

**THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF THE KURDISH COMMUNITY IN SYRIA AND ITS
POSSIBLE TRANSBOUNDARY EFFECTS IN THE SUBREGION OF THE MIDDLE
EAST, DURING THE PERIOD 2011-2014**

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“The political influence of the Kurdish Community in Syria and its possible transboundary effects in the subregion of the Middle East, during the period 2011-2014”

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Para todos aquellos que me inspiraron a alcanzar los objetivos de este proyecto.

A ti, madre, por no dejarme descansar.

A ti, por creer en mí.

For those people who inspired me to achieve the aims of this project.

To you, mother, for not letting me rest.

To you, for believing in me.

RESUMEN

El interés de esta monografía es analizar las interacciones no-lineales con resultados emergentes que la comunidad kurda mantuvo en Siria, durante el periodo 2011-2014, y por las cuales se produjeron formas de Auto-Organización como resultado de la estructura compleja a la que pertenece. De esta forma, se explica cómo a raíz de la crisis política siria y los enfrentamientos con el Estado Islámico, se transformó el rol de los kurdos en Siria y se influenciaron las estructuras políticas del país y las naciones de la región con población kurda. Por lo tanto, esta investigación se propone analizar este fenómeno a través del enfoque de complejidad en Relaciones Internacionales y el concepto de Auto-Organización. A partir de ello, se indaga sobre las interacciones surgidas en estructuras más pequeñas, que habrían afectado un sistema mayor; estableciendo nuevas formas de organización que no pueden ser explicadas, únicamente, a partir de elementos causales.

Palabras Claves:

Auto-organización- Sistema Compleja, No-Linealidad, Emergencia.

ABSTRACT

The interest of this paper is to analyze the non-linear interactions with emerging results that the Kurdish community maintained in Syria, during the period 2011-2014, that produced forms of Self-Organization as a result of the complex structure to which it belongs. In this way, it is explained how in the wake of the Syrian political crisis and the clashes against ISIS, the role of the Kurds in the country changed and influenced the traditional political structures of Syria and the countries of the region with Kurdish population. Therefore, this research aims to study this phenomenon through the approach of complexity in International Relations and the concept of Self-Organization. Hence, it is sought to examine the interactions arisen in smaller structures, affecting a larger system and creating new forms of organization that cannot be explained, solely, from causal elements.

Key Words:

Self-Organization, Complex System, Non-linearity, Emergence.

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LIST OF INITIALS

CAS	Complex Adaptive System
IR	International Relations
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
PDKI	Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan
PJAK	Partî Jiyanî Azadî Kurdistan
PKK	Kurdistan Workers Party
PYD	Democratic Union Party
YPG	Popular Protection Unit

INTRODUCTION

In early 2011, a series of social mobilizations arose in Syria against the government led by Bashar al-Assad, given the collective disagreement about the issues related to the form of government, the corruption and the violent actions of the regime towards population. These mobilizations were the base of a political crisis that emerged in the context of the Arab Spring, when countries like Tunisia, Libya or Egypt was mobilized to demonstrate their discrepancy in the face of each government (Manfreda, 2011, part. 4). However, the Syrian crisis counted with features that differed with the rest of the countries.

In Syria was found a set of organized factions opposite to the government, such as the Free Syrian Army, Al-Nusra Front, Syrian Islamic Front, etc.; besides some others less radical groups which were known as rebels (BBC, 2013, par. 4-31). Each of these groups had a series of reclaims, with a list of principles that differed substantially with those proclaimed by the regime of al-Assad, since more than thirty years. On the other hand, in the middle of the conflict in Syria, the Kurdish community had reached - and had demanded - a meaningful political participation that could not be predicted from its historical behavior. Besides, since the political crisis in Syria, the Kurds had gotten the opportunity to create an autonomous government, being a possible initial step to change the political configuration in Syria.

As such, the Kurds are one of the major nations in the world with no State, located in Minor Asia, with a population of 22 million people, approximately (MERIP, 2014, par. 1). Moreover, the Kurdish nation was divided into four countries: Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria; as a result of the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 (Baskent Universitesi, 2014, sec. 1).

Figure 1. General Map of Kurdistan. Source: (KurdiSite, 2012).



In each of these countries, there had been tensions and conflicts due to the repression and non-recognition of the Kurdish rights, further of the blooded confrontations with international repercussions. Above all, the Kurdish communities in the different States maintained cultural, linguistic, political and other ties that conserve its essence as a nation. For instance, along the history in Syria, the Kurdish community was considered as an ethnical minority. Therefore, their interests were not properly taken into account. The causes for this situation are several, but one of these is the Arab nationalism, which was strengthened by the arrival of the Ba'ath Party to the power, during the decade of the 60's.

Nationalist and secular, the Ba'ath Party, arrived to the power in Syria after a *coup d'état*¹ in 1963 (European Forum, 2014, par. 4), and has counted with a strong support of the military sector. Since its arrival, the Ba'ath Party brought Hafez Al-Assad

¹ Coup d'état: "also called Coup, the sudden, violent overthrow of an existing government by a small group. The chief prerequisite for a coup is control of all or part of the armed forces, the police, and other military elements" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2015, par.

to govern Syria until 2000 year, followed by his successor and son Bashar Al-Assad, who has governed until the present (Ziadeh, 2011, p. 45). In this way, the main national interests defended in Syria are those related with Pan-Arabism that were supported in other countries such as Iraq, Egypt, Yemen, Sudan, and others-, as well.

Despite the little political representation the Kurds had reached in Syria during the 20th century, during the period 2011-2014, they strengthened their discourse around a self-proclaimed autonomy government in 2013 -represented by the Democratic Union Party- (Hall, 2013, par. 1). As a consequence, their request was consolidated in January 2014 when members of different parties of the country support it (Abdulla, 2014, par. 1).

Similarly, the Kurdish community in Syria required being part of the Conference of Genève II in February 2014, whose purpose was the meeting between representatives of world politics to find a peaceful solution to the Syrian conflict (BBC, 2014, par. 21). Although the request was not answered, it put in evidence the claims of the Kurdish nation of starting to be a relevant actor in Syria.

On the other hand, the territories of Syria and Iraq were taken over control by the forces of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) in mid-2014. ISIS is a militant group that has as purpose to establish a caliphate in the mentioned territories, through violent and brutal actions. Indeed, ISIS has its origins from Al-Qaeda, which was born in 2004, but the first one has proved to be more violent (Thompson, Greene, & Torre, 2014, par. 1).

The actions of ISIS have affected, principally, the territory of Kurdistan in Syria and Iraq. For this reason, Kurdish military forces were gathered to fight against ISIS, during the few last months in 2014, with the support of an international coalition that seeks to eliminate this organization:

The fighting between ISIS and the Kurds stretches along a six-hundred-and-fifty-mile front in northeastern Iraq—a jagged line that roughly traces one border of Iraqi

Kurdistan, the territory that the Kurds have been fighting for decades to establish as an independent state (Filkins, 2014, par. 3).

This situation would have brought political, economic and social effects, in regional and State terms. For example, in September 2014, a migration of 130.000 Syrians -most of them Kurds- to the territories of the Kurdish territory in Turkey was presented, due to the ISIS offensives that had dejected their territory in the two previous months (Hubbard, 2014, par. 1).

The Kurds lived in a violent situation in each of the countries where they settled during the 20th century, which had delayed, among other things, the consolidation of their independence. However, since the Syrian crisis in 2011, some factors for the consolidation of the Kurdish autonomy in the country were engendered. This circumstance could have generated certain transboundary consequences with new forms of organization due to this political crisis that altered the interests of various countries in the region with Kurdish communities. In order to understand this phenomenon, concepts from the complex approach will be used.

The Complexity approach came from the claims in natural sciences, between the 30 and 50 decades, in the wake of the construction of a paradigm against the Enlighten thought in the social studies field, with scientists like Robert Geyer (Kavalski, 2007, p. 437). Nevertheless, the application of the Complexity in International Relations began with the paper of the professor in global studies from the Australian Catholic University, Emilian Kavalski, titled: *The fifth debate and the emergence of complex international relations theory: Notes on the application of complexity theory to the study of international life (2007)*. In this work, Kavalski proposed to bring together the claims of IR Theory and Complexity, introducing the fifth debate in the discipline and bringing novelties in terms of ontology and epistemology.

In this sense, Kavalski suggested three principles to guide the discussion between the dominant IR theories and the complexity approach: First, *the dialogic*

principle which refers to the aporetic duality between agency and structure, with the goal of maintaining a whole unity. Second, *the principle of recursivity*, which means that causes are a synonym for effects. Third, *the hologrammatic principle*, that indicates that a whole could be part of a greater whole, all the time (Kavalski, 2007, pág. 444). In this way, the author afforded a challenge to the conventional wisdom and proposed the creation of analytical imaginations.

On the other hand, according to the senior lecturers from the London School of Economics, Antoine Bousquet and Simon Curtis, complexity in IR is:

particularly sensitive to systemic properties and relationships, rejecting the reductionist assertion that complex systems can be wholly understood through the analysis of their constituent parts [...]; for this promotes a relational and processual style of thinking, stressing organizational patterns, networked relationships and historical context (2011, p. 3).

Hence, complexity will be employed as the main theory for the present research for understanding the existence of some elements, which define the structure where the Kurds are located to comprehend how this community can influence the political structure of the Syrian State and a system of major scale as a subregion of the Middle East. It is worth noting that in this research will be understood as a subregion of the Middle East, all those countries with Kurdish population such as Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria.

Before delving into the conceptual tools that will be used in this work, it is necessary to make a clearing up: “complexity theory is not an unify body of theory; it is an emerging approach or framework... it is a set of theoretical and conceptual tools; not a single theory to be adopted holistically” (Bousquet and Curtis, 2011, pp. 3).

In other words, Complexity has as a function the comprehension of a given reality from a series of concepts and principles, that pretends to innovate the way how is thought the world politics and the various structures that compose it. Likewise,

Complexity has served on some principles emerged in theoretical frameworks from IR that have a certain relation with those formed by the thinking from natural sciences.

For instance, in the Neorealism of Kenneth Waltz, which has assumed a reductionist analysis of the international system, does not allow the review of all the elements that complexity does incorporate. In his work *Theory of International Politics* from 1979, Waltz analyzed what is and what constitute the international system and suggested it was composed of three elements: ordering principles (anarchy), the character of the units (structures defined by the major ones) and the distribution of the capabilities (distinguished by the capability for performing similar tasks) (1979, pp. 88-101). According to Waltz, anarchy is the ordering principle of the international system because it determines the behavior of the States, being that each one fulfills the same function: Survive to the war of the system which is lack of a centralized entity that avoids it. In some way, the Neorealist posture projects anarchy as a synonym for chaos and disorder.

Although the Complexity approach has sometimes been matched with the concept of anarchy and, therefore, framed as within the Neorealism theory, it invites to have a more eclectic position that allows thoroughly discussing the very concept of “system”. Complexity thinking seeks to highlight that even when there is no a central and hierarchical entity that emits a specific order about the international system, this does not mean the chaos determines it. There could be an own form of organization recreated by the same system that is born from the existing interactions between the elements that compose it. Thereby, the concept of anarchy would evolve to the *Self-Organization*, through Complexity (Cudworth and Hobden, 2010, pp. 3 - 6).

The notion of Self-Organization is the central concept of this work, because allows to understand how the capacity of agency of the Kurds in Syria can create new forms of order that influence not only in the same country but also in a subregion of the Middle East –i.e. those countries with Kurdish population. The application of the notion

of Self-Organization in IR allows examining the multilevel relations, processes and forms in which the system is produced. In this manner, this notion helps to identify other three aspects of the system: emergence, non-linearity and bifurcation; according to the characteristics of as complex system – as is the structure where the Kurds are seated. Each one of these aspects will be explained later in the last chapter of this research, in which the concept of Self-Organization will be clarified according with the theme this project is working.

In fact, there is not a formal and linear organization in the structure where the Kurds are settling. Therefore, it is absorbing to understand the new forms of organization that were produced in the frame of the Syrian crisis and the clashes with ISIS; and the eventual results that can determined the structure of both Syria and the subregion of the Middle East.

The behavior of the Kurdish community could have influenced the political structure of Syria and create new forms of organization because they are settled in a complex system that allows these unpredictable changes emerge. Furthermore, this influence could have been generated in different directions and grades of affectation, which could have not been determined or constrained by any superior entity. Indeed, the behavior of the Kurds could have reached some eventual effects in the region, considering the facts that started to happen in 2011 and were affecting the population of this nation in Syria and Iraq. This situation concerned different actors from the government, as leaders of specific organizations (ISIS) and representatives of foreign countries (International Coalition, which was formed to combat the current conflict with ISIS in the Middle East).

Since the crisis in Syria, during the period 2011-2014 was presented a complex structure with innumerable actors and interactions that are not possible to understand since a traditional paradigm. Likewise, the Kurds were implied in the mentioned facts, so it is not possible to set up a framework that delimit the scope of the political behavior

of the Kurdish community in an only State territory, without seeing its possible implications in the subregion where it belongs.

There have been several studies about the situation of the Kurds in Syria and in the Middle East, where the political, economic and military elements that are implied in it were analyzed. Some of them are: *The Kurds in Syria: The forgotten people* by Kerim Yildiz (2005) and *The Syrian Kurds: out of nowhere to where?* By Michael Gunter (2013). Nevertheless, few of these studies had analyzed the role that Kurdish community fulfills in Syria and in the subregion of the Middle East and how it does it. It seems necessary to observe and attempt to comprehend, not only the factors and elements that composed their system, but also how they interacted and what kind of results could have produced –independently of the causes that generated them. For this purpose, the concepts constructed since complex thinking in IR result properly to the study of the Kurds, located in a system that seems to acquire changes, constantly.

For this research project, the following question has been purposed: How the political role of the Kurdish community in Syria could have generated possible transboundary effects, during the period 2011-2014, in the context of the notion of Self-Organization of the Complexity Approach?

Now the main claim that is intended to demonstrate is: *During 2011-2014, the Kurdish nation maintained non-linear interactions with emerging effects that produced forms of Self-Organization as a result of the complex structure to which it belongs; which could had influenced traditional political structures of Syria, changing the order of the State and, possibly, the border system in which is located.*

Therefore, three specific objectives will be reached: First, analyze the capacity of agency that Kurdish community had in Syria for the configuration of determined forms of Self-Organization, during the period 2011-2014, and the reach of possible transboundary effects. Second, remark how the Kurdish nation had maintained non-linear interactions with emerging results that produced forms of Self-Organization, all

through 2011-2014. Third, set how the processes of Self-Organization could have changed the configuration (or status-quo) of a subregion in the Middle East, in the frame of the facts occurred in the mentioned period.

For the developed of these objectives, three chapters will be presented with the following purposes respectively: First, the explanation in historical terms of the situation of the Kurds in the subregion of the Middle East and each one of the countries where there are Kurdish population, as Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. Moreover, the conflict with ISIS –also known as ISIL- will be presented and the behavior of the Kurds about it. Second, the concept of complex system and its properties will be presented and the demonstration of why the Middle East and Syria are some examples of it. Third, the concept of Self-Organization will be developed to demonstrate the main claim of this research -indicated previously. In this way, the elements of the Self-Organization and how it is useful to understand the situation analyzed in this research will be illustrated.

1. THE KURDS IN THE MIDDLE EAST: THEIR NATION, THEIR HISTORY AND THEIR ROLE IN THE SUBREGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST

The Kurdish nation was settled in the Middle East, for some periods previous to the 20th century. Along their history, political and territorial changes had taken place that had set the Kurdish nation as it is nowadays. Moreover, these changes had determined, to some degree, the role that they fulfill in the subregion.

For the purposes of this research, a brief description will be made about the origins of the Kurdish nation, making special emphasis on the facts occurred during the 20th century. Considering this depiction from treaties and negotiations that took place during this stage, was the engendered of the fragmentation of the Kurds.

1.1. The Treaty of Sevres 1920 and the Treaty of Lausanne 1923

During the 19th century, there was a nationalist spirit gaining strength; evidenced by the First World War and the other different ethnic disputes that arose in the Ottoman Empire before its fall. When the Empire fell, the Republic of Turkey was born, as well as additional independent States. Among the nations that composed the Ottoman Empire and that were in search of their independence, are found the Kurds that through the Treaty of Sevres in 1920 pretended the creation of their State: Kurdistan.

The Treaty of Sevres of 1920 was an agreement between the Allies (an alliance formed by the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Japan, among others) of the First World War and the Ottoman Empire that arranged the disintegration of this last after their fall with the creation of new States. A case in point is Turkey, which remained restricted to Constantinople and Minor Asia. Moreover, the treaty allowed the separation of the Kurdish nation and the creation of their independent State, called Kurdistan, in the east part of the Anatolian Peninsula (Kaymaz, 2014, p.35).

In the article 64 of the mentioned treaty said:

If and when such renunciation takes place, no objection will be raised by the Principal Allied Powers to the voluntary adhesion to such an independent Kurdish State of the Kurds inhabiting that part of Kurdistan which has hitherto been included in the Mosul vilayet (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2014).

Figure 2. Source: (Andersen, 2005).



This fact was one of the most relevant motivations for the project of the emancipation of the Kurds. However, this treaty was not ratified by the signatory members for several reasons. According to some authors, the principal reason was the rejection of the Turkish leader, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk², given the invasion of Greece in the region, in reply for the persecution that some nationals were suffering from the Turkish government: “There was little opposition to the separation of Ottoman areas

² Mustafa Kemal Atatürk: “was a Turkish nationalist leader and founder and first president of the republic of Turkey [...] was born in 1881 in Salonika (now Thessaloniki) in what was then the Ottoman Empire” (BBC, 2015, par. 1).

outside the Turkish heartland of Anatolia, but the invasion of Anatolia by Greek armies precipitated a popular national-liberation movement, led by General Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk)” (Ergil, 2000, par. 5).

The Kurds had not the chance to materialize their emancipation project based on that treaty, but they were into the disposition of the Turkish representative Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and some foreign actors; such as the Allies that were in charge of the reconfiguration of the region:

As a result, a new document was signed: the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, which was an agreement of peace between Greece and Turkey. The main goal of the treaty was the recognition of the borders of Turkey (the main political unity successor of the Ottoman Empire) and the finish of the conflict between the Great National Assembly and the High Contracting Parts of the country (Papian, 2007, par. 4).

Narrowly defined, the Treaty of Lausanne did not mean the substitution of the Treaty of Sevres, given that their main goals and causes certainly differed. But there was a shift in the consequences of the Treaty of Lausanne over the Kurdish population, since there was no recognition of an independent Kurdistan and, by contrast, they was placed at the disposal of four different States, which did not recognize their rights as autonomous nation. Thus, because the Treaty only contemplates (as in the article 40) as ethnic minorities all of those that were not Muslims (and a great part of the Kurdish people were not): “Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities shall enjoy the same treatment and security in law and in fact as other Turkish nationals” (Treaty of Lausanne, 2014).

Once again, with the definition of the new frontiers of the Turkish State in the Treaty of Lausanne, the territory that was defined in the Treaty of Sevres as Kurdistan was divided in four different countries: Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria.

In the 2nd article, it is mentioned:

From the Black Sea to the Aegean the frontier of Turkey is laid down as follows:

(1) With Bulgaria:

From the mouth of River Resvaya to the River Maritza, the point of junction of the three frontiers of Turkey, Bulgaria and Greece: the southern frontier of Bulgaria as at present demarcated;

(2) With Greece:

Thence to the confluence of the Arda and the Maritza: the course of the Maritza; then upstream along the Arda, up to a point on that river to be determined on the spot in the immediate neighborhood of the village of Tchorek-Keuy: the course of the Arda; thence in a south-easterly direction up to a point on the Maritza, 1 kilom below Bosna-Keuy: a roughly straight line leaving in Turkish territory the village of Bosna-Keuy. The village of Tchorek-Keuy shall be assigned to Greece or to Turkey according as the majority of the population shall be found to be Greek or Turkish by the Commission for which provision is made in Article 5, the population which has migrated into this village after the 11th October, 1922, not being taken into account; thence to the Aegean Sea: the course of the Maritza" (Treaty of Lausanne, 2014).

The fragmentation of the Kurdish nation is maintained until these days, and it has been the core of some reviews for the slant of the decision and the weak position in which it was left it.

1.2. The role of the Kurds in the subregion of the Middle East

The Kurds were divided into four different States from the establishment of the new borders of Turkey in the Treaty of Lausanne 1923, and their recognition as an ethnic minority. Currently, there are 28 million of Kurds in the world, approximately; divided into States such as Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. For the understanding of the situation of the Kurds, a brief description of their history in each of the States where they are seated will be provided. Besides, the conflict of the Kurdish factions with ISIS and their behavior to this situation until 2014 will be exposed.

✓ Turkey

The Kurds represent the 18% of the population in Turkey -15 million of people, nearly- (The World Factbook, 2015) and are located in the southeast of the territory: Generally,

they are settled in the cities of Diyarbakir, Erzurum, and Sivas.

As well, it is worth noting that Islam became the main religion of the Kurds; especially, the Sunni branch³. Nevertheless, conflicts arose between the said branch of Islam and the Turkish factions that were part of the Alevi communities⁴. However, religion is not the deepest point of the conflict, but the social-political conditions of the Kurdish community in Turkey (Country Studies, 2014, par. 6).

Regarding secessionist movements, in 1984 the rebellion of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (or Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan—PKK)⁵ began, questioning the violent actions carried out by the government against the Kurdish population. This situation had an international repercussion in the media and some sectors of the political elite.

As a result, several of prohibitions against the Kurds were removed, but the restrictions on the language were remained until 2013, when the Turkish government approved new reforms on behalf of the rights of the Kurds to use their language in private schools and other spaces of this community (Öpengin, 2015).

³ Sunni Branch: It is the largest branch of Islam. "Sunni Islam is based on the belief that the Prophet Muhammad died without appointing a successor to lead the Muslim community (ummah). According to Sunni Muslims, after Muhammad's death, the confusion that ensued from not having a person to head the community led to the election of Abu Bakr, the Prophet's close friend and father-in-law, as the first Caliph" (Jewish Virtual Library , 2015, par. 2).

⁴ Alevi community: "is the term used for a distinct religious group that is dominant amongst the Kurdish population around Antakya and Sivas in Anatolia. Since the 1960s, Alevis have been migrating to other parts of Turkey, notable Izmir and Istanbul, and also Germany, Austria, France, Switzerland and Scandinavia [...] they were probably part of Shi'a Islam as the term 'Alawi' means a follower of 'Ali ibn talib, the son-in-law of the Prophet and first Imam of the Shi'a" (Geaves, 2003, pp. 53- 54)

⁵ Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK): was formed in the late 1970s and has Marxist-Leninist roots. (BBC, 2013, p

Above all, pacific and violent organizations have emerged, in search for better conditions for this ethnic group in Turkey. Therefore, it has been done some attempts to finish the conflict, involving international and domestic actors (Global Security, 2014, par. 19).

In any case, the hostilities remain and the possibilities to finish them seem diffuse. Some of the representatives of the Kurdish guerrilla have shown their interest in maintaining pacific relations with the government but under some conditions. In this sense, there has not been an official declaration about the finish to the armed conflict.

✓ **Iraq**

The Kurdish population in Iraq (Iraqi Kurdistan) is about 15% and 20% - 5 million people, nearly- (The World Factbook, 2015) and is formed as an autonomous political unit with the city of Arbil as its capital (since the decade of 1970) in the northeast of the territory (Encyclopaedia Britannica, par. 1).

The Kurds in Iraq have passed for conflicts in which, several of them, have been victims of repression, oppression, and murders. For instance, some of these conflicts are the Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf War.

The Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) emerged due to the disagreement over the demarcation of their sovereign borders and the control over the oil reserves. Indeed, it is considered as one of the bloodiest conflicts in history with greater material and human costs. The Kurdish nation had the highest number of victims and faced several armed attacks; especially, by the government of Saddam Hussein⁶. Some scholars and organizations use to refer to this event as the Kurdish Genocide.

⁶ Saddam Hussein: "Saddam Hussein's road to absolute power began in Tikrit, central Iraq, where he was born in 1937 [...] Saddam Hussein took the posts of prime minister, chairman of the Revolutionary

During the government of Saddam Hussein were ordered different mortar attacks against the Kurds (KRG UK Representation, 2014, par.1). The “Kurdish Genocide” was maintained until 1989 and left terrible consequences for this population, as the disappearance of 90% of the cities and the assassination of 400.000 of people (Nezan, 1998, par. 15).

Despite the preceding, the reaction of the international community was indifferent and even some researchers argued that western countries financed weaponry to the government of Hussain (Nezan, 1998, par. 1). The Iran-Iraq War ended with no victory, but with many negative consequences due to the chemical armament employed. However, the hostilities persisted until 1991, specifically by the annexation of Kuwait to the Iraqi territory that finished until the intervention of the United States that resulted in the Gulf War (1990-1991).

The Gulf War was, undoubtedly, determining for the Kurdish people:

The coalition led by the United States established two no-fly zones, i.e. areas that would not be allowed Iraq to fly and since then are reinforced by American and British aviation: one to the north and one south, with the declared intended to protect Kurdish and Shiite minorities of Saddam Hussein. (Pampin, 2002, par. 11)⁷.

The Kurds attained the protection of the international community, which it is an advance for the Kurdish cause. Moreover, there were created diplomatic efforts by the Security Council for support and protect the rights of the Kurds. After this, Kurdish

Command Council and armed forces commander-in-chief. Within a year, he launched Iraq into a massive and risky adventure” (BBC, 2006, par. 2-9).

⁷ Free translate from the original: “La coalición liderada por Estados Unidos estableció dos zonas de exclusión aérea, es decir, zonas que no se le permitiría a Irak sobrevolar y que desde entonces son reforzadas por aviación norteamericana y británica: una al norte del país y otra al sur, con la declarada intención de proteger a las minorías kurda y shiíta de Saddam Hussein. La zona de exclusión aérea del norte, establecida al norte del paralelo 36, dejó en manos del gobierno central el 40% de la región kurda de Irak, incluyendo la ciudad petrolera de Kirkuk”.

forces were added to drop the government in Iraq, mainly the Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union and Masud Barzani's Kurdish Democratic Party (Malanczuk, 1991, p. 117).

Although the violent confrontation the Kurds suffered for decades, a new constitution in Iraq was signed in 2005 where their federal status and the right to count on an autonomous government were recognized. In this way, Iraqi Kurdistan, due to its autonomous condition, has grown in economic terms; also thanks to its reserves of oil and gas, favoring its position in the region (Pezoa, 2013, par. 1).

✓ **Iran**

The Kurdish population in Iran is of approximately 6 million people, (The World Factbook, 2014), and it is not the most significant minority in the country. They are located in the northwest of Iran, sharing a border with Turkey and Iraq (Global Security, par. 1).

The Kurds in Iran have not been involved in violent conflicts such as in Turkey and Iraq, but they have still passed through tensions for persecution, violation of human rights and reach of few social opportunities:

hundreds of activists of the linguistic and cultural rights of the Iranian-Azerbaijani people have been arrested in connection with the claim of being allowed to receive education in their language; was arrested rights activists of the Kurdish people and has killed or wounded protesters; and an ethnic Baluchi accused of responsibility for the bomb blast on February 14, 2007, has been executed just five days later (Amnistía Internacional, 2007).

In general, the political claim is not well accepted in Iran, further than Kurdish language and costumes, which are perfectly acceptable and tolerable. On the other hand, there are also confrontations about religion, given that the Kurds are mainly from the branch Sunni of the Islam, and the government is Shi.

In 2014, the PJAK - *Partî Jiyanî Azadî* announced their interest to create a mechanism to enter into dialogue with the government of Iran and finish with the violent attacks on the civil society (Fars News Agency, 2014).}

✓ Syria

The Kurds in Syria are the minor community of this nation, being of 9, 7% among the totally of the population -2 million people, nearly (The World Factbook, 2015). The Kurdish population has confronted many hostilities with the government throughout decades.

For instance, in the 60's years, 20% of the Kurdish people in Syria was denationalized "Since the 1950s, the Kurdish demands for greater political autonomy have been repressed by the Syrian government, through arrests of opponents and association with certain Kurdish tribal leaders" (Iglesias, 2012, p. 2)⁸.

On the other hand, the Syrian Kurds have not formed separatist movements as strong as in the other countries of the region. However, in 2011, during the Arab Spring, the actions of this ethnic group were changed, and they acquired a more active role in politics affairs.

This Civil War was constrained by the demands of several groups that formed an organized resistance. The most representative Kurdish organization in Syria is the Kurdish National Council, founded in 2011 in Iraq, which is not in favor with the government of al-Assad (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2014, par. 3).

⁸ Free translate from the original. "Desde la década de 1950, las demandas kurdas por una mayor autonomía política han sido reprimidas por los gobiernos sirios, a través de detenciones de opositores y la asociación con ciertos líderes tribales kurdos. La rica región petrolera de Qamishli, en el noreste, fue durante décadas motivo de contienda con el gobierno de Damasco, que llevó a cabo confiscaciones de tierras con el objeto de "arabizarlas".

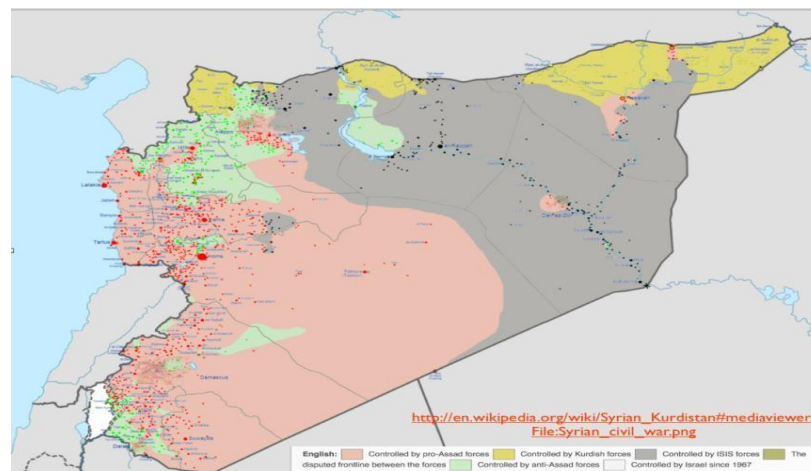
In addition to the organizations created in the conflict, it is found the *Democratic Union Party (PYD)* which has been truly important for achieving the project of the emancipation of the nation. The PYD has declared its right to have an autonomous government in 2013: “The plan calls for the creation of a parliament of 82 members elected from three cantons across the region, which will each have their own local assemblies” (Hall, 2013, par. 4). However, it was until 2014 that this autonomous government was consolidated and recognized (West, 2014, par. 3).

Likewise, the Kurds had strengthened their role in the political structure of Syria with all the demands that had asked to the regime and that had been responded. Indeed, the war with ISIS had enforced their role in Syria and the region, since the creation of the military faction Popular Protection Unit (YPG), as well.

1.3. The conflict among ISIS and the Kurdish forces of Syria and Iraq

The *Islamic State of Iraq and Syria*, according with its acronym ISIS is a Salafi jihadist organization and self-proclaimed caliphate in the territories of Syria and Iraq.

Figure 3. The Location of the factions of ISIS in the subregion of the Middle East. Source: (Lewis, 2014).



ISIS had its origins in 2002 when Abu Musab al-Zarqawi founded the organization in the north of Iraq. (Welby, 2015, par. 1-3). Even when ISIS has not broken with its activities since then, it was until 2014 that their actions had major transcendence through the region with Kurdish population, taking control over some of the cities of Syria and Iraq (Welby, 2015, par. 9).

This situation has forced the governments to create rapid tactical responses to the offenses perpetrated by ISIS, which are not limited to the occupation of certain territories, but also to the systematic violation of human rights of non-Muslims: murders, rapes, crucifixions, etc. Besides, representatives of the international community have also expressed concern about it and decided to create the International Coalition, which seeks the channels to culminate this war.

The International Coalition was born in early September 2014, for the proposal of the President of the United States, Barack Obama, and its Secretary of State, John Kerry (Payne, 2014, par. 3). During the Paris Conference 2014, countries like Germany, Bahrain, Denmark, France, Iraq, Kuwait, and Norway joined it, among others. (France Diplomatie, 2015, par. 2). Until late 2014, several attacks were submitted in response to the offensive of ISIS, with the help of some Kurdish factions such as Peshmerga in Iraq and the Popular Protection Units (YPG) in Syria (Welby, 2015, par. 10).

Nonetheless, Turkey's government allowed the Iraqi Kurdish (Peshmerga), cross the border to fight against ISIS, when in October 2014 this radical group took the city of Kobanî in Syria (Fahim & Shoumali, 2014, par. 1). However, the YPG has gotten a more outstanding role in the war with ISIS: "the YPG is perhaps one of the only forces that know how to take on the extremists at their own game" (Stephens, 2014, par. 2).

The fundamental difference between the YPG and Peshmerga is that the first one act with a greater degree of autonomy while the second one receive a superior assistance from countries like France, UK, Germany and the United States. In the same

way, is worth noting that the YPG arose from events occurred during the Syrian crisis and had adapted to operate in the territory in which they are (Stephens, 2014, par. 4).

As a result, the Kurds in Syria have reached a prominent autonomy and a status that in previous years was inconceivable. Beginning with the facts that occurred during the period 2011-2014, the role of the Kurds in Syria changed and was determinant for the country and the region. Therefore, the result of their political autonomy, legally speaking, could have a possible influence on the rest of the countries with Kurdish population in the Middle East.

The Complexity has proper theoretical tools to understand the influence of the Kurds in Syria and in the subregion of the Middle East, which are two complex systems -parts of a whole- and that possess dynamics that could create new forms of organization. In this way, it is necessary to describe what a complex system is and its characteristics, to comprehend how the Self-Organization arises.

2. THE KURDISH NATION IN A COMPLEX SYSTEM: SYRIA AND THE SUBREGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST

According with the senior lecturers in the area of International Relations and Social Sciences, Erika Cudworth and Stephen Hobden, a complex system “approaches enable an understanding of different kinds of systems -those of relations of social domination and those of institutions and related processes, which co-constitute each other” (2010, page. 3). In this way, there is a change in the form in which the system is observed, as a whole, the parts that compose it and the way how these interact. Thus, the patterns of alteration are not apparent, and the organization of the system turns unpredictable.

As a matter of fact, for effects of this research, two complex systems will be analyzed: The State of Syria and the subregion of the Middle East with Kurdish population. However, these two complex systems are integrated as one in a whole same structure, given the same complexity that characterized them. First, the State of Syria will be examined during the Syrian Crisis (2011-2014), in which actors like the Kurdish community are involved -represented by the Democratic Union Party-, with political and ethnic interests that changed the status quo of the country. Some of the interest that the Kurdish community pretended to reach is the formalization of an autonomous government in the territory of Syria and the guarantee of their political and civil rights ante the Syrian State.

Second, in the subregion of the Middle East is found the Kurdish population, branded by being divided in multiple State systems, whose social structures are made up by other various ethnic groups, with different interests and behaviors among the Kurds. This system could be influenced by the Syrian crisis in matters such as processes of migration, new deals of independence and peace with Kurds, among others. On the other hand, the war with ISIS, fight for Kurdish factions (Peshmerga from Iraq and Popular Protection Party from Syria) that with the purpose of recover their territories,

promote changes in the subregion of the Middle East and the form how it is maintaining the control over the territories and the dynamics that correspond to it. As, and mainly, the Kurdish influence in the cities of Raqqa in Iraq and Kobanî in Syria, in the context of the war with ISIS and the Syrian Political Crisis.

2.1. The Kurdish political project in the complex systems of Syria and the subregion of the Middle East

The Kurdish community in Syria maintains ties and connections with countries across the subregion of the Middle East, given its condition as a divided nation. Therefore, the official reunification is pretended due to the mentioned ties, since several years ago, but for the political and economic conditions along history, that goal has not been reached. However, since the Syrian crisis in 2011, certain circumstances that could be beneficial for the reach of the consolidation of the independence of the Kurds have presented; which includes the strengthening of their role and interests in territorial, political and economic terms as in Syria as in the subregion. Nevertheless, in this project of research it is not pretended to understand the possibilities of consolidation of an independent Kurdistan, but only the influence of the community of Kurds in Syria and in the rest of the countries with Kurdish population in the Middle East. The above, given there are not the sufficient elements to analyze the mentioned possibility, and also because the main objective of this research is the comprehension of the complexity of the system where the Kurds are settled.

In spite of, the results of the behavior of the Kurds cannot longer be explained by their interests or their history during the 20th century and the political opportunities that each government granted him to the Kurdish communities. Whereas they are in a complex system, the characteristics of it are what allows understand why

the Kurds may have such results and influence in the subregion of the Middle East - considering the Self-Organization⁹ process that is an own element of the system.

In fact, the establishment of the political project of the Kurds depends, to a large degree, on the dynamics and fluctuation that were carried out by the agents of the – complex- system. Consequently, the unpredictable changes acquired during the Syrian crisis and the current war with ISIS is making possible their strengthening. One might say, like a fluke or an externality.

2.2. The complexity of the Syrian political crisis and its transboundary effects in the subregion of the Middle East

Regarding the situation in Syria, there were several ethnic groups in Syria which sought the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad, as for instance the Sunni rebels and the Kurdish factions, which the most are organized in the PYD. Indeed, the Kurds maintained a position of neutrality in front of the government of Bashar al-Assad in the context of the Syrian crisis, since if they supported the interests of the Arab groups; these could come to power after al-Assad and would be a serious obstacle to the interests of the Kurdish community in the country (Stratford Global Intelligence, 2013, par. 5).

However, they were working on the consolidation of their political role in the country and the reach of their interests as the consolidation of an autonomous region in the territory of Syria and the strengthening of their participation in political issues. Still yet, the degree of consolidation of the autonomy of the Kurdish community in Syria cannot be explained by a series of causal elements and/or how it can change the

⁹ The process of Self-Organization refers to the formation of larger systems, from the lower multiple interactions that keep all the units or actors, components of the system. From these interactions, changeable dynamics emerged, which are not defined in only one direction and involve all the units that fulfill different functions in the system. The process of Self-Organization is a form of a Complex Adaptive System (CAS), which will be explained in the following chapter according to the topic presented in this.

configuration of the State (in political and economic terms) or the subregion of the Middle East. The above is presented because there are many causal elements that are implied in the Syrian Political Crisis, whose results are several and multiple.

The situation in Syria did not only bring changes to the traditional political structures of Syria but also to the subregion with Kurdish population in the Middle East, affecting, principally, countries such as Turkey, Iraq and Iran. Of course, the main points of influence of the Kurdish community that could be found in this subregion are: First, the cultural and religious ties with Kurdish communities in Turkey and Iraq, predominantly; second, the shared of a border (that ironically, divide them), which could been bringing back the promises of reunification and independence –speaking just as a sense and not as a statement, given there are not plenty factors to observe the establishment of Kurdistan as a matter of fact.

One of the principal points of observation of the influence of the Kurds in the Middle East is the migration. Based on figures presented in September 2014, more than 800.000 people, most of them Kurds from Syria, had migrated to Turkey through the border, since 2011; running away of the conflict in his State and gathering with people of the same nation (Kurdish). Thence, the Prime Minister of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoglu, declared: “We will take in our brothers fleeing... from Syria or any other place without any ethnic or sectarian discrimination. We have taken in 4,000 brothers. The number might increase. Their needs will be met. This is a humanitarian mission” (BBC, 2014, par. 8).

Above all, Turkey faced problems on the border with the Kurds in Syria; due it is an obstacle for arresting the wishes of independence of the same community in this country. Especially, two important strategies: The creation of peace dealt with the Kurdistan Workers’ Party in Syria and the strengthening of its economic relations with the Iraqi Kurdistan.

On the one hand, the government of Turkey has sought for the creation of a peace deal with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, given its interest in the creation of an independent Kurdistan. This matter is of great importance for the government of Turkey, known that the Kurdish community of this country is a numerous social group, located in one of the richest regions of the State. In that case, if the Kurdistan Worker's Party reaches their chance to materialize its autonomy, Turkey would lose an important strategic zone for the State. However, with the arrival of thousands of Kurds from Syria, the sense of independence gets strengthened, and the interest of keep being part of Turkey weakened. So, the government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Prime Minister of Turkey until August 2014, attained greater difficulties in the reach of this deal.

The Turkish government prided itself on pursuing a grand strategy to resolve its Kurdish separatist problem by pursuing an ambitious peace deal with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, known by its Kurdish acronym, PKK, while simultaneously strengthening economic linkages with energy-rich northern Iraq, a refuge for Kurdish fighters. This strategy was already facing a number of hurdles, but the power vacuum that developed in Syria's heavily Kurdish-populated northeast only compounded the problem for Ankara (Stratfor Global Intelligence, 2013, par. 6).

On the other hand, for the government of Turkey was truly imperative to maintain strategic economic relations with the Iraqi Kurdistan. However, with the alteration in the position that the latter had in the region, the interests changed, and its principal objectives are not related to the Turkish government. These two actors, Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan, maintained their political relations as can be noticed with the support the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq showed to the worries of the government of Erdogan.

Consequently, the influence of the Syrian Kurds brought a brake for the mentioned purposes. Hence, the mistrust of the government of Turkey against the Syrian Kurds was evident and interminable, because it was unclear the interests of each one of the negotiation of peace and the other issues that are of common interest.

On the other side, in Iraq was found the main Kurdish refugee camp: Domiz; which it was converted into a special space for the nation of the Kurds, where the refugees could express their culture and language with complete freedom: “They have traveled hundreds of miles to be with fellow Kurds where they can speak their own Kurdish language and freely express their ancient culture” (Resneck and Yankov, 2012, par. 4).

Figure 4: Location of the Domiz Refugee’ Camp. Source: (Sinjab, 2013).



Furthermore, this camp was financed by the Kurdish Regional Government that concedes particular benefits to the population of the Kurds. The leader of the Kurdish Regional Government was the Sir Massud Barzani, who is the president of Iraqi Kurdistan and who has led the project of an independent Kurdistan.

The leader Barzani achieved conquers loyalties, in political terms, for all the refugees in Domiz. Thousands of people had declared as followers of Barzani and were thankful for the management and treatment of the Kurdish population. However, Barzani had not gotten an influential role for the Kurds in Syria. Nevertheless, the clash

between the Democratic Union Party and the Kurdistan Workers' Party, that were fighting for the rule of the Kurdish population in Turkey was another of the problems that the Turkish government had to face regarding to the Syrian crisis. In this case, Barzani was an important ally of Turkey, who expressed his disagree about this situation (Resneck & Yankov, 2012, par. 19).

Even when is sooner to reach a conclusion about the establishment of an Independent Kurdistan, it could be said that the conquered of political loyalties to Barzani could have an important influence in the reach of this political objective. In addition, this is not the main objective of the refugees of the Camp of Domiz, but their displacement from Syria to Iraq is generating changes to this part of the region, which could not be seen since a first moment. All these facts, concluded in a modification of the organization in which the same interactions of the system shaped the order of the structure.

2.3. Partial remarks about the complex systems of Syria and the subregion of the Middle East

In the complex systems, the effects are not directly proportional to their possible causes: One agent could generate a lot of unexpected effects. For example, while the Kurds in Syria consolidated their autonomy in the country, at the same time, they were displacing through the region to countries such as Turkey and Iraq, fleeing from the horrors of the crisis and the offenses that ISIS has carried out in their territory. Therefore, the relation with multiple actions and their consequences are impossible to be observed with detail.

It should be noted that the latter did not mean that there are no causes for the situation lived by the Kurds in Syria. What is pretended to say is that some causes could generate many consequences. Therefore, it is not relevant to see them but the result of all the

dynamics carried out between the agents of the system. That means, to see, as a principal point, the consequences of the migration of the Kurds from Syria to other countries, or the strengthening of their political role in Syria to the structure of the State and, eventually, in that part of the region composed of territories with Kurdish population.

3. THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE KURDS IN SYRIA AND ITS EFFECTS IN A SUBREGIONAL COMPLEX SYSTEM

The subregion of the Middle East is a complex system composed, besides different States, by several ethnic groups, religious groups and organizations with interests in the region. In this way, the Kurdish nation is one of all of the actors that formed this system. Hence, the definition and characterization of each complex system depends on the discipline in which it is focused. In this case, it is pretended to develop a framework of the concept of Complex Adaptive System (CAS), to later explain the process of the Self-Organization and the elements that composed it. Furthermore, in the last part of this chapter, the influence of the Kurdish community in Syria in the traditional political structures in the country will be clarified. Of course, all this considering the affectation that the Kurds had in the subregion of the Middle East.

3.1. The concept of Complex Adaptive System (CAS)

The concept of CAS was firstly developed by the American physicist Murray Gell-Mann¹⁰, in his book *The Quark and the Jaguar* (1995). In this book, Gell-Mann pretended to show, through his experiences, some conclusions in the study of the interplay between the simple and the complex. Likewise, the purpose of Gell-Mann's work is the introduction of a new notion to be minted in the complexity approach. Therefore, the CAS concept emerged in the breast of the Santa Fe Institute, where diverse studies about the simple and the complex were carried out; based on the perspectives of specialists of different fields of study.

¹⁰ Murray Gell-Mann: (1929): American physicist, winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics for 1969 for his work pertaining to the classification of subatomic particles and their interactions (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2015).

According to Gell-Mann, the CAS “are dynamic systems able to adapt in and evolve with a changing environment. (...) there is no separation between a system and its environment in the idea that a system always adapts to a changing environment” (Chan, 2001, p. 2). In this way, the Middle East could be characterized as a CAS, for it is not governed by laws or principles that could be explained by a set of paradigms and theories with linear explanations.

Uniquely, some treaties and negotiations shaped the subregion of the Middle East, but these were not enough to explain the dynamics of the area East during the period studied. However, certain constant properties in the functioning of the regional system could be observed throughout history, namely: The constant use of the violence as a tool for reaching national interests, the conflictive relations between the States, the fragmentation of the Kurdish nation and the constant use of coercive means against them.

Nevertheless, the new forms of organization of the subregion of the Middle East are the result of the adaptation of the most recent phenomenon that is manifested in the system, such as the Syrian crisis and the war with ISIS. Therefore, in this project of research it is sought to analyze how since the Syrian crisis, a group of actions and reactions by different actors, institutions and entities could be loosed. And in this way, identify how these interactions allowed the strengthening of the role of the Kurds in Syria and the region.

Indeed, as there are so many actors implied in the dynamics of this subregion of the Middle East, in this project of research is pretended to focus predominantly on the behavior of the Kurds. Especially, the actions carried out by the Kurds in Syria. Likewise, as it was mentioned before, it will be analyzed the behavior of the Kurds as a whole nation, and not since the position of a determined faction or political group. This does not mean that it is pretended to ignore the importance of the decisions of specific

agents, but that for the reach of the main aim of this project of research, it is necessary to observe the Kurds since a general position and not divided.

In other words, in this project of research is analyzed the role of the Kurds as a nation, and not from the standpoint of some particular organization. As a consequence, even when the actions of a particular party or organization will be in consideration for its transcendence in the role of the Kurds in the region, what it is pretended to study is the position of the Kurdish nation and not of determined factions. It is exactly in this sense that the concept of Self-Organization plays a most fundamental role.

3.1. The process of Self-Organization

The concept of Self-Organization is developed by the senior lecturer in International Relations, Antoine Bousquet, in which pretends to apply this notion in one of the phenomena most known in the Middle East: the jihadist movement. According with Bousquet, the Self-Organization is referred to as “the process by which the autonomous interaction of individual entities results in the bottom-up emergence of complex systems, systems composed of many parts that are coupled in a nonlinear fashion” (Bousquet, “Complexity Theory and the War on Terror: Understanding the self-organizing dynamics of leaderless jihad”, 2011, pp. 5 -6). Furthermore, this notion has its origins in the concept of mutual aid by Peter Kropotkin, when he claims that emerging interactions produce new forms of social organization based on the aspects of solidarity and cooperation, through a spontaneous and progressive order.

Nonetheless, this notion enables to recognize that the system is altered by various kinds of accidents, which shape it constantly (Cudworth and Hobden, 2010, p. 12). This process is known in the Complexity approach as the Self-Organization.

The notion of Self-Organization is the central concept of this work, because it allows understand how the capacity of agency of the Kurds in Syria can create new

forms of organization that influence not only in the same country but also in the region. Besides, it helps to understand that this influence can be done by different elements and not since a sole element. But, for effects of this research, it will be making special emphasis to the element of migration, as a factor of influence in the subregion of the Middle East and that it was presented to all the countries where there is Kurdish population.

The application of the notion of Self-Organization in IR allows examine the multilevel relations in different scales, processes and forms in which the system is reproduced. In this manner, this notion helps to identify other three elements of the Self-Organization in the complex system: emergence, non-linearity, and bifurcation. Each of these elements will be explained below, as well as their application to this object of study.

3.3. The elements of the Self-Organization and its implications over the Kurdish nation

✓ Emergence

Firstly, the emergence is considered as a key element of complex systems, which is defined as “the manifestation of global level structures from micro-level processes”(Cudworth and Hobden, 2010, p. 1). The concept of emergence aids to understand how the actions of the Kurds, in the defense of their political interests, influence some alterations in the region, without responding to the clauses of the treaties that determined the configuration of the territory or the constraints of any superior entity.

In other words, through this concept it is possible to understand how some minor interactions from the Kurdish nation level could generate alterations in a major

structure, i.e., the subregion of the Middle East. Such alterations are completely unexpected from the outset. This process is the result of the non-linearity of the system. For instance, since the process of consolidation of the autonomy of the Kurdish community in Syria, some alterations in the political structure of the country were presented.

The regime of al-Assad is not the only entity that established a unified order, but also the Kurds; with which is pretended to strengthening their political role. Of course, these pretensions sought a transboundary reach and implied different actors out of Syria, as the community of the Kurds in Iraq and the population of Turkey and Iran.

This situation is enforced for the war with ISIS that obligated that thousands of people of the Kurdish nation displaced through the region, generating changes to the social and political structure of the countries in the subregion of the Middle East. The interests and the strategies of each of the government of the region changed and these were obligated to think in transboundary actions to respond to the events that were affecting them.

✓ **The phenomenon of non-linearity**

The phenomenon of non-linearity is referred to those situations in which there is no proportionality between inputs and outputs, and in which little influences can give place to mayor effects (Bousquet & Curtis, "Beyond Models and metaphors: complexity theory, systems thinking and international relations", 2011, p. 4). This concept helps comprehend why the emergence is presented in some structures: Not all the results respond symmetrically to a causal factor. In this case, non-linearity shows how even though that was not exactly the main goal of the Kurds, their actions could influence the Syrian structure and the whole region. Therefore, it allows understanding how such influence is due to minor interactions and not to decisions at a macro level.

In the last years, the Kurds had not followed the agreements and conditions stated in the treaties and negotiations established with other states. Indeed, they are creating new forms of organization that are the outcome of the interactions that influence cultural, social, economic, political and other concerns among several actors, namely the states, the factions, and Islamic forces – whose results could not be predicted. As a consequence, the Kurds were able to change the political structures in Syria and, eventually, in the Middle East. The non-linearity of the Middle-East allowed for interactions by the Kurdish nation that changed the political structure of Syria and influenced the Middle-East. Indeed, the non-linearity of the structure made impossible to establish unquestionable truths about the changes that the interactions of the Kurds could have.

✓ **Bifurcation**

Since the non-linearity, some states of bifurcation could be presented, particularly critical points of instability (Cudworth and Hobden, 2010, p. 413). Thus, for example, in the years before the 2011 Syrian crisis, the situation of the Kurdish community could be understood more evidently from the linear relation with the government, for there was a central government in head of Bashar al-Assad that released some orders that imposed constraints upon the Kurds and not always benefited them. However, since 2011, Syria presented some changes in which such a relation is not as evident any longer and, conversely, presented the possibility that the relationship between the central government and the Kurds be developed in more than one direction. To be sure, this has and will have concrete effects that are hard to anticipate.

In general, the Kurds are part of a complex system in which the constituent units that are constantly interacting, evolving, and establishing networks that influence the ordering of the whole structure. This system is characterized by the presence of non-

linear interactions of the Kurds in Syria, with populations of the same nation in other states, as well as with central governments in the region. Nowadays, one of the most salient forces is ISIS in the Kurdish territory. Such multiplicity of non-linear interactions allows for the emergence of unanticipated outcomes that could generate unexpected changes affecting aspects such as political, social and migratory ones in the region. Each of these elements enables the creation of forms of Self-Organization that do not rely on hierarchical structures previously set up, and which, on the contrary, transcend the State borders.

3.4. Final remarks about the influence of the Kurdish community in the traditional structures of Syria and, eventually, the subregion of the Middle East

The Syrian community of the Kurds is part of two complex systems: Syria and the subregion of the Middle East with Kurdish population. As it was mentioned before, these two systems are part of a whole unit, in which the behavior of the agents of one side can affect the consequences of the results of the other side. This situation has as result that the order of the same system changes and be shaped by the agents that composed the structure.

Before explaining the influence that the Kurdish community in Syria had in the subregion of the Middle East since the crisis during the period 2011-2014, the effect on the traditional political structures of the Syrian State will be described.

Previously to the social mobilizations that result in the Political crisis that since 2011 had brought down Syria, the regime of Bashar al-Assad was governing Syria since 2000 when his father died and yielded him the charge of being in the chief of this State. Even though, the government of Bashar al-Assad counted with a strong support of the military sector, which was inherited from the government of his father for several decades since that the Ba'ath Party arrived at the power. However, the support by the

social and civil sectors was weakened, and the Syrian people started asking for the respect of the human rights and actions against the political corruption that distinguished the government of al-Assad.

Among the people who wanted to improve their conditions in the country was found the Kurdish community that since they are part of the State of Syria, their rights were ignored and trembled for the Arab interests, defended by the regime of al-Assad. Even though, the Kurdish community found the special conditions to improve their political representation in the country, all through the crisis 2011-2014. Furthermore, they had some proposals that shown their interest to influence in the decisions of the country. Some examples mentioned before are the suggestion of being part of the Conference of Geneve II and the establishment of an autonomous region in the northeast of the country.

The above situations allowed that the way how are observed this country, in which there was a main party in the power in which its interest was imposed on the rest of the people. There were not in consideration only the decisions of the government, but also those interests of the Kurdish community given there is a stronger influence over the decisions of the country.

Now well, the Kurdish community is part of a nation that are divided in the Middle East, and that is part of four different countries since the Treaty of Lausanne 1923. Since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the Kurdish nation has sought for the establishment of an independent Kurdistan. However, this objective could not be achieved for diverse reasons, but the interest of achieved it is maintained.

Although in every Kurdish community there were changes in the way they sought to achieve this objective or the type of representation they want to achieve in their country of settlement, the aim is among the interests of the nation. Therefore, the strengthening of the political participation of the Kurds in Syria could have brought some influence on the rest of Kurdish communities in the subregion of the Middle East

such as Turkey, Iraq and Iran. Moreover, this influence was given from certain channels, such as migration, across the borders of the subregion and through the political relations between the leaders of each Kurdish community.

The most representative example presented in this research was Turkey, where migration carried out by the Kurds from Syria to this country, would have generated a change in the government decisions about the agreement it sought to achieve the peace with the Kurdistan Worker's Party.

Moreover, for the displacement of Kurds across the border -which initially sought to divide them-, it has changed the way how this subregion of the Middle East is observed. In other words, are not the policies and border divisions that organize this part of the region, but the displacements and relocations that the Kurdish people have done fleeing from the fighting between rebels and the government of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, and the violent actions carried out by the ISIS group.

The above changes and other events have led the reorganization of the subregion, which can no longer be analyzed from the negotiations of specific agreements. By contrast, they are the same players in the system - in this case the Kurds who are giving form to the structure. Of course, this reorganization is not raised previously, and the result is a consequence of the different external interactions and dynamics that during four years the Kurds held with different agents of the same system through different means. This phenomenon is what was studied in this research project, as the process of Self-Organization from the Complexity approach.

CONCLUSIONS

The Kurds are one of the major ethnic groups in the world with no State, thanks to the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 that established them as a divided nation in the Middle East in four different countries: Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. This negotiation put them in a situation in which they could not achieve some of their interests of independence, but they were constrained according to the policies of the correspondent government that, most of the times, did not benefit them. However, in each of the States where there is Kurdish population, the situation of the people of this nation is not the same.

In Syria, there is the minor population of Kurds in comparison with the other countries. In fact, their actions were not as suggestive to the government as in Turkey or Iraq. Nonetheless, during the period 2011-2014, some events as the Syrian crisis and the war against ISIS had determined the possibilities of the Kurds in Syria to influence in the country and the region. For instance, some events in which is shown this phenomenon in the Middle East are the consolidation of the autonomy of the Kurdish community in the northeast of Syria, the strengthening of their political role and the relations with other Kurdish communities for the transboundary displacement that were influencing the subregion of the region.

The dynamics and interactions that maintained the governments of the Middle East, the Kurdish parties and factions, among others; given in the State of Syria had influenced the region. In fact, both systems, Syria and the Middle East are part of a whole, whose agents' behavior influenced each other. Therefore, the actions and reactions carried out in Syria implied repercussions in the whole region, whose causal factors cannot be determined. In this sense, the results and consequences of the events are not directly proportional to their causes.

Furthermore, it is not possible to observe constant elements and interactions in the complex systems. There are multiple dynamics that emerged all of a sudden and

altered the complete system. What are noteworthy are the results that the set of this kind of multiple behaviors reaches. In this case, the theoretical notion that explains this process is the concept of Self-Organization of the Complexity approach.

The phenomenon of Self-Organization is the result of minor interactions in a structure of the major scale. Likewise, the relations among the Kurdish factions with the governments of the region, the displacement of the population through the frontiers due to the constant violent situation and the strengthening of the political role of the Kurds in Syria and their relations with Kurdish communities of other countries are some of the facts that recreate a new form of organization. This new order cannot be explained by any treaty or decision, for the same complexity of the system.

This research of grade studied the political role of the Kurds in Syria and its implications in the region. In some occasions, it was mentioned the political project of independence of the Kurds and the establishment of Kurdistan, but there was not the central topic of this research because for the period took it was not possible to see its effects in the consolidation of an independent State.

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