modern era? Stated differently, do we believe that nations are something that humans socially constructed, imagined, or have they always existed, as some Primordialists argue? Who makes them or imagines them if they are not established or natural? What boundaries do they have? Who is a member of the nation and who is not? If nation-states are imagined, as modernism and ethno-symbolism claim, then how are nationalist ideologies spread? Why do people have nationalistic inclinations and why do states have nationalistic mindsets? Why are they too strong and ingrained in our cultural immune systems to be easily disregarded or countered, and why are they so unquestionably untouchable in our mental nature to be called into question?

This chapter has three major purposes. It starts by attempting to give a succinct summary of the main theoretical arguments for these topics. It is important to emphasize that the selection of notable academics in this chapter is subject to time and space constraints within the research and does not claim to be unbiased or ideal. Ethnosymbolism, modernism, and primordialism are the three basic streams of thought that comprise current nationalism ideologies. As P. Brass notes, the distinction between the three is due to “the conceptual differences among scholars concerning the very nature of the groups involved, namely, whether they are 'natural', 'primordial', 'given' communities or whether they are creations of elite groups, interested leaders, or the political system in which they are included” (Brass, 1991, p. 69).

The latter two place more emphasis on a political conception of the nation and the nation-making process, whereas the primordialists view the nation as a cultural and socio-biological phenomena (Bacova, 1998).

Primordialists often hold that nations are inherent, eternal, and natural entities. Every individual within the community has innate feelings derived from their birthplace, spoken language, race, and blood type. These feelings are deeply rooted in people's emotions and constitute the given of humanity (Brass, 1991). The modernists, on the other hand, contend that nations were not primordial nor the result of certain, deeply ingrained historical processes. Rather, nations were the result of “recent historical developments and of the

rational, planned activity made possible and necessary by the conditions of the modern era” (Smith, 1998, p. 19). The creation of nations was primarily influenced by industrialization, urbanization, secularism, and the emergence of centralized states (Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1983).

Lastly, ethno-symbolism acknowledges the modern nature of nations while highlighting the importance of myths, symbols, memories, values, rituals, and traditions in the formation of modern nations (Anderson, 2006; Smith A. D., *Nationalism and Modernism: a critical survey of recent theories of nation*, 1998). It is widely regarded as a middle ground between the two opposing poles of the debate (Kennedy, 2011).

The second goal of this chapter is to critically examine the fundamental assumptions made by modernist and ethno-symbolist approaches—which belong to the instrumentalism school of thought—about the state's and elites' roles in the formation of ethnic identity. In summary, prominent modernist intellectuals have understood nations as discursive formations, created, shaped, and even produces by states and their leaders to seize power, maintain their standing, and generate political and/or socioeconomic gain (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983).

According to modernists, elites have a significant influence on how ethnic identity is formed because they employ “invented traditions” (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983, p. 2; Smith, 2009). However, ethno-symbolists do not regard nations as purely elite constructs, even as they acknowledge the significance of elites and political institutions in the creation of contemporary states. Ethno-symbolists argue that this kind of thinking ignores the significance of ethnicity and the reasons underlying people's nationalistic inclinations (Smith, 2009). They see it as vital to understand the complex interactions that exist between elites and ethnies (ethnic groups) in terms of the symbols, myths, values, and customs that speak to them (Smith, 2009).

This chapter's ultimate goal is to present an overview of Paul Brass' nationalism theory as it is presented in his 1991 study *Ethnicity and Nationalism*. His views on the formation of ethnic identities and nations may be summed up in two basic ways: first, “ethnicity and

nationalism are not 'givens,' but are social and political constructions”. They are the products of elites who, in order to preserve their existence or well-being or to secure political and economic benefits for both their groups and themselves, appropriate, misappropriate, and occasionally even fabricate elements of the cultures of the groups they seek to represent; second, “ethnicity and nationalism are modern phenomena inseparably connected with the activities of the modern centralizing state” (Brass, 1991, p. 8).

Historical Research of Sheikh Ubeydullah's Movement

After the Battle of Çaldıran in 1514, Yavuz Sultan Selim annexed the provinces in the East and Southeast, organizing them as Classical Ottoman Sanjaks, Yurtluk-Ocaklık, and Government Sanjaks. This led to the formation of a strong Kurdish leadership under state protection. The social layers within the tribes were divided, with military forces as the upper class and non-Muslims and non-tribal peasant and urban Kurds as the lower class. The Ottoman Empire's centralist policy was followed after Mahmud II's accession in 1839. However, attempts to implement these regulations failed, creating a vacuum of authority and allowing tribal leaders to intervene in lawlessness. The Ottoman Empire's dominance gradually decreased, leading to rebellions and the rise of Russia. These rebellions were suppressed by the Ottoman Empire due to the Kurds' inability to form a unity within the tribal structure, Russia's failure to support the Kurds during the Crimean War, and Britain and France's failure to support the Kurds.

1873-1876 Sheikh Ubeydullah Problem Between Ottomans and Iran

Kurdish tribes, exploiting the weakening power of the Ottoman and Iranian states, caused unrest in the region. They demanded tribute from villagers and threatened to plunder villages if they did not pay. Sheikh Ubeydullah, a prominent Kurdish figure, was one of the people who Iran complained about. The Ottoman Empire requested a meeting with Iran to discuss the damage caused by the Hertus tribe, but the investigation was stopped by Shuja al-Dawla. The Iranian side accepted the proposal and agreed to investigate the issue. The Ottoman Empire claimed the arrest of Sheikh Ubeydullah was his own claim, but the Iranian side treated the Sheikh with tolerance. The Ottoman Empire initiated an

investigation into the events, and Iran declared neutrality. Iran intended to use this incident to its advantage, hoping Russia would support Iran in the matter. The Ottoman Empire treated the Sheikh tolerantly, believing that loyalty would lead to loyalty to the empire.

1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War

The Ottoman Empire faced Balkan Revolts in 1875, which brought the empire and Russia into international conflict. The Ottoman Empire sought to draw Kurdish tribes and chiefs to its side against Russian danger and form military units. However, the British Consul in Erzurum wanted to remove influential Kurdish lords to prevent revolts. The Ottoman Empire was weak in terms of soldiers and equipment, leading to a policy based on gaza to prevent Kurds from drifting towards Russia. Sheikh Ubeydullah allowed the formation of Kurdish militia forces, but the Kurds disobeyed and left the battlefield. In 1878, an uprising between Motki and Reshkotan tribes spread, leading to the Ottoman Empire's transfer of military forces and appointment of extraordinary powers.

The 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian War led to a significant political and economic depression in the region, causing social and economic collapse. The Ottoman Empire increased tax rates to recover, but tyranny led to peasants fleeing or working as farmhands. The official administration collapsed, with corruption and arbitrary behavior among military units. Western states pressured Istanbul to reform eastern regions, leading to increased expenses and distress. The region also experienced a severe drought, leading to epidemic diseases and increased hunger. Both states sent soldiers to prevent plunder and extortion, sometimes acting together.

1880 rebellion of Sheikh Ubeydullah in Iranian Lands

The weakening of Ottoman and Iranian states led to rebellions in the region, particularly in the Ottoman-Iran border. The Naqshbandi sect, led by Sheikh Ubeydullah, became influential in the region, especially around Hakkari. The Ottoman Empire, aware of Ubeydullah's influence, attempted to prevent the uprising by appointing Mushir Semih Pasha to the Fourth Anatolian Command. However, the Sheikh's rebellion failed due to his inability to unite the Kurds and his refusal to pay taxes. The Ottoman Empire was friendly to the Sheikh, as it did not want to punish him for his public recognition and to

see him as a possible ally. The rebellion spread more and more, causing tensions between England and the Ottoman Empire.

In 1879, the Sheikh rebelled against the Ottoman Empire, despite sided with the Ottoman Empire in the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian war. He aimed to establish a fully independent Kurdish state, bringing radical reforms to the Armenians according to Article 61 of the Berlin Agreement. The Kurds believed that the Armenian state would weaken their power in the region. Sheikh Ubeydullah persuaded the Kurds to side with him, focusing on the Azerbaijan region and attracting Russia's support. The Nestorians supported the Kurds partly because they did not want Americans or the British to come to Urmia and Mosul. The Sheikh sought the Armenian population's support to ensure unity, but Russia did not support his actions due to concerns about losing ground and the potential danger of an Armenian state under the Sheikh's leadership.

In 1880, Sheikh Ubeydullah, a Kurdish leader, rebelled against the Ottoman Empire due to the oppression of Kurds in Iran. He cited the Ottoman Empire's acceptance of the Berlin Agreement as a reason for the rebellion, which led to the uniting of Kurdish tribes. The Iranian administration refused to collect taxes from the Soma region, prompting the Sheikh to send additional forces. As the uprising progressed, new tribes joined the union. Sheikh Ubeydullah formed an army, led by Sheikh Abdulkadir and Hamza Agha, to capture Savjbulak and Tabriz, Urumiye, and West Lake Salmas. The forces occupied and plundered Savjbulak-Urumiye, capturing and plundered Savjbulak-Urumiye.

A temporary government was established to administer captured places along the Iranian-Iranian border. Sheikh Abdulkadir and Hamza Agha committed massacres in Savjbulak, killing twelve thousand people and causing widespread looting and robbery. The Ottoman Empire did not intervene, and the Iranian government official Itimad Al-Saltanat was killed. Hamza Agha captured cities like Zevar, Miyandoab, and Melik-Kandi, while Sheikh Ubeydullah blockaded Urumiye with 12,000 soldiers. The Ottoman Empire tried to keep the events in Iran by supporting the uprising, but the successes of the Kurds worried them. The Ottoman Empire sent soldiers to the region and border due to

the uprising, but no precautions were taken. Negotiations between Iran and the Sultan on October 15, 1880, discussed the decrease in income due to plunder, the murdered people, and the summoning of the Sheikh and his son. The Iranian Ambassador to Istanbul requested more definitive evidence and documents, and the Sultan defended the Sheikh's actions due to British protection.

Iran mobilized military forces to suppress a Kurdish uprising in Tabriz, with units from Hemadan, Qazvin, and Tehran participating. The movement of the Kurds decreased, and incidents of robbery and plunder on the Azerbaijani side weakened the rebels. Iran applied to Britain and Russia and put pressure on the Ottoman Empire to take necessary measures. The Ottoman Empire sent an envoy to the Sheikh and asked him to stop fighting against Iran. The Sheikh's son, Sheikh Hamza Agha, continued to resist and damage the Iranian army, leading to the Kurds moving to the Ottoman Empire. The Iranian State declared amnesty after the Sheikh withdrew from the region, but no harm was done to the lives and property of the people. The Sheikh began to reorganize, taking lessons from the unsuccessful 1880 rebellion in Iran. He wanted to take the Nestorians with him again and attached great importance to the training of his units. The Ottoman Empire began to take necessary precautions to avoid a rebellion again.

In August 1881, negotiations between the Ottoman Empire and Iran required the exile of Sheikh Ubeydullah and his son, as well as the location of Hamza Agha and his other son. Iran interpreted the Ottoman Empire's attitude as believing the Sheikh's lies and not seeing the discord between the two sides. Iran warned Istanbul that Sheikh Ubeydullah would take action against Iran again in the spring. Mushir Nafiz Pasha informed his state that Russia would use this issue to enter Azerbaijan and possibly use the Sheikh's soldiers against the Ottomans. The Sheikh agreed to come to Istanbul and take necessary security measures. In November 1881, the Sheikh asked the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support his request to compensate for the damage caused by the Iranian Army. The Iranian State announced that the Sheikh's requests did not reflect the truth and would harm relations between the two states.

The Qacar empire repaired Urumiye's city walls, leading Iran to believe the Sheikh was left by the Ottoman empire rather than escaped. However, conflicting news from Istanbul suggested the Sheikh had escaped, and the Ottoman Empire was unaware of this. The Sheikh sought to strengthen his position and gain time by drawing Kurdish groups closer. Istanbul sent Colonel Yusuf Bey to deter rebellion, but failed. In August, Kamil Bey was sent as an intermediary, offering a monthly pension and privileges for the Sheikh to migrate to a holy city. The Sheikh agreed to settle in Mosul but delayed surrender. The Ottoman Empire took the Sheikh to Mosul, and Abdulkadir, a follower of his father, kidnapped his father near Sheptan. After a six-hour battle, the Sheikh and his son were exiled to Mecca, and the Sheikh died in 1883.

Paul Brass and Nationalism

Paul Brass mentions that there are three different ways to define ethnic groups. The first of these is in terms of objective characteristics, the second is in terms of references to subjective feelings, and the last is in terms of behaviors. (Brass, 1991, p. 18).

The identification made by looking at objective characteristics is based on clear evidence (or markers—differences in language, region, religion, color, types of food, and ways of dressing) that distinguish one ethnic group from another (Govers & Vermeulen, 1997, p. 5). Even though ethnic groups are similar to each other, it is not difficult to find an absolute difference between them that will enable this distinction. However, with this definition, some difficulties are encountered in drawing the precise boundaries required to determine ethnic groups and ethnic affiliations. Because there is no certain stability or continuity in the emergence of the mentioned evidence in social groups. For example, it is possible for a person to have clothing characteristics that are considered to belong to a certain ethnic group, but also to have language characteristics that belong to another group. In this case, the situation of which ethnic group the individual and the groups belong to becomes complicated. The difficulty faced by subjective definition is that it cannot answer the question of how social groups come to feel belonging to a certain ethnic group. It is very difficult to find an answer to the question of what the feeling of belonging to nationality and ethnic groups is. The first ideas on this subject were put forward by primordialists, who

claimed that nationalism consists of the innate feelings of individuals. (Bacova et al., 2003, pp. 117-118; Smith A. D., 1987, p. 29). With this put forward, linking the motives of being a nation to the feelings of the individuals who make up the nation brings up the questions of when and how these feelings were born or how they can be measured and compared.

However, it is certain that they are inadequate to answer these questions. In behavioral definition, emphasis is placed on the lifestyles of ethnic groups and their unique behavioral patterns when interacting with other ethnic groups. Therefore, it is quite possible to classify this type as a different type of objective definition. According to this definition, there are always cultural features/differences between ethnic groups that distinguish one from the other. However, these only emerge through the interactive interaction of a certain ethnic group with other ethnic groups and allow this group to be defined separately from the other.

However, what should be noted here, or the point that distinguishes the behavioral definition from the objective definition, is that the differences in the objective definition are more noticeable and concrete than those in the behavioral definition. In other words, while behavioral differences arise from and are nourished by interpersonal relationships, they have a more complex and intertwined structure. On the other hand, objective differences are concrete and self-existing differences, they exhibit a simpler and more monolithic structure. Among these definitions, the ones preferred by Brass are objective ones; Because it claims that objective ones have superiority and general validity over subjective ones in terms of analysis and precision. (Brass, 1991, p. 18).

Claiming that ethnic competition in modern societies differs from pre-modern societies through language, religion, education, employment and division of labor, Brass attempted to make sense of ethnic competition in modern societies under these headings.(Brass, 1991). For this reason, a classification has been made in the following headings, even though they are all interrelated and complement each other. In this way, it will be tried to help the theories put forward by Brass to be understood more easily.

Elites, Self-Consciousness, and the Problems of Emphasis on Identity

The elite competition that underpinned nationalist movements, although based on family representation, appears to be distinct from the competition of communities for work in early modern times. This is a challenge by one group to the entire distribution of resources and power in society, rather than simply a struggle for privileged jobs for a few (Brass, 1991, p. 45). So, in other words, elite competition is not a question of who will occupy which jobs and positions; It becomes a question, a problem or a question about deciding who will use and distribute which tasks and resources. In order to achieve greater unity within the ethnic group and to stand out against other competing ethnic groups, ethnic and nationalist elites increasingly emphasize that ethnic group members are similar to each other and different from others. (Brubaker, 2012, p. 2).

This situation has its own problems. The first is that such an emphasis and the new symbols added cause the loss of people who can be integrated into the group or the group necessarily reshapes its cultural preferences in line with these preferences. Secondly, it causes nationalist leaders to set irredentists goals on their peers based on the characteristics of their ethnic groups, thus causing problems with other states and nations (Brass, 1991, p. 20).

Paul Brass claims that ethnic communities emerged through the deep social changes of modernizing societies after the industrial revolution, with the help of a certain elite. Underlying this view is the idea that while the elites, classes and leaders struggling within and between different ethnic groups engage in their competition and conflict to gain political power, economic benefit and social status, they also engage in the process of ethnic formation in the same process. As a result, it is argued that the process of modernization and industrialization in multi-ethnic societies generally causes some of the ethnic groups or some regions to benefit more from this process. (Brass, 1991, p. 25).

However, it cannot be assumed that inequalities between ethnic groups or the existence of culturally differentiated regions alone will provide sufficient motivation to raise awareness in communities A community whose local dialect is not standardized in an underdeveloped

rural part of a modern state can continue their lives by speaking their language and cultivating their fields (means of production), and while doing this, they cannot argue that their language is excluded and their integrity is ignored. They may not even be aware of what language they speak (Safran, 1999, pp. 81-82).

Competition of Elites

As Brass argues, it can be argued that competition among elites is necessary for ethnic self-consciousness, ethnic-based demands and ethnic conflicts to emerge. (Brass, 1991: 26). While this competition revolves around the conflict of interests; it is said that the interests of the elites, as mentioned, are to possess social resources and values and to ensure their authority over society by finding stability in their reproduction. At this point, it can be said that the elites confront each other in two situations (Lachmann, 2000). These two situations can be recast as struggles between a domestic elite group and an external elite group, or between different elite groups within the same society. Although this distinction was inspired by the four different conflict areas listed below, it has been combined with the form Brass prefers.

In this regard, it can be said that the four sources support ethnic collectivization and segregation in societies in the early modernization and pre-industrialization times (Brass, 1991, pp. 26-30). First, between the local aristocracy and the invaders, with the local aristocracy insisting on protecting its privileges against a foreign conqueror/occupier. Second, between local religious elites and foreign aristocracy. Third, between local religious elites and finally between local religious elites and local aristocracy.

Elite Competition and Ethnic Transformation

Brass argues that once competition begins, whether between landowners and foreign conquerors, or between religious elites, or between religious leaders and local aristocrats, it will initiate ethnic transformation, while the latter two situations will stimulate movements aimed at awakening religious beliefs (Brass, 1991, p. 29). These movements are used to define ethnic boundaries, that is, to purify the mainstream faith from local

religious beliefs and “foreign” teachings derived from contacts with other religious groups (Govers & Vermeulen, 1997, p. 10). If the dominant religious elites are collaborators and there is only one foreign external authority or group, local counter-elites manipulate ethnic particularist symbols to challenge the leadership of the elites they oppose and encourage opposing classes to behave in this way (Brass, 1991, p. 29). Therefore, the religious counter-elites will be on the verge of gaining the support of the masses on the side of modernization and will educate new classes in their own languages to support the overthrow of the old elites (Brass, 1991, p. 29).

On the other hand, in situations where ethnic groups are multiple and in competition, local collaborationist aristocrats themselves try to maintain their dominance over rival counter-elites in different ethnic groups by manipulating ethnic symbols. For example, in Northern India, Muslim aristocrats, in cooperation with British authorities, sought to protect their own interests against Hindu elites and used their own language and religion as tools-symbols to achieve this. As a result, it can be said that two elite groups within the Muslim society, the ulama and the local aristocracy, were in competition with each other and with the Hindus to mobilize the Muslim communities within their ethnic entity (Brass, 1991, p. 30).

DISCUSSION

As mentioned in the previous chapters about the historical background and movement process of Sheikh Ubeydullah, the Sheikh was known as the religious leader of the Kurdish tribes. At the same time, he was also the leader of the largest clan in his region. That is, he was both a religious leader and the head of the tribe. For this reason, it had a strong position as an elite among the people. In order to understand the political and economic situation of Sheikh before the beginning of his rebellion, I will briefly explain it. Although the topic was written more fully in the previous chapters, this summary will be useful for us to adapt it to Brass's approach to nationalism.

During the reign of Sultan Mahmud II, after the approval of the territorial law, the semi-independent emirates were suppressed and destroyed by the Ottomans. The loss of the

power of the Emirs caused increasing confusion and chaos, and the Ottoman government, which was involved with great problems in the European and Arab lands and Western Anatolia, was practically unable to exercise the power of the central government. The power vacuum that was created due to the suppression and exile of Kurdish Emirs in the Kurdish regions of the Ottoman Empire created a new class of leaders in the Kurdish society, which were the sheikhs, the religious leaders. They had a huge influence among the Kurdish masses, which could fill the empty place of the Kurdish Emirs.

From around 1850 onwards, the sheikhs of Shamdinan, Barzanje and Barzan, practically entered the political arena of Kurdish society. In this way, the political and religious situation was completely favorable for the transfer of power to the sheikhs. The absence of a non-religious and influential personality among the Kurds became the basis for the rise to power of Sheikh Ubeydullah. Sheikh Ubeydullah was able to gather a large number of devoted disciples around him. Iskandar Gurians writes in this regard: Sheikh Ubeydullah had complete control over them, even it can be said that he owns their heads and bodies. The Kurds called the sheikh the successor of God and cursed those who do not follow their beliefs and consider them to be infidels. These disciples, both in Ottoman and Iranian lands, travel from their homes to visit the sheikh and consider him a person with revelation. They thought that obeying his orders is obligatory (Gurians).

The presence of the leader of the Naqshbandi sec covered all areas of the disciple's life, and this presence caused a deep and close relationship between the disciple and the leader. At least once a year, the disciples gave gifts such as property and cash to the Sheikh, and in return, the disciples asked the Sheikh for help in times of trouble and worldly affairs. The Sheikh's influence on the disciples was so strong that they ignored their own will and obeyed the Sheikh's will and considered the Sheikh as God's successor (Jwaideh, 2012).

Sheikh Ubeydullah established kinship ties with many tribal leaders and made them subject to him. The sheikh or his children increased their authority and wealth by marrying the daughters of influential tribal leaders. As the wealth of Sheikh Ubeydullah increased, so did the number of his followers. It was inherited from the father of Sheikh Ubeydullah Tiyul from the border region of Margavar, and he was also the owner of Arpalık in the

Ottoman territory. In addition to receiving gifts and offerings from his followers, the sheikh received ownership interest from the residents of all his territories in Iran and Ottoman, so that he became the owner of 200 villages (Jwaideh, 2012).

All the Kurds who lived in the Sheikh's territory considered themselves his subjects, not the citizens of the Qajar and Ottoman governments. Lord Curzon regarding the power and influence of the sheikh among the Kurds points out that the reputation of his sanctity and expertise spread everywhere to such an extent that he was gradually seen as the leader of the Kurdish people. He more or less established a royal presence and used to entertain 500 to 1000 people daily in his courthouse and behaved with authority in the management of affairs. The sheikh was actually a small prince among the Kurds (Curzon, 1357, p. 107).

Therefore, Sheikh Ubeydullah had a lot of political and economic power for the reasons mentioned above and was considered as the elite of his society. Also, according to the analysis we did in the chapter related to the historical study of Sheikh Ubeydullah's rebellion, we saw that the interests of the Sheikh were endangered by some actions of the Ottoman and Qajar governments. According to Brass, the fundamental causes of conflict are the acts made by opposing political elites, so emphasis should be primarily on their actions.

Sheikh's gaining political power as a Kurdish leader and his power to influence the central government of Iran led him to increase his influence and power in the northwestern regions of Iran and strengthen the foundations of the government by organizing the situation in this region. Therefore, in 1872, the Qajar government demanded taxes from the Kurds. The Kurds refused to pay taxes and declared that they paid their taxes to the sheikh. Because Sheikh Ubeydullah's father had received the right to receive taxes from Mohammad Shah Qajar since 1836. When faced with the Kurds' refusal to pay taxes, the Iranian authorities sent a military unit led by Yusuf Khan Shuja al-Dawlah, who was the ruler of Urmia, to the disputed areas. Shuja al-Dawlah took possession of Sheikh Ubeydullah's estates in Margavar. Sheikh, who was thinking of increasing the influence areas under his command, considered this action of the Qajar government as a violation of his rights (Kandal, 1379, p. 64).

Due to this inconvenience, he approached the Ottoman Sultan and requested the intervention of the Sultan in this case. After the Sheikh's request, the Ottoman Embassy in Tehran asked the Iranian Foreign Ministry to handle the Sheikh's complaints as soon as possible. Due to Iran's inattention to this issue, the Ottomans sent a person named Agha Mirsadegh as an agent to clarify this issue. In a part of his report addressed to the Azerbaijan agent, he writes that apparently the origin of this dispute was that Amir al-Mu'azzam Shuja al-Dawla had the idea of getting these few villages out of the hands of the Sheikh by any means. Finally, with the efforts of the Ottoman government, a tripartite meeting was held with the participation of the representatives of the Qajar and Ottoman governments and Sheikh Ubeydullah in order to deal with the Sheikh's complaints. This commission voted in favor of Iran and considered Shuja al-Dawlah to be right in collecting taxes and condemned any military action of the sheikh. Sheikh was very unhappy and angry with the final decision of the commission. For this reason, to take revenge, he started to provoke the nomads to create chaos and sedition. Following these provocations, disciples of the Sheikh attacked the outskirts of Ushnu. The Kurds, who started sedition and rebelling, were severely suppressed by Imam Qolikhhan Iqbal al-Dawla, the successor of Shuja al-Dawla, who was the head of the Azerbaijani army (Araqi, 1989-1996, p. 630).

It is known that foreign powers implemented certain policies in pre-industrial societies to control the lands they conquered and the aristocrats in these regions. These are to choose one of the ways to bring a new aristocracy class to that region, to gain the support of the old aristocratic class, or to eliminate the aristocratic class by establishing a direct relationship between the state and the peasant people (Brass, 1991, p. 26). In cases where foreign invaders are successful, in order for ethnic nationalist movements to occur in the region, one of the following must occur: revolutions and the emergence of new classes, or a loss of power of the aristocrats (Brass, 1991, p. 27). If this does not occur, one can talk about the assimilation of local powers and the dominance of foreign culture.

It is also possible that foreign invaders cannot establish dominance in the new lands they occupy. In this case, the local aristocracy is likely to offer resistance. However, the local aristocrats' lack of military power and lack of resources to engage in direct resistance

against foreign invaders will force them to organize the people. The local aristocracy will carry out the resistance by drawing the people to its side and thus protect its dominance and interests in the region (Brass, 1991, p. 27). At this point, it can be seen that the aristocracy is based on ethnic consciousness. However, in order to achieve this, they must prevent foreign invaders from establishing direct contact with the people. Otherwise, in cases where the people's wishes are fulfilled, it may become very difficult to gather the people around resistance. Because in this case, the way for the demands and needs of the society to be met through these means will be cleared and it will also be easier for the authority to be accepted by the public.

Another important issue that caused Sheikh Ubeydullah's fear of jeopardizing his feudal and local sovereignty was the Berlin Treaty. Based on this treaty, the Ottoman government undertook to grant privileges to the Armenian minority living in the southeast of the empire. Also, due to the violence and massacres that the Kurds had committed against the Armenians, the Ottoman government pledged to defend the Armenians against the Kurds. Article 61 of this treaty reads as follows:

“The Sublime Porte undertakes to carry out, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and Kurds. It will periodically make known the steps taken to this effect to the powers, who will superintend their application.” (Hurewitz, 1956, p. 190).

This rumor spread widely among the people that according to this article of the treaty, Armenians will create their own independent country in Van. In response to these rumors, Sheikh Ubeydullah was very angry and said that he would never allow such a thing even if he had to arm the women. Certainly, the interests of the Sheikh would be jeopardized by the creation of the Armenian state in the territory of the Sheikh.

Nationalist instrumentalist theorists emphasize that the elites of a society abuse the society's identity by creating new traditions or exploiting old traditions (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). Paul Brass is also one of the theorists of this school of thought, who

provides an example of this way of thinking with his research on India. In the case of India, Brass concluded that the political elites of the society used linguistic and cultural symbols to build political coalitions (Brass, 1991). But what distinguishes Brass from other theorists of instrumentalism is that Brass believes that the elites of the society first create the national identity and then use it to mobilize the society to achieve their goals.

According to Paul's approach, elite groups in a society can gain the support of members of that society by manipulating the symbols of that society, such as geography, language, or ethnicity, in order to maintain or expand their interests (Brass, 1991).

Brass believes that elite groups are one of the most influential groups in a society, which are referred to as a group in terms of sets of symbols (Brass, 1991, pp. 99-100).

According to Brass's approach to the theory of nationalism “Nationalism arises in response to objective exploitation of an indigenous group by an alien group, or of one social class by another” (Brass 1991, p. 41), causes the start of nationalist movements by elites. This process starts with the dominance of an elite group and the opposite elite group is placed in a weaker position. Then,

“new elites arise to challenge a system of ethnic stratification in the cities or an existing pattern of distribution of economic resources and political power between ethnically distinct urban and rural groups or ethnically distinctive regions” (Brass, 1991, p. 44).

In fact, the root of nationalism can be found in the distribution of economic benefits and political power between ethnic groups, and this ultimately leads to the manipulation of ethnic symbols by elite groups to use in competition with other ethnic groups.

Probably, the first sparks of rebellion were sparked by Herki tribe, because of the differences they had with the Viceroy of Yuksekova in 1879. Sheikh Ubeydullah sent messengers to the Kurdish leaders of Ilat to start the rebellion and was able to gather a force of 900 people in Diyarbakir, which was commanded by his son named Abdul Qadir . The Ottomans were informed of this incident by other Kurdish leaders who were Obeidullah's

rivals and sent their forces to the region. Upon the arrival of the Ottoman forces, the rebellion was quickly suppressed because the Kurdish chiefs were not as trusted as the Sheikh had thought, preferring to increase their personal power by raiding and looting. So Sheikh Ubeydullah changed his opinion and declared his loyalty to the Ottoman king. The Ottomans also welcomed this decision and dismissed the viceroy of Yuksekova and tried to establish an agreement between the sheikh and the local Ottoman authorities (Jwaideh, 2012).

Up to this part of the research, at least three reasons for Sheikh Ubeydullah's movement were said to overlap with Paul Brass's approach to the theory of nationalism: the declaration of Tanzimat, the Qajar government's decision to collect taxes from Sheikh Ubeydullah's villages and the treaty of Berlin.

According to Brass, if these reasons exist, the elites of the society affected by these reasons, whose economic, political or social position is under threat, start to provoke the members of their society by manipulating ethnic symbols or creating new symbols. In this way, these elites gather supporters around them and use them to start moving to maintain their power or to expand their power.

After the signing of the Berlin Treaty and Sheikh Ubeydullah's reactions to it, the supporters of the Sheikh began to gather new supporters for the Sheikh. In Tammuz 1880, the Sheikh himself invited the heads of the Kurdish tribes to a meeting in Shamdinan and talked to them about the necessity of an uprising against the Ottoman and Qajar empires. The heads of the tribes declared their support for the Sheikh. Sheikh Ubeydullah's speech in this meeting is an example of Brass's approach to the theory of nationalism. In this Sheikh's speech, you can see clear examples of the creation and use of ethnic symbols to move the masses of people.

Sheikh says in part of his speech in this meeting:

“The Ottoman Empire was founded 550 years ago. The Ottomans illegally seized the caliphate and caused rebellions. The condition for becoming a caliph is to be a

descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, the Ottoman presidency over the Islamic world is illegal.” (Ayvarov, 1995, p. 124).

Moreover, the Sheikh said,

“...Not only we, the Kurds in Ottoman Turkey, but also the Kurds in Iran, must get rid of these two cruel and shackle states. Our ancestors commanded us to sacrifice for the sake of religion and the independence of the country.” (Sinno, 2011, p. 147).

In this meeting, which was the origin of Sheikh Ubeydullah 's move to attack Iran, we can see clear examples of the Sheikh's use of ethnic symbols such as the homeland and the will of the fathers and religious symbols such as the caliphate. As we can see in the ideas of Bras, the sheikh tried to attract the opinion of the heads of the Kurdish tribes by misusing these symbols and to some extent he was successful.

There were differences of opinion in the congress because the Kurdish tribal leaders were loyal to the Sultan and were in favor of the Ottoman administration, and for this reason, Sheikh Ubeydullah changed his plans regarding the uprising and changed his plans for Iran, which was in a difficult situation due to the Turkmen uprising that emerged at that time, instead of the Ottomans (Halfin, 2020, p. 110).

It can be said that one of the most important reasons for the Sheikh's failure was that the Sheikh's companions did not believe in his thoughts. In fact, all the people who gathered around the Sheikh were not because of his nationalist thoughts. Few of them were aware of the Sheikh's goals and intentions. These people with political awareness were with Sheikh from the beginning of his rebellion until the end of his work. On the other hand, most of them were the same opportunists who joined this movement in order to gain benefits and plunder. In a telegraph to the British Foreign Ministry, Lord Tandren, the French consul, writes about Sheikh's nationals that the son of Sheikh Ubeydullah, who has been a refugee in Iran for several years, is preparing himself at the head of a band of robbers to infiltrate the Ottoman territory. Sheikh's followers, without political awareness and knowledge of his goals, considered the movement to be a continuation of the same looting

of the past on a larger scale. The greater number of opportunists took the initiative and started killing and looting and created severe chaos.

Lord Curzon introduces the main motivation and the nature of Sheikh's rebellion only interest in plunder. Minoru is not skiing, considers the foundation of the Sheikh's movement to be looting at the very beginning. Thus, other researchers, following these authors, evaluated the Sheikh's rebellion as a predatory and extortion-based rebellion. For example, Daval writes in his book that the Sheikh's forces were reduced from 20,000 to 1,500 people within two weeks because most of the nomads had gone to their homes with their looted property (Gurians). So, here too, on a smaller scale, the role of tribal chiefs' personal interests can be pointed out in this Sheikh's move, which has another reason for confirming Bras's approach.

On a larger scale, we can refer to the correspondence and writings of reliable people who claim that the sheikh's move was essentially to preserve his personal power. For example, Abbott, the British consul in Tabriz, wrote to the British Foreign Ministry in a report dated 1881. In this report, it is stated that the most important reason for Sheikh Ubeydullah 's rebellion was his failure to return his land in Margavar, and it is recalled that Sheikh promised to return to his home in Ottoman and end the rebellion if his land is returned (Araqi, 1989-1996, p. 630).

CONCLUSION

In this article, an attempt was made to investigate Sheikh Ubeydullah's rebellion. The purpose of this article was to research and analyze the causes and motives of Sheikh Ubeydullah for the rebellion. The attempt of this article was to explain this movement by choosing a suitable theory. The results obtained in this article will be written in this section.

At the end of the 19th century, Sheikh Ubaidullah, the leader of the Naqshbandi sect, attacked the Iranian and Ottoman border towns and caused many killings and loots in the Qajar Empire's Azerbaijan state. The reason for the beginning of Sheikh Obaidullah's rebellion was the endangering of his privileges and personal interests. He used ethnic and

religious symbols as a tool to gather supporters for himself. It can be said that Sheikh, as an elite, gathered supporters for himself by creating ethnic symbols and distorting existing symbols and tried to protect his personal interests under the title of nationalism.

It seems that most historians and political science researchers are unanimous in this matter that Sheikh Ubeydullah's movement was a nationalist movement. We can see the nationalist thought in the Sheikh in the formation of the Shamdinan meeting, as in the Sheikh's statements and correspondence with the British Consul. This issue was discussed in detail in the historical discussion related to the Sheikh's movement. Sheikh Ubeydullah can be called as the first initiator of the Kurdish nationalist movement, but the second and more important question that was tried to be answered in this article is how to explain this movement. Which approach to nationalism can be a suitable theory to explain this movement. The conclusion reached by this article is that we can explain this movement with an instrumentalist approach to nationalism. Because the factors that instrumentalist approaches put forward in explaining nationalist movements are in accordance with Sheikh Ubeydullah's movement.

Just as Paul Brass considers the start of a nationalist movement conditional on the competition between elites to maintain and expand their interests, Sheikh Ubeydullah also organized and started the Kurdish nationalist movement in order to maintain his power and wealth against external threats.

Instrumentalists believe that the elites of a society try to mobilize people in the form of nationalist movements by abusing ethnic and religious symbols. By using the capacities of mass movement, they can gain personal benefits or use them to maintain and expand their personal benefits. Also, when the interests of these elites are endangered, the best tool to prevent them from losing their interests is the mobilization of society in the form of nationalist movements.

As Paul Brass says, the competition of elites over interests and resources is the main reason for the creation of nationalism in a society by those elites. In the case of Sheikh Ubeydullah's movement, it is clearly seen that after the interests of Sheikh Ubeydullah were

endangered in the Qajar and Ottoman empires, the sparks of this nationalist movement was launched.

After the announcement of the Tanzimat declaration, which created a power vacuum in the southeastern and eastern regions of the Ottoman Empire, there was a very favorable environment for sheikhs to gain power. Sheikh Taha, the father of Sheikh Ubeydullah, who was the leader of the Naqshbandi sect, gained a lot of power and wealth through this terms. Sheikh Ubeydullah became the inheritor of his wealth and power. The attention of the Qajar and Ottoman sultans to him increased his power and wealth, especially Ubeydullah's participation in the Ottoman-Russian war for the benefit of the Ottomans, so that he gained weapons and military power in addition to political power and wealth.

But with the change of conditions in the Ottoman and Qajar governments and the many problems that both governments had encountered during the years of war with their enemies, they started to collect taxes from the villages and people of the areas under their control in their borders. A number of villages and lands in these areas were previously assigned to Sheikh Taha and Sheikh Obeidullah as Tiyul and Arpalik. Previously, the taxes of these villages were collected by Sheikh Ubeydullah. The action of the Qajar and Ottoman governments to collect taxes from these areas was a clear threat to the interests of the Sheikh. In addition, both governments sent new governors to these areas to exercise their sovereignty over the border areas to prevent the problems that arose, which weakened the authority of the sheikh as a local and unofficial ruler.

Finally, the signing of the Berlin Treaty by Ottoman empire, which can be mentioned as the most important reason for the Sheikh's move. Article 61 of this treaty states that the Ottoman government is obliged to protect the Armenian and Nestorian citizens against the Kurds and Circassians. This treaty created a rumor among the Kurdish people that an independent Armenian state was to be formed in Van. Van and its surrounding areas were the areas where the sheikh had influence, and there were some village cloths donated by the Ottoman sultan to the sheikh. The year after the signing of the Berlin Treaty, the British Consulate was opened in Van, which fueled the spread of this rumor. It was at this time

that Sheikh Ubeydullah entered the practical phase of his definite intention to create a rebellion.

In this brief explanation, it is clearly seen that the interests of Sheikh Ubeydullah as the elite of his society were severely compromised. He had lost the authority to collect taxes from several villages, which was considered as the main source of his wealth. With the arrival of new governors to the areas under his influence, his political power had decreased, and most importantly, the Armenian Christian state was supposed to be formed in the areas he claimed. As Paul Brass says, when the elites of a society lose their interests or their interests are in danger, they create ethnic symbols and abuse these symbols to create nationalist movements. In fact, nationalist movements are a tool in the hands of elites to secure their interests. Sheikh Ubeydullah, who first started the rebellion against Ottomans, was severely suppressed. He negotiated with the chiefs of the Kurdish tribes by forming a meeting in Shamdinan and received their positive opinion to start the rebellion against Iran. As it was announced in this forum, his intention was to form an independent Kurdistan. For the first time in history, Sheikh spoke about the formation of a country called Kurdistan, which can be considered as the creation of new national symbols.

The conclusion reached by this article can be clearly seen in the words of Abbott, the British consul in Tabriz. His opinion is very important because he lived in that time and place. In addition, he was a politician and was aware of the issues that were happening. Therefore, as a representative of the British government, he was obliged to send correct reports and analyses. In a letter to the British Foreign Ministry, Abbott writes that the most important reason for Sheikh Ubeydullah's rebellion against Iran is that the Iranian government took away the authority of several villages in the Margavar region from him. Abbott adds that the sheikh promised to stop the rebellion and return to Shamdinan if his lands are recaptured.

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