



Naqshbandi Sufis and their conception of place, time and fear on the Turkish-Syrian border and borderland

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The employment of diverse forms of security and control on territorial borders have led to the production of numerous events of border-crossings, smuggling, banditry and death along with stories of separation, loss, mourning, pain and yearning in the everyday life of border people. The Naqshbandi Khaznavi order has an expansive interpersonal social network across the political borders of Turkish and Syrian nation-states. This work analyzes the ways in which Sufis dealt with diverse aspects of the Turkish-Syrian border by unbinding shackles and orders of political systems that were fabricated constantly from the 1920s to the early 1980s. The life stories and narratives of the Sufis document the existence of a religious-cultural landscape, diversifying the perception of place, time and fear which have transcended political borders for decades, contradicting official cartographic imagination and the modern-secular understanding of place and time. Besides, in addition to analyses of religious orders as social, economic and political entities, this work aims to elucidate emotional aspects of relations and faith that coexist between Sufis and their Sheikh in the context of spatial distance, political border and fear of death.

In the process of the forming of nation-states, political territorial borders have become the sites and symbols of power and they create concrete forms of the boundaries of the imagined nations. In modern nation-state projects, the idea of sovereignty has been based on a determined geographical territory¹ where political borders become markers of that territorial sovereignty. As a homogenising container, it creates, by any means necessary, an assimilationist and integrated system of state-nation-territory through forcibly constructed political borders.² In spite of its work of forming a new cartographic memory at both subjective and collective levels, however, local people's reactions to the policies and practices of officially determined political borderlines in most cases are diverse in developing contesting epistemologies, other daily performances and tactics in order to maintain the former memory, history and knowledge of their land.

The nation-state's employment of diverse forms of security and control on territorial borders leads to numerous events at border-crossings: smuggling, banditry and death along with stories of separation, loss, mourning, pain and yearning in the every-day lives of border people. The scrutinised subjective and communal narratives of political borders reveal stories of the widowhood and mutilated bodies of smugglers, their children and other ordinary people as the most catastrophic consequence of living next to a land-mined border zone. In the Turkish case, like many other cases in different parts of the world, it was the early 1950s with the implementation of landmines when local people were crushed and faced the reality of the political border. The political division of Kurdish-inhabited lands, with the forced agreements between the Turkish authorities and the European colonial political powers after the First World War in 1921, resulted

in multi-faceted problems on the borderland. Later, it exacerbated living conditions in the 1950s because of the creation by the Turkish state authorities of a land-mined zone as a new strategy and apparatus along the Syrian border. Thus, the border that existed as a transitory entity during the early decades of the Turkish republic, was thickening and becoming a killing mechanism in the 1950s and in later periods.

The Syrian state, both as a French colony (1920–1946) and later as an independent nation-state since 1946, applied standard-regular and loose measures on its border with Turkey; there were no physical measures and security apparatuses such as wires, landmines, watch towers or security wall until the eruption of the internal war in 2011. On the other hand, the Turkish state has always been active, eager and aggressive, putting a huge effort into securing and maintaining control on the border. Turkish authorities have adopted diverse coercive policies including land markers, wires, landmines, border gates, watch towers, gendarmerie stations, mobile security patrols (soldiers) and the security wall which have been fundamental signifiers and apparatuses. The Turkish state's security measures intensified, particularly in the 1950s, with the placement of hundreds of thousands of anti-personnel landmines by soldiers of the Turkish army all along the Turkish-Syrian border at different periods as a result of increasing border-crossings, acts of smuggling and the complicated policies of the cold-war era with the Syrian nation-state.³ Ethnographic research that has been carried out in and around the border town of Nusaybin in Mardin on the Turkish-Syrian border in the south-eastern part of the country, has enabled us to comprehend the destructive consequences of the border-making strategies of the Turkish state from the past to the present.⁴ On the other hand, it also demonstrates the unmaking tactics from below performed by ordinary local people who encounter, overcome and acquire new ways of life on the border. The newly top-down political borders and violent state policies initiated in the 1920s aimed to divide, alienate and extinguish centuries-old local kin, ethnic and religious networks and life patterns of those residing in the region.

The objective of this article is to analyze mobility patterns and border-crossings of members of the Naqshbandi Khaznavi Sufi order, exploring their conception of place, time and fear, with a particular focus on the early decades of the Republic.⁵ This goes beyond metanarratives and the local narratives of smugglers, traders and kin groups from both sides and the diverse life stories of other border people which have been presented in another piece of research.⁶ Additionally, this work will endeavour to document how the emotions of fear of state apparatuses, danger and faith felt by Sufis collided with one another during the daily crossings in the early decades of the history of the border. Like many other Sufi orders, the Khaznavi order has an expansive interpersonal social network across the political borders of nation-states. As a distinct profile of Sufi subjects who constantly crossed the border (il)legally in the past, Khaznavi Sufis sometimes disregarded, subverted or appropriated state apparatuses (land markers, wires, landmines, border security guards/soldiers, official border gates and customs workers) that were implemented on the border. This article will analyze the ways in which Sufis dealt with the diverse aspects of the Turkish-Syrian border by unbinding the shackles and orders of the political systems that were fabricated constantly.

Rather than focusing on religious orders as social, economic and political entities, this work sets out to document and elucidate the emotional aspects of the relations and faith that coexist between Sufi disciples (*murids*) and their Sheikh (*murshid*) in the context of spatial distance, political borders and fear of death. How did the love and faith that they felt for their Sheikh supersede the dangers and fear of death while crossing the border when they might have been incarcerated, injured or killed by soldiers and landmines? It argues that the *raison d'être* of Sufis in *tariqa* (order, mystical path) is to have a deeper understanding of their religion (*din*, Islam) and a stronger love of Allah that is associated with *taqwa*. Here, it will be argued that it is this *taqwa*, this spirituality and solid bond with the Sheikh, which gave his disciples a high level of love (*ışk-aşk*), faith and courage to deal with the potentially fatal dangers and illegality during the border-crossings.

As we learn from the life stories of the Sufis, the paths of the irregular visits or journeys across the political border at certain periods (particularly during spring) became a very dangerous encounter in the lives of the Khaznavi Sufis. Ordinary people living in the region ignored the borderlines when there were just border markers, wires and casual patrols of border security guards (soldiers) on foot in the earlier decades, from the 1920s, to the 1940s. It was the use of anti-personal landmines and the creation of mined zones along the border in the 1950s by the Turkish authorities which shifted that local ignorance to different forms of subversion, conversion and appropriation in the later periods.

This article is based on field research that has been carried out among some members of the Khaznavi order in Mardin, Kızıltepe, Midyat and some surrounding villages at different times in 2016.⁷ This work can be defined as a further step in my previous fieldwork conducted between 2012 and 2014 on the Turkish-Syrian border and borderland in Nusaybin with particular focus on smuggling, land-mines and the un(making) practices of borders.⁸ During the fieldwork for this study, I conducted around 15 interviews with a random selection of older male members of the Khaznavi order with a particular focus on the pre-1980s.⁹ The time period of 1923–1984 was selected based on two main reasons: first, the changing notion of security after the cold war and the emergence of new concepts such as terrorism, illegal immigration and other criminal acts declared by the state authorities. In a similar vein, circumstances on the Turkish-Syrian border were changing in parallel to global political events and economic developments. In Turkish state politics, the security of the borders became a more serious issue after the eruption of armed conflicts and terror between the state and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (the PKK).¹⁰ Second, the rate of 'illegal' border-crossings diminished in the 1980s because of the accelerated activation of border gates as a result of the liberal policies of T. Özal (d.1993) from 1983 to 1993 during which trading or 'smuggling' through official border gates by use of permission documents or passports had become a safer preference. The post-1984 era with its new political and economic dynamics became a phase dominated by strict security policies which ended with the erection of a 'security wall'¹¹ in 2016 by the Turkish state authorities. In short, socio-political developments in the region were determining factors in the range of applied security measures on the border that also radically changed the mobility patterns of all border-crossing people, including the Khaznavi Sufis.

A brief history of the Naqshbandi Khaznavi order

In the broad scholarly literature on Sufism, the Naqshbandi order (*tariqa*) has gained the particular gaze of many researchers due to its historical, substantial, widespread and enduring influence on diverse Muslim communities around the world from the past to the present.¹² The history of the order goes back to the fourteenth century and its name is derived from the name of Baha al-din Naqshband (1318–1389), who was one of the leading figures who left certain marks on the fabric of the order, which extended geographically from Egypt to Central Asia, Pakistan and India.¹³ The order is 'essentially identical with its initiatic chain, its *silsila*, reaching back to the Prophet Muhammad'.¹⁴ The well-known figures in this *silsila* are Abu Bakr (d.634), Salman al-Farisi (d.657), Jafar as-Sadiq (d.765), Abd al-Khaliq Ghujdawani (d.1220), Baha al-din Naqshband (d.1389), Nasir al-din Ubaidallah al-Ahrar (d.1490), Ahmad Faruqi Sirhindi (d.1624) and Maulana Khalid Baghdadi (d.1827).¹⁵ Maulana Khalid Baghdadi, one of the most influential names in the *silsila*, was the leading figure in the expansion and impact of the order in the Ottoman territories, known as Naqshbandi-Khalidis from the nineteenth century onwards.¹⁶

The Naqshbandi order is based on a religious network which on one hand 'cuts through all tribal boundaries and is independent, even defiant, of the state'¹⁷ while, on the other, aspires to cultivate and educate its members and turn them into pious subjects. In general, the Sufi orders and particularly the Naqshbandi Sheikhs, have always been influential both at the subjective and

collective levels, intervening, involving, mediating and controlling diverse social, political and religious matters along with power conflicts.¹⁸ Hamid Algar, one of the scholars in the literature on Muslim Sufis, addresses the effective role of Sufi orders in the Muslim world with a particular focus on Naqshbandiyya, the Qadiriyya and the Shadhiliyya, stating that:

Their historical role, over more than five centuries of the Islamic era, indicates an organic relationship with the social, spiritual and intellectual life of the whole Muslim community, assuring it a large measure of unity, continuity and vitality.¹⁹

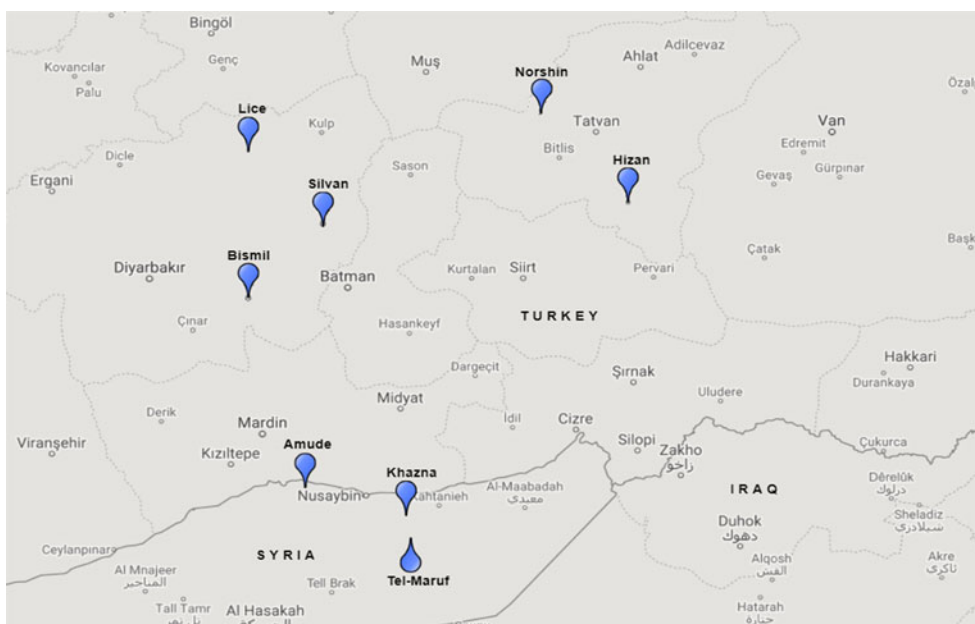
The order does not have a universal and centralised hierarchy, rather consisting of diverse branches. In this context, while writing on the history, institutionalisation and positions of the Qadiri and Naqshbandi orders in the Kurdish community, Martin Van Bruinessen contends that:

This is not to say that hierarchical relations do not exist. Some sheikhs enjoy more general respect than others, and may demand obedience from certain other sheikhs, who are their khalifas, or sons of their fathers' khalifas (or khalifas of their fathers' khalifas). The network, however, is only partially ordered in such hierarchical relations. And as there is no generally recognized head, there are many conflicts among Naqshbandi sheikhs, especially among those who live close to one another and compete for the same murids.²⁰

According to Bruinessen, contrary to some other Sufi orders, the Naqshbandi sheikhs are able to appoint deputies (in Arabic *khalifas*) who serve in other regions. When the acting sheikh dies, one of *khalifas* who can be a male family member (brother, son, uncle or son-in-law), or someone among other *khalifas*, begin to act as the new sheikh of the order. Sometimes, as in the case of the founder of the Khaznavi order, Sheikh Ahmed, the *khalifa* himself might gain this position in his own right instead of inheriting it. As Bruinessen has stated earlier, the *sheikh-khalifa* links and the organisational structure of the order played a crucial role in the continual development, growing network and massive influence of the Naqshbandi order in the nineteenth century in many parts of the Muslim world.²¹ The Naqshbandi-Khalidi order has been one of the most influential orders in the Ottoman territories and particularly in Anatolia in the last two centuries.²²

As one of the sub-branches of the Naqshbandi-Khalidi orders in the late Ottoman territories, the story of the geographically partitioned Naqshbandi Khaznavis starts with the partition of the territories inhabited by Kurds for centuries in 1921 by both Turkish and French authorities at the Treaty of Ankara. As a result, Khazna and Tel-Maruf were both bound to the city of Qamişlo; this emerged as a new settlement on the Syrian side after the partition and also as a twin city of Nusaybin. Both the small towns of Khazna and Tel-Maruf later become significant places of the order on the Syrian side. Sheikh Ahmed al-Khaznavi (1887–1950) and his family, like many other Kurds who were born on the Turkish side but lived on the Syrian side, were given the right to hold dual citizenship.

The founder of the order, Sheikh Ahmed, son of local imam Mela Murat (d.1903), was born in 1887 in Khazna, Qamişlo, Syria.²³ Ahmed was educated and trained by his father who served as a local imam. At the age of 12–13, he started to enhance his knowledge and was being guided to move nearer to Islamic madrasas for further education. After being educated by his father as his first teacher, he travelled to Silvan, a county of Diyarbakır, to be taught by Seyda Mela Hüseyin (later given the nickname of Küçük) Efendi (1871–1955). Later, as he was interested in Sufism, he attended the classes of Hizanlı Sheikh Abdulkadir Efendi (d.1905) in the county of Hizan in Bitlis. After this, he attended the classes of Muhammed Diyaeddin Norşini (1855–1923) in the Kurdish town of Norşin (or Norshin, in Turkish Güroymak). The madrasa in Norşin was one of the most prestigious madrasas of that time, located in the province of Bitlis in the eastern part of Turkey.²⁴ During his studies, he travelled between Khazna, Silvan, Hizan and Norşin and some other surrounding towns for more than 10 years for his Islamic madrasa education before the eruption of the First World War in 1914.²⁵



Map 1. Some routes and the centres of traditional Islamic madrasa education that Sheikh Ahmed Khaznavi (d.1950) and many other local Sufis and Sheikhs attended during their education in the Kurdish region.²⁶

The above map indicates the mobility routes of Sufis and Sheikhs with a passion for knowledge (*ilm*) in the Kurdish region within the Ottoman territories which were later partitioned between Turkey and Syria. Sheikh Ahmed, who became one of the khalifas of Sheikh Muhammed Diyaeddin Norşini (d.1924) at the age of 25 in 1912, remained on the Syrian side.²⁷ The geographical divisions for Sufi orders, and being on the Syrian side, offered a more attractive option for many Sheikhs in the region due to the aggressive secularisation and modernisation/westernisation policies of the Turkish authorities during the single-party regime from 1923 to the 1950s.²⁸ It is one of the reasons which prompted Sheikh Ahmed to make Tel-Maruf, near Qamişlo in Syria, the centre of his order. In 1927, at the age of 40, he started to disseminate his sermons and preachings to the larger public in Amude. He was forced by the French colonial authorities to reside in Haseke for a certain time but later he moved to Tel-Maruf, in Syria, where he lived until his death in 1950 at the age of 63. His order, named *Khaznavi tariqa* after his birth place, has been one of the most influential orders in the region. His teachings and approach have been transmitted by his disciples (murids) and the disciples of his successors to new generations. According to Akyüz, during his life, Sheikh Ahmed bestowed the status of khalifa upon 13 of his disciples/students including his two sons, Alaaddin and İzzeddin. His shrine in Tel-Maruf, which was partially destroyed by some terrorist organisations in Syria during ongoing the Syrian civil war and armed conflicts that erupted in 2011, has not only been a resting place for Sheikh Ahmed but for his male successors.²⁹ This small village has also been a burial place for his heirs, Sheikh M. Masum (1915–1958), Sheikh Alaaddin (1919–1969), Sheikh İzzeddin (1922–1992) and Sheikh Muhammed (1949–2005)³⁰ who was one of the sons of Sheikh İzzeddin.

The position of spiritual leader, the Sheikhhood, in the *tariqa* generally has been inherited by a son or brother and in some cases a son-in-law or a disciple. As a result of this transmissible tradition, there have been numerous conflicts between family members in Sufi orders for generations past and present. Today, the former Sheikh Muhammed's son, Sheikh Muhammed Muta (b.1977), is acting Sheikh of *tariqa* and is the successor for the majority of today's disciples. However, the youngest son of Sheikh Ahmed Khaznavi, Sheikh Abdulgani (b.1950) – who was

born soon after the death of his father – has been considered as the head of the *tariqa* by other disciples. Both leading figures of the Khaznavi order have been living in Turkey since the eruption of the ‘dirty war’ in Syria in 2011.

Since the 1920s, thousands of Khaznavi Sufis from different parts of south eastern and other parts of Turkey, visit their Sheikh and his successors who reside in the town of Tel-Maruf on the other side of the border. The Syrian border village of Khazna, the birthplace of Sheikh Ahmed, and Tel-Maruf, which later became the centre of his *tariqa*, have been two central places in the world of his disciples and other followers for generations. The legal and illegal mobility patterns of Sheikhs and their Sufis between two nation-states have become a very interesting aspect of this religious community/order. Although Khaznavi emerged with Kurdish ethnic roots, it later gained thousands of Arab and Turkish disciples and expanded its geographical space inside Turkey and Syria.

The case of the Naqshbandi Khaznavi Sufis who challenge the diverse forms of border-making practices of the Turkish nation-state, indicates how local people were not constrained by the boundaries of officially declared nations and the state. The life stories and narratives of the Sufis document the existence of a religious-cultural landscape, diversifying the perception of time and place which have transcended political borders for decades, contradicting official cartographic imagination and the modern-secular understanding of time. The modern nation-state’s strategy to control both the ‘territory’ and its ‘inhabitants’ by any means necessary, has encountered differing local epistemological and ontological perceptions which have created battlegrounds between the state and its subjects not only in the border territories but also in hearts and minds.

Local conception of place and the border

‘Humans are centrally beings-in-place and are emplaced’ and their relationship with and attachments to place have ‘dimensions of intimacy, knowledge, familiarity, history and interpersonality’ which, as the subject of research, has gained the attention of many anthropologists and other social scientists.³¹ In addition to experiences of rootedness, semi-nomadic patterns of life can be traced in the life stories and personal narratives of older people, whose status was violently converted to that of ‘border people’.

In a similar vein, the life stories of ordinary elders, including Sufis, illustrate how the local perception of place and border is a remnant of the Ottoman era like many other epistemological and ontological issues. Local people’s attachment to place and their sense of belonging to and narratives of the place are grounded by their social-cultural histories, cartographic memories, traditions, religion and ethnic (tribal) entities that date back many centuries. In this context, for instance, Keith Basso eloquently explains to us ‘what and how much place can mean to people’ by narrating the history and stories of the Apache people in Arizona.³² This research also clearly indicates the making of new territory, borders and cartographic memory based on nationalist, modern and secular paradigms by a new authoritarian state immediately conflicted with local-native traditional, religious and historical notions and memories of the past.³³

During the violent policies of the modern Turkish nation-state project under the single-party regime in the early decades of the Republic,³⁴ Naqshbandis were active in opposition movements resisting the state-sponsored modernising and secularising of social-political life, institutions and public space that targeted the sharia-based communal order.³⁵ Therefore, stories of Kurdish Sufis and narratives of their mobility patterns on the border and in the borderland correspondingly indicate the competing practices and discourses at the frontiers of the state: local and central (statist), traditional and modernist, religious and secular, Kurdish and Turkish.

As described in many cases from Africa, North America and elsewhere, political borders ‘often cut through more or less homogenous “culture areas” and ethnic groups, so social and political

differences on both sides of the border are usually not as pronounced as in the case of the US-Mexican border'.³⁶ When Turkish and colonial French authorities arbitrarily determined the Turkish-Syrian border and enforced unwilling local ethnic groups into accepting the new boundaries, the partitioning of Kurdish, Assyrian and Arab communities became inevitable. Nonetheless, the border created a sanctuary on the other side for those who had troubles with either the Turkish or Syrian state. In general, the Syrian side has been a place of escape and refuge for members of oppositional movements, religious groups and, indeed, criminals. Thus, for the local subject the border and borderlands have always been 'transition zones'³⁷ in spite of all the security and control measures that took place step by step in later decades.

Likewise, the fact that Sheikh Ahmed's place of residence was left on the Syrian side after the drawing of the border in 1921, later created a strategic condition for his *tariqa*. The new Turkish state's secular paradigm and the rebellion of Naqshbandi Sheikh Said against Turkish nationalism and the secular principles of the new authority in 1925, resulted in the prohibition of all religious orders and institutions.³⁸ Writing on the Naqshbandi image in the late Ottoman empire and in the early years of the Republic, sociologist Şerif Mardin explains how certain religious and political events during that time were employed to manufacture a 'dangerous' and 'backward' image of the Naqshbandis as the fundamental threat to the secularisation process. He explains how the Sheikh Said rebellion 'led to the passing of draconian laws that clamped down on the expression of public criticism against the new regime'.³⁹ Therefore, as a result of severe policies of the state towards pious subjects and religious orders, many sheikhs and other religious leaders were forced to go underground⁴⁰ and remain silent or took refuge in neighbouring regions in Iraq and Syria. Nevertheless, some of Sufi centres such as Norşin (Güroymak, Bitlis), Hizan and Cizre (Şırnak) remained and become more active with the advent of the Democratic Party led by A. Menderes in the 1950 national elections which ended the rule of the single-party regime.⁴¹ During the governments of Turgut Özal's Motherland Party in the 1980s and later, some of the Naqshbandi orders developed strong relations with the state authorities of the time.⁴² In this context, those Sufi centres have been critical homes of Naqshbandi networks and have been influential in the social and political life in Turkey.⁴³

However, during the early decades of the Republic, particularly from the 1920s to the 1940s, some of the religious, tribal and political leaders and their families took refuge on the Syrian and Iraqi sides of the border and never returned.⁴⁴ Thus, the coincidentally born strategy of being situated on the Syrian side but acting mostly on the Turkish side have allowed the Khaznavi order to broaden its networks among the Kurdish and Arab populations of both countries. Unexpectedly, the border was turned into a shield capable of protecting them against the suppressions of an extremely secular, nationalist Turkish regime that executed hundreds of devout subjects at the Independence Tribunals (*İstiklal Mahkemeleri*).⁴⁵ These courts were one the most influential instruments in suffocating the voices of pious Muslim subjects, creating a sovereign and totalitarian power.

As stated, 'the permeability or impenetrability of boundaries, however, has often been discussed with respect to trade, mobility and citizenship but not with respect to land rights and access to other immobile resources'.⁴⁶ The geographical division of ethno-religious communities in the process of partitions in the colonial and post-colonial eras has revealed land claims and rights to natural resources in different parts of the world. Sufis and other local people define their acts of cross-border mobility as daily routines of life for trading, the exchange of goods and other social, cultural and religious sharing and interaction with relatives and other neighbouring settlements. During my research in the city of Kızıltepe in the province of Mardin, Hacı Bedran who was nearly 90 years old remembers the visits of Sheikh Ahmed (d.1950) and describes him as the Sheikh of both human beings and *jinn*s. He talked about his visits as daily routines without any reference to the political border before the placement of landmines in the 1940s. Devoted murid Hacı Bedran narrates his memories arbitrarily and fragmentarily:

I remember, there were border markers. There were not any land-mines before. My first visit to the house of the Sheikh was with my mother. It was before going to do my army service. I was very young. We were just going and coming back whenever we wanted ...⁴⁷

In the same vein, 73-year-old Mela Abdulhalim, who later joined the Khaznavi *tariqa* and became a very faithful murid, narrates how he went to Amude (Syria) in the 1950s which seemed a routine mobility pattern. In his story, he talks about crossing the border 'illegally' but without mentioning or specifying the 'border' and the 'illegality'. Mela Abdulhalim states:

In 1954 the official primary school was opened in our village. One teacher, two gendarmes (soldiers) and the muhtar (the local official headman) of the village came and told my father: 'Boys and girls – children between the ages of 7 and 10 – have to go to school. It is an obligation.' But, my father was a religious man and well-known for his religiosity in the vicinity of our town. There were not many schools in the region and people were more in favor of sending their children to madrasas... So, my father sent me to a madrasa at Amude to receive an Arabic (Islamic) education at the age of 11.⁴⁸

In the world of Mela Abdulhalim, the Turkish-Syrian border was not seen as a fixed entity at the age of 11 in the 1950s. The border town of Amude in Syria, as in other locations, were just neighbouring settlements within tribally (ethnic) and religiously (Muslim) shared land which for centuries had contradicted the statist national cartography. As seen in his narrative, the events of travelling, visiting and trading between Turkish and Syrian sides were narrated as regular mobility routines at that time in the region which can be observed in many other life stories and narratives of that generation.

Mobility patterns of Sufis start to change after the placing of landmines on the border which started in the mid-1950s. When Hacı Bedran talked about the visits of successors of Sheikh Ahmed in the later periods, the words of smuggling, smuggling, land- mines, soldiers, death and fear start to emerge in his narratives. He narrated:

There were smugglers, later. Everybody was smuggling... my brother was also killed while crossing the border but he was not a smuggler... Then, we were doing our visits to the house of the Sheikh sometimes accompanying smugglers... But, the Sheikh was advising us not to cross the border at night and not to take any smuggled goods with us on the way back home... With the help of Allah nothing happened. Our path was always open... He was giving us advice in order not to get into any trouble in case of arrest by soldiers while crossing the border... Sheikhs were also coming to this side to visit their khalifas and murids but with official permission...⁴⁹

The creation of a land-mined zone all along the line of the border in the mid-1950s by the state authorities and the thickening of that zone by other security measures at that time led to destructive changes in the mobility patterns of the Sufis and their relationship with the land. Intensified border security policies and danger pushed Sufis toward use of official papers and passports through border gates. One of the murids, Hacı İsmail (b.1939), talked about poverty and the financial constraints for ordinary people and Sufis to obtain a passport. Later, he talked pleasantly about how he was a hardworking and talented carpenter in Midyat and his financial ability of obtaining a passport with many difficulties from the capital city, Ankara. He joined the order in 1975 at the age of 35 and was able to make his first visit legally to Sheikh İzzeddin (1922–1992) in 1981. According to his narratives, the majority of murids were not in a financial position to do so and thus preferred 'illegal' border-crossings to reach their beloved Sheikh.⁵⁰

These differing perceptions of place and land among local people can also be seen during the naming policies of the state on the borderland when re-naming policies of the nation-state collided with the local one. As splendidly articulated by some anthropologists: 'Local place names contribute to the creation senses of place rich in moral, cosmological and biographical texture.'⁵¹ In spite of enforced Turkification and officially used names of places (mountains, roads, plateaux, valleys, and other geographical locations) and settlements (villages, towns and cities), local Kurdish people (Assyrians and Arabs as well) continue to use local names that are rooted in their cultures and date back centuries. For instance, the officially used Turkish concept of '*hudud*' or '*sınır*' (border) cannot be seen in the narratives of the majority of elders. Instead of using

these terms forced through state discourses and other apparatuses for decades, they remember and prefer to use the Kurdish word 'xet' (line) for the political border as something ambiguous and artificial that was imposed on their land by 'outsiders'. Here, there is need to mention that the railroad constructed on the borderline from the border town of Çobanbey in the province of Kilis to Nusaybin in Mardin also played a role in naming of the border as the 'line'.⁵² Thus, the Syrian side has the appellation 'binxet' (down the line) while the Turkish side is named 'serxet' (up the line) and people commonly use these terms in their speeches and narratives.

What they inherited from their ancestors as diverse daily life patterns were interpreted by state authorities as attempts to convert the border into an unstable, transient and flexible entity. In other words, what has been a 'right' and 'legal' in the world of border-crossing Sufis and in general local Kurdish people was defined by the state authorities as 'acts of smuggling' and thereby was counted as 'illegal border-crossing'. However, for the people living on the borderlands, it has been their inalienable birthright to use and move on the land as a legacy of their ancestors.

The sense and meaning of time

Anthropological studies on the phenomenon of time⁵³ and the subject of time regimes in diverse communities have revealed differing conception of time that resist the 'concept of clock time' imposed by western modernity and capitalism.⁵⁴ As Michel Foucault and then Johannes Fabian stated in the context of 'time sense', official time sense is imposed through diverse state apparatuses 'to assure that discipline reigns over society as a whole'.⁵⁵ In her work on decolonisation of time regimes in the Lakota indigenous community, Kathleen Pickering cites Foucault and states that 'the power of the state to impose regimes of time is so great that at a point these conceptions of time eventually become internalised and are self-imposed by individuals without ongoing state force'.⁵⁶ In other words, the regulation of a standard time, a work time and thereby controlling time as a mode of governing the individual and society in everyday life, have been one of the new facets of a modern state as a disciplining mechanism.

In his investigation of understanding the concept of time (*waqt*) in Islam, Gerhard Böwering underlines four points in his argument which are 'the vision of time in the Quran and Muslim tradition, the atomism of time peculiar to Islamic theology, the paradigm of time prevalent in the medieval mystical philosophy of Islam, and the rhythm of the Muslim calendar that provides the basis for Islamic historiography'.⁵⁷ Böwering states that 'one of the most characteristic ordering principles created by Islam to define its ritual and measure its history was the Muslim calendar, its own measure of time in the horizontal realm' and concludes that 'there are parameters of Islamic time that give its culture and religion cohesion and structure in theory and practice'.⁵⁸ Following these arguments, it can be argued that Kurdish Sufis' sense and conception of time and practices are framed within those parameters of Islamic time.

During the labour of regulated time regimes as one of the fundamental aspects of the modern Turkish state, education and all other official mechanisms were based on western/modern and secular paradigms which immediately collided with traditional and Islamic notions and conceptions of time. In his work on the process of the foundation of secularism in Turkey, Tolga Köker also states that 'the adoption of the western clock and calendar in 1926 replaced the Islamic time in effect since the tenth century in Anatolia ... The new Turkish calendar no longer contained such a reference to Islam'.⁵⁹ The attempts of the Turkish state to 'make the worlds' of the populace on the frontiers, based on a western and secular paradigm, did not always work, as we have observed in the case of Naqshbandi Sufis who 'have made their own worlds' through their own ethno-religious subjectivities. The cycle of the lunar year, months (particularly the three blessed months, Rajab, Sha'ban and Ramadan) and days (*Jum'ah*, Friday as holiday) were some of the frames of time regime among pious subjects. However, the state-exposed Gregorian calendar and replacement of *alaturka* clock time with the *alafanga* one during the early years of

the secular regime⁶⁰ were also gradually incorporated in everyday life from past to the present among local people.

The Khaznavi Sufis' time concept⁶¹ is not determined by the modern conception of clock time (24 h), rather by an Islamic one based on the intervals between the intricate timing of daily prayers.⁶² Daily prayer times such as sunrise or morning prayer (*fajr*), midday prayer (*zuhr*, in Kurdish *nîvro*), afternoon prayer (*asr*), evening prayer (*magrib*) and midnight prayers (*isha*) are key time markers in the organisation of daily life among the Sufis.⁶³ During my fieldwork, I had to arrange interview times according to these time slots that regulate the daily life of Sufis. Therefore, my interview times were governed by considerations such as before/after midday, afternoon prayer or before midnight prayer. Similarly, in order to interview 78-year-old Mela Hesên, I had to wait for afternoon (*asr*) prayer. He had led *khatma* (*khatm-ul khwajagan*)⁶⁴ for many years at the Cevat Pasha mosque in Midyat where he had served for around 25 years as mullah before retiring.

The Naqshbandi ritual *khatma* is a daily prayer/*zîkr* performed in a circle sitting at one of the corners of the mosque where disciples come regularly for the *asr* prayers. After prayers with the whole congregation, the disciples of the Khaznavi order gather separately at the corner inside the mosque. A mobile, whitish cotton fabric curtain is hung around the columns inside the mosque, surrounding the corner they occupy in order to block any casual gaze and to create a private space for their *zîkr* performance. Around twenty members of the order gather, sitting in a corner of the circle, to start their daily *khatma* prayer. In the *khatma* prayer, the leading person (a *mela* or local *khalifa*) recites prayers for the Prophet, verses from the Koran and recites the chain of transmission (in Arabic *silâla*, spiritual pedigree) of the Naqshbandiyya order with prayers starting from the beginning then following the extended Khaznavi branch to the present. While the leading murid is reciting in a softened voice, the rest of the murids recite silently. In order to interview Mela Hesên who was leading the *khatma*, I had to wait until they had completed their performance. In comparison to the loud *zîkr* of some other Sufi orders such as the Qadiri, 'the *zîkr* is silent and ecstasy is discouraged'⁶⁵ in the Naqshbandi rituals. As I was told by some interviewees, inclusion in the performance is not allowed if you are not a disciple of the Sheikh of the order at that present time. Attending the daily *khatma* circle is one of the phases in the daily time management of working Sufis, who return to their workplace after *zîkr*.

In a similar vein, in his work on the Bni Battu tribe in Morocco, Dale Eickelman describes how prayers times are 'fully integrated into the rhythm of social life; the opening and closing of shops and other daily activities are often regulated by them'.⁶⁶ A day in the lives of Sufis is punctuated by the five daily prayers and always practised as narrated above. Among elder Sufis, the Muslim lunar calendar is also more known compared to the Gregorian one which is more used when they have to deal with an official document or state institutions. In broad argument, it can be affirmed that the conception of calendar time and clock time among elder Sufis both subjectively and collectively are framed within the Islamic conception of time. Nevertheless, the secular and modern/western organisation of time, place and life through the social-engineering project of the Turkish state by employment of diverse institutions and apparatuses has also resulted in the incorporation of state-imposed regulations, laws and practices of time as well. Thus, spontaneous or forced alteration from an Islamic conception to the secular one or amalgamation of both can be observed and traced in the life stories of Sufis and other pious subjects in the region at various levels.

The world of Sufis: faith, love and fear

Along with all of the political, social and economic activities by diverse subjects on the border and borderland, the case of the Naqshbandi Sufis appears an exceptional one. The world of Sufis that is shaped by faith, love and obedience illustrates in the meantime how the Sufis have a

distinct epistemological and ontological being compared to the one enforced by the secular nation-state through different apparatuses. The political, social and economic formulations of modern nation-states within a strictly determined territory confront those at the frontiers. Similar to the conceptions of other border people, the Sufis' diversifying perception of space, place and time is contradictory to that imposed by the state through different apparatuses. The local conception of time that is fundamentally associated with the timing of the religious practices of Islam and the local conditions of social and economic life differs from the official time regimes of secularist new states.

The life stories of my interviewees document the absence of an official education system, language and many other institutions in the lives of the local subjects in the early decades of the Republic. Kurdish madrasas whose graduates gain the status of *mela* were central education institutions in the local community. *Melas*, as religious figures, lead religious ceremonies and prayers at the local mosques, teach children the Quran and guide local people on diverse daily and communal issues. As Bruinessen also stated earlier, 'Before the establishment of modern schools he was generally the village's most highly educated man, in religious as well as in secular matters; he was also better travelled than most villagers, since the average mullah had studied at traditional Qur'an schools in at least one or two other places.'⁶⁷

In Midyat, 78-year-old Mela Hesén, as one of the elder Sufis, was not even a registered citizen until the age of 19 or 20, and could only speak Kurdish and not Turkish till that age. He narrated how he started to attend madrasas located in different villages and towns in the region at the age of 12 in 1950 and received a religious education contrary to the compulsory, secular one provided by the state. Likewise, what we learn from the life stories of many mullahs of the region, is that hundreds of teenagers – all of them boys – attended these madrasas until the 1970s and 1980s with the intention of becoming *melas* paid through an offering (*zakat*) system by local villagers at the local mosques. They received instruction in Kurdish and Arabic at the small madrasas around the mosques and were not touched by the official education system or by the Turkish language. Mela Hesén, however, was 'touched' by the official system when he was taken to do his obligatory army service at the age of 20.

Similar to Mela Hesén, other Sufis who were interviewed document the extent to which local subjects were detached from the outside world and how they were enclosed in their own ways of life as Sufis. While attending a madrasa in the Estel district of Midyat, he learned about the arrival of Sheikh Alaaddin – the successor of the Khaznavi *tariqa* in the 1960s – to visit his followers and preaching (*irshad*) from the other side of the border. As a young madrasa student, he was curious about Sheikh Alaaddin and decided to visit him. In Mela Hesén's words:

There was a large crowd around him at the hosting house. I wormed my way through the crowd and tried to reach him. When I saw him first time, I immediately fell in love with him. After that day, I always tried to visit him and stay around him. He was very charismatic, clever and handsome. He was a beautiful man like the Prophet Joseph.⁶⁸

Mela Hesén joined the order through a repentance (*tawba*) ceremony and later began to visit Sheikh Alaaddin regularly at certain times of the year, but particularly in 'the spring'.⁶⁹ His journeys visiting his beloved Sheikh started from Midyat and ended on the other side of the border in Tel-Maruf. While narrating his journeys, he spoke of the perils of crossing the border in the early 1950s when a mined zone was created by the state. The daily routine crossings before the landmines were now a thing of the past as they had to be accompanied by smugglers and their expert guides who were being paid by the Sufis during their border-crossings. Mela Hesén travelled on foot from Midyat to the closest border village where he had made his deal with smugglers and from there to Tel-Maruf. In the world of the Sufis, tightening their bonds with their *murshid* is conceived as a way of getting closer to Allah. The statements of Sufis like Mela Hesén remind us of the issue of love, faith and obedience between Sheikh as *murshid* and disciple as *murid*. While asked about the fear of death or of being killed during their illegal border-crossings,

they have always referred to that love and their belief in the protection of their Sheikh and their prayers for Allah.

When I asked Hacı İsmail about the difficulties and dangers of that journey, he looked in my eyes, smiled and said, 'When the love of the Sheikh enters your heart you will be able to overcome any obstacles you encounter on your way to reaching him.'⁷⁰ Carpenter Hacı İsmail talked about how he made his journeys to the other side of the border through the border gate in Nusaybin. In order to reach his Sheikh, he first had to travel to Mardin to get his passport, then to Ankara to obtain a Syrian visa. Thus, his journey was from Midyat to Mardin, from Mardin to Ankara and then all the way back to Midyat. Having a passport and a visa enabled him to start his journey from the Midyat to the Nusaybin border gate and then to Qamishlo. After passing to the other side, they travelled to Tel-Maruf, 30 km away in the southbound direction.⁷¹

As we look at the life stories and personal narratives of the Sufis, it is interesting to observe how the 'political organisation of space'⁷² and border as an exclusive and segregating geopolitical entity by the state authorities is being challenged by their mobility patterns on the border. The labour of state authorities in imposing a national cartographic imagination through Kemalist and Turkish nationalist ideologies, discourse, institutions (schools, public education centres, media, the army, universities and other bureaucratic institutions) and by implementation of physical security apparatuses was contested and sometimes contentiously appropriated by local subjects. However, what is striking in the world of the Sufis is that their idea of territory is related to their tribal and *tariqa* boundaries, dating back to the Ottoman era. Thus, official attempts to subordinate the pre-nation-state practices of daily religious, traditional, cultural and economic life and replacing them with a secular, Turkish nationalist and modernist one did not achieve their goal.

Conclusion

Khaznavi Sufis' and other local Kurdish people's perceptions and relations with land and their settlements have been congruent with their local traditions, life styles (semi-nomadic) and centuries-old local, land-based practices and experiences. Although the political border cuts through the social, cultural, historical and economic fabrics of local communities, resulting in physical and psychological damage, there have been continuing attempts at diverse forms of border-crossings for decades that cannot be explained only by emerging and developing political and economic reasons. The local people's mental/geographical map – and particularly Sufis' conception of place and time – differs from that secular, western/nationalist conception and the new map of the Turkish nation-state that was constantly imposed via diverse ideological, educational and institutional apparatuses for decades.

In summation, it is the fact that internalisation of statist conceptions of place, time and memory smoothly evolved, particularly after the demarcation of the border with landmines and extra security measures after the 1950s. Alongside these policies on the frontiers of the new nation, from the early decades of the Republic, diverse forms of violent assimilationist policies were being performed to dismantle the religious, ethnic and traditional ways of life that controverted the official one. The hegemonic scrutiny of state authorities aimed to restructure the fundamental aspects of local life on the border and borderlands. However, despite the dictated regimes of time, space and education (knowledge-schooling), the cultural, Islamic and local ways of life have been persistently practised and they are still flourishing in the region. Today, the stories and narratives of the Naqshbandi Khaznavi elders illustrate not only an example of actively resisting the state-imposed conceptions of place and time but a subverted and appropriated one in diverse forms.

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Notes

1. D. Delaney, *Territory: A Short Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p.36.
2. P.J. Taylor, The State as a Container: Territoriality in the Modern World-System in N. Brenner, B. Jessop, M. Jones and G. MacLeod (eds.), *State/Space: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1994), pp.101–14; see also M. Anderson, *Frontiers: Territory and State Formation in the Modern World* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1996).
3. R. Aras, *Mayın ve Kaçakçı: Türkiye-Suriye Sınırını İnşa ve Bozma Pratikleri* [Landmine and Smuggler: The Making and Unmaking Practices of Turkish-Syrian Border] (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi Press, 2015), pp.30–71.
4. N. Özgen, *Sınırın İktisadi Antropolojisi: Suriye ve Irak Sınırında İki Kasaba* in *Gelenekten Geleceğe Antropoloji* [‘Economic Anthropology of the Border: Two Towns on the Turkish Border of Syria and Iraq’] in B. Kümbetoğlu ve H. Birkalan-Gedik (eds.), *Anthropology: From Tradition to Future* (İstanbul: Epsilon Press, 2005), p.XX; A. Yıldırım, ‘Devlet, Sınır, Aşiret: Nusaybin Örneği
5. I have been interested in the Naqshbandi Khaznavi order while doing other research on the making and unmaking practices of the Turkish-Syrian border with a particular focus on landmines and smuggling since 2012. The research was supported by Scientific Research Projects Committee of Mardin Artuklu University between years of 2012 and 2014. While listening to narratives and life stories of smugglers, I recognized that they sometimes mention helping murids and Sufis during their smuggling work across borders. According to narratives of smugglers, Sufis were also accompanying them during their dangerous border crossing attempts in order to visit their Sheikh who resided on the Syrian side of the border. These narratives were a starting point for me to delve into the subject, to start a new ethnographic research on elder Sufis and learn more about the Khaznavi order and their mobility patterns on the border for the sake of and love of their sheikh, Ahmed Khaznavi (d.1950) and his successors in the later periods.
6. R. Aras, *Mayın ve Kaçakçı* (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi Press, 2015).
7. Here, I would like to thank Mela Ali Kurt, one of the local imams in Mardin city centre, my colleagues Mehmet Ragıp Ete and Mehmet Rıdâ Tür of Artuklu University for their help and hospitality. They were contact persons who put me in touch with interlocutors during my fieldwork in Mardin and Midyat.
8. The research was supported by Scientific Research Projects Board of Mardin Artuklu University. The collected data during the fieldwork (2013–2015) was published as a book in Turkish titled *Mayın ve Kaçakçı: Türkiye-Suriye Sınırını İnşa ve Bozma Pratikleri* (2015).
9. During the fieldwork, all interviews with interlocutors were conducted in the Kurmançî dialect of Kurdish.
10. The PKK [Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan] was formed at the end of the 1970s as a Marxist organization and launched its first terror attacks on civilians in 1984. For more details, please see H. Barkey and G.E. Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998); K. Kirişçi and G.M. Winrow, *The Kurdish Question: An Example of a Trans-state Ethnic Conflict* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 1997).
11. The building process was initiated in 2016 and was expected to be completed in the autumn of 2017 on the entire 911-km Syrian border.
12. H. Algar, ‘The Naqshbandi Tariqat in Bosnia’, *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series Vol.13, No.3/4 (1971), pp.168–203; M.V. Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1992); W.C. Chittick, *Sufism: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000); D. Le Gall, ‘Forgotten Naqshbandis and the Culture of Pre-Modern Sufi Brotherhoods’, *Studia Islamica* No.97 (2003), pp.87–119; A.T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).
13. H. Algar, ‘The Naqshbandi Order: A Preliminary Survey of Its History and Significance’, *Studia Islamica* No.44 (1976), pp.123–152.
14. Ibid, p.126.
15. For detailed information about the history of Naqhsbandiya and development of its *silsila* please look at Algar (1976), Bruinessen (1992) and Karamustafa (2007).

16. For more information on the presence and vitality of the Naqshbandi order in the Ottoman era please look at Dina Le Gall's work, *A Culture of Sufism: Naqshbandis in the Ottoman World, 1450–1700*, (Albany: NY: SUNY Press, 2005); Bruinessen (1992). See also Albert Hourani, 'Sufism and Modern Islam: Mawlana Khalid and the Naqshbandi order', in *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).
17. M.V. Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1992), pp.210–11.
18. Ibid.
19. Algar, p.125.
20. Bruinessen, p.296.
21. Ibid, pp.225–34. Bruinessen also mentions how Mawlana Khalid (1779–1826) was an organizing, proselytizing and a leading figure in the region in the nineteenth century (p.231).
22. D. Le Gall, 'Forgotten Naqshbandis and the Culture of Pre-Modern Sufi Brotherhoods', *Studia Islamica*, No.97 (2003), pp.87–119; Ş. Mardin, 'The Nakshibendi Order of Turkey', in M.E. Marty and R.S. Appleby (eds.), *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economies and Militance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp.204–32.
23. The Kurdish word *Mela* means imam (preacher) in Kurdish and is widely used for local imams (preachers) who serve, officially or unofficially, at the local mosques. For more information about the life of Mela Murat and his family please see K. Akyüz, Şeyh Ahmed el-Haznavi ve Hazneviyye Tarikatu [Sheikh Ahmed al-Khaznavi and Khaznaviyya Order] (Unpublished MA Thesis, Yalova University, Social Science Institute, 2015); see also Ş. A. Haznevî, *Hazret ve Şah-ı Hazne*, translated by A. Demiray (İstanbul: Semerkant Press, 2012); See also A. Haznevi, *Mektubat* (İstanbul: Seriiyye Kitabevi Press, 1982).
24. H. Çiçek, *Şark Medreselerinin Serencamı [Trajectory of Eastern Madrasas]* (İstanbul: Beyan Press, 2009); İ. Baz, 'Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Norşin Dergâhı ve Şeyh Abdurrahman-ı Taği [From the Ottoman to the Republic: Norşin Order and Sheikh Abdurrahman-ı Taği] *Tasavvuf, İlmi ve Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi* Vol.34, No.2, pp.73–108.
25. There is no clear data on the duration periods of Sheikh Ahmed in different madrasas in the region; however, we do learn from certain written and oral sources about his routes of Islamic education. For some more information on the life story of Sheikh Ahmed Khaznavi please see Akyüz (2015); M. Çiçek, 'Seyda Molla Hüseyin Küçük'ün Hayatı ve İlmi Kişiliği [The Life of Seyda Molla Hüseyin Küçük and His Scientific Personality]', *Şarkiyat İlmi Araştırmalar Dergisi* Vol.1, No.2 (2009), pp.124–39.
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27. Akyüz, p.22.
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29. Akyüz, pp.53–4.
30. Sheikh Muhammed lost his life with some other family members in a car accident in Medina, Saudi Arabia in 2005.
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32. K. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (University of New Mexico Press, 1996). See also J.D. Amith, 'Place Making and place breaking: Migration and the development cycle of community in colonial Mexico', *American Ethnologist* Vol.32, No.1, pp.159–79.
33. S. Field and K. Basso (eds.), *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1996); J. Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
34. C. Koçak, *Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi (1938–1945) II [The National Chief Era in Turkey 1938–1945 Vol.2]*, (İstanbul: İletişim Press); Z. Özcan, 'Psiko-sosyal Açından İnönü Dönemi Dini Hayatla İlgili Bazı Değerlendirmeler' [Some Psycho-social Evaluations on Religious Life in İnönü Era], *Tarih Kültür ve Sanat Araştırmaları Dergisi* Vol., No.2 (2014), pp.60–87; A. Dikici, 'Milli Şef İsmet İnönü Dönemi Laiklik Uygulamaları' [Secularism Practices of the Era of National Chief İsmet İnönü], *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi* Vol.42 (2008), pp.161–92.
35. G.D. Brocket (1998); D. Le Gall (2003); N.F. Kısakürek, 2017 [1969]; S. Albayrak, (2015).
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40. See also E.J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (3rd ed., London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), p.192.
41. M. Armağan, *Türkçe Ezan ve Menderes: Bir Devrin Yazılmayan Gerçekleri* [Turkish Adhan (Call for Prayer) and Menderes: Unwritten Truths of an Era] (İstanbul: Timaş Press, 2015); H. Çiçek, (2009); İ. Baz, 'Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Norşin Dergâhı ve Şeyh Abdurrahman-ı Taği', *Tasavvuf, İlmi ve Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi* Vol.34, No.2, pp.73–108.
42. Ş. Mardin, 'The Nakshibendi Order of Turkey' in M.E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds.), *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economies and Militance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp.204–232; Ş. Mardin, *Türkiye'de Din ve Siyaset* [Religion and Politics in Turkey] (İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2004); E. Yıldırım, 'Nakşibendiliğin Sosyolojik Muhayyilesi' [Sociological Imagination of Naqshbandiyya], *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi* Vol.1, No. 2 (2017), pp.1–8.
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44. M.V. Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1992).
45. G.D. Brocket, (1998); D. Le Gall, (2003); N. F. Kısakürek, 2017 [1969]; S. Albayrak, (2015).
46. Lentz, p.274.
47. Hacı Bedran (b.1928) was interviewed in his house in Kızıltepe, Mardin in October 2016.
48. Mela Abdulhalim (b.1943) was interviewed in his house in October 2016 in Mardin.
49. Hacı Bedran (b.1928) was interviewed in his house in Kızıltepe, Mardin in October 2016.
50. Hacı İsmail (b.1939) was interviewed at Cevatpaşa camii in Midyat, Mardin in October 2016.
51. Field and Basso, p.9.
52. For detailed information on the history of the Hijaz Railway whose construction was started by Abdülhamid II (1842–1918) in 1908, please see J. Nicholson, 'The Hejaz Railway', *Asian Affairs* Vol.XXXVII, No.III (2006), pp.320–36; M. Özyüksel, *The Hejaz Railway and the Ottoman Empire: Modernity, Industrialization and Ottoman Decline* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014); A. Orbaşlı and S. Woodward, 'A Railway "Route" as a Linear Heritage Attraction: The Hijaz Railway in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia', *Journal of Heritage Tourism* Vol.3, Issue 3 (2008), pp.159–75; D. Simonowitz, 'The Mobile Matrix: The Hijaz Railway as Ritual Space and Generator of Space', *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* Vol.3, No.2 (2014), pp.303–40.
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61. In Kurdish, time means *wext*, in Arabic (and also in Turkish) *wakit* or *zaman*.

62. In this paper, the Sufis' conception of time is evaluated through an ethnographic way with a particular focus on everyday life rather than a theological one. For a more detailed philosophical discussion, see G. Bowering, 'The Concept of Time in Islam', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol.141, No.1 (1997), pp.55–66.
63. While prayer times *fajr*, *asr*, *maghrib* and *isha* are named and pronounced as in Arabic, the midday pray time *zuhr* is named *nivro* which means midday in Kurdish.
64. For detailed information on daily and other practices and prayers please see *The Naqshbandi Sufi Tradition: Guidebook of Daily Practices and Devotions*, S.M.H. Kabbani, (Islamic Supreme Council of America, 2004); see also the handbook titled *Naqshbandi Devotions and Practices* published by Naqshbandi-Muhammadi South Africa, 2007.
65. Bruinessen, pp.240–41.
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67. Bruinessen, p.209.
68. Mela Hesên (b.1939) was interviewed in Midyat in October 2016.
69. The spring as the season of renewal, birth, awakening of nature is conceived by the Sufis as also the season for spiritual renovation, refreshing and awakening.
70. Hacı İsmail (b.1939) was interviewed at Cevatpaşa camii after *asr* pray in Midyat, Mardin in October 2016.
71. Personal interview with Hacı İsmail (2016).
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