

The *longue durée* of Kurds characters by the Western descriptions from the early XIX century to nowadays. Does this “heritage” fit with the current Rojava socio-political proposal?

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Nationalisms use the argument of the “national” heritage as a tool for building Iconographies (a la Jean Gottmann) affirmed as evidences of the existence of natural and/or undisputable aim/right to be a nation: meaning with that a state in which the prevailing human group could manage (hopefully) without problem the internal policy according to its iconographies (defined as “values”, “traditions” etc.).

Narratives about heritage are always positive. In the case of the “national” heritage they could be enthusiastic and avoiding totally any information about and references to facts and behaviours not confirming a favourable opinion.

The French geographer Elisée Reclus identified the characters of a human group as a combination of history, language and the *genre de vie* (the latter with a more complex meaning than the one of Vidal de la Blache). When a group maintains a stable relation with a specific territory this prolonged interconnection creates what he called a *natural region*.

The proofs of the existence of this natural region could be the external recognition. Geographers, voyagers, diplomats etc.

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could be reliable witnesses, as well being object of a (geo)political debate.

The historical events of the XIX century show the existence of semi-autonomous Kurdish areas along the borders of Persian-Ottoman Empires. Until the end of the XIX century both empires used against each other the transhumance and the attitude of banditry and raids of some nomadic Kurdish groups. While in the second half of the century until the IWW Kurds were partially involved, as supporters, in the repression and massacre of Armenians by the sultan Abdul Hamid II. Sometimes Kurds were object of the same treatment (repression, displaced, killed) of Armenians because before, during and after the IWW Kurds started to claim a single independent nation-state.

Voyagers, diplomats were witnesses of those events and geographers and European publications reported it. Kurds were described both as a specific group and as individuals with singular but shared Kurdish characters.

The IWW set up the final victory of the nation-state as the main way to politically organize a territory. From the Sévres Treaty (1920) to the Losanne one (1923) Armenians and Kurds got and only Kurds lost the perspective of a specific state. Kemal Atatürk fixed the "Turkness" as the main character of the new nation, thus denied the internal Kurd existence naming them "Mountain Turks", provoking revolts in 1925,1930/31,1937-38.

As a synthesis of the historical development and of the social characters Kurds were described as a recognized human group with a proper language and religion (even if with many internal differentiations for both). It is also recognized among them a strong sense of familial-clan relation, but with individual skill of independence and autonomy.

The leader of PKK Abdullah Öcalan initially adopted the marxist-leninist approach as the better way to organize the resistance, also armed, to the Turkish repression.

Between 2005-2011 Öcalan took inspiration from the anarchist Murray Bookchin municipal confederalism and ecological approach, so from the prison he launched a new political proposal = Democratic Confederalism, having as idealistic points of reference: bottom-up democracy, ecology, feminism. Those points are an impressive break with many elements of the Kurdish cultural heritage, as depicted in the past.

What is really important is the geopolitical aspect of the proposal: to be not “national”, explicitly against nationalism and supra-border. But what is perhaps more relevant is if and how long the heritage, i.e. the traditional ordinary life and self-representation of the Kurds, as well as the one of the Arabs, Assirians, Yezidi, Turks etc., resists the new iconographies that the experience of Rojava-AANES, in the NE of Syria, is trying to practice.

