

Britain's Role in Rising the Kurdish Issue in the Early Twentieth Century

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Abstract

In the early twentieth century Great Britain among western powers played a crucial role in Kurdistan, and showed keener interest than other powers, particularly, in the part of under the Ottoman Empire. There were also some political circumstances to be undertaken, such as rivalries among European powers to stable their powers in the area, and weakening the Ottoman Empire. However, this research potentially focuses on what was the British role in appearing the Kurdish question in that period. Most likely the real Kurdish issue came to international discourse directly after the First World War. The British role could be highlighted by mentioning the British attempts in Kurdistan some before the Great War, which possibly brought the Kurdish issue to existence. The most important British attempts were: firstly, creating a geographical map of Kurdistan. Secondly, opening a discussion about Kurdistan and published in the British royal geographical journal. Thirdly, increasing in the number of British scholars and Orientalists in Kurdistan, and finally paying a real attention to the Kurdish ethnic groups and Kurdish tribes. Those British attempts are discussed to reach a possible conclusion for Britain's role. In addition, the most potential outcome of this research is that, although Great Britain was following its interests and empowering her authority in the area, it was also pushing the Kurdish question to be rising. As a result it was important for the Kurdish policy to go with British interests in Kurdistan.

Keywords: *Britain, Kurdistan, World War I, geopolitics.*

1 - Introduction

The two decades of the early twentieth century were a crucial and controversial period in the Kurd's history as there were several political changes in the area; the most important was the First World War and then the failing of Ottoman Empire which could profoundly affect the Kurds. Simultaneously, there were western powers started a big rivalry in the area among them was Great Britain that certainly had its role on the Kurdish issue, particularly in the Kurdistan part under the Ottoman Empire authority. This role could be noticed for the Kurds in several aspects. However, this research is going to focus on only one aspect which is the situation of the 'Kurdish Question' before the establishment of the first Kurdish government under the rule of Sheikh Mahmoud (Eskander2000). Therefore, it can be asked that did British political activities in the area, participate the Kurdish issue to be rising. As it has been found out that Britain showed its interest on Kurdistan more than any other western powers in that period (O'Shea 1997). This question can be answered by considering and mentioning the British attempts in Kurdistan in order to clarify the British role in progressing the Kurdish issue at that time, and also how this role served the Kurdish question will be addressed.

The most important British attempts were: firstly, creating a geographical map of Kurdistan. Secondly, opening a discussion about Kurdistan and published in the British royal geographical journal. Thirdly, increasing in the number of British scholars and Orientalists in Kurdistan, and finally paying a real attention to the Kurdish ethnic groups and Kurdish tribes. These were at a time when there is not a real Kurdish representative or a sort of Kurdish leadership, for that reason the Kurdish issue would not be improved. Therefore, if any endeavors come over towards the Kurds by Britain, it would be greatly push the Kurdish political issue forward. This will be discussed in detail in this paper in order to find out in which way this benefited the Kurds, or if it did not work then what were the reasons behind.

The aim of this paper is to show the state of the Kurdish political and national issues in the early twentieth century, in order to find out the problems faced the Kurds and the reasons behind them. The most powerful western authority was Britain so in this way addressing the British role in the Kurds' issues is significant for this study paper. This might add even a little improvement to the Kurdish issue, in the way of forming and structuring their future policy with western powers most possibly Britain, if its policy still effective in the region.

The methodology for this research is that it relies on several primary sources such as British traveller and scholars' works in that time, and British political records. Publications from British geographical journal have provided a sufficient number of resources which are vital in order to give more realistic to

the outcomes. Moreover, the secondary works will also be undertaken seriously to support the main points, examples of them are the work of Kamal Mazhar Ahmed entitled '*Kurdistan during the First World War*' and Joseph Hiller, in his book '*the British policy towards the Ottoman Empire 1908-1914*', provides a great information about the British policy in the area, and Jo Laycock, who talks about the British views on minorities and takes the Armenians as the case study. In addition, in terms of orientalism Edward Said and John Mackenzie also give enough discussion which has been used in this paper.

This research is divided into four parts, firstly the appearance of Kurdish question is discussed when and how it came to be recognized internationally. Secondly, the main British interests in Kurdistan and how they affected the Kurdish issue. Thirdly the most important British attempts in Kurdistan before the Great War, such as creating geographical map of Kurdistan, to start a discussion about Kurdistan, increasing in the number of British Orientalists and scholars in Kurdistan and paying attention to the Kurdish ethnic groups and tribes as a different race. The final part is the conclusion.

2 - The Appearance of the Kurdish Question

It would be worth to point out when the Kurdish question came to existence, in order to figure out the role of Britain in raising the Kurdish issue. In this framework the Kurdish question means that to bring the Kurdish issue into a political discourse internationally among the great powers most likely the western. As there is a nationality and people who lives in a geographical position with their own history, culture, different from the others around as their identity is unique (Yegen 1999). Therefore, until there is not a real discussion of otherness about the Kurds there might not be a Kurdish question. In this manner as far as the Kurds were divided between local authorities such as Persia and ottoman empires the Kurds were accounted as parts of them. For that reason the Kurds would be ignored in the way of a political question about the Kurds as a nation, because both of them did not allowed the Kurds to integrate and follow their political and national demands. In terms of the Ottomans' attitude towards the Kurds, it was clear that the Ottoman government prevented the Kurdish movement in any form, whether to be religious or nationalism. For example, when Abdul Hamid II created the Hamidiye Cavalry it was first to weak the Kurdish national movement and another reason was to reduce the chiefs and Sheikh's power (Olson 1989, p.22-23). Similarly, the Persian authority's attitude towards the Kurds was shown even much stronger. Thus there was not such a Kurdish question in the Kurdistan part belongs to Persia (Bayat 2008). This tells us that the Kurdish question will come out when one of these empires ends or losses her power in the area. So the Kurdish real question came over when the Ottoman Empire was ended in the end of the First World War. Subsequently, the first question about the Kurds "was aired for the first time and focused upon

whether the Kurds should be granted an independent state, or whether it would be more beneficial – from the perspective of the imperial powers – to incorporate them into other states dominated by other peoples"(Stanford, 2006). And then the Kurds participated in the peace conference in Paris 1919 this was the first time for the Kurds to be talked by great powers, with the assistance of the British authorities (Elphinston 1946)

Bearing in mind that in this research using the term of Kurdish issue or Kurdish question, to some extent are different from the Kurdish problems in regional framework through the history of the Kurds. It means that their problems through history dates back to a long time ago with local authorities such as Ottoman and Persian empires. However the Kurdish question as mentioned in the previous paragraphs has come over after the First World War that means international powers differentiates the Kurds from the other nationalities by race or geographical position (Maunsell 1901). In this respect the Kurdish issue could be examined in two main perspectives, one is in the viewpoint of the Kurd and their historical and political circumstances. The next approach is in the British perspective in the form of international discourse.

In terms of the Kurds this issue was there as long as the local powers disputing the Kurd's national rights through the Kurdish modern history in one hand. Nonetheless, more possibly since the Kurdish nationalism has appeared for the first time can be accounted as a starting point of Kurdish Issue in the Kurd's point of view. as the Kurdish nationalism appeared in the late of nineteenth century started with the uprising led by Sheikh Ubaydallah Nahri in 1880 who desired to establish an independent Kurdistan which his movement soon failed by 1883 (Olson, 1989, p.2). Yet, the Kurds were still remained under a tribal system till 1918 (McDowall, 1996, p.15) that could affect the Kurdish integrity and even the Kurdish issue to be left behind.

There could have been several reasons that affected the Kurdish integration. The absent of the Kurdish national awareness could also lead a kind of drawback to the Kurdish issue. In this respect it can be asked that how the Kurds individuals known about their nationality or how they thought of independency. Answering this question may reach to the value of the Kurdish issue in the Kurds thinking about themselves. The most proper answer might be that, although it was a starting period of the Kurdish intellectuality such as pressing 'Kurdistan Newspaper' then forming Kurdish National Committee in 1908, there were a few of the Kurds who were intellectual or literate and those were mostly the leaders of the tribes, religious men or Kurdish notable families such as Badirkhan's sons (Elphinston 1946). Nonetheless, the rest of the other did not have a chance of being literate so their desires were very limited in terms of self-determination consciousness which was only demanding a better life, and no matter whoever rules them (Hay, 1921, p.39-40). The absent of literacy could be due to the Ottoman empire policy towards the Kurds for example, if we take a

quick look to a statistic of printing books in Kurdish it was in a very low position, as Malmisani(2006, p.17) reports that "As far as I have managed to find out the number of books published in Kurdish since 1844 until the announcement of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 is about 20. All these books were published in Istanbul with the exception of one in Diyarbekir and another one in Cairo". Therefore, the Kurdish national awareness and political issue could be remained unprogressive due to the lack of literacy, which it was the time of many European nations to be created (Bayat 2008) so that the Kurds might understand those national movements and take advantage for their national cases.

Another problem could be that the Kurds were mostly tied to religion rather than their nationality as Dickson (1910) who were an English traveler in the early twentieth in Kurdistan emphasizes the higher domination of religious phenomenon than the nationality among people says that "In Turkey, people are known by their religion and not by their nationality". This would lead the Kurdish issue to remain in the religious form not nationality. Yet, the Turks denied the Kurdish issue even in the religious framework. This has clearly shown in the British sources in the Indian office presented the Turks' outlook to the religious leaders saying that the Kurds "suffered severely under the impositions of the government; while their religious leaders, to whom they hold with singular tenacity, were subjected to humiliation and extortion" (Indian Office 1920). In consequence, those problems related to the Kurds and regional powers could not raise the Kurdish issue. In addition, alternatively intervening the outdoor powers probably give a better improvement to the Kurdish issue.

In the British perspective about Kurdish issue it is clear that they were playing their policy in Mesopotamia in general for building a strong structure for their benefits and Kurdistan seriously was in the British plan to rule over it. Nonetheless, due to the lack of the Kurdish integration, the Kurdish question became controversial in a political context, but it was also extremely vague, because there was no real Kurdish representation to structure a Kurdish policy other than the tribes (Stansfield 2006). In addition, during the war the Kurds were still ruled by tribes. British colonels attempted to assess the Kurdish tribe's attitudes towards support for British forces, where Sykes (1916), commenting on telegrams from colonels, such as Marsh and Chernozuvof in June 1916, explained that "so far as I can ascertain after long study of Colonel Marsh and Chernozuvof's telegrams, it appears to me that the red patch on the accompany[ing] map gives the area of the friendly Kurds, the purple patch the area of violently hostile tribes". Furthermore, even if there was a Kurdish issue or a Kurdish political dispute, it would be mainly with the Ottoman government rather than Britain at the outbreak of First World War, because, the first political negotiation between the Kurds and British officers was during the war (Stansfield 2006)."

The political situation between the Kurds and Britain was mainly dependent on the attitude of the tribes. This is evident from British documents in the Indian office by Wilson & Bell (1920, p.44), stating "the political importance of our occupying Khaniqin, in order to maintain our interest and influence with the Kurdish tribes who were already well-disposed to us". Stansfield (2006, p.1) mentions that during the First World War there were pro-Ottoman and pro-British Kurdish political groups "With his pro-British credentials, Sheikh Mahmoud was identified by the British as being an ideal figure capable of keeping the Mosul Vilayet firmly under control". This was probably the outcome of the British attempts in pre-war time, to design the British policy in Kurdistan which would be an important starting point of the Kurdish question. It can be said that the British travellers had a key role in representing the Kurds' nationalism and identity in their writings and presenting them internationally.

As a result by illustrating the Kurdish political and cultural problems in international matters, then the Kurdish real question would be made up. Moreover, several years before appearing the real Kurdish question Britain played a great role in Kurdistan which may indirectly lead the Kurdish question to appear. This will be discussed in detail in the fourth part of this research.

3 - Reasons for British Interests in Kurdistan

There were several reasons for British motivations in Kurdistan, However the three main reasons of them could push the British interest much further which could increase the Kurdish issue to an international policy. Firstly, in the late nineteenth century onward there was a strong rivalry among great powers in Kurdistan such as, Britain, France, Russia and Germany, each one according to their interests tried to make their position stronger in the area. The struggle was mainly related to the economy particularly when oil discovered in Kurdistan in this way Britain interests were much stronger shown in Kurdistan (Ahmad: 1994, p.18). Kurdistan was also important for Britain as a buffer zone to keep its business road safe to reach to the east especially India as the largest consumer of British goods (Cohen: 1976, p.3). Therefore, the economic aspect was the main reason for Britain interests in Kurdistan, so this indicates that Britain had to deal with the Kurds and also interfere any problems related to Kurdistan this could increase the Kurdish issue by Britain.

The second reason for British attempts in Kurdistan related to the Ottoman Empire, Britain seriously tried to take down the Ottoman Empire most likely due to the worst policy of Abdul-Hamid in the outlook of Britain and Europeans (Hiller: 1983, p.2) in this way Kurdistan might be a strategic position for Britain to play its role against Ottoman Empire. Britain tried to depart Kurdistan from Ottoman Empire to keep Kurdistan under British forces in the framework of colonialism (Eskander 2000). This was not just raised the Kurdish

issue but also for the Kurds it meant a kind of autonomy. Because it is experienced that later on most of the British colonies became independence during the decline of British Empire (Marshall 1979). So the possibility of solving the Kurdish problems could be highly gained by external powers such as Britain but not regional such as Ottoman Empire.

Another reason was that Britain always proclaimed humanitarianism in international policy for protecting the minority's rights (Laycock 2009, p.2). They illustrated themselves seriously to help the minorities groups particularly those who were under the Ottoman Empire such as Armenian and Christians (Said 2003, p.191). The Kurds also should be included in those groups. Principally this might not to help the Kurds, but to build up a sort of British power in the area to keep their interests. However, this could indirectly raise the Kurdish issue that Britain admitted a reality about the Kurds that their rights were abused by a local authority.

Regarding to the British policy, it is clear that Britain alike other European countries significantly gave priority to keep their interests before any other authorities. As a result, whoever authority matches with British interests there could be a kind of ally made between them, otherwise there might not expected any support from Britain. Hence, in terms of the Kurds it cannot be said that Britain was a Kurds' friend or enemy. However there could be clarified by conducting a research that what were the main points to gather Britain and the Kurds together because, in the early twentieth century until the end of the Ottoman Empire the relationship between the Kurds and Britain was well pretended, as Kurdistan such an important position in British policy towards not only the Ottoman Empire but also the other western powers in the Middle East such as Russia and Germany, to establish a British hegemony over there against them (Ahmed 1994, p.23). Moreover, there were plenty of the British attempts done with the Kurds which means Britain motivated to stay with the Kurds, of course to preserve their own interests. Those British attempts will be discussed in the following section as a core part of this research in the way of how the British activities participated to raise the Kurdish issue.

4 - British Attempts in Kurdistan

During the early twentieth century there were several crucial British attempts could be seen in Kurdistan. They were quite important for Britain to control the area under their sovereignty, also more significant for the Kurds who were still not well recognized in the international discourse. Hence, those attempts might increase the Kurdish political issue with their own identification. Some elements as a clear signal that could identify the Kurds has been undertaken in the British attempts in Kurdistan such as drawing a geographical map of Kurdistan and so on, which will be addressed in the following parts of this paper.

4-1. Creating Geographical Map of Kurdistan

One of the most significant steps of British activities in Kurdistan was the geographical concentration which drew a detailed map of Kurdistan with the most recent technology in the late nineteenth and then early twentieth century. A British colonel and also an experienced geographer called F. R. Maunsell created the map of Kurdistan within two different periods and published in the Royal geographical Society journal the first map published in 1894 with a significant explanation and describing Kurdistan which is about ten pages (Maunsell, 1984). The next map was in 1901 (See Figure 1&2) with extended data and added some extra potential information to it in twenty pages (Maunsell, 1901). Later on by 1908 another British geographer also drew another map of Kurdistan and provided some important information on the geography of Kurdistan added to the Maunsell's works (Dickson, 1908). These works on Kurdistan covers a body of information about geography, history, politics and many aspects of the inhabitants in Kurdistan. The tied the Kurds to a geographical position as their own land in this regard Maunsell (1901, p.121) describes Kurdistan that "Kurdistan is but a geographical expression for the country inhabited principally by Kurds, and is spread over several administrative provinces of the Turkish empire, ranging along the Persian frontier up to the Trans-Caucasus and west to the borders of Asia Minor". If those maps had been done purposely by Britain, there could also be very useful for the Kurds particularly in political perspectives. Because, nor the Kurds were able to create a kind of that map by themselves neither regional powers would allowed them doing so. Moreover, the Kurds are accounted as the original people of this land. Focusing on the main point here, that in which way this British attempt in Kurdistan raised the Kurdish issue.

It is obvious that a geographical position is a starting stage for any nation to be built up, and is one of the most important elements of a group of people to be recognized furthermore it is also the main purpose for foundation of new countries (Chang, 2010). For a long time the Kurds land divided between two powers Ottoman and Persian empires therefore, the Kurds and their land were recognized as parts of those empires (Malla 2005, p.23-24). In the beginning of the twentieth century onwards Britain strongly involved in Mesopotamia's policy, including Kurdistan (Eskander 2000). Creating a geographical map of Kurdistan seriously accounted the most vital British attempts in Kurdistan in the way of raising the Kurdish issue. Because, according to historical point of view and also British policy in the area, to some extent Britain tried to collect as many information as possible on Kurdistan some before the First World War (O'shea 2007). in this regard Britain had a clear vision to build up a political territory in Kurdistan, in other words, Britain was thinking to establish a new colony in Kurdistan under the British control in

colonialism system as the main policy of Britain in that period(Eskander 2007). Moreover, certainly Britain similar to the other European countries expecting the fall of the Ottoman Empire, in the British perspective if an event like that come to reality then a political space will be remained with no real authority except the Kurdish tribal system. Hence, before the other western powers take advantage and control Kurdistan as a buffer zone Britain seriously and quickly took her steps towards Kurdistan and started several preparations, one of them was the map of Kurdistan (Figure 1&2), in this respect Britain showed herself as the owner of an issue of a people living in that geographical position rather than any other western powers particularly German and Russia (Eskander 2007) as mentioned before there was a great rivalry between them. Consequently, the Kurdish issue would be more recognized as a subject of debate in international policy.

The most important geographical information in the British traveler works as geographers could be that, wherever they went through they recorded a various types of information such as names of places, mountains, rivers, valleys, streams, even watersheds and springs, and so on. They also reported the distances between them by miles and showed the heights of most of the mountains, hills, plants and lowers of valleys which were measured by feet above sea-level. Moreover, the fertility of the Kurdistan land and agriculture circumstances were extensively explained for example it is recorded that "There is first the plain country of the Tigris basin, especially on the left bank, extending to Mosul and the Great Zab River, which grows fine wheat crops and, where irrigated, maize, millet, cotton, and hemp" (Maunsell 1894, p86). This kind of information also was given to other parts of Kurdistan where the British experts visited to, and then they have portrayed beautiful sights and views of Kurdistan and even a kind of Kurdish culture, by photography (Dickson 1910). The main argument here is that there were a plenty of hard works conducted in various geographical aspects in Kurdistan by Britain which means the Kurd's land was important to be undertaken in the view of Britain as the most powerful authority in the area. Because they faced many difficulties in Kurdistan to collect this information in this regard Maunsell (1894, p92) claims the difficulties he went through that "From Suleimania I returned to Baghdad.....Travelling in this country is almost entirely done on horseback; in fact, there is no other way of getting over these rough mountain roads."

Having said that Britain has paid a great attention to the geography of Kurdistan in the early twentieth century, for the Kurds in that period was very vital to become a subject of discussion by western countries, because in that period the Kurds were not well recognized by others in terms of their nationality and geographical boundary. This indicates that the Kurds later on would become a part of any political changes made by Britain or the other western powers in

the region which means if any issue appears and the Kurds definitely would be a part of it.

4-2.Starting an Extensive Discussion on Kurdistan by British politicians

In the British recording by the early twentieth century there was a significant and special discussion started by British scholars and high leveled politicians, about Kurdistan which should be undertaken necessarily to address the Kurdish issue. This discussion has been made as a result of collecting much information on Kurdistan and their people by British officers mostly those, who were in charge in the region. More importantly those collections were not simply some information but also they are widely a body of researches about Kurdistan and most of them were published in the journal of British Royal Geographical Society. One of the most vital indications that related to the Kurdish issue is that those discussions were highly specialized to the Kurds themselves and their country which directly described their aspects. Because the titles they used for those works were under the name of Kurdistan for instance, the following titles were used such as 'Central Kurdistan: Discussion', 'a journey in Kurdistan: Discussion', and 'Kurdistan: Discussion' (Trotter & Maunsell 1910, Mason 1919, Howorth et al. 1894).

Those works are compounded an intensive discussion about what the officers conducted in Kurdistan, they have recorded various aspects about Kurdistan such as, the most important were the Kurd's history, ethnic groups, minorities, culture and religions, geography, borders and also geology (Mason 1919). Things that can significantly be undertaken in the British outcome of politicians were that all of them worked quit hard and intensively, because, the British president participated in those works and gave his own conclusion to any of reports conducted by British political officers or colonels, which sometimes through an organized debate. The president highly appreciated their results, at the same time criticizing them that they had to work even harder to reach those consequences that they expected to. They also demonstrate their attempts quit warmly because, they tried to highlight insufficiency in their previous works, to gain better results later on in Kurdistan as a strategic place. They seemed to build a colony in Kurdistan similarly as they put their efforts forward to colonize the other countries such as India or Egypt (Percy & Maunsell 1901). The most vital indication here is that there could be seen a sort of celerity in the British political strives in Kurdistan to stable their authority. In the way that Kurdistan was a very important position to play their political roles. Hence, these steps of Britain could also to push the Kurdish political issue more forward most likely to be another British colony. Moreover Kurdistan was in the Britain's plan in a deep intention amongst the other places in Mesopotamia. As Arnold

Wilson a British ruler in Iraq admitted that "a number of the most able Britons had been working particularly in the center of Arabian Peninsula, Kurdistan, south western and north western Iran, and in the Gulf" (Ahmed 1994, p. 25). If Britain could progress any Kurdish authority under their control or a colony indeed for their political benefits there, it would be a great chance for the Kurds to step forward and probably kept away from regional powers. Then Britain showed her interest to build a kind of autonomy for the Kurds (Eskander 2000) firstly in the pre-war period the first official contact happened between Britain and the Kurds by Major E. M. Noel to start negotiations with the Kurds and he visited to southern Kurdistan to appoint Sheikh Mahmoud as a British representative of Sulaimanyah (Stansfield 2006). As a result this is a very important stage of increasing the Kurdish issue which could have been come out from those discussions made up by most effective British politicians in Kurdistan during the early twentieth century.

4-3. Increasing in the Number of British Travelers in Kurdistan

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century overseas visitors have produced travel writings about Kurdistan. However, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are assumed to be the most prominent period in the history of the Kurds, in terms of European travel writers and their investigations (O'shea 2007). Several reasons, both internal and external factors, account for European scholars, and British scholars in particular, being in this region, and "British sources are full of original documents on the interest of the great powers in Kurdistan" in the early twentieth century (Ahmed 1994, p.12). In addition, Britain among the other western countries had a keener interest in Kurdistan (O'shea 2007). They would probably write according to their field experience or their line of work. For example, officers could be writing about politics, whereas others might be interested in the sights or possibly culture and life, thus the history of the Kurds would have emerged in different shapes and forms through travel writing. The purpose of this section is not to go beyond a deep description of all travellers in Kurdistan, but to find out how increasing in the number of those travellers raised the Kurdish issue.

The indication here is that during the pre-war decades, it was a prominent period of British travelling in Kurdistan. Some writers have differentiated the works of independent travellers and politicians so it is essential to discuss about these two types of travellers to be better distinguished. For example, according to Stansfield's statement who wrote about the Kurdish question, saying that the "British travellers did not adopt the role of politicians in Kurdistan" (2006, p.1). Thus it would be hard to discuss the political circumstances via British travellers. It is also seemed that the British travellers in Kurdistan provided much information to the British authority, and then later helped to design a Britain policy in the region to investigate how to deal with

Kurdistan. Moreover, the process of British travellers almost ended with the outbreak of the Great War. Mason (1919) comments that, the latest British traveller was 'Rev. W. A. Wigram' in 1914 in Kurdistan; this signifies that for Mason, perhaps the traveller accounts were different to the others such as the political, which means travelling was a process that had a starting point and an end.

In contrast, British scholars in any form or under any name such as travellers, Orientalists, or politicians, the majority of them had a strong tie to the British Government, because the works of them were related to the British imperialism procedure. Colonialism could have potentially had a role in increasing in the number of British travellers, linked to the expansion of the British Empire. For example, when the British control reached somewhere in Arabia, such as Egypt or Iraq, the number of travel writings gradually rose, but when the British authority later receded, the travellers' tales and travelogues decreased. This is because a great number of those travellers were colonial administrators, military officers, spies, intelligence officials, and missionaries (Canton 2011, p.2). This formulation can be applied for Kurdistan as well, when the British motivations highly increased, particularly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (O'Shea 2007). During this period the process of imperialism was being implemented and this had a significant role in serving and developing the process of travel writings. As Canton (2011, p.2) reports, "the very nature of travel in Arabia for British travellers was tempered by Britain's imperial presence. Even apparently independent travellers often used the existing structures of imperialism to frame their Journey". For the Kurds as a minority it can be said that imperialism and the minorities question had a strong relation to each other, because minorities were highly subjected in the colonialism process with their desires often being neglected, so that they would accept another authority as a better solution for their future.

This could be the most significant sign of the British travellers which related to raise the Kurdish issue during the early twentieth century the number of those travellers highly increased compare to earlier periods even after the First World War. So a body of research has been produced that represents Kurdish history in several different ways throughout their works. British scholars more or less described Kurdistan in their own way according to their needs or their type of research, representing Kurdistan and Kurds as a minority based on the existing situations at that time This takes us to also deal with this point in the concept of Orientalism. Meanwhile, exploration and information gathering in these regions had been approached by Orientalists, with their works as Mackenzie (1995, p.xii) states that those works basically covering "the study of the languages, literature, religions, thought, arts, and social life in order to make them available to the west, even in order to protect them from occidental cultural arrogance in the age of imperialism". The interesting point here is that

reasons appeared for British scholars to research in this area, including Kurdistan, via both the reformation in the Ottoman Empire and the minorities' question. This lends credence to a structure of so-called Orientalism which allowed the Europeans the ability to manage the Orient that eventually the European culture was able to rule and even interfere in the Orient businesses; politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-enlightenment period (Mackenzie 1995, p.3). Among the Europeans who had a longer tradition with Orientalism were the French and the British (Said 1979, p.1). Moreover, some of those British scholars travelled to Kurdistan and wrote about the region. This, to some extent, completes the scope of Said's Orientalism and presents the same perspective as other travellers thought in other places in the Middle East, such as Balfour during the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. For the British Orientalists the survival of Western civilisations was important. Said argues that European people believed that the East were not able to run themselves or to maintain the survival of their civilisations by themselves, so the Europeans were an alternative process enabling them to do that and would carry the responsibility for governing the western territories, using their knowledge. As Said (1979, p.32) also claims that "To have some knowledge of such a thing is to dominate it, to have authority over it, and authority here means for "us" to deny authority to it". Although, Great Britain tried to rule over Kurdistan, the British travelogue process in Kurdistan by any means, pushes them to show the Kurdish civilization, history, culture, alongside the political issues in Kurdistan so that the Kurds as a minority people became a subject of discourse. Then the Kurd's issue would be recognised in a better form in international policy.

There can be undermined two specialities in the British travel accountings that makes this period more prominent of the Kurdish history than before. One could be that before when they travelled to the area they mostly named Kurdistan as parts of either Persian or Ottoman empires lands. For example, some travellers named Kurdistan as Persian Kurdistan such as Walter Harris (1895, p.457). For instance he claimed that "of all the towns I saw of my travels, Sinna the capital of Persian Kurdistan, is the most charming." Other travellers might identify Kurdistan as a part of the Ottoman Empire. Although Kurdistan is comprised of the two great provinces Musel and Diarbakir (Sykes 1908), however, in the early twentieth century the term of Kurdistan became the main topic of their political reports as has been mentioned in the previous section of this paper.

The second speciality is that the varieties of the British travellers at that period were politicians and military officers in a high position rather than independent travellers, and they had a strong connection to the British government (O'shea 2007). Therefore when they talked about Kurdistan or the Kurds the Kurdish political issues might be wider undertaken than the other subjects

4-4. The Kurds' Ethnicity in the View of the British Politicians and Travellers

Britain has paid a great attention to the ethnic groups in Kurdistan in that period. For the purpose of better examining this study case, the Armenian question is taken as example under the British attention compare to the Kurds in the British view. This is to figure out how Britain represented the Kurds by race and ethnicity. For this section the theory of Jo Laycock is extensively used who exploring the minorities race and discusses the Armenian circumstances in the British policy and British attention.

In this respect one important point to be mentioned is that the British travellers attempted to define nations by race, as an important element of classification at this time. Jo Laycock (2009, p.53) reports that "by the late nineteenth century 'race' had become a primary method of classifying and comparing the human diversity encountered through implicit expansion". Travellers also used 'race' as a tool for identifying the boundaries of nationalities, and this would be much more important for scholars, particularly in a country which different nationalities lived in, for example the boundary between the Kurds and those around them. Maunsell (1894) wrote that:

"It is only in Southern Kurdistan that the population is exclusively Kurdish, as north of Mosul there is a large Christian population in the country as well. These are of various sects, but principally Armenians, Nestorians, Chaldeans, and Jacobites. To the north and north-west the Kurdish element comes in [to] contact with the more lethargic races of Osmanli descent, and in the Tigris Valley they meet the Arab tribes of the great deserts to the south-west"(p.81).

However, it can be asked whether British travellers represented the Kurds' image via the Armenian question, or whether they viewed the Kurdish issue as a separate discourse. Armenia came to the forefront of the British view in the late nineteenth century. This was probably due to the series of massacres which had been made against Armenians, and also due to the identification of boundaries of civilisation between east and west by national, racial, and religious categories (Laycock 2009, p.55). So, perhaps Britain attempted to keep this boundary safe and simultaneously protect Armenians from the atrocity. It can probably be said that the relationship between the Kurdish and British grew as a result of recognising the boundary between east and west; hence the Kurds frontier would automatically be recognised. It is clear that for a long time the Armenians and the Kurds were mixed together and they have had political similarities particularly against the Turks (Elphinston 1944). So, the race and ethnicity could play a great role to differentiate them to each other in the westerners view. Laycock (2009, p. 54) explained that "racial categories provided a framework for the conceptualisation of difference and 'otherness' ...

Thus in the Armenian case, the concept of race played a key role in differentiating them from their Turkish and Kurdish neighbours". This was a basic method of travellers in representing nationalisms, including the Kurds. For instance, when Sykes (1908, p.451) represented a number of the Kurdish tribes, his work relied on the Kurdish race for categorising those tribes, in that he claimed "in preparing the following list of the various tribes of the Kurdish race I have endeavoured to simplify the work of future students by marking down and cataloguing as many of the tribes as have come either directly or indirectly under my notice". Thus Sykes was able to identify the Kurds tribes and classify them by using their race. Nonetheless, there were other sects where it was still unclear whether they were originally Kurds or not. Sykes (1908, p.453) commented that "the question as to whether these Nestorian Christians of Hakkari, who have a tribal organization, are indigenous Kurds or fugitive Christians of Aramean[sic] stock, is I think still open". Thus, this suggests that when the British travellers refer to 'race', this as a concept is not sufficient to capture the human diversity and different ethnic groups that they see around them. In exchange for that purpose, they considered the term of ethnicity. This was important for travellers to classify various nationalities and religious sects as well, in particular in Kurdistan that had the oldest civilisation. For example, Judi's mountain, which was a holy place for different religious sects for pilgrimage, and British travellers, journeyed to this place. Dickson (1910) described it as a local place for different factions when travelling there in the early twentieth century, saying that:

"I should think the local tradition had the greatest element of truth; there is a large Ziarat (Zijurat or sanctuary) at the top of Jebel Judi, where every year in August is held a great fete attended by thousands of energetic Moslems, Christians, and Yezidis, who climb the steepest of trails for 7000 feet in the terrific summer's heat to do homage to Noah"(p.358).

In terms of the Kurds and Armenians, the history of the relationship between them in regard to civilisation dates back to ancient times, when for the first time people landed on the Judi's mountain from the prophet Noah's Ark. In this respect, Laycock used the term 'cradle of civilisation' for Armenians, meaning they have an attachment to Europe. Travellers also tied Armenians to Europeans by their race and religion, as the majority of them were Christians (Laycock 2009, p.56). In addition, probably the same conditions can be assumed for the Kurds and European civilisation. British scholars mention the sights of western civilisation in Kurdistan for example Bell (1911, p.298) explored a sight in Shakh in Diarbaker province, and imagined that "it marks the triumph of a European civilization, and its prototypes are to be sought not among the bearded divinities and winged monsters of Assyria, but in the work of Western sculpture."

Moreover, the origin of the Kurds is Indo-European(Forbes & Toynbee 1915 p.386-387), and British scholars mentioned this relationship between the English and Kurdish languages. In this regard the Guardian Newspaper recorded the words of Dr Mingana, who talked about his investigation of the Kurdish language, saying that "In performing this duty I noticed that many Kurdish words were almost similar to their English equivalent"(Mingana1911).The Armenian origins are also Indo-European, which presents a connection between the British and Armenians. In this regard, Laycock (2009, p.58) states that "in the popular imagination, the state of the Armenians as Indo-Europeans created the impression of similarity between the British and the Armenians". Thus, according to this statement, the Kurds and Armenians have the same tie to Western civilisation and to some extent their race. This probably increased the possibility for the Kurds to be a part of Western regimes or to be considered by British and European scholars. This link may have encouraged British travellers to journey to Kurdistan and to explore it which could serve the Kurdish political and cultural issues. Additionally, the British saw Armenia as an ambiguous country located in the borderland between east and west. As clarifying the frontier between east and west was an issue, it may have been that as a neighbour of Armenia, Kurdistan was included in this ambiguity (Laycock 2009, p.84) .

On the other hand, there were several diverse points between the Kurds and the other peoples of Western Asia, the British politician such as Bryce put upon them; among these differences was the Armenian superior civilisation which was probably more familiar to the west than the others. There was clearly a similarity of race with the Europeans, and they were the first nation to adopt Christianity, which would be an interesting point in the western view (Boxton1914, p.xi). As a result, the Armenian case was different from those of other Western Asian minorities, including the Kurds, in the view of Europeans in general and Britain in particular.

Another important point in the British work was the complex balance of Armenia's community between religion and nationality in the creation of the Armenian nation. This is probably due to deciding the future of the Armenian nation; whether to be a religious or national community (Laycock 2009, p.52).

Britain used this method of identification in Kurdistan as well, as way of identifying the various religious groups and the domination of religions and nationalities in the Kurdish Community. Dickson (1910, p.360) points out that in several districts in Kurdistan, such as Arnos Malat and Harki Oramar, "Like most other parts of Turkey, these districts are inhabited by races of varying nationalities and religious denominations, each separate village maintaining its own characteristics independent of its next-door neighbour." Dickson, as a British traveller, Politician and also geographer, only gives a description of the religious proportion and diversity, and does not point out its reasons and how

this affected the Kurds' nationalism. Additionally, in this regard, Buxton gives a similar opinion (Buxton 1914, p.9). In any way it can be thought that this is further evidence of Brittan's attention to creating nations.

Furthermore, it can be said that the Armenian question paved the way for the Kurdish question. However, the process of British investigations in Kurdistan seemed to go further in representing a Kurdish nationalism. The observations which were made by the British authorities and scholars not only included one aspect of the Kurdish life to be represented, but also included almost entire elements that symbolise a country or a nation and allow them to be identified or recognised. This can be great step for showing up the Kurdish issues. This can be clear when looking for any implication of Said's Orientalism, showing that identifying the orient with the west was based on several distinctions between them as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social disruption, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs 'mind' destiny and so on (Said 2003, p.2-3). Thus, even though the British travellers and scholars did not directly or formally represent a Kurdish nation, several stated the borderland of Kurdistan and its geographical height, and the depth and historical symbols to suggest an identifiable Kurdish country. Maunsell (1901, p.140) claimed that "Such is a description of a portion of Central Kurdistan, fascinating in the grandeur of its wild gorges, grey cliffs, and oak-clad slopes, the home of the Kurds, the direct descendants of the Karduchii, who hurled rocks on Xenophon's troops."

The most notable suggestion in the British works of creating a Kurdish nation, or at least thinking about it as a first step, was the creation of a map of Kurdistan and a wide discussion had been made among scholars on central Kurdistan. This had been published in the *British geographical Journal*, as it has been mentioned in a previous section. In addition, this comprised a representation of Kurdish nationalism, which was important for the Kurds, while the emergence of Kurdish nationalism was in its early stages.

British scholarly attempts represented the Kurdish costumes, peoples, habits, and women's lives, and the differences between groups of people to another one amongst tribes (Sykes 1908, p.454). There are numerous descriptions by travellers on the Kurds' ethnicity and traditions among different groups. One more example is shown by Bell (1911, p.271) who said that "the Yezidi, being of Kurdish race, do not differ in appearance from the rest of the population except in one particular of their attire: they abhor the colour blue and eschew it in their dress...and their women are mostly clothed in dark-red cotton garments." British travellers represented the Kurds in the sense of identifying their country borders, and as different from others in regard to culture and identity

As a result, in the Armenian case travellers used the term 'race' but not for the case of Kurdistan. They would use the term 'ethnicity' instead, to indicate

that Kurdish identity stems from their cultural differences and sense of self-hood - rather than any difference in their biology or blood. In this way a Kurdish self-image emerged during this period to a greater extent than before. An indication here is also that the relationship between the Kurds and British was certainly made via travellers and most of them at the same time were politicians, who widely investigated Kurdistan and who also put their investigation results and information about the Kurds on paper to their readers. In the traveller's view, there cannot be clearly noted a Kurdish Question in a political context compared to the Armenian case. However, the British travel writing represented various aspects of Kurdish history, including political aspects and simultaneously according to their investigations it seemed they attempted to structure a Kurdish country, whether independently or as a colony. One instance was the creation of the map of central Kurdistan.

Moreover, they demonstrated that in Kurdistan there were different nationalities, minorities, and religious sects even among the Kurds, and that having different groups had a backward effect on the Kurdish nationalism, particularly for the tribal leaders and religious groups. Therefore they used race and religious-national elements when dealing with Kurdistan, in a similar way to how they approached Armenia. However, there were also differences; the biggest difference is that the way in which Kurds were described as tribal meant that they were less likely to be viewed as a nation than the Armenians, who were assumed to have greater unity owing to their shared Christianity. Thereafter, the British travellers as the British government representatives had a great role in showing the Kurds ethnic by race different from the others, which could bring the Kurdish issue in a greater political discussion.

5 – Conclusion

To sum up, the role of Britain in Kurdistan in the early twentieth century has been discussed in this paper, in the way of affecting the Kurdish political and national issues to be rising by British attempts in Kurdistan. Nonetheless, several aspects of the Kurds' history and British authorities have been shown, like the appearance of the Kurdish question and the British interests in Kurdistan. Hence, there have been several outcomes of this research the most important is that; the Kurdish history at that period was very controversial in terms of their nationality and political issues. Kurdistan had been paid a great attention by western powers particularly Britain.

In this regard the most important result is that, the rule of Britain was getting much stronger in Kurdistan, so Britain played a great role in Kurdistan to raise the Kurdish issue through their efforts done in Kurdistan. One is the drawing a map of Kurdistan, which for the Kurds in that period was very vital, because the Kurds' were not well recognized by others in terms of their

nationality and geographical boundary. This indicates that the Kurds later on would become a part of any political changes made by Britain or the other western powers in the region. Another attempt was that Kurdistan became a subject of discussion by British travellers and politicians. This increased the Kurdish issue in the way that Kurdistan and the Kurds had been described by British Politicians under their real names as the Kurdish ethnic is different from the others around. Then that period in Kurdistan was the most significant period for incurring in the number of British scholars, travellers and political recordings. So The Kurds' political situations and cultural elements were getting more recognized. Lastly, the Kurdish ethnicity and race was a warmly subject of British attentions. Those efforts of Britain increased the Kurdish issue, and then as a result of those attempts the real Kurdish question had been made up by 1918, which was evidently the establishment of the first Kurdish government.

Another important result is that, in terms of Britain's policy towards the Kurds it has been find out that Britain was neither the Kurdish enemy nor friend, but also Britain's authorities tried to keep their interests in the area as a whole and in Kurdistan in particular. Therefor this needs to be applied for the Kurd-Britain relationship even for the present. So it can be suggested that it is better for the Kurds policy's future to rely on western powers and go with their interests, Britain as an example than the regional powers such as Turks, Persians or Arabs.

Another outcome of this paper is that, there was not a real Kurdish representative other than tribes which affected the Kurdish integration in one hand. Moreover, the various sects of religious aspectswere superior to nationalities in the Kurdish political perspectives on the other hand.The way in which Kurds were described as tribal for Britain meant that they were less likely to be viewed as a nation than for example the Armenians, who were assumed to have greater unity owing to their shared Christianity.

Finally, although British attempts played a great role in increasing the Kurdish issue in the early twentieth century, it did not bring a successful end to the Kurds' desires later on. This is because of, firstly, the weakness of the Kurdish national awareness, and the lack of literacy, next the religious domination then the tribal system. These all together affected the Kurds unity and integration.

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رۆلی بهریتانیا له بهرزکردنهوهی پرسی کورد له سههرهتاکانی سهدهی بیستم

پوخته:

له سههرهتاکانی سهدهی بیستم، بهریتانیای گهواره له نێو هیزهکانی رۆژئاوا دا دمووریکى گرنگی گێراوه له کوردستان، وه زیاتر له ههموو هیزهکانی تر ئارمژوووی خۆی پیشانداده بهتایبهتی له بهشی کوردستانی ژێر دهسهلاتی عوسمانی. وه لهوسهردمهدا چهند بارودۆخیکى سیاسى گرنگ له ئارادا بوون، وهك ململانێی ئههروپیهکان بۆ جیگیرکردنی دهسهلاتی خۆیان له ناوچهکه، ههروهها لاوازکردنی دهسهلاتی عوسمانیهکان بهلام ئهم ئیکۆلینهوهیه به گرنگیهوه دموهستیته سههر رۆلی بهریتانیا له بهدمرخستنی پرسی کورد. ئهوهی دیاره ئهوهیه که پرسی کورد به تهواوی راستهوخۆ له دواى جهنگی جیهانی یهکهه هاته ناو گفتوگۆی نێودموهلتی. لێره دا دمووری بهریتانیا دهکرێ دیاری بکریت زیاتر له ریکهه ههولێهکانیان له کوردستان له پێش جهنگهکه. که لهوانهیه هۆکار بێت بۆ بهدمرخستنی کیشهی کورد. گرنگترین ههولێهکانی بهریتانیاش ئهمانه بوون. یهکهه: دروستکردنی نهخشهه جوگرافیاى کوردستان. دووهه: ئههجامدانى گفتوگۆیهکی گرنگ

سەبارەت بە کوردستان و بلاوکەردنەومیان ئە جۆرنائى "جوغرافیای شاهانەى بەریتانى" سێیەم: بەرزبۆونەى ژمارەى لیکۆلەر و رۆژەهەڵاتنەسەکانى بەریتانى ئە کوردستان. چوارەم: گەرنەگیدان بە مەسەلەى نەژاد و خێلەکانى کوردستان. ئەم هەولانەى بەریتانیا گەفتۆگۆکراوە ئەم لیکۆلینەویدیە بۆ ئەوەى رۆلێ بەریتانیا دیاری بکەیت ئە کوردستان. وە دەرئەنجامێکى سەرەکی ئەم لیکۆلینەویدیە ئەوەیە کە هەرچەندە بەریتانیا بۆ قازانجى خۆى کارى کردووە ئە کوردستان، ئە هەمانکاتدا بۆتە هۆى بەرزکردنەوێ پرسى کورد، کە دەکرا کورد ئە داواکاریە سیاسییەکانیاندا بەشیوەیەک هەنگاوى نابا کە ئەگەر بەرزووەندى بەریتانیا بگۆنجا.

وشە سەرەکیەکان: بەریتانیا، کوردستان، جەنکی جیهانی یەکەم، جوغرافیای سیاسى.

دور بریطانيا في اظهار القضية الكردية في بدايات القرن العشرين

الملخص:

كانت بريطانيا في بداية القرن العشرين واحدة من الدول الغربية العظمى، التي قامت بدورها المهم في كوردستان . حيث انها اثبتت ذاتها اكثر من الدول الاخرى بالاطمح بما يخص منطقة كوردستان تحت السلطات العثمانية . وفي ذاك الحين كان هناك بعض الاوضاع السياسية مثل منافسة الدول الاوربية في تثبيت قواتهم الخاصة في المنطقة واسقاط السلطات العثمانية. ولكن يدور اهمية هذا البحث حول دور بريطانيا في اظهار القضية الكردية . هنا يظهر لنا ان القضية الكردية دخلت في المناقشات الدولية مباشرة بعد الحرب العالمية الاولى. ويتضح اكثر تحديد دور بريطانيا عن طريق محاولاتهم في كوردستان قبل الحرب العالمية الاولى. حيث انه يعتبر سببا في اظهار القضية الكردية. ان اهم محاولات بريطانيا كانت . الاول : وضع الخريطة الجغرافية لكوردستان. الثاني : فتح مناقشة حول كوردستان ونشره في المجلة (جغرافية ملكية بريطانيا) الثالث : رفع اعداد الباحثين والمستشرقين البريطانيين في كوردستان الرابع: الاهتمام بمسألة العرق والعشائر الكردية. تم مناقشة هذا البحث حول دور بريطانيا المهم في كوردستان من خلال محاولاتهم. ان الاستنتاج الرئيسي في هذا البحث هو ان بريطانيا عملت لصالح مصالحها الشخصية في كوردستان وفي نفس الوقت كانت سببا في رفع المسألة الكردية . حيث كان من الافضل ان تنسجم المتطلبات القومية والسياسية للكورد اكثر مع المصالح البريطانية.

الكلمات الدالة: بريطانيا، كوردستان، الحرب العالمية الأولى، الجغرافية السياسية.