

The Impact Of The Peace Process On Four Kurdish Publishing Houses In Istanbul

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Introduction

It was almost three centuries after the invention of the first printing press when a prominent Ottoman diplomat introduced it to the Empire in 1727. It took yet another century to reach the Kurdish provinces such as the cities Bitlis in 1865, Diyarbakir in 1868, Van in 1889.[1] However, the central state allowed the publications to be exclusively in Turkish.

The declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy (Meşrutiyet) in 1908, created a relatively free environment. In the same year, Liceli Kurdîzâde Ahmed Ramiz and Mutkili Xelil Xeyali founded the first printing house in Kurdish in Istanbul.[2] Kurdish intellectuals, especially in Istanbul, continued to establish different associations where they published newspapers and magazines by it.

Kurdish nationalism following its precedents such as Armenian and Turkish nationalism was thriving following throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries when the age of empires was coming to an end. Printing activities including newspapers, magazines, and books were crucial in the building and spreading of the ideas of the Kurdish nation and nationalism during the

Ottoman period. Printing ideas was an ideal and novel way to reach the masses to raise national consciousness. Due to the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy, the activities of the press have increased among the educated Kurdish community living in Istanbul who were introduced with the ideas of nationalism before the Kurds living in the Kurdish provinces, afar from the Imperial capital.

According to Benedict Anderson, the printing press as communication technology has a positive impact on the new imagined national communities.[3] The role of the printing press in the development of social belonging and awareness is very important. The Kurdish intellectuals of that period were aware of this and tried to use the printing press as effectively as possible.

Even today, at the age of digital technologies, printing still plays an active role for people to access information about different geographies and people, the formation of national identity and the process of nation-building. In this article, I am aiming to show how the political fluctuations in the last decade affected the publishing policies of four Istanbul-based publishing houses (Nûbihar, Avesta, Aram, Vate) that played an important role in the reinvigoration and standardization of Kurdish language and identity. In this study, I analyze the four interviews I conducted with Kurdish book publishers in Turkey to show the relationship between armed conflict and state violence, and the book publishing sector. I find that during the most recent peace process between the representatives of the Kurdish liberation movement and the Turkish state, the Kurdish publishing activities increased and garnered positive public attention. However, toward the end of the failed peace process, the demand for both the Kurdish books and the books about the Kurds were negatively affected.

A Brief Historical and Conceptual Framework

Istanbul is a multi-cultural metropole and has always been a melting pot of different cultures. Harboring a rich cultural heritage also makes it the main hub of arts and literature in Turkey. Because of being an imperial capital for centuries many inventions including the printing press have first appeared in Istanbul. Even today, Istanbul has central importance for arts and publishing activity. The printing and publishing activities affected the Kurds like most of the nations who live in the Ottoman Empire. Since the end of the 19th century, Istanbul has been the center of Kurdish intelligentsia, diaspora, and their political and cultural activities. Indeed, the first Kurdish book was published in Istanbul in 1884. This book, *Divan* was written by famous Naqshbandi

Sheikh Mevlana Khalid.[4] The first Kurdish book, which was published in lunar calendar 1260 (1844), contains mostly Arabic and Persian poems along with several pieces written in Hawrami[5] dialect.[6] Mevlana Khalid's Divan was neither published in Kurdish printing house nor by Kurdish associations, interestingly; it was published by the state printing house. With the arrival of the ulama[7], the intellectuals and especially the Kurdish princes in Istanbul, albeit relatively late the Kurds started printing and publishing activities. Since the first Kurdish-language book published in Istanbul (1844) until the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey (1923) the number of Kurdish books published in the Arabic alphabet is twenty, according to Malmîsanij. Apart from the two of these books that were published in Diyarbakir, Cairo, and others were published in Istanbul.[8] The Kurdish books were published in other scripts than Arabic as well. One of these alphabets is the Armenian script. According to Malmîsanij, at least five copies of the Bible were published in the Kurdish language written with Armenian text between the years 1856-1911.[9]

According to Mesud Serfiraz, during the Ottoman rule, the Constitutional Monarchy periods were the times when journalism and publishing were most popular. Especially with the II. Constitutional Monarchy, the freedom of printing and the abolition of censorship are two important events that increased journalism and publishing activities. During this period, dozens of newspapers were published in a very short time, even the number of daily newspapers in Istanbul reached fifty.[10] But this freedom lasted the 31 March Incident.[11] After this incident, printing and publishing were again forbidden and censored. Many Kurdish media outlets such as newspapers and magazines were closed by the Committee of Union and Progress.[12] The ups and downs during the Constitutional Monarchy is a striking example of the ways political developments can affect press and publishing activities. In this article, I focus on the years 2013-2018 to show the impact of changes in the political sphere in Turkey on the Kurdish publishing houses, that continue publishing activities in Istanbul.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

According to Benedict Anderson, "the nation" is an imagined political community.[13] People's acceptance of its imaginary community, the development of the idea of nationalism and the construction of identity is possible through the adoption of the ideas and beliefs established within this framework to certain social groups with certain tools and institutions. As it is known, one of the most important of these tools is the publication of newspapers, magazines, and books, in brief, printing press.[14]

In this article, I will show how Kurdish publishers interacted with the macrostructural political developments of the last decade in Turkey. For my research, I conducted semi-structured interviews with representatives of the four Kurdish publishing houses (Nûbihar, Avesta, Aram, and Vate) who published books in the Kurmanci and the Kirmancki (Kirdki, Zazaki, Dimilki) dialects of Kurdish in Istanbul since the 1990s.

Speaking Kurdish in public spaces was the first banned Plan for Eastern Reform (Şark Islahat Planı) in 1925. The Constitution of 1982, which was prepared by the military junta after the September 12, 1980, military coup, use of Kurdish language in public spaces was banned constitutionally. On the one hand, however, Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partîya Karkerên Kurdistan – PKK), in particular, has begun an armed struggle, Kurdish propaganda and the establishment of Kurdish TVs in Europe and the publication of magazines and newspapers in the 90s, in other words, the resistance of Kurds and Kurdish to assimilation policies; on the other hand, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the acceleration of globalization with developing communication and transportation technologies, Turkey's acceptance of European Union criteria, etc., as a result of all these different local, regional and global factors, the Kurdish language ban at least officially lifted in 1992. With the lifting of the ban, Kurdish publishing activities started in Istanbul despite the actual difficulties and obstacles. In the 2000s, it can be said that the last decade has been a very important political development for the Kurds. Kurdish publishing was also affected by those. When I began to my research, the impacts of political developments between 2008-2018 in Turkey to the Kurdish publishing, I thought that these years – the intensification of the war between the state and the PKK between 2005-2012, the closure of Kurdish legal political parties, etc.- could be divided into more than one sub-period in parallel with the important developments. However, after the interview with the publishers, the only issue that these four different publishers, with different traditions and ideologies, shared and emphasized, in particular, was the peace process and its termination. Therefore, I changed the timeline of my research from the peace process between 2013-2015 and the end of the process between 2015-2018 in light of my informants, emphasis on the peace process, failed peace process and the aftermath. First, I will briefly present the adventure of Kurdish publishing, in the 1990 era. Then I will introduce the publishing houses and explain the peace process between Turkey and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). My final remarks will be about the impacts of the peace process on four Kurdish publishing houses in Istanbul.

Opening of the Political and Public Sphere to the Kurds and Kurdish

The opening of the legal political and public sphere to the Kurds and the Kurdish language in the 1990s and after 2000s can be evaluated through two main actors: State and non-state actors.

State

Some changes happened in the 1990s. One of those changes was the lift of a legal barrier in front of using the Kurdish language. Finally, the Law No. 2932 on Publications in Other Languages than Turkish, was repealed in 1991. Additionally, the year 1991 was a significant turning point in Kurdish language studies, the central state allowed the Kurds to speak their language in both private and public spaces.[15] These legal amendments accelerated the publishing of Kurdish books and periodicals. As a matter of fact, after the lift of the ban, Nûbihar (1992), Avesta (1995), Vate (1996), Aram (1997) and many other publishing houses were established and started to publish books in Kurdish. This situation directly affected the number of Kurdish books in the market. For instance, in 1990, while the number of Kurdish books published in Turkey was three, in 1991 the number increased to eighteen, in 1992 it reached thirty-eight. Although the ban was de jure lifted in the 1990s, Kurdish publishers were still being prosecuted in the 2000s and 2010s. In addition to the attempts of removing Kurdish sign-boards by suing, some books were prohibited such as Menaf Osman "Girê Şêran" (The Hill of the Lions) and Qahir Firat's "Gulên Azadiyê" (Roses of Freedom) from the Aram Publications.[16] These are some examples of practical prohibition. Moreover, thirteen books of Avesta Publishing were banned by the state officials in 2018.[17] Although the ban on the Kurdish language was lifted officially, it continued in practice.

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey approved the European Union (EU) Harmonization Package on August 3, 2002. The EU packages promised to reduce the barriers in front of the minority languages in Turkey such as Kurdish. After the publication of short-term broadcasts in other languages in Turkish Radio and Television (TRT), the official broadcasting organ of the Turkish state, TRT 6 (Şeş/Six)[18] started to broadcast only in Kurdish in 2008, therefore the Kurdish became more visible in the public sphere. With the positive atmosphere of the peace process, the name of the channel was changed to TRT Kurdish. One can interpret that the Turkish state opened a TV channel in Kurdish to reduce the influence of the Kurdish political movement's television and radio broadcasts from Europe. In other words, when the ban became unfunc-

onal, this was one way for the state to control the Kurdish media consumption in Turkey. In this aspect, it can be said that the state has a direct impact on the public visibility of the language.

The peace process was the period in which Kurdish was most visible in the public sphere and was directly reflected in the book publishing sector. Indeed, with the political and discursive softening of this period, Kurdish became more visible in the political and public sphere in practice. For instance, for the first time in the history of modern Turkey the department of Kurdish Language and Literature has opened in Mardin Artuklu University in 2011-2012 academic year to provide undergraduate education in Kurdish, and in 2012, the department of Zaza Language and Literature[19] was opened in Tunceli Munzur University. These departments have started undergraduate programs under the name of Living Languages Institute. Besides, with a decision taken in 2012, Kurdish was offered as an elective course for the 5th-grade primary students in public school. Another important step of the state was to publish Kurdish books in its own printing house. Turkey's Minister of Culture and Tourism published the most popular Kurdish book of Ehmedê Xanî's *Mem and Zin* with the Turkish translation in 2010. This was the first Kurdish book that was published by a governmental institution.[20] Turkish Language Institution published the Kurdish-Turkish dictionary for the first time in the history in 2014.[21] These show how crucial are the state practices for the public visibility of the Kurdish language.

Non-State Actors

Perhaps the most important actor in the opening of the political and public sphere to the Kurds and Kurdish is the post-1970 Kurdish movements, organizations, especially the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). As M. Malmisanij states, "The strengthening of the Kurdish national movement is an important factor affecting the Kurdish book publishing. The Kurdish organizations open cultural associations, institutions and publishing houses in proportion to their power, and publish the Kurdish books, newspapers, and magazines." [22] For instance, the development of Kurdish television such as Roj TV, Med TV in 1992, the opening of Kurdish language institutions in Europe and Turkey such as the Kurdish Institute of Paris in 1982, Kurdish Institute of Istanbul in 1992, Kurdi-Der in 2006, etc. These examples made the Kurdish ban de facto meaningless. During the 1990s, Kurdish and Turkish newspapers such as *Yeni Ülke* (1990), *Özgür Gündem* (1992), and *Azadiya Welat* (1994) were published by the Kurdish movement organization. During the same period, the resistant attitude of the Kur-

dish politicians and intellectuals despite high-risk threat positively affected the visibility of Kurdish in the public spheres. For instance, Vedat Aydın was elected as the head of the Diyarbakır Branch of the Human Rights Association (İHD) in 1990, he spoke Kurdish at the platform of the İHD General Assembly in Ankara on 28 October 1990 and was arrested for this reason. On 19 December 1990, Aydın was acquitted at his first trial. Vedat Aydın later became the chairman of the People's Labor Party (Halkın Emek Partisi, HEP) in Diyarbakır, and he was abducted and tortured to death by JITEM[23] on July 5, 1991.

Leyla Zana, one of the HEP deputies who entered the parliament with the 1991 general elections, spoke Kurdish after completing her deputy oath in the General Assembly of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) on 6 November 1991. She said in Kurdish, "I made this oath on behalf of the Kurdish and Turkish peoples." Thus, she has taken an important step against the Kurdish ban imposed by the 1982 Constitution.

In short, the pressures of the Kurdish liberation movement and political and civic organization have weakened the legal obstacles and de facto barriers to the use of Kurdish. In the following, I will introduce the peace process and the four Kurdish publishing houses, which have made significant contributions to the visibility of the Kurdish in the public sphere, I will also discuss the effect of the peace process and the discontinuity of the process in the context of the Kurdish publishers.

Peace Process (2013-2015)

The peace process between the representatives of the Kurdish liberation movement and the Turkish state, also known as the solution process, aimed to resolve the long-lasting ethnic conflict (1978-present). The conflict has been ongoing since 1984 and resulted in 40,000-100,000 casualties and great economic losses for Turkey as well as high damage to the Kurdish population. Although there was a unilateral ceasefire between 1999 and 2004, the side failed to comprise and the conflict became increasingly violent. The 2013 truce was working until September 2014. But when the relations became strained due to spillover of the Syrian Civil War; the truce fully collapsed in July 2015.[24]

All four publishers whom I interviewed stated that the solution process had a positive effect on themselves and the Kurdish language. Publishers were able to print and distribute books more easily and had a positive impact on many people and institutions, including Kurdish writers, poets, readers, distributors, and booksellers.

When we look at the table below, we can see the positive and negative effects of the peace process on Kurdish publishing through the years. The number of Kurdish books available on the market was 156 in 2012 when the peace process was publicly announced by the PKK and the state authorities and accepted by the society, in 2013 number of the books reached 224. The number of Kurdish books published in a year passed 200 for the first time. The reflection of the mutual positive steps of the actors had been direct and positive effects on Kurdish publishers. The year 2014 was the top year of the process and Kurdish publishing. More than 250 Kurdish books were published this year. With the end of the peace process in the second half of 2015, the number of Kurdish books decreased. The number of books has dramatically decreased. The number of books has dramatically decreased with the start of the urban warfare and curfews, when we look at the statistic of 2016 Kurdish books was published 190, and in 2017 the published book was 171. As the table below shows, there is a tragic decrease in the number of Kurdish books throughout the years that the peace process is over and the war has started again.

Nûbihar Publishing House

Nûbihar Publishing House was founded in March 1992 in Istanbul. Since October 1992, seven months after it was founded, the publisher began publishing the Nûbihar Magazine, which was consisted entirely of the Kurdish writings. The magazine is still published quarterly and it is the longest-termed magazine in Kurdish.

Süleyman Çevik, the founder of the Nubihar, stated that the publishing house aimed was to develop the Kurdish language and culture. He said, "We are a publishing house established as a reaction against the oppression of the Kurdish language and rejection against the existing state politics." [25] Indeed, the publisher takes its name from the "Nûbihara Biçûkan" a book by Ehmedê Xanî, one of the most important names of Classical Kurdish Literature, whose influence on the Kurdish language and culture is indisputable. Nûbihar means "new spring", in other words, "newroz" or new day. The publisher's motto is "Pira navbera do û îro" (The bridge between yesterday and today). It had published 277 Kurdish books until this date. The 149th issue of the Nûbihar Magazine was published in November 2019.

Besides, Nubihar is a publishing house which dominated by the Islamic aspect. The publishing house defines itself through two important sensitivities: Religion and nationality. Nûbihar, also published important books of Classical

Kurdish Literature and tried to publish these books both in Arabic and Latin alphabets. It published important classics by canonical Kurdish authors such as Ehmedê Xanî, Melayê Cizîrî, Feqîyê Teyran, Elî Herîrî, and Perto Begê Herkarî.

Süleyman Çevik observes that Kurdish book readers did not decrease during the crises such as the conflict-driven period of the 1990s, 28 February 1997 post-modern coup. However, after the end of the peace process, the number of Kurdish readers significantly decreased.[26] He also stated that the attitude of the state affected Kurdish readers and the policies of the state determined the distance of the readers with Kurdish books. He notes, "The resolution process affected our publishing positively, as it did Turkey in general. People bought and read Kurdish books comfortably during the peace process. They bought the books with the conviction that it is safe to do." [27]

In brief, after the infringement of the process, the number of distribution companies of Nûbihar decreased and the books were sent back from bookstores to publishing house. This has adversely affected the publisher and the readers and led to a further reduction in the number of readers.

Avesta Publishing House

Avesta Publishing House was founded in 1995 in Istanbul. Avesta is the name of the holy book of Zoroastrianism and means "explanatory information". Abdullah Keskin, the founder of the Avesta, stated that he founded Avesta to explain and understand Kurds', history, literature, arts, and cultures of Kurdish in their language. According to him "Avesta Publishing House is a cultural founding-preserving publisher." [28] He asserted that since the Kurds don't have a unified nation-state they lack the institutions and structures to preserve and pursue cultural production, he feels responsible to fulfill this responsibility as a publishing house. Keskin describes the Avesta as the first Kurdish publishing house established apart from the political movements - in the northern part of Kurdistan.

Avesta, which has a rich archive of books, has an important position in Kurdish publishing. Among its major publications are, Ehmedê Xanî's complete works, Kurdology series, Mesopotamian culture, social science, research and analysis, language studies, memories, classics, cinema, media, Kurdish literature, shahmaran, eastern wind, poetry, Magna Carducia, and Celadet Alî Bedirxan, Kamiran Alî Bedirxan, and Cegerxwîn's complete works.[29] The publishing house has been active for twenty-five years and published its 200th

book in 2007. This number is close to 700 as of today. It aims to reach the 1000th book soon. Among the Kurdish publishers, Avesta is the publisher with the best economic conditions. The publishing house has also its building in Istanbul.

Based on the interviews I conducted, I can say that Avesta Publishing has a liberal nationalist language policy. The books they published and translated are both language-culture studies and on the Kurdish history are signs of this nationalist stance.

The peace process affected the Avesta as positively as it did the other publishing houses. For example, many of the Avesta's books have been included in the lists prepared for the courses of Kurdish Language and Literature students at Artuklu University in Mardin, and this has made the publishing house economically comfortable. "The period in which Kurdish publishing most apparent was the solution process. It was a period in which the most fairs and events were organized. Readers from many different backgrounds came to the fairs. They were curious about the Kurds, they did not label the Kurds with terror and they were starting to think about the Kurds. For instance, young people who do not consider themselves as Kurdish although their parents are Kurdish, come to buy the book for parents." [30]

However, after the infringement of the solution and negotiation process, the readers' interest decreased and this had an economic impact on the publishing house. Avesta Publishing has also been unable to work with distribution companies and bookstores, which has worked before. This led to a significant decrease in the distribution and sales of books. Similar to other publishing houses, Avesta's books have been returned from bookstores and it has become difficult to reach potential readers. "With the end of the infringement of the solution process and the restart of the conflicts, the books were sent back to us. For example, Remzi Bookstore bought 50 Mem and Zin from us, they returned 28 of them and sold 22 of them. They didn't even keep one in stock." [31]

Aram Publishing House

Aram Publishing House was founded in 1997 by a group of publisher laborers in Istanbul. Its publication policy consists of; contemporary politics, the Kurdish issue, alternative political solutions, which are among the ignored topics in Turkey. [32] In its first years, the Aram has mainly published books of writers close to the Kurdish movement (PKK). One of its employees, Ulař Güldiken, said that books have been published in such categories as Kurdish

history, literature, current issues, guerrilla memories, guerrilla poems, and historical-social archives expected to be brought to light. Also, it published a history and literature magazine called Westa in its first years. Towards the mid-2000s, Aram Publishing House, within the framework of the criticisms and evaluations brought by the Kurdish movement to the social sciences and Marxist understanding of history, published the books of well-known thinkers such as Noam Chomsky, Immanuel Wallerstein and Michael Albert who adopted a similar approach by translating them into Kurdish and Turkish. The writers of Aram are generally the guerrillas and the political prisoners.

The publisher, which has bookstore branches in Van, Diyarbakir, and Istanbul, continues to publish today with the motto "Aram is enlightenment." Güldiken stated that they do not have an exact list of the total books they have published so far but they have published more than 450 books, however among which 100 of them have been banned.

The publisher decided to move its headquarters from Istanbul to Diyarbakir in 2009. Güldiken stated that this was done on a need and after they moved to Diyarbakir, the content of their publications heavily focused on local works like prison books and research. As it is known, Aram Publishing House pursues a publication policy close to the Kurdish movement. There have been bans on the publisher's books, and some of its workers were arrested due to publishing books close to the PKK. Aram Publishing has taken a short break from publishing because of such political pressures.

The significant number of writers and readers of Aram Publishing are imprisoned. One of its employees Ulaş Güldiken describes the positive atmosphere of the solution process, "The negotiation period had positive effects on our publication efforts. The published books were not exposed to major obstacles in the period of publication and distribution. We used the pictures on the book covers freer than before. As a matter of fact, the atmosphere of relative freedom enabled us to reach our readers easier than before. We were able to send our books to prisons, fairs, and bookstores, and promote them very easily." [33]

It can be said that after the infringement of the solution and negotiation process, Aram was directly and the most affected publishing house by the process. Being close to the Kurdish movement has an important role in this. After the process, more than 100 books were banned and their branches in Istanbul were shut down due to political pressure and economic reasons. "The books in the category of guerrilla memories and books of Abdullah Öcalan [34] were often banned and confiscated." [35]

With the end of the peace process, the distribution of the books has become one of the main problems facing Kurdish publishing. The bookstores, which previously sold Kurdish books freely, can no longer sell Kurdish books after the failed peace process and they also send back the Kurdish books. "We used to work with nearly a hundred bookstores, but as of today, we have regular dealings with only ten bookstores. Only one of the major distribution companies continues to work with us, whereas before the end of the process we worked with five large book distributors." [36]

Vate Publishing House

In 1996, a group of writers from different regions writing in the Kirmanckî dialect of Kurdish gathered in the Swedish capital of Stockholm under the name of *Grûba Xebate ya Vateyî* (Vate Working Group). The aim of this group was the standardization of Kirmanckî. This group held 28 meetings between 1996 and 2016. In these meetings, members made decisions regarding correct writing practices and language standardization. The decisions taken in these meetings were published in the issues of the Vate journal that began publication in 1997. [37] As the publication outlet of this group, the Vate journal has produced 62 issues between 1997 and 2019.

The Vate Publishing House was founded in the name of this group. The Vate journal in Beyoğlu, Istanbul in 2003, functions as a continuation of this work. Vate means "word." It continued its activities in Taksim for 13 years but in 2016 it closed its place and moved to a warehouse in Cağaloğlu. The owner of the publishing house Deniz Gündüz, uses his house as an office of Vate. The warehouse in Cağaloğlu was rented only for the preservation and distribution of the books. Gündüz said that the publishing house was closed and the books were moved to the warehouse because of financial distress. [38]

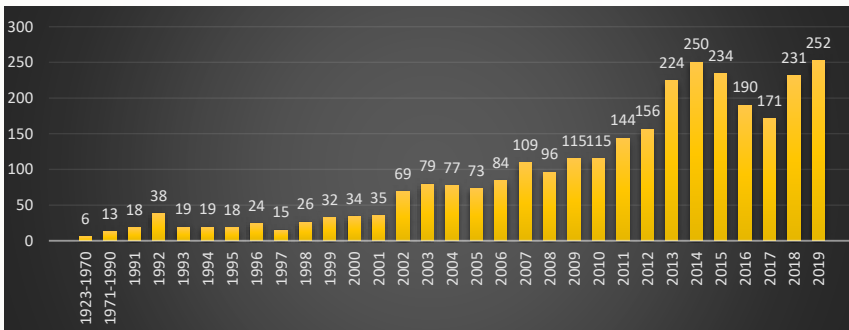
Vate Publishing House publishes (approximately 70%) books in Kirmanckî dialect of Kurdish. In addition to the books in Kurmancî dialect and on the Kurdish question, or Alevism, it also translates various dissertations from English to Turkish that are related to the Kurdish history and culture. The publisher has published 113 books in 16 years, 81 of these books are in the Kirmanckî. Gündüz explained why they focused mostly on the Kirmanckî: "Zazakî/Kirmanckî is more disadvantaged than Kurmancî. Because there is no institutional support for Zazakî. There is no substantial support for Kirmanckî from municipalities (DBP or HDP) and institutions such as Mesopotamian Cultural Center. Therefore, the development of this dialect of Kurdish is made by the efforts of particular intellectuals." [39]

Vate's publishing policy differs from the policies of the three other publishers that I briefly introduced above. This publisher has no organic link to any religious or political party. Although standardization has been reached in Kirmanckî written language, it is clear that there are not enough products in this dialect yet.

The peace process affected the Vate positively. "Certain steps were taken with the solution process, TRT 6 channel, and Jiyar TV started broadcasting in Zazaki in Diyarbakir. Kurdish became an elective course, and the opening of Kurdish language departments in universities affected Kurdish publishing positively both terms of readers and authors. There was an obvious increase in book demand." [40]

Vate, has fewer readers than other publishers; it was also negatively influenced after the end of the process. There was a decrease in the number of readers, authors and new books with the end of the process. Vate has not been able to attend the International Istanbul Book Fair (TÜYAP), where many Kurdish publishers such as Avesta, Nûbihar, and Aram have participated in recent years, due to economic reasons. The publisher's economic difficulties lead to basic problems such as not being able to reprint the out-of-print books and cannot obtaining, the copyrights and translation of some books. "My first Zazaki novel is sold out. Bot now we cannot reprint it. Instead of spending the money on reprinting we prefer to invest in new books and authors." [41] After all, Vate has closed his office by force.

Table 1: The Number of Kurdish Books Published Between 1923-2019



Statistic of Kurdish books between 1923-2005, Mihemed Malmîsanij, Türkiye ve Suriye'de Kürtçe Kitap Yayımcılığının Dünü ve Bugünü, (Istanbul: Vate, 2006).

Statistic of Kurdish books between 2005-2019, diyarname.com, Cemil Oğuz, <http://diyarname.com/news.php?Idx=39384>, [accessed January 06, 2020]

Although a unilateral cease-fire was declared by the PKK between 1999 and

2004, conflicts escalated especially after the year 2005. Since summer 2011, the conflict has become increasingly violent with the resumption of large-scale hostilities. On the eve of 2012 (28 December), in a television interview upon a question of whether the government had a project to solve the issue, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan –the prime minister at the time– stated that the government was negotiating terms with the PKK leader Öcalan. The negotiations were initially named as the Solution Process (Çözüm Süreci) by the public authorities. [42] The conflict process was replaced by a more moderate political atmosphere in 2013 with the start of the negotiations between the PKK and the state (Justice and Development Party - AKP).[43]

The beginning of the peace process (2013-2014) marks the year when the highest number of books in Kurdish –more than 250– were published. This means that Kurdish publishing has been affected very positively by the peace process. According to the number of books, we can say that the work of Kurdish writers also increased. All of these factors affected the Kurdish readers, Kurdish, and Turkish bookstores, and the distributors. To sum up, the peace process affected all publishers and institutions such as schools, universities, TV channels, etc.

However, the peace process ended up with failure in the second half of 2015. When the process ended up in 2015, the number of published Kurdish books decreased from 250 to 234. Indeed, the most dramatic decrease happened in the years 2016 and 2017. Concomitantly between these years most violent conflicts took place in Kurdish cities between the state and the PKK members. As can be seen from the table and the graph below, there is a tragic decrease in the number of Kurdish books in the years that the peace process ended and the war has started again. However, Kurdish publishing books increase following the end of the conflict process. In 2018 and 2019 Kurdish books tend to increase, Kurdish writers and publishers, are healing and overcoming effects and psychology of war slowly and relatively.

Concluding Remarks

Prohibitions of Kurdish books, cultural assimilation, and oppressive language policies, and use of state violence have been in practice since the foundation of the Turkish Republic to the present day. The history of Kurdish books in Turkey is a complete history of oppression and censorship.[44] Nevertheless, the Kurdish language and publishing houses still resist and survives.

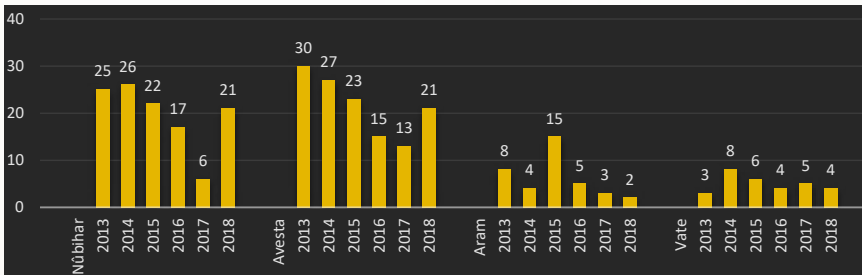
The four publishers who I interviewed agreed that the Kurdish language was directly affected by the political atmosphere, (1) the cease-fire periods af-

fect Kurdish publishing positively, (2) and the periods of armed conflict have severe negative effects. Especially, the peace process between the state and the PKK was the period that affected the four Kurdish publishers most positively and the end of the peace process affected negatively. Even the harsh atmosphere of the 90s did not affect the publishing house as negatively as the end of the process did. Even the worst periods of state of emergency, suspension of pro-Kurdish parties, conflict in the 90s, the 2003 Iraq War, wars in the Middle East, military coups, etc. did not affect publishers as much as the end of the peace process.

The Kurdish political movement, which has been carrying out an armed struggle since the 1980s, has taken various steps to make the Kurdish language visible in the public sphere. As a result of Turkey's wish to enter the European Union, the constitutional amendments and practical arrangements, together with the development of transportation and communication technologies and the phenomenon of globalization have led the state to lift the language ban in 1991.

Nevertheless, the positive steps taken by the state during the peace process have made the Kurdish language more visible in the public sphere. As a consequence of nonstop broadcasting in Kurdish via the state television, publishing Kurdish books under the Turkish Ministry of Tourism and Culture, and destigmatizing Kurdish language has led to the perception that Kurdish books will no longer be considered as a criminal element in Kurdish readers' minds. The opening of Kurdish Language and Literature and Zaza Language and Literature departments by the state within various universities have created a certain demand for publishers publishing Kurdish books. All these events have started to expand the Kurdish publishing market.

Table 2: The statistics of four Kurdish Publishing Houses between 2013-2018



Peace talks and process continued from 2013 to mid-2015. The numbers presented in the graphs showcase the effects of the peace process and the political atmosphere on publishing activities. During the three years of the peace

process, Avesta Publishing House published 80 books, followed by the 73 books from the Nûbihar Publishing, 27 from the Aram Publishing House, and 17 from the Vate Publishing House. In total, four Kurdish publishers published 197 books during these years. A total number of books published by all the Kurdish publishers in three years of the peace process were 708 books.

On the contrary, the book statistics upon the end of the peace process reveal the negative and dramatic effects of conflict and wars on four Kurdish publishers each year. After the failed peace process; Avesta published were 49, followed by 44 books from Nûbihar, 13 books from Vate, and 10 from Aram. In total, four Kurdish publishers published 116 books between 2016-2018. A total number of books published by all the Kurdish publishers during book these years were 592.

NOTES

- [1] Amir Hassanpour, Kürdistan'da Milliyetçilik ve Dil 1918-1985, trans. by İbrahim Bingöl and Cemil Gündoğan, (Istanbul: Avesta, 2005), p. 277.
- [2] M. Şükrü Hanioglu, Bir Siyasal Düşünür Olarak Dr. Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi, (Istanbul: Üçdal Neşriyat, 1981), p.84.
- [3] Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, (London and New York: Verso, 2006), p.56.
- [4] Mihemed Malmîsanij, Türkiye ve Suriye'de Kürtçe Kitap Yayıncılığının Dünü ve Bugünü, (Istanbul: Vate, 2006), p.34.
- [5] Hawrami also knows as Avromani, Awromani or Horami, is a Gorani dialect and is regarded as the most archaic one. It is mostly spoken in the Hawraman region, a mountainous region located in western Iran (Iranian Kurdistan) and northeastern Iraq (Iraqi Kurdistan).
- [6] Amir Hassanpour, Kürdistan'da Milliyetçilik ve Dil 1918-1985, trans. by İbrahim Bingöl and Cemil Gündoğan, (Istanbul: Avesta, 2005), p.298.
- [7] In Islam, the ulama are the guardians, transmitters and interpreters of religious knowledge in Islam, including Islamic doctrine and law.
- [8] Mihemed Malmîsanij, Türkiye ve Suriye'de Kürtçe Kitap Yayıncılığının Dünü ve Bugünü, (Istanbul: Vate, 2006), p.34.
- [9] Mihemed Malmîsanij, Osmanlı Döneminde Yazılan Kürtçe Eserler Üzerine, Tarih ve Toplum Dergisi, 1988, Volume 54, p.387-391.

- [10] Mesud Serfiraz, *Kurd, Kitêb, Çapxane: Weşangerîya Kitêbên Kurdî di Dewra Osmaniyan de 1844-1923*, (Istanbul: Peywend, 2015) p.14.
- [11] The 31 March Incident was the defeat of the Ottoman countercoup of 1909 by the Army of Action, which was the 11th Salonika Reserve Infantry Division of the Third Army stationed in the Balkans and commanded by Mahmud Shevket Pasha on 24 April 1909. The counter coup began on 31 March on the Rumi calendar, which was the official calendar of the Ottoman Empire, corresponding to 13 April 1909 on the Gregorian calendar now used in Turkey.
- [12] The Committee of Union and Progress began as a secret society established as the Committee of the Ottoman Union in Istanbul on February 1889 by medical students Ibrahim Temo, Mehmed Reshid, Abdullah Cevdet, İshak Sükuti, Ali Hüseyinzade, Kerim Sabeti, Mekkeli Sabri Bey, Nazım Bey, Şerafettin Mağmumi, Cevdet Osman and Giritli Şefik. It was transformed into a political organisation (and later on official political party) by Behaeddin Shakir, aligning itself with the Young Turks in 1906 during the period of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.
- [13] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London and New York: Verso, 2006), p.20.
- [14] The institutions / tools such as education and religion, which play a major role in the construction of identity and society, have not been mentioned because they exceed the limits of the article.
- [15] Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Jaffer Sheyholislami, Amir Hassanpour, *Kurdish: Linguicide, Resistance and Hope*, *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2012, Volume 217, p.181-187.
- [16] Mihemed Malmîsanij, *Türkiye ve Suriye’de Kürtçe Kitap Yayıncılığının Dünü ve Bugünü*, (Istanbul: Vate, 2006), p.50.
- [17] Avesta Yayınları’nın 18 yıl önce çıkan kitabı yasaklandı!, *basnews*, <http://www.basnews.com/index.php/tr/news/kurdistan/547695> , [accessed December 23, 2019]
- [18] TRT 6 (Şeş) broadcasts with in Kurmanci, Sorani and Zazaki dialects of Kurdish. The test channel broadcasted starting in December 25, 2008, the channel which depends on Turkey Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) has begun regular broadcasts in January 1, 2009.
- [19] Zazaki (Kirmanjki, Kirdki and Dimli) is a Kurdish dialect spoken in Eastern Turkey by the Kurds.
- [20] Mesud Serfiraz, *Kurd, Kitêb, Çapxane: Weşangerîya Kitêbên Kurdî di Dewra Osmaniyan de 1844-1923*, (Istanbul: Peywend, 2015) p.157.

- [21] TDK'nın Kürtçe sözlüğü satışta, anadolujansı.com.tr, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/kultur-sanat/tdknin-kurtce-sozlugu-satista/157611#> , [accessed 07.01.2020]
- [22] Mihemed Malmîsanij, Türkiye ve Suriye'de Kürtçe Kitap Yayıncılığının Dünü ve Bugünü, (İstanbul: Vate, 2006), p.90.
- [23] Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism (JİTEM) is the controversial wing and intelligence agency of the Turkish Gendarmerie. JİTEM was active in the Kurdish-Turkish conflict.
- [24] Kurdish-Turkish peace process, wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish%E2%80%93Turkish_peace_process , [accessed December 20, 2019]
- [25] Interview with Süleyman Çevik, Vezneciler, İstanbul, December 13, 2017.
- [26] Interview with Süleyman Çevik, Vezneciler, İstanbul, December 13, 2017.
- [27] Interview with Süleyman Çevik, Vezneciler, İstanbul, December 13, 2017.
- [28] Interview with Abdullah Keskin, Beyoğlu, İstanbul, November 24, 2017.
- [29] Avesta Kitap Diziler, avestakitap.net, http://www.avestakitap.com/sayfa.php?sayfa=diziler&me_no=diziler , [accessed December 20, 2017].
- [30] Interview with Abdullah Keskin, Beyoğlu, İstanbul, November 24, 2017.
- [31] Interview with Abdullah Keskin, Beyoğlu, İstanbul, November 24, 2017.
- [32] Interview with Ulaş Güldiken, Beyoğlu, İstanbul, December 15, 2017.
- [33] Interview with Ulaş Güldiken, Beyoğlu, İstanbul, December 15, 2017.
- [34] Abdullah Öcalan is a Kurdish leader, leftist political theoretician, political prisoner and one of the founding member of the militant Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).
- [35] Interview with Ulaş Güldiken, Beyoğlu, İstanbul, December 15, 2017.
- [36] Interview with Ulaş Güldiken, Beyoğlu, İstanbul, December 15, 2017.
- [37] Kurdilit, Vate Publishing House, kurdilit.net, <http://www.kurdilit.net/?p=2572&lang=en> , [accessed December 27, 2019].
- [38] Interview with Deniz Gündüz, Beyoğlu, İstanbul, December 3, 2017.
- [39] Interview with Deniz Gündüz, Beyoğlu, İstanbul, December 3, 2017.
- [40] Interview with Deniz Gündüz, Beyoğlu, İstanbul, December 3, 2017.
- [41] Interview with Deniz Gündüz, Beyoğlu, İstanbul, December 3, 2017.
- [42] Kurdish-Turkish peace process, wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish%E2%80%93Turkish_peace_process , [accessed December 20, 2019]

- [43] The Justice and Development Party (Turkish: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi), abbreviated officially AK Parti in Turkish, is a conservative political party in Turkey. Founded in 2001 by members of a number of existing conservative parties. The current party leader is Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the incumbent President of Turkey. (Wikipedia, Justice and Development Party, accessed January 7, 2020) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_and_Development_Party_\(Turkey\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_and_Development_Party_(Turkey))
- [44] Mihemed Malmîsanij, Türkiye ve Suriye’de Kürtçe Kitap Yayıncılığının Dünü ve Bugünü, (Istanbul: Vate, 2006), p.93.

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