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**Mobilising through Emotionally Resonant Collective  
Action Frames: The case of the Foreign Fighters of the YPJ**

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## Abstract

In the past few decades, the field of conflict studies and especially the theoretical approach of collective action frames have experienced an emotional turn. This thesis addresses this turn by operationalising the concept of emotional resonance in collective action frames and applying it to the case of foreign fighters of the YPJ in North-East Syria. The operationalisation entails three aspects: Emotional consistency, emotional centrality and emotional goals that have to be addressed by the frames. In order to apply these concepts to the case, texts and online communication by the YPJ and YPG are analysed for the emotions they evoke, using the NRC Emotion Lexicon created by Mohammad and Turney at the National Research Council Canada to detect emotions in text. The frames are then analysed for their emotional consistency, centrality and goals for foreign fighters, using secondary data collected in the form of interviews, personal statements and accounts of friends and family of the individuals. The results show that while all criteria have to be fulfilled to a certain extent, the emotional goals an SMO addresses can mitigate low or insufficient emotional centrality and render a frame emotionally resonant.

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## List of Abbreviations

AANES	Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria
Daesh	Al-dowla al-islamiiyya fii-il-i'raaq wa-ash-shaam / ISIS
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
KDP-S	Kurdistan Democratic Party-Syria
KNC	Kurdish National Council
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan / Kurdistan Workers Party
PYD	Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat / Democratic Union Party
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SMO	Social Movement Organisation
YPG	Yekineyen Parastina Gel / People's Protection Unit
YPJ	Yekîneyên Parastina Jin / Women's Protection Unit



## I. Introduction

In 2018, the story of an English woman made international headlines. Anna Campbell had been killed in a Turkish airstrike while fighting for the Kurdish militia Yekîneyên Parastina Jin (YPJ). This incident made her the first English woman to have died in Syria as a fighter of the YPJ. The young woman had no previous ties to the group when she joined their struggle in May 2017 (Vardy 2018). Still, she gave her life fighting for their cause. This incident shed light onto a phenomenon, which, at that time, was predominately associated with religious extremism: the recruitment of foreign fighters for conflicts abroad. In 2014, the YPJ and YPG received international attention as they clashed with the jihadist group Daesh or the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the battle over Kobane. With that battle came the military alliance with the United States which changed the international narrative of YPJ-YPG and increased the influx of international volunteers in the groups. From that point on, the commitment of female foreign fighters with the group became more frequent, leading to the establishment of the unit YPJ International in 2014 (ANF 2019a; Dean 2019: 10). But what motivated those women<sup>1</sup> with no previous connection to the conflict to travel to Syria, a country most of them have not been to before, and join the YPJ's fight against Daesh? What drives individuals living a relatively privileged and safe life, to join an armed group in a mostly unknown conflict arena, facing a high potential of getting injured or killed? This research attempts to answer these questions by making use of the concept of emotional resonance of collective action framing. This theory serves the empirical case well as it emphasises the importance of emotions in mobilisation for action rather than rational choice or deprivation of fundamental needs, neither of which being sufficient in explaining the phenomenon of foreign fighters (Malet 2009: 114). In the light of the emotion turn in collective action framing and the increasing recognition of the importance of emotions in collective action, the concept of emotional resonance of collective action frames can offer insights into the workings of frames and their ability to mobilise across borders. The question to guide this research is the following:

How does emotional resonance constitute the intermediate causal process between the collective action frames promoted by the Kurdish-led YPJ militias of northern Syria and the successful online recruitment of foreign fighters between 2015 and 2019?

To give further insights into the research question and its relevance, the next chapters will lay out the empirical case of foreign fighters in the YPJ and give insights into the historical background of

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<sup>1</sup> The following will use the terms women and female to describe all female-read members of the YPJ.

the group. It will then discuss the concept of foreign fighters to outline the significance of their involvement with the YPJ in Syria.

## A. Foreign Fighters of the YPJ

To understand the empirical starting point of this research, this chapter will present the development of the YPJ and the history of the Kurdish minority in Syria as well as elaborate on the concept of foreign fighters. This not only provides context for why certain events are framed in a certain way but also helps to identify greater patterns in the mobilisation processes of the YPJ.

### 1. Kurdish History in Syria

The Kurdish history in Syria has been shaped by oppression. The Kurdish population stretches over the countries of Syria, Turkiye, Iraq, and Iran. In Syria, the Kurdish population poses as the second largest ethnic minority and has been exposed to systematic oppression by the state (Dean 2019: 2). In the 1960s under the Ba'ath regime, Syrian Kurds were prohibited on speaking their language and practising their culture and traditions. In 1962, around 300,000 Kurds had been stripped of their citizenship and civil rights (RIC 2019: 9; van Wilgenburg and Fumerton 2022: 3). However, Kurdish parties and organisations were not engaging in coordinated action for a resistance against the Syrian government. Some reason this restraint with the adverse geography of the Kurdish territory (Knights and van Wilgenburg 2021: 22). The first Kurdish political party Kurdistan Democratic Party-Syria (KDP-S), which was founded in 1957, had ties to the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in Iraq. Many Syrian Kurds therefore joined the Iraqi Kurds in their fight. The focus of the Syrian Kurds changed with the arrival of the Turkey's Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and Abdullah Öcalan, their ideological leader and founding member, in the 1980s and their successful recruitment for the struggle against Turkiye (van Wilgenburg and Fumerton 2022: 3; Dean 2019: 3). The arrival of the PKK changed the dynamics within the Kurdish community, polarising it into supporters of the KDP and supporters of the PKK. In 2003, supporters of Öcalan and the PKK founded the Democratic Union Party (PYD), which later gained an advantage over the KDP-S as it immensely profited from the PKK's experience in leadership and political knowledge. This also allowed the PYD to display strong internal unity, proving to be a great asset in the network of Kurdish parties after the outbreak of the Syrian civil war and the increasing political and military vacuum in North Syria (Thornton 2015: 871; van Wilgenburg and Fumerton 2022: 3-4). In 2004, after a violent crack down of a Kurdish riot caused by turmoil during a football match in Qamilshli, the PYD initially found the need to establish its own defence units. These defence units gained importance in 2011, when the Arab Spring protests turned into an armed rebellion and Syrian Kurds started to organise themselves. With the gradual withdrawal of troops from the North towards Damascus and Aleppo, the regime's control over the Kurdish territories in Syria started to crumble

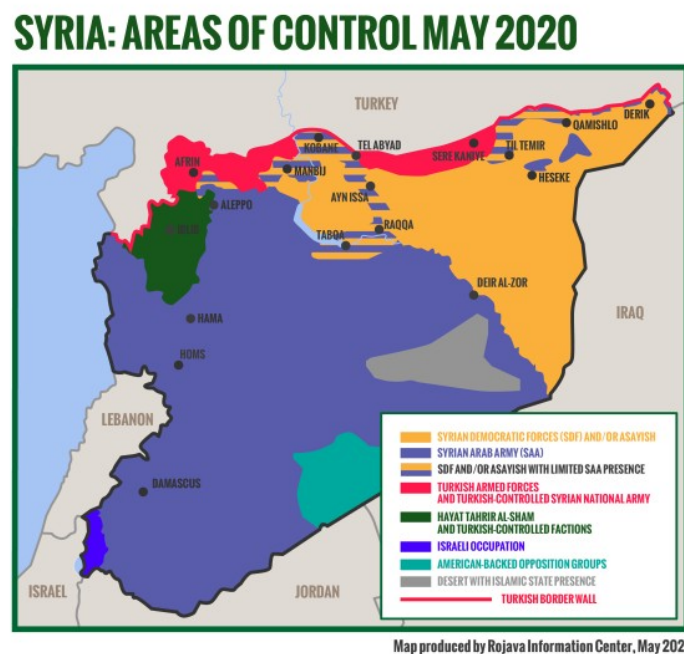
(van Wilgenburg and Fumerton 2022: 5). In 2012, the Yekineyen Parastina Gel (YPG) was officially founded as the armed wing of the PYD. Less than a year later, the YPJ established as an all-female unit (RIC 2019: 9; Knights and van Wilgenburg 2021: 27-28). Both groups now make up the main fighting force of the PYD (Dean 2019: 5).

With growing adversity between the PYD and its Kurdish rival the Kurdish National Council (KNC), both groups tried to come to an agreement in form of the Erbil Agreement in 2012. The agreement failed in 2013. After the failed consolidation attempt and increasing internal fragmentation of the KNC, the PYD was now to seize control over most of the Kurdish territories. The YPG's military advantage it gained through the PKK's training and experience constituted an important factor for driving out the KNC and the few regime forces that still remained in the area (van Wilgenburg and Fumerton 2022: 5-6). The apparent neutrality of the PYD and YPJ-YPG towards the Syrian regime protected the group from attacks by the regime forces as they were focussing on other armed groups (van Wilgenburg and Fumerton 2022: 7). The PYD's ambitions to expand the Kurdish territory and connect the three cantons Kobane, Afrin, and Jazeera however prompted increased attention by the Turkish state which consequently started supporting other armed groups in defiance of the PYD and YPJ-YPG. With this expansion, the group also started forming alliances with other armed groups and tribes in the area, resulting in an increasingly ethnically diverse cooperation.

With the closing in of ISIS towards Kurdish territory in 2014 and the siege of Kobane in September the same year, the YPJ-YPG's military abilities proved the groups to be a valuable partner in the field for the U.S. which had previously failed at establishing a successful military alliance to fight ISIS (van Wilgenburg and Fumerton 2022: 8-10). In October 2015, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) was founded as a military alliance and unified Kurdish and other militias. The SDF's political counterpart, the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC), was founded two months later (Dean 2019: 5). In 2014, the autonomous region of Rojava was declared through a social contract. The region was de facto self-governing and spanned over the cantons of Kobane, Jazzira and Afrin (Dean 2019: 3). Two years later, the Democratic Federation of Rojava – Northern Syria was established which initiated the development of a constitution for the region. Shortly after, the liberation of Manbij from ISIS expanded the area under control of the SDF. With Manbij being an Arab-majority area, the constitution adopted the the name Democratic Federation of North-Eastern Syria to be inclusive for non-Kurdish populations. The name Rojava is however still synonymous for the area. In 2017, Tabqa and Raqqa followed Manbij (RIC 2018: 9-10). In 2018, the Turkish army started an operation to take over Afrin, leading to a withdrawal of the SDF forces from the

area. The same year, the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) was established in the Third Conference of the SDC, formalising the administration over the North and Eastern Syrian territories. The AANES entails the areas of Jazeera, Euphrates (including Kobane), Afrin, Manbij, Tabqa, Raqqa and Deir-e-Zour (AANES n.d.). With the U.S.’ withdrawal from Syria in 2018, the Turkish state started pursuing the plan of creating a safe-zone in North Syria, leading to attacks on areas under AANES administration (RIC 2019: 10). Turkiye’s military offensive continues until today (Fakih 2019). Figure 1 shows the control over the Syrian territories as it was published by the Rojava Information Centre (RIC 2020).

The political system of the area is based on the theory of Democratic Confederalism. It is the brain child of Abdullah Öcalan and heavily influenced by his libertarian and socialist ideology. The ideology revolves around direct or “grassroots” democracy that relies on active participation on a communal level and collective consensus (Dean 2019: 3). Central pillars of the theory, which were inspired by Murray Bookchin, are feminism, ecology, and the deconstruction of the nation state (Öcalan 2017: 21). Part of the YPJ-YPG’s task of defence is the protection of this system. This is achieved through military operations to protect the autonomous region of Rojava as well as ideological and political education (Dean 2019: 11).



*Fig. 1: Syria: Areas of Control May 2020*

## 2. Yekîneyên Parastina Jin

The ideology of the PYD and YPJ-YPG assigns great value to the liberation of women as it is considered an essential step towards the liberation of society as a whole. The existence of the YPJ is consistent with this idea. The YPJ is a militia in Rojava composed only of women and poses as one of the main military forces in Rojava. It operates under the umbrella of the SDF (Knights and van Wilgenburg 2021: 27-28). With their motto “Jin, Jiyan, Azadi!”, which translates to “Woman, Life, Freedom!”, the YPJ has been fighting on the forefront against Daesh in North Syria (Dean 2019: 2-3). But while the international media’s fascination with the all-female fighting force in Syria developed rather recently, Kurdish women had been organising since the 1980s. With the increasing political organisation of Kurdish people through the PKK in the 1980s and growing attention towards feminism, Kurdish women moved into the public sphere. This change also shifted the focus of political concerns of Kurdish women from ethnicity towards women’s rights. The movement recognised the intersectionality of discrimination early on and understood the struggle against patriarchal structures as well as discrimination of Kurdish people to be mutual (Dean 2019: 5-7). From 2010 on, fighters of the YPJ-Star, the PKK’s female unit, started training women in Rojava. With the outbreak of the armed uprising in Syria, the number of women joining these autonomous women’s units rose, which led to the establishment of the YPJ on the 4th of April 2013. The YPJ united all previously scattered units into one. With the YPJ, training centres and academies were put up in every district, proliferating the YPJ’s influence further (Dean 2019: 10-11). By organising and militarising themselves, the fighters of the YPJ are tackling the system which they believe has led to the creation of Daesh: patriarchy and the capitalist system (Dean 2019: 13). Those overarching ideologies rather than ethnic struggles are an effective tool for mobilising foreign fighters (Koch 2021: 674-675).

## 3. Foreign Fighters

The recruitment of foreign fighters poses as an interesting phenomenon in the studies of collective action. However, scholars of the field apply varying definitions when researching the topic. Different terms to describe foreign fighters have been war volunteers, transnational insurgents or “combatants on foreign soil” (UNOSAA 2007, cited in Malet 2009: 109). The following will use the term foreign fighters as it is most frequently used in the literature describing this phenomenon. Broum and Fein offer a discussion of the different definitions in their work *The Psychology of Foreign Fighters*, citing key authors in the field (2017). Cerwyn Moore and Paul Tumelty regard foreign fighters as: “non-indigenous, non-territorialized combatants who, motivated by religion,

kinship, and/or ideology rather than pecuniary reward, enter a conflict zone to participate in hostilities.” (Moore and Tumelty 2008: 412–433, cited in Broum and Fein 2017: 250) Malet defines foreign fighters as “non-citizens of conflict states who join insurgencies during civil conflict” (2013: 9). Hegghammer offers a more differentiated definition that strays from Moore and Tumelty’s by identifying a foreign fighter as “an agent who (1) has joined, and operates within the confines of, an insurgency, (2) lacks citizenship of the conflict state or kinship links to its warring factions, (3) lacks affiliation to an official military organization, and (4) is unpaid.” (Hegghammer 2010: 57–58) His definition distinguishes foreign fighters from mercenaries, as they are usually paid; soldiers, who are under their commander’s order and salaried; and returning diaspora as they have pre-existing ties to the conflict. It also discerns foreign fighters from international terrorists, who usually engage in violence against civilians outside of the conflict arena (Hegghammer 2010: 58). Another crucial difference between Moore and Tumelty, and Hegghammer and Malet’s definitions is the consideration of foreign fighters as combatants. While the former identifies foreign fighters as being actively involved in combat in the conflict zone, Hegghammer and Malet require a fighter to ‘only’ operate within the confines of the insurgency, implying that foreign fighters are joining armed groups in any competence and do not necessarily have to be involved in active combat (Broum and Fein 2017: 250). Malet points out that, although foreign fighters hardly make up the majority of combatants in a conflict, they play a significant role in regards to spill-over effects. He refers to a report on the involvement of foreign fighters in the conflict in Iraq that observed 90 percent of all suicide and high-lethality attacks to be committed by foreign fighters (Quinn and Shrader 2005, cited in Malet 2013: 6). Considering the lethality of their commitment with foreign militias, the question after the motivations of foreign fighters is a curious one. While locals might experience direct deprivation of basic needs or an immediate threat to their physical security, foreign fighters are not directly exposed to these threats before joining the conflict. They are, further, often acting in direct violation of the laws of their home country as well as the norms of military service. Additionally, joining an insurgency as a volunteer in an often unfamiliar conflict arena puts foreign fighters in a position of high risk and little gain (Malet 2013: 4-10).

In an effort to understand the drivers that mobilise foreign fighters, several authors are differentiating between push and pull factors. Henry Tuck, Tanya Silverman and Candace Smalley found push factors to be the frustration with the foreign policies of the home country, a lack of purpose and the desire to belong (Tuck et al 2016: 21-24). Broum and Fein add grievances to this list (Broum and Fein 2017: 250). Pull factors could be the defence of a group based on identity or the altruistic desire to defend a minority or fight an aggressor (Broum and Fein 2017: 250-251).

Further, many veterans of the combat arena have been observed to join as volunteers in order to “finish the job” (Tuck et al 2016: 27), while others may join due to an urge to fight. In the early days of foreign fighters joining the YPG, the motivator of bloodlust was also observed (Tuck et al 2016: 24-30). All of these motives have a highly emotional background. Whether it is love or aggression, foreign fighters seem to be driven by emotions. But how are these emotions evoked in order to mobilise bystanders across borders? In 1964, James Rosenau noticed that conflicts are more likely to attract foreign support if they were framed to be part of a broader struggle over universal values such as ideology rather than ethnicity (Rosenau 1964, cited in Broum and Fein 2017: 251). When looking at the historical case of the Spanish International Brigades during the civil war, most foreign fighters did not solely join to defend the Spanish Republic but rather to fight fascism as a whole (Richardson 2014: 1-2). A local conflict is hence framed as an imminent threat to the foreigner, which can create strong emotions. The theory of emotional resonance of collective action framing can therefore help understand how the process of mobilising foreign fighters takes place.



## B. Relevance

### 1. Theoretical

As the psychologist and scholar of emotions and violence Robert Plutchik pointed out, “emotions are an essential part of who we are and how we survive.” (Plutchik 2001: 344) Still, the study of emotions in collective action has long been neglected in favour of rational choice (Jasper and Owens 2014: 529). Benford and Snow’s theory of collective action frames enjoys great popularity today as it helps understanding how grievances and perceived injustice can be used for recruitment, group making and group breaking. Larissa D. Meier expands upon the concept of collective action frames by pointing out the strategic use of emotions and emotionality in collective action. Meier argues, that social movement organisations (SMOs) can strategically elicit and shape emotions in order to recruit, maintain or break up collective action movements. This emotion work makes use of emotional resonance of frames in order to translate between a frame and an individual. The concept poses as a bridge that can help us understand how frames work. However, as Jasper and Owens point out, the role of emotions in academia grew only in the 1990s, due to increasing research on women’s and LGBTQ+ movements (Jasper and Owens 2014: 529-530). While research on collective action framing has slowly shifted its attention to the role of emotions in the past three decades, emotions in collective action research still presents to be under-researched and most theoretical concepts are under-developed or lack operationalisation. This also applies to emotional resonance. While there have been studies researching the workings of emotional resonance, most of them do not provide an applicable concept. This research aims to reduce this gap by further developing the concept of emotional resonance in collective action framing

### 2. Empirical

The phenomenon of foreign fighters joining the YPJ poses as a fitting case for exploring emotional resonance as most arguments for rational choice do not apply. By definition, foreign fighters have neither previous ties to the conflict like citizen- or kinship, nor any material incentives that would justify their commitment. This makes them the ideal case to understand the importance of emotions in collective action framing. Further, the case within which the foreign fighters are observed, poses an interesting one. The YPJ’s ideologies align with the PKK’s vision of Democratic Confederalism and they are considered as one of the many representatives of the Kurdish liberation movement. Their secular character has led to an international fascination with the group and facilitated international support (Dean 2019: 2-7). Despite a smaller number of foreign fighters joining the YPJ

compared to groups like Deash, the women deciding to go to Syria stand out in between foreign fighters joining Daesh as they are not motivated by religious extremism but often cite feminism, anti-capitalism and democratic values as their motivation which serve as powerful collective action frames (Orton 2017: 106).

### 3. Methodological

While framing and emotions are internal processes, their result manifests in communication and behaviour. This communication has, in the recent years, relocated into online spheres. The proliferation and increasing importance of social media and the internet in general results into an increased significance of the internet for social research. In consideration of the inaccessibility of the field, the collection of secondary data in the form of online communication was therefore deemed an appropriate approach to the research. In addition, the recruitment of foreign fighters predominately takes place in the online realm, rendering the analysis of online communication as significant (Malet 2013: 3).

### 4. Chapter Outline

This research is structured into five parts. The first part includes an outline of the analytical framework, comprised of the theory of collective action frames and the further development of the concept of emotional resonance. This theorisation will be operationalised in the following part, which discusses the methodology of the research. The fourth part will present the analysis of the collected data and will discuss the emotional resonance of the collected frames in accordance to the previously developed concept. For this, the frames are clustered into their respective core framing task and sorted by the themes they address. Each frame is then compared to the narratives of the individual foreign fighters and analysed for its emotional resonance. This analysis will answer the research question which is presented in the fifth part of this research and concludes this thesis.

## II. Analytical Framework

### A. Resonance of Collective Action Frames

The theory of emotional resonance in collective action framing is based in a constructivist epistemology. This implies that emotions do not just exist but that they are actively evoked through the framing employed by the SMO. This construction of emotional responses happens within an interactive environment and indicates the discursive nature of the theoretical lens. The ontological approach of this research is hence discursive as framing constitutes itself within an interactive process between the social movement and internal and external stakeholders (Benford and Snow 2000: 614).

A review of the theory of collective action framing and the resonance of frames will build the basis for operationalising the concept of emotional resonance for this research.

Social movements are, according to Benford and Snow, taking a leading role in naming grievances and connecting them to other grievances to construct a broader frame that resonates with a group's cultural context (Benford and Snow 1992, cited in Demmers 2017: 100). The concept of collective action frames stems from Goffman's concept of framing from 1974, which was adopted for social movements by Benford and Snow in 1992. The authors define frames as interpretive schemata that organise and simplify experiences and render them meaningful (Goffman 1974, cited in Benford and Snow 1992: 137). Sidney Tarrow sharpened this concept into collective action frames which identify social injustice in an effort of mobilising bystanders into action. Collective action frames intend to make "appeals to perception of justice and emotionality in the minds of individuals." (Tarrow 1998: 111, cited in Demmers 2017: 100) To specify framing processes, Benford and Snow identified three core framing tasks: Diagnostic framing, prognostic framing and motivational framing. Diagnostic framing, or 'injustice frames' as referred to by Gamson et al (1982, cited in Benford and Snow 2000: 615), identifies a problem or cause of grievance and attributes blame to specific agents. Benford and Snow also mentioned the concepts of 'boundary framing' (Hunt 1994, Silver 1997, cited in Benford and Snow 2000: 616) and 'adversarial framing' (Gamson 1995, cited in Benford and Snow 2000: 616), the construction of antagonists and protagonists, in relation of attributional processes within diagnostic framing. Prognostic framing proposes a solution to the problem. Benford and Snow hint to a potential constraint caused by diagnostic framing that can limit potential solutions in prognostic framing. Prognostic frames also often include 'counterframing' (Benford 1987: 75), the defamation of the opponent's prognostic frames.

Motivational framing describes a call for action and includes the development of an ‘agency’ of collective action frames (Gamson 1995, cited in Benford and Snow 2000: 617). This framing task seeks to improve the problem through collective action and therefore construct ‘vocabularies of motive’, like ‘urgency’ or ‘severity’ (Benford and Snow 2000: 617). Diagnostic and prognostic framing are building consensus on the issues the SMO seeks to address. When focussing on the strategic use of emotions in framing, this translates to directing which emotions are appropriate in certain situations. Diagnostic and prognostic frames are essential for constructing an emotion culture (Meier 2019: 1151 - 1152). However, this is not enough to mobilise individuals for collective action. Motivational framing hence holds particular importance as it creates incentives for the individual to join a group, especially in respect to the emotional resonance of frames (Schrock et al 2004: 63). With the use of collective action frames, SMOs can elicit specific emotions that reinforce the cognitive message conveyed by the frame. For those frames to be successful, they have to resonate with the potential recruit. Frame resonance depends on the credibility and salience of a frame. The credibility of a frame can be broken down into frame consistency, empirical credibility and the credibility of the claimmaker (Benford and Snow 2000: 619). The salience of a frame consists of three different parts: Centrality, experiential commensurability and cultural resonance. The centrality of a frame describes how important the essential beliefs and values that the SMO communicates through its framing are to the potential recruit. The experiential commensurability describes how congruent the SMO’s frames are with the individual’s personal life. Lastly, the cultural resonance of a frame signifies how relevant the frame is to an individual’s cultural context and values (Benford and Snow 2000: 621-622). As authors like Schrock, Holden and Reid, Robnett, and Jasper and Owens point out, this theory is neglecting the role emotional resonance, which should be located within the resonance of a frame. For a frame to be emotionally resonant, it also has to be cognitively resonant. Hence, Benford and Snow’s model on frame resonance, meaning credibility and salience, will build the frame within which emotional resonance is located.

## B. Emotional Resonance

For understanding emotional resonance, the following will discuss what an emotion is and what effect it can have on collective action. This elaboration will help constructing the framework of emotional resonance.

Hockenbury and Hockenbury define an emotion as “a complex psychological state that involves three distinct components: a subjective experience, a physiological response, and a [behavioural] or expressive response.” (Hockenbury and Hockenbury 2012: 346) Psychology categorises two kinds of emotions: basic and complex emotions. While basic or discrete emotions “are distinguishable on the basis of neural, physiological, [behavioural] and expressive features regardless of culture” (Colometti 2009, cited in Seyeditabari et al 2018: 2), complex emotions are not easily put into one category as they are often a result of the combination of two basic emotions (Seyeditabari et al 2018: 2). The difficulty with analysing emotions arises not only in determining which emotions are basic. The expression of emotions is very complex and influenced by situational circumstances and personal tendencies (Seyeditabari et al 2018: 2). The expression of an emotion can be altered to fit societal standards of appropriateness of the surroundings (Plutchik 2001:344) Because of the possibility for these alterations, expressed or communicated emotions are often distrusted by others. In addition, subjective reports of emotions are not always reliable due to ambiguous emotion language (Plutchik 1980: 5; Plutchik 2001: 344). Further, emotions often do not present themselves in their pure state. Robnett also refers to “emotion packages” when discussing emotional resonance since framing is often evoking different emotions at the same time. The study of emotions is, hence, a complex endeavour. To address the complexity of emotions, James Jasper developed a typology that distinguishes between urges, reflex or reflexive emotions and moods (Traini 2009: 194, cited in Jasper 2011: 3-4). Urges are described as strong impulses such as the need to sleep and, if not controlled, they may obstruct coordinated action. Reflexive emotions are immediate reactions to the environment such as fear or joy, which are often accompanied with a physical reaction that die down quickly. They are often equated with all emotions. Lastly, moods are long-lasting experiences that are not bond to an object but are influenced by and are influencing reflex emotions. This research will focus on reflex emotions as urges are often intrinsic and moods usually are not dependent on a specific object. While both can be controlled by SMOs, neither can be constructed by them and rely on the evoking of reflexive emotions. Jasper further argues that emotions corresponds with different goals an individual tries to achieve. Michelle Wolkomir refers to these goals as emotional needs and promises and suggests that emotional resonance can be constructed by

answering the emotional needs of an individual with emotional promises that an SMO can make through their framing (Wolkomir 2001, cited in Schrock et al 2014: 63). This can ultimately mobilise the individual to join the group in order to fulfil their emotional need. These goals or needs are categorised into reputation, connection and sensuality, impact, and curiosity (Jasper 2011: 6). Reputation is described as one of the most commonly used emotion goals. It includes honour and pride as well as the recognition of one's justice, dignity and humanity towards others. Especially pride and shame are powerful for mobilisation (Jasper 2011: 6-7). Many SMOs try turning this shame into pride in order to mobilise bystanders (Scheff 1990, cited in Stein 2001: 118; Kovesces 1990, cited in Britt and Heise 2000: 254). Pride is often connected to revenge, as the group seeks to humble the enemy's pride and avenge previous humiliation or injustice (Brym 2007, cited in Jasper 2011: 7). The goal of connection motivates individuals to stay in the group. It involves love, pride and excitement and addresses the need to belong. It encourages affective ties and a collective identity that triggers loyalty (Jasper 2011: 7). While Jasper conceptualises Sensuality as another human goal, this research disregards it as the YPJ is a military unit and condones rather than to encourage the notion of romantic relationships within the troops (Momi 2021). The desire to have an impact or purpose is often accompanied by an ideology that seeks change. Emotions like anger, fear and threat urge for action and, when combined with the positive emotion of hope, help to energise collective action (Jasper 2011: 7). Curiosity is not further elaborated by Jasper as it is less applicable for political but rather artistic movements. However, when reviewing testimonies of foreign fighters, many quote an interest in the area or conflict as well as the hunt for adventure to be a reason for mobilisation, indicating the relevance of curiosity (Malet 2009: 114).

Emotions mobilise for actions in order to answer these goals as they are the underlying motivation for individuals. An SMO therefore seeks to evoke specific emotions to mobilise for action through collective action frames. For a frame to trigger an emotional response, it has to be emotionally resonant with an individual. Schrock et al define emotional resonance as the degree of “‘emotional harmony and/or disjuncture’ between ideology, practices, or ‘collective action frames and the emotional lives of potential recruits’.” (Schrock et al 2004: 61, cited in Robnett 2004: 195) Breaking down this definition, harmony can be defined as “forming a pleasing and consistent whole” or a “state of agreement” (Lexico, n.d.). Applied to the definition of Schrock et al, emotions of the individual and collective action frames have to form a consistent whole. Consistency in this definition can be defined as “compatibility, especially correspondence or uniformity among the parts of a complex thing” (Dictionary.com). Further, Conrad Lashley defines emotional harmony as

“to exist in situations where the individual actually feels the emotion required of the display rules and social expectations.” (Lashley 2002: 256) While this definition describes the absence of emotional labour and primarily applies to the work environment, it can serve as a stepping stone for breaking down emotional harmony. Lashley’s definition essentially describes a consistency of the emotions that are felt versus the emotions that are appropriate to be expressed in a certain situation. Emotional consistency is therefore a key to emotional resonance. If the emotions linked to values and ideologies by the SMO are the same as the individual’s emotions for said ideologies and values, the frame is potentially emotionally resonant. In other words, the frame has to be congruent with the individual’s identity and the values they attach to it. However, emotional consistency is not enough to mobilise and deem a frame as emotionally resonant. To give an example, the YPJ-YPG’s framing of Daesh as misogynist is often connected to anger. While a lot of people in the West might feel anger when encountering this frame, only a very small number of people is actually mobilised by the frame. If, however, the issue of misogyny is of essential value to an individual, the frame would be significantly more effective.

Benford and Snow refer to salience when modelling frame resonance. The salience of a frame is dependent on its centrality, experiential commensurability and narrative fidelity (Benford and Snow 2000: 621). The salience, or centrality of a frame is therefore dependent on its importance or essentiality to the individual, how well the individual can relate to it and how well the frame fits into their cultural background. For a frame to be emotionally salient, it has to be emotionally consistent as well as central. According to Petersen, emotions can change the salience of values and desires (Petersen 2002, cited in Pearlman 2013: 391). For a frame to become more salient, the SMO can employ priming. Schrock et al further refer to emotional priming when discussing the concept of emotional resonance (Schrock et al 2004:63). Chartrand and Jefferis defined priming in psychology as follows:

“An individual’s experiences in the environment temporarily activate concepts that are mentally represented. The activation of these concepts, which can include traits, schemata, attitudes, stereotypes, goals, moods, emotions, and [behaviours], heightens their accessibility. These concepts are said to be primed; that is, they become more likely to influence one’s subsequent thoughts, feelings, judgments, and [behaviours]. Priming also refers to an experimental technique that is used to simulate the activation of concepts that usually occurs through real-world experiences.” (Chartrand and Jefferis 2004: 854)

To summarise, emotional priming can direct an individual's attention towards a certain concept, hence increasing its experienced centrality. This indicates another important factor to influence emotional resonance: emotional centrality. How central are the emotionally consistent values and ideas to the individual? What emotional role do they play in their life? This centrality can be influenced by emotional priming through a facilitative context or consensus building of collective action frames of an SMO (Schrock et al 2004: 63; Chartrand and Jefferis 2004: 854). Schrock et al refer to research of Gary Alan Fine and Lori Holyfield, Anne Kane, Francesca Polletta, and Michael Young when arguing that SMOs use this emotional priming to prepare individuals for collective action. The better the emotional priming, the more emotionally resonant the collective action frame. Being emotionally primed in a facilitative context is often not enough to result into mobilisation as it is only reflected in the consensus building of a frame which can lead to the support of the cause but not active engagement. An SMO still needs motivational frames and calls for action that refer to the emotionally consistent and central frame in order to effectively mobilise (Schrock et al 2004: 63). This leaves us with several indicators that can help understand how emotional resonance is translating frames into collective action:

1. Emotional consistency: Are the emotions connected to values and ideologies of the SMO consistent with the individual's emotions? Are they perceived as appropriate?
2. Emotional centrality: How important are the emotions, that the SMO connects to certain events and values, to the individual's rating of those emotions?
3. Emotional goal: What emotional need or goal does the frame answer to?

These three factors will constitute the concept of emotional resonance for this study. The following chapter will lay out the research strategy and operationalisation of all three aspects.



### III. Methodology

#### A. Research Design

This research is trying to understand the translation of collective action frames into the mobilisation of an individual, using emotional resonance as an intermediate factor. As the goal of the research is to advance the theoretical understanding of emotional resonance, the research design relies on qualitative methods. For this, the method of critical discourse analysis is employed, specifically a sentiment analysis. For this sentiment analysis, the semantic properties of spoken or written language in the social context of the YPJ-YPG's recruitment of foreign fighters are analysed. Interpretations of the vocabulary, structure and narrative are made in relation to the contextual knowledge of the case.

##### 1. Empirical Data

The empirical data of this thesis is comprised of two datasets. The first dataset analyses the collective action frames used by the YPJ-YPG by reviewing press releases, interviews, articles, and videos published on websites and social media accounts associated with the militias. Since the focus of this research is on foreign fighters, only websites and social media accounts with English translations were reviewed. The second dataset is comprised of women that have joined the YPJ between 2015 and 2019. While most of the statements and interviews by the individuals are dated in this time frame, several interviews are given later on but still only refer to the time before 2019. The decision to only conduct secondary research stems not only from the inaccessibility of the field but also the amount of secondary data that was already existing. The research is split up into two different aspects: the analysis of the collective action frames of the YPJ-YPG and the analysis of the personal narratives of the foreign fighters. Both of those are connected through the concept of emotional resonance.

The first data set contains communications of the YPJ-YPG which have been published via the YPJ's official website [YPJRojava.net](http://YPJRojava.net), the YPG's official website [YPGRojava.org](http://YPGRojava.org) and the YPG International's Twitter account [@YPGInt](https://twitter.com/YPGInt). The YPJ's official website provides press releases and statements from the YPJ General Command as well as news from the YPJ Center for the Public opinion, and articles from the YPJ Media Center and individuals. The website also gives information on the fallen martyrs and shares pictures and videos as well as memories. Unfortunately, not all contents of the website are available in English and a general discrepancy is

observable when browsing through the website in different languages. The small number of content on the website can be explained with the existence of a previous official website, which had been taken down. The YPJ Rojava website yielded a total of 22 press releases, 5 articles, and 6 news reports, dating back to March 2019. The Website [ypgrojava.org](http://ypgrojava.org) is the official website of the YPG and is used to share details on the military operations, martyrs, publications from other sources, photos, and videos. It provided the most data in this research as it is older and more comprehensive than the YPJ's website. On the Website of YPG Rojava, 346 press releases and news reports dating back to September 2016 were collected. As the website contains a lot of data, only original publications were taken into consideration in order to fit the scope of this research. To include data specifically directed at the international volunteers of YPJ-YPG, the Twitter account YPG International was included. Since most of the social media accounts are constantly taken down, this account was deemed to be the oldest and yielded most data, providing over 60 posts dating back to April 2019.

The second dataset is comprised of testimonies and personal accounts of foreign fighters of the YPJ and alternatively statements from their family and friends. The individuals were identified through a snowball system or research on YPJ accounts and posts, as the groups pay great attention to the commemoration of their fallen fighters, especially when foreign. Part of identifying the individuals was to confirm their existence through more than one source. News papers like ANF News publish plenty of interviews with internationalists in Rojava, however, their names and identities can rarely be confirmed and it is not unlikely, that some of the interviewees are not who they claim to be. After confirming the identity of the fighter, a total of five fighters were identified. Hanna Böhman, a Canadian who joined the group in 2015 and returned to Canada one year later ( O'Malley 2017). Elefterya Hambi, a woman from Germany who is only known by her combat name came to Rojava around 2018. It is unknown whether she is still in Syria, has returned home, or has died (ANF 2018). For the analysis, interviews given to news papers and in podcasts, letters published in newspapers and social media posts were examined. Maria Edgarda Marcucci from Italy who joined the YPJ in 2017, returned to Italy in 2018 and had been under house arrest for two years on the grounds of being a "danger to society" (Lancellotti 2022). Kimberly Taylor, a woman from England, who joined the YPJ in 2015 and is believed to be still in Rojava ( Blake 2017). Lastly, Anna Campbell, an English woman who had joined in 2015 and was killed in March 2018 during an air strike by the Turkish army in Afrin (Blake 2018).

## 2. Operationalisation

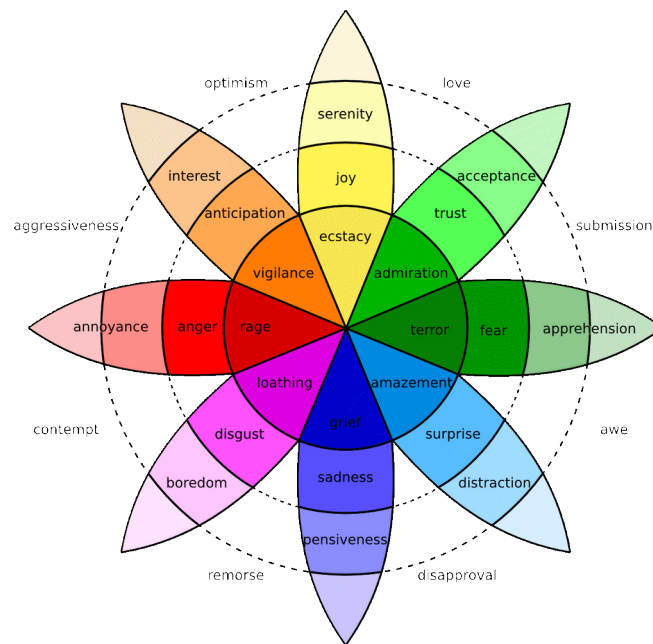
Operationalising emotional resonance draws on the earlier developed three sensitising concepts of emotional resonance: Emotional consistency, emotional centrality and emotional goals or needs. However, before being able to analyse the contents of the YPJ's framing and the individuals' narratives, the concept of emotion itself has to be operationalised. Emotional experiences are highly subjective and are heavily influenced by an individual's socialisation (Robnett 2004: 198). Therefore, an appropriate framework to identify the specific emotions within the collected data, has to be developed.

### a. Emotions in Collective Action

In order to annotate the emotions evoked or associated with text, this research will make use of Saif M. Mohammad and Peter D. Turney's Emotion Lexicon, developed at the National Research Council Canada (Mohammad and Turney 2011). In their development of the lexicon, the authors gave a set of words to participants of a study who then had to annotate the emotions that the words triggered for them. As Mohammad and Turney point out, words can be ambiguous and evoke different emotions in a different context. While the authors found a way to mitigate this problem by specifying the required outcome through increased interaction with the participants, this approach is not possible due to the scope of this thesis (Mohammad and Turney 2010: 28). Therefore, the context which the words are put in has to be considered as well. For annotating the emotions used in the framing of the YPJ-YPG, the text is analysed for their semantic orientation, so their positive or negative polarity, and then linked to the emotion that comes closest to the word. The NRC Emotion Lexicon will serve as a guidance for this annotation.

For their research, Mohammad and Turney used basic emotions. Basic emotions are defined to have "distinctive universal nonverbal expression, distinctive neural and physiological components, distinctive subjective experience, and distinctive regulatory and motivational properties." (Kowalska and Wróbel 2017: 2) While the concept enjoys high popularity in psychology, researchers in the field have not been able to agree on one single model. One of the most used models of basic emotions is Ekman's six basic emotions including sadness, fear, disgust, anger, happiness, and surprise (Ekman 1992). Another classification is Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions, a three-dimensional circumplex model, describing the intensity, direction, similarity, and polarity of emotions (Plutchik 2001: 349). The model includes eight basic emotions and several gradations, which he called secondary, or mixed, emotions. Plutchik's basic emotions are rage, vigilance, ecstasy, admiration, terror, amazement, grief, and loathing (*Figure 2*). To determine these

fundamental emotions Plutchik used the framework of evolution, identifying basic behaviour patterns from which basic emotions can be inferred. This method indicates that emotions fulfil functions and trigger behaviours that are essential for survival. Derived from basic adaptive behaviour patterns, Plutchik determines the primary emotions that build the basis for his model. Plutchik's model is also the one Mohammad and Turney used in their development of the NRC Emotion Lexicon. It will therefore also be used in this research.



*Fig. 2: Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions 1980*

Previously discussed research in the field of collective action often considers different sets of basic emotions compared to studies in the field of psychology. This is often due to the activation properties of the respective emotions and their relevance for SMOs. While the models are not including the same basic emotions, they are worth exploring as they give insight into the strategic value of emotions. Wendy Pearlman's model of emotions in collective action includes fear, sadness, shame, anger, joy and pride. She classifies those emotions into resignation and resistance provoking emotions. In her model, Pearlman addresses how, depending on how the individual experiences risk, blame and certainty when feeling specific emotions, an emotional experience can trigger mobilisation or countermobilisation. According to this model, the emotions of fear, sadness and shame trigger resignation as they hold avoidance properties. Anger, joy and pride on the other hand motivate resistance and action (Pearlman 2013: 392). Larissa D. Meier developed this model further and argues that while interpretive frames, so diagnostic and prognostic, elicit resentment through

injustice framing and polarisation, motivational framing needs to evoke anger as the emotion recognises the wrongdoing of someone else and heightens the urge for punishment and hence active engagement. It also lowers the estimation of risk. Similarly, shame can be used as it shifts the focus on dishonour and frames inaction as shameful and complicit to the wrongdoing, contradicting Pearlman's classification of shame. Revenge or resistance become more essential to the individual's personal beliefs. Both of these emotions activate personalisation which turns grievances of others to personal grievances and directly experienced injustice. Shame and anger is also evoked when violating moral values and norms. Besides the negative emotions of anger and shame, pride and hope can be useful when reinforcing action provoked. While pride increases confidence in the cause and oneself, hope anticipates a better future and the success of the SMO (Meier 2019: 1152-1153). These findings offer insights into the strategic value of emotions. According to Pearlman and Meier, an SMO should try to evoke anger, shame and pride in order to mobilise bystanders for action. For a frame to be emotionally resonant and effective in mobilising bystanders, it has to evoke resentment, and shame and anger, and reinforce the action tendency this creates with pride and hope. The implications for this research are hence that, in order to mobilise successfully, the YPJ-YPG's framing needs to focus specifically on the emotions of anger, shame, pride and hope.

#### b. Emotional Consistency

To research the emotional consistency of the frames used by the YPJ-YPG, the collected data is firstly organised into the framing tasks. This helps clustering the used frames and may later give interesting insights into what kind of emotions are used in order to achieve certain framing tasks. Next, the frames are sorted into the themes, values or ideas they address. After this step, the specific wording is analysed for the emotions it uses, using Mohammad and Turney's NRC Emotion Lexicon and the context within which the words are set. The annotated emotions are then linked to the theme and framing task. The result of this process is a detailed understanding of what emotions are used for which framing task and theme. After analysing the first dataset, the statements and interviews of the fighters are analysed. For this, the focus stays mainly on the motives for joining the YPJ and the ideology and values the individuals hold. Those motives, ideologies and values are then analysed for emotions that are connected to them. Lastly, both datasets are compared: Are the emotions used by the YPJ for a specific theme the same as the individual's? If so, it can be assumed that this makes up the emotional consistency of the frame.

c. Emotional Centrality

For emotional centrality, the consensus building, hence diagnostic and prognostic frames of the YPJ are being analysed to understand how the group uses emotional priming to increase the emotional centrality of a frame. For this, the background of the individuals is reviewed: Were they active in similar political activism that indicates their commitment to a certain cause or ideology? Further, the change of emotional centrality is observed: How did the individual's narrative change since joining the YPJ? Both of these aspects result into an understanding of the emotional centrality of the YPJ-YPG's framing.

d. Emotional Goals and Needs

As emotional goals are the underlying motivator for action, an emotionally resonant frame has to respond to them. As a last step in analysing the emotional resonance, the frames used by the YPJ-YPG are analysed in correspondence to these goals. The completion of these three steps will constitute the emotional resonance of the YPJ-YPG's framing.

## B. Limitations of the Research

### 1. Accessibility to the Field

This research is heavily limited by the accessibility of the field as the area of North Syria is currently not reachable due to safety concerns. Further, the women that are joining the YPJ are often acting in direct violation of the respective laws of their home country and face aggressions by groups like ISIS. This leads to increased secrecy over their identities. Most foreign fighters that are known to the public have died during their commitment with the YPJ, only a few have been able to return to their home countries. This secrecy also leads to difficulties in confirming the identities of the foreign women that are or have been in Rojava. While there is plenty of footage of foreign fighters, most individuals are not disclosing their real name. This limits the sample size but it does not make it impossible to collect valuable data. Rather than conducting interviews, the research is constructed around a discourse analysis of existing interviews, reports and social media accounts of the individuals and the YPJ themselves. While this might limit the research in some ways, it also offers an opportunity. As Plutchik said, the expression of emotions can be altered in order to fit the surrounding (Plutchik 2001: 344). This masking could be reinforced when confronted specifically with the topic of emotions in collective action due to the stereotypical and often negative association of emotions expressed by women (Radke et al 2016: 868; Norton 2018). Therefore, the unfiltered testimonies of the fighters can lead to detecting emotions that, under different circumstances, would have been hidden. Another limitation of the research is the access to reliable data. While it is relatively easy to find content on Rojava by the YPJ-YPG online, it is simultaneously difficult to confirm the source of the content. It is also a challenge to collect content that is older than 2019, as pages and accounts are being taken down regularly. Many pages that are cited by the foreign fighters as their first contact to the group are unavailable now (for example Lions of Rojava on Facebook). This limits the collection of data slightly but does not render the research unfeasible. However, due to the unavailability of certain websites and accounts, the data collected from foreign fighters is often older than the frames collected from the YPJ-YPG.

### 2. Data Reliability

A difficulty that emerges from only using secondary data is the inability to directly confirm or deny specificities of the research. This can render the data less accurate. Additionally, foreign fighters are often used for propaganda purposes in order to garner the support of the international community.

This can lead to inauthentic statements. While there is a chance that these issues could have been mitigated through generating primary data, it is not guaranteed.

### 3. Biases

A personal predisposition in favour of feminist and humanist values can lead to turning a blind eye on controversies that emerge from the YPJ-YPG's framing as well as the individual's narrative. By paying careful attention to this, I am hoping to have avoided any faults coming from this bias. Since the data was collected in a non-random way, it is exposed to a selection bias. This selection bias is reinforced by the limited number of samples available for the research. As this cannot be avoided under the set-up of this research, the results of this research are case-specific. The method used to annotate emotions in text has been developed with a group of people holding personal biases. One example for this is the word *capitalist* in the NRC Emotion Lexicon. While this word would, most likely, evoke a negative polarisation for members of the YPJ, the data of the NRC Emotion Lexicon classifies it as positive (Mohammad and Turney 2011). These socio-cultural biases have to be taken into careful consideration when annotating emotions in text.

### 4. Ethics

This research is case specific and does not serve as a generalisation. It should be taken into account that due to the nature of the data, the interpretations may be inaccurate and lead to false deductions. None of the individuals have been available for direct contact therefore the information about them was collected without their direct consent. The secondary data that this research uses had been published publicly, implying the consent of the individuals. However, the sourcing of social media posts for research still poses a question on ethics and consent. To avoid too grave of an invasion into individual's privacy, this research only uses posts that are connected to the topic and ignored personal and private statements.



## IV. Emotional Resonance of the YPJ's Collective Action Frames

### A. Foreign Fighters of the YPJ

Hanna Böhman, who took of the nom de guerre Tiger Sun, is a Canadian citizen who went to Rojava the first time in 2015. After three tours, she came back to Canada and is now advocating for the rights of refugees in the country (O'Malley 2017). When seeing a video of a Canadian member of Daesh and learning about the fight the YPJ-YPG were fighting in Syria, Böhman decided to join the group. Unlike the other women in this research, she does not stem from a background of activism. She mentions events in her personal life, an accident and a midlife crisis, to be another reason for her to take the step of going to Syria (Moulton 2015).

Anna Campbell was an English woman from Sussex who went to Rojava in May 2017 and took on the battle name Hêlîn Qerecox. She was killed less than a year later in Afrin on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2018 by a Turkish airstrike when fighting with the YPJ. Before going to Rojava, Campbell was involved in activism in England, following the footsteps of her mother who had been a well-known member in the activism scene in South England (Blake 2018). She had learned about the Kurdish fight for independence on an anarchist book fair and was deeply inspired by their goal to establish a free and feminist society. At that time she had dropped out of university and was heavily involved in anti-fascist and hunt saboteur activism (Ramaswamy 2019). Her main concerns were anti-fascism, animal rights, feminism, equality the fight against oppression, and the strive for a better world. Campbell identified as an internationalist, rejecting the notion of nation states and the conflict in Syria only being of concern for Syrian or Kurdish people (Punx 2018).

Kimberly Taylor or Zilan Dilmar is an English woman who travelled to Syria the first time in 2015 to report in Sinjar. There, she got inspired by the women's liberation movement. She spend eleven months studying Kurdish and receiving ideological and military training in a YPJ facility. Before going to Syria, Taylor was travelling in Europe, Africa, and South America, was involved in activism and worked as a writer for left-wing papers (Blake 2017).

Not much is known about Elefterya Hambi but different sources confirmed her existence. Her nom de guerre consists of the Greek word for freedom and the name of a German forest, a place where she had previously participated in an anarchist movement trying to prevent the wood clearing. It is unclear when Hambi went to Rojava but a video of the YPG Press Office dated from the 24<sup>th</sup> of December 2018 shows the woman at the front lines in Deir al-Zour, fighting Daesh (YPG Press Office 2018e). Her current location is unknown as is her status. She, however, does not appear in

the YPJ's *Sehid* database so it can be assumed that she is still alive. Hambi identifies as an anarchist and had been active in feminist and anti-fascist movements. In an interview Hambi said to have been inspired by the revolution and especially the women's self-organisation and their fight against the patriarchy (Hambi, cited in B9AcE 2021).

Maria Edgara Marcucci, also called "Eddi", is an Italian anti-fascist and one of the few foreign fighters that are known to have come back to their home country. She joined the YPJ in 2017 and returned to Italy in 2018. Before going to Rojava, Marcucci had studied philosophy and had been active in social movements, specifically feminist and anti-fascist activism (Berlin 2021). In 2020 she was persecuted for "socially dangerous" behaviour and put under surveillance for two years (Lancellotti 2022).

## B. Emotional Resonance of the YPJ's Collective Action Framing

After organising the data into diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames, several themes were found. The following will lay out the discovered themes, cluster them under the respective framing task and describe the emotions that are used.

### a. Diagnostic

The diagnostic framing of the YPJ-YPG is centred around exposing and denouncing enemies and aggressors of the Rojava region and its values. The discovered core themes are feminism and equality, antagonising Turkiye and Daesh, oppression and fascism, capitalism, general defaming and ridiculing of the enemy, legitimisation and self-defence, and international responsibility. Most of these themes interconnect. The issue of misogyny, the attacks of Turkiye and Daesh and the oppression of a fascist, the capitalist system or imperialism and colonialism, and are often mentioned in the same context. The text of the diagnostic frames holds predominately negative polarisation, evoking anger, fear, and sadness. Interpretations from the context allow argumentations for the use of shame.

#### (1) Misogyny and Patriarchy

In the diagnostic framing, one prominent and recurring theme is misogyny and the patriarchy. The frames describe oppression of women and “brutal attacks” of the misogynist system, a “system of male dominance” (YPJ General Command 2019a). While the frames specifically call out Turkiye and Daesh as aggressors. They present those actors as a symptom of the patriarchal system which is grounded in oppression and the slavery of women. It depicts the attack on women by Daesh and Turkiye as part of a bigger picture. In a press release, the YPJ used the following wording:

“In the same manner as IS, the Turkish state’s allied gangs are attacking the very existence of women. This brutal attack on a young woman and her defence of her land is an attack on all women.” (YPJ General Command 2019b)

With the usage of the words *brutal*, *attack* and *gangs*, a negative polarisation is evoked. All of the words elicits anger and fear (Mohammad and Turney 2011). In addition to this fear and anger, the text draws a bigger picture by framing the attacks on women in Syria as an attack on all women, creating a responsibility for women abroad to join the fight and defend the women in Syria as they are dying for a greater good. This combination of anger and shame is, as Meier argued, personalising this conflict and creates urgency (Meier 2019: 1154).

## (2) Antagonising Turkiye

Turkiye is commonly framed as the aggressor and antagonist in the YPJ-YPG's diagnostic framing. Words like "occupying", "invading", or "brutal" are used in connexion with the state (YPJ General Command 2019b; SDF Press Office 2019a; YPJ General Command 2019a). Turkiye is accused of committing war crimes, violating human rights and "all military engagement rules" by attacking civilian areas (SDF Media Center 2018; YPG Press Office 2018). YPJ-YPG are describing Turkiye as a fascist state that is determined to "annihilate the values of society." (YPJ General Command 2019a). Turkiye is not just portrait as the enemy of the YPJ-YPG but as the enemy of all humanity, social justice and humane values. When reporting on operations countering the Turkish state, YPJ-YPG always refers to the missions as "retaliation" or a "response" to Turkiye's "provocations" (YPG Press Center 2017a; YPG Press Center 2018; YPG Press Center 2017b). This wording evokes a negative polarisation and fear and anger directed at the Turkish state (Mohammad and Turney 2011). Further, the Turkish states is accused of cooperating with terrorist groups like Daesh as can be seen in a report on captured ISIS members:

"Mohammed Abu al-Qadr, who joined IS in 2015, [...] shares the following information: 'I came to Turkey overland passing through Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria with an ambulance. In fact, Turkish border gates were always open to any of us (IS members). I was amazed when Turkish border guards welcomed me saying 'This is your home, you are here to help us.''"(YPG Press Office 2018b)

While this text does not use any specific wording, the connection of the Turkish state with Daesh aims at provoking anger. In addition, they are often paired with frames appealing to the responsibility of the international community. This, again, creates a mix of anger, at the Turkish state as well as the respective home state, and shame over inaction. This is also reflected in a press release on the aggressions of Turkiye:

"Turkish army, which started to attack peaceful civilians of Afrin over the excuse of 'the local people is being oppressed by YPG', have committed countless war crimes and human rights violations by taking advantage of the silence of the global community." (YPG General Command 2018)

Again, the word *attack* is used to evoke anger and fear, directed at Turkiye. The word *excuse* is associated with a negative polarisation and helps the text to create a notion of injustice to provoke anger. The word *violation* evokes several emotions, all with a negative polarisation: fear, anger, sadness and surprise (NCR Emotion Lexicon 2011).

As mentioned, the theme of misogyny is often recurring in the YPJ-YPG's framing of the Turkish state. Specific cases like Turkiye's treatment of female prisoners, women in general and Kurdish women in particular is used to provoke anger and a strong sense of urgency:

“Our injured comrade has fallen into the hands of the Turkish state's jihadist allies. Her life is in the great danger. We say to the whole world, the life of this young woman is under the biggest threat. This is obvious from the brutal videos which have been spread by the jihadist gangs completely openly before the eyes of the world. These disgusting acts are a result of the political agreements between the American, Russian and Turkish states.” (YPJ General Command 2019a)

With using words like *danger*, *threat* and *brutal*, the text evokes anger, fear and sadness. Further, the context in which the wording is set provokes a notion of injustice (NCR Emotion Lexicon, 2011). Overall, the YPJ-YPG's diagnostic framing of Turkiye is evoking anger at the Turkish state and the inaction of the international community. It also conveys shame over the inaction of the own government and creates the urge to change something.

### (3) Anti-Fascism and Oppression

The enemies of the group are described as being part of a fascist and oppressive system that wants to “weaken, [their] system and create a system according to themselves.” (Ehmed 2019). Said system being one of freedom, justice and equality. The theme of fascism is used to paint a bigger picture of the conflict in Rojava and creates a strong injustice frame. Through this, the framing aims to create immediate relevance of the Kurdish struggle to outsiders. Frames of oppression and fascism evoke fear and anger but also create a sense of urgency and responsibility to get involved. The word *oppression*, which is often used in connection to fascism, evokes, according to the NRC Emotion Lexicon, fear, anger and disgust (Mohammad and Turney 2011).

### (4) Killed versus Martyred

An interesting observation in the wording of the YPJ-YPG when reporting about opposing actors is the use of the word “killed” instead of “martyred” as they do when referring to their own casualties. This implies that opposing actors are fighting a worthless and honourless fight while the fighters of the YPJ-YPG die with purpose and honour. A battle report read as follows:

“On the road between Ain Issa and Celebi, the jihadists [attempted] to enter through and 4 of them were killed as a result as the attack was answered to by our fighters. One of our fighters was martyred.” (SDF Press Office 2019b)

While the wording itself has no different effect on the emotions evoked, namely fear and sadness, the context of the text evokes pride for the members of the group, strengthening ties within the group. Simultaneously, it humiliates the enemy as they are displayed as worthless.

#### (5) International Responsibility

When using the theme of international responsibility, the blame is being shifted from Turkiye onto the international community, evoking shame and anger. A statement by YPJ International offers harf criticism:

“Only one example is the German state that is selling tanks to Turkey and keeping up a “good diplomacy” with the fascists. All of this helps Turkey in continuing its tradition of colonizing and massacring people.” (YPJ international 2019)

The word *massacre* evokes fear, anger, sadness and disgust and provokes a negative polarisation towards Turkiye (Mohammad and Turney 2011). This is put into contrast with the foreign politics of, for example, Germany and creates shame and ultimately anger for internationals as they see the injustice that is being done by their own governments and shame for being part of this injustice.

#### (6) Antagonising Daesh

When Daesh is mentioned, it is referred to as “murderous”, “fascist”, “rapists”, “misogynist”, “brutal” (Maddalena 2019). Daesh is portrait as a honourless organisation that does not hesitate to attack innocent civilians in order to safe its own skin (YPG Rojava 2019). While only *murder* and *brutal* are included in the NRC Emotion Lexicon, evoking fear, disgust and anger, the other words can generally be assumed to provoke a similar response (Mohammad and Turney 2011). Further, Daesh are portrait as a threat to the whole world, not only to the YPJ-YPG. This can be seen in the interviews given by members of Daesh who talked to the YPJ-YPG after their forces “liberated” Daesh territory:

“The families of Daesh said in the camps there that they would be active again. According to the intelligence we obtained, the sleeping cells said, ‘We will take revenge and we will return soon.’ This is a great danger not only for the region but also for the world.” (YPJ Rojava 2019)

The words *danger* and *revenge* evoke a negative polarisation with fear, anticipation, anger and surprise (Mohammad and Turney 2011). Within his context, it creates a notion of urgency. The YPG’s framing of Daesh also serves to discourage anyone to join the group by using testimonies of detained members of the jihadist group. One of these members had been arrested by Daesh after trying to defect. In an interview he stated:

“When IS arrests someone, it does it without asking a single question. They don’t tell you what you are accused of. Then I understood that IS has nothing to do with Islam. IS had been established by old BAATHists and some intelligence services. They only fight for oil and money. Now the remaining fighters are realizing the fact and are seeking the ways to go out of it. There are very few people who think that ISIS is an Islamic organization. When I saw that I wanted to defect from them but I was arrested at the Turkish border.” (YPG Press Office 2018c)

In addition to anger, the frames also convey fear of joining Daesh as there is no guarantee for the tyranny of the group to not turn against its own members, discouraging locals to join Daesh. This makes use of the action tendency of fear and avoidance, and triggers countermobilisation (Benford and Snow 2000: 617; Pearlman 2013 : 392). It further creates pride over the YPJ-YPG as it humiliates Daesh.

#### (7) Anti-Capitalism

The diagnostic framing paint a picture of the capitalist system at the root of the injustice and evil happening in Syria and the Middle East. The YPJ-YPG deem terrorist groups in the region to only be a symptom of the unjust system capitalism poses. A press release written as a commemoration claims that “These groups [ISIS, al-Nusra,...] are a product of the mindset that the capitalist system relies on.” (YPJ General Command 2019a). In some cases, the West is called out explicitly for being the source of the terror in the Middle East:

“What we call capitalism is this great beast that feeds the few who can afford it, while crushing everyone else, offering them nothing but the leftovers of years of corrupt politics. Perhaps it is this exclusion, this marginalisation, this life devoid of values, of beauty, of a future, that leads people to seek refuge in a community of solidarity and to find it in a religious community and identity. Here comes the encounter with the most closed and fundamentalist part of the Islamic religion, generated by the discrimination of Muslims by Western powers and societies and in Islamic countries.” (translated from Italian, Maddalena 2019)

The words *beast*, *crushing*, *corrupt*, and *exclusion* evoke anger, fear, and disgust which are connected to capitalism (Mohammad and Turney 2011). By calling Daesh and al-Nusra a product of capitalism, a system that is associated with the West, this negative polarisation is directed towards the West. This results into shame for internationals for being part of the injustice inflicted upon the population in Syria and the reason groups like Daesh were able to rise to power in the Middle East.

## (8) Nation States and Colonialism

The YPJ-YPG's ideology is based on the idea of Democratic Confederalism and the abolishment of the nation state as they are described to be the main reason for conflict in the Middle East (Öcalan 2017: 11-19). The frame of nation states is closely connected with capitalism, colonialism, and sexism as, according to Abdullah Öcalan, they imply each other. In a press statement, the YPJ claims that “[t]he roots of the brutality of these gangs [Daesh and al-Nusra] is the hidden face of the nation states.” (YPJ General Command 2019a) The word *hidden* holds a negative polarisation and implies insincerity and a hidden agenda on behalf of nation states and evokes anger (Mohammad and Turney 2011). The framing refers to colonialism, imperialism, fascism, capitalism, and the patriarchy when looking for the origin of this symptom. This excerpt from a comment published on the website *Rete Jin* and shared by the YPG International Twitter account offers an understanding of this frame:

“Everyone hates Isis, it is easy to hate Isis, the public enemy par excellence of the moment: men thirsting for power and glory, thirsting for revenge, unscrupulous murderers, rapists perpetrators of the worst nefarious deeds, but above all Islamic extremists, exponents of radical Islam. Through the propaganda of power, Islam per se ends up being perceived that way by western society. It is as easy to hate Isis as it is to forget and obfuscate years of imperialist and colonialist policies in the Middle East.” (translated from Italian, Maddalena 2019)

The words used in this text are not included in the NRC Emotion Lexicon. However, the context can be interpreted. While Daesh is a clear enemy of the YPJ-YPG, with diagnostic frames evoking negative polarisation towards the group, Daesh is also portrait as only a symptom of a problem that is much bigger than just one group. While this framing evokes fear and anger, it also shifts the responsibility for the terror that is happening in Syria towards the West, towards the home countries of the foreign fighters. This clearly evokes shame and an urgent need for action by the international community. This shame is however deeper than just shame of inaction since it directly blames Western governments for the terror.

## (9) Victimisation

The diagnostic framing is painting a picture of injustice that puts the Kurdish population and the YPJ-YPG at the centre as a victim. Besides the military attacks on the YPJ and affiliates, the group is also experiencing ideological and bureaucratic resistance. After the liberation of Raqqa, the YPG issued a statement claiming the following:



“The war taking place in Syria and the Middle East is showing itself most brutally in Rojava. From Ba’ath to Nusra and others, all organisations attempted here to force domination over the Kurds and all other peoples. It has been attempted to occupy the cities in Rojava.” (YPG Rojava 2017e)

The word *domination* evokes anger, fear and sadness. The word *occupy* poses as an argument for the ambiguity of language as the Lexicon finds it to be evoking a positive polarisation but in the given context, it is attempting to provoke a negative one (Mohammad and Turney 2011). The context of this text seeks to evoke anger: While their fighters are dying for the safety and freedom of the whole world, the SDF does not receive a voice when it comes to conflict resolution. This evokes anger and frustration but also affection towards the group.

#### b. Prognostic

The prognostic framing of the YPJ-YPG circles more around the group itself rather than oppositional groups or enemies. The group presents itself as the solution for the previously mentioned grievances, using wording with a positive polarisation and evoking emotions like trust and joy, but also fear. The prognostic framing of the Twitter account frames the YPG’s fight as a legitimate resistance and rightful self-defence. It portrays the YPG as the bringer of justice and dignity, offering Democratic Confederalism as the true solution to the war in Syria. All of this is trying to evoke emotions of admiration and vigilance, but also anger at the enemies of the group, as they are obstructing this progress towards peace and freedom. Lastly, the frame of *shahids* presents the YPG’s fight as a purposeful one, with every fighter fighting and dying for a bigger cause.

#### (1) Women’s Liberation

The emancipation and liberation of women is one of the main pillars of the YPJ-YPG’s ideology. Besides countless accounts of cases where SDF forces have liberated women and girls from the “tyranny” of Daesh, the liberation of women is also used as a justification for their fight (YPG Rojava 2017a). This can be observed in an excerpt from a statement by YPJ General Commander Nesrin Abdullah:

“We consider the emancipation of one woman and a whole country the same. When we liberate a woman, it’s like we have liberated a country. We don’t consider only liberation is enough either. We believe we have fulfilled our duty after we have developed their will for self [defence].” (YPG Rojava 2017b)

The prognostic frame of women's liberation answers the diagnostic frame of misogyny and patriarchy. After displaying the aggressions and oppression that women face in Syria and around the world, the YPJ-YPG now present themselves as the protector of women and the fighter for equality and freedom. The words *emancipation* and *liberation* are connected to a positive polarisation, evoking joy and anticipation (Mohammad and Turney 2011). It answers to the negative emotions evoked in the diagnostic frames with positive emotions by offering solutions and justice. Additionally, the participation of women in the ranks of the SDF is framed as an important step towards a free and equal society. In an interview, a YPJ fighter stated the following.

“The fighter Berivan Amara said [...] ‘The Arabic society strangles women existence in the society and obliges them to marry at an early age’. Berivan Amara also said ‘a huge number of Arabic girls joined YPJ and SDF for liberating their society. The women who join are trained, and by training, women get confidence, determination, and power. After that, they fight courageously against the mercenaries of IS, and struggle for women's freedom’.” (YPG Rojava 2017c)

The words *confidence*, *determination* and *courageous* all hold a positive polarisation, evoking joy and trust but also fear (Mohammad and Turney 2011). With these emotions, the text elicits pride of womanhood and being a member of the YPJ-YPG who is fighting for freedom. Simultaneously, it is aiming to be perceived as dangerous by the enemy, which explains why the emotion fear is equated with the wording. Admiration and joy are evoked about reclaiming the freedom of women. It answers to the previously provoked anger at the oppression with an optimistic frame, showing commitment and fearlessness. It creates resistance and energises mobilisation as it portrays the YPJ-YPG and SDF in general as the only hope for women in Syria to be free.

## (2) *Sehid*

Connected to the diagnostic frame of killed versus martyred, the prognostic framing of killed YPJ-YPG fighters as *Sehid* tell a story of sacrifice and purpose and is an important tool for the group's overall framing. The frame is deeply intertwined with narratives of freedom and resistance and answers to the diagnostic frames of fascism and oppression. In a commemoration for a fallen fighter, the YPJ reinforces this frame:

“Every one of our comrades has been willing to sacrifice everything to join the historic resistance in the face of this occupation. Every fighter and commander has stood up to occupation in the hope and belief that we can resist and defend our land. We are eternally in debt to the effort and sacrifice of our fallen. To fall in struggle is truly to forever live a free life.

Comrade Nûpelda was a leading example in the resistance and has become a symbol of a free life. [...] Once again, we promise to all our martyrs that we will continue on their path.” (YPJ General Command 2019c)

In the Emotion Lexicon, the word *martyr* and *sacrifice* evoke a negative polarisation but in this context, they sought to elicit a positive one. The words can be assumed to aim to evoke positive emotions like joy or trust. *Hope* and *effort* both hold a positive polarisation and evoke anticipation, joy, surprise and trust (Mohammad and Turney 2011). Trust stems from the basic emotion admiration, which is often connected to the frames of martyrs. This framing evokes pride for being part of the YPJ-YPG’s struggle and fighting the right and honourable fight. It also serves to mitigate the emotion of fear and sadness that arise when being confronted with the loss of a fighter by transforming it into hope and pride. The image of the martyr is further used to justify a continuous fight until the martyrs’ vision of a free Rojava is fulfilled. It is used as a mean of legitimisation.

### (3) Legitimising: Self-Defence and Resistance

An important part of prognostic framing is the legitimising of the YPJ-YPG’s fight. The principle of self-defence is embedded in Öcalan’s ideology as the “Theory of the Rose”. It implies that all military action is reactionary and only serves to protect lives (Dean 2019: 11). The framing puts great emphasis on this principle and refers to their operations and battles as self-defence operations to protect all people of the region. Often, wording like “historic resistance”, “legitimate self-defence”, and “heroic fight” is used (YPJ General Command 2019c; YPG Press Office 2018a; SDF Press Office 2019a). The idea of self-defence is used to legitimise the fight of the YPJ-YPG as well as all their allies. This shifts the blame onto the enemy as they are attacking, leaving the YPJ-YPG with only the option of self-defence. It answers to the diagnostic frames of fascism and oppression, the antagonising of enemies, misogyny and the victimisation of themselves. This is combined with calling their fight a resistance and glorifying it. A press release reading like a commemoration claims that “[t]he means of [self-defence] has been found as the most legitimate form of response to the war that ravages, murders, exterminates, and denies all values.” (YPJ Headquarters Command 2019a) A Twitter posts by YPG International emphasises on this resistance:

“No matter how repulsive and mean their attacks are. The fascist regime will fall and until this point we will not give up RESISTANCE. For the pain of our mothers, our revenge will be the laugh of our children. #BerxwedanJiyane”

The word *legitimacy* evokes trust with supports the frame’s claim that the YPJ-YPG’s self-defence is rightful. While the word self-defence is not included in the Lexicon, the word *defence* is. It is

associated with a positive polarisation but evokes anticipation, anger and fear, emotions that are usually experienced negatively (Mohammad and Turney 2011). The context can be interpreted as provoking pride and hope by using the anger and fear the diagnostic frames created in connection to the antagonising of the enemies. This helps legitimising the fight as well as energising the action.

#### (4) Revolution for Peace, Freedom and Democracy

The YPJ-YPG are not fighting for the sake of territorial control. Rather, the groups claim to fight for social justice, democracy and freedom. Using universal values in framing can amplify their resonance especially in mobilising foreign fighters as they are relatable to more people, even without knowing the context of the conflict (Malet 2013: 10-11). The YPJ-YPG's fight and their ideology that is based on Democratic Confederalism is presented as the solution to the conflict in Syria. Democratic Confederalism is described as the only feasible solution for the region as capitalism and communism have failed as claimed in a press release: "We say that the crisis in Syria will reach a solution with democratic projects, fraternity of the peoples and Democratic Autonomy." (YPG Rojava 2017f) Additionally, the frame of democracy and freedom is closely connected to the frame of self-defence. Clara Raqqa, a YPJ commander said after the liberation of Raqqa in 2017:

"Our purpose in Rojava is to fight for the freedom of all ethnicities. And this will only be possible, if both Rojava and all other cities in the North of Syria are liberated. In order to eliminate the threats of occupation and attacks, and in order to liberate the region, bring peace and prosperity, the liberation of Raqqa as much as all other campaigns we have launched, were inevitable." (YPG Rojava 2017e)

Earlier that year, in an interview given to the Kurdish news agency ANF and shared through the YPG Rojava website, Raqqa stated the following:

"We are not after territorial victory alone, because we aim to create a democratic, equal and libertarian society in the wake of this operation. This campaign is, at least, a beginning to this end. Every Arab woman that sees this [wants] to join the fight. Given their own suffering of years under the tyranny, they were actually surprised when initially seeing female fighters fighting and resisting. This is because of the fact that the society had their will stripped of, they are like dead people remaining standing. We need to keep working on it to bring the society back to life with a democratic, social, moral and political awareness befitting the essence of the society. We the YPJ and SDF are giving a struggle for this." (YPG Rojava 2017d)

The words *democracy, freedom, equality, peace, liberation* and *prosperity* all hold a positive polarisation and evoke joy, anticipation and trust (Mohammad and Turney 2011). This frame answers the emotions evoked by the frame of oppression, fascism and antagonising with pride and hope. It, again, presents the YPJ-YPG and SDF as the solution to the conflict in Syria. Both reports were illustrated with a picture of the commander, smiling into the camera. The frame evokes pride and joy and gives optimism in regards to the YPJ-YPG's mission.

In this theme of peace and freedom, the oppression of the Kurdish people in Syria is revisited and countered with a joyful notion, connected to the efforts of the YPJ-YPG. This can be seen in a press release on the liberation of Raqqa:

“We have also gone through suppression by the Baath regime. Our language, our Newroz, our joy was all prohibited, Kurds were not acknowledged. As a people, our joy was constantly prohibited and oppressed. Now, I am living the joy that was taken from us.” (YPG Rojava 2017e)

This framing evokes joy and pride over the Kurdish liberation while also eliciting anger and disgust with the enemy, who is framed as opposing humanitarian values, freedom and justice.

##### (5) Justice and Dignity

Previous injustice framing is now answered with the presence of the YPG. While fighting for their own people and the oppressed, the group preserves the dignity of the enemy by tending to their wounds and treating prisoners with respect. A tweet by a BBC News reporter which was shared on the YPG International's Twitter account, paints the image of the dignifying Kurdish people:

“The Kurds are treating their enemy with care and compassion and to the limits of their resources. They need more help. Zubaida and Hafsa Arab received third degree burns. They're given paracetamol for the pain. They don't sleep at night.” (Sommerville 2019)

This framing is re-enforced by the comment by Maddalena also shared by YPG International:

“On the one hand, the ability of SDF and YPJ comrades to treat their enemies with incredible respect gives us hope. We have seen comrades greet those who until recently were their tormentors, with extreme dignity.” (Maddalena 2019)

The words *compassion, respect* and *dignity* have a positive polarisation and evoke joy and trust (Mohammad and Turney 2011). This framing glorifies the YPJ-YPG while demonising its enemy by connecting to the diagnostic framing that describes the brutal attacks by Turkiye or Daesh. It

presents a picture of the YPJ-YPG's members as disciplined and humane fighters. The YPG is portraying itself as a just and dignifying organisation that respects even their worst enemies. It evokes pride for being just and humane. The group also shows self-reflection as they condemn the actions of one of their own units after footage that showed the torture of a prisoner.

“As the General Command of the Manbij Military Council, we are committed to laws of war. We condemn this incident which is contrary to our military morals. We are announcing that the group in question has been referred to the Manbij Military Court for trial.”(YPG Rojava 2017g)

The word *committed* evokes trust and the context of the text shows that the groups hold themselves accountable as well, which ultimately results into pride again (Mohammad and Turney 2011).

#### (6) International Legitimation

The YPG uses the International Coalition with the United States of America to legitimise their fight. The spokesperson for the YPG commented the following on the military alliance with the U.S.:

“Even though the White House decision to officially give weapons to the YPG is a decision made a bit late, it has become the demonstration of confidence in our forces fighting against Daesh and all the terrorist gang groups. YPG proved to the whole world, especially to the International Coalition forces, that it is the main force fighting against terrorism. Before this decision of the United States, our forces have had deficiencies for a long time.” (YPG Spokesman Rêdûr Xefîl 2017)

In addition to the legitimisation by the U.S. government, the international fighters are used to legitimise their cause in front of the international community. While this is often done through commemorations of foreign fighters that have been killed, this statement stems from a reports on the involvement of internationals in the YPJ-YPG:

“The fighters from all over the world, who joined the fight against ISIS for years, announced that they would respond the call to mobilize by Afrin local administration. Fighters stated that they will not stay silent while Afrin is being attacked by Turkish occupation army. ‘We’ve been fighting against ISIS terrorism for years. No one should expect us to stay silent when the territories saved from ISIS with blood is being invaded.’” (YPG Press Office 2018d)

The words *confidence* and *prove* hold a positive polarisation and evoke trust and joy (Mohammad and Turney 2011). The context of this text evokes pride of joining the groups as an international as well as shame for not doing so. The framing counters the diagnostic framing antagonising Turkiye and Daesh as well as the victimisation by offering hope and trust in the success of the YPJ-YPG.

### c. Motivational

The motivational framing is revisiting the previously used themes and frames them in a way that directly affects potential recruits. For this, the antagonism against Turkiye is connected to a struggle against fascism that should concern every freedom-loving person. The frames make use of the diagnostic and prognostic framing and result into concrete calls for action after specifically calling out the enemy or injustice and offering a solution. The framing portrays the participation in the YPJ-YPG's fight as the only logical consequence.

#### (1) Resistance

The theme of resistance is being revisited in the motivational framing and connects to the previously used themes of fascism and oppression, making use of universal values in order to relate to a broad range of bystanders. The frames shift the responsibility for attacks on the YPJ-YPG from Turkiye or Daesh towards the international community. The campaign #Riseup4Rojava is a powerful example for a motivational frame of the YPJ-YPG. A Twitter post by YPG International is sharing the newly created campaign, alongside an appeal for participation:

“A defeat of the Rojava revolution is a defeat of all the revolutionary and democratic forces of the World. Don't let this happen. Defend this revolution. Join us in the struggle. Rise against Turkish fascism and its accomplices! #Riseup4Rojava” (YPG International 2019a)

This frame is often revisited by the YPG International's Twitter account. It is connected to the frames of Anti-Fascism, Revolution and Legitimacy. YPG International shared an article by the Kurdish news agency ANF describing exactly this:

“We must expand our actions, connect them and internationalise them. We have to trespass from a politics of protest to permanent political resistance. The people of Kurdistan and Northern Syria are already responding to these attacks. We, as anti-fascists and revolutionary forces, will take action – through occupation, blockade and disruption – against the places of military, diplomatic and economic cooperation for Turkish fascism in our countries.” (ANF 2019b, cited in YPG International 2019a)

The words *democratic*, *revolutionary*, and *defence* evoke a positive polarisation which evokes joy and trust (Mohammad and Turney 2011). Combined with the previously evoked pride and anger, this frame is a powerful energiser for mobilisation.

## (2) *Sehid*

In the motivational framing, the prognostic frame of *Sehid* is now developed further as a call for perseverance and a continuous resistance. Continuing the fight the martyrs of the YPJ-YPG have started constitutes a duty for every member of the group. This frame is directed at the maintenance of the group and collective action rather than at recruiting more members. This call for action usually follows a commemoration statement, visible in this press release:

“We must, as the people and as followers in the martyrs footsteps, defend this land with our lives. We have already paid a high price and valiantly defended and today we will take the same responsibility and take our place on the front lines to make the same defence. This is the hope and belief of *şehîd Nûpelda* and all our martyrs for us. By bringing about the hopes of our martyrs we are certain to achieve a free life.” (YPJ General Command 2019c)

While *martyr* evokes sadness and fear, this negative polarisation is countered with the words *valiant*, *hope*, and *defence* evoking a positive polarisation (Mohammad and Turney 2011). In connection to the prognostic frame, the motivational frames are more direct and personal than the frames of other themes. This can be seen in an articles by ANF shared by the Twitter account YPG International concerning the establishment of the first Armenian Brigade which also operates under the umbrella of SDF:

“The Martyr Nubar Ozanyan Armenian Brigade, declared on the 104th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, issued a written statement. ‘MEMORIALS ARE NOT ENOUGH, WE NEED TO FIGHT’”(ANF 2019c, cited in YPG International 2019)

The motivational frame of *sehid* is connected with anger and sadness at the loss of friends and comrades. These negative emotions are however countered with the pride in the duty and responsibility that has been put on the fighters of the YPJ-YPG but also shame if one decides to not partake in the mission. Further, the notion of hope is mentioned, energising the frame further.

## (3) Feminism and Humanism: Liberation and International Responsibility

With using feminism and humanism in the motivational framing, the YPJ-YPG is using universal values to mobilise. Joining the YPG’s fight means fighting for the liberation of all women world wide. The framing is now shifting the focus on the individual, calling on their responsibility to take up the fight if they want to live a truly free life. The perpetrators that cause the oppression of women are called out again but this time, the responsibility is shifted towards the women to defend themselves. In a press release, the YPJ published this call for action:



“Wherever in the world you may be, let every women, collective and organisation struggle for women’s and society’s freedom. Every woman must take her own place and her role of leadership. The struggle for freedom is so powerful that no amount of violence, or occupation can crush it.” (YPJ General Command 2019a)

The word *freedom*, evoking joy and trust, is confronted with *crushing*, *violence* and *occupation* (Mohammad and Turney 2011). While the latter are holding a negative polarisation and are associated with the enemies of the YPJ-YPG, the former serves as the representation of the groups and evokes positive emotions towards them. In accordance with the YPJ-YPG’s ideology, the issue of women’s liberation is regarded as an issue of human rights and is hence communicated that way. This positive polarisation is often circled back to the negative polarisation used for the enemies of the YPJ-YPG as can be seen in a press statement by the YPJ:

“We call out to all women and human rights organisations internationally to raise their voices against these brutal mercenaries in the employ of the Turkish state. To stay silent in the face of these immoral acts is to be complicit in acts against all of humanity. In the face of these attempts to break the spirit of women, all women must stand up and be a unified voice.” (YPJ General Command 2019b)

The negative polarisation of *brutal*, *mercenary*, and *immoral* is connected to Turkiye and creates a powerful counterweight to the positive polarisation of *freedom*, *spirit* and *unified* (Mohammad and Turney 2011). This framing appeals to the earlier evoked pride in womanhood and anger at the oppression women face every day. It also pleads immediate responsibility for the violations against women in Syria, evoking shame over inaction. As a solution for avoiding this shame, the framing recommends joining the YPJ-YPG.

### C. Emotional Consistency of the YPJ's Collective Action Frames

Since the core framing tasks are closely connected to each other, the analysis of the emotional consistency will combine the diagnostic and prognostic frames. The motivational frames are a result of the emotional consistency of diagnostic and prognostic frames and are only emotionally consistent, if the respective diagnostic or prognostic framing is as well.

#### 1. Hanna Böhman

The diagnostic frames of Misogyny and Patriarchy, Antagonising Turkiye, International Responsibility, Antagonising Daesh and Victimization of the Kurdish people are emotionally consistent with Böhman. For the prognostic frames, Women's Liberation, Self-Defence, and Revolution are emotionally consistent. The data did not provide any proof of emotional consistency for the frames Anti-Fascism, *Sehid*, Anti-Capitalism, Nation States, and International Legitimation. The frame Justice and Dignity is only partially emotionally consistent.

Böhman stated that she was not much of a feminist before going to Rojava, indicating no emotional consistency with the frame of Misogyny and Patriarchy before receiving ideological education by the YPJ-YPG (Deep Green Resistance 2021). However, after being in Rojava the frame is emotionally consistent with her personal accounts: "As it's a feminist revolution, part of the training male YPJ members receive is to deconstruct the inner male, the arrogance of the patriarchal male and learn the error of that and how it's affected society." (Deep Green Resistance) The words *arrogance* and *error* hold a negative polarisation and reflect Böhman's attitude towards the patriarchy (Mohammad and Turney 2011). This diagnostic frame is answered by the prognostic frame Women's liberation, which is also emotionally consistent. Böhman said in an interview: "It was inspiring to fight alongside other women." (Corbin 2017) The word *inspire* has a positive polarisation and reflects joy, surprise and trust (Mohammad and Turney 2011). With trust being a nuance of the emotion admiration according to Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions, the combination of joy and admiration results into pride and an emotional consistency with the YPJ-YPG's framing. This is similarly seen in a quote stating her motivation to join the YPJ: "When I learned about what the Kurds were doing, especially the YPJ fighting for women's rights and trying to build a new democratic model in the region, I was just blown away with them. I was so inspired by them[.]" (Arabian 2017) This joy and admiration, resulting in pride, is consistent with the YPJ-YPG's framing.

The frame Antagonising Turkiye and evoking anger and disgust is emotionally consistent with Hanna Böhman as seen in an excerpt from an interview when confronted with the actions of Turkish soldiers towards Kurdish civilians. Her wording and the comparison she makes reflects anger towards the Turkish state and its soldiers: “It disgusts me how people can justify their actions in their own minds. How can they justify what they're doing is right?” she asks. ‘A lot of Turks fighting with ISIS tell me it's in their right to kill the Kurds because they're inferior. Their rhetoric is like that of Nazi Germany.’”(O'Malley 2017). Böhman made another statement, making her anger at Turkiye and Erdogan explicitly clear: “As long as Turkey is there, there'll still be more war. I hate Turkey, Turkey has no interest.” (Arabian 2017) The frame International Responsibility is emotionally resonant, she expressed anger towards family and friends in Canada: “It's easy to judge from the safety of their sofa, wallowing in their gluttony [...] Those same s---s will be the first ones to b---- when the war gets bigger.” (Böhman, cited in Larson 2017) Especially in regards to ISIS she stated that “Seeing evil beyond evil, the video of the Canadian guy [John Maguire] joining [Islamic State], the fact that governments weren't doing anything about it.” were reasons that angered her and ultimately made her decide to join the YPJ (Moulton 2015). She mentions this anger again in a podcast six years later: “I was also incensed mad about ISIS and what they were doing and I was more mad at the Western governments for not doing anything to step in and stop that.” (Deep Green Resistance 2021) This also reflects a deep aversion towards Daesh, rendering the frame of antagonising the group as emotionally consistent. The countermobilising frame that humiliates Daesh is also emotionally consistent with Böhman as seen in the following statement: “So it's really just a bunch of money-hungry, power-grabbing socio- [and] psychopaths who run ISIS. There's a lot of hypocrisy among those guys, too.” (Arabian 2017) The frame of victimisation of the Kurdish people was not emotionally consistent before Böhman went to Rojava but developed during her stay: “There was always a bias by the regime. Kurds were always second-class citizens.” (Arabian 2017) The word *bias* evokes anger which is emotionally consistent with the YPJ-YPG's framing (Mohammad and Turney 2011).

This anger is answered by the prognostic frames Self-Defence and Revolution which are both emotionally consistent with Böhman. In a podcast she refers to the YPJ-YPG as the reason for peace and democracy in the area, which has been obstructed by attacks by Turkiye: “Throughout [...] all the civil war [Afrin] was the only peaceful area.” (Deep Green Resistance 2021) Further, she makes the following claim: “You support democracy, you have to support the Kurds in one piece here. The YPJ, the YPG and the SDF. That's democracy.” (Deep Green Resistance 2021) The word *peace* and *democracy* both have a positive polarisation and evoke joy and trust, same as the

framing of the YPJ-YPG (Mohammad and Turney 2011). Further, the emotional consistency of Self-Defence is seen in her explanation for the YPJ-YPG's existence: "[... T]he YPG was formed to protect people. YPJ came along later in 2012 I think. So that's essentially how it started in the beginning; they were just set up to protect themselves because they couldn't count on the regime to protect them." (Arabian 2017) The wording is consistent with the YPJ-YPG's as well as the positive polarisation and the emotion of trust the word *protect* evokes (Mohammad and Turney 2011).

Due to the emotional consistency of the diagnostic and prognostic framing, only two of the motivational frames, Resistance, and Feminism and Humanism, are all emotionally consistent and result into a mobilisation for action. Overall, the injustice framing of the diagnostic and prognostic frames created a sense of urgency which motivated Böhman to go to Rojava. Böhman also describes herself as a humanist, rejecting political ideologies. The motivational frames are therefore effective as they create strong emotions over values like freedom, liberation and responsibility rather than a political agenda.

The frame Justice and Dignity can be assumed to not be emotionally consistent as Böhman said she had lost her empathy for Daesh during her stay in Rojava: "I thought that my friends have families too and ISIS wants to kill them. I soon lost any sympathy for ISIS." (O'Malley 2017) She also expressed anger for not having been able to kill an ISIS spy due to her commander's orders (Larson 2017). This indicates that the framing of the YPY-YPG treating their enemies with respect and showing mercy, is not consistent with Böhman. However, the framing to be just and self-criticise is emotionally consistent as demonstrated in the following statement: "If you're not willing to self-criticise, you've got problems. In our society we're ready to blame other people but with the YPJ, part of the thinking is to deconstruct that mentality" (Böhman, cited in O'Malley 2017)

## 2. Elefterya Hambi

The frames of Misogyny and Patriarchy, Anti-Fascism and Oppression, International Responsibility, Anti-Capitalism, Antagonising Daesh and Nation States are emotionally consistent with Hambi. The prognostic frames Women's Liberation, Self-Defence, Revolution, and Justice and Dignity are also emotionally consistent. The data on Hambi does not provide proof for the emotional consistency of the frames Antagonising Turkiye, Sehid, and International Legitimation.

In a video that emerged in December 2018 and was shared again by an anonymous Twitter account in 2021, Elefterya Hambi mentions the patriarchal system to be an underlying problem: "I heard about this revolution, like how they make this self-organisation and how strong the women fight

here and that they really understood that all this, the obeying of the world has something to do with the problem of hierarchy and with the problem that is based on the patriarchal system.” (Hambi 2018, cited in B9AcE 2021) The word *obey* indicates a negative polarisation and evokes fear (Mohammad and Turney 2011). In the context of the personal account of Hambi it reflects on her discontent with the patriarchal system. The frame is therefore emotionally consistent and leads to the emotional consistency of the frame Women’s Liberation. In a letter to her friends in Germany she says about Rojava: “Female-read people have made their common history of oppression a point of connection and have become autonomous. As women, they have earned their independence in all areas. Instead of hierarchies, all communities/neighbourhoods and villages are autonomous and live together in consensus. It has long been claimed that such a thing is not possible in the long term. Rojava proves the opposite!” (translated from German, Hambi, cited in ANF 2018) With creating the contrast between oppression and hierarchy, and the efforts of the women in Rojava, Hambi reflects a positive polarisation when referring to this frame. The emotions of joy and pride are emotionally consistent with the YPJ-YPG’s framing.

Hambi comes from an anti-fascist background and the sense of responsibility and ultimately shame for inaction that the frame evokes is emotionally consistent with her. In a letter to her friends in Germany she said: “Necessary steps at a time when unfortunately fascists have already taken these steps! Many turn to racism because it makes them feel worth something, because it gives them an identity, a sense of dignity and pride. Sad as it is, this too is a result of the system directing these constructed needs against other people in the form of racism. Many just become depressed. By understanding this, we ourselves can bring back some of these mad people, we can weaken fascism.” (translated from German, Hambi, cited in ANF 2018) With using the word *unfortunately*, Hambi evokes a negative polarisation, indicating aversion (Mohammad and Turney 2011). The text further holds the emotion annotations *mad* and *sad*, reinforcing the negative polarisation (Mohammad and Turney 2011). Hambi also links oppression with the system of capitalism: “Whatever regime is in power, it sustains itself by isolating people. In capitalism, the highest value is individualism, "self-realisation". What is meant by this is egoism and rejection of consideration for others.” (translated from German, Hambi, cited in ANF 2018) The words *isolation*, *egoism* (found similarly as egotistical), and *rejection* hold a negative polarisation and evoke anger, sadness and fear (Mohammad and Turney 2011). Another quote reinforces the negative polarisation: “A place where I could be me without being judged for it, where I had people who suffered just as much under the farce of the capitalist concept of freedom and wanted something different but did not know how to achieve it.” (translated from German, Hambi, cited in ANF 2018) Connecting the

negative polarisation of *suffer* to capitalism creates sadness and anger (Mohammad and Turney 2011). This is emotionally consistent with the frames used by the YPJ-YPG. These diagnostic frames are connected to the prognostic frame of Revolution, which is also emotionally consistent. Hambi writes about Rojava and its accomplishments that deconstruct systems of oppression in a joyful manner and says that “We can really implement utopias [...] and that the revolution has already begun.” (translated from German, Hambi, in ANF 2018) Further, she tells her friends about the accomplishments in Rojava: “The people of Rojava are on their way to freedom. Little girls skip through the streets at night alone in shorts, without fear of men, of Daesh, of the regime. No one can do anything to them. The cities are being rebuilt, the countryside, the trees are blossoming again. Everywhere it grows and blossoms.” (translated from German, Hambi, in ANF 2018) Using the words *blossom* and *grow* reflect the positive polarisation Hambi associates with the frame, evoking joy, trust and anticipation (Mohammad and Turney 2011). The pride she expresses for being perceived as intimidating by Daesh fighters also reflects on the pride she feels towards the YPJ (translated from German, Hambi, in ANF 2018).

The frame Victimisation is emotionally consistent as seen in this statement: “The revolutionaries do everything for the revolution, they have dedicated their lives to it and they never abandon the people even if it costs them their lives, which has been the case countless times. This strength of conviction is based on thousands of years of genocide, assimilation, torture and murder.”(translated from German, Hambi, cited in ANF 2018) The words *torture* and *murder* have a negative polarisation and evoke anger, fear, sadness and disgust (Mohammad and Turney 2011). While *genocide* and *assimilation* are not included in the Lexicon, they can be assumed to have a similar effect. By calling these wrong-doings out, Hambi connects with the frame Victimisation. This is connected to the frame Revolution and *Sehid*, with the word *dedication* having a positive polarisation to counter the sadness evoked by the frame (Mohammad and Turney 2011). This is emotionally consistent with the YPJ-YPJ’s framing.

This dedication leads to the principles of the YPJ-YPG. The frame of Self-Defence is emotionally consistent with Hambi which becomes evident in her description of these principles. In a letter to her friends at the Hambacher Forst she says to “never turn the gun against people unless they do the same against you or others.” (translated from German, Hambi, cited in ANF 2018) The context in which this text is set reflects on the pride she experiences, the same pride the YPJ-YPG are evoking in their framing of Self-Defence. This pride is also reflecting in the emotional consistency with the frame Justice and Dignity. In her letter she is appealing to her friends to follow the principles of the YPJ/G: “Don't look for differences, but for common ground. Because none of them [people who

have not joined the YPJ-YPG] are free and making them understand this and showing them perspectives is therefore the most important task. Solidarity, friendship, respectful and friendly interaction with everyone, discipline that grows out of the will to change.” (translated from German, Hambi, in ANF 2018) The words *solidarity*, *friendship*, and *respect* have a positive polarisation and evoke joy, trust and anticipation and reflect on the pride Hambi feels for being a member of the YPJ (Mohammad and Turney 2011).

Hambi recognises the responsibility of the international community, specifically Germany. In her letter to her friends she says: “Instead of waking up to the concert of birds, the middle spotted woodpecker and the titmice, the jay and the wood pigeons, it is the roar of Turkish bombs. Actually bombs coming from the West. Our bombs.” (translated from German, Hambi, cited in ANF 2018) While there are no specific words that are mentioned in the NRC Emotion Lexicon, Hambi created a rhetorical antithesis which amplifies the meaning of the text. With the radical contrast between birds and bombs, the origin of the bombs becomes shocking, evoking anger as well as shame. The frame International Responsibility is emotionally consistent. Hambi expresses her aversion towards ISIS in a video from the frontline in Deir al-Zour: “So now we’re here to make the fight, to fight them to go away that the [civilians] can come back. And to free this place, to free Rojava and to free Northern Syria from Daesh, to make this revolution. To free the people so that they can build up a new life.” (YPG Press Office 2018e) This statement places Daesh at the opposite of freedom and revolution, both of which evoke a positive polarisation in this context. The frame of nation states also proves to be emotionally consistent as shown in this statement: “No help from the West. So the refugees immediately organise themselves, form commissions, don't let it get them down. A sign of how much states are not needed.” (translated from German, Hambi, cited in ANF 2018) This quote shows Hambi’s dislike of states as she frames them to neglect their responsibilities towards civilians. But even without the help from states, the people organise themselves, making nation state constructs redundant. This reflects on a derogatory view on nation states that is emotionally resonant with the YPJ-YPG’s framing. Due to the preparation or priming of the diagnostic and prognostic framing, only two of the motivational frames, Resistance, and Feminism and Humanism, are all emotionally consistent and result into a mobilisation for action.

### 3. Maria Edgarda Marcucci

The frames of Misogyny and Patriarchy, Antagonising Turkiye, Anti-Fascism and Oppression, Antagonising Deash, International Responsibility, Anti-Capitalism and Victimisation are emotionally consistent with Marcucci. The diagnostic frames are answered with the emotionally

consistent frames Women's Liberation, Legitimation: Self-Defence, Revolution and *Shhid*. The data does not provide evidence for the emotional consistency of the frames Justice and Dignity, and International Legitimation. In the available data, Marcucci does not specifically mention colonialism or the frame Nation State.

Generally, anger at the injustices that are addressed in the diagnostic framing of the YPJ-YPG was one of the greatest motivators for Marcucci: "I believe that anger is a powerful feeling when it is put to collective ends. Sometimes it eats us from within, but when I have been in trouble, on the brink of resignation, anger at the injustices I have seen has turned into a tool of self-defence and helped me to honour the path paved by people like Lorenzo Orsetti and Anna Campbell, who fell in battle in Syria, and who are never talked about enough. Where that pain can annihilate, anger protects me." (translated from Italian, Marcucci, cited in Lancellotti 2022) This anger is emotionally consistent with most of the YPJ-YPG's diagnostic frames.

The frame Misogyny and Patriarchy is emotionally consistent with Marcucci as shown in a statement during an interview: "[Democratic Confederalism] concerned us deeply, both with regard to the defeat of the Islamic State and with regard to the construction of a social alternative," Marcucci stated in February 2021, making explicit the need to dismantle the patriarchal paradigm that still oppresses a large part of the Western population." (translated from Italian, Lancellotti 2022) This desire to deconstruct the patriarchal system shows Marcucci's aversion. This connects to the frame Women's Liberation which is also emotionally consistent as evident in a Facebook post from Marcucci from 2017: "First Young Women's Festival of Northern Syria. These women are fighting every day for a free life. And they are winning the battle. JIN, JIYAN, AZADI" (translated from Italian, Marcucci 2017) This text answers to the oppression of women in a similar way as the YPJ-YPG's framing does, reflecting a positive polarisation with the words *free* (found as freedom in the NRC Emotion Lexicon) and *winning*, both evoking joy, trust and anticipation in this context (Mohammad and Turney 2011).

The Frame Anti-Capitalism is emotionally consistent as well and connects to the frames of Patriarchy and Oppression. In a post about Lorenzo Orsetti, she talks about the reasons Orsetti's to join the YPG, saying he was "convinced that humanity deserves better than the capitalist society in which she had grown up and whose dynamics of exclusion and exploitation he had never tolerated." (Marcucci 2019) This wording reflects an aversion towards capitalism as she uses the words *exclusion* and *exploitation* in connection with it, reflecting on a negative polarisation and anger (Mohammad and Turney 2011). Marcucci has been active in anti-fascist movements before and



after going to Rojava, which manifests in the emotional consistency of the frame Anti-Fascism. In a Facebook posts Marcucci draws a picture of fascism being the opposite of justice and freedom: “The partisans were the part of that generation that decided to fight fascism and fight for a more humane, free and just society. [...] Just as then, there are those who are ready to close their eyes or support fascism, in its various forms, in order to gain more power or more profits.” (translated from Italian, Marcucci 2018). The anger conveyed in her statements is consistent with the anger evoked by the frames of the YPJ-YPG. Connected to the issue of oppression, Marcucci recognises the victimisation of Kurdish people as she says in a podcast from 2022: “The Kurdish people were colonised by four states” (translated from Italian, Marcucci, in Breaking Italy 2022) While the word *colonised* is not included in the Emotion Lexicon, the context gives away the anger and negative polarisation of this statement. The frame is hence also emotionally consistent. These diagnostic frames connect to the prognostic frames of Self-Defence and Resistance, and Revolution. The defence of freedom and justice against fascism and oppression is one of the motivations Marcucci mentions for her commitment with the YPJ: “In this revolution, the ideals of the partisans of that time are revived and, inspired by their example, we have come here from Italy to defend it and contribute to it.” (translated from Italian, Marcucci 2018) In connection to the ideals of freedom and justice, this text has a positive polarisation and indicates pride in the cause she is fighting for. The frame Self-Defence and Resistance is therefore emotionally resonant. Marcucci connects the frame of Revolution with the frame *Sehid*. She recognises the fight for freedom also as a duty in front of the martyrs of the YPJ-YPG: “... in the daily work of building a democratic and free society, our thoughts often went to those who fought in the Resistance, looking for a source of strength and courage to face today's fascism. The martyrs of the Resistance are our blood, our nerves, and we will always fight so that their values are never defeated.” (translated from Italian, Marcucci 2018) This frame answers the negative polarisation through anger and sadness of the diagnostic frames Fascism and *Sehid* with a notion of hope. Further, she believes that “It is our duty today to pay homage to Lorenzo's life, spent alongside the oppressed, devoted to altruism, an example of courage and honesty. It is our responsibility to follow the path he took and to take sides every day in Italy, in Syria and throughout the world, on the side of the values for which Lorenzo fought and to preserve his memory by making his ideals come alive.” (translated from Italian, Marcucci 2019) This frame reflects the pride and sense of responsibility which is emotionally consistent with the YPJ-YPG’s framing of *Sehid* and Revolution.

Opposing this sense of responsibility is the anger and shame that are evoked in the YPJ-YPG’s framing of International Responsibility which are consistent with Marcucci’s as seen in a re-post of

a statement by InfoAut: “Those who are fighting ISIS in the frontlines are neither Salvini [chief of the Italian xenophobic party Lega nord], Minniti [Italian Minister of interior] and Le Pen, nor Trump or Renzi, but thousands of young Kurdish, Arab, Assyrian, Turkmen and International women and men that daily put their lives at stake also for us.” (InfoAut 2017) The framing of Daesh being fascist and hence the emotional consistency of the anger the frame provokes becomes evident in a Facebook post: “Today's fascism in Syria has the face of Erdogan, ISIS and al-Qaeda.” (translated from Italian, Marcucci 2018) Equating Erdogan with fascism leads to the emotional consistency of the frame Antagonising Turkiye. Marcucci is voicing her anger at the Turkish president, indicating emotional consistency with the framing used by the YPJ-YPG. In an interview she stated: “[Erdogan] commits war crimes equal to those for which Putin is rightly condemned. Many institutional figures have condemned Putin, but the same does not happen when Erdogan invades, not one but two countries, Syria and Iraq” (translated from Italian, Marcucci, Rapisardi 2022) She is further using the same vocabulary as the framing uses: “The difficulties are immense: we are in the midst of a pandemic in a territory where water is rationed, because after the 2019 invasion Turkey occupied the aqueduct.”(translated from Italian, Marcucci, Rapisardi 2022) The word *invasion* holds a negative polarisation, reflecting anger (NCR Emotion Lexicon 2011). This proves the frame Antagonising Turkiye to be consistent. Due to the preparation or priming of the diagnostic and prognostic framing, the motivational frames Resistance, Sehîd and Feminism and Humanism are all emotionally consistent and result into a mobilisation for action.

#### 4. Kimberly Taylor

The frames Misogyny and Patriarchy, Antagonising Turkiye, Anti-Fascism and Oppression, Antagonising Deash, International Responsibility, Anti-Capitalism, and Victimisation, answered by Women’s Liberation, Sehîd, Revolution, Justice and Dignity, are emotionally consistent with Taylor. The data did not prove the frames Nation State and International Legitimation to be emotionally consistent. While Taylor never specifically mentions the frame of Self-Defence, her narration indicates that she believes the fight of the YPJ-YPG to be legitimate and on the grounds of defending themselves and the revolution.

Taylor reflects the frame of Misogyny and Patriarchy, using similar wording as the YPJ-YPG. In a video published via the Independent, she talks about the change the YPJ-YPG has brought to the area of Rojava and refers to the patriarchal system to be “about dominating and competition.” (Independent 2017) The word *competition* holds a negative polarisation and is emotionally consistent with the YPJ-YPG’s framing (NCR Emotion Lexicon, Mohammad and Turney 2011).

Explaining the positive change the revolution in Rojava has brought, her aversion towards the patriarchal system becomes evident. Further, in a phone interview she explains why she went to Rojava saying: “It’s for the whole world, for humanity and all oppressed people, everywhere. It’s not just [ISIS’s] killing and raping. It’s its systematic mental and physical torture on a scale we can’t imagine.” (Blake 2017) This reflects anger at the patriarchal system and proves this frame to be emotionally consistent. The frame Women’s Liberation answers this negative polarisation with pride and is emotionally consistent: “Especially from [...] when I’ve seen the people coming from Raqqa and especially the women and the older women and they’re in joys with like tears of joy and when they’re looking at us and they’re [...] pleading or they’re saying thank you, thank you thank you for liberating. And like it’s my favourite thing like it’s better than fighting is to see these women come in and kissing your hands and completely in love with who we are and that we’re, what we’ve done for them.” (Taylor, in YPG Press Office 2017) This text reflects the pride Taylor takes in being part of the YPJ and being able to liberate women in Raqqa. She speaks of the YPJ-YPG’s efforts in overcoming the patriarchy and emancipating women with great joy: “And it was the most incredible feeling and you know it’s not just that [...] they’re fighting against the oppressor, the ultimate oppressor, they have been there for three or four years under their rule, it’s also that they understand their oppression. They understand the patriarchy and they understand the religious, the use of religious doctrine to oppress people and also the capitalist system that uses people [...] for profit and so to see this transformation in the Arab women that have joined this, from the ultimate oppression under Daesh, ISIS, to this level of understanding the world and understanding their place in the world and in their own society is an incredible thing.” (Taylor, in YPG Press Office 2017) This statement connects the frame of Patriarchy to Anti-Capitalism and Oppression, both of which are emotionally consistent. Taylor stated in an interview: “For so many years I’ve thought we need a revolution in Europe [...] In Europe everyone’s depressed or has money problems or is losing jobs. Life is losing its meaning because of the capitalist system. But Rojava is an example for the whole world to follow.” (Blake 2017) The word *depressed* holds a negative polarisation and reflects anger and sadness (NCR Emotion Lexicon 2011). Further, the context of this statement and the notion of life losing its meaning is evoking anger and is therefore emotionally consistent with the YPJ-YPG’s framing. She later describes capitalism as a “system that uses people [...] for profit.” (Taylor, in YPG Press Office 2017) While Taylor does not specifically mention the issue of fascism, her personal accounts are emotionally consistent with the frame Oppression as presented the statement mentioned earlier: “It’s for the whole world, for humanity and all oppressed people, everywhere. It’s not just [ISIS’s] killing and raping. It’s its systematic mental and physical torture on a scale we

can't imagine.” (Blake 2017) The word *torture* evokes anger, fear, anticipation and sadness and set in the context of this statement it proves the emotional consistency of the frame Oppression (NCR Emotion Lexicon 2011). The answer to this frame is given by the frame of Revolution which is emotionally consistent as the framing portraits the YPJ-YPG as the bearer of freedom and peace and evokes pride, something that reflects in Taylor's own narrative: “And so when we're liberating these people in the knowledge that what they will have in the future, they will have a democratic society of their own power in a system that is impossible for often authoritarian regimes to come again or any other oppressive regimes like Daesh to come again. Because people are understanding their place in the world, they're understanding politics and this is what the answer is for Syria, this is what the answer is for peace in Syria and this is the only way.” (Taylor, in YPG Press Office 2017) The words *liberate* and *peace* are polarising positively, evoking joy, anticipation and trust. It counters the negative polarisation of *oppressive* and counters the anger, fear, sadness and disgust it evokes (NCR Emotion Lexicon, Mohammad and Turney 2011). Taylor's wording of the YPJ-YPG's efforts is consistent with the frames Revolution and Legitimation: “This is a real revolution. This is not just about getting a new government. It's not about getting a government. It's about changing everything completely. [...] It's about living together as people with different ethnicities, and different religions and different genders and everyone living together democratically. With the power in their own hands, not with a regime or dictatorship or party above you. It's about the people doing this and this is what's working. And I've seen it in society, I've seen it everywhere. How people are joining in, how people are taking control over their own lives and learning their position in the world, their position in their own society. And it is working. And this is why I'm here, this is why I'm fighting for it.” (Taylor, in Independent 2017) This text also connects to the frame Justice and Dignity as she describes the inclusivity of the new system they are creating. The context indicates joy, admiration as well as pride and hope by saying that the efforts are successful. The frame of Justice and Dignity is therefore emotionally consistent as well.

For Taylor, the frame of antagonising Turkiye was not a motive she mentioned before joining the YPJ. In 2017 however, she made the following statement about the Turkish state: “I am not a PKK member but I will say, the PKK are not terrorists. This is a politically aligned goal by the Turkish state who are actually the terrorists. They're the one that are killing people here, they are killing their own people in their own country.” (YPG Press Office 2017) This statement was made in connection to a at that time recently published report, framing the YPJ-YPG and its members as terrorists. Taylor assumed the author of the report to be financed by Turkiye and described the reports as “a slap in the face of humanity and [...] something that [she doesn't] accept at all ” (YPG

Press Office 2017) These statements reveal her anger towards the Turkish state. After two years of being in Rojava, the frame is now emotionally consistent with Taylor. It is also connected to the frame Victimisation. The framing of Kurdish people as the victims of the conflict is reflecting in Taylor's narrative but the data does not provide prove for it being emotionally consistent. It was, however, a reason for Taylor to join the YPJ as she states in a video: "As volunteers we're coming here because we want to help the Kurdish people." (YPG Press Office 2017)

Taylor's accounts reflect deep respect and admiration for the martyrs of the YPJ-YPG. In a video published by the YPG, she speaks about a report calling killed fighters of the groups terrorists: "And so to use their names, the people that have been martyred, to use their names in this report to say that these people are not humanists, that they are terrorists when they... after they have died it's a slap in the face of humanity and it's something that I don't accept at all. And I think that the British public shouldn't accept this, now we've had, is it 4 British volunteers that have been killed and I have absolute respect for every one of them, more than I have respect for everyone else" (Taylor, in YPG Press Office 2017) Using the wording "slap in the face of humanity" shows the agitation of Taylor and her aversion towards the report's framing. The text shows the emotional consistency with the YPJ-YPG's framing of *Sehid* as honourable fighters that have sacrificed their lives for a greater good. She has also internalised the notion of sacrifice, evident in a statement given to the Independent: "I have given everything to this fight and I am willing to die for what Rojava is trying to achieve." (Taylor, in Independent 2017) Due to the preparation or priming of the diagnostic and prognostic framing, the motivational frames Resistance, *Sehid* and Feminism and Humanism are all emotionally consistent and result into a mobilisation for action.

## 5. Anna Campbell

The frames Misogyny and Patriarchy, Antagonising Turkiye, Anti-Fascism and Oppression, Antagonising Deash, International Responsibility, Anti-Capitalism, Nation States and Victimisation of the Kurdish people as well as the prognostic frames Women's Liberation, *Sehid*, Self-Defence, and Revolution were found to be emotionally consistent. In the collected data, Campbell does not specifically mention colonialism. The data also did not provide proof for the frames Justice and Dignity and International Legitimisation to be emotionally consistent.

The frame Misogyny is emotionally consistent and manifests in a statement by Campbell: "But of course Daesh is just one symptom of a participial system and of a chauvinistic and nationalistic mindset that thinks that's okay to kill women, it's okay to enslave people and to kill people because of differences. And you don't just see that here but across the world." (Campbell, cited in Punx

2018) The words *kill* and *enslave* have a negative polarisation and evoke fear, anger and sadness (NCR Emotion Lexicon 2011). Further, her friends and comrades described her as a fierce fighter against oppression. “She was struggling against hierarchies and domination for all the living beings. She struggled against all the prisons and borders that hold people kidnapped, and against the walls that are built in all of us by the capitalist, patriarchal and state mindset. [...] She had the will to fight for the liberation from all structures of power and oppression that hold people down. She always had a rebel spirit that let her stick to her convictions in the most difficult situations.” (Internationalist Commune n.d.) With using *struggling*, the text implies that Campbell had a strongly negative attitude towards the patriarchal, capitalist and state system as well as fascism (NCR Emotion Lexicon 2011). This indicates that the frames Misogyny and Patriarchy, Anti-Fascism and Oppression, Nation States, and Capitalism are emotionally consistent with Campbell. The anger towards oppression is reflecting in Campbell’s motivation for joining the YPJ. In a video she stated that she wanted to “... join also the weaponised fight against the forces of fascism and the enemies of the revolution. And so now I am very happy and proud to be going to Afrin to be able to do this.” (YPG IA 2018) Further, she had been part of anti-fascist organisations in England which indicates her strong negative polarisation on the issue of fascism.

This negative polarisation is answered with the emotionally consistent frames Women’s Liberation and Revolution. In a video published by the YPG, Campbell say: “I joined because I wanted to support the revolution and because I wanted to participate in the revolution of women that is ... up here and fight and join also the weaponised fight against the forces of fascism and the enemies of the revolution. And so now I am very happy and proud to be going to Afrin to be able to do this.” (YPG IA 2018) She reflects joy and pride in connection with the frame Women’s Liberation. This frame is closely connected with the frames Revolution for Peace, Freedom and Democracy. In a commemoration for Campbell, her comrades said about her that she “... came to Rojava because she deeply believed in the struggle for a free, equal and ethical world, because she was dedicated with all her heart to the struggle for worldwide women liberation.” (Internationalist Commune n.d.) Campbell joined the YPJ because she “... wanted to support the revolution and because [she] wanted to participate in the revolution of women.” (YPG IA 2018) Her father also stated the strive for freedom and liberation as a reason for Campbell to go to Rojava: “When she heard about the political experiment in Rojava [the Kurdish area of northern Syria] this seemed to her to be the way the world should be. [...] The social organisation at all levels, the equality.” (Blake 2018) The context of the text indicates the positive polarisation Campbell connects to the frame Revolution

and the joy, admiration and anticipation it evoked for her. The frame is therefore emotionally consistent with her.

The frame antagonising Turkiye is emotionally consistent with the personal narrative of Campbell. As her father said in an interview: “She was absolutely single-minded when it came to what she believed in, and she believed what Turkey is doing is wrong.” (Blake 2018) This sense of wrongdoing reflects the anger Campbell felt towards the Turkish state. This frame is connected to the emotionally consistent frame Self-Defence. In a statement published after her death in 2018 Campbell is quoted: “The attacks of the Turkish state against the revolution and against the Kurdish people and the people of Kurdistan [...] are very shocking and heavy and I’m happy to join my friends to defend ourselves and our revolution against these enemies.” (YPG IA 2018) This text indicates the pride and hope she feels towards the efforts of the YPJ-YPG. It also shows the same notion of legitimising the military operations as self-defence efforts that the frames used.

The frame International Responsibility is emotionally consistent in regards to Campbell’s self-identification as an internationalist: “Internationalism is a kinda of political though that means that everybody who’s involved in liberationary struggles, it’s their duty to not just work for the liberation of their own people or their own area but for everybody who’s fighting in this way. You know like, okay I could be far away in my own country and I could say: “Oh okay, as long as I manage to free my own people than that is enough but now, for internationalists this is not enough. You know, we have to support everybody who’s fighting for, to create the world that they want to live in.” (Campbell, cited in Punx 2018)

In a video Campbell shows emotional consistency with the frame *Sehid*: “There have been international *sehids*, international martyrs since many many years in this place and so one of the forces behind the revolution is that we build things up even stronger and even greater in the memory of the people that have fallen *sehid*, that have become martyrs. [...] The fight would still be continued in memory of those international people who have died here and so I think this is something really beautiful for this revolution and to feel like we can all fight together to create a better world.”(Campbell, in Punx 2018) The pride and admiration towards the fighters that have been killed in the YPJ-YPG’s struggle becomes evident in this text. Further, she uses the same notion of responsibility and duty towards the martyrs of the group to justify a continuous fight. Due to the preparation or priming of the diagnostic and prognostic framing, the motivational frames Resistance, *Sehid* and Feminism and Humanism are all emotionally consistent and result into a mobilisation for action.

## D. Emotional Centrality of the YPJ's Collective Action Frames

The background of each foreign fighter already provides some information on the emotional centrality of certain parts of the YPJ-YPG's framing. In addition, the consensus building frames will be looked at again to determine their influence on the emotional centrality.

### 1. Hanna Böhman

Due to her interest in war documentary and her proclaimed goal to “[humanise] the Kurdish struggle for gender equality.” (Larson 2017), the frames of Victimisation and Women's Liberation can be assumed to be emotionally central for Böhman. The strongly positive polarisation towards the issue of Women's liberation in combination with the fight against ISIS becomes evident in a statement given in a podcast: “The fight against ISIS was truly you know a fight of good versus evil. I'd heard about the girls of the YPJ and I thought here's an actual army of women who were truly fighting. Not just, you know patronising roles in back radio ops or rad ops or things like that but actually fighting. And I was so inspired by that, I just wanted to be a part. It became like a physical feeling, I had to go and join them.” (Deep Green Resistance 2021) The described physical reaction indicates a strong emotional centrality of the frames Women's Liberation and Antagonising Daesh. She also showed anger towards the Canadian government's inaction before going to Rojava, indicating the emotional centrality of the frame International Responsibility before being recruited. After going to Rojava, the data shows a shift in her narratives as she also talks about her aversion towards Turkiye. It can be assumed that this shift is due to the emotional priming done by the framing through the education of the YPJ-YPG (Arabian 2017).

### 2. Elefterya Hambi

For Hambi, the frames Misogyny and Patriarchy, Anti-Fascism, International Responsibility, Anti-Capitalism, Nation States, and Justice and Dignity are emotionally central as becomes apparent in the reasoning for joining the YPJ in the letter she had written to her friends (Hambi, in ANF 2018). Her background in anti-fascist and anarchy movements indicates the centrality of these issues (ANF 2018). Using gender-neutral wording further shows her predisposition and the centrality of the frames Misogyny and Women's Liberation. The frames are therefore assumed to be emotionally resonant.



The frame Self-Defence is emotionally consistent but the data only provides limited evidence for the frame to be emotional central. It is therefore assumed to be insufficiently emotionally central and hence insufficiently emotionally resonant.

Hambi does not mention the fight against Daesh and Turkiye specifically but rather the fight against the system both actors are set in. Therefore, these two frames are less emotionally central than the frames deconstructing societal norms like Women's Liberation, Anti-Capitalism or Nation States. It can be assumed, that the YPJ-YPG's framing would have not been emotionally resonant if it would have only addressed the aggressions of Daesh and Turkiye and left out the groups' proposed solution in the means of societal change. The frames therefore hold insufficient emotional resonance.

### 3. Maria Edgarda Marcucci

Marcucci's background in anti-fascist and feminist movements indicates an emotional centrality of the frames Misogyny and Women's Liberation, and Anti-Fascism and Revolution. The frames Antagonising Daesh and Turkiye are emotionally consistent and the anger she expresses towards the actors also reflects emotional centrality. Marcucci went to Syria to fight ISIS and came back with great aversion towards Turkiye. Since Marcucci sees both as the symptoms of bigger problems, the frames Anti-Capitalism, Misogyny, Anti-Fascism and International Responsibility can be assumed to have an even greater emotional centrality. The frame Victimisation is connected with the frame International Responsibility. Both of them are emotionally central for Marcucci as becomes evident in a statement given to a new agency: "Europe should support the Kurdish resistance, even with weapons" (translated from Italian, Marcucci, Rapisardi 2022)

The data did not show emotions centrality of the frames *Shhid* and Self-Defence before Marcucci went to Rojava. After her commitment to the YPJ however, the frame's emotional centrality increased as she was calling for the recognition of foreign fighters that have been killed during their commitment with the YPJ-YPG: "I have seen has turned into a tool of self-defence and helped me to honour the path paved by people like Lorenzo Orsetti and Anna Campbell, who fell in battle in Syria, and who are never talked about enough." (Lancellotti 2022).

### 4. Kimberly Taylor

Taylor's background in feminism and left wing politics indicate an emotional centrality of the frames Misogyny and Patriarchy, and Women's Liberation as well as Anti-Fascism. She mentions her excitement over the YPJ-YPG's efforts being a "real revolution" which made her decide to join

the YPJ (Qandil 2017). This demonstrates the emotional centrality of Revolution. The frame Anti-Capitalism was also of central meaning to her as she said that she had “immediately ‘fallen in love’ with the ideology – anti-capitalist and feminist.” (Taylor, cited in Blake 2017) Further, Taylor’s wish to help Kurdish people which is closely connected to the frame International Responsibility, indicates emotional centrality of the frames Victimisation and International Responsibility.

While the data does not find proof for the emotional centrality of *Sehid* before Taylor’s commitment with the YPJ, she expresses strong emotions when talking about the martyrs a few years after joining the group. This indicated an increase of emotional centrality due to the emotional priming in the YPJ-YPG’s framing. Similarly, the data does not provide evidence for the frame Antagonising *Turkiye* to be emotionally central before she went to Rojava but only after staying with the YPJ-YPG for a while (YPG Press Office 2017). While the frame of Justice and Dignity is emotionally consistent, the data provides limited indication of its emotional centrality. The frame is consequently not sufficiently emotionally resonant. The frames Antagonising *Turkiye* and Antagonising *Daesh* are assumed to be of little emotional centrality for Taylor as her mentioning of them to be a reason for her commitment to the group does not exceed a side-note. She had further said to be mainly inspired by the ideology of the YPJ-YPG (Blake 2017).

## 5. Anna Campbell

The frames targeting the patriarchy, Turkey, fascism and martyrs were emotionally consistent with Campbell yet the frame *Sehid* only emerged after her arrival in Rojava. Therefore only the diagnostic frames of patriarchy, Turkey, and fascism are both emotionally consistent as well as central. Campbell’s involvement in feminist and anti-fascist movements before joining the YPJ reinforces the centrality of the frames Patriarchy and Fascism.

The frame Antagonising *Turkiye* has a strong emotional centrality for Campbell which becomes evident when looking at the last months of her life: She, against the advise of her commander, went to Afrin and even changed her appearance in order to being able to fight alongside her comrades against the Turkish attacks (Vardy 2018).

Campbell was inspired by “the grassroots feminist and socialist revolution that has swept Rojava (the semi-autonomous Kurdish region of northern Syria and heartland of the YPG/J) and inspired the Kurds’ fight against Isis.” (Blake 2018) While this indicated that the frame Antagonising ISIS has somewhat of an emotional centrality, the frames Women’s Liberation and Revolution hold a greater emotional centrality.

## E. Emotional Goals and Needs of the YPJ's Collective Action Frames

Based on Jasper's categorisation of human goals, the framing of the YPJ-YPG appeals to the goals of Reputation, Impact, Connection, and Curiosity. The most prominent goal is the impact the framing promises bystanders to have by joining their group. The following will discuss which emotional needs the emotionally consistent and central frames fulfil. These will then be compared to the emotionally consistent and central frames to see, what emotional goals the foreign fighters mobilised. Overall, the human goal to have an impact had been the main reason for the collective action frames of the YPJ-YPG to be emotionally consistent with the foreign fighters.

The frames of Women's Liberation, Revolution, Legitimising: Self-Defence, Justice and Dignity and International Legitimation all answer to the goal of reputation as they evoke pride in one's group. The frames Misogyny, Antagonising Turkiye and Daesh, Anti-Fascism, Anti-Capitalism and Victimisation increase this pride further by humiliating their enemy. The emotional goal of reputation is accommodated for by the YPJ-YPG's framing *Shhid*. The frame implies that the members of the groups are fighting with honour and pride, averting the emotion of shame. This shame is rather directed at the enemies of the YPJ-YPG, enhancing the reputation of the group and its members. The frame of *Shhid* is especially meaningful as it promises pride and honour beyond death, a likely occurrence when joining a militia. The slogan "Our Martyrs are our Honour!" (YPG International 2019d) directly demonstrates this honour.

The frames Misogyny, Anti-Fascism, Anti-Capitalism, Nation States, Women's Liberation, Revolution and Justice and Dignity all imply that the efforts of the YPJ-YPG are part of a bigger picture, a bigger struggle for freedom and justice. The frame *Shhid* matches the goal of impact as martyrdom implies that the person fought and died for a reason, a purpose. Since all fallen fighters of the YPJ-YPG are referred to as martyrs, it insinuates that fighting for the groups means fighting with a purpose. Further, the frame Legitimation: Self-Defence and Resistance presents the groups' fight as "the heroic resistance of the peoples" (YPJ Headquarters Command 2019a), creating a moral vision. It implies to offer a once-in-a-lifetime chance at creating something right. A direct implementation of this goal is carried out in frames addressing liberation and revolution. Those frames show the direct effect that the YPJ-YPG's struggle has on the population. Often, the frames use quotes by individuals, thanking the group for liberating them. The YPJ-YPG also promise their members to find a purpose and answers, implying truth and sincerity: "Our comrade Vejin Zagros [...] found the answer to her questions in the ranks of the YPJ and joined us." (YPJ Headquarters Command 2019b)

This emotional promise of connection gets expressed through condolences for every fallen fighter. It is communicated that every individual that joins the groups' struggle counts and will never be forgotten. The groups often use slogans like "The martyrs are immortal!" (YPJ Headquarters Command 2019a) Most of the goal connection is, however, fulfilled through the direct personal ties forged in the field rather than the framing of the groups.

The goal of curiosity is fulfilled by framing the project of Democratic Confederalism as an experiment and the frame Revolution. This especially appeals to individuals interested in social change and alternative ways to organise society. In addition, the low entry levels for the group might motivate individuals that are on the look-out for adventure and adrenaline.

Hanna Böhman specifically mentioned that she "mainly [...] just wanted to do something fulfilling with [her] life." (Arabian 2017) This indicated the emotional need of purpose and impact. The framing allowed her to invest into a cause and overcome the fear of death: "I'd rather die with a purpose. If I get killed fighting with the YPJ, it's not tragic." (O'Malley 2017) The goal of Impact is therefore most important for her and explains the emotional resonance of the frames with her. For Hambi, the goal Impact was also the reason why the frames were emotionally resonant. She mentioned a feeling of powerlessness in regards to creating the world she wants to see (Hambi, in ANF 218). The YPJ-YPG offers a solution for her to achieve this vision and ideology. The emotional resonance of the frames Anti-Fascism, Anti-Capitalism, International Responsibility, Women's Liberation and Revolution provide further proof for the goal to be essential. The goal to have an impact played a central role in Marcucci's motivation and the emotional resonance of the frames by the YPJ-YPG. Specifically the emotional resonance of the frames Victimisation, International Responsibility, Anti-Fascism, Anti-Capitalism and Women's Liberation provide proof for the importance of this goal. Taylor said: "I would like to say thank you, this revolution gave me a new life. In my whole life I wanted to be in revolution and now I am in the revolution, I am very happy." (Qandil 2017) This demonstrates the goal to have an impact, which she had tried to achieve unsuccessfully before (Taylor, in Independent 2017). Further, after coming to Rojava for the first time, she had felt an obligation to help after talking to civilians (Blake 2017). This indicates the goal connection. As an internationalist, Campbell wanted to contribute to the liberation of all people and make a change in the world. Hence, the goal to have an impact which is achieved through the moral vision created by the YPJ-YPG, is also applicable in her case. Campbell's strong urge to join her comrades in the battle over Afrin further indicates the goal of connection: "I'm happy to join my friends to defend ourselves and our revolution against these enemies." (Campbell, in YPG IA 2018)

## V. Conclusion

As this thesis has shown, the emotional resonance of collective action frames is an intricate process that relies on certain criteria. By creating emotional consistency and centrality with frames that answer to emotional needs, emotional resonance can constitute an intermediate processual cause that translates collective action frames into the mobilisation of foreign fighters. The SMO's framing has to elicit the same emotion as the individual would prescribe to the topic, providing for an emotional consistency. Secondly, the individual has to be emotionally primed by either their existing surroundings or the SMO's consensus building frames, in order to evoke emotional centrality for the framing of the SMO. With their diagnostic framing, the YPJ-YPG evoked the emotions of anger, disgust, fear, and sadness. According to Meier, these emotions help create resentment towards the enemies of the group (Meier 2019: 1152-1153). These negative polarisations are then countered in the prognostic framing by evoking joy, trust, and anticipation, resulting into pride and hope. Those emotions help energise action. Both framing tasks resulted into emotional consistency and emotional centrality with the observed individuals. By connecting the motivational frames to the emotions and themes used in the diagnostic and prognostic framing, the groups manage to create emotional frames that resonate. The YPJ-YPG created emotionally resonant collective action frames by deploying said mechanism and addressing the human need for impact. While in some cases, frames connected with societal change and social injustice hold a stronger emotional centrality than frames that only target certain actors in the conflict, in other those antagonising frames are much more central and lead to emotional resonance. Reasons for this are the personal predisposition and the emotional priming of an individual. However, emotional priming can also be done through framing, indicating the discursive character to collective action frames. Lastly, the SMO has to match the emotional needs of the individuals. While this is usually done purposefully by directly interacting with the potential recruits, foreign fighters pose a difficulty for SMOs. Hence, SMO has to pay careful attention to addressing these needs. The YPJ-YPG managed to create powerful promises by giving purpose and addressing the need of making an impact as well as connection.

The results also show that although certain frames may be emotionally consistent, they might not result into action due to a lack of emotional centrality. While this centrality is highly dependent on the background and personal predisposition, it can also be influenced by the emotional priming of the SMO and their effective provision of emotional promises that answer the individual's goals. This is seen in the case of Hanna Böhman. While she did not have a background in activism, dulling

the emotional resonance of frames addressing societal change, the framing of the YPJ-YPG was still emotionally resonant for her. This is, partially, due to her emotional need for impact, which the YPJ-YPG accommodated for and which was the main goal their framing answered to. Ultimately, emotions are based in functional behaviour. Hence, collective action frames making use of emotions have to fulfil these functions which are grounded in human goals and emotional needs (Plutchik; Jasper 2011: 6) In order to create effective collective action frames, SMOs have to knowledge the great influence emotions have on a persons behaviour as they fall back on basic needs. This is also relevant for research in the field of conflict studies. Neglecting emotions in collective action neglects a significant part of human motivation and behaviour and will most likely lead to adverse assumptions.

As this is only a first attempt to operationalise emotional resonance, the topic offers many opportunities for refining or even re-defining the concept, applying it to different cases and testing its accuracy. An important next step is to further research the causation between emotional consistency, centrality and goals. Interviews with members of SMOs will potentially offer the needed insights. It would also facilitate the detection of emotions and leave less room for inaccurate interpretations. As verbal expression is only one part of an emotion, possible further research should recognise the physical changes, for example facial expressions, and attitudes of the individuals (Plutchik 1980: 4). For that, the respective emotions could be dissected into more detailed parts, including behaviours and even reactions on a physiological level. Another consideration for future research could be the inclusion of personality types and their effects on the emotional resonance of collective action frames.

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