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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF SOCIAL, HUMAN AND MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES

Geography and Environment

**NATION, BORDERING AND IDENTITY ON THE BORDER BETWEEN
TURKEY AND IRAQ**

by

Bilal GORENTAS

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

SEPTEMBER 2016

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

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BILAL GORENTAS

This thesis explores the impact of the border between Turkey and Iraq on Kurdish identity. Since the demarcation of the border in 1926, both Turkey and Iraq have struggled to accommodate their Kurdish citizens into their common national communities. There have been numerous bloody conflicts on both sides. As of September 2016, the Iraqi Kurdistan President repeatedly announced that it was time for Kurdistan to demand independence. He stated that 'the time has come to redraw Middle East boundaries'. On the Turkish side of the border, a new series of bloody conflicts began at Turkey's Iraq border after the peace talks between the Turkish state and the Kurdish Worker's Party [or PKK] paused in July 2015.

Kurds have been exposed to different nation-state building processes with different notions of inclusion and exclusion in Iraq and Turkey. Kurds in each state have had a different socio-political environment within which to construct and practice their identity. Based on original data collected during a rarely encountered peaceful period on both sides of the border, this thesis addresses three important research gaps in the literature. (1) It brings Kurds' voices, self-understanding and self-narratives to the existing body of knowledge. The thesis explores how Kurds themselves perceive their nation and construct their identity. It shows how different socio-political environments in each state have shaped a different Kurdish identity and discusses the implications of these differences. (2) The thesis also explores how Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds perceive their ruling states as well as construct their identity in relation to them. (3) It explores how Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds perceive their nation and narratively construct their identity in relation to each other. The thesis examines how bordering, as a process of socio-spatial homogenisation and differentiation, works on each side of the border between Turkey and Iraq.

Table of Content

ABSTRACT	i
List of figures	v
DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
Part 1	
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Research Aim and Objectives	5
1.2 Document Outline	6
Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
Introduction.....	9
2.1 Nation and Nationalism	10
2.1.1 Defining the terms	10
2.1.2 The Origin of Nations and Nationalism	15
2.1.3 Types of Nationalism.....	21
2.1.4 Conclusion.....	26
2.2 Border and Identity.....	27
2.2.1 Studying Borders: A Theoretical Framework	27
2.2.2 Understanding Borders	29
2.2.3 Bordering and Identity.....	36
2.2.4 Conclusion.....	38
2.3 Kurds and the Border.....	40
2.3.1 Before the Border: Kurds before the First World War	40
2.3.2 Kurds in Iraq: The South side of the Border	41
2.3.3 Kurds in Turkey: The North Side of the Border	50
2.4 Conclusion: Revisiting the Objectives	63
Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY	68
Introduction.....	68
3.1 Conceptual Framework	68
3.1.1 The Theoretical Assumptions.....	68

3.1.2 Narratives and Identity	70
3.2 Research Design.....	72
3.3 Data Collection and Sampling	73
3.3.1 Asking Identity.....	75
3.4 Data Analysis	76
3.5 Limits of the Research	79
Part 2	
THE NORTH SIDE OF THE BORDER: KURDS IN TURKEY	85
Introduction	85
Chapter 4: The Region.....	85
Introduction	85
4.1 The Words.....	88
4.2 The Past.....	95
4.3 The Symbols	103
Conclusion	109
Chapter 5: The Rest of the State: Turkey	113
Introduction	113
5.1 Prejudice and Discrimination	113
5.2 Integration and Disintegration	121
Conclusion	126
Chapter 6: The Other Side of the Border: Iraqi Kurds.....	129
Introduction	129
6.1 The 'Denied' Border	129
6.2 The Symbolic Meanings of the South	134
6.3 The Image of the South and Interiorising the Border	140
Conclusion	150
PART 3	
THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE BORDER: KURDS IN IRAQ	152
Introduction	152
Chapter 7: The Region: Kurdistan Region of Iraq.....	152

Introduction.....	152
7.1 The Words	153
7.2 The Past	160
Conclusion	167
Chapter 8: The Rest of the State: Iraq.....	169
Introduction.....	169
8.1 Perceptions of Iraq	169
8.2 Kurdish Identity in the Iraqi Context	175
Conclusion	179
Chapter 9: The Other Side of the Border: Turkish Kurds	182
Introduction.....	182
9.1 The Sameness	182
9.2 Perceptions of Turkish Kurds	187
9.3 The Internalised Border	196
Conclusion	205
PART 4	
Chapter 10: CONCLUSION.....	207
10.1 The thesis in Context	207
10.2 Discussions of the Key Findings.....	209
Regional Dimensions	209
State Dimensions	212
Cross-Border Dimensions	215
10.3 Contributions of the Study.....	219
Appendices	221
Appendix 1: Ethical Consideration.....	221
Appendix 2: Interview Guideline.....	225
Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet.....	227
Appendix 4: Participant Information Script	228
Bibliography	229

List of figures

Figure 1: Kurdish inhabited area in Iraq	42
Figure 2: Geographical Regions in Turkey	86
Figure 3: Kurdish inhabited area in Turkey	87

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Part 1

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the impact of the border between Turkey and Iraq on Kurdish identity. Kurds are often referred to as the largest stateless nation in the contemporary world (Chaliand, 1993, Gunter, 2008, Vali, 1998). An estimated thirty million Kurds reside in an area that straddles the frontiers of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. Although this area has never constituted a definite political entity, and therefore cannot be precisely defined, it has traditionally been known as Kurdistan. Since the division of Kurdistan after the First World War, Kurds have been exposed to different nation-state building processes with different notions of inclusion and exclusion. Kurds in each state have had a different socio-political environment within which to construct and practice their identity.

Kurds have a long history of denial, oppression, marginalisation, persecution, war and even genocide in this divided land. Throughout these four states, Kurdish nationalist movements became more robust over time, particularly in Turkey and Iraq. Turkish Kurds constitute nearly half of the Kurdish population in the area, and the Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey has been one of the most active and has been involved in the bloodiest of struggles. In July 2015, the Turkish government suspended the ailing peace talks with the Kurdish Worker's Party (or PKK) that began in early 2013, as an attempt to both accommodate its Kurdish citizens into the common national community and avoid new ethnic conflicts and possible territorial losses. The Kurdish nationalist mobilisation in Iraq, on the other hand, has been the most robust, and has influenced Kurds and the central governments in Turkey, Iran and Syria. This is because the Kurdistan region in Iraq is a constitutionally recognised autonomous region, run by the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Recent developments in the Middle East, largely owing to the rapid advances of Islamic State (IS or ISIS), have drawn increasing global attention to the Kurdish people. On 29th October 2014, a convoy of Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga fighters crossed the Turkish border, and passed through the predominantly Kurd-populated Turkish territory en route to the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobani, to

Introduction

try to help Syrian Kurds break an Islamic State siege. There were many pictures in the press showing Turkish Kurds greeting the Iraqi Kurdish fighters as heroes when they crossed the Turkish-Iraqi border. Crowds of Turkish Kurds, estimated in their thousands, were cheering and waving pro-Kurdish flags, banners and symbols as the Iraqi Kurdish fighters travelled through their towns en route to help the Syrian Kurds. Images of these moments raised not just Turkey and Iraq's concerns about their long lasting problematic relations with their Kurdish citizens, but also drew increasing global attention to Kurds and their connections across these borders, as well as their relationship with their ruling states. These events raised the question of whether there is a shared perception of a Kurdish nation and identity among Kurds who have been separated by this state border for the last 90 years.

Since the demarcation of the border in 1926, both Turkey and Iraq have struggled to accommodate their Kurdish citizens into their common national communities. There have been numerous bloody conflicts on both sides. As of June 2016, the Iraqi Kurdistan President has repeatedly announced that it is time for Kurdistan to demand independence. He stated that the 'time has come to redraw Middle East boundaries' (Chulov, 2016). On the Turkish side of the border, since the peace talks between the Turkish state and the Kurdish Worker's party [or PKK] paused in July 2015, a new series of bloody conflicts began at Turkey's Iraq border. The Turkish President stated that 'It is not possible for us to continue the peace process with those who threaten our national unity and brotherhood' (MacAskill, 2015). All of these developments indicate that these problematic relations between these two states and their Kurdish citizens remain unresolved and the future of the region remains unclear. In order to understand these developments and predict their possible consequences, it is important to understand how Kurds in these two states perceive their identity, their ruling states, and each other.

Kurds have also been receiving increasing academic attention. There are many respected works on Kurds and Kurdish inhabited areas (see, McDowall, 2004, van Bruinessen, 1992, Gunter, 2008, Chaliand, 1993). There are also many researchers who have studied Kurdish nationalist movements and identity in this divided land (see, Yildiz, 2007, Natali, 2000, Toktamis, 2007, Yegen, 1996, Hassanpour, 2003, Ozoglu, 2004, Vali, 1998). As will be reviewed thoroughly in the literature review section, this growing academic literature

provides valuable information about Kurds, their history, language, culture, identity, their political relations with their ruling states, and so forth. However, three gaps in the existing literature have been identified, and addressed in this thesis.

1. An important question left unanswered is that of how Kurds themselves perceive and narratively construct their nation and identity. There are some respected studies on the different socio-political conditions in which Kurdish identity evolved in each state (Natali, 2000). Yet, the question left unanswered again is how these different socio-political conditions impact the perceptions of Kurdish nation and identity on each side of the border. What makes this research significantly different is that it also brings Kurds' voices, their self-understanding and self-narratives to the existing body of knowledge on Kurds, Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish identity. It will, thus, fill a large gap in the literature.
2. The existing literature also provides valued insights into the problematic relations between Kurds and the states to which they belong (Gunter, 2008, Van Bruinessen, 2000a, Chaliand, 1993, Kirişci, 2011, Yegen et al., 2011). These scholars have examined Iraq and Turkey's nation building strategies that created the conditions in which Kurdish nationalism and identity developed and was shaped. Nonetheless, there is a lack of knowledge about how Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds perceive their ruling state as well as construct their identity in relation to their ruling state. These questions are important as exploring how Kurds perceive their state and how they perceive Kurdish identity in the context of their ruling state will provide valuable insights into the extent of their integration into the common national communities in Turkey and Iraq. It will also highlight the ways in which Kurds themselves perceive these long-lasting problematic relations, and how these relations have impacted Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity.
3. Another important question left unanswered is how Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds perceive the border that divides them. As will be explained in the literature review, borders are understood not only as static physical lines that separate social, political and economic spaces, but also as the processes through which social-spatial differentiations and

Introduction

categories occur (Newman, 2006). Considering the 90 year-old history of the border between Turkey and Iraq, the important question that arises is how the border, as a socio-spatial differentiation, works on each side. The question of bordering is also important because understanding how Turkish and Iraqi Kurds perceive their nation and construct their identity in relation to each other will provide insights into the possibility of a future union. Further details on the research gaps will be given at the end of the literature review section.

A further important aspect of this research is its timing. The research is based on comprehensive and original data derived from an ethnographic field study. The data for this research was collected between June 2013 and July 2014. Since the demarcation of the border, both sides have witnessed numerous bloody conflicts that made it difficult to carry out any fieldwork. In Turkey, the long lasting conflicts between the state and the PKK ceased in January 2013, and the announcement of the peace talks was made in March 2013 (Reynolds, 2013). Hence, when the fieldwork was carried out, seven months had already passed without any conflict. The conflict resumed in July 2015. In Iraq, the Kurdistan region was the 'safe haven' in the country since the 2003 invasion of Iraq. However, the rapid advance of IS through Iraq in June 2014 brought instability and insecurity to the region. New conflicts started between Iraqi Kurds and the IS. The data for this research was, therefore, collected during a rarely encountered peaceful period on both sides. Thus, the research holds a very valuable set of original data. Further information regarding its timing and implications will be explained in greater detail in the methodology chapter.

1.1 Research Aim and Objectives

The overarching aim of the research is to explore the impact of the border between Turkey and Iraq on Kurdish identity.

In order to achieve this aim, the research addresses two questions:

1. How do Turkish Kurds perceive and narratively construct their nation and identity?
2. How do Iraqi Kurds perceive and narratively construct their nation and identity?

Both questions are viewed from three perspectives:

- a. Within the region they reside
- b. In relation to the state to which they belong
- c. In relation to the other side of the border

There are three sets of objectives in this research.

The first set of objectives are (i) to explore how Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds perceive the regions within which they reside and how they narratively construct their identity in relation to these regions, (ii) to uncover the key narratives through which they construct their nation and identity, and (iii) to analyse what Kurdish identity means for Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds, and which feature of Kurdish identity has come to prominence over others on each side of the border.

The second set of objectives are (i) to explore how Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds perceive the states they belong to and the rest of the community within their respective countries, and (ii) to discover how Kurds place their nation and identity in the contexts of their ruling states.

The third set of objectives are (i) to explore how Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds perceive the border, and its place in their perceptions of nation and identity, (ii) to understand how Turkish and Iraqi Kurds perceive each other and where they place each other in their perceptions of nation and identity, and (iii) to find out how the bordering processes, as on-going socio-spatial differentiations, work on each side of the border.

1.2 Document Outline

This thesis is divided into three main parts, with three chapters in each part. This first part begins with an introductory chapter that contains an overview of the research context and ends by stating the research aim and questions.

Chapter 2 contains a review of the academic literature, positioning the research in the context of broader academic work. The research is positioned within three research domains: Nationalism Studies, Border Studies and Kurdish Studies. It thus consists of three sections. It begins by introducing the existing arguments about the terms ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism’. The second section analyses the ever- expanding body of literature in border studies. Finally, it provides a chronological analysis of the socio-political contexts in Iraq and Turkey, within which Kurdish nationalism has developed and Kurdish identity is shaped. The chapter ends by identifying the gaps in the literature that this research aims to fill.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology. It opens with an outline of the conceptual framework and philosophical assumptions ascribed to the study, before continuing with an overview of the research design. Each stage of the data collection process is explained, followed by a discussion of the approach to data analysis.

Part 2 reports on the research findings on the Turkish side of the border. It consists of three chapters. Each chapter explores the Turkish Kurds’ perceptions of nation and identity from a different perspective, and ends by collating all of the findings and discussions and drawing key conclusions.

Chapter 4 explores the Turkish Kurds’ perceptions of nation and identity in relation to the Kurdish-inhabited area in Turkey. It begins by exploring how Turkish Kurds perceive their nation and identity through analysing their word choices. It then explores the key narratives through which Turkish Kurds construct their identity. Finally, it examines the meanings attributed to Kurdish identity by Turkish Kurds.

Chapter 5 investigates the Turkish Kurds’ perceptions of nation and identity in relation to the Turkish state. It has two sections. The first section explores the ways in which Turkish Kurds perceive the Turkish state and Turkishness. The

second analyses how Turkish Kurds situate Kurdish identity in the context of the Turkish state.

Chapter 6 explores the Turkish Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity in relation to Iraqi Kurds. It consists of three sections. The first section examines how Turkish Kurds perceive the border. The second scrutinises the meanings attributed to the Iraqi Kurdish region. The third explores the Turkish Kurds' perceptions of the Iraqi Kurdistan region, and the ways in which the bordering process works on the Turkish side of the border.

Part 3 reports on the research findings on the Iraqi side of the border. It explores Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity from three dimensions: regional, state and cross-border. It is, thus, divided into three chapters. Each chapter analyses Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity from a different dimension, and ends by collating all the findings and discussions and drawing key conclusions

Chapter 7 examines the ways in which Iraqi Kurds perceive their nation and identity in relation to the Iraqi Kurdistan region. It begins by analysing Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of this region, and then searches the key narratives through which Iraqi Kurds construct their identity. It ends by investigating the meanings attributed to Kurdish identity by Iraqi Kurds.

Chapter 8 examines how Iraqi Kurds perceive their nation and narratively construct their identity in relation to the Iraqi state. It starts with analysing Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of the Iraqi state. It also explores the ways in which Iraqi Kurds position Kurdish identity in the context of the Iraqi state.

Chapter 9 explores the Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity in relation to Turkish Kurds. It firstly focuses on the ways in which Iraqi Kurds perceive the border, and then explores the image of Turkish Kurds in the Iraqi Kurds' narratives. Finally, it focuses on the way in which the bordering process works on the Iraqi side of the border.

Chapter 10 is the conclusions chapter. It starts with revisiting the context within which the research was conducted, and then discusses the key findings from the previous chapters, in particular by comparing and contrasting the results from both sides of the border. It ends by summarising the original contributions of the thesis.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The thesis is situated within three research areas: Nationalism Studies, Border Studies and Kurdish Studies. This chapter reviews these literatures in three interconnected research domains.

The first section focuses on the nationalism studies. It begins with exploring the meanings of the terms 'nation' and 'nationalism' in the literature. It seeks the origins of nations and nationalism and identifies some existing typologies of nationalism.

The second section analyses the literature in the border studies. Initially, a conceptual framework that clarifies how to approach and study borders is drawn. Constantly evolving concerns in the border studies from a historical perspective are identified. Finally, this thesis focuses on the concept of 'bordering' and the relation between borders and identity.

The final section provides an extensive review of the literatures in the Kurdish studies. It starts with analysing the arguments about the origin of Kurds and the Kurdish nationalism before the First World War. It then focuses on the socio-political contexts on each side of the border from which Kurdish identity was evolving. The analysis does not only focus on the events occurred in the past but also pays particular attention to the opportunities for Kurds to construct, develop and practice their national identity before and after the border.

Through these three sections, this chapter aims to provide a theoretical framework for the research: It defines the key terms in these studies and provides a context for the research; it shows where the research fits into the existing body of knowledge; and it contributes to the understanding and knowledge of these three interconnected fields.

2.1 Nation and Nationalism

This first section is designed to review the continually expanding literature in the nation and nationalism studies. Three key themes have been observed in this controversial topic. These three themes have been shaped by three questions:

1. What is nation and nationalism?
2. What is the origin of nation and nationalism?
3. Are there different types of nationalism?

This section will firstly attempt to define and explain the terms, followed by the investigation of the origin of nation and nationalism. Finally, this section will focus on the different typologies of nationalism in the literature.

2.1.1 Defining the terms

Defining the concept of the 'nation' is undoubtedly one of the most problematic and contentious parts of the literature. As Tilly and Ardant said the term was 'one of the most puzzling and tendentious items in the political lexicon' (Tilly and Ardant, 1975, p. 6). Hence, there have been many different explanations of the term. After discussing two 'provisional definitions' of the term, Ernest Gellner suggests that 'it is probably best to approach this problem by using this term without attempting too much in the way of formal definition' (Gellner, 2006, p. 7). Yet, many scholars have attempted to define this phenomenon from different perspectives. All these attempts can be analysed in three main categories. The first category includes those who define the term by 'objective' factors such as gene, language, history and territory. The second one consists of those whose definitions also include some 'subjective' factors such as perception, attitudes and sentiments, in addition to 'objective' ones. Finally, the last category is composed of those who attempt to define the term by 'subjective' factors and approach the term as a completely modern construction. This categorisation is, by no means, exhaustive. However, it helps to investigate the literature from a clearer perspective.

The first group is 'primordialism'. Primordial definitions are usually based on some 'unquestioned truths'. The first thing that they use to define the term is 'gene'. The term 'nation' is usually defined as a community of people of the

same descent. The truth here is that biologically there is no pure race. As Bauer reminds us 'the Italians are descended from Etruscans, Romans, Celts, Teutons, Greeks and Saracens; French of today are from Gauls, Romans, Britons and Teutons; Germans are from Teutons, Celts and Slavs' (Bauer, 1996, p. 39). Therefore, as Renan (1995, p. 148) states, the ethnic considerations have nothing to do with the formation of the modern nations.

If the gene cannot be the centre of the definition, then the second 'objective' factor would be 'language'. Is it the language that combines people into nation? Snyder says that 'people who speak the same language are irresistibly drawn together' (1976, p. 21, quoted in Billig, 1995). It should be accepted that if one analyses the modern nation formations, the language would be one of the most important factors to distinguish the nations from each other. Hence, social scientists often assume that language is the central pillar of the nation (Edwards, 1991, p. 269). This is somehow more understandable as it is comparatively a more visible 'objective' marker. Yet, there is no such a unique language. There are language families, which are subdivided, intertwined and overlapping. Therefore, what was said about 'gene' applies also to language. Here, Renan (1995, p. 150) also reminds us that although the USA and England speak the same language, they are not on that account a single nation. Switzerland, on the contrary, has no common language yet is a nation. Hence, language is an important 'objective' element in the definitions of the modern nations; it may invite union, however, it does not necessarily compel them (Renan, 1995, p. 150). Again, if it is the language that combines people into a nation, then if the borders separate the members of such groups, these borders are arbitrary, unnatural and unjust.

The final 'objective' factor to discuss is history. All nations have their own history, this is understandably and undoubtedly one of the most important elements of a nation. As Hobsbawm states 'nations without a past are contradictions in term, what makes nation is the past; what justifies one nation against others is the past' (1992a, p. 3). Each nation has its own common history, which is unique and antique and it is mostly full of victories and heroes. Hence, history has a crucial importance in any explanations of any nation. Yet, the history here is basically the self-interpretation of nations themselves. When Renan talks about the significance of history on nations, he

Nation and Nationalism

states that 'to forget and to get one's history wrong are essential factors in the making of a nation' (Renan, 1995, p. 145). Hence, the history that nationalists want here is not the one that any professional academic historian should provide (Hobsbawm, 1992b). The national histories that have been written by nationalists, therefore, are nothing more than a common myth (Gellner, 2006, p. 47). All these attempts to create a history basically aim to create a common sense, in which the nation is a group of people who are naturally drawn together by the same 'gene', 'language' and 'history' in the same territory with a 'long-delayed political destiny' (Gellner, 2006, p. 47). That is why Anderson (1991, p. 5) identified one of the paradoxes of the literature as 'the objective modernity of nations to the historian's eye vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists.

Those 'primordialist' definitions of a nation that include 'gene', 'language' and 'history' are based on the perceptions that nations are given, unchangeable basic human categories. Stalin's definition of nation can be an example of these kinds of definitions who stress 'objective' factors. According to Joseph Stalin: 'a nation is an historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture' (1913, *Marxism and the National Question*). Although such 'naturalising' discourse can be overpowering, particularly in the essentialist forms of nationalism, it is now clear that these so-called 'objective' factors are not enough to explain what a nation is and how the national borders are drawn. Therefore, if these so-called 'objective' elements cannot explain the phenomenon, there should be some 'subjective' factors.

The second group's definitions are those that combine these 'objective' factors with some 'subjective' ones. This approach has mainly been propounded by Anthony Smith (1986). Smith accepts that the 'objective' definitions have always excluded some widely accepted cases of nations; thus, they fail to include some nations (Smith, 2001, p. 11). He also finds pure 'subjective' definitions too large to explain a single nation form and to distinguish nations from other kinds of communities such as tribes, city-states and empires (Smith, 2001). As a solution he combines these 'objective' factors with 'subjective' ones and calls this approach 'ethnosymbolism'.

This approach provides more acceptable explanations. In his definition, Smith firstly attempts to differentiate 'ethnie' and 'nation'. He defines nation as 'a named human community occupying a homeland and having common myths and shared history, a common public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties for all members' (Smith, 1991, p. 43), 'ethnie' is in turn defined as 'a named human community connected to a homeland, possessing common myths of ancestry, shared memories, one or two more elements of shared culture, and a measure of solidarity, at least among the elites'. Smith accepts that there is no direct link between these 'ethnies' and modern nations. Smith recognises that many 'ethnies' have not transformed into modern nations. However, he argues that the modern nations are originated from pre-existing ethnies (Smith, 2001). Here, he attempts to explain how these 'ethnies' are required to turn into nations by many transformations of modernity. Therefore, he gives special attention to 'myths and symbols' in order to explain how these 'ethnies' become nations (Smith, 1986, p. 15-16).

All Smith's attempts might be seen as a sensible middle way between the primordial views and the modernist approaches as he attempts to explain nations with a combination of ancient 'ethnies' and modern 'myths and symbols'. However, Breuilly (1996, p. 150) argues, searching the origins of modern nations into past 'ethnies' is not very helpful to any understanding of nationalism. To become a nation an 'ethnie' must undergo many changes which transform its structure and mentality and throughout this process it absorbs many alien elements and a never-ending flux of influences from other cultures (Özkirimli, 2003). Smith (2001) argues that three fundamental elements of modern nations are absent in pre-modern 'ethnies': legal; political and economic identity. However, as Breuilly (1996) states, these are the principal institutions in which national identity can achieve form.

Therefore, it should be accepted that nationalism, both as an ideology and movement, is a completely modern phenomenon. It can be accepted that nationalists use the myths and symbols of the past to build a national identity yet it is very difficult to evaluate their impact on nation building since in many cases nationalists invent these myths. Smith also dismisses those nations who do not have any ethnic formations, like the USA. Therefore, digging into the past to find the antique sources of the modern nations does not facilitate to

Nation and Nationalism

explain them. These attempts might even cause the resuscitation of nationalism (Özkirimli, 2003). Hence, if any of these so-called 'objective' criteria in the definition of a nation cause failure, then, the 'subjective' ones should be the decisive ones.

The final group consists of those whose definitions are based on the 'subjective' factors, such as perceptions and attitudes, and approach to the term 'nation' as a modern construct. Until now, this thesis has argued all these definitions include any of these so-called objective factors, which refer to naturally or materially given bonds, such as gene, language and history, have failed to explain the phenomenon by some means or other. Therefore, the terms can best be explained by 'subjective' factors, by which are referred to socially and discursively constructed bonds. The first thing that should be accepted is that 'nations' have exclusively emerged in a particular, and historically recent, period (Hobsbawm, 1992b, p. 9). This means that nations have a historically recent beginning. In this sense, if they are not a natural and primordial phenomenon, then they should have been created or, in Anderson's term, 'imagined' (1991). Hence, nations should have been engendered by nationalism, not the other way around (Gellner, 2006, p. 54). As an example of 'subjective' definition, Anderson (1991, p. 6) defines the term as 'an imagined political community- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'.

These 'subjective' definitions do not mean that there was no race or language or any culture. There were definitely many pre-existing cultures and languages. However, they were 'often subtly grouped, shading into each other, overlapping, intertwined; there exist, usually but not always, political units of all shapes and sizes' (Gellner, 2006, p. 47). What nationalism does is to use these pre-existing cultures and to transform them radically into nations. Histories are created, common languages are constructed, traditions are invented and racial purities are restored. In most cases, there is a dominant culture and all other sub-cultures and languages are assimilated and dissolved into this dominant culture. In some cases, there is not even a single 'ethnie' to make a link to any pre-existing culture; or in some cases, there is a 'poly-ethnic nation' that comprises separate 'ethnies' that have somehow come together. A nation can be built by redefining 'an existing ethnic group as the nation into which everybody should fuse' [by 'incorporation'] or creating 'a new national category through the amalgamation of a variety of ethnic groups [by

‘amalgamation’]’ (Wimmer, 2013, p. 50). It is in this regard that Bauer (1996, p. 43) defines nation as a ‘community of destiny’. Therefore, the pattern of these ‘imagined communities’ cannot be explained only by difference of languages or distinct ‘ethnies’ and cultures. Nations, however, can be explained by the way they have been imagined (Anderson, 1991). Hence, if they are not natural and God-given ways of classifying people, then the important question that rises here is that why, how and when nations have emerged.

2.1.2 The Origin of Nations and Nationalism

There have been many different theories of the origin of nation and nationalism in the literature and all these differences mostly depend on the ways they define and approach the terms. All these theories can also be analysed into the same three categories created in the previous section. These are the primordial approach; the ethno-symbolist approach; and the modernist approach. In this section particular attention will be given to the last approach as the terms are accepted to be historically very modern.

The first approach to the emergence of nationalism is the ‘primordial’ approach. The basic idea here is that nations have existed for a long time, even from the beginning of humankind. Here, nations are accepted to be God-given ‘natural’ communities and one can easily trace back their history throughout centuries. The problem with this approach is simply the lack of evidence (Breuilly, 1996, p. 149). It seems that it is not possible to find any nation formations or nationalist movements in pre-modern societies. Even Smith, as an ethno-symbolist, sought some pre-modern civilisations, like ancient Egypt, Greeks and Jews, and argued that they were far from being nations in the contemporary sense of the word (Özirimli, 2003, p. 81). It is a historical fact that many of the empires and states had diverse populations. Hence, it can be argued that ethnicity was not as important as today. When Zubaida criticises the primordial approach, he states that ‘the state and military apparatus of the Ottoman Empire was by no means exclusively Turkish –it included various Caucasian ethnicities, Albanians, Kurds and Turkish-speaking populations were not favoured over the others’ (Zubaida, 1978, p. 54). The primordial approach is not even a nationalist theory; it is more a view that is mostly held by

Nation and Nationalism

nationalists themselves. Some scholars even suggest that the sociological usage of the primordial approach should be abandoned because of its passivity and anti-intellectualism (Eller and Coughlan, 1993, p. 200). However, as Tilley argues, this approach enables us to explore how these meanings are produced and reproduced, and why 'such knowledge systems suggest themselves as 'givens', prior to individual thought and action' (Tilley, 1997, p. 503). In this sense, it seems not quite reasonable to follow Eller and Coughlan's suggestion. Yet, it should be accepted that nationalism, both as politics and ideology, is very modern.

A more acceptable version of this is the 'ethno-symbolist' approach. This approach suggests that nations are not pure modern phenomena and thus, modernism tells only half of the story of nationalism. The other half, which refers to the pre-1789s, was omitted (Armstrong, 1982, Smith, 2001, Hastings, 1997). They argue that the existence of nation and nationalism go even before the sixteenth century (Smith, 2001, p. 97). In this view, the origin of the nations should be sought in earlier ethnic communities. Smith (1986) seeks the origin of nations by tracing their genealogy into pre-ethnic foundations. He argues that nations were formed on the basis of ethnic cores. However, it does not explain the nations who formed without immediate ethnic antecedents. Therefore, he attempts to explain them by the idea of an 'ethnic model'. Smith states the first nations were powerful and culturally influential and they provided a model for subsequent cases of nation-formations (Özkirimli, 2003, p. 177). Smith argues this model was 'sociologically fertile' (1991, p. 40). Yet, this does not explain why nation and nationalism emerged. The first important criticism of the ethno-symbolist approach might be their tendency to discuss 'nations' before 'nationalism'. As Breuilly argued, it is the nationalism that shaped and re-shaped nations, not the other way around. Another important point is that 'nationalism is not simply a claim of ethnic similarity but a claim that certain similarities should count as the definition of political community' (Calhoun, 1993, p. 229). For this reason, nationalism needs rigid boundaries in a way pre-modern ethnicity does not (Calhoun, 1993, p. 229). Nationalism requires a distinctive form of group identity, which is difficult to find in pre-modern civilisations. Therefore, it is not reasonable to claim that there were nations and nationalism in the pre-modern era. Searching the origin of nations and nationalism in pre-ethnic foundations would not explain how some

‘ethnies’ transformed into nations and some did not. Therefore, it seems more beneficial to investigate the origin of nation and nationalism within the modernist approach.

According to the modernist approach the birth of nationalism goes back to the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century (Hobsbawm, 1992b, Anderson, 1991). Up until those times, the world political systems were defined by dynastic and religious terms. The root of nationalism, therefore, lies in these realms. Hence, it seems beneficial to start the investigation of the origin of nations from this point. Yet, it does not mean that nationalism somehow superseded religion or that the erosion of religious certainties produced nations, neither does it mean that the death of dynasties caused the birth of nations. However, what caused the erosion of religious certainties and destroyed the dynasties might have also triggered the birth of nationalism.

The emergence of nationalism is one of the major puzzles of modern history (Billig, 1995). There is different approaches to explain how nationalism emerged and spread all over the world. Yet, there is a historical fact that the rise of nationalism and nation-states coincided with the emergence of capitalism. A question arises as to whether this was accidental or not. In order to answer this question, it is beneficial to briefly investigate the rise of the capitalist economic systems and its social, spatial and political effects.

First of all, it should be accepted that the capitalist economic systems first emerged in Europe, just like the first nation states. In pre-capitalist times, modes of production in Europe were characterised by a kind of unity of economic and political power (Wood, 2002). There was a fragmented state power, which created a distinctive kind of political, judicial, and/or military power, the power of feudal lordship. The transformation in the modes of production towards capitalism compelled these feudal ruling classes to consolidate their fragmented political power and ‘parcellised’ sovereignty to more centralised monarchies (Wood, 1999). The socio-political effects of this transformation have been widely analysed by especially Marxist scholars (see; Hobsbawm, 1992b, Wood, 2002, Harvey, 2006, Jessop, 1990, Smith, 2010).

Nation and Nationalism

Capitalism can, initially, be seen and defined as 'an economic system in which goods and services are produced for sale in order to make profit in a large number of separate firms using privately owned capital goods and wage-labour' (Jessop, 2003, p. 12). Capitalism creates a society where the only way to survive is by making a profit. In this economic system, competition between separate enterprises rule the system. Survival requires accumulation of larger and larger quantities of capital. Yet, as Jessop (1990) and other scholars (Wood, 2002, Harvey, 2006, Smith, 2010) agree, this new system required more than just economic institutions for this accumulation process.

According to Jessop (1990) most of these 'extra-economic' needs (referred to as political, judicial and/or military institutions) for capitalism have been provided by a new type of state system, the capitalist type of state. This new type of states has had some important functions for the capitalist mode of production, re-production and capital accumulation. First of all, they secured the general external conditions for capital accumulation, such as legal order and protection of property rights. Secondly, the fictitious commodification of land, money, labour-power, and knowledge has also been possible with this new form of states. They also secured the rights and capacities of capital.

Another function of these states for capitalism is to define the boundaries between the economic and extra-economic and to modify the economic and extra-economic preconditions for capital accumulations (Jessop, 2003, p. 45). The most important part of these discussions, for the purpose of this research, is that nationalism and the nation-states firstly emerged along with these new type of states (Stokes, 1986, Wood, 1999). When Wood (1999, p. 3) analyses the development of the English nation-state, he states that '*the social transformations that brought about capitalism were the same ones that brought the nation-state to maturity*'. An important question arises here: How and why did these new states need nationalism?

One of the toughest theoretical issues of nationalism is its relationship to capitalism (the world economic system, industrialisation, modernisation) (Stokes, 1986). One reason for that would be the general character of modern capitalism that tends to go beyond national borders, whereas nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the national unit should be

independent within a defined territory. This feature of capitalism might understandably be seen as a contradiction for this relationship.

Gellner (2006) states that nationalism was the only possible outcome of the socio-political transformations brought about by industrialisation. In his book, *Nations and Nationalism*, Gellner deeply analyses the agrarian societies and their transformation towards industrial societies. For him, this transformation is crucial for understanding of nationalism (Gellner, 2006, p. 17). In agrarian societies, there is a small ruling class that horizontally differentiated at the top and there is a huge class of agricultural producers living in vertically insulated communities at the bottom. In the industrial societies, however, the social and cultural differences between rulers and ruled are not clear. According to Gellner, high culture has become a dominated culture; 'the clerisy' is universalised and became co-extensive with the entire society (Gellner, 2006, p. 34). He suggests that all these transformations happened due to the needs of industrialism for a mobile literate work force.

According to Robinson (2010) there were no public systems of education before the 19th century, they all came into being to meet the needs of industrialism. The state's duty was to ensure that citizens are available for the economic tasks industrialism requires. In practice, this means educating the citizenry to a certain cultural standard (Stokes, 1986). This creates cultural homogeneity, which is an essential element demanded by nationalism. However, according to Gellner 'It is not the case, as Kedourie (1993) claims, that nationalism imposes homogeneity; it is rather that a homogeneity imposed by objective, inescapable imperatives eventually appears on the surface in the form of nationalism' (Gellner, 2006, p. 38). With the educational system, 'high culture' becomes universal, not particular; it is transmitted through schools not through folks. Gellner calls it 'the age of universal high culture' which was irresistible and bound also to be 'an age of nationalism' (Gellner, 2006, p. 39). He claims 'if an industrial economy established in a culturally heterogeneous society (or if it even casts its advance shadow on it), then tensions result which will engender nationalism' (Gellner, 2006, p. 104).

All his efforts were to show that nationalism is a result of industrialism's need for literate and mobile labour. Anderson (1991), on the other hand, attempted to link the rise of nationalism with 'print-capitalism'. According to Anderson

Nation and Nationalism

(1991, p. 34), 'the first modern-style mass-produced industrial commodity was the book'. He argues that the relationship between capitalism and the print technology created possibilities for this new form of 'imagined community' that set the stage for the modern nations. According to Anderson, this worked in three ways. Firstly, as print languages created unified fields of exchange and communication, they gave a new fixity to language and finally they created languages-of-power. Hroch (1985) claims this sort of central direction for education and commercial policy was a need for the capitalist economies and could best be dealt with the modern version of the nation-states.

How can the relationship between nationalism and capitalism be formulated? What was argued so far is that the mode of production has shifted towards capitalist type of production. This shift triggered big social and political transformations in societies that required a new type of state system. This new state system was an essential for capitalist production, re-production and capital accumulation, and needed some strong ties to combine people into a defined territory. They needed homogeneity to function effectively and this is provided by a discourse produced by these new states, mostly through the public education system and by creating a common language, history and culture, which also involved assimilating other cultures. Hence, nationalism is the result of these socio-political transformations that begun with the development of capitalism in Europe. Yet, it does not mean that capitalism creates nationalism and neither does it mean that nationalism is created from nothing but as a result of some socio-political transformations that commenced with the rise of capitalist systems. As also mentioned in the previous section, it is not to deny existing cultures or ethnies. Yet, it is argued that there are even many more cultures and ethnies than so-called 'nations'. It is discussed that many cultures are dissolved and integrated into a dominant culture in order to provide the homogeneity required by nation states. That is all triggered and precipitated by the socio-political transformations that begun with the rise of capitalism.

Yet, there are points that need to be clarified in this argument. First of all, this approach does not aim to explain the emergence of nationalism as a phenomenon that appeared all over the world. Hence, it cannot explain the different nationalist movements since it does not claim that nationalism has emerged in the same way in every corner of the world. Rather, this argument

just aims to explain the birth of a particular nationalism and the nation states emerged in Europe, which were believed to be the first ones. Nationalism has undoubtedly appeared under different social and political environments in different parts of the world. The next section will attempt to analyse these differences. Finally, the contradiction between nationalism and the 'global nature' of capitalism is overlooked in this subsection. This contradiction will also be investigated in the next subsection.

2.1.3 Types of Nationalism

The origin of nationalism has mostly been analysed from European perspective especially by those who accept it as a modern phenomenon. This might seem a weak point in this approach because the transformations to nation-state systems occurred differently as a result of different social, political and economic circumstances in different geographies. Thus, there is not just a single way to explain the emergence of nationalism that can be applied to all cases. The previous section can be seen limited as it predominantly focuses on the emergence of nationalism from a European perspective. Yet, it still does not mean that focusing on European nationalism was less necessary either, since nationalism was born and grown in Europe and spread from there. Therefore, it is important to understand the emergence of nationalism in Europe first.

The following important questions need to be asked:

- How and why nationalism has spread all over the world?
- How it can be classified?

These two questions constitute another important aspect of the nationalism studies. Therefore, this section will attempt to investigate the emergence of nationalism on a global scale. This section will then attempt to classify nationalism.

In the previous section, it was argued that capitalism had a major importance on the social and political transformations through which nationalist movements developed. One can understandably argue that there were no similar capitalist developments in the rest of the world, but these transformations have still emerged. One way to investigate these

transformations that occurred in different corners of the world is to analyse the production of space under capitalism. One of the general characters of capitalism is to engender spatial unevenness (Smith, 2010). Neil Smith argues this 'spatial unevenness', or 'uneven development', is an inevitable result of the capitalist mode of production and is unique to capitalism (1982, p. 142). It does not mean that pre-capitalist developments were even, however the reasons for the unevenness of pre-capitalist developments are quite different (Smith, 2010, p. 98). 'Uneven development' under capitalism is more systematically and completely an integral part of that mode of production.

According to Smith (2010), there are two contradictory tendencies inherent in the structure of capitalism: the equalisation of conditions and level of development, and their differentiations. Capitalism, in the first place, produced a geography that is differentiated according to natural features. This natural based differentiation was an initial fundamental feature of the uneven development that occurred in earlier societies. This was based on the availability of natural materials; for example, textiles where sheep could graze, iron and steel where coal and iron ore were available (Smith, 1982). This sort of explanation is a traditional geographical approach. This nature-based pattern may explain the initial development of certain places; however, it would fail to explain subsequent developments. The advanced development of capitalism has brought a new and extended dimension to this geographical differentiation.

The capitalist developments shifted the logic behind geographical location from such natural considerations. The reasons behind the relationship between capitalist development and nature were first to overcome the difficulties of distance and second was the necessity of being close to raw materials (Smith, 2010, p. 104). However, the developments in transportation removed these natural obstacles. Thus, 'the geographical differentiations have been driven forward by a quintessentially social dynamic emanating from the structure of capitalism' (1982, p. 144). This differentiation proceeds according to 'the social logic' inherent in the process of capital accumulation and this social dynamic involves 'the progressive division of labour at various scales, the centralisation of capital, the evolution of spatial differentiated pattern of wage rates, the development of a ground rent that is markedly uneven over space and so forth' (Smith, 1982).

All these processes and relationships are the central determinants of uneven development that contribute to the tendency towards geographical differentiation under capitalism. The second tendency is the process of equalisation that stems from the basic necessity for economic expansion in capitalist society. As argued in the previous section, capitalism requires expansion of capital, which requires an increase in labour, locating and exploiting increased quantities of raw materials and more developed means of transportation that provide cheaper and faster access to raw materials and market. In this system, pre-capitalist societies are suppressed into the service of capital and subjugated through the world market to the rule of wage labour relation (Smith, 2010). These differentiation and equalisation processes work in three different scales: urban; national; and global.

Smith states that *'with the transformation of the earth into a universal means of production; no corner immune from the search for the raw materials; every inch of the surface as well as the sea, the air and the geological substratum is reduced in the eyes of capital to a real or potential means of production with a price tag'* (1982, p. 143). This is what lies behind the tendency toward equalisation. Capitalism tends to overcome all the spatial barriers to expansion; this is the process which Marx famously stated 'annihilation of space with time'. Along with these two contradictory tendencies, uneven developments occur not just at regional and urban scales but also at the international scale (Duncan and Goodwin, 1988). According to Smith, with the advanced capitalist development, the entire globe is partitioned into legally district parcels, divided by great fences, real or imaginary (2010, p. 85). Today's world is divided into nation-states and this is, for Smith, a necessity for capitalism.

It was argued that the geography produced under capitalism is unequal at all scales, regionally and internationally. This inequality resulted in two geographically distinct interest groups who either benefit or suffer from such uneven development. This may lead different nationalist movements at national and global scales. At the global scale there were the developed countries that had already built their capitalist systems and possessed the means of production; on the other side, there were the colonised countries that had been exploited by the first group. This situation created a resistance

Nation and Nationalism

in the colonised countries to the colonial dominations and this resistance formed its own nationalism. The nationalist movements that appeared in Africa, South America and Asia after decolonisation could be interpreted within this resistance. In addition to this wave of nationalism, another big wave of nationalist movements appeared in the post-socialist world after the fall of communism in 1989. At the national scale, the group who suffer from such unevenness might also be nationalised and demand independence from an existing nation-state. This situation would be more likely in the ethnically diverse nation-states, like Spain, the UK, Turkey and Iraq.

Uneven development that occurred under the capitalist mode of production might help to understand the spread of nationalism and give some ideas about the different types of nationalist movements. However, the emergence of nationalism is much more complicated. Nationalism appeared as a consequence of different socio-political transformations in different parts of the world, at different times. These differences also caused different forms of nationalism in different societies. In order to understand why nationalism takes different forms, it is beneficial to investigate the typology of nationalism in the literature.

There are many different classifications of nationalism in the literature. Wirth (1936) argues that nationalism should be studied on the particularistic knowledge of specific cases, rather than lumping together all instances of nationalism. He stresses the importance of historical variations of nationalism and suggests four types of nationalism: hegemony nationalism; particularistic nationalism; marginal nationalism; and the nationalism of minorities. By hegemony nationalism, he refers to the national unifications movements, which he observed in Italy and Germany. Particularistic nationalism, on the other hand, was based upon the secessionist demand of national autonomy. Wirth cites Ireland as a good example for this. Marginal nationalism, as another type of nationalism, was used to refer to the nationalistic movement characteristic of border territories and populations such as Italian-Austrian and Swiss frontiers. Finally, minority nationalism was referred to the nationalist movements of the existing racial, ethnic, cultural, or merely political minorities in existing states (Wirth, 1936).

Snyder (1976), on the other hand, defines four different categories for nationalism: civic nationalism; ethnic nationalism; revolutionary nationalism; and counter-revolutionary nationalism. Civic nationalism is being used to refer to the nationalist movements that emphasise the loyalty to a set of political ideas and institutions. Snyder argues ethnic nationalism emphasises a common culture, language and religion. Revolutionary nationalism focuses on the defence of a political revolution that brings power. Finally counter-revolutionary nationalism emphasises resistance to internal factions that seek to undermine the nation's traditional institutions.

Michael Hechter creates another useful typology. His typology of nationalism is based on his approach that nationalism is 'collective action designed to render the boundaries of the nation congruent with those of its governance unit' (Hechter, 2000, p. 15). Hechter defines four types of nationalism out of this definition: state-building nationalism; peripheral nationalism; irredentist nationalism; and unification nationalism. State-building nationalism is 'the nationalism that is embodied in the attempt to assimilate or incorporate culturally distinctive territories in a given state' (Hechter, 2000, p. 15). Peripheral nationalism 'occurs when a culturally distinctive territory resists incorporation into an expanding state, or attempts to secede and set up its own government (as in Quebec, Scotland and Catalonia)' (Hechter, 2000, p. 16). Irredentist 'nationalism occurs with the attempt to extend the existing boundaries of a state by incorporating territories of an adjacent state occupied principally by co-nationals (as in the case of the Sudeten Germans)' (Hechter, 2000, p. 17). Finally unification nationalism 'involves the merger of a politically divided but culturally homogeneous territory into one state, as famously occurred in nineteenth-century Germany and Italy' (Hechter, 2000, p. 17). Although Hechter does not claim that his typology is exhaustive, this typology seems to explain especially normative differences between the types of nationalism.

In order to place Kurdish nationalism along with Turkish and Iraqi nationalisms in a specific theoretical framework, this thesis embraces Hechter's typology of state-building nationalism and peripheral nationalism. The formations of Kurdish nationalism and its connections with Turkish and Iraqi nationalisms fit well with Hechter's typology. The final section in this chapter analyses the

Nation and Nationalism

formations of these nationalisms that will also answer to the questions of why these nationalisms fit well in the typology of 'state-building nationalism' and 'peripheral nationalism'.

2.1.4 Conclusion

The literature set out in this section is the first step of formulating a theoretical framework for this thesis. In this thesis, a nation is understood as a historically modern human community who share some perceptions of sameness and/or similar political interests and feelings of belongings to each other and to a territory. Hence, the Kurdish nation is considered as a modern construct. This initially raises the question of when, why and how Kurdish nation and nationalism has appeared in Turkey and Iraq. The thesis explores the key narratives through which Kurds construct their nation and identity on both sides of the border. This thesis will show the differences and similarities in the formations of Kurdish nationalism and the meanings of 'Kurdishness' between both sides. Theoretically framing Kurdish nationalism as 'peripheral nationalism' and Turkish and Iraqi nationalisms as 'state building nationalism', this thesis will show how Kurdish nationalism in Turkey occurred as a resistance to incorporation into Turkish nationalism and in Iraq as an attempt to secede and set up its own government. By comparing and contrasting Kurdish nationalism as peripheral nationalism on both sides, the thesis addresses the question as to why Kurds have not completely fused into Turkish and Iraqi national identities.

2.2 Border and Identity

This second section focuses on the literatures in border studies. Borders have always been interesting subjects for researchers from a wide range of disciplines. This section analyses the extensive and diverse literature on borders.

The section starts with drawing a theoretical framework through which borders can be understood and studied. It includes some initial clarifications about the research's stance in the border studies. Following this theoretical framework, it introduces some popular conceptualisations of borders and outlines main developments in the border studies and its constantly evolving concerns from a historical perspective. Finally it focuses on the concept of 'bordering' and the relationship between borders and identity.

2.2.1 Studying Borders: A Theoretical Framework

Borders are understood here as processes, rather than static physical lines that separate social, political and economic spaces. Constructing borders is not simply about drawing lines or building fences in physical landscapes but also about the processes through which social and spatial categories and differentiations occur (Newman, 2006). In other words, it is not just about producing a bounded space but also producing a social collectiveness. Identities are seen here as constantly evolving processes. Social identities are being constructed and re-constructed through these bordering processes. 'Others' and 'us' are equally important for the formation of borders and therefore constantly produced and reproduced. This thesis is concerned with the bordering process, as on-going socio-spatial homogenisations and differentiations, rather than the border per se as a physical line.

Borders are primarily about territoriality, as an ordering principle of social and political life (Anderson and O'Dowd, 1999). Borders are spatial manifestations of power and sovereignty (Newman and Paasi, 1998). Space is seen here as social products, rather than a geographical feature, and tends to conceptualise notions of border and territory (Lefebvre, 1991, p.26). Constructions of borders are part of the processes of '*institutionalisation of territoriality*'- the

Border and Identity

processes in which their territorial, symbolic and institutional 'shape' is determined (Paasi, 1999, p. 670).

The relationship between borders and identity are permanent processes. It is important to acknowledge the constitutive nature of borders in social and political life (Rumford, 2012, p. 897). Borders inform individual and collective identities; they shape and are shaped by collective and individual consciousness. Borders are the lines where 'we' supposedly ends and 'the others' starts. Borders are dynamic phenomena that first and foremost involve people and their everyday lives (Newman and Paasi, 1998). Identities obtain meanings through borders and as Sack (1986, p. 13) state *'borders tend to be characterised by identities which are shifting and multiple, in ways which are framed by the specific state configurations which encompass them and within which people must attribute meaning to their experience of border life'*.

Borders, by definition, are about creating and taking sides, which construct many more associated dichotomies: inside-outside; we-they; inclusion-exclusion; and us-the other. The process of imagining the existence of 'other' is crucial in creating borders. As Sibley (1995) argues, geographies are being produced by rejecting and excluding 'difference' or in his own term by 'purifying space'. Agnew (2008) states that there is nothing 'natural' to borders.

Finally there is a need to move beyond many dichotomies in border studies: symbolic or material; real or imaginary; barriers or zones of cultural encounters; top-down or bottom-up; and frontiers or multiple sites. Borders have both material and symbolic uses. In a sense, they are real and can have physical presence. Their effects are real and, as Agnew (2008, p. 176) argues, they 'trap thinking about and acting in the world in territorial terms'. In another sense, they are imaginary lines on the ground with symbolic meanings and are social, political and discursive products (Paasi, 1999). Material dimensions of a territory are endowed with imaginative values which stem from a range of social, cultural and political meanings (Bachelard, 1994). Borders play important roles in the construction of 'imaginative geographies' (Said, 1979). Borders can also be both barriers (for some) and gateways (for others) (Rumford, 2008, p. 2). The question here is 'borders for whom?' (Newman, 2003, p. 22). Borders, in the contemporary world, are increasingly taking the

form of '*asymmetric membranes*' (Hedetoft, 2003, p. 152) that allow free pass to certain goods and people while protect against unwanted entrance of the others (Rumford, 2008, p. 3). Bordering processes are not just institutional top-down, state-centred, managements but also performative bottom-up negotiations. Borders are not just state projects but also produced and reproduced in numerous social (economic, cultural, administrative and political) practices and discourses (Paasi, 1999). Finally, borders, in the contemporary world, are not only at frontiers any more, but increasingly spreading everywhere (Balibar, 1998). All these arguments will be developed further in the following sections.

2.2.2 Understanding Borders

There is an extensive understanding of borders in the literature. As Balibar (2002, p. 75) states, that there is not a simple way to answer the question of what a border is. There is not an essence that can be attributed to the border that would be valid in all cases through space and time, and which would also encompass all individual and collective experiences in the same way (Balibar, 2002, p.75). This is not just because every state border is unique, but also because the production and reproduction of territoriality/territory, state power, human agency and experience are deeply contextual (Paasi, 2005). Borders have always been the main indicators in the world's political maps. Yet, their formations, meanings and functions have been perpetually changing throughout time and space.

Borders have been approached in many different ways; different topics were popular, different themes were debated and different views were held on how to study a border since the earliest systematic border studies. There have been numerous assumptions related to borders –their power, significance and functions, and the agencies impacting on borders and bordering– (Paasi, 2012). In order to provide a better understanding of border studies and its succession of concerns, seven main themes have been identified in the literature:

1. formations and locations of borders
2. functions and effects of borders
3. bordering processes

Border and Identity

4. borderless world
5. border securitisations
6. transnationalism
7. the new spatiality of borders

This list is not an exhaustive one. It only aims to introduce some popular conceptualisations of borders and to outline main developments in border studies and its constantly evolving concerns from a historical perspective.

Early border studies, as summarised by Julian Minghi (1963), mainly focused on the nature of the boundary's location and history. The earliest systematic studies were mostly descriptive, mainly carried out from a military perspective and tried to classify the borders as good, bad, artificial and natural (Minghi, 1963, p. 408). Holdich's works can be a good example for this approach to border; he viewed borders as barriers and defined the best borders those which are based on distinctive natural features, such as mountains, lakes or deserts (Holdich, 1916, p. 504). Bachelard (1994), like Holdich, argued that rivers, as regional bonds, would make good boundaries. This kind of approach was widely held especially during the First World War.

Later, this approach '*shifted from the criteria by which a boundary drawn to the functions which it performs*' (Minghi, 1963, p. 413). This change in the perspective was related to the recognition of borders as contact points between territorial power structures in addition to demarcation of national sovereignty. Boggs (1940) argues that borders have specific functions which vary throughout time and space. He also views borders as barriers to economic relations (Minghi, 1963). Spykman (1942) suggested that borders are 'points of contact of territorial power structures and territory' is central to understanding power relations across borders. Holdich (1916) also stated that borders with few functions are better to strengthen state power. Following the Second World War, borders were mostly turned into military regions where the combats took place (Brunet-Jailly, 2011). Hence, the following border studies suggest to change the borders' functions in order to lessen boundary tensions across borders (Donnan and Wilson, 1999).

The literature during the first half of the 20th century shows that the initial interest in borders was about their locations, formations and history. As Minghi (1963) observed, the focus shifted towards border's functional meanings and

effects which change over time and space. Minghi's work reflected the transformation in the border discourse of the time: 'function' and 'effect' started to have much more importance than 'form' and 'location'. In this later conventional wisdom, borders served various economic or social functions. Borders were seen as the territorial delimitation of sovereign states and became central to the nationalist agenda.

Towards the end of the 20th century, border studies have undergone a major transformation (Paasi, 2012, Newman, 2006, Van Houtum, 2005, Bauder, 2011). Newman (2006, p. 144) called this period as the renaissance of border studies. In this later trend, borders are understood not just static naturalised lines between states but also social, political and discursive constructs and the meaning they carry is produced, re-produced and/or institutionalised (Newman, 2006). It is later understood that it is the bordering process that affects our lives on a daily basis, rather than the border per se (Newman and Paasi, 1998). This new conceptualisation '*shift the analysis and understanding of socio-spatiality away from the static world of container-borders to the complex and varied patterns of both implicit and explicit bordering and ordering practices*' (Van Houtum et al., 2005, p. 2). Hence, the border scholars paid more attention to how borders are constructed socially and reflect the discourses and practices of national identity, rather than taking their existence for granted (Agnew, 2008). Borders are critically investigated as '*differentiators of socially constructed mindscapes and meanings*' (Van Houtum, 2005, p. 673). From this perspective, the main 'site' of the border is not only the borderland but also the complex, perpetually on-going, hegemonic nation-building process (Paasi, 2012). States are also not the only actors in bordering processes, but as Rumford (2006, p. 159) states '*borders have human and experiential dimensions, and can be appropriated by societal actors for non-state purposes; signalling an important dimension of community identity, for example*'. Borders are, hence, as much related to nation and identity as state. In this sense, the roots of borders are in historically contingent social practices and discourses that are related to national ideologies and identities. Johnson et al. (2011) label these as 'discursive/emotional landscapes of social power' that often draw on various forms of nationalism. From this point of view, there are no natural borders. This has led to new debates on the construction of borders, in other words, how borders are made in term of its symbols, signs,

identifications, representations, performance and stories (Van Houtum, 2005). This was the point where the proliferation of border studies started.

After the end of the cold war, there was a substantial growth in border studies (Johnson et al., 2011). Many researchers were suggesting that bounded territorial units are declining as a result of the increasing flows of capital, commodities, information and people across the state borders (Ohmae, 1995). Therefore, the argument of the 'borderless world' started to dominate the border studies toward the end of 20th century. It was argued that the traditional understanding of borders as symbols of 'past', fixed world or 'the space of places' was increasingly being replaced by a dynamic world and a 'space of flows' (Castells, 1992). Yet, the assumption of disappearing borders was also widely criticised. Amin and Thrift (1994, p. 2) argued that 'globalisation does not represent the end of territorial distinction and distinctiveness' rather it means 'an added set of influences on local economic identities and developing capacities'. Hirst and Thompson (2001) argued that despite the rhetoric of globalisation; the world's population is still 'trapped by the lottery of their birth'. Anderson (1995, p. 67) also finds these end-of-border scenarios exaggerated and noted that 'in some ways the modern nation state, with its sovereignty defined by familiar territorial boundaries, seems as firmly rooted as ever'. This much-discussed topic has gradually been overcome by the increased border securitisations as a part of the 'war on terror' as a result of 9/11 attacks. Hence, as Paasi (1998) stated, borders stayed with us.

The terrorist attack of 9/11 has brought a new approach to border studies (Newman, 2006). In this new era, there was increasing attention to the process through which borders can be more rigidly controlled. Therefore, the notion of a borderless world through globalisation is in contradiction with the reality of the increased border securitisations as part of the 'war on terror' (Johnson et al., 2011). The main attention in border studies has started to focus on new border fences (Jones, 2009b), biometric borders (Amoore, 2006), expanded security practices at airport (Adey et al., 2008), the 'technologisation' of borders and visualisation practises (Amoore, 2006), cognitive boundaries of categories (Jones, 2009a), and the relationship between territorial borders and the so-called borderless world of networked, topological space (Paasi, 2009, Johnson et al., 2011). In the light of the rich-but-diffuse recent history of border literature, Paasi (2012) observes the changes in the border practices. He

argues border practices have become increasingly mobile. Increasing technical surveillance and control on borders, border-crossings and border-crossers have stretched the borders beyond the border areas.

Along with these two relatively recent and conflicting tendencies in border studies, a new theme has gradually become more popular in the literature: transnational space and/or transnationalism. The emergence of this new theme can be thought as a response to the increasingly mobilised borders in these spatially fluid times (Yeoh et al., 2003).

The term 'transnational' is commonly used to refer to various types of social relations and interactions that transcend 'national' borders. In this sense, transnationalism describes a condition in which multiple ties and interactions link people or institutions across nation-state borders (Vertovec, 1999). Therefore, it has become a popular study area where the increasing intensity and scope of circular flows of persons, goods, information and symbols can be analysed. There have been numerous research papers about transnationalism (see among others, Basch, 1993, Schiller et al., 1995, Vertovec, 2001, Kearney, 1995). All these scholars have agreed that transnationalism is a complex and multi-dimensional field. Some of the previous studies focused on transnational migrations and the sociological analysis of transnational communities (Itzigsohn et al., 1999, Levitt, 2001, Schiller et al., 1995, Voigt-Graf, 2004); transnational corporations and economic networks (Dicken et al., 1994, Yeung et al., 2006); transnational urban politics and social movements (Conradson and Latham, 2005, Smith, 2005, Guarnizo, 2003); and the significance of newly emerging transnational cultural forms (Appadurai, 1996, Hannerz, 1996).

All these different approaches to transnationalism begin from the premise that social and cultural practices now regularly transcend the borders of individual nation-states (Jackson et al., 2004). Yet, the term might cause confusions by conflating rather different types of situation. In the case of Kurds, it might be appropriate to use the term to refer to the interactions, networks of contacts and the complex of activities connecting Kurds in Germany, Great Britain and Turkey; however it might be problematic to use the term 'transnationalism' to refer to the interactions and networks linking Kurds in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria as the essential element of being away from the homeland is lacking (van Bruinessen, 2000b, as used by Sheffer, 2006 p. 123). Kurds are now living in

Border and Identity

several neighbouring countries because they were dispersed from their homelands. Therefore, a more appropriate term for the Kurdish case might be 'trans-state' or 'cross-border'.

The term 'trans-state' or 'cross-border' can be used to describe the multiple ties and connections linking people across neighbouring state borders where an ethnic group historically inhabits both sides of the border. In the case of Kurds, there are three main kinds of mobility situations:

1. There are numerous Kurds who were displaced within 'Kurdistan' but across state borders; i.e. following the rebellions of the 1920s and 1930s, many Turkish Kurds fled to Syria; following the 1974-75 Iran-Iraq war, 50,000 Iraqi Kurds fled to Iran; and during the Iraq's genocide Anfal campaign, 65,000 Iraqi Kurds fled to Turkey (van Bruinessen, 2000b).
2. There are many Kurds living away from Kurdistan but within the state which they are citizens; i.e. millions of Kurds, for several different reasons, now live in such cities as Istanbul, Izmir, Tehran, Abadan, Baghdad, Basra and Damascus.
3. There are also millions of Kurds who live away from both Kurdistan and the state they belonged to again for numerous different reasons. Millions of Kurds now live in Lebanon, Germany and other West European states, Libya, Russia, and Australia.

These three groups might be subjects of different transnationalism studies. However, it may be problematic to use the term 'transnational' for the Kurds who live in the neighbouring state borders, because there is no mobility but division. As stated above, 'trans-state or cross-border' might be more appropriate term to use for the interactions of the Kurds who currently live in between Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria.

Finally, another tendency in border studies is about the spatiality of borders. The earlier questions about borders' formations, locations and functions confront the scholars anew in the contemporary world. The 'spatial turn' in border studies brings a new perspective to how to understand and study borders. The first important shift is about the location of borders: borders are no longer only at the frontiers of states but increasingly dispersed everywhere (Balibar, 2004, p. 1). As opposed to the 'borderless world' thesis, Balibar

(2002, p. 92) suggests that *'borders are being both multiplied and reduced in their localisation and their functions, they are being thinned out and doubled'*. His arguments about 'diffused borders' suggest that whole countries are transforming into borderlands (Balibar, 2002, p. 92). Borders are now everywhere (e.g. airports, train stations, along motorways and throughout city centres and shopping malls). Rumford (2008, p. 1-2) suggests they can even be elsewhere too, such as in another country: i.e. UK passport control for the Eurostar trains is now in Paris and French passport control is in London. Amoore (2011, p. 63) describes these expansions of borders as 'spatial stretching', *'in which the border is "exported" via "touch-points" and "encounters" between mobile people, objects and data, in a system designed to operate far beyond state boundaries'*. Borders are being elements of the current surveillance mechanisms and societal control in today's dynamic world characterised by 'motion' (Paasi, 2011). There is also *'a shift from state-centric approaches to a concern with other, non-territorial spaces: public spheres, cosmopolitan communities, global civil societies, non-proximate or virtual communities, and transnational or global networks, none of which can be bordered in conventional ways'* (Rumford, 2006, p. 160).

As also argued in the previous paragraphs the notion of 'a world in motion' does not necessarily refer to a world without borders, rather increasing border crossings. The contemporary social life is recursively being formed and reformed in mobilities, in uneven and complex ways (Urry, 2000). However, as Rumford (2006, p. 163) states *'borders and mobilities are not antithetical. A globalising world is a world of networks, flows and mobility; it is also a world of borders'*. Another important point in these arguments about these increasing mobilities is that borders do not treat everyone the same way, so they do not mean the same for all. Borders can be permeable to some and restrictive to others (Rumford, 2012, p. 895). Border crossing experiences mostly depend on the passport that the border crosser holds. As argued earlier, contemporary borders are taking the forms of *'asymmetric membranes'* (Hedetoft, 2003, p. 152) that allow the movements of certain goods and people while protecting against unwanted entrance of the others (Rumford, 2008, p. 3). The important question is 'borders for whom?' (Newman, 2003, p. 22).

Border and Identity

To sum up, it is important to note that these seven themes identified here are not exhaustive, as many more different themes were debated, different approaches were popular and different views were held on how to approach and study borders over time. Through these seven themes, this section introduced some popular conceptualisations of borders and outlined main developments in border studies and its constantly evolving concerns from a historical perspective.

2.2.3 Bordering and Identity

Borders are related to identities. As Balibar (2002, p. 76) states 'to mark out a border is to define a territory, to delimit it, so to register the identity of that territory, or confer one upon it'. Drawing borders is not only about creating a bounded space, but also about producing a social collectiveness. Similarly, constructing an identity is a process of defining a group's boundaries and borders (Barth, 1998). As Bourdieu and Thompson (1991, p. 120) state 'to institute, to give a social definition, an identity, is also to impose boundaries'. Bordering and identity building are interdependent processes.

Space is understood as a social product (Lefebvre, 1991, p.26). Geographies, just like history, are made by people (Said, 1979). As Barth (1998) articulates every society creates/defines its space in order to create itself. Making geographies is about creating territories by drawing borders. Sack (1986, p. 1) defines territoriality as 'spatial strategy to affect, influence, or control resources and people, by controlling area'. Borders, for geographers, are firstly expression or manifestation of the territoriality of states (Newman and Paasi, 1998). It is the territoriality that gives meaning and significance to borders.

Territorial borders have both material and symbolic uses. In a sense, they are real and have physical presence. Their effects are real and, as Agnew (2008, p. 176) argues, they 'trap thinking about and acting in the world in territorial terms'. In another sense, they are imaginary lines on the ground with symbolic meanings. Material dimensions of a territory are endowed with imaginative values which stem from a range of social, cultural and political meanings (Bachelard, 1994). These given meanings are sometimes more important than material space itself. They are 'the justified borders of ours': *'We are also forced or persuaded to learn what are the legitimate and hegemonic national*

meanings attached to these borders and what are the pools of emotions, fears and memories that we have to draw on in this connection' (Paasi, 2011, p. 24).

The meanings and the pools of emotions attached to national borders are disseminated deeply into society through various ways. Paasi (2011, p. 24) defines these pools of meanings as 'emotional landscapes of control'. Borders are the edges of these 'imagined geographies' (Said, 1979); and these meanings and emotions associated with borders play a key role in the construction of identities and the sense of belonging to 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1991).

The relations between borders and identity are permanent processes. As argued earlier, borders are a specific form of institutions and symbols that simultaneously produce distinctions between social groups and are produced by them (Paasi, 1998). Yet, it does not mean that borders as institutions and symbols are stable entities; instead they are perpetually developing and being transformed, so they are the discursive constitutive of collective identities. Bordering as a process is also about the complex, perpetually on-going, hegemonic nation-building (Paasi, 2012). As Hall (1992, p. 4) states that *'Identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices, and positions. They are subject to a radical historicisation, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation'*.

Borders, by definition, are about creating and taking sides, which construct many more associated dichotomies: inside-outside, we-they, inclusion-exclusion, us-other. These dichotomies are the result of the social process of a continuous defining of 'self' and 'other'. Constructing or identifying the 'difference' is directly linked to drawing borders. 'Others' and 'us' are equally important for the formation of borders and therefore constantly produced and reproduced. Borders are constructed through different ways of inclusions and exclusions. They are not just about constructing 'us'; but also constructing 'others'. As Hall (1996, p.4) states *'it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its constitutive outside that the 'positive' meaning of any term - and thus its 'identity' - can be constructed'*.

Border and Identity

As stated above, state borders have double-edged significance; while they signify power, control and exclusion, they simultaneously stand for empowerment and inclusion. It is not only about 'differentiation' but also 'homogenisation'. An important challenge in border studies is therefore to analyse how the exclusions and inclusions between 'us' and 'others' that a border implies are historically and discursively constructed and shaped in relation to power. Borders are the expression of power relations; and manifest themselves in social (economic, cultural and political) practices and discourses that directly involve the production and reproduction of identities. Meanings attached to borders and identities are constantly evolving through these various social, political and discursive practices. Therefore, the meanings of a border can be analysed through these social practices and discourses in which identities are produced and reproduced in relation to power. Hall (1992, p. 4) states that identities are '*produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies*'. Somers and Gibson (1994 p. 5) states that all people come to be who they are by locating themselves or being located in social narratives, which are rarely of their own making.

2.2.4 Conclusion

This section provided a literature analysis of border studies. This thesis is also situated within the border studies research domain. The section started with some initial clarifications about the research's stance in the border studies. It is stated that the border in this research is understood as bordering processes rather than just a mere physical line or fences in a landscape. By bordering processes, it refers to the construction of socio-spatial categories or, in other words, the processes of socio-spatial differentiations and homogenisations. Bordering and identity building are seen as interdependent processes. Space is seen as human production, and identity as constantly evolving processes. The relationships between borders and identity are understood as permanent ones.

The second subsection introduced some popular conceptualisations of borders, the main developments in border studies and some of its constantly changing concerns in the literature from a historical perspective. It showed that borders have been understood, approached and studied in various ways

since the earliest systematic border studies. In this subsection I identified seven main themes in the literature:

1. formations and locations of borders
2. functions and effects of borders
3. bordering processes
4. borderless world
5. border securitisations
6. transnationalism and finally
7. the new spatiality of borders

This is by no means an exhaustive list, as many more different themes were debated, different approaches were popular and different views were held on how to approach and study borders over time and space.

The final subsection focused more on the connections between bordering and identity. Bordering and identity building are understood as interdependent processes that are constantly evolving. The relations between border and identity are permanent processes. Bordered space is filled with symbolic meanings and emotions that are disseminated deep into society by various ways. Identity building is also a constant process. The constructions of 'other' and 'us' are equally important in the constructions of borders and identity.

2.3 Kurds and the Border

This final section of the literature review analyses the socio-political contexts from which Kurdish identity was evolving. It pays particular attention to the opportunities for Kurds to construct, develop and practice their national identity. The chronological analysis will not only focus on the events occurred in the past but also show the socio-political environments of the time to show contexts from which Kurds have been developing and performing their identity, before and after the border. The section is designed as three main subsections: Kurds before the border, Kurds in Iraq and Kurds in Turkey.

2.3.1 Before the Border: Kurds before the First World War

It was widely argued in the nation and nationalism section that nations are modern constructs yet nationalists often consider that the origins of their nation and nationalism reach back into time immemorial. One reason is, as Hobsbawm (1992a, p. 3) states, that *'nations without a past are contradictions in term, what makes nation is the past; what justifies one nation against others is the past'*. Each nation has its own common history, which is unique, and it is mostly full of myths, victories and heroes.

Some scholars trace the origins of Kurdish people to the Medes in the sixth century BC (Gunter, 2010, p. 5, Chahin, 1996, p. 109, Jwaideh, 2006, p. xv). Some Kurdish nationalists even argue that the Kardouchoi in fourth century, whom the Greek historian Xenophon speaks of in Anabasis were also Kurds (Gunter, 2013, p. 30, Potts, 2014, p. 111, Wolff, 2014). First time the ethnic label 'Kurd' encountered in the Arabic sources in the seventh century (Van Bruinessen, 2000a, p. 16). There have been numerous more dynasties and principalities that were related to Kurds: the Aishanid dynasty (912-961); the Hasanwayhids (959-1015); and the Marwanid (990-1096). The most flourishing period for Kurds was probably during the twelfth century, when the Great Saladin founded the Ayyubite (1171-1250) (Humphreys, 1977, p. 29, Ozoglu, 2004, p. 46).

Early sixteenth century, most of the Kurdish principalities loosely fell under the Ottoman rule, while the remaining principalities were placed under the Persians (Gunter, 2010, p. 6). Until the 1840s, Kurds continued to live under

semi-independent Kurdish emirates in the Ottoman Empire and the ruler of the last Kurdish emirate of Botan, Badr Khan, was suppressed in 1847 (McDowall, 2004, p. 47).

Kurds widely enjoyed a degree of autonomy during the regional empires of Persians and Ottomans (McDowall, 2004). In the Ottoman system the minorities were categorised according to their religious affiliations: Muslims and non-Muslim. This system provided wide cultural, economic and political opportunities for Kurdish communities (Natali, 2000). Many Kurdish notables were even assigned to high posts in the administration, the military and universities by the Ottoman authorities (Natali, 2000). Kurds had opportunities to practice their identity: speak their language, celebrate their festivals, and identify themselves as a different ethnic community (Natali, 2000). Ozoglu (2011, p. 205) argues that while Kurdish principalities were mainly autonomous during the Ottoman time, the Kurdish leader emphasised their religious identity connected them with the state. Natali (2005, p. 56) also showed how the absence of an exclusive nationalist system in Ottoman Empire prevented Kurdish nationalism from being salient.

Yavuz (2001) argues that the major reason for the politicisation of Kurdish identity and the emergence of Kurdish nationalism is the shift from multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Ottoman Empire to the nation-state systems. Ozoglu (2004) also argues that the emergence of Kurdish nationalism was the disappearance of pluralistic Ottoman ideology. Many other scholars agreed that the collapse of the Empire and the emergence of the new nation-states created new socio-political contexts and opportunities for Kurds to practice and develop their identity (McDowall, 2004, Chaliand, 1993, Olson, 1991, Natali, 2005, Yavuz, 2001, Edmonds, 1971). Therefore, at this point, it is more beneficial to analyse these contexts on both sides of the Turkish Iraqi border.

2.3.2 Kurds in Iraq: The South side of the Border

From 1918 to 1958

Iraq was built by cobbling together three former Ottoman Empire provinces of Basra, Mosul and Baghdad. At the end of the First World War, the British took control of Basra and Baghdad provinces, which were mostly populated by

Kurds and the Border

Shi'ite and Sunni Arabs. Mosul, however, remained a disputed territory between Turkey and the UK until 1926. Kurdish people lived within the terrain of Mosul province (Figure 1), which became increasingly more important for both Turkey and the British due to its strategic location and newly found oil reserves (Stansfield, 2006, Edmonds, 1971, Gunter, 2008).



Figure 1: The Kurdish inhabited area in Iraq¹ (Source: Kurdish Human Rights 2013).

The green coloured area is Iraq and the red coloured area shows the Kurdish inhabited area. The overlapping area shows the Kurdish inhabited area in Iraq.

¹This map only depicts the roughly drawn boundaries of the Kurdish inhabited areas. Kurds are not the only ethnic group who live in these coloured areas. Similarly, there are also Kurds who live elsewhere, like in the rest of Anatolia. There is rather a fluid situation on the ground. These boundaries are constantly changing, i.e. Syrian Kurds took control over Kobani in Syria and Kirkuk fell under Kurdish control in Iraq in 2014, also many Turkish Kurds moved to other parts of the country after the resurgence of the conflicts in July 2015. Mapping the Kurdish inhabited area has always been a tough and controversial issue.

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the end of First World War created an opportunity for Kurds to establish an independent Kurdistan (Yildiz, 2007). Stansfield (2006) states that Kurds roughly divided into two during the WW1: pro-Ottoman and pro-British. Yildiz (2007, p. 10) argued that the British Empire understood the right of the Kurds' self-determination, however they were not sure whether a Kurdish leader could sacrifice his own tribal interest for the greater purpose of the Kurdish nation. A Kurdish leader, Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji, was appointed by the British as the British representative in Silemani, in 1918, as an ideal figure to keep Mosul under control (Stansfield, 2006). However, Barzanji believed that Kurdistan should not be a part of Iraq and thus initiated an uprising and claimed himself as the 'King of Kurdistan' in 1919. The British defeated Barzanji in the same year.

In order to strengthen their claims over Mosul, Turks emphasised the ties between themselves and the Kurds (McDowall, 2004). However, the Ottoman Empire accepted the Treaty of Sevres with the Allied Powers in 1920 which envisaged an independent Kurdish state (Chaliand and Black, 1994). Yet, this treaty was never ratified due to the rise of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in new Turkish state (Edmonds, 1971). Instead, a new treaty was signed in Lausanne in 1923 that had no mention of a Kurdistan. Yet, the province of Mosul remained as an issue to be solved through the League of Nations. The border between Turkey and Iraq was definitively laid down on 5 June 1926 at the Treaty of Angora [Ankara] between the UK, Turkey and Iraq. Since then, Kurds would no longer have a shared common political centre and Kurdistan would be partitioned into the separate nation-states.

The transformation of Iraq to a new state occurred under the British control. During the unstable post-war period, British authorities made special efforts to pacify Kurdish communities by giving more political space to them to prevent its colonial state from losing oil-rich Kurdish-populated territories (Natali, 2000). Unlike the Ottoman elites, British treated Kurdistan as a separate entity from Arab Iraq. The 1921 Iraqi constitution recognised two ethnic groups, Arabs and Kurds, and Kurdish language had an equal status with Arabic. Yet, after securing the state's border with Turkey (in 1926) and the establishment of the independence (in 1932), the status of the Kurds started to change. In 1930 the British-Iraqi Treaty of Alliance aimed to end the British mandate and

Kurds and the Border

regulate the future of the relations, was signed with no mention of the Kurds (Yildiz, 2007). However, the independence of Iraq was conditioned on its acceptance of international obligations to protect civil and political rights of the Kurds and their rights as a minority groups by The League of Nations.

The British apportioned Faisal as the King of Iraq in 1921. Before Iraq obtained its independence in 1932 from Britain, King Faisal emphasised the lack of an Iraqi identity and the division between Sunni, Shiite and Kurds, which he saw as a big issue that would make governance difficult (Ghareeb, 1981, p. 2). Bagdad assumed that it could fob off the Kurds' demands because of their apparent disorganisation and tribal divisions (McDowall, 2004, p. 288). However, Kurds became increasingly opposed to the Iraqi state and demanded their right of self-determination in 1930s and 1940s. Barzanji led another unsuccessful uprising in 1932 and Mustafa Barzani initiated an unsuccessful revolt against the Iraqi state in 1943.

In 1941, there was a Military Coup in Iraq that led to a British invasion of Iraq and subsequent occupation until 1947. From this intervening period to the revolution in 1958, Mustafa Barzani formed 'the Kurdish (later, Kurdistan) Democratic Party (KDP)' as 'an alliance between the tribal, rurally-based Kurds and their urban-dwelling, generally leftist-oriented cousins' (Stansfield, 2006, p. 4). Mustafa Barzani became the political and military leader of the Kurdish movements in Iraq until his death in 1979 (Yildiz, 2007, McDowall, 2004). After his unsuccessful revolts, Barzani fled to Iran in 1946, which coincided with the establishment of the Republic of Kurdistan in Mahabad in Iran. He did not return to Iraq until the Iraqi revolution in 1958. Yet, the KDP kept growing in Iraq as a major leftist political force (Stansfield, 2006, p. 4). At the 1953 KDP congress, they declared the KDP to be a party of all the people in Kurdistan, regardless of their ethnic origin, which was a move towards a civic nationalism (McDowall, 2004, p. 297). The party steadily distance itself from the Iraqi monarchy and approached to Qasim's Free Officers (Stansfield, 2006). After the monarchy was overthrown and the republic of Iraq was established in 1958, Qasim showed '*his gratitude to the Kurds by issuing a new provisional constitution stating that 'the Kurds and the Arabs are partners within the Iraqi nation' and, more importantly, allowing Mulla Mustafa Barzani to return to Iraq*' (Stansfield, 2006, p. 4).

From 1958 to 1991

Kurds believed that the 1958 revolution would establish a new era of Kurdish-Arab understanding (Yildiz, 2007, p. 16). The new republic recognised Kurds and Arabs as partners, and their national right in the constitution (McDowall, 2004, p. 302). Qasim, the prime minister of the republic, even promoted territorial Iraqi-first national identity for all the people of Iraq (Aziz, 2014, p. 67). Although it seemed that the tension between Kurds and Baghdad was being resolved this period of cooperation was short-lived (Yildiz, 2007). Increasing pressures from Arab nationalists and military factions forced Qasim to shift his left-leaning, pro-Kurdish agenda to new strategies of assimilations and control (Natali, 2005, p. 52). In 1959, Qasim imposed martial-law that Arabised the Kurdish names, cancelled the Kurdish organisations, closed the KDP and arrested Kurdish nationalist leaders (Natali, 2005). These Arab nationalist-military influences in Iraq reduced the political space for Kurds and created new discontents.

In 1961, Barzani demanded autonomy for the Kurdish region. Qasim refused the demand, which sparked the first large-scale war between Kurds and Baghdad (McDowall, 2004, p. 308). Gunter (2013) argued that the genuine Kurdish nationalism began in 1960s, as a reaction to the excesses of Iraqi Arab nationalism.

In 1963, Qasim was overthrown by a coup of Baath Party, who had a new Arabic ideology, which was socialist and secular in spirit (Yildiz, 2007). The new party's socialist, non-ethnic and non-sectarian principles were believed to provide the needed common ground for peace negotiations with the Kurds (Bengio, 2012). Abdul Salam Arif became the second president of Iraq in 1963 and negotiated a peace agreement with Barzani (Yildiz, 2007). In 1966, the state recognised the bi-national (Kurdish and Arab) character of Iraq and implied regional autonomy (Yildiz, 2007). The autonomy agreement was negotiated and imposed with Saddam Husein in 1970.

The agreement of 1970 outlined the socio-political rights of the Kurds (McDowall, 2004). The agreement recognised Kurd's linguistic and cultural rights, and that government officials in Kurdish areas would be Kurdish. The constitution would recognise Kurds as an official nationality, which would

Kurds and the Border

provide equal right to Kurds in Iraq (McDowall, 2004, p. 328). It was announced that almost all of the Kurds' demands were met (Yildiz, 2007).

Following three years showed that Saddam was not willing to implement the agreement (Yildiz, 2007). Both sides broke the promises. Saddam Hussein wanted to impose his own Autonomy Law; Barzani refused it and demanded increased military and political freedom for Kurds (Ghareeb, 1981). The peace plan eventually failed in 1974. This failure escalated a new large-scale war between Kurds and Bagdad. When Barzani refused Saddam's offer in 1974, he was also reliant on Iran's support (Yildiz, 2007). However, Saddam had an agreement with Iran, known as Algiers Agreement in 1975, which would cease Iran's support to Kurds in Iraq (Stansfield, 2006). Saddam later launched major attacks against Barzani and defeated him. Iraq's military not only attacked and killed Kurdish fighters but carried out a vicious campaign against thousands of civilians (McDowall, 2004, Yildiz, 2007, Stansfield, 2006). Thousands of villages were destroyed, with thousands of Kurds resettled (Yildiz, 2007). Mustafa Barzani passed his leadership to his son Massoud Barzani, Jalal Talabani founded a new Kurdish party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

The Islamic revolution of 1979 in Iran had a significant impact on the Kurds' relations with Iraq. Saddam Hussein launched an unexpected attack against Iran in 1980. The KDP and PUK sought support outside to turn the Iraq-Iran war into an opportunity for Kurds (McDowall, 2004). PUK gained support from Iran in 1980 to use against Iraq to obtain autonomy (Yildiz, 2007). By 1982, Kurdish forces managed to take control over the Kurdish areas in Iraq (O'Ballance, 1996). Yet, when the war between Iran and Iraq ended in 1988, Iraqi forces started to focus on the Kurdish areas. Saddam launched the deadliest campaign against Kurds, known as Anfal Campaigns in 1988.

Saddam's objectives were to reclaim Kurdish territories and to punish Kurds for treason (McDowall, 2004). Approximately 3,000 villages were destroyed and, 1.5 million people were displaced. Approximately 180,000 people were killed during the Anfal campaigns (Yildiz, 2007). In March 1988, approximately 5,000 people were killed in one chemical attack in the Kurdish city of Halabja (McDowall, 2004, p. 358). The Anfal campaigns were one of the most horrific parts of Kurdish history in Iraq. The Anfal campaigns were officially recognised as genocide by many countries, including Sweden, Norway and the UK.

The defeat of 1988 was devastating for Kurds. Kurds would only get some respite from the Bagdad's regime when Saddam Hussein attacked Kuwait, an action that led to the Gulf War of 1991.

From 1991 to 2003

After the war with Iran, Saddam decided to occupy Kuwait in an effort to recuperate the financial losses of the war. When he directed his forces to Kuwait in 1990, Kurds launched another uprising against Saddam's regime with the encouragements of the US and its Allies in 1991 (McDowall, 2004). George H.W. Bush made the appeal to Kurds to rise up against Saddam on TVs (Romano, 2006). Despite its openly encouragements, the US was blamed for declining to support Kurds with arms (Yildiz, 2007, p. 34).

The human cost of the 1991 uprising was again devastating for Kurds. Approximately 2 million Kurdish refugees fled into Turkey and Iran (Romano, 2006). The US and its allies forced a no-fly zone above the 36th Parallel that gave some respites to Kurds from the regime (Yildiz, 2007). The Gulf war ended in six months and Iraqi army agreed to withdraw its forces from the Kurdish areas.

Kurds eventually obtained the autonomy after the war in 1991. Kurds reclaimed the Kurdish provinces of Duhok, Erbil and Silemani. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) was established in 1992 with the first election held in May 1992. The KDP and PUK shared the power in Kurdistan. Each party obtained 50 seats in this new Kurdish parliament. A long-held goal of Kurdish movements in Iraq was eventually achieved.

In 1994, the tensions between the two Kurdish parties, KDP and PUK over the administration of Kurdistan turned into armed clashes. The following four years witnessed a civil war in Iraqi Kurdistan region (Romano, 2006). During the four-year-long civil war, the Kurdish factions from Turkey (Kurdish Worker's Party, PKK) and Iran, and as well as Turkey, Iran and Iraqi armies were drawn into the fight (McDowall, 2004). The KDP and PUK finally agreed on a ceasefire, brokered by the US, in Washington in 1998. At the end of this internal war, Kurdistan region divided into two administrative divisions, KDP in Erbil and PUK in Silemani (Gunter, 2008).

Kurds and the Border

Until 2003, Kurds were left to their own fate. They suffered from a double embargo: the first is from Bagdad and the second from the UN sanctions against Iraq. The Kurds' social, economic and political fortunes changed for good with the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

From 2003 to 2016

In March 2003, the US launched an invasion against Iraq that overthrew Saddam's regime. Kurds played an important role in the war. Yildiz (2007) argued that there were two main reasons why Kurds were important players for the US: they had a large military force (80.000 Kurdish fighters) available in a strategic point and also the US believed that an Al-Qaida cell was located in the Kurdish area.

The Kurdish leaders from both parties, KDP and PUK, were aware that the fall of Saddam Hussein would create a political opportunity for Kurds to finally form their own state. Both Kurdish parties combined their forces and declared their intention to support the US-led invasion and to rebuild Iraq (Yildiz, 2007). Kurds were determined to establish an autonomous federal state in a post-Saddam Iraq (Gunter, 2008). Following the war, Iraq's provisional constitution (also known as Transitional Administrative Law or TAL) was initially signed in March 2004, which recognised Kurdish autonomy. Finally with the Iraqi Constitution in October 2005, Iraq was defined as a federal state. The constitution recognised the Kurdistan region, and the KRG as the regional government of Kurdistan. Kurds were also presented in the Iraqi governing council. The Iraqi National Assembly elected a Kurdish leader, Jalal Talabani, as the President of Iraq in 2005.

The Kurdish federal state obtained substantial rights to govern the Kurdish region. Kurdish Regional Government has become virtually independent in the federal Iraq (Gunter, 2013). Since the removal of Saddam, the Kurdistan region continued to be 'the safe heaven' in Iraq. The Kurdish provinces were the only places in Iraq to be ranked 'secure' by the US military. Compared to the rest of Iraq, this relative security and stability of the region provided the necessary ground for a substantial growth and wealth. The constitutionally recognised and empowered KRG started to receive high-level diplomatic missions, participated in international trade shows and negotiated its own investment

projects. Kurdistan currently houses numerous consulates, embassies, trade offices and honorary consulates of many countries (Natali, 2007).

The socio-political atmosphere provided opportunities for Kurds to grow and develop. The Kurdistan region was relatively secure and stable compared to the rest of Iraq since the 2003 US invasion. Yet, the relations with the central government have been unsteady and problematic since then. In 2008, the Kurdistan president, Mesud Barzani, told the prime minister of Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki, 'you smell like a dictator' (Gunter, 2003, p. 34). One of the reasons for these tensions was the oil-rich city of Kirkuk. These problematic relations nearly resulted in open hostilities (Gunter, 2003). The tensions between both sides mounted through 2011-12 on territorial disputes, power sharing and oil productions.

These limping relations with the central government and increasing wealth and growth along with the autonomy retriggered Kurds' demand for an independent state. In 2006, Kurdistan president Mesud Barzani ordered the Iraqi flags to be replaced with Kurdistan flags in the government buildings. The Iraqi Prime Minister replied that 'the Iraqi flag is the only flag that should be raised over any square inch of Iraq'. The tensions between both sides escalated in 2008 when the Kurdistan president stated that 'we will not allow the Kurdish people's achievements to be wrecked by the Iraqi parliament. Iraq will fall apart if the Iraqi constitution is violated' (Anderson and Stansfield, 2011, p. 7). In 2009, Kurds began to export crude oil to foreign markets and the central government allowed Kurds to use the pipelines; in return the Iraqi government demanded to share the revenue. Kurds' oil export later caused more problems in their relationship with the central government. The central government put more pressures on the foreign companies who signed contracts directly with the Kurdish government. Kurds' oil exports were halted as a result of the central government's attempts. In 2012, Kurdish leaders announced that Kurdistan would start to export its oil via new pipelines. In March 2014, the Iraqi government started to block the transfer of oil revenues to the Kurdish government, leaving Kurdish government unable to pay the salaries of the officials. This is still an ongoing issue for the Kurdistan regional government.

In 2014, Kurdish leader, Mesud Barzani, announced his intention to hold a referendum on independence within months. At the time of writing this thesis,

Kurds and the Border

the referendum has not been yet held. However, Mesud Barzani repeatedly states that the referendum will eventually be held. He states that 'time has come to redraw Middle East boundaries' (Chulov, 2016).

The rapid advance of the Islamic State (IS or ISIS) in 2014 brought instability to the region. The IS took control of Mosul in June 2014 and when they approached Kirkuk, the Iraqi army left the city, which led Kurds to capture and protect the city against the IS. One of the most disputed territories between Kurds and the central government is now being controlled by Kurds. The future of Kirkuk and the rest of the Kurdish region are still ambiguous. Iraqi Kurds are currently suffering from economic issues due to the central government's block on the transfer of oil revenue. There are also internal disputes over power sharing between Kurdish political parties, mainly between the KDP and the others. At the time of writing this thesis, IS continues to pose a threat to whole region. Although the future of Iraqi Kurds and Kurdistan remain ambiguous, it is certain that Kurds will not let their achievements be wrecked, and the Kurds will determine Kurdistan's status through their relations with the central government, the neighbouring states and the rest of the international community.

2.3.3 Kurds in Turkey: The North Side of the Border

From 1918 to 1938

Modern Turkey was established as the successor state of the Ottoman Empire after the traumatic processes of massive territorial losses of the empire along with the rise of nationalist movements in Arabic peninsula, Balkans and Greece, and under the leading Western powers' occupation threats.

The foundation of the new Turkish Republic is based on a National Pact (Misak-ı Milli), a set of important decisions about the new political strategies and new borders of the state. This was made by the last term of the Ottoman Parliament in January 1920. Atatürk, who is accepted to be the founder of the new state, declared that "It is the nation's iron fist that writes the Nation's Pact which is the main principle of our independence to the annals of history" (Butler, 2011, p. 219). These decisions resulted in the occupation of Istanbul, the capital of Ottoman, by Allied Powers and the establishment of a new parliament, the Grand National Assembly, in Ankara where Turkish Republic was founded in

1920. The borders of the modern Turkey were also drawn roughly according to this Pact with the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. The only border that was not agreed in this treaty was the border with Iraq. As stated in the previous section, Turks demanded the Kurdish populated territories to join Turkey, which created problems with the British who were controlling the disputed region.

As stated before, during the Ottoman Empire, Kurds enjoyed with a certain degree of autonomy in the eastern and south-eastern parts of present day Turkey and were allowed to have their associations, foundations and use of their language. This situation changed right after the establishment of the new state (Natali, 2005).

The main goal of the new state was to transform this multi-ethnic structure of the Ottoman Empire into one homogenous nation-state in which every ethnic group could be 'Turks' (Güzeldere, 2009, p. 293). Mango (2011) points out that throughout the independence war, Atatürk accepted the multi-ethnic structure of Turkey and mainly emphasised on the Islamic connections of these ethnic groups until the establishment of the Republic, in October 1923. Five months later, in March 1924; the Caliphate, which presented political unity of Muslims, was abolished by this new state (Chaliand, 1993). Hence, the new state was successfully transformed from the religion-based former Ottoman Empire into a modern nation-state. However, breaking the religious connections between the other ethnic groups created more problems, especially with its Kurdish population (Yavuz, 2001).

Until 1923, Atatürk repeatedly mentioned the connections between Turkish and Kurdish people (Atatürk Arastırma Merkezi, 2006, p. 71). Mango (1999) analysed Atatürk's telegrams, diaries, letters, and speeches. He showed that in a letter to a Kurdish leader, Atatürk stated that 'Kurds and Turks are true brothers and may not be separated' (Mango, 1999, p. 6). In another telegram, Atatürk ordered a Turkish commander, Kazım Karabekir, to embrace Kurds as true brothers. In a speech in 1920, Atatürk stated that '*the individuals which constitute our Assembly are not only Turk, or Kurd, or Laz, or Çerkez; but the components of the Nation of Islam composed of all. It is a sincere community*' (Ozcan, 2012, p. 66). During the Lausanne conference in 1923, the government representative, İnönü, in response to the British delegates, stated

that *'the government of the Grand National Assembly is also the government of the Kurds as much as of the Turks. This is because the bona fide and legitimate representatives of the Kurds have taken part in the National Assembly, and have been enjoying the right to participate in the government and to rule the country'* (Ozcan, 2012, p. 67). The first provisional constitution of Turkey in 1921 stated that *the Turkish State is governed by the Grand National Assembly (article 3) and The Grand National Assembly is composed of members who are elected by the people of the provinces (article 4)*. The parliament also had Kurdish members who participated in the Lausanne conference 1922-23. Two Kurdish members stated that the Turks and the Kurds are brothers; they are alike and not separable. Mango (2011, p. 979) argues that 'neither Mustafa Kemal Ataturk nor any other leading Turkish nationalist denied at the time that there were Kurds in Turkey. But they argued that Turks and Kurds were indissolubly linked by a common history and interests, and should be considered an indivisible national entity'.

The Lausanne conference ended with a peace treaty in 1923 that led the international recognition of the new Turkish Republic. A year later, the new constitution was accepted. Many scholars argue that, after signing the Lausanne treaty and accepting the constitution of 1924, the state began to impose Turkishness onto Kurdish populations (Barkey and Fuller, 1998, p. 10, Mango, 1999, Ozcan, 2012). The Turkish delegates argued in Lausanne that the Turks and the Kurds are an indivisible nation. However after the peace treaty of Lausanne, the new republic began to emphasise only Turkishness. The constitution of 1924 equated 'citizenship' with Turkishness. The article 88 stated that 'the people of Turkey are called Turks by virtue of citizenship, irrespective of their racial and religious affiliations'. There was no mention of Kurds or Kurdishness or brotherhood in the official state discourse anymore. The constitution declared that one had to be Turk to become a member of the parliament. Although the Kurds were constitutionally 'qualified' to be 'Turks', this caused dissatisfaction of the Kurdish citizens. The new regime's strategy of building a nation was based on melting all ethnic groups into 'Turkishness'.

In February 1925, the first large-scale religious and nationalist rebellion, called Sheikh Said Rebellion, was started by the Kurds in the east and south-east regions (Olson, 2000). This uprising was suppressed in just two months.

However, the aftermath of this insurgency changed the whole situation in the region.

After the Sheikh Said Rebellion, a set of new radical decisions were made under the name of 'the rehabilitation plan for the east' or 'the reform plans for the east' ('Sark Islahat Programi') in September 1925. Under this reform plan: Martial law (Sıkıyönetim) would be imposed in the east and south-east regions (Kurdish inhabited areas); Kurdish language would be forbidden; and local people would be encouraged to speak in Turkish; some Kurdish families would be exiled to the west where Turkish people were majority; Kurdish people would not even be nominated to the lowest level public servant (Yegen, 2006). The rehabilitation plan mentioned about Kurds as 'Turks who have forgotten their Turkishness'. Kurds were no longer 'true brothers' or a sibling nation in the state discourse (Zeydanlioglu, 2008).

All of these decisions triggered new insurgencies in the region. Among the others, the Ararat rebellions were the most important ones that occurred between 1926 and 1930. During this period; a Kurdish state, called 'The Republic of Ararat', was self-claimed by the rebels (1927-30) (Houston, 2008). In order to deal with this problem, the Turkish state initiated three military operations. The uprising was violently suppressed in September 1930 (McDowall, 2004, p. 206). According to the mostly-read daily 'Cumhuriyet' newspaper dated 19 July 1930, around 15,000 people were killed in the Zilan River (located in Van province). In 1930, after the Kurdish uprising, the minister of justice, Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, went to the region and in the presence of the press stated that *'we live in a country called Turkey, the freest in the world. As your deputy, I feel I can express my real convictions without reserve: I believe that the Turk must be the only lord, the only master of this country. Those who are not of pure Turkish stock can have only one right in this country, the right to be servants and slaves'* (Chaliand, 1993, p. 56).

After all these uprisings, and in order to deal with these problems permanently, Ataturk sent the Prime Minister (Ismet Inonu) to the east (Kurdish inhabited areas) with the mission of writing a report about the region in August 1935. In his report, Inonu pointed out 'the problem of spreading Kurdish people in the region'. As a solution he suggested to create new Turkish populations in the region and to assimilate the Kurdish people (Efegil,

2011, p. 29). The report also included Inonu's suggestions on how to Turkify Kurdish citizens (Ozturk, 2007).

In 1934, the state also adopted a resettlement policy. This resettlement law ordered the dispersion of Kurdish citizens (Zeydanlioglu, 2008). The law designated three zones. The first zone was for the 'population who share the Turkish culture' who were allowed to settle wherever they wish. The second zone was for the 'relocation and resettlement of populations which are to adopt the Turkish culture'. Those who did not belong to 'Turkish race' had to settle to places where the government wanted, regardless of their wishes. Finally the third zone was the closed areas for resettlement and inhabitation for 'sanitary, economic, cultural, political, military and security' reasons (Cagaptay, 2002). The law addressed the Kurdish citizens. The idea was to assimilate Kurds by mingling them with Turks (Yildiz, 2005). The law stated that 'the Ministry of Interior is entitled to ... resettle nomads who do not share the Turkish culture, by spreading them around to Turkish towns and villages'. The law later dictated some resettlements of Turkish citizens in the eastern regions that were inhabited by Kurds. The law entitled the ministry of the interior to take 'the necessary actions' (Cagaptay, 2002). The law ordered that all villages where Turkish was not the mother tongue were to be dissolved, and their inhabitants were dispersed into areas where Turkish was predominantly spoken. Any kind of grouping or associations of non-Turkish speaking citizens were forbidden. The law ordered Kurdish people to be dispersed to places where they could not make more than five per cent of the total population; it even proposed to send non-Turkish speaking children to boarding establishments and schools where they would be obliged to speak only in Turkish (McDowall, 2004, p. 207).

From 1938 to 1980

In 1938, the resettlement law and these Turkification policies of the state led to another Kurdish rebellion that was violently suppressed, known as the Dersim Massacre (McDowall, 2004, p. 207). According to McDowall (2004) it is estimated that 40,000 Kurds were killed and 10,000 Kurds were forced to immigrate. The state also replaced the name of the city from Dersim to a Turkish name 'Tunceli'. Van Bruinessen (2007, p. 6) argues that the Dersim Massacre was an ethnocide that aimed the destruction of Kurdish ethnic

identity. The Dersim rebellion was the last Kurdish uprising that was led by a tribal leader in Turkey (McDowall, 2004). The same year, in 1938, Atatürk also died and İnönü became the second president of Turkey.

After the violent suppression of the last rebellion, the state's approach to Kurds did not change (Barkey and Fuller, 1998). In 1946, Turkey entered to a multiparty era. When the new political party, the Democrat party, got in power, new political opportunities emerged for the Sunni Muslims (Natali, 2000). Although it created opportunities to Kurds to express their identity as Sunni Muslims, there was still no legal space for Kurdish oppositions (Natali, 2000).

The following years, Turkey experienced three military coups and two military memorandums; these occurred in 1960, 1971, 1980 and the memorandums occurred in 1997 and 2007. The military coups also provide valuable insight into the state's approaches to Kurds. According to the Kurdish report of the military junta in 1961, 'so-called' Kurdish people's connections with the Kurds in the neighbouring countries had to be cut (Akar and Dündar, 2008). An important detail in these commands was that the state started to call Kurdish people as 'Turkish people who think they are Kurds', 'so-called Kurds' or 'mountain Turks'. The military junta attempted to cut Turkish Kurds' connections with the Kurds in the neighbouring countries. The military junta's Kurdish report also stated that 'a Turkology department needs to be established in a university where those 'so-called' Kurds have to be proven to be Turks', 'it should be declared to the world that there is no Kurdish question in Turkey', and some 'so-called' Kurds should be sent to the west and these places need to be filled by Turkish immigrants' (Akar and Dündar, 2008, p. 102).

The continuous denial and assimilation policies increased Kurds' awareness of their Kurdish identity (Natali, 2000). After the military coup of 1961, the state allowed the establishment of a socialist party, The Turkish Worker's party. McDowall (2004, p. 166) argues that the state's approaches to Kurds, uneven industrial developments, the availability of leftist organisation [while the state elites closed the Kurdish organisations and publications, they allowed the leftist ones to survive] and the rise of Kurdish proletariat created a leftward shift in the Kurdish movements in Turkey.

Kurds and the Border

Until 1970, the leftist movements proliferated and these leftist organisations were organising mass meeting in the Kurdish inhabited areas (McDowall, 2004, p. 410). The Turkish Workers' party, in their fourth congress, stated that *'there are Kurdish people in the East of Turkey.... The fascist authorities representing the ruling classes have subjected the Kurdish people to a policy of assimilation and intimidation that has often become a bloody repression'* (McDowall, 2004). Kurds participated in many leftist organisations and tried to disseminate Kurdish materials or Turkish materials about Kurdish culture and identity (McDowall, 2004). There were signs of growing intellectual unrest. In 1967, the state declared that *'it is illegal and forbidden to introduce to, or distribute in, the country, materials in the Kurdish language of foreign origin in any form published, recorded, taped or material in similar form'* (McDowall, 2004, p. 410).

In 1971, there was the second military intervention in the Turkish Republic, the Turkish military memorandum. After the memorandum, leftist organisations and publications were banned, with union meetings and strikes declared illegal (Natali, 2000). The leftist Turkish Workers' party was also closed. Yet the instability continued even after the military coup and the political violence escalated until 1980, which gave a rise to the Kurdish Worker's party (or PKK). The PKK became prominence through the end of 1970s. The military coup of 1980 opened a new chapter for the Kurdish movements in Turkey.

From 1980 to 1999

The military coup in 1980 was not much different from the previous ones. It added even further restrictions and policies of repression. The military leadership, under General Kenan Evren, banned the use of Kurdish completely, and persecuted Kurdish intellectuals and activists (McDowall, 2004, p. 410). According to the military coup facts (by The Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Hurriyet, 2012) 650,000 people were taken into custody, 230,000 people put on trial, and 1,683,000 people were blacklisted. Approximately 30,000 people fled Turkey to seek refuge abroad, 299 inmates died in prisons due to 'indeterminate' reasons, 14 inmates died in hunger strikes and 171 people died under torture. The military junta adopted a new constitution that is still ongoing in 2016. The constitution was ratified in 1982 by popular referendum during the military junta. An article in this new constitution

addressed the use of Kurdish by stating that ‘expressing thoughts or publications in languages that are not first official language of the any recognised countries are forbidden’.

The military junta also announced martial laws in the majority of many Kurdish areas. Majority of Kurdish villages were under military control, depopulated or destroyed completely (Natali, 2000, p. 177). The militarised political space, lack of legal political alternatives, increasing discriminatory policies, and highly ethnicised populations strengthened the PKK, which gradually shifted from a socialist revolutionist party to Kurdish ethno-nationalist party. In an interview, Abdullah Ocalan, the founder and the leader of the PKK since its establishment, explains this shift with these words: *‘I did not emphasise Kurdishness along with the other leftists during 1960s-70s because the extreme left was very strong and the Kurds lost their confidence. Also, there was not a dictatorship in Turkey during that time. We created PKK in 1978 at the time of massacre in Maras. Still it was not a party uniquely for the Kurds or Kurdishness. It was an idea of socialist...our route to revolution was socialism. But after 1980, the ‘flash’ appeared’* (Perincek, 1990).

By ‘flash’ Ocalan referred to the realisation of his Kurdish identity that he placed at the core of his political struggle.

Ocalan announced the party with a manifesto that he named ‘a manifesto for proletarian revolutionaries of Kurdistan’ and later printed as a booklet and titled as ‘the path of Kurdistan revolution (manifesto)’ in 1978. According to the manifesto:

- *Kurdistan is an inter-state colony.*
- *A national liberation struggle is an unavoidable duty in order to gain the freedom and independence of the Kurdish people.*
- *The Kurdistan revolution shall be a national and democratic one, and the ultimate end would, in long term, be the socialist revolution with an uninterrupted transition to a ‘classless and non-exploitative’ society.*
- *The revolution’s political objective is to establish an independent, united and democratic Kurdistan.*

Kurds and the Border

- *The targets of the revolution are the conquerors of Kurdistan (the Turkish state) and its native feudal-collaborators, and the imperialist powers behind them.*
- *The all-in-one use of ideological, political and military forms of the struggle is necessary for the success of the national liberation of the colony Kurdistan (Ozcan, 2012, p. 87).*

According to the military sources, the PKK organised its first deadly attack in 1984, announced as the work of 'bunch of bandits' (Ozcan, 2012). This offensive would later be considered as 'the 29th Kurdish revolt' that would be smashed as the other 28 revolts were by the state forces (Ozcan, 2012, p. 73). Yet, since this first offensive, according to Turkish Military Forces, tens of thousands of people were killed, most of them Kurds, at least one million people have been displaced, with around 3,000 villages destroyed (Güzeldere, 2009, p. 293). There was a long lasting state of emergency in the Kurdish provinces and deadly attacks in Western Turkey, and thus a massive increase in the military budget and cross-border operations.

Until 1990, the conflicts between the state security forces and the PKK continued without any sign of peace. In 1986, Turkish Social Democrat Populist Party, SHP, stated that whole south-east was 'a sort of concentration camp, where every citizen was treated as a suspect, with oppression, torture and insult the rule' (McDowall, 2004). In 1990, the SHP announced its report on the conditions in the Kurdish majority areas and recommendations for the solution: '*free expression of identity and linguistic freedom of expression, abolition of the village guards, the governorate-general and state of emergency, and a major programme of regional development*' (McDowall, 2004, p. 430). In 1991, hope of peace appeared for the first time. The Prime Minister, Suleyman Demirel, announced that 'Turkey has recognised the Kurdish reality' (Gunter, 2008). In the same year, the President, Turgut Ozal, also showed his willingness to solve the Kurdish question in Turkey and also announced his acceptance of an autonomous Kurdistan in Iraq (McDowall, 2004). Ocalan, on the other side, gave the first signal of abandoning his separation plans by announcing that 'there is no question of separating from Turkey, my people need Turkey' (McDowall, 2004). In 1993, the president, Turgut Ozal, died and Tansu Ciller became the Prime Minister. Ciller showed no willingness to solve the Kurdish question with peace; her premiership

initiated more intensified conflicts against the PKK (Barkey and Fuller, 1998, p. 140, Yildiz, 2005, p. 106). Until 1999, the deadly conflicts continued without any break.

In 1990, the first pro-Kurdish party, People's Labour Party or HEP, was also established and gained 22 seats in the Turkish Grand Assembly in 1991 election. The fate of HEP and its successors were all the same: Turkey's Constitutional Court outlawed them all. They were all seen as 'terrorist' agents and considered as dangers to the unity of the country. The HEP was banned in 1993 due to 'the overt promotion of Kurdish cultural and political rights' (Guney, 2002). In the same year, Kurdish MPs founded another party called 'the Freedom and Democracy Party' that was also banned soon after its establishment and succeeded by the Democratic Party, DEP. In 1994, the parliament lifted the immunity of six DEP MPs, after they took the parliamentary oath in Kurdish in the parliament. These six Kurdish MPs were later sentenced to 15 years in prison on charges of treason and affiliation with the PKK (HDP, 2015). In 1994, the DEP was also banned. The Kurdish politicians formed another political party in the same year, called 'The People's Democracy Party (HADEP)' which was banned in 2003. The next party was called 'the Democratic People's Party (DEHAP). When the Constitutional Court opened a case against the DEHAP, the party joined to the Democratic Society Party (DTP). The party won over 100 of municipalities in Kurdish populated areas in Turkey. The DTP was banned in 2009. The next pro-Kurdish party was called 'The Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)'. The BDP's candidates ran independently and gained 36 seats in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 2011. The final pro-Kurdish party is The Peoples' Democratic Party or HDP. HDP gained 13% of the vote in June 2015 election and became the third largest parliamentary group with 80 seats in the parliament. In November 2015 election, the HDP again won 10.75% of the vote and gained 59 MPs. At the time of writing this thesis, it continues to be the third largest group in the Turkish parliament.

From 1999 to 2016

In 1999, deadly conflicts between the Turkish security forces and the PKK ceased when the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, was captured. The PKK announced a unilateral ceasefire that lasted until 2004. When Ocalan was

Kurds and the Border

captured, he stated that '*a ceasefire would ease the deadlock over the Kurdish question and open the way to dialogue on a democratic solution*' (Yildiz, 2005, p. 106). Ocalan also reportedly referred to the PKK's war for the Kurdish independence as a 'historical mistake' (Yildiz, 2005). In June 2004, the PKK announced that the unilateral ceasefire would be called off due to 'the on-going state military operations against the organisation' (Yildiz, 2005). The conflicts restarted and lasted until the end of 2012.

At the end of 1999, Turkey was also officially recognised as a candidate for full membership to the European Union (the EU). This became a turning point for the Kurdish question in Turkey. The relatively peaceful period, due to the PKK's unilateral ceasefire, and the prospect of being a full member of the EU created a political context that encouraged the government to undertake some important reforms that were required by the EU and also addressed some popular Kurdish demands (Aslan, 2015). In 2002, a new political party, Justice and Development Party or AKP, came into power in Turkey. The AKP also initially focused on the democratisation processes and the EU membership. Some important reform packs were passed by the parliament in order to meet the EU criteria, which also addressed to some of the long-waiting demands of the Kurds (Aslan, 2015). An amendment in the broadcasting law allowed broadcasting TV and radio channels in Kurdish. Another amendment lifted the ban on teaching Kurdish in private schools. Another amendment eased giving Kurdish names to children. In 2005, the negotiations between Turkey and the EU started. The same year, Tayyip Erdogan, the prime minister and the leader of the AKP, stated that '*the state made some mistakes in the past that should be acknowledged... the Kurdish problems are my problems. The Kurdish question should be addressed with further democratisation, expanded citizenship rights and welfare*' (BBC, 2005). Further legal amendments and reforms continued to meet some other demands of Kurds and improved the conditions in the Kurdish populated areas in Turkey. These new legal regulations created more opportunities for the use of Kurdish, i.e. the ban on Kurdish publications was also lifted.

Although the AKP government continued to initiate further reforms to meet Kurds' demands, Kurdish activists underlined some limitations of these new amendments, such as the requirement for Kurdish broadcasting to send the Turkish translations of all the programmes to the Radio and Television

Supreme Council or RUTUK, and that these programs '*could not aim at teaching children these languages, should always be accompanied by subtitles in Turkish, and could not exceed forty-five minutes a day and four hours a week*' (Aslan, 2015). Similarly, while the new regulation allowed teaching Kurdish in private schools, there were also some practical limitations and bureaucratic obstacles, such as one requirement to be a 'foreign' language teacher was to obtain a Bachelor degree in the language they would teach. However, there was no Kurdish language degree in any university in Turkey. The Kurdish activists and politicians increasingly demand Kurdish education in public schools (Aslan, 2015). It was still prohibited to speak Kurdish in any party meeting or election campaigns. For instance a pro-Kurdish party member, Resit Yardimci, was sentenced six months prison and 1,640 Turkish lira fine for saying 'have a nice day' in Kurdish at the party's provisional congress (Hurriyet, 2005).

In 2009, the AKP launched the process called the 'Kurdish Opening' as an attempt to solve the Kurdish question in Turkey. The initial attempt was to release 34 PKK fighters when they return the country from the Iraqi Kurdistan region. The pro-Kurdish party and the PKK turned this event into a victorious celebration that enraged those Turkish people who considered the insurgents as terrorists. Nevertheless, the government continued secret peace talks with the PKK in Oslo (Larrabee, 2013). The same year, the state allowed a graduate degree in Kurdish in a university for the first time. The government also eased the law for Kurdish broadcasting and the first Kurdish channel was also launched in 2009.

Yet, in 2009, many pro-Kurdish politicians, journalists, mayors, activists, publishers and lawyers were charged for allegedly being members of the Kurdistan Communities Union, KCK, the political wing of the PKK. Many underlined that all these allegations were the result of the vague anti-terror laws and the definition of terrorist crimes; such as if a demand matches with the PKK's demand, i.e. the demand for the Kurdish education in public schools, can be prosecuted as PKK propaganda (International Crisis Group, EU Report, 2011, Kurban, 2013). According to the official records 2,146 people, including 274 elected officials from the pro-Kurdish BDP were charged for being members of the KCK (Aslan, 2015). The pro-Kurdish party, BDP, claimed that

Kurds and the Border

these figures reached to 7.748 people in 30 months (Bianet, 2011). In 2012, hundreds of Kurdish prisoners also went on hunger strikes with demands for better conditions for Ocalan, the PKK's imprisoned leader, and more use of Kurdish language in public life (BBC, 2012). These events caused a significant increase in the PKK's attacks against Turkish security forces that lasted until the end of 2012 (Larrabee, 2013).

In December 2012, Erdogan's AKP decided to open peace negotiations with the PKK's leader. This was another turning point in the state's relations with Kurds. Direct contacts with Ocalan ceased the PKK's attacks. In March 2013, Ocalan sent a letter to be read out publicly during the Kurdish New Year celebrations in Diyarbakir. In the letter, Ocalan called for a ceasefire, ordered the PKK to withdraw its forces from Turkey and stated that 'the time for an armed struggle is over' (Bianet, 2013). The negotiations between the government and the PKK were carried out through regular meetings with the pro-Kurdish party members and Ocalan. In May 2013, the PKK announced that it started to withdraw its forces from Turkey and also released its Turkish prisoners as sign of good will (TheGuardian, 2013). The peace process was planned in three stages. The first stage was the withdrawal of the PKK from Turkey; the second stage was to meet the Kurds' demands on Kurdish political and cultural rights and the Kurds' status; and finally the third stage was the process of normalisation in which the PKK would dissolve and integrate into the political system (Larrabee, 2013).

The peace process, however, did not proceed as smoothly as desired with a lack of trust on both sides. The government blamed the PKK for not withdrawing its forces as agreed and the PKK blamed the government for not giving any indication of what it is going to offer in return for its withdrawal. While there was already a limping peace process, the Syrian civil war brought a new dimension to the problems. In 2012, the Syrian government forces withdrew from the Kurdish populated areas. The Kurdish groups that closely linked to the PKK took control over the Kurdish-populated cities and towns in Syria. The Syrian Kurdish groups' increasing strengths at Turkey's Syrian borders raised the government's concerns due to their close links to the PKK. The government attempted to work closely with the Kurdish groups' rivals, such as the other Sunni groups, to isolate these Kurds in Syria (Larrabee, 2013, p. 139). These developments also damaged the peace negotiations, as it

created further concerns for both sides. Another obstacle in the peace negotiations was the AKP's own political agenda. Erdogan wanted to switch the current political system from parliamentary system to a strong presidential system (Al-Monitor, 2015). The AKP did not have enough MPs to amend the constitution, and the pro-Kurdish party, HDP, announced that they are strongly against the presidential system (Hurriyet, 2015).

While the peace process was already fragile, the advance of the IS in Syria and IS's direct attacks against the Kurdish groups in Turkey became the breaking points. The IS's attacks directly targeted the Kurds and the pro-Kurdish party's political campaigns in Turkey. A car bomb attack during the Diyarbakir rally killed 4 people and injured hundreds more. A suicide attack in Ankara killed 104 people and injured 400 people. The breaking point was the IS's suicide attack in Suruc that killed 32 students in July 2015 (BBC, 2015). The PKK initially stated that they had killed two Turkish police officers as revenge for the deaths in Suruc (BBC, 2015).

The failure of the peace process in July 2015 resulted in greater polarisations of the Turkish government and the PKK and the resurgence of the conflicts in Turkey. From July 2015 to June 2016, according to the Turkish official reports, 5.000 PKK fighters and more than 500 Turkish security forces were killed. The Prime Minister, Binali Yildirim, stated that 6.320 buildings, or 11.000 dwellings were destroyed in just five Kurdish populated areas alone (Today, 2016). The pro-Kurdish party's report claimed that the government declared curfews in 22 towns, 7 cities at 63 times for a total number of 817 days and counting (HDP, April 2016). Turkey's Human Right Foundation also reported that some 338 civilians, including 78 children, have died during the conflicts; and the curfews violated the rights of 1.6 million people in Turkey from July 2015 to June 2016 (Today, 2016). At the time of writing this thesis, there are still on-going conflicts between Turkish security forces and the PKK in some Kurdish-populated cities and towns. The timeliness of the thesis and its implications will be discussed at the end of the methodology section.

2.4 Conclusion: Revisiting the Objectives

The literature review above highlights a series of research priorities, which have been addressed in this thesis. There was much academic attention

Kurds and the Border

focused on Kurds, Kurdish nationalist movements, and the issues between Kurds and their ruling states on both sides of the border between Turkey and Iraq.

As widely explained and detailed in the previous section, some scholars, such as McDowall (2004) and Chaliand (1993), have provided highly valuable information about the history of Kurds across these state borders. Jwaideh (2006) also yielded important insights into the Kurdish nationalist movement and its development in these states from a historical perspective. Hassanpour (2003) researched the origin of Kurdish identity and nation in pre-20th century times. While Hassanpour (2003) argued that Kurdish nationalism existed even before the 20th century, Ozoglu (2004) believed that Kurdish nationalism and identity came to the fore with the collapse of Ottoman Empire. Olson (2000) analysed significant Kurdish rebellions, such as Sheik Ubaydullah and Sheik Said, as well as the Kurdish nationalist movements. Izady (1992) and van Bruinessen (1992) provided valuable insights into the socio-political structure of Kurdish society.

There has also been an expansion of academic research of the Kurdish nationalist movements in Turkey and Iraq and the issues between Kurds and their ruling states. Gunter wrote many articles about the issues between Iraqi Kurds and the central government (Gunter, 2003, 2008, 2013). Ghareeb (1981), Stansfield (2006), and Edmonds (1971) put forth very useful findings regarding the Kurdish nationalist movements in Iraq from the First World War onwards. Aziz (2014), and Yildiz (2007) examined the historical and socio-political conditions for the emergence and development of the Kurdish nationalist movements in Iraq, as well as their issues with the Iraqi state.

As also reviewed in this chapter, many scholars have written invaluable books about the Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey. Kirisci and Winrow (1997) analysed the evolution of Kurdish nationalist movements and the Kurdish question in Turkey. Many researchers focused on the Turkish state's policies and approaches to its Kurdish citizens. Yegen (1996), (2011) analysed the Turkish state discourse in an attempt to show how Kurdish identity is excluded by the state as well as the changing attitudes of the Turkish state towards Kurds. Some scholars including Yavuz (2001), Ergil (2000), Toktamis (2007), Somer (2004), Tezcur (2010), Aslan (2015), scrutinised the Turkish state's

nation building strategies and their impact on the evolution of Kurdish nationalism and identity in Turkey. Yildiz (2005) analysed the key issues Kurds have faced in Turkey along with the state's attempts to join the EU. Moustakis and Chaudhuri (2005) scrutinised the Turkish Kurds' relations with the state from a historical perspective, as well as the changes that these relations require in light of Turkey's possible accession to the EU.

There have also been several scholars who emphasised the differences between the Kurdish nationalist movements in Turkey and Iraq. Natali (2005) focused on the socio-political opportunities Kurds have had in Iraq and Turkey throughout their history. She argued that the Kurdish identity was moulded and the Kurdish nationalist projects factionalised according to the socio-political environments in each state. Houston (2008) analysed how these nation-states shaped the national identities to which Kurds were expected to conform.

A very important question that remains unanswered as to how Kurds themselves perceive and construct their nation and identity. The existing literature has shown that nations are not authentic outcomes of static ethnicities, but are historically contingent modern constructs (Hobsbawm, 1992b, Gellner, 2006, Anderson, 1991). As detailed above, many scholars emphasised the differences in the socio-political conditions between Turkey and Iraq. Natali (2005) also argued that Kurdishness should be understood in accordance with the socio-political environment in each state. Yet, the question left unanswered again is how these different socio-political conditions impact the perceptions of Kurdish nation and identity on each side of the border. Therefore, the first set of objectives of this research is to explore:

- How Kurds themselves perceive and construct Kurdish nation and identity on each side of the border, how Kurds narrate their identity, what Kurdishness means to Kurds on each side of the border, and which feature of Kurdish identity have become most salient in each state.

These questions are significant as understanding the Turkish and Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of Kurdish nation and identity will show how these different socio-political conditions create a different Kurdish identity. Although the existing literature provides valuable information about the differences in the socio-

Kurds and the Border

political environments, it is equally important to explore the impact of these different socio-political environments on the formation of Kurdish nation and identity, in order also to draw the implications of these differences.

What makes this research significantly different is also that it brings Kurds' voices, their self-understandings and self-narratives to the existing body of knowledge about Kurds, Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish identity. It will, thus, fill a significant gap in the literature.

As reviewed in the previous section, many scholars have examined Turkey and Iraq's nation building strategies in such a way as to show the conditions in which Kurdish nationalism and identity emerged, developed and were shaped. Although the existing literature provides valued insights into the relations between Kurds and their ruling states, there is a paucity of empirical research about how Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds perceive their ruling states as well as construct their identity in relation to these states. Hence, the second set of objectives of this research is to explore:

- How Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds perceive their ruling states, and how Turkish and Iraqi Kurds place Kurdish identity within the context of their ruling states.

These questions are necessary as exploring Kurds' perceptions of their ruling states, and the ways in which they construct Kurdish identity in relation to these states, will shed light upon an important dimension of the problems between Kurds and their ruling states. Both Turkey and Iraq have struggled to accommodate their Kurdish citizens into their common national communities. As detailed in the previous section, there have been Kurdish nationalist struggles, which have resulted in numerous bloody conflicts on both sides. Both Turkey and Iraq have attempted to solve the problems with their Kurdish citizens in order to prevent both further ethnic conflicts and possible territorial losses. The problematic relations between these two states and their Kurdish citizens remain unresolved, and the future remains unclear. In order to better comprehend these problematic relations and predict their possible consequences, it is important to understand how Kurds on each side perceive their ruling state and how they place Kurdish identity in the contexts of the Turkish and Iraqi states.

Finally, the existing literature emphasises many aspects of Kurdish nationalism and identity on each side of the border. However, another question left unanswered is that of how Turkish and Iraqi Kurds perceive the border that divides them. The border studies literature has shown that borders are not just static physical lines that separate social, political and economic spaces, but are also the processes through which socio-spatial categories and differentiations occur (Newman, 2006). Considering the 90 year-old history of the border between Turkey and Iraq, the important question that arises is how the bordering works on each side. Therefore, the final set of objectives in this research, is to explore:

- How Kurds perceive the border, how Turkish and Iraqi Kurds perceive each other across the border, what the importance of the other side is in Kurds' identity constructions, and how the bordering, as the process of socio-spatial differentiation, occurs on each side.

These questions are equally important because understanding Turkish and Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of each other will, most importantly, provide insights into the possibility of a future union, to build a greater Kurdistan. Both Turkey and Iraq have, for a long time, had a fear of potential territorial losses. Showing the extent of the socio-spatial differentiations between the two sides will also provide a valuable perspective to analyse the validity of these fears. It is also important to explore how the socio-political environment on each side of the border shapes a different Kurdish identity and to draw out the implications of this. This thesis will, thus, explore whether there is a shared Kurdish identity.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter provides a systematic description of the methods used and the rationale for using them. The chapter consists of five sections. The first section draws a conceptual framework that functions as an analytical tool through which national identities are explored. It includes the concepts and the theoretical assumptions related to national identities that research holds and also the theoretical arguments on the relations between narratives and identity. The second section outlines the research design. The third section provides information about the data collection and samplings. The fourth section explains the data analysis strategy in this research.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

3.1.1 The Theoretical Assumptions

The previous chapter, especially 'Nation and Nationalism' and 'Border and Identity' sections, has provided valuable insights into the concept of identity, particularly national identity. In order to draw a conceptual framework, this section starts with reviewing some theoretical assumptions deduced from the above discussions related to the concept of national identity.

- (1) First of all, as widely discussed in the previous chapter that national identities are historically a modern phenomenon (Hobsbawm, 1992b). Nations are not natural, primordial and not even biological; but historically contingent modern constructs and are 'imaginary' (Anderson, 1991).
- (2) National identities are 'produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices by specific strategies' (Hall, 1996, p. 4). There is always the narrative of the nation that is constantly told in national histories, literature, media, popular culture and thus it is embedded into society (Hall, 1992, p. 623). There is an emphasis on origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness in these narrations. These provide stories for these 'imagined

communities' in which each member can picture oneself as a part of whole (Anderson, 1991). Hence, this imagined community becomes a reality in the realm of this discourse launched by politicians and intellectuals and disseminated through the system of education, media, military etc. (Hall, 1992, p. 623).

- (3) National identities are internalised and taken for granted. Although, national identities are modern discursive products, they have been naturalised and thus become a dominant source of meanings for the identity constructions of the self. In this sense, national identities can be viewed as sort of 'habitus'. 'Habitus' is understood as certain beliefs that become part of society's natural structure (Bourdieu, 1990). In other words, *'as a complex of common ideas, concepts or perception schemes, (a) of related emotional attitudes inter-subjectively shared within a specific group of persons; (b) as well as of similar behavioural dispositions; (c) all of which are internalised through 'national' socialisation'* (De Cillia et al., 1999, p. 153). Although national identities are discursively constructed, they become real and natural. They can generate strong senses of belongings, attachments and sentiments. National identities are being considered as if they are an essential part of one's nature.
- (4) National identities are constantly being produced and re-produced through different ways of inclusions and exclusions. They are not just about constructing 'us'; but also constructing 'others'. As Hall (1996, p. 3) states, identity requires a 'constitutive outside' to be constructed. Therefore, constructing an identity needs excluding something. In this sense, construction of a national identity is an act of power. It is because the discourse that generates the stories of inclusion and exclusion are produced through power.
- (5) National identities are multiple. There is not one single national identity for all in any essentialist sense; but different identities constructed through different discourses according to context (Hall, 1996, p.4).
- (6) National identities are always subject to change. They are discursively produced, thus flexible processes and constantly evolving. They are not fixed entities that remain the same always (De Cillia et al., 1999, p. 154). They are continually re-produced and re-negotiated; therefore, any

Methodology

analysis of an identity would represent just 'a snapshot of the unfolding processes' (Meinhof and Galasinski, 2005, p. 8). Any analysis of identity construction would only represent the identity construction of that specific time in that place, rather than a universal and permanent one.

3.1.2 Narratives and Identity

'In the end, we become the autobiographical narratives by which we "tell about" our lives' (Bruner, 2004, p. 694)

The assumptions listed above suggest a conceptual framework that functions as an analytical tool through which national identities can be explored in this research. Among all, this conceptual framework indicates the centrality of discourse and narratives in the constructions and negotiations of national identities. It is argued that national identities are 'constructed', rather than inherited, through discourses and narratives. National identities are 'produced' by positioning the self or by being positioned in the narrative of the nation. A self is rather being 'thrown' into these narratives (Benhabib, 2002, p. 15). As Somers (1994, p. 606) puts it: *'all of us come to be who we are (however ephemeral, multiple, and changing) by being located or locating ourselves (usually unconsciously) in social narratives rarely of our own making'*.

The links between narratives and identity are ontological and interdependent. As Somers and Gibson (1994, p. 30) state that *'the relationship between narrative and ontology is processual and mutually constitutive'*. Arendt (1998, p. 184) states that 'every individual life can eventually be told as a story'. Each life story began with inserting itself into the human world. Arendt (1998, p. 183) defines the realm of human affairs as 'web of relationships'. Construction of identity consists of positioning oneself in this existing web, through 'speech' and 'act'. Taylor (1989, p. 36) defines these relations between identity and language with the concept of 'web of interlocation': *'I am a self only in relation to certain interlocutors: one way in relation to those conversation partners which are essential to my achieving self-definition; in another in relation to those who are now crucial to my continuing grasp of languages of self-understanding-and, of course, these classes may overlap. A self exists only within what I call 'webs of interlocation'*. Benhabib (2002) states that 'we

become aware of who we are by learning to become a conversation partner in these narratives'.

Human communication consists also of conveying who one is, where one's belongings, loyalties and attachments are (De Fina, 2011). Arendt (1998, p. 181) states that *'the moment we want to say 'who' somebody is, our very vocabulary leads us astray into saying 'what' one is... we begin to describe a type or a 'character'.* The disclosure of the specific uniqueness of an individual, the question of 'who' rather than 'what' one is, is in everything one says and does (Arendt, 1998). As Taylor (1989, p. 52) puts it: *we must inescapably understand our lives in narrative forms.* The narrator of a story *'tell us more about their subjects, the 'hero' in the centre of each story, than any product of human hands ever tells us about the master who produced it'* (Arendt, 1998, p. 184). The only 'one' a story reveals is its 'hero'. Who the narrator is can only be known if the narrator is the hero in the story, in narrator's biography (Arendt, 1998). As also quoted above *'in the end, we become the autobiographical narratives by which we "tell about" our lives* (Bruner, 2004, p. 694).

Narratives, thus, become the prime tools in search of identities. Giddens (1991, p. 54) states that *'a person's identity is not to be found in behaviour, nor - important though this is - in the reactions of others, but in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going. The individual's biography, if she is to maintain regular interaction with others in the day-to-day world, cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them into the ongoing 'story' about the self'.* For Giddens (1991, p. 53), a self's identity is not a set of traits or characteristics but a self's own reflexive understanding of their identity, a self's narratives.

This research, thus, focuses on the participants' narratives through which they disclose their identity, self-understandings, attachments and belongings. It is also important to note that analysing these narratives require at all times an understanding of the socio-political contexts of the narrators. The following sections will provide further details about the research design, data collection, sampling and analysing strategies, through which the research generates the findings.

3.2 Research Design

This study has two questions, and each question is viewed from three perspectives. It is, therefore, designed as two analytical parts and each part consists of three chapters, in accordance with the research questions.

The research is situated within the qualitative tradition in human geography. It explores the perceptions of nation and identity through narratives and discourses. The data is, thus, collected through ethnographic interviews with the members of both border communities.

The informants are the Kurdish citizens who still live in the border regions between Turkey and Iraq. In this study, the frontiers of the border region are defined with the frontiers of the border provinces of Turkey and Iraq; namely Hakkari and Sirnak provinces in Turkey; Duhok and Erbil provinces in Iraq. Hence, those Kurdish people who live in the rest of the states, those who immigrated to the other countries and those who live in the other Kurdish-populated cities away from the border are not subject to this research. The research is limited with those who live on either side of the border region where the impact of the border are relatively more acute.

Two fieldworks were conducted to collect the data in these four border provinces mentioned above, between July 2013 and July 2014. The data consist of 96 semi-structured interviews conducted throughout these fieldworks. Further information about the data will be given in the following section.

The stories that evolved in the interviews were the combinations of life stories, past experiences, social and political analyses, anecdotes, future expectations, political demands, socio-economic relations, everyday activities, social interactions and more such categories. I was interested to see how the participants were constructing 'we' and 'other' through these stories. The focus, hence, was on the interviewees' self-understandings, attachments, feelings of belonging and the ways they defined differences and similarities to others.

The following two parts will set out the result of the analysis of these interviews that will be detailed and used to further our understandings and knowledge on the problems being examined. Each chapter will report the key

findings from each main theme using verbatim quotes to illustrate these findings, and the discussions will be incorporated in each chapter. An account of those who were interviewed, their characteristics and the context will be provided in order to generate extensive understandings of these findings and discussions. These two parts will conclude by collating the discussions of all the themes emerged throughout the analyses. It will then be possible to draw a conclusion and present the original contributions of this research.

3.3 Data Collection and Sampling

The fieldworks were carried out during a rarely encountered peaceful period for both sides of the border, between 2013 and 2014. As explained in the previous chapter, both sides of the border have witnessed numerous bloody conflicts since the demarcation of the border. The on-going conflicts have always created serious security issues for the researchers who want to collect primary data from these border regions. As of June 2016, most parts of these border provinces on Turkish side are declared as ‘forbidden zones’ by the military due to the resurgence of the conflicts. Similarly, the advance of the IS through Iraq has also caused instability and insecurity on the Iraqi side of the border.

The first fieldwork was carried out in two Turkish border provinces, Hakkari and Sirnak, between July and October 2013. The last heavy bloody conflict in these provinces was just in 2012. As detailed in the literature review, the conflicts ceased in January 2013 and the announcement of the peace talk was made in March 2013 (Reynolds, 2013). Hence, it had already been 7 months without any conflict when the fieldwork was carried out. The peace talks brought pacific days to the region that made the fieldwork possible. The final fieldwork was carried out in two Iraqi Kurdistan governorates, Duhok and Erbil, between May and July 2014. As explained in the previous chapter that Iraqi Kurdistan region was ‘the safe haven’ in Iraq since the 2003 invasion of Iraq. During the fieldwork, the Iraqi Kurdistan region was still a peaceful and fast growing region. This final fieldwork coincided with the fall of Mosul in June 2014 but the fieldwork had already been completed before the ISIS was advancing towards Erbil in August 2014.

Methodology

The timing of the fieldworks, thus, adds further significance to the research. It also has a weight in the interviews. The peace talks on Turkish side created observably optimistic atmosphere in the research areas. Consequently, it became an important topic throughout the interviews. Similarly, the on-going growth and development in the Iraqi Kurdistan provided a more optimistic prospect for the region that can be observed in the interviews. The timings have also put limitations to the research that will be identified with details at the end of this chapter, in the limitations section.

The data consists of 96 face-to-face semi-structured interviews, 57 from the Turkish side and 39 from the Iraqi side. I followed a purposeful sampling method by using snowballing technique. This technique simply describes using one contact to help researchers to recruit another contact, which in turn can put researchers in touch with someone else. The aim was to reach as many different voices as possible until the research reaches saturation, i.e. when no additional information was provided by the participants, the level when new participants do not give any new information or insights into the ways they perceive their nation and construct their identity. I recruited the initial participants via friends, local authorities or someone in public spaces (e.g. café owners). These first participants were later asked to locate other informants. However, the participant recruitment process did not always follow the same way. There were some points that the informants were addressing people from their own network that was thought as limitation in the sample; therefore, I had to cut that snowballing process and found new entrances in these communities. For example, my initial contact in Semdinli/Hakkari was a member of a political party. The next contact that this participant addressed and the subsequent four informants recruited by snowballing technique were either from the same political party or at least their supporters. Hence, I had to cut that snowballing process there and found an alternative route. I met a shop owner and started a new snowballing process from there (Please see Appendix-1 for the Ethical Consideration).

I had the chance to conduct interviews with participants from different age groups and occupations; however I failed to have enough women participants, mostly due to the social structure of the region. Therefore, the gender representation is one of the limitations of the research, which will also be discussed further at the end of the chapter. I had the chance to interview local

politicians, journalists, writers, students, local businesspeople, labourers, lawyers, public servants (including teachers and imams-religious leader), a mayor, farmers, un-employed locals and more. They were all living in these border provinces, surrounding towns, as well as remote border villages.

The interviews were conducted in places where the participants were more comfortable. Based on the participant's choices, the language of the interviews was either in Turkish or Kurdish. As stated earlier each participant was found through local contacts and by using snowballing techniques. Therefore, it was relatively easy to develop rapport with them. The researcher's identity also facilitated this rapport. I am a Turkish citizen with Kurdish ethnic background and can speak both Turkish and Kurdish. My position helped me to easily find contacts and access some remote border villages. My position and its impact will also be further discussed in the limitations section at the end of the chapter.

3.3.1 Asking Identity

The semi-structured interviews were designed as two parts.

(1) In the first part the interviews followed an indirect way in order to obtain information about the participants' less explicit modes of identity constructions. The participants' social relations, connections, and individual and social memories were initially examined. The ways in which the informants interpret and experience history, directly or indirectly, and the justifications they bring to their own stories, in order to detect the ways the interviewees situate their nation and identities in these stories, were investigated. Asking indirect questions allowed the participants to narrate their identities less consciously. This initial stage consisted of three sections based on the research questions. In the first section, it attempted to explore the informants' relations within the region they live in, their approaches to the region and their perception of it. In the second section, it investigated the participants' connections and relations with the rest of the state, their personal stories and experiences in the rest of the country, and their approaches and their perceptions of the state they belong to. In the final section, indirect questions focused on the other side of the border. The aim was to examine the participants' relations, connections and perception of the other side.

Methodology

(2) The second stage consisted of more direct questions about the ways in which the participants perceive their nation and narratively construct their identities. It aimed to obtain information about more consciously held beliefs of these perceptions and identity constructions. It investigated the ways the participants define themselves and their nation, by posing direct questions. This stage also had three sections designed based on the research questions; these direct questions were related to (1) the region (2) the rest of the state, and also (3) to the other side of the border.

The reason for setting two stages was to explore the participants' less consciously held, perceived and also more consciously held discursively constructed identities (Please see Appendix-2 for the interview guideline for more information, Appendix-3 for the Participants information sheet, and also the Appendix-4 for the Participant Information Script).

3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis process started with the management of the data. With the help of the computer program called 'NVivo', all the interview transcripts were coded. Coding here refers to the process of identifying one or more units of the text or passages that exemplify some theoretical or descriptive idea. Some of those codes are just a word(s) that describes the content of the passage; such as 'tribe', 'smuggling', 'unevenness', 'immigration', 'religion', 'evacuation of villages' etc.; some of the others give more general descriptions, such as 'connections with the other side of the border', 'differences within the region' etc. To illustrate, the following lines are coded as 'evacuation of villages'.

'In 1993, our village was evacuated and half of them went to the other side of the border and the other half came to Yuksekova. I am talking about the village. The village was right on the Turkey/Iraq border'²

Coding process was not always an easy one. In some cases, a passage or even a line was coded more than one way. For example, I coded the quotation below

² All the extracts are translated by the researcher

with three labels: 'connections with the rest of the state', 'perception of the rest of the state' and also 'prejudice against the region'.

'Yes I also had friends who came here to visit me from different parts [of Turkey] and they were all surprised when they met with the local people here. There is prejudice against this city. They had mostly heard nasty things about here, but when they saw the city, they started liking it. So, the best solution is that they should come over here to see us'

The codes were constantly being compared and refined; and this process continued throughout the research analysis process. In this process, the data were constantly being coded, un-coded, re-coded. All this process of coding, un-coding and re-coding provided an effective way to analyse the content of the data. Here, NVivo has been a very useful tool for working with the data and discovering the content.

The second step was categorising. This step started when the constant comparison of the codes started to produce the initial tentative categories. After the initial codes were produced and constantly analysed and refined, they were classified and some tentative categories started to appear. For example, some codes like 'PKK', 'assimilation, denial and pressure', 'unevenness', 'evacuation of villages' were compiled under a tag called 'Kurdish Question'. In the same way, some codes were combined under different tags, such as 'connection with the other side of the border', 'differences within region', 'similarities between both sides of the border' etc. After the constantly comparing and analysing these tentative categories, I divided them into three groups for each side of the border, which are generated from the research questions: the region related, the rest of the state related and the other side of the border related categories. The main problem that I encountered in this stage was the overlapping categories. In order to overcome this, I had to add some categories into more than one group. There were also some categories that I could not place in any group; therefore I kept them as separate groups; i.e. in each interview I asked the participants where they would prefer to live if they had to leave their current place; and each time I gave different options like some cities from the region versus some cities from the rest of the state, the rest of the state versus the other side of the border, and the region versus the

Methodology

other side of the border. The answers to these questions were combined into three categories and these categories were put in another group named 'the preferred place'. The second step was all about organising the data; and finding categories. This step has helped me to closely interact with my data and discover some initial themes.

The third step was to search for the relationships, connections and patterns. In this stage, I analysed each code and category in each group by using NVivo software. This software aided in the analysis of a code in relation to another code, a category with another category, and also differences within and between participants. NVivo facilitated the analyses by displaying the codes within a participant and also between the participants; therefore a code could be analysed within a single interview and also between different interviews, as mentioned in different parts of each interview as well as in different interviews. Continual movement and comparison between memos, codes and categories within and between the interviews facilitated to discover the relationships, connections and patterns. This continual search for the relationships and connections between categories and themes is a conceptual process and involves developing theories, which are deeply grounded in the data. This process also reached an end when theoretical saturation occurred, when data failed to uncover any new pattern, relation or connection.

The final step was to interpret and explain these patterns, connections and relations. It is the process of attaching meanings to the data. Therefore, this is one of the most controversial areas in any qualitative research. The interpretation stage in this research is not a mechanical process, but a creative one that depended on the insights and imaginations of the analyst. Therefore, the interpretational findings of this research are one of several possible readings of this phenomenon. However, the interpretation process is not an arbitrary one either; it followed a methodological order. These findings are achieved by testing and exhausting the initial concepts and theories that are inducted from the data by constantly comparing and making logical associations between categories, patterns, connections and relations. The interpretative findings in this research will be presented with the way they have been achieved. The quality of these analyses, interpretations and the researcher's integrity depend also on the reflexivity of the research, which is a concern about how the selves and the identity of the researcher affected the

research process (Hammersley, 1990, p. 60). Hence, in order to justify the interpretative analyses of the research and be reflective, the findings are presented with:

- The sufficient raw data for each interpretational point,
- The polyphony of voices in the field,
- Alternative explanations,
- The grounds on which knowledge claims are being justified (length of the fieldwork, the rapport developed with the respondents etc.)
- The strength and weaknesses of the research design,
- The wider relevance of the settings,
- The un-researched features of the settings
- My experiences during all stages of the research,
- Multiple and contradictory descriptions proffered by the respondents themselves,
- The contextual nature of the respondents' accounts and descriptions, and identifying the features that helps to structure them.

3.5 Limits of the Research

This research is limited in many ways. This section is designed to identify the known limitations of the research before moving on to the analytical chapters of the thesis.

There are four main limitations that particularly need to be identified thoroughly, namely the generalisation, the timing, the gender representation and the researcher's position.

The limits related to the generalisations are multiple. Firstly, the results that the research generates might not be valid for all Kurds, whose population is estimated to be over 35 million, dispersed all around the world. As mentioned earlier, the participants in this research are those Kurds who live in the border regions on both sides between Turkey and Iraq. The border regions in this research are defined in accordance to the administrative provinces of both states that are located at the border. In Turkey, there are two provinces that have borders with Iraq, namely Hakkari and Sirnak. In Iraq, there are also two administrative provinces that have borders with Turkey, namely Duhok and

Methodology

Erbil. Therefore, those Kurds who do not live in these provinces are not subject to this research. It is also possible to question to what extent these 96 participants represent the overall population of these provinces. Generalisation is acceptably a very controversial issue, particularly in qualitative researches. Although this research does not claim to generalise, it provides a rich, contextualised understanding of the problems being examined. On each side of the border, the recruitments of new participants only ended when the saturation was achieved. The level at which new participants did not provide additional information is referred as saturation. The research, therefore, does claim that it elicited a range of stories that provide valuable insights into the research questions.

The timing of the fieldwork has twofold impacts on the research. As mentioned earlier, the fieldworks were carried out during a rarely encountered peaceful period on both sides of the border. There have always been serious security issues to carry out fieldworks on both sides of the border regions, as detailed in the literature review. As of June 2016, there are still serious security issues on both sides due to the resurgence of the conflicts, which made it impossible to carry out another fieldwork, as there are strict curfews on some of the towns visited during the fieldworks and also some areas are declared as 'forbidden zones'. From this perspective, the research holds a highly valuable original unique data set. From another perspective it can be argued that the changing context has also impact how current this research is. The on-going peace talks on the Turkish side of the border during the fieldwork did observably become an important topic that mostly brought more optimism into the conversations, particularly on prospects concerning a solution for the Kurdish question in Turkey. Such optimism would not be observed due to the resurgence of the conflicts. Similarly, the fieldwork on the Iraqi side was carried out during a period of security and stability that brought growth and wealth to the Iraqi Kurdistan region. There was also more optimism in the conversations about the prospect of the region. It can similarly be argued that the broken relations with the Iraqi central government, the recent financial issues and the advance of the IS towards Iraq have vanished such optimism. A new fieldwork, if it were possible, would reach a different data set; different topics might become more popular, new expectations might be dominant. Yet, it is important to note that there are also some other topics and views that may not have been influenced

by these recent events, such as participants' life stories, personal anecdotes, self-narratives and participants' stories about their relations and connections with 'others', which are essential in order to explore their identities. Firstly, as stated before, identities are constantly evolving processes. Thus, this research does only take a snapshot of these constantly unfolding processes. It does, however, still provide valuable insights into these processes, as it offers a rich contextual understanding of the participants' senses of belongings, their attachments and self-understanding at a particular time and place. The research also offers valuable findings for any prospective projects that aim to examine the impacts of these recent developments and/or to use for comparative studies.

Another important limit of the research is the gender representations in the samples. There are only 13 women participants, out of 96, in this data set. There are few reasons for the failure of recruiting equal number of women participants. The main reason was the gender roles in these border regions that created barriers for the researcher, who is male, to recruit women participants. Although tried, the patriarchal structure of the society facilitated the recruitment of only more men participants. The question arises as to what would be different if there were equal number of women participants.

From one perspective, it can be argued that it would be highly unlikely to expect any significant differences, due to few reasons. As argued previously, identities are being produced, developed and negotiated through discourses and narratives, within 'a web of relations', 'a web of interlocution', and within a wider discursive context. It is highly unlikely to expect any prospective women participants to be immune from these on-going narratives, and/or from this web of relations, web of interlocutions or from the wider discursive contexts. The 13 women participants did not also indicate any sign of significant differences from the male participants. From this point of view, the equal women participants would not create any significant differences in the research. However, it must still be recognised as a weakness of the research.

From another perspective, gender is an important variable in the operation of identity. Gender is an often-neglected key element in the discussions of national 'production' and 'reproduction' (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 1). Both gender and nation are social constructions, and are profoundly embedded in each

Methodology

other (Mayer, 2012, p. 2). McClintock (1993, p. 61) argues that *'all nationalisms are gendered'*. There are multiple ways in which gender relations affect and are affected by national projects and processes (Yuval-Davis, 1993). There is a multi-layered relationship between nationalism and women. Feminist scholars revealed that women's identity and participation in the national projects is different from that of men (Iveković, 1993, Mayer, 2012, Yuval-Davis, 1993, McClintock, 1993, Jayawardena, 1986). Some feminist scholars attempted to conceptualise the link between women and nationalism by focusing on the central dimension of citizenship, and how it constructs men and women differently (Yuval-Davis et al., 1989, p. 6). Pettman (1996, p. 187) states that *'despite the very different kinds of nationalisms, and individual women's different views on and actions within each nationalism, there is remarkable similarity in the ways in which nationalisms construct women'*. Yuval-Davis et al. (1989, p. 7) identified five major ways *'in which women have tended to participate in ethnic and national processes and in relation to state practices'*:

1. As biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities. The first category is related to the population control policies in which women are the primary targets. These policies aim either to limit the physical numbers of members of 'undesirable' racial/ethnic groups, or to encourage the population growth of the 'right kind' (Yuval-Davis et al., 1989, p. 8).
2. As producers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups. Women are also controlled in terms of the 'proper' way in which they should have children – i.e. in some cases, women are not allowed to have sexual relationship with men of other groups (Yuval-Davis et al., 1989, p. 9).
3. As participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of collectivity and as transmitter of its culture. Women are being seen as 'cultural carriers' of the ethnic group. Women are often less assimilated socially and linguistically, and are required to transmit the rich heritage of cultural symbols and ways of life to the other members, especially to the young (Yuval-Davis et al., 1989, p. 9).
4. As signifiers of ethnic/national differences. Women often constitute a nation's symbolic figuration. Women are constructed as the symbolic bearers of the collective identity and honour, both personally and

collectively (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 45) i.e. a mother who lost her son in the battle is a frequent part of the particular nationalist discourse in national liberation struggles, or to fight 'for the sake of our children and women' and 'to defend their honour' (Yuval-Davis et al., 1989, p. 10).

5. As participants in national, economic, political and military struggles. 'Women's role in national liberation struggles, in guerrilla warfare has varied but generally they are seen to be in a supportive and nurturing relation to men even where they have taken most risks' (Yuval-Davis et al., 1989, p. 10).

The relationship between gender and nationalism has also been examined in the specificity of Kurdish societies in Turkey and Iraq (King, 2013, Clark, 2015, Mojab and Gorman, 2007, Çaha, 2011, Yuksel, 2006, Al-Ali and Pratt, 2011). King's book was concerned with *'could be called 'primordial' symbols and social relations, which are now maintained, reformulated and questioned in globalising Kurdistan'* in Iraq (2013, p. 15). King defines Iraqi Kurdish society as a patrilineal society, and asserts that *'patriliney remains salient, even though some of its features are undergoing new scrutiny in light of new possibilities fostered by globalisation'* (King, 2013, p. 67). She analyses the ways in which patriliney work and shape people's social connections (King, 2013, p. 74). In terms of conferring identity, whether sectarian or ethnic, patriliney plays a major role as it is through the male head of the family that identity is passed from generation to generation (King, 2013). Clarke's works focus on the role of women in the contemporary ethno-territorial struggle of Kurdish Question in Turkey (Clark, 2013, 2015, and, 2016). Clark analyses the ways in which the state and Kurdish political movements place women at the core of the struggles over the Kurdish Question (Clark, 2015, p. 1464). Both the Turkish government and Kurdish nationalist movement describe women as 'peace builders' (Clark, 2015, p. 1465). She states *'women's social economic developments, what may appear at times as neutral efforts towards modernisation, democratisation, or even urbanisation, are in fact efforts that are at all moments imbued with national and ethnic meaning'* (Clark, 2015, p. 1476). She argues that *'women is not a neutral category and 'women's development' is not a neutral project. These are categories and projects that are produced part and parcel to the practices of war and nation building'* (Clark, 2015, p. 1476).

Methodology

Finally, the researcher's position presents another point that needs to be identified thoroughly in this study. I am a Turkish citizen Kurdish student and I speak both Turkish and Kurdish. The research is funded by the Turkish Ministry of Education, as a part of the project called '5000 student in 5 year'. The project aimed to sponsor 5000 students' education costs in respected universities all around the world in five years. The students are chosen by an exam called 'Academic Personal and Post-Graduation entrance exam (ALES)' and the average of their qualification grades. The sponsor has not been involved at any stage of the research. Positionality has often been a controversial issue, particularly in qualitative research. I, as the researcher, do accept that there is not a thoroughly objective and unbiased interpretation of social world. A detailed discussion about the role of positionality, in general, has already been made in the previous section under the discussions over the reflexivity of the research. The researcher's identity has twofold impacts in this research. Being able to speak both languages and coming from similar backgrounds facilitated to develop rapport with the participants. In many cases the participants observably felt comfortable to talk about even more sensitive issues. My identity also enabled me to reach some remote areas without any difficulties. Being informed on the wider socio-political and historical contexts facilitated a better understanding of the participants and the micro-phenomena. Yet, the researcher's position has also created a few difficulties. In many cases, the participants tended to provide less details about the past events or conditions, due to their assumptions that the researcher already knows those details. In some cases on the Turkish side, the researcher is considered as a member of 'we' in their stories. Similarly, in some cases on the Iraqi side, the participants referred to the researcher as 'you' or 'on your side of the border', particularly when they talked about the Turkish side. The researcher's identity does acceptably have its weight in the research. I am thus aware of my positional biases and limits in this study. Yet, I feel confident to present my findings as they are generated through a methodological order and being presented with the socio-political contexts of the speakers and a detailed reading of the wider discursive context where micro-phenomena occur. In order to be reflective, the research will follow the guidance detailed in the previous section.

Part 2

THE NORTH SIDE OF THE BORDER: KURDS IN TURKEY

Introduction

This second part of this thesis explores Turkish Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity from three dimensions: regional, state and cross-border, and is divided into three chapters, each one addressing one of these dimensions. Each chapter presents and discusses the results of the interview analysis, using verbatim quotes to illustrate the findings, and provides an account of those who were interviewed, including their characteristics and the context of the interview.

Chapter 4: The Region

Introduction

This chapter explores Turkish Kurds' perception of nation and identity from the regional dimension. 'The region' in this chapter refers to the Kurdish populated areas of Turkey. There is no defined border that separates 'the region' from the rest of Turkey. The Turkish state is officially divided into seven regions which are named either after the seas to which they are adjacent (the Black Sea, the Marmara, the Aegean and the Mediterranean Regions) or according to their location in the whole of Anatolia (the Central Anatolia, the Eastern and the South-eastern Anatolia Regions (Figure 2). This division was made during the first Geography Congress, which met in Ankara in 1941. This division was made merely for geographic, demographic and economic purposes and does not refer to an administrative division (Yigit, 1996).

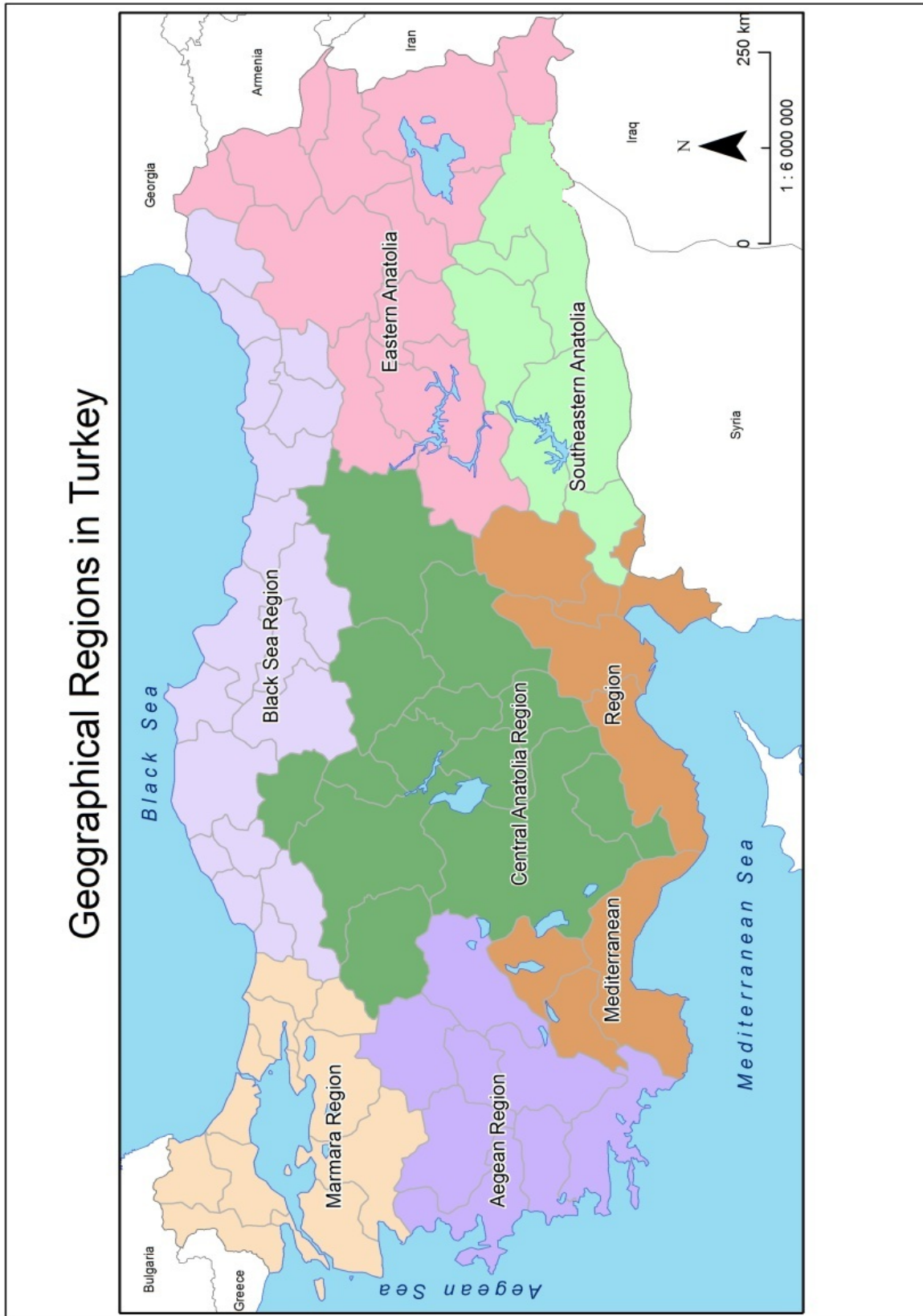


Figure 2: Geographical Regions in Turkey (Source: The EnviroGRIDS/Turkey, 2009)

The Kurdish populated area, the region, in the Turkish state mostly overlaps with 'the Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia Regions' (Figure 3).



Figure 3: The Kurdish inhabited area in Turkey³ (Source: Kurdish Human Rights 2013). The green coloured area is Turkey and the red coloured area shows the Kurdish inhabited area. The overlapping area shows the Kurdish inhabited area in Turkey.

The chapter consists of three sections that explore Turkish Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity in relation to the region. The first section explores the Turkish Kurds' perceptions of the region, the Turkish state and Iraqi Kurdish region through analysing the participants' choice of words. The second section unfolds the key narratives through which Turkish Kurds construct and develop

³ This map only depicts the roughly drawn boundaries of the Kurdish inhabited area in Turkey. As explained in figure 1, mapping the Kurdish inhabited area has always been a tough and controversial issue.

their identities. These key narratives are in the Turkish Kurds' stories about past events. Finally, the third section will display the most salient features of Kurdish identity on the Turkish side of the border. It will show the meanings Turkish Kurds attribute to Kurdish identity. This chapter ends by collating all the findings and discussions from these three sections and drawing the key conclusions.

4.1 The Words

The act of naming is about power and domination. Naming places is about producing territories; naming people is about constructing identities. Language has the power to change our perceptions and our ways of imagining (Fairclough, 2001). Nationalism, for its construction and perpetuity, needs a perception and an image of a bounded territory and a certain level of sameness among the people in this territory (Gellner, 2006). Therefore, naming is a powerful tool for nationalist ideologies to create a nation and identity. Every nationalist movement creates its own specific vocabulary that gives clue to its imagined geography (Said, 1979) and imagined community (Anderson, 1991). During the interviews the participants used a wide range of words to refer to both border regions and the communities. The search for the perceptions of nation and identity in this research will, hence, start with analysing these word choices of the participants.

Throughout the fieldwork one of the first things observed was the variety of the words the participants used to refer to the Kurdish populated area in Turkey. It is named as 'Eastern and Southeast Region', 'Eastern Region', 'Kurdish Region', 'Kurdistan', 'Northern Kurdistan', 'Bakur' [means 'North' in Kurdish] or just 'the region'. Later, it was noticed that the differences in the word selections were not just restricted to labelling the Kurdish populated area in Turkey. Some other mostly disputed words often encountered during the interviews were the ones that define two border communities, 'the Kurdistan region of Iraq' and 'the Kurdish Workers' Party (or PKK)'. These different vocabularies can be divided into two categories: the Turkish official language and the Kurdish political language.

The Turkish official language defines the Kurdish populated area in Turkey as 'the Eastern or Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia region'; the PKK as 'the

terrorist organisation' or just 'the terrorists' and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq as 'Northern Iraq' or 'Northern Iraqi Region'. Even though Iraq's constitution recognises it as the 'Kurdistan Region of Iraq', this region has never been termed 'Kurdistan' in the Turkish official lexicon (Section 2.2.3).

In contrast to these vocabularies, in the Kurdish political language the region is called 'Kurdistan', 'Northern Kurdistan' or 'Bakur' [means 'north' in Kurdish]; the PKK 'Freedom Fighters' or 'the organisation'; and the Kurdish Region of Iraq is called 'Iraqi Kurdistan', 'Southern Kurdistan' or 'Bashur' [means 'south' in Kurdish].

Two conflicting languages indicate two distinct perceptions of the region and its identity. Defining the region as Eastern or South-eastern Anatolia clearly emphasises its connections with the rest of the state. Similarly, naming the region as 'Northern Kurdistan' or 'Bakur' puts emphasis on its ties with the Iraqi Kurds. These opposing vocabularies are the results of two distinct ways of imagining the territory, perceiving the nation and constructing an identity. On the one side, Turkish official language defines the region as a natural part of the state without mentioning any differences (ethnic, cultural etc.); overlooks the differences in ethnic identities and defines those people as members of the same nation, as Turkish; and also perceives the border as the edge of this imagined geography and community. In this discourse, there is no connection with the other side of the border, no continuity beyond that line. As opposed to this discourse, Kurdish political language emphasises the ethnic differences; defines the region in relation to the Kurdistan region of Iraq; and defines those people as members of a different nation from 'Turkish', as Kurdish. It also perceives the border not as an end to this nation and geography, but as a line that divides its imagined geography and community. Therefore, these two discourses that the informants use can provide insights into the ways they imagine their nation and construct their identity.

During the interviews, the interviewees were given a chance to select any of these disputed words in order to analyse their ways of perceiving and constructing their nation and identity. The results show that there is not just a firm 'either-or' situation, rather an intertwined 'as-well-as' situation in the participants' word choices. There were four main noticeable patterns in the interviews. Each of these patterns will be illustrated with a participant, along

Kurds in Turkey

with the discussions of what these patterns are, what they mean and what functions they have.

The first group consists of those who persistently preferred the words from the Kurdish political vocabulary. For example Gabar⁴, a 37 year-old male Kurdish politician from Semdinli, consistently selected his words from the Kurdish political language throughout the interview.

Gabar: ...I'd like to say that Semdinli has an important place in Kurdish history. My village is close to the border. 60% of my relatives are living in the south part of Kurdistan, which was occupied by Iraq, and 20% of my relatives are in the east Kurdistan in the Iranian part and only the rest 20% of my family and relatives are here in the north, in the Turkish part. We are divided.

There were just few participants who were as careful as Gabar with the word choices during the interviews. Gabar always preferred to use the word 'Kurdistan' to refer to the region. Naming the region as 'northern Kurdistan' clearly indicates that Gabar imagines the region as a part of greater Kurdistan that is divided into four: North, South, East and West Kurdistan, between Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria respectively.

Although the word 'Kurdistan' was widely used throughout the interviews, in many cases the participants also used some alternative words when they referred to the region.

The second group consists of those participants who interchangeably used alternative names to refer to the region. Chiya, a 32 year-old male labourer from Uludere, preferred the words 'Southern Kurdistan' and 'Northern Kurdistan' to name both border regions in the most part of the interview. Yet in the beginning of the interview he also used the word 'Northern Iraq' twice to refer to the Iraqi side of the border.

Chiya: ...I went to the secondary school in Hilal in Senoba. But it wasn't the old Hilal. It was the new one, the one that is called Hilal now. When the

⁴ Gabar and all the other participants' names in this research are pseudonyms, generated by the researcher.

old one was evacuated, some people went to the west, some went to Makhmur [refugee camp] in the Northern Iraq and the rest of us went to Silan...

B: So you have always lived around here.

Chiya: Just a few times I went to Istanbul. I also worked as a truck driver for three years in the Northern Iraq.

This extract shows the only two places where Chiya used the word 'Northern Iraq' to refer to the Iraqi side of the border. In the rest of the conversation he continually used 'South Kurdistan' to define the Iraqi side of the border. It is important to notice that he only uses the term 'Northern Iraq' during the indirect conversations. This can partly be explained by the dominance of the official lexicon which he had been exposed to in his everyday life. It is because when it came to the direct questions about the region and the Iraqi side, his word selections were completely different. Throughout the conversations about the region and the Iraqi side of the border, he preferred the words from the Kurdish political vocabulary. As can be seen from the extract below.

Chiya: When we go from Northern Kurdistan to Southern Kurdistan, firstly we need to register to the system there...

In this extract, Chiya prefers to use the word 'Southern Kurdistan' instead of 'Northern Iraq'. This shows that Chiya's word choices are context related. In the previous extract the Iraqi side of the border was just a detail in his answer. In this extract, the questions were directly about the other side of the border. When Chiya's interview is analysed, it can be seen that Chiya prefers to define himself primarily as Kurdish and considers the region as a part of greater Kurdistan. Yet, these extracts also indicate that he has also been exposed to the Turkish official language that has a visible impact in his word choices.

It was fairly common to observe similar cases during the fieldworks. This also indicates the power of the Turkish official language in people's everyday lives. There were more participants who used these conflicting words interchangeably.

In some other cases, the participants appeared to adopt the Turkish official vocabulary even more extensively. Evdal, a 50 year-old farmer from a border

Kurds in Turkey

village in Guzelyazi/Uludere, never used the words 'Kurdistan', 'Northern or Southern Kurdistan' during the interview. He always preferred to refer to the region as 'the eastern', to the Iraqi side of the border as 'Iraq' or 'Northern Iraq'.

Evdal: Yes sure we do. We are all relatives. We are not strangers to each other. We have the same culture, language and life with the people in the northern Iraq. I have two sisters who live in Iraq and married to Iraqis. My aunt-in-law who lives here in this village is also Iraqi...

Evdal's word choices draw an image that he perceives the border as a line that divides two separate territories. Yet, contrary to what his word selections suggest, Evdal clearly perceives one community divided into two territories. Although he uses the words from the Turkish official lexicon to define these two territories, his perception of these border communities contradicts the perception that this official lexicon suggests. The following extract provides further insights into Evdal's perception of these border communities.

Evdal: Kurds are human beings too. Those who live in Zakho [a Kurdish city on the Iraqi side] are also human. Those in Iran and in Syria are human beings. If the people in the west [of Turkey] and in Iran have right to live, so do Kurds have the right to live. We have our own language, our own culture and traditions. God created us as Kurds. What can we do about it? Our mother tongue is Kurdish. There are millions of languages in the world, why should Kurdish be forbidden...

This extract clearly demonstrates how Evdal's perception of nation and identity does not fit in with the division defined by the vocabulary he uses. Although Evdal uses the vocabulary from the Turkish official language, he still perceives 'the easterners' and 'the northern Iraqis' as the communities of the same nation, as Kurdish. This also shows how much the Turkish official vocabulary is embedded into people's everyday lives.

Finally, there were also some cases in which participants would use the words from two distinct vocabularies interchangeably to define the region, the other side of the border and their inhabitants and place emphasis on being Turkish Kurds. There were two key points in these choices. Firstly, the perception of the territorial division was more noticeable in these cases. Secondly, the perception of nation and identity in these cases was not just an 'either-or'

division between Turkish and Kurdish; rather, there was an 'as-well-as' relation. It was very common to observe how their self-understandings, feelings of belonging and self-attachments were not fitting in with just the either perception that these vocabularies desired to create.

Berdan, a 22 year-old student from Silopi, used two words to refer to the Iraqi side of the border, 'Iraq' and 'Kurdish region in Iraq'. His word selections for the region were 'the eastern region' or 'our region'. He did not use the word 'Kurdistan' neither did he use 'northern Iraq' to refer to the other side of the border.

Berdan: No we don't. But we have some relatives in Iraq. On this side of the border, all our relatives are in Silopi...

Berdan: ...As far as I know our family roots are in Iraq, in the Kurdish region there.

Berdan's word choices display his perception of the territorial division. He does not define the Iraqi side of the border in relation to the region; neither does he define it as 'northern Iraq' that overlooks its ethnic identity. He recognises its Kurdish identity to which his family roots also extend. Berdan also defines the region as 'the eastern region' and 'our region'. The former one indicates the region's connection with the rest of the country and the latter reveals a sense of belonging to it. The following extract shows how Berdan defines himself in an indirect conversation.

Berdan: At Eastern Mediterranean University in Cyprus. There are many students from our region...

B: How is life there? How's social life?

Berdan: It's very good. I have many friends from Van, Hakkari, Mardin and such cities. We have really good friendships there...

B: Do you also have friends from the western cities?

Berdan: Yes, sure I do have friends from there too. Surely I have good relations with them too. But it is partly because we are from the same region, and partly because we are Kurds, we get along better with the people from our region.

Kurds in Turkey

This extract shows that although Berdan perceives the region as a part of the state as the Turkish official language desired, he still perceives himself as Kurdish, as the Kurdish political language desired. It will later be detailed that such perceptions were more common in the data. After mentioning his Kurdish identity, in the following extract Berdan also mentions his Turkish identity.

B: ...If there were exactly the same economic opportunities, would you prefer to move to Mersin [a Turkish city] or Erbil [a Kurdish city in Iraq]? Or you wouldn't mind either.

Berdan: Actually I could say 'I don't mind', but there is a fine line: We are Turkish [Türkiyeli] now. We are used to this region and I don't think this region will separate from the west [of Turkey]. So, living in Mersin sounds more attractive to me...

Along these lines, Berdan's perception of the region, nation and identity becomes clearer. In Berdan's case there is a link to the Iraqi side of the border, as both are Kurds. Yet, the territorial division is also internalised and it generates a new belonging too: 'we are Turkish [Türkiyeli] now'. It is an important detail to notice that Berdan uses the word 'Türkiyeli' rather than 'Türk'. The concept of 'Türkiyeli' has a territorial meaning; it simply means 'someone from Turkey'. The concept of 'Türk', on the other hand, has an ethnic meaning. As discussed earlier in the literature review, although the concept of 'Türk' [Turkish] refers to an ethnic group, it is redefined in the constitution as 'constitutional citizenship'. Yet, as can be seen in Berdan's case too, this new definition has not been internalised due to its ethnic connotations. Instead, the territorial concept of 'Türkiyeli' is used to encompass all ethnic-religious communities in the country. It is in this sense Berdan also defines himself as 'Turkish' too. He is Kurdish, not from Kurdistan or 'northern Kurdistan' but from the eastern region of Turkey now.

The existence of these disputed words illustrates the complexity of the perceptions of the region, nation and identity. Turkish Kurds' word choices provide clues as to their self-understandings, attachments and sense of belonging. These word selections do not mean anything without the context in which they were used and also without analysing the rest of the conversations. In this section I have shown two distinct languages, which were named as the Turkish official language and the Kurdish political language. These languages have two conflicting vocabularies that represent two different perceptions of

the region and its inhabitants. Whilst the Turkish official language draws a picture of a territory framed by the 'natural' borders that separate a homogenous – Turkish – nation from 'others', the Kurdish political language perceives the region as a territory connected to the Iraqi side of the border, and considers the inhabitants of both border regions as the bearers of the same – Kurdish – national identity.

I have attempted to show how the participants adopted these two vocabularies and perceptions. Although the Turkish official language, to a certain extent, managed to embed its own vocabulary into the community, it did not completely succeed to generate the perception it desired. The perception of a territorial unity has, to some extent, been obtained. Yet, the participants' perceptions of sameness in terms of nation and identity accord more with the perception that the Kurdish political language wishes to create. In the following section I will analyse how and why this perception of Kurdish national identity has become salient. In order to do this I have analysed the participants' stories about past events.

4.2 The Past

'The struggle of man [sic] against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting' Milan Kundera (1981, p. 4)

Stories about past are existential ones, particularly for national and territorial identities. As discussed in the literature review, past is crucial to define a nation and a territory and also to justify a nationalist struggle against 'the others' (Hobsbawm, 1992b). Stories about past are endowed with clues as to the narrator's perception of nation and identity. The way the narrators conceptualise (or omit) past events gives impressions of their positions in their own groups and attitudes towards 'the others'. They constantly interpret past events, draw the background contexts, which are mostly influenced by the socio-political, economic and cultural meta-contexts, and sort them into the ongoing stories of 'us' and 'them' (Giddens, 1991). Therefore, the participants' stories about past events will be my second point to search out Turkish Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity.

Kurds in Turkey

The stories about the past events that the participants shared are understandably selective. They may even have fictitious dimensions. Some of the events may be enlarged and others omitted. Yet, the aim is not to seek the truth, nor is it to search for what actually has happened but to explore what versions of past events the narrators have, how they interpret these stories and what functions these stories perform in their identity construction processes.

In my interviews with 57 people living in this border region, I was interested to see whether there were any shared stories through which Turkish Kurds construct their identities. The results show that many of the interviewees drew on the issue of 'oppression' to settle their sense of 'self' and 'others'. By oppression I imply a wide-ranging set of themes: these include forbidding the language, denying the ethnic identity, assimilation policies, as well as evacuating villages and physical coercions. It is through these stories a firm us/them divide is constructed and reconfirmed to justify their identities against 'others'.

The past is traumatised in the participants' stories. The participants, in these stories, are the victims of history. There are stories about how Kurdish identity was denied, Kurds' land was divided, their culture was assimilated, the Kurdish language was outlawed, their villages were evacuated, they were killed or forced to leave their homes. This traumatised past draws the line between the region and the rest of the state. It is partly these stories of shared pain that unites Kurds as a distinct community as opposed to the state-defined national identity. It is because in these stories what made them the target of these oppressions was their identity: because they were Kurdish.

These stories of the dramatised past play a key role in Turkish Kurds' identity constructions. The oppressed past is at the core of Kurdish nationalist discourse. It is these stories that justify Kurds' struggle to unite as a nation. These narratives form Kurdish identity: Kurds were oppressed, so they had to resist for their rights; Kurdish identity was denied, so Kurds had to prove that they exist; the Kurdish language was banned, so Kurds had to protect it. There are two main functions that all these 'oppressed Kurds' narratives perform. Firstly, these narratives reconfirm Turkish Kurds' historical existence as a nation in that territory. Secondly, these stories justify Turkish Kurds' nationalist struggle, and present it as a human rights issue.

In this section I have selected and analysed some narratives to illustrate how the informants use these stories about the oppressed past in their identity construction process. The analyses indicated four salient themes, shared by most participants: oppression, physical coercion, denial and assimilation. This section will present the words of one interviewee per theme to illustrate each theme.

The first extract is from Doski who is a 28 year-old male labourer and works for a construction company in a border village called Derecik in Semdinli, Hakkari. He was complaining about prejudice against the region and some regional problems. I asked what the root of this prejudice and problems was for him.

Doski: I assume this has happened after the military coup in 1980. Let me give you an example; did you know that we couldn't speak Kurdish here until 1996? If you spoke Kurdish, the soldiers would smash you with their feet. When people travelled, they had to hide Sivan Perwer's music cassette [a Kurdish folk musician] at the checkpoints. If they got caught [with a Kurdish music cassette] they would be in big trouble. Do you know why people go to mountains [become a guerrilla]? When the problems were so hot between 1984 and 1990s, the soldiers were raiding the houses and beating people up and swearing badly in front of their children. Imagine what those kids would do. Imagine an eight year-old kid whose father was taken by some guys and never brought back. These kids will go to mountains for revenge. That is the root. The main problem has been the brutality of soldiers and police towards these people.

This is a short representation of the stories of the past events the participants shared. Doski draws a picture of the past in order to explain the current regional problems. In this picture two sides are clearly drawn. He describes groups of 'we' and 'they'. Doski highlights three issues that the group of 'we' has experienced in the past: the prohibition of language, the ban on Kurdish music and physical violence. All these oppressions in the region that Doski underlines are identity-related. The picture he draws illustrates the threat that Kurdish identity faced in the past. In this extract, Doski concludes these stories of oppression with a 'natural' result: 'going to mountains'. This is a widely

Kurds in Turkey

used expression for joining the PKK. In Doski's account the PKK consists of those people whose fathers were taken and never brought back, and also whose language was forbidden. 'They', in this account, are soldiers and police who represent the state.

Doski blames the state for oppressing his identity. Being victim of these oppressions would leave no choice but 'going to mountains'. Doski is aware of the official definition of the PKK as a terrorist organisation; therefore, he uses a metaphorical phrase as a precaution and prefers to tell the stories from a third person point of view. Doski later shares some personal anecdotes through which he gives more emphasis to the state-led physical coercions and constructs his identity in opposition to these oppressions.

Doski's version of the past events was a very typical case. There were numerous different stories and personal anecdotes about the state-led physical violence. There was hardly any case in which a participant did not justify the Kurdish nationalist struggle without referring to the past oppressions. As can be seen in Doski's case the PKK was also a 'natural' result of these oppressions in these stories.

The second extract is from the interview with Roj, a 35 year-old male journalist from Yuksekova, Hakkari. When I arrived in Yuksekova (on 28 August 2013) I witnessed a small disturbance in the main street. Some kids were throwing stones at an armoured police vehicle. I wanted to start the interview with this event.

B: I arrived here this morning and saw some kids throwing stones at a police vehicle. You are a journalist and I want to ask 'why do these kids throw stones at the police'?

Roj: Yes, there was an event this morning. It was about the funeral of two PKK members. This kind of thing usually happens in the PKK funerals. These two members were from Yuksekova. They actually died seven years ago and buried in a mountain. Now their graves are brought to their families. So, you ask why these kids throw stones. Well, all these kids, and us too, have grown up with violence. For those who grew up in a violent environment throwing stones is not a big deal. Each one of these kids either has a family member in prison, or who died on a mountain, or still lives on a mountain. All these are the results of the violent atmosphere.

Roj's answer has some important details that provide insights into the locals' perceptions. In his account, the past is loaded with violence. There is still tension between the local people and the policemen. This tension, for him, is a result of the violence they were exposed to. Therefore, he clearly perceives the kids' actions as expected and natural reactions. Their relatives are in prison, or died on a mountain or live on a mountain. 'Mountain' is again a symbolic word used for the PKK. Referring to the PKK simply implies that the origins of this violent atmosphere are the identity-related issues. This can also indicate how the nationalist struggle is being justified. I wanted to carry this conversation further.

B: So it is about the violent atmosphere. I was just surprised to see even little kids were picking up stones to throw at the armoured police cars. At that moment I just wondered if the policemen in these vehicles knew why those kids were throwing stones at them.

Roj: They do. They are also already aware. They know for years there were police tortures here, many families were disturbed, and many families were lost in the middle of these streets. Even just a few years ago, during the Semdinli incidents⁵, three young people were murdered in the street...

⁵ A bookstore, owned by a former PKK member, in Semdinli was attacked with grenades on 9 November 2005. One person died and several were injured in the attack. The attack was carried out by Turkish Gendarmerie personnel who were caught in the act by local residents (Bianet, 2005).

Kurds in Turkey

This violent atmosphere of the past was widely articulated in the interviews. There were many stories about the violence in the region's past. This extract is a good representation of such stories. Roj's explanation about the stone-throwing children shows how the perception of the state and its security forces are for him. Roj perceives these stone-throwing kids as a result of the systematic atrocities that the Turkish state exposed to its Kurdish citizens. These stories about the violent past show how they perceive the region and its residents as targets of the state's oppression due to their identities. He draws a picture of the past in which we can see how his perception of his nation and identity is developed and formed. These stories of the state-led physical violence present Kurdishness as a historically victimised identity. This perception of the victimhood constitutes the region and Kurdishness as 'the others' vis-à-vis the state.

Kato, a 28 year-old musician and folkdance teacher, also shares his version of the past that reveals how these 'others' were attempted to melt into 'us'.

B: You said 'there was a war and too much prices have been paid'. So, can you please tell me what this war was for and why too much prices have been paid?

Kato: The main reason of the war has historically been the denial politics of the state. They said 'there is no such thing as Kurd' and this 30-40 year-old war was the struggle of existence, to show 'we exist'. After 30-35 years, Kurds have proven that they exist. Before that there was assimilation, they used to say that there is no Kurd. They said 'these people are in essence Turkish and their names come from the sound when someone walk on snow, like 'kart', 'kurt' and all kinds of humiliating stories. We have proved that we exist and now we demand equal rights. For me all the wars were for this.

Kato's case represents another frequently mentioned point in the stories of the past: denial. Kato defines the long lasting conflicts between Turkish troops and the PKK as a war of existence for Kurds. The past was the time in which Kurdish identity was denied and humiliated. In this account, the state did not even recognise the existence of its Kurdish citizens. For the state, Kurdish people in essence were Turks, who mistakenly perceived themselves as Kurds.

Kato states that their existence is proven now and it is time to demand equal rights.

The state's denial politics were usually presented as the sources of the regional problems. In this account Kurdishness becomes the most important dimension of his identity by being direct targets of the state's denial politics. These stories of the past feed and also form Kurdish national identity. Such stories present Kurdishness as a denied identity and the Kurdish national movement as a struggle for survival.

The denial was a very common theme in the stories about the past. These are also being used to justify Turkish Kurds' nationalist struggle. The stories of denial politics were mostly followed by the stories of the assimilation attempts they were allegedly exposed to.

In the next extract Gabar, a 37 year-old Kurdish politician, draws a picture of the past that shows the state's attempts to instil Turkishness into the region. I asked him what his political party demand.

Gabar: Our demands are the demands of our people. ... It was even illegal to speak our mother tongue... You had to speak Turkish everywhere... The students in this region don't know Turkish when they start school, but the teachers don't even teach Turkish, because they assume that all students know Turkish by default. So, students don't understand anything and fail in school. Imagine a 60 year-old man goes to a mosque to pray and listen to the preacher; but now they had to preach and pray in Turkish, so he goes there but does not understand anything, is that fair? ...The worst thing is that my kid goes to school, he has to repeat the pledge every day: 'I am Turkish... may my existence be sacrificed to the existence of Turkish nation... happy is the person who says who is Turk...' so, my kid should be sad for being Kurdish every day... then why they made me say that 'I am Turk, honest and hardworking' but I am not Turk, so I am not honest and hardworking?

Gabar's arguments are understandably highly politicised ones. He gives many examples to the state's politics against its Kurdish citizens. As it will be discussed further in the next section, the language is on top of the list. A

Kurds in Turkey

Kurdish student could start a Turkish school without any knowledge of Turkish. The school would not teach Turkish, as the student has to know it by default. As a Kurdish politician he uses these stories to explain his political demands. He is there to defend Kurdish identity that was denied and repressed. These stories also justify his political struggles and present it as a human right issue. Therefore, these stories are at the core of his political arguments.

Gabar focuses on the state's assimilative policies which directly pose threats to his identity. The student's oath was one of the most used examples to display the assimilation attempts. Every student had to proclaim loudly that *'I am Turkish, honest and hardworking. My principle is to protect my younger, to respect my elder, to love my homeland and my nation more than myself. My ideal is to rise, to progress. Hey Great Atatürk! I promise solemnly to walk on the road you have opened, to the goal you have showed, without stopping. My existence shall be dedicated to the Turkish existence. How happy is the one who says, "I am Turk!"'*⁶. What Gabar rejected was also not about being Turkish as someone from Turkey (Türkiyeli), but Turkish (Türk) as an ethnic group. He complains that the Kurdish students had to proclaim that they are Turks, even before they start learning Turkish.

As can be seen in Gabar's lines he does not perceive Turkishness as constitutional citizenship which can be open, inclusive and unifying. He rather recognises Turkishness as an ethnic identity that threatens his identity. The past, in his lines, was the time when the state attempted to assimilate his identity.

These stories of the oppressed past tell how and why Kurdishness has become a salient dimension of Turkish Kurds' identity. These stories about the oppressions, physical violence, denials and assimilation attempts are the key narratives through which the participants constructed their identity. The next subsection will attempt to analyse further the impact of these stories about the past on the formation of Kurdish identity.

⁶ The practice of reciting the pledge was abolished on 8 October 2013.

4.3 The Symbols

Identities are often expressed in symbols, particularly national and territorial ones. A nation, as discussed, is a historically modern construct whose members share a perception of sameness, which can be a common genetic, language, history, territory, and/or similar political interests (Gellner, 2006, Smith, 2001, Hobsbawm, 1992b). Therefore, national identities are of subjective and symbolic characters. For each nation different features of their identity become more salient, which depend on its own socio-political contexts. Different meanings are attributed to different national identities by their members. These differences between different national identities can be observed through their symbols they use to represent their identities.

The previous section has explored the key narratives through which Turkish Kurds construct their identities. This section searches what Kurdish identity means to Turkish Kurds and which features of Kurdish identity have become more salient than others.

There are three main reasons for this investigation of traits that are seen as salient in the descriptions of Kurdish identity and exploring the meanings given to Kurdish identity by the participants. Firstly, it will show how Kurdish identity has been shaped on the Turkish side of the border. This is important to understand the impacts of the socio-political environment on Kurdish identity in Turkey. Secondly, this will help to examine how Turkish Kurds place their identities within the state. Finally, it will help to compare and contrast the perceptions of Kurdish identity in Turkey and Iraq.

Throughout the fieldwork I was interested to understand what makes Kurdish identity and how the participants perceive it. I was in search of shared representations built by the participants in the story worlds they created. The aim was also to explore whether there were any common ways in which the participants characterise Kurdish identity.

The results show that there is one feature of Kurdish identity that was commonly more salient than others in the participants' descriptions of 'us': the Kurdish language. Kurdishness first and foremost evoked the Kurdish language for the participants. The language-related demands were on top of Turkish Kurds' identity-related demands. Kurdish identity was primarily associated with

Kurds in Turkey

Kurdish language in the participants' narratives. Kurdish language is the main facet and symbol of Kurdish identity through which Turkish Kurds express and represent their identity.

Kurdish language has become a central pillar of Kurdish identity. Through language-related issues the participants build shared representations about who they are. Language lies at the heart of the participants' descriptions of Kurdish identity. One possible explanation of this may lie in the participants' stories about the past events. Language was one of the most threatened features of Turkish Kurds' identity. When a feature of an identity is under threat, that feature becomes a symbol of that identity. As stated earlier the Kurdish language was outlawed, Kurdish place names were replaced with Turkish ones, and so forth. All these attempts may explain the importance of the Kurdish language in Kurdish identity on the Turkish side of the border. As it will be shown with selected extracts from the interviews that the Turkish Kurds' stories about their mother tongue in the wider context do not only act as key identifiers of selfhood, but shape their political demands and future expectations.

In order to illustrate this emphasis on language I have selected and analysed some extracts from the interviews. I will initially argue that the oppressions on the Kurdish language developed it into the most important dimension of Kurdish identity. I will show how Turkish Kurds express and practice their identity through everyday language-related problems. I will, later, demonstrate how these problems also cause a fear of losing their mother tongue. Finally, I argue that placing the Kurdish language at the heart of Kurdish identity also impacts Turkish Kurds' political demands. The first and most demanded rights are all related to the mother tongue.

The first extract is from Kato, a 28 year-old folk dance teacher. He previously stated that Kurds have proven to the state that they exist and now they demand equal rights.

Bilal: What rights are you talking about?

Kato: You may have witnessed too that we were not allowed to listen to Kurdish music, nor could we speak Kurdish until 90s. We were not permitted to express ourselves in our mother tongue in any

government institutions. A mother could not go to hospital to tell her problems to a doctor – actually this is still an issue. Before everything else we demand our mother tongue. The most important thing is our language. Just like our identity our language was denied too...

This short extract is a demonstration of how the informants put the Kurdish language at the core of Kurdish identity in their narratives. As far as Kurdish identity or any regional problems were concerned, Kurdish language was the first and foremost mentioned topic in the interviews. Kato indicates that most of the language-related issues he mentioned are not valid any more, yet it is still the most important feature of Kurdish identity. His lines display how the importance of the Kurdish language is related to the past oppressions. Their mother tongue was one of the first and most oppressed features of Kurdish identity in the Turkish Kurds' narratives. There was almost a general consensus on the issue of language. The Kurdish language was threatened, denied and forbidden. It appears that the oppressions on the Kurdish language developed it into the most important feature of Kurdish identity in Turkey.

The participants frequently shared their personal anecdotes about the problems they encountered in relation to their language. The Kurdish language turns into a symbol through which they express and practice their identity in their everyday lives. Herke, a 29 year-old folk musician from Semdinli, claimed that there was discrimination against the region, and Kurdish people were deprived of basic rights. I asked what rights these people were deprived of and what this regional discrimination was.

Herke: ...The most important one [right] is our language. My mum has been ill for a long time. But she can't speak Turkish. She can't express herself in Turkish, cannot tell her problems. So my mum cannot go to hospital alone. There should always be someone, who knows Turkish, with her. The biggest issue is this language issue. We speak Kurdish in our house until we turn 4-5 years old, until we go to school. Actually this is also changing... We always have problems with expressing ourselves. Because we cannot comfortably speak our mother tongue in any governmental institutions, not even in our daily lives. This is the reason for all these problems, resistances, protests, political struggles,

and so forth. These are all for this language.

This extract is a good example of presenting the Kurdish language as the most important facet of Kurdish identity. Herke concludes that all these struggles were for their language. It is partly because the Kurdish language first and foremost symbolises the existence of his identity. He expresses his self-understandings, his identity over some everyday life issues related to his language. It was a very common way, in the interviews, to prioritise everyday language-related issues to reveal their sense of belonging, to unfold their identity.

There were numerous stories about the everyday language-related problems that take place in a variety of places; it can be in a prison, hospital, military, court or a school. For example, the stories about the first year at school are some of the most frequently encountered stories in the interviews. For many participants, school was the first official institution where Turkish Kurds experienced problems due to their language. Feeling inferior or failing in school due to their inability to speak Turkish seemed common in these stories. There were stories about the mothers who were not allowed to visit their imprisoned children, just because they could not speak Turkish. There were stories of the people who had to join the military without basic knowledge of Turkish. Turkish Kurds express and practice their identity through all these stories about the everyday language-related problems.

An important detail in these stories is that women, particularly elderly women, are first and foremost affected by these language-related problems. Many of these stories describe 'mothers who could not tell their problems to doctors because they could not speak Turkish' and 'mothers who could not speak with their imprisoned children'. These narratives also describe elderly women as the transmitters and carriers of the Kurdish language in Turkey. There are stories about 'young Kurdish people who could speak in Kurdish only with their mothers'.

All these problems also cause the fear of losing their language. In the next extract Berdan, a 22 year-old student from Silopi, shares his views about the injustices he observes in the region and his fears about his language.

Berdan: According to unofficial statistics there are approximately 25 million

Kurdish people in Turkey. This makes up nearly 35-40% of the whole population. The British empire attempted to occupy this country, but now their language is nearly the second official language. As far as I know there are English translators in every hospital, but there is not even a single Kurdish translator in any hospital... There are no English people living here, but If an English guy comes over and has a problem, he will have a translator, but there is not even one translator for 25 million Kurdish people living here. We want some respect; we don't want to lose our language. All the media is Turkish, I'm not talking about last two years, and you know Kurdish broadcasting was illegal until recently. All the programs are in Turkish. Books are Turkish. We are forced to learn Turkish. I don't say that learning Turkish is a bad thing. Everyone must definitely learn the official language, but we are losing our language. Everything is in Turkish, there is no Kurdish school, nor is there anything else in Kurdish. We can only learn it from our mothers, but now I'm studying in a university and may do my masters too, we have to speak Turkish everywhere. The only place we can speak Kurdish is home. There is no Kurdish education. So, our language is disappearing.

In this extract Berdan firstly tries to demonstrate the unfairness towards the Kurdish language. The language-related problems encountered in hospitals are other common issues mentioned by the participants. The participants tended to give examples from the fundamental language rights they were deprived of. These examples also present their identity-related problems as human rights issues.

Berdan emphasises a very common fear among Turkish Kurds; the fear of losing their mother tongue. Therefore, they strive for the Kurdish education in state schools. Berdan points out that the only place left for him to practice his mother tongue is his home. An important point also should not be overlooked in this narrative: he is not against learning Turkish. However, he demands education in his own language too.

Kurdish language has become the primary dimension of Kurdish identity. Therefore, the fear of losing language equally means the fear of losing their

Kurds in Turkey

identity. The Kurdish language is also the main symbol of Kurdish identity. Being unable to practice their mother tongue also means being unable to practice their identity. Hence this fear of losing language has a huge impact on Turkish Kurds' political demands. It is very important to notice that most of the socio-political demands stated during the interviews were related to language rather than territory or else. In other words, expressing their identities through their language also affects Turkish Kurds' political demands. Instead of seeking independence Turkish Kurds can only demand more language-related rights.

The language-related demands are at the core of the Kurdish political movement. During my interview with a 42 year-old woman politician, Zerya, I was interested to see what would be the first and most important issue she would address.

Zerya: Yes, let me tell you the first demand of these people... The first thing that they ask is the freedom of their mother tongue; the right of using mother tongue in education. They want to be able to educate their children in their own language.

As Zerya states, the language-related demands are on top of her political party's agenda. Among others, the first and most mentioned language-related demand is the demand for education in Kurdish. It was very interesting to observe that Kurdishness is first and foremost associated with the Kurdish language. The participants' biggest expectation from the state is the absolute freedom for their mother tongue, which includes access to education and public services in Kurdish.

Relating Kurdishness primarily with the Kurdish language forms the Kurdish nationalist demands. It does not mean that perceiving the Kurdish language, as the primary facet of Kurdish identity is the only reason why the Turkish Kurds demand territory less than language. Yet, it is one of the most important reasons behind this trend and it is mostly shaped by the state's oppressive policies towards the Kurdish language over the state's history. The reasons for this tendency will be better understood in the next chapter about 'the rest of the state'.

In this section I have argued that the most important facet of Kurdish identity is the Kurdish language, which is directly related to past oppression. When a feature of an identity is under threat, that feature becomes the primary symbol of that identity. In the Turkish Kurds' case this primary symbol is the Kurdish language. The oppression on the Kurdish language developed it into the most important dimension of Kurdish identity. I also showed how Turkish Kurds express their self-understandings over everyday language related problems. There were numerous personal anecdotes about the language-related problems that Turkish Kurds encountered in schools and other public services. There was also a fear of losing the Kurdish language in Turkish Kurds' narratives. The Kurdish language is the symbol of Kurdish identity; therefore, the fear of losing language also meant the fear of losing their identity. Finally, I argued that putting the Kurdish language at the core of Kurdish identity also impacted on Turkish Kurds' political demands. The first and most demanded rights were all related to their mother tongue, rather than territory or other issues.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the Turkish Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity in relation to the region. It explored (1) how Turkish Kurds perceive the region, (2) the key narratives through which Turkish Kurds construct their identities, and (3) the meanings Turkish Kurds attribute to Kurdish identity.

The first theme in this chapter derives from the participants' word selections. The data showed that Turkish Kurds use different words to define the region, its inhabitants and the Iraqi side of the border. These different words were categorised into two groups: Turkish official language and Kurdish political language. These two categories indicate two different perceptions of the region and its inhabitants. The Turkish official language uses a vocabulary that perceives all citizens as bearers of one nation, as Turkish, and imagines the state borders as the natural boundaries of this nation. Kurdish political language, instead, uses a vocabulary that perceives the people in the region as Kurdish and imagines the border as a line that divides Kurdish people.

The reason for the existence of these two distinct perceptions can be found in the Turkish state's nation building strategies and the Kurdish nationalist movements. The state's nation building strategy was based on melting all

Kurds in Turkey

ethnic groups into 'Turkishness' (Chaliand, 1993, Jwaideh, 2006, Somer, 2005, Van Bruinessen, 2000a, Yildiz, 2005). After signing the Lausanne treaty and accepting the constitution of 1924, the state began to impose Turkishness onto Kurdish populations (Barkey and Fuller, 1998, p. 10). In the immediate action plan of the 1960 military junta, one article stated that 'a Turkology department needs to be established in a university where those "so-called" Kurds have to be proven to be Turks' (Akar and Dündar, 2008, p. 102). The state referred to Turkish Kurds as 'Mountain Turks' (Kirisci and Winrow, 1997, p. 103). An important aspect of the assimilation attempts was to change geographical names. In 1957, the Ministry of the Interior created 'The Special Commission for Name Change (Ad Degistirme Ihtisas Komisyonu)', for the purpose of changing non-Turkish topographic names in Turkey (Tuncel, 2000). Approximately 28,000 place names, including villages, mountains, rivers and other topographic features, were replaced with Turkish names (Tuncel, 2000).

While the Turkish state attempted to build a national identity through creating a new vocabulary, the Kurdish nationalist movement also developed its own nationalistic vocabulary as part of an attempt to construct a Kurdish identity (Gunes, 2013). As illustrated by Sheyholislami (2011), pro-Kurdish sources and media kept using and promoting the Kurdish names of the geographical features, as opposed to the imposed Turkish names.

An important contribution of this thesis has been to demonstrate the impact of these two conflicting vocabularies. Four salient patterns have been observed in the data. Each pattern has been illustrated with a participant. An important detail in these findings is that when it came to define any territorial names, the participants often comfortably used the words from either vocabulary interchangeably, whilst there was no participant who defined himself or herself as Turkish. The participants' word choices showed that although the Turkish official language, to a certain extent, managed to embed its own vocabulary into the Turkish Kurds' everyday language, it could not completely succeed in generating the perception desired by the State; that is, the perception of territorial unity, although this has, to some extent, been achieved. The participants' perceptions of sameness in terms of nation and identity accord more with the perception that the Kurdish political language wishes to create. In other words, while Turkish Kurds, to some extent, perceive the region

territorially as part of the Turkish state, they perceive themselves primarily to be Kurdish.

The second section in this chapter focused on the key narratives through which Turkish Kurds construct their identity. Many scholars have argued that Kurdish nationalism and identity evolved as an ethnic reaction against the oppressive 'official state nationalisms' (Gunter, 2007, p. 15). Van Bruinessen (2003, p. 57) argued that the Turkish state's repressive attempts to dissolve Kurdish culture into Turkishness actually strengthened Kurdish identity. Yavuz (2001, p. 1) claimed that the Turkish state's 'forced homogenising nationalism' played an important role in the evolution of Kurdish nationalism and identity. The evolution of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey is often explained via Turkish nationalism and repressive and discriminatory state policies (Tezcur, 2009, p. 3). Although the data in the present research cannot make any claims regarding the emergence of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey, it suggests that the stories about state-led oppression construct the main narrative in the Turkish Kurds' identity constructions. An important contribution of this chapter has been to illustrate how this 'repressive' official state nationalism has become the key narrative through which Turkish Kurds construct their identities. The results showed that Turkish Kurds drew on the issue of 'oppressions' to settle their sense of 'self' and 'others'. Kurdish identity is being built upon the memories of state-led physical violence and the policies of denial and assimilation. Kurdish identity is often presented as a victim of history. The participants placed themselves within these stories of how Kurdish identity was oppressed, coerced, denied and forced to assimilate. It is through these stories that Turkish Kurds construct their nation and identity, and also justify their nationalist struggle, presenting it as a human rights issue. These stories are also important to understand how and why Kurdishness has become an important facet of their identity on the Turkish side of the border.

This chapter has explored what Kurdish identity means to Turkish Kurds and which feature of Kurdish identity has become more prominent than others. The results showed that the Kurdish language is the most important feature of Kurdish identity for Turkish Kurds. The data suggests that the importance of the Kurdish language stems from past oppression. When a feature of an identity is under threat, that feature becomes a primary symbol of that identity.

Kurds in Turkey

In the Turkish Kurds' case, this primary symbol is the Kurdish language, as it was the most threatened feature of Kurdish identity in Turkish Kurds' stories of past oppression. It is important to note that women, particularly elderly women, are primarily affected by these language-related problems, and they act as the transmitters and carriers of the Kurdish language in Turkey.

Zeydanlioglu (2012, p. 105) claimed that the Kurdish language was the main target of the Turkish state's nation-building project, as it was the primary marker that differentiated Kurds from Turks. The state, from the early years of the republic, started to promote the Turkish language and restricted the use of Kurdish (McDowall, 2004, Zeydanlioglu, 2012, Yegen, 2006). The state launched a campaign in 1927, called 'citizen, speak Turkish' (Vatandas Turkce Konus) that advocated that all citizens should speak Turkish (Sadoglu, 2003). As detailed previously, the pressures on the Kurdish language reached a peak during the military coups of 1960 and 1980 (Akar and Dündar, 2008, McDowall, 2004). The Turkish state's policies towards the Kurdish language have also been referred as 'linguicide' or 'linguistic genocide' (Skutnabb-Kangas and Bucak, 1994, Hassanpour, 2000, O'Driscoll, 2014). Skutnabb-Kangas and Bucak (1994, p. 362) state that *'to kill a language you have to either kill the individuals speaking it or make these individuals change their mother tongue. Turkey tries to change the mother tongue of the Kurds and make Turkish their mother tongue'*.

This chapter demonstrated the impact of these pressures on Kurdish identity in Turkey. The findings show that the pressures on the Kurdish language made it the most important feature of Kurdish identity in Turkey. Kurdishness is first and foremost associated with the Kurdish language by Turkish Kurds. The Kurdish language is the main facet and symbol of Kurdish identity through which Turkish Kurds express and represent their identity. This significance of the language has important implications. It is argued that placing the Kurdish language at the core of Kurdish identity impacts the Turkish Kurds' socio-political demands and future expectations. The most sought after rights were all related to their mother tongue, rather than territory or other aspects. These findings illustrate how the socio-political environment has shaped Kurdish identity and the Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey.

Chapter 5: The Rest of the State: Turkey

Introduction

This chapter explores the ways Turkish Kurds perceive and narratively construct their nation and identity in relation to the Turkish state. The chapter is split into two sections. The first focuses on Turkish Kurds' perceptions of the Turkish state and the community who live outside of the Kurdish inhabited region. It analyses the participants' relations and connections with the rest of the state. The second section explores how Turkish Kurds perceive their nation and construct their identity within the context of the Turkish state. It analyses their attachments and feelings of belonging to the state and the rest of the community.

5.1 Prejudice and Discrimination

This section focuses on Turkish Kurds' stories about their experiences in the rest of the country and their encounters, relations and connections with the people outside of the region. Regarding the terminology used by informants, it is important to state that 'the rest of the state' is commonly referred to as 'the west' during the interviews. Regardless of their specific geographical locations to the region, anywhere outside of the region is labelled as 'the west' in the participants' narratives.

The findings in this section will be presented in four steps. First of all, the analyses showed that Turkish Kurds strongly believe that the region has a negative image in the rest of the country. The contents of this image and the feelings it generates will be explained and presented through verbatim quotes from the interviews. Secondly, there will be discussions over the functions of these stories related to this image. It will be argued that these stories function as a border between the region and the rest of the country and also increase their self-awareness as Kurds. Third step will focus on the reasons the participants brought to the existence of this image of the region, and what these reasons mean. Finally, the section will examine the participants' predictions and expectations for the future of the relations with the rest of the state and the community.

Kurds in Turkey

The data depict that the initial reactions to the questions regarding the participants' relations with the rest of the country are almost always about the negative image of the region in the rest of the state. Thus, I was interested to find out the contents of this image and how the participants feel and think about it.

The results showed that the region often appears as backward and underdeveloped; and its inhabitants as primitive and/or potential criminals in these negative images. The participants' narratives about their experiences outside of the region and their relations with the rest of the country almost always included some stories about the prejudice against their region and themselves.

A 26 year-old shopkeeper from Semdinli/Hakkari, Nehri, talked about his experiences when he ran away to Istanbul when he was 18 years old.

Bilal: So, what happened when you went to Istanbul?

Nehri: I realised that we are mountain people, living in caves, do not know anything about civilisation. I am serious, that is really what I heard once. I was living with a friend there. We both were seeking jobs. One day, we found out that there was a new grocery shop opening behind our house. So we both went there to apply for a job. In the application form my birthplace was Hakkari and my friend's was Adana. A lady called us for an interview. In the interview she asked which part of Hakkari I was coming from. I said 'Semdinli'. She said 'I've heard that people live in caves there and make a living from farming. I said 'yeah, you have heard it right' [sarcastically].

I met with Nehri through a local Kurdish politician, Gabar, who is also a participant in this research. In the beginning of the interview, Nehri told stories about the state-led oppressions in the region. He stated that the reason why he went to Istanbul was partly because of the pressures he faced in his hometown.

As seen in the above extract, Nehri initially wanted to take attention to the negative image of the region in the west. He expresses his surprises when he found out that his hometown is imagined as primitive in the west. He wanted to stress that the west is misinformed about the region and its inhabitants.

Nehri also interpreted the rejection of his job application as discrimination towards his identity.

Nehri's lines also indicate a disconnection between the region and the rest. Although the image of the region did not always appear as primitive as it was in this case, not everyone in these stories imagined that 'the local people live in caves', there were still many stories about how the region is considered as backward and underdeveloped in the west.

Zerya, a 42 year-old Kurdish woman politician, underlined one of the commonly encountered details in this image of the region in the west. It is about an accusation that Kurdish people face in the west. Zerya complained about the discrimination against Kurdish people in the west and as an example she stated that some Kurdish students had to drop out from the university in Erzurum in the previous years. In the following extract, Zerya explains why these students dropped out.

Zerya: The locals kept telling them that 'you are Kurdish, so you are all terrorists'. They were potential criminals and terrorists in those people's eyes. So, they couldn't stand with that.

Zerya gives an extreme example to illustrate the image of the region and Kurdish people in the west. The reason for giving such an extreme example might partly aim to draw extra attention to this issue. Through such allegations Zerya tries to show how far the prejudice against the region go and what damage they cause. She strongly believes that there is extreme discrimination against Kurds in the rest of the country. Her statements suggest that such discrimination against Kurds function as a border between the region and the rest of the state.

Although the stories about the participants' experiences in the west often included some details about the prejudice against the region and discrimination against Kurds, it is important to note that there were not many extreme stories about such discrimination in the data. In the following extract, Herke, a 29 year-old folk musician from Semdinli, shared his experiences in the rest of the state.

Herke: People have different views. They haven't seen Semdinli and only

heard about it in the conflict news. There is no other news about Semdinli, like festivals, theatre or anything else, but conflicts. There are always conflicts, and when you go outside of the region, they keep asking about these conflicts. You even hesitate to tell that you're from Hakkari. My many friends had the same issue. Yet, it is not always the case, it is not like everyone looks at you like an enemy.

Comparing to Nehri and Zerya, Herke draws a more optimistic picture. He blames the number of the conflict news for the reason of this prejudice. Herke believes that the region is associated with conflicts in the rest of the country. This means that the people in the west are misinformed. He states that this image of the region even causes anxiety to share one's identity. In order to avoid such conversations about these conflicts, Kurdish people may feel a need to hide their identity when they go to the west. Yet, Herke also states that '*it is not like everyone looks at you like an enemy*'. Although he confirms the existence of the prejudice and discrimination against the region, he believes that this is not always the case, nor does he blame the people.

Comparing to the previous two extracts, Herke's approach was much more common in the interviews. The general tendency was to emphasise these 'unfair' prejudice and discrimination in the conversations, and then blame 'the misinformation' about the region that exists in the rest of the country.

The reason for such prejudice and discrimination was also obvious for Rodin who is a Kurdish journalist from Yuksekova. When asked about his relations with the rest of the state, he wanted to explain his thoughts about them before giving any details.

Rodin: Firstly, I would like to explain the situation of those who have the sense of belonging for Turkish nation. The political regime exploited them as much as they exploited us. They have been told that 'these are your absolute borders and everyone who lives in these lines is Turk'. Therefore, when you go to Antalya, Izmir or any such cities, you cannot tell that you're Kurdish. They don't recognise your identity. So they react when you say 'I am Kurdish'.

Rodin clearly believes that all this prejudice and discrimination are the results of the misinformation disseminated in the rest of the country. He clearly blames the political regime for creating such prejudice against Kurdish people and the region. Rodin interprets the situation as a result of the state's policies that aimed to create a perception that everyone in its borders is Turk. It was very common to blame the state and its 'unfair' policies. The state is often perceived as the source of all these problems in the data. This way of reading the situation also means that Turkish people are simply misinformed.

This approach was very typical in the transcripts. This way of interpretations arguably creates a space to overcome this prejudice and discrimination. However, these stories still function as a border between 'them' and 'us'. As can be seen also in the above extract from Rodin, there are still two sides 'those who have the sense of belonging to Turkish nation' and 'Kurdish people'.

It is commonly observed that these stories about the prejudice and discrimination increase the participants' awareness of their Kurdish identity. It is because the main target in these stories is their Kurdish identity. The following extract from the interview with Zap can be a good example. Zap is a 25 year-old student from Hakkari who lived in many different cities outside of the region. He shared his stories about how he was feeling when he was outside of the region.

Zap: I was anxious sometimes; it is because you don't know what kind of reaction you will get. When you talk in Kurdish on the phone; you think that 'should I talk a bit quieter?'

Bilal: I understand.

Zap: By the way, after a while, you develop a defence mechanism and tell yourself that 'hey no! It is me, my language and I don't have to talk quieter'... I am a bit careful about this now. I am a conservative person and trying to protect this identity. I am even doing my best to speak Kurdish in my daily life.

Zap stated that he had the chance to live in many different cities in Turkey, due to his father's job. In this extract he explains how his experiences changed the way he practices his identity. When Zap travelled outside of the region, he was

Kurds in Turkey

suspicious of possible pressures on his identity. Although he did not experience any prejudice against his identity, he still had such an expectation.

It was common to observe similar expectations in the interviews. These expectations indicate the impact of these ongoing stories about the prejudice and discrimination. These expectations also give clues as to the participants' perceptions of the west.

Zap's initial reaction was to disguise his identity. Yet, he develops a 'defence mechanism'. He rather takes a more protective approach. He states that '*hey no! It is me, my language and I don't have to talk quieter*'. He decides to '*protect this identity*' and he is now 'even doing his best to speak Kurdish in his daily life'.

This kind of protective approaches was widely observed in the data. It shows that these ongoing stories about prejudice and discrimination, regardless of whether personally experienced or not, draw a line between Turks and Kurds and also increase Turkish Kurds' self-awareness of their Kurdish identity.

The results also showed a very interesting pattern in the data. The participants, nearly unexceptionally, shared stories about how these 'misinformed' visitors from outside of the region overcome their prejudice when they visit the region. It was very obvious to observe how the participants were striving for correcting this negative image of the region. The common way was always to tell stories about how these 'misinformed' people's perceptions of the region changed after they visit the region and meet with the local people.

The following extract is from the interview with Doski, a 28 year-old male labourer from Hakkari. Doski previously stated that he did not personally experience any prejudice against his identity, yet he believes that if he told where he was from, it would be highly likely that someone would call him 'terrorist'. I asked if he had ever been called 'terrorist'.

Doski: No. But I have heard about that from my friends and others. Last week, a friend of mine from the university came here with his parents to visit his brother who is doing his military service here.

B: Were they from Van?

Doski: No, they were from Gaziantep. They were Turks. Well, we just showed

them around, walked around the city and had some chat. His parents told me that 'you know what? I had a completely different idea of this city', he had thought that we were cannibals. He later said that 'I haven't met such nice and hospitable people anywhere else'... They thought it is a city where the rules cannot be applied.

Doski: ...There is prejudice against this city. They mostly hear horrible things about here, but when they see, they start liking it. So, the best thing would be that they should come over and see.

Doski's story is a typical one. The visitors in these stories are mostly misinformed about the region. The visits usually are the processes through which their prejudice is corrected. The visits usually end with more positive approaches to the region and Kurdish people. These stories are the attempts to prove that the image of the region and Kurdish people in the west is wrong. Doski simply wants to give the message that 'we' are not like as 'they' perceive us.

Doski also explains the existence of this prejudice with the external factors: '*they mostly hear horrible things about here*'. Doski is talking about a solution that is, for him, to know each other more. Blaming external factors and striving for the correction of this negative image can be read as the willingness to connect and to live together.

There are also very optimistic prospects for the issues of this negative image of the region and the prejudice. Although there is still a general consensus that the problem still exists, it is also argued that the new developments since 2000s, especially since the beginning of the peace talks, soften these pressures on Kurds and open more socio political space in where these issues could be solved. As stated earlier, the interviews were conducted during the peace talks between the Turkish government and the PKK, therefore, the context has to be taken into account while reading the following extract from the interview with Parazer.

Parazer, a 38 year-old lawyer from Silopi/Sirnak, draws a hopeful picture for the future of the region and the state. In the following extract he shares his experiences about his visits to the west of the country.

Parazer: Before when we said we are from Sirnak, they used to treat us differently. Now it is minimised. Still, when I say that I am from Sirnak, they start talking about Kurds and the Kurdish issues. I had such conversations in Trabzon, Mersin and elsewhere. New political atmosphere opens more space where these issues can be questioned and discussed. It is not like before, yeah I agree that the problems are not completely over. There are still some people who look down to Kurdish people, but this is now minimised. It is at the lowest level. The important thing is to try to combine on a common ground. We have to work together for the future of this country. This country is not Turks' or Kurds' country, it is the country of everyone who lives in it. We all must work together for this country. This should be our aim. These conflicts, these fires have no benefit for us, neither for Turks.

This extract illustrates how Parazer believes that this negative image of the region and the prejudice against Kurdish people are already diminishing. For him, the current political environment creates opportunities to minimise the prejudice. He also highlights the importance of finding a common ground for Turks and Kurds where they both would only aim to work for the country.

This extract also demonstrates the will to solve the problems and the desire to live together. Although all the participants were not always as optimistic as Parazer, there was a consensus that this negative image of the region is changing for good and the relations with the rest of the country are improving.

It is again important to note that the ongoing peace talks at the time of the interviews observably appeared as the main sources of the optimism in such statements. It might not be possible to observe the same optimism after the failure of the peace talks and the resurgence of the conflicts in the region since July 2015.

These findings are still highly valuable in understanding of the Turkish Kurds' identity constructions in relation to the Turkish state. This will be evaluated further at the end of the next section that focuses on Turkish Kurds' perception of nation and identity within the context of Turkey.

5.2 Integration and Disintegration

This section explores how Turkish Kurds perceive and narratively construct their nation and identity in relation to the Turkish state, through analysing their attachments and feelings of belonging to the state and the rest of the country. This section shows how Turkish Kurds perceive and construct their identity within the context of Turkish state. There will be stories about integration and disintegration.

Throughout the fieldwork I was interested to find out how Turkish Kurds perceive their identity within the Turkish state, how much they integrated into the rest of the community and what would be ideal for them in terms of the future of the connections with the rest. Four significant patterns were found in the data. Firstly, there are stories about disconnections with the rest of the country. These stories demonstrate the feelings of being ‘the others’ in the country. Secondly, there are stories about defining Turkishness as part of Turkish Kurds’ identity. In these stories Turkishness is referred as a territorial identity rather than an ethnic identity, which indicates the territorial attachments to the state. Thirdly, there are commonly shared narratives about the ‘inseparability’ of the region from the rest. These narratives include stories about how much Kurdish people dispersed around the country, and how much connections were built with the rest. Finally, there are stories about the tendencies towards integration with the rest. These stories often include some conditions and requests, which will also be detailed.

This section will illustrate all these patterns with verbatim quotes from the data, and discuss what they mean and how they function in Turkish Kurds’ perception of nation and identity. Through all these findings, it will be argued that Turkish Kurds, to a great extent, perceive themselves as part of Turkey and embrace Turkishness as a territorial identity, nevertheless Turkish Kurds primarily consider themselves as Kurdish and also demand to practice their Kurdish identity more freely.

The first interesting pattern found in the data is about the feelings of being disconnected and excluded in the rest of the country. The participants’ stories about the rest of the country suggest that there is a border at social level between the region and the rest, which appeared in different degrees in the

Kurds in Turkey

interviews. In the following extract Berivan, a 42 year-old women lawyer from Silopi/Sirnak, describes the connections with the rest through her personal experiences.

Berivan: I have spent most of my life outside of the region. I went to a high school in Adana. No one sat next to me, just because I was from Sirnak. There are emotional borders. These emotional borders between hearts are more important than the physical borders... I had too many problems in Adana. They treated me as someone who came from a mountain. It is just because I kept my identity. There are things that you cannot forget. For example, once two girls in the class took my bag and shouted 'hey look everyone her bag is really heavy. Be careful there might be a bomb inside'. For me, Turk, Kurd, Arab or any other identities are all the same. I approach everyone firstly as another human being, but I was not treated the same way... they first see your identity as a tag on your forehead and treat you accordingly. Your skills, your character traits don't matter. You're Kurdish, period. I had a math teacher who used to tell me 'you cannot be Kurdish' to compliment me. I said 'please don't say it again; I am Kurdish, that's it'.

In this rather long extract Berivan argues that there are emotional borders between the region and the rest. By emotional borders Berivan refers to the lines between 'us' and 'others' in people's feelings. Berivan believes that the border that separates the region from the rest is in people's hearts.

Berivan's story is a typical one that illustrates the senses of disconnections and exclusions in the data. She shares a story from her childhood that informs her that her identity is 'othered'. In this story, Berivan is alienated due to her identity, regardless of her character traits and skills. Feeling excluded, in this story, encouraged her to embrace her identity even more.

Such stories of disconnections and exclusions suggest that Kurdish identity is 'the other' of Turkish identity. These stories of being excluded appear as a key narrative in the construction of Kurdish identity. As argued in the literature review, construction of national identities is not only about constructing 'us' but also defining 'others'. Identity requires a 'constitutive outside' to be constructed (Hall, 1996, p. 3). In these stories of exclusions, Turkishness is not

defined as the other of Kurdish identity; Kurdishness is rather described as 'othered' by Turkishness. These stories of 'otherness' appeared as a salient narrative in the perceptions of Kurdish identity in the context of Turkish state.

Although it was very common to describe Kurdish identity as an othered identity in Turkey, this does not necessarily mean that Turkishness is also othered by Turkish Kurds. The data showed that it was also fairly common to describe Turkishness as part of their identity too. It is important to note that in these descriptions Turkishness is always referred as a territorial identity, as 'Türkiyeli', rather than as an ethnic identity, as 'Türk'.

Turkishness as a territorial identity is also a facet of Turkish Kurds' identity as described by Zap, a 25 year-old student from Hakkari who previously shared his concerns about prejudice against the region and stated that he had been doing his best to protect his Kurdish identity.

Zap: So, it is also a reality that I cannot cut my connections with Turkish society. Turkey has also given me a mission and I cannot cut my relations off with Turkey either.

...I neither want to live away from the Turkish society, nor do I prefer to live away from my society, my culture. Eventually my second mother tongue is Turkish. I also like Turkish language too, so I need to protect it too. I don't have any problem with Turkish. People shouldn't have any problem with languages at all. That is so absurd. I have lived by speaking Turkish too since I was a child. So, it is also part of my culture now.

...So, instead of living in the south or Iraqi Kurdistan, I would prefer to live in a place where I can protect and practice these two cultures together.

A common question in the interviews was 'if you had to leave this city, where would you go to live'. The question was always directed with different options: a city from the region versus a city from outside of the region, or a city from the west of Turkey versus a city from the Kurdish region of Iraq and a city from the region versus a city from the Kurdish region of Iraq. The extract above is a part of Zap's answer to the question.

Kurds in Turkey

This extract shows that Zap also considers Turkishness as a part of his identity. It is yet important to note that he states '*I neither want to live away from the Turkish society, nor do I prefer to live away from my society, my culture*'. This line suggests that he does not consider himself as a part of Turkish society, as he clearly mentions two different societies: 'the Turkish society' and 'my society'. However he states that Turkish culture, particularly Turkish language, is also a part of his identity. Zap insistently preferred to stay in any city in the region where he can practice these two cultures together. It is important to notice that Zap did not mention Turkish language as his second language but as his second mother tongue. All these statements suggest that Zap embraces Turkishness as a territorial and cultural identity and still wants protect and practice his Kurdish identity too.

When the answers to the question above is analysed, it is observed that the majority preferred to live any other city in the region compared to any other city outside of the region. The participants who preferred to live outside of the region mostly chose cosmopolitan cities like, Istanbul, Izmir, and Antalya etc. When the options were any city in the region versus any non-cosmopolitan cities outside of the region, i.e. Corum, Yozgat and Trabzon, the answers were almost always in the favour of the region. Although these answers suggest a division between the region and the rest of the country, another interesting description of the relations was the 'inseparability' of the region from the rest.

Another interesting finding in the data was the emphases on the 'inseparability' from the rest of the country. This was usually justified with the long historical coexistence with the Turkish people and the dispersion of the Kurdish people around the country. Although there were some opposing statements, the data indicated that there is a general belief that the separation is not needed and not even possible. Diyar states this:

Diyar: I am always concerned with the Kurdish issue. However I also have too many close Turkish friends. I cannot even think of separating from them. I wouldn't leave them. You know we sometimes talk about separations and stuff, but I don't believe that... We can't separate; this is the case for both sides, for us and also for them.

In this extract, Diyar initially wants to show that he is aware of and concerned with the issues that Kurdish people have been facing. However, he also has

many Turkish friends from whom he does not want to separate. Diyar explains his lack of desire for the separation through his connections with Turkish people. Diyar clearly believes that the separation is not even possible.

The discussions over the ‘inseparability’ were common during the interviews. Stressing on the connections with the rest of the state was one of the most common ways to rationalise the impossibility of separation from the rest of the country. There were stories about intermarriages, business partnerships and friendships that demonstrate these connections with Turkish people. Another common way was to refer to the dispersion of Kurdish people all over the country. Expressing the desires to be connected, which always come with some conditions, often follows these stories about the ‘inseparability’.

The final finding in this section is, thus, this general tendency towards integration with the rest. The desires to be connected with the rest almost always articulated with some conditions, as Berivan, a 42 year-old women lawyer from Silopi/Sirnak, stated below.

Berivan: ...If I don't have some certain restrictions in Turkey, if we can overcome the issues we've had from past to present, if I can freely say that I am Kurdish and not being discriminated for that; for example, I want my kids to learn Kurdish so if I know my kids will freely learn Kurdish, if my Kurdish village name will not forcefully be changed with a Turkish name, if I can give a Kurdish name to my daughter – I gave a Kurdish name to my daughter, why do they even have a problem with that – if I have all these, then I don't need a land, I'm happy to leave under this [Turkish] flag. These are all reasonable cultural demands. If I have all these, I will have no problem to live in this country under this [Turkish] flag.

Berivan earlier shared her story about how her identity is being othered in Turkey. In this extract Berivan is trying to show that she does not demand to separate from the rest but to solve the problems that she listed above in order to create optimum conditions to live in this country. She describes these demands as reasonable cultural ones.

Berivan's statement is a typical one that demonstrates some of the general demands encountered in the data. Such statements suggest that the demand is

not to separate but to solve the issues. The demands and expectations are almost always to solve the problems to continue living together.

When these listed demands and expectations are scrutinised and classified according to their contents, three main categories become salient: (1) recognition and respect to Kurdish identity, (2) cultural and identity-related rights [predominantly language-related rights] and (3) some administrative rights to govern the region they reside, i.e. more decision making powers to the local authorities.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how Turkish Kurds perceive their nation and construct their identity in relation to the Turkish state. There were two key objectives in this chapter: (1) to explore how Turkish Kurds perceive the Turkish state, and (2) to examine how Turkish Kurds locate their perceptions of nation and identity in the context of the Turkish state. This chapter is, therefore, divided into two main sections in accordance with these two objectives.

McDowall (2004, p. 1) suggests that a crucial question that must be examined in any modern history of the Kurds is '*the struggle between the Kurdish people and the governments to which they are subject*'. The relationship between Turkish Kurds and the Turkish state has often been antagonistic and conflict-ridden. Many scholars have analysed these problematic relations between Turkish Kurds and the state (Yildiz, 2005, Ergil, 2000, Toktamis, 2007). Bozarslan (2003, p. 187) states that '*the relations of domination between the state and the Kurds would involve systematic persecution, marginalisation and humiliation of Kurdishness*'. The emergence and development of Kurdish nationalism are often explained as a reaction to repressive and assimilationist state policies (Tezcur, 2009, Gunter, 2008). Kadioglu and Keyman (2011) describe the relationship between Turkish and Kurdish nationalisms as symbiotic, in which these nationalisms derive their *raison d'être* from each other, and prepare the conditions for each other's continuous reproduction.

Turkish Kurds' relationship with the state is an important factor in the evolution and development of Kurdish nationalism and identity. Kurdish nationalism and identity is also shaped through this relationship in Turkey. The

existing literature provides valuable insights into the problematic relations between the state and the Kurds. The findings in this chapter provide a different perspective to these relations. They highlight how Turkish Kurds perceive and interpret these relations in their self-narratives. The findings also show the impact of these historically problematic relations. It shows how these problematic relations shape Turkish Kurds' identity.

The findings showed that the main themes that dominate the perceptions of the relationships with the Turkish state are 'prejudice and discrimination'. Turkish Kurds believe that the region has an unfairly negative image in Turkey. There is also a common belief that this unfair image causes prejudice and discrimination against the region. The stories about prejudice and discrimination function as a border between the region and the rest of the country. These stories also increase Turkish Kurds' self-awareness as Kurds. It is because there is a belief that the main target of these prejudice and discrimination is their Kurdish identity.

The findings also showed that the state is commonly perceived as the source of this prejudice and discrimination. This can also be interpreted as Turks simply being misinformed about the region. This approach arguably opens up a space to develop relationships with the west. There were typical, or even identical, stories about 'misinformed' Turks' visits to the region that always end with diminishing their prejudice. These stories can be interpreted as attempts to prove that this negative image of the region is wrong. These stories show that the participants are striving to correct this negative image. Another important detail in these stories was the desire to live together with Turks in these stories.

Finally, the findings show that the Turkish state's negative image is also changing in Turkish Kurds' narratives. Although there have been many hopeful expectations and prospects for the future of the relations with the state, it is argued that the socio-political context of the time, particularly the peace talks, had a significant impact on these statements. It might not be possible to observe the same optimism after the failure of the peace talks and the resurgence of the conflicts in the region since July 2015.

Kurds in Turkey

The second section in this chapter analysed Turkish Kurds' perception of nation and identity in terms of where they place Kurdish identity in the context of the Turkish state, by examining their attachments and feelings of belonging to the state. As reviewed, the evolving relationship between Turkish Kurds and the Turkish state has reached a level where neither the Kurdish nationalist movement strives for secession; nor does the Turkish state continue to insist on a homogenous monolingual nation (see Section 2.3 Kurds in Turkey, particularly from 1980 to 2016).

The results show that Turkish Kurds share a common feeling of being 'the others' in Turkey. Yet, Turkish Kurds often consider Turkishness to be a territorial identity, and as such part of their identity too. It is equally important to note that Turkishness as an ethnic identity is not considered a part of their identity. Turkishness as an ethnic identity appears as 'the constitutive others' in the construction of Kurdish identity on the Turkish side of the border (Hall, 1996). These findings also indicate Turkish Kurds' territorial attachments to the state. This argument is also supported by commonly shared narratives about the 'inseparability' of the region from the rest of the country.

These findings suggest that there is a common tendency towards integration with the rest of the state. It is argued that Turkish Kurds, to a great extent, perceive themselves as part of Turkey and embrace Turkishness as a territorial identity. Nevertheless, Turkish Kurds primarily consider themselves as Kurdish, and also demand to practice their Kurdish identity more freely within Turkey.

Chapter 6: The Other Side of the Border: Iraqi Kurds

Introduction

This chapter explores Turkish Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity in relation to Iraqi Kurds. There are three sections in this chapter. The first focuses on the perception of the border. It analyses the ways in which Turkish Kurds perceive the border, what these perceptions mean and how these perceptions impacts Turkish Kurds' identity constructions. The second section analyses the meanings attributed to the Iraqi side of the border. It explores the importance and functions of these meanings in Turkish Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity. The final section in this chapter describes the image of the Iraqi Kurdish region in Turkish Kurds' narratives. It explores how the bordering process occurs in Turkish Kurds' narratives.

6.1 The 'Denied' Border

The artificiality of the border emerges as the key narrative from the data. The border is widely defined as a 'fake', 'artificial', 'unnatural' line. The statements to evidence the inauthenticity of the border are based on two main perceptions: the territorial continuity and the continuity of the community across the border. The perception of the territorial continuity relates to consideration that the two border regions are a part of Kurdistan. The perception of the continuity of the community relates to defining both sides primarily as Kurdish. Hence, the border does not divide two different territories; neither does it divide two different communities. The argument about this 'denied' border is, thus, followed by foregrounding these two aspects of sameness over the line.

This section will depict how the border is perceived as an artificial line, what it means and how this perception functions in Turkish Kurds' identity constructions.

The informants' statements about the border largely emphasised the 'unnatural' and 'arbitrary' characters of the border. Described variously, the connotation to 'artificiality' of the border stood significant. Serhat, a 56 year-

Kurds in Turkey

old shop owner and a member of the BDP [the Kurdish political party at the time] from Semdinli, starts the conversation about the border with a clear rejection.

Serhat: As you know, Kurdistan has been divided into four pieces with the treaty of Lausanne. These borders are surely artificial for us. I mean that we, as Kurdish people, rightly do not accept these borders.

The narratives about 'four pieces of Kurdistan' was common in the interviews. The questions related to the border were often initially answered with stories about the division of Kurdistan into four pieces. The extract above is a good example.

Serhat denies the border in its contemporary place. He perceives the border as an artificial line that divides a territory, which he calls Kurdistan. He refers to the mutual past with the Iraqi Kurdish region before the treaty of Lausanne, which was ratified in 1923. Serhat states that this division is not acceptable for Kurds. He, therefore, 'rightly' rejects this border.

Serhat clearly accentuates the past territorial unity that extended across the border. He perceives both sides as parts of greater Kurdistan thus perceiving the border an unnatural line and unacceptable.

Although there was not always a clear statement of rejection, the territorial division of Kurdistan was widely reiterated. Many informants also underline the kinship across the border. For example, Pir, a 69 year-old farmer from Silopi, narrates how the border divided his family and their properties.

Pir: When the border appeared, three/four of our villages stayed on the other side. They are all our next of kin, our own flesh and blood. Still my cousins, my father's aunt and her grandchildren live there.

B: When the border was drawn, were they on the other side?

Pir: When they drew the border, three and half of our villages, 'Hirtiyan', 'Tiyan', 'Shinawan' and half of 'Bacukan' were on the other side of the line.

Pir highlights one of the most commonly mentioned characters of the border: a divider of lands and families. The border is not by any means drawn between two different communities and territories in these narratives. There were

numerous cases when the participants emphasise the kinship that extends across the border. In the accounts of those living close to the border, the examples related directly to their relative and their own lives, as in the case of Pir. For Pir, people who live on the Iraqi side of the border are his own 'flesh and blood'. The border separates him from his immediate relatives depicting a strong connection with the Iraqi side that is based on a kinship.

Another participant, Nehri, also emphasises his family ties over the border. He also claims that this 'artificial' border was intentionally drawn to divide Kurdish people.

Nehri: Turkey did not draw its own borders to separate from Iraq and Iran... These three countries did not draw these borders to separate themselves from each other; they simply drew them to divide us. I accept that every country has its own territory and the right to draw its borders. But, look at these borders. There is a tiny little river that divides Turkey, Iraq and Iran. I live on this side of the river, my uncle's house is on the Iraqi side of the river and all the people live on the Iranian side are also Kurdish, mostly the ones who went from the Turkish side.

Nehri believes that the decision to draw the border was an attempt to divide Kurdish people. He draws attention to the inauthenticity of the border. There is clear denial of the border in Nehri's lines. He justifies his rejection with an emphasis on family ties of the communities over the border.

This perception of unity across the border was the most recurring theme in the border-related conversations. Almost none of the participants failed to relate to continuity of the community over the border, drawing a significant perception of being 'divided'. Nehri's statement demonstrates the connection between the people living on each side of the border and a feeling of belonging to this cross-border community.

This perception of 'artificial border' can particularly be drawn from stories about illegal border crossings and smugglings. Considering the border as an artificial line has a particular impact on Turkish Kurds' perceptions of and approaches to the illegal border crossings and smugglings. In the transcripts, illegal border crossing is accepted and commonly considered as a 'natural'

Kurds in Turkey

right. Similarly, smuggling is often defined as an ever-present trade between both sides.

In the following extract, Kato, a 28 year-old folk dance teacher from Semdinli, talks about his relations with the Iraqi side of the border.

B: How about the other side of the border? Have you been there? Do you know anyone on the other side?

Kato: Yes, our relatives are there. They have divided us. Our relatives come over here and we also go there to visit them. But we don't go there with a passport. We go there through illegal ways. In the end, we are all relatives, so it is easy for us to visit each other.

The initial respond is again an emphasis on the divider function of the border. Kato defines the border as a line that divides 'us'. It is interesting to note that Kato comfortably states that he crosses the border without any valid travel document. Despite knowledge of legal consequences, he visits his relatives on the Iraqi side of the border.

This extract that resounds the response of other participants shows how illegal border crossing is normalised. In most cases these illegal border crossings are to visit some family members and therefore considered a natural right.

Smuggling was also freely talked about and mostly accepted as a 'reality' of the region. It was often considered as an endless commercial activity between two sides. Although many participants define this activity as 'smuggling', the word was commonly used to describe a socially accepted trade.

The next extract is from the interview with Parazer, a 38 year-old lawyer from Silopi/Sirnak, who has relatives on both sides of the border. When asked if his relatives went to the Iraqi side after the border from Silopi or if they were already on the Iraqi side when the border was drawn his response was:

Parazer: Both... It is a bit complicated. It is because one of the characters of this border is that it was not drawn where something...eh... a culture ends and another starts. It is an artificial line drawn at the time. Some of our relatives are here; some are on the other side... the connections between these people haven't ended and will never end. These relationships won't end. Neither will these economic

relations. The state counts these as smugglings. However, these people in the region don't count these activities as smugglings, it is just a trade for them. This can even be seen more especially in the rough mountainous areas. There is more legal trade here in Silopi. It is just because there is a border gate here. When you go further to Uludere and Beytussebab, there is no more need to have a passport. So, there are this kind of family and economic relationships. This is the reality of the region. It cannot be ignored.

This response is a good representation of the typical initial narratives of the border in the data. The initial statements are often about the kinship existing over the border, which are often expressions of closeness. As Parazer emphasises, they are all close relatives, they have been in touch all these years and they always will. The border, for Parazer, does not mark a point where something ends and another starts.

Parazer emphasises economic relations referring to smuggling. The reason for this opinion is directly linked to the perceptions of sameness thus, relating to the border being an artificial line.

There exists many more cases in the data in where the participants refer to the ties between both sides. The kinship, the connections and sameness in term of territory, ethnicity, culture, language, traditions etc. all these illustrating the perception of the border as an artificial line.

This section indicated that the initial responses to the border related questions are mostly about its artificial, unnatural and inauthentic characters, based on two perceptions of unity: the territorial continuity where the border does not divide two different territories but Kurdistan, and the continuity of the community where the communities of both sides are first and above all Kurds. Yet, it is important to note that such statements were commonly made in the initial conversations about the border. It thus presents just one part of the story. The next section will explore the symbolic meanings attributed to the Iraqi side of the border in Turkish Kurds' perception and construction of nation and identity. It will present the functions of the perception of 'artificial' border in Turkish Kurds' identity construction processes. The last section in this chapter will explore the image of the Iraqi Kurdistan region in Turkish Kurds'

narratives with a focus on the bordering processes. It will also indicate the extent of this denial of the border and where the bordering starts in the participants' narratives.

6.2 The Symbolic Meanings of the South

Beyond the border is endowed with symbolic meanings in the Turkish Kurds' narratives. The data shows that these symbolic meanings, attributed to the Iraqi Kurdistan region, play significant roles in Turkish Kurds' perception of nation and identity. This section lists these symbolic meanings and analyses their importance and functions in Turkish Kurds' perception of nation and identity.

The narratives about the Iraqi Kurdistan region frequently had some common features that unfold the participants' self-disclosures and sentimental feelings in their identity construction processes. I have identified four main categories and two main functions in each category in the data. The first one is about the participants' joy and excitement of seeing the Iraqi Kurdistan region. It will be argued that the Iraqi Kurdistan region symbolises what they have been striving for: 'recognition'. Iraqi Kurds' achievements also create more emotional connections. Secondly, it will be shown that the Iraqi Kurdistan is also considered a place where Turkish Kurds can rely on. It is considered both as a secure place and one with economic benefits. Thirdly, Iraqi Kurdistan is a place governed by Kurds, thus, seen as a place where Kurdish identity can be practised freely. Iraqi Kurds' political achievements also symbolise the Kurds' political existence in the international arena and encourage Turkish Kurds' political movements. Finally, Iraqi Kurdistan is seen as a place where Kurdish language can be spoken freely and where Kurds are welcomed.

Throughout the interviews I questioned the participants' experiences in the Iraqi Kurdistan region. Their narratives about their visits to the Iraqi side of the border commonly started with personal experiences of the initial joy and excitement of seeing the Kurdish flag, the Kurdish policeman and Kurdish signposts on the roads.

In the following extract Roj, a 35 year-old male journalist from Yuksekova, Hakkari, shares experiences of his first trip to the Iraqi Kurdistan region.

Roj: Yes, I have been to Iraq. I went there through Iran. When I arrived to the border, when the first time I saw the signboard saying 'Welcome to Kurdistan', I got so excited. I was always wondering if it'd ever be possible for me to see such a signboard. Because the word 'Kurdistan' has always been forbidden here. Too many people were prisoned; too many people were killed for this word. We were even getting excited when we heard 'Kurdistan' in a song.

This extract is typical to those Turkish Kurds who visited the Iraqi Kurdistan region. Roj expresses his excitement of seeing 'Kurdistan' on a signboard. The word has sentimental values to him. He explains the value of this word by stating that the word 'Kurdistan' has always been forbidden on the Turkish side of the border where many people were prisoned and several died for using this word or fighting for what it refers to. Kurdistan simply means 'the land of Kurds'. He describes it as an emotional moment, but exciting to hear this word in a song, which is now in a concrete form existing just beyond the border.

An important point in this extract is that Iraqi Kurdistan has what Turkish Kurds have been striving for: recognition. Regardless of its content, the Iraqi side of the border is first and foremost recognised as Kurdistan. The word has symbolic meanings that can be traced in the stories about state-led assimilations and denial policies and oppression, as detailed in the section 4.4: stories about the past events. Hence, the Iraqi Kurdish region is also a symbol that consolidates Turkish Kurds' existence as Kurdish. What excited Roj was the recognition of Kurdistan, not what is inside.

In the next extract Rodin, another journalist and writer from Yuksekova, also shares his experience in the Iraqi side of the border.

Rodin: If we look at it emotionally, yes, I do have sympathies for them. A state is being build, and its name is Kurdistan. Of course, these people will feel sympathies for it. Let me tell you what happened to me. I went to the Kurdistan region for a conference. We were all in a huge conference room, and waiting for the conference to start. Then, it started with 'Ey Reqib' [the Kurdish national anthem]. As soon as I heard it, I got my goose pimple. I even wrote an article about that moment. It was something I had always missed, and couldn't even

Kurds in Turkey

hope to hear. When I heard it, I felt its tones up to the hilt; it filled my eyes with tears. From this perspective, yes, there's an emotional connection.

Rodin's story demonstrates the emotional connections with the Iraqi Kurdistan region. Rodin evaluates the connections from a sentimental perspective. He claims that there are undeniable emotional connections with the Iraqi side of the border due to its identity. Rodin states that there are 'of course' national sentiments for the Iraqi side as it is called 'Kurdistan'.

Rodin's personal anecdote about his excitement and emotions stimulated by the Kurdish national anthem is a good representation of the emotional connections with the Iraqi side. It was a psychological threshold for Rodin to experience the moment when the Kurdish national anthem was sung at a formal event. It symbolised Kurds' recognition and achievements. The reasons for these highly emotional reactions are hidden in the following lines: '*It was something I had always missed, and couldn't even hope to hear*'. These lines clearly refer to the denial policies and oppressions on Kurdish identity that he experienced on the Turkish side of the border. Iraqi Kurdistan is a place where his oppressed identity can freely be performed. The Iraqi side is also a symbol that proves that Kurds are a nation.

A 60 year-old retired teacher from Silopi, Ferat, highlights another important function of the Iraqi side.

Ferat: Yes, of course, we also benefited from them [the Kurdistan region of Iraq]. There have been many business agreements. The people on this side had both psychological and economic benefits. It's been a huge relief for those people who live here. Now, they can say that we have a place where we can rely on, a place we can easily go.

Another interesting detail in the data was that some participants described the existence of the Kurdish government on the south side of the border as relief for both security and economic reasons. Ferat's statement illustrates these two points together.

The Kurdistan region is a secure place for Kurds. Although the economic benefits that Ferat emphasises is important, a relatively more intriguing detail is that he describes the Iraqi side as '*a place where we can rely on*'. Ferat

believes that Iraqi Kurdistan is a state where Turkish Kurds can count on. Some participants recounted stories of Turkish Kurds who suffered oppression on the Turkish side and found shelter on the Iraqi side of the border, as illustrated in the next extract. Iraqi Kurdistan is a place where they can easily go. Iraqi Kurdistan is, thus, also a symbol that underpins Turkish Kurds' existence on the north of the border.

The following extract further clarifies the 'shelter' function of the south side of the border. Bager, a 59 year-old man from Silopi, was a political prisoner during the military cope on 12 September 1980. He ran away to Iraqi Kurdistan due to oppression in 1990 and returned to his hometown after 17 years, in 2007. In the following extract he compares the living conditions of both sides.

Bager: It would be easier to live on the south [Iraqi] side from some aspects. For example, there is no state oppression there. We are still worried about that. We still have fear that the [Turkish] state can arrest us at any moment. They recently arrested numerous people within the scope of so-called KCK [Kurdistan Communities Union] operations. Their crime was to be Kurd and demand equal rights. On the south side, the state is Kurd, the soldiers and policemen are Kurds.

B: Does this make it easy to live on the other side of the border?

Bager: Yes, it is easier there. There is no state oppression there. I mean the state is yours. Would you be happy to live with your own family or would you be happier to live in my family? You would prefer your own family; it would be more comfortable for you, right?

B: I understood.

Bager: It is the same thing. Everything is under Kurdish control there. You govern yourself. Kurdish people have their own army, policemen, judges, and so on. They have their own laws.

Bager suffered state oppressions, which drove him into exile for 17 years. He lived on both sides of the border. His initial comparison is based on the political spaces on each side. Bager earlier stated that his main political struggle was to obtain equal rights for Kurdish people in Turkey. While he demands equal rights for Kurds on the Turkish side, Iraqi Kurds are already running the government on the south side of the border.

Kurds in Turkey

In this extract what makes a place 'home', for Bager, is to govern the territory he lives in. Bager clearly demonstrates a feeling of not belonging to the Turkish governance. He uses the analogy of the family to explain his sense of belonging. For him, the south is home because *'everything is under Kurdish control'*.

The existence of a Kurdish government on the Iraqi side of the border is a source of joy and excitement for Turkish Kurds. Such joy and excitement were common for participants who definitely preferred to live on the Turkish side of the border. The existence of the Kurdish government on the south side of the border symbolises an important psychological threshold for the Kurdish nationalist movements. It shows that Kurds can build a state.

Gabar, a 37 year-old Kurdish politician from Semdinli, explains how Kurds' achievements in the Iraqi Kurdistan region helped him to overcome his doubts about building a Kurdish state.

Gabar: Before they [Iraqi Kurds] got independence, we had been told that 'imagine you obtained independence, what would you do, you would suffer from hunger, and how would you govern yourself?' I even thought they might have a point. But now, we see that Kurdish people can govern their countries and can even be richer. You know that Iraqi Kurds were poor and starving before they got their autonomy. When Kurdistan was founded, we witnessed how fast they developed and became rich.

Gabar states that the south proved that 'we can do it'. His arguments show that the Kurdish government on the Iraqi side has symbolic functions for the Kurdish movements on the Turkish side of the border. Iraqi Kurdistan is constitutionally recognised by the Iraqi state.

When asked, Gabar stated that he was not planning on moving to the Iraqi side to carry out his political struggle. He had numerous objections to the Kurdish regional government and the Kurdish political movements in Iraq. Yet, the existence of the Kurdish government in the south of the border is a source of joy to Gabar, due to its symbolic meanings. The existence of the Kurdistan region on the south side of the border is also a symbol of Kurds' existence in the international arena.

Another way of expressing closeness to the Iraqi side of the border during the interviews was through the Kurdish language. A vast majority of the informants underlined their excitement of the freedom to speaking Kurdish in any official and non-official institutions on the Iraqi side of the border.

Ferat, a 60 year-old retired teacher from Silopi, continues to talk about the importance of the Iraqi Kurdistan for Turkish Kurds.

Ferat: ...Now, when these people go there [Iraqi Kurdistan] and say hi, they hear 'Merhaba sercwan, hûn bi xêr hatin xwîşk û birayên' [Kurdish: Hi you're very welcome my brothers and sisters]. This is a relief for these people. It makes them so happy to hear this. Our people have never been able to speak in their mother tongue freely in anywhere. It is the first time that they can speak in their own language and it is a huge psychological relief.

Iraqi Kurdistan region is first and foremost described as a place where Kurdish can freely be spoken. In this extract Ferat talks about the psychological importance of being able to speak Kurdish for Turkish Kurds. Ferat also stated that being able speak his mother tongue makes him feel at home in the Iraqi Kurdish region.

Many participants, like Ferat, described their great joy and excitement of being welcomed in Kurdish. The reasons of these excitement and joy that have been stimulated by the language freedom on the Iraqi side can be traced in the participants' stories about the oppressions on Kurdish language on the Turkish side. As discussed, Kurdish language was the most threatened feature of Kurdish identity and the language-related rights are the most demanded ones. The Iraqi side, in this sense, has what the Turkish Kurds have always desired.

Another informant, Herke, a 29 year-old folk musician from Semdinli, shares his first visit to the Iraqi side of the border.

Herke: It was so different when I went there [Iraqi Kurdistan] first time. Actually, I was a kid in my first visit. When you go to a Peshmerga checkpoint, they welcome you in Kurdish. They ask you questions in Kurdish. Everything is in Kurdish. It is a different feeling; you can speak freely and can go there easily. When I tell them I am

from Semdinli, from Kurdistan, they approach to me differently.

B: What do you mean by 'differently'? Is it a positive thing?

Herke: Yes sure, I mean there is a more positive approach.

Herke's story is another good example that illustrates those Turkish Kurds' joy and excitement of being able to speak Kurdish on the Iraqi side of the border. An important detail in such statements is that these excitement and joy are mostly about the places where Kurdish is spoken. As can be seen in the extract above, what excites Herke is that he could speak his mother tongue during the passport controls, which symbolises the recognition of Kurdish language at the state level. In such statements, the participants' joy and excitement are always related to where they can practice their identity, such as speaking Kurdish with an official in a government institution, with a border patrol, a policeman and etc. As can be seen in Herke's case, he talks about the pleasure of speaking Kurdish at a checkpoint.

Herke also describes the Iraqi Kurdistan region as a place where he is welcomed. He states that his identity is privileged on the south side of the border. Compared to the stories about how Kurdish identity is being 'othered' in the rest of Turkey, Herke's story describes a place where his identity is 'included'. Iraqi Kurdistan region is considered as a place where Kurdish identity is recognised and respected.

These narratives about the meanings attributed to Iraqi Kurdistan are very valuable to understand Turkish Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity in relation to Iraqi Kurds. Yet, in order to comprehend these perceptions of nation and identity, it is also important to analyse the image of Iraqi Kurdistan in the participants' narratives.

6.3 The Image of the South and Interiorising the Border

'We know that this border is fake but still feels so different when we cross it'

Baz, a 37 year-old villager from Yesilova/Semdinli

Bordering, as discussed in the literature review, is a process that does not start or end with demarcating lines in space (Newman, 2006). Although borders unjustly create a perception of fixed places in space and time, the border, in this research, is understood in terms of bordering, as an ongoing process

through which social and spatial categories and differentiations occur (Newman and Paasi, 1998, Van Houtum et al., 2005). The previous two sections depicted that the border is perceived as an artificial line, as it does not demarcate where something ends and another begins. Beyond the border is endowed with symbolic meanings that have special significance in Turkish Kurds' perception of nation and identity constructions. Following these two sections, this final section analyses the bordering process by seeking the image of the south in the participants' narratives.

There were a wide variety of narratives that reflect the image of the Iraqi Kurdistan in the data. All these narratives can be classified into seven main categories. In this section, I outline all these narratives and illustrate each main category with a participant, with (1) stories of how the border stimulates the participants' feelings, (2) stories about the impact of the border on the participants' perceptions of topological proximity, (3) stories about the participants' disappointments during their visits to Iraqi Kurdistan, (4) illustrations of Iraqi Kurdistan which is also considered as more feudal compared to the more 'modern' Turkish side, (5) how Iraqi Kurds and the Kurdish political movements on the Iraqi side are also considered more tribal compared to more 'egalitarian' image of the Kurdish political movements in Turkey, (6) analysis of participants' reasons for choosing to live on the Turkish side rather than the Iraqi side and (7) analysis of participants' reasons for choosing to live on the Iraqi side of the border.

An initial trace of the bordering found in the participants' narratives were related to feelings. As Baz stated at top of this section, crossing the line, regardless of describing it as fake, inauthentic, unnatural, artificial or else, often stimulates the feelings of the crossers. This feeling that Baz could not describe is the point where the bordering begins to appear more prominently in the narratives.

Dilaver, a 41 year-old businessman from Hakkari, also shared his experiences of border crossings. He stated that he crossed the border illegally numerous times.

Dilaver: We know that both sides are Kurdistan, but there is this different feeling of crossing the border. When you pass by a border stone, no

matter how much you ignore it, you still feel that you're now in somewhere else.

Dilaver perceives both sides of the border as Kurdistan. Therefore, the border is a line that is often 'ignored'. Yet, perceiving the border as an artificial line does not prevent him from feeling 'different' when he crosses it. He still feels that beyond the line is 'somewhere else'.

Many more participants described changes in their feelings and perceptions at the moment when they crossed the border. Along with these feelings, borders produce new meanings, new belongings, new perceptions, new vocabulary and more.

Another function of the border is to alter the perception of topographical proximity. Despite the fact that the Iraqi Kurdish cities were physically closer than many other Turkish cities, many participants perceive the Turkish cities closer. Such perceptions also have an impact on Turkish Kurds' social connections.

The change in the perceptions of topological proximity can be related to the socio-spatial differentiations between two sides. There were many participants who indirectly demonstrated such perceptions. There were also a few participants who shared these perceptions in more direct ways. Aram's case can be a good example. Aram is a 36 year-old technician who works in a hospital in Uludere. He lives very close to the border but has never crossed it. However, he went to Istanbul many times, which is 1750km away. I asked the reason.

Aram: Yes. For me, Zakho is further away from Istanbul. Yeah, I know Zakho is physically closer. When we went to the plateau I showed to you today, my friends pointed out Zakho. We could easily see from there. Probably it is just 7 hours walking distance. But, we are far from each other in another meaning. A Turkish town is physically further than a Kurdish town in the south; however, I found the people of Turkey [Türkiye Halkı] closer. I have even more emotional connections with Van, Diyarbakir, Mardin and other cities in this region. The second place would not be Zakho; I would rather say it would be Istanbul. I find a Turkish town closer than a Kurdish town in the south. I mean I

could share more things with a Turkish man. I could understand a Turkish person more. But I am not talking about all Turkish people. I am talking about the Turkish people who are a bit leftist and more moderate towards Kurds. These moderate Turkish people will be closer than any Kurdish people in Iraq. I mean I could not share many things with Iraqi Kurds. They wouldn't know about Ahmet Kaya [a singer] or Yilmaz Guney [a director].

The perception of proximity in this extract is not only related to the physical distances from Zakho and Istanbul. Aram is fully aware that Zakho is physically closer than Istanbul. By closeness he also referred to his social relations and connections which encouraged frequent visits to Istanbul. Zakho, on the other side, is a few kilometres away but not 'close' enough to visit. Aram compares Iraqi Kurdistan with the rest of Turkey. In his ranking the region is the closest place to him, it is followed not by Iraqi Kurdistan but the rest of Turkey.

Another important point in this extract is that Aram clarifies his closeness to Turkish people by stating that he does not have much in common with Iraqi Kurds: *'I could not share many things with Iraqi Kurds. They wouldn't know about Ahmet Kaya [a singer] or Yilmaz Guney [a director].* Ahmet Kaya was a Kurdish singer from Turkey who mostly sang in Turkish and Yilmaz Guney was a Kurdish film director and actor from Turkey, whose works were also mostly in Turkish. Whilst these two figures can connect Aram to Turkish people – at least to those who are *'a bit leftist and more moderate towards Kurds'* – he also uses these two figures as examples of social differentiations from Iraqi Kurdistan.

Aram highlights an important point that was often observed in the interviews with those Turkish Kurds who also lived in Iraqi Kurdistan. Throughout the interviews I was interested to know more about the participants' experiences in Iraqi Kurdistan. The narratives about the participants' visits to the south also reflect the image of Iraqi Kurdistan in Turkish Kurds' eyes. The most salient pattern observed in these narratives is that there is often a disappointment, as Berat, a 36 year-old restaurant owner from Yuksekova, described below.

Berat: Kurds in the north [Turkish Kurds] are so curious about the south [Iraqi Kurdistan]. When they come [to Iraqi Kurdistan], they all get

disappointed at some point and leave. I have met many people; I have witnessed how happy and excited they [Turkish Kurds] were when they arrived [to Iraqi Kurdistan] first time. They [Turkish Kurds] are usually excited to see that Peshmerga and policemen speak in Kurdish, everything is in Kurdish. This excites them. They become happy and say 'this is it, this is my state', because they see that it is written 'Kurdistan' everywhere. It makes them so happy, but if they stay and live with them [Iraqi Kurds] it takes maximum one month that they get disappointed and leave.

Berat's statement about Turkish Kurds' experiences in Iraqi Kurdistan illustrates a common pattern in the participants' narratives. As illustrated in the previous sections, there was often joy and excitement in the participants' stories about their initial experiences in the Iraqi Kurdish region. As Berat also states that the participants expressed their excitement about the national symbols exist on the Iraqi side of the border.

Berat's experiences on the south side of the border showed him the differences between two sides of the border. Berat states that being able to speak Kurdish everywhere and seeing the word 'Kurdistan' generated an inclusive attitude toward the Kurdish region in Iraq. Yet, he claims these excitement and inclusive nationalistic feelings do not last more than a month and always end with disappointments.

The data showed that there are two main motivations for Turkish Kurds' visits to Iraqi Kurdistan. The first one is about its Kurdish feature. As illustrated in the previous section, Iraqi Kurdistan is primarily considered a place where Kurdish identity can be freely practiced. Some participants describe it as a dream to see a Kurdish state. The second main motivation is about the economic opportunities in Iraqi Kurdistan. The growth and increasing wealth made Iraqi Kurdistan as an attractive place for some Turkish Kurds.

The findings showed that the main source of these disappointments is the 'lack' of similar nationalistic sentiments in the Iraqi Kurdistan region. Civan, a 24 year-old Turkish Kurd student who studied at Duhok University [in Iraqi Kurdistan], provides a clearer account of those who do not find Iraqi Kurds nationalist enough. He stated a lack of nationalist sentiment on the Iraqi side. I asked him to explain his claim.

Civan: Let me clarify. I haven't observed any national feelings among the new generation there [Iraqi Kurdistan]. I don't know how to explain. For example, last year during Newroz [Kurdish New Year] I was passing by an auto gallery and I saw a Kurdistan flag in a bin. I got crazy, emptied the litter and picked up the flag. A guy from the gallery came and asked 'what're you doing?' I showed the flag, and said 'see I found this Kurdistan flag in the bin. Who threw it into the bin? The flag was hung over here before'. He said 'I don't know it's not ours'. I said 'where is yours then?' He looked around but couldn't find it. I said 'it's yours'. He said 'it's not your business, go away'. I said 'shame on you, too many people shed blood for this flag. At least you could be a bit respectful'. There were a few more people, one said 'you came from Turkey, you didn't shed blood'. I said 'no I didn't, but it's my brothers' blood that was shed here, it's Kurdish people's blood. I can't accept this. I'm Kurdish and this is my flag too'. ...You know how we chant Turkish national anthem, you have to stop whenever you hear, everyone stands up and they don't let us move until the end. That's how you show respect. As I said, this new generation lost these national feelings.

This long extract is a good representation of the claims that the Iraqi Kurdish region is less nationalist. There are a few important details in these two incidents. First of all, this anecdote shows how important these national symbols for Civan are. He values the flag and the national anthem for his nation and identity. He, thus, demands respects for these symbols. In his anecdote Iraqi Kurds, or at least the new generation, do not value these symbols as much as Turkish Kurds do. By showing the lack of nationalist sentiments on the Iraqi side Civan foregrounds the differences between both sides.

The second detail is about how Civan gives meanings to these symbols. He states that many people shed blood for the flag that simply symbolises the Kurdish nation. He demands respect to those who died for his nation. Iraqi Kurdistan owes its achievements to those martyrs. The importance of these symbols come from the meanings they contain. These are the symbols through which Civan constructs his identity.

Kurds in Turkey

It is also important to note that Civan is connected to Iraqi Kurdistan through these symbols. When he was said that he came from Turkey and did not shed blood here, he replied *'no I didn't, but it's my brothers' blood that was shed here; it is Kurdish people's blood. I can't accept this. I'm Kurdish and this is my flag too'*. It is clear that he has inclusive nationalist feelings for Iraqi Kurdistan. He sees those martyrs who died on the Iraqi side as his brothers and embraces the flag. This detail also shows that those Iraqi Kurds did not approach him as one of them, rather as just someone from Turkey. Through this anecdote Civan shows that his perception of his nation includes Iraqi Kurdistan along with its symbols, and his national feelings embrace Iraqi Kurds; however, Iraqi Kurds, in his account, do not have the same perception of nation and do not embrace Turkish Kurds as they embrace Iraqi Kurds.

Finally, Civan recalls how nationalistic rituals are being performed in Turkey. The Turkish flag bears a red field that represents the martyrs' blood that is considered sacred. Any desecration of these rituals, the flag and the martyrs is strictly forbidden. Civan expects similar approaches to the Kurdish national symbols, and demands similar rituals and respect. The interesting point here is that Civan shows Turkish nationalism and nationalistic rituals as examples for how the concepts of nation and nationalism ought to be understood and the Kurdish nationalist rituals should be performed. This suggests that his nationalistic views are influenced by Turkish nationalism.

Chiya's stories are good examples that illustrate the differences in the perceptions of nation and identity with Iraqi Kurds. This extract also shows how Turkish Kurds' perception of nation and identity is influenced by Turkish nationalism.

There are some common features in the image of Iraqi Kurdistan in the Turkish Kurds' narratives. Iraqi Kurdistan is often characterised by being more feudal, traditional, tribal, less educated as opposed to more democratic, modern, national, more educated image of the Turkish side. It is important to note that the aim is not to search the validity of these claims but to show the differentiations that are being made between the two sides in the participants' narratives.

A detail in the image of the Iraqi Kurdistan that was often encountered in the data was about its social structure. The society on the Iraqi side is mostly

perceived as a feudal society. By feudalism the participants refer to the power and dominance of the tribal leader in the society and politics. In many interviews Iraqi Kurds are described as a tribal society.

Zap, a 25 year-old student from Hakkari, compares both sides of the border.

Zap: The south part has more feudal values. As you know, Barzani [the president of Kurdistan Region of Iraq] is, at the same time, a tribal leader. It will take more time for them [Iraqi Kurds] to overcome this feudal structure. They are also getting wealthier; but, we are in a better condition in term of the rights, like women rights. ...When you think about the political regime in Iraq, or Iran or Syria; they are a bit more primitive.

Zap's initial comment on Iraqi Kurdistan is on its socio-political structure. There are four significant details in this extract. First of all, Iraqi Kurdistan region is considered as a tribal society. By feudal structure Zap refers to the tribal division on the Iraqi side. He believes that tribes are still important parts of the social structure on the Iraqi side. This social structure, for Zap, is an issue that needs to be 'overcome'. The second detail is about the impact of this social structure. Zap argues that this tribal social structure also affects the political regime. As a proof he recalls that the president of Kurdistan region in Iraq, Masood Barzani, is also a tribal leader. Therefore, he finds the political regime in Iraqi Kurdistan as a more primitive one. Thirdly, Zap makes a comment about Iraqi Kurds' increasing wealth. Comparing to Turkish Kurds, Iraqi Kurds are getting richer. Although he defines it as a positive feature of Iraqi Kurdistan, Zap makes this statement in conjunction with emphasising on their 'less democratic' conditions compared to the Turkish side. This appears to be a way to neutralise this positive aspect of Iraqi Kurdistan in his comparison with the Turkish side. He also talks about an important aspect – democracy. Zap perceives Iraqi Kurdistan as a less democratic place in terms of the democratic rights.

This extract shows how Zap imagines Iraqi Kurdistan in relation to the Turkish side. He perceives the Iraqi Kurdish society as tribal, the political regime primitive, and the region wealthier but less democratic, which shows the socio-

Kurds in Turkey

spatial differentiations through his eyes. In his account there is a clear difference between two sides.

Another image of Iraqi Kurdistan that comes to the fore is about the political movements. Serhat, a 56 year-old shop owner and a member of BDP [the Kurdish political party of the time] from Semdinli, states a huge difference in the Kurdish political movements between both sides.

Serhat: Sure. It creates a difference, for example, in women rights, in human rights and citizenship rights. There is a more egalitarian struggle on this side, whereas the struggle in the south [Iraqi Kurdistan] depends on the tribes' power. This even creates discrimination in the justice system there. For example, if someone from a powerful tribe kills someone else, he may even get away with that with a little cost.

Serhat evaluates the Kurdish political movements on both sides of the border. He describes the Kurdish political movement in Turkey as an egalitarian struggle that also focuses on the women rights, human rights in general and citizenship rights. He claims that the political movements on the Iraqi side are under the influence of the tribes. He establishes a 'them/us' divide through the difference in the political movements on both sides.

As observed from the last two participants, Iraqi Kurdistan is often considered less modern when it is compared with the Turkish side. Iraqi Kurdistan is commonly believed to be more traditional, conservative and tribal. A sense of superiority can also be observed in the above two quotations. Turkey and Kurdish political movements in Turkey are considered more modern and egalitarian, compared to Iraqi Kurdistan.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the participants were asked where they would prefer to move to if they had to leave their current cities. The questions were directed with various options, such as a city from the region versus a city from Iraqi Kurdistan. The reason for posing these questions was to understand their perception of Iraqi Kurdistan.

The results showed that the majority of the participants preferred to move to any of the other cities in the region, other than cities in Iraqi Kurdistan. Berdan's answer can be a good illustration of these answers.

Berdan: Probably I should go to see the other side [of the border] first. But, I was born and raised on this side, so this side is more attractive to me. This's our land.

The most common reason given by the participants was the feeling of belonging to the Turkish side. In many cases, the participants expressed their attachments particularly to the region. In some cases, the participants also considered themselves partly Turkish. Some participants stated that they preferred to stay and obtain their identity-related rights in Turkey. Some participants just believed that the Turkish side has a more promising future. There is often a clear 'us' and 'them' divide in the participants' answers. There is often a more developed sense of belonging to the Turkish side. Iraqi Kurdish region, in these answers, appears not as 'us' but 'the other us'. All these different ways of expressing senses of belonging to the Turkish side also shows how the border is being internalised and how the socio-spatial differences between both sides are being created and developed.

There were also few participants who preferred to move to Iraqi Kurdistan rather than any other city on the Turkish side. There are often two main reasons for these decisions: economic opportunity in Iraqi Kurdistan and freedom to Kurdish identity. Evdal's answer is a good example.

Evdal: They have two things better than us: economy and freedom. Economic conditions wouldn't make you too sad compared to freedom. But, you cannot live without freedom and peace. I mean my peace and my freedom are more important than money...So, in today's circumstances I would prefer the Iraqi side...but, if I have this freedom here too, I will choose this side.

The findings showed that the sense of belonging to the Turkish side is common even to those who preferred to move to the Iraqi side of the border. Iraqi Kurdistan offers what they have been demanding on the Turkish side of the border, yet the feeling of belonging to the region seems stronger and more developed in each case. Iraqi Kurdistan, for these participants, is still a place where they can practice their identities. In the participants' answers Iraqi Kurdistan does not appear to be 'other', nor does the Iraqi Kurds; however, the south has become 'the other Kurdistan' and Iraqi Kurds are 'the other Kurds'.

Conclusion

The final aim in this second part was to explore Turkish Kurds' perception of nation and identity in relation to Iraqi Kurds. Three main themes emerged throughout the investigation of these perceptions: the denial of the border, the symbolic meanings of Iraqi Kurdistan, and the internalisation of the border.

This chapter has, firstly, explored how the border is perceived by Turkish Kurds. The results showed that the border is, first and foremost, regarded as a line that is not supposed to be where it is right now. The border is often described as 'fake', 'artificial' and 'unnatural'. The statements about the inauthenticity of the border are based on two main perceptions: the territorial continuity and the continuity of the community across the border. The perception of the territorial continuity is about considering two border regions as part of Kurdistan. The perception of the continuity of the community is about defining both sides primarily as Kurdish. Hence, the border does not divide two different territories; neither does it divide two different communities. The arguments about the 'denied' border are, thus, followed by foregrounding these two aspects of sameness over the line. Yet, it is important to note that these statements about the artificiality of the border only appeared in the initial conversations about the border and, hence, they only tell one part of the story.

The data showed that Turkish Kurds also attribute a variety of meaning to the Iraqi Kurdish region, which have important functions in Turkish Kurds' identity constructions. Material dimensions of a territory are often endowed with imaginative values which stem from a range of social, cultural and political meanings (Bachelard, 1994). These given meanings are sometimes more important than material space itself. The meanings attributed to the Iraqi Kurdistan region illustrate the importance and functions of Iraqi Kurdistan in Turkish Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity constructions. First of all, Iraqi Kurds have what Turkish Kurds have been striving for: recognition. The participants shared stories about their joy and excitement of seeing Kurdistan, the Kurdish flag, Kurdish policemen, Kurdish signposts, and anything that has a national symbol. These stories indicated the emotional connections with the Iraqi side of the border. The existence of the Kurdish government on the Iraqi side is also considered a back door that Turkish Kurds can rely on. The Kurdish

government on the Iraqi side appeared as a symbol that underpins the Turkish Kurds' existence on the north side of the border. It is also a place where Kurdish identity can be freely expressed. The existence of Kurdish autonomy also symbolises the achievement to a psychological threshold: building a Kurdish state. It consolidates the Turkish Kurds' existence as a nation. Iraqi Kurdistan is also a place where the Kurdish language is freely spoken at the official level. It is the Kurdish language that first and foremost creates emotional closeness to the Iraqi side. It stimulates Turkish Kurds' feelings and creates sentimental connections. Iraqi Kurdistan is a place where Kurdish identity is recognised and respected at state level.

The final section analysed the bordering process by seeking the image of Iraqi Kurdistan in Turkish Kurds' narratives. It has been argued that a border is also the '*differentiator of socially constructed mindscapes and meanings*' (Van Houtum, 2005, p. 673). The first notable pattern in the data related to the feeling that the border stimulates. The border, regardless of describing it as fake, artificial or unnatural, generates the feeling of being 'somewhere else' to the crosser. The border alters the perceptions of topographical proximity. The findings also showed that there is often a disappointment in the participants' narratives about their visit to Iraqi Kurdistan. The results indicated that the main reason is the 'lack' of the same nationalist sentiments on the Iraqi side of the border. The participants' approaches to the nationalist symbols and the nationalist rituals suggested that Turkish Kurds' perception of nation is also under the influence of Turkish nationalism. It is later argued that Iraqi Kurdistan is often regarded as tribal, traditional and less educated, compared to the more modern, educated and egalitarian image of the Turkish side. Such statements about Iraqi Kurdistan suggested that there is a sense of superiority over Iraqi Kurds. Finally, the participants' choices of the preferred city to live suggested that although Iraqi Kurdistan is often regarded as a place where Kurdish identity can be freely expressed and as a place with greater economic opportunities, there are much stronger feelings of belonging and attachment to the Turkish side, particularly to the region. These findings show how the differences between the two sides are being foregrounded and the border is being internalised.

PART 3

THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE BORDER: KURDS IN IRAQ

Introduction

This third part of this thesis explores Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity from three dimensions: regional, state and cross-border, and is divided into three chapters, each one addressing one of these dimensions. Each chapter presents and discusses the results of the interview analysis, using verbatim quotes to illustrate the findings, and provides an account of those who were interviewed, including their characteristics and the context of the interview.

Chapter 7: The Region: Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Introduction

This chapter aims to explore how Iraqi Kurds' perceive their nation and narratively construct their identity in relation to the Iraqi Kurdistan region. The chapter consists of two sections. The first analyses the participants' choices of words in their narratives in order to explore Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of both sides of the border and the Iraqi state. The participants' choices of words provide valuable information about their perception of nation and identity. The second section focuses on the ways in which Iraqi Kurds' narrate their nation and identity. It searches the key narratives through which Iraqi Kurds construct their identity. It analyses the participants' stories about past events. It also shows the most salient features regarding the perception of Kurdish identity in the Iraqi Kurds' narratives.

7.1 The Words

The search for Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity starts with analysing the participants' word choices for the Kurdish region in Iraq, the rest of Iraq, the Turkish side of the border and the communities who live in these territories.

As argued in the section 4.1, naming places is about producing territories; and naming communities is about constructing identities. The word choice for a territory or a community suggests a type of identity, meaning and value due to established associations. Word choices for a specific territory and community thus provide clues as to the users' perceptions of that territory and society. As argued in the literature review, nationalism, for its construction and perpetuity, requires a perception of a defined territory and a certain level of sameness among the people in this territory (Gellner, 2006). Thus, naming is a powerful tool for nationalist ideologies to construct and perpetuate a nation and identity. Every nationalist movement creates its own specific vocabulary which provides clues to its imagined geography and community (Anderson, 1991, Said, 1979). Nationalist vocabularies are often produced by nationalist elites and ruling groups through institutions, such as schools, the media, and in everyday mundane face-to-face contexts (Hall, 1992). To analyse such word choices facilitates the exploration of the users' perceptions of nation, identity and territory.

This section analyses Iraqi Kurds' word choices for the Iraqi Kurdish region, the rest of Iraq and the Turkish side of the border in terms of both territory and community. It will show which words are being used, what meanings these words carry and what functions they have, in order to explore Iraqi Kurds' perception of nation and identity.

The findings showed that the most common word to define the Iraqi Kurdistan region was 'Kurdistan'. In contrast to the Turkish side, the use of 'Iraqi Kurdistan', 'Southern Kurdistan' or 'Bashur' [means 'the south', it is the abbreviation for 'Southern Kurdistan'] was very rarely encountered. Naming the region as 'Iraqi Kurdistan' foregrounds the region's connections and attachments to the rest of Iraq. Naming the region 'Southern Kurdistan' or just 'Bashur' is about emphasising the region's connections with the neighbouring

Kurds in Iraq

Kurdish regions. The word choice 'Kurdistan' for the Iraqi Kurdish region suggests that there is a perception of the region as a separate entity from both the rest of Iraq and also from the neighbouring Kurdish regions. Although the findings initially indicate such a perception, the data showed that the perception of the Iraqi Kurdish region is multi-layered. This will be illustrated with some quotations from the interviews.

The first noticeable detail was that the participants often used the word 'Kurdistan' to refer to the Iraqi Kurdish region with a certain assumption that everyone knows to which region they are referring. This assumption sometimes caused some ambiguity in the interviews, as was the case in the interview with Zana, a 57 year-old man who works in a governmental institution in Duhok. In the following extract, he was talking about 'the suffering past' of the Kurdish people.

Zana: Kurds suffered a lot in the past, we suffered a lot, now everyone must work hard to build a state, and Kurdistan must be a state.

B: Sorry, where exactly do you refer to when you say 'Kurdistan'?

Zana: I mean here, I'm talking about Kurds here in these borders, in this Kurdistan region.

In this extract, by Kurdistan Zana clearly refers to the Kurdistan region of Iraq. The reason for this uncertainty was the context. Zana was talking about past coercions and the necessity of building a Kurdish state without specifying where. Kurdistan, in his perception, appears to be only the Kurdish region of Iraq. Yet it does not mean that he does not recognise the existence of Kurdish society in Turkey or elsewhere. He seemed rather knowledgeable about the Kurds on the north side of the border. He always referred them as 'Kurds in Turkey' or 'Turkish Kurds'.

It was interesting to note that although the participants demonstrated their knowledge about the Kurdish society on the Turkish side of the border, the word Kurdistan was often used just for the Iraqi side of the border. This was the case in the interview with Bawer, a 26 year-old waiter from Duhok.

B: If you had to leave this city and had two options: Silemani and Van, which one would you choose?

Bawer: Silemani. For me, everywhere in Kurdistan is better and more beautiful...

After being presented with several different options between cities on the north side of the border and cities on the south side, Bawer clarified that he would always choose any city in 'Kurdistan'. The interesting detail in this last option between 'Van' and 'Silemani' is that Bawer earlier stated that 'it is easier for me to understand Kurdish that is spoken in Van rather than Kurdish in Silemani'. This means that Bawer is aware of the Kurdish society in Van and also finds them linguistically closer to himself, yet by Kurdistan he only refers to the Iraqi side of the border.

The findings also showed that the Turkish side of the border is often referred to as 'Turkey' in the interviews with Iraqi Kurds. The following extract demonstrates the most common way to name the Turkish side of the border in the participants' statements. Semele, a 34 years old estate agent from a small town close to Duhok, states this:

B: Have you been to the north side of the border?

Semele: Turkey? Yes I have. I've been to Istanbul many times, also Mersin, Alanya and Van.

This was the typical way to name the Turkish side of the border in the interviews. While the Iraqi side of the border is only referred to as 'Kurdistan', the area beyond the border is often recognised as 'Turkey'.

Semele has close relatives on the Turkish side of the border and crosses the border very often. He is, thus, aware of the Kurdish community on the other side of the border. However, the other side of the border is first and foremost Turkey for him. While he uses the word 'Kurdistan' for the Kurdish region in Iraq, he does not use the same word for the Kurdish populated area in Turkey. In the following extract I asked about Semele's relatives who live on the Turkish side of the border.

Semele: Frankly speaking their lives are not that good over there. For example we have many jobs in Kurdistan, but those in Turkey don't have jobs...

Kurds in Iraq

This extract clearly demonstrates how Semele names both sides of the border. The south side of the border is Kurdistan and the north side is Turkey. This way of naming the two sides clearly suggests that there is a perception of Kurdistan that ends with this border. This was the most common way of naming both sides in the interviews.

There were also some participants who were aware of alternative words to name both sides of the border. Seyda, a 33 year-old male participant, demonstrates how the words 'Bakur e Kurdistan' [the northern Kurdistan] and 'Bashur e Kurdistan' [Southern Kurdistan] are very new words on the Iraqi side of the border.

Seyda: I have responsibilities for Kurdistan – the Turkish side is called 'Bakur', right? And this side is 'Bashur', right?

B: Yes.

Seyda: And there are also 'Rojhilat' [the East] for the Iranian side and 'Rojava' [the West] for the Syrian part. So our side is called 'Bashur'. I have responsibilities for Bashur...

Seyda pauses in the middle of his sentence, when he realises that he needs to clarify to which areas he is referring. He was initially about to use the word 'Kurdistan' to refer to the Kurdish region of Iraq. However, he wanted to avoid a possible ambiguity. This extract shows that he is aware of the alternative words that are being used to define the Iraqi Kurdish region. The words 'Bashur' and 'Bakur' [meaning 'the north', the abbreviation for Northern Kurdistan] simply indicate the connections between both sides of the border. However, these words also seem not to be completely internalised on the Iraqi side. There were only a few other participants who used the words 'Bashur' and 'Bakur'.

There were also few cases in which participants referred to the north side of the border as Kurdistan too. Ferman is a 49 year-old male participant from a small town close to the border. He was asked to share his expectations for the future.

B: So, how do you predict the future of Kurdistan?

Ferman: Kurdistan will be a great place if these four parts unite in the future.

Kurdistan is a beautiful place. Just this part of Kurdistan alone is not good enough, but if the four parts unite, everything will then be great.

By four parts Ferman refers to the Kurdish regions of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. Kurdistan in this extract is described as a place divided into four parts. Ferman's dream for a greater Kurdistan consists of the unification of these four parts. When Ferman states '*Just this part of Kurdistan alone is not good enough*', he refers to the constitutional recognition of autonomy for Iraqi Kurdistan. In other words Iraqi Kurdistan is recognised and established as an autonomous region on the Iraqi side. What is not good enough, for Ferman, is the lack of self-governance in the other three parts of Kurdistan.

An important detail in this extract is the context in which the word 'Kurdistan' is used for the Turkish side of the border. As stated, throughout the interviews the north side of the border is mostly referred to as Turkey and the south side of the border as Kurdistan. Yet, the findings showed that there is a context in which both sides of the border are being called 'Kurdistan'. It is the context of 'the greater Kurdistan'. It is the context in which the Turkish side of the border is also being called 'Kurdistan'. The conversations about 'the greater Kurdistan' often occurred as part of the participants' expectations for the future. This can be illustrated with Zana, a 57 year-old public servant, who states:

Zana: Kurds in Turkey also suffered a lot, but now their situation is also getting better. Hopefully they'll build their Kurdistan too...

Zana, throughout the interview, used only the word 'Turkey' to refer to the Turkish side of the border. As can be observed also in this extract, he preferred to use the phrase 'Kurds in Turkey' to refer to Turkish Kurds. It is important to note that Zana wishes that Turkish Kurds would build their 'Kurdistan' too. Zana's statement suggests that Kurdistan does not refer exclusively to a place where Kurdish people live or where the Kurdish language is spoken or to a place that was historically inhabited by Kurds, but to a territory ruled by Kurds.

This extract demonstrates how the perception of Kurdistan is associated with territoriality. This was a very common tendency in the data. Such statements

Kurds in Iraq

suggest that it is often territoriality, as governmental control over a territory, and recognition that determine whether a Kurdish populated area is called Kurdistan. Whilst Kurdistan is an officially recognised autonomous region of Iraq that is being governed by the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), there is no defined administrative region for Kurds in Turkey, nor is there any separate Kurdish governmental authority over the Kurdish populated area in Turkey. The data suggests that it is not ethnicity, language or history, but recognition and territoriality that primarily determine whether either side of the border is called Kurdistan. The following section on the participants' narratives of past events will further analyse this association between 'territoriality' and Kurdistan.

Although the naming of the border regions was related primarily to territoriality and recognition, naming the communities on both sides was mostly immune from such factors. The participants often referred to the border community on the north side as 'Kurds', 'Turkish Kurds' or 'Kurds in Turkey'. There was not a single participant who referred to the people on the Turkish side as Turkish.

Miziri, a 41 year-old merchant from a small town close to Zakho, states that both sides of the border spoke the same language and shared the same culture. When I asked Miziri if he could live on the Turkish side of the border, his answer was a clear 'no'. This is how the conversation unfolded:

B: Why? You just said they [Turkish Kurds] also speak the same language and have the same traditions as here.

Miziri: When it comes to Kurdishness, we are all brothers and sisters. They are our brothers and sisters. We are all Kurds...

As this extract demonstrates, although the Turkish side of the border is not often called Kurdistan, the people who live on the Turkish side of the border are considered Kurdish.

Miziri's attitude towards the community on the Turkish side clearly seems inclusive. Miziri considers Turkish Kurds to be his siblings. Although the word choice for the border region on the Turkish side does not imply any territorial connections between the two sides, when it comes to the communities on both sides, the connections are more clearly established.

Finally, the word choices for the rest of Iraq and Iraqis indicate an interesting approach. When the conversations were about relations with the central government and the community in the rest of the country, the word choices show a clear detachment from the rest of the country. This can be observed in the following extract from the interview with Arin, a 19 year-old undergraduate student from Duhok.

Arin: ...Many people had problems in Iraq and they took refuge in Kurdistan. There was war in Iraq and they ran away to find shelter and came to Kurdistan.

It is interesting to notice that Arin talks about Iraq and Kurdistan as two completely separate states. He uses the word 'Iraq' to refer to the rest of the country. This was the most common way to refer to the rest of the country. In this extract, Kurdistan is not a region that belongs to Iraq. Iraq is the country on which Kurdistan was dependent in the past. Arin clearly perceives Kurdistan as a separate entity from Iraq. There was hardly any case in which a participant defined the region in relation to the rest of Iraq or expressed any sort of connection with the rest of the country. Such word choices suggest a clear disconnection between Kurdistan and the rest of Iraq.

Similar disconnectedness was also observed when it came to the community in the rest of the country. There was hardly any word used that could imply any connection with the rest of the community. The participants mostly tended to foreground the differences and disconnections with the rest of Iraq, such as Semele, a 34 year-old estate agent from Duhok, who talked about the relations with the rest of the community in Iraq:

Semele: To be honest we don't have good relations. Especially nowadays there are more sensitivities. We don't really like each other. They say 'you're Kurds' and we say 'you're Arabs'...

Semele's statement illustrates the general tendency found throughout the data. In the participants' narratives, the rest of the Iraqi population are often 'Arabs' and 'we' are 'Kurds'. The division between the region and the rest of the country is much clearer on the Iraqi side of the border than on the Turkish side. There was no mention of an Iraqi identity in the transcripts, which could

Kurds in Iraq

indicate a connection with the rest of Iraq. The word choices suggest that there is no sense of togetherness with the rest of Iraq.

The important detail in this extract is that the differentiation between Kurdistan and the rest of Iraq is based primarily on the ethnic differences. This will be demonstrated and discussed further in the next chapter.

As illustrated, the word choices on the Iraqi side of the border are not as complicated as on the Turkish side of the border. Nonetheless, Iraqi Kurds' word choices are still very important and valuable in the search for the Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity.

As demonstrated, the most commonly used word for the Iraqi Kurdish region is Kurdistan, for the Turkish side of the border is Turkey, and for the rest of the country is Iraq. Iraqi Kurds recognise the people on the Turkish side of the border as Kurdish, and the remainder of the Iraqi population is considered first and foremost as Arab.

The important questions relate to what these word choices mean and how they function in Iraqi Kurds' identity constructions. First of all, these words suggest that the Iraqi Kurdish region is perceived as an independent entity. As opposed to Turkish Kurds, Iraqi Kurds' word choices do not indicate any perception of any territorial connections between both sides of the border, nor do they indicate any territorial connectedness with the rest of Iraq. It is also argued that the context in which the word 'Turkey' is replaced with the word 'Kurdistan' suggests that the word Kurdistan is closely associated with recognition and territoriality, as governmental control over an area. The participants' word choices for the rest of the country demonstrate a lack of any perception of togetherness with the rest of Iraq. The following section will explore how and why such perceptions of Kurdish identity and Kurdistan are constructed, through an analysis of the participants' stories regarding past events.

7.2 The Past

This second section explores both the key narratives through which Iraqi Kurds construct their identities and the meanings attributed to Kurdish identity by Iraqi Kurds.

As stated in the literature review, the past plays a crucial role in defining a nation and territory (Hobsbawm, 1992b). The participants' stories about the region's history are filled with clues as to their perceptions of their nation and identity. They constantly interpret past events, draw on background contexts, which are mostly influenced by the socio-political, economic and cultural meta-contexts, and sort them into the ongoing stories of 'us' and 'them' (Giddens, 1991). Analysing these stories about the region's past will, therefore, provide valuable insights into the participants' sense of belonging, attachment and self-understanding.

The participants' stories about past events might understandably be selective. Some events may be inflated and others omitted. Some may even have fictive dimensions. Yet, as in the section 4.2, the aim is not to seek the truth but to explore the contents of these ongoing stories about the region's past, what these stories mean, and to analyse their function in Iraqi Kurds' identity constructions. Particular attention will, therefore, be paid to the ways in which Iraqi Kurds construct 'in-groups' and 'out-groups' in these stories. This section has three stages: what these stories are, what they mean, and how they function in Iraqi Kurds' identity constructions.

The initial stage is to draw a picture of the region's past as seen through the eyes of the participants, from their memories. The findings showed that although there are many historic moments in the region's past, such as the uprising in 1991, the turning point that changes the content of all of these stories about the region's past is the constitutional recognition of the region as autonomous Kurdistan in 2005. The contents of the stories before the constitutional recognition can be classified into three groups: (1) physical coercion and oppression that included displacements, discrimination, war and genocide, (2) poverty and scarcity, and finally (3) struggles for liberation. The contents of past events change significantly with the recognition of Kurdish autonomy in the region. Stories relating to post-autonomy periods are more about freedom, a sense of security, development and wealth. It is argued that Iraqi Kurds construct Kurdish identity through stories of the 'enslaved' past and the struggle for liberation. The word 'freedom' is at the core of all these stories about the region's past. It will also be argued that these stories from

Kurds in Iraq

periods before and after freedom foreground the importance of territoriality in Kurdish identity in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The data showed that the most dominant feature of the overarching contexts in all of these stories about past events is 'freedom'. The past is simply divided into two in the participants' narratives: before and after the liberation of Kurdistan. The participants' stories were mostly about either what freedom brought to the region or how the region was during the absence of this freedom.

Below, Ferman, a 49 year-old male participant from a border town, describes the changes that Kurdish autonomy brought to the region.

Ferman: Everything has changed in Kurdistan. Everything has become beautiful. Before, we had nothing. We had nothing during Saddam. We didn't even have roads, not even these streets. There was no freedom.

This extract shows a simple but very common way of describing the region's past. The most significant point in the participants' narratives about the region's past is always the establishment of Kurdistan. The stories about the time before the autonomy are always about scarcity.

Ferman paints a clear picture of the region's past. Ferman describes it very simply: 'before, we had nothing'. The turning point in this picture is the establishment of Kurdistan. It is the point when everything started to change for the better. In these stories, everything becomes better with freedom.

Miziri, a 41 year-old trader from Zakho, provides more details about the region's past. I asked him about life before the establishment of Kurdistan.

Miziri: Like, if you went to a market, a soldier might just kick you out without any reason. Being Kurdish was enough reason. They never liked Kurds. If you were Kurdish, you would most probably have such problems. They never liked Kurdish cities, nor did they like Peshmerga [Kurdish Soldiers]. They would call Peshmerga 'traitors'. They considered us as enemies. For example, if you were stopped at a traffic checkpoint, they would ask many questions, check all your documents, your ID's. If you were a Kurd, you would suffer every

single time. It was a really difficult time.

This extract presents Miziri's memories about life in the region before autonomy. Miziri remembers the arbitrary physical abuse perpetrated against Kurds in their everyday lives. He claims that a Kurdish person would suffer from arbitrary coercion at any time and place before the establishment of Kurdistan. In his account, Kurds were discriminated against and treated as enemies due to their identity. Miziri describes the past as the time when Kurdish identity was marginalised.

This picture of the region's past presents two sides: Kurds and the Iraqi state. Miziri draws a bold line between these two sides. On his side, there is no sense of belonging to the state, and the Iraqi state, in this extract, does not have any inclusive attitudes towards its Kurdish citizens either. This account suggests that Kurds were disconnected from the rest of the state. The state would use any means to make Iraqi Kurds' lives miserable.

These strong accusations against the state dominated the stories about the region's past. In the following extract, Miziri provides further details about what Kurds have been through in the region.

Miziri: First of all, on this side of Kurdistan, we have seen many disasters and misery. There was too much pain. We have been through wars and even chemical attacks. You know about the genocide in Halapja. We have reached this level; we have reached this freedom after all these things.

The participants often associated the past with pain and blood. An important detail in these memories is that all these bloody conflicts and wars were being related to the lack of freedom. Iraqi Kurds' memories suggest that so much blood was shed due to the lack of a Kurdish government in the region.

Before Miziri replied to the question, he suggested learning from the past when there was no freedom. In his memories, the periods during which the Kurds did not rule the territory were full of blood and misery. Throughout the fieldwork the participants often repeated that Iraqi Kurds had been through many wars, bloody conflicts and even chemical attacks until the establishment of Kurdish autonomy.

Kurds in Iraq

There were two important dates in the participants' stories that changed the contents of all of these stories about the past. As explained in the literature review, the uprising in 1991 was the first important event that brought Kurdish sovereignty to the region. The Kurdish regional government was established in 1992, in the aftermath of the uprising. Yet the major changes in the region started with the recognition of Kurdish autonomy in 2005, following the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Below, Dara, a 36 year-old agricultural engineer from Duhok, shares his memories about these two important dates.

Dara: You know, everything was so difficult when we got our freedom [in 1991]. There were many problems when we were trying to build a state, a new system. Everything was so slow. There was no job, no money, no agriculture, no business, nothing. But since around 2003-5, everything is getting better. Since then we've been developing, there is money now; there is agriculture, business and everything.

Dara describes two historical points in the region's past. The initial years of Kurdish sovereignty did not bring wealth to the region. As stated in the literature review, although in the aftermath of the 1991 uprising the state forces were pushed out of the region allowing Iraqi Kurdistan to function de facto independently, the region was suffering from both the UN imposed embargo on Iraq and the Iraqi state's embargo on the region. Dara's memories of scarcity in the region coincide with this period.

Dara describes 2005 as the turning point in the region's history. It was the year in which the region started to develop. Recognition of autonomy and the Kurdish regional government turned a page in the region's history. The stories about the region's past after recognition are mostly about increasing development and wealth. An important underlying message in all these stories is that self-governance is the source of this development and wealth.

Below, Sewer, a 42 year old businessman from Duhok, describes the changes he observed in the region.

Sewer: Above all our economic situation has changed. Firstly our economy has become better. Our cities have developed and expanded. Our cities have become big and lively cities. People have expanded their horizons. They started to travel to see the rest of the world. The

literacy rate has increased. Not just the quantity of the schools but also the quality of the education system has increased too. Now the education system is also liberated. People can now read and write in Kurdish. In our time most of our classes were in Arabic, but now everyone reads in Kurdish.

Sewer draws a comprehensive picture of the developments in the region since the recognition of Kurdistan. First of all, the region has become wealthier. The cities are growing and the community reconnected with the rest of the world. They started to receive better education; the literacy rate is increasing. Finally, Kurdish becomes the main language of instruction. Sewer describes this period as a historical moment for the region. The establishment of Kurdistan brought freedom, development and wealth.

Sewer's account was not an exception. Each participant mentioned some aspect of the changes that the establishment of Kurdistan brought to the region.

Another participant, Arin, a 19 year-old undergraduate student from Duhok, did not have many memories of the time before autonomy, yet it was interesting to observe the stories about the region's past that circulated around him and shaped his knowledge about the earlier years of the region.

Arin: Before, life was so difficult here. My dad always says that there was too much coercion and oppression. We had too many difficulties, but thankfully everything is over now. There were always some conflicts, but now we have much fewer problems. Kurdistan is liberated now. People are free. Before, no one could stay outside after 9pm. Now, we can stay outside until 1am, 2am or if we want we can stay out until sunrise. No one would stop and cause a problem; there wouldn't be any terrorist. It is really safe now.

Arin was just 11 years old when Kurdish autonomy was constitutionally recognised. Yet he shares the stories he was told by the people around him. He was told that the region was suffering from state coercion and oppression. Arin imagines the time before the recognition as the time when the region was in captivity. Kurdistan is now liberated. The establishment of Kurdistan brought freedom and safety to their lives.

Kurds in Iraq

It is important to remind ourselves again that the interviews were conducted during a peaceful period in the region. As widely explained in the literature review, the Iraqi Kurdish region had been peaceful and growing rapidly since the establishment of Kurdish autonomy in 2005. This peaceful period ended with the advance of the Islamic State (IS) towards Iraq in June 2014. The interview with Arin was conducted before the resurgence of conflict in the region. It is, therefore, important to take into account the context. Arin might not have made similar optimistic statements if he had been interviewed after the resurgence of the conflicts.

The extract above shows the stories circulating in society about how the region has been changing for the better since the recognition of Kurdish autonomy. These are stories about how autonomy has changed every aspect of Iraqi Kurds' lives.

All of these stories have two significant meanings for Iraqi Kurds. First of all, these stories suggest that Iraqi Kurds suffered from physical coercion, oppression, discrimination, poverty and scarcity due to their identity, because they were not Arabs but Kurds. The state, in these stories, viewed Iraqi Kurds as the enemy and treated them unjustly. Iraqi Kurds were forced to accept and obey the state's authority.

Secondly, these stories also suggest that Iraqi Kurds suffered from these adverse conditions because they were not ruling the territory they lived in. Compared to the stories on the Turkish side of the border, there were no similar stories about denial of Kurdish identity, forbidding the Kurdish language or restricting any other cultural rights, but there were stories about the Iraqi state's oppression over the Kurdish region. These stories indicate that the turning point in the region's history is the establishment of Kurdistan. The time before autonomy is equated to 'captivity'. Kurdish rule in the Kurdish region, in these stories, brought development, growth and wealth.

There are also two main functions of these stories in Iraqi Kurds' identity constructions. These stories, firstly, place Kurdishness above all other aspects of Iraqi Kurds' identities. It is because Iraqi Kurds were victims in these stories due to their Kurdish identity. These are the stories through which Kurdish identity is being constructed on the Iraqi side of the border. Kurdish identity is

being built on the memories of state-led physical coercion, oppression and poverty.

The other significant function of these stories is that they place 'territoriality' at the core of Kurdish identity on the Iraqi side of the border. These stories suggest that Iraqi Kurds must obtain political control over their region. It is, first and foremost, the territory that underlies Kurdish identity in Iraqi Kurdistan. This has a significant effect on Iraqi Kurds' future expectations for the Iraqi Kurdish region. Iraqi Kurds' primary demand and expectation is to obtain independence. This will be further analysed and demonstrated in the next chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter explored Iraqi Kurds perceptions of nation and identity in relation to the Iraqi Kurdish region. There were three main objectives: to explore how Iraqi Kurds perceive the region, to explore the key narratives through which Iraqi Kurds' construct their identity, and finally to explore what Kurdishness means to Iraqi Kurds and which feature of Kurdish identity has become more salient.

The literature showed that as opposed to Turkish Kurds, Iraqi Kurds have had a very different socio-political environment within which to practice and develop their identity in Iraq. When Iraq was built, the right of Kurds' self-determination was recognised (Yildiz, 2007, p. 10). The 1921 Iraqi constitution recognised two ethnic groups, Arabs and Kurds, and the Kurdish language enjoyed equal status with Arabic. Iraqi Kurds started to demand their right of self-determination in the 1930s and 1940s (McDowall, 2004, p. 288). After the 1958 revolution, the new republic recognised Kurds and Arabs as partners, and their national rights in the constitution (McDowall, 2004, p. 302). As opposed to Turkish Kurds, Iraqi Kurds' existence was not denied. Yet, Iraqi Kurds have suffered from state-led oppression, poverty, numerous bloody conflicts, wars and even chemical attacks.

The initial aim in this chapter was to explore how Iraqi Kurds perceive Iraqi Kurdistan and themselves in these circumstances. The results showed that the Iraqi Kurdish region is perceived primarily as an independent entity from both

the Iraqi state and the Kurdish inhabited area in Turkey. In contrast to Turkish Kurds, Iraqi Kurds' word choices did not indicate any territorial connections between the two border regions, nor did they imply any territorial connectedness with the Iraqi state. Iraqi Kurds prefer to name the region 'Kurdistan', rather than 'Iraqi Kurdistan' or 'South Kurdistan'. The perception of 'Kurdistan' often ends at the border in Iraqi Kurds' narratives. Yet, there is also a context in which the word choice for the Turkish side of the border is replaced with the word 'Kurdistan': the context of 'greater Kurdistan'. The findings suggest that it is often territoriality and recognition that determines whether a Kurdish populated area is called Kurdistan in Iraqi Kurds' narratives.

The chapter also analysed Iraqi Kurds' narratives about past events to explore the key narratives through which Iraqi Kurds construct Kurdish identity. The results showed that the turning point in the history of Iraqi Kurdistan is the recognition of Kurdish autonomy in Iraq. Iraqi Kurds commonly share stories about life in the region under a lack of Kurdish governance, and how everything has changed for the better since recognition. Iraqi Kurds view themselves as the victims in the stories about state-led past oppression, conflict, poverty and war. Kurdish identity is being built upon these stories about historical victimhood. This chapter argued that there are two key functions of these stories: (1) they bring Kurdishness to the core of Iraqi Kurds' identity, suggest that Iraqi Kurds suffered due to their Kurdish identity, and put forward the need to protect Kurdish identity; and (2) they highlight the importance of 'territoriality' at the core of Kurdish identity. These stories suggest that all the pain and suffering were the result of the absence of self-determination, which also impact Iraqi Kurds' demands and future expectations. As explored in greater detail in the following chapters, Iraqi Kurds' main demand is the independence of Kurdistan.

Chapter 8: The Rest of the State: Iraq

Introduction

This chapter explores Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity in relation to the Iraqi state. It consists of two sections. The first analyses the perception of the Iraqi state and the community outside of the Iraqi Kurdish region. It focuses on Iraqi Kurds' relations and connections with the rest of the Iraqi state. The second section explores how Iraqi Kurds position Kurdish identity in the context of the Iraqi state, through analysing their sense of attachment and belonging to the state.

8.1 Perceptions of Iraq

This section explores Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of the Iraqi state and the community outside of the Iraqi Kurdish region, through searching Iraqi Kurds' relations and connections with the state and the rest of the Iraqi population.

The analysis indicates four main findings that reflect the participants' perceptions of Iraq. First of all, there is a lack of an inclusive Iraqi national identity. Secondly, in Iraqi Kurds' eyes, the state and other Iraqis bear responsibility for the pain and suffering endured by Iraqi Kurds since the establishment of Iraq. Thirdly, it is widely believed that the state and other Iraqis have not yet completely accepted Kurdish autonomy and its economic progress and, thus, are still hostile to the region. Finally, there is a clear lack of trust towards both the state and the rest of the Iraqi population. This section demonstrates and further explains these four findings.

The initial salient point in the data is the lack of an inclusive Iraqi identity. The community outside of the region is, first and foremost, referred to as Arab and not Iraqi. The Iraqi state is also predominantly perceived to be an Arabic state, rather than a state for all Iraqis. Below, Miziri, a 41-year old trader from Zakho, talks about their relations with the rest of Iraq.

Miziri: We have no relation with them. They are all Arabs and the state is theirs and they don't like us at all.

Kurds in Iraq

Miziri's statements thematically present Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of the state and the rest of the community. There is no sense of belonging to the state, nor is there any social connection with other Iraqi citizens in these perceptions. The 'us' and 'them' divide is boldly drawn.

There were very few cases in which a participant defined people from inside or outside of the region as Iraqi, instead identifying them as either Arab or Kurd. The data showed that there was no indication of either territorial or social connections between the region and the rest of the Iraqi state. The only thing that connects Iraqi Kurds to the Iraqi state is their legal status. For Iraqi Kurds, Kurdistan is only officially connected to the Iraqi state.

Below, Sewer, a 42 year-old businessman from Duhok, talks about the region's connections with the rest of the state.

B: How are the relations with the Iraqi state?

Sewer: We have no good relations with them. It has never been good.

B: How about the people?

Sewer: We have no relations, no business with Arabs. Our only connection with them is the governmental one and it is not good at all. They have never given us our rights, our money. Look, since Maliki [the prime minister of Iraq at the time] is in power, he has never given any Kurds' rights. Not just him, from the beginning of Iraq until Maliki, none of the Iraqi leaders did Kurds justice. None of them has given Kurds what they deserved. They all did injustice to Kurds. Maybe there was only sometimes someone among them who did less injustice.

The first interesting point in these statements is that, again, the people in the rest of the region are referred to primarily as Arabs. In this approach, 'Arabs' seems to be 'the other' in the Iraqi Kurds' identity construction in the context of Iraq. The participants tend to draw a clear line between Kurds and Arabs in this context. On the Kurdish side of the line, there are Kurds and the Kurdish regional government, and on the other side there are Arabs and the central government that belongs to 'them'. There are no connections between these two sides, except the official governmental relations that also seem to be

unsteady in these stories. In this equation, there is no inclusive Iraqi national identity or any sense of togetherness, either territorial or social.

After a line is clearly drawn between the region and the rest of Iraq, the next step is often to exclude and to alienate the rest of Iraq. Sewer blames the state for being unjust towards Kurds since the beginning. The state, and thus Arabs, has always attempted to impose its hegemony over the region. In Sewer's account, since the beginning of the state, the Iraqi leaders have always been hostile to Kurds.

In the following extract, Zana, a 57 year-old public servant, also explains the relations with the state.

Zana: Until the establishment of Kurdistan we'd always had brutal leaders. We suffered a lot. We have seen too much cruelty. We were sent into exile. They always coerced us to obey them...

Such arguments were commonly shared throughout the interviews. The state, in these accounts, is responsible for Iraqi Kurds' suffering. There is a clearly observable pattern in the statements about the rest of the state. The initial statements are often about the differences, both territorial and social, between the region and the rest of Iraq. These initial statements were often followed by blaming the state for past pain and suffering. This clearly widens the division between the region and the rest of the country. Zana believes that the state has used all means necessary to attain Kurds' obedience.

Zana perceives the state as an organisation that constantly attempts to dominate the region. The state in this perception is an oppressive apparatus that threatens Kurdish identity and territory. The participants, thus, took a distant stance against the state in their stories. The division between 'we' and 'they' is very clear in these accounts. The state in these stories is 'theirs' (Arabs'). This division is not only at the state level but also at the social level too. The rest the Iraqi community, Arabs, are also on the other side of this division. Such division is being widened through these stories they share in their everyday lives.

Below, Bawer explains their relations with Iraqi Arabs.

Kurds in Iraq

B: Yes I haven't seen any Arab around. Isn't there any Arab here?

Bawer: Believe me Arabs never did any good to us. We can't trust them. Look at Mosul today. Did you see what happened again? Again It's the same issue. If one of us goes there, they throw us out. They don't like us. They don't support us. They don't want us.

There is a very negative image of Arabs in this extract. Arabs were described as a community that has been hostile to Kurds from the past to the present-day. Bawer believes that Arabs have never wanted Kurds in Iraq. He gives a recent piece of news to prove this. The interview took place immediately after the Islamic State's (IS) attack in Mosul and neighbouring villages. The main news disseminated around the region was that the local Arabs supported the IS in the attacks that killed many Kurds, especially in Sinjar; many Kurds were put in captivity and the rest had to leave their homes. Bawer mentions this current news to demonstrate how Arabs have been excluding Kurds in Iraq.

These narratives suggest that the Iraqi state, and Arabs, were behind all the pain and suffering that Iraqi Kurds experienced since the establishment of Iraq.

This perception of the Iraqi state inevitably shapes Iraqi Kurds' expectations from the state and Arabs. Below Adar, a 37 year-old café shop owner from Duhok, explains the relations with the state and the rest of the Iraqi community.

Adar: You know, Arabs still want to see our region as part of their land. They still haven't absorbed Kurdish autonomy. They [Arabs] try to do their best to damage and even destroy our region. That's why these people [Iraqi Kurds] don't really want them [Arabs] here that much.

Earlier in the interview, Adar mentioned the problems between the central government and the region. He claimed that the central government intentionally creates problems. I asked what the state's intention was for him. This extract is from his explanation of the state's ulterior motives behind the current problems.

The state appears as a threat to the Kurdish region in this extract. Adar believes that the state is plotting to regain the region from Iraqi Kurds. He says that the state has not yet completely accepted Kurdish autonomy in the region. Such expectations from the state stem from their past experiences.

All these expectations from the state encourage Iraqi Kurds to develop more protective attitudes against the state and other Iraqis, as there is a common perception that they do not want Kurds to succeed, as Semele, a 34 year-old estate agent from Duhok, states below.

Semele: We don't have good relations with the Iraqi government. They don't want Kurds to grow and develop. They don't like us. If you look at the whole of Iraq, Kurds have been more successful. Kurds can stand on their own feet. They can't take their eyes off us and they don't like us.

This extract suggests that the state and the rest of Iraqis are not only blamed for past pain and suffering, but are accused of still harbouring hostility towards the region and Kurds. Semele believes that the state does not want the region to grow and develop. An important detail in this extract is that there is a belief that the region has been more successful in terms of growth and development, compared to the rest of the country.

The rest of Iraq is a wrecked and unsafe place in the participants' eyes. The lack of security and stability in the rest of the country widens the social and territorial division between the region and the rest of the state. As detailed in the literature review, the Kurdistan region has, relatively speaking, been a safer place compared to the rest of the country since the 2003 invasion of Iraq. This creates a desire for further division. The data also showed that many participants believe that the state intentionally causes further problems for the region. Below Miziri details some of these issues.

Miziri: Since we started to bring up our own oil, since we built our own regional government, made Erbil our capital city, since they see that there is real freedom in our region, Duhok and Silemani are growing and developing; they [the Iraqi state] try to make more problems. The Central Government doesn't send our salaries; doesn't send our petrol shares. To cut it short, they are being hostile to us, to our government. You know what, we don't need them anymore. We can survive without them. We can afford anything we want.

Miziri explains the current issues between the region and the Iraqi state with the region's development and growth. He describes the state as a hostile

Kurds in Iraq

organisation against the Kurdish region. Miziri believes that the Kurdish region is a more developed and safer place compared to the rest of Iraq. He interprets this situation as the ulterior motive behind the current issues created by the Iraqi state.

These statements draw an image of the Iraqi state in the region. An important detail in this extract lies in the last lines. Miziri believes that the region can survive without the rest of Iraq. The central government and the rest of the Iraqi community are seen as a burden for the region. There is a belief among the participants that the region would grow faster without the rest of the country.

The findings suggest that the region's economic developments and growth damage the connections with the rest of the country. Miziri clearly states that the region does not need the rest of Iraq anymore. While these developments broaden these divisions, they further unite the region for the same cause: independence.

These arguments about the state and non-Kurdish Iraqi citizens lead to a conclusion that there is no trust in the state and the rest of the Iraqi population. The data show that there is a belief that the only reason that the state accepts the region's autonomy and does not interfere in the region's governance is the state's current military weakness compared to the Kurdish region. Here is how Zana, a 57 year-old public servant, explains it.

Zana: ...If they [the state] had the power to control our region again, they wouldn't wait even for a second. That's what we learned from our history.

This extract indicates that past experiences are the reason behind this untrustworthy image of the Iraqi state. Zana clearly shows his mistrust of the state. The state constantly poses a threat to the region.

All these perceptions of Iraq have important functions in Iraqi Kurds' identity constructions and their future expectations. The functions of these perceptions and their impact on Iraqi Kurds' identity constructions and their demands will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

8.2 Kurdish Identity in the Iraqi Context

This section explores how Iraqi Kurds' perceive Kurdish identity in the context of Iraq.

This section presents four major findings. Firstly, and most importantly, the findings suggest that Iraqi Kurds do not want to consider themselves Iraqis; neither do they want to consider 'Kurdistan' as part of Iraq. Secondly, it will also be argued that the Iraqi state and Arabic identity are the 'constitutive outside' in the construction of Kurdish identity in Iraq. Thirdly, the insecure and unstable conditions in the rest of Iraq underpin the demands for a complete separation. Finally, the findings show that there is a region-wide consensus on the demand for the independence. These findings will be explained and illustrated with the participants' responses.

First of all, as illustrated in the previous section, there is a lack of an inclusive Iraqi national identity to which Iraqi Kurds expressed any belonging. There was no concept of 'Iraqiness' in the participants' narratives. The participants did not even wish to associate themselves with 'Iraqiness' under any circumstances. The participants often avoided words such as 'Iraqi Kurdistan', 'Iraqi Kurds' and 'Iraqi' in the conversations about the region and themselves. They preferred instead to use just 'Kurdistan' to define the Kurdish region and 'Kurds' to define themselves. The data suggest that this absence of 'Iraqiness' provides the necessary basis on which to develop a stronger Kurdish identity in the context of Iraq.

The impacts of this absent Iraqi national identity appear in the data firstly in relation to the socio-spatial differentiations between the region and the rest of Iraq, as participants often foregrounded these differences. The lack of an Iraqi national identity has an impact on foregrounding Kurdish identity more saliently in the Iraqi context. Mete, a 64 year-old housewife from a small border town Bamerne/Duhok, states this:

Mete: They [Iraqi leaders] always tyrannised us. We've never seen anything good from them. All those who came to power in Iraq tyrannised Kurdistan. Now, thank God, we have a line between Kurdistan and Iraq. Since we separated from them, our villages are developing,

Kurds in Iraq

getting more beautiful. We don't want Arabs or their state any more...

The first thing that captures our attention in this extract is that Mete clearly differentiates the region from the rest of Iraq. Two sides are clearly defined, based on ethnic differences: Kurds in Kurdistan and Arabs in Iraq. As can also be observed from the above extract, the Iraqi state is often considered to be an Arabic state. Mete does not express any sense of belonging to the state. She even considers the autonomy as a separation. It is interesting to note that she does not consider 'Kurdistan' to be part of Iraq.

The data suggest that there is no citizenship status that generates any sense of belonging to the rest of Iraq; neither is there a supra-identity above any regional, ethnic, religious or cultural identity in Iraq. This, hence, also underpins Kurdishness as the most important facet of Iraqi Kurds' identities.

Secondly, the findings suggest that the Arabic identity constitutes 'the out-group' in the construction of Kurdish identity in the context of Iraq. As argued in the literature review, national identities are constantly being produced and re-produced through different means of inclusion and exclusion. They are not just about constructing 'us', but also constructing 'others'. As Hall (1996) states, identity requires a 'constitutive outside' to be constructed. In the case of Iraqi Kurds, 'the constitutive out-group' appeared to be Arabs. Iraqi Kurds often construct their identities in contrast to Arabic identity in the Iraqi context.

The data show that Iraqi Kurds often differentiate Kurds from Arabs through stories about past oppression, in which Arabs are described as the perpetrators and Kurds as the victims. Sewer, a 42 year-old businessman from Duhok, states this:

Sewer: Neither Arabs nor Turks ever cared about Kurds but only about themselves. So we have to care about ourselves now... If you see any of their [Arabic] soldiers who fought against us in the past, you'll see that they were thinking that Kurds were savages, barbaric people who deserved to die. They didn't even know anything about Kurds. When they met us, they could realise that we were not like that. They were brainwashed. Now Arabs are coming here, now those who come

here see that we have always been on the good side, we have been right, honest people and we were the victims. They were the ones who were bad, who did so horribly wrong.

This extract demonstrates the most common way to define the two sides in Iraqi Kurds' version of the history of Iraq. An oft-repeated message in these stories is that Kurds were the victims and Arabs were the perpetrators in Iraq. As can also be seen in the above extract, a common tendency is to foreground the differences between both sides, mostly in the form of 'our good' and 'their bad'.

Such narratives play an important role in the construction and development of Kurdish identity in the Iraqi context. Narrating Kurdish identity as victimhood is being used to justify the Kurdish nationalist struggle in the Iraqi context. Sewer states: 'neither Arabs nor Turks ever cared about Kurds but only about themselves'. This statement clearly justifies his following statement: 'So we have to care about ourselves now'. These narratives describe Kurdish identity as 'excluded', which often generates feelings for the necessity of holding on to Kurdishness. As can also be observed in the extract above, Arabic identity, thus, appears as 'the constitutive other' in the construction of Kurdish identity in the context of Iraq.

Thirdly, as detailed in the literature review, the rest of Iraq has been suffering from serious security issues since the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The Kurdish region of Iraq has been relatively secure and stable compared to the rest of the country ever since. The insecure and unstable conditions in the rest of Iraq also widen the division between it and Kurdistan.

It is again necessary to remember that the interviews were conducted before the advance of Islamic State (IS) towards Iraq, and during a peaceful period in the region. The Kurdish region also suffered from the IS's attacks after completion of the fieldwork. Although there are no data to measure the impacts of these developments, it is important to note that after their occurrence, the president of the Kurdistan Region declared that 'Kurdistan will hold a referendum for independence before October 2016' (Chulov, 2016).

Kurds in Iraq

The data shows that the division between the region and the rest of Iraq has reached a point where there is no longer any desire to live together. Arin, 19 a year-old student from Duhok, states this.

Arin: To be honest I don't like to live with them [Arabs]. The current situation in Iraq is not good at all. You see how it is. Iraq has too many problems. I don't like their politics. They are all sectarian, they always think only of themselves, everyone just cares about their own sect.

An interesting detail in this extract is that Arin refers to Iraq as a separate state, as though Kurdistan is not even a part of it. He clearly states that he does not desire to live with 'them'.

The long lasting instability and security issues in the rest of the country join with existing stories about the state's past crimes against Kurds. These ongoing problems underlie Iraqi Kurds' desire for a complete separation from the rest of the country. The participants repeatedly express that they do not see themselves as part of Iraq anymore.

The participants often emphasise the disconnections with Arabs. The data show that there is a general belief that complete separation is already underway. Below Adar, a 37 year-old café shop owner from Duhok, states this:

Adar: It doesn't matter anymore whether they [the state] accept it or not, Kurds are separated now. Kurds live in their own way. No matter how hard they [the state] try, even if Kurds were threatened with death, they still wouldn't accept to reunite with Iraq. Kurds have now gotten used to living their own lives. Kurds have their own soldiers, policemen and everything. So I don't think that Kurds would ever want to live with them [Arabs] anymore.

Adar claims that the separation has already been completed in practice and that there is no way back. He does not consider Kurdistan as a part of Iraq anymore. He refers to the governmental institutions established in the region as signs of the separation. The Kurdish region has its own parliament, governmental institutions and also regional security forces. All of these conditions enable Iraqi Kurds to act as an independent state. Adar believes that

Kurds are finding their own way and that this does not seem to merge with that of the rest of Iraq.

The only step left is to achieve independence. All of these arguments – the lack of an inclusive Iraqi national identity, the territorial and social divisions between the region and the rest of the country, the stories of the pain and suffering experienced in the region throughout the state's history, ongoing problematic relations with the central government, the emphasis on the unstable and insecure socio-political circumstances in the rest of Iraq, the region's economic development and increasing wealth – lead in the same direction: the demand and expectation to build an independent Kurdistan.

Below, Mamo, a 67 year-old farmer from a small border town called Bamerne, shares his future expectation.

Mamo: I want Kurdistan to be free. Neither Arabs nor anyone else, but Kurds themselves must govern Kurdistan. Kurds should be free in their lands.

The data indicated that the participants, unexceptionally, demand an independent Kurdistan. There was not even a single participant who rejected the idea of independence.

Some participants argued that the Iraqi state is just a barrier to the Kurdish region's development and growth. Some argued that it is not possible to live with the rest of Iraq after the many problematic relations experienced since the establishment of Iraq. Some considered independence to be an 'everlasting dream' of all Kurds and that independence is the long-deserved right of Kurds. Iraqi Kurds clearly desire to determine their own future without the Iraqi state.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity in relation to the Iraqi state. There were two main objectives: (1) To explore how Iraqi Kurds perceive the Iraqi state, and (2) to explore how Iraqi Kurds place Kurdish identity in the context of the Iraqi state.

The first important detail in the participants' perceptions of Iraq was the lack of any inclusive Iraqi national identity to which Iraqi Kurds expressed any

Kurds in Iraq

belonging. This lack of an Iraqi identity was first observed by King Faisal, before independence of the country in 1932 (Ghareeb, 1981, p. 2). After the establishment of the republic in 1958, Qasim promoted territorial Iraqi-first national identity for all Iraqis (Aziz, 2014, p. 67). However, this period of cooperation was short-lived (Yildiz, 2007). In subsequent years there were many bloody conflicts and wars between Iraqi Kurds and the state. The findings in this study suggest that there is no sense of social or territorial togetherness with the rest of the country in Iraqi Kurds' perceptions. The rest of the community is primarily referred to as Arab and the state is perceived as 'theirs'. Therefore, the current connections with the rest of the country are only those compulsory official relations.

The data also showed that the Iraqi state and 'Arabs' are blamed for Iraqi Kurds' pain and suffering throughout the state's history. The participants often recall past massacres and wars in the region. The state is accused of being the perpetrator of all this bloodshed in Iraqi Kurdistan. It is often stated that none of the Iraqi leaders behaved justly towards the Kurdish region. There were various stories about the unjust and unfair treatment of Kurds by the state.

Throughout history, relations between Iraqi Kurds and the state have been conflict-ridden and antagonistic. Although there were some promising periods, these peaceful times often did not last long. The first prime minister of Iraq, Qasim, attempted to resolve the issues with Kurds in 1958. However, growing pressure from Arab nationalists and military factions forced Qasim to shift his left-leaning, pro-Kurdish agenda to a new strategy of assimilation and control (Natali, 2005, p. 52). During the Baath regime in 1966, the state recognised the bi-national (Kurdish and Arab) character of Iraq and implied regional autonomy (Yildiz, 2007). The autonomy agreement was negotiated and imposed with Saddam Hussein in 1970. The constitution would recognise Kurdish as an official nationality, providing equal right to Kurds in Iraq (McDowall, 2004, p. 328). Nonetheless, the following three years showed that Saddam was not willing to implement the agreement (Yildiz, 2007). As detailed in the literature review, in the following years Kurds suffered throughout many wars.

The findings showed that Iraqi Kurds believe that the state is still plotting against the region and its achievements. The economic and political success of

the region compared to the rest of Iraq is often mentioned, and used as an argument to explain the state's ulterior motives behind its hostile attitudes towards the region. There is a common belief that the state has not yet completely internalised the region's autonomy. The Iraqi state always appears as an unreliable institution in Iraqi Kurds' narratives. Iraqi Kurds also openly state their mistrust towards other Iraqis, referred to as Arabs.

This chapter has also explored how Iraqi Kurds position Kurdish identity in the context of the Iraqi state. First of all, the data showed that Iraqi Kurds do not want to associate the region with the rest of Iraq. This chapter argued that the lack of an inclusive Iraqi identity provided an ideal basis for the construction and development of a stronger Kurdish identity in Iraq. Secondly, it is argued that Kurdish identity is also being constructed by excluding the Arabic identity in Iraq. The Arabic identity is, thus, viewed as the 'constitutive outside' in the construction of Kurdish identity (Hall, 1996). Thirdly, the long-lasting insecure and unstable circumstances in the rest of Iraq underlie Iraqi Kurds' demand for a complete separation. Finally, the data clearly indicate that there is a region-wide desire for an independent Kurdistan.

Chapter 9: The Other Side of the Border: Turkish Kurds

Introduction

This chapter explores Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity in relation to Turkish Kurds. It consists of three sections. The first explores how Iraqi Kurds perceive the border. It also analyses what this perception of the border means and how it functions in Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity. The second section explores the ways in which Iraqi Kurds perceive Turkish Kurds. It describes the image of the Turkish side of the border in Iraqi Kurds' narratives. It also discusses the meanings and the functions of this image of the Turkish side in Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity. The final section focuses on the bordering process on the Iraqi side of the border. It shows how socio-spatial differentiations occur in Iraqi Kurds' narratives.

9.1 The Sameness

The initial narratives about the Turkish side of the border are predominantly about the sameness between the two sides. The initial points emphasised mostly relate to the ethnic, linguistic and cultural sameness between the two border communities. The data show that there is a clear perception that the people on the Turkish side of the border are Kurdish who speak the same language and have the same cultural values as Iraqi Kurds.

Yet, there are three important interrelated details in these narratives that must be noted. The first regards the contents of these stories about 'sameness'. The Turkish side of the border is often considered ethnically, linguistically and culturally the same, yet there was hardly any mention of territorial continuity as was the case for Turkish Kurds. The second is about the description of the border. Turkish Kurds often used such adjectives as 'fake', 'artificial' 'unnatural' and 'unauthentic' to describe the border. Yet similar adjectives barely appeared in Iraqi Kurd's narratives about the border. Finally, as also argued in Chapter 7, the participants referred to the Turkish side of the border primarily as Turkey, rather than Turkish Kurdistan or Northern Kurdistan.

This section demonstrates these initial narratives about the border and the sameness between the two sides. It also explains what these narratives mean and how they function in Iraqi Kurds' identity constructions.

The initial questions related to the Turkish side of the border were mostly about the participants' connections and relations with the Turkish side and their experiences if they crossed the border. The initial answers were almost always related to the similarities between both sides of the border.

The first extract is from Memed, a 32 year-old male participant from Duhok. He earlier stated that he had crossed the border several times. The following question was about his observations on the Turkish side of the border:

Memed: First of all, there are not two different societies on these two sides. They are not different people. They are all one. They are all the same.

This extracts shows Memed's initial reaction to the question about the Turkish side of the border. It was often observed that the initial statements were mostly about the sameness between both sides. The participants often recognised Turkish Kurds as members of the same society. As Memed states, above all, the communities on both sides are considered to be the same.

The data show that the border is never understood as a line that divides two ethnically, linguistically and culturally different societies. There is always an emphasis on such connections between the Turkish and Iraqi sides.

An interesting detail in these narratives relates to the lack of emphasis of any territorial connection between both sides. As illustrated in the previous part, Turkish Kurds often directly or indirectly emphasised the territorial connections with the Iraqi side in different ways, such as by naming it 'Southern Kurdistan' or describing the border as an artificial line. However, the data show that there is no similar approach on the Iraqi side of the border.

Although the participants referred to Turkish Kurds in a variety of ways, such as 'our relatives', 'our brothers and sisters' and 'part of us', there was hardly any stress on territorial connections. Ferman, a 49 year-old male participant from a border town in Duhok, states this:

Kurds in Iraq

Ferman: We are always so happy to see them [Turkish Kurds]. When we see someone from there [the Turkish side], it is like we see our brothers and sisters. Those Kurds are also part of our family. They are definitely not like foreigners. They are not strangers. When they come over here, it is like our brothers come to visit us.

This extract demonstrates a common attitude towards Turkish Kurds in the data. Ferman describes the relations with Turkish Kurds who visit the region. Turkish Kurds are often referred to as 'part of us'. He claims that they do not consider Turkish Kurds foreigners or strangers, but as part of their family who come to visit their region. This seems an inclusive attitude towards Turkish Kurds.

Whilst Turkish Kurds are considered as 'part of our family', the Turkish side of the border was mostly perceived to be detached from 'Kurdistan', by which they primarily meant the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Those Kurds who live on the Turkish side are, thus, referred to as 'Kurds in Turkey' or 'Turkish Kurds' in the participants' narratives. The same narratives, however, describe those Kurds who live on the Iraqi side mostly as just 'Kurds'; they are the Kurds in Kurdistan, not in Iraq or Iraqi Kurds.

Zana, a 57 year-old public servant, states this:

Zana: It is like they [Turkish Kurds] are coming back home. Kurdistan is not just ours. It is all Kurds'. I see that when they [Turkish Kurds] come here they are always so happy to see Kurdistan, the Kurdish flag. We are also happy to see them. You should feel at home when you come here. It is your home too.

This extract also shows an embracing attitude towards Turkish Kurds. Turkish Kurds were perceived as 'the same', and as possessing 'Kurdistan' in equal measure. Zana states that Turkish Kurds are also happy to see 'Kurdistan'. The important detail is that the Iraqi side of the border appears to be the only side that is named 'Kurdistan' in these narratives. As opposed to Turkish Kurds, there is hardly any mention of 'South Kurdistan' and 'North Kurdistan'.

It is important to note that the researcher's positionality is very visible in this extract. Zana directly indicates that I, as the researcher, should feel at home

when I visit 'Kurdistan'. One might also understandably expect Zana to speak well of Turkish Kurds in my presence.

Although the participants' statements suggest that Iraqi Kurds perceive the border as a line that divides 'Kurdistan' from Turkey, the data show that this is also related to a lack of any Kurdish administrative division in Turkey, in which Turkish Kurds hold any governmental power. As argued in the chapter 7, 'territory' is the most important element in Kurdish identity for Iraqi Kurds. The absence of a similar Kurdish territorial division on the Turkish side appears to be the main reason behind these perceptions of the border and the Turkish side.

Another interesting finding is that the lack of any defined Kurdish territorial division or any separate Kurdish administrative power on the Turkish side is often interpreted as 'captivity' by Iraqi Kurds. Dara, a 36 year-old agricultural engineer from Duhok, states this.

B: Let me ask this question; would you be able to live in Diyarbakir as you live here? I mean would you be able to live on the other side of the border too?

Dara: I don't think so. I'll tell you why. Now, our lives are getting better here, everything is getting better and more comfortable. We are developing now. This is really good. However, our Kurds' situation in Turkey is not like this. Our Kurds in Turkey are in captivity, under other people's hegemony...

The first salient detail in this extract is that Dara refers to Turkish Kurds as 'our Kurds'. This possessive determiner clearly indicates Dara's perception of Turkish Kurds as part of 'us'. There is again a discourse on the sameness between both sides.

Another important detail is that Dara describes Turkish Kurds as being in captivity. As seen in the previous part, Turkish Kurds never interpreted their situation as being in captivity or under 'other's hegemony'. One explanation for the existence of this perception of Turkish Kurds is the importance of having a political status for Iraqi Kurds. This perception might also play an important role in why 'territory' is missing in the perception of sameness with the Turkish side of the border. This perception of captivity and further reasons

Kurds in Iraq

for the lack of territoriality in the perception of sameness will be discussed further in the following two sections.

There is another important detail in the participants' narratives about the sameness with the Turkish side. The participants often compared Turkish Kurds with Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds. There are two main Kurdish dialects in Iraqi Kurdistan: Sorani [also known as Central Kurdish] and Badini [or Kurmanji, also known as Northern Kurdish]. While Sorani is common in the southern and eastern parts of Iraqi Kurdistan, Badini is widely spoken in the north and west of Iraqi Kurdistan and also by Turkish Kurds. This means that those Iraqi Kurds who live close to the border are linguistically closer to Turkish Kurds, rather than to those Iraqi Kurds who live in the southern part of the Iraqi Kurdish region.

Many participants mentioned this linguistic closeness with Turkish Kurds in their narratives. Sewer, a 42 year-old businessman from Duhok, states this:

Sewer: Kurdish in Turkey is much closer to me. I understand them [Turkish Kurds] very well. But sometimes I don't understand Sorani too much. I have no problem to understand Turkish Kurds. Though they sometimes use some Turkish words, but even our accent is the same, so I can even understand those Turkish words in context. On the other hand, if we didn't live with Sorans [Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds], we wouldn't understand them at all. We are living together and gradually understanding each other more and more.

In this extract, Sewer compares Turkish Kurds with Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds. From a linguistic perspective, he finds Turkish Kurds closer to himself. The findings showed that as far as the language is concerned, Turkish Kurds are always regarded as closer than Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds.

The participants often referred to this linguistic closeness in their narratives regarding the sameness with Turkish Kurds. Being linguistically closer to the Turkish side also impacts the participants' perception of Turkish Kurds. Compared with Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds, Turkish Kurds are often considered to be socially and culturally closer too.

The following extract is from the interview with Miziri, a 41 year-old merchant from Zakho.

B: I just wonder. How many languages do you know?

Miziri: I know Kurdish and Arabic.

B: Do you speak Sorani too?

Miziri: Yes, I do. It's also Kurdish.

B: Which Kurdish dialect is closer to you, that of the Kurds' in the north or the Sorans'?

Miziri: Of course Kurds in the north [Turkish Kurds] are much closer to us.

B: Are they just linguistically closer to you or is there any other aspect?

Miziri: Kurds on the north side are closer to us in any aspect. We are closer to them. That's why we do more business with them. We visit each other more.

Miziri considers Turkish Kurds closer to him than Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds with whom he shares the same territory. The data showed that Turkish Kurds were mostly considered culturally and linguistically closer than Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds. Those Iraqi Kurds who live close to the border commonly have some relatives on the Turkish side. Although Miziri knows the Sorani dialect of Kurdish too, the data show that the majority of the participants either do not know the Sorani dialect or know it just a little. However, none of the participants declared any difficulty understanding Turkish Kurds.

It is also important to note that Miziri considers Turkish Kurds closer to himself in all aspects, not just linguistically. The data showed that the participants considered themselves socially and culturally closer to Turkish Kurds compared with Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds. Turkish Kurds were considered to have more similar traditions than Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds. Further discussions regarding the comparison between Turkish Kurds and Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds will be addressed in the last section of this chapter.

9.2 Perceptions of Turkish Kurds

The second step to explore Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity in relation to Turkish Kurds is to further analyse their perceptions of the Turkish

Kurds in Iraq

side of the border. The previous section showed that the initial narratives about the Turkish side are predominantly related to sameness between the two sides. The Turkish side is primarily perceived as ethnically, linguistically and culturally the same. Yet, 'territory' was not a part of these narratives of sameness. This section analyses some other main themes in the participants' narratives about the Turkish side of the border in order to explore Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of Turkish Kurds.

This section presents five main themes that emerged in the data in relation to the participants' perceptions of the Turkish side. The first is about Turkish Kurds' socio-political status. As briefly mentioned in the previous section, Turkish Kurds are, first and foremost, considered to be in 'captivity'. The second relates to Turkish Kurds' past. Turkish Kurds were depicted as a suffering people in the history of Turkey in the participants' accounts of the past. The third theme is about Turkish Kurds' economic conditions. The Turkish side of the border is often perceived as a poor region with limited economic potential. The fourth theme regards their character traits. Turkish Kurds were recognised as hardworking people compared to Iraqi Kurds in the participants' narratives. The final theme is about the most recent developments on the Turkish side, and Iraqi Kurds' predictions for the future of Turkish Kurds. This section demonstrates these five themes with verbatim quotes from the interviews, and analyses their importance and functions in Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity.

The first intriguing theme in the perceptions of Turkish Kurds that emerged from the data relates to the way in which the participants described Turkish Kurds' socio-political status in Turkey. The most repeated word in these descriptions was 'captivity'. What makes this word more interesting is that it has never been used by Turkish Kurds in their self-narratives. The participants repeatedly interpreted the political status of Turkish Kurds as being in 'captivity' with limited rights.

Semele, a 34 year-old estate agent from a small town close to Duhok, states:

B: How was life there? Is there any difference between here and there?

Semele: We are not in captivity here. We are free but they don't have freedom in Turkey, as we have here.

B: What do you mean? Can you explain it a bit more?

Semele: First of all our language here is Kurdish...

Semele has relatives on the Turkish side of the border and, therefore, often crosses the border to visit them. It was interesting to notice that Semele, as someone who regularly crosses the border, describes Turkish Kurds' as being captive. He states that Turkish Kurds are not free in Turkey as Iraqi Kurds are on the Iraqi side of the border.

Similar descriptions dominated most of the narratives about Turkish Kurds' lives on the other side of the border. Throughout the interviews, I tried to understand what the participants meant by 'freedom' and 'captivity'. In the extract above, Semele started to explain it with the lack of language rights. It is important to remember that language-related rights were the most demanded rights on the Turkish side of the border. Semele explains 'captivity' with Turkish Kurds' most frequently stated issue.

Another participant, Sewer, a 42 year old businessman from Duhok, describes Turkish Kurds' lives and the situation on the Turkish side of the border from a different perspective. This is what he said:

B: How do you think it would be to live on the north side? I mean in Van or Hakkari [Kurdish populated Turkish cities]?

Sewer: If I go there, yes they are also Kurdish. They're my brothers. In this sense we have no difference. Yet, if a man is free in his liberated land, he won't want to go anywhere else... Freedom is attractive.

Sewer initially reconfirms that those people on the Turkish side of the border are Kurdish and that he sees them as his siblings too. This extract shows that, for Sewer, the main issue on the Turkish side is that it is not 'liberated'. Sewer clearly explains that his concerns about living on the Turkish side are not related to the people and their identity or culture, but that the land is not liberated.

As argued in the chapter 7, territory has appeared as the most important element of Kurdish identity on the Iraqi side of the border. The importance of self-governance was the most commonly mentioned topic in Iraqi Kurds' narratives about their region. This perception of Kurdish identity and Kurdistan

Kurds in Iraq

may also help to explain what underlies the existence of this common perception of 'captivity' in Iraqi Kurds' narratives about the Turkish side of the border.

As argued earlier, the lack of any Kurdish administrative division or any recognised Kurdish territory on the Turkish side of the border was interpreted as 'captivity'. This is arguably related to Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of Kurdish identity and Kurdistan.

The next extract illustrates Ferman's perception of Turkish Kurds' lives. Ferman is a 49 year-old male participant from a small border town.

Ferman: Life can be beautiful anywhere, but if you don't have a good state, a good government, then life can be miserable too. Now they [Turkish Kurds] don't have such a good state or government. The life there is not liberated yet. They are not yet free under that state. If you're not free, then what's the point of life? If you're free, then life can be beautiful.

Ferman has many relatives on the Turkish side of the border, yet he has not crossed the border to visit them. I asked how he imagined life on the Turkish side. The reason for asking such a question was to understand the way in which he perceives the area beyond the border.

This extract shows how Ferman imagines the Turkish side of the border. The main theme in his perception of the Turkish side is again freedom. Ferman believes that Turkish Kurds are not free on the other side of the border.

In order to understand what Ferman means by freedom, it is beneficial to analyse the extract below.

Ferman: No. There's not a good life there. Do you know why it's not good? The government there doesn't give Kurds their rights. Why should I go there? If the government becomes a democratic government and supports Kurds, if everyone lives life in their own way, then it's all right. When our Kurds' lives in Turkey aren't good, our lives here won't be good either. If our Kurdish brothers and sisters are not doing well there, no matter how much our lives are getting better here, we won't be happy.

There are a few interesting points in this extract. Firstly, Ferman tries to show solidarity with his 'Kurdish brothers and sisters' on the Turkish side of the border. By stating this, he also wants to emphasise that his lack of interest in living on the Turkish side is not related to the people who live there. This extract also shows that by lack of freedom he is referring to a lack of Turkish Kurds' rights. He claims that the government on the Turkish side is not a democratic one.

Ferman's statements also show that by 'liberation' he does not necessarily refer only to administrative power over a recognised territory, but also to democratic rights to provide the necessary socio-political environment for people to be able to practice their identity.

The participants' emphasis on 'freedom' and 'captivity' in their narratives about the Turkish side are also partly related to their knowledge of the history of Turkish Kurds. The Turkish side of the border often appears as a suffering region in Iraqi Kurds' narratives.

Miziri, a 41 year-old merchant from Zakho, states this:

Miziri: ...Your side has also suffered a lot. You have also been through very difficult times and are still suffering. But you can't reach good days without pain.

It is again necessary to mention the researcher's position, as it is clear from Miziri's statements. In this extract, by 'your side' Miziri is referring to the Turkish side of the border; similarly, by 'you' he means 'Turkish Kurds'. My position and its impact on data collection are widely explained in the methodology section (Section 3.5). In this particular extract, my position seems to have had an impact on Miziri's word selections. After giving information about Iraqi Kurdistan's 'suffering' history, Miziri attempts to show that he is also aware of Turkish Kurds' history.

An interesting pattern in the data is that the participants often briefly mention 'the suffering' history of Turkish Kurds in their narratives. When the participants were asked to detail their statements, there are often two main points in their answers: 'lack of rights' and 'lack of Kurdish government'. There is a common belief that Turkish Kurds have been suffering from a lack of

Kurds in Iraq

cultural rights and a lack of self-governance. Turkish Kurds are commonly perceived as being under an unfair state's regime.

The participants also tended to compare both sides in terms of the socio-political environments in which they exist. The extract below is from the interview with Arin, a 19 year-old student from Duhok.

Arin: I believe the north [Turkish Kurds] will be good too. At least they didn't see any war like us. We got liberated after a war. I hope you'll be free too. Turkey has to give you your rights. So far Turkey doesn't give all your rights. We got ours from Iraq. Now, we are even ready to separate completely to build our own state. Unfortunately, Kurds in the north are not in such conditions yet.

Arin compares the current situation on the Turkish side with the Iraqi side. It should be noted that he also uses 'you' to refer to the Turkish side due to the researcher's identity. He states that 'I hope you'll be free too'. This statement shows that Arin also perceives Turkish Kurds to be in captivity. He continues with mentioning a lack of 'rights' on the north side of the border. Although Arin does not detail these 'omitted rights', he states that 'we got ours from Iraq', which refers to the administrative rights over the Kurdish region in Iraq. Arin considers Iraqi Kurds' conditions more fortunate than Turkish Kurds.

Another salient detail in Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of the Turkish side relates to economic conditions. The north side of the border is commonly perceived to be a poor region, with limited economic capacity compared to the Iraqi side. This detail initially appeared in the participants' answers to the questions related to Turkish Kurds' lives.

As demonstrated above, the participants' narratives about the sameness between both sides are mostly followed by discussions about 'captivity' on the Turkish side. The second most commonly mentioned detail in the narratives about Kurds' lives was Turkish Kurds' economic conditions.

Kesko, a 27 year-old labourer from Duhok, states this.

Kesko: The economic conditions are so different here compared to there [Turkish side]. The life here is different from the life there. I can easily survive here without even working; but in Turkey I have to find

a job and make money to survive. We get a lot of help from our government. Everything is cheap here, water is cheap, and clothes are cheap. The government provides your necessary foods. The government gives us our needs. Turkey doesn't give anything to anyone. I wouldn't live there.

Kesko states that the economic conditions on the Turkish side are the most important reason that would prevent him from living on that side of the border. He details the benefits Iraqi Kurds receive in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. He states that Iraqi Kurds receive foods and other essentials from the Kurdistan Regional Government. Compared to the Iraqi side, the Turkish side seems poor and unattractive to Kesko. He later claims that he could easily live on the Turkish side of the border if he was offered the same economic conditions on that side.

Kesko presents the economic benefits in the Iraqi Kurdish region as one of the main differences between the two sides. Before moving onto the meanings and impacts of this perception, it is important to note that these narratives were often developed following the narratives about the sameness between the two sides.

Semele, a 34 year-old estate agent from a small town close to Duhok, states this:

B: I understand. I also wonder if you could live on the other side of the border. How would it be to live in Van, Hakkari or Diyarbakir?

Semele: Yes I could. We have no difference. The thing is that we have better economic conditions here. Things are better here, I mean in terms of economy and jobs. Because if I go to Diyarbakir, I may not be able to work there. Why? Because we don't pay tax here. Everything is cheaper. Nothing is expensive. Everyone receives salary from the government. Do you understand what I mean?

Semele earlier mentioned the ethnic, linguistic and cultural similarities between the two sides, and foregrounded 'freedom' in the south as the main difference. In this extract Semele, simply adds a second difference to that of 'captivity'/'freedom': economic opportunities.

Kurds in Iraq

As can also be seen in the last two extracts, Iraqi Kurds seem to be accustomed to high government benefits and salaries. The participants tended to detail these benefits. In the above extract, Semele states that there is no tax in Iraqi Kurdistan and 'everyone' receives salaries from the regional government. Kesko also said that the regional government also provides necessary foods and other essential items. All of these economic benefits on the Iraqi side constitute another important content in the perceptions of the differences between the two sides. Better economic conditions clearly make the Iraqi side a more attractive place for Iraqi Kurds.

These differences in economic conditions between the two sides have several impacts on Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of Turkish Kurds. One clear pattern observed in the data related to Turkish Kurds' hardworking character trait. Compare to Iraqi Kurds, Turkish Kurds were commonly described as hardworking people.

In the below extract Sewer, a 42 year-old businessman from Duhok, was asked if he would prioritise one group of Kurds over the other when he hires someone.

Sewer: I would prefer the one who comes from Turkey. The system in Turkey is like in Europe, they work well, are hardworking people... They like working. I haven't been there, but on your side people do more proper work. Not like people don't do anything all-day and just enjoy. Not like here, here people don't work and spend money that they don't make themselves. These people [Iraqi Kurds] don't like to work, just like to spend. They just sleep, eat and wander around all day. On the north side people have to make money. The land in Kurdistan is good for agriculture but we don't even do that anymore. We are just so lucky that we have petrol everywhere. We just extract this petrol out and sell it. If no one received this money from petrol, everyone would have to work.

In this extract, the 'hardworking' character trait appears as a key feature that differentiates Turkish Kurds from Iraqi Kurds. Sewer draws attention to the negative impacts of the government benefits that are being distributed on the Iraqi side of the border. He claims that these benefits discourage work. Such social benefits, for Sewer, have more negative consequences, as they affect

social attitudes: 'they just sleep, eat and wander around all day', 'the land in Kurdistan is good for agriculture but we don't even do that anymore'. Sewer makes these claims in order to explain the differences in work habits between Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds.

Turkish Kurds, in comparison to Iraqi Kurds, were described as a more diligent people. This perception of Turkish Kurds was very common in the interviews.

The different economic conditions on both sides of the border also have impacts on Iraqi Kurds' future expectations to build a 'greater Kurdistan'. This point will be discussed in the next section.

Another important detail regarded the current developments on the Turkish side of the border. As previously stated, the fieldwork on the Iraqi side of the border coincided with the peace talks between the Kurdish rebels and the Turkish government. The participants showed their awareness of the progress being made on the Turkish side.

Dara, a 36 year-old agricultural engineer from Duhok, states:

Dara: Hopefully they [Turkish Kurds] will be better too. The Turkish government has been changing. They hosted Kurdistan's president Masoud Barzani. It is a very big thing. Erdogan [the Prime Minister of Turkey at the time] started to give Kurds' rights. Hopefully he'll gradually give all these Kurds' their rights. Those Kurds have rights too. They want to speak in their languages, they want Kurdish TV channels, and they should be able to wear their traditional clothes. These are about rights. This year they celebrated Newroz [Kurdish New Year] even in Istanbul. This is progress. Hopefully their conditions will be better, they'll grow, and maybe someday they'll have their own state.

There are a few interesting details in this extract. First of all, this extract shows Dara's knowledge about Turkish Kurds' current conditions, their demands and the progress that is being made in Turkey. His initial emphasis is on the Turkish State's changing attitudes towards Kurdish people. A small but important detail in these initial sentences is that the Iraqi Kurdistan President's visit to Turkey is also presented as evidence of the Turkish state's changing

attitudes towards Turkish Kurds. This highlights Dara's perception of the connections between Kurdish people on both sides. Nevertheless, he describes two groups of Kurds in this extract: the Kurds from 'Kurdistan', by which Dara means the Iraqi Kurdistan region, and 'those Kurds from Turkey'. Although Dara's sympathies lie with Turkish Kurds, there is still a clear line between 'we' and 'they'.

This extract also indicates that Dara is aware of Turkish Kurd's demands in Turkey. He mentions Turkish Kurds' language-related demands. He also acknowledges the progress that was being made at the time of the interview and describes this as promising. However, an interesting detail in his last sentences is that his final wish for Turkish Kurds is to have 'their own state' someday, as it is Turkish Kurds' ultimate demand. It is important to note that by this wish, Dara does not only mean a Kurdish state as opposed to equality within the state of Turkey, but also participation in a greater Kurdistan that covers the Iraqi Kurdish region.

It was interesting to observe similar wishes for Turkish Kurds in the data. The findings show that there is a common perception among the interviewees that independence is Turkish Kurds' ultimate political goal. However, as demonstrated in the Chapter 5, such demands were very rare in the interviews with Turkish Kurds. This perception can partly be related to Iraqi Kurds' own demands on the Iraqi side of the border. As argued in the previous chapter, independence is the most frequently stated demand and expectation on the Iraqi side. Iraqi Kurds' demands for an independent state may also have an influence on their assumptions about Turkish Kurds' ultimate political demands. This will be discussed further, along with the participants' narratives about building a greater Kurdistan, in the next section.

9.3 The Internalised Border

The final section in this chapter explores how the bordering, as an ongoing process through which social and spatial categories, homogenisations and differentiations occur, works on the Iraqi side of the border. This section explores the socio-spatial homogenisations and differentiations in Iraqi Kurds' narratives, so as to reveal how Iraqi Kurds place Turkish Kurds in their

perceptions of nation and identity. Hence, it will also show how the border is being perceived and, how it functions.

As argued in the literature review, borders are not just static lines between states but also social, political and discursive constructs and the meaning they carry is produced and reproduced (Newman, 2006). It is not the border per se that affects people's lives, but the process of bordering, as an ongoing socio-spatial differentiation (Van Houtum and Van Naerssen, 2002). Borders produce and are produced through various social, economic, cultural and political practices and discourses (Newman and Paasi, 1998). Therefore, borders can best be analysed through these practices and discourses.

This section analyses the bordering process through these ongoing social practices and discourses. There are three main arguments in this final section. It will, firstly, be argued that Iraqi Kurds develop stronger senses of belonging and attachment to the Iraqi Kurdish region, in terms of both social and territorial dimensions. It will later be argued that Turkish Kurds are being 'othered' in Iraqi Kurds' narratives, through a variety of means. Finally, it will be argued that although Iraqi Kurds often express their desire to remove the border and, to unite with Turkish Kurds, there are also widely shared concerns for this 'reunion' to build a 'greater Kurdistan'.

The findings showed that an important function of the border is to create new social and territorial belongings. As argued in the literature review, borders also function as differentiators of socially constructed mindscapes and meanings (Van Houtum, 2005, p. 673). The results show that the border has some important impacts on Iraqi Kurds' social and territorial senses of belonging, their self-understanding and attachments. The following extract is a good illustration of these impacts.

Sewer, a 33 year-old businessman from Duhok, was asked where he would prefer to live, if he had two options: Silemani or Van.

Sewer: I would still go to Silemani. This is my motherland. Well, actually Van is also my motherland. They are also Kurds, my brothers, but the only difference here is that we are used to living here. Our habits, traditions would be more similar to Silemani. Yes they are Soran, the

Kurds in Iraq

Sorani dialect is more difficult for us to understand, but our lives would be more similar to theirs. Maybe Van won't be that similar to me. For example, when I went to Van, I didn't see the same dishes we have here, but when I go to Silemani or Erbil, I can find exactly the same dishes there. This is just one example.

This extract is thematically a demonstration of Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of social and territorial differences between both sides. There are some important details in Sewer's statements.

Sewer initially attempts to differentiate the Iraqi side from the Turkish side by calling it 'my motherland'. However, he then recognised the Turkish side as his motherland too as those people are also Kurds and his 'brothers'. His second attempt to explain his decision was to underline possible differences between Turkish Kurds' and Iraqi Kurds' daily lives. Although Sewer states that those on the Turkish side are Kurds too, he believes that his lifestyle, habits and traditions are more similar to those Kurdish people on the Iraqi side rather than those Kurds on the Turkish side of the border. An important detail in such narratives is that whilst the participants' foreground social and territorial differences, they tend to acknowledge the ethnic ties between the two sides.

The findings indicate that Iraqi Kurds often directly express stronger senses of belonging and attachment to the Iraqi side. Such statements demonstrate how the border functions as a differentiator of the perceptions of territory and society. It shapes their perceptions of sameness, belonging, attachment and self-understanding. In this particular case, there is no denial of the ethnic similarities between the two sides. There is rather more emphasis on 'the sameness'. Yet, the border constructs and develops new 'sub-groups', new perceptions of belonging and attachment within this 'sameness'. As can also be seen in the above extract, Iraqi Kurds tend to express their closeness to Turkish Kurds by calling them 'brothers' or 'Kurds'. Nevertheless, there is a clear socio-spatial distinction between both sides in the participants' subsequent statements. In the above extract, Sewer talks about the different dishes in order to exemplify the differences between the two sides in his perceptions.

Furthermore, these social and territorial differentiations become even more salient when Turkish Kurds are compared with Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds. As

demonstrated in the previous sections, Turkish Kurds are linguistically closer to those Iraqi Kurds who live close to the border. While Turkish Kurds and the northern part of the Iraqi Kurdistan region speak the same Kurdish dialect, those Iraqi Kurds who live in the southern part of the Iraqi Kurdish region speak a different Kurdish dialect, called Sorani. Therefore, it was important and interesting to explore how the participants compared Turkish Kurds with Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds.

As in Sewer's case, the participants often do not speak the Sorani dialect and find it difficult. As illustrated earlier, the participants recognise that Turkish Kurds are linguistically closer than Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds. Nonetheless, just like Sewer, many participants believe that those Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds would be more familiar than Turkish Kurds who speak the same dialect, Badini.

This finding shows that sharing the same territory has a greater impact on Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of belonging, attachment and self-understanding, than sharing the same language. In this particular case, although Sewer shares the same language with Turkish Kurds, he demonstrates stronger attachments to Sorani-speaking Kurds who live on the same side of the border.

This emphasis on the socio-spatial differences between the two sides in the participants' narratives indicate that although Turkish Kurds are considered as 'part of us', as they are also Kurds, there is, nevertheless, a difference between Kurds in Iraq and Kurds in Turkey. Turkish Kurds, in Iraqi Kurds' narratives, appear as 'the other us'. Although there is an emphasis on sameness, there is also a perception of difference that is determined by the border.

The data also show that there are some commonly shared beliefs that present Turkish Kurds as 'the other Kurds' in the Iraqi Kurds' narratives. The following extract is a good illustration.

Seyda, a 33 year-old businessman from Duhok, states this:

Seyda: ...Regarding politics, those on the north side [Turkish Kurds] don't even accept Kurdistan's flag, which has been our flag since Qazi Muhammed's time. They say 'the Kurdistan flag represents just one fraction, not all Kurds'. They say 'we won't use this flag when

Kurdistan unites'. Personally I don't like this. This is my flag and I don't have another one. I'm scared about what's going to happen, because those northerners are non-religious, they're Marxist atheists.

B: What do you mean?

Seyda: They don't believe in God. Look, today how could I ever accept my daughter going to the mountain to fight with boys? Okay, maybe they don't have such boy-girl relations, but I can't still accept it. We can't let our daughters go to war. Yes, when we had war here, our girls and women helped Peshmerga [Iraqi Kurdish soldiers] but by cooking food for them, by making soup for them, by washing their clothes. They never fought shoulder to shoulder. Look at the north, their girls and boys are fighting together. So if we unite, will we be the same? We don't want this. I don't even believe their natural dispositions are like this. I believe that Ataturk and the westerners shaped their thoughts. They mingled with Russians and the westerners, that's how they become like this. I don't like such attitudes. If we are to unite someday, our condition is that our hearts and minds should unite first. We should meet on the same religious ground. If it's not going to happen, I wouldn't like to unite.

This long extract reveals many important details in Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of the differences between the Turkish side and the Iraqi side. Seyda lists some of the main complaints about Turkish Kurds and the Kurdish political movement in Turkey.

Seyda's first criticism is related to Kurdistan's flag. He underlines that the Kurdish political movement in Turkey uses a different flag to that of the Iraqi Kurds. Seyda uses this as an example of the differences between the two sides. This seems an important issue for Seyda, as he states that he would not accept another flag for Kurdistan. Along with the disputes over the flag, he attempts to show his first point to prove the incompatibility of the Kurdish political movements on both sides. Although it was not always related to the flag, many participants also foregrounded some political disputes between both sides. These were mostly related to national symbols, past conflicts and more recent developments.

Seyda's second argument is about the religious aspect of the Kurdish political movements on the Turkish side of the border. He claims that Kurdish politics in Turkey is based on a 'Marxist atheist' ideology that is, for him, a very negative feature that cannot be accepted. His emphasis is not on Marxism as a political ideology, but the 'secular' feature of the Kurdish political movement on the Turkish side. As Seyda states, his concern is about their faith: 'they don't believe in God'.

It was interesting to note that many participants repeatedly made similar comments about the religious views of Turkish Kurds. The target was often the Kurdish political movement in Turkey. Although similar criticisms were often aimed at Kurdish politicians in Turkey, they also relate to Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of Turkish Kurds in general. Through these discussions over religious views, the Turkish side is being excluded in such narratives.

Seyda's third criticism in this extract is about gender roles on the Turkish side. He clearly opposes the position of women in the Kurdish political movement in Turkey. He interprets this as assimilation, and he thinks that this is not in Kurdish people's nature. This extract shows that the gender roles that Seyda perceives as ideal are not the same on the Turkish side. In this particular extract, Seyda differentiates Iraqi Kurds from Turkish Kurds also through his claims over the differences in the gender roles between both sides.

Seyda's statement describe a patrilineal Kurdish society. A gender-biased language was often observed in the participants' narratives. As can be seen in the previous extract, Turkish Kurds are often described as 'our brothers'. Such gender-biased terms present the male members as the primary bearers of Kurdish identity. In these narratives, an individual's identity derives from and is recorded through male kin.

There are also a few common accusations directed towards Turkish Kurds in Iraqi Kurds' narratives. Turkish Kurds were often blamed for losing 'the Kurdish traditions', such as not wearing traditional clothes, and becoming like 'the westerners'. By 'becoming like the westerners', Seyda refers here to the 'fading' religious and traditional Kurdish values on the Turkish side of the border.

Kurds in Iraq

Seyda takes a stance against the Kurdish political movement in Turkey. Although there were not always such strong criticisms, similar views were shared by many participants. The main targets in these expressions of disapproval were the secular aspect of the Kurdish movements, the gender roles, and the past and recent disputes between the Kurdish political movements on both sides.

The extract above contains some of the commonly shared criticisms related to the Turkish side of the border. All of these narratives about the differences between the two sides demonstrate the extent of the socio-spatial differentiations in the participants' perceptions.

Finally, one of the most widely discussed topics in the interviews was the demand to remove the border for the union with Turkish Kurds. The findings indicate that there is a consensus on the removal of the border for reunion with the Turkish side, just like the consensus on building an independent Kurdistan. Almost all participants clearly stated that they desire to unite with Turkish Kurds. Yet, many participants underlined their concerns about the possible union; and in many cases the desire for the union was subject to certain conditions.

The next extract is from the interview with Semele, a 34 year-old estate agent from a small town close to Duhok.

Semele: Sure I do want it. Everyone wants it. From our president to our little boys would like to remove all these borders to unite all of Kurdistan. We are all brothers and sisters, so we should live together.

This extract is a good representation of the initial answers to the question of the union. There was hardly any direct negative answer to the question in the interviews. As in the above extract, the initial reactions were always in favour of the union. Semele claims that everyone, from little kids to the President in Iraqi Kurdistan, wants to unite. He considers those on the Turkish side as his brothers and sisters with whom they should join.

The data did not contradict Semele's claim, however the findings suggest that the desire to unite is only half of the story. The data showed that although there was not a direct rejection of the removal of the border, Iraqi Kurds commonly shared many concerns about the possible reunion with Turkish

Kurds. As could be seen from the previous extract, Seyda disapproves of many things on the Turkish side, however when he was asked he clearly stated that he was in favour of the union, but required Turkish Kurds to meet with his stated conditions.

There are some common concerns about the union, and two of these are more prominent: the first one relates to politics and the second to economy and wealth. Kesko, a 27 year-old labourer from Duhok, states:

Kesko: Yes of course. I want the four pieces of Kurdistan to unite. But it'll never happen.

B: Why?

Kesko: Because if something is broken into pieces, it will never be one piece as it was before. To divide into four means to create four different groups. Now, if we unite, south Kurdistan will say 'I want to rule', the north will say 'the majority of the population is here, so we should rule', the east and the west will also claim rights. If these four pieces unite, there'll be problems among them. You know that in the past there was a conflict between the north [Turkish Kurds] and the south [Iraqi Kurds]. It'll be the same. So, I believe that the reunion is so tough and problematic.

B: What kind of problems?

Kesko: Firstly, there'll be problems regarding who will rule; and there'll also be many problems regarding the economy.

B: What do you mean by economic problems? Is it about petrol?

Kesko: Yes, there is petrol here but they [Turkish Kurds] don't have it. This will cause many problems. Our side is rich with petrol resources and there is no petrol on the north side. Maybe there's a little on the east side and a little on the west side but not on the north side [Turkish side]. These four sides will fight for power and the north [Turkish side] has the majority, so they'll win the elections. This will cause many big problems.

This long extract demonstrates some commonly shared concerns on the Iraqi side about the removal of the border.

Kurds in Iraq

Responses to the question about the removal of the border are almost always in favour of the union, as in this extract. Kesko wants not only the union of the Turkish side and the Iraqi side but of the four pieces, by which he refers to the Iranian and Syrian sides also. However, Kesko does not find it a realistic demand. This was one of the commonly shared beliefs among the participants. Some participants explained this with the power of the Turkish state. Turkey is often perceived as a powerful state that would never accept the union.

Kesko also believes that the division of Kurdistan has created four different Kurdish groups that could not merge to form a single entity again. Although it was not very common to directly express the 'incompatibility' of both sides, the participants tended to share their concerns about a possible union. In this particular example, Kesko reminds us of past conflicts between the two sides in order to support his argument. He believes that each side has its own political agenda that would cause serious issues, particularly in relation to power sharing, in any possible union. Kesko anticipates that the removal of the border would be very problematic. Power sharing and the political disputes between the Kurdish political movements of both sides were frequently mentioned as potential obstacles to a possible union.

Kesko also mentions one more potential obstacle: the natural resources of the Iraqi side. As also argued in the previous section, the Turkish side is often perceived to be a relatively poor region with limited economic potential, whereas the Iraqi side is rich, particularly with natural resources. Kesko is concerned about sharing Iraqi Kurdistan's wealth. He states that the Turkish Kurds' population is higher than that of the Iraqi Kurds'. Thus, he is concerned that Turkish Kurds would be in power in an eventual reunion. His concern in this scenario is about sharing the wealth of Iraqi Kurdistan. He believes that such uneven economic conditions pose a major threat to the union in the future.

The data showed that differences in economic conditions was one of the most commonly mentioned potential issues for the union. Although sharing the wealth was one of the main concerns of many of the participants, some also believe that this could be overcome. The data suggests that the natural resources of Iraqi Kurdistan often lead to an unwillingness to merge with the Turkish side.

Conclusion

This final chapter has explored Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity in relation to Turkish Kurds. The first section examined how the border is perceived by Iraqi Kurds. The findings showed that Turkish Kurds are, first and foremost, perceived as ethnically, linguistically and culturally 'the same'. Yet, there was hardly any emphasis on territorial connections between the two border regions. In contrast to Turkish Kurds, Iraqi Kurds did not describe the border as 'fake', 'artificial' or 'unnatural'. Compared to Turkish Kurds' narratives of the border, there were no statements of denial of the border in Iraqi Kurds' narratives. Similarly, the Turkish side of the border was not referred to using any name associated with Kurdistan, i.e. 'Northern Kurdistan' or 'Turkish Kurdistan'. An interesting detail in the data was the comparison between Turkish Kurds and Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds. Those participants who live close to the border are linguistically closer to Turkish Kurds, rather than Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds who live in the southern and eastern parts of Iraqi Kurdistan. Although many participants acknowledge this linguistic closeness with Turkish Kurds, who were also often referred to as 'part of our family', the findings suggest that the territorial division is, to a great extent, internalised. Turkish Kurds are clearly part of Iraqi Kurds' perceived nation, but as 'other Kurds' who live outside of the perceived 'Kurdistan'.

The second section in this chapter highlighted some salient details in Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of Turkish Kurds. The first interesting detail was that Turkish Kurds were, first and foremost, perceived to be in 'captivity'. It is argued that this perception of 'captivity' is related to the lack of a Kurdish political status over a defined Kurdistan region in Turkey. As argued in the previous two chapters, territory is the most important feature for Kurdish identity for Iraqi Kurds. The findings show that the absence of any territorial Kurdish administration in Turkey is interpreted as 'captivity' for Turkish Kurds. An interesting detail is that Turkish Kurds do not describe their political status as 'captivity'. This shows that Iraqi Kurds' interpret Turkish Kurds' status with their understanding of Kurdishness. Iraqi Kurds' narratives also often describe Turkish Kurds as a suffering community.

Another pertinent detail was that, compared to the Iraqi side, the Turkish side is perceived as a poor region with limited economic potential. This perception

Kurds in Iraq

also has an important impact on demands for a possible union with the Turkish side. Iraqi Kurds also often described Turkish Kurds as diligent people in contrast to Iraqi Kurds. Finally, the data showed that Iraqi Kurds' often demonstrated their awareness of ongoing developments on the Turkish side. However, the interesting detail was that Iraqi Kurds commonly assume that Turkish Kurds' ultimate political goal is to build an independent Kurdish state, although there was hardly any mention of independence in Turkish Kurds' narratives. This assumption is again related to Iraqi Kurds' demands in Iraq. Iraqi Kurds often assume that Turkish Kurds demand independence as they do.

The final section in this chapter focused on the socio-spatial differentiations between both sides in Iraqi Kurds' narratives, so as to disclose how Iraqi Kurds place Turkish Kurds in their perceptions of nation and identity. The findings showed that Iraqi Kurds develop stronger senses of belonging and attachment to the Iraqi Kurdish region, in relation to both social and territorial aspects. An important detail was that the participants demonstrated a greater sense of belonging and attachment to Sorani-speaking Iraqi Kurds with whom they share the same territory, than to Turkish Kurds who are linguistically closer to them. It is also argued that Turkish Kurds are often being 'othered' in Iraqi Kurds' narratives. Iraqi Kurds often criticise Turkish Kurd politicians over their secular world views, gender roles and national symbols. The findings showed that Iraqi Kurds also perceive Turkish Kurds as less traditional and less religious. Iraqi Kurds differentiate themselves from Turkish Kurds also through the differences in the gender roles, particularly by opposing the position of women in the Kurdish political movement in Turkey. Gender-biased terms and narratives draw a more patrilineal social structure on the Iraqi side of the border. Finally, it is also argued that whilst the participants unequivocally demonstrate the desire to remove the border for the union with the Turkish side, there are also commonly shared concerns about merging with Turkish Kurds to build a greater Kurdistan. Two of these concerns were most prominent in the data: political disputes and sharing Iraqi Kurdistan's wealth. The natural resources of Iraqi Kurdistan and the political disputes between the two sides of the border lead to reluctance to unite with Turkish Kurds.

PART 4

Chapter 10: CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter consists of three sections. The first section revisits the context in which the thesis took place. It recalls the research rationales and recounts the research questions. The second section discusses the key findings presented in the previous chapters, extending and combining their insights, in particular through comparing and contrasting the results from both sides of the border. Finally, the last section summarises the original contributions of the thesis to the knowledge.

10.1 The thesis in Context

The research is situated within the qualitative tradition in human geography, concerned with the exploration of the impact of the border between Turkey and Iraq on Kurdish identity.

Kurds have often been described as the largest stateless nation. The estimated thirty million Kurds is dispersed between the frontiers of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. Kurds have been exposed to different nation-building strategies with different notions of inclusion and exclusion. Kurds, in each state, have had a different socio-political environment to construct and practice their identity.

Among these four states, Kurdish nationalist movements have become more robust particularly in Turkey and Iraq. Since the demarcation of the border in 1926, both Turkey and Iraq have struggled to accommodate their Kurdish citizens into their common national communities. There have been numerous bloody conflicts on both sides of the border. As of June 2016, Iraqi Kurdistan President repeatedly announced that it is the time for Kurdistan to demand independence. He stated that 'time has come to redraw Middle East boundaries' (Chulov, 2016). On the Turkish side of the border, since the peace talks between the Turkish state and the Kurdish Worker's party [or PKK] failed in July 2015, new series of bloody conflicts restarted at Turkey's Iraq border. All these developments indicate that the problematic relations between these

Conclusion

two states and their Kurdish citizens remain unsolved and the future of both sides remains unclear.

Kurds have also been receiving increasing academic attention. There are many respected works on Kurds and Kurdish inhabited areas (see, McDowall, 2004, van Bruinessen, 1992, Gunter, 2008, Chaliand, 1993); there are also many researchers who studied Kurdish nationalist movements and identity in this divided land (see, Yildiz, 2007, Natali, 2000, Toktamis, 2007, Yegen, 1996, Hassanpour, 2003, Ozoglu, 2004, Vali, 1998). This growing academic literature provides valuable information about Kurds, their history, language, culture, identity, their political relations with their ruling states, and so forth.

Yet, three important research gaps were identified in the literature that have addressed in this thesis. (1) An important question left unanswered is how Kurds themselves perceive their nation and construct their identity. What makes this research significantly different is also that it brings Kurds' voices, their self-understandings and self-narratives to the existing body of knowledge about Kurds. (2) Another weakness in the literature is the lack of knowledge on how Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds perceive their ruling state as well as construct their identity in relation to their ruling state. (3) Considering the 90 year-old history of the border between Turkey and Iraq, another important question that arises is how the bordering, as socio-spatial differentiations, works on each side. There is a lack of knowledge in the literature on how Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds perceive their nation and construct their identity in relation to each other. This thesis, thus, fills these important gaps in the literature.

Furthermore, the timeliness of the research makes this thesis even more important. The original data for the research is collected through an ethnographic fieldwork on both sides of the border, during a rarely encountered peaceful period on both sides. Since the establishment of the border, there have been numerous bloody conflicts that often make it difficult to collect primary data. As of June 2016, there are still ongoing conflicts on both sides. Hence, the research holds a highly valuable set of original data.

Before discussing the findings, I will briefly recount the research questions below, as originally set out in chapter 1.

The overarching aim of the thesis was to explore the impact of the border between Turkey and Iraq on Kurdish identity.

In order to achieve this aim, the research posed two questions:

- 1) How do Turkish Kurds perceive and narratively construct their nation and identity?
- 2) How do Iraqi Kurds perceive and narratively construct their nation and identity?

Both questions are viewed from three perspectives:

- a. Within the region they live in
- b. In relation to the state they belong to
- c. In relation to the other side of the border

10.2 Discussions of the Key Findings

This section discusses the findings presented in the previous chapters in particular through comparing and contrasting the results from both sides of the border from three perspectives.

Regional Dimensions

The exploration of Iraqi Kurds and Turkish Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity started from the regional perspectives. The results disclosed how Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds perceive their nation and narrate their identities in relation to the regions they reside.

Turkey and Iraq had different nation-state building strategies that created different socio-political environments in which Kurdish identity is constructed and evolved. Turkish state's nation building strategy was based on melting all ethnic groups into 'Turkishness' (Chaliand, 1993, Jwaideh, 2006, Somer, 2005, Van Bruinessen, 2000a, Yildiz, 2005). As detailed chronologically in the literature review section, after signing the Lausanne treaty and accepting the constitution of 1924, the state began to impose Turkishness onto Kurdish populations (Barkey and Fuller, 1998, p. 10). The Turkish state attempted to create a homogenous and monolingual nation (Yegen et al., 2011). As opposed to the Turkish state, when Iraq was built, the right of Kurds' self-determination

Conclusion

was recognised (Yildiz, 2007, p. 10). The 1921 Iraqi constitution recognised two ethnic groups, Arabs and Kurds, and Kurdish language had an equal status with Arabic. After the 1958 revolution, the new republic recognised Kurds and Arabs as partners, and their national right in the constitution (McDowall, 2004, p. 302). Yet, the Iraqi state used different strategies to endure its hegemony over Kurds. These strategies also include persecutions, oppressions, large-scale wars and even genocides that killed numerous Kurds.

The results demonstrated the implications of these differences between both sides. The findings suggested that Turkish Kurds, to a great extent, perceive their region as a part of Turkey, whereas Iraqi Kurds have a clear perception of Kurdistan as a separate entity from the rest of Iraq. It can be argued that it is partly because the Kurdistan region of Iraq is an officially recognised autonomous region in Iraq; whereas at the same time there is no defined line that separates Turkish Kurds from the rest of Turkey.

Another important difference was related to Kurds' social belongings and attachments. The data showed that Turkish Kurds, to a large extent, perceive themselves socially connected to the rest of the country. Yet, Turkish Kurds also perceive themselves as ethnically and linguistically different from the rest. In other words, Turkish Kurds are connected to the rest of the country not as Turkish but as Kurdish. Turkish Kurds also foreground their Kurdish identity and the region's ethnic, cultural and linguistic connections with Iraqi Kurds. By contrast, Iraqi Kurds, to a great extent, perceive themselves disconnected from the rest of Iraq. Iraqi Kurds perceive themselves as socially, culturally and linguistically different from the rest of Iraq. They consider themselves as socially, culturally and linguistically connected to Turkish Kurds.

Another main objective of the thesis was to explore the key narratives through which Kurds construct and develop Kurdish identity. The differences in the nation-building strategies in each state have clearly been observed in these key narratives. The findings showed that Turkish Kurds draw on the issue of 'oppressions' to settle their sense of 'self' and 'others'. There were three main themes in these key narratives: 'denial', 'assimilation policies' and 'state-led physical coercions'. The data showed that Kurdish identity is being built upon and developed on the memories of the state-led physical coercions, the politics of denials and assimilations on the Turkish side. On the Iraqi side of the

border, Kurdish identity is also being constructed and developed on the sufferings and pains of the past. Yet, the forms of these past pains and sufferings differ on the Iraqi side. In Iraqi Kurds' narratives Kurdish identity was not denied, nor was it attempted to assimilate, but the region suffered from state-led physical violence, many bloody conflicts, wars and even genocides, and were left underdeveloped. On both sides, Kurdishness is presented as a victim of history, as a suffering nation. Turkish Kurds employ these narratives of 'oppressions' to justify their nationalist struggle and to present it as a human right issue; Iraqi Kurds use these narratives of the historical victimhood in order to justify their demands to build a Kurdish state. All these narratives from both sides are also important to understand how and why Kurdishness has become an important facet of their identities on both sides of the border.

An important difference between the nation-building strategies of Turkey and Iraq was their primary targets. On the Turkish side, an important target of the assimilation policies was the Kurdish language. The martial law of 1925 banned the use of Kurdish language and encouraged Kurds to speak Turkish (McDowall, 2004). An article in the constitution of 1982 addressed the use of Kurdish by stating that 'expressing thoughts or publications in languages that are not first official language of the any recognised countries are forbidden'. Although most of these restrictions on the Kurdish language have gradually been lifted, the Kurdish language has been the most oppressed element of Kurdish identity in Turkey. By contrast, the Kurdish language was not oppressed on the Iraqi side of the border. The Iraqi state often employed physical violence to endure its hegemony over the Kurdish region in Iraq; however, it did not restrict the use of the language (McDowall, 2004, Yildiz, 2007, Stansfield, 2006).

This difference has impacted Kurds' understanding of Kurdish identity in each state. The data indicated that the Kurdish language has become the first and foremost important facet of Kurdish identity on the Turkish side of the border. On the Iraqi side of the border, 'territory' appeared as the most important element in Kurdish identity. These findings suggest that the most threatened feature of Kurdish identity in each state had become the most important facet of Kurds' identity. The data suggests that these differences also have

Conclusion

significant impacts on Kurds' socio-political demands and future expectations. While the most demanded rights, on the Turkish side, are mostly related to the Kurdish language, i.e. Kurdish education; on the Iraqi side of the border there is a strong demand for an independent Kurdistan.

State Dimensions

Turkish Kurds and the Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity have also been explored in relations to the states they belong to. There were four fundamental differences between both sides that had impacts on Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity constructions in the contexts of their ruling states. Firstly, while there is a Turkish national identity that Turkish Kurds have been expected to fuse to; there is not an inclusive national identity on the Iraqi side of the border.

The constitution of 1924 equated 'citizenship' with Turkishness (Barkey and Fuller, 1998, p. 10). The article 88 stated that 'the people of Turkey are called Turks by virtue of citizenship, irrespective of their racial and religious affiliations'. A slightly changed version of this article still defines Turkishness in the current constitution of 1982: 'Article 66: 'everyone bound to the Turkish state through the bond of citizenship is a Turk'. Although this definition seems civic and inclusive, the word 'Turk' also defines an ethnic group. Hence, Turkish national identity is constructed by mainly redefining the Turkish ethnic group as the nation into which Kurds and the other ethnic groups were expected to conform to. The findings also suggested that Turkish Kurds perceive 'Turkishness', first and above all, as an ethnic identity that poses a threat to Kurdish identity. The data indicated that while Turkishness as an ethnic identity [as Türk] is commonly rejected, Turkishness as a territorial identity [as Türkiyeli] is defined as a part of Turkish Kurds' identity.

On the Iraqi side, the state recognised Kurds as an official nation, and Kurdish language had an equal status with Arabic (Yildiz, 2007). After the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Kurds obtained substantial rights to govern the Kurdish region. Kurdish Regional Government has become virtually independent in the federal Iraq (Gunter, 2013). The findings showed that the absence of an inclusive Iraqi national identity strengthens the division between the Iraqi Kurdish region and the rest of Iraq. The rest of Iraqis are primarily defined as

Arabs and the state is considered to be 'theirs'. The data suggests that the lack of an Iraqi national identity provides a space for Kurdish identity to develop further independently from the rest of Iraq.

The second important difference was that while an overwhelming majority of Iraqi Kurds lives in the Kurdish region of Iraq; Turkish Kurds do not only live in the southeast part of the country; but they have also dispersed around Turkey. Mainly due to numerous wars between Iraqi Kurds and the state, there is hardly any Iraqi Kurds in the rest of the country, particularly since the Anfal campaigns in 1988 when millions of Kurds were displaced (Yildiz, 2007, McDowall, 2004). By contrast, numerous Turkish Kurds have spread around Turkey since the earlier years of the state. Some Turkish Kurds were exiled to the west part of Turkey after the Rehabilitation Plan in 1925 (Yegen, 2006). Also in 1934, the state adopted a resettlement policy that ordered the dispersion of many Kurdish citizens (Zeydanlioglu, 2008). Many Turkish Kurds also preferred to live in different parts of the country due to economic, security or other reasons. It can be argued that these different conditions impact Kurds' attachments and belongings to their ruling states differently. The data showed that a common pattern in Turkish Kurds' narratives was the 'inseparability' of the region from the rest of Turkey. By contrast, Iraqi Kurds commonly believe that the separation from the rest of Iraq is already on the way.

The other two important differences between both sides are related to economic and security conditions. On the Turkish side, the region is relatively poor and underdeveloped compared to the rest of Turkey. The rest of the Turkish state has a more promising image in terms of economic capacity and developments. Similarly, due to long lasting conflicts, the region has less secure and stable conditions compared to the rest of Turkey. On the Iraqi side, the rest of Iraq is unstable and insecure compared to the more secure and stable conditions in the Iraqi Kurdish region. Iraqi Kurdistan is also rich with natural resources that provide sufficient economic conditions for the region. These differences in the security and economic conditions between both sides also partly explain the differences in Kurds' relations and connections with their ruling states. While Iraqi Kurdish region's relatively better economic and secure conditions reinforce the division between Iraqi Kurds and the state; on the Turkish side, the region's relatively smaller economic capacity arguably

Conclusion

plays an important role in strengthening the connections with the rest of Turkey.

Kurds' relations with their ruling states are also important determining factors in the evolution and development of Kurdish nationalism and identity. These relations shape Kurdish nationalism and identity in each state. The findings showed that Turkish Kurds often blame the state for the past oppressions, denial policies and physical coercions. The Turkish state mostly appears as the source of injustice and suffering in Turkish Kurds' narratives. The state is also blamed for producing a negative image of the region in the rest of Turkey. The data suggests that these narratives function as 'emotional borders' to varying degrees with the rest of community in Turkey. These perceptions also increase Turkish Kurds' self-awareness as Kurds. It is because the main target in these narratives is Kurdish identity. On the Iraqi side, the rest of Iraqis and the state are blamed for the pains and sufferings of the past in the region. This has some important impacts on the relations and connections with the rest of the Iraqi state. It disconnects them from Arabs. These arguments are also being used to justify the lack of trust towards the rest of Iraq and the demands for a complete separation. While Arabs often pose a threat to Kurdish identity in Iraqi Kurds' narrative, it is often the state, not Turks, that poses a threat to Kurdish identity in Turkish Kurds' narratives.

The findings also revealed Kurds' demands and future expectations on each side of the border. All these differences in the socio-political environments between two sides as well as Kurds' perceptions of, and relations with, their ruling states shape Kurds' demands and expectations in each state. The findings showed that Turkish Kurds desire to remain together with the rest of Turkey. The demands and expectations are to solve the problems and to continue living together. The findings indicate that Turkish Kurds have three main demands: (1) recognition and respect to Kurdish identity, (2) cultural and identity-related rights [mainly linguistic rights] and (3) some administrative rights to govern the region they reside, i.e. more decision making powers to local authorities. There is a belief that the problems with the rest of the state are also fading away. It is again important to note that the socio-political context of the time, particularly the peace talks, had a significant impact on these beliefs. It might not be possible to observe the same optimism after the failure of the peace talks and the resurgence of the conflicts in the region since

July 2015. By contrast, on the Iraqi side there is a clear demand and expectation of separation from the rest of Iraq, to build an independent Kurdistan.

Cross-Border Dimensions

Finally, Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of nation and identity have been explored in relations to each other. The findings reveal how the bordering, as the processes of socio-spatial homogenisations and differentiations, works on each side of the border.

The border in this research is not only understood as a physical line but also a socio-political and discursive construct as well as a process of socio-spatial homogenisations and differentiations (Van Houtum and Van Naerssen, 2002, Newman, 2006). As detailed, the literature contains valuable works on the differences between the socio-political environments Kurds have had in Turkey and Iraq (Gunter, 2008, McDowall, 2004, Natali, 2005, Yildiz, 2007, Yildiz, 2005). All these respected works left an important gap in the literature: how these differences impact Kurds' belongings and attachments to each other across the border.

This study, initially, explored how Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds perceive the border. The findings showed that the border is, first and above all, perceived as an artificial line on the Turkish side. Turkish Kurds emphasised the social and territorial connections with Iraqi Kurds. Turkish Kurds commonly referred to Iraqi Kurds as 'our relatives' and 'part of us'. There are emphasises on the cultural, territorial, ethnic and linguistic connections between both sides of the border in Turkish Kurds' narratives. Hence, the border neither divides two different territories; nor two different communities.

On the Iraqi side, the border is also considered as a line that divides Kurds. Iraqi Kurds also frequently referred to Turkish Kurds as 'our brothers and sisters' and 'part of our family'. Yet, as opposed to Turkish Kurds, Iraqi Kurds hardly ever used such adjectives like artificial, unnatural, and unauthentic to describe the border. Similarly, Iraqi Kurds rarely mentioned any territorial connections between two sides. Iraqi Kurds make a clear distinction between both sides: while the Iraqi side is always referred as the only 'Kurdistan', the

Conclusion

Turkish side is commonly referred as just Turkey. Although Turkish Kurds are considered culturally, ethnically and linguistically the same, and even closer than Sorani speaking Kurds on the Iraqi side; the findings suggested that Turkish Kurds are often perceived as 'the other Kurds' who live outside of the perceived 'Kurdistan'.

The findings also disclosed Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds' perceptions of each other. The data showed that Iraqi Kurdistan has many symbolic meanings for Turkish Kurds. Iraqi Kurds, first and above all, have what Turkish Kurds have been striving for: recognition. Turkish Kurds perceive the Iraqi Kurdish region as a place where Kurdish identity can be freely performed. Hence, Turkish Kurds' initial narratives about the Iraqi side often start with stating Iraqi Kurds' achievements: the Iraqi side is officially recognised as 'Kurdistan' and the Kurdish language is the official language in Iraq. In their narratives, Turkish Kurds also express their joys and excitements when seeing the Kurdish flag, Kurdish policemen, Kurdish signpost and any national symbols. The existence of Kurdish autonomy on the Iraqi side excites Turkish Kurds. All these meanings attributed to Iraqi Kurdistan play important roles in Turkish Kurds' identity constructions. It confirms Turkish Kurds existence as a nation. It also symbolises that Kurds can govern themselves.

The data showed that all these perceptions of Iraqi Kurdistan and the meanings attributed to the Iraqi side tell only half of the story. Turkish Kurds also foreground some differences between both sides. In Turkish Kurds' narratives, Iraqi Kurds were often described as more tribal, feudal, traditional, less democratic and less educated. These findings suggest that Turkish Kurds feel superior to Iraqi Kurd. Iraqi Kurds were also blamed for not having inclusive nationalist feelings towards the Kurds who reside outside of the Iraqi Kurdish region.

On the Iraqi side of the border, the findings showed that Iraqi Kurds, first and above all, consider Turkish Kurds under 'captivity' with limited rights on the Turkish side. It was argued that these narratives about 'captivity' on the Turkish side of the border seem primarily related to the lack of a Kurdish political status and a defined Kurdistan region on the Turkish side. The Turkish side was also perceived as a poor, suffering region with limited economic capacity. Turkish Kurds were also blamed for not being traditional; and the

Kurdish political movement in Turkey was often criticised for being leftist and secular. Finally, gender is another variable through which socio-spatial differentiations occur in the participants' narratives. As argued, gender is a key element in the operation of identity. A gender-biased language was observed in the participants' narratives on both sides. The relationship between Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds was often described as 'brotherhood'. The differences in gender relations, particularly within the Kurdish political movements, were emphasised. Compared to the Iraqi side, Kurdish women play a greater role in the Kurdish political movement in Turkey. The data indicated that Kurdish women, particularly elderly women, were primarily affected by the language-related problems in Turkey, and were seen as the transmitters and carriers of the Kurdish language in Turkey. Iraqi Kurds' narratives described a more patrilineal social structure on the Iraqi side of the border. Iraqi Kurds distinguish themselves from Turkish Kurds also through the differences in gender relations.

All these findings suggested that the border is being internalised by both sides. The findings demonstrated how the border also functions as a differentiator. On both sides, the border shapes Kurds' perceptions of sameness, belongings, attachments and self-understandings. Although Turkish Kurds recognise Iraqi Kurds as their 'relatives', there is also a sense of belonging to Turkey. The findings suggested that there are more connections and attachments to the Turkish side rather than the Iraqi side in Turkish Kurds' narratives. On the Iraqi side, although Iraqi Kurds stated that Turkish Kurds are 'our brothers and sisters' and even linguistically closer than Sorani speaking Iraqi Kurds, the findings showed that there are more connections and attachments to Sorani speaking Iraqi Kurds whom they reside in the same region since the border was drawn. Although Kurds, on both sides, recognise the other side of the border as ethnically, culturally and linguistically connected, those on the other side of the border are perceived as 'the other Kurds'.

Finally, although, on both sides, there were commonly stated desires to unite with the other side, there were many concerns about that. The findings suggested that Turkish Kurds' main demand is to solve the issues with the Turkish state, not to build a greater Kurdistan, whereas Iraqi Kurds strongly

Conclusion

demand an independent Kurdistan. Furthermore, Iraqi Kurds' independent Kurdistan demand does not include any land on the Turkish side of the border. Although Iraqi Kurds commonly stated that their expectation is to unite with Turkish Kurds, such statements were followed with their concerns about a possible union. Among others, two salient concerns of Iraqi Kurds were about the political disputes between both sides and more commonly about the possible issues of sharing the Iraqi Kurdish region's wealth.

10.3 Contributions of the Study

This final section lists the original contributions of the thesis. The thesis supports the existing literature at many points.

This thesis has brought Kurds' voices, their self-narratives and self-understanding to the existing body of knowledge about Kurds, Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish identity. It has, thus, filled a big gap in the literature. This study has addressed a very important question that was left unanswered in the literature. Although the existing literature contains many respected works on the national identities to which Kurds were expected to fuse to in each state, there was lack of knowledge on how Kurds themselves perceive their nation and construct their identity.

This work has explored how the socio-political environment on each side of the border shaped a different Kurdish identity. Kurds, in each state, have had a different socio-political environment to practice and develop their identity since the demarcation of the border in 1926. Kurds have been exposed to different nation-state building processes with different notions of inclusions and exclusions. Although many respected works provide valuable insights into these differences between both sides, there was a lack of knowledge on how these differences affected Kurdish identity.

The thesis has also explored how Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds perceive their ruling states as well as construct their identity in relation to the contexts of the Iraqi and Turkish state. Both Turkey and Iraq have always been struggling to accommodate their Kurdish citizens into their common national communities. There have been numerous conflicts and wars on both sides of the border. The thesis has provided a different perspective to understand all these problematic relations between these two states and their Kurdish citizens. It demonstrated how Kurds, in each state, perceive their ruling state and how they position Kurdish identity in the contexts of Turkish and Iraqi state.

This study has also explored how the bordering process works on each side of the border. The findings showed how Turkish and Iraqi Kurds have perceived the border. The thesis explored how Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds perceive their nation and construct their identity in relation to each other. Considering

Conclusion

the 90 year-old history of the border, there was a lack of knowledge on Kurds' belongings and attachments to each other across the border. The research, thus, filled another important gap in the literature.

Besides contributing to the existing academic literature, the findings of this thesis could certainly also provide a useful avenue for the possible future researches on Kurds, Kurdish identity and Kurdish nationalism in Turkey and Iraq, as well as in Iran and Syria.

The findings of this thesis also provide valuable knowledge to both Turkish and Iraqi state authorities and decision makers, concerning their Kurdish citizens, their demands and expectations. The thesis contributes to our understanding of the problematic relations between these two states and their Kurdish citizens. Both Turkey and Iraq have suffered from numerous ethnic conflicts and shared the fear of losing their territory. The findings provide highly valuable insights into the existing issues between Kurds and their ruling states on both sides of the border.

The thesis also furthers our understandings and knowledge of the existing regional issues and the most recent developments on both sides of the border, i.e. the advance of the Islamic state towards Iraq, the failure of the peace talks between the Turkish state and the Kurdish Workers' Party in Turkey. It provides a valuable perspective that helps to predict the possible consequences of all these developments.

Finally, what also makes this research highly valuable and unique is its timeliness and originality. As repeatedly stated, since the establishment of the border, there have been numerous bloody conflicts that often make it difficult to collect primary data. As of September 2016, there are still ongoing conflicts on both sides. The original data for the research is collected through fieldwork on both sides of the border, during a rarely encountered peaceful period on both sides. Hence, the research has provided a highly valuable set of original data.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations in this research involve informing the participants about the content of the research, asking their consent, recording the interviews, informing the participants about their right to withdraw their consent, avoiding inconvenient and distressing topics, and protecting the participants' anonymity in every stage of the research.

The informants are provided an information sheet prior to meeting (see the [appendix-3](#) for the participant information sheet). Once a participant agreed to take part, the time and venue were arranged for the interview. At the beginning of all interviews, the participant information script was read to ensure that the participants have understood the information contained in the information sheet (Please see [the appendix-4](#) for the Participant Information Script). The participants were later asked to sign a consent form at the end of the script, and their responses were audio-recorded before the interview commences.

In this research, some of the respondents did not want to sign a consent form because of the history of difficult relationships between these people and the state. Signing a consent form was problematic, uncomfortable and distressing for some participants; therefore in such cases verbal consent of the participants was obtained and recorded at the beginning of the interviews (see 'Participant Information Procedure Script' for more details about how the oral consents obtained).

Participants met individually with the interviewer in a convenient and comfortable location to the participants. Each interview took up to 2 hours. During the interviews, a series of different topics discussed involving reflection on participants' everyday life practices and their relations and interactions within the community they live in, with the state they belong to, and with the community on the other side of the border. The interviews were audio recorded. (Please also see the [appendix-2](#) for the interview guideline for more details about the contents of the interviews).

Appendix

The right to withdraw consent was made clear on the information sheet at the outset of the interview as part of the consent process. The participants were informed that the interview has been completed at the end of the interview; and they were asked whether they were still happy for the conversation to be used as part of the research. The participants have been provided with the contact details of the researcher, in case if they decide at a later date that they would prefer to withdraw their consent, this opportunity was accessible to them.

Some participants had stories that were inconvenient and uncomfortable to share with the researcher, such as of smuggling or illegal border crossing. Therefore, I did not raise such topics at any time. Yet, when the interviewees raised them, I let them talk but when they seem distressed or uncomfortable at any point, I reminded them that they were under no obligation to continue, and that the interview can end or the discussion can move on to another topic. In such cases, participants were also assured again that all the conversations would stay completely confidential. Sharing the same background and a similar identity with the informants facilitated to develop a rapport with the participants.

The interviews were audio recorded but the recordings were identified by a number (not a name). The recordings were stored on a password-protected computer. Interviewees were given pseudonyms in any written material. They will be identified according to broad sociological categories like gender and approximate age. Only relatively large geographical areas will be referred to in publications (in case only a few people in a particular village took part in the study).

In any written materials (such as reports or articles), regardless of whether academic or not, any quotes will be careful to not only use pseudonyms but also either avoid using or change any other identifying information such as dates, locations or particular events. The focus will be on the meaning attached to events and interactions rather than the historical content of these, which could be linked back to the participant. Data stored electronically is password protected and stored on a laptop and backed up on my password-protected space on the server at the University of Southampton for five years. The password is only known by the researcher.

Given the particular sensitivities regarding anonymity, confidentiality etc., I have not kept the contact details of my participants. It seems more important to avoid retaining contact details of participants than to offer them a summary of the findings. Yet, participants can always search and access any findings once it is published or can get in touch with the researcher, as they will have the researcher's contact details in the participant information sheet, and ask for findings at any time once it is published.

One of the main ethical issues is that the researcher, in some cases, came across information about activities that are illegal; namely smuggling, illegal border crossing and getting involved with illegal demonstrations. For such cases, any personal details will not be divulged without their express permission. The research conforms to the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University Data Protection Policy (approved by the council 10 July 2008) (see, <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/inf/dppolicy.pdf> accessed on 23/04/14).

Appendix 2: Interview Guideline

Interview Timeline		Explanatory Notes
	Introducing self Purpose of Study Participant information (scripted) Consent (written and oral) Permission to record	- The aim of this section is to inform the participant about the project and to obtain their consent, and also their permission to record. (See 'Participant Information Script' and 'Consent Form')
	Some possible initial questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where were you born? How long have you been living here? What do you do for living? What is your daily routine? 	- The aim of this section is to initiate the interview by gathering some information about the participants and also to prepare them for the first section.
1 st P A R T	Some possible questions for the first section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How was life here before? What has changed here? Have you been to any neighbour cities and/or villages? How often? How is life there comparing to your city? Do you have any friend/family/business partner there? How were your relations with these cities comparing to now? Referring the second section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How about the other cities? 	- This section aims to gather some information about how the participants perceive and narratively construct their nation and identity, in relation to the region they live in.
	Some possible questions for the second section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which cities have you been? How did you find them? How is life there comparing to your city and/or region? Do you have any relative/friend or business partner there? How were the relations with the rest? How is it now? What are the difference and similarities between this region and the rest? Referring the third section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How about the other side of the border? 	- This section aims to gather some information about how the participants perceive and narratively construct their nation and identity, in relation to the states in Turkey and Iraq.
	Some possible questions for the third section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you ever been on the other side of the border? How often do you go there? Do you know any one (friend, family, business ass.) personally from the other side of the border? What do you know about the other side? How is life on the other side? Do you follow the news about the other side? 	- This section aims to gather some information about how the participants perceive and narratively construct their nation and identity, in relation to the other side of the border?

Appendix

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the differences and similarities between this region and the other side? 	
2 nd P A R T	<p>Some possible ways of asking more direct identity questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you define yourself? What does it mean to be Kurdish? What makes you Kurdish? How do you define the region? Is there anything that makes this region different from the rest of the state? If so, what? What does it mean to be a citizen of Turkey/Iraq? What does it mean to be Turkish/Iraqi? How do you define people living in the rest of the state? Is there any difference between people who live in the region and who live in the rest? If so, what? How do you define people living on the other side of the border? What are the similarities and differences between the Kurdish people who live on this side and the Kurdish people who live on the other side? If you had to leave this city, where would you prefer to live –first options: the region vs. the rest of the state; second options: the rest of the state vs. the other side of the border, third options: the region vs. the other side of the border? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the second part, some more direct questions about how they identify themselves and their nation will be asked to the informants. It consists of three sections: they will be related to (1) the region (2) the rest of the state, and also (3) to the other side of the border. This part aims to gather some information about more consciously held beliefs about their nation and identity. The reason for setting these two parts is to obtain information about both less explicit modes and more consciously held beliefs about their identity and nation.
	<p>Checklist</p> <p>Age, Gender, Occupation, Income bracket.</p> <p>The end of interview consent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some key factual information regarding the participant will be gathered. The participants will be asked whether they are still happy for the conversation to be used as part of the research. The participants will also be provided the contact details of the researcher; in case if they decide at later dates that they would prefer to withdraw their consent, so that this opportunity will also be accessible to them.

Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: Nation, Bordering and Identity on the border between Turkey and Iraq

Researcher: Bilal GORENTAS

Ethics number: 6450

Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

The purpose of this research is to establish the experiences of Kurdish people living either side of the Turkey/Iraq border, with a particular focus on their self-identities, including their national and ethnic identities. I am a research student at Southampton University in the UK. This project is part of my training that will lead to a PhD degree in Geography.

Why have I been chosen?

The participants in this project are Kurdish people who live on either side of the Turkey/Iraq border. I am looking for up to 75-100 people, consist of approximately 35-50 male and 35-50 female adults aged between 18 and 70 years, to take part in each side of the border.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to take part, we will arrange to meet at a time that is convenient to you, either in your home or if you prefer in another quiet venue which you feel comfortable in. It will not cost you anything to take part. Once you have given your consent to take part, we will have a conversation, which will probably take about one or two hours, about your everyday life practices, your relations and interactions within the community you live in, with the state you belong to and also with the community on the other side of border. The conversation will be recorded.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

I hope that you will find taking part an interesting experience. There is very little research that explores the everyday life practices of the border communities; hence by taking part you will be helping these communities' voices be heard in academic research.

Are there any risks involved?

There are no real risks to being involved and you are not obliged to talk about any experiences you feel uncomfortable discussing or find distressing.

Will my participation be confidential?

Confidentiality is very important in this project. The recording and any documents will be stored on a computer and they will be password protected so that they cannot be accessed by anyone else. In any written documents your name and the names of anyone else you mention will be changed, as will any other details by which you could be identified. Information will be kept safe in line with UK laws (the Data Protection Act) and University of Southampton policy.

What happens if I change my mind?

You have the right to withdraw at any time and this will not have an effect on any of your rights.

What happens if something goes wrong?

If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research is conducted, you may contact:

Dr Martina Prude, Head of Research Governance
Southampton University
+44 02380 595058
mad4@soton.ac.uk

If you have any further questions once you have read this information sheet, please get in touch with me using the following details:

Bilal Gorentas
Post Graduate Researcher
University of Southampton
+44 740 1919 219
bilal.gorentas@soton.ac.uk

Appendix 4: Participant Information Script

1. All participants will be given a copy of the information sheet to read themselves or to take with them should they wish someone to help them read it at a later date.
2. The participant information script will be read at the beginning of all interviews to ensure that all participants have understood the information contained in the information sheet.
3. The participants will be asked to sign a consent form at the end of the script, and their responses will also be audio recorded before the interview commences.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this project. My name is Bilal Gorentas, and I am a PhD student at Southampton University, in the UK. Before we start, there is some information I need to give you about what taking part involves. After I have explained everything to you, if you are happy to continue I will ask you to sign a consent form. Please feel free to ask any questions you have as I go through the information, or once I have finished.

The title of this project is 'Nation, Bordering and Identity on the border between Turkey and Iraq Border'. I am interested in the experiences of Kurdish people living either side of the Turkey/Iraq border, with a particular focus on their self-identities, including their national and ethnic identities.

The participants in this project are Kurdish people who live on either side of the Turkey/Iraq border. I am looking for up to 75-100 people, consist of approximately 35-50 male and 35-50 female adults aged between 18 and 70 years, to take part in each side of the border. If you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. It will not cost you anything to take part. Once you have given your consent to take part, we will have a conversation, which will probably take about one or two hours, about your everyday life practices, your relations and interactions within the community you live in, with the state you belong to and also with the community on the other side of border. The conversation will be recorded.

In order to do this project I have obtained an ethical approval from the University of Southampton.

You are not obliged to talk about any experiences you feel uncomfortable or find distressing. Please let me know if you want to take a break at any time. Anything you do say will be kept confidential.

The recording and any documents will be stored on a computer and they will be password protected so that they cannot be accessed by anyone else. In any written documents your name and the names of anyone else you mention will be changed, as will any other details by which you could be identified. Information will be kept safe in line with UK laws (the Data Protection Act) and University of Southampton policy.

You have the right to withdraw at any time and this will not have an effect on any of your rights.

If you have any question or are unhappy about any aspect of this project, please do discuss it with me. My details are on 'the Participant Information Sheet' I have given to you. If you would prefer to make a complaint, there are details of whom you can contact on 'the Participant Information Sheet' I have given to you.

That is all of the information I need to give you. Do you have any questions?

Are you happy to continue with the interview?

Consent Statement

I am going to read you three statements. If you agree, please say so at the end of each statement.

- 1) I have heard and understood all of the information about the research and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- 2) I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.
- 3) I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected.

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