The influence of Place, Space, and Socialising agents on Identity in Iraqi Kurdistan:

A study of Kurdish youth aged 18 - 25

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Abstract

Much has been written about Kurdish nationalism and identity, the largest ethnic group without a nation living in what is probably the most hostile region of the world will inevitably draw the attention of academics. Whilst this thesis is another in that long list, it does something that others have not done. We have decided not to take the traditional approach of studying Kurdish nationalism and identity. This thesis attempts to deconstruct Kurdish identity using what we determine as the three main influencing factors of place, space, and socialising agents. When we think about what makes us who we are, we do not think about primordialism, ethno-symbolism, constructivism, instrumentalism or indeed any other theory. What makes us British, American, Indian or Kurdish are the memories of where we grew up, our surroundings, the influence of our friends and relatives, the language we grow up with, the sounds and smells of our upbringing and much more. Each of those influences are as important as each other and work together to make us who we are. Iraq, much in the same way as Turkey, Iran and Syria has tried (and failed) to reduced the impact of one or more of those influences in any way it can, often using brutal force to meet those aims. Kurds have been most successful in Iraq and if one were to visit the region they would be surprised to know it was an Arabic speaking country. The influences of place, space and socialising agents in Iraqi Kurdistan since the creation of Iraq have culminated in what can only be described as a de-facto state. These influences have resulted in a new type of nationalism that we have called 'guerrilla nationalism', a nationalist movement that is "Irregular, uncoordinated nationalist activities carried out by non-state actors in an often (but not exclusively) defensive and/or reactive response to the established states nationalist activities and policies of homogenisation".

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I do not consider myself superstitious but after experiencing several difficulties in the course of my thesis, things decidedly improved as soon as I met and married my wife Shene and so I have to thank her for all her encouragement, support and just agreeing to be a part of my life and giving us our son Nolan, you are my lucky charms.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0   Introduction

As the largest ethnic group in the world without a nation, the Kurds and in particular, Kurdish nationalism has received considerable academic attention. Being located in the Middle East, an area of hostile for centuries, has meant that any claims for national identity recognition, let alone independence has been repeatedly met with not only political objection but also ethnic cleansing and genocide. Clearly there are different definitions of nationalism and national identity by different academics and the main definitions will be discussed and debated further on in the thesis.

For the purposes of this research, I shall use the definition of the nation elaborated by Anthony Smith. According to Smith (1991, p. 14), a nation is 'a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members'. One thing missing from this definition however is the recognition of the often irrational and irregular actions people will take in defense of their national identity. It is also worth mentioning that there is a distinction here between national identity and ethnicity/ethnic identity. The term national identity has been used here as there are people living in the Kurdish areas who consider themselves a part of the Kurdish nation but who may not be ethnically Kurdish by birth. Since ethnic identity is defined by one's ethnicity and race, the use of the term national identity is more appropriate in this case.

The purpose of this thesis is to study the influences of national identity and nationalism in Kurdish youth and whilst this has been done before in relation to

Turkey, Iran, Syria as well as Iraq (the focus of this study), it is argued that a new approach is needed. The way in which Kurds have been treated in those four states have differed greatly as each state has adopted different policies of containment and appeasement. One thing that brings them all together however is that they have all individually sought to control and weaken Kurdish identity and nationalist expression, in many cases they have even worked together to do so. In order to complete our study the following questions were therefore raised which this study seeks to gain answers to.

1. How have Kurdish youth reacted to any perceived threat to their identity?

2. What influence do other people and inherited memories have on identity development?

3. To what extent is place influential in the formation of ethnic identity in Kurdish youth?

4. Can identity be imposed on smaller groups and what are the consequences of such an imposed identity being rejected?

5. What do Kurdish youth living in Iraqi Kurdistan feel about the idea of Kurdistan as a symbolic idea and has the idea of Kurdistan changed with a change in demographics?

6. How has social media and technology impacted on Kurdish identity expression?

It is hoped that by gaining answers to the above questions not only will there be a greater understanding of Kurdish nationalism and national identity but a new approach to the study of nationalism in general will be put forward.

This chapter of the thesis will give a brief introduction into the history of the region in particular the events that led to the creation of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey following the demise and breakup of the Ottoman empire after the first world war. This brief introduction will outline the history of Iraq and the Kurds in particular which will lay the foundations for the further study of Kurdish nationalism and national identity. It begins with the study of the origins of the Kurds including geographical location, language, population size and their place in the context of the Ottoman empire. The chapter then moves on to study the Kurds relationship with the Ottoman empire and how from this period, the attempts to homogenise Kurdish identity into a national Ottoman identity started and continued until the creation of the state of Turkey. There will also be a discussion on how the states of Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria dealt with their Kurdish populations and their attempts at homogenizing Kurdish identity.

Chapter two will begin to explore the literature surrounding the issues of identity and identity development including the most notable authors in the field who have made significant contributions towards research on how individual and group identity is developed. This will begin with a study on identity formation and the state and the

homogenisation of national identity. This chapter will start the review of literature based on the three elements of place, space, and socialising agents that we have identified as influencing Kurdish identity development.

Chapter three will lay down the methodological approach carried out to perform the study including the reasons why the particular approach was decided upon, the ethical considerations, limitations and conflicts of interest, and the analysis method.

Chapter four will take the introduction a little further and concentrate more on the identity development in Iraqi Kurdistan. It will look further into the policies of successive Iraqi governments and their attempts to subdue and control Kurdish nationalism and national identity expression. It will begin with an exploration of reactive nationalism in a homogenous state and move on to concentrate on the state of Iraq and the development of Kurdish nationalism in that country. It will also look at how dominant ethnicities deal with minority groups, in particular the study of non nation states

Chapter five will continue the literature review and move on to provide a theoretical framework for the study. In this chapter there will be a discussion of the main theories around nationalism and national identity expression. The theories of primordialism, instrumentalism, constructivism and ethno symbolism will be discussed and debated in the context of the Kurdish nationalist movement. The chapter will start with an exploration of the modernist paradigm and the cultural roots of nationalism. After discussing primordialism, instrumentalism and constructivism the chapter will then move on to discuss the implications for the Kurdish case.

Chapter six will begin to explore the research findings in the context of the literature which will be split into three areas of identity influence. This chapter will explore the influence of place on Kurdish identity development and asks how the cities, neighborhoods, schools, mosques, museums and places of entertainment etc. influence identity development inn Iraqi Kurdish youth. It will begin with an exploration of the importance of place identity and then move on to discuss how history, or post memory, influences identity development. The chapter will also discuss how non Kurdish groups influence place identity and how the change in demographics changes what places mean to some people.

Chapter seven will continue the discussion of the research findings from the previous chapter and explore the influence of space on Kurdish identity development. This chapter will explore the influence of the spaces in which we express ourselves which include, amongst other things, language, clothing, social media, symbols, songs and myths. The chapter starts by discussing the importance of spatial identity and how the expression of identity by those that are considered members of the out group influence Kurdish identity and how those members are treated. This will then move on to discuss the influence of language, clothing and social media.

Chapter eight will conclude the discussion of the research findings from the previous chapters and explore the influence of what we call 'socialising agents' on Kurdish identity development. These socialising agents have a direct impact on identity development and include parents, grandparents, relatives, friends, teachers, religious and political leaders and any other individuals or groups that have an

impact on identity development. As in previous chapters, this chapter will start by discussing the importance of socialising agents on identity development and also how members of the out group influence identity development. It will then move on to discuss the influence of family, teachers and friends, religion and media on national identity development in Kurdish youth.

Chapter nine will provide a brief conclusion to the study summarizing the main issues raised throughout the study and discuss the contributions to knowledge and overarching claims of the thesis.

Chapter ten, the final chapter will give a more detailed discussion of the findings where the research questions will be repeated and a more in depth analysis of the influences of place, space, and socialising agents will be given. This chapter will also discuss any conflicting data and unexpected findings that arose form the study. Finally, recommendations for future research and final comments will be given which will then bring the main body of the research to a close. The chapter starts with a discussion on the methods used to conduct the study and its ethical concerns and limitations and then moves on to discuss the findings in more detail in relation to place, space, and socialising agents. The chapter then moves on to discuss any conflicting data and unexpected findings that arose form the research, the recommendations for future research and final comments.

Throughout the research and chapters discussed above, we discuss relevant theories that are relevant to identity development and nationalism. The recurring theme throughout each chapter is that Kurdish nationalism and national identity

development is both defensive and reactionary in nature and falls into what we have termed guerilla nationalism which we define as "Irregular, uncoordinated nationalist activities carried out by non-state actors in an often (but not exclusively) defensive and/or reactive response to the established states nationalist activities and policies of homogenisation". To elaborate on this term, guerilla nationalism is the act of carrying out unplanned, ad hock nationalist activities by one or more individuals that is uncoordinated and not organised by any political or social group. It is often the start of a wider political or social nationalist movement where the actions of one individual leads to wider revolt. It can and often does happen as a result of a threat or hostility from a third party, a man burning an American flag in Iran, Palestinian boys throwing stones at Israeli soldiers can both be used as examples of guerilla nationalism. These actions by individuals or groups may lead to further expressions of nationalism which may then lead to a distinct nationalist movement or become part of an existing one.

This term has been used as it perfectly describes Kurdish nationalist movements and existing theories do not adequately do the particular Kurdish case sufficient justice as will be shown throughout the following chapters.

1.1   Origin

Kurds have inhabited their land, Kurdistan, for thousands of years and are considered by many to be one of the oldest nations in the Middle East. Its capital

Erbil is recognized by UNESCO[1] as one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world[2].

There is much myth and superstition surrounding the origin of the Kurds and so there is not enough substantial evidence regarding their origin to give enough indisputable evidence as to their origin but most historians agree that they are Indo-Europeans by origin. Historical evidence suggests that the Kurds are the descendents of Indo-European nomadic tribes that settled around the Zagros mountains[3] during the second millennium BC but there is also mystery and disagreement amongst historians as to their origins. It is thought that the Kurds are a mixture of two nations that are indigenous to the area, firstly people who lived in the area of the Zagros mountains and secondly those that moved to the area from Central Asia. It is thought that these two groups lived in the area and mixed with each other over thousands of years and eventually became what we now call the Kurds. Many attempts have been made to identify the ancestors of the Kurds amongst the many different nations and empires that have lived in and ruled an often volatile and turbulent region. Many historians and scholars and historians agree that the Kurds are descendants of the Medes of the Medain empire. There are however different opinions on the origins of the Kurds due to the lack of evidence of their origin. Johnathan Randal claims that the Kurds have been present in the area since 2400 BC and that they have a better claim to racial history than any nation in Europe now. Different empires and various nations have referred to the Kurds by different names. These names were used in different periods of the history of the region. Jawad

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[1] The Erbil citadel locally known as Qelat is located in the centre of the city and was added to the UNESCO world heritage list on 21st June 2014.

[2] Erbil, also spelled Arbil or Irbil, Hewler in Kurdish dates back to 2300 BC.

[3] The Zagros mountains are a long mountain range along the borders of Iraq, Iran and South-eastern Turkey.

believes that "The Sumurians and Babylons knew the Kurds as Guti, Juti, Kurts, Kardo. The Assyrians and Arammians called the Kurds Guti, Karti, Kurti, Kardo, Kardaka and Kardak. The Iranians knew the Kurds as Sirti, Kurti, Kurdiu, Kurdraha and Kurds. The Romans and the Greek knew the Kurds as Kardosui, Kardxoi, Kurdutu, Kurdin, Kardoti, Kurdons and Kardwai" (Jawad 1981).

With all this uncertainty as to the Kurds origin there is however, some consensus in that most agree that the Kurds have Aryan roots. Jawad argues that "Most of the scholars consider the Kurds to be Aryans, but it is difficult to obtain a unanimous view of their origin. As long ago as 400 BC Xenophon, in the Anabasis, mentions Khardukhi or Kardukai, a mountain people who harassed his march towards the sea. The Kurdish language belongs to the Indo- European family" ((Jawad 1981).).

Stansfield also argues that "The origins of the Kurds are unclear, but there is common consent within the academic literature that they are an Indo-European people, descended from waves of migrations originating on the Indian subcontinent and spreading across the mountains of Turkey, Iraq and Iran, and into Europe, a migration occurring several thousand years ago. Kurds believe themselves to be the direct descendants of the Medes, who secured their autonomy from the neo-Assyrian empire and established their own empire centered in the Zagros Mountains" (Stansfield 2016).

One of the best clues to the origins of the Kurds may be found in the history and origin of the name 'Kurd'. One of the earliest accounts of written texts mentioning

the Kurds comes from Xenephon's famous account of the Kardoukhi[4]. From this reference there are further references by others in various forms.

Another variation on the word has been referenced as "Khaldi" which Professor Vladimir Minorsky has described as having "a certain consonantal resemblance" to the name "Kurd". The Khaldi emerged around the ninth century B.C. and established an empire until the seventh century B.C. in the south of modern day Turkey (Minorsky 1927).

1.1.1 Location

It would not be possible to find Kurdistan on any map as you would identify any other state as there are no independent internationally recognized state boundaries or borders that identify Kurdistan as an independent state. To date the geographical boundaries of Kurdistan are drawn up based on estimated population of certain areas but this in itself also causes problems when particular states deny the existence of Kurdish identity and do not officially identify the population of a given area by their Kurdish ethnicity. This means that it is difficult if not impossible to officially identify the population of the given area. With greater autonomy in Iraqi Kurdistan, this is much easier to do however, with no official census for decades and disputed territories such as Kirkuk, there are also wide ranging estimates as to the population in Iraqi Kurdistan as well.

Today, the Kurds are mainly concentrated where the countries of Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria meet but they can also be found in few numbers in the countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Lebanon and Eastern Iran. Running through the center of this

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[4] Xenephon travelled with Alexander the great as his biographer and wrote of a tribe called the Kardoukhi or Kardukai that savagely harassed their army.

territory are the Zagros mountain range, a rugged mountainous area that has provided a natural barrier and defense against invasion and government forces throughout the history of the Kurds.

It can certainly be argued that Kurdistan was a land that was inhabited by people who travelled to or settled on its land. Migration (particularly nomadic) was a feature of the lives of many nations in history and the Kurds were no different. It is therefore accurate to say that those that inhabit the geographical borders that are called Kurdistan today are descendants of a mixture of groups and tribes that travelled to and stayed in Kurdistan. Ali argues that "We can conclude from the evidence that is available to date that the Kurds are the descendents of the Kuts, who were originated from the mix between the original inhabitants of Zagros Mountains and the waves of the Aryans that dwelled in their region" (Ali 1997: 9).

The modern history of the Kurds contains many accounts of abuse by those nations that they inhabit, in most cases that abuse is often based on the denial of the existence of a distinct Kurdish identity. In turn, Kurds are often very defensive about their claim to their ancestral land and insist that there is proof beyond any doubt that the Kurds have inhabited. Jalal Talabani[5] writes about the origin of Kurds and claims that

"The current Kurdish nation has its roots in this land, Kurdistan for thousands and even tens of thousands of years. The latest archeological findings in the caves of Shanadari, Chami Rezan (Zarzi) show that the land of the Kurds, Kurdistan, was inhabited for tens of thousands of years. Obviously, the waves of people and groups

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[5] One of the founders of the main political parties in Iraqi Kurdistan, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

that arrived in Kurdistan mixed with the original inhabitants throughout time. Therefore, the original tribes and clans merged together to create the current Kurdish nation" (Resool 2012).

The Kurds of Iraq have been battling the central government ever since the creation of the country in relation to the territorial boundaries of the Kurdish area. As Bartu states "The disputed internal boundaries in northern Iraq between the Kurds and the Arabs have been a persistent fault-line in the state's history and rapidly emerged as a core dispute after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Previous negotiations on the extent of Kurdish autonomy in 1963, 1970–74, 1983 and 1991 had foundered on the questions of defining the Kurdish region, jurisdiction over mixed areas, and related processes of determining sectarian and ethnic preferences—that is, censuses and referendums[6]. Behind these ostensibly technical questions lurk more fundamental concerns of identity and nationhood. After each failed negotiation Arab–Kurd relations have taken a turn for the worse" (Bartu 2010).

The most contentious of these territorial disputes has been around the ethnic identity of the oil rich city of Kirkuk. The city has been the subject of countless attempts at demographic change by Saddam and previous governments who have tried to reduce Kurdish influence and population size in the city. Kurds argue that the city is the heart of Kurdistan and any future Kurdish state must include the city within its boundaries, it is also the case that the wealth that the city brings in through oil revenue is essential if that state were to stand any chance of survival.

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[6] The Kurdish proposal to the Baath National Revolutionary Command Council in April 1963 defined the Kurdish areas as 'the provinces of Sulaimaniyah, Kirkuk, Arbil and the districts inhabited by a Kurdish majority in the provinces of Mosul and Diyala.

1.1.2 Population size

Yet more controversy is generated by the question of the size of the Kurdish population. Kurds themselves are temped to exaggerate it whilst governments with Kurdish populations under estimate it. What is generally accepted however is that the Kurds are the largest ethnic group without a nation. The statistics for population size of Kurdistan are however notoriously variable, however, what all estimates show is that over time, the population of Kurdistan has increased, even when taking into consideration the hundreds of thousands of Kurds murdered and forcibly displaced. Many thousands of Kurds have fled Kurdistan towards Europe during conflict and many other have returned from Europe whenever conflicts have died down. The majority of the Kurdish population is located in southeastern and eastern Anatolia in Turkey, however as previously mentioned there are no accurate census data which actually tells us exactly how many. According to the CIA factbook the total number of Kurds is around 28 million made up of 14.5 million in Turkey, 6 million in Iran, 5-6 million in Iraq and under 2 million in Syria (C.I.A. Factbook 2010). Due to recording and census irregularities in each of these countries the figure could be considerably greater. No official census in Iraq has been conducted for approximately 50 years, in Turkey until relatively recently there was no such thing as Kurds and were referred to as "mountain Turks". According to official reports there are 11 million Kurds in Turkey whilst Kurdish sources put the figure at 20-25 million (Izady 1992).

As far as Iraqi Kurdistan goes, the population size is further complicated due to the population movements within the area and movements too and from it[7].

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[7] Largely down to the systematic attempts by Saddam to change the ethnic demography of Kurdish cities and also down to Kurds emigrating to Europe.

1.1.3 Language

Language is often the first and most important ethnic identity identifier and this is particularly the case when discussing Kurdish identity. For the Kurds, their language is proof of a separate distinct identity and a symbol of their national struggle. In Iraq, the Kurdish language has been spoken with relative freedom now and in the past. Under Saddam Kurdish was permitted in schools, offices and in public life but was strictly denied in Turkey. Kurdish is an officially recognized language by the government in Iraq and although officially a part of Iraq, if anyone were to spend time in Iraqi Kurdistan it would be surprising if they encountered any Arabic in their day to day lives, indeed very few people (particularly the younger generation) actually understand Arabic. With the increase in internet accessibility and communication with the outside world, English is now a more important language to know than Arabic. As Romano states; "There are four main factors affecting Kurdish nationalist movements' adoption of modem communications technology and its resulting impact: (1) The aforementioned physical division of the Kurds, which exacerbated linguistic, cultural and political distance between Kurdish groups; (2) repression of the Kurdish ethnic minority by the states in which they live; (3) modernization-a general process in which increasing proportions of the population become urbanized, separated from agricultural and pastoral "traditional" lifestyles, exposed to new ideas, subject to in- creasing state intrusion into everyday life, inserted into state educational systems and integrated into a market economy; and (4) Kurdish population movements, including refugee movements, migration and the formation of diaspora communities outside the Middle East" (Romano 2002).

The Kurdish language stems from the Indo-European Language related to the Iranian language. There are several Kurdish dialects spoken, some of which are similar to each other and their speakers can easily converse and communicate with each other whist others are very distinctive and not mutually understandable. The four main dialects of Kurdish are Kurmanji, Sorani, Hawrami and Gorani but the main dialects spoken by most Kurds are Sorani and Kurmanji. Kurmanji is spoken by most Kurds and is the dialect spoken by Kurds in Turkey, Syria and parts of Iraq which makes up the majority of the greater Kurdish population. Sorani is spoken by Kurds in Iraq and Iran making it the official language of the Kurdistan Region in Iraq which has had the most cultural and political significance of all Kurdish dialects. As far as the number of speakers go, the Kurdish language is the fortieth most common language based on an estimate of around 6,600 to 7,000 languages[8]. Complications as to the number of speakers of Kurdish arise however due to the different dialects of Kurdish spoken not only by Kurds in different states but also within those states themselves[9]. However, contrary to what has been written about the Kurdish language, there is only one Kurdish language which is made up of only two different dialects. Gareth Stansfield argues that the Kurdish language can be subdivided into four different major groups: Firstly Kurmanji which is spoken in Turkey, Iran and Iraq: Sorani which is spoken in Iraq and Iran: Sanandaj, Kermanshai, and Like which is mostly spoken in Iraq and: zaza and Gurani which is also mostly spoken in Iran. This is further complicated by the fact that the dialects are also accompanied by different scripts with the Kurds in Turkey using the Latin script and the Kurds

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[8] This ranking is based on an estimate of the number of Kurdish speakers at around 20 million.

[9] Bahdini and Sorani are two distinct dialects of Kurdish spoken in Iraqi Kurdistan.

elsewhere using the Amharic scripts which is down to the national language of the states that Kurds reside in (Stansfield 2003).

Iraq won its independence from Britain in 1932 but even before that, the question of language policy had already caused problems between the Kurds and Arabs. The British government took notice of these disputes and attempted to institutionalize Kurdish equality in the new state. However, there was little force behind these policies on the ground and Mabry states "Thus, in the years leading up to independence, Arabic was in no uncertain terms the High Culture, high status language of power in the country; however, the place of the Kurdish language paralleled the "Kurdish question," that is, how to accommodate a stateless nation in a de facto Arab state. In 1926, the Anglo-Iraq Treaty stipulated that Baghdad must enact a "Local Languages Law" to accommodate the rights of minority groups, including but not limited to the Kurds. The purported goal of the law was to determine the boundaries of the area in which the Kurdish language would be spoken as the language of administration, the courts, and the elementary schools (Mabry 2015).

1.1.4 Society

Kurdish society has been traditionally very tribal in nature as with much of society in the area. A hierarchy of tribes and sub tribes ruled by Aghas and Sheikhs has maintained order and loyalty in the area with many of those tribes competing for local and government influence against each other. These tribes would often be played off against each other by successive empires and governments in order to gain local influence but were largely left to their own devices.

Kurdish society cannot be described in one single construct and there are important differences and distinctions between Kurdish groups in different parts of Kurdistan, and again between tribal and non tribal Kurds. Tribal Kurds were traditionally nomadic or seminomadic and their family structure was and still is based on a structure of the head of the tribe which was usually the Sheikh or Agha. These tribal heads usually intermarried and often consolidated their power and influence by working with different states at different times. Today, these tribal affiliations are still important depending on the tribe and level of affiliation. In Iraqi Kurdistan where there are two main political parties, those that biologically or tribally linked to the main parties PUK[10] and KDP[11] have considerable influence in politics and government even if they lack educational or work experience. Something as simple as having the surname 'Talabani' or Barzani' will get the owner of that surname opportunities that are simply not available to people who are better qualified and educated. This also influences politics in the region which is also run by the heads of those families with the posts of President and Prime Minister being occupied by different members of the Barzani tribe.

Whereas in the past, Kurdish society was run by the different tribes and tribal leaders, it is now run by the two main political parties which work in much the same way. Instead of biological tribal links, party affiliation is now the important factor so that even if you do not share a surname with the party leaders, loyalty to those individuals significantly increases success of those individuals.

Kurdish society is also based on geographical location which is again linked to political party support. The Capital of Erbil and the city of Duhok are strongholds of

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[10] Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
[11] Kurdistan Democratic Party

the KDP[12] whereas Sulaimaniyah and Koya are PUK[13] strongholds. As such, society and politics in those areas are heavily influenced by those parties.

Under Saddam's tyrannous rule, the Kurds were perhaps the biggest victims of his culture of violence. From 1975 onwards for the next 15 years and the establishment of the Kurdish autonomous zone in 1991 around 500,000 Kurds were killed and 4500 villages destroyed[14]. In 1987 and 1998 alone, 180,000 Kurds were murdered by the regime and 1700 villages raised to the ground. The gassing of the town of Halabja in 1988 killed 5000 within the space of a few hours. Romano argues that "the gassing of villages such as Halabja was only incidental to a more organized, sinister, and less visible campaign begun in February of 1988, however. Saddam named the campaign al - Anfal and appointed his cousin Ali Hassan al-Majid to pursue a large-scale Iraqi government campaign, carefully planned and executed, to exterminate a sizable portion of Iraq's Kurdish minority. Saddam's attempt at genocide consisted of eight Anfal operations" (Romano 2006).

Since 1991 however, the Kurdish region of Iraq has been living in autonomy to the point that it has been a de facto state and since 1991 Kurdish society has been relatively free to express its cultural and ethnic identity. This freedom of expression has firstly allowed the Kurdish government and political parties to solidify its own support, power and influence but more importantly Kurdish society has now reached a point of no return in that it would be impossible now, after such freedom of ethnic expression, to return to a point that Kurds identify as anything else. Kurds have had unfettered access to the internet, they have had total freedom to criticise and

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[12] Kurdistan Democratic Party
[13] Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
[14] This was also done in part to counter the use of those border villages by Iran during the Iran Iraq War.

denounce the Iraqi government, they have had no restrictions on wearing Kurdish clothes or speaking Kurdish in public. All these freedoms in Kurdish society have allowed Kurdish youth in particular to express their Kurdish identity freely and cast off any notion of Iraqiness.

1.2   Kurdish Identity in the Ottoman Empire

In order to study Kurdish identity it is important to understand the historical context of how the Kurds have at any given time been considered subjects, citizens, minority groups, non entities, traitors, travelers and more. Throughout history, the Kurds were often used by their more powerful neighboring empires against one another.

To win favor with the Kurdish tribal leaders many were given prominent posts in government, universities and other institutions (Nezan 1993). Although tribal in their nature, the Kurds were treated by the Sultan as a distinct group and had their own fiefdoms and were very much an autonomous group. However, given the very tribal nature of Kurdish society and the fragmented identities tribal leaders tended to act according to their own tribal interests and not to a sense of national Kurdish interest.

The early nineteenth century saw a change in Ottoman state systems that sought to quell unrest that was spreading around the empire, including the abolishment of the semi-autonomous Kurdish region and its centralization into the state apparatus.

Following the Revolution of 1908, but notably from 1910 onwards, the Young Turks and the CUP[15] began to implement a Turkification policy. The prominent leaders of the Kurdish Society for the Rise and Progress were sentenced to capital punishment, and were forced to flee the country. One member of the Bedirhan dynasty involved in publishing the newspaper Kurdistan was exiled abroad. All of the Kurdish schools in Istanbul, which were authorized under the rule of Abdulhamid II, were closed down in 1909.

The first indirect provision for Kurdish independence following the break up of the Ottoman empire was made by US president Woodrow Wilson in his 14 point plan for world peace in 1918. Amongst other things the plan set out to assure non-Turkish minorities "absolute unmolested opportunity of autonomous development" (Wilson 1918).

The Peace conference laid the foundations for the agreement of the Treaty of Sevres in 1920 which began the work of partitioning the Ottoman Empire.
The treaty would result in a significant loss of territory for the new Turkish state and was rejected by the Turkish nationalists led by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk who had seized power and ousted the Ottoman rulers. After many months of negotiations the Treaty of Lausanne was ratified by the allies and Turkey in 1923 and defined the borders of modern day Turkey. The treaty made no mention of an independent Kurdistan.

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[15] Committee of Union and Progress

1.3　The homogenization of Kurdish identity in post Ottoman Empire

It was after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the new states that the homogenization policies of those states started to have an impact on Kurdish identity. As there was an initial provision for a Kurdish state in the Sevres treaty, action was taken by the new states to quell any potential future claims to an independent Kurdish state which was to be done by bringing the Kurdish population under the national state identity.

1.3.1　Homogenization of Kurdish identity in Turkey

The new Turkey had a great deal to contend with, it had a hostile Christian population following the Armenian genocide and a large group of Kurds that had petitioned for independence immediately after the war. The new state of Turkey did not recognize any non-Muslim minority and so it had to be formed out of a single nation unified around the same language, culture, collective memory and religion. What followed was a long and arduous process of appeasing minority groups into one homogenous Turkish national identity.

Ataturk promoted a unified Sunni Muslim identity of which both Turks and Kurds were a part. The old Ottoman structures remained in place providing some stability and continuity to the Kurdish tribal leaders and emphasized the "sisterhood" between the two groups.

Once some semblance of stability had been established Ataturk began a policy of emphasizing the single homogenous Turkish identity of the country. A process of closing Kurdish clubs, arresting Kurdish nationalists and introducing Turkish symbols

on stamps, national currencies and Universities began to introduce the idea that there was no such thing as a Kurd.

This policy of denying Kurdish identity continued for decades, several rebellions were put down and the sole Turkish Identity was emphasized and Kurds were referred to as "mountain Turks" (Robins1996).

1.3.2 Homogenization of Kurdish identity in Iran

Unlike the Kurdish areas in Iraq, Turkey, the Kurdish areas of Iran were not ruled under the Ottoman Empire. The fall of the Qajar Empire bore similarities to the fall of the Ottoman Empire in relation to its treatment of minority groups especially the Kurds. The new constitutional monarchy lead by Reza Shah persianised the Iranian language, altered the school curriculum and defined all non Persian languages as Persian dialects (Hassanpour et al. 1996).

As in Turkey, Kurdish schools and clubs were closed down and the political environment and highly ethnicised society made it increasingly difficult for Kurds in Iran to express their Kurdish identity.

1.3.3 Homogenization of Kurdish identity in Syria

After the break-up of the Ottoman empire, as the British took control of Iraq and Palestine, the French took control of Syria and Lebanon. Under the French mandate, Kurdish identity was not only permitted but was encouraged. However, in very much the same way that policies changed in Iraq, Turkey and Iran, once Syria gained its independence from France many of the rights that Kurds had in Syria were

quickly withdrawn. Kurds were denied passports and Syrian citizenship and mainstream Kurdish activities were banned. Use of the Kurdish language was forbidden and any rebellion was swiftly put down much in the same way as Turkey dealt with its Kurdish minority.

As the Kurds constituted a very small minority of the population policies aimed at appeasing them and promoting a homogenous Syrian identity were seen as unnecessary. By denying them citizenship and passports, the problem was immediately resolved, in Syria this small group of non-entities posed no threat to the national identity of the state and as such ignored as long as they continued to identify themselves as Kurdish.

1.3.4   Homogenization of Kurdish identity in Iraq

Iraq after the fall of the Ottoman Empire took a different form to the other states. Run by the British government, the Kurds were treated almost as an independent state within Iraq and was treated as autonomous entity. In fear of losing Mosul and the oil-rich city of Kirkuk to Turkey, the British officials made special efforts to pacify the Kurdish communities.

In order to unify the new nation and its many ethnic and religious groups a process of national identity homogenization was undertaken to emphasize a single national identity called (al-wahda al iraqiyah) (Batatu 1978).

A recurring theme of Kurdish identity and nationalist aspirations has been the changes in policy by successive governments. Natalie later emphasizes this by highlighting how Abdul Karim Qasim (Iraq's first President) 'imposed martial law, Arabised names of Kurdish localities, closed Kurdish organizations, arrested leaders and bombed rural areas once control of Iraq was gained' (Natali 2005).

As with events in Turkey and early Iraq promises of Kurdish autonomy, dual Arab and Kurdish identity of Iraq, language rights were made to gain the influence and support of Kurdish leaders and as in earlier examples, once political power was established, these promises were reneged upon and any platform for Kurdish nationalist expression was often violently put down.

1.4   The creation of Iraq and an Iraqi identity under Saddam Hussein

It was important for the British government to have a greater degree of control in the new Iraq and so it was important for them to encourage and develop a sense of Iraqi identity that brought all people in Iraq together. Conceptually, this is difficult to maintain because a truly independent nation would naturally seek to control its own administration and resources and sever ties with an imperialist power. In 1922 the *London Times* noted: "No common purpose yet animates these heterogeneous communities... (yet) Mesopotamia, with its vague frontiers and mixed population, was treated as a nation, as an embryo State, to be ranked with the modern democracies included under the League of Nations " (Bellini, 2012)

Therefore, among the various interpretations of an Iraqi nationalist identity presented among in the political discourse of this era, the British propagated a particular brand of this notion that ensures dependency on the foreign power.

The discourse on a homogenous Iraqi identity is largely one sided in that it is widely accepted that unlike many other Arab states, Iraq does not have a dominant ethnic or religious population. As quoted by Byman , Iraq's first ruler King Faisal I, lamented: "there is still…no Iraqi people but unimaginable masses of human beings, devoid of any patriotic idea, imbued with religious traditions and absurdities, connected by no common tie, giving ear to evil, prone to anarchy, and perpetually ready to rise against any government whatever" ("Byman," 2003).

To further oppress Kurdish identity expression, Saddam undertook a policy of rewriting Kurdish history claiming that Sallahadin Ayubi was actually Arab and not Kurdish and the Kurdish hero of Newroz was not actually Kawa[16] but an Arab (Natali 2005). It was therefore not only the policy to deny Kurdish identity but to also rewrite history and convince the nation that what the Kurds actually identified as their identity markers was actually Arab.

This shows that at the highest levels of Iraqi rule and from the outset it was acknowledged that Iraqi has no collective identity and that for 'evil' and 'anarchy' to be avoided, an identity had to be formed either through policy or force.

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[16] Kawa the blacksmith is a symbol of Kurdish nationalism who according to myth defeated the tyrannous king Zuhak.

In 'Kurdish Future in a Post Saddam Iraq', Gunter (2003) exemplifies this identity building exercise experienced by early Iraqi nationhood. "Following World War I, modernization policies continued with the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the development of modern states in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. The price to be paid for the modernized state, however, was a highly centralized government that sought to assimilate its minorities" (Gunter, 2003). It is right to assume that these policies would be more likely to succeed in Turkey, Iran and Syria where the dominant identity of Arab, Turk and Shia identities prevailed. In Iraq however, the number and size of the minorities made it much more difficult to do. It was therefore only through force and terror that Saddam Hussein was able to keep all the different ethnic and religious groups in check and avoid any serious challenges to Iraq's identity.

1.5   The weakening of minority identities in Iraq

Martin Van Bruinessen argues that "promoting the different dialects in Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria as a way of highlighting differences within the Kurdish minorities was misplaced and ineffective" (Bruinessen, 1998). This is the case especially in Iraq where the Kurdish language is split equally between Sorani and Badini speakers. There is an argument to be made here that Bruniessen is incorrect, as far as acknowledging the existence of a Kurdish nation and any claims to statehood goes, it can be argued that language is not a necessary prerequisite for national identity. As Iraq was made up of so many different religions and ethnicity, the identity building exercise that Gunter describes was all the more difficult in Iraq and has still not been done successfully. This is in no small part down to the very tribal nature of identity amongst groups in Iraq and in particular the Kurdish minority.

A recurring theme of Kurdish identity and nationalist aspirations has been the changes in policy by successive governments. Natalie emphasizes this by highlighting how Abdul Karim Qasim (Iraq's first President) 'imposed martial law, Arabised names of Kurdish localities, closed Kurdish organizations, arrested leaders and bombed rural areas once control of Iraq was gained' (Natali 2005).

The expression of minority identity and those that were not in line with the Sunni Arab identity that was ruling Iraq was strictly controlled. Unlike Iran, Turkey and Syria where the dominant majority identity of Shia Muslim, Turk and Sunni Arab controlled the government, in Iraq the Sunni Arab government of Saddam Hussein was very much a minority group in Iraq and had to contend with a majority Shia Arab population and a large Sunni Kurdish minority.

The first Gulf War of 1991 brought about radical changes to Iraq and Kurdish Identity. From this point the Kurdish areas enjoyed a great deal of autonomy and little interference from the rest of Iraq allowing Kurds and political parties to freely express and develop a sense of Kurdish identity. Romano states that "in October of 1991, facing continual ambushes from Kurdish Peshmerga, and unable to use its air forces to assist in suppressing the guerrillas, Iraqi forces and government personnel withdrew from an area roughly the size of Switzerland, which became the de facto state of Iraqi Kurdistan. The oil producing areas of Kirkuk and Mosul, long claimed by the Kurds, remained in government hands, however" (Romano 2006).

The removal of Saddam Hussein and the Baath party further stabilized and entrenched a Kurdish sense of identity and today the Kurdistan Regional Government acts as a de-facto state.

1.6   Kurdayeti and the rise of Kurdish national identity

The term *Kurdayetî,* or the affirmation of Kurdish nationalist identity, now entered
Iraqi Kurdish public discourse (Moaddel et al., 2008). It had appeared
in a poem called *Kurdayetî* written by Kamil Zhir, who was affiliated with
the extremist Kurdish nationalist group *Kajik, Komeley Azadî Jiyanawey Yekitî Kurd,*
established in the 1940s (Association for Liberty, Life and Kurdish Unity) by Jamal
Nebez. In this poem, Zhir responds to the communists by establishing *Kurdayetî* as
an ideology that cannot be separated from humanism.

The idea of *Kurdayetî* became popular with Kurdish political leftists. Jelal Talabani
gave a series of lectures to Kurdish military cadres in the 1960s and published them
under the title of *Kurdayetî.* The theme was that Kurds were ethnically different from
Arabs and more nationalistic than the communists (Moaddel et al., 2008).

While loyalty to Saddam was characterized as the most vital piece of Iraqi national
identity throughout his presidency, the dictator also introduced several other critical
dimensions of this identity, many of which had negative ramifications for Iraq's
various ethnic and religious groups. First, Hussein emphasized the Arab dimension
of Iraqi identity and deeply mistrusted anyone of non-Arab origins. In 1979, the
dictator stated. "There is no contradiction between the Kurdishness of the Kurd and
his being part of the Arab nation" (Allison, 1996). He also ethnically linked the Kurds
to Arab Iraqis through common historical ties dating back to the Assyrians and
Babylonians (Allison, 1996). In this case, the "Arab" dimension of Iraqi identity was
used as a fluid concept to apply to all Iraqis as a unifying factor. However, when
referring to citizens of Persian origin, ethnicity became a rigid and exclusive

component of national identity. This inconsistency revealed that Hussein was well aware of the power of using group identity as a political tool. In addition, he directly contradicted his previous speeches stressing unity between Kurdish and Arab identities and focused on ethnicity to marginalize Iraqi Kurds, particularly during the most violent years of the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s.

1.7   Identity freedom in post Saddam Hussein Iraq

Iraq has changed significantly since Saddam has been removed. With so many ethnic and religious groups all competing to express their individual and at times conflicting identities it was only through fear, brute force and oppression that Saddam was able to maintain security and keep Iraq together.

Much of the literature on Iraqi identity focuses on how different it is, how ethnic and religious identities are in competition with each other and how Iraq can satisfy all the competing demands of each group without alienating an of the groups involved.

Iyad Allawi, a politician of a secular Shia background with a strong relationship with the US, served as the interim Prime Minister from 2004 to 2005.

With considerable influence from Washington, Allawi continued the task of forming his cabinet. He chose thirty-three members and tried to represent Iraq's diverse social fabric by including people from a variety of ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. For example, he assigned seven seats to Kurds in proportion to their numbers in the population. This quota system, while intended to prevent marginalization of ethnic and religious minorities, had negative consequences for communal relations in Iraqi society. By introducing a system of fixed political representation based on one's background, the new Iraqi administration effectively

reduced all the diverse political perspectives in Iraq to a game of identity politics, in which Iraqi political opportunists vied for power by fighting against fellow citizens and looking out only for the interests of their ethnic or religious communities. In time, these powerful politicizations of identities were combined with the violent tactics of sectarian militia groups and gave rise to sectarian warfare.

Amidst the widespread frustration over the election results, tensions rose among Shia and Sunni communities and were reflected in increasingly hostile political discourse. Many Sunni citizens, angered at their own marginalization in the elections, began to view all Shia Iraqis as their enemy and referred to them as "Iranians". In response, Sunni citizens were referred to as Ba'athists and Wahabis[17]. All of these derogatory terms were designed to associate a large portion of Iraqis with a foreign country or corrupt regime, thereby removing their legitimacy and right to participation in the government.

In response to changes in the ethnicity of certain civil servants and rising sectarian violence, Sunnis in the Ministry of Agriculture began to move their offices to one hallway, and the Shia to another. Mustapha insisted that he had never seen this self-segregation and inability to efficiently work with citizens of a different religious or ethnic background before the U.S. invasion.

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[17] Wahabism is an Islamic doctrine and religious movement founded by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahab and is described as ultra conservative, far right and fundamentalist.

1.8   Conclusion

The end of World War One brought about the most significant changes to the area. It brought about the end of the Ottoman empire and a complete redrawing of the area. Under the Ottoman and Qajar empires minority identities were largely accepted and in many cases encouraged. Tribal groups were left alone to deal with local affairs in exchange for loyalty to the empire. With the break up of those empires and the establishment of the states we see today, a wave of nationalist policies took force to homogenize national identities which left little room for minority identities such as that of the Kurds.

If there was one similarity that could be drawn from the experiences of Kurds living in Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Iran it would be that each of these government have used minority groups (in particular the Kurdish groups) to establish and monopolies power in order to homogenize their own individual national identities. The pattern that emerges from the above introduction is one of concession followed by repression.

The nature of early Kurdish society has also had a great impact on Kurdish nationalist movements and the expression of Kurdish identity. Although a great number of individuals have come to the forefront of Kurdish nationalist claims, a single unified nationalist movement had not emerged due to a combination of political suppression by respective governments and the general self interest of Kurdish tribal leaders.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.0   Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the literature on the identity of Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan and a more general discussion identity, through a theoretical debate on identity. The focus has been made as it is during this period, individuals develop a greater awareness of their identity and who they are (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968). In particular, Kurdish youth in Kurdistan have experienced a number of substantial changes to their lives from the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein (Chomani 2014). Rather than being studied as a distinct subject, the Kurdish issue in academic literature is mostly studied in relation to those nations where Kurds reside. In each of these nations (Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria) the Kurdish subject has been referred to as 'the Kurdish question', as if to suggest a problem or an issue that needs fixing (Barkey 2000, Ghareeb 1981, Kirisci and Winrow 1997). As the more developed of the four countries and with closer ties to Europe, more research has been conducted on the Kurds in Turkey than in any of the other countries. The wealth of literature available on the Kurdish issue has largely been developed relatively recently as certain international events have carried it to the forefront of world media. The first Gulf war in 1990 leading to hundreds of thousands of Kurds fleeing into Iran and Turkey, the removal of Saddam Hussein and the involvement of the Kurdish forces started to bring the Kurds to the world's attention. More recently, the fight against ISIS and the success

of the Kurdish forces both in Syria and Iraq has meant they are now widely referred to as "the only effective ground force fighting ISIS" (Filkins 2015 p1)[18].

Identity is an ambiguous term often used in different contexts and for different purposes. Paradoxically, identity is as much about how we see ourselves as individuals, as it is how much we belong to a group. It is therefore as much a personal thing as it is a public thing. When we associate ourselves with a group on the basis of ethnicity, gender or nationality our personal identity becomes part of the group identity (Buckingham 2008). There is general convergence amongst political and social scientists on Donald Horowitz's definition of what can be classed as ethnic identity. Membership of an ethnic group can be based on "one or more of the following characteristics; color, language, religion, and also includes tribal and national characteristics" (Horowitz 1985 p53). This definition may appear to be too broad in its scope; however, it does reflect the complicated nature of defining what makes someone a member of an ethnic group. Ultimately it is the broadness of its scope that makes this definition of ethnic identity a more accurate one. The more recent literature on ethnic identity has continued with this definition (Varshney 2001, Htun 2004). A single statement however cannot define ethnic identity, as it would be to over simplify a complicated process, other scholars such as Cheung over simplify the definition as "the psychological attachment to an ethnic group or heritage (Chueng 2016). From an early age there are issues of how identity is developed and what influences identity formation. As with membership of any group, there are also issues of group dynamics and who or what constitutes a member and a non-

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[18] ISIS forces and the Kurdish Peshmerga forces (Kurdish army) were in constant battle on several fronts across Iraq and Syria.

member. Taking a more holistic view of ethnic identity there are two important issues, firstly, how are ethnic identities developed, and secondly, once developed, how does the individual fit into the wider group? The issue of how the individual fits in to the wider group is most relevant in the Kurdish case. As minorities in each of the nations they occupy, the Kurds have often been seen as potentially divisive figures intent on gaining independence and separating from those countries[19]. As a result, various policies have been employed to assimilate the Kurds into the national identity be it Iraqi, Turkish, Syrian or Iranian (Chomani 2014).

As Ergin (2014) has noted *"Kurdish identity is now gradually becoming an immutable category. Earlier hopes for the assimilation of Kurds imagined a transformation as a one-way street: Kurds would assimilate into Turkishness. The denial of Kurdishness as an independent ethnic entity precluded the need to engage with it and to develop a moral stance regarding daily encounters. It was Kurds, and not all of them for that matter, who pushed for the recognition of Kurdish identity as a distinct ethnic identity"* (p336). Although Ergin's comments were directed at Kurds in Turkey they are also applicable to Kurds in Iraq where Kurdish identity has only recently begun to be studied. There is therefore limited research on the theme of identity in Iraqi Kurdistan, which provides the main justification for this research. Kurdish forces were involved in a decades long guerrilla war with the central government of Baghdad which saw considerable constraints on Kurdish culture and freedom. Kurds were free to express their identity but only within strict parameters set by the

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[19] Although a minority in each of those states, the Kurds in Turkey make up approximately 20 percent of the total population of Turkey.

state[20]. Those that were born after 1991 have not had the same restrictions placed on them in exploring and expressing their Kurdish identity (Voller 2014).

The focus of this research is therefore directed at Kurdish youth, as it is during this stage that individuals form a greater awareness of their identity and who they are (Arnett, 2000).   The term 'youth' has no universally agreed age range with different organisations, nations and institutions using different age ranges to describe the term ranging from 12 to 35 years old. For the purpose of this study 'youth' will be classified as anyone aged 18 to 25. This particular point in development has been chosen as it marks an important point not only in general identity development but particularly in the Kurdish context. Since 1991 the Kurdish region in Iraq has been run with little or no influence from the central government in Baghdad. Events leading up to the removal of Saddam Hussein started in late 1997 and early 1998 when Britain and the USA started bombing campaigns of Iraqi weapons installations. These two significant events provide the age range of 18-25 to be studied; furthermore, the lower range of 18 years also excludes children in the research, which would have otherwise brought up issues of parental consent and ethical standards. Therefore 18-25 year olds in Iraqi Kurdistan have grown up in a very different environment to those older than them resulting in greater freedom of expression of ethnic identity amongst the youth as opposed to restrictions of those freedoms among older age groups (Chomani 2014)[21]. Furthermore, Iraq and Kurdistan in particular have a very young population and this age group represents a

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[20] It is often said amongst Kurds in Iraq that as long as you didn't ask for anything, didn't complain about anything or didn't criticise anything, Saddam would leave you alone.
[21] Socially speaking, children in Kurdistan age quicker than some other countries especially in Europe. Boys in particular are given far more responsibilities than other countries and both boys and girls are often expected to marry in their early to mid 20's.

considerable section of society today. Although statistical data in Iraq and Kurdistan is scarce and dated, there are a number of reports that have studied the age demographics of Iraqi and Kurdistan. According to the CIA world factbook, the median age in Iraq is 21.2 years old (The world factbook 2014) and even lower in Kurdistan at 20.65 according to the Kurdistan investment board (Kurdistan investment board 2009). To put this into context, according to the Office for National Statistics in the UK, the median age in that country was 40 years old in 2014. The median age of the target group in this study is 21.5 years old which is comparable to the latest figures in Iraq. With such a young population, this particular age group will undoubtedly have a considerable influence in the future identity of the country and provides further justification for the choice of target age group.

The debate on ethnic identity will be put forward by firstly through a general discussion on identity in the context of state formation and issues of identity homogenization and reactive nationalism. This will then lead to an exploration of the literature on the dynamics of Kurdish identity. This will begin with an exploration of how the physical place and symbolic space influence identity development with particular reference to how changes in place and space impact on identity attitudes. This will lead to a discussion of how identity is expressed in the form of clothing, use of national language and online activity. Finally, the influence of others on personal identity development will be discussed starting with theories on identity development and social groups with particular reference to parents, peers and community figures.

2.1 Identity formation and the state

On the issue of how ethnic identity is developed, Jean Phinney's (1992) model of ethnic identity development is focused on ethnic identity formation during adolescence. At this stage, significant changes take place including the contemplation of identity and a greater understanding of physical and social environment and a realisation of physical attributes. The model was based on research collected from 91 in-depth interviews with American born Asian American, Black, Hispanic, and White tenth-grade students. Phinney's three-stage model has become the mainstay of ethnic identity research and features in most research on the subject. Not focused on any one particular ethnicity its aim is to be applicable to all ethnic groups and the development of identity. A discussion of this model is therefore important in the context of identity development among Kurdish youth.

Phinney's Three-Stage Progression:

Unexamined Ethnic Identity – During this stage, children give little or no thought to their ethnic identity and instead gain any ethnic identity by absorbing actions and conversations form others rather than any personal examination.

Ethnic Identity Search- this phase brings about with it a questioning of those views and experiences previously absorbed and considers ethnicity in a more objective and abstract way. A significant event or personal awakening such as an experience of discrimination typically triggers this phase.

Ethnic Identity Achievement- During this stage the individual gains clarity about their ethnic identity. They become more confident of their identity and gain a certain

degree of stability in themselves. They also realise their place within the larger group of like-minded individuals and are able to assess their position within that group and of others within the same group.

In areas where there has been a history of political and military conflict resulting in disrupted lives, adolescents mature at different rates than those living in relative political and military stability. In the Kurdish case it is therefore difficult to place a numerical or social boundary on the age at which the above stages are experienced, as they may be experienced even before adolescence[22]. However, the statements used to conduct the research can serve as a valuable example and source for the current study. By adapting Phinney's statements to fit the Kurdish case it is possible to gain a better insight into the development and influences on Kurdish youth identity.

An important aspect of identity, both individual and collective, is its dependence on "the other", or the differences it has with other groups. In other words, there is no independent identity without taking into account its difference from the identity of the others. The creation of "the other" as a necessity of constructing one's own identity has widely been referred to, the social identity perspective (Tajfel 1972) analyses the group process, intergroup relations and the self-concept. This perspective of identity development has as its main point that individuals develop their sense of personal self, based on their social identity and the social groups they belong to that provide any form of social and emotional ties. Closely associated with this theory and

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[22] This is particularly the case for the target age group of this study who have experienced war, exodus and political conflict.

forming an integral part of the Social Identity Perspective is the Social Identity

Theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979).

The Social Identity Theory (SIT) posits "*people are motivated to maintain a positive self-concept, the self-concept derives largely from group identification; and people establish positive social identities by favourably comparing their in-group against an out-group*" (Sindic and Condor 2014 p39).   Made popular by Tajfel, an in-group is a "*social group to which an individual psychologically identifies*"; in contrast an out-group is a group with which an individual does not identify (Tajfel 1972 p23). Social identity theorists therefore argue that it is the in-group dynamics that drive intergroup conflicts, as it is the increasing comparison of their in-group with an out-group.

Based on insights from SIT and interactions between in-groups and out-groups, Korostelina (2014) developed a theoretical model of intergroup identity insults and applied the model to the case of insults connected to the Russian rock group Pussy Riot. The study identified six types of insults: identity, projection, divergence, relative, power, and legitimacy. The study found that *"identity insults occur when group members perceive a threat to their self-esteem and the sense of dignity provided by their social identity in situations of conflict with other groups. to increase or restore positive self-esteem, Group X creates an identity insult by attributing to Group Y negative features, evil motivations, or foul values or by accusing Group Y of performing destructive or erroneous actions"* (p217).

What SIT wrongly assumes, is that the group acts as one entity and it is the group as a whole that drives its dynamics. It replaces the important role of the individual with

a general concept of social identity and neglects the fact that it is the individual that makes up the group. This is particularly relevant in places like Iraq and Kurdistan where individuals are often defensive and reactive in relation to threats on their identity. Wimmer declares that "*When ruling elites are not prepared to include the entire population of the country into the state-embodying nation, those who thereby become 'minorities' are excluded from the benefits of political modernity and do not feel inclined to embrace the project of nation- building through assimilation and passing. This in turn led to the technocrats to rely on terror and pure force in order to control the many, which in turn further alienates the 'minorities' from the state and so on*" (Wimmer 2008: 194).

2.2   The homogenisation of the state

Inter group conflicts and rivalries are common where one group is more dominant than the other or poses a threat. Dominant, more powerful groups may impose their own identity on smaller groups in order to assimilate or weaken them, which in turn may be rejected by the smaller group creating conflict. In the context of Kurdish identity faced with the larger more established Iraqi identity, the issues of homogenisation are at the forefront of the conflict. The important issue raised here and what needs further investigation, is the impact of this possible homogenisation on the development of Kurdish identity and how this process is experienced by Kurdish youth as any identity imposition will undoubtedly have an impact on the future identity of that individual. Moreover, can identity be imposed on smaller groups and what are the consequences of such an imposed identity being rejected?

Identity homogenisation may occur when dominant ethnic groups claim a common historical origin with smaller groups in order to suppress any idea of difference thereby reducing or removing the significance of the smaller groups claim to a separate ethnic identity. Ethnic identity and the association of an individual to that group can be viewed as "*a segment of a larger society whose members are thought, by themselves or others, to have a common origin and share segments of a common culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients*" (Yinger, 1976).   In Iraq, the Sunni minority were given power and made rulers of the country with control over the army and administration[23]. This enabled them to advocate a pan-Arab identity for the country which was met with fierce objection by other groups who objected to the homogenisation of Iraqi identity. As Resool (2012) states "In 1958 Abdulkarim Qasem recognized Kurdish rights in the constitution and declared that the Kurds and Arabs would share Iraq. Kurds agreed with this move and supported Qasem and his government and were ready to defend it against its enemies. As soon as Qasem backed down from his promises, the Kurds turned against him and demanded autonomy. They refused to accept a homogeneous Arab state of Iraq where their rights and identity would fade." (p46) This was met by the Ba'th party later excluding the Kurds form all government institutions. Excluded groups (in particular the Kurds), felt alienated by the government and lost any feeling they had to Iraq and further fuelled their struggle to be recognized as Kurds. Kurds were dismissed from army positions irrespective of their loyalty to the regime and were treated as second class citizens. This gave them a free hand to continue the homogenisation of the

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[23] This power was given to them as part of the British mandate after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

state and its institutions. The more pressure the party placed on Kurds to homogenise, the less the Kurds felt a part of Iraq and the more they rejected the Iraqi Identity that was being imposed upon them.

In the Kurdish case this raises important issues regarding what can be viewed as common origin and by whom. Iraqi intellectuals such as Matar (1997) argue that Iraq has a single national identity and that "the Iraqi people are the direct descendants of Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Arab peoples. Matar argues "*Iraqi identity is not an invented phenomenon but has evolved naturally, as any national identity does, in the heart of every Iraqi. All one need do is simply try to revive it*" (p46). Based on historical interpretation, in this perspective/opinion piece, Matar attempts to impose an Iraqi identity by invoking what he believes to be a shared history and heritage based on an ethnic identity of common origin[24]. According to Connor, ethno-nationalism "*focuses on the self-determination of the historically given ... community of culture and of ancestral belonging*" (p147). The individual is, moreover, defined by the national community, not the reverse, which creates a situation where force rather than consent form the basis of communal unity by a nationalist regime that can become more authoritarian than democratic in nature (Connor 1994). Matar attempts to apply Connor's ethno-nationalism theory of identity to the Iraqi case by invoking a shared history and heritage that binds all Iraqis into one identity. Matar's invocation of such a theory may well be accepted and welcomed by a large number of Iraqi's but may be rejected by others.

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[24] Comments such as those of Matar are commonplace in Iraq where there is identity conflict, particularly during the Kurdistan independence referendum.

The issue of 'identity imposition/rejection' is something that has not been debated in academic circles to date and the Iraqi/Kurdish dichotomy needs further research. It is therefore important to understand how Iraqi Kurds feel about a national Iraqi identity and if that identity is something they have chosen or have been imposed upon them. More specifically, to what extent do Kurdish youth feel a part of Iraq and its homogenous Iraqi identity? This is an important question that needs answering as it will have implications for the future of the country and the wider academic debate on the influences on ethnic identity and how identity can change over time either naturally or mechanically.

The literature in this section has shown that although identity may be explored and chosen, it is also the case that it can be imposed on others. The larger, more dominant out-group may seek to assimilate smaller groups by claiming common origin with other smaller groups it views as a threat to its own identity. The result of this (if unsuccessful) may lead to the rejection of the dominant identity by the smaller group. If the differing identities are strong enough, those differences could ultimately lead to conflict between groups if one or both feel their identity being threatened. The study of identity in Iraqi Kurdistan is therefore one that needs further research and in particular during the most critical point of identity development that is, among the youth. As Albert (2013) stated "*there has not been a thorough investigation into understanding the identity of the Iraqi Kurds, nor has there been much written about the history of violence between the Iraqi government and the ethnic group*" (Albert 2013: 232). What is missing therefore is a greater understanding of Kurdish identity in Iraq. More specifically, what does being Iraqi mean to Iraqi Kurds and to what extent do they feel that that identity is being imposed on them?

2.3   Identity and reactive nationalism

In order to understand the impact of identity homogenization as suggested above, it is necessary to first understand Kurdish identity in its current state.

Andreas Wimmer argues that "The first signs of ethnic awareness with clear political implications can be traced to the end of the nineteenth century... Kurdish grievances and demands were reactions to the language issues raised by the educational policy of the Young Turks, to the move towards centralization and to the replacement of indirect rule through notables, sheikhs and tribal leaders." (p40)

The most relevant work conducted on modern Kurdish identity in Iraq is the PhD thesis and subsequent book by Aziz (2009). This publication has served to merely start the debate on Kurdish identity in Iraqi Kurdistan scratching the surface of what it means to be Kurdish in Iraqi Kurdistan today and how that relates to other groups living in the region and the wider nation of Iraq. Indeed by the author's own admission "*This research was exploratory and it suggests a programme for further work*" (p361). The study concentrated on University students from three Universities in three different areas and was conducted in the form of quantitative questionnaires with 450 students questioned. When asked how proud they felt when they saw the Kurdish flag as apposed to the Iraqi flag, respondents showed more pride towards the Kurdish flag and that 73.1% see themselves as 'Kurdistani' (p357). There was however, a great deal of ambiguity in the questions asked in the research as respondents were asked to identify themselves from a possible of four Kurdish options (Kurd, Iraqi Kurd, Kurdistani, and Kurdistani but not Iraqi)[25]. A major theme

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[25] Definitions of these terms were not provided in the questionnaires which could lead to confusion as to the meanings of those terms.

and question that arose in the research was "has the Iraqi state under various ruling regimes…managed to incorporate the Kurds into its fold" (p354). However, as Kurds do not see themselves as Arabs, the nationalism that was being espoused by Iraq was not met with welcome by Kurds. As Resool (2012) states:

"The Kurdish elite reacted to the spread of Pan-Arabism in Iraq. The Arab Army officers were among the first group to advocate for Arab nationalism and for creating an Iraqi state with Arabic identity. The Kurdish army officers who served under the Iraqi army, on the other hand, reacted to such attempts by establishing Kurdish political groups with clear nationalist goals." (p100)

The Ba'th party policies towards the Kurds strengthened Kurdish identity and created a reactionary response from the Kurds. With each policy directed at the Kurds designed to impose an Iraqi identity, there came reactions of enhancing Kurdish identity and institutions by the Kurds.

As has been previously discussed, the idea of identity imposition and rejection has not been studied in Iraqi Kurdistan and the conclusion found by Aziz that Iraq had not been able to incorporate the Kurds is to over simplify the argument without understanding how Iraqi Kurds feel about their identity. To understand the dynamics of Kurdish identity in any great detail it is essential to understand how and why respondents express their Kurdish identity and their feelings towards their identity in relation to the more dominant national Arab Iraqi identity (Aziz 2009). Although the title of this thesis related to Kurdish identity it was more concerned with how its relation to other factors such as politics and Arab identity rather than Kurdish identity itself. Aziz therefore follows what other scholars have researched and opted to

concentrate their research on the history of Kurdish nationalism as a dynamic within the wider debate on Iraq rather than Kurdish identity in its own right.

Similarly to Iraq, in Turkey, Kurdish identity and its identifying factors have been under attack by the creation of the Turkish state and its founding principles of secularism. As Yegen (1996) noted in his perspective piece on Kurdish identity, "*when the Kurdish question is identified with reactionary politics, tribal resistance, smuggling and so on, the Turkish state is enunciating an attack on the social space wherein Kurdishness is constituted. In other words, the pressure on Islam, tribes, and the 'periphery' had the effect of excluding the possibility of Kurdish identity and the Turkish state discourse is the enunciation of this pressure*" (p226). This raises the important question of choice and legitimacy of identity and how one identity can be rejected by or imposed on another group.

2.4   Deconstructing Kurdish Identity in a homogenised state

2.4.1 Place

Identity and place are intrinsically linked as people feel a strong sense of ethnic identity in the local and national surroundings. The term "place-identity" has been used since the late 1970s and can be described as "those dimensions of self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, feelings, values, goals, preferences, skills, and behavioural tendencies relevant to a specific environment" (Proshansky 1978 p149). Place-identity provides a mixture of memories, ideas and interpretations based on physical settings and environment.

The influence of physical environment is one of those factors that have been largely overlooked in the past. However, it can be one of the most important memories and identity influences linked to places such as the school or university we studied in, childhood homes and holidays. Here the influences of physical and symbolic surroundings on youth identity in Iraqi Kurdistan will be discussed. In particular, the impact of a change in ethnic make-up of Iraqi Kurdistan, what Kurdistan symbolises and differences in perception of place in Kurdish cities.

The mountains in Kurdistan represent more than a strategic border to the Kurds, they have become something that is inseparable from Kurdish Identity and the main example of what has been termed 'place-identity, so much so that the phrase "the only friends of the Kurds are the mountains," became the title of a book in 1992[26]. Mountains have therefore become a national symbol and one of the most salient markers of Kurdish identity. Twigger-Ross et al., (2003) argue that it is the surroundings and what makes the place we live in that greatly affect our identity development.   Places and the immediate environment form part of identity development because they have symbols and meanings that remind us of who we are and of our history. They represent personal and shared memories of both the individual and the group. Having grown up being surrounded by the mountains and having such a part in Kurdish history, it is difficult to discount the role of place in the identity formation of Kurdish youth.

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[26] Bulloch, J., & Morris, H. (1992). *No friends but the mountains: The tragic history of the Kurds.* Oxford University Press, USA.

Place identity and the importance that people put on their location is therefore an important element of an individual's identity. Although the impact of forced or voluntary relocation of Arab refugees is beyond the scope of this study the large number of non Kurds coming into Kurdish areas will ultimately have an impact on the host community and how they perceive the changes to their idea of 'place'. As anecdotal evidence suggests, in the Kurdish city of Sulaimaniyah, areas such as 'Sar Chnar' have very high Arab concentrations (Mohammed 2015)[27]. If place identity in Kurdistan is intrinsically linked to being Kurdish (i.e. on ethnic grounds) and being surrounded by Kurds, then large increases in non-Kurdish populations will undoubtedly have an impact on the notion of place for Kurds.

Casakin et al (2015) conducted research involving 208 participants in a quantitative survey of university students residing in Israel comprising of 54.8% who were born in their city of residence and 45.2% who were born in another city. Their research found, it is the time spent living in a particular city and the attachments developed that influences place-identity and not being born there or any ethnic attachment (Casakin et al. 2015). Put simply, being born in a particular city or having parental links to a particular city is less important than actually living there, meaning a non-Kurd living in a Kurdish city for 10 years will have greater attachment to that city than a Kurd who moved abroad during childhood. Similarly, Sanchez et al (2007) carried out a study of mixed status groups studied 29 Southern Italian Students living in Northern Italy. They found that members of a low-status minority (Southern Italians) who had spent more time living within the context of a high-status majority (Northern

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[27] This area of the city is considered a tourist destination and contains many parks, hotels, bars, restaurants, discos and Shisha cafes.

Italians) displayed higher levels of automatic identification with the high-status out-group. Celebi et al. argue, *"Higher cross-group friendship was also associated with lower ethnic identitfcation, lower perceived discrimination and higher national identification. This might indicate that friendships with Turks lead, for example, to lower Kurdish identification" (Celebi et al. 2015).* This raises the importance of multicultural areas in the development of ethnic identity. Put simply, the greater the friendships and interactions between Kurds and non-Kurds, the greater the chances that this friendships will lead to reduced ethnic identification. Similarly, Zimmermann et al. (2014) in their theoretical research found that "*living in an area where other co-ethnic immigrants tend to cluster appears to reduce the likelihood of an immigrant's self-identification with the host country society*" (p15). What the research by (Casakin et al 2015, Sanchez et al 2007, Celebi et al 2015, Zimmerman et al 2014) suggests, is that a wholly Kurdish populated Kurdistan would reduce their association to Iraqi identity and an increase in non-Kurds could have the opposite effect. Put simply, according to the literature, the more non-Kurds live in Kurdistan, the weaker the association to Kurdish identity may become amongst Kurdish youth. Also conversely, the greater the interaction between groups, the more likely the in/out group identification. If identity for Kurds is intrinsically linked to the notion of place in the form of symbolic meanings of the mountains and cities, and if place identity can be developed rather than being born into, an important issue is raised here. What is missing from this debate and what needs further investigation in the Kurdish context is how does the change in demographics of place impact on an individual's attachment to that place? Also how do Kurdish youth feel about Kurdistan becoming a place of refuge for non-Kurds? To date there is no scholarly

work on the connection of national identity and place in Kurdistan let alone any research on recent territorial and demographic changes.

There are also further dynamics to consider within the boundaries of Iraqi Kurdistan itself. The civil war between to two major political parties in 1994 created deep divides between the two areas these parties represented (Gunter 1996). The conflict between the KDP controlled areas covering Erbil and the PUK[28] areas covering Sulaimany still exist and whilst the conflict has moved onto the political arena, a certain degree of hostility and tension still exists between the two parties and the inhabitants of the cities they control (Chomani 2014). As with any other city, the two main urban hubs (Sulaimany and Erbil) in Iraqi Kurdistan feature affluent and less affluent areas. This raises another important dynamic to consider in the place identity debate.

Political influence in these areas is therefore considerable, however there are a large number of individuals that do not support any of the parties and are not politically active in any way (Hevian 2013). With strong political and social influences of these two parties and their respective geographical strongholds of Sulaimany and Erbil further research is required to determine any differences in Kurdish identity of Kurdish youth in these areas and if there is a difference between active party members and inactive non-members. More specifically, is there a difference in how Kurdish youth feel about their Kurdish identity in these areas depending on their political activity? The geographical split between the two main political parties raises other questions in addition to those relating to the influence of place on Kurdish

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[28] Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

youth identity. Party symbols and colours of yellow (KDP) and green (PUK) carry great importance in those areas to the extent that their respective areas are referred to the 'green zone' and 'yellow zone'. The display of party flags at party checkpoints, buildings and by members of the public provides a visual representation of political identity (Al-Kadhimi 2015).

As has been discussed, Kurdistan has largely been isolated form the rest of Iraq and its cities are almost completely inhabited by Kurds. A change in the demographics of those cities may have an impact on how place influences identity development. The Kurdistan in which the youth live in is undoubtedly different to the one that the older generation have lived in. A more diverse demographic make up of Kurds and non-Kurds and a more modern landscape has changed the notion of what place means in Kurdistan. More specifically, what do Kurdish youth living in Iraqi Kurdistan feel about the idea of Kurdistan as a symbolic idea and has the idea of Kurdistan changed with a change in demographics? The visual representation of identity through the display of party flags and colours as mentioned above, leads to a more general issue of how ethnic identity is represented and exhibited through the choice of fashion, use of language and online activity. These representations of identity can be categorised as spatial identity.

2.4.2 Spatial Identity and expression through language, fashion and online activity

The changing demographics of Iraqi Kurdistan has resulted in increased interactions between Kurds and non-Kurds and the wholly Kurdish make-up of Kurdistan has changed. As Arabic is being used more often and traditional Arabic clothing seen more on the streets, the aesthetics of Iraqi Kurdistan are changing (Hawramy 2015).

These changes have been very recent and very substantial and no research has been conducted on its impact on Kurdish identity. The important question raised as a result of these changes are, have Kurds reacted by expressing their identity through clothing and national symbols? The literature on identity expression will be discussed, particularly how choice of clothing, use of language and online activity through the use of national symbols on social media and involvement in social media campaigns, can all be used as aesthetic markers of ethnic identity (Wood and Smith 2004, Darvin and Norton 2014, Sklar and Delong 2012).

Serving as our 'social skin', clothing can be a tool for identity construction as well as an expression of pre-existing identity demands (Hendley and Bielby, 2012). It can be argued that fashion is one of (if not the most) visually expressive forms of national identity, wearing traditional ethnic clothing or symbols of identity can either be an expression of their identity or simply convenience or normal practice. It will therefore be an important defining factor of identity to determine how often Kurdish clothes are worn and if that decision is based on a conscious decision of identity expression or simply for comfort or what the individual is used to.

The expression of identity through clothing and language form the basis of the aesthetics of identity. In a study of how Chinese Americans expressed their ethnic identity in different settings and with different people such as peers or family, Kiang et al. (2007) found that Chinese adolescents expressed their ethnic identity most with their peers. Kiang found that ethnic identity expressed with others from the same ethnicity could translate into sub-conscious feelings of shared experiences and

histories. This resulted in a form of identity affirmation where they simultaneously explore and cement their own ethnic identity

In the Kurdish context the Kiang study raises one very important issue. For almost all of modern Kurdish history in Iraq, Kurds almost exclusively populated Kurdish areas and very little interaction took place between different ethnicities let alone inter-ethnic marriages. Applying Kiang's research to the Kurdish case it may appear that the more ethnically diverse Kurdistan becomes, the weaker Kurdish identity becomes. This also raises the important question as to the extent traditional Kurdish clothes are worn to express and reaffirm their identity. This assumption places the Kurdish issue in the wider debate around the impact of immigration on the host community, a debate that has not been had to date in academic research in relation to Kurdistan. The study, however, had one major flaw in that it was an Internet based study not including anyone without Internet or computer access and responses came largely from educated university students. With Internet access in Kurdistan not widely available, this study may not be applicable to the Kurdish case and therefore further research is needed to understand how Kurdish youth express their identity in different settings.

Myhill (2003) discusses the 'language-and-identity ideology', which assumes an inherent emotional connection between an individual and their language. Language is arguably one of the clearest forms of identity expression and the national language of Iraq (Arabic) is not spoken in Kurdistan. Rogg and Rimscha argued that "*after fifteen years of self-rule, and with decades of conflict and persecution within living memory, ordinary Kurds hardly consider themselves Iraqis, a whole generation does*

not speak Arabic at all" (Rogg & Rimscha, 2008 p824). Those aged 18 to 25 have only experienced life under Kurdish rule and not Saddam Hussein, in effect living in a de-facto independent Kurdistan. For them, borders are relatively clear between what constitutes Iraq and Kurdistan, interaction between this group and Iraqi Arabs has been minimal, knowing Arabic has become less important and political rivalries between the Kurdish government and Iraq has further increased a sense of 'otherness' amongst them (Khalid 2004). As the previous research has suggested, the lack of interaction between Kurds and Arabs in the past has resulted in the lack of importance placed on the Arabic language in Kurdistan. If this interaction were to increase as a result of an increase in the number of Arab residence in Kurdistan, would the use or Arabic by Kurdish youth increase or would it be considered a threat to Kurdish identity? As Rogg and Rimscha have suggested above, more and more adolescents are placing a higher importance on learning English than Arabic.

Anderson (2006) argues the emergence of 'print capitalism' relates very much to the expression of national identity as it was through the expansion of print media that more and more people came together in expressing their ethnic identity.   It is inappropriate however to apply the idea of 'print capitalism' to the Kurdish case. The era of print media is still here but the basic tenant of Anderson's argument has moved on exponentially and 'digital capitalism' would be more appropriate. One of the first instances where Kurds used modern forms of 'digital capitalism' as a means to express their identity was the capture of the leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party Abdullah Ocalan (known as the PKK[29]). Although Ocalan was a Kurd from Turkey, Kurds from all parts of Kurdistan and the diaspora protested in cities around the

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[29] In Kurdish – Party Krekarany Kurdistan: translation – Kurdistan WOrkers Party

world. This was the first major event in Kurdish history that brought Kurds together as a single group campaigning about one single issue and an expression of a single Kurdish identity. They identified as members of an imagined Kurdish community. This was not just about speaking language, but an emotional reaction and expression of identity (Keles 2011). The idea that social media can be used as a tool of identity expression and aesthetics is further supported by research conducted by Michikyan et al (2015). In a study of 261 emerging adults, a thematic analysis was based on 761 Facebook photo descriptions and 741 wall posts and status updates. Participants were asked to select three Facebook wall posts, photos and status updates that best captured whom they were. They were then asked to describe the content of each item and then to interpret and explain the meaning of each item and why they were important to them. They found that *"participants' responses indicated that they felt happy by presenting their social identity online and showcasing shared moments with the important people in their lives. In addition, a collective sense of self-presentation, involving social, ethnic, and spiritual identities, may be linked to greater positive states" (p302).* Events such as these, particularly instances of 'self-presentation' as Michikyan et al refer to it, are often seen as rallying points that bring people together, in this case creating a heightened sense of Kurdish identity.

The literature in this section has highlighted the importance of how identity is expressed, particularly where that identity is under threat from another group. The use of symbols, clothing and language form part of the aesthetics of identity and the clearest form of identity expression. The bringing together of people who have never met, into a group that campaigns for a particular cause such as Kobane or Ocalan

raises the important subject of group dynamics and how individuals are influenced by groups. As Keles has previously argued, Kurds from all over the world came together when Ocalan was captured because the event connected with what they had heard from relatives, friends and the media. The influence of others in the identity formation process therefore cannot be overlooked in Kurdish youth, particularly as it is during this phase that identity development occurs. This leads to an important issue of how individuals develop their identity and the influences on that individual which ultimately forms part of the group identity dynamics.

2.4.3 The individual and society; parents, peers and community leaders as socialising agents in identity formation

The individual is therefore an important element of the group dynamics and the identity that the group displays. This raises an important question about the influences of friends and family in the development of ethnic identity. As Smith argues, nations and nationalism are born from a pre-modern era and continue from generation to generation adapting to changes in time with each generation passing down memories, experiences and cultural practices to the next generation. This relates to what has been previously discussed in the first stage (Unexamined Ethnic Identity) of Phinney's model of identity development where identity is developed through sharing memories of events, particularly from parents and peers (Smith 1986). It is therefore important here to discuss the role of parents, peers and community figures as influences on identity development. These socialising agents influence identity development from an early age and continue into adulthood.

These studies and previous issues highlight the influence that parents have on identity formation and development in adolescents and young adults. This is particularly the case in the Kurdish context where many parents in Kurdistan have witnessed, if not personally experienced events such as Anfal[30] and Halabja. The Anfal campaign, which ended in 1989, saw the murder of approximately 200,000 Kurds and the chemical gas attack on Halabja in 1988 killed over 5000 civillians. These events are still discussed and commemorated in Iraqi Kurdistan with many Kurdish youth having lost close family members to these events. The impact of these relatively recent events are lived and re-lived in family homes and local media. They form the basis for any arguments of Kurdish nationalism and are used in reaction to any threat that is posed. In short, to what extent can identity expression be inherited and how much of Kurdish youth identity is inherited from these socialising agents?

Religion and identity are very strongly linked together as someone's religion forms a major part of who they are and shapes their identity. In a Muslim country religious socialising agents are possibly more influential than politicians in directing the national identity movement of a group. Religion therefore serves as an important influence on the individual and subsequently the group, assuming of course that the individual is religious in nature. Religious parents are more likely to transmit their religious identity onto their children than non-religious parents (Oppong 2013). Group influences on religious identity are also an important element of identity development. If it is the case that adherence to a particular religion is a prerequisite for membership of that group then this will undoubtedly have implications on how

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[30] Taken from a chapter of the Muslim Holy book, The Koran, meaning 'spoils of war'.

individuals in the group behave. Iraqi Kurdistan is religiously diverse, whilst the

dominant religion is Islam belonging to the Shafi'I[31] branch of Sunni Islam, there are

a small number of Shia and Suffi followers of the religion. Followers of other

religions include Christians, Yezedis, Shabak and more recently Zoroastrianism

(Schmidt 2009). As a majority Muslim country where religion and culture play an

integral part in the family structure, women in particular enjoy fewer freedoms than

men. This also has an impact on freedom of expression and movement. Religious

parents who are conservative have considerable influence on their children,

particularly female members of the household. The question of gender and identity

development is therefore one that also needs further research in the Kurdish context.

Empirical research conducted on the Pakistani community in London by Jacobson

(1997) found, "*the greater significance of religion can be understood if we bear in

mind, first, that these young people distinguish between the universalism of Islam

and the particularism of their Pakistani or Asian ethnicity. Secondly, that the social

boundaries defining the young people's religious identities have a clarity and

pervasiveness that protects and enhances the minority religion, whereas the

boundaries delineating their ethnic identities are far less clear-cut, reflecting and

contributing to a decline in the distinctiveness of the minority community*" (p253).

What religion therefore offers is membership to an international identity, in the

Kurdish context where Kurdistan is not recognised as a state this raises an important

question. To what extent do Kurdish youth feel that their religious identity can be an

alternative to their ethnic Kurdish identity?

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[31] The Shafi'i branch of Islam is one of four schools of Sunni Islamic law and was founded by
the Arab Scholar AL-Shafi'i

The influence of religion on identity formation in Iraqi Kurdistan has not been researched and its importance should be recognised in the study as part of the social influences on identity. For example, Bruinessen (1998) conducted research into minority Kurdish groups such as the Alevi and Zaza living in Sweden. These two groups and many others are also present in Iraq and to a lesser extent Kurdistan. Whilst the study of minority religious and ethnic groups in Kurdistan such as Shia, Alevi, Zaza, Christian, Feyli and others is important it is beyond the scope of this study to include them and distinguish between results from specific religions and groups.

2.5   Guerilla nationalism in Iraqi Kurdistan

Kurds have reacted to policies of Arabisation in different ways, almost always by further strengthening their own identity expressions and nationalist movements. As the number of atrocities committed against the Kurds increased, so too did demands for more Kurdish rights and freedom. What the Ba'th Party failed to realize was that the Kurds demands for rights and freedoms were a direct result of their attempts to curtail those rights and freedoms.

The major flaw in the research to date is that it does not fully explain Kurdish identity and nationalism. As Ressool (2012) argued, Kurdish nationalism has been so far reactionary, only reacting to Ba'th policies of homogenisation. However, as we have discusses, this does not account for Kurdish identity on an individual level, nor does it account for instances where Kurdish nationalist actions were not in retaliation to homogenisation. There is nothing in the literature to date that fits this Kurdish typology and a new term is therefore needed that best fits the Kurdish case and

other like it. The Kurdish example best fits what we have termed "Guerilla Nationalism" which we define as "Irregular, uncoordinated nationalist activities carried out by non-state actors in an often (but not exclusively) defensive and/or reactive response to the established states nationalist activities and policies of homogenisation".

Guerilla warfare has been as much a part of Kurdish history as anything else, from the beginnings of Kurdish nationalism in all four countries that Kurds are located in, they have bene fighting a guerilla war against those nation states, none of which was coordinated. Recently with the establishment of the Rojava[32] cantons, the establishment of the KRG in Iraq, the Mahabad republic in Iran and the PKK in Turkey, the Kurds in these areas have been undertaking their own forms of guerilla nationalism despite sharing a common ethnicity. This is also the case on a by-country basis if we look at Iraq, there have been numerous parties, individuals, forces, media outlets, groups etc. that have been carrying out their own nationalist and identity agendas in an uncoordinated and irregular manner that have more often than not been reactions to state homogenisation policies.

This is exemplified by very recent events that have brought Kurds from around the world together in protest and in support of the city of Kobane on the border of Syria and Turkey. Besieged by ISIS on all sides and with a closed border to Turkey the Kurdish forces in the city faced defeat with the city falling to ISIS. The city became widely referred to by international media as a modern day Leningrad and soon became a symbol of the fight against ISIS. Indeed it was the intervention in Kobane that instigated western airstrikes in Syria as a whole. Kurds in Iraq demonstrate in

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[32] Rojava meaning 'West' in Kurdish is the name given to 'West Kurdistan' in Syria.

support of Kurds in neighbouring countries and vice versa. Knowledge of similar protests has been made easy with the increasing use of the internet and in particular social media. The protests in support of Kobane created an online community that brought together Kurds from all over the world and provided the platform for them to express their identity freely.

Kurdish nationalism is very much guerrilla nationalism, it is uncoordinated, irregular, instigated by people, political parties, newspapers, individuals, groups, almost anyone and any organization can (and often has) at some point been the spur of Kurdish nationalism.

The Kurds, keen to exploit any chance to achieve their national goals, saw Iraq's defeat in Kuwait as a golden opportunity. The IKF prepared its Peshmerga forces and mobilized Kurdish populations, managing to lead a massive popular uprising against the regime. The spark of the uprising started on 5 March 1991 from the town of Rania and soon spread to every town and city in Iraqi Kurdistan including Kirkuk. By 19 March almost all regions of Iraqi Kurdistan were controlled by Peshmerga forces and the people.

As Ressool (2012) states: "the Kurdish nationalism movement was reinvigorated by the mixing of Peshmerga and the population of Kurdistan living in the towns and cities. Furthermore, the inclusion of populations within Kurdish society that had been under the direct rule of the Ba'th Party for an extremely long was a daunting task. (p298)

As Masoud Barzani admitted, according to Rae (2002), "the uprising came from the people themselves. We didn't expect it.' As a result, in the words of a spokesman,

the Iraqi Kurdistan Front 'merely followed the people onto the streets. It has been hesitant to enter towns in case of massive retribution. It now preferred these to remain under civil control, and for the civil authorities to negotiate with local army units." (p249)

2.6   Concluding remarks

The influences on identity development are varied with different dynamics influencing individuals in different ways. The literature has shown that our physical and symbolic surroundings, how we express ourselves, and those around us all have an impact on how individuals see themselves. The influence on identity development has been studied in relative isolation in previous research with some attempts at intersectional analysis. However, it is argued here that a more holistic, multi dimensional approach is needed when researching the influences on identity development.

The current state of the research on the influences on identity development in youth is too narrow and specific. Much of the literature focuses on a narrow one-dimensional approach on identity development without taking adequate consideration for other influences. Major contributions however, have been made in specific areas in the debate around identity development and in particular ethnic identity. Phinney's three-stage model of ethnic identity development in adolescents has become a mainstay for identity researchers and can be applied to any ethnicity. Meanwhile Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory has helped researchers to understand better the dynamics and interactions of in-groups and out-groups,

something that is particularly relevant in the Kurdish case. There is also

considerable research conducted on the subject of identity in different contexts (Aziz

2009, Fidzani and Reed 2013, Christensen and Kerper 2013, Han 2012, Kelman

1998, Jacobsen 1998, Wood and Smith 2004), however, a multi-dimensional

approach to the influences on identity development has been severely lacking.

By taking a multi-dimensional approach, multiple influencing factors can be analysed

and addressed simultaneously. This review has argued that there is no single

influence on identity development in Kurdish youth. Rather than understanding

identity solely in the context of parental influence, language, or local environment

alone, it is necessary to consider these and wider factors in conjunction with one

another. The intersections of place, space and society are inextricably linked. As

the literature studied has suggested, the influence of place is also shaped by the

demographic make-up and aesthetics of that place. The use of symbols and the

expression of ethnic identity are also shaped by parents, peers and influential

community leaders (for example religious leaders), as well as the displaying of

national symbols such as flags and statues. The influence of space is also shaped

by place, particularly when what that place symbolises is threatened by another

group, and it is also shaped by society as religious/non religious socialising agents

are likely to influence how individuals dress and express themselves.

This review also argues that previous definitions and theories of identity and

nationalism do not fit the Kurdish type in that it is neither defensive, reactionary or

aggressive but a combination of the three which we have termed 'guerrilla

nationalism'. As Githens-Mazer argues "Those accounts which focus on the

emergence of the modern state as a cause of nationalism ultimately leave little possibility for understanding the perceptions and rationales of individuals acting in the name of the nation (except potentially as a form of 'false-consciousness'), especially where nationalism is a reaction against, rather than a function of, the emergence of the state" (2007). What previous research fails to highlight are the autonomous actions of the individual, carrying out nationalist actions on behalf of what they perceive to be the state.

Once the arguments are made for an intersectional approach to identity development, its application to Kurdish youth must be made. This in turn raises a number of research questions that need to be identified and studied further. The empirical research will therefore attempt to identify the extent to which place, space and society all intersect with one another in the identity formation of Iraqi Kurdish youth. More specifically, what are the main factors influencing identity development in Iraqi Kurdish youth? How have Kurdish youth reacted to any perceived threat to their identity? What is the correlation between identity formation and socialising agents? How exactly do Kurdish youth express their ethnic identity? To what extent is place influential in the formation of ethnic identity in Kurdish youth? These questions are pertinent to the Kurdish case as they draw similarities to previous research carried out by Githens-Mazer who found that "resistance isn't just about resistance to immoral behaviour, or resistance to the temptations to re-engage in criminal life. It is also about resistance to being part of a system which they felt created the conditions which led them to be tempted by the road life to begin with. Ultimately, the appeal of this resistance in both contexts rests on

The study of the influences on identity in youth in Iraqi Kurdistan are minimal with only one study tackling the subject, albeit with considerable flaws to the research. Iraqi Kurdistan has experienced considerable change in a very short space of time to its social demographics, its borders, and available technology. In order to accurately assess what impact these changes have has it is necessary to study those changes together and in greater detail. This approach to researching the influences on identity development will have far reaching implications not only for our understanding on Kurdish youth identity but also for the wider debate on identity development and influence.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

3.1   Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the literature exploring the factors and influences of identity development in Kurdish youth. As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, to date, the discussion surrounding identity has largely been one from a narrow perspective of specific identity perspectives. Research has been conducted on

place identity, language and clothing as a form of identity expression, family influences on identity and more. This thesis seeks to develop theories around identity influences in general by adopting a new holistic approach to identity development and nationalism as will be discussed in subsequent chapters. From the literature, three themes emerged that impact on ethnic identity development:

- Place – our physical surroundings, places we grew up in, the demographic make-up of the area in which we live, and the symbolic meaning of place.
- Space – the way in which we choose to express our ethnic identity through our choice of clothing, use of language and online activity.
- Socialising agents – how our ethnic identity is influenced by those around us such as parents, peers, religious leaders and political figures.

Given that these major influencing factors have been identified, this chapter can now deal with the research methodology that will be used to conduct the study. The

following research objectives provide a more detailed and specific breakdown of the research problem being studied:

- To gain an insight into experiences of Kurdish youth (18 – 25) in relation to their sense of Kurdish identity.
- To explore the nature and strength of Kurdish identity of Kurdish youth in Kurdistan
- To gain a better understanding of how Kurdish youth feel about their identity and the role of place, space and socialising agents.
- To explore the nature and strength of Iraqi identity of Kurdish youth in Kurdistan and the extent to which they feel Iraqi.

This chapter will first address the research method used to conduct the study by introducing the different options available, and the respective advantages and disadvantages of quantitative and qualitative methods. Considering those options and their respective benefits, an argument will be made that the use of qualitative research methods best suits this particular study.   The discussion will then move on to the research design and similar to the research method section, different options will be introduced and an argument will be put forward that the use of semi-structured interviews provide the most suitable method of conducting this research. The sampling techniques used in the study will then be discussed with a detailed breakdown of the sample population by area and particular sample category. Once the sample has been identified and explained, a more detailed breakdown of how the sample will be discussed with particular reference to access strategies to include respondents with particular sample characteristics. The discussion will then move

onto the techniques used in the analysis of the data obtained by first highlighting

different options available and then specifying the most suitable one for this

particular study. Finally, ethical considerations will be identified and discussed. This

chapter will end with a brief summary of the approaches and methods adopted in this

thesis.

3.2   Research Method

Methodological foundations of research in social sciences are based on what are

known as ontological and epistemological theories.   The approach adopted by the

researcher defines the way in which the research is carried out and can also reflect

the researcher's personal beliefs about the way in which the world and people

around them operate (Marsh and Furlong 2002). The ontological position concerns

the theory of being and how the world is built (Crotty 2003). In contrast,

epistemology allows us to dig deeper and explore how we know what we know

(Crotty 2003). Epistemology therefore explores what it means to say that someone

knows or doesn't know something. Epistemology is also about determining the

extent of knowledge, how much we know and the limits to our knowledge (Crotty

2003). Closely linked to Epistemology is the philosophy of positivism[33] that states

that only knowledge gained through observation and measurement is trustworthy.

The positivist position states that the aim of knowledge is to describe any given

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[33] Founded by Auguste Comte (1798-1857)

phenomena or experience by using methods that can be observed and quantifiably measured. Positivism is therefore more closely linked to quantitative research methods where results are quantifiable and can be better measured statistically. An alternative to positivism came about in the mid 20th century when the term post-positivism[34] was coined. Whereas positivists believe that the researcher and the subject being researched are independent of each other, post-positivists accept the background and views of the researcher may influence what is being researched and that knowledge is based on conjectures. Whilst quantitative research can be linked to the positivist approach of surveys and questionnaires, there is also an increasing tendency to use open-ended questions in quantitative research.

One particular research method that is rooted in positivist and post-positivist theory is ethnographic research. As the study of people and cultures, ethnographic researchers immerse themselves into the daily lives of the people or culture being studied and undertake research from the point of view of the subject being studied. According to Brewer (1999) data collection methods in ethnography are meant to capture the *"Social meanings and ordinary activities in naturally occurring settings" (p10).* Different data collection methods exist in ethnographic research including the use of participant observation, taking field notes and conducting interviews. Ethnographic research ranges from a realist perspective that states that behaviour is observed, to a constructivist approach where understanding is socially constructed by the researcher and subjects. The epistemological assumptions of this study are based on the idea of constructivism defined as "*the view that all knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality as such is contingent upon human practices, being*

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[34] Postpositivism was coined by by Sir Karl Popper (1902 – 1994)

constructed in and out of interaction between human beings, developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty 2003). The constructivist approach therefore argues that people develop their identity through interaction with others, to understand the source and meaning of this interaction in the context of place, space and socialising agents. It is this interaction that is key to this particular study in that Kurdish youth have largely only interacted with other Kurds until recently. As these interactions change with the increase in non-Kurds and given the importance of the social group in the formation of identity, the constructivist approach provides the most suitable foundation to understand the influences of place, space and socialising agents on identity in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Both qualitative (De Andrade 2000; Nowicka and Cieslik 2014) and quantitative (Noels 2014; Sibley and Houkamau 2013) methods have been used extensively in the research of identity in general and ethnic identity in particular. The particular justifications for the choice of method for this research will be given below. Like others before it, Kurdish identity is also conducive to both qualitative and quantitative research methods in epistemological terms. The main difference between these two methods is in their flexibility. In general, quantitative research asks participants the same questions, in the same order using 'closed-ended' or fixed questions through questionnaires and street surveys. However, there are instances where open-ended questions can and have been used in quantitative research, which helps to avoid the participant simply filling in a questionnaire, and allow them to respond in more detail. Whilst this allows the researcher the opportunity to compare responses between different participants in different areas, in general they do not offer the flexibility to interact with participants. The flexibility that is offered by qualitative research allows

for more spontaneity and adaptation during data collection. As opposed to the general 'closed-ended' nature of quantitative research, qualitative questions are in general 'open-ended' and are not necessarily asked in the same order, or indeed at all where some questions are omitted.

A quantitative approach using questionnaires was considered for this research where it would involve a mixture of online, postal questionnaires or stopping members of the public in the street to respond to a pre-set questionnaire. Quantitative research and questionnaires in particular are not a viable option in Iraq as there is no home postal system and only a certain section of society has access to Internet (Invest in Group 2013). Street surveys would overcome the lack of postal service but would in turn create other problems for the data collection. Firstly, respondents may not be willing to provide the time required to answer all questions, which can result in rushed or inaccurate responses[35]. This may also be said for face-to-face interviews but if participants are given enough information about the time commitment involved then this can be reduced or eliminated. In relation to this research where much of the interviews took place in the individuals place of work, the issue of time may be important, as they had to take time out of their work. Secondly, respondents may not be comfortable with providing answers to potentially sensitive questions and instead, provide answers that present them in a favourable manner. In terms of this particular study, these issues are pertinent in that there are issues being discussed that relate to politics and religion, which can be sensitive issues to discuss in public places resulting in rushed or inaccurate responses.

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[35] There was also a real risk that a street survey would 'draw a crowd' and totally remove any privacy that participants may have.

Whilst public and open criticism of government and political parties is commonplace, personal insults and criticisms of individual political figures is less accepted. It was therefore important that a comfortable environment was provided where only the interviewer and participant were present. The issue of identity and politics in general is a sensitive issue in Kurdistan[36] and conducting street surveys where others can hear what the interviewee is saying will influence the answers that are given. As a sensitive issue, street surveys in Iraqi Kurdistan are therefore not conducive.

The issue of identity in Iraqi Kurdistan has been studied only once to date by Aziz (2009) who surveyed 450 university students in the Kurdistan region. The data was collected by surveys on university campuses, during lectures and in cafeterias. Whilst the research was the first to address the issue of identity amongst any Kurdish group, the study has several methodological drawbacks. Firstly, the research design adopted by Aziz and in particular the questions asked of participants failed to cover in adequate detail the details of Kurdish identity with only 10 out of 49 questions related to identity. Finally, respondents were asked to identify themselves as one of four different Kurdish identity types (Kurd, Iraqi Kurd, Kurdistani, and Kurdistani but not Iraqi). The use of quantitative research where respondents are given specific options to choose from can cause confusion if the options are not clear, or immediately obvious. In this case there is no explanation in the questionnaire as to what these options actually mean, in particular Kurdistani and Kurdistani but not Iraqi. By having ambiguous options to choose from, the researcher may end up forcing respondents to choose an answer they may not be

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[36] Kurdistan and Kurdish society in particular has been heavily influenced by politics with countless wars, conflicts, acts of genocide etc. so much so that it feels like everyone is a politician. This often means that people have a lot to say when it comes to politics.

clear about. Also as has been previously stated, conducting surveys on a sensitive issue such as this may influence the responses given if participants feel they are being overheard. Aziz does not take the issue of sensitivity into consideration, which is all the more important given the several questions specifically relating to political affiliation. Nevertheless, imperfect as it may be, the research conducted by Aziz started an academic discussion on how Kurds in Iraq feel about their identity as opposed to how they feel about being Iraqi. In this way, the research by Aziz has started an important discussion regarding the identity of Kurdish university students. The current research will try to elaborate on the work by Aziz to not only assess the state of identity in Kurdish youth but also to investigate the influences on those identity formations. Aziz argues that it was the 1990's that saw the birth of modern Kurdish nationalism where the Kurds entered a new era of nation building[37]. This research has also emphasised this significant period in Kurdish history, which needs further research. Aziz adopts Anthony D. Smith's approach to nation building as having several influences such as political, economic, social and emotional but acknowledges that these influences need further investigations in the Kurdish context. It is therefore the role of this study to investigate those influences in the context of place, space and socialising agents.

The role of media on the influence on identity cannot be overlooked and it can be argued that the language used by radio and television stations and the messages they convey are of great interest in any study on national identity. The analysis of discourse in the public media such as documentaries, debates and interviews can

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[37] This happened when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and as a result Iraqi forces left Kurdish areas and the No Fly zone was established leading to the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government.

often provide the researcher with a deeper understanding of meanings and implications behind the language used on a given subject. The great strength of discourse analysis lies in its approach towards the socio-political aspects of research by analysing the way in which language is used in the media. This approach may be suitable in environments where free and independent media exist but is put into doubt as media outlets in Kurdistan are owned by political party heads, affiliates or supporters bringing the reliability of Kurdish media into doubt (Chomani 2014). As Kurda (2016) wrote*, "Sadly, we see that the pursuit of reliable, professional journalism in Iraqi Kurdistan takes second place to the politically motivated scheduling of news items by the major news broadcasters[38]. The news on these channels doesn't just create itself, it is part of a deliberate process of selection and editing".*

Given these considerations relating to quantitative research such as the sensitivity of using street surveys, the lack of postal service and the availability of Internet and the need to discover the real issues on the ground, it was decided that a qualitative approach would best suit this research. The qualitative approach highlights the need to investigate the in-depth exploration of a particular problem or subject, which cannot always be quantifiable by providing a subjective answer to the research question (Beedles 2002). Also given the nature of the question and the need's to find out the 'where's, why's, how's and what's' of Kurdish identity, it is most prudent to select the research method that allowed the most interaction with participants. Although those questions may also be answered by quantitative research methods,

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[38] There are also many documented and undocumented cases of journalists being abused and abducted.

the qualitative approach offers the greatest opportunities to dig deeper and probe for more detailed answers that are relevant to the research. In the case of the ethnic identity of Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan, this study is pioneering in that it is the first of its kind that uses a qualitative approach to identify the specific influences on Kurdish identity.

3.3   Research Design

Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer and interviewee to react to each other synchronously with the interviewer having the opportunity to probe answers and pose further questions depending on the response given. Whilst semi-structured interviews allow the researcher greater freedom to probe and question the participants they are also not without fault. On sensitive issues or where the participant has an unpopular or socially unacceptable view, they might choose not to express that view for fear of being judged[39]. This may also result in perceived low anonymity of the research as answers are given in front of the interviewer and usually recorded. As the interview and analysis process is down to the interviewer there are also risks that the researchers personal bias will influence the results. If participants are reassured about the research anonymity, that their views will not be judged and interviewer biases are omitted, semi-structured interviews allows the

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[39] There is considerable mistrust of politics, politicians and the government and many believe that plain clothed undercover police and security officials operate to identify potential opponents.

researcher to elicit spontaneous answers to questions without the influence of others. (Vogl 2013).

However, this does mean that the interviewer must work much harder in observing key elements and points of further discussion simultaneously listening to the response, analyzing them and thinking of further questions if needed. Face to face interviews where both the interviewer and interviewee have experience and knowledge of the subject allows a certain amount of mutual interest or opinion. This creates a certain amount of trust from the interviewee and a greater openness to discuss the issues. It also allows the interviewer to ask pertinent follow up questions and a far greater interaction between the two and a greater understanding of particular political, social and cultural meanings (Irvine, Drew and Sainsbury 2013).

The practicalities of conducting the interview have also been considered in light of the above arguments. Interviews need to be arranged beforehand in order to maximise the number of participants per day. Through the use of extensive contacts approximately three interviews were conducted per day to be spread over the course of one month. Interviews were conducted in Kurdish in order to speed up the whole interviewing and analysis process, as there are no language barriers between the researcher and the participants in this case. In order to keep within the aims and objectives of the research, some degree of structure is needed in the interviewing process, as there is a tendency in interviews for the participant to digress from the question and subject. Ritchie et al (2003) state "*Managing the interview process involves ensuring coverage of the agenda to be discussed within the interview, steering the interviewee back to topics from which they stray. It means exercising*

judgement about the length of time that should be devoted to any given topic and when to move on to the next one, and about how to respond if the interviewee moves on to unanticipated topics" (p138).

It is therefore important that the interviewer maintains the structure and direction of the interview without impacting negatively on the free flowing and candid nature of the interview allowing the participant to speak freely regarding a particular question (Hopf 2004). Interviews also allow the participant the time and candour to think about a question and give a detailed answer. In many social arenas the opportunity to give an honest and candid answer to a question may not occur, especially if the issue or the response is socially unacceptable.

Interview questions have been split into two different sections, questions in the first section were asked of all participants to gain an understanding of the strength of their Kurdish identity. These include asking participants what it means to them to be Iraqi/Kurdish, what Kurdistan means to them, how they feel they are treated as Kurds, if they aspire to live in an independent Kurdistan, and if they have an Iraqi identity. The second section includes questions aimed at specific group sets and not all questions were asked of all participants and will include questions about where they live, the influence of political parties, identity of residents in different cities, the importance of Kurdish clothing, language, social media, and the influence of their parents and peers on their identity development. From the review of the literature, three major influences on identity development were identified. Firstly, the physical location and individual's surroundings, secondly, how individuals express themselves

aesthetically, and finally, how social structures and individuals influence identity development.

The questions to be used during the interviews have been drawn out of the literature review and in some cases; questions used in previous research will be adapted and used in the current study. By adapting and using questions used in other studies it will be possible to compare results them with responses obtained in this study. Particular questions include: 'What does being Kurdish mean to you?' (Aziz 2009), 'How important is it to you to know about Kurdish history?' (Phinney 1992), 'how important is social media such as facebook in allowing you to express your identity?' (Machikyan et al 2015). In designing the interview questions it is also very important to build a certain level of trust between the participants and interviewer. Whilst there is relative freedom in Iraqi Kurdistan there is a sense that saying too much can get you into trouble with particular parties and could hamper career development in the future (Human Rights Watch 2013). The two major cities in Kurdistan are largely controlled by the two major parties with PUK[40] in Sulaimany and KDP[41] in Erbil. Although criticism of government and party policy is accepted and often discussed, criticism and personal insults aimed at party leaders is less tolerated[42].

Given the above concerns regarding the sensitivity of the subject and the sample groups identified, a pilot study involving 5 participants was conducted to test the adequacy and feasibility of the research questions. Conducting a pilot phase allows

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[40] Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
[41] Kurdistan Democratic Party
[42] This is again in reference to the mistrust that people have and the suspicion that they have of questions by strangers.

the interviewer to assess the quality of the interview schedule and make any changes regarding to the inclusion or exclusion of any questions as well as any changes to the wording of any of the questions asked. A pilot phase of data collection will also allow the researcher to familiarise themselves with the interview questions gaining confidence in the whole process for subsequent interviews.

As this research is interested in gaining an insight into how respondents feel about their identity and what they feel are the influences, semi-structured interviews allows respondents the freedom to express themselves. This further allows the interviewer to probe any unclear or ambiguous responses. Probing respondents for further opinions also allows the interviewer to explore sensitive issues and to help respondents recall information in questions involving memory; both important aspects of this research (Bryman 2015, Hopf 2004). Semi-structured interviews are not without their drawbacks, however, by adequately planning for those drawbacks it is possible to minimise their impact. Impromptu interviews that do not allow individuals adequate time to consider participating can result in them refusing to take part. In those circumstances even if they agree to take part, the participant may feel apprehensive about being interviewed, they may wish not to answer certain questions or they may refuse to have the interview audio taped. To overcome this issue participants who were not happy about being taped were first reassured of the

anonymity of the interview and provided with an official letter from the university confirming my studentship[43].

Face-to-face interviews can also be very time consuming not only to conduct but also to transcribe. The interviewer often has to listen to the interview recording more than once and constantly has to stop and restart the recording in order to transcribe the interview. These drawbacks were overcome or minimised by preparing for each interview beforehand and by using software to transcribe the interview. The manual transcribing of interviews was made easier by the use of dictation software which allowed the interviewer to repeat the responses which were then automatically transcribed by the software[44]. By arranging the interviews with the participants and providing them with enough information about the research and interview process, participants were able to make a considered decision about taking part or not (Hopf 2004, Irvine et al 2013).

3.4   Sampling

Arranging the interviews involved a certain amount of preparation in that it is important to plan not only for the interview itself but the kind of person the researcher

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[43] It should be noted that any initial trepidation or nervousness was soon forgotten once the interviews were under way.
[44] Responses were received in Kurdish during the interview but when it came to transcribing, the we interpreted those responses into English when using the transcribing software.

wants to interview.   It is therefore important to identify the sample or target group that the researcher wishes to interview.

Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. The researcher identified the individuals to take part based on certain criteria and variables such as age, location, gender, occupation social status or any other criteria that the researcher sees fit (Tongco 2007). In this form of sampling it is important that the researcher continuously analyses the data received in order to meet the different sample criteria. This form of sampling technique is suitable for researchers who want to conduct their research on a particular section of society and although it is not representative of the whole population this does not weaken the research as it is a choice made by the researcher to target a certain section of society (Tongco 2007). This involves the conscious selection of certain individuals that meet certain criteria, in this case 18 – 25 year olds, this is a non-probability sampling method, which means that the participant is selected and sought rather than selected on a random basis (Guest et al. 2006). A common form of purposive sampling is Theoretical Sampling, which can be described as the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects coded and analyses the data in order to develop or test a particular theory.

Once the pilot study was completed and relevant changes made, an initial round of interviews took place numbering 10 individuals born and raised in each of the two governing areas of Erbil and Sulaimany. A further 10 individuals were interviewed who have returned to Kurdistan from living abroad. The returnees interviewed could

be located at any of the two cities mentioned. The aim of interviewing these individuals was to assess the impact of a change in place and physical environment as this will impact on an individual's identity perception (Duval 2004). There is considerable debate in academic literature regarding sample size and when to stop interviewing in qualitative research. Guest et al. (2006) suggest, "*although the idea of saturation is helpful at the conceptual level, it provides little practical guidance for estimating sample sizes for robust research prior to data collection*" (p59).

The sample was limited to 18-25 year olds of mixed backgrounds, occupations and locations. These criterions have been selected because in particular the age boundaries represent particular events that have taken place in Kurdish history. Iraqi Kurdistan has had relative freedom since 1991 so those within the age bracket of 18-25 have only experienced life under Kurdish rule and not Saddam Hussein.   The age group identified not only fit into key events in Iraqi and Kurdish history but they also represent key stages of identity development (Kroger 2007). It is during adolescence and early adulthood that identity is formed and developed, where an individual is starting to get a better understanding of who they are and physical changes they are experiencing. Furthermore, Iraq and Kurdistan in particular have a very young population and this age group represents a considerable section of society today. Although statistical data in Iraq and Kurdistan is scarce and dated, there are a number of reports that have studied the age demographics of Iraq and Kurdistan. The most recent and detailed study of population figures in Iraq has been conducted by the CIA world factbook that found the median age in Iraq as a whole is 21 years old (The world factbook 2014) and is the same in Kurdistan according to the Kurdistan investment board (Kurdistan Investment Board 2009). The sources

identified above are not provided by any Iraqi or Kurdish government agencies as census and demographic surveys have not been conducted by government bodies. To put this into context, according to the Office for National Statistics in the UK, the median age in that country was 40 years old in 2014. The median age of the target group in this study is 22 years old, which is comparable to the latest figures in Iraq providing further justification for the chosen age range of this study.

Therefore, a total of 30 interviews have been conducted lasting 45 minutes to an hour each, which can be further increased to fill any shortcomings of the sample size. The total number of respondents remained flexible in order to meet the desired sample for each section. This is due to the fact that not all questions will be asked to all individuals as they may be irrelevant or inapplicable and some may fit more than one sample category.

Place has been identified as important as Sulaimany and Erbil[45] are political strongholds for the two major competing parties, their influence on identity formation needs to be researched (Gunter 1996). Secondly, those that have returned to Kurdistan from abroad may not have had the same influences experienced by those born in those cities. It is assumed that participants that fit the sample criteria of Sulaimany, Erbil or returning diaspora will also meet other sample categories of space and socialising agents. Having identified the breakdown of the sample to be

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[45] Other cities were not chosen as the two cities of Erbil and Sulaimany are the centres of the political influences of the two main parties and it would be likely that other cities would have the same influence.

studied it is now necessary to discuss the ways in which participants will be found that meet the identified criteria[46].

3.5   Access

Having lived in Kurdistan for three years and having immediate family and friends in the area, strong connections with different institutions and political parties in Kurdistan have been developed which will help to get access to the people needed to take part in the research. Close relatives working with the Kurdish government in senior positions facilitated access to different institutions and organisations required that meet the sample criteria.

Contact was made with the two main party youth wings in Sulaimany and Erbil where a number of contacts exist that can provide access to participants who are supporters or members of a particular party. In order to obtain a varied response from apolitical participants who are not members or active in a political party, contact was made with the American university of Iraq Sulaimany where, due to previous employment it is possible to gain access to participants. Access to the more educated and middle class section of society was relatively straightforward, however, access to the less educated working class will be more problematic. Teahouses in Kurdistan offer a good way of gaining access to this section of society. The unemployed, retired and young tend to convene in teahouses to discuss current affairs and kill time. Random visits to teahouses in different areas of the cities also allowed the researcher to gain access to a variety of sections of society. These

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[46] Including villages was initially considered but it was thought that including one or two villages would not be representative of rural respondents.

participants were given all relevant information regarding the research as well as the information sheet. If they were not able to read the sheet, it was read to them. As with other participants, informed consent was gained before the interview commenced and recorded consent was obtained during and after the interview. To avoid issues of trust and apprehension towards the researcher, gatekeepers were used to gain access to teahouse customers. These were in the form of members of the researchers family who regularly attend local teahouses.

Contact with the Ministry of Education in Kurdistan also facilitated strong contacts with the University of Kurdistan Hewler[47] and together with the American University of Iraq Sulaimany covered students from the two governing areas. Although it is possible to gain access to non-university participants through the youth wings of political parties, it was more valuable to include non-party affiliated participants in the research. In Iraqi Kurdistan a small but active community group called 'genjany belayen' (unbiased youth) exists in both cities. Although no direct personal contacts exist with members of this group it was relatively easy to get in touch with its members by obtaining contact details from the official registrar of non-government organisations, which was easily obtained through the relevant government ministry. With the use of an extensive contact list and large social network, gaining contact with the above institutions and others was relatively straightforward. As a native Kurd, fluent in the language, it was also possible to travel freely within Kurdistan with no concerns[48]. Where there were gaps in the sampling criteria it was also possible

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[47] Officially called Erbil, Kurds call the city by its Kurdish name 'Hewler'
[48] Non Kurds are often met with increased scrutiny and questions when travelling around the area.

to use snowballing techniques to gain access to participants with particular attributes and criteria.

Snowballing relies on the participants themselves suggesting people the researcher should interview. This type of technique is particularly useful when the target sample is difficult to access or from marginalised communities (Thorogood and Green 2009). The drawbacks of snowballing are also quite evident in that there is a real risk of skewed sampling towards like-minded people (Noy 2008). It also relies on the participants to refer others and so if this is not forthcoming or difficult to obtain then the snowballing ends. Snowballing therefore was not suitable as the main access strategy in this research as the target sample is not difficult to access and not from a marginalised community as previously pointed out. For this reason, different access strategies were used and where gaps in the access criteria were evident, snowballing was only then used as a back up to find suitable candidates that meet specific criteria. In light of this, it is recognised that the sample is not representative of the wider population, as it has already been mentioned in the previous section; the research is focused on a particular age group. Therefore it is not the aim of the research to seek a representative sample.

3.6   Data analysis

This section will start with an explanation of the relevant themes and analysis terms. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) suggest that data collection and analysis should be conducted simultaneously in qualitative research to allow for necessary flexibility. A cyclical approach will therefore be adopted whereby data will be analysed as soon

as it is collected until emerging themes are identified and new information ceases to emerge (Corbin and Strauss 2014).

Grounded theory is a technique used to identify particular concepts and themes within the data and directly connect them to existing theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Charmaz (2006) describes grounded theory as a set of methods that "consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves (p31)".

Thematic analysis involves the researcher going through the data and categorising the responses into themes. Using some of the techniques described in the grounded theory approach, thematic analysis allows the researcher to narrow down large amounts of raw data into emerging themes and patterns allowing further analysis. However, it is not merely the sorting of data into words or phrases; it is also concerned with the implicit and explicit ideas within the data. It is the most popular and commonly used method of data analysis as it provides the researcher a greater deal of flexibility to interpret and analyse the raw data. A thematic approach was used in this study to analyse the data collected which simplified the procedure allowing the researcher to notice emerging themes form the data and following up further interviews that supported and more importantly, opposed those emerging themes (Braun & Clark 2006). The process that was undertaken in this research involved going through the responses of each interview transcript and allocating a

relevant theme to each response, in some cases a particular response would cover more than one theme.

Finally, the role of data analysis software will be explored and how it can be best applied to this study. Software now allows researchers to very quickly and efficiently analyse vast amounts of data that would have taken hours, days and weeks to do manually.   The analysis software also produces more reliable and systematic results without the element of human error or interference and has greatly simplified the recording, transcribing and analysis of data. In the first instance, interviews will be audio-recorded and saved on an encrypted smart-phone. Once interviews have been completed for the day, dictation software will be used to automatically transcribe the interview onto an encrypted laptop. Once saved as this format it is possible to import the interview files into any data analysis software.

The most widely used and effective software in data analysis is NVivo and this will be used to analyse the transcripts of this research. Once the data has been uploaded onto NVivo it is then possible to start the analysis process. The software is in no way meant as a replacement for the research analysis process, rather than an analysis software it may well be better to treat it as 'organising software', making the process of organising themes much easier for the researcher. Indeed NVivo is not a replacement for the thought process that goes into drawing conclusions from the data, rather a tool to allow the researcher to immediately identify and organise responses and emerging themes. As has been previously stated, the analysis process will involve reading and re-reading interview transcripts and attributing codes to emerging themes. Once this is done, the software will allow for the creation

of word trees, models and charts from the data. This will then allow for the creation

of coding and matrix queries, which will allow comparison of items and sample

categories in the form of tables or matrices. Once this is completed it is then very

easy to select certain attributes and themes and compare them with others to identify

trends. For example, the software will easily allow the researcher to extract

responses from male respondents living in Erbil who are religious and compare them

with those that are atheist. This will also allow far greater variety of topic/concept

combinations to be compared and contrasted with each other. Coding stripes can

also be used in the software to provide a constant visual representation of the codes

that have been used and where they have been used. It is also possible to produce

memos or comments on particular responses and link them to other pieces of text in

different documents. This will allow the researcher to compare and contrast

responses from one participant with another. This will easily allow for the

comparison and organisation of specific items to highlight such as respondents living

in Sulaimany who are party members and wear traditional clothes broken down by

gender.

3.7   Ethics

Iraqi Kurdistan is a safe area and has different travel restrictions to the rest of Iraq.

According to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website "The Foreign and

Commonwealth Office (FCO) advise against all but essential travel to the whole of

Iraq, except the Kurdistan region". As a Kurdish national and regular visitor to the

region the researcher has extensive experience of living in Iraqi Kurdistan and

considerable familiarity with all customs and norms of the region also being fluent in the local language with extensive contacts and a wide network.

Participants will be reassured of the research's strict ethical standards from the outset by providing them with the following assurances:

- An official letter from the University confirming my studentship at the university and my role in the research;
- Personal details of participants such as name and address will not be disclosed in any format and that certain information such as age is only required to aid the data analysis;
- The participants right to withdraw from the research at any time leading up to the final submission of the research.

One of the main principles in conducting qualitative research is the right not to take part, the right to say what they want without censorship, and the right to withdraw from the research at any time. These principles will be expressed to the participant on a number of occasions so that they are aware of their rights and of my responsibilities to them.

From the outset all participants will be informed that the study is purely for research purposes, that none of the responses will be used for any other purpose and that their participation is completely voluntary. Participants will also be reassured several times that audio recordings will not be heard by anyone else other than the researcher. In order to reassure participants that their anonymity will be respected, their names will not be recorded as part of the interview or the analysis procedure.

As an extra reassurance participants will be told that the recording device is fitted with an application that allows the researcher to remotely format the device deleting all recordings if the device was lost or stolen and that all files were encrypted on both the recording device and the laptop where they would be stored.

In order to make sure that all participants had the appropriate information regarding the research, an information sheet will be provided to them in Kurdish, detailing the reasons for conducting the research, why they had been chosen, University ethical standards of anonymity and their rights as participants. On commencement of the recorded interview, participants will be asked to provide verbal consent and again once the interview had been completed[49]. On completion of the interview, participants will be offered the opportunity to personally delete the recorded interview from the recording device if they decide that they want to withdraw from the research. This will provide further reassurances that their interview has been deleted should they wish to withdraw. One final consideration needed is the opinion and in turn, possible bias or influence the researcher may have.

3.8   Limitations and self-reflection

Given the above plan of research it is important to identify and acknowledge a number of limitations and personal biases. The Kurdish national movement has been well documented and has been covered in previous chapters (McDowall 1992, Jwaideh 2006, Bruinessen 1978). As a supporter of the Kurdish independence movement, atheist and social reform advocate, those views may not be welcomed by

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[49] These documents were done by another individual as the interviewers Kurdish was not satisfactory

some participants and may be strongly welcomed by others. Although not a member of any political party in Kurdistan it has to be acknowledged that the researcher has certain political views and preferences that are not necessarily in agreement with one or any particular party. As an atheist there may well be issues if this was made obvious especially during the interviews with religious participants. It is therefore important that this fact is not disclosed. This may also be an issue if participants express strong religious opinions that do not agree with the researcher's. On the issue of social reform there are also instances where the researchers views did not agree with those being interviewed. This was particularly the case when participants expressed strong views in support of tribal culture and a male dominance. Fortunately, this was a rare occurrence as the age group being interviewed was not one that those views were prevalent in. As a strong supporter of the Kurdish independence movement there were instances where the views of participants were in total contrast to the researcher's, especially instances where participants expressed negative views relating to independence. Although those views strongly disagreed with the researcher's it was important that they were expressed in the research and was not simply a PR exercise for Kurdish independence. In order to minimise personal influences on interview responses it is important to not disclose the researcher's personal opinion, which may result in the participant telling the interviewer 'what they want to hear' rather than their own opinion (Seidman 2013). Most importantly, it was important to reassure the participants that this was an opportunity for them to express their views whatever they may be. The confidentiality of the interviews allowed participants to freely respond to questions, particularly if those responses were against the mainstream. To further maintain impartiality it is important that the researcher treats each question on its own merits

by probing responses that both agree and disagree with the researcher's personal view.

Although this research is focused on how participants feel about their identity, there may be references to personal and general historical events that have influenced their identity, which may raise the issue of memory recall in participants. It must therefore be acknowledged and noted that recent events, media, and memory recall may influence references to historical events.

Finally, there are sections of Kurdish society that have differing views on women's rights to others in Kurdistan and the west. Although there is very limited research on the role of women in Kurdish society, the former Minister of Reconstruction and Development acknowledged that "women in Iraq do not have the level of freedom to move about and express themselves as women here in the United States do. And, in general, women in Iraq are more home-centred and house bound" (Sideek 2000). Given the religious and conservative nature of Kurdish society, this particular demographic may be more difficult to access and must therefore be noted as a possible limitation of the research.

3.9   Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the methodology that will be established to conduct the research. Although both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used in other studies on identity, it was argued that a qualitative approach is more conducive to this particular study. It was discussed that due to the sensitive nature of the subject, the lack of postal service and the political differences that exist in Kurdistan, a qualitative approach would be suitable in this case. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews allows both the interviewer and the researcher the

freedom to explore issues as they come up and they also allow for greater trust between participant and researcher as the interview was organised through formal channels. Semi-structured interviews also allow the researcher to probe for further responses that come up as a result the interview allowing a greater deal of flexibility in the research.

Semi structured face-to-face interviews will be conducted and participants asked permission to audio record the interviews for ease of transcription and ethical purposes. The research design was produced in a way that will provide a firm foundation and backbone to the debate around the identity of Kurdish youth in Iraqi Kurdistan by addressing the deeper issues that need exploring in this particular subject. Although only one other study (Aziz 2009) has previously been conducted on identity in Iraqi Kurdistan, the quantitative research method adopted by Aziz had a number of methodological drawbacks. This particular study will greatly add to the debate as the only qualitative research on the subject. Whilst the uses of qualitative techniques are most appropriate for this particular study, it is not without its limitations.

Purposive sampling techniques will be used to conduct the research and analysis conducted on a continuous basis to identify emerging themes, and from those results identify further participants to take part in the research. Participants will therefore be selected in order to aid the discussion on the influences of place, space and socialising agents and will reflect the benchmarks identified in the sample criteria. Access to participants will not be difficult to obtain, as the researcher is a native Kurdish speaker and having lived in Kurdistan for several years with extensive

contacts in government, political parties and civil society. Where there are gaps or shortcomings in the sample, snowballing will be used as a back-up strategy to meet any remaining sample category that remains insufficiently covered. The analysis of the interview material will commence from the completion of the first interview, which will allow for regular monitoring of emerging themes and the fulfilment of the sample criteria.

One of the main factors of importance in the research is the ethical consideration during the data collection. Given that the field area of Iraqi Kurdistan is a relatively hostile location with the FCO advising against all but essential travel to Iraq except the Kurdish regions it was important to maintain anonymity of the participants. Participants will be asked to provide verbal consent on commencement of the interview and at the end in order to ensure that they are happy with the outcome of the interview.

Finally, a number of limitations and personal biases were identified and acknowledged. Limitations of the research include the possibility of respondents not being able to recall personal or public historical events or have their views on those events influenced by current news and media broadcasts. Another limitation of the research is the difficulty in gaining access to 'home centred and housebound' women given the religious and conservative nature of Kurdish society.

CHAPTER FOUR

Theoretical framework

4.1   Introduction

In todays world, different groups of people are coming together along ethnic lines under nationalist movements demanding power and recognition as a distinct ethnic group. Some of these groups are going further than demanding ethnic rights and are demanding a state of their own based on their groups status and their claims to territory. Wherever claims to territory are made however, there comes with it a disputed claim by the majority groups apposing the ethnic groups claims. Those disputed claims are often manifested in the form of often brutal oppression directed towards the minority ethnic group by the state. Claims to ethnic identity and rights to independence are often so strong that those minority groups carry on their nationalist claims even in the face of that brutal oppression.

The Scottish philosopher David Hume, in his 1748 publication on moral and political essays, made statements on the origins of national identity that fundamentally changed the established view of nations and nationalism. The essays entitled 'Of National Characters' challenged the established theory that attributed the differences between people to the influences their surroundings and climate in which they lived. The established theory gave the example of the Spanish and the Italians, who according to his theory, were whiter and more inclined to warfare than northern Europeans whose mental state was influenced by their humid environment. Hume's objection to the established theory was based on the fact that even though Spain,

England and France travelled across the globe and lived in different climates, they were still distinguishable between each other and the natives of the countries they went too. Instead Hume suggested that there were other influences that impact on ethnic identity such as cultural habits, language, religion and being ruled by the same government. He disagreed with the established view that the differences in the customs of people could be down to climatology and he instead promoted the idea of differences in national cultures, i.e. that identity was defined by culture. The way that government influenced and coordinated other factors such as language and culture meant that identity was changeable and not dependant on climate. People imitated each other rather than climate, the geographical boundaries only represented political boundaries (Hume 1748).

The aim of this chapter is to expand on the literature review and provide a theoretical framework for the thesis and to contribute to the current debate on the historical foundations of nationalism by addressing the relationship between the modernist paradigm that defines the nations as essentially a modern phenomenon and the traditionalism that states that argues that nations were formed long before the age of modernity. Proponents of the modernist theory have been dominant in recent years but it has been challenged by an ever growing advocacy that state nations and nationhood go back to pre-modern times. After going into more detail about the modernist and traditionalist paradigms, this chapter will argue that neither of these trains of thought accurately describe the Kurdish nationalism discourse and that something new is needed in order to do so.

4.2   The Modernist Paradigm

The differences in the modernists and traditionalists paradigm stems from two simple questions: what is a nation? And do nations have origins? These apparent simple questions have been discussed for decades and have produced a steady stream of research and publications that have no sign of abating, in fact he discussion on nations, nationalism, identity and nationhood has greatly increased amongst scholars in recent years. As the two theoretical beliefs are so diametrically opposed, the debates between advocates of the two are often fierce.

The philosopher Anthony Smith has been defining and refining all possible debates and disputed between the modernists and the traditionalists since the 1990s. No matter how much is debated and by whom, it is impossible to ignore the obligation that scholars have in that they must place themselves within one of the proposed schemes discussed around opposing ideas: organic vs voluntary nationalism, constructivism vs determinism, ethnic vs civic nations, political vs cultural, primordialism vs perennialism etc. These discussions it may be assumed have helped to clarify the differing positions but paradoxically, it appears that the more they are debated, the more the gap between the two are affirmed. It is therefore impossible to discuss anything related to nations and nationalism without first addressing the modernist and traditionalist positions.

The foundations modernist school of thought were laid down by scholars such as Hans Kohn (1967) and Elie Kedourie (1998) who defined nationalism as something that came about from a political ideology during the nineteenth century. Later, and more famously, Ernest Gellner added to the position in the 1980s who also argued like his predecessors that nations, national identity and nationalism were all products

of modernity and not vice versa (Gellner 1998). However, the most influential and most widely cited works are those by scholars such as Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger who although argued that nationalism was a modern phenomenon, they also argued that people have a considerable input in its definition by stressing the role of the media and governments who have considerable influence in the lives of people. As such the terms that they have introduced into the debate such as 'imagined communities' and 'invention of tradition' have become an essential reference point in any publication on nationalism, nationhood or national identity.

Although a number of modernists attempt to include in their accounts the wider, pre-modern source practices by adding concepts such as ' social thought ' and ' ethnics ' and ' ethno-symbolism ' (Smith 1986), they maintain a clear distinction in relation to what occurred before and after 1800. Smith's ethno-symbolistic theory, however, acknowledges the specific need to consider the emergence of nations from a wider historical perspective, assigning great relevance to collective values, memories and traditional ' ethnic ' symbols. One of the reasons for the popularity of the modernist narrative is the form of factors used to explain the rise of globalization, such as industrialization, the growth of mass media, and democratisation. We work to macro-level to clarify large processes. Another explanation is the interrelationship of arguments: modernity is characterized by a set of triggers which are also presupposed for nationalism to rise. Consequently, the inference is drawn that nationalism should be seen as a product of modernity.

The main argument given by traditionalists or pre-modernists is that traditional customs are far more stubborn, volatile and dependent than those grand schemes

make room for. Traditionalists believe that nations and nationhood existed before modernity are not results of modernity. There is a wide variety of methods and regional reach, and at the starting dates of their alternate narratives, scholars differ widely. However, scholars of pre-modern national theory are critical of the existing theoretical framework in which their more source-based studies are difficult, if not impossible, to fit into. Many of their studies concentrate on nations that from a very early stage have taken the form of a national cultural and political culture, such as Britain, Sweden, France and the Netherlands. For example, Andrew Hastings claims that England provides the' template' of a country and nation-state, and that by the end of the tenth century a sense of national unity was already visible there. The development of British National identity in the beginning of the 16th Century or the Elizabethan era. Dutch identity, which is sometimes used as a counterexample to modernist accounts: while all the different provinces were semi-independent, centralist trends were abundantly present at the level of official state politics. In the same way, national symbols and narratives which added to a feeling of a shared national identity were abundant in the print media from the late sixteenth century.

Two recent critiques of the modernist model, more historically focused, stand out: The Roots of Nationalism. An alternative history by Caspar Hirschi from Ancient Rome to Early Modern Germany (2011), and Nations: Azar Gat's Long History and Deep Origins in Political Ethnicity and Nationalism (2013). Hirschi gives the modernist paradigms a' counter-theory' by considering nationalism as a linguistic trend that created and reflected historical realities. His reconstruction of the history of nationalism, taking' national honor' and' national independence' as key concepts, consists of three phases: he claims that "nationalism arose in Catholic Europe in the fourteenth century, that forms of nationalism abounded in the Renaissance, and that

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modern nationalism could only become such a mobilizing force because of its involvement in politics, intellectuals and academics". Through addressing kin-culture societies and the development of these groups into tribes and then states in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America, Gat broadens the temporal and geographic spectrum even further. This transition happened much earlier than is usually assumed:' Nations and national states can be found wherever states have arisen since history began.' The ideas of 'race' and 'political ethnicity' are central to his claim. His use of 'ethnics' bears great similarity to Smith's, but is less time-and space-limited: it is not only the cornerstone of historical states, but also of new immigrant states. Political ethnicity 'reflects the notion that, throughout the ages, race was political and politicised. Gat sees national states as basic types or models of political ethnicity in which there is a rough congruence between a single, dominant population, and a state (Gat 2013).

Although the writers addressed so far take different approaches as to how far the use of terms such as 'country' and 'nationalism' can be generalized, they have in common calling for a more source-based approach and a more pragmatic attitude towards continuity and discontinuity issues. Azar Gat defends the traditionalist stance, but criticizes the use of subdivisions such as 'primordial' and 'perennial' that serve primarily modernist rhetoric purposes. Instead, he presents as a category 'cultural ethnicity,' which stresses the strong power of ethno-national relations and their enduring impact on human history.

Modernists have failed, according to Gat, to understand that ethnic relations have always been political and politicised, and that prior to the advent of modernity there was a strong congruence between culture, ethnicity and State. Gat points to the

emergence of national states in medieval Europe, such as England, Denmark, Norway and Poland, and to the (often political) use in medieval documents of the word 'natio' to support his argument that racial and national affinities have deep roots and are among the strongest forces in human history (Gat 2013). In his view, the key distinction between pre-modern and modern nationhood lies in the fact that in earlier periods pre-modern national identity remained secondary to the dynastic principle, whereas during modern times it became the primary formal, legal, and political principle.

Another critic of the modernist view, Andrew Hadfield asks if it is possible to contemplate an era where nations didn't exist. He claims that if historians accept that we have always had a sense of ethnic identity, it would be far more fruitful. He refers to the position of the public space, which, in his opinion, was in no way an invention of the 18th century, and literature's role in transmitting images of national identity. Hence, "the invention of the printing press, its variety and potential importance, is crucial to our understanding of nations progress". He highlights this point by addressing the work of two English poets of the early seventeenth century who tried to express a conception of the country that could even be considered nationalist, at least if one acknowledges their position in a national tradition that in the nineteenth century did not emerge out of nothing.

Bell however warns against an excessively teleological and universalistic approach, in which the French Revolution becomes the all-encompassing paradigm of subsequent revolutionary regimes and nationalist movements. Historians should for example avoid drawing a straight line from the 1790s to the Third Republic revolutionary revolutionaries. On the contrary, a completely different policy was

adopted during the Napoleonic period, when Napoleon propagated European integration and the unification of the peoples of Europe into a single people. Bell also relativises the tendency to take the nation-state as the sole reference point in nineteenth-century historical studies, when regional empires played an equally important role. In other words, saying that nationalism is a new, conscious political program does not mean that nationalism was or is important to modernity: this method of organizing and mobilizing citizens and territories is not necessarily preferred by modernity.

4.3   Cultural Roots of Nationalism

Cultural continuity is the key word here: the basic idea is that national identity shaping was firmly rooted in pre-modern source practices and that they were created, invented and imagined just as much as they were in modern times. The essence of the proposed continuities can be illustrated by revisiting terms such as 'invention of history' and 'imagined culture' that are usually applied to modern times. It is generally recognized that the formation of collective memory cultures in the nineteenth century was crucial for the propagation of nationalist sentiments: national unity was formed by the inventing of customs such as symbols, ceremonies, epic tales and founding myths. They offered "authentic" customs and origins to the nation that characterized their unique history and character.

Nevertheless, many of these elements returned to earlier stages of history: the Dutch lion, the Gallic rooster, and the German eagle, for example, were not nineteenth-century creations, but had long served as emblematic animals, especially in times of war. In a new historical context, they were reused, without sacrificing the older

meanings attached to those symbols. Precisely because of their origins in a long and significant past, they have contributed to feelings of national unity, strength and resilience. Both Smith and Gat pointed out the deceptive connotations of' tradition invention;' it conceals that many symbols and practices were only partly new inventions, and were embedded in a long, cultural history. As Gat puts it, 'the tradition's necessarily fanciful processing and reprocessing did not mean ex nihilo fabrication. Instead, it required largely selective reworking of existing historical materials and folk memories that often had at least some foundation in reality.'

The 'imagined community' can be said to be something similar. Anderson has argued famously that modern nations act as imagined communities: while members do not know the majority of their fellow members, they all have in their minds a picture of their (national) society. Such images are primarily disseminated through mass media and other outlets including newspapers and books. A comparison can be made with the early modern period, when written media was also used in early modern Europe to unite people for common causes. Bibles in the vernacular, books and other religious writings encouraged the creation of imagined societies based on a common language, as indicated by Peter Burke (2010). Pamphlets, periodicals, magazines, poetry, and works of theatre have aroused and propagated feelings of patriotism and solidarity in times of war or political crisis. Nevertheless, one should bear in mind that these imaginary cultures varied from those of the 19th century. The circulation of printed material was much lower, and one should be cautious not to overstate the impact of (partly literary) discourses.   Nevertheless, the mental environment of writers and readers has inevitably been influenced by concepts such as 'the fatherland' and' the country'. Not all the inhabitants may have identified with these 'imagined' societies, but they did exist, at least in the minds of philosophers

and writers, who created various types of unifying images, using metaphors and topical images that exceeded the borders of people and regions.

4.4　Primordialism

Primordialism holds that racial identity is ascriptive, granted birth membership and as such hard to alter (Isajiw, 1993). It argues that racial ties are innate in us as humans, and we have strong natural links that tie us to other people and establish natural distinctions with others, whether based on ethnicity, religion, language or place (Geertz, 1973). Consequently, membership of an ethnic group is fixed and handed on unchanged over centuries (Chandra, 2012). Primordialism considers an ethnic group as an empirical power (Perez and Hirschman, 2009), and their ethnic identity is unique, universal and with distinct social distinctions (Poata-Smith, 2013). Ethnic disparities are seen as ancient, fundamental and unresolvable (Esteban et al., 2012), and therefore ethnic violence derives instinctively and ultimately from 'old animosity' amongst ethnic groups. Primordialism defines the terror of invasion, deportation or even destruction that is at the heart of most ethnic wars, and reveals the commitment to ideals that evoke an intensity of passion and brute power that fuels the brutal massacres perpetrated in such wars.

For example, why do conflicts come up when they do, and not sooner or later? How did the Arab African cultures have to be such important identifiers in the 2003 Darfur crisis[50], and not in the earlier conflicts in the region? The genetically dependent

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[50] Rebel groups in Darfur Sudan attacked the military airfield and an air force general, the government launched a counter offensive which resulted in mass violence against the citizens in Darfur.

theory of race doesn't properly answer these kinds of questions. However, despite these limitations, primordialist theory is helpful in explaining the emotional nature of ethnic disputes, and gives insight into the passion-driven behavior of ethnic groups. Ethnicity's power lies in its ability to promote passion and commitment, and if misused leads to violent confrontation.

The primordialist perspective maintains that if the nation is viewed as a modern phenomenon, i.e., a 20th-century approach to consolidating political units, it prioritizes nationalism and never challenges the centrality of modern states. This considers identity as a primary dependency by ensuring that social life, ethnic groups and nations are formed on the grounds of connections to the 'cultural gifts' (Smith, 2004). According to scholars using this approach, any identification (e.g., family, faith, nationality, language, race or nation) occurs before interactions. Therefore, identity is given rather than chosen, immutable rather than changeable, and conflict inevitably arises. Primordialism assumes, when addressing nations and ethnicities, that people cannot reject or avoid their country or ethnic identity (Horowitz, 2002). Primordialism supporters, such as Pierre van den Berghe (2005), agree that "any conception of ethnicity must go back to stateless societies, 'whereas' nothing focuses one's ethnic consciousness more easily or better than political conflict with or within states dominated by people who are ethnically different from one another."

Although primordialism preserves the above key elements, it may vary. There have been at least three subgroups in elementary school according to research on identity: nationalistic, biological, and cultural/symbolic. People's identity (or nation) is the same for getting the same look. A nation has a 'political border' where people live under the same name as each other. This concept of nationalism involves people

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seeking to defend this border, but usually this protection is violent when engaging with individuals with different ideologies.

The socio-biological theory[51] argues that people collaborate with other feelings or emotions; that is, they need security, and are connected by shared identity. In this context, cultural communities are seen as a broader community group, and cultural symbols (e.g., accent, ethnicity, colour) are used as biological association indicators. The cultural/symbolic hypothesis argues that on the basis of links to the historical assets of social life, ethnic groups and nations are formed (Smith, 2003). Scholars such as Clifford Geertz (1963) expanded the scope of the concept beyond parentage to broader classes such as those dependent on mutual income, history, language, and other customs.

The definition of race and ethnic identity, in general, has many benefits of primordialism. Primordialists gave us a greater heritage than we assumed. It contains both feelings and memories; it applies to other people (which varies in who we are and who they are); and it provides a better understanding of how we desire identity, and how it influences our lives. Primordialists view nationalism as a role model, as well as a rational framework for interpreting national characteristics. Primordialism assumes that we can learn or foresee something (e.g., behaviors) in a group because we recognize a social identification. But there are other pitfalls of primordialism too. Primordialists contend the limitation is overcome by their emphasis on social situations underlying the identity or, rather, on changing or unjust social conditions. Primordialists still neglect the context in which identity is formed

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[51] Defined by E.O. Wilson and based on the premise that some behaviours are partly inherited.

(Jaffrelot, 2005), and the manner in which racial identities arise from experiences. Although primordialism can anticipate people's behavior by understanding their origin, it doesn't explain why these people obtain that origin.

4.5   Instrumentalism

The instrumentalist hypothesis sees race as "under human existence neither natural nor necessarily important" (Varshney, 2009). Ethnicity is used as a geopolitical foundation for coalitions pursuing a greater share of scarce economic or political power, and is therefore a means to restrict support to a few individuals. The instrumentalist theory suggests that assembling a group along ethnic lines is rational, based on the advantage it gives to them. Since certain ethnic tensions and civil wars occur in response to the incentives for primary commodity predation, they argue that envy is stronger than hostility as a main cause of ethnic conflict. Therefore there is ethnic conflict between objective actors over scarce resources motivated by agendas of political or economic gain or intentional coercion based on a moral decision to cause or encourage ethnic violence (Chandra 2004). Hence ethnic conflict is the result of the actor's popular involvement in moral action such as stability, power, and security. While demonstrating the role of elite dominance in ethnic wars, the value of this hypothesis also lies in understanding whether some ethnically separated populations chose to battle or prefer to cooperate rather than combat. This is argued that this decision is based on group assessments of costs and advantages, and that, where the risk of cooperation is higher than the expected gains, racial tensions tend to be inevitable (Walter, 1997). Instrumentalism often reveals that certain people engage in ethnic abuse, particularly though they are not individually influenced but obey the crowd. Hardin (1995) suggests in line with this that ethnic mobilization is a coordination activity in which collaboration is rational as soon as you see people

working together. Similarly, Collier and Hoeffler (1998) conclude that the opportunity cost of engaging in a rebellion is low, and that the costs of getting a share in the loot are therefore very important. The crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo is often described mainly as a product of political repression, state collapse and illegal extraction of natural resources (Autesserre, 2012)[52]. The result of this dialogue on resolving this conflict was a narrow emphasis on solutions to state-building and reconstruction while paying less attention to the difference of social roles that Connor (1994) aptly argues is reflected in the phenomenon of us-them. Moreso, if any move in ethnic war is perceived at the individual level as being motivated by a few leaders desire for individualistic economic benefits, how can the actions of members of these ethnic groups, including assassination, genocide, rape, contribute to those benefits? It is argued that war rape is also a political weapon for threatening, insulting and exploiting the 'enemy' as experienced in the case of the Serbs during the Bosnian War whose aim of raping Bosnian Muslim women was to build little 'Chetniks' (Weitsman, 2008)[53], or the case of Rwanda where genocide is depicted as an elite political strategy to buy one party allegiance by annihilation[54]. Although these statements are plausible, without the emotional material stressed by primordialism, they are incomplete. How is it so easy to successfully organize mass engagement along ethnic lines? How does the bourgeoisie feel that for these benefits they should make successful use of race? Insiders do not generate these emotions and mutual feelings linked to ethnic origin, they simply recognise and relate to them (Ruane and

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[52] The conflict knows as Africa's First World War led to the loss of five million lives between 1994 and 2003.
[53] The Bosnian War was an international armed conflict that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovenia between 1992 and 1995.
[54] The Rwandan civil war was fought between the government forces and the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front from 1990 to 1994

Todd, 2004). This is not to suggest that elite coercion or greed for economic benefits is not a significant cause of ethnic strife but rather that legal elite 'power-conserving' strategies alone (Fearon, 1995) are inadequate to overcome the dynamics of this phenomenon.

According to instrumentalists, ethnicity is the product of a cultural by-product (Cohen, 1969) and the way of creating common values within a state for a particular political purpose, such as nationalization (Haas, 1997). Instead of focusing on ethnic groups or countries origins, instrumentalists pay more attention to targets that vary based on their use as political instruments. In this way, race (and nationalism) is a sort of foreign ideology that is cultivated by leaders within individual communities for their own political or personal agendas. However, for instrumentalists, race is changeable, rather than an inherent feature which is constant over time. At times (or in other conditions) it can be necessary and totally missing in others (Joireman, 2003); from this point of view, due to circumstances or to the role of the bourgeoisie in the abuse of ethnicity, ethnic identity is often central, whereas at other times it fails because it no longer serves a particular function.

Instrumentalists believe that the idea of nations and national identity are modern creations. Describing patriotism as a common basic identity (or ideology), Ernest Gellner (1983) claimed that nationalism, the concept of creating 'one community, one state,' was necessary for controlling new states and producing communities which needed their people's defense. As Gellner points out, industrialization introduces various improvements to society, including a shift in the mode of production, with the adoption of new technologies and technical advances requiring a specific type of education. Unlike rural cultures, where schooling or training can be left to families or

guilds and is related to agrarian traditions and social backgrounds, the state takes over compulsory education in urban communities, using one language, one culture, a shared understanding of history, and nationalism. Thus, the (modern) state's instrumental use of nationalism is necessary to maintain its strength. More accurately, dominant governments are those capable of exploiting patriotic sentiment through a number of ways, including the use of symbols, art, traditions, and traditions, to bind their citizens' emotions to state ideals and goals. Such states that tend to exploit imperialism, by comparison, are usually weaker, and frequently lack patronage or legitimacy.

The lack of the value of emotion and desire, and the positions of identity and recollection, is another criticism of instrumentality. Instrumentalism makes it hard to grasp whether nationalism can overcome its impulses, and allows people either to disregard cultural and other philosophies that do not adhere to regimes, or to view them blindly in some way. Consequently, the instrumentalist view can not explain if capitalism is more benign in some countries and states, and malignant in others, or why it builds some countries, and destroys others. Furthermore, on the basis of their emphasis on the position of leaders/elites and their restriction of identity to language, and identity to economic benefits, instrumentalists have little to no relation with how many people mean by the word 'nationalism': the philosophies and revolutions under which the people's banners pursued liberty, sovereignty and democracy for their land. For this cause, more lately the focus of the instrumentalists on the philosophical essence of nationalism has been replaced by a focus on the broader historical context and thus on the theoretical meaning of nationalism" (Pryke, 2009).

To sum up, instrumentalism considers citizenship as a tool used by western states to

establish and maintain a nationality. In terms of cost-benefit analysis (Hechter, 1987), identity politics can be rationally defined to instrumentalists, making identity easy to exploit. Although, according to the instrumentalistic interpretation, nationalism for the most dominant ethnic group promotes political agents in conflict that can push the stakeholders into a romanticized nation-state, instrumentalists often believe an internal division between identity groups that influences how communities organize and how they operate. Of this purpose, instrumentalism is more relevant to explaining why people feel a national identity and become nationalists than primordialism (Jaffrelot, 2005). Nevertheless, reasons that neglect the ethnic identity are insufficient to explain recent trends where ethnic groups have developed a number of nations. In addition, while instrumentalists believe in the impact of developed economies (industrialization and technology) on the centrality of nation-states, developed nations also exist without industrialization (e.g., Thailand).

4.6   Constructivism

The constructivist theory perceives ethnic identity as a culturally built, complex system that can be produced by different means such as conquest, colonization, or immigration (Wimmer, 2008). Ethnic communities are considered to be social buildings with 'recognizable origin and history of expansion and contraction, amalgamation and division' (Posner, 2004). We are complex and derive from a number of social, cultural and political mechanisms (Chandra, 2001). Constructivists argue that each culture has a master cleavage and paradigm built in history that can be exploited by political entrepreneurs (Brass 2003).

Constructivists consider identity as a social group defined by the laws of

participation, characteristics (perceived as typical), or behavior expected under

certain circumstances (Fearon and Laitin, 2000). They argue that these social

distinctions are not natural, innate or unalterable as they are not genes but the

internal logic of social discourses that drives identity formation and links people's

identities to different classes (Ferejohn, 1991). We call attention to the historical

development and the preservation by colonial and post-colonial governing classes of

exclusive philosophies for political and social influence (Jackson 2002). The role of

language, custom, symbols and culture in instigating and sustaining ethnic rivalry is

important to the constructivists (Kaufman, 2001). Hence ethnicity varies in dynamic,

historical and interethnic communication and its purpose is to strengthen and

maintain social inequalities for different purposes (Jemma, 2006). Thus, ethnic

violence is the product of unique historical processes, and these historical forces

affect relations between ethnic groups and generate friction amongst them, thereby

recognizing the politicization of ethnic identities (Weir, 2012) triggered by a variety of

factors and develop through time and build a favorable atmosphere for aggression.

As Kaufman (2001) rightly says, "the most problematic symbols used in ethnic wars

are stereotypes that justify government control of particular territories that could have

been conquered in the past, and stereotypes of historical massacres that can be

used to clarify potential genocide concerns". Likewise, Toft (2003) argues that the

primary determinant of ethnic wars is how state and future secessionist minorities

interpret it and if ethnic identities are formed, they may often become internalized

and institutionalized in such a way that they establish profound significance for that

group and produce the same emotions as primary identities, as ethnic groups appear

to share a common sense of mutual beliefs and identity centered on mutual historical

memories, valued cultural characteristics, philosophies, religion, languages. For

example, Botswana, described as 'the refuge of Africa's ethnic peace and harmony' (Mulinge, 2008), is a vulnerable state like its neighbor Zimbabwe, heterogeneous too, yet has not had the same war past as Zimbabwe[55]. However, while the constructivist argument may appear systematic, the nature of the eruption of confrontation (Jackson 2004) does not compensate for it. Why do these historical periods arise at a given stage in the conflicts? Although this model explains the macro-level processes, it is difficult to understand what is happening at the grassroots level and it generates strategies that are more concentrated on creating the institution, even though they ignore the inherent aggression.

Constructivism considers every society as a human system and as subject to various meanings and influences. Influenced by Benedict Anderson's Imaginary Cultures (2006), this hypothesis suggests that national mythologies construct fictitious societies, such as nations, ethnic groups, and mutual religions, and use myths and historical narratives to represent them. To Anderson, a nation is "an abstract political community–and conceived to be inherently limited as well as sovereign" (2006). Unlike a real society, the party is pictured, as it's not a face-to-face collective but a society that its members keep in their minds as a symbol of their communion. The world is created as tiny because no nation considers itself as being coexistent with mankind "(2006). For Anderson, "The most messianic nationalists don't dream of a day when all the leaders of the human race will enter their country in the way it was possible to imagine, say, in those epochs of a solely Christian culture. It is also conceived as sovereign as the notion originated in a time when Abolition and Rebellion weakened the power of the divinely-ordained patriarchal dynastic system.

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[55] Since 1980 Zimbabwe has been involved in a total of 7 wars whereas Botswana has been involved in only 2

It is often imagined not only as a dictator but also as a nation, as the world is still perceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship "(2006). As he says, "at the end of the day, it is this culture that has made it possible for so many millions of men over the past two centuries not to kill so much as to willingly die with so little creativity (2006)".

Therefore, according to Anderson, the period that created nations and nationalism includes the territorialisation of religious traditions, the collapse of ancient kingship, the relationship between capitalism and literature, the development of modern state languages, and changing meanings of time and space. Anderson claims nations utilize vocabulary and changing objects such as historical records, maps and museums to mold these imaginations and reinforce them. National language is a tool for societies to teach people how to form their identities. People with more knowledge often have more interest in learning about themselves and their culture through the education the country provides as a resource for nation-building. Issues like reading and traveling often form the imaginations of children. As people read novels, they can visualize themselves and their world and when connected with those they meet, traveling will help people realize who they are. Citizens are constantly aware that across the world, there are citizens like them who help them know more about themselves and their culture. Nationalism is also a tool for constructivists who use language and symbols to develop, form and enhance imagination.

Cultural, political, technical and historical systems and conditions are regarded by constructivist philosophy as determinants of the nations and ethnic groups being built. These frameworks and conditions form, model and decide the meaning and significance of ethnicity. Therefore, the constructivist approach to citizenship and

racial identity has some advantages over the latter. Constructivists explain how nationalists construct history, and identify particular entities in identity creation. Constructivists also explain whether abstract concepts are collective theories, for example, using old stories to evoke new feelings, they examine the role of contemporary literature in shaping culture. Since identity is not fixed but is continually changing, constructivism investigates how individuals establish various forms of identity. For the constructivists, creativity is never over; it is still planned and re-constructed, nonetheless, constructivism presents some points which may be contentious.[56]

4.7   Ethnosymbolism

What ethnosymbolism symbolises is the continuity and link between premodern and modern forms of social cohesion and the role of intellectuals is fundamental to the theory of ethno symbolism. The problems of better understanding nationality have, since the 1970s, been considerably clarified. Ethnosymbolism has come about from the theoretical critique of modernism, it refers to an approach to nationalism that focuses on the role of myths, symbols, memories, values, and traditions in the formation of national and ethnic identity. The founding father of this theory is Anthony D. Smith who advocates the study of cultural identities over a long duree that spans many centuries, that is continuous and recurring that connects the national past, present and future. He also places great significance on the pre-existence of ethnic communities, the role of memories of a golden age, myths of

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[56] Particularly its core ideas on identity formation and inventing, how do other projects to establish a nation struggle when identity is easy to construct or develop?

ethnic origin, cults and national heroes, and the attachment to a homeland. In general, scholars agree that nations are formed through living human beings, whether it be through a primordial origin, a constructed sense of ethnicity or an instrumentalist creation by elites.

Intellectuals under the ethno symbolism theory work to record the ethnic traits and cultures, they are chroniclers of the ethnic past elaborating the myths of of ethnic past linking the modern nation to its golden age. These intellectuals are not necessarily individuals who belong to a certain class, they are literate but not necessarily academics or scholars, what matters is their ability to express and spread a national identity. In general, the role of the intellectuals is seen by ethnosymbolists as laying down the skeleton that larger movements are built upon. First there is a need for an impetus from amateur scholars who envisage the nation the flint that ignites the fuse which is then taken on by other intellectuals and academics. These intellectuals took on the task of imagining the nation, of taking myths, national heroes, folk tales and creating or promoting stories based on them to further promote that nationalist movement amongst the masses.

As Leoussi also states "yet this is in fact the implication of overly deterministic, whether historical or sociobiological, accounts of nationality, where the existence of one form of the nation is presented as a necessary, uniform result of either the 'historical forces' of 'modernity' (as in the work of Gellner, Anderson and Hobsbawm) or our biological drives (as in the work of van den Berghe), and where the 'engineers' are elites manipulating or inventing traditions to further one interest, for example 'power' in the form of the state, the market, or the 'inclusive fitness' of kinship,

depending upon the analyst. Such accounts minimize, if not altogether eliminate, what is crucial to the existence of the nation: its meaning to its members such that the nation is, as Smith has rightly put it, 'a community of history and destiny'" (leoussi 2006).

Through researching the cultural material of nations and recognizing the links between ethnic memory and contemporary national identities, the ethno-symbolic approach seeks to "provide a nation's cultural past as a form of historical cultural culture." By doing so, current national identities are exposed as far more nuanced and multi-faceted as the modernist model will enable. He further suggests that once established, ethnicities (racial populations) appear to be exceptionally resilient as individuals, and nations show additional virtues to those exhibited by ethnic groups as a further development of ethnic communities. Smith describes country as "a designated human society sharing a historical land, popular beliefs and historical memories, a community, collective culture, a shared economy and its members ' legal rights and duties. (Smith 2009)"

Leoussi identifies two weaknesses of ethnosymbolism which she identifies as "Smith defines the nation as 'a named human population occupying an historic territory, and sharing myths, memories, a single public culture and common rights and duties for all members' (Smith 2004). This is somewhat unclear. The inclusion of common rights and duties in the definition seems to refer to citizenship rights, which can only be fully granted by the existence of a state autonomous region". The second weakness which she identifies is its "apparent difficulty in explaining the variability of

nationalist's movements and their different motivations. Failing this task, ethnosymbolism risks remaining a descriptive endeavor" (Leoussi 2006).

4.8   The Nationalist Discourses and the Kurdish Case

The Kurdish homeland is located where the ancient empires of the Ottomans and the Persians meet, this meant that both those empires often used the Kurdish tribes and principalities to their own benefit as buffers to each other. The Kurdish poet Ahmed-i-Khani[57] wrote of the difficult situation that the Kurds found themselves stuck between these two powerful empires:

" I leave it to God's wisdom

The Kurds in this world's state

Why are they deprived of their rights?

Why are they all doomed

See, from the Arabs to the Georgians

Everything is Kurdish and, as with a citadel

The Turks and the Persians besiege them

From four sides at once

And they both make the Kurdish people

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[57] Kurdish poet, writer, astronomer and philosopher (1650 – 1707)

Into a target for fate's arrow"

(Khani 1692)

Khani was considered the founding father of Kurdish nationalism and was hundreds of years ahead of his countrymen and it was only after the end of the First World War when the Ottoman Empire was broken up that the Kurdish nationalist movement gained wider support and momentum.

The typical Kurdish nationalist from any one of the Kurdish cities is essentially a "primordialist". For this individual, the Kurdish nation is something that dates back millennia, something that is natural and instilled in every Kurd defining their individual and collective historic identity. If nationalism is akin to human nature in the primordialist paradigm then this discourse is one favorably used by scholars and politicians to justify and lay claim to Kurdish national identity. As the primordialist is based on an inherent given right to nationhood, scholars are slowly challenging the primordialist discourse seeking to locate the origin of Kurdish national identity. In the ethnicist debate, conceptions of Kurdish culture and citizenship are all based on the shared national origin, identified as a standardized Kurdish ethnicity. The specific constituent elements of Kurdish national origin and culture are in this sense ethnic groups. Therefore, racial constructions of the common origin provide the discursive ground for the creation of the standard national identity, while national identity often entails essentialist claims to the common origin. The convergence of heritage and ethnicity discourses within the ethnicist approach suggests that multicultural groups alone determine the Kurdish community's borders. Those advocating ethnicism clearly define and set out the historical and cultural lines of inclusion and exclusion, defining who is and who is not included within their given cultural circle. This is also

done by defining who or what they are not by defining themselves in relation to their surrounding Arab, Iranian and Turkish ethnicities. As Wali claims: "This uniform Kurdish identity is, for the ethnicist approach, the core of the nationalist political project. It is the vehicle for the expression of the national claim, historicized by invoking instances of rebellion and uprising as instances of the expression of the common ethnic origin, a natural quality given to history awaiting realization. The expression and realization of the origin, however, is not a natural process; it requires specific social, economic and political conditions. The conceptions of Kurdish origin and identity in this approach, though clearly essentialist, are not transcendental. The uniform Kurdish origin expresses itself through the intentions and actions of social classes and political and cultural elites and organizations. Some recent ethnicist approaches, grounded in Marxism, place a strong emphasis on historical conditions and structural constraints in the revivalist project" (Wali 2003).

The application of the primordialist approach to the interpretation of Kurdish ethnic identity has some advantages. For example, primordialists specifically explain that people (Kurds, in this case) need a collective name to demonstrate unity and cooperation. We may also use the primordial approach to consider Kurdish national identity to learn or expect much about Kurds (e.g. their conduct). It can not fully explain Kurdish nationalism and ethnic identity, however, since the primordialist perspective lacks the context in which identity is formed and denies the centrality of modern states.

Although primordialists seldom question the centrality of the modern state, recent trends are the Kurdish government, and nationalism. As Gunter argues, Nationalism in general is a relatively new concept to the West, let alone the Middle East.

"Despite these primordial or essentialist arguments for the antiquity of Kurdish nationalism, such interpretations can be challenged for a number of very solid reasons. In the first place, of course, the very concept of the nation and nationalism being the focus of one's supreme loyalty is relatively new even in the West, where many would argue that it only began to develop in the latter part of 18th century and specifically during the French Revolution which began in 1789[58]. The concept is even newer in the Middle East. Turkish, Iranian, and even Arab nationalism largely emerged only after World War I following the demise of Ottoman Empire and its emphasis on Islam as the supreme focus of one's loyalty. (Gunter)"

Kurdish nationalists argue that they are entitled to national recognition based on having a distinct and unique language, culture and common history based on living in a homeland where they have lived for thousands of years. On this basis the primordialist discourse seems to fit the Kurdish case especially since this sense of national identity has not only remained but gained strength after many years of brutal violence and dictatorships suffered at the hands of successive Iraqi governments. Hassanpour uses another method to define what he believes to be Kurdish nationalism, by using the term 'Kurdayeti' he argues that "by the 1960s, the modern nationalist ideas had developed into a coherent system of thought that was named Kurdayeti. This term means the idea of and struggle for relieving the Kurds from national oppression by uniting all parts of Kurdistan under the rule of an independent Kurdish state." Hassanpour emphasizes other components of nationalism too such as language and education. According to Hassanpour "most of the studies on Kurdish nationalism fail to account for the social, economic and cultural components

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[58] The French Revolution took place between 1789 to 1799 and was a far reaching period of social upheaval that led to the dictatorship of Napolean.

of Kurdish nationalism- detribalization, urbanization, the decline of feudalism, the rise of capitalist relations, linguistic consciousness and literary creation, journalism, education, and mass communication. (Hassanpour 1992)".

The Kurdish nation's constructions, nationalism, and ethnic identity is a result of the region resisting colonisation. When the cycle of nation-state building started in the early 19th century, the Kurdish identity was used as a tool for the development and preservation of Kurdish nationalism. Such proof can also be used to support a primordialist perspective rather than an instrumentalistic or constructivist one.

The constructivist approach to Kurdish national identity has an edge over the alternatives of primordialism and instrumentalism. Many researchers have considered it scientifically persuasive, as the hypothesis shows us why certain ethnic groups evolve and why other groups vanish. The development of nationhood in this context is a method of establishing a national entity's territory and drawing up its specific borders, thereby forming a nation's structure.

constructivism is a useful approach to the study of the Kurdish nation and nationalism, especially when considering the 20th century era of nation-state construction. Latest Kurdish political leaders may provide an indication of how Kurdishness can be a pure political tool in its use in politics. The construction of Kurdish identity as a political tool to gain power, wealth and influence could well be a valid argument since it is from the creation of political parties such as KDP[59] that nationalist discourse increased in Iraq and Iran in particular. This would however only be taken as granted in all other nationalist sentiments prior to those movements

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[59] Kurdistan Democratic Party

were ignored, which would be erroneous to do since Kurdish scholars, tribal leaders, poets and intellectuals have been writing about and advocating for Kurdish national identity recognition. The constructivist viewpoint on nationalism and national identity is often reductionist in that it reduces national identity and ethnic sentiment to a political tool used by a number of individuals to ultimately progress their own personal ambitions. As Wali argues "for the constructivists, needless to say, the nationalist project is strictly modern; it depends on political and cultural processes and practices historically associated with capitalism and modernity. The point, however, is that while the ethnicist approach derives national identity from a uniform ethnic origin given to and ever-present in history, the constructivist conception reduces it to a mythical origin constructed by capitalism and modernity. In both cases national identity has no discursive autonomy; it is an effect or expression of the real or assumed national origin. (Vali 2003)"

The Kurdish nationalist movement motivated Kurds to work for the formation of a nation-state and encouraged them to fight to that end. Mariwan Wria Qani uses Gellner's perspective when he says that when it comes to the relationship between country and nationalism,' Ernest Gellner addresses a very significant point. His sociological and political theories are important to our discourse. He believes that nationalism is not there to lift a nation's sense of identity, but rather to establish the nation-state where it does not exist. Nonetheless, nation-building requires a variety of specific reasons to begin work on it. M Qani states that "Hobsbawm agrees with Gellner's definition and argues that nationalism exist prior to the nation. In fact, it is not the nation that creates a state and nationalism; it is rather the opposite." George Santayana wrote in his introduction to Gellner's book, Nations and Nationalism, that "nationalism is not a sentiment expressed by pre-existing nations; rather it creates

nation where they did not previously exist." Where Gellner describes nationalism as a "very strong force, but not the awakening of an old, latent, dormant force...it is in reality the consequence of a new form of social organization, based on deeply internalized, education dependent high cultures, each protected by its own state" (Qani 2002)

However, since constructivism is less oriented on how people control and develop racial ideologies or national objectives, it might not be necessary to use only the constructivist approach to explain the case of Kurdish Nationalism. Kurdish political figures (e.g., military and government figures)[60] played important roles in the process of establishing Kurdish identities and cultural identity. In comparison, owing to the identification of country and ethnic identity through constructivism as a synthesis of inborn characteristics and social feedback, most nationalist researchers may argue that primordialism and instrumentalism are variants on social constructivism. Nevertheless, all elements of primordialism and instrumentalism and their variations are in some way collective constructions.

Nonetheless, the Kurdish situation contradicts the instrumentalist method in two factors. Firstly, although the instrumentalists claim that industrialization is necessary for nation-state growth, the process of building the Kurdish nation-state emerged without industrialization[61]. However, while the Kurdish political factions used

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[60] These include historical figures such as Sheikh Mahmoud Barzinji and Mulla Mustafa Barzani.
[61] The Kurdish economy has bene and is still largely agrarian.

numerous modern techniques such as democracy, peshmerga, and mass education as instruments for establishing and preserving Kurdish nationalism, the importance of emotion and anger was not ignored, and the role of history and memory (especially the history and memory of genocide acts such as Halabja and Anfal) was instilled in the minds of people. Secondly, they developed symbols such as a flag[62] and a national dress to represent the Kurdish country. They also produced and used poems, plays, and novels to awaken Kurdish national identity. Buildings, such as temples and memorials, were designed to shape and reshape the history of the nation's inhabitants. Most recently, Kurdish leaders and groups are gradually engaged in a far stricter nationalist-conservative vocabulary and rhetoric, drawing on ideals of the Kurdish national identity, and using symbols such as the Kurdish flag and colour in much more simplistic way than ever to achieve political influence and prominence.

4.9   An alternative approach to the study of Kurdish national identity

When discussing nationalism and national identity in any context the trinity of nationalist discourse of primordialism, constructivism and instrumentalism are more often than not brought up in one way or another. This is done because it offers an easy categorization of nationalist discourse, the primordialist belief that the nation has always existed and will continue to do so based on an inherent 'blood line'; the constructivist belief that national identity is constructed by elites to suit their own purposes and adopted by the masses; and the instrumentalist belief that national

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[62] The Kurdish flag is one thing that is shared by Kurdish nationalist movements in Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria.

identity is a product of elites to emphasise the boundaries between members of the group and outsiders. There has been much debate regarding these theories of nationalism on a wider theoretical standpoint and this has also applied to the Kurdish case with many scholars researching Kurdish nationalism and national identity within the framework of these nationalist theories. The problem is however, as with many other national identities, it can be argued that the Kurdish case has elements of all three nationalism theories mentioned above.

Unlike other case studies of national identity, the Kurdish case is reliant on a number of other simultaneous nationalist movement of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey. As Vali states "The concepts of the Kurdish nation and national identity are determinate responses to the discursive constructions of national identity which have accompanied the structural processes of formation and consolidation of the modern nation-state in Turkey, Iraq and Iran since the end of the First World War and the subsequent partition of Kurdistan. The denial of Kurdish identity and the destruction of civil society in Kurdistan were the necessary conditions of the construction of a uniform national identity in these multi-ethnic nation-states. This assigns a specific character to Kurdish nationalism, setting it apart from classical nationalism in Europe" (Vali 2003). Whereas European nationalism and the theories that are grounded in it are based on the industrialization and modernization of the nation state, the Kurdish nationalist movement is based on a response, a reaction to the suppression of its identity by Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria.

National identity crosses boundaries and is not influenced by a single factor. However primordial a national identity might be, there are also elements of

constructivist and instrumentalist influences. It would therefore be erroneous to follow the same analytical method of studying Kurdish nationalism and national identity. Instead what needs to be done is the study of Kurdish nationalism and national identity from a more holistic approach and to deconstruct Kurdish identity from a wider viewpoint of influencing factors rather than theoretical pigeonholes.

4.10 Conclusion

The fundamental premise is that the formation of national identity was deeply ingrained in pre-modern source traditions and was developed, conceived, and dreamed almost as much as it was in modern times. The ideas can be demonstrated by revisiting concepts like' historical innovation' and' imagined society' which are typically applicable to contemporary times. It is widely accepted that the development of collective memory in the nineteenth century was essential to the production of nationalist sentiments: by inventing rituals such as flags, ceremonies, and founding myths, national unity was created. We gave the country "authentic" traditions and heritage that revealed its unique history and character.

Ethnic violence leads to substantial loss of life, violation of basic human rights and severe environmental damage which must be avoided. Knowing the significance, reasons and conditions of the diverse political and social contexts in which they flourish is important not just for explanation but also for providing the foundation for appropriate approaches and policies for prevention, action and peace resolution. The main ethnic conflict theories are often guided by observations regarding the essence of ethnic identity and interethnic interactions, they discuss complex and relevant

problems and their value rests in their capacity to tackle substantial aspects of the

phenomena. However, as both of them relies on a one-dimensional understanding

of ethnic identity, their interpretations of the roots of ethnic identity and their role in

ethnic strife remain over simplified leaving the hypothesis incapable of detailed and

substantive analysis. The assumption is that ethnic conflict resolution remains

lopsided and virtually futile in some situations as our discourse shapes our response

and guides the course of action taken to deter or settle such conflicts. A limited

emphasis on a single aspect would tend to generate inadequate action or

approaches for establishing peace after conflict which are oblivious to certain

significant factors. A context that encompasses resentment, corruption, fragile

governments, security collapse, racial diversity, intergroup policy, elite politics,

uneven structures of economic distribution, historical cycles and other socio-political

causes (Brown, 1996:) could offer a stronger case-by-case explanation.

Anderson has recently argued that contemporary nations behave as imaginary

communities: although members do not know the majority of their fellow members,

they all have a vision of their community in their head. Photos are distributed

through the internet, through magazines and through books. A comparison can be

made in early modern Europe when written newspapers were often used to unite

people for mutual causes. Bibles, books and other religious texts, as suggested by

Peter Burke, promoted the development of imaginary cultures based upon a shared

language. During periods of war or national turmoil, pamphlets, periodicals, journals,

poetry, and theatre plays have aroused and propagated sentiments of patriotism,

and unity.

Nationalism and national identity are often discussed in terms of primordialism,

constructivism and instrumentalism. This is because it is a simple categorization of nationalism, the primordialist belief that the country has always existed and will continue to do so on the basis of an intrinsic' blood line;' the constructivist belief that elites are constructing national identity to match their own purposes and to be accepted by the masses; and the instrumentalistic belief that national identity is a creation of elites to prioritize. There has been considerable discussion on these theories of nationalism from a wider academic point of view, and this has also extended to the Kurdish situation with several academics studying Kurdish nationalism and national identity within the context of these theories of nationalism. But, as with many other national ideologies, the question lies in the fact that the Kurdish situation has aspects of all three theories of nationalism described above.

While the key justification for constructing the Kurdish community, nationalism, and ethnic identity was initially to maintain Kurdish national identity as a result of state-run confrontations, the cycle is continually developed by paying attention to the value of sentiment and memory. For this cause, it must be stressed that Kurdish nationalism was not a spontaneous growth that was grounded in some primordial sense of separateness, but rather a mixture of primordial, instrumental and constructual theories built consciously. It is also erroneous to use existing theories of nationalism on the Kurdish case as it has been made clear in this chapter that Kurdish national identity and nationalism is not only a mixture of all three theories discussed here but it has also not followed the traditional nationalist movements in Europe. Kurdish nationalism and national identity was not brought about by a sudden awakening of primordial sentiment, it was not brought about by an instrumentalist elite body seeking to differentiate on ethnic grounds nor was it created by individuals seeking to manipulate the populous to its own gains. Rather it

was a mix of all three and in difference to the European nationalist journey it did not

go through an industrialization and capitalization phase but rather its nationalist

movement was based on a reaction to other nationalist movements. It can be

therefore said that Kurdish national identity and the nationalist movement was not

only reactive but also defensive and so a new approach to the study of Kurdish

nationalism and national identify is needed, one that takes into account the nuances

that are unique to the Kurdish case.

CHAPTER FIVE

Identity development in Iraqi Kurdistan

5.1   Introduction

The Kurds in Iraq reacted to the start of British rule in Iraq in the time old fashion of tribal revolt. They sought to resist the imposition of majority rule which would turn out to be the main characteristic of the Kurdish nationalist struggle for many decades to come. Whilst the tribal structure of Kurdish historical society worked to the disadvantage of the Kurdish nationalist movement, nowadays Kurdish society has moved away from its traditional tribal culture. However, elements of nepotism and tribal rule still exist in the highest levels of political and government power. The dominant Kurdistan Democratic Party is still run by the Barzani family and the other major party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan is still run by the Talibani Family.

Whilst there are noteworthy examples (Bouillon, Malone, & Rowswell, 2007; Diamond, 2005; Herring & Rangwala, 2006), the current theoretical discussion embraced by those trying to understand the post-invasion Iraq continues to be influenced either by ignoring historic primordialism or by a reused ethno-symbolic approach that is more scientifically sophisticated. The impact of this theoretical process at work in media, the role of participant researchers and scholars is seen by three representative indicators of this. Nicholas Pelham was one of Iraq's most astute foreign correspondents from 2003 to 2007, adding to his coverage a fine-grained, almost anthropological accuracy. Nevertheless, as his notes contributed to his book (2008), Pelham presented his extensive reporting by expressing his research through a primordial framework explaining not just the history of Iraq, but

that of the broader Middle East in terms of trans-historical sectarian violence (2008).

Ali Alawi (2007)[63], established this primordial approach to an even greater degree.

Allawi claims that "the cycle of reform and urbanization as a skin deep in Iraq",

leaving a "society of tensions" where "mutual antagonism" prevails, both among all

ethnic and religious sections of society.

5.2 Reactive Nationalism in a Homogenous State

The Ottoman Empire was based on religion rather than ethnicity for most of its

history. The style in which the very same notion was expressed in which the affairs

of the empire were carried out. Consequently, nationalism did not blossom among

the majority of the people of the kingdom, who hailed from diverse ethnic

backgrounds until the second half of the 19th century. Within the borders of the

empire the Kurds sought to achieve further control from Ottoman rulers. This could

be interpreted as a degree of nationalist sentiment and understanding of nationalism

among them. Shortly after the advent of the CUP[64] and the Young Turks ' campaign

to govern the empire's affairs the desire to obtain additional national rights within the

elite shifted. As it was evident that there was a trend and actual efforts to Turkishize

the empire, non-Turkish Muslim nations, including the Kurds, responded by calling

for protection of their rights and seeking self-governance on their territories. At that

time, the establishment of Kurdish organisations, parties, and clubs by some Kurdish

intellectuals and army officers indicated their degree of national knowledge. Andreas

Wimmer insists that the Arabs were following the same trend.

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[63] Former Iraqi Prime Minister
[64] Committee of Union and Progress

"The Arabs remained firmly tied to the ideal of a trans-ethnic Islamic empire, although some of them dreamed of an Arab caliph or looked towards the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy as a new model for the Ottoman state. Nevertheless the gradual abolition of a system of mass education, and the introduction of popular representation in politics had led to a first wave of the politicization of ethnicity, which had been absent from the political realm of the pre-modern Ottoman empire for more than a millennium. (Wimmer 2003)"

Any effort by a dominant ethnic group to develop its dominance by implementing a centralized cultural and educational structure is met with a response from non-dominant groups. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Young Turk's[65] policies in that direction generated knowledge and outrage among the Kurdish bourgeoisie, authors and intelligentsia. Anthony Smith draws attention to the importance of language by saying that "The extraordinary role played in so many nationalisms by philologists, grammarians, and lexicographers shows the significance so much attributed to language as an authoritative symbolic code embodying the special inner experiences of the ethnic group" (Smith 1986).

A number of Kurdish newspapers were first published in Cairo, Istanbul and Sulaimany, at the time when the Young Turks sought to force Turkish culture and language on the Kurds. In publishing such newspapers, the Kurdish leaders, scholars, notables, and sheikhs played a large role. Andreas Wimmer concludes that "the end of the nineteenth century mapped the first signs of ethnic consciousness with strong political ramifications... Kurdish complaints and demands were reactions

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[65] The Young Turks was a political reform movement in the early 20th Century that favoured the replacement of the Ottoman Monarchy with a constitutional government.

to the language problems posed by the young Turks' education policies, the push toward centralisation and the substitution of indirect control by notables, sheikhs and tribal leaders" (Wimmer 2003).

The Kurdish elite replied to the Young Turks movement by setting up a number of Kurdish political parties that called for recognition of their national rights and for the Kurds to create a nation-state. Kurdish calls for independence emerged as they started to lose their semi-autonomous position within the empire in the form of emirates. This occurred after the Young Turks introduced a centralized system of education and administration in the management of the empire's affairs. Iraq's rulers in the early 1920's mirrored what the Young Turks did after 1908 in Turkey. They introduced a centralized education structure at its heart, with the Arabic language.

5.3   State Formation and Nation-State

Like the Western Empires, the Ottoman Empire accepted various minority groups in the banner of Islam. While until the end of the twentieth century the core affairs of the empire were mostly controlled by the Turkish aristocracy, the empire itself did not represent a recognizable Turkish community. Religion functioned under the umbrella of the empire as a source of unity between various ethnic groups. Within the borders of the kingdom, non-Turkish ethnic groups, including Kurds, had local governments to conduct their own affairs as, emirates. Turkish nationalism emerged soon during the blossoming of European nationalism. Relatively late in the nineteenth century, Turkish nationalism emerged in reaction to nationalist arguments that had spread through Europe and most of the Ottoman Empire. As Anthony Smith writes, "Until 1900, Turks in Anatolia were generally unaware of a distinct" Turkish "identity–

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different from the prevalent Ottomans or the overarching Islamic identities–and were often more important than local identities of family, village or country" (A Smith 1986)

The advent of Turkish nationalism preceded the rise of nationalism within Europe. According to Rae, "Turkish nationalism, as it evolved in the second half of the nineteenth century, was essentially a reaction to the nationalistic arguments that had spread through the Empire." Words used by European nationalists quickly found welcoming ears in the Turkish elite. Rae states that, "but from the first half of the nineteenth the ideals of Western Europe, such as' government, democracy, homeland and equality,' began to trickle through to some elite leaders. And in no small part, Turkish nationalism was a reaction to the ethnic demands of subject peoples in the Ottoman Empire" (Rae 2005). Turkish nationalists sought to homogenize the state to give it a Turkish identity to homogenize all non-Turks.

Following World War I, rulers of the newly formed states in the Middle East sought to mimic the pattern of the European monarchs in controlling their country's affairs. King Faisal, Iraq's first ruler, introduced a centralized political and educational structure, as well as gaining charge of the army to establish a homogeneous kingdom of Iraq from north to south, granting an Arab-majority identity to Iraq without respect to the other ethnic groups. This was the Sunni Arabs ' initial emergence as the dominant party which dominated the running of Iraq's affairs. This remained so until April 2003, from the day that Iraq was formed.

Non-Arabs have been faced with two alternatives in the current authoritarian Iraq: either recognize a homogenous regime, or be disqualified. Sadly, that was the case from Iraq's very establishment to the collapse of the Ba'th Party in April 2003. The ruling party had the ability to use the wealth, military and security agencies of Iraq to

enforce an ideology of this kind. So Iraq's history in terms of its government, its rulers ' personality and the means used to enforce its government is all representative of such a state's ideology and characteristics. As Rae states, "As long as the fundamental roles of statehood are fulfilled–a central government which has jurisdiction over the means of coercion, over a given population and over a specified region–then a state is a state" (Rae 2005). Given the fact that the makeup of the Iraqi population was a mixture of ethnicities, sects and ideologies, the Sunni-Arab minority sought to make Iraq a single. Some of the key elements of Ba'th philosophy since its inception has been the creation of a single Arab state. Iraqi Ba'th leaders wanted to launch their tireless efforts and campaign from Iraq to establish such a state and force such an ideology on all living beyond Arab countries ' geographical borders, regardless of their racial or national history or nationality; Clearly, anyone who supported these efforts stood to greatly benefit and anyone who rejected this initiative should expect to pay a high price.

Experience and the frequent catastrophes faced by the Kurds in the preceding century, particularly at the hands of their rulers, convinced the Kurds that remaining stateless is a key cause for their continued misery. Rae states that "statelessness is a situation of limitless risk" (Rae 2005). The issue of the Kurds in Iraq was not only that they did not have a state of their own, but they were also faced with a government that sought to force an Arab culture upon them. They understood the risk they would face by rejecting these policies, because those who oppose that identities could be rejected and eradicated by these rulers.

Since its takeover of power in Iraq in 1963 and again in 1968 until 2003, the Ba'th Party has been attempting to establish a homogenous state with a strong Arab

heritage. To force this homogenization on all non-Arabs, it used all the available state resources such as government, economy, army, defense infrastructure and administrative bureaucracy. It also used all available resources to rule out any party who failed to acknowledge this phenomenon.

5.4   Homogenization and State-Building

Nationalists with a majority ethnic group in a multi-racial state or empire frequently start promoting a homogeneous state in the expectation that certain ethnic minorities within the state will support such an attempt and thereby fight toward a homogeneous state as established by the dominant party. First, Turkish nationalists set out to establish a homogenous Turkish state under the banner of Ottomanization that would cover all ethnic groups within the borders of the old Ottoman Empire. Rae claims that "While the word ' ottomanization' was used by this group they intended homogenization mechanism by which all Ottomans should become Turks" (Rae 2005)..

The Young Turks wanted to use the Ottomanisation agenda to force Turkification on the Ottoman Empire's non-Turkish subjects. Rae argues that "Particularly in the period when an ottomanization policy was being brought forward, what the Young Turks meant by that was not recognition of a super-national unification with all subjects with the Ottoman Empire in a manner compatible with different national identifications. On the opposite, their understanding of Ottomanization has come close to Turking the non-Turkish components" (Rae 2005).

Several important historical developments created modern social, political, and

economic interactions and thereby opened up new eras. World War II and many years later the fall of Communist governments were no exceptions to this rule. The latter was a landmark historic case that had yielded unprecedented progress. According to Rae,' With the fall of communism and the reorganization of society on the basis of modern-state values, old' cultural' myths were revived, lost tombs were revived, and a fresh wave of' cultural independence ' battles,' ethnic cleansing' and mass evictions of' the enemy inside' were sweeping through the Balkans. Therefore, the conclusion of World War I, World War II, and Cold War marked the foundation of many new states which can be listed as nation-states.

Nationalists who wanted to create a homogeneous state from a multi-ethnic community started their attempts by forcing a centralized system of education and culture on all. Such a state's rulers resort to the use of violence against any ethnic group who fail to obey its policies. Clear evidence of these activities is the story of the Armenian genocide[66] in the second decade of the twentieth century. As Andreas Wimmer notes,

"While state builders tried to kill the targeted minority's cultural image and inflicted much distress in the process, they did not plan to remove all targeted community members physically. However, this was the purpose of those liable for the 1915-16 Armenian genocide. The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which came to power in the Ottoman Empire after the 1908 revolution, was influenced by a chauvinistic element of Turkish nationalism and wanted to create a rationalized and homogenous Turkish national state. Consequently, ethnic communities, the largest

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[66] The Armenian genocide took place between 1914 and 1923 and involved the murder of 1.5 million Armenians in Turkey.

and most vulnerable of which had the Armenians, were to be expelled from Turkey...

This carving out of a homogeneous national state from the remains of the imperial

empire was to have a devastating effect on the Armenian people, who were already

subjects of the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century" (Wimmer 2008).

Hardin starts with the presumption that individuals make a reasonable decision to

join ethnic groups in order to obtain access to resources which, he claims, one group

should have. In Iraq where the Ba'th regime went far further than the Turks in

implementing the cycle of homogenisation, this pattern is fitting. The Ba'th regime

had adopted a policy of arabization[67]. One of the Arabization campaign's tactics was

to compel non-Arabs in general, and the Kurds in particular, to change their

nationality to Arab during the general census or by applying to registration offices.

Anyone who supported the idea was praised and spared the retribution expected

against members of his fellow party. One of the successful advantages was being

permitted to remain in his area of residency, and expulsion would be avoided, in

addition to financial incentives.

"One element that benefited greatly from this recognition of new nationalities was

that of the forced Arabization of whole areas. In the Iraqi context, Arabization mainly

related to the forced removal of Kurdish, Turkmen, and Assyrian families from their

homes and property in Kirkuk Governorate, in addition to contested areas in Nineveh

and Diyala, and the resettlement of Arab families in their place. This demographic

engineering aimed to undermine Kurdish opposition, deprive existing and future

rebel groups of potential cadres, and assure that in case the government would ever

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[67] Arabization was the government adopted policy of changing the ethnic identity of non Arbic areas.

have to conduct a referendum in the future it would have a majority against secessionist claims" (Voller 2017).

Anthony Smith examined the effect of nation-state creation on the state's population by saying that "nation-building has proven elusive. Very many, nation-building was equated to state-building. Yet state-building, while it may promote a deep nationalism (whether supportive or hostile to the state in question), is not to be mistaken with forging a national culture and a democratic ideology within the still culturally heterogeneous populace. Establishing state institutions is not an assurance of the cultural affiliation of a community with the State, or recognition of the prevailing ethnic national legend. Constructing a common state of origin or homogeneous society from a combination of racial and religious groups comes at an expense. Ultimately the party that seeks to enforce such an ideology must use whatever means possible to achieve its aims, even though this effort involves a militant and offensive stance. Many minorities would of course pick up the tab. Rae argues "Genocide is one, serious, pathological homogenization tactic by which state-builders try to create a unitary corporate identity" (Rae 2005).

The Ba'th Group took the same direction the Young Turks sought in Turkey during the early years of the 20th century. The Ba'th Party has sought to establish a homogenous Arab-state in Iraq. As the Kurds refused to recognize such a homogenous state in Iraq, the Ba'thists ' use of excessive violence became the solution. The genocide of the Kurds by the 1988 Anfal movement was a big price Kurds paid for failing to recognize a homogeneous Arab state in Iraq.

Different people will commit similar actions and massacres in different locations at

various times. Gol argues that "the process of 'othering' the Armenians was a result of three historical factors, which were also connected to the relationship between modernisation and nationalism. First, the early development of Armenian nationalism: The Ottoman Armenians developed a strong national consciousness through the channels of church and standardised language, as explained in regard to the use of print capitalism in the nineteenth century. Second, the European intervention in Ottoman domestic politics on behalf of Christian minorities, as the Empire became weaker: the refusal of Armenian demands gave legitimacy to Western interference in Ottoman internal affairs during the modernisation period. The Ottoman elite was suspicious of European pressures to the extent that they actually intended to weaken the authority of the Sultan and the sovereignty of the Empire. Great power interventions had helped the Greeks to gain independence, and this had to be prevented in the case of the Ottoman Armenians. Third, the demographic and geopolitical composition of the Armenians led to their 'othering': historically, the Armenians were a divided people by a divided land during the rule of the Persian, Russian and Ottoman Empires (Gol 2005)".

There are a number of parallels between the Armenian Genocide at the hands of the Young Turks and the Ba'th regime's Anfal offensive against the Kurds. Both offences were the result of two governments aiming at establishing homogeneous national states and the resulting rejection of such policies by the two ethnic groups they tried to repress. Rae concludes that "the purpose of the genocide was to radically reshape the Empire's remains into a homogeneous national state... The genocide took place after World War I, and provided the government with an incentive to bring

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its efforts to address the' Armenian problem' into motion by presenting the Armenians as a threat to national security" (Rae 2005). The Ba'th Party's approach in Iraq was split along ethnic lines. Through accusing them of terrorism, they explained and legitimized the slaughter of Kurds during the notorious Anfal war. The main explanation for such an allegation was the Kurds ' reluctance to recognize a homogenous Iraqi state with an Arab heritage and their Kurdish independence campaign organizational and financial assistance. Eric Kaufmann's opinion is close as he says:

"The policy was more and more divided along ethnic lines, the ruling regime ever more exclusive with regard to its social bases of recruitment, and 'minorities' more and more estranged from the regime. At the end of this process was a systematic attack on the Kurdish population by the Iraqi army (during the so-called Anfal operation of 1988). The Kurdish populations were no longer considered part of citizenry of the state, but an enemy population to be held in check by means of terror and force. (Kaufmann 2011)"

5.5   Arab nationalism in Iraq's political field

As soon as Iraq was created and its mechanisms of power observed by the British government, the Arab nationalists in the country gained increasing prominence. This nationalist movement contained both Sunnis and Shia, they saw Arab nationalism as a way in which they could bring the country together against British rule.

The 1941 coup d'état[68] was a significant milestone in Iraq's development of Arab nationalism. It was an effort to resolve the inconsistencies implicit in Arab nationalism, but it was an attempt to attack Britain. They set about purging the economic and political fields of Arab nationalists until British-led forces had gained power. Which represented the decisive split from Arab nationalism, encouraging more conservative trends, signaling the rise of the Baath Party as a powerful rival in the political field of Iraq.

During the revolution of 1958[69], which founded hegemony and governing class to destroy the British state, it became divided by the development of Arab nationalism as a political power. Despite being the strongest political opponent since the formation of Iraq, the Baath's fight to inflict symbolic aggression on Iraq's people was still hierarchical, responding to both factions on the ground and outside (Rohde, 2012). When the party unsuccessfully attempted to assert its hegemony on the region, it created an increasingly hybrid philosophy that shifted away from Arab nationalism toward an Iraqi political field vision. As Voller states

"In one of the most obvious examples of this, when the Ba'th leadership sensed a growing threat from Shi'i activism amid the strengthening of the Islamic Da'wa Party (from *da'wa* meaning "call" or "invitation," but implying proselytization), it turned to incorporate Shi'i symbols and traditions into its discourse. In parallel, the Ba'th Party intensified its recruitment efforts in Shi'i regions. As tensions with Iran loomed, even before the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War, the government turned to play the card of

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[68] The coup d'etat that took place on 1st April 1941 was a nationalist and pro-Nazi coup that overthrew the pro-British regime of Regent Abd al-llah and his Prime Minister Nuri al-Said
[69] The revolution took palce on 14th July 1958 and resulted in the overthrow of the Hashimite monarchy in Iraq.

Arab identity to weaken potential Shiʻi sentiments" (Voller 2017).

5.6   The Iraqi principle vision

The second rival in the political arena is parties mobilizing behind a distinctly Iraqi homeland's theory dream. These communities appeared to have a more pluralist understanding of who may be a member of the political arena, especially in comparison with Arab nationalism, one that was not linguistically, culturally or racially constrained. The major movements reflecting this political sector dream were iraqi social democratic parties fighting in the region from the 1930s onwards. The goal of the party has advocated Sha'biyah (populism) or the wellbeing of all, regardless of status or religion. It established itself against Arab nationalist efforts to enforce an exclusionary vocabulary and race-based political sector, accusing them of being self-serving and authoritarian, promoting solidarity above social growth. Instead, national unity would promote social change, prosperity and equity through democratic mobilization (Bashkin, 2009).

The Communist Party became the second large organization battling for an Iraqi interpretation of the political sector. Established in the mid 1930s, intense repression has repeatedly tempered the party's increasing influence among Iraq's rising urban educated groups. Under the leadership of Yusuf Salman Yusuf, secretary general from 1941 to 1947, the national power hit the height (Franzen, 2011). August 1935 saw the first publication of the Communist party magazine in which they made clear their manifesto for the country. In their publication they claimed that all minorities had cultural rights and that the Kurds had the right to self-determination if they wanted it.

The Iraqi position within the political arena solidified under the rule of Abdul Karim Qasim, 1958 to 1963 (Baskin, 2011). However, his lack of social capital came to define Qasim's own position. The strength of promoting Arab nationalism through the army's officer corps has contributed to Qasim facing a daily struggle. It was this weakness that led him into a volatile and continuously changing coalition with the Communist Party, which offered military-balanced coercive resources backed by their militia against Arab Nationalists.

The movement of symbolic capital by Qasim has been linked, influenced by the influence of both the Communist Party and Arab nationalism. Through the Ministry of Guidance Qasim set out to combat the influence of Arab nationalism, establishing an intellectual infrastructure that placed Iraqi meanings on the political sphere. Propaganda broadcasts on television and radio, book production and cultural festivals have tried to underline an ethnically and culturally pluralistic Iraqi nationalism available to everyone (Bashkin, 2011).

The moment the Baath party took power, its dynamism allowed it to take on the symbols of its rivals and undergo a programme of authoritarian rule against them all. After 1968, in recognition of the ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity of Iraq, the party watered down its insistence on Arab nationalism. This, it was hoped, would create an ideational room in which, along with Shia and Sunni Arabs, the Kurdish community could be encouraged to align with the nation's conception of the Baathist.

The emerging nature and substance of this ideational pluralism was highly dependent on the comparative influence within the political sphere of the Bathists. When Iraq made an agreement with Iran in 1975 to end Iranian support for the Iraqi Kurdish insurgency, the Bathist ideology's Kurdish cultural content was reduced to

reflect a reduction in the Kurdish nationalist threat (Baram, 1991).

At the other hand, when, during the 1977 Marad al-Ras, Shia religious processions, the Baathist government faced mass demonstrations, the regime made a deliberate attempt to incorporate Shia religious symbols into its political capital and to expand the influence of its social capital by coopting Shia religious leaders and institutions (Jabar 2003; Tripp 2000).   Through occupying Iran in 1980, it tried to reduce the threat, seeking to force a swift settlement on a weak government. The dictatorship restructured its philosophy once again in reaction to the revolution and then a prolonged war of attrition, launching' The Quest for the Rewrite of History.' It was a second effort to establish a symbolic Bathist capital through' Mesopotamianism,' integrating all the fragmented aspects of Iraqi culture into a strategic field dream that aimed to eliminate Tehran's nationalist ideology (Davis, 2005).

5.7   Kurdish nationalism and Iraq's political field

Kurdish nationalism as we know it today came about during the second half of the 19th Century along with other nationalist movements of the Ottoman Empire. Amongst the intellectual elite in Kurdistan the most notable nationalist was the poet Haji Qadir of Koi[70] who called upon the tribal chiefs from Botan to Baban to forget their personal differences and unite together. He criticised them for neglecting their own language and for using Turkish and Persian instead. After the breakup of the Ottoman Empire and the signing of the treaty of Lausanne[71], the League of Nations

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[70] Kurdish poet who carried on the nationalist message of Ahmed Khani (1817 – 1897)
[71] The Treaty of Lausanne was signed in 1923 and formally made Eastern Anatolia part of modern day Turkey in exchange for relinquishing Ottoman claims to Arab lands.

attached the Mosul Vilayet and modern day Kurdistan to the rest of Iraq. The

Hashemite Emir Faysal was installed as King of the new Iraq and any hopes that

Kurdish leaders had of establishing a Kurdish state were dashed. Kurdish unrest

and conflict started almost immediately after being sidelined by the British who

controlled Iraq but as the Kurds had very few troops to support their claims, the

British army bombarded Kurdish rebels and civilians to quall any unrest setting a

precedent for the future of Iraq and the Kurdish nationalist movement. In order to

appease Kurdish nationalist sentiment, a joint statement by the newly appointed King

and the British government was agreed upon which stated that:

"His Britanic Majesty's government and the government of Iraq recognize the rights

of the Kurds living within the boundaries of Iraq to set up a Kurdish government

within those boundaries and hope that the different Kurdish elements will, as soon as

possible, arrive at an agreement between themselves as to the form they wish that

government to take and the boundaries within which they wish it to extend and will

send responsible delegates to Baghdad to discuss their economic and political

relations with His Britanic Majesty's government and the government of Iraq" (Brown

& Romano 2006).

The aim of this statement was not to give any long term power or political or

economic freedom to the Kurds, much like the Ataturk's assurances of Turkish-

Kurdish brotherhood, the intention of this statement was to hamper Kurdish efforts to

unify themselves against the new Iraqi government and once any Kurdish rebel

groups were suppressed, the promises would be reneged upon just as they had

previously been in Turkey in the 1920s.

Although the British government had colonial rights over Iraq, it could not secure

control of much of the political apparatus or the tribal infrastructure who continued to create instability for the British government. This difficult period saw the British government trying to appease and influence different tribes across Iraq, particularly in the Kurdish areas of the North.

"Majors E. B. Soane and E.M. Noel, colonial officers stationed in the Kurdish regions of Iraq and Turkey, gained the confidence of tribal chiefs and shaykhs by offering them political posts and financial incentives and promising to protect caliphate. They also recognized the Kurds as a unique ethnic group and acknowledged their nationalist claims. During his travels with Kurdish notables, Major Noel ensure an independent Kurdistan with Alexandretta as its seaport. Major Soane spoke directly to the Kurds about their rights to self determination" (Natali 2005).

The problem that existed for the Iraqi Kurds was similar to those that existed for the Kurds in Turkey in that there was no organized nationalist movement that could put tribal differences aside for the greater good of the Kurdish nationalist movement. If the Kurdish tribes had been able to organize themselves into a collective movement then they could have forced a change of policy by the British much in the same way that Attaturk was able to force the British and allies to discard the Sevres treaty[72]. David Romano states that

"For the Kurds, the most important element in the Treaty of Sevres was Article 64: If within one year from the coming into force of the present Treaty the Kurdish people within the areas defined in Article 62, [Article 62 defined these areas as "the predominantly Kurdish areas lying east of the Euphrates, south of the boundary of

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[72] The treaty of Sevres was signed on 10th August 1920 and abolished the Ottoman Empire obliging Turkey to renounce all rights over Arab Asia and North Africa.

Armenia as it may be hereafter determined, and north of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia], shall address themselves to the Council of League of Nations in such a manner as to show that a majority of the population of these areas desires independent from Turkey, and if the Council then considers that these people are capable if such independence and recommends that it should be granted to them, Turkey hereby agrees to execute such a recommendation, and to renounce all rights title over these areas... If and when such renunciation takes place, no objection will be raised by the Principle Allied Powers to the voluntary adhesion to such an independent Kurdish State of the Kurds inhabiting that part of Kurdistan which has been there to be included in the Mosul Vilayet" (Romano 2006).

After 1958, Iraqi Kurdistan's political arena saw a fight for controlling influence in the Iraqi government, first Qasim and then Arif, and three other parties, the Iraqi Communist Party, the moderate urban leftists of the KDP, and other mainstream tribal and religious figures clustering around Mulla Mustafa Barzani. As had been the practice in the past on many different occasions, once a new government structure was in place, stabilized and power under the control of the government, Kurdish demands and aspirations were again ignored

In the Ba'athist newspaper, Al-Ishtiraki, in 1964, Arif stressed that Kurdish objectives could not be ascertained without supporting Arabism. He created a new provisional constitution that stated that 'the Iraqi people are part of the Arab people, whose aim is total Arab unity.' Unlike the 1958 constitution, it did not mention the Kurdish role in the Iraqi nation. Pan-Arabist historians such as Mohammed Rashid al-Fil published The Kurds from a Scientific Point of View with others at the University of Baghdad, attempting to prove the Arab origins of Kurds" (Natalie 2001).

After 1958, the growing power of the Iraqi Communist Party, and Qasim's 1959 introduction of land reform, brought this conflict to a head. Yet the integration of Kurdistan into the world economy, and the region's incorporation into the Iraqi state, had produced a population of urban intellectuals, many of whom were the product of Iraqi colleges and universities. The creation of the Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party in 1946 was an uncertain alliance between those two parties (Brown & Romano, 2006).

The ensuing infighting ultimately split the Kurdish national movement, splitting the KDP with Ibrahim Ahmad and Jalal Talabani, the young contemporary nationalists, to start a new party, the PUK. Conflict between Peshmerga and Baghdad continued sporadically until the Baath initiated the Anfal campaign to ethnically cleanse Kurdish regions in 1988. This is modestly estimated as being between 150,000–200,000 killed using indiscriminate aggression and nuclear weapons. However, its goal was to illustrate the unparalleled costs of sustained opposition to the Baath within Iraq's political environment (Tripp, 2000). The genocidal ambitions of the Iraqi government, however, produced a distinctly Iraqi Kurdish political area in a manner similar to Shia political mobilisation.

Nonetheless, after the defeat of Iraqi powers in Kuwait[73], it was Baathist foreign-policy expansionism that gradually led to the unequivocal creation of an Iraqi Kurdish political state, produced under international protection. Nevertheless, the competing political ideologies within the nascent sector contributed to the fracturing of the new regional government in Kurdistan, with the KDP and the PUK opposing each other and instead refusing to combine national, repressive and economic forces, opting

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[73] Refered to as the First Gulf War or Operation Desert Storm

instead to create two independent governments and two independent militia powers. Divisions amongst those struggling for a Kurdish dream of ideology ultimately hampered the establishment of an exclusively Kurdish political region. In the end, this was a combination of the genocidal aspirations of the Baathist government and foreign-policy expansionism that gave rise to the space and resources needed to establish a distinctly Kurdish political market.

5.8   State building - Subordinate group's exclusion by dominant group

The nation has been governed by a strong Arab majority since Iraq's establishment until the collapse of the Ba'th regime in April 2003. There had been little diplomatic incentive for the Kurds. While the ruling class have been Sunni Arabs for much of the past century, the Shiite Arabs are the majority. "Two versions of this cycle of institutional termination between racial lines can be identified," says Kaufman,: "the dominant majority and the dominant minority. For the first example, following the fall of the monarchy, the leaders of the most dominant ethnic community take over the modern state system while the subordinated classes sit on the outskirts of political life and popular culture. As part of the country-building effort, the State strives to assimilate these' minorities' through education and language training and thus realize the dream of a cohesive community, country, and sovereignty. Educational elite of historically oppressed groups can emerge as a result of these efforts" (Kaufmann 2011).

In official documents the Kurds in Iraq is classified as a "national group." This jargon has been commonly used by the Bath Party to mean that, first of all, the Kurds are not the largest ethnic group on their land; secondly, they are of a different race to the

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majority national group and can not be the dominant ethnic group; and thirdly, they do not have the characteristics of becoming a country.   This concept was thus meant to pave the way for the ruling party that controlled state relations to establish a homogeneous society by all practicable means. According to Kaufmann, "The word 'white' was used for those who were not treated as the official owners of a national state but as cultural, if not demographic, minorities (Williams 1989) in popular language as well as in social science." Throughout the time when the Ba'th Party controlled Iraq, Kurds were prohibited from holding senior and important roles in managing the country's affairs, because in the eyes of the Ba'th Party' belonging to a single national or ethnic group defines access to the freedoms and services that the new state is meant to provide.' As Kaufman states, "In relation to pre-modern regimes, racial distinctions were brought under the umbrella of a bureaucratic yet universalist and truly non-ethnic constitutional system, under which each group would have its properly defined position. This pyramidal structure was torn up as cultures were nationalized, and ethnic affiliation became a key issue in deciding political allegiance and disloyalty to the regime" (Kaufmann 2011). Few Kurds held senior and important roles in Iraq prior to the 1958 coup d'état. This slim resistance, too, had absolutely vanished with the arrival of the Ba'th Team.

The Kurds were subjected to various forms of injustice during the stage of nation-state formation in Iraq. Arabization, mass deportation of Kurds from their towns and villages and settling Arabs in their place were some of the methods implemented by successive regimes in Iraq, particularly the Ba'th Party regime, to form an Arab- state in Iraq, impose their vision under the umbrella of homogenization and Iraqi identity, enhance their grip on power and control all the state's tools.

There is no better guide of such a custom than the Ba'th Party. The overwhelming majority of senior military leaders, members of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC)[74] and members of the Ba'th Party Regional Command came from Tikrit district, and Al-bu Nasir Tikrit tribe, mainly from Saddam Hussein's clan in Uoja village. Before 1963, the makeup of the leaders of Ba'th Party and the Iraq Area Command was a combination of Sunni and Shiite Arabs and Christians. Since they assumed power in Iraq the number of non-Sunni Arabs in National Leadership had drastically increased. Andreas Wimmer attempts to make his point by saying that "While there were already 54 per cent Shiite leaders of the Ba'th Party command from 1952 to 1963, their share was reduced to 6 per cent during the period from 1963 to 1970... At the end of this cycle of relentless purges, massacres, clandestine killings and forced exile, leaders of the al-Begat group of the Sunni t tribe Al-bu Nasir" (Wimmer 2011).

The Ba'th Party spared no tactic of depicting the Kurds as traitors, allies with Iraq's rivals, and representatives of Iran and Israel as a result of Kurdish refusal to recognize Arabic citizenship and increasing consciousness among the Kurds to seek acceptance of their national rights. The Party also argued that the Arabs were the only ethnic group to protect Iraq, and were the only witnesses to a triumphant Iraq history. Kaufmann concludes that "in countries with a dominant ethnic majority, autonomy and citizenship are not entirely congruent with the country, as the country contains a plurality perceived as the true state population and ethnic minorities who have contributed less to the glorious past of national liberation. Often they are scarcely accepted and freely regarded as visitors rather than absolute tenants of the

[74] The Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council was established as the defacto ruling power after the military coup of 1968

national house, as in the more exclusivist forms of dominant majorityism" (Kaufmann 2011).

The Ba'th Party Kurds manifesto identifies them as visitors on Arab territory. Subsequently, any acknowledgment of their rights by the ruling Party and the Arabs is interpreted as a privilege. In fact, the Kurds were seen as one of the key threats to Arab national security–close to Iran and Israel. Such three risks were learned in the Army Academies as part of the program, and the preparation of senior Ba'th Party cadres.

"Still, most Kurds did not seek territorial secession from the state. Even during the Kurdish war years Barzani and the KDP continued to emphasise Kurdayeti as compatible with the Iraqi identity. In his letter to the United Nations dated January 1, 1966, Barzani complained about the racist and oppressive policies of the Iraqi government against the Kurds. Instead of calling for a Kurdish state, however, he demanded the right to preserve the Kurdish language, cultural heritage, national personality, and autonomy within the boundaries of Iraq" Natalie 2005).

Initially, Saddam Hussein and the Ba'th Party established those communities of Kurdish descent who would not recognize a homogenous Sunni Arab nation state of Iraq at the creation of the State of Iraq. It was then that the regime named more and more groups in Iraq. In Ba'th Party's history, the first intended group to be eradicated were Faili Kurds[75], who were Shiite Muslims. The dictatorship murdered several thousands of them in the early seventies of the last century, and hundreds of thousands more were stripped of their Iraqi citizenship, and deported to Iran. This

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[75] Faili Kurds are a tribe living mainly in the borderlands between Iraq and Iran and they speak a sub-dialect of Kurdish.

legislation against inferior classes was enforced by other related regimes. Wimmer reiterated this argument by noting that "countless episodes of' ethnic cleansing' and millions of immigrants were removed from states where they were immediately treated as' foreigners' even though they had existed there for decades" (Wimmer 2011).

The Ba'th Party represented the ruling party and treated non-Arabs as a second-class citizen but such a view was not officially declared by the Ba'th leadership. Nevertheless, there was more than one instance in the substance of the amnesty of 6 and 8 September 1988, after the Anfal war, when it was explicitly mentioned that all Kurds who would yield to the Iraqi government were to be treated as second-class citizens. The returnees were forbidden from serving in the army, prohibited from staying in their major cities and were offered the chance to be re-employed in civil services.

When the Ba'th Party learned that a homogenous state with an Arab heritage in Iraq was rejected by the Kurds, they agreed to eliminate this barrier. In 1987, the Revolutionary Command Council of Iraq and the Ba'th Party's Provincial Leadership agreed to recognize and prosecute another Kurdish faction for failing to acknowledge an Arab identification for Iraq. The dictatorship started in the 'prohibited regions' with the rural Kurds. The government used their rejection of such an ideology and their endorsement of the Kurdish independence movement as a pretext for suppressing and instead exterminating them in the banner of rebellion, collaboration with the enemy and supporting rebels. Rae studied this situation and concludes that "the intention to assimilate, exclude or exterminate other individuals by coercion in the context of homogenized culture can not be justified solely in terms of seeking

material benefits. For all the cases reviewed in this report, decisions were taken on focus populations for exclusion or extermination with the understanding that this would entail economic and, undoubtedly, political costs in the latter cases" (Rae 2005).

In certain cases, individuals from an ethnic minority group who adopted Ba'th Party ideology, worked for achieving their objectives and proved obedient to their leader have been permitted to take senior positions within the structure of the Ba'th Party and the government. And they never seemed to get the same standing as the ruling group's individuals. The more they instinctively inclined to represent the Ba'th Faction, the more they distanced themselves from their ethnic origins. Its own ethnic group will mark this type of Kurds as traitors. They will then work harder to prove their allegiance to their new bosses, and gain their trust. Two examples of Kurds coming under these groups were Taha Yasin Ramadan and Taha Mehieddin Marouf, who were the vice-president of the Transitional Command Council and the vice-president, respectively. It does not distract away from the fact that they formed a feeling of overt hostility towards these people within their ethnic groups. This has generated incredibly harsh reactions among minority groups to these efforts by the majority ethnic group to remove the possibility of a nation-building project from the minority group.

Following the collapse of the monarchy, those in the Kurdish nationalism movement in Iraq started to demand non-centralization of the government, and then their appeal grew to autonomy before seeking and eventually achieving federalism. Any time Iraq's rulers used more violence against them the Kurds showed more resilience. The use of chemical weapons and genocide created a sense of complete rejection of

the effort by the Ba'th regime to homogenize the Kurds to the Iraqi Arab state.

The establishment of a newly established Sunni Arab controlled Iraq was not the product of the ever-growing Arab nationalism among all the numerous sectors of the population of Iraq. This phenomenon was embraced by Arab nationalists, but other Iraqi ethnic components not only did not accept it, but were also exempt. The Kurds in Iraq have never developed a sense of being included and belonging to the State since the establishment of modern Iraq. In the beginning the reaction came quickly and got stronger as the Ba'thists sought to force on them a homogenous Arab society. Arab nationalists intended to establish such homogeneous state with caution. They started with a consolidated system of schooling, governance, and culture and the hegemony on all senior and important state posts.

Many Arab fanatics claimed that they would compel all subordinate classes to recognize the homogeneous Arab society, but this was never true. Wimmer notes that "the emerging Sunni Arab bourgeoisie realized that feelings of national unity were largely absent in Iraq in the 1920s and that the idea of an Arab republic was scarcely established even among the country's Arab-speaking community. The mosaic system of the country should be slowly overcome and the different parts melded into an aware Arab republic, according to the view of the elite" (Wimmer 2011).

The Sunni Arabs, who became Iraq's administrators and dominated the army and government institutions of the empire, sought to glorify their dominance by promoting ethnic nationalism and pan-Arabism. The latest trend led to a strong opposition on the part of non-Arabs in general, and the Kurds particularly. That continued to be the

case as long as the Arab fanatics continued their arabization program to give Iraq's Arab identity and homogenize it to others. Wimmer analyzes the situation in Iraq by saying that "the rise of Pan-Arabism to the level of national hegemony and army arabisation, the education system and the political structure were threatened right from the outset by those who unexpectedly found themselves in the role of a 'minority' vis-à-vis a new state and military establishment (Wimmer 2008)." This leaders, imposed by a foreign government, proclaimed as a model for the country as a whole their own cultural history and ethnic characteristics.

The Kurds did not give up, and tried to demonstrate their Kurdish heritage through their efforts. Kurdish nationalism took on other ways after the fall of Sheik Mahmoud's reign in Sulaimany[76]. In comparison to the authoritarian Arabic education system enforced by Baghdad, the Kurds demanded the use of the Kurdish language for learning at schools in Kurdistan. A group of intellectuals from Suleimanyeh went much further and set up a center for purifying the Kurdish language by purging international (mostly Arabic and Turkish) words. Following the recent wave of publication of Arabic newspapers and journals in Baghdad, a variety of Kurdish newspapers were published in Suleimanyeh and Erbil. Poets and authors used their poetry and essays to unite the Kurdish people and support Kurdish nationalism.

From the early 1920s through the 1930s a number of Kurdish political parties had arisen. The nationalistic aims and agenda of the emerging political parties were a response to the Sunni Arabs ' efforts to govern the affairs of Iraq's newly formed state and work towards giving Iraq an Arab identity and homogenizing others to it.

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[76] Sheik Mahmoud Barzinji was the self declared King of Kurdistan and reigned from 1922 to 1924

Wimmer acknowledges the emergence of Kurdish nationalism in the first half of the last century as he says "but a true Kurdish nationalism emerged from the 1920's onwards, and particularly during the 1930's and 40's. For this body, the notion of a Kurdish nation, unified by language ties and a shared history and culture, and the dream of political autonomy or even independence, was gaining increasingly supporters among the urban population communities. The propagation of these ideas was closely linked to state and army arabisation" (Wimmer 2008).

In the early to mid-twentieth century, pan-Arabism developed among the Sunni Arabs in Iraq. The first move of the Pan-Arabism supporters was to take control over the state over Iraq by consolidated schooling and administrative structures, and to staff all senior positions on their own. They sought to homogenize Iraq between all the racial and religious components of Iraqi culture by building a sense of identity and loyalty in the nation-state. In their opinion a homogeneous Iraq must have an Arab origin. They made every attempt to dominate the state— the military, governmental structure, and network of education— to give it a base on which to unleash their more radical nationalist manifesto. Not only did they struggle to mobilize subordinate groups for their cause but they faced a fierce reaction and opposition, especially from the Kurds. Arab nationalism among the Kurds did not win support or unity, as it did not involve them. Kurdish nationalism, on the other hand, became stronger as a response to what was seen as chauvinistic Arab policies.

The Ba'th Party had barred the Kurds from managing Iraq's affairs. This policy harmed and weakened any hope for establishing a homogeneous nation-state by alienating many components of the state. In fact, as a response to such a scheme, the Kurds not only felt alienated but also abandoned any sense of belonging to Iraq,

and were more willing to join in the Kurdish movement for recognition of their national rights. The feeling of alienation of a minority in a multi-ethnic state could lead to a reaction articulated in the form of violence against the rulers of the state who serve the dominant-ethnic community and denial of the state's status, hegemony and ultimately its development.

The majority ethnic group's policy of isolation generates a sense of disapproval of anything relevant to the society in which they reside, because they are excluded from engaging in the management of their affairs. If they were present and their interests respected, the Kurds and any other subordinate community would have established a sense of belonging to the state. Wimmer declares that

"When ruling elites are not prepared to include the entire population of the country into the state-embodying nation, those who thereby become 'minorities' are excluded from the benefits of political modernity and do not feel inclined to embrace the project of nation- building through assimilation and passing. This in turn led to the technocrats to rely on terror and pure force in order to control the many, which in turn further alienates the 'minorities' from the state and so on. (Wimmer 2008)"

For any new action introduced by the Ba'thists against the Kurds following their assumption of power, the Kurdish nationalist party has been given yet another chance to recruit additional leaders. While the Ba'th Party managed to clean off Iraq's non-Arabs state bureaucracy, the state's future became more fragile. Minority communities which were removed from the management of Iraq's affairs lacked any sense of belonging to the current state. Anti-state sentiment had then increased and Kurdish national visibility among common citizens, landowners, workers, students and civil servants increased. Thereafter more people joined the campaign of Kurdish

independence. Kaufmann describes the situation in Iraq as follows,

"In post-independence Iraq, the new elites narrowed their concept of the nation to those sharing their own background, i.e. to the Sunni Arab population. Accordingly, political closure quickly proceeded along ethno-religious lines. Exclusion from access to the increasingly Arabized state gave rise to a strong and militant Kurdish nationalist movement, which at various points in post-war history was able to secure control over large parts of the Northern territories. The Iraqi state was neither willing nor able to respond to the rise of Kurdish nationalism (Kaufmann 2011)."

The strong amalgamation of various ethnicities and sects into one state in Iraq did not, as the Ba'th Party wished and expected, put such communities into one nation-state with an Arab heritage. For a period of time the Ba'th Party continued to rule Iraq but only with the use of force. The dominant party defined the concepts of non-state citizenship and non allegiance in a manner that best suited its function of enforcing the identity of a homogeneous state upon all. This has, of course, not created or strengthened the impression of non-dominant classes being part of the society. Instead, it has isolated them from the administration. Subsequently, the dominant group in control of the state labeled them with treason. This policy led to massacres, ethnic cleansing and genocide. Hence, it divided the population even further. Wimmer argues that "The introduction of the principles of the modern nation-state, with its ideal of congruence between citizenry, sovereign and nation, into a mosaic society with a wide variety of religious communities of varied origin, led to the well-known catastrophe of endless wars in the name of national unification" (Wimmer 2008).

Any appeal by an ethnic group for sovereignty and special status or independence within a state is a strong sign of its rejection of an established identity built on political and cultural homogenisation. Abdulkarim Qasem[77] acknowledged Kurdish interests in the constitution in 1958, and announced that Iraq should be shared by the Kurds and Arabs. Kurds agreed with this move and were able to protect Qasem and his government from its rivals. So soon so Qasem backslided his words, the Kurds turned against him and claimed freedom. They declined to recognize a homogenous Iraqi Arab state where their rights and culture disappeared and it was under Qasem's reign that the armed struggle against Kurdish nationalism began. The same practice was repeated in 1974 as the Ba'th Party withdrew from the March compromise of the 1970s. The Kurds declined to consider anything other than their constitutional rights being recognised. The vast majority of Kurds have now supported the Kurdish independence party headed by the KDP. Another response to the Ba'th Party's policies against the Kurds was the cornerstone of the PUK and the resumption of armed resistance in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1976 after the failure of the Kurdish motion. The Ba'th Party sought to build on its success and the failure of Barzani's revolution to force the Kurds with a strong Arab heritage on a homogeneous society. The Ba'th government began a brutal policy of expulsion and arabization, removed officers of the Kurdish army from their positions, coerced civilians into entering the Ba'th Party and sending their children to newly established Arabic schools. It also prohibited Kurdish newspapers from publishing anything that pointed at Kurdish nationalism, and allowed those Kurds who cooperated with them to glorify in print the successes of Saddam Hussein and the Ba'th faction. The 1991

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[77] Iraqi army brigadier and nationalist who rose to power after the overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy on the 14th July revolution.

rebellion that led to the independence of Iraqi Kurdistan, the formation of the Kurdistan Regional Government and the election of the Kurdistan Parliament in 1992 was a potent example of the response of the Kurds to the proposal of the Ba'th Party to force on the Kurds an Arab homogenous state.

When the Ba'th Party discovered that such a pattern of homogenization had not been embraced by non-dominant classes, including the Kurds, they omitted them and made preparations for their eradication. One of the components most required to enforce such a strategy by Iraq's political leaders consisted of two factors: 1) providing a large army, 2) controlling the military through a centralized structure. Amir Hassanpour says that "The political power structure has been similarly concentrated leaving no room for any sort of dissent. This form of despotic rule has demanded the militarization of the country as a whole, especially in politically sensitive areas such as Kurdistan. The dominant party, the Sunni Arabs, did not hesitate to commit genocide against subordinate groups who refused to recognize the homogenous state with an Arab identity if such action was appropriate. The Anfal movement was the Ba'th party's final act of eradicating the Kurds after they were convicted of treason. During the general census of 1987, just before the campaign began, the rural Kurds were deprived of their Iraqi citizenship" (Hassanpour 1992).

The Arab nationalists and the Ba'th Party used whatever means possible to arabize the regime by a variety of steps such as: the adoption of unified educational and institutional structures, the takeover over the state's military, defense and intelligence services, expulsion and a brutal program over arabization involving the enforcement of a scorched earth policy and genocide. Not only did this strategy struggle to get the Kurds to recognize the Iraqi state's Arab heritage, it also enabled a deep reactive

nationalism to blossom and raise their demands. The Kurdish independence campaign was reinforced and its supporters continued to recruit ever more Kurds under the umbrella of Kurdish independence.

Thus the Ba'th Party built a fertile atmosphere for Kurdish nationalism to grow, through its philosophy and action. Andreas Wimmer says, "The new regime envisioned the compulsory assimilation of the different minorities into the main stream of Arabism.... The rounds of coups and counter-coups, palace intrigues and foreign interventions, of civil wars and conflicts with neighboring states that characterize the history of Iraqi state is at the same time a history of the steady Pan-Arabism...During this ascent to power, Pan-Arabism became radicalized and finally took on a fascist hue under the rule of Ba'th from 1968 onwards...The more the regime tried to enforce its vision of society, the fiercer resistance became, giving rise to ever higher levels of repression and domination. This in turn nourished feelings of being ruled and dominated by 'ethnic others' among those who refused to meld into the great Arab nation and who were more and more excluded from state power" (Wimmer 2008).

Each effort by the Ba'thists to enforce an Arab culture on Iraq and establish a homogenous state has increased the level of demands of the Kurds. The Ba'th Party used intimidation and brutality to inflict one nationality upon the entire Iraqi nation. The Kurds resisted and responded as an act of opposition to full incorporation of the Iraqi state by demanding sovereignty and self-rule. This reaction on the part of the Kurds led to further government brutality against them. The further strain the Ba'th Party placed on the Kurds, the fewer they feel as if they were part of Iraqi society. The Kurds consequently felt little or no relation with modern Iraq-with its territory,

history, reputation, military, society, manufacturing and agricultural goods, or even with its football team. It was a mere criticism of the ideology imposed, and the Ba'th Party's attempts to homogenize the society. The shaky regime quickly disintegrated as the instability of the regime became apparent following the second Gulf War, where the Kurds stormed Iraq's military and defense offices in all Kurdish cities and towns, thereby occupying Iraqi Kurdistan. Heather Rae claims that "In situations of state instability and lack of authority, ethnic violence is more likely to arise" (Rae 2005).

For all the Ba'th Party's efforts to establish an Arab nation-state in Iraq at the detriment of the national ambitions of the Kurds, they could not eradicate the Kurds demand for their own self-rule. This strategy pushed the Kurds to try every way to attain their national objectives and to take advantage of the instability of Iraq. Wimmer states that "After the end of the second Gulf war, when the allied forces installed a zone of protection there, the Kurdish guerrilla forces had embarked on a project of state- building amidst an atmosphere of nationalist euphoria. A Kurdish army had been formed out of the different guerrilla forces, a government set up with ministries and cabinet meetings, and customs taken at the borders. (Wimmer 2008)"

After the collapse of the Ba'th Party in 2003, a vivid and strong Kurdish nationalism arose as a product of Kurds ' collective reactions to the Ba'th Party's efforts to force upon them a homogenous Arab state. As Romano states; "once Saddam's regime was overthrown, Iraqi Kurds began to reposition themselves in earnest. The KDP and PUK announced the merger of their respective administrations in 2005 (officially signing the reunification agreement on 21 January 2006) and stood on a united list

including most of the other smaller Kurdish political parties in the Iraqi elections of January and December 2005[78]" (Romano 2010).

The Kurds managed to create their own semi-state in Iraqi Kurdistan with all the requisite components and resources of a nation-state. The Kurdish country can only become the object of national allegiance and legitimacy after consolidating a cycle of State-building. Kurdish has the potential to thrive as the Kurds administer their own affairs by setting up a new government, upholding their courts, protecting human rights, and providing a new national school. Despite shortcomings and internal wars, the Kurds have maintained such a position in most parts of Iraqi Kurdistan since 1991.

5.9   Conclusion

The formation of Iraq was contested from the very first day of its creation and it was later made clear that the creation of the state was done to serve the interests of the allied powers in the area after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, namely Britain and France. When the former lands of the Empire were drawn up into areas of political interest, little attention was given to the ethnic makeup of the lands that were divided which many argue are the root cause of the problems facing the middle east from Palestine to Kurdistan. Iraq is a casserole of religions, sects, ethnicities all of whom have in one way or another fought for religious or ethnic recognition or freedom. In an area where conflict prevails over democracy and negotiation it is unsurprising that the history of Iraq is full of internal conflict, genocide and the denial of basic religious

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[78] The Kurdistan Islamic Union ran on a separate ticket in the 2005 elections

and ethnic rights.

The nations that were born from the demise of the Ottoman Empire all in their own way practiced a form of hegemony towards their respective Kurdish populations which first began with the attempt to centralize the bureaucracies of the state apparatus. Nationalists with a predominant ethnic minority in a multi-racial state or empire often tend to advocate a homogeneous state with the hope that other ethnic groups within the state will accept such an effort and therefore struggle for a homogeneous state as set up by the ruling party.

As soon so Iraq was established and the British Government followed the structures of influence, the country's Arab nationalists gained growing popularity. The nationalist ideology included Sunni and Shia alike, they saw Arab nationalism as a means of uniting the world against British rule. The moment the Baath party took power, its dynamism allowed it to take over its competing symbols and implement a system of totalitarian rule against both of them. After 1968 the party scaled down its focus on Arab nationalism in consideration of Iraq's cultural, social, and linguistic diversity. This, it was hoped, would create an ideational room in which the Kurdish community could be welcomed, along with Shia and Sunni Arabs, to conform with the Baathist vision of the country.

The Kurdish nationalist party has been given yet another opportunity to hire additional members for any fresh intervention taken by the Ba'thists against the Kurds after their assumption of power. Although the Ba'th Party tried to scrub up the corruption of Iraq's non-Arab regime, the stability of the regime grew shakier. Minority groups that had been excluded from running the affairs of Iraq lost any sense of belonging to the new regime. Anti-state sentiment then increased and the

popularity of Kurdish nationality among ordinary civilians, landlords, workers, students and civil servants increased. Thereafter more people joined the Kurdish secession movement.

The Arab nationalists used whatever means they could to arabize the government by a number of actions such as: the introduction of united educational and administrative systems, the infiltration of the state's police, security and intelligence forces, deportation and a ruthless arabization campaign including the implementation of a scorched earth policy and genocide. Not only did this strategy battle to get the Kurds to accept the Arab identity of the Iraqi state, it also allowed a profoundly reactive nationalism to blossom and increase their demands. The Kurdish movement for independence was intensified and its supporters started to attract ever more Kurds under the Kurdish nationalism banner.

The hegemony of its political system has been demonstrated by a number of studies and analysis on Iraq since the invasion and regime change in 2003, among those promoting exclusionary religious and racial dream ideologies. As discussed in this chapter, those who sought to use symbolic violence in the political arena to create exclusivist Shia or Kurdish definitions were at times specifically present in Iraq's past prior to 2003. Nevertheless, these have been rivaled and perhaps overshadowed by at least two other competing vision ideologies with very different definitional ambitions for the Iraqi political field.

CHAPTER SIX

Place Identity

6.0   Introduction

Research into the study of the feelings that people have towards a certain place in their lives is receiving more and more attention. We all have memories of certain places in our lives that bring us joy, a holiday destination, an old school, the house we grew up in for example and as much as we can we try and maintain a link to those places that bring us joy. These places can be very different in nature but hey each bring a different sense of attachment. One important factor that influences place identity is the length of time and it is often the case that the more time a person spends in a certain place, the more they feel attached to that place but this also depend on a number of factors such as the relationship in that place, home ownership etc. Place identity is therefore the sense of belonging that people have to a certain place through their interactions with people and places. Place identity is therefore a component of personal identity.

Human memories are essentially also social memories, the places that we remember are embedded in the people and social interactions that we experienced in those places. Halbwachs (1925) talks about social frames of autobiographical

memories and Zerubavel (2003) about socio-biographical memories. Sociologists and social psychologists use the terms ''collective memory'', i.e., the memory shared by groups or societies, or ''social memory''.

Our social memories are founded in the events that happened during our own lives or the lives of our parents, grandparents, ethnic group etc. These memories belong to the wider social group, they could be our parents, grandparents or the wider community so that their memories in effect also become our memories. Memories in general however tend to be biased, some events are remembered and some forgotten whilst some are distorted and adapted to suit the current situation.

"In cities that changed their state belonging the natural bias in interpretation of city history is ethnic bias, i.e., a tendency to overestimate the impact, significance, size, and contributions of the presently dominant ethnic group, compared to other groups inhabiting the same place in the past. The main function of this bias is appropriation of a place by providing evidence that one's own group has always been its rightful owner" Lewicka 2008).

It has been explored in the theoretical chapter of the study that identity is a concept, which is constructed, in the social and historical context by the influences of place, space and society. In particular circumstances, identity becomes the instrument for certain groups or individuals to conceive their similarities to some actors and their differences from others. As Twigger-Ross et al (2015) suggest, the surroundings of an individual and the place in which they live carries great importance in creating and fuelling a sense of reactive nationalism, that is to say that identity formation is largely based on the actions of 'the other'. The Iraqi government also recognised this importance as Natalie notes "High-ranking Ba'athist leaders started taking symbolic

tours of the Kurdish provinces, promising to implement development programmes for their 'Kurdish brothers'. Although al-Nayef[79] rejected al-Bakr's[80] attempt to increase Kurdish representation in the government, al-Bakr appointed Kurds to the cabinet. The state's leaders also called for an internal territorial configuration. Hussein promoted the March 1970 Manifesto, or the Autonomy Agreement[81], as a way of finding a 'permanent solution to the Kurdish problem' (Hussein 1973; see also Ghareeb 1981). Drawn from the twelve-point al-Bazzaz plan, the document promised limited political self-rule and cultural expression within the given territorial boundaries of Iraq. For nearly two years the regime implemented most of the promises. It expanded Kurds' cultural and (p.275) political space, gave Kurds administrative rights, and even created another Kurdish province called Duhok (Natalie 2001)".

This chapter will explore the links between identity formations amongst Kurdish youth and how reactive nationalism informs the debate relating to place and identity in Kurdish youth.

6.1   The importance of place on identity

Place marks an important subject when dealing with Kurdish national identity as much of the disputes between the Kurds and Iraq lie between territorial disputes and claims to land, as Stansfield and Anderson claim "*The struggle between Baghdad and Erbil is fought in two environments. The first of these is along the points of contact between Kurds and non-Kurds, the disputed territories themselves. In this*

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[79] Abd ar-Razzaq al-Naif was an Iraqi military officer and Prime Minister of Iraq during 1968
[80] Fourth President of Iraq from 1968 to 1979
[81] The autonomy agreement was signed in March 1970 between the Kurds and Iraq for the creation of the autonomous region consisting of three governorates.

swath of land, running from Sinjar in the northwest next to the Iraq-Syria border,

down to Baladruz in the southeast adjacent to the Iraq-Iran border, Arab, Kurdish,

Turkmen, Christian, Ezidi and Shabak communities have all been drawn into a

struggle for influence that, by its nature, is forcing them to choose sides in a highly

*polarized and politicized environment. T*his polarization has not, for the most part,

been driven by inherent communal antipathy within these regions, although in some

places such animosity is readily apparent, but by the pressures that have been

brought to bear from developments in the second conflict environment — among the

political elites of the Iraqi and Kurdistan regional governments. *(Stansfield and*

Anderson 2009)".

Territory and in particular place is therefore of great importance not only to the Kurds

but also to the Iraqi government and other ethnic minorities.

The term "place-identity" has been used since the late 1970's and can be described

as "those dimensions of self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to

the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and

unconscious ideas, feelings, values, goals, preferences, skills, and behavioural

tendencies relevant to a specific environment" (Proshansky 1978). The following

respondent represents the opinion expressed in the interviews that place identity is

an important factor in identity development.

"I can't explain, it is not something that I can explain easily. I can't put into words how

proud I am of being Kurdish. If you brought an English person here to Kurdistan it

would still be English if you brought an Arab here to Kurdistan they would still be

Arab. You can't change who you are and I wouldn't want to. If I could choose to be a

different nationality I wouldn't choose anything else" (Alan, male, policeman, native to Sulaimany).

This comment reflects the opinion that is contradictory to some of the arguments made that the length of time that someone remains in a certain place influences their identity. For this individual, place identity is not associated with how long someone remains in a certain place, it is directly linked to their ethnic origin and no matter how long an Arab lives in the Kurdish areas, they will always be Arab and not Kurdish. The comment comes about from a fear that the past policies of Arabisation of Kurdish areas will be repeated and the ethnic identity of a place will be changed.

"It made me realize how wonderful Kurdistan is, in Europe there is everything, but it is not Kurdistan. I missed the streets, the dust, the heat, all the bad things you can think of, I missed them and wished for them. I even missed the electricity cutting out[82]" (Darin, male, driver, returnee to Erbil).

Place and our attachments to it are therefore not limited to the fun and happy memories of that place as is expressed in the above quote. Being proud of being Kurdish is often grounded in the simple truth of being born in Kurdistan, or articulated as an unquestioned and natural consequence of birthplace. The following response emphasises the important of place that Kurdish youth place on their identity.

"I am very happy to say I am Kurdish and I am proud of it. We are born here and in all aspects Kurds are good, there are community and religious things that have not

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[82] National electricity is only available a few hours a day and regularly cuts out.

influenced our culture compared to other countries, we haven't become ultra religious like Iran and Saudi, I think that our brand of religion[83] is better" (Yusuf, male, teacher, native to Sulaimany).

As the above response shows, the simple fact of being born in a given place leads to an association with that place and a sense of pride in it. In relation to previous quotes, this response follows previous ones in that being born in a place leads to an increased association to that place. In most cases, the pride and association to place is not something that can even easily be explained, as the following response shows.

"Its not nice [being Iraqi], I don't know, I just prefer to say I am Kurdish. Just from birth it is something we are used to, to say we are Kurdish not Iraqi, it is just something I like more to say I am Kurdish" (Hanar, female, student, native to Sulaimany).

The above response also signals the appearance of loyalty and attachment to Kurdistan and the strength of pride to be Kurdish rather than Iraqi. Environment therefore is not limited to the built and natural world; the people that occupy any given place also have a profound influence on the notion of how place influences identity. However, the concept of place identity from Proshansky and colleagues point of view, as well as for most of the authors who have used the concept until now, was centred on an individualistic perspective, thus neglecting the social nature

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[83] Although overwhelmingly a Muslim nation many Kurds drink alcohol and bars, liquor stores, discos, night clubs are open and available.

of the relations between individuals, identities and place (Bernardo & Palma-Oliveira, 2012; Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). What Proshansky describes as the 'dimensions of self' therefore does not adequately account for how out-group members are perceived and should therefore not be limited to 'dimensions of the self' but should also include the 'dimensions of the other'. The following section will therefore discuss the impact of the people that inhabit a given place and how a change in demographics can impact identity.

6.2   Memory, post-memory and place: creating a nationalist identity in Kurdish youth

Kurdish cities still show signs of the previous regimes treatment of the Kurds in most part as commemorative buildings or museums, which serve as a reminder of those events. Furthermore, school children are regularly taken to these buildings to be reminded of the Kurdish struggle. As Kenny (1999) argued in a study of the native Canadian population and how schools were used as institutions of assimilation, 'the schools have assumed a symbolic importance driven by the fact that they were so patently an agency of cultural "genocide." They are something tangible-mnemonic benchmarks that, one can point to and say, "it happened there!" A visit to the school can provide a trigger or cue that takes one back to the past almost as if there were there, a redemptive pilgrimage to an aboriginal Auschwitz' (p12). In the context of place identity, buildings such as former prisons (now museums), statues, and place names serve as a constant reminder of Kurdish identity and past events.

"If you ask any school children in Sulaimany if they have been to the 'red peace'[84] building they will tell you they have been more than once, all taken by their school. The building was used during Sadame's time as a prison where they tortured and killed thousands of people, even pregnant women[85]. The schools take the children there so that they know what happened before they were born, so they don't forget. The building is still full of bullet holes, old tanks and war machines" (Sarok, male, Administrator, native to Sulaimany).

Post-memory as described above has considerable influence on the perceived discrimination that individuals face, in that they perceive that the discrimination experienced by previous generations has/will continue in their own. As one respondent recalls a school trip to one of these memorial sites explains, there are regular reminders of post-memory, which are often renewed by the smallest of modern incidents of discrimination. Each of these acts of renewal work to further strengthen the nation identity of the group.

"I remember a school trip we had a few years ago, it was only a few years ago but it has stuck with me. Not really because of the things we saw at the memorial but there was an Arab group that had also visited the site and they started dancing and singing! I was so angry, you can't believe it, I started shouting and screaming at them and our tour guide backed me up and told them to leave. I told them people died here from Arab hands, how can you celebrate?" (Bahar, Female, project worker, native to Sulaimany).

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[84] Called 'Emne Swreke' in Kurdish, the building is now a museum and monument.
[85] The museum even has sculptures of people being tortured, imprisoned to serve as a visual reminder of past events.

The above actions by Bahar are a good example of what we have termed 'guerrilla nationalism' whereby she has reacted immediately to confrontation and hostility targeted not at her specifically but to what she sees as her nation and national identity. Portes and Rumbaut's reactive ethnicity phenomenon would fit well here were it not for the fact that in the Kurdish case, the line between host community and immigrant/outsider is considerably blurred. As Branscombe et al also state, "The notion of 'reactive ethnicity' is based on research in social psychology, which showed that individuals who experience discrimination will identify with their in-group more strongly to buffer the negative consequences that the perceived discrimination has for their self-esteem (Branscombe et al. 1999)."

In this particular context, this raises the question as to who the host community and visitor are? Were the Arab visitors acting with a sense of ethnic solidarity to assert their ethnic dominance or was Bahar reacting to their actions based on perceived prejudice and hostility? Indeed it may be a little bit of both! What this example shows is a mixture of defensive and reactive nationalism, and reactive ethnicity, an example of what we have previously discussed as what we term, 'guerrilla nationalism'. This is further personified by the following quote by Bahar which is another example of what we call guerrilla nationalism.

"*We have to do what we can to protect our identity, I won't accept anyone making fun of Kurds or Kurdistan. Maybe its only a small think that I did but we are all responsible in our own ways, we cant just wait for the government to step in, we are all responsible and we can all do something whenever we see it. I am proud of what*

I did that I got angry at them and I would do it again, everyone should do the same"
(Bahar, female, project worker, native to Sulaimany).

Zembylas (2014) argued that 'nostalgia is not simply good or bad, positive or negative, but that it is inseparable from post-memories and collective memories of an imagined homeland, especially in contexts in which this homeland is lost' (p19). In this context therefore where there is a feeling that Kurdistan has been 'lost' or denied, post-memory plays an important role in an individual's identity. When it comes to the Kurdish case, historical ill treatment and post-memory are used to defend Kurdish identity from a recurrence of those events. This is because memory of those events play such a significant part in the lives of everyday people and the national identity. The following quote emphasises this point very clearly in that the individual is fearful of historical events happening again, such is the importance of post memory on the identity of Kurds.

"We have to be careful I think because what has happened in the past could happen again, I personally haven't experienced any abuse or anything but just look at our history and it is full, time after time the Iraqi government tries to reduce what we have and force us to become a part of Iraq" (Ari, male, unemployed, native to Sulaimany).

Although the individuals interviewed may have not personally experienced discrimination mentioned, the Arabisation policy, particularly in this case is pertinent to the discussion. As Natalie argues "The state's policies had become so devoid of

credibility that while the government referred to the 1970 agreement[86] as 'the most important accord for Iraqi-Kurd relations' and created the first Kurdish legislative assembly in Iraqi Kurdistan, both Barzani and Talabani refused to participate in the state's United Popular Front. Moreover, by 1970 the reshaping threshold had risen. The Arabization of Kurdish lands territorialized Kurdish identity, tying Kurdish claims to sensitive regions such as Kirkuk (Kutschera 1979). The crux of the Kurdish autonomy issue was no longer about cultural and political rights, but centred on the 'real' ethnic origins of Kirkuk. Petroleum played a key role in this debate. While Hussein was demanding 'Arab oil for Arabs', Kurds were claiming 'Kurdish crude for Kurdistan" (Natalie 2001).

Either personal family experiences or knowledge of those events makes Kurdish youth weary of a recurrence of those events, mostly in the interests of the affected group.   Kenny (1999) highlights problems associated with the manipulation of historical events for the use of present gain as 'there is no story without someone to tell it. The transmission of historical memory is therefore contextual, partial, and subject to self-interested manipulation' (p22). What runs through the responses is a sense of identity loss, not just of the individual but the place or city in which they live. *"Sometimes I feel like I don't live in a Kurdish city anymore because there are so*

>*many different people living here, mostly just Arabs. I mean I lived abroad*
>
>*and the city I lived in had people from all over the world living there but there*
>
>*was one difference, all those people spoke English and it didn't matter where*
>
>*they were from. I went to an England football game and all sorts of people*
>
>*were there, black white, brown and they all had England t-shirts on and they*

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[86] The Iraqi-Kurdish Autonomy Agreement of 1970 was reached by the Kurds and the Iraqi government after the first Iraqi Kurdish war.

were supporting the country. I don't think it's the same here, probably the

Arabs here don't even recognise the existence of Kurds" (Aram, male,

Manager, native to Erbil).

What is clear from the responses is that the historical events that occurred during

Saddam's reign still play heavily on the minds of Kurdish youth in different ways,

even though they have not personally experienced any of those events. Those

historical events also serve as fuel for the (comparatively) minor incidents of ill

treatment experienced by youth in today's Kurdistan. Whilst those experiences may

not necessarily be personally experienced, they are stored in collective group

memory and drawn upon to reiterate and confirm in-group/out-group differences as

the following quote suggests (Hirst and Fineberg 2011, Gerber 2004).

"I know from my history lessons and television that there has been a lot of bad things

done to Kurds, even my own family experienced them, we are reminded of them all

the time. The whole city is a reminder, it is in the buildings, street names,

monuments and statues but it shouldn't be like that, we do have to learn to move on"

(Sarok, male, unemployed, native to Sulaimany).

Here the whole city becomes a reminder of past ethnic conflict and abuse.

Museums, statues and other monuments work as a constant reminder and people

develop attachments to those places.

6.3   Reactive trans-nationalism: the defence of place from a distance

Kurdish identity has crossed the physical boundaries and a new form of 'pan-Kurdish' identity has formed amongst many Kurdish youth. The age of instant communication has meant that news of events travels instantly from all over the world. In the past, the states of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey carried out their actions in relative isolation and Kurds from other parts were not aware of those actions. This is exemplified by the following quote, which represents a number of the often emotional and passionate responses to the idea of a united Kurdistan.

"I am so proud of our Peshmerga[87], PKK[88], YPG[89], YPJ[90] and Democrat guerrilla. I saw a report yesterday that said one YPG Peshmerga said that the Yezedis that were taken to Syria for safety are Internally Displaced People and that they are refugees from one part of Kurdistan to another. It sent shivers down my spine. Imagine that! We are already talking about breaking down borders that separate Kurdistan by calling them internally displaced!" (Sarbast, male, teacher, native to Erbil).

Whilst this study is limited to researching the Kurdish case, it is the view of many respondents that there is great historical inter-conflict between different groups. These conflicts are essentially one regarding group identity resulting in what can be

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[87] Iraqi Kurdish army
[88] Party Krekarany Kurdistan – Kurdish guerrilla army based in Turkey
[89] Yekinakany Parastiny Gel – Kurdish guerrilla army based in Syria (People's Protection Unit).
[90] Yekinakany Parastiny Jnan – Kurdish guerrilla army based in Syria (Womens Protection Unit)

termed 'identity war' in that groups are essentially at metaphorical war with each other over their identities. This 'identity war' is personified by the following response.

"I used to live in Britain for a few years and believe me there is nothing different there, it is just like Iraq, we are discriminated against there as well. I can't count the number of arguments and fights I had with Arabs and Turks. They will talk to you, be your friends but when you start to talk about Kurdistan they will fight you, they will constantly try to control your identity." (Sarbast, male, teacher, returnee to Erbil).

This reactive trans-nationalism represents the defence of the homeland from a distance and a response to the homogenisation of identity in Iraq that so many Kurdish people feel. It should not matter a great deal to an Iraqi or a Turk born and bred in the UK for example that in some distant corner of the world where their parents or grandparents were born there is an identity war taking place. However, as we discussed in the previous section on post-memory, reactive nationalism, or what we term 'guerrilla nationalism' occurs across ethnicities and borders. This is further confirmed by Rasool (2012) who states that:

"The Arab nationalists, in Iraq, labeled the Kurds treasonous and disloyal to the state because they rejected attempts to homogenize it with an ill-fitting Arab identity. This, they felt, legitimized the use of brute force and violence against them, including massacres, mass deportation and genocide. Kurdish nationalism emerged as a reaction to this attempt."

Revisiting the research discussed in the literature review by Enneli et al (2005) on Kurdish Turks living in London there is considerable correlation with this current study. In their study, they found that the majority of those interviewed rejected their Turkish identity and considered any notion of 'Turkishness' as being imposed upon them. This is also the case with this current study where in general, those interviewed considered any notion of 'Iraqiness' as also being imposed.

"We left Kurdistan because we were forced to really, they [Iraqi government] was going to kill my Dad so we had to leave and go to UK. I'm not trying to be ungrateful but I didn't enjoy my time there. Now when family talk about the past I feel I missed out on a lot, I wish I had grown up here" (Layla, female, manager, returnee to Sulaimany).

Here, these comments not only resent the homogenisation that Kurds have suffered in the past but also blame it for 'missing out' on a potentially greater or stronger Kurdish identity. In short, the respondents above and below consider 'what could have been' if they had not been forced to leave Kurdistan.

"My Dad was a Peshmerga and it was getting too dangerous because we were getting found out by the Bathists so we all left. Now all I think about is the years I had to live away form friends and family and it really hurts me, they pushed me away from my home" (Darya, female, student, returnee to Sulaimany).

This, however, may be skewed somewhat as for every returnee there may well be one other non-returnee (if not more) who does not have that desire. It is therefore

not within the remit of this research to interview Kurds living abroad who have decided not to return to Kurdistan. The need to belong and feel part of a group was not something that other groups could provide and so returned to Kurdistan in order to seek out that group membership.

The response below repeats the previous comment in what represents the views of many others that took part in the research. On initial assessment it may appear that Kurds have grown accustomed to 'blaming' out-groups for their own misfortune's but this would be to neglect the historical events that have taken place and the divisive homogenisation policies countries have taken to protect or impose their own identity on minority Kurds.

"If it was up to me, if it was a perfect world and I could go back in time we would have a united Kurdistan with our own borders, but the policies of the British have meant that we are now like four different countries. Because when they split it up each part was created differently and they tried to integrate each one into their own culture so a Kurd from Turkey is different to a Kurd in Iraq" (Halo, male, administrator, native to Erbil).

In many regards, it is this separation and subsequent feeling that Kurds in different parts of Kurdistan in some way have different identities that has further strengthened the need to preserve and strengthen Kurdish identity. This defence of Kurdish identity is seen as important because the consequences of previous attempts to weaken it have been noticed and observed. A big part of Kurdish identity as has

been previously described are dimensions of the other. Those dimensions of the other will be discussed in greater detail in the following section.

6.4   The 'other': fear and acceptance

Iraq has a long history of inter ethnic conflict[91] which many of the interviewees responses indicate. It is this conflict, which has resulted in a cycle of homogenisation and guerrilla nationalism. Many of the interviewees and researchers alike acknowledge that whilst dividing Iraq as a country may not be politically expedient, a federal system of government is the only way to appease all the different ethnicities and factions. "In societies such as Iraq, with long histories of inter-communal tensions and powerful secessionist sentiments, a federation may be the only way to sustain democracy while maintaining the territorial integrity of the state" (L. Anderson & G. Stansfield, 2005).

The following quote identifies the issues that many face in Iraq, in that the different ethnicities in the country find it difficult to live together governed by the same laws. It can be argued that the comment below and others like it are brought about as a reaction to decades of laws and policies designed to homogenise Iraq into one identity.

"*Me personally I don't like them coming here they don't bring anything, if they were European or American I wouldn't mind, Arabs are always trying to bring us down. My*

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[91] A total of 20 internal conflicts, mostly involving Kurdish groups.

problem is with Arabs, I don't like them" (Shene, female, housewife, native to Sulaimany).

So it is clear from the above comment that the issue here is not one of conflict with 'others' in general, rather it is a conflict with a particular 'other' namely Arabs, or the Iraqi government that represents them. Whilst the above comment is clear in its racist message, it is born out of a reaction to government and individual actions towards directed at Kurds which further supports our 'guerrilla nationalism' theory.

When asked about refugees coming to Kurdish cities to seek safety, many respondents drew on family and shared memories of having to flee Kurdistan themselves, which meant they could relate to the experiences of incoming Arabs. These individuals believe that Arab refugees should be helped and sheltered in Kurdish cities until the situation in their cities of origin returns to normal.

"I don't really have a problem with it, they are no bad people just unlucky and I feel sorry for them. We experienced this ourselves so we should help them but I think they shouldn't stay here" (Hiwa, male, labourer, native to Sulaimany).

Within this identity type there are also events (again both historical and recent) that have greatly influenced the views of those that adhere to the type. Firstly, in the same way that the rise of non-Kurdish inhabitants concerns them, they do not believe that those coming to Kurdish cities should stay there permanently. However, their views are also influenced by another set of events, ones that have been

experienced by family members in the past. Personal or individual experiences of having to flee ones home and settle in a strange environment results in a certain amount of empathy with refugees although the historical Arabisation of Kurdish cities also influences them as the following quote indicates. These comments are born out of a reaction to historical events not personally experienced but 'inherited' from parents or grandparents.

"I was young when we had to run away and leave our home, my parents tell me how we had to walk to the mountains and stay in a village until it was safe. I was so young I couldn't walk and they had to carry me for days with little food. The Arab refugees have it better; they are in warm houses but it cant be nice being forced to leave your home. I think they should go back to their cities when things improve, this is not their home, just a place to stay" (Ranj, male, labourer, native to Erbil).

What the above quote highlights is that place is not just somewhere that people relate to in terms of identity; it is also a place of temporary sanctuary. It is unclear what makes Kurds place more importance on these lived events rather than those experienced collectively, however, what is clear is that they are both informed by traumatic or unhappy experiences.

The following response highlights and represents the emphasis on the need to introduce policies directed at integrating and settling Arab immigrants into Kurdish culture and society. Rather than use events such as Halabja, Anfal and individual memories of refuge as a cause of racism or mistrust of the other, it is the racism and mistrust itself that has caused such events from a top government level down to

society. This group of people therefore advocates greater integration and understanding between the different groups in order to avoid similar events occurring and to bring communities together.

"I think Arabs treat Kurds well, I don't think the general population has a problem with Kurds. They live here and they are happy, they don't cause trouble because they know they are guests. I don't have a problem with them being here it doesn't affect my identity at all because I am and will always be Kurdish" (Mabast, male, postman, native to Erbil).

The reference to guests in this comment is important as it raises the issue of the attachment to place and the amount of time a person has to remain in that place.

Alternatively, the following quote also introduces the element of integration into this particular identity, and by definition, increasing the scope of who can or can not be considered a part of the Kurdish in-group. By integrating and adapting into Kurdish life and culture, non-Kurds (in this case Arabs) may be considered a part of the group.

"My opinion is that is ok if they come but they have to integrate and adapt to the culture and way of life here in Kurdistan. They have to integrate but integration and mixing is difficult in Iraq because throughout its history the groups have been in conflict with each other, always fighting and killing each other" (Shno, female, unemployed, native to Erbil).

As in the above quote, the following respondent highlights the importance of integration and the mixing of ethnic communities with one another. This represents what the historical and present situation is like in Iraq with different ethnicities and religions living in cluster areas and not mixing with one another. The above comment goes in opposition to many other previous comments but highlights the importance of increased interactions as a solution to ethnic conflict. The following comments also supports this claim in that is accurately summarises the history of ethnic conflict in Iraq where each group has been occupying a certain place and have considered it their 'territory' often treating anyone with a different ethnicity as hostile.

"I think it is good because the more people mix and get along with each other the more they will accept each other. Part of the problem in Iraq is that Kurds live in one area, Shia in another; they are all separated like different countries. If they were all mixed then people would get used to each other and accept each other without differences. Maybe they won't like it for a while but they will get used to it" (Barin, female, unemployed, native to Sulaimany).

When asked to comment on the idea of a united Kurdistan and what it symbolises, the vast majority (27 out of 30 interviewed) of respondents reacted with hope and a desire to see a united Kurdistan with many referring to it as a dream come true. When discussing other parts of Kurdistan (Turkey, Syria and Iran) regular references are made to Kurds fighting ISIS in Syria and how the Turkish government badly treats its Kurdish population.

Alinia (2004) carried out empirical research on 22 members of the Kurdish Diaspora in Sweden and found that "*common to all of these participants is their effort and desire to become "located". Location with this meaning is symbolic rather than territorial. It is about creating spaces and platforms, which can give them self-confidence, solidarity and belongingness".* The desire to be 'located' and be accepted runs through the responses relating to returning Kurds. Alinia and Eliassi have a different definition of diasporah in terms of what it means to place identity "we depart from a definition of diaspora as a complex and intersectional social process characterised by two major elements. The first is the existential relation to and orientation towards a home(land), a homing desire and a need for "home" and belonging that occupies a central place in daily lives and identities of diaspora members. Homeland is used in both a symbolic and territorial sense. This should be understood in its context in order to avoid an essentialisation of the relation between identity and territory/place. Exile, exclusion and homing desire are closely related and can partly explain these feelings. The second characteristic of diaspora is the formation of a collective identity around collective movement related to issues of home(land), belonging and community formation" (Alinia and Eliassi 2014).

What runs through the quotes is the idea of being a stranger or not feeling a part of the 'in-group'. This desire to become an 'in-group' member has pulled them back to Kurdistan and the following quote represents that desire to be near family and other Kurds.

"Actually I wish I never left Kurdistan, I am much happier here, I experienced a lot of racism in England and I was always a stranger, I never felt welcome from the first

day when the Home Office[92] interviewed me to the day I came back I always felt like

a stranger. Here in Kurdistan I am with my family" (Jamal, male, driver, returnee to

Erbil).

The response above shows that those individuals have an innate need to be part of

a group, a need to belong to a wider collective that fits their own criterion. The

references to being a 'stranger', 'not being welcome', missing 'all the bad things' and

returning to their ancestral home all indicate the loss of identity that they felt when

they were outside Kurdistan. Those possible experiences of not feeling a part of a

group and the need for belonging can drive people to search for that belonging and

group membership in other places. The symbolism that the Kurdish space offers

them has led them to return to Kurdistan to be located in the Kurdish physical place.

6.5   Changing places: reactions of a guerrilla nation

The recent fight against ISIS or Daesh has resulted in a large number of refugees

coming into Kurdish cities within a very short space of time. With a population of

roughly 5 million, the Kurdish region has seen more than a million refugees move to

the area. This proportionally large increase in population in the space of a year has

changed the demographics and social structures of what Kurds relate to when

thinking about place identity. To put this into context, an increase in refugee arrivals

on this scale in the UK would mean approximately 15 million refugees arriving in the

country within the space of a year. The following respondent relates events taken

place in the past with the current situation in the city where he lives.

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[92] The Home Office is a UK government ministerial department responsible fro immigration, security and law and order.

"I live in Sar Chnar[93] district in Sulaimany. There is a joke in our area. It is popular with Arabs and the joke says; Arabs say they like Sar Chnar area but there are too many Kurds there. It is a joke but it says a lot. There are a lot of Arabs in the area, I don't have a problem with it but we have to be careful. Look at Kirkuk today where so many groups are claiming a legitimate ownership of it because their grandparents were moved into the city and given the houses of Kurds" (Ari, student, returnee to Sulaimany).

The above response comes across as racist or xenophobic, but to reduce the trepidation apparent in the responses to this level would be to over simplify the issue. What is apparent in the responses in not a hatred of Arabs per say but real fear of what they represent and the historical ill treatment associated with Arabs and Iraq. Kirkuk is used by the respondent as an example of how the demographics of a city can change over time to influence the identity of that place and how people associate themselves with it. The link between ill treatment and space is therefore connected through the Kurdish characteristics of place, and secondly to compare current events with historical ones. The following response reiterates the previous quote in recognising the changing characteristics of space in Kurdistan.

"There are so many Arabs moving into Kurdish areas now it's unbelievable! We joke about it but it's dangerous, just look at Shaqlawa[94], people are jokingly calling it 'Shaqluja' [a blending of the Kurdish city name of Shaqlawa and the Arabic city of

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[93] This area is traditionally a tourist area with hotels, bars and restaurants.
[94] A tourist area in Iraqi Kurdistan between Sulaimany and Erbil

Faluja], before we can do anything about it, it will become a reality and not a joke"

(Hazha, female, unemployed, native to Erbil).

This quote relates to what Korostelina (2014) developed a theoretical model of intergroup identity insults and applied the model to the case of insults connected to the Russian rock group Pussy Riot[95]. The study identified six types of insults: identity, projection, divergence, relative, power, and legitimacy. The study found that *"identity insults occur when group members perceive a threat to their self-esteem and the sense of dignity provided by their social identity in situations of conflict with other groups. to increase or restore positive self-esteem, Group X creates an identity insult by attributing to Group Y negative features, evil motivations, or foul values or by accusing Group Y of performing destructive or erroneous actions"* *(p217).* The following respondent further expresses the issue of segregation.

"Well we have Kurds and Arabs and I see Kurdish kids playing together in the park opposite but I don't see Arabs kids playing with them…I came back a few weeks ago I haven't seen the Arabic kids playing with the Kurds" *(Ari, male, student, returnee to Sulaimany).*

The unwillingness of Arab and Kurdish children to mix and play together may represent a similar wider issue amongst adults, which will greatly increase a sense of segregation and difference. As Casakin et al (2015) found, in their research involving 208 participants in a quantitative survey of university students residing in

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[95] The group is a feminist protest group founded in 2011 and opposed Russian President Vladimir Putin who they considered to be a dictator.

Israel comprising of 54.8% who were born in their city of residence and 45.2% who were born in another city. Their research found, it is the time spent living in a particular city and the attachments developed that influences place-identity and not being born there or any ethnic attachment (Casakin et al. 2015). This contradicts what many of the respondents have stated where importance is placed on being born in Kurdistan and how Arabs coming into the city are viewed as a threat. It may be the case that in the future, those Arabs that decide to stay and integrate into Kurdish society and spend considerable time in Kurdish cities, develop similar attachments to Kurdistan to those born there. This also raises another question regarding the birth of Arab children in Kurdish cities who will also have the 'place of birth' argument. This is supported by another respondent who raises an interesting point about what it means for people who are not of the local ethnic origin but are born in and have attachments to that place.

"*My children go to a local school here in Sulaimany, they were born here and they play with other children in the neighbourhood. One day my son came home from school and he told me that his best friend is called Ammar and I know that it's an Arabic name. He has learned Kurdish very well and apparently he was born here, if you changed his name to a Kurdish name nobody would know. I think it's a really good idea that he has learned Kurdish because when he grows up he will understand what Kurds have gone through and he will stay in Kurdistan maybe"* (Jwan, female, housewife, Native to Sulaimany).

 It may also be the case that 'higher cross-group friendships will result in lower ethnic identification, lower perceived discrimination and higher national identification'

(Celebi et al 2015). The current situation however, where Kurdish and Arabic youth do not interact leads to a 'reduced likelihood of an immigrants self-identification with the host country society' (Zimmermann et al 2014).

6.6   Conclusion

In all the classifications of Kurdish typologies relating to the influence of place on identity of Kurdish youth, historical ill treatment plays a major part in the views expressed by respondents. From the study of the answers that participants gave in relation to the changing demographics of Kurdish cities, certain typologies of Kurdish identity appear.

We all have memories of certain locations in our lives that bring us happiness, a seasonal trip, an old school, for example, the house we grew up in, and as long as we can seek to maintain a connection to certain locations that bring us happiness. Such sites in nature can be somewhat different, but each one gives a different sense of connection. The length of time is a significant aspect that affects location identification, and it is often the case that the more time a person spends in a certain location, the more they become connected to that place, but it often depends on a variety of factors such as the relationship in that place, home ownership, etc.

The interconnectedness of place and demographics is not something that has been studied in detail but it is certainly an unexplored factor in Kurdish identity. Place however, is not limited to the bricks and mortar of an individuals surroundings, nor is it limited to who inhabits that place as has been discussed in this chapter. Whilst the idea of place represents identification with a physical location such as cities people grow up in, space in the Kurdish context represents the symbolic idea of the Kurdish homeland.

Kurdish towns often show traces of the Kurdish oppression under former regimes often as structures or monuments that act as a reminder of such incidents. In fact, school kids are often brought to these buildings to inform them of the Kurdish battle. They are something tangible-mnemonic landmarks that can be marked to and told, "it occurred there!" A school tour will have a catalyst or warning that brings us back to the past as though it were there. Buildings like former prisons (now museums), monuments, and place names act as a daily reminder of Kurdish heritage and historical incidents within the sense of place identification.

Place identity has influenced Kurdish youth in different ways, whilst the increase in Arab inhabitants of Kurdish cities has encouraged protectionism in some; it has induced empathy in others. This is largely down to the specific characteristics of ill treatment (such as Halabja and Anfal) and how different people deal with those incidents. Some associate Arab inhabitants with the ill treatment Kurds have suffered in the past whilst others see them as victims of their own forms of ill treatment and empathise with them.

This chapter has discussed how our surroundings (both physical and symbolic) influence identity development and how ill treatment has played a key role in the process. Identity is often considered an inward looking process looking at what Proshansky called the 'dimensions of the self' but what this chapter has found is that the 'dimensions of the other' are of equal importance. The 'dimensions of the other ' Whilst conflicts between the 'self' and the 'other' occur when discussing identity in general, the Kurdish case has shown that in Iraq there appears to be an 'identity war' taking place on many fronts.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Spatial Identity – Deconstructing Kurdish identity

7.0   Introduction

This chapter will discuss Kurdish identity in relation to what is termed 'spatial identity'. Spatial has been previously studied and researched but has largely been confined to the field of art. This study however, will look at it from the point of view of the individual in what Proshansky described as 'those dimensions of the self' to which we added 'those dimensions of the other' in the previous chapter. The way in which we dress, the language we use, the logo's and symbols we display often says a great deal about us. In short, how do we express our identity and how do we react to other peoples expression of identity where it differs from ours? In these situations conflicts can often occur whereby the dominant group seeks to exert its identity over the minority group which can in turn cause armed conflict, independence movements and nationalist sentiments.

"*I know that the Iraqi government wishes that there was no such thing as Kurds, not just the Iraqi government but also the Turkish, Iranian, and Syrian governments too. The problem for us is that we are a minority but we were here a long time before any of them, the Turks came from Mongolia and now they are the majority*" (Sarok, male, policeman, native to Sulaimany).

Spatial identity is generally understood in two ways: one how any space is identified in terms of cultural association, and another how many cultural practices / streams

can be identified within one particular space. Both symbolize the richness of culture. The human sense of identity is often realized in the sense that one lives in the world of others. It is in relation to 'others' – to the society and the environment in which one lives – that one's own identity is formed.

"*Sometimes I feel that the city is changing because I remember how it used to be when I was younger and I see it now it is different. In university most of the girls wear hijab's[96] now and more and more boys are growing their beards[97] and I hat what is happening to the city. Now, everyday I see men walking around in dixdasha[98] and it makes me worried*" (Ari, male, unemployed, native to Erbil).

With globalization this process has only accelerated and has become more visible even at smaller scales i.e. within a city or even within a suburb. The spatial identities at different scales are formed, reformed and deformed through the process of de-territorialisation and reterritorialisation in recent times as globalization as a process generates contradictory spaces, characterized by contestations, internal differentiation and continuous border crossing (Sassen, 2002).

7.1   The importance of aesthetics on identity

Whether it is done consciously or subconsciously, people express their identity in many different ways through the clothes they wear, style they choose, the language they speak and even different dialects of the same language (Hendley and Bielby,

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[96] Islamic headscarf work by women to cover their hair.
[97] Religious practice amongst men to grow beards
[98] Traditional Arabic attire that resembles a dress.

2012). The language we speak can also often betray our identity, for example, an Englishman fluent in French may very well pass off as French when speaking to a Frenchman. This is expressed in the following quote where language is not only a tool for identity expression but also a tool for identity deception.

"No it doesn't really matter how many languages you know, it isn't about that. Its about what language you use and where. If I just spoke Dutch in Holland then people would see me as Dutch even if I wasn't Dutch. If I just speak Kurdish in Kurdistan then people would see me as Kurdish, even if I wasn't Kurdish" (Shno, female, unemployed, native to Erbil).

Whilst language is therefore an important element of identity, there are other facets to the concept. As mentioned before different dialects of the same language can provide an instantly recognisable badge of identity. In Britain, a Cockney[99] accent is easily distinguishable from a Scouse[100] accent to those living in the country. Another aspect of identity aesthetics, which, like language can often betray an individual's identity is the clothing, we choose to wear. We would be forgiven for assuming a Spanish man wearing an Arabic Dizdasha[101] was indeed Arabic but in many ways what we choose to wear acts as a banner or plaque around our necks as if to tell everyone 'look at me, this is who I am'. This is the case in the following quote where the individual had returned from America and felt the need to express his Kurdishness whilst there.

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[99] Accent traditionally associated with inner city London in the UK
[100] Accent traditionally associated with the city of Liverpool in the UK
[101] Traditional Arabic clothing for men that resembles a dress

"I have my 'I love Kurdistan t-shirt on' I didn't buy it actually I asked a friend of mine to bring it to me in the states when she travelled there form Kurdistan. It was important to me to have it because clothes are a way of presenting yourself to the world" (Rawand, male, student, returnee to Sulaimany).

What the above quote shows is that when in surroundings that people tend to blend in with other people (typical jeans and t-shirt style etc) there is often a need to express a unique identity.

7.2   Space and dimensions of the other

The previous sections have discussed how people use language and clothing in order to express themselves in what Proshansky described as 'the dimensions of the self'. What is also important to discuss is what we have termed 'the dimensions of the other', in short how do individuals react to the expression of other peoples identity.

From the moment we are born we are influenced by dimensions of the other, the simple act of saying "it's a girl", and buying her pink clothes immediately gives a certain identity to that baby that is not of their own making. Identity is therefore a two-way process and others influence much of our identity (Paltridge 2015). This has become increasingly the case in Kurdistan with the sudden rise in non-Kurdish inhabitants (Hawramy 2015). The following quote expresses this viewpoint well where they note the recent change in the cities spatial identity.

"Just in the past few years the look and sound of this city has changed, there are many more Arabs wearing dizdasha and speaking Arabic. I am not saying I am

against it, well maybe a little, but it is very different now. Also fewer and fewer Kurds are wearing Kurdish clothes" (Ako, male, receptionist, native to Sulaimany).

There is an assumption that can be made from the above quote, whilst initially they say they are not against it, they express a certain amount of concern by adding "well maybe a little". These four words are telling in that it recognises the importance of spatial identity not only of the self, but also of the other and how that impacts on their own identity.

As in the above quote, the dimensions of the other can often be perceived as a threat to the dimensions of the self or an attack on an individuals own identity especially where there is a perceived conflict between the two identities resulting in what we previously described as 'identity war'. For several groups to live peacefully in a multinational state largely depends on each groups spatial identities and how they correspond with other groups. Where there is a significant power imbalance of one group wielding more power than the other, then the larger group may simply ignore the rights and demands of the smaller group and go so far as to deny or reduce the rights that they already have. Dimensions of the other can also act as a stimulant for dimensions of the self as the following quote suggests.

"I think that Arabs living in Kurdistan have more confidence maybe, I don't know. I just think that they wear Arabic clothes and speak Arabic as a badge of their identity. Maybe the dizdasha is just more comfortable and practical in hot weather but the more I see wearing them, the more I feel I should also wear my Kurdish clothes. The

problem is Kurdish clothes are not very practical in hot weather" (Blend, teacher, native to Sulaimany).

7.3   Kurdish youth and the expression of spatial Identity

The expression of identity is something that most, if not all people do at some point. Wearing the shirt of your favourite football team, wearing traditional ethnic or religious clothing, the wearing of a crucifix or Jewish kippah[102] all says something about who you are. However (at the risk of generalising and stereotyping), wearing a Manchester united shirt in a pub full of Manchester city fans may get you into trouble. If for example an increasing number of United fans go to this pub, the City fans may feel the need to (for lack of a better phrase) 'mark their territory' by either displaying City colours or by showing hostility to the United fans. The ethno-patriotic Kurdistani in this example is the Manchester city fan, the increasing visual and vocal expression of Arabic identity (the United fan) brings about a concern for a weakening or loss of their own identity. This sentiment is expressed in the following quote which emphasises the importance of what people wear and how they speak as a marker for identity.

"Clothing is really important in many ways. Because it is a representation of who we are, it is our culture and how we distinguish between ourselves and anyone else. I also don't like it how you go into a shop and they don't know Kurdish and expect you to speak Arabic" (Chro, female, unemployed, native to Erbil).

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[102] Traditional Jewish hat as a symbol of awareness of a higher entity.

The importance of clothing in not only making a personal ethnic statement but also a political statement is clear. As stated 'Clothing and fashion are not simply manifestations of taste and wealth, but can also be used as part of wider attempts at shaping the political landscape' (Ahmeda 2016). This sentiment is further discussed in the following section where those interviewed clearly express concern and hostility towards the changing aesthetics of identity.

7.4   Guerrilla nationalism through an expression of spatial identity.

As has been previously discussed, the clothes we wear or the language we speak represents a great deal about who we are. However, a name or label given to a place, can also become important in this case (Rogg & Rimscha, 2008). The following quote represents this well in that the simple name of a place becomes an issue with identity.

"Believe me they [Arabs] don't want a single Kurd here, they don't even call Hewler by its name, they call it Erbil. For example, we heard some Arabs talking and we asked them if they liked Hewler, and they replied oh yes we like Erbil. I said why don't you say Hewler, why do you call it Erbil. It is true that the historical name is Erbil, but it is a Kurdish city now and it is called Hewler" (male, administrator, native to Erbil).

What the above respondent highlights is that not only do they consider the influence of the out-group important in relation to their own identity but that of the city in which they live. The simple fact of a city having a Kurdish name is of importance in this case and calling it by its historically more accurate name is perceived as a threat to

the individual's and national identity. Therefore the context of historical threat and maintaining Kurdish identity is important to Kurdish youth.

"Kurdish clothes are very important and we have to wear them as much as we can it is a part of our history, our ancestors wore them and our parents wore them so we have to continue the tradition and wear them as much as possible. I make a conscious decision to wear Kurdish clothes I say that on such and such a day I'm going to wear my Kurdish clothes. There are lots of Arabs in Kurdistan and they are not embarrassed to wear their clothes so why should we be?" (Sarbast, male, teacher, native to Erbil).

The conscious choice to wear traditional clothing issues a clear statement particularly when, as in the Kurdish case, that statement is one of a unique ethnic identity and one of a desire for independence. As Yangzom (2014) found in a study on Tibetans, 'In denying the category of being an ethnic minority of China and in resisting colonial assimilation, Tibetans as opposed to submitting to the notion of a multicultural China are employing their cultural uniqueness as declaration of their independence' (p56).

Both the above quotes highlight a recurring theme in that they both refer to history. As was the case in the previous chapter, history plays a major role in Kurdish identity, particularly when discussing the expression of identity.

As previously discussed, spatial identity goes beyond the mere wearing of clothes and the speaking of a language, national anthems, folktales and songs are also used

to represent who we are. This is particularly the case with national anthems as they are used the world over as a symbol for national and ethnic identity.

"The thing that brings all Kurds together form all parts of Kurdistan is our national anthem. If you go to Kurdistan in Iraq, Iran, Turkey or Syria you will hear 'Ey Raqib'[103]. I think that we all make it our anthem because of the words, 'The Kurds are here they'll never die' they are relevant to all parts of Kurdistan" (Ashti, male, Manager, native to Erbil).

As Voller states "In one of the most obvious examples of this, when the Ba'th leadership sensed a growing threat from Shi'i activism amid the strengthening of the Islamic Da'wa Party[104] it turned to incorporate Shi'i symbols and traditions into its discourse. In parallel, the Ba'th Party intensified its recruitment efforts in Shi'i regions. As tensions with Iran loomed, even before the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War, the government turned to play the card of Arab identity to weaken potential Shi'i sentiments" (Voller 2017).

Typically national anthems are about pride in historical strength and achievements, this is not the case in the Kurdish national anthem which is predominantly about having to face up to attacks on their identity.
The following respondent further highlights the case of having to defend Kurdish identity from aggressors by referring to the Kurdish national anthem.

"The whole history of Kurds is one of defensive. If we look at the national anthem it starts 'ow enemy the Kurds are still here' it is about survival and it is all about others

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[103] Kurdish national anthem – Ey Raqib meaning 'Ow Enemy'.
[104] From *da'wa* meaning "call" or "invitation," but implying proselytization.

trying to wipe us out. Kurdish identity has been lost, it isn't a new creation, it has always been there. There was a Kurdish alphabet that Ibn al Wahshiya[105] wrote about and books that he translated from Kurdish to Arabic 'for the benefit of mankind' that is how important Kurdish history is" (Awrng, Female, manager, native to Sulaimany).

What is shown in the above quote is therefore a culture or tradition of having to defend one's Kurdish identity and being regularly reminded of this through national symbols and anthems (Kulyk 2011). What the previous and following quotes suggest is a need for reconciliation with historical events, a need not to forget those events as a part of history but to recognise current influences on Kurdish identity.

"It is something that gives me great strength in life to know that as a Kurd I am still here despite all the suffering and all the attempts to wipe us out as a nation. I am proud of the history and culture that Kurds have experienced from all the rebellions against oppressors from the sheikh said rebellion up to today. Kurdishness mean having an identity, having an existence. It is the way that people in Kurdistan live their lives it is the basis of how people live and run their families, it is the most important thing" (Ari, male, student, native to Sulaimany)".

The protectionist and defensive nature of the above responses fit into the guerrilla nationalist theory in that they see the influence of the larger Arab/Iraqi out-group as a considerable threat to their own identity. The association with historical ill treatment

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[105] Also known as Abu Bakr Ahmad bin Ali he was an Arab alchemist, agriculturalist, farm toxicologist and Historian

is considerable in the guerrilla nationalist which is taken further to include modern ill treatment as discussed in the following section. As Shwartz argues "Integrated threat theory specifies three types of threats that host nationals can perceive regarding immigrant groups – symbolic threats, realistic threats, and negative stereotypes. *Symbolic threats* represent perceived harm that the immigrant group poses to the host national group – such as a fear that Islam will conquer Europe or that mass Hispanic immigration will unseat the status of English as the official language of the United States *Realistic threats* refer to concerns that immigrants will take away jobs and other resources that "should" belong to host nationals – especially to those from low-income backgrounds *Negative stereotypes* refer to the (generally pejorative) characteristics that a prototypical member of the immigrant group is perceived as possessing" (Shwartz 2017).

All three of the above examples can be seen in the Kurdish case as fear of the other is manifested in the comments below. The fear however is not always unfounded and is based on historical facts in that the Arabisation and concurring of space has bene a policy not only of the Iraqi government but also of all other governments that Kurds reside in.

"*Kirkuk has always been a Kurdish city but because there is oil there all previous governments have tried to change the population of the city so that now we are almost a minority in the city. The problem is that it could happen to Sulaimany, Erbil, Duhok and all the other Kurdish cities if we are not careful. The problem is that it is happening right now, in Erbil if you go into a shop, the first language that the shop keeper talks to you in is Arabic*" (Shene, female, housewife, native to Erbil).

Guerrilla nationalism draws considerable resources from both historical and modern ill treatment and it is within this identity that most references are made to those events of ill treatment. Whilst nowadays the physical events of the past such as Halabja and Anfal are not occurring, guerrilla nationalists refer to other instances of bureaucratic ill treatment by the Baghdad government as the following quote suggests.

 I have gone to meetings with high level officials from Baghdad, just as an administrator but I heard some crazy things from them. Once they objected to the Kurdish flag appearing on official buildings and another time they asked a general manager to speak Arabic instead of Kurdish" (Darya, female, student, returnee to Sulaimany).

In the above example, the objection to the appearance of the Kurdish flag and the use of the Kurdish language is taken as an attack on identity, a denial of identity which is used by the individual to further strengthen their own Kurdish identity in the face of the objection by the other. This is a reaction to an attack on that individuals ethnic and national identity. It is therefore clear that spatial identity is an important factor in the expression of identity not only from the point of the minority wanting to preserve that identity but also form the point of view of the majority wanting to impose their own identity. How an individual reacts to that imposition is important as the reaction itself is a manifestation of ethnic identity.

"I worked for a refugee charity in UK for a short time and we had an event at the Eisteddfod[106] to promote the contribution of refugees to the community. It was a nice event and we had traditional things form different countries on display as well as hanging flags. One of the flags was Kurdistan and we had a visitor who worked for the UN and him and his wife went crazy when he saw the Kurdish flag and he told me to remove it and my manager said no, I was really happy he stood up for us and I started to argue with the man" (Shwan, male, manager, returnee to Sulaimany).

When discussing modern ill treatment however, the definition of who or what is considered the perpetrator is broadened to include even some Kurds. So whilst they have all the characteristics of being a group member, some of their actions are considered to be an attack on Kurdish identity carried out by Kurds themselves. This is expressed in the following quote where there was a campaign to alter the lyrics of the national anthem or remove it altogether. The campaign led by Islamic parties and individuals protested at a line in the anthem which referred to Kurdistan as 'my faith and religion' which offended many religious people.

"Nowadays some of the attacks are being done by Kurds themselves, it is crazy that some people wanted to change the national anthem because of that line. Thankfully it was just a few stupid uneducated people and it didn't get anywhere. Even now there are Islamic party leaders in Kurdistan that wont stand for the national anthem" (Dyar, male, student, returnee to Erbil).

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[106] The Welsh Eisteddfod is an annual nationalist event in wales celebrating Welsh language and literature.

As has been evidenced in the above quote, the mere refusal to stand for the national anthem and the desire to change it is taken as an insult and an attack towards what the anthem represents.

The guerrilla nationalist takes the issue of space seriously and strongly emphasise the link between it and identity as a way of expressing their identity against the identity expression of the other. Alternatively there are those that whilst placing importance on space as a form of identity expression, do not consider that expression to be a threat.

With such a history of tension and hostility between different groups based on ethnic grounds it is easy to assume that this tensions spreads throughout the different groups.

As Rouchdy (2013) states, '*the changes that occur in the ethnic language because of contact with the dominant language, should not be considered an erosion of the speaker's competence in Arabic, but rather as an accomplishment of performance resulting in an ethnic language or lingua franca, that acts as a bond among Arab Americans*' (p146). Whilst the study discusses Arabs living in America the same can be applied to this study in that the expression of identity by Arabs living in Kurdistan should be taken as an opportunity for cross cultural understanding as the following quote also suggests.

"Kurdistan has been closed off for too long, now we are more familiar with different cultures and people. It really doesn't bother me the way people dress especially

Arabic people because is their national dress and they are here if you should accept them and accept the way they dress" (Shno, female, unemployed, native to Erbil).

The diversification of Kurdish population has brought about a change in identity with more and more different languages and cultures. The opening of borders to Arabs, Americans, Europeans, Asians etc has brought with it a greater understanding of different cultures and a willingness to accept them.

7.5   Language and Spatial identity

Alongside the use of spatial identity, language serves as an important defining factor of identity expression. Myhill (2003) discusses the 'language-and-identity ideology', which assumes an inherent emotional connection between an individual and their language. This connection embodies a persons identity, it signifies their nationality in many ways.

Five years after the passage of legislation making Romanian the state language of Moldova, language remains one of the most difficult issues between the Russians and Romanian-speakers in Moldova. This situation is hardly surprising because language is one of the objective attributes of ethnicity. Language provides a "cultural mark" which serves to create internal cohesion among people and differentiate one group from another (Baar & Yakubek 2017). This is particularly the case when it comes to the Kurdish case where Kurds have a distinct language that is very different to Arabic, this language has been used by many as a cultural and national mark of ethnic identity to differentiate themselves from their surrounding ethnicities as the following individual states.

"We have our own language and our own history which we need to protect. Our language isn't very rich, we don't have many words especially for new things so sometimes we use English words or Arabic ones which I don't like but we have no choice, we should try to make Kurdish words for new things. This is because we are part of a larger world now and we do incorporate foreign words" (Hiwa, male, labourer, native to Sulaimany).

As Shwartz et al also argue "For example, a Mexican person living in Mexico may not think of her behaviors or values as Mexican. However, upon relocating to the United States, the contrast between her behaviors (or values) and those more characteristics of Americans may lead her to identify even more strongly as Mexican. Our hypothetical Mexican immigrant may also begin to incorporate "American" into her sense of self as she learns the language, associates with American friends, adjusts to American values, and begins to notice contrasts between her new American way of life and her former Mexican way of life" (Shwartz et al, 2017).

Those aged 18 to 25 have only experienced life under Kurdish rule and not Saddam Hussein, in effect living in a de-facto independent Kurdistan. As Rogg & Rimscha above mentioned, knowing Arabic for the Kurdish youth is something akin to a foreign language and one that is not even useful as the following individuals suggests.

"I don't speak Arabic, I mean we learned a bit in school but I have forgotten it all now because I don't need it. I live in a Kurdish city, my family are all Kurdish, I don't know any Arabic people and I don't need it for my job so what's the point? It is much

better for me to know English and I am trying to improve it because it is a world language and I like watching English language films" (Ari, male, teacher, native to Erbil).

For them, borders are relatively clear between what constitutes Iraq and Kurdistan, interaction between this group and Iraqi Arabs has been minimal, knowing Arabic has become less important and political rivalries between the Kurdish government and Iraq has further increased a sense of 'otherness' amongst them (Khalid 2004). As the previous research has suggested, the lack of interaction between Kurds and Arabs in the past has resulted in the lack of importance placed on the Arabic language in Kurdistan.

"I have never really mixed with Arabs, Turks or Iranians because I haven't left the city of Sulaimany since I was born, I have gone on picnics but I haven't even gone to Erbil before so I don't need any of those languages, they are not important for me. It's not that I don't like the languages or the people its just I have no use for it, its like learning Russian, why would I need it?" (Halwest, male, Chef, native to Erbil).

If this interaction were to increase as a result of an increase in the number of Arab residence in Kurdistan, would the use or Arabic by Kurdish youth increase or would it be considered a threat to Kurdish identity? As Rogg and Rimscha (2008) have suggested above, more and more adolescents are placing a higher importance on learning English than Arabic.

"It was so amazing when I saw Kurds from all over the world coming together to support the Kurdish city of Kobane[107] in West Kurdistan, the whole world was watching how brave and heroic the Kurds were there. Kurds from Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria all came together and what was even better was the Peshmerga travelled through north Kurdistan in Turkey and they went through a parade where the Kurds there welcomes and cheered our peshmerga" (Bahar, female, housewife, native to Sulaimany).

Kurds in Iraq demonstrate in support of Kurds in neighbouring countries and vice versa. Knowledge of similar protests has been made easy with the increasing use of the internet and in particular social media. The protests in support of Kobane created an online community that brought together Kurds from all over the world and provided the platform for them to express their identity freely.

In relation to the events described above, Anderson (2006) argues the emergence of 'print capitalism' relates very much to the expression of national identity as it was through the expansion of print media that more and more people came together in expressing their ethnic identity.   It is inappropriate however to apply the idea of 'print capitalism' to the Kurdish case.   The era of print media is still here but the basic tenant of Anderson's argument has moved on exponentially and 'digital capitalism' would be more appropriate. One of the first instances where Kurds used modern forms of 'digital capitalism' as a means to express their identity was the capture of the leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party Abdullah Ocalan (known as the PKK).

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[107] Kobane was the city that came to the worlds attention when it was surrounded by ISIS and often described as the Kurdish 'Stalingrad'

"One of the saddest things I saw was when Ocalan was captured by Turkey, it was the first time that Kurds all over the world came together and protested together, he became a national hero to all Kurds and even now in Sulaimany people love and support him. I think it is a good idea, whatever brings all Kurds together is good and Kurds from all over the world became active on social media" (Ari, labourer, male, native to Sulaimany).

Although Ocalan was a Kurd from Turkey, Kurds from all parts of Kurdistan and the diaspora protested in cities around the world. This was the first major event in Kurdish history that brought Kurds together as a single group campaigning about one single issue and an expression of a single Kurdish identity. They identified as members of an imagined Kurdish community. This was not just about speaking language, but an emotional reaction and expression of identity (Keles 2011).

"The older generation had totally different experiences to the younger generation, the things that they talk about never happened to us and their identity is based on that, it is based on war, being bombed, being imprisoned, mass exedous, Anfal and Halabja. It is different for us, my identity is also based on those things but also what is going on in Syria, Turkey and Iran, it is as if they are happening to me as well" (Aso, male, unemployed, native to Sulaimany).

The idea that social media can be used as a tool of identity expression and aesthetics is further supported by research conducted by Michikyan et al (2015). In a study of 261 emerging adults, a thematic analysis was based on 761 Facebook photo descriptions and 741 wall posts and status updates. Participants were asked to select three Facebook wall posts, photos and status updates that best captured whom they were. They were then asked to describe the content of each item and

then to interpret and explain the meaning of each item and why they were important to them. They found that *"participants' responses indicated that they felt happy by presenting their social identity online and showcasing shared moments with the important people in their lives. In addition, a collective sense of self-presentation, involving social, ethnic, and spiritual identities, may be linked to greater positive states"* (p302).

This is very much the case during the study and responses that were obtained in this research as the following suggests.

"I take every opportunity to put Kurdish things on my profile picture and other social media, on Newroz[108] I always change my profile to a Kurdish flag, on the Halabja anniversary I always make my profile picture something to do with it, on every other occasion too. I mean I don't have any foreign friends but even just for our own benefit we need to remind ourselves who we are and where we have come from" (Hazha, female, unemployed, native to Erbil).

Events such as these, particularly instances of 'self-presentation' as Michikyan et al refer to it, are often seen as rallying points that bring people together, in this case creating a heightened sense of Kurdish identity. The approach used by Michikyan et al in this study can be adapted and used in the current study to gain an insight into how Kurdish youth use social media to express their identity and the importance that this has to them.

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[108] Kurdish New Year celebrated on March 21st

7.6   Guerrilla nationalism expressed through fashion

The wearing of clothes to symbolise an ethnic identity can be both a conscious and subconscious decision, it can also be a practical decision that has little or nothing to do with ethnic identity. In this case individuals take the view that clothing can be used not just as an expression of ethnic identity but also an expression of class identity. The following quote provides an interesting insight into how Kurdish clothes, particularly the sharwal[109] has become a symbol for the working class and how people can be protective of the ownership of clothing as a form of identity.

"It is very important to me, I wear Kurdish clothes every day to work. I work as a labourer and it is very comfortable for me because it isn't restrictive, it lets me move around and be free. The sharwal has become a symbol for the working classes, most labourers wear Kurdish clothes, even the arabs wear them, they say it is comfortable and it is perfect for labouring but I am worried that it won't be Kurdish anymore" (Hiwa, male, labourer, native to Sulaimany).

The above quote shows that what people wear can tell a great deal about who they are and the symbolism it can show. The following quote expresses this view clearly in that although they are concerned that they do not understand Arabic, the clothing that others wear to express their identity is not something of concern to them.

"I don't mind seeing Arabic clothes, it does kind of bother me when you go into a store and there's an Arabic guy who doesn't speak Kurdish but that is just practicalities really as I don't speak Arabic. But as far as clothes go, what else should

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[109] Traditional Kurdish trousers

they wear, it's their clothes and it doesn't make me feel anything when I see it"

(Hazha, female, unemployed, native to Erbil).

"Portes and Rumbaut (2001) call this phenomenon 'reactive ethnicity'. More recently, Dutch researchers used the term 'reactive religiosity' to describe the enhanced religious identifications in the face of discrimination among young Muslims in the Netherlands and other Western countries (Maliepaard and Phalet 2013; Voas and Fleischmann 2012).

In their work on second-generation immigrant youth in the USA, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) coined the notion of 'reactive ethnicity'. Reactive ethnicity refers to the heightened group consciousness, ethnic group solidarity and political mobilization among migrants as a result of perceived prejudices, hostility or social exclusion in the host society. The notion of 'reactive ethnicity' is based on research in social psychology, which showed that individuals who experience discrimination will identify with their in-group more strongly to buffer the negative consequences that the perceived discrimination has for their self-esteem (Branscombe et al. 1999).

"In iraq everyone has been treated badly in the past, so much so that nobody trusts anyone and they all look at each other with caution and mistrust, so when any ethnicity expresses themselves it is taken as hostile by the other" (Halwest, male, Chef, native to Erbil).

7.7   The expression of guerrilla nationalism from a distance

During the reign of Saddam, many Kurds fled Kurdistan to leave for Europe and beyond. In the past the Kurds in Iraq had been relatively closed off from the outside world as communication links were unreliable and television was not widely available. Nowadays however, using modern technology a wealth of knowledge and cultures are available to them. Having moved to Europe, many Kurds became friends with other Kurds from different parts of Kurdistan which has brought them together to find that the differences in aesthetics they thought existed between the different Kurds were few or non existent.

"I had never met a Kurd from another part of Kurdistan, I mean of course I knew about them but not much. I became great friends with Kurds from Turkey and Iran and we found out that there is only a little difference in how we speak, actually Iranian Kurds sound exactly like Iraqi Kurds. We dress similar and we have the same dance too"! (Jamal, male, driver, returnee to Erbil).

"I care more now about what happens in other parts of Kurdistan and I think this is a first step. Not just me but I notice more and more kurds are interested in things happening in other parts of Kurdistan. More people going to demonstrations, people putting YPG and YPJ profile pictures up, people criticizing turkey, showing support for Ocalan and Demirtash[110]. This is all new" (Sarkhel, male, manager, native to Erbil).

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[110] Imprisoned Kurdish leader of the BDP in Turkey

Social media has allowed many Kurds to interact with each other and express their identity to a wider audience. In the past, a Kurd in one area had little interaction with another Kurd from another area. This increased interaction has brought about with it and increased understanding of how other Kurds express their identity. This has resulted in Kurds from Iraq showing support for Kurds in Turkey and displaying symbols associated with Kurd there as can be seen in the following quote.

"I love putting a PKK flag on my profile and commenting about Turkish issues on news pages like al Jazeera[111], that really annoys people. I've been banned a couple of time for doing that. I think it is about telling people you exist, you are here" (Jwan, female, unemployed, native to Sulaimany).

Social media platform have allowed people to express themselves to a wider audience reaching non-Kurds too (Romano 2002). The expression of identity has therefore become more than something that is done to express identity to the local surrounding and is now done to anyone around the world. The following comment shows how social media has allowed the expansion of Kurdish identity to a wider audience.

"I comment on something general and people in America or Britain like my comments or reply, that is important too. Especially now when a lot of people know about Kurds fighting ISIS, if I write something I get comments like 'well done" or " keep fighting we are proud of you all" or more importantly lots of comments like "give the Kurds a state". It makes me really happy when I read comments like that

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[111] Arabic news channel

because I feel our identity is international and that is what social media has done"

(Halo, male, student, native to Erbil).

Over time, there has been a far greater understanding and awareness of historical events that have happened to Kurds in each of the four parts of Kurdistan (Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey). With this greater awareness of historical events there has been a greater awareness of the aesthetic similarities between the different parts of Kurdistan. Whereas in the past, Kurds in Iraq had thought that Kurds in Turkey hold little similarities with them, nowadays there is an understanding that Kurds in all parts have experienced similar events of ill treatment as the following quote suggests.

"When we talk about the expression of Kurdish identity just look at how Turkey has suppressed the Kurds there. Children have been imprisoned for speaking Kurdish in School, just saying you were Kurdish would make you a terrorist, it's a bit better now but in the past people were afraid to speak Kurdish or wear Kurdish clothes" *(Hero, female, manager, returnee to Erbil).*

With the expression of identity being illegal as this individual describes there is a clear indication of the importance that is placed on identity Michikyan et al (2015). The ability to express an identity in this case is taken as a potential for that identity to develop and flourish. In addition the association placed between a language and an act of terrorism is also very telling in that the language is linked with terror. The guerrilla nationalist type uses examples of historical ill treatment in not only their local area but also across borders where other Kurds live to further strengthen their own identity.

"I don't know where to begin when I talk about historical ill treatment, do you mean my family, my neighbourhood, my city, Iraqi Kurdistan, Syrian Kurdistan, Turkish Kurdistan, Iranian Kurdistan or any other country? You see the Kurds have been betrayed and abused not just by local government or the countries where Kurds live but also by international government too. How many times have USA and Britain betrayed and sold the Kurds?" (Sarkawt, male, cameraman, native to Sulaimany).

Whilst nowadays events such as Halabja and Anfal are not occurring, the references to ill treatment have moved to largely political acts of ill treatment. As has been mentioned previously, the advent and rise in use of social media and communication technology in Iraqi Kurdistan has allowed Kurdish youth to stay informed of modern events taking place in other parts of Kurdistan. The Kurdish flag has become mainstay on government buildings in Iraqi Kurdistan and has come to represent that particular part of the nation.

"I am really happy when I see the Kurdish flag on government buildings and when our politicians go abroad on diplomatic missions but the one thing that makes me angry is that Turkey still doesn't allow the Kurdish flag to be displayed when our politicians go there. Turkey needs us, they sell so much food to us but our politicians should force them to display or flag" (Diar, manager, male, native to Erbil).

However, the guerrilla nationalist type also uses symbols such as the flag to represent all part of Kurdistan. This is represented by the following quote in the discussion of the role of Kurdish women fighters of the YPJ (Women's Protection Unit). The references to the pictures of Kurdish women fighters, the Kurdish flag

itself and the link to attacks on identity has become a point of reference when discussing Kurdish identity.

"As a women I always feel so proud and I get a strange feeling when I see pictures of the women fighters in Syria with their flags. Their bravery is inspiring and I know that they will be the ones to finish isis but I'm afraid they will just get treated the same way as the past. Once they have finished they will be ignored and abandoned as Kurds have in the past"(Jamal, male, driver, returnee to Erbil).

The references to being abandoned after the fight against ISIS is brought about by the perceived recurrence of ill treatment and abandonment. Whilst the references here are to historical events, the argument is that this has become the norm and will reoccur in the present and/or future.

"*We Kurds have become a little bit used to being betrayed by everyone, its no coincidence that we say the Kurds have no friends but the mountains but the problem is that we have to learn from our mistakes and betrayals. Most of the time other countries use us for what they want and then leave us once it is done. Like now, we are fighting ISIS and I am afraid that once they are defeated we will be betrayed again"* (Halo, male, student, native to Erbil).

This is further explained in the following quote. Like the previous quote, historical events are also taken as a benchmark for modern acts of ill treatment. In this case it involves probably one of the most well known companies/social media organisations. Social media (in particular Facebook) has become the first point of call for people to

connect with others and consequently share life events and express their identities to people all around the world (Keles 2011). There are very little restrictions on who can and cant join and what you are allowed to post. As the following quote explains, ill treatment has moved on to a larger scale as perceived by the respondent.

"Kurds have been ill treated in the past but it is still ongoing, we are still not allowed to express our identity. Did you know about the facebook banning the name Kurdistan? On facebook you are not allowed to have a personal account in the name of Kurdistan because it breaks their community guidelines, like a swear word. Kurdistan is a girls name in Kurdish lots of girls called Kurdistan have to change their name if they want an account" (Roza, female, housewife, returnee to Sulaimany).

7.8   Conclusion

This chapter has discussed an important element of identity in that the way we express ourselves in the form of language, clothing, national symbols, songs, and tattoos tells a great deal about who we are as individuals. By choosing to wear certain clothing or speak a language we are showing those around us that we support a certain identity be it the traditional ethnic identity or one that is different to our surroundings. How we express ourselves is a manifestation of our identity from a Scottish kilt to a Kurdish Sharwal you can immediately know the ethnic identity of an individual from what they wear, how they speak, etc. If it is achieved intentionally or subconsciously, people convey their personality in the clothing they carry, the look they pick, the language they use and also various dialects of the same language in several different ways. Even the language we use will also misrepresent our nationality, for example, while listening to a Frenchman an Englishman who is fluent

in French might very easily come off as a Frenchman. Spatial citizenship not only represents a number of nationalisms, but also illustrates specific nationalism understandings. Every country that is strongly founded by a specific ethnicity would add considerable importance to the territories synonymous with that community and regions of land that are now or have been populated by that particular ethnicity. This can often be the case where more than one race dominates a given area, in such situations the majority party (through influence of policy structures, the identities of the minority ethnicities with which it holds territories may attempt and sometimes succeed in submerging. This chapter first introduced the idea of spatial identity and how important space is in identity expression. The discussion then moved on to how the spatial identity of the other (what we call the dimensions of the other) plays a significant role in how others express themselves. This is particularly the case in the guerrilla nationalist identity type which uses space to both affirm their own ethnic identity and as a response to the identity expression of the other. This identity type is informed by both historical and modern ill treatment associated with their identity. The guerrilla nationalist reacts to any incident of identity oppression or suppression that they face by increasing their own identity expression. These events (both historical and modern) have greatly influenced how these individuals express themselves with Kurdish clothing and language used to express preference for their own ethnic identity over any other ethnic identity.

What was critically important in this chapter was the expression of identity through social media and how it has allowed Kurds from all over the world to come together. As stated earlier, the introduction and growing usage of social media and communications technologies in Iraqi Kurdistan has enabled Kurdish youth to stay updated regarding current events taking place elsewhere in Kurdistan. The Kurdish

flag has been a staple on Iraqi Kurdistan's government buildings and has come to represent that specific part of the country. In the past where the Kurds form Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria treated themselves and other Kurds as almost different ethnic nations, now they are active in support of each other, reacting to events wherever they occur.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Socialising agents and the expression of national identity

8.1 Introduction

A socialising agent can be defined as individuals or groups, associations, political parties, non-government groups etc. that have an influence on how we see ourselves and how we identify ourselves. People around us and groups influence our identity from our parents and friends to political parties and religions. Clearly one of the most important (if not the most important) socialising agents we encounter are our parents. From an early age it is their influence and upbringing that impacts on our identity, however, that is not to say that children are malleable products entirely of their parent's beliefs. We come to a point where we are also influenced by others so that it is not unsurprising that the child of a strict conservative Muslim or Christian becomes an atheist, or indeed vise versa. Most of the individuals we spoke to during this research identified the importance and influence that their parents had on not only their upbringing but also on their ethnic identity. The following is just one of many comments that people made regarding the importance of their parents influence.

"Maybe it is a strange thing to say this because probably everyone will say the same thing but my parents were the biggest influence on me. More than other peoples parents I think because my parents were a part of the resistance during Saddam's Iraq, they saw prison, and my dad was tortured. They both tell me about that time, about all the bad things that happened and it has made me so patriotic, I wont let anyone say a bad thing about Kurdistan" (Sarok, male, policeman, native to

Sulaimany).

As Voller 2017 argues "Identity, or more appropriately for this article, social identity, is "that part of individuals' self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership." This self-perception is always fluid and affected by interaction between individuals and groups with their peers. It may be constructed unconsciously, through prolonged social and political encounters. However, it can also be manipulated by political elites in their search for control. Students of totalitarian regimes have pointed out the tendency of such governments to engage in projects of social engineering" (Voller 2017).

For example, one negative experience with a Muslim, Christian, person of different origin in early life could result in negative opinions of all members of the Muslim, Christian faith or the particular ethnic group resulting in stereotyping and group discrimination. This is particularly the case between ethnic groups and to bring the example a little closer to the subject area, there is a great deal of perceived discrimination between Kurds and Arabs in Iraq due to the decades of oppression experienced by Kurds at the hands of Arab Iraqi individuals, political groups and governments. Saddam Hussein's regime in particular has not only caused considerable distrust by Kurds towards Arabs but also fear and hatred since the regime was responsible for genocide of hundreds of thousands of Kurds as the following comment suggests.

"In Kurdistan you don't really meet people form other countries so you don't really know what they think about you, even if you did they wont be honest because they are in your country. When I was in UK I met Arabs and Turks and there they weren't scared to say what was on their mind. Even saying I was Kurdish they would say things like show me on the map or there's no such thing as Kurdistan. I would say, remind me where Palestine is on the map Kurdistan is near there" (Bako, male, Manager, returnee to Sulaimany).

Perceived discrimination is defined as "a belief that one has been treated unfairly because of one's origin" (Mesch, Turjeman, & Fishman 2008:592). It pertains to salient aspects of life, including social, professional, religious and cultural domains (Giamo, Schmitt, & Outten 2012).

So Kurds believe that due to their Kurdish ethnicity, they are in many ways discriminated against by Iraq to the point that their ethnicity was the historical cause of genocide as we have seen in previous chapters.

Perceived discrimination is also felt by some Immigrants who perceive discrimination at the hands of host society are reluctant to identify themselves with the latter and are less willing to see themselves as intercultural (Chen 2013). Whilst Kurds in Iraq are not immigrants, as we have seen in previous chapters, it is certainly the case that many Kurds refuse to identify themselves with the host (in this case majority) community or as intercultural and they have often seen themselves as second class citizens in Iraq.

"The biggest reason why Kurds want to separate from Iraq is because of the way they are treated by Arabs. For so many years, even now, so many won't call

Kurdistan by it's name, they call it 'the beloved north[112]'. This was a term Saddam used and even the government now they don't send our share of the budget, there is no trust between us" (Aso, male, unemployed, native to Erbil).

As discussed in previous chapters, what Proshansky describes as 'dimensions of the self' should also be expanded to 'dimensions of the other' in that our identity is equally developed by how the 'other' group reacts to us as individuals and as a group. In addition, how we act and portray ourselves within a given group determines our acceptability within that group, meaning that an atheist, homosexual, or Christian, is unlikely to be accepted in a community of strict conservative Muslims and may even face persecution.

Howard & Gill (2001) note that in their study of Australian children's understanding of national identity, comparison with other countries was a frequently used strategy. Similarly, in this study, approximately 20% of children expressed a view of identity in their writings that was based explicitly on the idea of difference.

This chapter will discuss in greater detail some of the issues already discussed in this introduction; the importance of social identity and our self expression within a group, the considerable influence of parents in our identity development, the influence of peers in schools, the influence of religion and religious figures, and the influence of political parties and politicians (Waldron & Pike 2006). All these influencers, be they individuals or groups, can be identified as 'socialising agents', the following section will discuss socialising agents and those dimensions of the other. In particular, to continue the recurring theme of the previous chapters, the

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[112] This phrase was initially introduced by Saddam Hussein in reference to Kurdistan

following sections will show how Kurdish identity construction is not only reactive, but largely based on what we have termed 'guerilla nationalism'.

8.2   Socialising agents and dimensions of the other

Conflicts can often exist when one group is more dominant that the other or where a group is in minority, many such examples exist and are not limited to race, religion or ethnicity. There also exists a great deal of intersectionality between groups so that an individual can be part of a majority group and a minority group at the same time, for example a white British male will be a part of the majority ethnic native community but if that individual was homosexual, they would also be a part of the minority LGBT[113] group. This is personified by the following statement form one of the respondents.

"Iraq is a strange place and especially Kurdistan because yes, if you look at Iraq in general the Kurds a small part of the country, we are a minority but Kurdistan is like a country in a country. In the Kurdish regions the Kurds are a majority, if an Arab comes to live here they are the minority and Kurds are a majority. We also have Shia Kurd[114]s who are a minority in Kurdistan but they are a majority in terms of their religion in Iraq" (Halo, male, student, native to Erbil).

What is also important here is how those minority groups react to conflicts and attacks on their identity by larger more dominant groups. In the Kurdish case, those

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[113] Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transexual
[114] Shia Kurds in Iraq are almost exclusively of the Faili branch of Kurdish ethnicity

socialising agents that represent 'dimensions of the other' are numerous. On a national scale, the surrounding nations of Arabs, Turks and Iranians in general share a religious and often cultural identity with Kurds but on the issue of ethnicity and national identity have come into conflict with each other.

Abbas Vali (2003) contends that Kurds' minority status and the hegemonic nature of these states create a dialectic of denial (by states of Kurdish political demands) and resistance (by Kurds), generating a politics marked by exclusion and/or violence: a politics of the Other.

Kurds surveyed for the present study consistently noted a lack of avenues for national representation in Iraq, revealing a strong sense of "Otherness". A majority of participants mentioned a lack of trust between Kurds and the Iraqi state which is expressed in the following comment.

"It doesn't matter how much the Iraqi government and Arabs try to say Kurds and Arabs are brothers and belong to Iraq, it will never be the case, not because Kurds hate Arabs, no, because they love us as long as we shut up and wave the Iraqi flag. The Iraqi government and Arabs will take the first opportunity to wipe out Kurds, it has happened so many times in history and even now with Daesh[115], Arabs killed their Kurdish neigbours and stole their belongings." (Ako, male, receptionist, native to Sulaimany).

What the above comment shows is a reaction to previous instances of abuse and ethnic conflict. The individual highlights the distrust and conflict between the two

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[115] This is in reference to anecdotal evidence of Kurdish residents who claim that Arab neighbours turned on them and attacked them when they knew the city would fall to ISIS

groups and is a product of and an expression of what we have called 'guerilla nationalism' on the part of the Kurdish population. Any attempt to curb Kurdish identity has actually made Kurdish Identity more potent. A similar dynamic has been seen in Turkey, Iran, and Syria, where repression has strengthened the very nationalist impulses it sought to weaken, this is all very much in line with what we describe as Guerilla Nationalism that external (state) pressure consolidates internal (ethnic) solidarity and so Kurdish "groupness" is galvanized (Akbarzadeh et al. 2019).

In such situations state brutality is often counterproductive, neither quelling insurgencies nor consolidating security as intended, but spurring disgruntled minorities to join the conflict against the state (Tezcür 2016). The following statement is something that has been expressed by many respondents and it exemplifies the general consensus among the individuals interviewed.

"*The Kurds have faced a lot of oppression from different countries in the past but it just makes us stronger and feel more Kurdish because when something happens it happens to all of us. If the Kurds in Turkey are oppressed then we are also oppressed here in South Kurdistan[116]. Just like brothers and sisters if one of us is abused then it just makes our identity stronger, this has been the characteristic of Kurds for hundreds of years*" (Aso, labourer, male, native to Erbil).

Kurdish reactionary identity is not only reserved for actions of states but also for any other groups that threaten Kurdish identity. In the case of ISIS where in Syria and

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[116] South Kurdistan is a reference to Iraqi Kurdistan and is used by nationalists that do not recognise the established borders. Therefore, South Kurdistan is Iraqi Kurdistan, North Kurdistan is Turkish Kurdistan, East Kurdistan is Iranian Kurdistan and West Kurdistan is Syrian Kurdistan.

Iraq, Kurdish identity was threatened, the Kurds mobilized against this group and ultimately proved to be the major group on the ground that defeated ISIS. The threat of ISIS to Kurdish areas in Syria and Iraq spurred many to join the Peshmerga in Iraqi Kurdistan and the JPG/YPJ in Syrian Kurdistan. In the same way that the very essence of military tactics of groups such as YPJ and YPG are guerrilla in their nature, so to is the identity and nationalist approach of   the Kurds themselves. So we see that as a reaction to the threat posed by ISIS, the Kurds came together and confronted that threat.

"We Kurds have always been trying to put fires out, I mean there is always one group or government that targets us and we defeat whichever thing that comes up, today it is ISIS, tomorrow something else. The big difference this time is that Kurds from all four parts fought together, it was amazing to see peshmerga fight alongside YPG in Kobane". "(Blend, teacher, native to Sulaimany).

Interview respondents generally used events like this to support the argument noted earlier regarding the oppression of Kurdish identity region-wide and reinforced a sense of "togetherness". The act of 'putting out fires' as the above comment explains is a telling one when put into context of guerilla nationalism. The guerilla nationalist is in many ways always on duty, always reacting, always defending, always attacking, always putting out fires. Another interviewee commented that:

 "The collaboration between Kurds in Syria and our peshmerga really raised my sense of Kurdish identity, people came together because there was a threat form another group, it wasn't our government telling us to do it, Kurds everywhere suddenly started fighting." (Handren, unemployed, native to Erbil).

Any act of collaboration by different Kurdish groups is seen as an act of a collective

identity by members of that group. As the above comment shows that not only is nationalist sentiment increased in the face of an attack but it is also increased in instances of collective action.

The rejection-identification model, introduced by Branscombe et al. (1999), offers one viewpoint on this relationship, suggesting that, because social rejection activates a person's need to belong, experiences of discrimination may lead to increases in ethnic identity and a greater connection to that identity. As we have seen, there are many examples of when Kurdish nationalism has galvanized as a result of conflict.

"The more racism I experienced in UK the more Kurdish I became, you can't help it, I don't think anyone can just take the abuse. Tell an English man that England is rubbish and all English people are stupid idiots and see what happens, he will beat you up first and then maybe put an English flag on his house" (Bako, male, manager, returnee to Sulaimany).

This is another example of what we have termed as 'guerilla nationalism' in that the term not only applies to the Kurdish case but could also apply to any situation where people react to an attack on their ethnic or national identity. In this case it is clear that people react to an attack on their identity with an act of their own.

Fuller-Rowell et al (2013) describes responses to discrimination fitting into two broad categories: *intropunitive* and *extropunitive* (p. 160). Intropunitive responses are said to be associated with self-blame, in-group blame, and group disidentification, whereas extropunitive responses are associated with increased group identification, and anger or hostility towards the dominant group. In the Kurdish case, and in the context of socialising agents, acts of discrimination by non Kurdish agents directed at Kurds has resulted in extropunitive responses as the following response suggests.

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"*IF you look at Kurdish history you will see again and again that the history of Iraq and Kurdistan it is full of racism and discrimination towards the Kurds. The Iraqi government could have made life in Iraq so good that all Kurds would be proud to say they were Iraqi but they decided to commit genocide against us. There is a lot of hatred towards Iraq by Kurds and it is all justified" (Ari, unemployed, male, native to Sulaimay).*

What this section has shown so far is how the 'other' affects individual Kurds own sense of identity, how socialising agents influence identity development in general. The following section will look deeper into different aspects of the 'other' not only from an ethnic point of view but also internal others. The number of socialising agents that could possibly impact on identity development are wide ranging as we have already discussed, the most influential of those agents will be discussed below.

8.3   Familial influences on Kurdish national identity formation

Without doubt, from the moment we are born, our parents and our immediate families influence the type of person we become and how we choose to identify ourselves. Parents can choose to exert considerable or limited influence in the identity of their children, this is probably most noticeable when it come to issues such as religion. A strict orthodox Muslim, Christian, Jew etc. will undoubtedly mold their child in their own image. For example, a strict Muslim father may influence, convince, force his pre-teen daughter to wear a hijab[117], and parents of other religions will have similar customs that they will 'pass down' to their own children.

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[117] Scarf worn by Muslim women to cover their hair

This study however, is not looking directly at how parents influence religious identity, what this section will address is how influential parents and families are in the identity of their parents. The section will also address how national identity formation in Kurdish youth is also influenced as a reaction to other influences. Without doubt, the experiences of Kurdish parents are very different to those of their children and those that are the subject of this research as the following comment suggests.

"My parents had a very different life to people my age, they went through so many different things like the mass exedous of 1991[118] when Saddam occupied Kurdish cities, the stories they tell me are really scary. I don't remember any of it but they tell me that when I was just about 2 years old they had to walk from Erbil to the Turksih border, it took them like a month and they had to carry me most of the way. When I think about things like this it makes me mad" (Halo, male, student, native to Erbil).

Kurdish parents who grew up during Saddam Hussein's regime, the Gulf Wars[119], and the mass exodus that followed, experienced war, genocide, oppressions, starvation, poverty and more. Their children however have grown up in an Iraqi Kurdistan that is relatively stable, liberal, westernized and free. Yet many of the people interviewed for this study regularly and consistently refer to oppression by Iraqi governments without having experienced it themselves. These 'shared memories' are passed down from their parents and are so ingrained into their identity it is as though they experienced it themselves.

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[118] This event gained international media attention and was the impetus for the no fly zone.
[119] The first Gulf War started on 17th January 1991, the second Gulf war started 20th March 2003.

"One of the first memories I have is of my parents telling me about the time we had to walk hundreds of miles from Sulaimany to Iran even with children and with little food. When Saddam Hussein attacked the Kurdish regions again in 1991 we were scared for our lives, it was terrible seeing the pictures now". When I see the pictures and the videos of that time it makes me cry a bit, I feel like I am there experiencing it as well with them (Ashti, Student, Native to Sulaimany).

The use of 'we' by this respondent might otherwise indicate some involvement in the event or at least a memory of it but the respondent was not born at the time and considered those stories of hardship as shared memories of oppression passed down from parents. The same respondent goes on to say:

"This has been our life, all Kurds I mean, always in guerrilla war, always running and fighting at the same time, I am sure it will happen to me as it did to my parents, it is just a matter of time. Just look at Daesh[120], we would have had to run away again if they got any nearer to us". (Ashti, Student, Native to Sulaimany).

The appropriation of someone else's memory is not a new thing and there are countless example of similar instances, most notably the Jewish Holocaust where family of survivors often relive experiences described to them by those that had experienced it themselves.   The reference to being 'always in a guerrilla war' is also telling in that the individual considers their ethnic identity as akin to guerilla identity. This is an example of what Martinez et al. (2012) call a transmission of culture where this transfer or transmission occurs between parents and children:

"As such, many of these women identified with a bicultural orientation. These types

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[120] Arabic name for ISIS

of family interactions or "transmissions of culture," as we have labeled them in this study, also occurred between the participants and their own children. We call this process of negotiating different notions of Latino culture and identity as "Cultural Customization" a process whereby a participant takes in information from parents or an older generation but customizes practices to align with their current circumstances. Cultural Customization might be necessary because the norms, values, or practices of the older generation may not be completely viable or realistic in a Latinas' current life circumstances." (p195)

Most academic research on upbringing strategies for children focuses on the mother, as they are considered as the 'gate-keepers of culture. Reynolds and Zontini (2015) emphasize the importance of a process approach when studying second generation migrants' identities. For example, Reynolds (2005) discusses the role of Caribbean mothers in developing ideas and understandings of their children's cultural identity. She examines how mothers employ concepts of memory and re-memory to give a sense of belonging to their offspring. This finding by Reynolds is replicated in the Kurdish case as it is mothers that have the most emotional bonds to their parents with fathers naturally being emotionally distant. In a patriarchal society where men seldom show emotions and have traditionally taken back seat roles in childrearing, it is the women that influence children most in Kurdistan even though most incidents that are passed down involve men and politics.

"My mother is the one that inspires me most, she told me once how she was with the 'tenzimat'[121], how she would take provisions to the peshmerga and my dad in the

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[121] Kurdish urban resistance movement

mountains. She was never caught but it meant that I had to stay with other family for a long time. She spent a lot of time away from us but it was for a good cause" (Shene, female, housewife, native to Sulaimany).

One gets his/her identity from communication (verbal or non-verbal) with others, implying that without communication, it would not be possible for identification to take place. Family and social ties remain the cornerstone and scaffolding for individual existence. As channels for the transmission of values and norms in the rural communities, in the spirit of 'it takes a village to raise a child', they guide and encourage individual action (Kempny-Mazur 2017).

The following section will discuss how Socialising agents in the political field have influenced Kurdish youth identity and how it is not only reactionary towards the out group of non Kurds but also internally when there are conflicts between Kurds and Kurdish political parties.

8.4   The politics of national identity formation in Kurdistan

Politicians and governments have the ability to impact on the lives of everyday people without the individual realising it. Policies that governments enact and statements that politicians make can and do change the very fabric of society and national aspirations of its citizens. This is both the case regarding the out-group and the in-group, if in this case the Iraqi government were to put out a statement denying Kurdish identity, this would be met with great hostility in with those that identify themselves as Kurdish. similarly, if Kurdish politicians and governments carried out a campaign of promoting Iraqi national identity then this may too have an impact on

how Kurdish people identify themselves. There are as many critics of the Kurdish government as there are supporters and one of the issues that came to light during the data collection was the increase in the number of Arab refugees arriving in the Kurdistan region as a result of the war on ISIS.

"*I can't believe how many people are coming here now, we don't have enough room for ourselves, we don't have enough electricity for ourselves[122], we don't have enough water or food and the government is accepting all these people. They are not just in camps as well[123], they are buying property and staying here, the Kurdish government should not allow them to live in the cities. If they come here temporarily fine but they should force them to leave now*" (Bahar, female, housewife, native to Sulaimany).

The above comments could be heard in almost any country in the world where there is resentment towards immigration and the Kurdish case is no different. The comment is a reaction to events that they see as a threat to their own ethnic identity. When individuals face discrimination, they draw meaning from these experiences, which informs self-organizational processes, such as identity (Zeiders 2019). Similarly, the rejection–identification model proposes that individuals are naturally motivated to seek social inclusion; therefore, experiences of discrimination promote subsequent identification with one's stigmatized group as a way to preserve psychological well-being (Njogu et al. 2010). This has been shown in our own study

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[122] Kurdistan as with most of Iraq has daily electricity outages.
[123] Kurdistan was and still is relatively free of Islamic terrorist insurgents and so many of the refugee camps were located in the Kurdish region and many more voluntarily moved there for its safety.

on a consistent basis when it comes to the influences of place and space, the influences of socialising agents in this regard are no different as the following individual notes.

"Not just in Iraq but in all the other countries that Kurds live, the central governments wish that there was no such thing as Kurds and they always try to at least reduce Kurdish identity or even wipe it out. Turkey called Kurds 'mountain Turks' [124]and Iraq keeps calling us Iraqi brothers but it doesn't work, in fact it makes Kurdish identity stronger". (Shno, female, unemployed, native to Erbil)

The media in Kurdistan exercises cultural power which they derive from the political parties that they represent, this gives them the power to define which issues enter the circuit of public debate, how they will be debated, and who will speak on the issues in the media. In general, the media is used to promote a particular political party or to criticise or degrade any opposition parties but in some cases, they work together when it comes to issues of Kurdish identity.

"In Kurdistan if you watch Kurdsat, Rudaw, NRT[125] then most of the time you are just watching political propaganda or Turkish soap operas and none of them are any good, they are all trying to brainwash you but there is one good thing about them. All of the media channels in their own way promote Kurdish identity, they all celebrate Newroz and they all commemorate acts of genocide against us. This is a good thing because it reminds us all what has happened" (Aso, male, teacher, native to Erbil).

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[124] A phrase initially introduced by the Turkish military to describe Kurds in Turkey
[125] Kurdish news channels funded by and affiliated to Kurdish political parties.

The evolution of media has reduced the significance of physical presence in the lives of people and events, and the physically spaces are now less significant as information is able to flow through walls to great distances. These transformations in social relations have been brought about by computer networks combined with mobile telephones, satellite broadcasting, with easier systems of storage and distribution of sound and pictures[126]. In Kurdistan given that media is almost exclusively controlled or influenced by politicians, political socialising agents have considerable influence, not least due to the areas of influence of political parties.

"People in Kurdistan are like sheep sometimes, you see people and a lot of them are my friends and family but they are so brainwashed by the political parties like it doesn't matter what rubbish the politicians say people will believe them. If KDP or PUK announced tomorrow that Kurds were originally from China I swear a lot of people would believe it" (Hazha, female, unemployed, native to Erbil).

The dominant PUK and KDP with their respective areas of influences of Sulaimany and Erbil control much of the political discourse. This can be seen in the way in which the independence referendum was covered in Kurdistan. The KDP were passionately in favour of conducting the referendum whilst there was some opposition in Sulaimany. Although all were in favour of independence, the referendum was seen as a KDP initiative which led to its opposition. As we have discussed previously, socialising agents exist within the in-group and the out-group and this is an example of how even within the in-group, there are subgroups

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[126] As late as the late 90's the only way of communication between Kurdistan and Europe was through written letters sent from family member in Europe by hand when others travelled to the region. Later this was improved to telephone lines which were only available at a handful of phone stations in the country.

influencing each other.

"I consider myself Kurdish but there are so many people that say they are Kurdish but they are not. Like now we have this amazing opportunity to be independent of Iraq and there are so many in Sulaimany that are against it, I can't believe it really. I love people form Sulaimany but politics shouldn't be important". (Ari, student, returnee to Sulaimany)

The mention of politics here highlights what we have mentioned in the the political socialising agents have such an influence on people that in some cases, they have convinced them not to vote for Kurdish independence, the one thing that Kurds have been fighting for for decades. This is further supported by research carried out by Murphy and Laugharne (2013) who conducted participatory research with children (aged 10–11 years) producing individual drawings and writing, as well as conducting semi-structured interviews. The study found that 'media conceptions of Irish identity are particularly influential' (2006) with the children's drawings of Irish persons reflecting product symbols and slogans.

"Parents, grandparents and family figured strongly in the reasons given for the children's identification of national identity. Their sense of national identity at seven to eight years appears to be highly influenced by those people who are close to them." (Murphy, Laugharne 2013)

This supports our own research that found that the people we interviewed clearly linked national identity to close family and their ancestry (grandparents).

"Your identity is passed on from your father, and his father, it travels down the blood line. I am Kurdish because my father and his father were Kurdish. If my father

married an Arab then I wouldn't be fully Kurdish. Like, if you brought a baby from America and they were raised here they would speak Kurdish but they would not look Kurdish, they could never be Kurdish because his father and grandfather were American" (Sarok, male, unemployed, native to Sulaimany).

For many years, historians, political scientists, and other scholars have devoted considerable attention to the study of nationalism and its intersection with cultural practices, examining the manner in which the socially constructed 'imagined communities' we refer to as nations often rely on invented traditions to foster national solidarity and pride. Recent scholarship has argued that these processes of shaping collective memory are interactive. 'Official' constructed versions of the past, promoted by governments and elites, are often contested by mass audiences or individual actors in commemorative ceremonies (Hayday 2010). They are largely contested due to the shared memories collected from the in-group socialising agents. So when an Iraqi central government announces that Kurds and Arabs are brothers, Kurds are Iraqi, previous atrocities will not happen again etc. members of the Kurdish in-group draw on shared in-group memories and distrust anything that out-group socialising agents say.

"It doesn't matter what Iraq, Turkey, Iran or Syria says, they are just saying it to keep us quite and to forget about our identity. Every time in history it has happened, they try to trick us with words and then when they don't need us they attack us, we are always fighting back the best way we can but we don't have power, we don't have an army" (Hazha, female, unemployed, native to Erbil).

These words describe in many ways what a guerilla war is, a group of non state actors taking up arms against a larger more organized state run army. By saying

that he does not have power or an army, this individual recognizes that their campaigns for recognition of Kurdish identity are unorganized, uncoordinated and not politically lead.

This section has discussed the importance of politics as a socialising agent and in the Kurdish case, politics is synonymous with media outlets which are at very least politically motivated and at worst propaganda machines. Undoubtedly in any country. Politics influences the lives of everyday people whether they notice it or not, another area in which it has great influence is education as the syllabus has an impact on what we learn at school. In addition, the friends we make, people we meet and not least the teachers we have all serve as important socialising agents that affect our identity and how we choose to represent ourselves.

8.5   Educating national identity formation in Kurdistan

Much of our time is spent either at school with friends and teachers or after school with friends, indeed good friends and teachers can be even more influential than our own parents, sometimes becoming confidants knowing things about us that our parents don't know.

This could particularly be the case when it comes to conservative religious societies and households that bring children up a certain way. If those children's view differs in any way to their parents and they feel they cannot express those views for whatever reason, then teachers and friends can often become more influential than parents (Murphy 2013).

"Sometimes I feel that my parents are a bit racist but I don't blame them even though I don't agree with them. They have gone through things that I can't imagine and they blame someone or a group of people for it. I am a Kurdish patriot but I can't blame all Arabs for everything that has happened to Kurds. I have some Arab friends and they speak a little bit of Kurdish, my parents aren't very happy that I have Arab friends" (Jwan, female, student, native to Sulaimany).

How Kurdish youth has reacted to this sudden availability of technology has meant that there are platforms and websites that their parents don't use or are unaware of. This has in turn provided something of a 'safe space' for many Kurdish youth where they can freely express themselves with their friends.

"We don't really use facebook anymore, our parents use it, we might go on there to see pictures but my friends and I use Snapchat and Ticktock[127] more. I think if our parents saw what we see on these apps they would stop us from using it". I would be really embarrassed if they saw the stuff I posted and commented on". (Hanar, female, student, native to Sulaimany)

What this shows is that there are boundaries of acceptability when it comes to how much influence parents have on identity and how much friends influence identity. This may well be similar for any child-parent relationship in the world but in the Kurdish case, as the realms of acceptability have changed so much in so little time, there is a significant difference in those opinions. How Kurdish youth have reacted to those changes is significant when it comes to Kurdish identity as their identity is now

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[127] Social Media platforms used predominantly by the younger generation

being played out and communicated on an international scale whereas in the past it was very much a local issue.

"Today I feel more a part of the world than before, I can see what is going on around the world, with my friends we watch American and European programmes, I reply to comments from people I have never met in America, these are all big changes. My friends in Europe tell me about what it is like there and we want that here, we want to live like them". (Bahar, Female, project worker, native to Sulaimany)

There are however, negative impacts on Kurdish identify in this case as we will see below in a comment by the same person. Being able to access information from around the world and having peers in different countries influences Kurdish identify very differently to how it did in the past. As more and more young people increase contact with people abroad they see from a distance how their peers are enjoying freedom of choice, having fun, democratic governments etc. and they want to enjoy those same freedoms in Kurdistan.

"I do feel unlucky sometimes that I am Kurdish because I am young, I want to enjoy life, go to discos, travel around the world, say what I want but I can't do that here in Kurdistan. We try to be different amongst our friends but as soon as we are home or with older people we become Kurdish again, it's like I am two people at once, my friends are the same". (Bahar, Female, project worker, native to Sulaimany)

What this comment shows is that Kurdish youth identity is not only reactive in the face of the Kurdish out-group but it is also reactive within its own in-group. The

desire to reshape Kurdish identity to fit into one that is more aligned with western culture is not only reactionary but it is also very grassroots based, uncoordinated, leaderless and evolutionary. The fact that the respondent sees themselves as two distinct people whilst both those people remaining Kurdish is systematic of the guerrilla nature of Kurdish nationalism from a grassroots youth level right through to the older, more established and accepted older generation.

8.6   Ethnic identity and the impact of religion

Iraq is a Muslim state and religion has subsequently had a big impact not only on government policy but also on social life. During Saddam's reign, religion played a smaller role in the daily life of government policy making and in fact Saddam used religion to his own ends when he wanted to enact a policy he used different interpretations of Islam to meet his own aims. The biggest example of this was the Al-Anfal campaign against the Kurds. The term 'Anfal' is taken directly from a chapter of the Muslim holy book the Quran and its literal translation means 'the spoils of war'. By labelling this campaign after a chapter of the Quran he immediately gave the campaign religious approval and the 'spoils of war' mean that to take the property or lives of Kurds was legitimate.

"My parents tell me a lot about the Anfal campaign and Halabja, we hear about it every year on the news and TV as well. There isn't one family in the whole of Kurdistan that doesn't know someone or has a member of their family killed by anfal, they still haven't found many of the bodies, what really annoys me is that this was a religious war against the Kurds and yet still there are so many people who worship this religion" (Hanar, female, student, native to Sulaimany).

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Although you can practice a certain religion and an ethnicity at the same time, the impact of religion in this case is great. This individual has reacted to the use of religion to diminish Kurdish identity by disowning that religion. Indeed it was and still is the case that the states in which Kurds reside often label the Kurds as infidels and non Muslims in order to justify their genocide and abuse. Religion has also historically been used by Kurdish leadership to gain national support. *"Kurdish historiography regarded nationalism and religion as mutually exclusive, which automatically disqualified and delegitimized the religious class's political, historical and nationalist accounts. Kurdish historiography, for its secular nationalist and Marxist agendas, employed some major arguments against the Kurdish religious class creating a certain negative image: first, the religious class was co-opting with the Iraqi state against Kurdish interests; second, they were reactionary, corrupt and exploitative of Kurdish resources, necessitating a secular leadership for Kurdish nationalism. Third, they propagated an Islamic brotherhood of Kurds and Arabs, which only functioned to pacify Kurdish national awareness (Gurbuz-Kucuksari 2020)".*

This is not to say however that religion has had an altogether negative influence on Kurdish identity. Religious leaders have had both a positive and negative impact on Kurdish national identity and most if not all condemn or debate the use of the Quran by Saddam to justify the campaign against the Kurds.

"Saddam used religion against the Kurds but he wasn't a religious person, he just used it for his own purposes so his interpretation of religion and his application of it to the Kurds was totally wrong as far as Islam goes. The problem was that people

went along with him, maybe they didn't believe it either and they were just scared of what he would do if they disagreed" (Hazha, female, unemployed, native to Erbil).

As there is this overlap or similarity between religion and ethnicity it is often the case that religion is used as an alternative group identifying factor to ethnicity. Many of the respondents that were interviewed stated how they thought that religion was used by the dominant Arab Iraqi majority to weaken Kurdish identity by encouraging a sense of communal religious identity rather than an ethnic one.

"It has happened a few time in the past and I have experienced it myself living abroad when I spoke to Muslims about Kurdish independence. The Iraqi government has tried to encourage the Muslim identity of Iraq and promote the brotherhood between Kurds and Arabs saying that nationalism is against the Quran. This is the same for some Muslim people I have met, they say why do Kurds want independence, the Muslim people should come together not separate. Religion is just a tool for their own purpose so I ignore all religious leaders and Mullas" (Aso, male, Manager, returnee to Sulaimany).

By ignoring all religious leaders and Mullahs, this individual has reacted to what he sees as a biased manipulation of religious belief by certain individuals in order to suit their own personal opinions. However, as we previously mentioned, there are individuals who see religion as a positive force when it comes to the promotion of ethnic identity in Kurdistan, as the following individual suggests.

"Religion is very important to me, I don't really pay attention to what people have

done in the name of Islam to Kurds, someone like Saddam wasn't a Muslim in my

eyes, he just used it for personal gain, you cant be a Mulsim and kill millions of

people. I am really happy with some Kurdish mullahs because they really promote

Kurdish identity during Newroz, Anfal, and Halabja. I don't see anything wrong with

being Muslim and Kurdish, they are two separate things for me (Shno, female,

unemployed, native to Erbil).

The comment from this individual that you can have both a religious and national

identity at the same time is certainly true. As we see in many cases in almost every

country of the world, people are both Christian and British or American, they are both

Muslim and Iraqi, they are both Muslim and British and so it can be argued that as

you do not have to choose between one or the other, it is not necessarily the case

that religion has an impact on how people perceive their ethnic or national identity.

8.7 Conclusion

This chapter brings together the final elements of the influences on Kurdish identity,

namely, the influence of what we call 'socialising agents'. The people and

organisations that we have a social connection to, in one way or another has

substantial influence on our upbringing, identity, and our beliefs. From the moment

we are born, we rely on our parents for information about the world around us, what

is safe, what is dangerous, what language to speak, how to behave around others,

what is good or bad behaviour, and a whole multitude of other things. We then go to

school and are thrown into another socialising environment, friends that we share

our closest secrets with, others who we argue and fight with, teachers who we

remember long after we leave education. Throughout all this and in later life we

interact with religious leaders, politicians, charities, governments, social media companies to name just a few. The influence of these socialising agents on our identity is therefore one that can't be ignored, not least in the Kurdish case where these agents are so influential and at the same time in direct contradiction and conflict with each other.

What this chapter has shown is that in relation to parents as socialising agents, has been repeated in previous chapters in that the influence of shared or inherited memory is influential. Parents 'hand down' their own experiences onto their children and as such, the events that happened to them are relived as actual experiences in their children. Those children who were not even born during the time of Sadam often talk of events from that time as recollections, spoke in the first person with the use of 'we' when discussing historical family events. There is also an acknowledgement from the respondents that the memory handed down from their parents is part and parcel of being Kurdish and that one day, they too will have memories of their own to hand down to their own children. What these and other responses have shown is that children have reacted to the experiences of their parents by internalising and taking ownership of those experiences as their own. They live out those experiences through the absorption of stories and pictures that start from an early age and are told as soon as they are able to understand that there is an enemy out there that opposes our identity. Stories of guerrilla war, heroic fighters (often the parent themselves are those fighters), genocide, oppression all add to the influences that shape the respondents identity.

In Kurdistan, it is said that everyone is a politician. Politics has influenced the lives of nearly everyone in Kurdistan, not only to the point of their daily lives but it would be difficult to find someone that doesn't have a member of their family killed, imprisoned, tortured, or exiled by not only the previous regimes but also current governments. What the respondents have shown in this chapter is that the media is synonymous with politics and that they do not distinguish between the two. There is dissatisfaction with Kurdish politics and media but the emphasis here is on the influence of the out-group politics and how as Kurdish youth, the respondents react to actions, statements, and policies of oppressive out-group nations such as Turks, Arabs, and Iranians. Respondents react to attacks on their identities by drawing on inherited memories from their parents and historical events.

What this chapter has also shown is that despite what we have found previously that Kurdish identity is reactive and that Kurds defend their identity, they are also somewhat disgruntled with the lack of freedom that exists to express their own versions of Kurdish identity that are more in line with the identities of their peers abroad in the West. They acknowledge that things have changed drastically since the time of their parents with the availability of instant communication and the availability of information on the internet. The individuals interviewed had free and readily available access to how someone their age lives in the West and this was something that they aspired to. This meant that those interviewed reacted not only to the out-group that threatened their ethnic identity but also to the in-group that threatened their youth identity.

CHAPTER NINE

Discussion

9.1   Methodology, ethics and limitations

Due to the lack of postal services[128], access to internet and sensitivity of the survey it was decided that a quantitative approach would not be appropriate for this survey. Rather, a qualitative, semi structured interview process would provide far more valuable insights into what influences Kurdish identity and the expression of that identify by Kurdish youth. The research sample was limited to 18-25 year olds, such parameters were chosen because the age categories in particular reflect specific incidents that happened in Kurdish history[129]. Not only did the age group define fit into crucial events in Iraqi and Kurdish culture, they often reflect key steps in the formation of nationalism. This technique would allow all parties to explore in depth the issues that arise and it also offers a far greater degree of fluidity and flexibility in the responses. By developing a rapport with the interviewee greater degree of trust was gained as interviewees were happy that the research was not influenced by or conducted on behalf of governments or other organisations.

Having lived in Kurdistan for three years and having immediate family and friends in the region, close relations have been built with different organizations and political parties in Kurdistan that helped to get exposure to the people required to engage in the study. Near relatives serving in senior roles with the Kurdish Government

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[128] No national postal service exists and only international couriers operate in the country today.
[129] Since 1991, Iraqi Kurdistan has had relative independence, and many in the 18-25 age range have witnessed life under Kurdish rule and not Saddam Hussein.

allowed links to the numerous agencies and organizations needed to fulfill the sample requirements[130]. Once the interviews were started the issue of obtaining enough participants changed to one of over participation where people would contact us and ask to take part. These would be friends or family of people already interviewed who were interested in taking part. Indeed we found that whenever the research topic was discussed in passing with friends and relatives, many of them asked if they could participate in the survey even when they didn't meet the age criteria of the ample. In some cases we were told 'I have a lot of good things to say just let me take part don't worry about the age'[131]. This development was a surprise as we did not expect to be having to select candidates in this manner, in many interview situations researchers have to rely of different techniques in order to reach the individuals they need but in our research we had too many potential participants and we had to tell a number of them that they could not participate. This put us in an advantageous position of being able to pick and choose the participants that exactly met our requirements and sample based on the criteria we identified. By conducting semi structured interviews as opposed to questionnaires and street surveys we were able to allow a greater degree of freedom to the participants. It would not have been possible to get some of the responses that we had if we had opted for a quantitative approach, particularly when it came to some of the critical comments that were directed towards religion and political parties. Even with this approach, the participants only expressed those negative views towards the end of the interviews

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[130] In many cases, due to lack of official lines of accessibility, family connections are the only option one can use to access certain individuals.
[131] They were of course not included in the survey even if we did conduct a mock interview in order to make them happy.

when they felt comfortable that the interview was not going to be monitored or used in another way.

Conducting research in Iraqi Kurdistan had its own very serious ethical considerations. However true it may be, there is a real sense that individual politicians and businessmen, governments and parties, religious and community leaders take note of what people say in public and at times respond with violence if they do not agree with any comments[132]. Critical comments towards the government and political parties are freely and regularly made both on the streets and in the media. These comments do not face any political retribution and they are often very insulting, libelous and are even made by legitimate media outlets and notable figures. However, issues arise when comments are made that are directed at individual politicians themselves. In Kurdistan there exists a culture of idol worship where individual politicians are revered and idolized, comments directed at individual politians are seldom tolerated. There are numerous cases (both real and alleged) of journalists being harassed, abused, assaulted and murdered because they said or wrote something that went against the established conservative opinion or individual politician[133]. Although neither the research or the questions themselves were directed at any individual or party, this may still cause concern when gaining the trust of the individual and maintaining the confidentiality of the individual. Although widespread and transparent criticism of government and political parties is prevalent, there is fewer tolerance of personal criticisms and critiques of particular political leaders. So it was necessary to have a relaxed atmosphere where only the

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[132] There have been numerous cases of individuals being attacked for criticising politicians and public figures.
[133] The most notable of these was the case of journalist Sardasht Osman

interviewer and the participant were present. The question of identification and politics in general is a sensitive topic in Kurdistan and holding street surveys so people will hear what the interviewee thinks could affect the answers given. Therefore street surveys in Iraqi Kurdistan are not conducive as a critical issue. Adherence to strict ethical guidelines were therefore fundamentally important during the data collection process.

Finally, a number of limitations and personal biases were identified and acknowledged. Limitations of the research include the possibility of respondents not being able to recall personal or public historical events or have their views on those events influenced by current news and media broadcasts. Although this study focuses on how people feel regarding their identity, there will be connections to specific and general historical events that have affected their identity, which can increase memory retention problems among people. So it must be understood and remembered that recollection of current events, media, and memory may affect references to historical events. Another limitation of the research is the difficulty in gaining access to 'home centred and housebound' women given the religious and conservative nature of Kurdish society. In two cases, these limitations posed real challenges to the research where the husbands of two interviewees asked to sit in on the interview or to have copies of audio recordings. In order to preserve the confidentiality of those interviewees and the integrity of the research, alternative participants were found.

9.2   Discussion/Findings

This research set out to examine the factors that influence Kurdish youth identity in a manor that had previously not been done. Kurdish identity has been studies extensively by many different scholars and been studied in the context of socio-political implications in the four different countries where Kurds reside. The aim of this research was to make a contribution to the study by deconstructing Kurdish nationalism and national identity in a manor that had not been done before. The major flaw in the research to date is that it does not fully explain Kurdish identity and nationalism. As Ressool (2012) argued, Kurdish nationalism has been so far reactionary, only reacting to Ba'th policies of homogenisation. However, as we have discusses, this does not account for Kurdish identity on an individual level, nor does it account for instances where Kurdish nationalist actions were not in retaliation to homogenisation. The approach of previous research and researchers was considered but it was found that of the considerable literature that existed, whilst theoretically sound, did not adequately explain the Kurdish case and what influenced Kurdish identity. As Albert (2013) stated "*there has not been a thorough investigation into understanding the identity of the Iraqi Kurds, nor has there been much written about the history of violence between the Iraqi government and the ethnic group*" (Albert 2013).

In deconstructing Kurdish identity into three main influencing factors of place, space, and socialising agents it was possible to clearly identify what historical and current factors influence Kurdish national identity and nationalism. In order to do this, the following questions were raised.

1. How have Kurdish youth reacted to any perceived threat to their identity?

2. What influence do other people and inherited memories have on identity development?

3. To what extent is place influential in the formation of ethnic identity in Kurdish youth?

4. Can identity be imposed on smaller groups and what are the consequences of such an imposed identity being rejected?

5. What do Kurdish youth living in Iraqi Kurdistan feel about the idea of Kurdistan as a symbolic idea and has the idea of Kurdistan changed with a change in demographics?

6. How has social media and technology impacted on Kurdish identity expression?

9.3   Place

The association and connectedness to place often ignites fond childhood memories of families and friends but in some cases people also reminisce about memories that are not necessarily good. The particular relation to a past described, evoked, and analyzed has come to be seen as a "syndrome" of belated-ness or "post-ness" that descendants of survivors (of victims as well as of perpetrators) of massive traumatic events connect so deeply to the previous generation's remembrances of those events that, in certain extreme circumstances, memory can be transmitted to those who were not actually there to live an event (Hirsch 2008). Similar to events such as

the Jewish Holocaust where memories of these events have become a part of the national identity, the Kurdish case is also full of incidents of traumatic events that have become synonymous with the identity. This is very much in line with what this research has found after speaking to the Kurdish youth population. We found that whenever references were made to events such as Halabja and Anfal, they were mentioned with a great sense of betrayal, genocide and violence, these events because synonymous with what it meant to be Kurdish, so much so that many of the respondents we spoke to identified being Kurdish with those events. The place that they know is very different to the place of their parents and the influence that place has on them is very much in turn influenced by historical events. These historical events are almost universally based on trauma and conflict and what this research found is that the respondent's notion of place is at the same time both reactionary and defensive in nature. There is considerable emotional attachment to the notion of place in Iraqi Kurdistan not least due to the historical events that have taken place and the attempts to de-ethnicise those places by successive Iraqi governments[134]. As Branscombe et al also state, "The notion of 'reactive ethnicity' is based on research in social psychology, which showed that individuals who experience discrimination will identify with their in-group more strongly to buffer the negative consequences that the perceived discrimination has for their self-esteem (Branscombe et al. 1999)."

What Hirsch calls 'post-memory' is therefore quite relevant in the Kurdish case as it is the memories of survivors of ill treatment that are used by their descendants to

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[134] Examples of this run throughout the research finding with regular references to Kirkuk amongst other places where they are considered Kurdish cities under occupation.

inform their own identities. Post-memory describes how the personal experiences of trauma and ill treatment of one generation impact on their children and how they 'remember' those experiences only by means of stories, images and behaviours among which they grew up. It can therefore be argued that what informs the influence of place identity in Kurdish youth is the post-memory of genocide, ethnic cleansing and armed struggle. In the same way that the Kurdish nationalist movement was very much based on a guerrilla movement, so in turn is the Kurdish nationalist movement today, a movement inherited from their parents and grandparents. This is very much in line with our own findings as there were regular references to both guerilla fighters and the defensive nature of Kurdish nationalism and the movement in general. As Masoud Barzani admitted, according to Rae (2002), "the uprising came from the people themselves. We didn't expect it.' As a result, in the words of a spokesman, the Iraqi Kurdistan Front 'merely followed the people onto the streets. It has been hesitant to enter towns in case of massive retribution. It now preferred these to remain under civil control, and for the civil authorities to negotiate with local army units.[135]" (p249)

This supports our findings in that Kurds both now and in the past based their national identity movement on a guerrilla movement and this was not only done in times of occupying Kurdish cities but also in everyday life. This mentality has been handed down to their children who we have interviewed for this research and is supported by many of the responses that we have obtained. Place therefor not only means a great deal to the people we spoke to but it also forms an integral part of what it means to be Kurdish, since Kurdishness is based on a geographical location, people

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[135] In reference to the 1991 uprising when people took to the streets and defeated the Iraqi army.

are very defensive of that location. This is supported in many ways by the several references to the age old saying in Kurdistan and abroad that the Kurds have 'no friends but the mountains'[136]. This has become synonymous with the Kurds and Kurdistan and it highlights the influence and importance that place has in the context of Kurdish nationalism and national identity. Twigger-Ross et al., (2003) argue that it is the surroundings and what makes the place we live in that greatly affect our identity development.   Places and the immediate environment form part of identity development because they have symbols and meanings that remind us of who we are and of our history. They represent personal and shared memories of both the individual and the group. Having grown up being surrounded by the mountains and having such a part in Kurdish history, it is difficult to discount the role of place in the identity formation of Kurdish youth.

The policies of schools and institutions to take school children to historical places of traumatic memory is in itself an act of reaction to previous acts of genocide. Even though those events were in the past, the act of reacting to these previous events can also be described as what we have termed here 'guerrilla nationalism' in that the nationalism act is not state or group organised. This results in further enhancing in-groups identifications and affiliations. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) call this phenomenon 'reactive ethnicity' which refers to the heightened group consciousness, ethnic group solidarity and political mobilization among migrants as a result of perceived prejudices, hostility or social exclusion in the host community. We found that in many ways, although Kurds are in no way migrants in Iraq, they perceive themselves to be treated as such by the wider Iraqi community and

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[136] A reference to the many times Kurds have fled to the mountains in search of safety.

government as many of the comments we came across share similarities with studies on migrant communities.

Many of those individuals that have originally left Kurdistan, left due to persecution of their family by Saddam's government and cite ill treatment as the main cause for them having to leave. Post-memory therefore also plays an influencing role in those individuals returning to Kurdistan from the diaspora.

Research on post-memory is important because it demonstrates how historical events can continue to influence the identity and perceptions of subsequent generations, and it shows how historical memory, whilst being preserved through intergenerational transmission, can also change through this process (Fuica 2014). Post memory is a running theme throughout our findings in that references were made to it on a regular basis. The place identity of the people we spoke to is heavily influenced by historical events, so much so that it was not something that we expected to such an extent. We found that places in the cities such as museums and monuments work to recharge national identity feelings even if those individuals have no direct interactions with the events that took place in those places. Places like the red security building serve as a permanent reminder of previous acts of ethnic oppression and the conscious act of preserving bullet holes on the walls of the building further support our argument that post memory and place are an intrinsic part of what influences Kurdish identity.

The influence of collective or shared memories is therefore an important one when discussing any modern relationship between Kurds and Arabs. In recognising its importance it is then possible to come to terms with and reconcile some of the

events that have taken place in Kurdish history to encourage greater integration of the out-group members living in Kurdistan. As Ressool (2012) states: "the Kurdish nationalism movement was reinvigorated by the mixing of Peshmerga and the population of Kurdistan living in the towns and cities. Furthermore, the inclusion of populations within Kurdish society that had been under the direct rule of the Ba'th Party for an extremely long time was a daunting task.

When discussing the idea of a single Kurdish state which encompasses all major parts of Kurdistan (Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey), one of the first things that is brought up is the historical context in which the aforementioned countries were created. So much so that the internationally little known Sykes-Picot agreement[137] signed in secret between Britain and France after the First World War to redraw the borders of the Middle East, has become a mainstay of the discussion on Kurdish independence by all walks of life from the highly educated to the illiterate.

To advance what Rasool argued, the legitimisation of discrimination by government forces or indeed members of the ethnic Arab communities not only in Iraq but anywhere in the world constitutes the use of guerrilla nationalism. This is not confined however to non-Kurdish individuals either as what respondents mention is a clear example of guerrilla nationalism on the part of Kurds living in the diasporah. Contested places is brought about not only by those that inhabit a certain place but also by people who have an affection for that place from a distance. We found that the people we spoke to all contested the identity of place, in particular they contested the ethnic make up of Iraq.

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[137] The Sykes-Picot agreement was a secret treaty signed in 1916 between the UK and France to define their mutually agreed spheres of influence.

This is further supported by some scholar who recognise the historic ethnic individuality of the Kurds ". . . to say that Iraq is part of the Arab nation is wrong from both a scientific and local point of view. . . . Iraq as a whole cannot be considered part of the Arab nation. Only the historical Arab Iraq, which did not include Kurdistan. . .. Moreover, the non-Arab peoples of the Iraqi republic do not constitute a part of the Arab homeland. Some time in history, Kurdistan became part of the Islamic state, as happened in the case of other Muslim countries. . . . A satisfactory formula should state that the eternal Iraqi Republic identity is formed of a Kurdish part—Iraqi Kurdistan and an Arab part—Mesopotamia. Only the Arab part forms part of the greater Arab nation "(Jawad 1981).

This raises the important issue of how the inhabitants of a certain place influence its identity. Kurdish cities have almost always been inhabited by only Kurds which has meant that the identity of those places have never really been contested. We found that the people we interviewed placed great importance on maintaining the ethnic identity of place and this is based on the fact that those Kurdish cities have been inhabited by Kurds for a considerable length of time. As Shdema, Martin and Abu-asbeh state, "The duration of living in a locality is one: native residents tend to have a more profound place identity compared to immigrants since the former grew in this particular locale from childhood parallel to the construction of their identities. Two: Home ownership is an additional mediator because people tend to invest more (emotionally and financially) in their own houses resulting in a deeper emotional bond. Third: the amount of social interaction and specifically, involvement in the community also shapes place identity as it bonds people to places via social

networks. In most cases this identity is constructed as positive because people tend to highlight positive experiences and minimize the effect of negative ones" Shdema, Martin and Abu-asbeh (2020).

Fear of changing demographics and the assimilation of Arabs in Kurdish cities runs throughout the responses and all of those fears refer to previous attempts by the central government to Arabise Kurdish areas[138]. In the Kurdistan, place is therefore of great importance and it is through place identity that that this group seek to protect their sense of Kurdishness. Interviewees place great important on the demographics of place identity and who inhabits that place influences its identity. What we found was that the change of demographics in a certain place represented a threat to that places identity for our respondents. In reference to what Shdema, Martin and Abu asbeh mention above, our research found that the Kurdish case follows their findings in that the native Kurdish residence of cites were more connected to those cities and it was not thought that new inhabitants could not develop those same feelings. As refugees were not permitted to own property in Kurdish cities they could also not emotionally and financially invest in those cities meaning they had less attachment. Finally, the relatively small amount of refugees that inhabited those cities either tended to live together in specific areas and generally did not mix with Kurds, there was very little social interaction and involvement in community activities.

The clustering of Arabs in certain areas such as Sar Chnar brings about segregation issues where non-Kurds for whatever reason choose to live in a particular area. This raises two issues; firstly, the grouping of non-Kurds in one area is more noticeable

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[138] In particular the cities of Kirkuk and khanaqin

and can change the demographics of that place. Secondly, this makes it considerably more difficult for non-Kurds to integrate into the wider community reducing the interactions between Kurds and non-Kurds. We found that the concerns of those individuals regarding the ethnic makeup of place was based not on current attitudes but on a fear of history repeating itself. Ever since Iraq was created, successive governments have tried to change the demographic identity of Kurdish cites and have not been successful. Memories of these policies have been passed down from generation to generation and those that we interviewed fear that the rise in the number of non Kurds in Kurdish cities would be a repeat of the Arabisation policies of previous governments.

9.4   Space

The way in which we dress, the language we use, the logo's and symbols we display often says a great deal about us. In short, how do we express our identity and how do we react to other people's expression of identity where it differs from ours? In these situations conflicts can often occur whereby the dominant group seeks to exert its identity over the minority group which can in turn cause armed conflict, independence movements and nationalist sentiments. Spatial identity is the most visible and expressive forms of identity, it is everywhere around us and its subconscious influences are great. Put a British child amongst a rural Chinese community and that British baby will undoubtedly be influenced by the clothes, language, songs, and stories of that community. This was very much in line with what we found in our research and in keeping with the findings related to place, people were very conscious of the impact that space has on the changing identity of Kurdish cities.

Much in the same way that flat caps and top hats were a symbol of social class, the sharwal has in some cases become a working class identity marker which threatens its Kurdish original identity. This is very much similar to what is termed cultural appropriation by mass media and the fashion industry where we see cat walk fashion shows and designers designing clothes based on African tribal clothing for example. The role of language, custom, symbols and culture in instigating and sustaining ethnic rivalry is important when discussing Kurdish identity. We found that people are protective of what language, customs, symbols, and clothing represent and that appropriation of those things represent a threat to their identity. The identification of the Sharwal as a purely Kurdish item of clothing is meant to distinguish between Kurds and non Kurds, if this distinction is not available then this particular individual could not identify their ethnic group. Hence ethnicity varies in dynamic, historical and interethnic communication and its purpose is to strengthen and maintain social inequalities for different purposes (Jemma, 2006).

As Kaufman rightly says, "the most problematic symbols used in ethnic wars are stereotypes that justify government control of particular territories that could have been conquered in the past, and stereotypes of historical massacres that can be used to clarify potential genocide concerns" (2001).

We found that the perceived changes relating to space were also born from a fear of the changing identity due to influences of the other. The respondents identified Kurdishness in a certain way and the change in demographics represented a threat to that existence. Smith defines the nation as 'a named human population occupying

an historic territory, and sharing myths, memories, a single public culture and common rights and duties for all members' (Smith 2004).

As previously mentioned, it was decided that we would take a different approach in the study of Kurdish identity. We decided to deconstruct Kurdish identity into the three elements of place, space and socialising agents. We decided to do this because whilst there were an abundance of studies on Kurdish nationalism there were no studies on Kurdish nationalism taking this three tier approach. As Hassanpour states "most of the studies on Kurdish nationalism fail to account for the social, economic and cultural components of Kurdish nationalism- detribalization, urbanization, the decline of feudalism, the rise of capitalist relations, linguistic consciousness and literary creation, journalism, education, and mass communication (Hassanpour 1992)".

Iraqi intellectuals such as Matar (1997) argue that Iraq has a single national identity and that "the Iraqi people are the direct descendants of Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Arab peoples. Matar argues "*Iraqi identity is not an invented phenomenon but has evolved naturally, as any national identity does, in the heart of every Iraqi. All one need do is simply try to revive it*" (p46). Individuals with a similar view to Matar are few if not nonexistent in Kurdistan and indeed none of the respondents that we spoke to remotely shared these views. On the contrary, what we found was a clear apathetic feeling towards Iraq as a nation. All of our findings in one way or another highlight the distance people feel towards Iraq and the connectedness they feel towards their Kurdish identity. However, what remains to be seen is what the impact of increased interactions and the changing nature of

space will be in years to come. Given that Kurds have been largely closed off for decades with very little interaction with other ethnicities (in particular Arab Iraqis), Kurdish space has remained almost exclusively Kurdish in nature. The changing demographics of Iraqi Kurdistan has resulted in increased interactions between Kurds and non-Kurds and the wholly Kurdish make-up of Kurdistan has changed. As Arabic is being used more often and traditional Arabic clothing seen more on the streets, the aesthetics of Iraqi Kurdistan are changing (Hawramy 2015). Our Findings suggest that at this moment in time there is considerable resentment at the prospect of this change but as previous research suggests, the increase in interactions result in the increase of understanding and harmony between different ethnicities.

Myhill (2003) discusses the 'language-and-identity ideology', which assumes an inherent emotional connection between an individual and their language. Language is arguably one of the clearest forms of identity expression and the national language of Iraq (Arabic) is not spoken in Kurdistan. Rogg and Rimscha argued that "*after fifteen years of self-rule, and with decades of conflict and persecution within living memory, ordinary Kurds hardly consider themselves Iraqis, a whole generation does not speak Arabic at all*" (Rogg & Rimscha, 2008). This is very much what our research also found and in contrast to what Matar idealistically or somewhat naively believes as being the nature of Iraqi Kurdistan. We found that indeed very few people knew how to speak Arabic and those that did, didn't speak it fluently. This is a considerable finding given that Iraq is a predominantly Arab speaking country. What this shows is that our findings confirm that language is an essential indicator of Kurdish ethnic identity. This might be the case in many other situations but the

rejection of the official state language by Kurds is significant, drawing similarities with other nations, it would be like the Welsh refusing to speak English and only speaking Welsh[139]. This is again an example of what we have termed guerilla nationalism that uses language to defend the groups identity and react to the other groups identity imposition. Language is arguably one of the clearest forms of identity expression and the national language of Iraq (Arabic) is not spoken in Kurdistan. Rogg and Rimscha argued that "*after fifteen years of self-rule, and with decades of conflict and persecution within living memory, ordinary Kurds hardly consider themselves Iraqis, a whole generation does not speak Arabic at all*" (Rogg & Rimscha, 2008). Those aged 18 to 25 have only experienced life under Kurdish rule and not Saddam Hussein, in effect living in a de-facto independent Kurdistan. For them, borders are relatively clear between what constitutes Iraq and Kurdistan, interaction between this group and Iraqi Arabs has been minimal, knowing Arabic has become less important and political rivalries between the Kurdish government and Iraq has further increased a sense of 'otherness' amongst them (Khalid 2004).

Language and communication in general has changed dramatically with the onset of modern technology. Communication technology has given the users the tools to express their identity to a far broader network and to come together as a social group. Romano (2002) finds that "*participation in protest, and the knowledge of similar protests undertaken worldwide by fellow group members, in turn inculcate a greater sense of ethnic consciousness and politicized ethnic identity*" (p212). This is exemplified by very recent events that have brought Kurds from around the world

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[139] The Welsh language in the UK is the traditional language of Wales and was previously banned by the ruling English monarchs.

together in protest and in support of the city of Kobane on the border of Syria and Turkey. Besieged by ISIS on all sides and with a closed border to Turkey the Kurdish forces in the city faced defeat with the city falling to ISIS. The city became widely referred to by international media as a modern day Stalingrad and soon became a symbol of the fight against ISIS. Indeed it was the intervention in Kobane that instigated western airstrikes in Syria as a whole. This was also supported by the findings from our study which found that events that took place in Turkey and Syria had a significant impact on Kurds in Iraq. Kobane became a rallying point for all Kurds and it was often given as example of Kurdish identity and many shops, bridges and landmarks names were changed to Kobane. The Kobane bridge in Sulaimany, the residential flats named Kobane and many others were reactions to an attack on Kurdish identity by ISIS. This reaction and the events that took place are another example of what we have termed guerilla nationalism.

Events such as these, particularly instances of 'self-presentation' as Michikyan et al refer to it, are often seen as rallying points that bring people together, in this case creating a heightened sense of Kurdish identity. They found that *"participants' responses indicated that they felt happy by presenting their social identity online and showcasing shared moments with the important people in their lives. In addition, a collective sense of self-presentation, involving social, ethnic, and spiritual identities, may be linked to greater positive states" (p302).* To Anderson, a nation is "an abstract political community–and conceived to be inherently limited as well as sovereign" (200). Unlike a real society, the party is pictured, as it's not a face-to-face collective but a society that its members keep in their minds as a symbol of their

communion. The world is created as tiny because no nation considers itself as being coexistent with mankind "(2006). This is also repeated by Alinia and Eliassi who found that The Kurdish identity becomes a location, a platform, a space, one's own room and a "home" where they can feel strong through belonging to a Kurdish imagined community. It is both a strategy of survival and an active and conscious identity project and a strategy of resistance. There are however differences between the two generations with regard to their identity formation. Members of the older generation define in the first hand their Kurdish identity in relation with and in opposition to the ethnic oppression experienced in their countries of origin" (Alinia and Eliassi 2014).

We found that not only does spatial identity reflect a variety of nationalisms but it also reflects different understandings of nationalism. Any nation that is firmly fixed with a common ethnicity will place high value on territory associated with that culture including areas of land that is currently or was inhabited by that particular ethnicity. Smith describes country as "a designated human society sharing a historical land, popular beliefs and historical memories, a community, collective culture, a shared economy and its members ' legal rights and duties. (Smith 2009)". Most significant here is the relation to what Smith mentions as popular beliefs and historical memories to our findings which almost totally refer to those two traits. We found that post memory or what Smith terms historical memories plays a significant part in Kurdish identity. All respondents that we spoke to mentioned historical acts of genocide, abuse, ethnic cleansing etc. in at least one of their responses to us, in some cases every response that was given was based on historical events.

It may also be the case that more than one ethnicity occupies a particular territory, in these cases, the dominant group through control of government mechanisms will attempt and often succeed in submerging the identities of the minority ethnicities it shares territory with. The dominant groups ethnic and spatial identity therefore covers the whole state, irrespective of the other minority identities that live there. Opposition to this labelling by the dominant group is often called separatist, regionalist, unpatriotic etc. However, those minority groups have legitimate (sometimes more legitimate) rights to their land, identity and territory than the dominant group. There were also examples of this from the results that we found in our research. There were references to Kurds being labelled as nationalist, unbelievers, Kafir and even Fatwas announced advocating the murder of Kurds[140]. These labels are used in order to delegitimize a certain group and to label them as enemies of the state. There were several examples of this labelling given by people we spoke to during the course of our research and this worked to further distance Kurds and Iraqi's.

With the movement of people and transfer of technology and the consequent restructuring of economic space creates spaces of exclusion and inclusion at different scales across border and within border. It is in this sense that spatial control becomes an essential constituent of modern technologies of discipline and power that creates 'exclusive space' and 'excluded space'. Although Ocalan was a Kurd from Turkey, Kurds from all parts of Kurdistan and the diaspora protested in cities around the world. This was the first major event in Kurdish history that brought Kurds together as a single group campaigning about one single issue and an

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[140] This was particularly the case during the independence campaign.

expression of a single Kurdish identity. They identified as members of an imagined Kurdish community. This was not just about speaking language, but an emotional reaction and expression of identity (Keles 2011). What was surprising to find was the numerous references to the leader of the PKK (Abdulla Ocalan) in or findings. He was considered by many to be an iconic leader and in many cases, preferred to Kurdish leaders in Iraq. This represents what we have previously mentioned as the restructuring of space from something that is based on your surroundings to a transnational sphere and it also links in to Andersons idea of Imagined communities. Social media and technology has therefore allowed Kurdish youth a far greater platform for the expression of their identity as they connect with Kurds from all over the world which was not possible just a few years ago.

We found that individuals felt a strong need for others around them to know that they are Kurdish, that they had (what he believed to be) a distinct identity. As far as Kurdish youth are concerned they are projecting an image, what also needs to be taken into account is how others receive that image. A strong Iraqi nationalist may very well take great offence at the very notion of 'Kurdistan', and in turn a strong Kurdish nationalist will also take great offence at being called Arab or Iraqi. Guerrilla nationalism can often come across as racist or xenophobic in its attitude and responses, however what the underlying issue represents is both the fear of a weakening of their own Kurdish identity and a strengthening of the identity of the other.

The events of the past have had a marked impact on many people, especially when those events are traumatic and have become a significant symbol by which identity

is known by. If when explaining the history of the Jews to someone that had not heard of them, it would be likely that one of the first things you would talk about would be the Holocaust. It would be much the same when talking about the Kurds as one of the first things you would discuss would be Halabja and Anfal. This is very much the case in our findings also, Halabja and Anfal have become synonymous with Kurdish identity and it would be almost impossible to find a Kurd anywhere that did not know the very basics of those historical events. They are told about these events in schools form an early age, they are taken to museums and monuments, they are told about them by family who may have experienced them and they are reminded of them when lost family and relatives are mentioned. So much so that these events represent the very spaces in which Kurdish identity is developed and nurtured. Having such a significant part in what makes a Kurd Kurdish, those events and others form the backdrop to what we have termed the guerilla nationalist. The guerrilla nationalist uses aesthetics as an identity marker but does not consider the aesthetics of identity to be hostile towards their own identity and the act of expressing an identity that is different to their own does not encroach on their identity.

9.5   Socialising agents

Previous sections have so far discussed and deconstructed Kurdish identity in relation to place and space, as was initially discussed, identity is made up of three elements: Place, Space, and Socialising agents. This section will therefore discuss Kurdish identity in relation to what we term 'socialising agents'. Socializing agents

are people, organisations, organizations, political parties, NGOs[141], etc. who control

how we view and describe ourselves. Through our parents and associates to the

political parties and sects, individuals and communities shape our personality. The

parents are one of the most powerful (when not the most significant) socializing

factors we have. However, from an early age their presence and environment effect

on our personality is not to suggest that children are solely creations of the values of

their parents. We get to a stage where we are all affected by others, such that the

child of a rigid Muslim or Christian may become an atheist, or vise the other way

round. Communities can be physical or geographical and they can also be virtual

communities that are not tied to a specific location, but all members of communities

share a sense of belonging and togetherness. Correspondingly, we can have

physical identity and virtual identities, which can be on-line. Primordialism holds that

ethnic identity is ascriptive, granted birth membership and as such hard to alter

(Isajiw, 1993). It argues that ethnic ties are innate in us as humans, and we have

strong natural links that tie us to other people and establish natural distinctions with

others, whether based on ethnicity, religion, language or place (Geertz, 1973).

Although as we mentioned previously that Kurdish cities are almost exclusively

populated by Kurds, this has changed in recent times due to the increase in non

Kurdish refugees[142] and western experts and workers. These new socialising agents

each have a different impact on Kurdish identity. We found that when it comes to

socialising agents, westerners are treated differently to the refugees in that there is

little interaction between Kurds and Arabs. With little interaction between the two,

the influence of socialising agents are reduced due to historical ethnic conflict

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[141] Non Government Organisations
[142] Almost exclusively Arab

between the two different groups. Primordialism assumes, when addressing nations and ethnicities, that people cannot reject or avoid their country or ethnic identity (Horowitz, 2002). Primordialism supporters, such as Pierre van den Berghe (2005), agree that "any conception of ethnicity must go back to stateless societies, 'whereas' nothing focuses one's ethnic consciousness more easily or better than political conflict with or within states dominated by people who are ethnically different from one another."

It is also not necessarily the case that all influence has a positive impact on our identity, a negative experience of a religious group, political party/leader, or individual to name a few, can cause us to have a negative opinion not only of that individual but also of the whole group or ideology they represent. As Trepte 2017 states "*Social categorization* implies that people are defined and understood not only as individuals but also as belonging to certain social categories such as age categories (e.g., child or adult), economic categories (e.g., high or low economic status), or cultural categories (e.g., Asian or Caucasian). People socially interact based on experiences they have had with others who belong to different categories. During interaction, they constantly refine their social categories. These, in turn, influence their behavior. For instance, going to lunch with an adult triggers different behaviors than going to lunch with a young adolescent. While having lunch with either one, more experiences are collected to extend the mental representation of the existing categories (Trepte 2017)". This is very much supported by our findings in that the respondents we spoke to often referred to the negative interactions that they had with what they saw as the hostile 'other' group. This was particularly the case when people referred to interactions outside Iraq when respondents had

returned to live in Iraq form the diasporah. In those cases, people expressed the opinion that interaction with people from the other community actually increased their own self identification which was in contrast to existing theories and research which argued that increased interaction creates understanding and harmony.

Central to our identity is our own beliefs and perceptions of who we are, our dimensions of ourselves, the groups that we see ourselves best fitting into, who we are most like, the attitudes, beliefs, history, culture that best fits our own. What also defines us, is who we are not; those dimensions of the other that do not match our own, those groups and individuals that are different to ours, have different histories, cultures, religions, or beliefs etc. The Social Identity Theory (SIT) posits "*people are motivated to maintain a positive self-concept, the self-concept derives largely from group identification; and people establish positive social identities by favourably comparing their in-group against an out-group*" (Sindic and Condor 2014 p39).   This was certainly the case in our research and our findings showed that people actively seek to maintain and develop a positive group identity so much so that a negative group identity was attributed to the other, in this case the non Kurds. The out group was considered a threat to the continuity of the Kurdish identity and in the same way that post memory significantly influenced identity in the place and space, so to did it when it came to socialising agents. The continued discussion of historical acts of genocide and abuse confirmed and affirmed the differences between Kurds and non Kurds and they are reminded of the actions of previous governments which further distinguish group differences.

This shows that socialising agents from both the out-group and the in-group can have a considerable impact on identity development. In Kurdistan, politics and

government are heavily linked to the media networks which are all influenced or controlled by political parties and so media outlets are equally significant socialising agents. The influence of media was something that was referred to by the people we spoke to and as we mentioned in previous sections, the media in Kurdistan is almost wholly controlled by political parties. Much of the media is political propaganda but there is something that brings most if not all of them together. In times of national mourning, celebrations commemorations of Anfal and Halabja, the media outlets all broadcast nationalist and patriotic news, songs, interviews and programs. The media in Kurdistan is therefore a very important and influential socialising agent. This was evident from our findings which all respondents that we spoke to confirmed, although each individual had a channel of choice depending on their particular political view, they all cited the media when it came to avenues of identity development. Appiah, Knobloch- Westerwick, and Alter (2013) examined selective exposure more directly by tracking the selection of, and time spent with, news articles varying in valence (positive vs. negative) and news character skin color (Black vs. White). Among Black students, contrary to the authors' hypothesis, no "social identity enhancement" was revealed (i.e., the participants did not spend more time on positive than negative news featuring Blacks). However, the authors found support for in-group favoritism (i.e., Black students spent more time on positive news featuring Blacks than on positive and negative news featuring Whites) and out-group derogation (i.e., Black students spent more time on negative than positive news featuring Whites). White students, in contrast, were equally inclined to read stories about Blacks and Whites irrespective of the news' valence. The authors argued that this selective exposure effects among Black students might have arisen due to their perceiving their own in-group as stigmatized and of lower status as well as

identifying more strongly with their in-group" (Trepte 2017). This is very much the case when it comes to Kurdish identity and the media as socialising agents. The reminder of historical events in the media are not directed at a particular race or ethnic group, none of the reports or programs identify a certain group as the reason behind those events, only previous government but this creates a link in peoples minds between those governments responsible and the ethnicity of those in governments. People therefore indirectly link previous atrocities to Arab Iraqis, and in turn, those Arab refugees that have come to seek refuge in Kurdistan are seen negatively.

Media in general is a considerably influencing factor no matter where in the world it is based and it is no surprise that media Moghuls are closely linked to major political parties. One of the differences between western media and other media in developing countries is that the media in the west has been slowly developed over decades if not centuries. In other less developed countries the media availability has been revolutionised in the space of a few years. Kurdistan in many ways is one such a place, where modernity, the internet, and globalisation has spread dramatically. In as little as 20 years, Kurdistan has gone from having no internet and having to go to a telephone exchange to call someone abroad to internet access on the go and access to world media from the smallest village. The changes in this short space of time has had huge implications for ethnic identity and how Kurdish youth see themselves as part of a global youth culture. The fight against ISIS was not the first such occasion, the Gulf War of 1991 and the removal of Saddam, and the Kurdish mass exodus are examples of when circumstances impelled cross-border and international contacts between Kurds and heightened pan-Kurdish identification. This again is another example of the guerilla nature of Kurdish nationalism and

identity. This is represented by a number of comments made by people we interviewed and our findings further support our claim that history plays a significant part not only when it comes to place or space but also when dealing with socialising agents. The mass exodus that followed the Gulf War of 1991 is something that many people we spoke to referred to and although they could not remember those events themselves, they lived them through stories told to them by their parents, grandparents, political parties and the media.

The sample of this research study was limited to male and female Kurds aged 18 to 25, this was done both for practical reasons and for logical reasons. To interview anyone under the age of 18 would have meant additional ethical guidance and clearance from both the University and the Kurdish government in Iraq.
Although children were therefore not asked to participate in the study, the people we interviewed were certainly influenced by childhood memories. Sellers, Morgan, and Brown (2001) argue that children who feel that ethnic identity is central to their sense of self may be more aware of prejudice and discrimination against their ethnic group and, in turn, more likely to identify discrimination than their peers for whom ethnicity is less central. Relatedly, individuals who are exploring their ethnic–racial background and identity may become more aware of historical mistreatment and, in turn, more attuned to personal experiences of discrimination. The historical mistreatment that Sellers, Morgan and Brown refer to is very appropriate for our study as been previously mentioned, history plays a significant role in the identity development of Kurdish youth.

It is important to note that nationalism as has been identified, is strongly linked to ethnicity and fulfils social functions such as shared historical experiences, language,

ethnicity, and region of residence. Through nationalism there is a clearly defined belief system dealing with the groups origins, ideals, goals and desired traits. It sets out a guideline for the group behaviours and is usually led by political parties social groups, advocacy groups etc. These similarities expressed above can also be applied to religion and it is not surprising that some argue that religion is one of the origins of nationalism.   Religion however did not play a significant role in the development of Kurdish national identity from the findings that we have. The only influence that religion had was in reference to the use of religion by Saddam Hussein in the genocide campaigns against the Kurds, in particular the Anfal campaign. We found that this was particularly the case when it came to those individuals that were either atheist or agnostic. This is partly due to the fact that those that don't believe in religion use the Anfal campaigns in support of their general anti-religion arguments and those that are religious dismiss the same campaigns as 'not in keeping with real Islam'.

The impact of socialising agents are also acknowledged in the wider theoretical literature in that it also argues that ethnic identity can be constructed by individuals. The constructivist theory perceives ethnic identity as a culturally built, complex system that can be produced by different means such as conquest, colonization, or immigration. Ethnic communities are considered to be social buildings with 'recognizable origin and history of expansion and contraction, amalgamation and division' (Posner, 2004). We are complex and derive from a number of social, cultural and political mechanisms (Chandra, 2001). Constructivists argue that each culture has a master cleavage and paradigm built in history that can be exploited by

political entrepreneurs (Brass 2003). If ethnic communities are social buildings, then they can also be influenced depending on the aims and objectives of individuals. This is also the case in our study where the role of socialising agents has been identified as a significant one. This has also happened when it comes to Kurdish history during the changes in governments when different rulers enacted different policies towards Kurds. As Resool (2012) states: "The Kurdish elite reacted to the spread of Pan-Arabism in Iraq. The Arab Army officers were among the first group to advocate for Arab nationalism and for creating an Iraqi state with Arabic identity. The Kurdish army officers who served under the Iraqi army, on the other hand, reacted to such attempts by establishing Kurdish political groups with clear nationalist goals" (p100). In these cases, and in others, it was individual Kurds that were disillusioned with Iraqi Identity and perceived a threat to their own Kurdish identity that established political parties and movements that subsequently led to the development and spreading of Kurdish nationalism and national identity. As Rasool states, these were reactions to Iraqi state policies and maneuvers on behalf of Kurdish individuals, many of whom joined the Kurdish national struggle as guerilla fighter.

9.6   Conflicting data and unexpected findings

As with any research it was expected that there would be some conflicting data and unexpected findings. It is the case that in Kurdistan different areas are heavily influenced by different political parties and the political 'green' and 'yellow' zones represent the influence of the PUK and KDP respectively. A small number of the responses that we had reflected this political different inn that the respondents in Sulaimany 'green zone' were far more critical of the Kurdish government which was

based in the capital controlled by 'yellow zone' party. This conflicting data however did not skew any of the findings that we had as those comments and opinions were overwhelmingly directed at government and political parties which we were not directly studying. Although politics and politicians were identified as socialising agents we did not ask anyone what their opinion was on any particular party or politician.

This research aimed to deconstruct Kurdish identity in a way that had not previously done before which meant that it was possible and likely that there would be both conflicting data and unexpected outcomes. We chose to look at Kurdish identity from a three factor approach of place, space and socialising agents and whilst we expected that Kurdish identity would be influenced by historical events, we did not expect that it would be so influential in the responses that people gave to our questions. So much so that once we started to analyse the results, a recurring theme emerged that brought us to the coining of what we have termed 'guerrilla nationalism'. History and historical events were mentioned by every single individual we spoke to and whilst some more than others linked their identity to those events they all stressed the importance those events had on them.

We also didn't expect the level of animosity and in some cases racism directed towards non Kurds and refugees in the Kurdish areas. On speaking to individuals a very strong sense of animosity was expressed towards Arab refugees in particular which also influenced some of our findings as the animosity and racism shown to those individuals was not necessarily directed at the individuals themselves but what they represented. It was not necessarily the case that some of the respondents

hated Arabs as such but what they represent, i.e. the continued implementation of decades old policies of de-Kurding Kurdish cities. A small majority of those we interview expressed such feelings and attitudes towards Arab refugees but also blamed Kurdish governments for allowing them to enter Kurdish cities.

9.7   Recommendations for future research

There are many considerable implications of this study for future research in the fields of identity and nationalism, not only on the basis of ethnicity but also in other forms of identity. This study can be adapted to work on the study of corporate identity to identify the influencing factors of how staff feel about their organisation. By taking the core elements of identity that we have identified (place, space and socialising agents) it is possible to draw up research questions that can be used in a corporate setting or any other workplace. For example, this study could be adapted to work on a study at an international banks Head Quarters in the heart of financial London. By conducting qualitative and/or quantitative surveys of staff it would be possible to see how individuals working at the bank see themselves in terms of the larger corporate identity. It will allow the bank to understand worker dynamics, how lower level staff view their superiors and vice versa, what employees think of the working culture and the physical location of their desk/office etc. taking this holistic approach allows the researcher to understand not only the factors that influence a persons identity, but also how those factors impact on each other. For example, a family made up of a Kurdish mother, Australian father, living in Germany where their only child attends school will have an wide range of influencing factors. This method of studying identity will allow far greater detailed study into how that child identifies

themselves, who/what influences their identity the most etc., studying their identity solely in relation to the place they live would not give accurate meaningful results.

It would be useful to understand where this study lies in relation to the identity of Kurds living in other states such as Turkey, Iran and Syria and also in relation to Kurds living abroad. By conducting studies on these groups it will be possible to see if similar traits exist in those countries and to see if there are any new influencing factors that aren't discussed here. By also studying Kurds in the diasporah we can also see how those three influencing factors change when they are not Kurdish, for example, a Kurd living in a European capital city, away from friends and family, and who has little or no knowledge of Kurdish.

It is also the case that there are other ethnic groups around the world similar to the Kurdish one that have also gone through similar experiences. It would therefore be interesting to conduct a similar study on different ethnic groups in order to identify any similar guerilla nationalist tendencies.

9.8   Final comments

The Kurds in the different states that they reside in express their national identity in different ways, from the moment the Kurds were divided by the allied powers after WWI, they have been influenced by each state in different ways and each of those states have treated their Kurdish populations differently. The major similarity between these states is that they have treated Kurdish minorities with disdain, oppression, imprisonment, aggression and genocide. Indeed these acts are the one thing that these very different and competing states all agree on and even in times of war and conflict between those countries, their desire to control and subdue any

Kurdish nationalist sentiment has brought them together in wholehearted agreement. The Kurds in those states have all been influenced in different ways, for example by denying them a 'place' through forced relocations to non-Kurdish areas, by denying them 'space' through banning Kurdish language and clothing, and by denying them 'socialising agents' by abducting/murdering parents politicians etc. What is clear is that these influencing factors do not work in isolation with each other, by removing either one it is not possible to remove an identity. What this study has shown is that the Kurds have defended their identity from attack and subsequently reacted by any means at their disposal. Engaged in a guerrilla war for decades against the states they reside in, not only their nationalist outlook but also their ethnic identity is one that is based on the guerrilla ideology.

CHAPTER TEN

Conclusion

The Middle East saw considerable changes which was brought about by the end of the First World War. The Ottoman Empire had collapsed and the process of breaking up the empire by the Western forces resulted in the complete redrawing of the area and the creation of new nation states. The establishment of Iraq was questioned from the very first day of its existence, and it was later made evident that after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, namely Britain and France, the development of the state was undertaken to serve the interests of allied powers in the region. Once the Empire's former territories were carved up into regions of strategic significance, no consideration was given to the demographic composition of the fragmented territories which many say is the root cause of the problems confronting the Middle East from Palestine to Kurdistan.

The promise of independence and nationhood fuelled nationalist desired in many minority nations that were once loyal to the Ottomans. This also suited the Western powers as it meant that the Ottoman Empire could be broken up and its power diluted. This created a situation where it was 'everyman for themselves' and those nations that could prove ethnic provenance were granted statehood. The new Turkish state however, fought long and hard to keep as much territory as it could and left little room for Kurdish minority identity expression in fear that they too would be granted independence. A wave of homogenizing national policies took place in order to achieve those aims which was also taken up by other new states where Kurds resided in Iraq, Iran and Syria.

The suppression of Kurdish identity was one of the major traits that all these nations shared which exists to this day. The experiences of Kurds in all these nations can be summarized into one of attempts of homogenization by the more dominant states that they reside in. this was necessary as many of those states themselves did not have a defined ethnic identity and so it was essential that one was created which brought in other minority identities such as that of the Kurds.

A mixture of these attempts at homogenisation and a lack of unity on the Kurds part meant that although individuals came forward with Kurdish nationalist claims, those claims were easily quashed either by the dominant states themselves or by internal Kurdish conflict.

What followed in all of these states and throughout Kurdish history is a cycle of Kurdish nationalist sentiment, leading to conflict with the state, leading to suppression and oppression by the state, leading to further nationalist sentiment. In essence, this is the research problem that this thesis has aimed to address, that Kurdish nationalism and identity is reactionary. The way in which it has reacted was the subject for further discussion that the above chapters have tried to address as Kurdish identity was deconstructed into three main influences of place, space and socialising agents. The Arab nationalists used whatever means they could to arabize the government by a variety of acts such as: the adoption of unified educational and administrative structures, the penetration of state police, military and intelligence services, eviction and a brutal arabization policy involving the creation of a scorched earth policies and genocide. This policy not only worked to get the Kurds to recognize the Iraqi state's Arab heritage, but also enabled a highly reactive nationalism to grow and raise their demands. The Kurdish secession campaign was

stepped up and its proponents started recruiting ever more Kurds under the umbrella of Kurdish nationalism.

The thesis began with an introduction into the history of Kurdish nationalism and identity, a brief background on its geography (physical, social and linguistic) and a history of homogenisation policies under the Ottoman empire and subsequently Iraq which forms the basis of this research. The research methodology was clearly set out followed by a review of the literature and the establishment of the theoretical framework. This was followed by the empirical chapters that deconstructed Kurdish identity into three influencing factors of Place, Space and Socialising Agents.

Like many other nations, the origins of the Kurds are not exactly known, however, history suggests they are descendants of Indo-European nomadic tribes that settled in the Zagros mountains during the second millennia BC with references to the Kurds in Sumerian inscriptions. As mentioned above, the Kurds reside in what we now recognise as the states of Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria but there also sizeable Kurdish populations in Armenia, Russia and Eastern Iran. As numerous attempts were made at homogenising Kurdish identity, the population number of Kurds varies widely but it is assumed that they number at least 28 million with approximately 6 million living in Iraq.

The homogenisation of Kurdish identity was and still is a policy that all those states not only adhere to but also cooperate on and learn from each other. When the newly formed Turkish state forcibly relocated Kurdish civilians from their houses and replaced them with Turks to change the areas demographics, similar atrocities were

carried out by Iraq, Iran and Syria by successive governments. These policies and others resulted in not only a reactionary approach to identity but also what we term in this thesis as 'guerrilla nationalism' which we have defined as:

"Irregular, uncoordinated nationalist activities carried out by non-state actors in an often defensive and/or reactive response to the established states nationalist activities and policies".

How Kurds in general have reacted to the homogenisation policies in all four states seems to fit this description well, in particular the case of Kurds living in Iraq where successive governments have enacted often oppressive and genocidal policies against the Kurds. These policies were often met with defensive and/or reactionary actions not only by Kurdish leaders but by the Kurdish population in general.
We start with the acknowledgement that identity dynamics influence different people in different ways, there is no blueprint for how something will affect any given individual. From the literature we can see that we are influenced by our physical surroundings, our symbolic surrounding and the people in our lives. Each of these factors has its own way of influencing our identity. Whilst these influencing factors have been acknowledged and studied in depth, they have not as yet been studied in relation to each other, they have been studied in isolation. What this thesis argues is that identity cannot be studied in parts, there needs to be a holistic approach to identity research as each influence is in turn influenced by another.

As such, the literature on identity development is too narrow and specific with much of the literature focusing on a single dimension of identify without consideration of

other influences. There have however been major contributions to the understanding of identity within specific dimensions by several authors. Any research or paper on identity would be inadequate without reference to Phinney's three stage model of identity development or Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory. These authors address identity influences from parents and peers, to in/out groups respectively. Both of these in isolation can be used to further examine the Kurdish case.

There is also considerable research conducted on the subject of identity in different contexts (Aziz 2009, Fidzani and Reed 2013, Christensen and Kerper 2013, Han 2012, Kelman 1998, Jacobsen 1998, Wood and Smith 2004), however, a multi-dimensional approach to the influences on identity development has been severely lacking. Resool (2012) argued that Kurdish nationalism during the Baathist rule 1963 – 2003 was reactive within the homogenized Iraqi state and took a historical perspective with his study but also failed to address the multi-dimensional influences on current youth identity.

Rather than understanding identity solely in the context of parental influence, language, or local environment alone, it is necessary to consider these and wider factors in conjunction with one another. The intersections of place, space and society are inextricably linked.

This thesis has argued that previous definitions and theories of identity and nationalism do not fit the Kurdish type in that it is neither defensive, reactionary or aggressive but a combination of the three which we have termed 'guerrilla nationalism'.

Once the arguments are made for an intersectional approach to identity development, its application to Kurdish youth must be made. This in turn raises a number of research questions that need to be identified and studied further. The empirical research will therefore attempt to identify the extent to which place, space and society all intersect with one another in the identity formation of Iraqi Kurdish youth. More specifically, what are the main factors influencing identity development in Iraqi Kurdish youth? How have Kurdish youth reacted to any perceived threat to their identity? What is the correlation between identity formation and socialising agents? How exactly do Kurdish youth express their ethnic identity? To what extent is place influential in the formation of ethnic identity in Kurdish youth?

The essential concept is that national identity development was profoundly rooted in pre-modern root cultures and was formed, imagined, and thought just as much as it was in modern times. The theories can be seen by revisiting terms that are usually relevant to contemporary times such as' historical invention' and' imagined culture.' It is generally agreed that the creation of collective memory in the 19th century was central to the growth of nationalistic sentiments: national cohesion was generated by inventing traditions such as banners, celebrations, and founding myths. We gave "authentic" traditions and heritage to the country which revealed their unique history and character.

Kurdish nationalism was not brought about by an explosion of primordial sentiment; it was not brought about by an instrumentalist class attempting to divide on ethnic grounds nor was it generated by individuals trying to exploit the population. It was a combination of all three because, unlike the German fascists, it did not go through an industrialization process but was focused on a response to other revolutions. It can

be seen that the Kurdish national identity was not only reactive but also aggressive and therefore required a fresh approach to the analysis of Kurdish nationalism, one that takes into consideration the complexities peculiar to the Kurdish situation.

Place identity is a term that has been used since the 1970's to describe an individuals personal identity in relation to their physical environment. These can be current or historical in that we feel connected to archeological landmarks, schools we went to, places we worked and our current sense of belonging to home. In the Kurdish case, this is something as simple as being proud of being born in Kurdistan and not Iraq. Place identify in the Kurdish context is very much based on Proshansky's 'dimensions of the self' to which we have added 'dimensions of the other'[143]. What our research has shown is that Kurdish place identify is very much based on what Kurds are not (i.e. Iraqi or Arab) which is not to diminish the importance of Kurdish identity but to show that it is a reaction to Iraqi or Arab identity influences.   For the Kurds, place is of critical important as much of the conflict that has arisen in its history has bene brought about by a conflict of place in the form of territorial boundaries of Kurdistan. This conflict has not only been limited to the boundaries of the four states in which Kurds reside but also more recently to the wider Kurdish diasporah. Such reactive trans-nationalism reflects the homeland's security from a distance, and a reaction to the homogenization of Iraqi identities that so many Kurds fear. It does not mean a thing to an Iraqi or a Turk born and raised in the UK that a war of origin is taking place in some remote corner of the world where their parents or grandparents were born. However, as mentioned in the previous

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[143] As previously stated this is down to the importance of others on an individuals identity development.

segment on post-memory, reactive nationalism, or what we term ' guerrilla nationalism,' occurs through ethnicities and frontiers. This guerrilla nationalism in the context of place has been shown to be evident in the Kurdish example in that what place means for many Kurds represents their national and ethnic identity and any changes to those places could threaten their very identity. This is manifested in the opposition to those traditionally Kurdish places being occupied by non Kurds, namely Arabs.

Identity is often considered an inward looking process looking at what Proshansky called the 'dimensions of the self' but what this chapter has found is that the 'dimensions of the other' are of equal importance. The 'dimensions of the other ' Whilst conflicts between the 'self' and the 'other' occur when discussing identity in general, the Kurdish case has shown that in Iraq there appears to be an 'identity war' taking place on many fronts.

Closely linked to or sense of attachment to place are the influences of our spatial surroundings and the way we express ourselves in the form of language, clothing, national symbols, songs, and tattoos. Our choice of clothing and use of language gives a certain impression of how we identify ourselves, whether we are traditional, modern, native to an area, our religious beliefs etc. In much the same way as place identity and dimensions of the self, spatial identity in the Kurdish case is also very much represented by dimensions of the other, how other non-Kurds express themselves in Kurdish areas. Again, Kurdish spatial identity was found to fit what we term 'guerilla nationalism' in that it is at the same time, reactionary and defensive, without organization or leadership. Historical and modern events have considerably

affected how Kurds choose to express themselves using clothing, language, national symbols and more. Guerrilla nationalism can also be seen in its mentality and reactions as racial or xenophobic, but what the underlying problem is just the apprehension of losing their own Kurdish identity and enhancing the identity of the other. When mentioned before, the clothing we carry, or the language we use, are so much of who we are.

What this research found was that the way in which Kurdish youth express themselves is very much influenced by the dimensions of the other, in this case as a reaction to attacks on their identity by the out-group, namely Iraqi Arabs. Conscious decisions to wear clothing not because they are practical or look good but because they represent ethnic identity shown that people are reacting to the identity expression of the out-group. As we saw in the previous chapters, even Kurdish songs are reactionary and defensive. Whereas typically, national anthems are about pride and national achievements, the Kurdish national anthem is about facing up to adversity and oppression, that the Kurds are still alive[144]. The defensive and reactive lyrics of the Kurdish national anthem support the claim that we have made that Kurdish identity and Kurdish nationalism is fitting with what we have termed 'Guerilla Nationalism'. This is also true when individuals we talked to expressed their enjoyment of actively seeking out social media posts by Turks and Arabs to antagonize and provoke them by displaying the PKK or Kurdish flag. Online space is therefore also very important to the Kurdish guerilla nationalist, it provides them an anonymous platform not only to react to abuse but also to garner support from around the world. Many of the respondents interviewed mentioned that the fight

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[144] To quote a line from the anthem 'Let no one say Kurds are dead, Kurds are alive'

against ISIS has resulted in many messages of support for the Kurdish cause by people all around the world. This non-state, unorganized, leaderless movement is very much a part of the guerilla nationalist mentality.

The protectionist and reactive nature of many of the responses have highlighted those individuals opinions on not only those 'dimensions of the other' but also the individuals own guerilla nationalist identity. There have been numerous references to historical events of ill treatment and genocide by many of the respondents which forms the basis of many of their beliefs but this is also added to examples of modern ill treatment. Modern examples of ill treatment experienced by those individuals only seek to confirm and reaffirm those historical events. The manifestation of spatial identity in the form of language, clothing, music, stories etc. The guerrilla nationalist takes the topic of space seriously and emphasizes the relation between it and culture as a means of communicating their culture towards the representation of the other's identity. Conversely, there are others that do not find the language as a challenge while putting emphasis on space as a means of identity speech. Given such a tradition of conflict and animosity between various ethnically related communities, it is safe to believe that such conflicts are increasing through the different classes. Social media has helped many Kurds to communicate and convey their identity to a broader public. A Kurd in one place has had no contact with another Kurd from another zone in the past. Such increased engagement has contributed to a better awareness of how many Kurds perceive their culture. This has culminated in Iraqi Kurds expressing interest in Turkey for the Kurds and presenting icons affiliated with Kurds there. Through time, in each of the four areas of Kurdistan, there has been a much greater knowledge and comprehension of recent things that have occurred to

the Kurds. Since this growing understanding of incidents, a stronger knowledge of the differences between the various areas of Kurdistan has emerged. Although in the past, Iraqi Kurds had assumed that Turkey's Kurds had no connection with them, there is nowadays an awareness that Kurds have undergone common ill-treatment incidents in both regions. This ease of communication has broadened the scope that people can interact with and in the Kurdish case, the individuals concerned are able to follow events happening to Kurds all over the world and they are now able to react and support them from anywhere.

What we wear can be both a conscious and subconscious decision, we might choose to wear an item of clothing that represents our ethnic identity or something that is just practical given the weather. Wearing Kurdish clothes, especially in an environment and time of national celebration and in response to the expression of identity by the other. What this research has shown is that many Kurds choose to wear Kurdish clothes, display a Kurdish flag, speak Kurdish as a response to displays of identity by the 'other'. This display of identity by Kurds is a conscious decision to promote and display their identity. This has been brought about as a result of a perceived threat to their national and ethnic identity by non Kurds. With the concept of identity being unlawful as defined by this author, there is a strong example of the value put upon identity. The connection put between a language and a terrorist attack is often quite clear given that the language is associated with violence. The militant nationalist style uses stories of previously bad treatment to further reinforce their own claim not just in their immediate region but also through boundaries where many Kurds reside.

This moves us onto the final elements of the influences on Kurdish identity, namely, the influence of what we call 'socialising agents'. As well as the physical place we grow up and live in, the sights and sounds we are influenced by, we are equally (if not more so) influenced by the people around us from parents, to friends, to politicians and even strangers. The very language that our parents talk to us in will impact on the way we identify ourselves. At school we are subjected to different socialising agents and simply by mixing with the 'wrong crowd' our whole future could take a different course, people power to influence others carries on after school when we talk/listen to or befriend religious or community leaders or politicians. Parents 'hand down' their own experiences onto their children and as such, the events that happened to them are relived as actual experiences in their children. Those children who were not even born during the time of Saddam often talk of events from that time as recollections, spoke in the first person with the use of 'we' when discussing historical family events. Every effort to suppress Kurdish nationalism has rendered Kurdish nationalism more powerful. A similar trend has been shown in Turkey, Iran, and Syria, where intervention has strengthened the very nationalistic tendencies it has tried to undermine, this is all very much in line with what we identify as guerrilla nationalism whose external (state) pressure consolidates internal (ethnic) unity and thus galvanizes the Kurdish "group."

There is also an acknowledgement from the respondents that the memory handed down from their parents is part and parcel of being Kurdish and that one day, they too will have memories of their own to hand down to their own children. Children absorb the experiences of their parents even if they are not told to them directly, simply overhearing historical events will mean that children internalise and take

ownership of those experiences as their own. Many of the individuals that were interviewed during the course of the research referred to their parents and extended families experiences of guerrilla warfare during the government of Saddam Hussein. Those experiences of guerrilla warfare have since bene passed down to their children who often relive those experiences as their own. The difference between the experiences of parents and children however is that whilst their parents experienced a physical guerilla war, their children are expressing themselves in what can be called guerilla nationalism.

In Kurdistan, politics and media are both interchangeable and synonymous with each other as there are no major media outlets that are not supported by and affiliated with a particular party. This represents another major influencing factor when it comes to Kurdish identity development. With little access to international news in the past, people only had the local media to rely on for information, even in the age of technology and social media, many don't know or understand English and so cannot consume more reliable non-biased news. This means that those individuals that do not have access to free media that is not politically biased are influenced solely by Kurdish media outlets which are almost exclusively either politically influenced or work to promote nationalist sentiments. These often include stories and memories of previous acts of genocide and abuse directed at Kurds and stories of heroic actions. Previous conflicts and wars have meant that it would be very hard to find any individual in Kurdistan that did not have at least a guerrilla fighter in their family and in many cases victims of genocide and war. What this has meant is that for everyone growing up in Kurdistan, young and old, there are people in their families with stories of political conflict and/or victims of torture and abuse. In cases

of political and social attacks on Kurdish identity, what this research has found is that respondents draw on shared or inherited memories of political conflict even though they have not lived through them themselves.

Nationalism and national identity has traditionally been studied in the context of primordialism, instrumentalism and constructivism and whilst Kurdish national identity is no different to any other, the argument that is made here is that a new approach is needed in the way in which it is studied. Kurdish nationalism and national identity is made up of all three forms mentioned above, it is at the same time primordial, instrumental and constructed but in this study a different approach was taken which has not previously bene done in the field of national identity. It was decided that identity in general is influenced by place, space and socialising agents and these three influences work in tandem with each other to form any given national identity.

Although only one other study (Aziz 2009) has previously been conducted on identity in Iraqi Kurdistan, the quantitative research method adopted by Aziz had a number of methodological drawbacks. This particular study greatly adds to the debate as the only qualitative research on the subject. To date there has been no qualitative study on Kurdish identity influences of post Saddam youth, we believe that this is critical given that during Saddam's reign, identity, expression of ethnicity, anti government sentiment, and education was so controlled. During this time it was difficult to express any form of identity that went against what the state or the Baath party had sanctioned. Now, with relative freedom, Kurdish youth are subjected to many more influences on their identity both past and present. They are also almost entirely free

to express their identity not only in their immediate locality but also on the world stage.

What this research claims is that firstly, Kurdish identity cannot be viewed from one point of influence, it is not possible to research the impact of place, space or socialising agents on Kurdish identity alone. By studying the impact of the physical surrounding such as the school we went too for example, we must also study the language lessons were taught in and the teachers who taught there. By studying the impact of language on Kurdish identify we must also study the place this language was spoken and other people who spoke it. Also, by studding the impact of parents on identity we must also study the place in which the child was brought up and the non-physical surroundings such as language etc. Identity is therefore not something that can be studied in isolation and there must not only be an intersectional approach but a cross-intersectional approach to studying it, its influences are intertwined.

This can also be argued for the study of identity in general, whether it be ethnic identity or corporate identity. If for example we compared an emergency disaster response organization and an investment firm, the place, space and socialising agents influences will be completely different and will therefore have different influences on people working there. On the one hand you might have casually dressed staff, traveling to different places and people with a variety of cultures less driven by financial rewards. On the other hand you might have men and women in suits, in the heart of the financial district, competing with each other for financial rewards. These influences combine together to make up the organization, it would

not be the same organization if for example the issue of financial rewards were reversed and the disaster response organization was purely motivated by money.

The argument and example used above is the main contribution to knowledge of this research, as we have deconstructed Kurdish identity into these three influencing factors that must be studied in association with each other, we must also use this method to study other forms of identify. This study has contributed to a greater understanding of Kurdish identify in general in that we claim that Kurdish identity and nationalism is simultaneously both reactionary and defensive, fitting into the term we have called 'guerilla nationalism'.

As has been previously discussed, Kurdish nationalist history is full of examples of the more dominant state in which Kurds reside implementing policies that seek to oppress and subdue Kurdish national identity. These policies have been met on several occasions with actions that have sought to preserve Kurdish identity, actions that were not led or organized by Kurdish political parties or organisations but by people themselves. They were uncoordinated, irregular and they were a response to established states nationalist activities.

This led to our definition of 'guerilla nationalism':

"Irregular, uncoordinated nationalist activities carried out by non-state actors in an often defensive and/or reactive response to the established states nationalist activities and policies".

Whilst the Kurdish case has been used as an example of guerilla nationalism, it is not limited to this particular ethnic group. The term can also be used to describe

other minority ethnic groups that have taken physical steps to preserve their

identities in the face of more dominant oppressive nation states.

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