

Indoctrination in the Disguise of Active Citizenship: An Analysis of Political Socialization Process through Ideological Political Education in the Case of PYD

Aktif Vatandaşlık Maskesi Altında Beyin Yıkama: İdeolojik Siyasal Eğitim Aracılığıyla Siyasal Toplumsallaşma Sürecinin Bir Analizi, PYD Örneği

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to examine the ideological political education process through the concept of political socialization for indicating how the Democratic Union Party (PYD), the Syrian affiliate of the terrorist organisation Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) indoctrinates the PKK ideology to the young people under its administration and how it creates ideological members for the continuation of its regime.

Design/Methodolgy: This research is mainly based on the textual analysis. In this regard, the PKK material in English, Western media outlets, pieces of think-tanks and reports of the PYD's local bodies for the Public Relations and the existing literature over the education under the PYD-controlled areas were analysed.

Findings: Findings indicate that the PYD operationalises ideological political education through educational system, teachers, curriculum and textbooks in its language centres, academies, universities, primary and secondary schools to create ideological members who will be loyal to its regime. Findings also demonstrate that this type of political education is closely connected to the approach of Siegel's (1965) concept of political socialization who perceives it as a process of creating active or well-functioning individuals for the continuation of political systems.

Limitations: The fact that the research is mainly based on the textual analysis. Conducting interviews with teachers in the region could have increased the reliability and decreased the limitations of this research. However, the PYD is the Syrian affiliate of the PKK and rightfully both are designated as a terrorist organisations by Türkiye and interacting with these people mean interacting with the elements of terrorism.

Originality/Value: Since this research conceptualises the indoctrination or ideological political education process in the context of the political socialization, it contributes to the role of education in the process of political socialization through a new case of the PYD.

Keywords: Political Socialization, Political Education, Active Citizenship, PKK, PYD

Öz

Amaç: Bu çalışmanın amacı terör örgütü Kürdistan İşçi Partisi'nin (PKK) Suriye'deki uzantısı Demokratik Birlik Partisi'nin (PYD) ideolojik siyasal eğitim sürecini incelemek ve PYD'nin kendi yönetimi altındaki çocuk ve gençlere PKK ideolojisini nasıl aşılamaya ve bu yolla rejimini devam ettirecek ideolojik bireyleri nasıl ortaya çıkarmaya çalıştığını gözler önüne sermektir.

Tasarım/Yöntem: Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemine başvurularak ikincil kaynaklar üzerinden metin analizi yapılmıştır. Bu kapsamda PKK'ya ait İngilizce yazılı materyaller, Batılı medya kuruluşlarının haber kaynakları, çeşitli düşünce kuruluşları (think-tanks) tarafından hazırlanan raporlar, PYD'nin yerel propaganda mekanizmalarına ait İngilizce raporlar ve PYD'nin hâkimiyeti altındaki bölgelerdeki eğitim faaliyetlerine odaklanan İngilizce makaleler analiz edilmiştir.

Bulgular: Bulgular PYD'nin PKK ideolojisini temel alan siyasal eğitimi, dil merkezlerinde, akademielerde, üniversitelerde, ilköğretim ve liselerde eğitim sistemi, öğretmenler, müfredat ve kitaplar aracılığıyla verdiğini ve oluşturduğu rejime sadık bireyler ortaya çıkarmaya çalıştığını göstermektedir. PYD'nin bu türden bir ideolojik siyasal eğitimi Roberta Siegel'in (1965) siyasal sistemlerin devamını sağlamak için aktif ve iyi yetişmiş bireyleri ortaya çıkarmak gerektiğini iddia eden siyasal toplumsallaşma konseptiyle de yakından ilgilidir.

Sınırlılıklar: İkincil verilerle metin analizi çalışmanın temel sınırlılığını oluşturmaktadır. Bölgedeki eğitimcilerle mülakat yapılarak birincil verilerin toplanması çalışmanın sınırlılığını azaltabilir ve güvenilirliğini artırabilirdi. Fakat PYD'nin terör örgütü PKK'nın Suriye uzantısı olması ve haklı olarak Türkiye'nin ikisini de terör örgütü olarak tanıması, bu türden bir etkileşimi haklı olarak ortadan kaldırmaktadır.

Özgünlük/Değer: Bu çalışma beyin yıkama veya ideolojik siyasal eğitim sürecini siyasal toplumsallaşma kavramsal çerçevesinden değerlendirmektedir. Bu yolla eğitimin siyasal bireylerin ortaya çıkma (siyasal toplumsallaşma) sürecindeki rolünü yeni bir örnek olay aracılığıyla gözler önüne sererek, siyasal toplumsallaşma literatürüne katkı sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Siyasal Toplumsallaşma, Politik Eğitim, Aktif Vatandaşlık, PKK, PYD

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1. INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of the Syrian conflict in March 2011 and its transformation into a civil war in July 2012 provided some unprecedented opportunities for the Syrian Kurds. Particularly, following the withdrawal of the Syrian government forces from the northern parts of the country in July 2012 with the start of Aleppo battle, there were authority and security gaps. The PYD, the Syrian affiliate of the terrorist organization PKK, filled those gaps due to its militias (Savelsberg & Tejel, 2013). Since then, the PYD had a de facto autonomous region and it established its own administrative units and institutions in accordance with the writings of the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan.

Ocalan (2016) argues that Kurdish consciousness can be constructed through the intellectual improvement of individuals and their awareness regarding the social existence that are also fundamental points to form a new Kurdish society and a new model of governance with a new understanding. This society requires active citizens to survive. He claims that those active citizens can also be created through their interaction with this new society and its model of governance, particularly by taking some responsibilities in the policy-making processes. So, there is a close connection between the claimed active citizenship of Ocalan's envisaged society and its model of governance. In other words, while the so-called active citizens are necessary mechanisms for the continuity of Ocalan's model of governance and its society, citizens can become "active" through their roles, responsibilities and primarily their political education in this society through a new model of governance. The PYD leadership practiced those premises since the summer of 2012 and tried to design its new administration and institutions in accordance with those premises. The PYD leadership also underlined that they would transform the Syrian Kurdish society through the political education of individuals by opening academies, schools and language centres and teaching their concepts of active citizenship, democratic autonomy and democratic nation (Muslim quoted in KurdWatch, 2011; Abdullah quoted in ANF, 2012). Accordingly, the PYD's political education process for individuals has become a matter of investigation. It brings the question of how the PYD attempts to create its claimed active citizens who will be loyal to their regime and what types of tools/agents the PYD leadership applies during this process.

Such a political education can be better explained through the concept of political socialization. Studies on the concept of political socialization in the existing literature refer to a process during which individuals can become political by gaining some values, attitudes and learning some political ideologies (Heywood, 2019, p.364). In this process, there have been some primary (family and schools) and secondary (friends, peer groups, working environment, religion, language) agents that play a role in the creation of a political individual (Heywood, 2019, pp.364-365). Therefore, this article mainly focuses on the political education of individuals under the PYD administration through the process of political socialization during which individuals have to internalize the ideological concepts of Ocalan. In so doing, the article provides some insights that the PYD's political socialization process is mainly close to Sigel's (1965) perspective over the concept, who perceives this process as a creation of active or well-functioning individuals for the continuation of political systems.

As underlined by Espinosa & Ronan (2022, p.2) education, particularly the political education functions as an effective tool for building the political community of the PYD administration. Accordingly, this article argues that the PYD operationalizes the political socialization process to create active citizens for its model governance through education system, teachers, textbooks and curriculum in their language centers, academies, universities, primary and secondary schools which functions in accordance with ideological concepts of the PKK leader Ocalan. The article demonstrates the roles of academies and schools as one of the primary agents in the political socialization process after the family. Accordingly, the article will start by addressing the methodology of this research. Then, the concept of political socialization and the main agents in this process will be explained. After that, the article will focus on the claimed active citizenship in Ocalan's ideological concepts such as democratic confederalism and democratic nation. Then, the political education for the creation of the claimed active citizens in the practice of the PYD administration through academies, universities, schools, teachers, curriculums and textbooks will be examined.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this article is mainly based on the textual/document and content analysis. Those steps were followed. First, to explain the claimed concept of active citizenship, books of the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan and texts of Murray Bookchin were read and analysed since the PKK's concept of the claimed active citizenship was based on the idea of Murray Bookchin's concept of active citizenship. Therefore, Bookchin's *The Meaning of Confederalism* and Ocalan's *Democratic Confederalism* (2011) and *Democratic Nation* (2016) were read, compared and analysed in terms of active citizenship and their ideological creation. Those books of Ocalan are also significant and crucial to understand and show the ideological impact of the PKK on the PYD and its policies because of their ideological links (Muslim quoted in KurdWatch, 2011; Kaya & Lowe, 2017). Second, official documents of the PYD such as the Social Contract of Rojava (2014), particularly the parts regarding education and teaching and learning in other languages and papers of Rojava Information Center regarding the structure and education at universities in the PYD-controlled areas were read and analyzed. To strengthen such an analysis and understand the policies over education and their implementations in the region, explanations of the PYD representatives/officials through regional and/or international media outlets were collected and analysed. This analysis was underpinned by the content analysis of some Western media outlets such as the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, the New York Times, the Independent and the Times/Sunday as well as pieces of regional and international think-tanks. Step three was to search for the existing literature on education system and textbooks in the PYD-controlled areas (Espinosa & Ronan, 2022; Bengio, 2020; Din, 2020; Knapp et al. (2016).

While analyzing those aforementioned documents/texts, some direct quotes from Bookchin and Ocalan, and from the official documents of the PYD were used to express specific terms. Except this, analysis was written through paraphrasing the analyzed points. This research has also some limits. However, this does not reduce its academic significance as it has a potential to become one of the significant studies focusing on the PYD and its indoctrination process from the perspective of political socialization. For instance, conducting interviews with teachers in the region could have increased the reliability and decreased the limitations of this research since there was a chance to have primary data. Such an approach could have provided some interesting findings on the subject. However, the PYD is the Syrian affiliate of the PKK and rightfully both are designated as terrorist organisations by Trkiye. Interacting with those people means interacting with the elements of terrorist groups. There is also another possibility that the PYD could have prevented researchers from collecting primary data by interviewing with teachers or educators in this region especially if researchers have a Turkish origin that could have caused personal security risks. To avoid from those situations, the textual analysis mainly over the official document of the PYD, explanations of the PYD representatives and using the secondary resources such as studies conducted by other experts over the education system in the PYD-controlled areas were preferred.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. The Concept of Political Socialization

Political socialisation is a concept which at the same time refers to a process of gaining political beliefs and values by individuals (Heywood, 2019, p.364). Scholars studying this concept mainly refer to the studies of political thinkers such as Plato, Thomas Moore, and J.J. Rousseau. The most important development in this area was the understanding of human behavior and mainly the role of instinct in the formation and direction of those behaviors. H. Lasswell's *Psychopathology and Politics*, published in 1930, was the first important research dealing with political socialization from a psycho-analytical perspective. While scholars such as Erik H. Erikson, Lucian W. Pye, Lewis S. Feuer followed Laswell's approach, the study titled *Authoritarian Personality* published by Adorno et al. created a new influence in this field (Alkan & Ergil, 1980, pp.2-4). However, the most significant study regarding political socialization was Herbert Hyman's *Political Socialization* (1959) in which Hyman systematically brought the previous studies over this subject. The book included important findings from the sources that form the political view of an individual. It also organized the findings of an extensive fieldwork and analyzed information about the learning phase of political perspectives to

answer the questions in this field. Thanks to those studies, Hyman contributed to the discussions on political socialization through the fact that political behaviour, which he expressed as a type of learnt behavior, can be investigated effectively (Hyman, 1959).

Problems encountered during the searching process in this field have also affected the definition of the concept of political socialization. Therefore, there were divergent definitions depending on the focusing points of researchers or approaches that these researchers followed to explain this concept. For instance, Dennis (1968, pp.86-88) analyzed the development process of studies on political socialization through three phases. In the first phase, there were studies like Herbert Hyman's book (1959), some other summaries referred to Hyman's study in the following years as well as research conducted by experts such as Greenstein, Dawson and Patrick. The second phase includes studies initiated by Sigel and Dawson – Prewitt and the critical interpretation of the previous studies on the subject. In the last phase, experts like Hess, Almond, Verba, Greenstein, Mitchell, Froman, Pye conducted some studies to provide a substantive theoretical ground for political socialization. All those studies identified ten crucial problematical points regarding the process of political socialization. They are the relationship between political systems and political socialization, diversity in the content of political socialization, political socialization versus lifecycle, political socialization from one generation to another, position of political socialization toward counter-cultures and sub-cultures, the process of political learning, agents and institutions of political socialization, impact of individuals and relatives on this process and specialized political socialization.

Those aforementioned points have affected the definition of political socialization and have created divergent approaches for its definition. For instance, Frey (in Bender, 1967, p.391) perceives political socialization as a process in which organizational behavior can be internalized by members of a group, organization, institution or a society through regular repetition of social attitudes and behaviors. According to Almond (in Bender, 1967, p.391), political socialization is more related to the concept of political culture. In other words, political socialization is a process of entering into political culture to gain a set of ideas, values, and standards regarding a political system, its main functions, and its officials that were fulfilling those responsibilities or operating those functions. Roberta Sigel, for instance, approaches political socialization from the perspective of a political system. In this regard, political socialization alludes to a process of learning the “norms, attitudes and behavior accepted and practiced by the ongoing political system” (Sigel, 1965, p.1). Therefore, the goal of political socialization becomes a way of training and developing individuals to become well-functioning or active citizens in their society. Ultimately, active citizens, who participate in political system, acknowledge political norms of their society and transfer them to the next generations (Sigel, 1965, p.1). Consequently, the common understanding is that political socialization is a process of learning some concepts, attitudes, beliefs, values and political systems to become a political (for some active) person. The main concentration point of this article is more related to Sigel's point of view since it approaches political socialization or political education of individuals from a perspective of becoming active or well-functioning citizens in a society for the continuation of a political system. This is because the PYD's claim and practice of active citizenship is very closely related to Sigel's perspective over the political education of individuals.

Factors affecting socialization process can also show their effects in the political socialization process. When a humanbeing is accepted as an open system, they must interact with the environment and generations to become political beings. There are some certain factors, some call them agents, known to play a role in this process. In general, those agents are family, school, friends or peer groups, environment, pressure groups and mass media. In addition to them, religion and language can be seen other effective factors in this process. Some experts also classify those agents as primary and secondary ones. While family and schools are called as primary agents, others are accepted as secondary ones (Heywood, 2019, pp.364-365). This study mainly concentrates on one of the primary agents for the political education of individuals, the political education through academies, schools, and language centers under the PYD administration. It analyzes the relationship between the claim of creating a new society and the role of education in this process through schools, academies, teachers and teaching materials or curricula to create new citizens or indoctrinate them with some ideological

premises. In this regard, there is a need for addressing the roles of political education, particularly the roles of schools, teachers, and curricula in the political socialization process of individuals.

3.2. Political Socialization through Political Education

Schools are accepted as the most basic and official tools of the socialization process. Young people socialize and comply with the rules of their society through schools (Tezcan, 2012, p.54). This is because schools do not only provide knowledge or skills to individuals but also teach them about their social responsibilities. When children start their school, they encounter many faces and events that are unfamiliar to them. They learn the basic structure of their society. This includes points like the rules of their society and how to live in it. In this way, children face with a very intense cultural transfer and they understand what is expected of them both as individuals and a group to be part of their society (Ozkalp, 2005, p.120).

Schools also play an important role in conveying attitudes, values, beliefs and certain behavioral patterns of the system to members of their society to ensure the continuity of political systems. With the education process in schools, it is aimed to consciously transfer the political culture to the new generations of a society and educate individuals, who will be newly included in a political system (Dursun, 2006, p.223). The emergence of nation-states brought up the aim of raising individuals, who would remain loyal to the state and power, and the most important tool for this political education was the school. In this context, the state-centered education systems became compulsory for people, and schools took their place in the systems as centers where state ideologies were transferred (Akin, 2013, pp.112-113). According to Althausser (1971), schools have a role to “ensure subjection to the ruling ideology or mastery of its practice” (p.133). Similarly, Foucault (2003, p.45) approaches schools and education systems as tools for the domination of a state, particularly a nation-state ideology. Those points indicate the importance and impact of schools in the political education of individuals within the political socialization process.

Alkan & Ergil (1980, pp.80-93) underline the effective role of school in the political education process in terms of the formation of ideology, sense of political activity and participation, and the acquisition of political knowledge. It is noted that studies focusing on the role of school in political socialization examine the school from two perspectives. In the first one, the effect of classroom, official curriculum, rituals and teachers are discussed, while the second one examines the social structure of school, political organizations formed by the youth, and activities outside the official curricula (Dawson et al., 1977, p.139). The main focus point in this article is the role of academies, schools, language centers, teachers, and their official curricula as the further section will discuss the political education process under the PYD administration in accordance with the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan’s claimed active citizenship.

Party schools are noticeable examples for the adoption and/or indoctrination of state ideology to people or public. Those schools, which emerged especially in totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, play a key role in forcing people to adopt the state ideology in the political socialization process. During the Soviet Union, such schools trained people and propagandists in charge of spreading the party’s ideology (Akin, 2013, p.119). It is seen that the most intense program for the adoption of the ideologies of regimes was implemented during the Nazi Germany period. In addition to providing education to adults like young people, taking the youth organizations, particularly schools under control and training teachers, and those types of schools served as the most active tools of political education of individuals for the state (Alkan & Ergil, 1980, p.84). It is seen that schools fulfil their duties in reflecting the official ideologies of states. Political powers, which could have some limits in terms of interfering in the family, can become active in the political socialization process of individuals through schools. After individuals recognizing their mother and father as the first authority in the family, their second recognized authorities are teachers in their schools. In this regard, teachers, education system and curricula in schools have important functions in the political socialization process.

In general, teachers have important roles in a society and they are active in helping children adapt to political and social life by establishing close contact with them in the socialization process. Therefore, teachers are known as respected and trusted individuals by society due to their

responsibilities. They convey the rules of society to students and teach them how to behave and draw attention to the importance of obeying the rules in social life (Dursun, 2006, p.224). In the US, where the first and foremost studies were carried out in the field of political socialization, teachers are seen as the most important servants of society in raising children. In this context, teachers have two important effects in the process of political socialization; disseminating political values and teaching political culture. Teachers, as cultural educators, have an impact on students for learning the political culture through social systems that they have established in a classroom (Dawson et al, 1977, p.150-152).

Another factor that makes education and teachers important in this process is the ideologies accepted by political systems. Authorities prefer that the official state ideology should be adopted by society, and it should be conveyed to societies through education systems, and mainly through teachers and curricula in schools or academies. In this respect, it is known that during the Nazi regime, teachers in Germany were screened in accordance with their political views and served as propaganda tools for the political system (Alkan & Ergil, 1980, p.84). Party schools in the Soviet regime also trained teachers, who would disseminate the ideology of the party (Akin, 2013, p.119). Another point that makes teachers important is that they have a duty to implement the education system adopted by the political power and curriculum based on it. Because teachers are individuals, who are responsible for implementing the curriculum offered to them by educational and political systems.

In this respect, the education system has a fundamental place in the political socialization process. In almost all countries, from the most democratic systems to the most oppressive ones, political powers have made an effort to intervene directly in the political socialization process through national education programs and curricula, and they have tried to implement education systems in accordance with their own ideologies. By making various interventions in the curricula, books for teaching are specifically selected, and in this way, an individual is politicized in the sense that the system desires (Kaplan, 2005, pp.95-129).

Studies in this field have also shown that specially prepared textbooks, educational practices, courses and programs are effective in the political knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and participation of young people (Ehman, 1980, p.105). It is an accepted fact that the official curriculum applied in the lessons, various ritualistic activities and activities of teachers are all effective in the political development of young people. In this respect, the curricula become one of the most important instruments of political education and the process of political socialization. National values of society are adopted through curricula. The choice of national history subjects in lessons causes enthusiasm in the individual's perception of glory and reveals a picture of the gaps and deficiencies in history. While the official curricula and lessons over citizenship determined by the system are effective in the development of young individuals, they can also give clues about how to become a citizen, particularly a political one. In general, political leaders and educators see the curricula as a suitable agent through which knowledge and values are transmitted in the formation of a good citizen (Dawson et al, 1977, p.140), or in this case, the claimed active citizens.

In this regard, textbooks can play an important role. There have been some studies, like the analysis of Anyon, which indicates that textbooks are not neutral and they include political content as well as an interpretation. They present the existing situation in a totally different way and also provide a false social reality (Anyon, 1978 in Palonsky, 1987, p.498). Textbooks may include norms and values to construct the identities of members of their society, community or country and they encapsulate some patterns which could help perceiving the world or rules, realities or norms of their society for the individuals (Fuch & Bock, 2018, p.1). Textbooks can also become primary tools for conveying/disseminating formal, systematical and most importantly intentional national narratives or ideological aspects of a state to societies (Adwan et al, 2016, p.202). The important point here is that school curricula could reflect “a society’s ideology and ethos” and disseminate “values, goals and myths which the society aims to transmit to new generations” (Adwan et al, 2016, p.202).

Those points indicate that education systems and textbooks can become significant tools for disseminating information and educating people with the ideological and political needs of a specific government. So, the regimes could use textbooks as political mobilization tools to engrain some feelings in their people such as loyalty to a nation, ideology, state or rulers (Bengio, 2020, p.359).

Those are fundamental points in terms of analyzing the political education of individuals in the political socialization process. As seen, education systems and curricula are important in the process of political socialization, and political powers that cannot find the opportunity to intervene in the family try to be effective on individuals by using those tools. In this regard, the next section will discuss the PKK's claimed concept of 'active citizenship' before analyzing its implementation in the political socialization process under the control of the PYD in north and eastern Syria.

3.3.A Claimed Active Citizenship in the PKK's Ideology

The PYD's concept of democratic autonomy is mainly based on the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan's concept of democratic confederalism for the PKK (Muslim quoted in KurdWatch, 2011). While creating the concept of democratic confederalism, Ocalan was inspired by Murray Bookchin's concept of libertarian confederalism (Gunter, 2014). Therefore, it is quite important to address how Bookchin approaches active citizenship and what type of role education plays in Bookchin's society to create such citizens. Bookchin (1990, p.4) envisages a society in which the relationship between people will be totally different from the ones adopted by the nation-states. This understanding requires a need for radical changes in the structure of politics and political culture (Bookchin, 1990, p.5). Bookchin (1990, p.4) attempts to redefine the concepts of politics and citizenship for his ideal community. According to him (1990), politics is an organic phenomenon and activity of a public body through which a community engages in rational discourse, raises awareness over the public empowerment, and exercises practical reasons through participating in a political process (p.1). In this regard, politics becomes a "societal life beyond the family" (Bookchin, 1990, p.1).

This point indicates that Bookchin (1990, p.9) seeks a political place which should transform an individual from being a person to an active citizen or from a private into a public being. This would also have a discursive place (Bookchin, 1991, p.5). Those places (both political and discursive) will lead people interact one another intellectually and emotionally in which the dialogue, body language, personal intimacy and face-to-face impression will play significant roles in making collective decisions (Bookchin, 1991, p.5). Bookchin (1990, p.8) believes that his new community should have a responsibility of character building and indispensable moral education. This is because perpetual personality formation (in other words, an intense political socialization process), education and growth in the sense of public responsibility and commitment are fundamental parts of true citizenship and politics. In this regard, Bookchin's ideal community will create active citizens like acting schools in nation-state systems which take part in the political socialization process of individuals.

Like Bookchin, Ocalan claims putting the education at the center to form his new Kurdish nation. The interesting point here is that although Ocalan criticizes the idea of nation-state, he follows the same path that nation-states implement that is, to a certain extent, to indoctrinate his ideology and form ideologically conscious people through education, particularly through schools, academies that teach his concepts for the PKK. He (2016) argues that Kurds can become a nation in a different way from the nation of the nation-state. However, this transformation requires two significant dimensions, the intellectual and social existence. So, the intellectual dimension can be concretized through the education that would contribute to the transformation of the existing Kurdish society from the nation of the nation-state to Ocalan's so-called democratic nation. Such an education does include science, philosophy and art (Ocalan, 2016, p.29). It requires opening schools, academies, and teaching centers. Those institutional tools provide intellectual and emotional education to create Ocalan's claimed active citizens. According to Ocalan (2016), those schools have some responsibilities such as explaining the existing societal structure of the 21st century and historical developments regarding the modern society and help indicate the transformation of historical societies into the capitalist modernity as an existing system of this century. Those schools would also facilitate the political education of the envisaged nation and society by internalizing the concepts of freedom and equality, and by being respectful to differences in the public places, and moral and political life of Ocalan's society (Ocalan, 2016, p.29).

Those points demonstrate that the transformation of Kurdish societies through education is a theoretical part of the creation of Ocalan's claimed active citizens or indoctrinated people that implicitly refers to the political socialization process of individuals or Kurdish citizens in Ocalan's

new society and new model of governance. There is also a practical part for the claimed active citizens. Those citizens would participate in policymaking processes under the concept or administration of democratic confederalism. They would take part in the defense mechanisms to defend their nation, society and political system actively. In this regard, Ocalan derives a concept of self-defense, which would help the transformed Kurdish society to protect their identity, political awareness and democratization process against the potential internal or external interventions (Ocalan, 2011, pp.28-29). According to Ocalan (2016), self-defense is a matter of existence for the new nation. It seems that Ocalan offers two types of self-defense as social and military ones. Social self-defense is mainly related to the matters of the claimed active citizenship, particularly regarding the protection of identity, political awareness, decision-making capability and the concept of democratic nation. As another practical implementation of the claimed active citizenship, the military self-defense prioritizes the protection of territories and administrative units of Ocalan's new nation, society and administration against the potential or perceived threats.

The political socialization process in the envisaged society of Ocalan does not only include men but also considers the education of women. Ocalan (2011) also argues that he attempts to liberate women from the obstacles of the existing nation-state system and prepare an environment for them to become active citizens. Because the nation-state system is based on the codes of a patriarchal society and this type of society exploits women as a cheap labor and utilizes them as tools for producing men and maintaining this patriarchal system. However, as Ocalan argues, in his new society, women should learn their history and construct their own organizations or institutions as part of their existence and representation in the areas of life (Ocalan, 2016, p.56). In this way, Ocalan seems to have believed that woman could become a political and active person, take part in the decision-making processes and administrative or military units. To sum up, Ocalan's claimed active citizenship is more about raising ideological consciousness over the responsibilities of new citizens of his new society through ideological indoctrination and political education of individuals. In doing so, it requires some practical implementations such as participation in decision-making processes of the Ocalan's new society, and administrative and military units of his new model of governance. The question here is how those premises of Ocalan regarding the political education of individuals have been implemented in a daily life. This could be indicated through the case of the PYD administration in north and eastern Syria which argues that they put Ocalan's concept of democratic confederalism in the practice (Muslim quoted in KurdWatch, 2011).

3.4. The PYD's Indoctrination Process As A Claimed Active Citizenship

The Syrian conflict started in March 2011 with the protests against the Bashar al-Assad regime and provided some unique opportunities for Syrian Kurds (Savelsberg & Tejel, 2013). The conflict transformed into a civil war with the outbreak of Aleppo Battle in July 2012. Consequently, the Syrian government forces withdrew from northern parts of the country and the PYD managed to have a de facto autonomous administration (Gunter, 2014, p.1). Then, the PYD established the People's Council of Western Kurdistan (PCWK) with its executive and legislative branches (Gunter, 2014). This was an umbrella organization included TEV-DEM (Western Kurdistan Democratic Society Movement or Tevgara Civaka Demokrat) (Kaya & Lowe, 2017), the Yekitiya Star, women's organization, the Union of Families of Martyrs, the Education and Language Institution, and the Revolutionary Youth Movement of Western Kurdistan (Allsopp, 2015). The PYD leadership underlined that they would follow the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan's concept of democratic confederalism in Syria by calling it as democratic autonomy (Muslim quoted in KurdWatch, 2011). Ocalan (2016, p.29) asserts a need for active citizens to transform Kurdish society. Creation of those citizens or their political education requires educational units (schools) that would teach Ocalan's concepts, democratic confederalism and democratic nation. Since the early stages of the Syrian conflict, the PYD leadership began preparing for this political education by opening some institutions as underlined by the co-chair of the PYD at the time:

“Those are concrete steps of democratic autonomy. We establish associations, hold conferences, and open language schools, women's centers, and cultural centers. We want people to know what we want and support our project. [...] In Syria, we currently have the best opportunity to open

such schools and centers, even if they are rather symbolic.” (Salih Muslim quoted in KurdWatch, 2011)

Accordingly, the PYD formed a new education system (Bengio, 2020, p.363) and established some special and general public academies as training centers to teach Ocalan’s new ideology for all members of committees and administrations under their model of governance (Abdullah quoted in ANF News, 2012). The PYD leadership also began providing some lessons over their interpretation of the culture of democracy and self-government. According to their claim, to raise awareness among the public and create the claimed active citizens, the PYD and its affiliated bodies commenced organizing regular seminars, discussions through panels in neighbouring units and villages. They held periodical public meetings to lead citizens participate in the decision-making processes and discuss problems and implement Ocalan’s concepts (Abdullah quoted in ANF News, 2012).

Language can become one of the important agents in the political socialization or political education process of individuals. Consequently, one of the main important political socialization tools for the PYD is the establishment of language centers to teach Kurdish language. This idea traces back to the 1990s. When Ocalan was living in Syria, he suggested that the Kurdish language should be taught privately, particularly in homes. For this purpose, a specific school system was established in Makhmur Camp in relation to Ocalan’s premises (Knapp et al, 2016, p.176). Article 9 of the Social Contract (2014) of the PYD administration also concretizes teaching and learning Kurdish language in addition to Arabic and Syriac, particularly in the Jazira region. Accordingly, the PYD established the Celadet Bedir Khan Academy for Kurdish Language, History and Literature in 2013 with an aim for training Kurdish teachers and creating a new education system that would transform the society and form the claimed active citizens. The curriculum of this academy indicates the ideological impact of Ocalan on the PYD administration and its society as well as their teaching or purpose of internalizing this new model of society and government. This is because teachers who would teach Kurdish language have to study literature, Kurdish history, the history of argued assimilation, pedagogy, democratic nation and women’s science (Jineoloji) (Knapp et. al, 2016, p.179) in accordance with the writings of Ocalan. Additionally, the points or teachings regarding Kurdish history are re-invented in compatible with the ideas and writings of Ocalan and they are reconstructed according to the propaganda of the PKK. Teaching Kurdish language also conveyed to villages, and children, teenagers and people almost of all ages began attending those classes (Knapp et. al, 2016, p.176) during this process.

The second political socialization tool of the PYD for creating the claimed active citizens is the academies. The PYD and its affiliates founded academies in the entire region operating as education centers for people to raise awareness over the self-governance or Ocalan’s new model of governance, society and the claimed active citizenship. Those academies prioritize the subjects such as self-defense, women, youth, ecology, security, urbanization, sociology, law and justice, history, language and literature (Knapp et al, 2016, p.181). The important one of those in the region is the Nuri Dersimi Academies. Those academies teach local languages, mainly the Kurdish one, provide philosophical education including the European philosophy, history and science. However, the pieces of Ocalan, particularly his “ecological, democratic, gender-liberated paradigms, have a central place in the academy’s curriculum” Knapp et. al, 2016, p.182). Those lessons regularly refer to the new social and political system as well as its “ethics, councils, and women’s history to teach Ocalan’s new model of governance to people and practice it since those academies are associated with the TEV-DEM and the institutions of the PYD administration (Knapp et al., 2016, pp.182-183).

The journalist Wes Enzinna (2015) also underlines that during his visit to the Mesopotamian Social Sciences Academy in Qamisli, he observed that there had been an ideological education to teach the main principles of Abdullah Ocalan regarding society-building and active citizenship. For, instance, there was a 29-year old Yezidi student, Sami Saeed Mirza, who managed to escape from the atrocities of DAESH in the Sinjar Region of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq and sought shelter from the PYD administration. Mirza and his friends had been studying books of Ocalan in one of those academies, particularly the one which focuses on feminism, gender equality and role of women in a society. Although Mirza argued that he had never heard about Ocalan before, he underlined that he had accepted Ocalan as his leader now and had learnt the truth that Ocalan had

shown them the correct interpretation of society (Enzinna, 2015). This example also demonstrates the level of effectiveness of the political education or indoctrination of the PYD on individuals through those associations.

The PYD also established some civil society associations like the Culture and Art with a claim of performing educational work and advancing the Kurdish culture in the region. It appears that associations like the Culture and Art have some responsibilities such as establishing more cultural academies, protecting traditional cultures, particularly creating new culture that allows to participatory attitude based on the new political and social situation in accordance with Ocalan's writings (Knapp et al., 2016, p.126). There is also the Revolutionary Youth Movement, which consists of young people mobilized and devoted themselves to the writings of Ocalan, and therefore aiming to advance the political education of the Kurdish society through the subjects of history, democratic values and liberation of women. They come together and learn Ocalan's model of governance from one another and become teachers to share their learnings with other members in northern Syria (Knapp et al., 2016, p.127). Even those examples indicate how the PYD indoctrinates the concepts of Ocalan through its political education process to members of its communities for creating Ocalan's claimed active citizens.

Universities under the territories of the PYD administration are also designed to contribute to the PYD's political education process of the youth. According to the paper of Rojava Information Center, *Young and Promising: An Introduction to the NES University System* (2022), there are four public universities established, Afrin University (2015), Rojava University (2016), Kobane University (2017) and al-Sharq University of Raqqa (2021) (Rojava Information Center, 2022, p.4). Those universities also contribute to the political education process of the PYD through the indoctrination of Ocalan's concepts of democratic confederalism and democratic nation. For instance, the Rojava University underlines that its philosophy is directly connected to "ideas of Democratic Nation, as expounded by Kurdish philosopher and imprisoned Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Öcalan" (Rojava Information Center, 2022, p.6). This ideology proposes that "every ethnicity, creed, as well as every city, local, regional and national entity has the right to participate as its own identity in the nation's democratic social structures". Accordingly, the Rojava University perceives itself as an organic part and service of this ideology (Rojava Information Center, 2022, p.6).

Ocalan's concept of democratic confederalism play a role in the different units of those universities. For instance, in the Rojava University, as in the community of the PYD, the university has councils of men and women, and committees to organize students and implement Ocalan's concept of democratic confederalism. Each department has its own student councils, and student representatives regularly meet with academics of the university. Student councils are responsible for managing student affairs and organizing meetings, discussions, celebrations on special occasions. These councils have a co-chair system in each class as in the PYD administration, and students managed to participate in the decision-making processes by practising how to become a claimed active citizen, as a political education process of the youth (Rojava Information Center, 2022, p.7).

Additionally, it is possible to see the ideological impact of Ocalan in the organization schema of Rojava University. For instance, in the scope of the Faculty of Languages and Social Sciences, there is a Department of Jineoloji (Women's science) which is based on Ocalan's ideology over women and it provides a 2,5-year course since 2017 (Rojava Information Center, 2022, pp.11-12). All those points indicate how the ideology of Ocalan was indoctrinated in the region as part of the political socialization process of individuals. Finally, the paper explains the main reasons for the establishment of Rojava University. These are to serve as "a training ground for a new generation of educated professors", "a pool for future AANES staff", a weapon for revolutionizing the education and "a tool to cement and proliferate the values of autonomy and democracy among NES society" (Rojava Information Center, 2022, p.30). All those points are related to the practical implementations of the PYD administration as a practical part of the political socialization process through the writings of Ocalan.

The previous sections also discussed the importance of the education system, schools, teachers and curriculum in the political education process of individuals. This seems also considered by the

PYD leadership to create the claimed active citizens in accordance with Ocalan’s writings. The education system was redesigned by the PYD since the summer of 2012 to reduce the impact of the central government in Damascus and to prevent its Arabization policies (Bengio, 2020, p.363). As previously mentioned, since the beginning of the Syrian conflict, the PYD leadership commenced establishing teacher training centers and forming committees as a result of the conference in the PKK-influenced Makhmour Camp of northern Iraq. Those committees began creating new curricula and identifying new textbooks for schools under their administration (Allsopp & Wilgenburg, 2019, pp.109-110). The Article 91 of the Social Contract (2014) also attempts to justify those points:

“The education system of the Autonomous Regions shall be based upon the values of reconciliation, dignity, and pluralism. It is a marked departure from prior education policies founded upon racist and chauvinistic principles. Education within the Autonomous Regions rejects prior education policies based on racist and chauvinistic principles.” (Social Contract of Rojava, Article 91, para 2, p.14)

In relation to the article 91 of the Social Contract, the Education Committees of the PYD removed the Syrian state curricula and began implementing the Kurdish, Arabic and Syriac curricula since October 2016 (Allsopp & Wilgenburg, 2019, p.109). As underlined by an official at the Education Commission in the region, the preparation of new textbooks either for the newly established universities or the primary or secondary school courses were based on Ocalan’s concept of democratic nation (Allsopp & Wilgenburg, 2019, p.110). Even the books teaching Kurdish language for students include some pictures of Ocalan and attempt to teach commune system and his concept of democratic nation as part of the new type of governance in the region (Allsopp & Wilgenburg, 2019, pp.111-112). In this regard, a textbook for teaching Kurdish language, Society and Life (Civak u Jiyan), picturizes the administrative system of the PYD’s model of governance and organization schemas of the communes for teaching general principles of Ocalan’s concepts to young people (Allsopp & Wilgenburg, 2019, p.111).

There are some important studies analyzing the textbooks utilized for education in northern Syria and those are some of the crucial material for understanding the political education process of the PYD in accordance with the ideological concept of Ocalan. For instance, a third-grade social studies book includes quotes from Abdullah Ocalan that praises the Kurdish nation and particularly the Kurdish language as a very old version of Mesopotamian languages (Bengio, 2020, p.369). Bengio (2020, p.370) underlines that the elementary school textbooks in northern Syria do not include the name of the PKK. However, they include the name of its founder Abdullah Ocalan. Particularly, the third-grade language book has some explicit references to Ocalan as a leader of Kurds and especially his capture by the Turkish authorities as a disappointment for the Kurdish people through a poem (Bengio, 2020, p.370). In addition to the admiration toward Ocalan, those textbooks refer to his ideological premises regarding his endorsement for feminism and empowerment of women.

A second-grade social studies textbook underlines the theory and practice of the co-presidency or equal leadership of Ocalan and the PYD through the election of both male and female presidents/chairs for each class (Bengio, 2020, p.371). An equal representation of boys and girls were presented through almost all textbooks in the schools and the “books encourage teachers to have girls and boys share leadership positions within their classes.” (Bengio, 2020, p.371). All those implementations demonstrate the role of schools, textbooks and mainly teachers in the political education process of the PYD leadership to create their claimed active citizens for their community and administration in accordance with the writings of Ocalan. The main indoctrination point in this process was Ocalan’s concept of democratic confederalism that includes the terms direct democracy, gender equality and socialist economy (Bengio, 2020, p.372). Those textbooks also introduce Ocalan’s model of governance to children by explaining institutions such as people’s councils, and by providing details about how those institutions should be established in neighborhoods, villages and cities through members of community that are chosen by citizens as part of a democratic, pluralist and representative new system (Bengio, 2020, pp.372-73).

Another indication of how PYD implements the PKK’s claimed active citizenship was the establishment of a Board of Education and Teaching in each canton to organize and administer education system and design new curricula. People who played roles in designing these new curricula

argued that they aimed at changing the non-scientific and nationalist subjects from the existing Syrian state curricula, and teaching new concepts in compatible with the concept of democratic nation of Ocalan (Espinosa & Ronan, 2022, p.7). In relation to the viewpoints and narratives of Ocalan, the new system began teaching young people about terms of oppression, particularly the history of oppression of Kurds and potential threats to the PYD's model of governance and community (Espinosa & Ronan, 2022, p.7). Therefore, educational institutions/associations applied to symbolism by putting the photographs of so-called Kurdish martyrs, activists and Abdullah Ocalan in the textbooks (Espinosa & Ronan, 2022, p.9). Depending on their conversations with the designers of school curriculums in the region, Espinosa & Ronan (2022, p.10) emphasize that those people believe in ideas of Ocalan regarding the return to values of their ancestors and terms such as community, culture or life and that they almost repeat the opinion of Ocalan about the capitalist nation-state as a main reason for problems in these communities. So, the concept of democratic nation was implicitly located in the curriculum, and equal status of men and women during the Neolithic period was specifically propagated with an argument that men and women are not equal anymore within the existing nation-state system (Espinosa & Ronan, 2022, pp.10-11). Those are the reflections of Ocalan's opinions that tried to be indoctrinated by the PYD during the political education of the individuals.

It is possible to infer and argue that schools operate as practical parts of the PYD administration. This is because there are student meetings in schools through which students bring their ideas/critiques together, convey them to school administrations, and the elected students from classes meet with administrators weekly as an implementation of active citizenship in the decision-making process that is compatible with the principles of Ocalan's democratic confederalism (Espinosa & Ronan, 2022, p.13). The PYD leadership propagates that they are respectful toward other minorities and support the freedom for other languages to be learnt and taught under their administration. To some extent, they implement those points in practice. However, there are some other implementations in the political education process. As seen in 2018, the PYD closed some schools in the Assyrian communities, mainly because of their rejection to accept the new curriculum of the PYD that forcefully impose the practice of the concept of democratic nation (Espinosa & Ronan, 2022, p.15). Those points also demonstrate how the political education process takes place under the PYD administration for creating the claimed active citizens and how the PYD leadership is intolerant with alternative ideas or curricula in their schools in spite of their argument of peaceful coexistence with other minorities.

Textbooks can also play a significant role in the political education process of the PYD. Books include the name, Democratic Autonomy, which is followed by the names of cantons in Kurdish, Arabic and Assyrian. They describe schools as places where pupils can learn the concepts of freedom, democracy, equality, culture and tradition, and could practice those concepts in their daily life (Dinç, 2020, p.1004). For instance, a primary school textbook has a title "Women's place in life and society" in accordance with the ideological principles of Ocalan. In this section, some Kurdish activists such as Leyla Qasim, who lost her life during the struggle against the Iraqi regime in 1974, and Arin Mirkan, who detonated herself not to be taken as a prisoner by DAESH in 2014, were presented. Their stories as heroes who sacrificed their lives for a holy purpose, a freedom for their territory, were introduced to children (Dinç, 2020, pp.1004-5). Dinç (2020, p.1006) also provides information about the content of another textbook used for education that discusses the history of the Kurdish-populated territories, particularly with regard to their culture, histories of states and societies in Mesopotamia. Those points also implicitly refer to Ocalan's writings such as Democratic Confederalism (2011) and Democratic Nation (2016). Through those texts Ocalan provides explanations regarding the Mesopotamian societies and tries to build his society by rejecting the existing societal codes of the nation-state. It is possible to infer that all these points are introduced and in this way indoctrinated to children under the PYD administration through schools, curricula, teachers and textbooks in the context of the political education process of individuals. According to the assessment of Dinç (2020, p.1008), textbooks in primary schools include other ethnic and religious communities as well as their languages living in the PYD cantons. Those are also related to the argument of Ocalan, a peaceful coexistence with other minorities, and its practical implementation by the PYD leadership that is taught to primary school students through textbooks to accelerate their political socialization process. Those books utilize three languages (Kurdish, Arabic and Syriac), and they include some discussions regarding the origins of

Kurds and the role of women and family in the process of democratization which coincides with Ocalan's writings (Din, 2020, p.1009).

Under the PYD administration, the political education process of individuals was operated for both men and women. According to Knapp et al. (2016), women movements in north and eastern Syria working with TEV-DEM try to raise awareness regarding the role of women in this new society and system as well as to transform the women as the claimed active citizens in decision-making processes. Those movements/organizations are the Kongreya Star, the Women's Education and Research Centers, the Young Women's Movement, the Syrian Women's Association, the Syriac Women's Association, the Kurdish Women's Press Association and the Foundation of Free Women in Rojava. PYD-affiliated bodies also established women councils in Arab majority districts and villages where the large Kurdish population inhabit. Women under those movements and institutions have some activities. They read books and discuss things together, do some educational work, particularly the political education as a crucial part of the new system and society. They publish newspapers and have some courses like using computers, learning language, sewing, first aid, children's health, culture and art (Knapp et al, 2016). A representative of the Yekitiya Star in Qamisli explains that once a week approximately sixty women of a commune come together, do educational work by reading books, mainly the teachings of Ocalan, and discuss them. Representatives of this association also visit women in the neighborhoods twice a month and explain their agenda of so-called revolution for those women. Additionally, these types of associations, including academies, provide a ten-day training for women with regard to the system of communes and councils of the PYD and lead the women to participate in a two-hour educational session in a week (Knapp et al., 2016, pp.65-66).

The role of curricula, discussions and textbooks in the political socialization (for being the claimed active citizens) of a woman was tried to be explained by a Western journalist, Wes Enzinna during his visit to the PYD-controlled areas. For instance, a young woman, who was 22-year-old, Neriman Hesso, introduced her friend, another young woman 20-year-old Fidan Ahmed, by pointing out the changes took place on her compared to the previous year:

"The most significant thing to happen to her in the last year is that she was not very social and didn't have many friends. But in the academy she has made friends and found her place." (Enzinna, 2015)

Those points also indicate to what extent the PYD managed to indoctrinate Ocalan's concepts among young people (male and female) through using schools, academies, curricula, textbooks as main agents of its political education process through exploiting their psychological needs such as search for attachment, and support. Academies like the Mesopotamian Social Sciences in Qamisli also play a key role in the ideological training of new recruits of the military wings of the PYD, the People's Protection Units/Yekineyen Parastina Gel (YPG) and the Women's Protection Units/Yekineyen Parastina Jin (YPJ) (Enzinna, 2015). This has brought the critique regarding the political socialization process of the PYD, particularly by making the issue of forceful conscription visible since the educational associations introduced the mandatory conscription (Allsopp & Wilgenburg, 2019, pp.112-113).

The aforementioned points regarding forceful or mandatory conscription also demonstrate that the political education process can take place not only through schools but also through military units of the PYD. In this case, people, who joined or were conscripted by the YPG and YPJ, have to receive an ideological training regarding the concepts of democratic confederalism and democratic nation of Abdullah Ocalan. In addition to teaching how to become/form a battalion and brigade in accordance with the criteria of the YPG/YPJ (Knights & Wilgenburg, 2021, p.80), during those training sessions, the new recruits are instructed and indoctrinated about "the history of humanity, quantum theories, ecological society, culture, morality, democratic modernity, central civilization, the origin and truth about women, and the Rojava Revolution" which are basic teachings of Ocalan (Rashid, 2018, p.29). Such a military training has become a compulsory requirement for the Arab members of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) that was formed as a combination of the YPG-YPJ forces and the Syrian Arab Coalition to fight ISIS in the Arab majority areas. However, the Arab members/recruits of the SDF have to have a "forty-five days of military training"; and then, "more than sixty days of ideological indoctrination based on Abdullah Ocalan's books" to promote the concepts of democratic

nation, democratic autonomy and the new model of governance that is based on local assemblies and communes (Knights & Wilgenburg, 2021, p.81).

This compulsory training session was observed by Western journalists like Liz Sly. During her visit to the town of Tel Abyad, Sly (2017) witnessed that approximately 250 Arab recruits of the SDF received military and educational training from the Kurdish YPG instructor, Agit İbrahim Heso particularly over the PKK leader Ocalan's ideology and concepts of democratic confederalism and democratic nation. According to Sly (2017), in addition to the photos of Ocalan over the squares of the town and in public buildings, some of those new recruits/trainees also keep the photograph of Ocalan on the screens of their phones. These examples also show how effective the indoctrination/political education process of the PYD over people under its control. Those military and ideological training sessions as part of the political education process of individuals include the men and women from the region (Otten, 2015) as well as the Western volunteers who came to join the YPG/YPJ for fighting DAESH (Nissebaum, 2015; The Sunday Telegraph, 2017).

4. CONCLUSION

This article has attempted to answer the question how the PYD leadership operationalizes the political education (political socialization) process under their cantons and what types of tools they apply to create the claimed active citizens in accordance with the ideas of the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. The article has mainly focused on the political education process of individuals in the communities under the control of the PYD which tries to realize/concretize Ocalan's claimed active citizenship through the indoctrination of his ideological concepts, democratic confederalism and democratic nation. The article has indicated that the political education of individuals in the PYD-controlled areas has been conducted through the tools of one of the primary agents of the political socialization process, academies, language and/or culture centers, universities, and secondary and primary schools.

The article has also provided some insights that the PYD leadership utilizes education system, teachers, textbooks and curricula in their language centers, academies, universities, primary or secondary schools to create their claimed active citizens or sympathizers for their model of governance by indoctrinating Ocalan's writings. It has been seen that those tools have been designed in accordance with the ideology and concepts of the PKK leader Ocalan. Such findings support the perspective of Roberta Sigel (1965) regarding the concept of political socialization, a process of creating active or well-functioning individuals for the continuation of political systems. The article has also demonstrated the importance of school as one of the primary agents in the political socialization process within the literature over the political socialization (Akın, 2013; Kaplan 2005; Alkan & Ergil, 1980; Dawson et al., 1977; Althausser, 1971) after the family through the case of PYD.

This article also provides some information about the political socialization process through the military trainings of the YPG, YPJ and the SDF. Particularly, new recruits in those units were taken for military and ideological trainings in accordance with Ocalan's concepts of democratic confederalism and democratic nation. Such trainings were compulsory for the Kurdish members of the PYD community, the Arab recruits of the SDF and for Western male and female volunteers, who came to join the YPG, YPJ and SDF to fight ISIS. In this way, the article has clearly addressed the indoctrination of concepts of the PKK, especially concepts of Ocalan to people in the PYD-controlled regions through the political education process. The further research could detail and/or specifically identify the role of each of those tools (academies, language centers, universities, secondary and primary schools, education system, textbooks and curricula) in the political education process of individuals by collecting primary data through interviews in the region.

Etik Beyan: Bu çalışmada "Etik Kurul" izni alınmasını gerektiren bir yöntem kullanılmamıştır.

Ethics Statement: In this study, no method requiring the permission of the "Ethics Committee" was used.

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