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Border Settlement Dynamics and Border Status Quo: A Comparative Analysis of Turkey's Borders

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ABSTRACT

There is a plethora of research on border disputes, border dispute resolution, unsettled borders, and artificially drawn borders. Yet, no study has so far been conducted on the comparative analysis of borders settled with mandatory powers and between nation-states. This article fills this research lacuna and makes a novel contribution to border scholarship by exploring the linkages between border settlement dynamics and the border status quo. In analysing and comparing Turkey's borders drawn between the 1920s and the 1930s, it is shown that Turkey's Iraqi and Syrian borders settled with mandatory powers (Britain and France respectively) have resulted in the emergence of alternative border imaginations by one of the neighbouring states, albeit without reaching the level of an official demand to change the status quo. Since its independence, Syria has produced an alternative border imagination with respect to its Turkish border by showing Turkey's Hatay province within its borders in its official maps and documents. Since the cession of Mosul to Iraq, Turkey's alternative border imagination has taken the form of state actors' contemplations about resettling the border. In sharp contrast, the Turkish-Iranian border, settled after long consultations between two independent nation-states, effectively resolved boundary-related problems, resulting in the mutual endorsement of the border status-quo. This article concludes that border settlement processes create path-dependent effects that are carried over to subsequent generations of state actors.

Introduction

Interstate borders show differences in size, physical characteristics, historical background, ethnic composition, and different stages of economic development (Anderson and O' Dowd 2010). Despite their differences, borders fulfill similar roles. They lie at the core of security, sovereignty, and territoriality of states. They are political and social constructions that manifest states' territorial authority and sovereign power (Baud and van Shendel 1997; Newman 2011; Steinberg 2009). Borders are not only lines that divide territories, but also powerful symbols of national identity and collective history. They maintain sharp distinctions between

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"here" and "there"; "us" and "them"; "self" and other"; "inside" and "outside (Newman 2006). They are "historically contingent, politically charged, dynamic phenomena" (Vaughan-Williams 2009, 1).

Border scholars have given ample attention to the linkages between border disputes and militarised interstate conflicts (Blanchard 2005; Gibler 2017; Huth 1996; Mandel 1980), democracy and border settlement (Gibler and Owsiak 2018), unsettled borders and state rivalry (Rider and Owsiak 2015), the dynamics of border dispute resolution (Gibler and Owsiak 2018; Manpreet 2000; Powell and Wiegand 2010; Simmons 2005, 2006), and nation-building problems and border disputes derived from artificial borders drawn and imposed by colonial powers (Cribb and Narangoa 2004; Deng and I 2002; Ikome 2012; Yoon 2014). Yet, no study has so far comparatively examined the dynamics of borders settled with mandatory powers.[1]

Border settlement refers to the delimitation of borders through border agreements (Gibler and Owsiak 2018; Owsiak 2012; Rider and Owsiak 2015). This study provides the first systematic and comparative analysis of borders settled with mandatory powers and between nation-states. It compares and contextualises Turkey's borders settled with mandatory states (Britain and France respectively) with the Turkish-Iranian border, settled between independent nation-states. It adopts a comparative historical approach to illustrate the linkages between border settlement and the border status quo.[2] It makes a novel contribution to border scholarship by demonstrating that border settlement dynamics account for why some states resist or endorse the border status quo.

This study reveals that even though Turkey's borders settled with mandatory powers have not led to border disputes, these settlements have given birth to the emergence of alternative border imaginations by one of the parties.[3] For example, since its independence, Syria has portrayed Turkey's province of Hatay within its borders in official maps and documents. After the cession of Mosul to Iraq, Turkish state actors have contemplated the resettlement of the border as a possibility. In sharp contrast to Turkey's borders with Iraq and Syria, the Turkish-Iranian border, which assumed its final shape after long negotiations between the two independent nation-states, resulted in the mutual endorsement of the status quo.

Border settlement processes matter for (re)thinking about state borders in contemporary times as the ways borders are settled create path-dependent effects that are carried over to subsequent generations of state actors and impact states' current border politics. Borders settled with mandatory powers have idiosyncratic characteristics that make them different both from artificial borders imposed by colonial powers and borders settled between independent states. In this respect, studying alternative border imaginations enables us to trace the long-term deleterious consequences of mandatory regimes on borders that appear peaceful and stable from the outside.

The variation in border settlement accounts for the variation in how states approach their border status quo. Even though the Turkish-Iraqi and the Turkish-Syrian borders were settled peacefully, the involvement of a former imperial power in border settlement processes led to alternative border imaginations that have continued until the present day. In particular, although settlement processes of these borders involved bilateral negotiations and the League of Nations, they were also marked by great power politics and a top-down approach which resulted in border-related grievances. Interestingly, the Turkish-Iranian border serves as an archetypical example of a mutually agreed border and illustrates the importance of locally embedded border settlement processes for mutual consensus on the border status quo. Overall, by adopting a comparative historical approach and linking institutional and subjective dynamics of borders as well as the history of borders with current border politics, this article enhances our understanding of border settlement and the border status quo and their interrelation in the Middle East and beyond.

A Brief Overview of the Literature

The delimitation of borders is crucial for inter-state relations as it specifies the extent of states' sovereign authority (Kahler 2006). Unsettled borders are found to be associated with increased inter-state rivalry (Rider and Owsiak 2015). Border settlement, on the other hand, is treated as an indicator that rival states are transitioning from an adversarial relationship to a more cooperative one (Vasquez 1993). Indeed, Rider and Owsiak (2013) find evidence to suggest that the settling of borders precipitates the termination of interstate rivalry. Simmons (2006) finds a positive association between border settlement and bilateral trading relations. Yet, settled borders do not always translate into the border status quo. In empirical border studies, challenges to the border status quo have been analysed within the context of states' diplomatic (non-coercive) or military (coercive) initiatives to resettle borders (Huth and Allee 2004; Blanchard 2005, 2012; Atzili 2012; Gibler 2017; Huth 1996; Mandel 1980).

In tandem with the shift of attention from "borders" to "bordering" from the 1990s onwards, challenges to the border status quo have been analysed from a bottom-up perspective. This brand of literature offers insight into the emergence of alternative subjectivities and agencies with respect to border settlement at the local level. Particular attention is devoted to the tension between symbolic and political boundaries (Wilson and Donnan 1998). For example, Wandji (2019) sheds light on resilient practices employed by African borderlanders against post-colonial border institutions in their daily activities. Sur (2021) sheds light on the discrepancy between people's notions of belonging and state identity in India's Assam region which borders Bangladesh. Pelkmans (2006) shows that the residents of Ajaria (a region of the Republic

of Georgia that shares a border with Turkey) have resisted the changes in border practices after the Cold War by creating new cultural and social boundaries through stereotyping the Turkish people.

Analysing two Turkish villages along the Syrian and Iraqi borders (Nusaybin and Idil), Ozgen (2005) sheds light on Turkish borderlanders' development of distinct identities by tracing their relations with the centre and the villages on the other side of these borders. Dagtas (2018) examines the development and changing dynamics of the relationship between different ethnoreligious identities and the national identity in Turkey's Hatay province that borders Syria.

Culcasi (2016) shows how Palestinian Jordanians developed alternative geographical imaginations by analysing counter maps of Palestine displayed in their homes, businesses, and communities. Stahler-Sholk (2020) draws on the similarities between Palestinians and Zapatistas in resisting hegemonic colonial projects through daily resistance practices that shape collective identity and subjectivity. Jones (2012, 698) proposes the concept of "spaces of refusal" to describe "alternative mental, emotional, and practical networks" in borderlands that challenge territory and identity categories imposed by states. Cons (2016) develops the concept of "sensitive spaces" to describe territorial anxieties derived from discrepancies between official imaginations and the realities of daily life in certain areas.

Overall, even though scholars have given ample attention to border settlement issues within the context of states' diplomatic/military attempts to resettle borders and alternative subjectivities at the local level, the analysis of alternative border imaginations at the state level remains lacking. An important study offered by Murphy (1990) underlines that in the post-World War II era, historical justification (the argument that disputed territories were wrongfully taken in the past) has become the dominant form of conflict justification in many territorial conflicts. Yet, to date, no systematic attention has been given to border-related grievances at the state level that have not been translated into territorial conflicts. This study advances the understanding of borders by analysing the impacts of the way borders are settled on alternative border imaginations at the state level. It is based on the assumption that state actors might challenge the border status quo even as they maintain status quo policies at the bilateral level.

By drawing attention to spatial imaginations, this article helps to frame more nuanced assessments of the challenges to the border status quo. It establishes a dialogue between the empirical study of borders (as geographical lines) and border scholarship which treats borders as social constructions (Forsberg 2003; Newman 2011); mental maps (Migdal 2004) [4]; social practice and discourse (Paasi 1999); symbols, representations, and stories (van Houtum 2005). Furthermore, comparing Turkey's borders with Iraq, Syria, and Iran enables us to identify the nuances between stable borders and offer

a broader perspective on the linkages between border settlement dynamics and the border status quo. With its focus on a comparative analysis of borders settled with mandatory powers and independent nation-states, border settlement methods, border imaginations, and current border politics, this study is situated at the nexus of border studies, geography, geopolitics, history, and law.

Research Approach and Case Studies

Turkey offers a perfect laboratory for analysing and comparing borders settled with mandatory powers and between nation-states. As mentioned in the Introduction, borders settled with mandatory regimes differ from artificial borders created by colonial powers (e.g., most African borders). Differing from colonial boundary-making practices that were based on the top-down imposition of borders following the deliberations by European state actors and diplomats without any involvement of local communities, Turkey's border settlement processes with Britain and France involved bilateral negotiations and the League of Nations. However, as this study will show, a top-down approach marked these processes, albeit by different mechanisms. Borders settled with mandatory powers have idiosyncratic characteristics in comparison to both post-colonial borders and borders settled between independent states. In this respect, the analysis and the comparison of Turkey's borders with Iraq, Syria, and Iran allow us to make a broader theoretical intervention in border studies by identifying the ripple effects of the involvement of former imperial powers in border settlement processes on border politics and comparing the differential impacts of border settlement dynamics on the border status quo.

The research design of this study is based on cross-case comparison and within-case analysis. The Turkish-Iraqi, the Turkish-Syrian, and the Turkish-Iranian borders share both similarities and differences. All of these borders are located in the Middle East. They were settled during the inter-war period that witnessed the restructuring of most parts of the region through mandatory powers, Turkey's turning into a new state structure from an empire to a nation-state, and the rise of Arab nationalism. None of these borders witnessed diplomatic or militarised initiatives that would violate the status quo after settlement. The Turkish-Iranian border differs from the Turkish-Iraqi and the Turkish-Syrian borders due to its settlement between the two independent nation-states. While Syria and Iraq were provinces under Ottoman rule, the Ottoman state and Iran were neighbours for centuries, sharing one of the oldest borders in the world (Ates 2013).

Turkey's borders with Iraq and Syria were both settled and demarcated during their mandate period. The border settlement negotiations were difficult due to the power asymmetries between Turkey and the mandatory powers.

The League of Nations was involved during the settlement process of both borders. The Turkish-Iraqi border was settled with the 1926 bilateral border agreement following negotiations between Turkey and Britain and the arbitration of the League of Nations. The settlement of the Turkish-Syrian border took place after negotiations between Turkey and France. The League of Nations was also involved in the border settlement process, yet it did not assume an arbitrary role. Differing from these two borders, no external actor was involved during the settlement process of the Turkish-Iranian border. The border was settled with refereeing by the President of Iran, followed by long-lasting negotiations between both countries.

After analysing different ways of border settlement, this paper explains how border settlement is linked to alternative border imaginations at the state level and the mutual consensus on the border status quo. As mentioned in the Introduction, in this study, alternative border imaginations at the state level are defined as state actors' questioning and challenging the border status quo without reaching the level of an official demand to resettle borders. In other words, they refer to state actors' performative and discursive claims about borders without turning into an actual dispute. In this study, they are treated as official maps and documents that show borders differently than internationally recognised territorial agreements as well as state actors' contemplations about resettling borders. Mutual consent on the border status quo is equated with the absence of militarised/non-militarised border disputes as well as alternative border imaginations on both sides of the border. Data collection consists of primary sources (treaties, official documents, parliamentary debates, embassy documents, state officials' statements, memoirs, biographies, and newspaper articles) as well as secondary literature.

The Turkey-Iraq Border

Iraq came under Ottoman control in 1534. The Sykes-Picot Agreement (a secret agreement signed between Britain and France in 1916) allocated Iraq to Britain (Rogers 2007). Britain occupied Baghdad in 1917 (Silverfarb 1986). Immediately after the end of World War I (and a few weeks after the ceasefire with the Ottoman Empire entered into force), it occupied Mosul. At the San Remo conference in 1920, Iraq was mandated to Britain. A constitutional monarchy was established under the leadership of King Faisal (Rogers 2007). During the mandate period (1920–1932), the British authorities sought to unify Baghdad, Mosul, and Basra eventually giving birth to Iraq as a British project.

The National Oath (Misak-ı Milli) (a body of decisions taken by the Ottoman Parliament during its last term in 1920) underlined that Mosul should continue to be under Ottoman rule. Shortly after the declaration of the National Oath, Allied Powers invaded Istanbul and shut down the

Parliament. Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (later named Ataturk), the Turkish War of Independence was launched and foreign powers were expelled from the country. That led to the annulment of the Treaty of Sevres[5] that had opened the possibility for an independent Kurdish state along with the voluntary adhesion of Kurdish people in Mosul to this state in case of its formation (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 1924).

The National Oath decisions were endorsed by the Ankara government and formed the basis of its foreign policy. Indeed, in his speech at the newly opened Turkish parliament in 1920, Mustafa Kemal stressed that Mosul was within Turkey's borders and that there would be no compromise over that matter (Atatürk 1920, 165). In 1921, Turkey dispatched special military units to Mosul (Ali 2017). By the time the Lausanne Peace Conference commenced in 1922, Turkish troops near the de facto Iraqi border were mobilised for a probable military operation. Yet, Turkish authorities decided to forgo a military option and focused instead on finding a diplomatic solution in Lausanne (Ali 2017).

The future fate of the Mosul province constituted one of the most heated discussions during the Lausanne negotiations. Britain's representative Lord Curzon insisted on keeping Mosul within the Iraqi borders. Turkey's representative İsmet İnönü, on the other hand, refused to relinquish Turkey's rights over Mosul by referring to Turkey's historical links to the province, the principles laid out in the National Oath (Beck 1981; Keith 1926), and a significant number of the Turkish population living in the province.[6] The Turkish thesis underlined that the wishes of the population in Mosul should be taken into consideration to settle the dispute. It argued that the majority of the population in Mosul (including the Kurds, the Turks, and the Arabs) wished to live within Turkey's borders (The League of Nations 1925). It is in this context that Mr. İnönü rejected the option of arbitration and proposed instead a plebiscite to settle the dispute. The British thesis also incorporated the wishes of the people to counter the Turkish thesis albeit with different population statistics (The League of Nations 1925). However, Mr. Curzon countered the plebiscite proposal on the grounds that "the uneducated voter would not attach sufficient importance to strategical, geographical, economic and administrative factors" (The League of Nations 1925, 16).[7]

As Turkey and Britain could not find a mutual solution to the Mosul issue during the Lausanne negotiations, they agreed to transfer the matter to the League of Nations in case bilateral relations failed to settle the dispute within nine months. Both parties also pledged to refrain from military action to alter the territorial status quo (The Treaty of Lausanne 1923). The League, which was established by the winners of World War I, reflected the interests of the great powers. Britain, a member of the Council of the League of Nations, had significant military and political pressure mechanisms at its disposal. In sharp

contrast to Britain, Turkey was a newly established republic and during that period, it was not a member of the League of Nations (it became a member in 1932).

Britain and Turkey submitted conflicting data on the ethnic composition of Mosul to the Council of the League of Nations. The Council appointed a commission of inquiry in 1924, which commenced its investigations in Mosul a year later. The commissioners travelled across Iraq by train, car, plane, horse, and on foot (Rogers 2007). By presenting maps, graphs, and statistics to the Council, the commissioners argued that the geographic and ethnic factors should not be taken into consideration in the settlement of the dispute (Beck 1981).[8] The commissioners also rejected Turkey's thesis that emphasises its historical links with Mosul by arguing that the pashas of Baghdad ruled over Ottoman Iraq (Rogers 2007).

In its final report, the Commission concluded that as the wishes of the population in Mosul varied greatly, it cannot constitute a basis for the resolution of the dispute. Considering the possibility of the termination of the British mandate before Iraq was ready for independence, the Commission noted that "the advantages of the union of the disputed territory [Mosul] with Iraq would in that case be exchanged for very serious political difficulties, and considers that, under those circumstances, it would be more advantageous for the territory to remain under the sovereignty of Turkey, whose internal conditions and external political situation are incomparably more stable than those of Iraq (The League of Nations 1925, 89). From a legal point of view, the Commission underlined that Mosul should be treated as an integral part of Turkey until it renounces its rights. The Commission left the final evaluation of legal and political arguments specified in the report to the Council of the League of Nations (The League of Nations 1925).

The Council of the League of Nations asked for the advisory opinion of the Permanent Court of Justice on the Mosul case. The Court advised the dispute to be settled with arbitration by the Council (Keith 1926) even though since the beginning of the Mosul dispute, Turkey had heavily opposed the arbitration and emphasised mediation as its preferred method of dispute resolution (Okur 2020). The presence of a British judge in the Permanent Court of Justice raised serious questions about judicial impartiality, a matter which disturbed several judges as well as the Court's President Hans Max Huber (Spiermann 2004). One of the judges of the Permanent Court of Justice, William Moore, who did not participate in the vote, later remarked that the Mosul case weakened the Court's independent position (Spiermann 2004).

Before the League offered its final decision on Mosul, Turkey continued to stress its reluctance to accept arbitration for dispute resolution (Makko 2010). In addition, a number of minor clashes between British soldiers and Turkish border guards along the Turkish-Iraqi border occurred (Makko 2010). According to British intelligence reports, the Seyh Sait Uprising (a Kurdish

rebellion that erupted in 1925 in the southeastern part of Turkey) led Turkey to forgo a military option regarding the Mosul dispute (Coşar and Demirci 2006).

The Council of the League of Nations convened on December 16, 1925, and voted unanimously to leave the Mosul province to Iraq under the British mandate administration. The Turkish government declared this decision invalid and proclaimed its sovereign rights over Mosul (Aras 1926). However, against the backdrop of a closer alliance between Britain, France, and Italy, looming military threats along with threats of material sanctions and diplomatic isolation, Turkey backed down from its claims on Mosul (Klapsis 2014). Turkey formally recognised the cession of Mosul and Kirkuk to Iraq with the Treaty of Ankara signed on June 5, 1926 (Okur 2020). Both countries pledged not to change the border status quo and not to allow propaganda activities against one another in their border regions (Treaty Between the United Kingdom and Iraq and Turkey Regarding the Settlement of the Frontier Between Turkey and Iraq, Together with Notes Exchanged 1927).

Before the approval of this treaty in parliament, the then Turkish Foreign Secretary Tevfik Rustu Aras justified Turkey's decision to cede Mosul within the context of "sacrifices" made to avoid further wars, stressing that the Turkish thesis regarding Mosul was still legally valid and that the League of Nations acted unlawfully (Aras 1926). The Turkish-Iraqi border was demarcated in 1927 (International Boundary Study 1964). Iraq gained its independence in 1932. In 1936, Turkey and Iraq agreed to examine border-related matters in a bilateral border commission every six months (Antlasmalar n/d). The 1946 Friendship Treaty signed between Iraq and Turkey endorsed the border status quo shaped by the League of Nations process and the 1926 Treaty.

The security dimension of the border issue between Turkey and Iraq came to the forefront of bilateral relations in the context of PKK terrorism. In 1983 and 1984, under the shadow of the power balances of the Iran-Iraq war, Ankara and Baghdad signed two agreements on border security permitting "hot pursuit" operations within 5 kilometres depth of each side's territory (Kumral 2016, s. 121). From then on, Turkey has conducted dozens of military operations in Mosul (Akuay and Ates 2013). However, these operations aimed to target the PKK within the context of hot pursuit arrangements and had no objective of resettling the border.

The Turkey-Syria Border

The territories of today's Syria came under the control of the Ottoman Empire in 1516. Syria's territorial design began to take shape during the 19th century through economic policies and demographic changes carried out by the Ottoman state (Cimino 2020). The 1916 Skyes Picot agreement allocated

Syria to the French. In 1920, the French troops occupied Syria after the San Remo Conference recognised the French mandate over Syria (Bureau of the Geographer 1978). The 1921 Franklin-Bouillon Agreement (also called the Ankara agreement) ended the state of war between Turkey and France and roughly defined the border between Turkey and the French-mandated territory of Syria along the lines of the Baghdad railway. With this agreement, Alexandretta, an important trade centre of the Ottoman Empire, remained outside of Turkey's borders, but Turkish inhabitants' cultural rights were recognised and Turkish was designated as the official language (Franklin-Bouillon/Ankara agreement 1921).[9]

The Treaty of Lausanne confirmed the border laid down in the Franklin-Bouillon agreement. During the debates on the ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne in the Turkish parliament, some deputies reacted against the inclusion of Alexandretta within the borders of the French-mandated territory of Syria by referring to the predominant Turkish-speaking community in the province (Guclu 2006).

Throughout the 1920s, Turkey witnessed cross-border attacks carried out by villagers, tribesmen, and irregular soldiers from Syria. In 1923, Turkish and French state authorities reached an agreement to stop these incursions. However, sporadic border incidents continued (Guclu 2006). The Mixed Commission of Delimitation (envisioned by the Franklin-Bouillon Agreement) began its operations in 1925 (Guclu 2006; Ozbey 2019). However, due to conflicting opinions, the commission reached an impasse. The 1926 Franco-Turkish Convention confirmed the status quo regarding Alexandretta (Firat and Kurkcuoglu 2011). However, with the 1926 Protocol of the Delimitation of the Turco-Syrian Frontier attached to the Franco-Turkish Convention, a number of minor adjustments were made to the border in favour of Turkey (Guclu 2006). The delimitation of the border continued slowly due to France's other foreign policy problems, including Italy's growing eagerness to be a mandate power in Syria (Guclu 2006).

Since the early years of the 1920s, representatives of the Turkish community in Alexandretta pressured Ankara for the accession of Alexandretta to Turkey (Firat and Kurkcuoglu 2011). Turkish-speaking people were the largest ethnic community in Alexandretta which witnessed strong lines of divisions in terms of ethnicity (Turkish vs. Arab) and religion (Muslims vs. Christians) (Khoury 1987). Arab nationalists, on the other hand, firmly opposed the integration with Turkey (Khoury 1987). However, amidst the Seyh Sait rebellion, the Mosul dispute, and the rising Italian aggression in the Mediterranean, Alexandretta was not a foreign policy priority of Turkey in the mid-1920s (Barlas 2014; Firat and Kurkcuoglu 2011).

Between 1927 and 1928, there was some, albeit slow, progress regarding the delimitation of the border (Guclu 2006). In 1929, Turkey and France reached an agreement regarding a controversial territory located on the border

between the Baghdad railway and Tigris by dividing it between both sides (Guclu 2006). The Permanent Frontier Commission, established in 1929, gathered almost annually till 1938. Both sides showed mutual determination to patrol the border and build border observation posts (Guclu 2006). Starting from 1929, the Turkish state authorities made significant efforts to include Alexandretta within Turkey's borders (Altug 2020). For example, in 1932, Charles H. Sherril, American Ambassador to Turkey wrote to the U.S. Secretary of State of Turkey's plans to retake Alexandretta and Aleppo if the French left Syria (Sherrill 1932). Yet, after a flurry of discussions, Turkey and France agreed to settle the problem in the future (Altug 2020).

France signed a treaty with Syria in 1936 to end its mandatory rule within three years. Following this treaty, Turkish Foreign Minister Tevfik Rustu Aras proposed that France sign a similar treaty with Alexandretta to open the room for self-determination. France objected to this proposal, claiming that it would lead to the disintegration of Syrian territory as well as violate the conditions of the mandatory agreement (Firat and Kurkcuoglu 2011). Both sides agreed to appeal to the League of Nations for the resolution of the issue. The Syrian National Party objected to Alexandretta's transfer to Turkey by sending a letter to the League of Nations. During this period, the representatives of the Turkish community in Alexandretta were also actively involved by sending telegrams to the Turkish and the French Ministries in objection to Alexandretta's possible transfer to Syria (Barlas 2014).

In 1937, the Sandler report was approved by the Council of the League of Nations with a unanimous vote. The Council of the League decided on the establishment of a separate entity in Alexandretta that would enjoy full independence in its internal affairs, while its foreign affairs would be managed by the State of Syria. Turkish was designated as the official language. The interparliamentary liaison would be established between the legislative assemblies of Syria and Alexandretta. Alexandretta was not permitted to have an army, while permission was granted regarding the establishment of local police forces (The League of Nations 1937). Upon the acceptance of the Sandler report, Syrians took to the streets throughout the country and chanted the slogan "Alexandra is Arab" (Shields 2011). The Syrian Prime Minister underlined that Alexandretta was an indispensable part of Syria (Firat and Kurkcuoglu 2011).

The legislative assembly of Alexandretta adopted the name "the State of Hatay", and accepted the Turkish national anthem as well as the Turkish currency (Jorum 2014a). The new Hatay government removed customs barriers with Turkey (Shields 2011). Nevertheless, Turkey saw the arrangement in Hatay as a temporary solution. Similar to the Mosul issue, it claimed rights over the territory by referring to demographic dynamics and the desires of the population (Shields 2011). In 1937, it denounced the 1926 Franco-Turkish Convention to put pressure on France for the

resettlement of the issue (Guclu 2006). A year later, it sent extra troops to the Syrian border (Firat and Kurkcuoglu 2011). France was reluctant to change its position on the issue. Against the backdrop of the rising aggression of Fascist Germany and Italy as well as Turkey's strategic importance derived from its full sovereignty over the Straits (following the 1936 Montreux Convention), Turkey's cooperation was vital for Britain and France. In light of these dynamics, France eventually yielded to Turkey's pressures (Khoury 1987). The British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden also played a pivotal role in persuading French authorities to moderate their stance on the issue (Barlas 2014; Khadduri 1945). Overall, geopolitical dynamics determined the outcome of the Hatay question (Shields 2011).

With the 1938 French-Turkish General Staff Agreement, Turkish and French authorities agreed to transfer the State of Hatay to Turkey and delimit a new boundary line (Biger 2015). In 1939, after a popular referendum, the legislative assembly in the State of Hatay voted in favour of disestablishing the State of Hatay and joining Turkey. Alexandretta's name was changed to Hatay and it became a Turkish province (Jorum 2014). The final demarcation of the Turkish-Syrian border was made after the 1939 French-Turkish Agreement (Biger 2015).

The President of the Syrian Parliament protested against this new territorial arrangement by sending telegraphs to France and the League of Nations, noting that Alexandretta was an indispensable part of Syria and its transfer to Turkey violated the previous treaties (Firat and Kurkcuoglu 2011). When Syria gained its independence in 1946, it sent letters of protest to foreign embassies on this issue (Firat and Kurkcuoglu 2011). Turkey's recognition of Syrian independence was secured by the Iraqi Foreign Minister Nuri al-Said who persuaded Turkey not to put pressure on Syria to officially recognise the border status quo and Syria not to challenge the border status quo officially (Sanjian 1956). However, since Syria's independence, Syrian authorities repeatedly claimed that the transfer of Alexandretta took place without the approval of the Syrian parliament.

The Turkey-Iran Border

The Qasr-i Shirin Agreement, signed between the Ottoman Empire and Iran in 1639, defined the parameters of the border-related negotiations between both countries and for the most part determined the main outlines of the modern Turkey-Iran border. Yet, in sharp contrast to nation-states, the Ottoman Empire and Iran did not have a definitive border, as they both possessed lands with overlapping borders (Ates 2013). Until the 19th century, territorial conflicts between both countries were not about the exact location of their territories, but about winning out tribal loyalties on frontiers (Ates

2013; Lesaffer 2015). The concept of territory as a bounded, fixed entity had not yet been mirrored in these countries' spatial organisation and governing logic.

While many European absolutist states tended towards hardening their borders from the 16th century onwards, the Ottoman Empire maintained its "soft" and "flexible" approach in its territorial design (Kadercan 2017). The Ottomans saw territory "in terms of a 'fuzzy' continuum, with no real end-points or beginnings" (Kadercan 2017, 9). Boundary-making processes in the Ottoman Empire took place concomitantly with modernisation, centralisation, and institutionalisation efforts throughout the 19th century (Ates 2013). Due to their economic and imperial interests in the Middle East, Britain and Russia pressed for a fixed Ottoman-Iranian border (Lesaffer 2015).[10] The 1847 Treaty of Erzurum, which settled a number of border disputes between the Ottoman Empire and Iran, was the first serious attempt by the two countries to identify a precise borderline (Lesaffer 2015). Following this treaty, a multilateral border commission was set up for the delimitation of the border (Ates 2013; International Boundary Study 1964). Working from 1849 to 1853, the border commission (which consisted of diplomats, soldiers, engineers, translators, cartographers, and archaeologists from the Ottoman Empire, Iran, Britain, and Russia) completed surveys on the border and produced maps (Ates 2013). In this respect, border commissioners worked as "agents of territorializing sovereignty" (Ates 2013, 88) and initiated a process that eventually transformed the borderlands into bordered lands (Ates 2013, 140).

While Iran never became a mandate territory like Iraq or Syria, it was divided into spheres of influence by Britain and Russia with the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 (Hambly 2008). The Ottoman Empire occupied the northwestern part of Iran to create a bulwark in fear of a possible Russian advance on its territory (Ates 2013). The Ottomans and Iranians restarted border-related negotiations in 1908. Following the 1911 Tehran Protocol, the Ottoman Empire and Iran set up a border commission (which also included British and Russian representatives) for the settlement of the border (Ates 2013). Both parties also agreed to go to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague in case the border commission failed to settle the border-related disputes (Lesaffer 2015).

During these negotiations, the Ottomans agreed to withdraw from the northwestern part of Iran due to pressures exerted by Britain and Russia (Ates 2013). According to the 1913 Protocol, the Ottoman Empire ceded the Little Ararat area and Khorramshahr (an oil-rich city of Khuzestan) to Iran (Lesaffer 2015; Şener 2012). Following this protocol, the border commission started to demarcate the border by erecting boundary pillars. Yet, these works were interrupted due to the outbreak of World War I (Ates 2013; Lesaffer 2015).

During World War I, Russia, Britain, and Germany were engaged in a power struggle over Iran. They manipulated ethnic, religious, and sectarian differences in the country to increase their influence. Although the Iranian Shah declared Iran's neutrality during the war, Russia and Britain occupied northern and southern Iran respectively which prompted the Ottoman army to occupy western and northwestern parts of Iran (Atabaki 2006). After the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, Russian forces withdrew from Iran. The Ottoman forces withdrew from the country following the 1918 Armistice of Mudros (Atabaki 2006). With the 1919 Anglo-Iran Treaty (which resembles in many respects the mandate treaties) the British influence over Iran's domestic and foreign policies grew considerably.

While after World War I, the Ottoman Empire collapsed and the Republic of Turkey was established, in Iran, a dynastic change occurred. With the ascendance of Reza Shah to the throne in 1925, the Qajar dynasty was replaced by the Pahlavi dynasty. Turkey under Ataturk and Iran under Reza Shah went through similar processes of nation-building, modernisation, industrialisation, and centralisation.

During the early periods of the Turkish Republic, state authorities argued in favour of the renegotiations on the Turkish-Iran border on the basis that the Istanbul Protocol was not approved by the Ottoman Assembly. Iran, on the other hand, supported the border status quo (Erim 1952; Şener 2012). While both countries had disagreements on the location of the borderline, Ataturk and Riza Shah developed formidable diplomatic relations. Both states signed the Security and Friendship Treaty in 1926 in which they pledged not to act aggressively towards one another and to be neutral when one of the parties is subjected to hostile attacks by one or more states.

During the Ararat Uprising (which was led by some Kurdish tribes between 1926 and 1930), rebels crossed the border from Iran's Little Ararat region and staged attacks on Turkey as a result of which the border problem evolved into a national security issue in Turkey.[11] Khoybun, the most influential Kurdish separatist organisation established in Lebanon in 1927, also joined the Ararat Uprising (Bozarslan 2002). Turkey organised three military operations in 1926, 1927, and 1930 with the last one being a cross-border operation. Between 1926 and 1930, Turkey pressured Iranian authorities to impose strict control over the border. Rebel attacks from Iran to Turkey created a major diplomatic thaw between both countries.

In 1929, Turkey and Iran established a border commission, entrusted with the task of preventing cross-border rebel flows and delimiting the border. Yet, the commission was dismantled after the Kurdish rebels staged an attack from Iran to Turkey in 1930 (Çetinsaya 1999). Following this attack, Turkey increased its pressure on Iran to crack down on the rebels within its borders (Şener 2012). The Ararat Uprising ended after Turkey organised a third operation in the Little Ararat area (a cross-border operation) in 1930 with

the cooperation of the Iranian authorities. Iran gave support to Turkey by arresting the rebels and declaring a state of emergency in the Iranian city of Maku where the rebels sought shelter (Gerede 1952).

While since the early years of the Republic, Turkish authorities stated their willingness to change the border status quo regarding the Iranian border, after the eruption of the Ararat Uprising, Turkish state actors linked the resettlement of the border to Turkey's territorial integrity and national security. It is against this backdrop that border negotiations started in 1931. The Iranian authorities proposed that the League of Nations act as an arbitrator for the settlement of the border issue. However, Turkey rejected the arbitration proposal and instead proposed a land swap (Gerede 1952).

Based on Ataturk's recommendation, the then Turkish Foreign Minister Tevfik Rüştü Aras suggested that Reza Shah become a referee for the resettlement of the border. Reza Shah accepted this offer (As 2010). During the negotiations, the Shah stated that the solution to the border problem with Turkey was more important than the piece of land, stressing that bilateral problems would only benefit both countries' rivals and that a genuine friendship should be formed between both countries (Çetinsaya 1999).

In 1932, a border resettlement agreement was signed between Turkey and Iran, resulting in the exchange of land. The Little Ararat area was handed over from Iran to Turkey and Qotur along with areas near Bajirge, northwest of Rezaiyeh were handed over from Turkey to Iran (Erim 1952). With the agreement, both parties also agreed not to encourage tribes to cross to the other side of the border. Both sides agreed to grant the other party a right of hot pursuit in case of cross-border rebel flows. After the resettlement of the border, Turkish-Iranian relations significantly improved. Riza Sah showed a gesture to Turkey by making his first visit to Turkey. The border agreement was followed by demarcation works which were finalised in 1934. An additional border agreement was signed in 1937 to solve minor border issues. From the 1932 border agreement until now, neither side has voiced its opposition to the way the border was settled. Even when political relations were strained, the borderline did not become a political thaw between the two countries.

Border Settlement and Alternative Border Imaginations

The previous section gave a historical account of the border settlement processes that took place at Turkey's borders with Iraq, Syria, and Iran. It showed that even though Turkey and Syria recognised the legality of their borders with Iraq and Turkey respectively, both countries have contested the border status quo by voicing their disagreement on the way their borders were settled. In sharp contrast, the Turkish-Iranian border was settled through the mutual consent of both parties and as such, no party questioned the status quo

after the border settlement process. This section explains the linkages between border settlement and alternative border imaginations by shedding light on Turkish and Syrian state actors' performative and discursive claims about their respective borders following border settlement.

While Turkey has never engaged in a diplomatic or a military attempt to alter the status quo of the Turkish-Iraqi border, Turkish state authorities have approached the settlement of the Iraqi border with discontent. Mosul has been evaluated as a lost territory of Turkey. During the Lausanne conference, Mr. Inonu underlined that Mosul was an inseparable part of Turkey, framing the Mosul dispute in terms of Turkey's national interests (Şimsir 2008). The British delegate, on the other hand, framed the issue only as a boundary problem between Turkey and Iraq, downplaying the importance of Britain's strategic interests in the province (Beck 1981).

The loss of Mosul following the decision of the League of Nations created a huge disappointment among political elites. It is claimed that in 1933 Ataturk told American General McArthur about his determination and willingness to take back Mosul along with Kirkuk (another former Ottoman territory located in Iraq) (Kodal 2015). Bulent Ecevit (former Prime Minister) shared his memoir with Ismet Inonu, noting that in 1971, Inonu told him that taking back Mosul was Ataturk's will and that the inclusion of Mosul within Turkey's borders in the right circumstances would be appropriate and necessary (Barlas 2005; Zengin 2016).

Turkish journalist Hasan Bulent Kahraman, wrote in his memoir, that Suleyman Demirel (former Prime Minister and President) told him how the loss of Mosul along Kirkuk created immense grief in the then parliament (Time Turk 2015). Turkey's alternative border imagination regarding Mosul reached its apogee under President Ozal as he gave full support to the USA during the First Gulf War and evaluated this war as an opportunity to take back Mosul and Kirkuk (Gökmen 1994).

There are numerous claims about a dialogue between US President Bush and President Ozal on Ozal's plans for the intervention in Mosul and Kirkuk (Gökmen 1994). According to the testimonies of Özal's son, Ahmet Özal, the then Chief of Staff, Necip Torumtay, resigned over Ozal's question about whether the Turkish Armed Forced had developed scenarios about the seizure of Mosul and Kirkuk. He stressed that rather than planning a war, Ozal was thinking about sending a battalion of soldiers to the region. He further explained that Ozal's scenarios about Mosul were informed by Ataturk's will about the province (Asır 2017). Furthermore, against the backdrop of little public support and strong reactions from military and bureaucratic actors, Ozal's plans were not actualised (Aral 2001; Zengin 2016).

The invasion of Iraq and the toppling of Saddam Hussein by the U.S.-UK-led coalition in 2003 opened a new chapter in Iraq, marked by weak coalition governments, terrorist incidents, ethnic, and sectarian conflicts (Alhassan

2021). With increased instability in Iraq, Turkey's alternative political imagination regarding Mosul resurfaced in political discourse. For example, in 2004, the then Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül went so far as to state that if Iraq was disintegrated, Turkey would raise its claims over Mosul (Bagheri 2017).

As noted previously, from the mid-1980s till the present day, Turkey has occasionally sent its troops to the north of Iraq to defend its territory against PKK incursions. After ISIS captured Mosul in 2014, Turkey built a military base in Bashika near Mosul, stationed its hundreds of troops, and trained local forces to fight against ISIS at the request of the Erbil-based Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). This led to the deterioration of relations with the Baghdad government which saw it as a violation of its sovereignty (Aljazeera 2016). While Turkey's military operations against the PKK in northern Iraq and its military offensive against ISIS in Mosul raised concerns about Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, these operations carried no objective of resettling the border.

However, the capture of Mosul by ISIS reignited political discussions that stressed Turkey's historic links to Mosul. In his speech in 2016, Erdogan implied contrast between the stability of Mosul under Ottoman control and the current condition of Mosul under ISIS attacks and stressed the importance of the National Oath as a legacy of Ataturk (BBC Turkce 2016). In the same year, the former Chief of Staff Ilker Basbug articulated the disappointment regarding the Mosul issue by stating that Mosul would have been within Turkey's borders if the Seyh Sait rebellion had not erupted (Ozbey 2019).

In 2017, the leadership of the KRG held a referendum for independence. This referendum brought Turkey and the Baghdad government on the same page as they both declared support for the territorial integrity of Iraq and opposed the referendum attempt by denouncing it as a separatist action. Before the referendum, Turkey carried out military exercises near the border and engaged in talks with Baghdad and Tehran regarding counter-measures in the case of the Kurdish declaration of independence (Reuters 2017).

Before the referendum took place, the National Security Council in Turkey published a statement, portraying the referendum as a threat to Turkey's national security as well as Iraq's territorial integrity (Bloombergth 2017). The Justice and Development Party's deputy Samil Tayyar evaluated the statement as a warning that implies Turkey's consideration to enter Mosul if Iraq was disintegrated (Hurriyet 2017). Even though the predominant majority voted in favour of independence in KRG-controlled areas in northern Iraq, against the backdrop of the strong opposition of the Baghdad government, Iraq's Supreme Federal Court's ruling against the secession along with USA's and the European Union's support for Iraq's territorial integrity, the independence was not materialised in the context of (Rasheed 2017).

Similar to Turkey, modern Syria never officially requested the resettlement of the Turkish-Syrian border. However, since its independence, it has always questioned the border status quo albeit in different forms. In 1946, protesters in Syria called for bringing the matter to the Arab League and the United Nations for the retrocession of the Hatay province. Since the 1950s, Hatay has been shown as Syrian territory on Syrian official maps (Jorum 2014a). With some exceptions (such as the Syrian Prime Minister's suggestion for Turkish-Syrian negotiations to resettle the Hatay dispute), Syrian state authorities have approached the Hatay issue as a domestic problem and not as a foreign policy matter (Soysal 1998/99). Turkish Diplomat Ismail Soysal noted in his memoirs that Syrian President Adib al-Shishakli (1951–1954) personally told him that Syria's questioning of the border status quo would only remain a domestic matter (Soysal 1998/99).

However, against the backdrop of grievances regarding the settlement of the border, Syrian state actors and official documents have emphasised Hatay as Syrian territory. In his book, Walid al-Muallim (former Foreign Minister of Syria) claimed that Hatay was unjustly taken away from Syria, yet he did not call for its retrocession (Al-Muallim 1998). A few years later, the Geographic Dictionary of the Syrian Arab Region treated Hatay as part of Syrian territory (Jorum 2014a). The Geographical and Economic Yearbook of Syria, published in 2001, included Hatay within Syria (The National Information Centre 2001). Hatay was shown as Syrian territory also in school books. Bashar al-Assad, who came to power in 2000, did not publicly object to Turkey's sovereignty over Hatay and after 2003, school books no longer showed Hatay within Syria's borders. However, no changes were made to official maps (Scheller 2013). Even after the Syrian civil war that started in 2011, Hatay has been treated as Syrian territory in pro-government newspapers and TV channels (Jorum 2014b). On November 29, 2021, the Syrian Parliament declared that Hatay was stolen from the Syrians through a French-British-Turkish deal and that France acted against its commitments as a mandatory power. In the statement, it was declared that "We in the People's Assembly affirm that the stolen province of Alexandretta is an integral part of the precious Syrian soil. Its place is like the heart's position in the body. It is always present in our minds, conscience, and hearts. We will continue to struggle until the stolen right return to its owners and we insist on the restoration of all of our usurped lands, and we are confident of the resounding victory by the valiant men of our Syrian Arab army" (The Syrian Parliament 2021). The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly rejected the claims of the Syrian Parliament and declared this statement unlawful.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study brought a new perspective on the linkages between border settlement dynamics and the border status quo by analysing and comparing borders settled with mandatory powers and between nation-states through

a comparative historical approach. It made a novel contribution to the border scholarship by identifying the differential impacts of border settlement on the border status quo. It shed light on the ripple effects of mandatory regimes on borders that appear peaceful and stable outside. It is shown that the involvement of former imperial powers during the border settlement processes of the Turkish-Iraqi and the Turkish-Syrian borders gave birth to alternative border imaginations that have passed from one generation of political actors to the next. The Turkish-Iranian border case contrasts the cases of border settlement with mandatory powers. Findings with respect to this border illustrate the importance of the solution of boundary-related problems through a mutual consent between independent states for the border status quo.

The Turkey-Syria and Turkey-Iraq borders exemplify the discrepancy between mental maps (Migdal 2004) and spatial configurations and the strong nexus between border-related grievances and alternative border imaginations. Syria's alternative border imagination is embedded in its territorial discourse moulded by its grievances with the French rule.[12] This territorial discourse is built upon the idea that the Turkish-Syrian border was settled without considering the claims of Arab nationalists (Altug 2020). The legitimacy of the border status quo is hence questioned on the basis that Syrian border officers and intelligence service officers were absent throughout the border settlement process (Altug 2020). The border, as such, is viewed as an artificial colonial imposition. Even though Syria never asked for the retrocession of the Hatay province from Turkey, the Hatay issue is seen as "as an act of treachery on the part of the French, and aggressive territorial expansion on the part of the Turks" (Stokes 1998, 265).

Turkey's border imagination with regard to Mosul is ensconced in the National Oath. The borders outlined by the National Oath did not extend to territories with an Arab majority. While the newly established Turkey accepted most territories lost by the Ottoman Empire during World War I, it did not relinquish its rights over Mosul by referring to the National Oath. In this respect, the cession of Mosul to Iraq created a feeling among state actors that Turkey could not achieve its ideal border envisioned in the National Oath, leading to a bifurcation between Turkey's border imagination and the current border status. Mr. Aras's stress on the validity of the Turkish thesis regarding Mosul before the approval of the 1926 Ankara agreement that shaped the current Turkey-Iraq border (Aras 1926) is an eloquent example of this bifurcation.

It is against this backdrop that Turkey developed an alternative border imagination by treating the resettlement of the border within the realm of possibility. While the Syrian territorial discourse focuses on injustices perpetuated by the absence of Syrian agency during the border settlement, the Turkish territorial discourse focuses on the unequal power relations that marked the border settlement process. In sharp contrast to the Syrian case,

the Turkish agency was involved during the border settlement process of the Turkish-Iraqi border. Turkey's alternative border imagination is reinforced by the idea that Mosul was lost due to the dominant role of Britain in the League of Nations. More specifically, Turkey's grievances regarding Mosul are underpinned by the presence of a British judge in the Permanent Court of Justice and the Council of the League of Nations' arbitration decision despite Turkey's heavy opposition to this method since the start of the dispute.

As this study revealed, alternative border imaginations show variation across countries. Turkey's border imagination regarding its border with Iraq has taken the form of state actors' deliberations about resettling the border whereas Syria's border imagination with respect to its border with Turkey has been reflected in official maps, and documents (and until 2003 in school books). Interestingly, alternative border imaginations also show within-country variation. More specifically, at different periods, depending on political dynamics, they became more visible than before. For example, the First Gulf War created a permissive environment in which Turkey's alternative border imagination with respect to its Iraqi border moved to the top of the country's political agenda with Ozal's plans to annexe Mosul. Turkey's alternative border imagination again resurfaced in the political discourse following the Second Gulf War. Similarly, while the Syrian alternative border imagination with respect to its Turkish border became less visible after al-Assad came to power, it became more pronounced against the backdrop of the changing political dynamics and the deterioration of bilateral relations following the Syrian civil war.

As underlined previously, borders settled with mandatory powers have peculiar characteristics that make them distinct both from artificially created and mutually-agreed borders. This article showed that even though Turkey's borders were not imposed top-down by European powers as in many African borders, great power politics and a top-down approach were at play in Turkey's border settlement processes, albeit by different forms. These dynamics operated through the dominant role played by Britain in the League of Nations and the exclusion of Syrians by France in border negotiations.

The Turkish-Iranian border serves as a useful heuristic example that highlights the contrast between borders settled with mandatory powers and those settled between independent nation-states. As this study shows, territorial reconfiguration between Turkey and Iran took place through a mutual agreement. At variance with Turkey's borders settled with Iraq and Syria, great power politics and a top-down approach did not mark the settlement process of the Turkish-Iranian border. Even though the proposal to resettle the border came from Turkey, and Iran resisted this proposal for some period of time, Turkey was able to persuade Iran to resettle the border. Ataturk's recommendation that Reza Shah become a referee during the border settlement process and Shah's acceptance of this offer are eloquent examples of mutual agreement

between independent states in border settlement. Through border negotiations, the two states reconciled their divergent interests and reached a consensus on a land swap. Against the backdrop of a mutual agreement on the land swap, the absence of a former imperial power and uneven power politics, no party developed a feeling that the territory was unjustly taken away.

While Turkey's borders drawn with mandatory powers led to the questioning of the border status quo by one of the parties, the Turkish-Iranian border drawn after long-lasting negotiations between state authorities has led to the mutual acceptance of the border status quo. The perception about the legitimacy of the border status quo passed on to the subsequent generation of state actors. Neither side questioned the border even after the coups that took place on both sides, the 1979 Iranian revolution, and when bilateral relations deteriorated. The Turkish-Iranian border case substantiates the argument that without the mutual consent between independent states, peaceful settlements of borders do not guarantee the mutual consensus on the border status quo.

Overall, this article has shown that past grievances about or mutual endorsement of boundary-making practices have long-term effects. State actors do not operate in a normative vacuum. Their rhetorical or policy choices are linked to previous practices (Grube 2016). It is in this context that discursive and performative practices that question the border status quo are carried over from one generation of state actors to the next. In other words, border institutions have path-dependent effects with the legacy of past boundary-making practices affecting contemporary border politics. The border status quo is usually hard to change. As this article has revealed, border-related grievances are also resistant to change.

Notes

1. Mandated territories had a distinct legal status as they were neither colonies nor independent states (Getachew 2019). Differing from colonial settlements, in the League of Nations mandate system, they were considered to be in transitionary stages towards full independence under the supervision of mandatory powers.
2. The border status quo refers to the maintenance of the borderline along the parameters outlined in the last border delimitation agreement.
3. This study defines states' alternative border imaginations as state actors' challenges to the border status quo through discursive and performative claims about borders without turning into an actual dispute.
4. Mental maps are meanings, emotions and passions associated to territories irrespective of geographical maps (Migdal 2004).
5. The Treaty of Sevres was signed between the allied powers and the Ottoman Empire in 1920. Yet, this treaty was never ratified.

6. According to the Turkish statistics presented to the British delegation, Turkish people were the second largest group in Mosul followed by the Kurds. The British statistics, on the other hand, showed the Turks as the third largest group followed by the Kurds and the Arabs (The League of Nations).
7. Mosul's oil resources and strategic location were crucial factors that determined Britain's policies over Mosul (Pedersen 2007). However, Beck (1981) and Okur (2020) claim that even if Mosul had had no oil, Britain would still have insisted on keeping Mosul within Iraq's border to ensure Iraq's territorial integrity and would have made no concessions as an imperial policymaker.
8. Even though the Kurds were the largest ethnic group, the complex ethnic composition of the country led the commissioners to rule out the possibility of drawing of the Turkish-Iraqi border based on ethnicity (Rogers 2007).
9. France divided Syria into numerous states with Alexandretta attached to the State of Aleppo. After the unification of the states of Aleppo and Damascus in 1924, Alexandretta became part of the State of Syria (Firat and Kurkcuoglu 2011).
10. While on the one hand the 19th century witnessed the diffusion of the norm of sovereignty to non-European periphery, on the other hand, Western countries violated "the Westphalian sovereignty of non-Western states" through territorial imperialism (claiming jurisdiction over non-Western societies) and extraterritorial imperialism (extraterritorial juristiction) (Kayaoglu 2010, 18).
11. The Kurds, who had a semi-autonomous status during the Ottoman period, struggled with adapting to the centralised system of modern Turkey (Kaymaz 2007). In this respect, the roots of the Ararat Uprising lied in the Kurds' dissatisfaction with Turkey's new state structure. That Turkey had not yet consolidated its power in its periphery during that period provided a permissive environment for the uprising (Kocer 2004).
12. France established and consolidated its position in the French-mandated territory of Syria by favouring Christian minorities, focusing on religious, sectarian and urban/rural differences. The Muslim majority saw the French rule, which was built upon imperial logic of the divide and rule, as illegitimate. Against the backdrop of its weakened economy after World War I and unstable coalition governments, France's rule of Syria was wrecked with inconsistent and ineffective policies. During this period, urban leaders in Syria opposed the French rule by mobilising people around nationalistic ideas with a specific aim to achieve Syrian independence. Seeing Arab nationalism as a threat to its rule in Syria, France directly confronted Arab nationalists by isolating and disarming them (Khoury 1987).

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