



University
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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MEd (Simon Fraser University, 2007)
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**“Identity, Politics, Organization: A Historical Sociology of the
Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan and the Kurdish Nationalist
Movement”**

Department of Sociology

August 24, 2017
10:00 A.M.

Clearihue Building
Room B007

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Peyman Vahabzadeh, Department of Sociology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. William Carroll, Department of Sociology, UVic (Member)
Dr. Andrew Wender, Department of Political Science, UVic (Non-Unit Member)

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Dr. Issa Traore, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, UVic

Abstract

The struggle of the Kurdish nation in Iran entered a new phase of modern nationalist movement since World War II, especially since the establishment of the Society for the Revival of Kurdistan (J.K.) in 1942. The J.K. was then transformed into the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), which later changed its name to the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI) in 1945. This dissertation addresses a major gap in the existing research about the study of Iranian Kurdish nationalism spearheaded by the PDKI. Offering a historical sociology, the dissertation argues that this movement should be understood within the context of the state-building process in Iran and nationalist and national liberation movements in the world. It offers, for the first time and in any language, the most extensively researched and detailed history of the PDKI, its struggles for Kurdish national rights, its programs, organizational structure, political strategies, achievements, internal conflicts, numerous splits and unifications, women's status within it, and its relations with other parties. It critically analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of the PDKI.

The methodological components include: literature review, discourse analysis, content analysis, snowball sampling, in-depth, open-ended interviews with 29 high-ranking activists, archival research, fieldwork conducted in the Iraqi Kurdistan and in Europe, Internet research, and statistical data. Sources used were in English, Persian, Kurdish, and Turkish. While the PDKI has championed a democratic Kurdish nationalist movement, it has heavily undermined the democratic principles within and outside the party and underestimated women's potential within the movement. In order for the PDKI to re-emerge as a party in sync with our times, it needs to undergo a radical reform and democratize its internal and external relations.

Keywords: Kurdish nationalism; Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI); Kurdistan, nationalism, national liberation, state building, Islamic Republic of Iran; democracy; gender relations; socio-historical analysis