

Kurdish generational diasporic identities

**Perceptions of 'home' and 'sense of belonging' within families
among Iraqi Kurds in the UK**

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Abstract

This thesis examines the concept of 'home' and 'sense of belonging' according to the experiences of Iraqi-Kurdish diasporic communities in the United Kingdom. It aims to explore the extent to which those in the Kurdish diaspora constructed their 'identity' in relation to their experiences and perceptions of 'home'. It considers the concept of 'home' and 'sense of belonging' as two contested and negotiated concepts among immigrant communities and Iraqi Kurdish communities in Britain in particular. The study also seeks to discover connections between the family as home and that of institutional home (i.e. the country of origin and the country of settlement) and experiences of living between two cultures.

It aims to obtain empirically grounded insights from the generational perspectives of the Kurdish immigrants and their children in terms of their sense of belonging and integration into UK society. It also aims to provide insights from the perspective of gender and conceptualise the Kurdish male/female experiences in the diaspora. The study will also investigate the ways in which memories of 'back home' narrated by parents, influence and interweave with their children's constructions and experiences of 'home' in the UK. The current study is distinctive in at least two ways. It provides new insights from different generational and gender perspectives among Kurdish communities that are essential to the field conceptually; its empirical focus is characterised by ethnographic study. The study aspires to not only understand why this particular group thinks in that way but also to investigate how they experience their life-world. It deploys a combination of research into

lived experiences and the reflexive experience of the researcher. Through its autoethnographical approach it contributes to the development of research methods in the field. This study's distinctive features take into account lived experiences from the Kurdish community; the research is bottom-up rather than focusing solely on the political activist or the political elite. Furthermore, it considers generational differences and transnational family experiences in the age of globalisation and the intensity of people's migratory.

The thesis' findings conclude that the Iraqi-Kurdish diaspora is experiencing a triadic identity and belonging; this is taking place in the context of the family home, host country and country of origin. As a consequence, there is a focus on heterogeneity enabling an understanding of the diaspora's multiple identifications with different places, times and cultural formations. The study promotes perspectives from an individual's experience (Alina, 2004) and also its social practice; it is not just an apolitical domain. This necessitates challenging the essentialist and nationalist approach that is, unfortunately, dominant in diasporic community research and in the Kurdish diaspora in particular. The thesis has concluded that the second generation do not behave in a manner similar to their parents in terms of their experiences of their ancestral home; they are just not a continuation of the first generation. They need, instead, to be treated as a complex phenomenon in their own right.

Keywords: Diasporic Identity, Home, Kurdish, Generational Identity and Transnational Family.

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List of Abbreviations

BASP	Ba'ath Arab Socialist Party
CM	Movement for Change
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FGW	First Gulf War
GCIR	Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees
HBVA	Honour-Based Violence Awareness Network
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICP	Iraqi Communist Party
IC	Iraqi Constitution
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IMK	Islamic Movement in Kurdistan
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
KIG	Kurdistan Islamic Group
KIU	Kurdistan Islamic Union
KNA	Kurdistan National Assembly (Parliament)
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KRI	Kurdistan Region-Iraq
KSSO	Kurdish Studies and Student Organization
OFFP	The Oil for Food Programme
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

YPG People's Protection Units

YPJ Women's Protection Units

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1A Vignette

When I was a teenager, the wall of my little sleeping space (I did not have my own bedroom), was covered with portraits of the famous ‘martyrs’ of the nation and freedom fighters; the latter we called the ‘Peshmerga’. The wall was also hung with our stateless national flag and slogans such as ‘Freedom to Kurdistan’. These were symbolic of the Kurdish national identity; it was strictly prohibited by the Iraqi central government to publicly display these symbols. Revealing any loyalty to these symbols was a considerable offence and a betrayal of the country. Consequently, people were executed and sentenced to life in prison simply for demonstrating sympathy with their national symbols. Now when I enter my son’s room the first object to be seen is the Arsenal football team portrait on the wall and alongside this is a large poster (30inch x 24inch) of an Arsenal striker. Gazing at this poster reminds me of another childhood memory when I was playing football with a group of my close friends in a nearby field in the town of my birth, Khormal. We heard bomb explosions starting up again. The town was under constant bombardment by the Iranian army for eight years during the Iraq/Iran war as the area was situated on the border between these two countries. We became familiar with the blitz but this time was very different as a bomb dropped in the field in which we were playing. We all ran away in the smoke and dust and I

found myself under a collapsed wall of the building next to the field we played in. Soon I realised that a beloved friend had been killed and a few others were seriously injured.

In those days there were always photocopies of prohibited newspapers and also a few political leaflets hidden under my pillow. Of course there was my beloved small radio to listen to as the only medium to inform us about the 'Peshmerga' freedom fighters. At that time it was broadcast in the mountains and if anyone was caught tuning-in they were considered a separatist. Nowadays, in my son's room there is also a slim HD TV, a PS 4, smart phone and his laptop; he mostly plays games and chats with his friends online. His little room has become a virtual world where he can easily connect to his peer group anywhere in the world.

This is not simply a comparison between two groups of people, one old and one young; the first living in the past and the second in the present. The latter has access to advanced technology while the former lived with basic and simple technology. There is now a complex and unique transformation of generational experiences in the Kurdish nation being as it is one of the largest nations without a country. There is still the generational continuity of struggling to belong; the Kurdish are a stateless people regardless of their age, gender and religious differences and they carry this profile wherever they go.

On recollection, it was while I was working within the community, at the beginning of this research, that particular childhood memories came to me seemingly from nowhere. There was an emergence of nostalgic memories within me as a father living in exile which brought to mind traumatic experiences of political persecution and at the same time an observance of my son's life and the lives of many other young Kurdish individuals who I worked with either in my previous study or through my work as interpreter and community organiser.

It is important to bear in mind that, unlike my son, most of the young Kurdish living in the diaspora have the Kurdish flag alongside their posters of their affiliated football clubs or sport personalities. I was intrigued by this and so I began to enquire about the generational differences in respect of home and belonging. I wondered whether the Kurdish younger generation considered themselves as British or Kurdish and whether there was a middle way, in which way their experiences growing up and being educated in the UK had shaped their lifestyles and sense of belonging. There was also the question of whether their parents' memories and experiences of war and political persecution had had an impact on them.

Generally speaking, my early enquiries had led me to realise that there were two dominant responses to the above concerns and queries in the current literature in regard to the younger generation in the diaspora. First, the mainstream literature has suggested that the children of immigrant families (i.e. the second generation) will simply follow their parents in terms of home and belonging or at least experience similar difficulties in adapting. This concept has been termed 'downward assimilation' (Ports, Fernandez-Kelly and Haller, 2009). The second argument promotes the opposite point of view insisting that the younger children have their own lifestyles influenced by the experiences of living in the host society (Kasinitz et al. 2008) and that soon the children of immigrants will assimilate (Alba and Nee 2003). Both sides of the arguments only consider one aspect which is that the children of the immigrant communities, regardless of the experiences of family life, have not taken into account the power relationship between generations (parents and children). However, insufficient attention has been paid to the experiences of the Iraqi Kurds' younger generation in particular.

1.2 Formulating the Research Question

This study aims to explore the extent to which the Kurdish diaspora constructed their 'identity' in relation to experiences and perceptions of 'home'. It considers the concept of 'home' and 'sense of belonging' as two contested and negotiated concepts among immigrant communities and Iraqi Kurdish communities in Britain in particular. The study also seeks to find connections between the family as home and institutional home (the country of origin and the country of settlement) and experiences of living between two cultures. It needs to be borne in mind that this thesis understands 'home' as a complex term. The term 'home' is being understood here with reference to both one's lived and imagined home. In a sense the thesis is not concerned with the physical space of home but rather with an understanding of the relationships between people in transnational families that establish the idea of home through their basic daily experiences. In addition, it aims to obtain empirically grounded insights from the generational perspectives of the Kurdish immigrants and their children in terms of their sense of belonging and integration into UK society. Relatedly, I investigate the ways in which memories of 'back home' narrated by parents, influence and interweave with their children's constructions and experiences of 'home' in the UK. Although the scope of this research will be focusing on discussion of inter-generational conceptualisations of home among a particular group of Iraqi-Kurds immigration, debating and analysing Kurdish diaspora in a general term cannot be denied. This is due to the fact that notions of home, 'imagined home' and returning home for diasporic communities are a set of complex and interrelated phenomena. Therefore, it is impossible to discuss identity without referring to the diaspora in general. The transnational family is an increasingly important aspect of diasporic studies. This study aims to fill the gap where there is insufficient research paying close attention to the family in a diaspora. Similarly, very little is currently known about the

'imaginary home' in researching identity and home among immigrant communities and in particular the Iraqi Kurdish communities in the UK.

This research is part of the ever-changing literature in the field of diaspora studies and which usually views the experiences of the younger generation as complex and indeterminate in terms of their ancestral home and assimilation process. Hence, their experiences are not just a continuation of those of the older generation, as has been suggested by the researchers whose work can be seen mostly as policy or political driven. In other words this is the type of research conducted in a top-down approach and usually carried out by the researchers outside the immigrant communities. In contrast this research is driven by lived experiences and investigates the community utilising a bottom-up approach and, most importantly, is carried out by an 'insider' researcher. Therefore, in respect of the new generation of Kurdish immigrant living in the UK they are now viewed as a complex set of practices on their own (Levitt 2009). My main focus will be on this under-researched area of the life and experiences of Iraqi Kurdish generations in the context of transnational families with particular regard to their sense of home and belonging.

There are several characteristics which make this research distinctive; this can be seen in both the theoretical and methodological features of the research. By attempting to access the deeper, emotional as well as sociological dimensions of my participants' experiences, I am at the same time providing a degree of breadth by conducting combined ethnography research. The method used to gather the data involved adapting the original and experimental ethnographic and auto-ethnographic methodologies (for further details see Chapter 4).

There are some significant theoretical and methodological challenges to this research. Predominantly, the research into the Kurdish diasporic communities in Europe is influenced by two particular views of this group. First, those non-Kurdish researchers that have worked

with Kurdish communities have treated Kurdish people as a homogenised entity. Rarely do they make a distinction in the Kurdish diaspora when it comes to identity and belonging, and generational differences in particular. This is the case regardless of their knowledge of the historical and political background of the Kurdish as a divided nation and the fact that these people, the Kurds in the diaspora, originated from at least four different countries, namely Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria. Additionally, many of these non-Kurdish researchers who have contributed to the field of Kurdish diaspora studies have constantly argued that the presence of the Kurdish diaspora in the Europe is due to the political situation in their countries of origin (Van Bruinessen, 1999, Wahlbeck, 1998). Second, there is a growing literature among Kurdish researchers themselves who are living in Europe. Recently they have contributed significantly to research in the field of Kurdish diasporic studies. It can be argued that these researchers were mainly influenced and driven by Kurdish nationalism; their research study will be available in due course (i.e. Khayati, 2008, Eliassi, 2010). Furthermore, the current research aims to depart from both essentialist and nationalist world-views where Kurds were treated as a unified people in a diaspora and importantly, there was a strong focus on their national identity with political aspects. Investigating Kurdish diversity in broader terms such as ethnic, political, religious and geographical differences is largely ignored together with the influence of gender and generational diversity in respect of individual experiences (Alina, 2004). Consequently, this research is in line with those handful of researchers who are in favour of the constructive approach.

It is the responsibility of this research first, to conduct it taking the above broader terms into account and second, to challenge the dominant method of researching Kurdish communities in the diaspora. Hence, at a theoretical level this research has adopted a postmodernist worldview that favour less imposing narratives, particularities and differences rather than meta-narratives and universal truth, which ignore heterogeneity (Lyotard, 1979). I am

interested in the less insignificant identities of individuals that are unfixed and multiplied and tend to be ongoing products (Hall, 1992). This research, in a sense challenges the notions of Kurdishness and Kurdish political identity regardless of generational differences and the particularities of individual lived experiences in respect of home and belonging. It also challenges the essentialist notion of a fixed identity which categorises people, such as members of ethnic groups, as having intrinsically different and characteristic natures or dispositions (Richard, 1968). On the contrary, this research is in line with post-colonialist and postmodernist views of identities which are transformed over time rather than being fixed and static. The de-territorialized identities of refugees and displaced peoples tend to reconstruct communities, and are part real and part imagined (Said, 1979; Hall, 1992; Rayaprol, 1997).

The second challenge faced relates to the way the research is carried out. A normative pattern of conducting research among Kurdish political activists and Kurdish organisations that represent Kurdish political parties in diaspora has not been adopted. Access to the information inside Kurdish communities in the diaspora was mainly made through those representative bodies. In other words, looking to the community from above and through a political eye only, so to speak, has been termed a top-down approach. This research has adopted a bottom-up sociological perspective which prioritises insights from and within Kurdish families. Put another way, this research takes into account the voices of the ordinary people in the Kurdish community.

This thesis provides exclusive evidence of the methods the transnational families engage in when employing the various strategies as well as the way parents offer endless support to their children in order to promote a successful future. The children of immigrant families have a strong feeling of gratefulness and responsibility towards their families. There is a

dynamic relationship between the generations as well as a dynamic identity with regard to their sense of belonging.

There is a theoretical and empirical exploration of how immigrant family members have perceived home and their sense of belonging and how they manage and maintain a balance in their transnational diaspora in respect of their social life and political activities. The ability of transnational families to discover new ways of adapting their lives between two or more 'homes' and the dynamic in their identification process and resilience in their lifestyles will also be examined. In addition, there will be an investigation into how gendered identities are made manifest. Following this is a consideration of the gender differences in a diaspora and in which way, if any, the Kurdish patriarchal background impacts on the relationship between Kurdish men and women in the UK.

Therefore, the current research considers each entity within the family independently; this means taking into account the different perspectives from one family household. This research has paid particular attention to narratives within the family when involving the issue of identity. It is important to bear in mind that literature on Kurdish diasporic communities is restricted to political, cultural identities and in some cases personal identities: the place of the family remains almost uncharted. In other words it is important to pay close attention to the generational differences and the gender differences among families. Alongside the power relations between parents and their children within the families, the power relations between Kurdish men and women are also important. The following section provides a brief background of Kurdish culture in respect of the gender identity in the diaspora.

1.3 Generational and Gender Conflict

On the 24th of January 2006, Banaz Mahmud, 20, a British-Kurdish girl from Mitcham, south London, (originally Iraqi Kurdish) was strangled by her own family and her body placed in a suitcase in Handsworth, Birmingham. Banaz was only ten when she came to Britain with her father who had served in the Iraqi army. The family, who came from a rural area, close to the Iranian border, were escaping Saddam Hussein's regime and were granted asylum. Hers was a so-called 'honour killing'. She was murdered by her father and her uncles simply because she refused an arranged marriage and had fallen in love with someone outside of her community. During my fieldwork her story was chronicled in the 2012 documentary film *Banaz: A Love Story*, directed and produced by Deeyah Khan. Banaz's death had interfered with my nostalgic memory of life in Kurdistan. I was deeply affected by her story and realised that both generations were 'victims' of a patriarchal culture. It was then that I understood how much memories of the past and the experiences of persecution impact on family life in exile. A crime such as 'honour killing' does not occur in a vacuum and without a background; it happens when two cultures collide and there is a construction of the past, when memories of back home influence immigrant communities in the host society. Hence the motivation for conducting this research is both personal and impersonal as well as being a vital research requirement. The personal aspect is about me as an immigrant, father and researcher and the existential matter of who I am, where do I belong and my status as Kurdish-British; it is also about a group of people (father, mother, daughter and son), who wanted to be heard and researched as one family household rather than as separate individuals.

My study is designed to remedy this weakness and treats a family as a whole unit regardless of gender and generational differences among one household. This will be achieved by conducting research on the family as an important unit in society. I will be examining the patriarchal culture that has always been blamed for crimes such as honour killing and will

provide insights from Kurdish women themselves in respect of Kurdish women's rights in a diaspora. Bear in mind that patriarchy has many forms and cannot be restricted to a particular community. Of course, where diasporic communities are concerned it will become even more complex. I agree with Alina (2013) that each social context is unique and therefore experiences of masculinity and manhood are not uniform (Alina, 2013, p.53). In a sense, as a man, father and husband, this research will examine my own assumptions about gender differences and the extent to which my identity as a male researcher impacts on the way that I conduct research on gender identity among Kurdish diasporic communities in the UK.

I acknowledge that more could be said when analysing Kurdish patriarchal culture and its effect on individuals in the diaspora in respect of gender identity and in particular the relationship between Kurdish men and women. The research focuses on lived experiences from Iraqi-Kurdish diasporic communities in the United Kingdom and acknowledges the diversity composed of both gender and generational distinctions. I cannot deny my role as a male insider researcher and its impact on the research when it involves understanding identity markers in regard to the above two variables. On the one hand I am a father and this particular social role distinguishes me from members of the younger generation. On the other hand, I am a husband too and this role 'inside' the family and social life has its own distinctiveness which can stamp me as an outsider according to my female participants in the research. In a sense, my own diasporic experiences cannot be ignored throughout this research journey; I have been in a subjective and emotional relationship with my participants and to a large extent this has determined my theoretical framework.

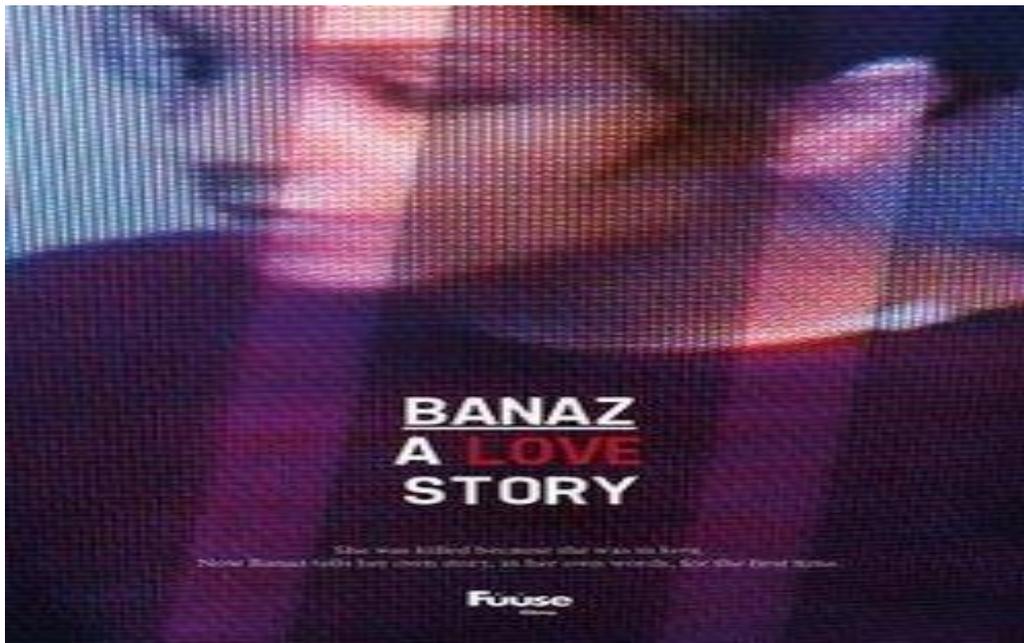


Figure (1) A documentary flyer of Banaz Mahmood, a Kurdish girl who was killed by her family.

Source: 'Image in the public domain', <http://fuuse.net/banaz-a-love-story/>

1.4 An unfolding of my own story in this research

To begin with, this research is in line with the paradigm shift occurring in social sciences research which calls for more embodied research and self-reflexivity. Unlike an ordinary qualitative researcher that places her/himself at a distance with those who are researched I see myself as a researcher in the middle of everything being researched (McNiff and Whitehead, 2006). This questions the dichotomy between objective and subjective in the research as well as the concept of the insider/ outsider researcher. As an insider researcher, most of the questions I have raised here as well as the justification for conducting this research are to a large extent prompted by my own social and cultural experiences in the diaspora. Contrary to mainstream ethnography in the social sciences I intend to include my story, as I prefer from now on to refer to it as my autoethnographical account; this is not simply a biography but rather a way of connecting my personal narrative to the wider cultural, social and political

sphere (Marechal, 2010, Ellis, 2004). In essence, my autoethnographical account has to a large extent affected my theoretical approach in this research (see Chapter 4.11). Unlike the ethnographical approach that is interested in what is going on ‘there’ (i.e. among a specific group of people) or is about a known something or someone, autoethnographical research is about the embodied experiences of a researcher’s own life (Ellis, 2004, Boncher, 2000). In a sense my own story is treated as a kind of fieldwork to which I refer to throughout this research. However, this is to say much about a phenomenon rather than writing about myself. Alongside the voices of individuals from Iraqi Kurdish communities here in the United Kingdom my voice will be heard right from the beginning.

As an interpreter and community organiser working closely with Kurdish families and individuals in Bristol and some other major cities, I have been considering many questions in regard to home and belonging. In 2008 I began my Master’s degree over the course of two years. Apart from observing the community I was also actively engaged with establishing a Kurdish supplementary school or so-called Sunday school in order to help Kurdish children learn their mother tongue. That particular experience and my contacts with Kurdish families resulted in my devoting my dissertation to studying cultural identities among diasporic communities and in particular I was interested in the notions of living both at home and the imagined home among the Kurdish second-generation in Bristol (Zalme 2011).

This thesis can be seen as one of the ways to refine my initial inquiry about identity and belonging by expanding my areas of interests and developing further themes. As a first generation Kurd in Britain I was interested in the differences and similarities between fathers and children and between me (as a male researcher) and my female participants in terms of home and belonging. In addition to my gender and generational distinctive characteristics as an insider researcher among my fellow Kurdish participants in the UK, another relevant characteristic feature is my linguistic background as a Hawrami speaker. Being Hawrami

myself and growing up in an environment where Kurdish-Sorani speakers in Iraqi-Kurdistan were dominant (and this is still the case in the diaspora) has always triggered in me the question of who I am. My own diasporic experiences among the Kurdish diaspora have always been stimulated in a way that made me think about my sense of belonging. I have tended to involve myself in many activities in my diasporic position in order to support the Hawrami; this was not always possible while living in Kurdistan. This is because of the hegemony of the nationalist ideology which has situated all Kurdish people as a unified people regardless of their trivial narratives relating to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities in Kurdistan society. In contrast, in the UK, I have experienced a loss of identity and belonging in the diaspora as I grapple with, and seek to resolve, the disjunction between my everyday lived experience of being born and raised as a Hawrami and my awareness of the differences between other Kurds and me. This research, in one way or another, is contextualising home and examining my own sense of belonging as well as my participants' understandings of home and sense of belonging. Therefore, this thesis pays close attention to the diversity of the Kurdish diaspora and introduces the notion of a diaspora within a diaspora (see Chapter 8 for details). Hence, this research concentrates only on a particular group of the Kurdish diaspora in the UK, namely Iraqi-Kurds, as I am interested in their circumstances because the situation back home has a significant impact on the diaspora. The following section explains why the Iraqi-Kurdish have been chosen as an entity worthy of study.

1.5 The Context of the Research

The focus of this research is on the Iraqi Kurds living in the UK, with the researcher being one of them. However, my reasons for researching this particular group of Kurds in the diaspora are not only personal. My rationale for doing so comprise the following: first, the repression and ethnic cleansing of Kurds in Iraq peaked with the former regime, the Baath party (1963-2003). A chemical weapon was used against the Kurds in the town of Halabja, in

the north of Iraq, (see appendix G which contains my press interview as an eyewitness), on the 16th March, 1988 killing more than 5000 civilians. The attack was part of the Al-Anfal campaign (Kurdish Genocide), which occurred between 1986-1989. The Anfal campaign included ground offensives, aerial bombing, the systematic destruction of settlements, mass deportation, firing squads and chemical warfare. According to the UN and Amnesty International, as many as 180,000 people were killed and more than 4500 villages were destroyed. The victimisation in the twentieth century of the Kurdish in Iraq comprising the chemical attack in 1988, the Al-Anfal campaign from 1986-1989, the Kurdish uprising and mass exodus in 1991 and the Kurdish internal armed conflict from 1994-1998 resulted in mass migration and displacement. A huge number of Kurdish communities was established in the diaspora mostly across Europe and North America. The Kurds in Iraq have been through difficulties and were more oppressed compared to the Kurds in the other three parts of Kurdistan: Iranian-Kurds, Turkish-Kurds and Syrian-Kurds. The Iraqi Kurds are less assimilated and politically more progressive in contrast with the Kurds in the other three countries who were less victimised but more assimilated. This might seem a contradictory situation as, for example, while in Iraq, the Kurdish people were subject to ethnic cleansing, genocide and mass murder. In general, the Kurds in the other areas were not fully aware of their ethnic rights and their status as Kurds, i.e. a part of the small political elite.

My second rationale for conducting this research among Iraqi Kurds is that these Kurds live in the only part of Kurdistan that gained semi-independence since the 1991 uprising and when the no-fly zone was established by the Western powers. On May 19th, 1992, six months after the Kurds gained their freedom, the first elections were held with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) being the official ruling body of the region. In 2003 when Saddam Hussain was completely removed from power in Iraq, the new Iraqi constitution was adopted which announced Iraq as a federal country. Since then the KRG officially ruled the

Kurdish dominated areas in the north of Iraq. The Kurdistan Regional Government inaugurated a movement to distinguish itself from the rest of Iraq and called it "Kurdistan - The Other Iraq", in a bid to attract investors by showing its security and economic progress. The political stability and economic boom in the KRG controlled areas had persuaded not only foreign companies to invest in Kurdistan but many families from the diaspora decided to return. Before and during my fieldwork (2010-2013) and up until ISIS attacked the Kurdish people in Iraq and Syria, hundreds of Iraqi Kurdish families had already returned to Kurdistan from the UK or had planned to do so. Many transnational family members in preparation for their return to their families were divided by their loyalty to both Kurdistan and the UK. I knew many children from Kurdish communities whose fathers were working in Kurdistan while their mothers were in the UK caring for their children. I am particularly interested in these transnational experiences and their dream of returning.

1.6 A Brief Background

Since I began this research, more attention from the international community has been focused on the Kurdish people and their quandary. This is due to the fact that during this period (2012-2016) many political events occurred in the Middle Eastern region which have attracted global attention and have had an impact on the Kurdish diaspora and transnational activities in the West. These comprise the popular uprising known as the Arab Spring in the Middle Eastern countries and the rise of so-called ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria). Currently, Kurds are better known by those outside the land they occupy and, in particular, by the West. This is due to global media coverage; however, an academic voice is still silent. This is in contrast to the decades before where Kurds suffered much but received little media attention.

The Kurdish character is not easy to define, especially in a world where the idea of the nation-state has been naturalised and become a convincing way of recognising groups of people. The division of the land occupied by the Kurds in the four neighbouring countries of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey has had an enormous impact on Kurdish people both politically and socially across generations and in particular on the Kurdish in the diaspora. Being a stateless people has always determined the way outsiders have treated Kurds and the way in which they are perceived. For example, there have always been ‘good Kurds’ and ‘bad Kurds’ according to the regional and international powers. I remember during the Iraq/Iran war (1980-1988), that the Iranian authorities were helping Iraqi Kurds but repressed the Kurds in Iran and the Iraqi regime did the same by helping Iranian Kurdish political parties and repressing Kurds in Iraq. During the First and the Second Gulf Wars (1991-2003) and recently with the fighting against ISIS, Kurds in Iraq were allies of the USA and other Western powers. Consequently they were considered ‘good Kurds’ but the Kurds in Turkey, mostly represented by the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) were, and still are, considered as terrorists. Culturally Kurds have never been a homogenous entity; they have a particularly diverse spoken and written language dialect and sub-dialect. In terms of religion, the majority of Kurds are Muslims (Sunni) but there is a sizable proportion of Kurdish Shia and Alavi (about 20%). There are also other religious minorities, including Christians, Jews, Yazidi, Yarsan and Zoroastrians (Chapter 2 provides more detail about Kurds and their historical background). In the following section I briefly explain how the political instability in Kurdistan and the Middle Eastern region has had an impact on me as a researcher and also on the participants of the research.

1.7 Recent Political Upheavals and the Impact on my Research Focus

Given my rationale above in regard to my choosing Iraqi Kurds as respondents in my research, the recent events and new political instabilities in the region have had an impact on transnational activities in the UK. Conducting research into Kurdish people at this particular time was difficult. Indeed throughout the research I had many moments when I felt anxious, worried and helpless with regard to my countrymen. This was particularly intense when ISIS gained prominence in early 2014 and drove the Iraqi government forces out of key cities in its western Iraq offensive, followed by its capture of Mosul and the Sinjar massacre (A Kurdish town occupied by the Yazidi). This was followed by the siege of Kobani, a Kurdish town in the north of Syria; the campaign was launched by ISIS in order to capture the Kobani Canton. ISIS succeeded in capturing 350 Kurdish villages and towns within the vicinity of Kobani, generating a wave of some 300,000 displaced Kurds who fled across the border into Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan. The Kurdish fighters in Syria led by the People's Protection Units (YPG) and Women's Protection Units (YPJ) had bravely resisted ISIS. By April 2015 after a long and bloody battle, YPG and YPJ alongside the Kurdish Peshmerga from Iraqi Kurdistan and supported by airstrikes controlled and retook all the lost areas in September 2015. These two particularly brutal events received global attention and there was considerable discussion amongst Western academics, journalists and political activists. Furthermore, on the 25th of September, 2017, Kurds in Iraq voted in an independence referendum. This was a landmark referendum on independence for the Kurdistan region of Iraq and which was a move which was criticised by foreign powers and neighbouring countries. The authorities in Baghdad strongly opposed the referendum and threatened the KRG with economic sanctions and military intervention. This not only had an impact on the political instability in the region as the situation became more complicated but it also significantly affected Iraqi-Kurdish diasporic communities.



Figure (2) Kurdish protest in London, condemning the Kobane massacre, 2014.

Source: 'Image in the public domain', <http://www.rudaw.net/english/world/25032015>

As a Kurdish researcher, I have been affected by these events during my research and as a member of the diasporic communities in the UK. I have been involved with transnational activities, for example, to protest against the Kobane massacre and have attended rallies and demonstrations to condemn the ISIS massacre of Sinjar (Shangal in Kurdish), where women were taken into slavery.



Figure (3) Kurdish protest in London condemning the Yazidi massacre, 20 14.

Source: 'Image in the public domain', <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3002547/IS-likely-committing-genocide-against-Yazidi-minority-Iraq-UN.html>

1.8 Defining the Key Concepts

For the purpose of clarity and to avoid generalisations, some important terms frequently used in this thesis need to be clarified and defined. Such terms include home and multiple homes, transnational families, the Kurdish diasporic identity, the nation-state, Kurdishness, and

statelessness. Some of these terms are discussed and explained in more detail in the literature review chapter (Chapter 3) as well as in subsequent chapters.

There is no doubt that multiple meanings and understandings apply with regard to defining a complex term such as 'home'. However, in the context of migration studies 'homeland', refers to the country of origin and 'host-land', refers to the country of settlement (Waldinger 2015). In this thesis 'home' has been used specifically to describe a dynamic and is the specific way it is conceptualised by the respondents. The thesis intentionally avoids the use of fixed and single geographical locations as being understood as 'home' and suggests instead that 'home' is multi-layered and has multiple locations. Particularly in an era of intensifying human global movement, the concept of 'home' is an increasingly a spatial phenomenon. As stated by Taylor (2014), wherever it is located, home is often represented as offering complete familiarity and comfort, a place that we either leave and consequently long for, or move towards for security and identity. In this sense home can be both lived and imagined (Brah, 1996), and constituted through multiple (lived and imagined) relationships with people and places.

Transnationality is another useful term together with diaspora in regard to migration studies in the age of globalisation and a decline in nation-state borders. Transnationalism can be defined as the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link their societies of origin and settlement.

We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders (Basch et al., 1994, p. 7).

The term transnational families is used to signify the frequency of experiences and the practice of living in more than one place and also acknowledges the fact that migration

does not end with the settlement (in this case Britain) and that members of migrant families maintain regular contact across borders. The term diaspora has been understood as a desire to feel 'at home' in the context of the migrant people. However, in line with other researchers home has always been a difficult concept to define (Mallet, 2004, Taylor, 2014).

With regard to the Kurdish diaspora there are several features of the Kurdish communities in Europe that characterise them as belonging to a diaspora in accordance with Safran's (1991) precise definition and Wahlbeck's (1999) contention. This includes the mass enforced displacement of Kurds, their collective memory of their original homeland, their collective commitment to the restoration of their homeland and finally their transnational social networks which are all features of the diasporic relations displayed by the Kurdish refugees in Europe (see Wahlbeck, 1999a). The use of a diasporic identity in this context does not necessarily mean a desire to feel at home as suggested by Brah (1996). However, this might be the case for other migrant communities living in the UK. Instead, for Kurds as the largest nation without a state, the term 'home' has always been disputed (see Chapter 4 for more details). Hence, this research on the one hand deals with the lack of a nation-state and stateless people in the context of the Kurdish communities in the UK in order to draw a comparison between Kurds and other ethnic minorities living in Britain who have a national state (back home). On the other hand this research also describes the respondents' frustration at their lack of an independent state (back home), and how the process of a nation-state and national borders are naturalised not only politically but in all aspects of human life. The expression Kurdish diaspora raises a series of questions in regard to who a Kurd is and what Kurdishness means to Kurds from all parts of a divided Kurdistan. Furthermore, in terms of geography, the question of where Kurdistan is, is problematic because there is no physical entity on any map (in the naturalised nation-state world order of countries) called Kurdistan. Instead, there are Kurdish people inhabiting mainly four countries (Iran, Iraq, Turkey and

Syria) and many other countries in the region. The term ‘Kurdishness’ can only be imagined by members of the Kurdish diasporic communities (see Chapter 2 for details). Although my main focus will be on the Kurds from north of Iraq or as most Kurds refer to it, southern Kurdistan, this thesis aims to provide a theoretical overview of the Kurdish diaspora in general. In particular, earlier literature (Wahlbeck, 1999) did not pay attention to the second generation Kurdish diaspora. For example, concern has been expressed about the nature of the Kurdish diasporic communities in Western Europe and the fact that Kurds are mainly considered as political refugees (Wahlbeck, 1999). Unlike previous studies the current study views the contemporary Kurdish diaspora as a diverse entity, i.e. they comprise both political refugees and economic migrants. However, in this thesis I have paid particular attention to the conception of uncertainty and how this has had an impact on members of Kurdish diasporic communities. In particular a special consideration has been given to the political instability in the Iraqi Kurdistan region in order to assess and understand its impact.

1.9 Chapter Outline

Alongside my respondents’ narratives of being homeless and in order to provide an understanding of the Kurdish issue and the history of the repression of the Kurdish nation, chapter two introduces the historical and political background of the Kurdish people. The chapter presents a brief account of Kurdish victimisation in Iraq and how international sympathy has changed with regard to the Kurdish issue. It then provides a general overview of Kurdish history, the language, its culture, land issues and the Kurdish struggle for recognition through the centuries. This includes both tribal revolts led mostly by Kurdish chieftains against colonists as well as the modern struggles led and organised by Kurdish nationalist movements. Then the chapter discusses the historical 16th century and modern 20th century divisions of Kurdistan and their political, social and cultural impact on Kurdish generations and as the one of the largest nations without an official state. The chapter

concludes by delineating how the Kurdish historical struggle for ethnic recognition has contributed to political mobility in the diaspora. The question of how Kurdish people in general and diasporic communities in Europe in particular perceive a nation-state and in what way the Kurdish diaspora has experienced a lack of a proper state is also discussed.

The third chapter provides the framework for a theoretical background, reviews the relevant literature in the field and discusses studies in the fields of diaspora, transnationalism and migration with Kurdish diasporic studies being the prime focus. Initially, the chapter deals with the diaspora as a broad term in the context of research on migrant communities and then more specifically reviews related literature on Kurdish diasporic communities in the United Kingdom. The chapter then examines certain important concepts that are significant to the current study, namely the Kurdish identity, and highlights previous works in the field and situates the research accordingly. The essence of the chapter is to provide a theoretical framework underpinning the study which examines the intergenerational identities and the diversity of thinking on 'the imagined home' among the Kurdish diaspora. Finally, the chapter concludes by providing a platform to contribute to new insights in regard to home-making and gendered identity among Kurdish transnational families and ends with a list of research questions based on a review of the existing studies in the field.

The fourth chapter provides an explanation of not only *how* this research was conducted and which methods were deployed but also discusses in considerable detail *why* a certain method was adopted. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section discusses the justification behind deploying a multi-ethnographic method, i.e. both a multi-sited ethnographic and an auto-ethnographic methodology has been adopted in studying Kurdish diasporic communities in the UK. It provides the rationale behind using in-depth interviews in many locations across the community and in family settings that unite generations. Finally there is an explanation of how, through the experience of the research journey and the process

of generating data and analysing it, the research methodology and theoretical framework was developed and formulated. The second section then discusses the theoretical challenges in undertaking such research with immigrant communities and in particular the methodological considerations in conducting research among one's own community. In particular more attention has been given to the use of autoethnography as an important component of research methodology. Following this, the dilemma of being both an insider and an outsider is discussed including the ethical issues in the context of conducting research on Kurdish communities.

The second part of the thesis deals with the analysis, findings and the result chapters (5, 6 and 7). Chapter five examines how Kurdish immigrants contextualise home and belonging and includes an analysis of respondents' experiences. The chapter draws on the narratives of respondents living as Kurdish diasporic community members in Britain. It provides a background for the generational respondents' experiences, their perceptions of home and their ways of managing life between two cultures. The chapter then provides an overview of the respondents and how the narrative of the individuals provides new insights into a better understanding of the younger generation's experiences of everyday identity and hybridity. Moreover, the significant role of family as an institutional mediator and the notions of transnational family as a modern phenomenon are also discussed in the chapter. The chapter then discusses the generational memory of the concept of 'back home' and how the majority of respondents shared collective memories of ancestral culture in a divergent way. Finally, the findings chapter examines the notions of home and provides new insights into how home can be seen as a multi-layered phenomenon where imagining home and the generational perception of home and belonging is viewed as a dynamic process.

Chapter six discusses the debates around gendering in the diaspora and conceptualises Kurdish men and women in terms of home and belonging. The chapter is divided into two

main sections with an introductory theoretical background on Kurdish gendered identity. In the introductory section there is an examination of the claim that the history of the Kurdish struggle in all its forms has been viewed as a history of only Kurdish men. From a feminist point of view the history of Kurdish resistance is strongly linked with patriarchy in the form of both tribalism and nationalism. In the first section, the experiences of female respondents are analysed to reveal the position of Kurdish women as stateless persons in the diaspora. In addition there is a discussion on whether Kurdish women are frustrated with Kurdish men with regard to Kurdish nationalist claims for an independent state or whether they side more keenly with feminist ideology in regard to women's statutes and rights. Following this there is an account of the violent ill-treatment of Kurdish women both emotionally and economically. There is then a strong focus on female respondents' experiences of gender inequality taking into account the thoughts of female respondents in the diaspora and how Kurdish men are perceived 'back home' and in the UK. The chapter concludes by providing into how Kurdish women have gained much freedom in the UK and have exercised their rights. However, they still have concerns about some forms of patriarchy which are practised among the communities both in the UK and at home. The tension between their private lives and life in public has been intensified and felt especially by those men who feel women have established cultural barriers.

Based on the empirical findings of the research and the development of the theories throughout the research experience in the earlier chapters, chapter seven provides new insights into the main field of study. The chapter discusses the state of uncertainty among Iraqi-Kurdish immigrants and provides an update on the new political instability in the Middle Eastern region and Iraqi Kurdistan in particular in order to structure an understanding of the situation 'there' (in Kurdistan) and how this impacts on the 'here' in the United Kingdom. The chapter also discusses recommendations for tangible policies towards

immigrant communities, the Iraqi-Kurdish in particular, in the United Kingdom. The chapter then discusses the concept of citizenship and how those who identify as Kurdish-British have adapted and integrated into the wider UK society through employment and integration policies.

The final chapter of the thesis, chapter 8, discusses the theoretical approach of the research and reconsiders the Kurdish diasporic identity. It then discusses the following themes: First, the context of the research within the development of the literature in the field of Kurdish studies. Second, significant consideration is also given to the research findings including new diasporic identities and belonging and diaspora as space for emergent belonging as well as questions on the narrative of Kurdish-ness and a diaspora within a diaspora. The chapter then discusses a new paradigm shift that has occurred in social research, with self-reflexivity becoming more prominent particularly with those researching migrant and refugee communities. Finally, the chapter deliberates on the limitations of this research and makes some suggestions for further work in this field of study.

Chapter Two

Historical and Political Background to the Kurdish Struggle

2.0 Introduction:

The history of struggle and the fight for political recognition are important elements for understanding the Kurdish internal displacement and the Kurdish international migration. The lack of a recognised official state for Kurdish people has had a great impact on Kurdish generations home and abroad. This chapter first attempts to conceptualise the Kurdish

historical struggle for recognition. It highlights Kurdish revolts throughout the twentieth century and certain tragic events that enabled the Kurdish issue to be known internationally. The chapter then aims to contextualise a collective narrative of statelessness among Kurdish immigrants. The question of what it is like for someone who has left his or her country because they have been treated as a second-class citizen and then settled in a new country and naturalised as a British citizen is addressed. This poses another question as to whether Kurdish community members in exile in the UK compromise their ethnic identity and pride with their new status of being British. The chapter provides new insights into the debate regarding Kurdish diaspora and their experiences of living between two political cultures with dual nationalities.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section is a brief account of Kurdish recent political persecutions in Iraq and how international sympathy has changed towards the Kurdish issue. It presents a brief history of the Kurdish people and an account of their culture within the region. The second section highlights the historical contexts of Kurdish resistance and their struggle throughout modern history. This includes both tribal revolts mostly led by Kurdish chieftains against colonists and also modern struggles led and organised by Kurdish nationalist movements. The third section focuses on the history of the Kurdish people and their struggle for freedom and independence in the twentieth century. It will also focus on the Kurdish political movement in Iraq and highlight the political upheaval that caused massive emigration in the later decades of the twentieth century. The final section analyses patterns of diasporic experiences in relation to the lack of a Kurdish nation-state. Following this, I updated this thesis with the current political situation in Iraqi Kurdistan and reveal how this has had an impact on Kurdish immigrant families here in the UK. My reasons for referring to

the historical background of the Kurdish struggle for independence are briefly as follows: first, I think that throughout the history of the Kurdish struggle there is a better understanding of the current Kurdish political and social situation. Secondly, it is also important because the significance of a lack of a nation-state among Kurdish people generally, and Kurdish diaspora in particular, has been understood. In other words there is Kurdish generational continuity of shared feeling towards statelessness and victimisation as will be seen throughout the subsequent chapters (i.e. chapters 3, 5 and 6). Furthermore, the concept of family as a unique institution has always been significant in the social and political life of Kurdish communities throughout history up till the present day. The role of family in the history of political struggle for independence cannot be denied; this is true for both forms of struggle, whether tribal or in its modern political movement. In a diaspora the role of family has also been reproduced in many different shapes and forms by members of the Iraqi Kurdish communities. For example, with regard to the concept of belonging, the family has a significant impact on Kurdish individuals when negotiating between two homes: the country of origin and the country of settlement or, to express this in another way, between the imagined home and the “real” home (i.e. see Ch5 and Ch6 for more details).

2.1 International Awareness of the Kurdish Situation

Hidden in the shadows of history, resistance against oppression became the Kurdish way of life. During the last decades of the twentieth century violence and racial discrimination against Kurds peaked with the Ba’ath regime in Iraq. In particular, atrocities inflicted on the Kurds under the former dictator Saddam Hussein when he was in power from 1979 to 2003 and his cousin, so-called ‘Chemical Ali’, shocked the world. The following two most recent crimes against Kurdish people, clearly revealed the brutality of Saddam’s regime. The first was the dropping of chemical bombs on the civilian town of Halabja in Iraqi Kurdistan (my home town), in March 1988, which killed more than 5000 unarmed people and injured

thousands of others. Among them were survivors who continued to suffer from mustard gas exposure. The second was the systematic genocidal campaign (Anfal) of people in large Kurdish rural areas which resulted in the mass murder of more than 180,000 civilians: 4500 villages were destroyed in the late 1980s. (Human Rights Watch, 1991, 1993; Samuel, 2008; McDowell, 1996; Randal 1998). This was followed by other significant events that occurred in the aftermath of the First Gulf War in 1991. This included the Kurdish uprising in March of the same year but the Iraqi regime responded aggressively to crush the Kurdish revolt. This led to the terrified flight of almost two million Kurds to the mountain borders of Iraq and neighboring countries in order to escape the military attack. This was followed by the international community intervening and the adoption of Resolution 688 by the UN Security Council as the first legal protection of Kurds internationally (Cook 1995, UNHCR 1991).

From 1991 onwards, Iraqi Kurds entered a new era of political life by establishing a de facto state bearing in mind that Kurds in other parts of Kurdistan were still struggling to be recognised. Nevertheless, in many ways Kurds now came to the world's attention and this was also reflected in many academic works. Accordingly, a stabilised and a democratically elected self-government (Kurdistan Regional Government- KRG) was established in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1992. The Kurdish issue progressed in Turkey; there were political activities by Iranian Kurds inside Iran or in exile and finally there was the Syrian Kurds struggle for freedom alongside other peoples of Syria against the Assad regime. This, hopefully, gives Kurds an opportunity to be heard and recognised as a distinct nation in the region. As a result, many researchers have recently focused on Kurdish issues and the Kurdish people. Many more in the western countries would now like to know who the Kurds are. The following sections provide an introduction that summarises and contextualises Kurdish issues within the research literature.

2.1.1 Who are the Kurds?

2.1.2 People, Land and Early History

The Kurds or Kurdish people are an Indo-European ethno-linguistic group mostly inhabiting a region known as Kurdistan (Land of Kurds). Today, Kurdistan is centred predominantly in the area of modern Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Syria, with significant old and new Kurdish diaspora in Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Lebanon, Israel, Russia, some Western European countries, Australia and the United States. The Kurdish people can claim to have one of the longest ethnic histories in the Middle East. Their lineage dates back to as early as 2400 BC, where they occupied the same lands as they do today. According to Minorsky 1948, Disney 1980, and McDowall 2005, the Kurds are an Asian nation, situated in the west of Iran and the highlands around the Tigris and Euphrates. Kurdistan extends from the Loristan region in Iran to Kharpoot (currently a city in Turkey called Alazig), which is a town that is connected to both sections of the Euphrates. This area covers about 900 km from the North West to the south west and is up to 200km wide on the 34th to 39th parallel in the west and the 37th to 46th parallel in the east (Miles, 1846).

The Kurdish population today can be estimated at 30 million or more (McDowall, 2005, Van Bruinessen, 1992), which provides for a significant proportion of the overall population in the following countries. There are considered to be some 15 million Kurds in Turkey (20% of the population), 5 million in Iraq (25% of the population), 8 million in Iran (15% of the population) and 1.5 million in Syria (10% of the population). There are also believed to be some 2 million Kurds in diaspora all around the world. In addition to this there are also several million Kurds living in metropolitan cities, such as Istanbul, Tehran, Damascus and Baghdad (Chaliand, 1993).

The physical geography of Kurdistan has always been disputed and consequently Kurdistan was not easy to define because of the lack of a unified territory and the land was divided between neighbouring countries. In other words, Kurdistan has no official boundaries due to the lack of a recognised state. As Stansfield (2003) has stated, “The manipulation of geography always has been used as a tool to pursue political ends” (Stansfield, 2003, p.27). This did not prevent anthropologists, Western travelers and regional historians confirming that it is a land that Kurds have inhabited for more than 4000 years and which is now called Kurdistan. Although the term Kurdistan was first used in the twelfth century as a geographical term by the Saljuqs, indicating the fact that Kurds occupied land in between two ranges of mountains, the Zagros and Taurus, the land covers most of old Mesopotamia and lies to the north-west and south-east either side of Persia. Modern Kurdistan refers to parts of eastern Turkey, north Iraq, north-western Iran and northern Syria (Stansfield, 2003; McDowall, 1996; Lee, 1991).



Figure (4) Map of Kurdish-inhabited areas of the Middle East and the Soviet Union in 1986

Source : U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 1986.

Although much of Kurdish early history was dominated by factional disputes, rivalry between empires and much conflict, the Kurds were mostly tribally orientated and throughout history have survived as a distinct people with a common cultural heritage and shared territory. In fact, in terms of language and religion, the Kurdish people do not share a single language or single religion. Consequently, the Kurdish people are believed to be of heterogeneous origin, particularly in terms of religious affiliation and language. For example, the Kurds speak a number of different dialects and sub-dialects; in the north and south-west of Kurdistan (Kurds in Turkey and Syria) the main dialect is Kurdish-Kurmanji. The other main dialect is Kurdish-Sorani (or central), which is spoken mainly in the south and east of Kurdistan (Kurds in Iraq and Iran). There are also three sub-dialects spoken by substantial minorities distributed around the Kurdistan areas consisting of Gurani (Hawrami), Leki and Zaza. This reveals the complexity of Kurdish society especially with regard to the process of identification among these different Kurdish entities. Consequently, this is not only in terms of the variety of languages spoken by Kurds but is also true in respect of the variety of religions and sects in Kurdistan.

In spite of this the majority of Kurds nowadays are Sunni Muslims; Kurdish society is considered to be a very heterogeneous derivation religiously. Disney (1980) provides an example from Kurdish history of religion and the enmity between empires of the time that Kurds were surrounded by. The Kurds, due to racial, cultural factors and physiognomy have always been seen as part of the Persian Empire and neighbouring non-Kurdish nations. However, Disney has stated that:

With Safavid Shah Ismail's forced conversion of Persia to the Shi ' ite sect of Islam in 1501, the loyalties of the majority of the Kurds shifted to the seat of Sunni power in Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire. During the ensuing wars of territorial conquest and religion between the Ottoman

Empire and the Safavid dynasty of Persia, parts of Kurdistan changed hands on numerous occasions (Disney, 1980, p.14).

In pre-Islamic times there is sufficient evidence to show that in Kurdistan there were a variety of religious beliefs including Mithraism, Buddhism, Mazdaism, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism and, of course, Judaism and Christianity (Nebez, 1997, McDowell, 1996, Lescot, 1975). Islam came to the region in the 7th century AD in consideration of many facts that forced the Kurds to convert to Islam but there are still significant non-Islamic sects and religions in Kurdistan. Alongside Judaism and Christian sects like the Yazidis, the Ahl al Haqq (People of Truth) and the Kakay remain strong religious sects distinct from a considerable number of non-Sunni Muslims such as the Alevis and Kurdish Fayli who are mainly affiliated to Shia-Muslims. Due to the lack of an official census in the region and many political uncertainties, the actual size of these religious minorities is unknown. With regard to the history of Kurdish victimisation, there is the issue of being stateless and homeless at the beginning of the twentieth century. The question of the extent to which the Kurdish people have been affected at home and away by experiencing a lack of state will be addressed.

2.2 One of the largest Nations without a State.

The mainstream political discourse of Kurdish nationalism is that there are external powers who prevented the Kurds having their own nation-state like others in the region that have nation-states such as the Arabs, Turks and the Persians. This perception among Kurds regarding the lack of a nation-state and the victimisation of Kurds is a common experience no matter where one lives. In this section I contextualise the statelessness among Kurds and show how this manifests itself in both the political agenda and on a daily basis.

Although Kurdistan is geographically homogenous and culturally heterogeneous, politically it was first divided in the 16th century amongst the two powers of the time: the Safavid and the Ottoman Empires. Following the First World War and 300 years after its first division, Kurdistan was further divided by the powers of the day (France and Britain) amongst the three newly established states of Turkey, Iraq and Syria. In this section, these two divisions in the history of the Kurds and their impact on the political life of the Kurdish people as the largest nation without a state will be discussed. This will assist in understanding the context of the specific Kurdish version of nationalism and their struggle for ethnic rights together with how it differs from other types of dominant nationalism in the region.

As a result of the Chalderan War of 1514, for the first time Kurdistan was in 1639 formally divided between the two warring empires: the Turkish Ottoman and the Persian Safavid. McDowall has explained the impact of the above division on Kurdistan as a power equilibrium between the Ottoman Empire and the newly emerged Safavid.

Indeed, the conditions established at this time determined the general pattern of political relations between the state and the Kurdish periphery for the next three hundred years. At the beginning of this period, no such equilibrium could have been foreseen (McDowall, 1996, p.21).

According to Sharafnama, the main and oldest source of Kurdish history, written in 1579, the Turkish and Mongol invasions in the Middle East (11th -14th centuries) caused considerable instability and frequent political changes. The geographical spread of the Kurds was also significantly affected. A new stabilization took place in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the emergence of two strong multi-ethnic states: the Ottoman and Persian Empires. The major confrontation of these two states took place in Kurdistan; Kurdish tribes

and chieftains played, naturally, an important role therein. However important parts of Kurdistan and some of the Kurds regional emirates collapsed because of the Ottoman-Persian conflict, particularly on the frontiers on both side of the empires. Thus, throughout the 16th and 17th centuries numbers of Kurdish emirates, tribal chieftains and dynasties remained to a great extent independent or semi-independent including Chemishkezek 1514, Hakkari 1534, Bitlis 1597, Baban Emirate 1550-1850, Botan 1846, and the Soran Emirate 1800-1836. (Bitlisi, Edmonds 1957; Van Bruinessen, 1992). These were tribal and regional powers that represented their people and most importantly were seen as symbolic powers of Kurdish survival through the history of the repression of the Kurdish nation.

One could argue that the 16th century Kurdish tribal chieftains and emirates revolts against the Ottoman Empire and newly emerged Safavid Empire might have provided the Kurds with an opportunity to gain some sort of independence. Kurdistan then slipped into a war zone and its land became a battlefield for two empires of the day which resulted in further division and weakened the country. This was the state of affairs until the 19th century when the political landscape of the region dramatically changed, particularly with the beginning of the decentralisation of the Ottoman Empire. Many commentators have argued that the second half of the 19th century initiated the rise of the modern wave of the Kurdish nationalist movement (Natali, 2005; Ozoglu, 2004; Van Bruinessen, 1992).

Following the end of the Ottoman Empire prior to the First World War in 1908, the Young Turks came to power asserting a radical form of Turkish ethnic identity and Ottoman associations and non-Turkish schools were closed. They launched a campaign of political oppression and resettlement against ethnic minorities such as the Kurds, the Laz people and the Armenians but in the wartime context they could not afford to overdo the antagonism of the ethnic minorities (See Ericson, 2013).

However, the lack of an internationally recognized state of Kurdistan has not prevented the Kurds from considering themselves as a separate nation and Kurds during wartime still had the legal right to conduct their affairs in Kurdish, celebrate unique traditions and identify themselves as a distinct ethnic group. The just struggles of the Kurdish nation in the last century to have their rights recognised are well documented. Hundreds of thousands of Kurdish lives were lost and many more were displaced and many forms of racial elimination were practiced against the Kurds. This was contrary to the agreement of Sèvres which recognized the formation of an independent state in Kurdistan. The Treaty of Sèvres signed in 1920 “suggested” an independent Kurdish and Armenian state. Soon after the establishment of the Turkish Republic by a Turkish ethno-nationalist government which balked at the treaty, the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne was signed which made no mention of the Kurds this time and the division of Kurdistan into four parts was formalized in the treaty.

From the early 1920s onwards there was a tendency towards uprising and resistance in most parts of Kurdistan, particularly when Kurds realised that their rights were denied regionally and internationally. This time Kurdish rebellions were still led by tribal chieftains but in addition small numbers of the intellectual Kurdish elite nationalists emerged who demanded the rights mentioned in the Treaty of Sèvres and which were denied in the Lausanne Treaty and which included the right of self-determination. The British, for example, were trying to understand the new country Iraq which had just created a popular Kurdish leader, Sheikh Mahmoud Barzinji with a religiously powerful family background and who had challenged the British administration in Iraqi Kurdistan. Within a considerably short time he managed to expel British troops out of the city of Sulimaniya province and declared himself king in 1922. Sheikh remained king until 1924 and was involved in uprisings against the British until 1932 when the Royal Air Force and British troops were able to capture Sheikh and he was exiled to southern Iraq. The situation in other parts of a divided Kurdistan was similar and uprisings

began against central governments in Turkey and Iran. Sheikh Siad Piran in Turkish Kurdistan was another chieftain rebel and nationalist fighting Turkish troops; his movement was known as the Sheikh Said Rebellion. He and most of his followers were captured in 1925 and hanged publicly. On the Iranian side there were some random movements but the revolt led by Smko Shikak (1887-1930) during the mid-twenties of the last century was the most notable. Shikak led Kurdish farmers into battle and significantly defeated the Iranian army on several occasions. McDowell (1996) notes that:

By the summer [of] 1921 Smko's successes had offered Britain the enticing prospect of an independent Kurdish entity, carved out of both Iran and Turkey (McDowell, 1996, p, 141).

The Kemalists won in new Turkey and the Bolsheviks had withdrawn their support and as a result the Iranians were able to capture Smko in 1930 (Gunter, 2004, McDowell, 1996, Lawrence, 2008).

For the duration of the 1930s and prior to World War II, the Kurds went through a very difficult time in terms of minority rights and faced many forms of ruthless racial discrimination. Accordingly, the countries that Kurds were divided amongst namely Iraq, Iran and Turkey collaborated to stop a Kurdish revolt. McDowell (1996) explains how the modern countries of Iraq, Iran and Turkey all agreed that their respective exploitation of discontented Kurds to foment trouble was less valuable than co-operation when desirous of stifling Kurdish dissent. McDowell has stated that:

In July 1937 a pact was signed at Raza Shah's palace of Saadabad, in which the signatory parties recognized the existing borders and undertook to observe the canons of good neighbourliness. It marked a discouraging

development for the Kurds in inter-state co-operation against their aspirations (McDowell, 1996, p.226).

Since then the created border line between countries that Kurdistan divided had an impact on Kurds not only politically but also socially, culturally and economically. I have witnessed many Kurdish families living on the borderline with close family members divided. They had to apply for a visa in order to visit each other while they lived on the other side of the valley in a so-called different country. This was well expressed by many modern Kurdish poets and in Kurdish oral literature and includes the following poem by British-Kurdish poet Choman Hardi, the daughter of the famous Kurdish poet, Ahmed Hardi (1922-2006).

At the border

“It is your last check-in point in this country!”

We grabbed a drink-

soon everything would taste different.

The land under our feet continued

divided by a thick iron chain.

My sister put her leg across it.

“Look over here,” she said to us,

“my right leg is in this country

and my left leg in the other”.

The border guards told her off.

Now our mothers were crying. I was five years old

standing by the check-in point

comparing both sides of the border.

The autumn soil continued on the other side
with the same colour, the same texture.
It rained on both sides of the chain.
We waited while our papers were checked,
our faces thoroughly inspected.
Then the chain was removed to let us through.
A man bent down and kissed his muddy homeland.
The same chain of mountains encompassed all of us.

Source: Hardi, 1979

The poem above expresses not only the feeling of an individual who has struggled by being in between borders but also a collective and shared feeling among the entire nation who have considered themselves the largest nation without a country. As I have argued throughout this chapter this shared feeling and frustration in lacking a state is well expressed in various ways; this poem can be seen as one of the more obvious mediums with which to present a collective feeling. Hence poetry has always been a significant component of the Kurdish struggle and an essential tool with which to enable the Kurdish people to be more aware of their ethnic rights. Many commentators for instance have referred to the 17th century Kurdish poet Ahmadi Khani (1650-1707) as the father of Kurdish nationalism who, through his poems, indoctrinated people into their right for freedom (Vali, 2003; Van Bruinessen, 1995)

2.3 From Tribalism to Nationalism

Kurdish revolts during wartime and later, shifted significantly in terms of their character and the nature of their resistance. However, in between the two World Wars many Kurds organised political movements and elite groups were established which were mostly nationalistically motivated rather than tribally prompted. Unlike some commentators who

have characterised Kurdish revolts generally as purely tribal (Edmonds, 1957; Wenner, 1963; Cottam, 1964), analysts who propose a significant shift in the character of the Kurdish revolt are to be endorsed. This revolt ranged from the purely tribal and the religiously tribal through to the nationalistic (See Zeidner, 1959; Disney, 1980). Disney has stated that:

Subsequent analyses of the revolts of 1925, 1930, 1937, 1941, and 1943 as well as intermittent flare ups, have also been attributed to causes along the spectrum of tribal to nationalist (Disney 1980, p.28).

The following are nationalist political parties and associations that were established between the two world wars: the Khoyboun (Kurdish League for Independence) 1927; the Hiwa (Hope) Party 1941; the KJK 1942 (Committee for the regeneration life of Kurdistan); and the Kurdistan Democratic Party 1945.

The formation of the Republic of Kurdistan in 1946 in the Kurdish town of Mahabad, western Iran, was a consequence of improved organisational and political development. Evidently, support was offered by the Soviets to the Kurds in the early stages of the Cold War, particularly when the Iranian government weakened. The Soviet Union was not the only power wanting to safeguard its flank position in the region and was desirous of the Kurds support, other allies and the USA had interests in the area too. Eleven months after the establishment of the Republic of Kurdistan by Qazi Mohamed (1893-1947) the first newly-born state for Kurds had vanished. Subsequent to the Russian withdrawal of their troops in western Azerbaijan, the Iranian central government regained power with allied intervention. In December 1947, less than one year after the declaration of the Republic, Iranian authorities were able to control Mahabad and hundreds of KDP members were hanged, including Qazi Mohamed.

Mulla Mustafa Barzani (1903-1979) a main supporter of the Republic of Kurdistan, was able to escape to Russia with his five hundred followers in a remarkable journey. Barzani stayed in Russia until 1958 when Qassim staged a military coup in Iraq and allowed Barzani to return. However, the Kurdish nationalist movement was declining in favour of class-based politics (Van Bruinessen, 1992). From the 1960s onwards there was a re-emergence of Kurdish nationalism, at first in Iraqi Kurdistan. This was particularly evident when Barzani returned and it occurred in Iranian Kurdistan and the Turkish sector of Kurdistan (Van Bruinessen, 1992, Disney 1980, McDowell 1996). The following sections focus on Iraqi Kurdistan being the most advanced sector of Kurdistan politically and, as commonly known, was the stage of a series of humanitarian catastrophes in the history of the 20th century, which included genocide and mass displacement. The following section concentrates on the more recent history of Iraqi Kurds from where all my participants originated. The significant political events that lay behind my decision to leave the country will now be highlighted. Many of my first-generation interviewees had experienced these events apart from me.

2.4 Kurdish Recent Resistance and Revolts in Iraq

“Free Kurdistan or die trying”

The majority of Kurdish people of the 1960s, 70s and 80s generation upheld the above slogan either in their memory or it was hung on their walls if allowed. The countries Kurdistan is divided amongst are reluctant to admit the presence of Kurds in the country (except in post- Saddam Iraq). In Iraq, although the 1958 constitution recognized that Kurds and Arabs should live side by side in the country, all their rights were denied during the previous regime and they were subjected to genocide. Following the First Gulf War of 1991, the Kurds in Iraq entered a new era. This favourable international situation has resulted in a de facto Kurdish government in Iraqi Kurdistan known as the Kurdistan Regional

Government (KRG). During the last decades of the 20th century, violence and racial discrimination against the Kurds reached its zenith, especially that practiced by the Ba'ath party in Iraq. As a result, a significant number of Kurdish families and individuals emigrated to Europe or the neighboring countries of Iraq in order to escape from the regime. In this section, certain historical events and political upheavals that caused Kurdish mass immigration will be briefly discussed.

In March 1970, a peace plan was announced between the Iraqi central government and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) led by Mustafa Barzani. The agreement was reached after a series of bloody wars between both sides resulting in thousands of lives being lost and many more displaced. Although the so-called March Agreement provided for border Kurdish autonomy and also gave Kurds representation in Iraqi government bodies, the Kurdish leaders soon realised that they were only killing time and a political game was being played rather than a real solution being provided to resolve the Kurdish Issue in Iraq. By 1974, the Iraqi government had broken all their promises to give Kurds their rights, including political and cultural rights, and instead began a new offensive against the Kurds and pushed the rebels (Pesh merga) close to the border with Iran. In March 1975, Iraq and Iran reached an agreement known as the Algiers Pact or as the Kurds preferred to name it, the Dark Algiers Agreement. The Iranian portal for aid closed within hours and suddenly the Kurds had no access to the outside. The KDP, as the main political party at that time, had been forced to return to the mountains and begin guerrilla warfare as before. Later in 1976 the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) was formed, and unlike the KDP, featured as a conservative party. Jalal Talabani (the former president of Iraq 2005-2014) and his colleagues formed the new party as a modern leftist movement. From the late 1970s onwards the war between the Kurds and the government in Baghdad had intensified and Iraqi troops cleared a buffer along the borders which was sometimes thirty kilometers wide; this was part of the Algiers Agreement.

Thus, by 1978 more than one thousand villages had been razed and people were forced to live in surveillance camps.

Hundreds of thousands of Kurdish people were displaced internally and forced to live in compulsory camps. At that time, the Iraqi government was delighted that the international community had greeted the Kurdish tragedies with silence and were quite desperate to eliminate any links between the Kurds and the outside world. Despite the difficulties for those who wanted to leave the country illegally, many individuals took risks and travelled to the neighbouring countries on their way to Europe. This was the first wave of the Kurdish migration and they were mainly non-economic refugees and political activists. They established the first Kurdish diasporic communities who have worked hard to break the international silence on the Kurdish question and the Kurds at home have always considered them as their ambassadors.

On the one hand, the eight years of the Iraq-Iran war from 1980 to 1988 was to a great extent an excellent opportunity for Kurds to develop politically and to take advantage of two countries that were fighting each other. On the other, this war cost both sides huge economic infrastructural damage and up to a million people were killed including civilians. However, one can argue that this was similar to the victimisation of the Iraq-Iran war. Furthermore, the Ba'athist regime in Iraq used this war as an excuse to attack Kurds; the Iraqi authorities believed that Kurdish guerrillas were cooperating with the Iranians in the war. The Iraqi army had extensively used chemical weapons such as mustard gas against Iranian troops and Kurds. The UN Security Council issued statements that "chemical weapons had been used in the war". However, due to various outside pressures, the statements never clarified that it was only Iraq that was using chemical weapons as many authors have claimed that the international community remained silent as Iraq used weapons of mass destruction against Iranian[s] as well as Iraqi Kurds (Fisk, 2005; King, 2003; Hiltermann, 2003).

2.4.1 The Two Tragic Events

The following two tragic human catastrophes that happened to Iraqi Kurds (1986-1989), namely the Anfal (Kurdish genocide) and the Halabja chemical attack, have symbolised Kurdish victimisation. After more than a quarter of a century there is, to some degree, still silence from the international community regarding this. This despite some individual efforts to document these two events and conduct research on the consequences of people's lives. Most recently, members of the Kurdish diasporic communities' activists alongside with some members of parliament in some European countries including the British House of Commons, have lodged a campaign to formally recognise these two tragic events as evidence of genocide. For example, on Thursday 28th February 2013, the House of Commons debated a motion relating to the 25th anniversary of the Kurdish genocide. The Backbench Business Committee scheduled the debate and invited the Conservative MP Nadhim Zahawi, who is originally Kurdish (House of Commons, 2013). After a brief chronology of these events and an explanation of why these two historical events are important for the Kurdish people, I will discuss how these relate to the life of the Kurdish people in diaspora.

During the Iraq-Iran war in 1985, the Iraqi regime in Baghdad maximised its power and control of the Kurdish areas using any opportunity in order to eliminate Kurdish rebels. It began with the destruction of villages forcing its people to live in controlled camps which were constructed in urban areas and followed the interrogation of those families whose members had joined the Peshmerga (freedom fighters). After this, mass arrests began. Then operation Anfal began; a genocidal campaign against the Kurdish people in Northern Iraq, led by the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein and headed by Ali Hassan al-Majid in the final stages of the Iran-Iraq War. The campaign takes its name from a verse in the Qur'an (Surat al-Anfal), which was used as a codename by the former Iraqi Ba'athist regime for a series of systematic attacks against the Kurdish population of northern Iraq, conducted between 1986

and 1989 and culminating in 1988. The Anfal campaign included the use of ground offensives, aerial bombing, systematic destruction of settlements, mass deportation, firing squads and chemical warfare. Thousands of civilians were killed during the anti-insurgent campaigns stretching from the spring of 1987 through to autumn of 1988. The attacks were part of a long-standing campaign that destroyed approximately 4,500 Kurdish villages in areas of northern Iraq and displaced at least a million of the Kurdish population. Amnesty International collected the names of more than 17,000 people who had "disappeared" during 1988. The campaign has been characterized as genocidal in nature. It is also characterized as "gendercidal", because "battle-age" men were the primary targets. According to the Iraqi prosecutors, as many as 182,000 people were killed (Black, 1993; Rubin, 2003)

Alongside the Anfal campaign, one of the most aggressive modern crimes committed by the Iraqi regime against the Kurds, attacking Halabja town in northern Iraq using chemical bombs in March 1988 can be seen as the world's worst mass killing after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan at the end of the World War II. On March 16th, 1988 after two days of conventional artillery attacks, Iraqi planes dropped gas canisters on the town. The town and the surrounding district were attacked with bombs, artillery fire and chemical weapons, the latter of which proved most devastating. At least 5,000 people died as an immediate result of the chemical attack and it is estimated that a further 7,000 people were injured or suffered long-term illnesses. Most of the victims of the attack on the town of Halabja were Kurdish civilians. According to the BBC many different types of chemical bombs were used by the Iraqi army:

Up to 20 aircraft, said to include Iraqi MIGS and Mirages, were seen overhead at around 1100 local time in Halabja. According to experts, the chemicals dropped by the planes may have included mustard gas, the nerve agent sarin, tabun and VX and possibly cyanide (BBC, 16th March 2005).

As I personally came from the affected area that was attacked with chemical weapons and was fortunate to escape the gas bombardment the night before, I can recall the event where the attack started on 13th of March 1988 as Iranian troops advanced to control the surrounding areas of Halabja and the Iraqi army's fightback to regain the areas I was interviewed as an eyewitness of the attack (see appendix G). After two days of intensive fighting between the two sides, the Iraqi army realised that they could not stop the Iranian and Kurdish fighters. The following day on the 16th of March they used chemical weapons while tens of thousands of civilians remained in the area; my family and I just managed to leave the town on the evening of the 15th. My family decided to stay in the city until 8.00 pm on the 15th March. Later we realized that we should leave the city and we were lucky to escape in time. The five-hour attack began early in the morning of the 16th March 1988, following a series of random attacks using rockets and napalm, when Iraqi Mirage aircraft began dropping chemical bombs on Halabja's residential areas far from the besieged Iraqi army base on the outskirts of the town.

Iraqi aircraft conducted up to 20 bombings in sorties of seven to eight planes each; helicopters coordinating the operation were also seen. We all witnessed clouds of smoke billowing upwards: white, black and then yellow, rising in a column about 50 meters into the air. Later, many of my relatives and friends who were victims of the attack said to me that the gas at first smelled of sweet apples and that people died and were wounded in a number of ways. Some of the victims just dropped dead while others died laughing. Others took a few minutes to die, first "burning and blistering" or coughing up green vomit. It is believed that Iraqi forces used multiple chemical agents during the attack, including mustard gas and the nerve agent Sarin. Most of the wounded people, including my own maternal uncle, were taken to hospitals in the Iranian capital Tehran suffering heavily from mustard gas exposure. Halabja is the unfinished story of the Kurdish nation; it is also a symbolic city of a crime

committed against humanity. Unfortunately, there are many more victims from Halabja who are still suffering from the mustard gas exposure. The United Nations and the international community need to recognise Halabja and Anfal as an act of genocide. This is what the people from Halabja need urgently. I think our new generation here in exile is well aware of the tragic events that happened to us just because we were Kurds. My daughter is only 8 years old and her date of birth is, coincidentally, the 16th March but out of respect for the victims of Halabja, she has decided to celebrate her birthday on a different day.

In August 1988, the war between Iraq and Iran finally ended and the UN declared a ceasefire which was accepted by both exhausted sides of the longest war in the region. The Iraqi regime again wanted to maintain its power over the Kurds' territory and control areas that it had lost in the war. If the Iraqi army had not slipped into another war in 1990 and invaded Kuwait as a result of coalition forces responding and defeating Iraqi troops in the Gulf War, the Kurds may have continued systematic attacks such as the so-called Anfal operation without any international condemnation. However, on 3rd August 1990, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 660 condemning the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and demanding that Iraq unconditionally withdraw all forces deployed in Kuwait. The Iraqi authorities simply refused to withdraw and finally the United States-led coalition forces launched a massive military assault on Iraq and Iraqi forces stationed in Kuwait in mid-January 1991. Following the Iraqi army's withdrawal from Kuwait when it was heavily defeated, an extraordinary internal rebellion began which first started in the southern cities of Iraq and then in Kurdish cities in March 1991. By March 21st 1991, all Iraqi Kurdistan cities and towns including Kirkuk, the most important Kurdish city that had huge oil field reserves, was under the control of Kurdish rebels (Peshmerga).

Unfortunately, the support from the coalition troops suddenly stopped just after Iraqi's withdrawal from Kuwait- this gave Saddam Hussein a free hand to crush the internal

rebellion. The regime began a fightback with characteristic ruthlessness and brutality, using heavy artillery, helicopter gunships and tanks.

The scale of this counter-offensive, fuelled undoubtedly by the recent horrific experiences of many Kurds during the Anfal campaign, provoked a massive and rapid exodus of some 1.8 million refugees and displaced persons (Cook, 1995, p.35).

According to the UNHCR the Kurds' 1991 mass exodus represented the highest rate of influx in the 40-year history of the UNCHR (UNCHR Report on Northern Iraq, May 1992). Finally the Kurds humanitarian crisis was recognised this time and the world powers responded by persuading the UN to issue Security Council Resolution 688 known as the Safe Heaven in Northern Iraq. Resolution 688 dealt exclusively with Iraqi repression of its citizens and the urgent need for humanitarian assistance (ibid: p.37).

When the Iraqi government withdrew from the north of Iraq in October 1991, the Kurdistan Front stepped into the vacuum, operating as the regional government through a series of local committees and organizing a de facto administration. Soon a new political era for Kurds began and on May 19, 1992, 6 months after the Kurds had gained their freedom, the first elections were held. Due to allegations of election fraud, they divided the seats 50-50 and created a unity government. However, the government collapsed resulting in a civil war breaking out in 1994. The last parliamentary meeting was held in 1996. It resulted in the creation of two Kurdish states, a PUK-controlled state based in Sulaymani and a KDP-controlled state based in Hewler; both recognised themselves as legitimate rulers of Kurdistan. The Kurds' internal conflict and civil war resulted in thousands of lost lives and many more were displaced. A new wave of Kurdish emigration to Europe and neighbouring

countries began in order to escape from the troubled newly autonomous Kurdistan. In the next section narratives of Kurdish diaspora as stateless individuals will be examined.

In summary, I have intentionally listed a number of significant events which have caused mass emigration from Kurdish territory, namely the Halabja gas attack (1988), Anfal (1986-1989), the Kurdish uprising (1991) followed by the mass exodus and Kurdish internal armed conflict (1994-1997). My reason for highlighting these events is to make the point that these are central to the notion of Kurdish diaspora and they are also vital to any study in this regard at least two ways. First, the historical context of Kurdish migration patterns reveals the diversity of the factors explaining why Kurdish people left, and are still leaving, their homeland. As indicated elsewhere there are at least three phases of Iraqi-Kurdish immigration to Europe: (1975-1985), (1988-1998) and (2003-present). Here I am certain that the first two phases from the 1975 Algiers Agreement against the Kurdish rebellion (1975-1985) to the Iraq/Iran war (1988-1998) and its aftermath, caused many Kurdish individuals and families to leave; these can be classified as political refugees. Although most of the Kurdish people who left their country from 2003 onwards can be seen as economic migrants there are exceptional circumstances. This excludes individuals such as journalists, politicians and activists who were persecuted by the KRG authorities. It also excludes those who left the country during the recent political uncertainties such as the Kurds fight against ISIS; this will be discussed in more detail elsewhere in this thesis. Second, except for only one participant who came to the UK 40 years ago after the Algiers Agreement, the rest of my first generation (parents) participants who I interviewed for this research, have personally experienced and witnessed at least two of those four events discussed above and some of them three. Yet, they were all present when the Kurdish uprising occurred against the Iraqi central government and they were frightened by the Iraqi army fightback which resulted in a mass exodus of up to two million people fleeing to the mountains and neighbouring

countries. The memories of these events are vividly recalled and they have been passed on to new generations in diaspora. In the next section I shall explain the generational and collective shared memories of life back home and particularly the Kurdish collective feeling towards the lack of a nation state.

2.5 Kurdish Diasporic Communities and the lack of a Kurdish Nation-State

The lack of an official state (nation-state) in particular, distinguishes the Kurdish diaspora from other types of diasporic communities around the world today. This is due to the fact that we live in a world where belonging to a nation is seen as natural (Eliassi, 2015, Malesevic, 2013). In relation to memories of home this indicates how important it is to take into consideration the point of view of people who define themselves as stateless. Memories of stateless diasporic communities are contested. Studies have focused on Palestinian (Khalidi, 2010), Kurds (Eliassi, 2013; Sokefeld, 2008) and Amazigh (Benigo, 2013; Merolla, 2002) communities in Europe. The nostalgic images of back home among individuals of ordinary diasporic communities who have their own country are different from the images of the Kurdish diasporic people who do not have a proper country to call their own. Therefore, unlike the mainstream diasporic communities, for the Kurdish people a part of their political aspiration is to be recognised as having an identity and a sense of belonging. This point will be discussed further under Volkan's idea of unresolved mourning in regard to the lack or loss of something. In his book, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (1998), Volkan argues that like individuals, large groups and ethnic minorities also mourn the loss of their symbolic leaders or the lack of an opportunity to exercise their cultural rights. Members of a group who share the same loss collectively experience a similar psychological mourning process. He goes further and explains how some kinds of tragedies result in more complicated group mourning processes which also pass to generations in what he calls transgenerational transmission.

This type of trauma exacerbates a feeling of humiliation and helplessness, which can cause post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Volkan, 1998, p. 41).

Although members of Kurdish diasporic communities share a mourning for the lack of a proper state and have also been through many nation tragedies (Anfal, Kurdish Genocide, Halabja Massacre 1988), the question that arises here is whether losing something can only result in mourning (passive) or can it sometimes create resilience (active). My close work with participants across generations among Kurdish communities here has provided me with insights into how individuals and families are strongly attached to each other. Their spontaneous connections across towns and cities offer endless support and hospitality to each other whenever and wherever needed.

It is worth mentioning my own personal narrative again as during my field work I have been welcomed by members of Kurdish communities across the country and invited to stay in their homes. Occasionally I have been invited to dine with them while the interviews took place and even occasionally to sleep in the family home. For me, in order to access this kind of unconditional support, I need to locate a Kurdish person in a particular town or city that I want to visit, then within an unbelievably short period of time everything is usually arranged: interview venues, accommodation and the numbers of people that were required to be interviewed. Most of the families I have interviewed did not know me personally; therefore, occasionally I was a source of suspicion to them. This reminds me of the brilliant work by Benedict Anderson (1983) titled, *Imagined Communities*, where he defines a nation as ‘an imagined political community’. He justifies the concept by providing the following example: members of the community will probably never know each of the other members face to face. However, they may have similar interests or identify themselves as part of the same nation. Members hold in their minds a mental image of their affinity. It is similar to a football fan

who associates himself with his country's national team; Kurdish individuals who I am in contact with identify with my work and show their interest.

However, Anderson's work has been questioned by scholars in the field of nationalism and nation-building, especially when he comments on the process of constructing the nation (imaginary) in the modern world. For instance, Pool (1999) asks whether this affiliation is arbitrary and why at certain times in history, large numbers of people began to think in that way in order to distinguish themselves from the others. Smith (1999, 1993) seeks to know how the possibility of imagining the nation turns into the moral imperative of mass dying for the nation. He goes further by providing many examples of different versions of nationalism that have been formed with or without regard for intellectual and print-languages. He is also interested in ethno-nationalism as a non-Western concept of nationalism which is opposed to Western views of a nation defined by its geographical territory. This is particularly relevant when discussing Kurds as ethnic-based nationalists and Kurdish diasporic communities in Europe and whether division at home has an impact on the structure of Kurdish diaspora in Europe bearing in mind the fact that there is no official Kurdish language spoken by all.

Through my close work with members of Kurdish communities across UK cities, participants from both generations have not hesitated to demonstrate their Kurdishness at least in a symbolic way such as wearing necklaces with the Kurdish flag or having a map of Kurdistan and hanging Kurdish flags on their bedroom walls alongside their celebrities. During my fieldwork with Kurdish families I observed a young Kurdish sportsman who attended five days of training and wanted to be a professional boxer. He wishes to be a Kurdish version of Amir Khan, who represents both Kurdistan and Britain in international boxing competitions. He has hung in his room posters of Mohamad Ali and the Kurdish flag next to each other. If in the past ordinary Kurdish people have not exercised their Kurdishness in a symbolic and soft way it is because they have always been coerced into physical conflict. In contrast the

newer Kurdish generation, and diasporic communities in particular, have mobilised themselves at least in symbolic representation of Kurdishness. Billig's influential work, *Banal Nationalism* (1995), helps us to distinguish between two versions of Kurdish mobilisation in Europe. One kind is the hard version which is mainly practiced by the Kurdish from Turkey, Iran and Syria (the Kurdish in Syria live in complex circumstances). While the Kurds in these countries are still struggling for political and cultural recognition, Kurds in Iraq have had a semi-independent state since 2003. Consequently, I would argue that the diasporic Kurd communities from Iraq (those that this research focuses on) through symbolic representations (i.e. the soft way) are practising their Kurdishness. This explains why Kurdish immigrant communities from Turkey are more organised and better politically mobilised than Iraqi Kurd immigrants. For example, they organise regular demonstrations, protests, hunger strikes and large rallies against the Turkish state. In contrast Iraqi Kurds in Britain are less politically mobilised; during my fieldwork I interviewed three community activists and organisers from Kurdish communities and they all confirmed unquestionably that Kurds in other parts of Europe are more organised and politically engaged with Kurdish issues (See interviews 1, 5 and 7) and in this regard referred to Kurdish communities in Germany (mainly Kurds from Turkey or Northern Kurdistan) and Kurdish communities in Scandinavian countries (mainly Iranian Kurds or Eastern Kurdistan). This not only supports the argument that the division at home has an impact on Kurdish diaspora geographically but also politically across Europe.

In chapter five these themes are discussed in more detail in my data analysis; I shall question in what way Kurds 'imagine their nation' and how they distinguish themselves from the 'others'. In other words, there is not only the struggle of self-determination and political recognition but also nostalgic experiences of home and the experience of living in more than

one home. The emotional experiences of Kurdish individuals, when asked where they are from or where they consider their home to be, will now be examined.

2.6 The KRG's Internal and External Challenges

In order to understand the current political situation in Iraqi Kurdistan and how this has had an impact on Kurdish communities here in the United Kingdom, I will provide an update with a comprehensive view on the region in the following section. I will first concentrate on three tensions that the KRG is facing: internal threats, namely the tension with the Iraqi central government; ISIS threats to the region; and finally tension among the Kurdish themselves. Attention also needs to be drawn to external threats to the KRG, namely those from the regional and international powers. Both internal and external threats have contributed to the status of uncertainty for residents of the KRG and also for Iraqi-Kurdish diasporic communities including the families who have participated in this research and who might have dreams of returning one day. This threat was echoed in many of the interviews I have had with my participants.

Internal Threats

Middle Eastern experts and commentators have expressed their concern regarding the relationship between the Baghdad-Iraqi central movement and the Erbil-KRG. Both Stansfield and Anderson (2009) have described such a relationship as characterised by suspicion, animosity and brinkmanship. In their analysis of Iraq's biggest threat, post-Saddam, it was concluded that it was neither the ethnic threat nor the sectarian threat but rather a real threat to divide Iraq; this is the tension between the centralist block and the regionalists' block (Stansfield and Anderson, 2009). The main issue between the Iraqi central

government and the KRG since 2005 is due to the interpretation and implementation of the new Constitution of Iraq post- Saddam. For example, the following Articles of the Iraqi constitution in particular are viewed differently by each division. Article (121) gives power to provincial councils to establish a regional administration; Article (111) provides for the right to manage each region's own oil resources; Article (9) deals with the creation of a militia outside of the official army and finally Article (140) is a negotiation to normalise disputed territories including the Kirkuk, Mosul, Diyala, Salahaddin and Erbil provinces. The disputed territories included all the districts that have experienced policies of discrimination which were implemented consistently over a long period. (Ihsan 2017). The different interpretations of a country's constitution have resulted in much tension between Baghdad and Erbil over power sharing and managing natural resources. For example, in regard to Article (111), Kurds see the constitution as allowing for the regional administration to manage and trade their natural resources, oil and gas without returning to the central government whereas the authorities in Baghdad disagree. One of the worst consequences of the above dispute is the effect on the public sector and the KRG regarding salaries for over 1.3 million employees. Erbil is currently three months behind on payments to its people and blames an ongoing financial crisis due to global oil prices, a dispute with Baghdad over its budget share as well as an influx of refugees and displaced Iraqis.



Figure (5) Map shows the areas disputed between the KRG and the Iraqi government in Baghdad. Red signifies known disputed areas controlled by the KRG; pink areas are disputed and officially controlled by the KRG, and orange areas are disputed and not officially controlled by the KRG.

Source: 'Image in the public domain', <https://ethnicgeography.wordpress.com>

Another internal issue that the KRG is facing is the fact that although ISIS (Da'esh) has been defeated in their battle across the Kurds' controlled territory, KRG officials have continually stated that the ISIS threat remains strong. The KRG has a long borderline with the Sunni division in Iraq and that area has been known as a disputed territory where most of the domestic ISIS fighters originally come from. There are three Arab-Sunni provinces, namely Tikrit, Mosul and Diyala. ISIS have recruited young fighters from these areas and are prepared to fight the Kurds over disputed land and at the same time fight against the central government dominated by the Shia division in Baghdad and southern Iraq. Clearly the ISIS threat to KRG will remain for at least two reasons: first there is the geographical element which makes it easy for ISIS members to enter the KRG. Second, as a result of this the border areas remain unstable and in addition the threat can be intensified as ISIS has become hostile toward the Kurds and central government by increasing terrorist attacks rather than fighting on the front line. The literature on new waves of Islamist fundamentalism supports the above

suggestion and this has been consistently argued by commentators. For example, political Islam can be understood as a revolutionary project with the aim of creating an Islamic state. However, Oliver Roy, (2017) a French scholar argued that neo-fundamentalism is a new form of globalised Islam in which we are facing not a radicalization of Islam, but the Islamization of radicalism. Despite Isis stepping back in the frontline, their threat will remain strong as their strategy and motivation is complex. In particular there are many unsolved issues in the region such as the Arab/Kurd, Sunni/Shia, Muslim/non-Muslim conflicts which easily feed instability and enable security in the region to be more vulnerable (Leezenberg2017). This, in particular, causes another problem for the KRG authorities as its border will remain open to displaced people coming from the region (King 2017).

The final internal threat for the KRG under discussion and which also has an impact on my respondents' decisions whether to return to Kurdistan or not is disagreement between the Kurdish factions themselves in regard to a power struggle and the future of the KRG. The political landscape of the Iraqi Kurdistan region is deeply divided over certain essential issues which can be summarised as power legitimacy, corruption and the relationship with Baghdad. One can argue that the tension between political actors within the KRG leaves the Kurdistan region increasingly vulnerable to financial collapse and internal armed conflict. However, although the current government is comprised of all five winning parties in the most recent election held in 2013, (the Kurdistan Democratic Party won 38 seats out of 111 seats in parliament, the Movement for Change 24 seats, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan 18 seats, Kurdistan Islamic Union 10 seats, Kurdistan Islamic Group 6 seats and other parties 10 seats), in reality the government and its resources are controlled by two parties, the KDP and the PUK. As a result the current parliament is blocked by the KDP. Just as with the general election in September 2013, where for more than nine months the parties did not come to any agreement on future government, the recent election in September also 2018 shows that there

is no indication that all parties will reach an agreement to form a new government. This raises particular concern and reveals more political instability which causes feelings of fear among many people at home and in the diaspora (Fischer-Tahir 2017).

The following three issues are the origin of the division between the KRG authority and its opposition and their relations has become increasingly worse. First, there is a dispute over the legitimacy and terms of the current KRG president, Massud Barzani, who is the current leader of the KDP. The opposition parties require that the president should be elected from parliament while the KDP and its allies want the president to be elected directly by the people. The former claim that the current president's term has ended, (it is more than eight years), but the latter insist on Mr Barzani remaining in his post because he is the only suitable candidate for this post. The second issue is in respect of oil revenue and corruption. The opposition has accused the government of being deeply corrupt on many levels over the KRG's economic activities including oil trade with neighbouring countries and international companies. Additionally, the KRG has always been accused of corruption by many internal and external commentators (see Leezenberg, 2005). This, in particular has an impact on those involved in diasporas in Europe that want to return to KRG controlled areas and it also affects the process of reintegration (Paasche 2016). As a result the KRG is now facing an economic downturn and the people have paid the price since public salaries have been hugely affected by the above crisis. In response, the government has maintained that the economic crisis is due to the threat from ISIS and that the oil price has dropped.

Finally, there is tension between the KRG government and the opposition in regard to the future of the KRG which is deepening the division between the Kurdish parties and has increased the status of uncertainty in the region. As the KRG's relationship with Baghdad has worsened, Barzani and his allies have lodged a political campaign to move the Kurdistan region toward becoming fully independent and disconnected from the central government.

However, the opposition in the Kurdish parties hold a different view and see Barzani's attempt as unrealistic. The KRG authority proposed a referendum to be held on September 25th, 2017 in order for the KRG's citizens to vote on whether they want to leave Iraq or remain. This could be seen as a democratic way to solve any political issues as in reality there are many challenges internally, regionally and internationally which remain as obstacles preceding a referendum. (During the submission of this thesis the referendum referred to was held and, unfortunately, these obstacles were realised as predicted).

External Threats

The external threats can be understood as emanating from two sources: first, a direct threat from regional powers, Arab states and two neighboring countries in which the Kurds live, Iran and Turkey, who are strongly opposed to any attempt by the Kurds in Iraq to be independent from the central government. Second, there is an indirect threat from international superpowers. Unlike the regional powers, the international actors like the US, the UK and Russia consider Kurds in the region as their ally especially in the war against ISIS, but when it comes to Kurds' independence they withdraw their support. Clearly, the relationship between Kurds generally, the Kurds in Iraq in particular and the Western powers could be described as manipulative and related to the terrorist threat with only a limited mutual understanding between the political actors. The US and UK policies towards the Kurds in Iraq are very vague; this on its own contributes to increasing the state of uncertainty among Kurds inside and outside Kurdistan. However, the Kurds in Iraq since 1991 have considered themselves as a friend of the Western powers. For example, a recent report issued by the House of Lords, May 2017, stated:

We recognise that there is a balance to be drawn between engaging with sub-state actors, and avoiding the risk of undermining the central state.

Nevertheless, the Iraqi Kurds are a valuable ally, and the UK should support the Kurdistan Regional Government financially and its Peshmerga forces with military capacity. The UK should not, however, support attempts by the Iraqi Kurds to seek independence. (Select Committee on International Relations, 2017)

There are many documents promoting similar thoughts issued by the US Department of Foreign Affairs. However, Donald Trump's administration is keen to strengthen its cooperation with Kurdish fighters in both Syria and Iraq to eradicate ISIS but in regard to the future of the KRG the United States preferred road is via Baghdad and is not supporting a fully independent Kurdistan. The situation becomes more complex when international powers share a conflict of interest over the Kurds in the region: Russia backs the Kurds in Turkey and Iraq but is against the Syrian Kurds because they see the current Syrian regime as their ally while the US backs the Kurds in Syria and Iraq who fight alongside US allies against ISIS but it considers the Kurds in Turkey as terrorists because they see Turkey's regime as their ally.

To conclude, many commentators have argued that only time will tell with regard to what the future will look like due to the complexity and uncertainty in the region and the KRG in particular. The ISIS threat remains while they conduct their terrorist activities in different forms and use multiple strategies rather than just fighting on the frontline. For many Kurds, even if the US and its allies were able to defeat ISIS completely, the future of the KRG would still not be certain due to the fact that the Iraqi central government will regain its strength and will not tolerate any further progress by the KRG towards independence. Although this research has not paid considerable attention to a returnee's experience and post-diasporic experiences with regard to members of the Iraqi Kurd communities living in the United Kingdom,

data in this research have revealed that the unstable political and security situation in the KRG controlled area has had an enormous impact on them in a number of ways. Thus the current literature in this field (Paasche, 2016; Baser & Toivanen, 2018) has shown how the political situation in Iraqi Kurdistan and their homeland has had an impact on those returnees and that they have a plan to return one day. For example, Paasche (2016) shows that corruption has affected returnees' economic reintegration within the KRG administration. In another study, both Baser & Toivanen (2018) have examined the dynamic of a voluntary return migration to the KRG in the post-Saddam period. In this study they have claimed that the lack of support by the KRG is evident in regard to voluntary returns. Additionally, they concluded that more recent political developments, namely those following the independent referendum, have created new dynamics for engagement between the KRG and the diaspora. As my participants alongside their fellow Iraqi Kurds living in the diaspora have all witnessed, the aftermath of the referendum held in September 2017 and the unwelcome consequences which followed, undoubtedly made them reconsider any plans they might have had to return. I agree with the above researchers that more work needs to be conducted in regard to returnees to the KRG. Whilst conducting this research I have witnessed many members of the Kurdish diasporic communities across the UK who have clearly expressed their concern in regard to the KRG's future. On the one hand, they stay connected with their extended family and friends in Kurdistan building their hope of returning one day. On the other hand, their dream of returning is put at risk by threats that the KRG faces and they are neither leaving nor staying in the UK but living in a suspended state- a kind of limbo. Further research may be able to show whether this state of uncertainty is continually intergenerational.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on a number of factors which have caused the mass displacement and immigration of the Kurdish population throughout modern history. This includes Kurdish long-term political repression and the struggle to gain an independent state, particularly through a number of tragic events that has occurred to Kurds in Iraq in the late 20th century, namely the Halabja chemical attack (1988), the Anfal process (Kurdish genocide) from 1985 to 1988 and the mass exodus in 1991. In addition, there was the internal armed conflict in the post semi-independent Iraqi Kurdistan region and the economic crisis between 1994 and 1998. Kurds in all parts of Kurdistan have differing migration backgrounds occurring in different historical contexts. Therefore, each Kurdish entity has its own patterns of migration and these differences must be taken into account when categorising them.

The chapter has followed a historical framework that provides an understanding of the relationship between Kurdish diasporic communities and the Kurdish ethnic identity. The chapter delineates how the Kurdish historical struggle for ethnic recognition contributes to political mobility in diaspora. The question arises as to how Kurdish people in general and diasporic communities in Europe in particular, imagine a nation-state to be, and in what way have Kurdish diaspora experienced the lack of a proper state? The chapter has also identified diverse ways of political mobilisation in diaspora and the exercise of ethnic rights and a sense of belonging. The different generational perceptions of home and living and managing the balance between being Kurdish and British are also discussed and will be taken up in more detail in subsequent chapters. Finally, I have updated this thesis with the current political situation in Iraqi Kurdistan and reveal how this has had an impact on Kurdish immigrant families here in the UK.

Chapter Three

Literature Review: Debating the concept of Diaspora

3.1 Introduction

We live in a world where migration has increased remarkably and people tend to relocate by different means and for multiple purposes. Migration as a global phenomenon has been recently revisited by policymakers and researchers. A significant shift has occurred in regard to immigration with the rise of globalisation and the decline of the power of the nation-state. In the past, the idea of a diaspora as useful term was a significant theoretical framework for understanding and conceptualising immigrant communities. In the last decades of the twentieth century, scholars in the field of diaspora and international migration studies have increasingly used another useful term, *Transnationalism*, to develop an understanding of immigration in the era of globalisation. These two concepts significantly offer a deeper analytical tool to understand immigrant communities. Today transnational and diaspora studies have significant implications for the way we conceptualise immigration. Kurdish diaspora in the West are considered one of the newest and comprise a relatively large community. Kurdish people are also regarded as one of the largest nations without a state (a nation-state) in the world. The purpose of this chapter is to review the relevant literature on Kurdish diaspora and situate this study within it. It also aims to contribute to a discussion on, and provide new insights into, the experiences of the younger generation, and in the context of transnational families in particular. A question worth considering is how the new Kurdish diasporic communities perceive 'home' and whether there is a generational continuity among Kurdish communities in terms of political belonging.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section focuses on Kurdish diaspora literature in relation to history and the present features of Kurdish diaspora in Europe. The second section reviews the literature on the Kurdish diasporic identity. It highlights research findings in the field of Kurdish studies in regard to political awareness among diasporic

communities and the lack of a nation-state as a driver of collective identity. The third section focuses on Kurdish younger generation literature in relation to their political involvement and sense of belonging and provides the theoretical consideration that underpins the study. Finally, the chapter discusses the notions of 'Kurdishness' among the Kurdish diaspora and questions the Kurdish homogeneity in terms of identity and belonging.

3.2 Kurdish Diaspora

The term 'diaspora' has been used extensively by scholars from various disciplines and fields of study. The term originally referred exclusively to the Jewish diaspora after the Babylonian exile (Harald, 2008). Diaspora is a term describing the separation of a nation or part of a nation from its own state or homeland and subsequent dispersal amongst other nations; most importantly it preserves its national and ancestral national culture (Sheffer, 1986; Cohen, 1997 and Dufoix, 2003). Accordingly, I take Tololyan's (1991) view when he expands the term more widely and uses diaspora as an umbrella term. He argued that the term shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes similar words in the field, i.e., immigrant, guest-worker, exiled community, and ethnic community. Political immigration and political repression are two important causes of diaspora as they represent the forced movement of people from their homeland. Thus, economic crises were also distinctive causes in the new diaspora of the late twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century. For example, diaspora have developed in the age of globalisation when significant shifts have occurred in the world's political power balance and world economies. With all these complex features, the term diaspora has multiple functions in the contemporary world. Generally speaking there are two perspectives in theorising diaspora: the globalist (Appadurai, 1996) and the localist or culturalist (Malkki, 1992, 1995). However, I argue that the new experiences of transnational people cannot be polarised and I am in agreement with

Roberston (1997) who introduced a new term 'glocalisation' in which both perspectives coexist.

Diasporic people, in one way or another, have always been subjected to an emotional experience of living outside their own motherland. Studies of diaspora have strongly engaged with questions related to identity formation (Hall, 1997; Lavie and Swendenburg, 1996; DeHaan, 2010; Landau 1986), including nationalism and homeland and the process of integration, assimilation and adaptation. There has been a tendency to discuss diaspora mostly along a majority/minority axis regarding the postcolonial exile communities in Europe and Britain in particular. Thus, social and cultural commentators have been interested in diasporic communities who live between two worlds. On the one hand there is their sentiment of homeland and on the other their adaptation to receiving societies.

The Kurdish presence in Europe dates back to the nineteenth century but the Kurdish diaspora, thought to be the largest stateless diaspora in the world and the most politically vocal group within Europe, mostly moved to the European countries from the second half of the twentieth century onward (Grojean, 2011 and Baser, 2011). During the last decades of the twentieth century, violence and racial discrimination against Kurds peaked, especially from the Ba'ath party of Iraq. A significant number of Kurdish families and individuals migrated to Europe or the neighbouring countries of Iraq in order to escape from the Saddam regime (McDowall, 2005). According to a report by the Council of Europe, approximately 1.3 million Kurds live in Western Europe. This includes Kurdish exiled communities who have moved from all parts of a divided Kurdistan (Council of Europe report 2006, Wahlbeck, 1999).

All the features and categories that constitute a diasporic community and which have been identified by scholars in the field (e.g. Sheffer, 1986, Dufoix, 2003 and Cohen, 1997) can

also be applied to Kurdish diaspora (Wahlbeck, 1999, Hassanpour, 1995). Despite the significant numbers of Kurdish people displaced and the exiled communities outside their homeland, there are insufficient studies carried out regarding the Kurdish diaspora. Accordingly, most commentators, who have contributed to Kurdish diasporic studies, mainly concentrated on only first-generation migrants. Generally speaking, we could argue that the Kurdish diaspora is not a homogenous entity. The diaspora comprises labour migrants, students, those who came to join their families, asylum seekers, refugees and exiled intellectuals. (Baser, 2011, Hassanpour, 1995).

Kurds in the United Kingdom are the second largest Kurdish migrant population after Germany in Western Europe. The figure ranges from 200,000 to 250,000 with most Kurds originating from Iraq. More recently, immigration has been due to the continued political oppression and repression of ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq, Iran and Syria. Unquestionably, we should add the recent internal conflict and economic crisis when discussing the new wave of Iraqi Kurdish immigrants to Europe and the UK in particular. Today the Kurdish community in the United Kingdom is not considered one of the main ethnic minorities but it can be argued that the presence of large Kurdish diaspora in the UK cannot be denied. The 2001 UK Census did not record the number of Kurds in the UK but some unofficial sources indicate that they are estimated to number around 200,000 and have settled across the country including in major cities such as London, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and Glasgow (Kurdish Studies and Student Organization-KSSO: 2006). However, the most recent UK census in 2011 recorded the number of people in England and Wales that speak Kurdish as their main language as 48,239 (CoDE, 2013 and Office for National Statistics 2011). These figures may not be representative due to the fact that the Kurdish people have not been recognised as one of the main ethnic groups; they were mainly registered under the country of origin not their ethnic background. For example, a Kurd from

Iraq could be registered as an Iraqi or an Arab. Unlike Kurdish communities in Sweden and Germany which comprise a large proportion of families, the Kurdish immigrant communities in the United Kingdom are predominantly single males (KSSO, 2006). This does not include the Kurds from Turkey, who arrived a long time ago and established their own community mostly in the north of London. Despite the fact that Kurds from Turkey have established their community for many years, in Ipek Demir's (2012) study on the Kurdish community in London she asks for further research to be conducted as she claims that this has been largely ignored in studies on the Kurdish diaspora.

Wahlbeck's work *Kurdish Diaspora* (1999) focuses on Kurdish refugee communities in Britain and Finland and indicates that any definition of diaspora describes the Kurdish refugee situation and exiled Kurdish communities.

All the criteria for a diaspora can be found in the Kurdish refugee communities: forcible expulsion, myths and memories of the homeland, alienation in the host country, the wish to return, ongoing support for the homeland and, finally a collective identity importantly defined by the relationship to the homeland (Wahlbeck, 1999, p. 179).

Accordingly, he argues that since the Kurds clearly fulfil the requirements of the definition of a diaspora as suggested, for example, by Safran (1991), Cohen (1997) and Chaliand (1989), there are sufficient grounds for researching a Kurdish diaspora. This research goes further in this regard by narrowing the focus on a particular group of diaspora Kurds from Iraq and also by concentrating on generational differences among the Kurdish diaspora.

3.3 A Kurdish Nation-State or an Imagined Community?

Many commentators such as Van Bruinessen (1999), Wahlbeck (1999), and Hassanpour (1995) have agreed that the development of the Kurdish diaspora is mostly due to the political situation in the countries of origin, namely the Kurdish nationalist movement. The label 'diaspora' is, perhaps, especially appropriate in the case of Kurdish refugees because of the influence of Kurdish nationalism which commits many Kurdish refugees to the restoration of their homeland (Hassanpour 1995). Van Bruinessen (1999,2007) goes further and sees even the so-called second generation of Kurdish migrants (children of the labour migrants) who were born or grew up in Europe as showing interest in the Kurdish national identity and political activity more so even than their parents. He believes the reason behind this can be understood as retaliation for the exclusion and marginalisation experienced in the host society (in this case Bruinessen's study of Kurds in Germany) and consequently this offers them a stronger sense of belonging to their homeland. Similar to the Kurdish diaspora case in Germany regarding the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden, Alina & Eliassi (2014) have argued that despite the differences which exist in the new generation concerning their conceptualisation of such terms as. "homeland" compared with the older generation of the Kurdish diaspora, they both share two main elements: the need for a homeland identity and a sense of belonging. They insist that the Kurdish diaspora, for both the older and newer generations, was inspired by the nationalist discourse on homeland, belonging and their conception of community. This is more evident, because of exclusion and marginalisation, when there is a lack of identification and belonging with regard to the new country of residence (Alina & Eliassi, 2014, p.73). In addition, it has been argued that the mobilization efforts of the Kurdish elites encouraged many Kurds to embrace their ethnic identity. Baser (2011) provides an example of how a large number of Kurds only discovered their 'Kurdishness' in Germany, where they could express their culture, language and organise themselves without repression. Wahlbeck (1998) takes this point further and argues that after

several years in exile the Kurdish refugees continued to feel alienated in the receiving society. Instead they continued to relate to their countries of origin, emotionally and psychologically, in several different ways. However, the connection with Kurdistan did not only have a psychological aspect; there was also a quite tangible flow of information, ideas, capital and people between the countries of origin and the countries of settlement (Wahlbeck, 1998, p.7).

Additionally Van Bruinessen (1999) and Hassanpour, (1997) have argued that while Kurdish people have been unable to establish their own national state, despite a long struggle for freedom and political awareness, they have succeeded in creating some sort of cyber state. Van Bruinessen explains that if Kurds have not been successful in creating their own state on the ground, they have managed to make it online. He states that:

The Kurds have so far failed to gain independence or a significant degree of autonomy on the ground (with the exception of a part of Iraqi Kurdistan since 1991). Due to the civil liberties enjoyed in exile and to the new technologies that some of them have learned to use, the Kurds have, however, achieved a degree of sovereignty on the airwaves and in cyberspace (Van Bruinessen: 1999, p.12).

This reveals why Kurds prioritise online versions of news and politics. It can be argued that there are at least two obvious facts that motivate Kurdish people in the diaspora to go online: one is due to the lack of a national state and the other is to sustain the Kurdish language as an important symbol of national identity. Now I shall discuss in more detail the ideas of both the political motivation of the Kurdish diaspora and the tendency to create a digital state.

Thus, in regard to the nation-state and nation-building, scholars have argued (Conner,1994) that the formation of a nation which follows establishing a nation-state is not something

which can be granted or an occurrence but is rather a process. Consequently, the above argument can help us to understand the Kurds' demand for an independent state as a long-established dream. In other words, while Kurdish people lack a national state, on the ground they are exercising a form of sovereignty online; Kurds believe that this has to be transformed into reality one day. As many studies have shown (i.e. Wahlbeck, 1998), there is a strong connection between homeland and host-land among Kurdish diasporic communities in Europe in order to maintain their hope and belief of creating a Kurdish national state. What I have found missing and paid little attention to in the literature with respect to the Kurdish nationalist movement in diaspora are the shifts that have occurred in the nature of the nation-state itself. Accordingly, the nature of contemporary diaspora has also changed significantly: for example, the motivation for immigrants to leave their country of origin varies. Most of the literature concentrates on early Kurdish communities which settled in Europe and which left Kurdistan during the 70s and 80s to escape political persecution. This includes a large proportion of families from northern Kurdistan (eastern Turkey). Conversely, there is only insignificant research into the Kurdish immigration to Europe and the UK in the mid and late 90s in search of a better life as a result of economic hardship in Iraqi Kurdistan due to double sanctions imposed by the UN and Iraq. These studies demonstrate that there is a strong tendency among early Kurdish diasporic communities to mobilise themselves and to show interest in political activities across generations. The question that this research seeks to tackle is whether all Kurdish diaspora entities (earlier and recent migrants, children and parents, Kurds from all four parts of divided Kurdistan) have the same predisposition towards the Kurdish question and share the same feelings with regard to political belonging. This means moving from the general to the particular, as current literature treats all Kurdish diaspora in a similar fashion. Instead I argue that the Kurdish diaspora must be viewed as a phenomenon of diverse communities across Europe.

As I mentioned at the opening of the chapter, transnationalism as a term can aid our understanding when it comes to discussing diaspora in the age of globalisation and communication technology. It needs to be borne in mind that studies on transnational migration have been discussed mainly within the context of voluntary migration. It can be argued that the Kurdish migration (except for 2003 onwards in the case of Iraqi Kurds migrating to the EU) is mainly involuntary and that Kurdish communities mostly consist of war and political refugees (Alina, 2004, p. 80). Human movement and communication across continents has become easier and more effective than ever before. In contrast, nation-state borders have become weaker along with the decline of national economies. People all around the world are increasingly making new homes and establishing new ways of life. Transnational families undoubtedly produce new lifestyles and life experiences that go far beyond how we viewed classic diaspora. Within time-space compression (Harvey 1989, Giddens 1981) the notions of 'here', 'there' or 'receive' and 'host' society have become more problematic. In particular, the geographical home has become more flexible. Moreover, new ways of national belonging and political mobilisation have emerged which are based on everyday activities and symbolic representations (see Billig, 1995). He coins the term *Banal Nationalism* in order to clearly differentiate everyday, endemic nationalism from extremist variants. He argues that more attention has been given to the latter version of nationalism.

Although Billig's idea of banal nationalism applies to advanced forms of nationalism in the Western world and European countries in particular, it can explain the Kurdish mobilisation in diaspora too. Kurdish people (at least in exile) have already missed the opportunity to gain a nation-state model and seem to enjoy living in a borderless world more than anyone else. Through symbolic representations, Kurdish communities tend to show a strong affiliation of their national identity in a soft way and in everyday practice. For example: wearing traditional costumes in an open event like Newroz (New Year); hanging a Kurdish flag on the

wall of many Kurdish restaurants and takeaways across European cities; and waving half Kurdish, half English football scarves at football match. Eliassi (2015) provides another good example of this link between ethnic identity (the country of origin) and regional identity (the country of residence) through the concept of sport. Dalkurd FF is a football club in Sweden, founded in 2004 by a group of younger generation Kurds and now successfully competes in the third best football division in that country. Eliassi notes that the name Dalkurd is interesting because it connects the Kurdish identity with Dalarna, a region in Sweden. Following this successful example, other clubs in Sweden have been founded by Kurdish youths. Eliassi argues that this indicates a transnational identity that links Sweden to Kurdistan (Eliassi. 2015, p.46). These examples provide a more complex picture of new Kurdish experiences in the diaspora and in particular the experiences of the Kurdish younger generation in terms of home and political belonging.



Figure (6) Kurdish Arsenal Football fan living in the UK

Source: *Humans of the Arsenal*, January 2016 , <https://humansofthe Arsenal.com/post/137048015547/arsenal-kurdistan-fans>

It might be useful to borrow another term that could explain more clearly exceptional Kurdish cases. This is what Benedict Anderson explains profoundly in his well-known work *Imagined Communities* (1983). Yet, here in Europe, Kurdish exiled communities distinguish themselves from other minorities and the host society. Despite this heterogeneous feature of Kurdish communities here and at home, Kurdish individuals preserve communality at least in their minds or as Anderson called it, the imagined.

It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (Anderson, 1983, p.6).

Kurdish diaspora in Europe particularly, have an opportunity to advance likenesses and practise their Kurdishness via the technology of communication, namely the Internet. In the past Kurdish communities in Europe faced difficulties maintaining their mother tongue and enjoying entertainment in their language. The arrival of faxes, cellular telephones and satellite links provided individuals and groups with instant communication around the globe. For example, Kurds have also been experimenting with the possibilities of the Internet, bulletin boards, E-mail, news groups, mailing lists and a rapidly growing number of websites. Not only news and information is being communicated; a growing corpus of modern Kurdish writing is becoming available online, and the web is likely to play a crucial part in the effort to develop a modern standard language (Hassanpour 1997, Van Bruinessen, 1999). Most recently, Eliassi (2015) investigated an online campaign led by two young Kurdish individuals in Europe who created a Facebook page titled 'I am Kurdistani'. Soon Kurds worldwide were participating in this campaign. This campaign is an attempt by diasporic

communities through social media to disrupt the political geographies that have divided Kurds into four national groups and states. The campaign, argues Eliassi (2015) clearly shows that naming is important in the construction of a new national imagination but is also about reclaiming territory that Kurds have been prosecuted for in their history of struggle (Eliassi, 2015, p.47). In conclusion, regardless of the shared feelings among Kurdish community members in exile and the strong connection between them, one could argue that unfortunately the Kurdish division at home has had an impact on Kurdish diaspora here in Europe. For example, the spread of Kurdish exiled communities in European countries simply represents the division which was made a long time ago. Most of the Kurdish immigrants from Turkey or North Kurdistan are settled in Germany; Kurds from Iran or the eastern part of Kurdistan mainly live in Sweden and other Scandinavian countries; and Kurds from Iraq or the southern part of Kurdistan reside in Britain. This suggests that both the Kurdish diasporic identity and their form of nationalism in exile are complex and unique in many cases. Further divisions can be understood through other elements inside Kurdish communities in the diaspora for example, generational, gender and linguistic differences. Lack of literature in this field and the uniqueness of the Kurdish case require more work. Another problem with the literature is in respect of the younger generation that mainly follow their parents in terms of political interest. The following section reviews this argument and identifies the gap that this research seeks to fill.

3.4 The Kurdish Diaspora and Intergenerational Identity

Many studies have shown (i.e. Baser, 2011; Van Bruinessen, 1999) that like their parents the Kurdish younger generation are heavily engaged in political activity, as, in order to preserve itself, a diaspora undoubtedly needs generational continuity. The second generation is the

vehicle for transformation toward a hybrid identity such as Euro-Kurds (Soguk, 2008): those who have few real memories of their parents' homeland but have grown up hearing the stories and experiences of their parents and relatives. This led to the formation of 'imaginary homelands' in the sense that they have built an idea of a homeland in their minds through second-hand information. (Baser, 2011). However, Kurdish offspring who were raised and grew up in Europe might have been influenced by their parents' political background but this does not necessarily mean they simply followed their parents in terms of attachment to 'home' and political belonging. Instead, throughout the present study I problematise whether classical diasporic theories and categories can be applied to contemporary migrant people and transnational communities. Many scholars (Chan, 2005, Fung, 2002, and Sun, 2002) who have contributed to the field of diasporic study have argued that a new migration wave in the age of globalisation and communication technology no longer fits with the older definition of diasporic people and exiled communities. For Cohen (1997) changes in technology in every country and awareness of mass transport have uncovered fresh destinations for migrants. He goes further to explain that opportunities have arisen for migrant people with the new changes:

In the age of globalisation, unexpected people turn up in the most unexpected places. Their more diverse geographical spread creates a more truly global basis for the evolution of diasporic networks (Cohen, 1997, p.162).

Thus, on the one hand, the movement of people, travel and settlements or resettlements have changed because of the new ways of communication; transport systems have also shifted rapidly. On the other hand, new generations of immigrants have emerged who have developed different lifestyles from their parents. Their relation with the older generation has changed too, and because of those changes mentioned earlier the way that they identify

themselves has changed as well. We need to redefine the new waves of immigrant people and human movement and revisit the theories which have been introduced by commentators in the field so far.

According to some scholars such as Kasinitz et al., (2004) and Alba and Nee, (2003) who have contributed to intergenerational migration studies, transnational parents do not necessarily produce transnational children. For example, it has been argued that the children of immigrants are not likely to engage in their ancestral homes with the same intensity and frequency as their parents and nor will they be as influenced by homeland values and practices. For others, such as Levitt (2008), Schiller (2004) and Morawska (2004), this is not as straightforward as has been suggested and a rather more complex picture is found in recent research regarding the children of immigrant families. Levitt (2008) explains the contradictory influences among second-generation immigrants:

When children grow up in households and participate in organisations in which people, goods, money, ideas and practices from their parents' countries of origin circulate in and out on a regular basis, they are not only socialised into the rules and institutions of the countries where they live, but also into those of the countries from whence their families come (Levitt, 2008, p. 1226).

In a globalised world, the intensification of worldwide social relations (Giddens 1990) has made the present world more tightly integrated than at any earlier point in our history. In the age of the jet plane, cheap flights, global capitalism, global mass media and communication technology, various commentators have claimed that the world is rapidly becoming globalised and people are more connected than ever. The massive diffusion of the Internet in the early 1990s onwards has created virtual communities that take the form of social

networking and online communities (Rheingold: 2000). For Castells (2000), the rise of the network society can be seen as a new dimension of user identity, no matter where they belong. Hence, easy travelling and easy communication among diasporic communities worldwide has convinced many commentators to rethink and revisit concepts around diaspora (see Brinkerhoff 2006, Wu and Chao 2005). Brinkerhoff, for example states:

Diaspora communities are exceedingly diverse, with variation along class, longevity of residence in the host country, ethnic, and regional lines. Combining this diversity with Internet technology yields a ‘creolized global *mélange*’ of cultural crossovers (Brinkerhoff: 2006, p. 32).

Thus, the intensive use of communication technology networks by young people, and in particular the new immigrant generations, has attracted researchers. Throughout this research, I refer to it as a new lifestyle and new experiences of living in more than one ‘home’.

Levitt (2009) shows how immigrant children negotiate and manage to keep a balance between their parents’ home and the receiving society where they live. When the second generation access particular elements of their cultural repertoire this varies considerably by group. Online social networking here is a very good example. Put simply, the second generation do not behave like their parents in terms of their experiences with the ancestral home; they are just not a continuation of the first generation.

Some children, more deeply and intensely embedded in transnational social fields, do not simply choose between the home and the host-land. Instead they strike a balance, albeit tenuous, between the competing resources and constraints circulating within these fields, and deploy them effectively in response to the opportunities and challenges that present themselves, (Levitt, 2009, p.1239).

A core aim of the present study is to explore the above point made by Levitt (2009) and particularly the balance between having two homes and facing new challenges. The latter point is in particular regard to young Kurdish immigrants. I am particularly interested in whether recent Kurdish generations who have grown up in the UK have easy access to the Internet and are able to travel home more frequently. In addition, do they feel bound to a particular 'home' and where do they feel they belong. Undoubtedly the new life experiences and lifestyles experienced by young Kurdish immigrants need to be explored in a multi-perspective way.

New opportunities and challenges are facing later generations of immigrant communities in the age of globalisation and the shrinking world and the concepts of place, time, distance, citizenship and identity have all developed or even lost their original meaning. Different forms of political activities, socialising and belonging have emerged. For many scholars, this is a transformation to the world of cyberspace. Chan (2005) highlights the Chinese diasporic discourse of nationalism and what they imagine home to be. This is taking place through online political discussion forums. According to Naficy (1993), migrants are characterized as liminal people who are separated from their homeland and are yet to be integrated into the host society. As Chan (2005) cited by Naficy (1993) says:

Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between
(Naficy, 1993, p.34).

He argues that the Internet opens up liminal spaces from which migrants can resist, challenge, and speak against regimes of truth (Foucault, 1980) imposed on them by their homeland and the host society. He goes further to discuss the channels and the way that people connect together in online communication.

Discussion on politics and current affairs in online forums mimics the sort of discussion that would take place in a café or lounge among a group of friends, yet the text that appears on the Internet can be read by hundreds of people out there, akin to publishing an article in the press (Chan: 2005, p.360).

To sum up the new immigrant generation's accessibility to technology, the Internet in particular has an impact on an adolescent's lifestyle and identity, but at the same time it can strengthen the link with where they were born. Therefore, unlike first-generation immigrants, the children of immigrant families have been characterised as being a complex topic to be researched. Therefore, any research findings regarding migration study should not necessarily include all generations of migrant people. Children of immigrant families may not share the same sentiments of home and sense of belonging as their parents.

3.5 Kurdishness: Imagined vs Reality

In September 2014, while I was still completing my research fieldwork, I met a young 'Kurdish' man in his early twenties who had just arrived as an asylum seeker from Kurdistan. I had quite a long chat with him about his journey and also the outcome of his asylum process here in the United Kingdom and discovered that the Home Office had refused his application. He was feeling unstable and emotional and seemed very disappointed. He told me tearfully and in a jerky voice the reasons for his refusal. He said, "I've been refused because they couldn't find me a right interpreter". I then asked him what he meant by a "right interpreter". He said, "When I arrived I said I am a Hawrami -Kurd speaker; they didn't know what is Hawrami, so they brought me a Kurdish-Sorani one, then everything went wrong we couldn't understand each other well".

Being Hawrami myself and interpreting in Kurdish-Sorani I sympathised with his concerns and I can confirm that this gentleman is not alone. You can hear many stories like this on a daily basis among Kurdish asylum seekers. It is not only the Hawrami speakers who have this issue but people from other Kurdish language dialects and sub-dialects as well such as the Kirmanji, Bahdini, Zazai, Macho and Lorri dialects. Although this study focuses on the generational and gender differences in the Iraqi-Kurdish diaspora in respect of identity and homemaking, it also consider the particularities of each individual such as her or his linguistic and religious background. In which questions the homogeneity of Kurdish people in diaspora. It has been imagined by all Kurdish in diaspora regardless of their linguistic, gender and age differences that there is a shared 'home' called Kurdistan but in reality this is much contested concept.

Generally speaking the Kurdish languages belong to the Iranian branch of the Indo-European family (McDowall 1996). Kurdish forms three dialect groups known as Northern Kurdish (Kurmanji), Central Kurdish (Sorani), and Southern Lorri or Kurdish-Lorri; the majority of Kurds speak Kurmanji (Kurds from Turkey and Syria). In addition a separate group of languages, Zaza-Gorani, are also spoken by several million Kurds but it has been argued that linguistically these are not Kurdish languages (Kaya, 2011; McDowall, 1996). In total the number of Kurdish native speakers is estimated at between 20 and 25 million, mostly inhabiting four countries: Iran, Turkey, Iraq and Syria. They are generally classified as north-western Iranian languages, or by some scholars as intermediate between north-western and south-western Iranian languages. Bruinessen (1994), for example, notes that Kurdish has a strong south-western Iranian element, whereas Zaza and Gorani belong to the north-western Iranian group (Bruinessen 1994, p.64).

This account above poses a striking question on the nature of Kurds and the dominant narrative of their political struggle throughout the twentieth century. I would like here to

borrow from the postmodernists' notion of metanarratives (Lyotard, 1979) in an attempt to understand the Kurdish context. One of the reasons some postmodernist and poststructuralist thinkers have made a theoretical critique of grand narrative theories is because they ignore the heterogeneity or variety of human existence; metanarratives are seen as being created and reinforced by power structures and are therefore untrustworthy (Lyotard, 1979, 1999; Gutting, 2007). Just as postmodernists have proposed that metanarratives should give way to small and local narratives, similarly this study poses the questions on the authoritative discourse of Kurdish narratives should be replaced by more diverse as well as specific stories.

A relevant example is the case of the Kurdish diaspora in Europe; I shall refer to them briefly as *Zazas* but they are also known as *Zazaki* or *Dimili*. *Zazas* are a segment of Kurds in Turkey, estimated in number to be between 1.5 and 2 million people. Their heartland is the Dersim region and consists of the Tunceli and Bingöl provinces and parts of the Elazığ, Erzincan and Diyarbakır provinces in Eastern Anatolia (Victoria, 1999; Bozarsalan, 1996). However, the majority of *Zazas* consider themselves as ethnic Kurds and part of the Kurdish nation and are often described as *Zaza Kurds*; there is a tendency towards, and strong affiliation for, their linguistic rights. Some of their intellectuals in the diaspora have even considered *Zazas* as a separate group and not a Kurdish sub-ethnic group. Soon after they established their community in the diaspora most settled in Scandinavian countries and Germany where they are well-organised politically speaking. Some activists and intellectuals descended from the *Zaza* in Stockholm gathered in 1996 aimed at organizing the *Zazaki* with one aim: grammar development. At the same time they created the *Vate* group. Well-known *Zaza* writers and philologists such as Malmîsanij, Çem and others have been actively working in this group and alongside writing numerous publications in the *Zazaki* language they are also actively engaged online through their dedicated website (Mosaki, 2012). In the following section I recount my own example as a Hawrami-Kurdish speaker.

Similar to the Zazaki, a newly-formed group of the Hawrami people both in the diaspora and at home have stood for their rights including the right of an education in their mother tongue; in comparison to the Zazas they are less advanced. While some Hawrami writers and activists have claimed that the Hawrami is an independent ethno-linguistic group, this in particular is viewed by some Kurdish nationalists as separatism and even seen as a threat to the Kurdish identity. Hawrami consists of many sub-dialects but is often grouped with other Kurdish dialects such as Shabak, Zazaki, Bajalan, Macho and Zangana; together they are referred to as the Gorani language. Defining who the Hawrami are and what their language comprises has for many years remained an issue among Kurdish and non-Kurdish philologists. There is a dispute as to its linguistic classification; some say it is a subgroup of north western Iranian languages whilst others classify it as a branch of the Kurdish language.

Linguistically, Hawrami or (Horami) and also known as Avromani, is one of the main group of dialects of the Gorani language. Similar to all other Gorani dialects, it has some phonological features which distinguish it from Kurdish dialects, although it is surrounded by Kurdish dialects and has been affected by them. MacKenzie (1966) has argued that Hawrami (Avromani) is regarded as the most archaic of the Gorani group although several Zazaki scholars regard Hawrami as one of the oldest dialects of the Goran-Zaza languages. It has been argued that the name Horami has close links with the Zoroastrian faith and it is asserted that the name actually originated from the name for God in Avesta and Ahuraman (MacKenzie, 1996). According to some non-official sources, the number of Hawrami is estimated to be about one million. It is mostly spoken in the Hawraman region which is a mountainous region located in western Iran (Iranian Kurdistan) and north-eastern Iraq (Iraqi Kurdistan). The key cities of this region are Pawe, Nawsuod and Mariwan in Iran and Halabja, Byara and Khormal in Iraq.

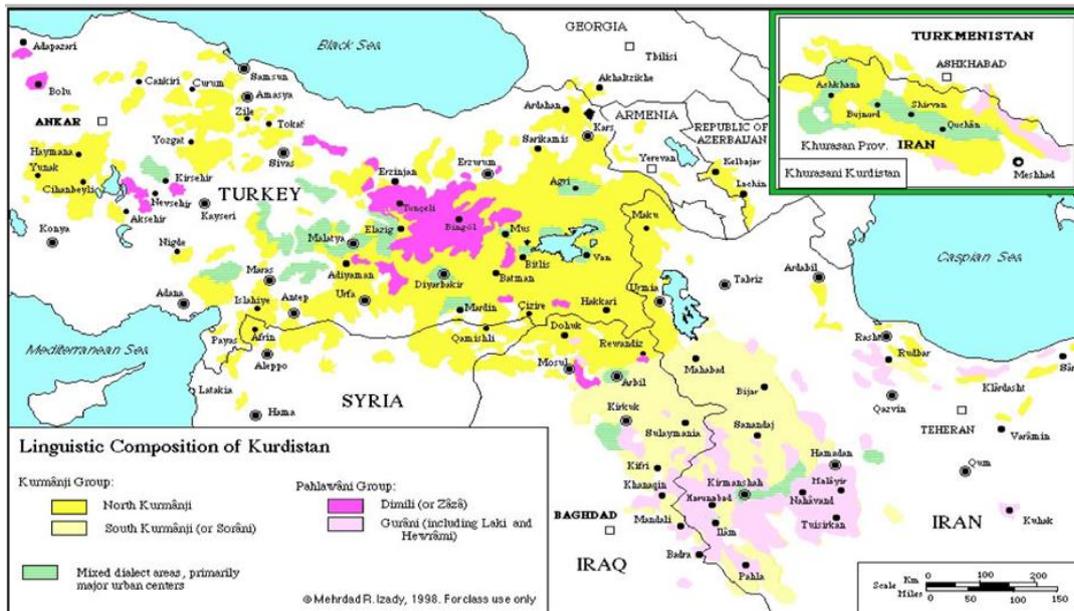


Figure (7) a map of Linguistic composition of Kurdistan

Source: Kurdish Academy for Language

Despite of all Kurdish people from divided Kurdistan and diaspora have shared same feeling in respect of homemaking at least in sense of an ‘imagined home’, as Kurds do not have their own national state. In reality there are identities that individuals can claim along with the national identity and sometimes these two identities confront each other. One can argue that in the Kurdish case, the diaspora might be an opportunity to disclose other forms of identity and belonging, for instance: linguistic background, religious background and gender differences.

3.6 Conclusion

Because of the relative limitations of literature on Kurdish immigrant families living in the United Kingdom, the current study aims to help fill this gap by providing new insights from lived experiences from both the young and old Kurdish generations and also by challenging the essentialist view of identity and belonging. As I have insisted throughout this chapter the lack of literature on Kurdish diaspora generally, is undeniable, especially in respect of the

experiences of the younger generation inside the Kurdish communities in the diaspora. Additionally, it can be argued that research on the new generation of Kurdish immigrants and parent-children (family- based research) relationships is uncharted research territory. Theoretical frameworks such as diaspora and transnationalism offer deeper analytical tools towards a better understanding of immigrant communities. However, I argue that any coherent research on the new experiences of younger people and new lifestyles within transnational families would be impossible without multi-dimensional approaches and a variety of perspectives. The study provides a useful contribution in a number of ways to the field of immigrant studies:

- This study deepens our understanding with regard to exploring the extent to which the Kurdish diaspora construct their ‘identity’ in relation to the experiences and perceptions of ‘home’. This is accomplished by examining the ideas of home and sense of belonging on the part of two recently arrived Kurdish immigrant generations. Additionally, this is achieved by revisiting and reconsidering the concept of ‘home’ and the sense of belonging as two contested and negotiated concepts among immigrant communities and, in particular, Iraqi Kurdish communities in Britain.
- The study seeks to explore how Kurdish generations in the UK conceptualise home and their sense of belonging and how they define home. I shall discuss the link between home and diaspora, questioning the idea of home and conceptualising “homeland” as a multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept (Galip, 2014). In other words, the study seeks to find connections between the family as home and institutional home and the experience of living within two cultures.
- Additionally, the study aims to obtain empirically grounded insights in order to compare first generation Kurdish immigrants with their children, in terms of their

sense of belonging and integration into UK society. This means, on the one hand, exploring the fact that Kurdish people have been ill-treated in the past and lack a fully independent state. On the other hand, we need to understand the hybrid experience of a stateless person who is now categorised as a citizen (British citizen in this case).

- The study investigates the ways in which memories of ‘back home’ narrated by parents, interweave with and influence their children’s constructions and experiences of ‘home’ in the UK. There are likely to be differences in terms of the experience of the persecution of parents and children’s understanding of what their parents have had to suffer. This includes a consideration of the notions of imaginary ‘home’ and how the concept of ‘home’ appears as more of an idea than a physicality that conveys a stable place of residence in which one feels secure, comfortable and familiar. Another consideration will be how memories of back home and childhood shape someone’s life in exile together by investigating the nostalgic experiences of the older generation.
- It has never been easy for a diasporic people to choose between returning ‘home’ and settling in a ‘new home’. Immigrant people desire to return to their ‘home’ but for many reasons this plan may be delayed or may not happen at all. This is due to the fact that the concept of ‘home’ itself changes constantly and the memories from childhood of immigrant individuals who left home long ago no longer match the present time ‘back home’.

To conclude, the current study is distinctive in at least two ways. It provides new insights from different generational and gender perspectives among Kurdish communities that are essential to the field conceptually; its empirical focus is characterised by ethnographic study. The study is keen not only to understand *why* this particular group think in that way but also

how they experience their life-world. It deploys a combination of research into lived experiences and the reflexive experience of the researcher. Through its autoethnographical approach it contributes significantly to the development of research methods in the field. The next chapter will explore this more fully in respect of methods and methodological considerations.

Chapter Four

Methods and Methodological Considerations

4.1 Introduction

Conducting research among refugee communities has been considered a complex task by researchers (Ellis et al., 2007; Temple & Moran, 2006; Arnall, 2003) and as a refugee researcher carrying out research on your own communities is even more difficult. This chapter justifies an ethnographic and auto-ethnographic approach as an appropriate methodology for researching diasporic and refugee communities. The chapter is divided into two main sections: The first section deals with the way in which the research was adopted and how the process and product will proceed. This includes the rationale for the utilisation of in-depth interviews and the use of my own biographical account (auto-ethnography) as a starting point for theoretical and methodological consideration. The data collection and data analytical process follows. The second section considers the adoption of such an approach and discusses a theoretical justification of particularity and uniqueness regarding the nature of this research. Special attention to the number of challenges that were faced during the research will be drawn out.

Section A: Method and Data Collection

In this section the method used to collect the data, and most importantly the method most appropriate to the research project, will be explained. This section is divided into nine subsections. The first part discusses the qualitative approach in general. The second part provides an explanation for the use of auto-ethnography as a form of qualitative research. The third

justifies the adoption of in-depth interviews as the central and most appropriate procedure and explains why some of my participants have been approached more than others. The fourth section provides an explanation of ethnographic research and an overview of the research interviews. Following an explanation of ethnographic research and an overview of the research interviews. The sixth part delineates my own biographical account as a significant methodological supplementary technique. The seventh and eighth parts explore the research fieldwork journey and data collection process. The final part explains the analytical process and my unique experiences during the data collection and data analysis sections, including the fieldworks issues.

4.2 Why Qualitative Research?

Social researchers have claimed repeatedly that a paradigm shift has occurred in the social sciences. This is in response to positivism which has dominated the research disciplines throughout the 19th and first half of the 20th century. Quantitative approaches depend on positivist traditions in the natural sciences with an emphasis on objectivity, generalisability and validity. While qualitative research is usually multi-methodological, there is a reliance on an interpretative approach (Bryman, 1999; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Qualitative researchers desire the opportunity to connect with their research participants and to observe the world from their viewpoints. This type of research, in which the researcher collects and interprets data, enables the researcher to be a part of the research process in a way similar to the participants themselves and the data they provide.

In qualitative research there is an effective use of interpretation and flexibility as described below:

Qualitative researchers are drawn to the fluid, evolving, and dynamic nature of this approach as opposed to the more structured design of quantitative methods (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p.5)

The interpretive approach has its roots in philosophy which describes the social sciences as a discipline that cannot be understood in the same way as the natural sciences. This type of methodology focuses on the way in which human beings make sense of their subjective reality and attach meaning to it.

The aim of the study is to explore the experiences of the Kurdish Diaspora, within the context of their families and as individuals, living in the UK. I am particularly interested in how they experience and perceive issues relating to 'home' and belonging. A qualitative methodology is most suited to understanding a social actor's meanings, and his or her narratives of the diasporic experience. The study is primarily based on qualitative in-depth interviews along with the researcher's auto-ethnographical account. First, I shall explain what is meant by auto-ethnography, offer some reflections on the usefulness of ethnography for my research and in the subsequent sections in this chapter I will discuss the interviews and how they were conducted. I also make reference to the insights of narrative research because, although I did not pursue fully a narrative analysis, there were components of story-telling within the interviews. These story-telling elements were further illuminating of the imaginaries associated with people's meaning-making.

4.3 What is Autoethnography?

Autoethnography is a form of qualitative research in which a researcher uses her or his own story and self-reflection to explore her or his personal experiences and connects this autobiographical narrative to wider cultural, political and social meanings and understandings (Marechal, 2010; Ellis 2004). Ethnographic methodologies are the main approach for studying culture (Boyle & Parry, 2007). Auto-ethnography as a form of ethnographic research has been described as:

Research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political (Ellis, 2004, p. xix).

As a methodology, it connects an auto-ethnographer's common, everyday experiences to political, social, and organizational implications, while highlighting tacit knowledge and memory not easily accessed through traditional methodologies (Grenier, 2015). Auto-ethnography is different from other self-narratives, including autobiographies and memoirs, because it calls on the researcher to move beyond the personal story into the analysis and interpretation of a culture (Chang, 2008). Moreover, autoethnography is unique in that it embraces a subjective lens, and the subject of knowledge and observation are one and the same, allowing for the researcher to be both subject and object (Richards, 2008). Through an interpretation and analysis of their own reflective narratives, autoethnographers express personal experiences in order to analyse cultural beliefs and social interactions that influence identities (Wall, 2008).

As an insider researcher, I also consider myself and my own story to be significant. As scholars (Ellis 2011, Richards 2008 and Wolf 1992) have quite rightly stated, autoethnography is a unique way of bringing subject and object together. Consequently, I have always seen myself 'inside' the research and immersed within it rather than there being

distance between me as a researcher and what is being researched (for more details please see section 4.9 Chapter 4).

Using my own account as an Iraqi-Kurdish refugee (and being a husband and the father of a young man) alongside the account of 25 respondents has strengthened the way of conducting this research and revealed the diverse way of gaining information. On many occasions throughout this research, I have referred to my life stories and recalled my own memories; this does not necessarily mean that I and my participants are not different. Instead there are times when we have shared the same feelings about a particular situation but there are also many times when we have been depressed. As this current research was aimed at exploring collective identities and the sense of belonging among Kurdish refugees, one of the tasks was to examine the similarities and differences among this group of people. Additionally, in the previous research, Kurdish refugee communities were treated as a homogenised group whereas this research aims to depart from any generalisations that have been suggested. There have been some concerns expressed by researchers in the field with respect to the use of autoethnography that there is a strong focus on self in isolation from others and an overemphasis on narration rather than analysis and cultural interpretation (Chang, 2008). To circumvent this concern, I have been utilising autoethnography and talking to people and interviewing them from, and within, Kurdish communities across UK cities and towns. However I concede that maintaining a balance between being an insider and an outsider, and being subjective and objective has been one of the main challenges throughout the research. Other concerns with respect to the disregard of ethical standards have been dealt with in section 4.10 of this chapter (methodological and ethical considerations).

4.4 Ethnographic Research

Ethnography traditionally refers to a practice in which researchers spend long periods living within a culture in order to study it. The term has been adopted within the qualitative research tradition to describe occasions where researchers spend time observing and/or interacting with participants in areas of the participants' everyday lives. The traditional ethnographer typically situates him/herself in one field site for an extended period of time. Accordingly, the researcher does not move very far geographically but familiarises himself/ herself with families within one setting; however, he or she is extremely well-focused on those particular families and physical location. Differing from traditional ethnography, a new development has been made in ethnographic research which not only focuses on the object as the subject also plays a central role. As Rosen (1991) has stated, 'ethnographers study others in order to find out more about themselves'. The researcher is consequently often viewed as the major research instrument in ethnographic work. Thus, the postmodern approach engendered a vivid discussion about reflexivity where the typical approach of the ethnographer has been to 'discover' a field (Landen 2011). Researching transnational families not only requires a flexible and steady researcher but he or she is also required to hold perspectives from the bottom-up and a need for particularity. As an ethnographer I have to keep my eyes wide open during my fieldwork and observe my participants' feelings, movements and general setting. This type of investigation enables more elaboration on people's journeys and background. Transnational families are a global phenomenon involving multi-dimensional perspectives and requiring multiple methods of investigation. The following section discusses the main method utilised in the collection of my data.

4.5 Ethnographic Interviewing

Researchers in an ever-increasing number of disciplinary and applied fields have been turning to ethnographic interviewing to help gather rich, detailed data directly from participants in the social worlds under study. Scholars in the field who have defined the term ethnographic interviewing have included in their definition those works in which researchers have established respectful, on-going relationships with their interviewees. This included sufficient rapport for there to be a genuine exchange of views and enough time and openness in the interview for the interviewees to explore purposefully with the researcher the meanings they place on events in their worlds (Heyl, 2001). Many scholars (Walcott, 1982, Backer, 1970, Spardley, 1979) have argued that there are conceptual characteristics which allow ethnographic interviewing to be distinguished from survey interviewing, including interviews with open-ended questions, because there is no time to develop respectful, on-going relationships. The research interview is a method of data collection that utilises respondents' answers to researchers' questions as their source of data (Denscombe, 1998). It is important to bear in mind that every effort should be made by researchers to naturalise interviewing and it should be distinguished from normal conversation. Research interviews involve a set of implicit assumptions about the situation that is not associated with a normal conversation (Denscombe, 1983; Silverman, 1985, 2013). For example, when someone agrees to take part in a research interview they recognise that they are taking part in a formal piece of research.

With regard to the number of interviews chosen for this research and determining the quantity of data required, I should first clarify that qualitative research methods differ from quantitative approaches. The former approach considers a smaller population, but individuals are interviewed more thoroughly in order to understand how and why people make sense of their world. As always there are many factors which can influence the quantity of data qualitative researchers gather. This is measured not only by the number of interviews; there

are also other ways of collecting data. I am in agreement with Alder & Alder (1987) that in some circumstances a small number of interviews might provide representative data.

A small number of cases, or subjects, may be extremely valuable and represent adequate numbers for a research project. This is especially true for studying hidden or hard to access populations such as deviants or elites (1987, p.08)

Accordingly, in this research gaining access to refugee communities, such as the Iraqi-Kurdish in the United Kingdom which is usually viewed by researchers as a hidden population, was not easy. Despite having a set of interview questions (see appendix, A and B), I have strongly encouraged my interviewees and storytellers to respond as freely as possible in response to open-ended questions about biographical backgrounds, their journey as immigrants, language competence, community-based activities, transnational ties and belonging (diaspora politics), new lifestyles and future plans. As scholars have emphasised, in the semi-structured interviews the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topics are considered, and, perhaps more significantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher. The interviews are open-ended, and there is more emphasis on the interviewee elaborating points of interest (Denscombe, 2014).

4.5.1 Research Interviews

In the course of the eighteen months of my fieldwork I conducted 25 in-depth interviews from January 2013 to September 2014. Bear in mind that not all my participants were involved in this research equally, in the section below (see section 4.5.2) I have explained why some of my participants were used more than others. The interviews were one-to-one

semi-structured interviews. My entire sample's age ranged between 18-50 years old.. I interviewed 14 males and 11 females overall (see Table 1 below). There were two groups: 10 from the first generation (older respondents and parents including 5 males and 5 females) and 15 from the 1.5 generation (younger respondents and children 8 males and 7 females). This so-called 1.5 generation, is defined as" those children who came with their parents at an early age" (Aparicio, 2007). In fact, they are positioned between the cultural influences of the UK and their parent's experiences, memories and identifications with their country of origin.

I am particularly interested in the experiences and perceptions of the younger generation who were referred to as the second generation, i.e. those who were born and raised in the UK. Kurdish communities across UK cities are considered young communities in comparison with other ethnic minorities and consequently there are insufficient 'second generation' families to recruit. So, I interviewed the children of Kurdish immigrant families who were born in Kurdistan and raised or educated in the United Kingdom. In respect of refugee status, I deliberately chose those who went through the naturalising process of gaining a British passport and who are occasionally referred to as British-Kurdish by the mainstream media; they also refer to themselves as British-Kurdish. I made this choice because they are in the position of providing new insights; they have considered themselves as being treated as second class citizens in Iraq (Kurds in Iraq) but accepted as full citizens in the United Kingdom.

All interviews took place in the participants' homes except for three of my female interviewees; two interviews took place in a café and one took place in a pub. As this was their preferred venue for the interview to occur, I respect their choice and I explained this in the section below called Fieldwork issues. I preferred to interview my younger participants

in their own rooms in a family home if they were agreeable. My purpose was to create an open atmosphere for our discussion away from any parents' restraints and also to observe their own space. Consequently, I was interested, for example, in the sport that they followed or any cultural or political affiliation that may have been exhibited on the walls of their rooms. Of course, it was not easy for me to avoid parental influence over their children, and again in the section below (4.8 Fieldwork Issues) I highlighted some of those challenges.

As I had adopted an ethnographic approach over the course of 18 months, I frequently travelled to the UK's major cities such as London, Manchester, Birmingham, Derby and Bristol in order to meet my participants. I am aware that all the cities that my participants are living in are located in England but this does not prevent them from being considered as UK residents. There are no official statistics which help to locate the largest Kurdish immigrant residents in any geographical place in the UK but some sources (KHRP 2006) show that the largest Kurdish community resides in London followed by Birmingham and then Manchester. I was interested in the Kurdish recent immigration experiences (mid 1990s to mid-2000s) and those who share a similar migration journey, coming to the UK as asylum seekers. Unlike the previous generation of Kurdish migrants (early 1960s to late 1980s) those individuals who came to study from wealthy families or were political elites mostly resided in London. More recent arrivals did not have much choice over decisions about where they wanted to live. In fact they were under the control of the National Asylum Seeker Support (NASS) accommodation scheme, which is responsible for supporting and accommodating people seeking asylum while their cases are being dealt with. This means they were spread across UK's cities subject to housing availability and they could not choose where to stay. All my participants' current residencies were apportioned following their claims to the Home Office which were accepted. The residence is usually allocated to the father and the rest of the family will join him at a later stage under the family reunion visa scheme. My participants

migration journeys can be categorised into three groups: the first group consists of a male (father and husband), a first generation participant who came illegally and claimed asylum in the UK and subsequently gained refugee status. The second group consists of a female (mother and wife) as first generation participants who mostly came under the spouse visa or family reunion scheme. The third group comprises the children of immigrant families who were born in Kurdistan but then moved with their family to the UK directly or via a third country.

Then gradually small Kurdish communities were established through the snowballing effect where families gave priority to live in those cities where they found their relatives or friends or other Kurdish families. Mostly they identified with those who originated from the same area or town in Kurdistan. In this case all my participants came from two provinces, Hawler (the capital of KRG) and Sulaymanya. Naturally, other factors were taken into consideration such as the shops where Kurdish food can be purchased or where there were mosques and supplementary schools to teach the Kurdish language.

The interview periods varied considerably. Some interviews occurred at night and, in keeping with ethnographic research, I sometimes stayed with some participants for dinner and some for lunch so that conversations and discussions continued beyond the confines of a time-limited interview. An important point to be mentioned in regard to interview timing is the fact that all my research participants were volunteers and, consequently, I appreciated their time and effort. I was flexible and accepted any time convenient for them. The actual duration of each interview was varied; most of the older generation interviewees easily engaged in discussion while for the younger generation a warm up time was sometimes needed using probing questions. The average time range of the interviews was between 40 and 70 minutes; the longest interview with a female first generation participant took 1 hour

and 45 minutes and the shortest interview with a male of the younger generation took 37 minutes.

With regard to the languages used in my conversations with my interviewees, only in four out of 25 interviews was English not used. It is important to note that not all participants who communicated in the English language had the same level of language competence and fluency. Significantly all my younger generation participants were fluent English speakers, while their parents and other members of the older generation were less fluent in comparison to them. The four interviews were in the Kurdish language that is the Kurdish -Sorani dialect, which is the main dialect that Kurds from Iraq use. The translations of these four interviews in Kurdish-Sorani were completed by the researcher. I am aware of some of the potential problems associated with language and dialect variations among Kurdish groups who cannot be thought of as a homogenous group. It is important to note the specificity of language and the experience of particular Kurdish groups and to be aware of implications regarding access and understanding. For this reason and as my research became more focused, I interviewed Iraqi-Kurdish interviewees only in terms of their geographical location and, with regard to Kurdish-Muslims, their religious background and regarding the Kurdish-Sorani, with respect to their linguistic background. Finally, due to protecting my respondent's confidentiality I have used pseudonyms in this research.

Table (1): Overview of the respondents

No	Gender	Age	Language	Marital Status	Education	Occupation	Living here since	Genera
1	Female	35-45	English	Married	Degree (home)	Unemployed	2005	1 st G
2	Female	18-22	English	Single	A level	Student	2009	1.5G
3	Male	18-22	English	Single	A level	Student	2001	1.5G
4	Female	22-25	English	Single	Degree	Student	2004	1.5G
5	Male	22-25	English	Single	Degree	Employed	2004	1.5G
6	Female	18-22	English	Single	Degree	Student	2007	1.5G
7	Male	18-22	English	Single	GCSE	Student	2007	1.5G
8	Male	18-22	English	Single	A level	Student	2002	1.5G
9	Male	35-45	Kurdish	Married	Degree (home)	Unemployed	2002	1 st G
10	Female	18-22	English	Single	Degree	Employed	2002	1.5G
11	Male	50-above	Kurdish	Married	Primary (home)	Unemployed	2002	1 st G
12	Female	35-45	Kurdish	Married	Degree (home)	Unemployed	2004	1 st G
13	Male	50-above	English	Married	Primary (home)	Employed	2002	1 st G
14	Female	22-25	English	Married	Degree	Student	2007	1.5G
15	Male	18-22	English	Single	GCSE	Student	2007	1.5G
16	Female	50-above	English	Divorced	Degree	Employed	1977	1 st G
17	Male	22-25	English	Single	Degree	Employed	1999	1.5G
18	Female	18-22	English	Married	High School	Unemployed	2013	1.5G
19	Male	22-25	English	Single	GCSE	Student	2004	1.5G
20	Male	35-45	Kurdish	Married	Secondary (home)	Employed	2002	1 st G

21	Male	35-45	Kurdish	Married	Secondary (home)	Employed	2002	1 st G
22	Male	35-45	Kurdish	Married	Primary (home)	Unemployed	2005	1 st G
23	Female	35-45	Kurdish	Married	Primary (home)	Unemployed	2006	1 st G
24	Male	18-22	English	Single	A Level	Student	2003	1.5G
25	Female	18-22	English	Single	A level	Student	2000	1.5G

4.5.2 Who is Being Heard More and Who Less?

Despite the interview usually being the predominant way of expressing oneself vocally, not all individuals express themselves in a similar way. Our emotional status and our characteristic features also have an impact on the way we talk. For example, shy people are less active with regard to socialising but it needs to be borne in mind that this is not to say that conversation is our only form of expressing ourselves. For many reasons, not all of my interviewees were engaged fully and satisfactorily in the discussions. This could be due to age, social status and language and gender variation or because of personal reasons. Generally speaking, my first generation participants were more confident to talk to me and express themselves in the Kurdish language while the younger generation were happier to conduct the interviews in English. In addition, the older generation were more talkative than the younger generation and the female participants were more engaged than my male participants. Overall, of the twenty-five interviews (overview of respondents in Table1 on p.82) which took place in this research only a few have been referred to more than once. I can

briefly highlight their profiles here and hopefully this explains why they have been more significant than the other participants in the research.

Unlike nearly all of my older generation respondents, one female interviewee provided her views in English and contributed significantly to the research. Her position was unique as in terms of generational barriers she was the mother of a twenty-year-old son and arrived in the UK nearly 35 years ago. In that sense, she was a first-generation Kurdish immigrant but she was raised and educated in the UK and moved with her parents when she was in her early teenage years; again in this sense she belonged to the 1.5 generation. She was in a position to provide evidence and a testimonial from both generations' experiences. This led me to explore in more detail her experiences with regard to her home and sense of belonging across the generations.

Sara and Shanyia are two first generation female activist participants who also contributed significantly to this research and I have referred to their accounts often during the analytic process. They have both experienced deep uncertainty in their lives during the diaspora. Their lives and experiences between the two cultures, back at home and in the UK, were unique from many different perspectives. They accurately provided new insights in regard to their suspended life and the fact that they were torn between two homes. Another unique account that also engaged the discussion was a female belonging to the 1.5 generation who spoke of her experience of being cosmopolitan. She was born in Kurdistan, raised in the Netherlands and lived during the latter part of her teenage years and whilst at university in the UK. She now works between London and Erbil (the capital of the KRG). She was also in the position of being able to offer much with regard to the phenomenon of belonging to more than one home.

4.6 Reflecting on my role within the Kurdish Diasporic Community

As a researcher and a member of the Kurdish diaspora here in the UK I have some influence with my interviewees. In the second part of this chapter (Section B) I set out at some length the reasons behind adopting autoethnography as an appropriate approach particularly with regard to the insider/outsider issue. In this section I only briefly indicate another important question: What would it be like if someone else from outside the community had conducted this research and in what way would my role as researcher be particularly useful for the community and the Kurdish diaspora in general? My position between the community and academic life is a useful source of reflection as it represents some key and typical conflicts. I not only share the culture with the people but I am immersed within them and support the community in various ways. I was the first person in Bristol who actually ran Kurdish lessons with the children; this later evolved into a regular supplementary school. On an annual basis I have organised Neworz (Kurdish New Year) celebrations which is a good opportunity to socialise. I have naturalised as they have and consequently there were no issues of undocumented persons who are often encouraged to participate in research with the hope that they would be more successful in their claim for political asylum. In addition, I am a father of three children and one of my children, a 19-year-old son, belongs to the 1.5G. He was born in Kurdistan and arrived in the UK when he was only five years old. As a result, I know what it is like to be the father of someone of the younger generation who has an immigrant background. This lends extra strength to my research and enhances the trust between those being researched and me. Although I have not written up the details of the background and life-stories of those I have interviewed, it has been important for me to know about these details and to draw on them where I feel it appropriate in the analysis of the interview material. Just as I have shared my own story, I have drawn upon other elements of which are powerful tools which can help us communicate who we are. I agree with Fiese et al., (1995)

who states that employing personal stories can be a method of integrating experiences and enhancing personal identities. Stories can be found in this research titled: *Fieldwork Notes and A personal vignette*.

4.7 Data Collection

In this research, the interview was considered as the most appropriate instrument to gather valid and reliable information. However, the data and information in this research were not gathered from interviews alone. I observed the individuals closely in the course of working within the community. As the principle investigator in this research I conducted the interviews on an individual basis.

Prior to the interviews, I provided explanations and directions for the research participants. These were precise and included explanations regarding both the information sheet and the consent form and the signing of it. It included the right to stop at any time during the interview or withdraw from the interview afterwards and ensure that he/she was willing to talk and was fit and well to proceed. All interviews were audio-recorded (the participants were informed about this) and I did my best to minimise the distraction caused by the recording device.

I purposely did not use a transcriber but completed it manually as I wanted to listen carefully to what had been said. The nature of my data required a close relationship with me as researcher and the data; transcribing all interviews, while relatively time-consuming, provided me with second thoughts on the material gathered. Furthermore, transcribing the data was a way of organising it and gave me an opportunity to better understand my data while I listened repeatedly during the course of the actual transcribing procedure. This follows recommended procedures regarding coding and managing the data where the researcher familiarises him- or herself with the data. In other words, the process of

interpretation and analysis had already begun by assigning categories and subdividing the data. However, I adopted the following order in my coding procedure: I looked for a main theme, then a category and sub-category followed by a code but I did not use any pre-coding before my fieldwork. Similarly, in the actual procedure I did not accommodate a single code model but instead was more open to applying different methods of coding. This included a descriptive code, an in vivo code, initial coding, a process code, and simultaneous coding (see Saldana, 2009 for more details). I agree with Saldana (2009) who states that coding is not a precise science; it is primarily an interpretation and as a result there is no particular method that has to be followed. This is because each qualitative study is different; the analytical approach used will be unique (Patton, 2002).

4.8 Fieldwork Issues

The more time the researcher spends in the field, the more her/his understanding of different events will change. As a researcher learns more about the area of research he/she may be puzzled by topics other than those in the initial stages of the fieldwork. It is all about managing and examining our own emotions while we are immersed in our fieldwork. I agree with Kleinman (1991) that field researchers may experience anger, disappointment or ambivalence towards my research participants. However, in the course of 21 months of fieldwork I have been through pleasant experiences and maintained a good relationship with my research participants. I have encountered many issues, but here I shall highlight only two main fieldwork issues.

1-Being a male researcher in her world

Much has written about the possible influences of gender on the conduct of field research. There are many scholars in the field who have concerns with the process of entering and becoming established within a field research setting (Gurney, 1991, 1985; Weitz, 1976). Some have argued that a field researcher who becomes interested in a setting in which

participants are predominantly members of the opposite sex may experience some awkward moments as he or she attempts to gain the respect, trust, and cooperation of those participants. However, this phenomenon only occurs during long-term fieldwork when the researcher remains with the participant for a lengthy period (See Gurney, 1991). Generally speaking, I have not confronted significant issues in meeting respondents, establishing rapport, and maintaining appropriate relationships with hosts for the duration of the study. Nevertheless in my experience the impact of gender on these aspects of my fieldwork has been greater than I expected. Of course, I have to say that some of my female respondents were more friendly, hospitable, or cooperative than others, but I considered that the behaviour of some in the research setting might have been influenced significantly by my gender as a male researcher interviewing female participants. In the main, my female participants consisted of two groups: one group comprised the wives who joined their husbands and came to the UK mostly via a spousal visa or as part of family reunion policy by the Home Office. In this research they have been referred to as belonging to the first-generation. The other group were daughters of those families who came here in their early childhood and referred to as the 1.5 generation. In my experience the younger generation were more confident to talk to me in respect of their gender difference despite an age gap between me as a first generation researcher and them. In contrast, I have encountered some difficulties with regard to setting when I interviewed the first generation female (wives) participants. For example a couple of my interviewees hesitated when choosing an appropriate place to meet me alone. This was partly to do with the cultural background where the Kurdish culture and the relationship between men and women has been influenced by Islamic doctrine and the tribal system. The other factor relates to the image of Kurdish women living in the West and how they are perceived by their compatriots back in Kurdistan. I have noted that many Kurdish women in the diaspora have to adjust themselves in order to be accepted by their families back in

Kurdistan, as they have often been perceived as ‘Westernised’ (See chapter 6 for more details). Interestingly, the only first generation female participant that I have had quite lengthy conversations with did not involve any issues when trying to find a place to meet. She was a divorced woman without any family in Kurdistan. I met her in one of the pubs in west London in the evening and I did not think for a moment about any gender differences or issues between us.

2-Parental power

It was challenging to talk to the younger generation in the family home where parents were present. Mostly, families in Kurdistan are considered to be conservative, where children have to abide by their parents’ decisions and there is little room, until they have reached adulthood, for expressing their views in front of their parents or even their older siblings. A brief explanation for this is to do with the role of the father as breadwinner and an authority figure running the family. Other explanations can be drawn here related to Islamic teaching which considers parents as two small gods to obey. Hence, my experience in the fieldwork with most of the younger generation participants who are still living with their families was that it was not easy to interview them privately. Whereas with those 1.5 generation participants who were living independently, the interviews went smoothly. Understandably, there are always exceptions. I interviewed two families where the parents and their children were both present in their family home and I was so fascinated by the confidence and the degree of freedom the young people exhibited in front of their parents that I noted this during the interviews. My interpretation of this is that both families were open-minded in respect of their religious beliefs and values. In fact, both fathers were former members of the communist party in Kurdistan.

4.9 Data Analysis Process

This section deals with the practical mechanism of data analysis alongside my understanding, thoughts and experiences learned during the process of collection and analysing my materials. First, the data analysis process cannot be viewed as extrinsic to the whole of the research project. In fact, the process starts when the researcher begins to show interest and search for meaning and issues in the data; this could be completed during data collection and fieldwork. Braun and Clarke (2006) state the following:

Writing is an integral part of the analysis, not something that takes place at the end, as it does with statistical analysis (2006, p.15).

For example, during my fieldwork I kept analytical notes which were extended and amended when the interviews were transcribed. Second, this type of research requires both multiple methods of collecting data and also multiple techniques related to data analysis. Consequently, the writing of the thesis, data collection, observations, transcribing, coding, organising and the analysis of the data all involved some difficulty. The research method used is flexible and is in harmony with the nature of the study. Furthermore, the method promotes quality and depth of information. Finally, the opportunity for understanding (empathy) is encouraged. For example, using my own biographical account and multi-sited ethnography acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality and the researcher's influence on research, rather than believing that these issues do not exist as was the case during my fieldwork with my personal sentiments as researcher and my empathy toward my participants during my interviews (see above; fieldwork notes 1 and 2).

Moreover, I argue that qualitative research is a journey where the researcher experiences many unknown destinations. There are tempestuous times where at one point one is exhausted and at another energised and enthusiastic. Unlike other tasks and forms of study,

writing a thesis is fraught with uncertainties and unpredictability. Hence each researcher has his or her own unique experiences and gradually builds a unique way of conducting the research; this is true for all aspects and phases of the research journey. The uniqueness of this research has led to the opening of many doors and the carrying out of many experiments during which numerous challenges, both theoretical and methodological, have been faced. For example, during my analytical process and, in particular, when I was coding my dataset and categorising them I came to realise that there is no single technique and method which could be used in that procedure. The type of data and the information that researchers are searching for will determine the most valid method.

I have many significant interview codes and consequently have noticed relevant phenomena like some concepts which have commonly and frequently been used by interviewees or where I found some patterns. Some codes, for instance, are second generation's future plans, first generation return to homeland, memories from home, family life, safety, job, settlement, weather, and women's rights. Then I categorised the above codes as follows: home, uncertainty, gender and family.

4.10 How Themes Unfolded

Every research is unique, therefore the way to conduct it is unique too. This is even more true when it comes to qualitative research. In other words, the type of data, the way of collecting the data and organising the data can all be part of the analytic process. In this research I did not begin empty handed when I approached people and interviewed them as I had a set of questions and I wanted their views. Consequently, I was looking for certain information from certain people and I was interested in the life of Iraqi-Kurdish diasporic communities in the UK and their sense of belonging. I was also interested in their children's perspectives in respect of home and identity. This a very complex and broad subject which also involves

many aspects of the lives of this particular group of people, such as the political, social, cultural and economic.

As I have mentioned in many other areas of this research, the current research has been influenced by the new paradigm of research study termed narrative inquiry (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). For example, I wanted to understand the ways in which a few individuals through their life stories organise and manage their lives in exile. In particular, I need to understand the impact of social structures on those individuals and how that relates to political identity and family, in other words, the insights from the lived experiences of Kurdish individuals in the UK. Soon, I realised that the rich and fascinating data that I had gathered not only provided me with valid information but also influenced my understanding. During the transcribing, organising and rereading of the data I became more familiar with it. Therefore, instead of following pre-chosen themes in the data based on the initial research questions, (bearing in mind the research question itself had evolved and changed significantly), I followed the direction the data was taking me. The data was enabled to speak out, as it were, and I became more familiar within the data. Of the many predicted themes I found I confronted by three major themes: family orientation, uncertainty and gender differences where each one could be an umbrella term for some sub-themes. For two reasons I had to stop analysing at some point because the research would continue ad infinitum. Firstly, and importantly, these three themes were connected intensively and fed each other in a circular and dynamic process rather than as three isolated individual themes. The more I looked at these three themes the more its meaning became clear and focused. Secondly, I had to discontinue my search for further themes because I was more interested in their relationship and the meaning of the themes rather than increasing the number of themes. Consequently, I stopped adding themes and instead focused on those themes which were associated and interrelated with the original three themes. I was satisfied that this provided

many insights into the experiences of both first and second Iraqi-Kurdish generations living in the UK in these three dynamic and dimensional ways: family orientation, political uncertainty and gender differences.

Section B: Methodological Considerations

4.11 Researching Refugees

Many ethical and methodological issues have been raised in connection with conducting research on refugee communities (Ellis et al., 2007; Temple & Moran, 2006; Becker-Bease & Freyd, 2006; Spring et al., 2003; Emanuel et al., 2000; Dyregrov et al., 2000). Due to the recent global human movement of people transnationally who tend to resettle in their host country and experience new lives, there is a greater demand for undertaking research among refugee communities.

Increasingly, empirical research with refugees is needed to provide the foundation for effective services and resettlement practices, to evaluate mental health interventions, and to provide a base for advocacy for refugees (Ellis 2007, p.35).

While many approaches have been considered as appropriate to conduct research on refugee communities (i.e. participatory approach), this field of study is fraught with both methodological and ethical challenges. Consequently, as refugee research by nature involves people of many different cultures, many have argued that there is no single set of cultural guidelines that can be identified.

For example, researchers in the field have suggested peer research (Arnull, 2003) in order to minimise the risk of cultural misunderstanding and issues of power relations between

researcher and participant. Peer research may reduce hierarchies within the research environment (between researcher and researched but also between 'academic' and 'peer' researcher). This type of research could also employ research as a tool of empowerment and make real attempts to transform the material conditions of existence for marginalised groups. In addition, peer researchers, as Arnall (2003) argues, may increase access to particular groups, but may limit access to others.

Broadly speaking, standards for methods and ethics have evolved over time based on the experience and precedents of prior research. As an autoethnographic researcher I am necessarily involved in participatory research. I share a culture with the participants and this is important to build trust and reduce barriers. A shared culture / language is essential for accessibility and trust purposes (Winters and Patel, 2003). Working as an interpreter and a community activist, I can access members of the community and share my growing insights, where appropriate, with other community leaders. I am aware that this has its own advantages and disadvantages as explained later in this chapter.

Researching immigrant people and refugee communities is a challenging and complex task. Various scholars (Schweitzer & Steel 2006; Briman 2005; Bartunek 1996; Yu& Lieu 1986) have written about their concerns with many issues regarding research into refugee communities, including both methodological (e.g. sampling strategy) and ethical issues. An example of the former is the issue of accessing these communities and choosing a representative sample. Equally, there is the issue of sensitivities (Liamputtong, 2007) while researching hidden populations (i.e. refugee communities). Often research on refugee communities is carried out by non-refugee background researchers, i.e., those who lack personal experience with immigration. Hence an issue of adjusting to a particular culture has been brought to our attention by scholars concerned with such issues as ethical dilemmas. Briman states that:

Lack of familiarity with participant cultures poses particular challenges with respect to assessing research risk/benefits, procedures to obtain informed consent, determining appropriate incentives in research and avoiding coercion, and maintaining confidentiality. (Briman, 2005, p. 164)

In addition to this, some researchers have argued that refugee related research, while politically and emotionally sensitive, needs to be conceived within a socio-political context and undertaken in a fearless and, if necessary, politically engaged manner (McNeill 2003; Farmer 2004; Schweitzer & Steel 2008). As a Kurdish researcher, I am politically engaged because I have personally experienced political persecution and racial discrimination merely because I am a Kurd belonging to a repressed nation that has been victimised continually both in the past and in recent times. This engagement does not mean that I underestimate the risks of conducting research in my own community. I have considered the possibility of any risk to the participants and will be justifying my approach. Researchers have emphasized the importance of applying the ethnographic techniques in order to build rapport and trust in the scientific study of special, immigrant or refugee populations. For example, researchers who share their ethnicity, language fluency in several dialects and their religion with potential participants may reduce the risks (Friedman, 1997; Dumka 1995; Gorman & Balter 1997).

Having said that, many studies have suggested that torture has long-term psychological effects independent of those related to uprooting, refugee status, and other traumatic life events in a politically repressive environment. Often refugees have experienced many extremely stressful events because of political or religious oppression, war, migration and resettlement. It is difficult to even define all of the types of events they have suffered because refugee trauma often precedes the primary war-related event that causes them to flee.

As some of my older generation participants have suffered from political repression, I have dealt cautiously with these matters, focusing much attention on any psychological risk or emotional state when past life memories were discussed. Discussing past experiences is painful. Fortunately, the discussion went smoothly and they were content to talk to me about their past, so no issues were raised in this regard; if there were any concerns I would direct participants to the relevant support agencies and sources of information if required (See appendix F). Having access to participants' social lives and working closely with this community makes me more aware of the emotional sensitivities of their experiences as well as the sources of emotional and practical support which are available. I argue that carrying out research on refugee communities by researchers from their community would reduce risks in many ways and cause fewer ethical dilemmas. This occurs through building a rapport between researcher and the researched and by providing a natural setting when conducting research within the researcher's own community. In particular, conducting sensitive research within the community has taught me to be more 'reflective and reflexive' (Sin, 2004). In this regard Bourdieu (1977) states the following:

We need to stand back and look closely at the relationships of our methodology and the data we collect because this will permit us to carry out good research that will be beneficial to those we work with in our research projects. (Bourdieu, 1977, p.12)

The relationship that Bourdieu is referring to can be interpreted as a way of accessing a particular group; querying the reason why a particular community has been chosen as well as the methodology used in the research creates a stronger relationship between the researcher and the respondents. This is in order to minimise the risk and also create an effective research outcome.

The next section explores the reflexivity of the research and an overview of research embodiment. I shall explain the experiential account of the researcher and the relationship with those researched and the way in which a researcher's biography (autoethnography) can be used as a tool to be more representative.

4.12 Why Autoethnography?

Autoethnography can be excruciating for the researcher because it is a personal narrative and research may evoke painful feelings. It also challenges the reader to experience the meaning of what has been said about certain people and cultures. Ellis and Bochner state that it is "connecting the personal to the cultural" (Ellis and Boncher, 2000, p.739). Initially, in the very early stages of this research I began with some ontological questions as an immigrant such as, who am I and why am I here? In addition, there were questions like what is the significance of these geographical places 'here' and 'there' and why should I bother about this research at all? Why should I write about a Kurdish-British way of life amongst two cultures? Consequently these and many more questions have led me to think about my life story, my journey and the experiences I had before leaving my country, on my journey to the UK and after I had settled in the UK. From the beginning, I am both the narrator of, and a listener to, my own story. As I write, I retell my story to myself as a Kurdish immigrant and also as a British citizen and then as a father, who brought with him a child who was born in Kurdistan. I also have child who was born in the United Kingdom. I soon realised that my story makes sense to me; it not only makes sense but works as a tool helping me to discover more about myself. I began to question in what way and how I could gain access to the stories of others? Other important questions follow, such as what makes my story unique and in what way is my story, as a researcher more valid than anyone else's?

For an ethnographer, it is important to know “what’s going on here?” This type of investigation encourages the respondent to disclose more information about a particular culture or people (Ellis, Adams and Bochner: 2011; Wolf, 1992). Therefore, the relationship between knower (subject) and known (object) is clear. In contrast to this, autoethnographic research is not only about a known something or someone but rather about embodied experiences of the researcher’s own life. As Ellis (2004) states, autoethnography is about the researcher’s own experience; often personal narrative draws someone to produce autoethnographic writing. Unlike classic ethnography work, in autoethnographic research the relationship between researcher (ethnographer) and ‘other’ is unclear.

Until the 1970s, researchers from the disciplines of both sociology and anthropology paid relatively little attention to the researchers’ experience. Gradually a significant shift has occurred among researchers and ethnographic researchers in particular, by emphasizing reflexivity and taking more interest in the researcher’s emotions (Bourdieu, 1990; Giddens, 1991; Ellis 1995; Grafanaki, 1996; Plummer, 2001).

Of course, these shifts have created a new paradigm in scientific knowledge among sociologists and anthropologists and more recently across many other disciplines such as communication studies, psychology and cultural studies. Researchers influenced by postmodernism and feminism and those who increasingly understand the role of researcher reflexivity, have contributed new approaches that challenge traditional social research and modernity’s positivism. Yet more recently, researchers have adopted the postmodern theoretical paradigm and rejected the grand narratives (Lyotard, 1979) of positivist science, which ignore the differences between individuals and their social context. Thus, postmodernists attempt to replace meta-narratives by focusing on specific local contexts as well as the diversity of human experience. As Liamputtong (2007) states:

Postmodernism reveals the ambiguity and contextuality of meaning, it aims at theorising society not as a monolithic structure but as a series of fragments in continuing flux (Liamputtong, 2007, p. 15).

Within the new paradigm shift that has occurred in social research, self-reflexivity is becoming more prominent in researchers' work. In other words, researchers' emotions and personal experiences are an essential part of someone's research outcome. Hence, the researcher and the researched are no longer divided. Lee (2002) suggests that researchers need to be critically aware of their own self and the influence of their lived experiences and knowledge on the research performance.

Bourdieu (1990) insists on the importance of a reflexive sociology in which researchers must at all times conduct their research with conscious attention to the effects of their own position, their own set of internalized structures, and how these are likely to distort or prejudice their objectivity (see also Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). As a consequence of this, he introduced a concept referred to as the 'sociology of sociology'.

Commentators such as Grbich (2004) and Liamputtong (2007) have argued that the emergence of autoethnography is another example of the influence of postmodernism in the qualitative research tradition and the autoethnographic orientation has become popular among perceptive researchers. Therefore, they insist that "Autoethnography engages extensive life experiences of the researcher/author within a specific social and cultural location" (Liamputtong 2007, p.18). Liamputtong (2007) justifies using autoethnography as a valid method to conduct research into vulnerable people and the hidden population (in my case research into refugee communities).

Furthermore, autoethnography provides me with a voice to narrate my story which is not only the voice of an individual but also the voice of an entire nation; a stateless nation which is

desperate to tell and share its tragic narrative to 'others'. Here I rely on the power of narrative: my own story as a member of an ethnic group who went through a very difficult time and experienced a history of political repression and ethnic cleansing. There are also the stories of my Kurdish-British compatriots who are living between two cultures; stories of our journey as 'illegal travellers' (Khosravi 2010). In his work Khosravi uses the phrase 'illegal traveller' to refer to those people who travel without proper documents and where their act of crossing a border illegally is considered a crime. He examines the issue of border crossing in the era of globalisation, analysing how the nation-state system regulates the movements of people. Based on his own journey and informants' (other illegal travellers) border narratives, he investigates the nature of borders, border politics, various difficulties and the dangers of border crossing by focusing on the individual experiences of illegal immigrants.

What follows are the stories of Kurdish children who have been raised in the UK. The Kurdish people are a nation whose story is untold and who need to speak out and break the silence of centuries. It is time that our stories of repression and our experiences in the past were heard as told by our own narrators and not by others (usually by the oppressor). Put simply we have a different story to tell; not the story as some would like it but the story as it is. This is not to justify the avoidance of objectivity; it is rather that reflecting on my own story has led me to examine my people and events more critically. As an insider, my long-term neutral everyday inquirer approach contributes not only to knowledge about the experiences of my participants but it also raises awareness about the intricacies and the impact of the work of researchers in the lives of our participants.

Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) have argued that 'autoethnographers recognize the innumerable ways that personal experience influences the research processes. This means a researcher's decisions about who, what, when, where and how to research are often tied to

institutional requirements and personal circumstances (e.g. a researcher studying immigration because of personal experiences with a life of exile) (Bochner, 2011, p.29).

Researching immigrants and refugee communities is a challenging and complex task. Scholars (Schweitzer & Steel 2008; Briman, 2005; Bartunek, 1996; Yu& Lieu 1986) have written about their concerns with research into refugee communities. These include methodological (e.g. sampling strategies) and ethical issues. One example is the issue of accessing these communities and whether the sample is representative. In addition, there is an issue of sensitivities (Liamputtong, 2007) while researching hidden populations (i.e. refugee communities). Often research on refugee communities is carried out by non-refugee researchers with little background and who consequently lack personal experience of immigration. Hence an issue of adjusting to a particular culture has been brought to the attention of scholars and they have become concerned with a variety of issues such as ethical dilemmas. Briman, 2005 argues that:

A lack of familiarity with participant cultures poses particular challenges with respect to assessing research risk/benefits, procedures to obtain informed consent, determining appropriate incentives in research and avoiding coercion, and maintaining confidentiality (Briman, 2005, p.164).

However, as a Kurdish researcher, I have personally experienced political persecution and racial discrimination simply because I am a Kurd belonging to an oppressed nation that has been victimised continually in the past and now.

My position within this research is more likely to derive from multi-layered identities and therefore I identify myself both as researcher/other (immigrant) and insider/outsider. In addition, the line between subjectivity and objectivity is blurred. I have always argued that there is more than one motive behind conducting this research: one academic and the other

personal. It is important to bear in mind that both motives are equally in play. This sounds as if I have an excessive personal interest. The issue of objectivity has been raised by many researchers (Atkinson 1997, Delamont 2009), who still assume that research can be conducted from a neutral, impersonal and objective stance only. Autoethnography challenges this assumption:

Autoethnography is one of the approaches that acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don't exist (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011, p.6).

Sharing two examples of my personal feelings as researcher and revealing my empathy toward my participants during my field work will illustrate this:

Fieldwork Notes 1:

I interviewed a second-generation 21-year-old married female; she is the mother of a young child and also a university student. She had the courage to talk to me about the difficult topic of home and belonging when I asked her about their future plans as a family and whether they wanted to continue to live in the UK or return to Kurdistan. She seemed like someone who has waited for this type of question for so long, after a few deep breaths she explained how parental dispute had a great impact on their children. She told me that the way she wants to raise their child is quite different from the way her husband wants to. "Simply I want my child grow up here, learn and be educated in English, but he wants [the child] to grow up there and learn and be educated in the Arabic language instead, because this is the language of holy Quran." I saw her eyes watering and she was full of emotion when she was talking to me. I could not stop myself from identifying with her or protecting myself from her feeling.

This vignette illustrates the complexity of the task I am working on and the way in which my identity and emotions can blur my relations with my participants. My feelings and deep understanding of the dilemmas my respondent was facing can be understood as an element of empathy in the research. Weber (1945) in his call for methodology in social science research, coined the term 'verstehen' in which understanding any social action by any social actor involves empathy i.e., the capacity to place oneself in the shoes of another to better understand their perspective. Although, having experienced something is not a necessary ingredient of 'verstehen', as already discussed my own interest, driven by my own experiences, arguably strengthens it. Moreover, this is not a single occurrence but a repeated one. I have no hesitation in referring to this explicitly as I have already acknowledged in this research that I cannot avoid my own feelings with regard to my research participants. The following fieldwork note is another example of the difficulties experienced as a researcher with regard to remaining both subjective and objective.

Fieldwork Notes 2:

One of my first generation interviewees was a middle-aged woman; she has been living here with her family for nearly forty years. She is a great story teller; she told me about her father, when he was old and could not return to their country of origin due to a political dispute with the regime. She explains in a slightly emotional tone that her father every so often had asked her to take him to the park in London, a venue which reminded him of his small village in Kurdistan surrounded by trees and a lake. "I had to take him regularly to that park in order to refresh his memory of back home otherwise he was restless and remained sad for that day" she said. While she was talking to me about her father, I soon felt that this story was affecting me deeply and I realised that this was not only her father corresponding between these two locations. It reminds me (of course not only me) that I often take my family to Cheddar in Somerset (South West of England), because we Kurdish people come from a mountain

landscape and Cheddar is the only local place whose features resemble the Kurdistan landscape. We see it as identical to our home. This can be seen as a good example of how facets of the physical features of an original 'home' are then re-imagined in a different context.

I acknowledge that adopting multiple roles while conducting research is not an easy task. For example, it has been argued that the researcher may hold prejudices and directions which encourage participants to respond in the way that the researcher wants them to (See Plummer, 1983). Having said that, the privilege of being an insider and being a native allows the researcher to have a relaxed conversation with participants and build rapport. People naturally feel happier to share their feelings with, and tell their stories to, familiar faces and trusted ones; they are less motivated to do this with strangers. Many writers (Mercer, 2007; Gibbs, 2006; Thapar-Bjorkert & Henry, 2004) have expressed concern with issues of power and researcher bias but there is a growing literature that encourages the scholar to undertake research in his or her own community. As Alan & Linet, (2012) have concluded:

We encourage other researchers to investigate their own organisations, because of the undoubted benefits of insider research in terms of access, rapport and shared frames of reference with participants, and an in-depth understanding of the organisation (Alan & Linet, 2012, p.9).

Therefore, while I am aware of many risks in researching my own community, I also have as an insider, advantages through autoethnographic work to discover and learn more about my people more than being an outsider.

In this research, apart from sharing my own experiences with the reader where the researcher's voice is evident almost everywhere and in each section of the study, I also share

the narratives of 25 other Kurdish individuals: voices from both old and newer generations. I am interested in their life stories and I like to listen to them. You may see my personal narrative here and there but at the same time I am a good listener; I am someone who passionately enjoys hearing their experiences as diasporic people and learning about their journey as immigrants, their childhood, their feelings towards 'home' and how they identify themselves. I see my research as a treasure hunt to recapture these hidden stories and also as a journey of self -discovery (Humphreys et al., 2003). I treated my research participants as story tellers, not as informants; I sought out those who related their experience with enthusiasm instead of providing information in an apathetic manner. I soon realised how my participants' accounts confirmed and recalled my own experiences. I understand our differences as members of the Kurdish diaspora and have never treated the content of the Kurdish communities here in the United Kingdom as a homogenised one. I soon realised the complexity of this research and faced challenges but this did not discourage me as I was convinced it was a potential research area. Last but not least, I argue that autoethnography enables us (immigrants) to conceptualise our accounts of the experiences of life in exile. It also helps to explore and understand the lives of those who are considered as 'others' as well as their everyday negotiation with the wider society in order to become familiar and accepted. In the next section I shall discuss issues faced during my fieldwork and data collection.

4.13 Methodological and Ethical Considerations

In my fieldwork from January 2013 to September 2014, I encountered many sensitive issues during the data collection process. These issues were challenging and sometimes concerning but without them I would not have accurately understood my research. To begin with, I should acknowledge that I have benefited from complying with the university's ethics

committee procedures before I began my fieldwork. Together with my submission of a lengthy and specified application for the ethical review of my research with participant involvement, I also produced a consent form, an information sheet for participants and a letter for young participants. In this section, I have chosen three issues that illustrate this relation to the research. I intend through these examples to build an understanding of the nature of my research and my situation within the research.

4.13.1 Insider vs. Outsider

One can argue that there are various ways in which a researcher can be categorised as an insider. The term insider-researcher has a number of characteristics and definitions. Insider researchers conduct research about home communities, such as one's own profession, workplace, society, or culture (Innes, 2009). Jenkins (2000) defines an 'insider' as a member of an 'in-group' with access to its past and present and who shares experiences with the research participants or, as Griffith (1998) suggests, has 'lived familiarity', which can lead to a feeling of sameness between the researcher and participants. However, Griffith (1998) further cautions that the insider position cannot be identified with purely common characteristics such as race, gender, or ethnic history. My insider status can be clearly recognised as having multiple commonalities with my participants such as shared culture, language, political affiliations, beliefs, educational experiences, profession, work roles, community responsibilities, collegial relationship, daily activities and lifestyle. Sharing these commonalities led me to experience various dilemmas during the process of my data collection.

It is difficult when researching your own community to avoid your background experiences and prejudice your own people, but with a clear methodological guide and tools of analysis plausible findings can be reached. It was indeed hard to bracket my own cultural awareness

and sociological perspectives and empathise with the Kurdish individuals in my study. I have tried to be an 'invisible' researcher and a good listener, particularly when I was conducting the interviews.

Alternatively, I could be both an insider and an outsider in the community. As an insider, there is an opportunity to listen to my Kurdish fellows' views regarding the research aims and themes. In addition, as an insider, respondents might also be discouraged from speaking freely in order to avoid issues of disclosure. Scholars have emphasized that a faithful representation of reality must be both similar to that reality and distinct from it (Woolgar, 1988). Perhaps the one important aspect of my work in this setting was that I too am a first generation immigrant. I assumed that if this particular identity operated for me as a researcher it might provide a distinct advantage when I interviewed the first-generation group. By contrast, when I interviewed their children and the new generation of Kurdish immigrants, it felt slightly hazardous. On the one hand the age gap between my young interviewees and me led them to consider me as an outsider from the point of view of lifestyle. On the other hand, they may have different sentiments regarding the whole Kurdish question and lack of a nation state. The question of what the Kurdish state means to them and whether they are concerned about politics at all arises. Surprisingly, my 20 months of fieldwork has revealed a complex relationship with my participants from both generations. It was soon clear that my identity was neither as an insider nor an outsider but someone with a more flexible approach and multi-layered identity.

4.13.2 Was I being regarded as a Researcher or a Spy?

Many studies have suggested that torture has long-term psychological effects independent of the suffering related to being uprooted, refugee status, and the other traumatic life events in a

politically repressive environment (Litz, 1997, Beiser, 1986). The first wave of Kurdish immigrants to Europe and to the United Kingdom in particular, during the 1970s, 80s and mid-90s, were people fleeing from the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein who considered the Kurdish as separates. In the main the Kurdish first-generation refugees was comprised of educated individuals and those who had a political awareness of Kurdish issues. Consequently, in one way or another they suffered from political repression including imprisonment and torture and consequently experienced emotional and physical mistreatment. Usually members of this type of exiled community are very sensitive, fearful and traumatised.

A personal vignette (1)

Not very long ago one of my Kurdish friends from Hull visited Bristol. During his visit I introduced him to another Kurdish friend from Bristol called K, who left Iraq a long time ago and was older than us. K had experienced interrogation by Iraqi security forces and a close friend had spied on him while he was an undergraduate student in Baghdad during the early 1980s. We talked about some issues in the past that had happened to all of us and we discussed how difficult it was to deal with situations such as when your own friend has betrayed you. Suddenly I saw my visitor friend, who had just arrived in the UK and had not had the same experience as my older friend in terms of political persecution. He took out a small voice recorder from his pocket because he needed to record our interesting conversation as part of his hobby. But I witnessed a strong reaction from K toward the recording and I stopped the recorder without asking for permission. This was a bit embarrassing and uncomfortable for me because they knew each other through me.

This is just an example but it illustrates some of the methodological and ethical issues attached to this research, particularly in regard to the use of a recorder. In addition to this, I

encountered another issue which I will refer to as ‘lack of familiarity with research’. Yet for some communities they were not used to research methods. For example, any activities involved with tape/video recording, field note recording or observing may have been seen as suspicious. In my case most of my participants originated from Southern Kurdistan (North of Iraq) and they had had experiences with the educational system under the former Iraqi regime. During the Ba’athist regime’s rule, led by Saddam Hussein mostly from the mid-1980s until 2003, there was almost no sociological research in Iraq. (Miler, Riendeau and Rosen, 2013; Koivunen, 2013). Universities were simply a channel for the Ba’ath party to educate people in the way they wanted and universities were used as propaganda instruments for the Ba’athist chauvinistic ideology. The idea of scientific research seems to be beyond the understanding of most people in Iraq, including Kurds. My commitment to the Kurdish community in Bristol and the help that I offered to the families through my work as an interpreter and community organiser, together with my strong networks with other Kurdish community members in the UK has given me confidence and increased trust with the participants.

4.13.3 Heterogeneity vs. Homogeneity: Sampling Issues

Sampling has increasingly been problematized in the literature on research methodology. Techniques which have been employed by researchers include probability (random sampling) and nonprobability (purposive sampling). In my research, I mostly adapted purposive sampling or as it is sometimes called, judgemental sampling (Castillo 2009). This is based on my knowledge and experience of who it would be appropriate for me to select as participants within the community. Ethnographical study as qualitative research, characteristically focuses on particularity rather than large populations. Autoethnography, in particular, as an appropriate method in ethnographical research, would require more specific cases.

By setting up a convenience sampling strategy and a careful plan which included consultations with other community members, I attempted to deal with issues such as exclusion and isolated individuals (Ellis 2007). For example, the snowball sampling technique which is often used in hidden populations (in my case the refugee community) is difficult for researchers to access. Additionally, for a more diverse sample I went to social networking at events such as the Newroz festival (Kurdish New Year), Eid (Islamic holiday) ceremony, and wedding and birthday parties that took place in the community. I agree with Spring (2003) who argues that mounting evidence suggests that well-planned and executed recruiting with a careful description of the process are key to identifying sample representativeness.

I am aware of some of the potential problems associated with language and dialect variations among Kurdish groups who cannot be thought of as a homogenous group. It is important to note the specificity of language and the experience of particular Kurdish groups and to be aware of implications for access and understanding. The average Kurmanji speaker does not find it easy to communicate with the inhabitants of Kurds in Iraq who are Sorani speakers (Chapter 8 explores this issue in more details). Thus, linguistic scholars assert that the term "Kurdish" has been applied extrinsically to describe the language the Kurds speak, while Kurds have used the term "Kurdish" to simply describe their ethnic or national identity and refer to their language as Kurmanji, Sorani, Hewrami, and Lorri. (Hassanpour, 1992). Therefore, due to uneasy communication among Kurdish speakers it would be difficult to find all four dialect speakers here in Bristol. Hence, in this research the only Kurdish individuals recruited, were originally from southern Kurdistan (North of Iraq) and communication with them took place either in English or the Kurdish central dialect called Sorani. As my study has focused on Kurdish diaspora in the UK only, and England in particular, I attempted to keep my chosen sample geographically representative of the

Kurdish residents in Britain. During the 20 months of my fieldwork I travelled every so often to the north west of England, the Midlands and the south west of England. Alongside Bristolian Kurdish participants, I interviewed Kurds living in many other major cities including London, Manchester, Derby and Birmingham.

Another issue worth mentioning in regard to sampling is that during the UK Census of 2011, Kurdish communities have been lobbying for the recognition of the Kurdish ethnic identity within official government data. Kurds are registered in the UK with regard to their nationality, not their ethnic affiliations, and therefore Kurds remain unrecognised as they are classified as ‘Turkish’, ‘Iranian’, ‘Iraqi’ or ‘Syrian’ within the UK. Relevant papers produced by different government institutions highlight the fact that the local and national government should introduce “Kurds” as a separate ethnic category within the census in order to rectify the problems Kurdish people are facing in their everyday life when accessing hospitals, schools and employment. As the issue is still outstanding many research participants informed me of their daily frustration at being asked their country of origin and at which stage they are obliged to fill in the official forms that contain personal information such as their ethnic background. The following short narrative illustrates how a Kurd with an immigrant background living in the UK and naturalised as a British citizen struggles to relate who he/she is, and from where he/she originates. This would be less of a problem for someone if he or she originated from a recognised country.

A personal vignette (2)

Through my work as an interpreter I have frequently witnessed the issue of recognising Kurdish people with an independent ethnic background. What follows is a short conversation

presenting just such an example of this issue. In the following extract a Kurdish applicant (claiming Job Seeker Allowance, JSA) responds to the questions by an adviser from the JSA call centre in regard to the applicant's ethnic background. I have worked as an interpreter and in this example have only included the English section of the conversation.

- Oh thanks, can you please tell me what's your ethnic group is? Are you White British or any other white background?

+no

-Are you mixed ethnic group? White and black Caribbean or white and black African, white and Asian?

+no

-Are you Asian/ Asian British? Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese or any other Asian backgrounds?

+no

-Are you Black/African / Caribbean/Black British or any other Black background, please describe?

+no

- Are you any other ethnic group? Arab or any other ethnic group, please describe?

+ I am a Kurd

-so you're Kurd from Iraq?

+no I am Kurd from Kurdistan

-but there is not such a country in my list (conversation continued...)

4.14 Conclusion

Despite the fact that conducting research within diasporic communities is fraught with methodological and ethical challenges, I have argued throughout this research that adapting a flexible methodology is best suited to this type of research. Adopting an ethnographic and an autoethnographical method enables me to think in a more convincing way and, more precisely, to immerse myself in my study with regard to the relationship between myself as researcher and my participants. Ethnography is useful in gaining access to members of the Kurdish communities that have spread across the United Kingdom. In this chapter I have discussed both methodological and practical challenges faced. The fact that this research is unique in all aspects of the research has reflected this and should be understood in that way. Finally, the writing up of the thesis was not a distinct stage in the fieldwork but rather an integral part of the whole research process. Consequently, the research process and production can be seen as a journey that links all phases coherently and should be understood in that way.

Chapter Five

Imagining and conceptualising the idea of ‘home’ among Iraqi-Kurd generations in a diaspora

5.Introduction:

5.1 Defining Key Concepts

For the purpose of clarity it will be useful to define ‘home’ here and inform the thesis with an understanding of such a complex term. The way I understand ‘home’ here is with reference to both one’s lived and imagined home. In a sense the thesis is not concerned with the physical space of home but rather with an understanding of the relationships between people in transnational families that establish the idea of home through their daily experiences. I claim that nowadays people make adjustments to live within an imagined home with the construction of a home really happening in the mind. Therefore, thinking of the dichotomy between real and imagined is not helpful in understanding the new experiences of immigrant communities. There is no doubt that multiple meanings and understandings apply with regard to defining a complex term such as ‘home’. However, in the context of migration studies a ‘homeland’, refers to the country of origin, and ‘host-land’ refers to the country of settlement (Waldinger 2015). In this thesis ‘home’ has been used specifically to describe a dynamic; it is the specific way it is conceptualised by the respondents. The thesis intentionally avoids the use of fixed and single geographical locations as being understood as ‘home’ and suggests instead that ‘home’ is multi-layered and has multiple locations. Particularly in an era of intensifying human global movement, the concept of ‘home’ is increasingly a spatial

phenomenon. As Taylor (2014) states, wherever it is located, home is often represented as offering complete familiarity and comfort; a place that we either leave and consequently long for, or move towards for security and identity. In this sense ‘home’ can be both lived and imagined (Brah, 1996), and constituted through multiple (lived and imagined) relationships with people and places.

With reference to a mediator, in the current thesis this concept has been introduced to emphasise the role of family and family practice. This is the attachment that influences the imaginary home among immigrant generations living in a diaspora. Here, family share unique experiences where negotiations between generations take place. Consequently, the Kurdish diaspora creates its own networks and transnational communities at the familial, social and even trade levels. For the Kurdish in a diaspora family ties are strong and in many cases are the foundations of trust for other forms of cross-border interaction. On the one hand, family plays an important role to connect and maintain relations between family members and generations in both a diaspora and in the home. On the other hand, family home can be seen as a platform for both generations; in this case, both parents and their children negotiate and manage living between two cultures. Most importantly, it is important to mediate between home culture ties and the process of integration into the host society among family households.

5.2 A Brief Discussion about an Imaginary ‘home’

Most Kurdish diaspora studies were mainly concentrated only on first generation migrants. The Kurdish younger generation in exile in the UK remain an uncharted research territory. However, there is little research (Baser 2011, Van Bruinenseen 1999) which focuses only on second generation Kurds in Germany. These Kurds are mainly from northern Kurdistan (Eastern Turkey) and are also economic migrants. Due to the fact that the Kurdish diaspora is

not a homogenous entity and it is important to take into account the life of other Kurdish communities that have ignored by the researchers in the field. These studies have concluded first, that in addition to their parents the Kurdish younger generation is heavily engaged in political activity; in order to preserve itself, a diaspora undoubtedly needs generational continuity. Second, the younger generations are the vehicle for transformation towards a hybrid identity such as Euro-Kurds: those who have few real memories of their parents' homeland but have grown up hearing the stories and experiences of their parents and relatives. This led to the formation of 'imaginary homelands' in the sense that they have built up an idea of a homeland in their minds through second-hand information. This chapter discusses notions of home and belonging among Kurdish diasporic communities in the UK. The narratives of both Iraqi-Kurdish generations, young and old and in some cases parents and their children will be considered. The chapter also discusses a significant shift that has occurred in the nature of the diaspora itself.

5.3 The Chapter Outline

In the following three sections this chapter draws on emblematic vignettes from the empirical data to explain and define themes that have emerged in the data analytical process. First, I shall explore the concept of 'home' and the sense of belonging as two contested and negotiated concepts among immigrant communities and Iraqi-Kurdish communities in Britain in particular. This chapter aims to theorise and define the concept of home and discuss the link between home and diaspora, as well as questioning home and conceptualising "homeland" as a multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept (Galip, 2014). The second section discusses the notions of transnational families and their everyday practice of 'homemaking' and 'belonging' and how members of generational Kurdish diasporic communities negotiate between 'here', life in the UK and 'there', their past life in the Iraqi-Kurdistan the area that from which they have emigrated. The research findings challenge

concepts in the literature on the generational perception of home and draw attention to the new diasporic identity. The third and final section considers the notions of imaginary 'home' and how the concept of 'home' appears as more of an idea than a physicality that conveys a stable place of residence in which one feels secure, comfortable and familiar. This will include memories with regard to home and belonging and how memories of 'back home' and childhood shape someone's life in exile. Additionally, later in the chapter I will explore the nostalgic experiences of the older generation and how parental memory of 'home' influences their children and whether the children of immigrants are following their home culture or carving their own path.

5.4 Conceptualising 'home'

In this section home and a sense of belonging among Kurdish diaspora which have always been restricted to only political motivations will be discussed. Mainstream literature on Kurdish diaspora that sees and defines 'homeland' within classical nationalist views as inspired by a nation-state model will be challenged. This research considers home as the experience of life on a daily basis and in a soft version of nationalism as Billig (1995) coined symbolic representations. Home can be physical or imaginary and be in one place or multiple places. Most importantly a new home can be seen on a multi-layered level; home can be seen as space (i.e. geographical location), home as family and home as belonging (this includes an imaginary home). This is not necessarily suggesting that these levels are disconnected but seen instead as a spontaneous interplay between each other. In general, the relevant literature views Kurdish diasporic communities as a homogenous entity regardless of generational differences and new life experiences in the country of settlement. This can be regarded as a theoretical problematic and inadequate methodologically. Additionally, based on empirical evidence and lived experiences and contrary to the literature on this subject, a more complex picture is suggested. In the following passage, I shall refer to a film narrative to illustrate in

more complexity what is being discussed in respect of home and belonging among immigrant people.

James Gray's dramatic film *The Immigrant* (2013) depicts the emotional journey of a young Polish girl, Ewa, (Marion Cotillard) and her sister who seek a better life in America after escaping their ravaged home in post-Great War Poland. As a newly arrived immigrant, Ewa tries to build a new life in the country and helps her ill sister, but after a while she is arrested for a second time as an illegal immigrant and kept in a detention center by the authorities in order to deport her. Previously Ewa worked as a dancer and in a short conversation with her previous theatre manager Bruno (Joaquin Phoenix) she shows her disappointment that she was unable to help her poor sister and he persuades her to work for him again as a prostitute. "I think they are returning you home," says Bruno. "But I don't know where my home is," says Ewa in a whimpering voice. Ewa could not find a better answer to Bruno, when he asked her what she meant by "I don't know where my home is?" Her answer was "My sister is here". In the general sense of communication her answer does not fit the main structure of the conversation between the two people but through this answer she implicitly expresses much ambivalence. She reveals a strong attachment to her sister and has placed her as 'home'; this is what I previously called individual life experiences and strategies. Ewa's dilemma in trying to identify her home is driven by two kinds of experiences. One is her traumatic past life in her country of origin, Poland, and the other is the recent life she has had in a new country for which she feels a mixture of hope and disappointment. All immigrant people will experience this same emotional complexity and uncertain experience between leaving one home and settling in another.

Immigrants' narratives provide a rich testimony of the sentiments of those people who are forced to establish a new home. This is not only through forced migration. The world is

more globalised than ever and people's movements (i.e. voluntary migration) are beyond all previous experiences. Here the concept of home is problematized. How can someone 'erase' their home and make another home? What makes a place home? Is it where your parents are from and where your family is, or where you have been brought up? Many children of migrant families are not sure where they belong. Is home the place from where you have been displaced, or where you are now? I shall repeat the following fundamental question rises by Brah: "Where is 'home'?" (Brah 1996). In early studies of diaspora, scholars have argued that notions of making a new "home" are strongly linked with the idea of return (Safran 1991, Tololyan 1996). However, new diaspora studies have suggested a more complicated picture when they introduce new concepts such as transmigration and transnationalism (Levitt, 2004, Binaisa, 2013).

Unlike old diasporic communities, new members of diaspora maintain lively transnational social relations with their country of origin by way of visiting more frequently and regularly communicating with relatives on the phone or via the internet. Scholars have suggested that transnational family networks provide some members of the younger generation with a strong sense of embeddedness and belonging (Wessendorf, 2010, Purkayastha, 2005). According to scholars who have contributed to intergenerational migration studies (Kasinitz et al., 2004; Alba and Nee, 2003), transnational parents do not necessarily produce transnational children. For example, it has been argued that the children of immigrants are not likely to engage with their ancestral homes with the same intensity and frequency as their parents, nor will they be as influenced by homeland values and practices. For others, such as Levitt (2008), Schiller (2004) and Morawska (2004), who have recently researched the children of immigrant families, this is not as straightforward as has been suggested and they provide a rather more complex picture. Levitt (2008) explains the contradictory influences among second-generation immigrants. When children grow up in households and participate in organisations

in which people, goods, money, ideas and practices from their parents' countries of origin circulate in and out on a regular basis, they are not only socialised into the rules and institutions of the countries where they live, but also into those of the countries from whence their families originate (Levitt: 2008).

It is important to stress here that significant shifts have occurred within the nature of new diasporic communities in terms of belonging and each day practising the concept of "home". Transnational family members comprise both generations (new and old belong to two homes and even sometimes to more than two). Many of my respondents have clearly referred to two homes when they talk to me about their sentiments and sense of belonging. Mashkal is a 21-year-old female who lives in London and was completing a degree in Architecture. She left Kurdistan and went to Holland with her family in the mid-1990s when she was only seven years old. She explained to me how tricky it is when she thinks of home, simply because she does not think she belongs to a single place as she has connections with three "homes": Kurdistan, Holland and the UK.

um it is very difficult question to be honest because I do not like it is hard to answer because I do not feel at home eh I don't feel at home in London necessarily but also I do not feel at home in Kurdistan either..... , I don't feel at home in Holland (laugh) I (emphasis) it's really difficult for me because every time when I am in London I don't like London but when I am away from London I miss London and in the same time when I am away from Kurdistan I miss Kurdistan..... , when I am away from Holland I miss Holland.....so I do not have one home I think I have got a few homes but at the same time when I am at these homes I do not feel at home if you understand what I mean. (Mashkal, 21)

Mashkal, like many other immigrant children in similar situations, is negotiating and managing to maintain a balance between her parents' home and the receiving society. This, in particular, gives her the strength and confidence to be flexible in terms of 'home belonging'. It is clear how she belongs to many homes at many levels that interplay with her roots (her parents' country is Kurdistan), her childhood memories (Holland) and where she is living now with her family (London). Therefore, she unhesitatingly demonstrates that she belongs to more than one place (home).

I don't think I'm belong to one place or one home, I think I'm supposed to travel around and see everywhere instead of being in one place. (Mashkal, 21)

Interestingly and unexpectedly, the majority of my interviewees from the older generation in the Kurdish diasporic communities clearly expressed a similar feeling towards home and belonging. Amir, an interviewee aged 45, is a Kurdish activist and artist, married with three children (his oldest son is 19 years old). He left Kurdistan in the mid-1990s and travelled to the UK in 2002. Amir shared similar feelings to Mashkal and many others from the younger generation of the Kurdish diasporic communities that he belongs to and insists he is not only from one country but from all countries.

All countries in the world all governments and states are like Kurdistan for me..... because now I am looking to this in a humanist way eh..... I don't mind whether this government or that state accepting me or not eh..... Britain is accepting me or not a country in Africa is accepting me or not..... I have my own way of thinking we are more like those people who in between sky and ground like suspended people eh..... now we've a new home which I can called humanity homeland..... for me now everywhere is home, yeah home is a place that you feel respected.

(Amir, 45, Translation)

Unlike many other studies in the field the current research tends to concede that the generational similarities and differences vary. Even though both interviewees shared feelings of belonging to more than one home, clearly their motives behind this kind of sentiment is different. This became more evident when my first-generation participants flagged up past experiences in his own country of origin. This was particularly evident, when he linked notions of *new home* with his emphatic phrase '*feel respected*'. Home and belonging in this sense is dreamlike and hyper spatial where no country (geographical location) is recognised. It is like the idea of a world without states and artificial borders similar to an idealistic world power order in which people can move and live freely. I have noticed that some of my participants consider home as a place where they are protected and respected. This usually derives from a leftist/humanist view and influences an individual that has been ill-treated by his own people or subjected to political persecution in his own country. I have also noticed that some of my participants have been influenced by a nationalist view that, strictly, only considers Kurdistan as 'home' no matter what their experience. Hadi (65) is a Kurdish veteran who lives with his family in the UK; one of his daughters was also interviewed in this study. He has much to say and many interesting stories. Hadi grew up in a political climate where tension between two main parties was dramatically raised in the mid-twentieth century, namely the nationalist side led by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (PDK) and the leftist faction led by the Iraqi Communist Party. His family were affiliated to the Communist Party and he believes the current authority in the Kurdistan region and its president Massud Barzani to be corrupt. He claimed that despite all the years he served fighting with the military for freedom all his hard work was disregarded by the KRG government. I have witnessed his frustration towards Kurdish self-rule and he places great emphasis on his preference to live in exile where he feels equal with other citizens:

Yes your own home is important but I didn't have that eh..... I was like foreigner in my country..... if the state doesn't treat you fairly so you became a foreigner they treat you differently so how can someone loves homeland eh..... you know even your own father if treats you differently with the rest of other siblings you don't like your father and you don't consider that family your beloved family eh you see eh..... so I'd treated badly eh differently..... So your homeland is a place that you respected as a human being. (Hadi, 65, Translation)

My communication with members of the Kurdish diasporic communities here in the UK and my own experiences offer insights into the concepts of homemaking and belonging. It reveals strategies for erasing memories of the old home and creating a new home: a very complex process. To a considerable extent, transnational families and new diasporic communities are negotiating on a daily basis the management of optional 'homes' according to their past experiences, current situation and future plans.

5.5 Family as 'home'

Many scholars have focused on immigrant children, especially those who are deeply family-orientated because of their practice of focusing on their home culture in their daily activities. They stress that family networks provided certain second-generation immigrants with a strong sense of embeddedness and belonging (Wessendorf, 2010). In contrast, other scholars have argued that although family as a social institution has maintained a degree of consistency with the traditions and values of members of immigrant families such as solidarity, support and kinship networks, it has been shaped by various 'modernizing' forces and thus is in a state of change (Christou, 2006). In her work regarding second-generation Greeks in America, Christou argues that:

It is therefore clear that a changing ancestral homeland, the impact of globalization and migration have all stimulated a cultural response and shaped perceptions of belongingness for the second generation Greek-American further torn between a consciousness that can neither fulfil true 'Greekness' nor true 'Americanness' (Christou, 2006, p. 1044).

Here I would argue that this is not only the case for the younger generations among diasporic communities and Kurdish diaspora in particular, but it is rather a multi-generational issue. The children of immigrant families and also their parents have difficulty choosing between two homes: the family home and the new home. This is because instead of two optional homes (i.e. the ancestral home and new home) a third option arises for them which I call 'belonging to a child or children'. There are many parents who 'belong' to their children. Wherever the children are, the parents consider that place as home. In other circumstances, a person may attach her- or himself to a family member's life (for example husband, wife, and sibling, extended family such as grandmother or grandfather). In other words, many diasporic community members see their family as 'home' or at least they give priority to their family first as a way of identifying themselves and then other attachments follow such as their ancestral homeland or their new home. Many of the interviewees from both the first and the younger generations (1.5 G) underlined that living with their immediate family has provided them with a strong sense of belonging. However, this does not necessarily mean that they practice only a single culture; instead they are managing to maintain a balance between all those connections they have established at home and outside home.

Darin (23), a second-generation male living in London with his family, has just graduated and started work with a private company in London. His account illustrates how he considers the family as 'home' and for him this is a priority.

To be honest eh..... home to me is not just one place or not one country or one city..... home to me is where the family is..... you know wherever your family is I consider that's my home because I eh I can't say like England is my home now or like Iraq is my home because eh I don't..... eh to me always been like that..... Wherever your family is or wherever you start your own family that's your home and that's where you should always continue from and adopt everything upon that..... eh yeah that's it. (Darin, 23)

Throughout my interviews with individuals from Kurdish communities, I encountered many more who explicitly shared the same feeling as Darin towards family ties. For example, Halmat (17), a young male who is just starting his A levels and lives with his family in Bristol, said:

home is somewhere you feel comfortable eh..... or you feel relax (emphasis when you've family I think eh..... that's how I found home..... and also just general culture how you use to like my daily routine is more of with English culture (---)..... so I probably call this home rather than Kurdistan and I spent majority of my life here and eh I've been here from a very young age so I've been brought up like this..... if I came here when I was older I've been use to more with Kurdish culture but because I am here from young age I think yeah more family orientated yeah. (Halamat, 17)

Yet these two interviewees share the same feeling, in a way, regarding the significant role that family has on one's life, but they provide considerably different accounts when it comes to new individual life experiences and individual life strategies. For instance, Halmat states that because he has been brought up in the UK and is more familiar with English culture, he

therefore feels more English than Kurdish. In contrast, Darin enthusiastically insists that a person should not forget his/her roots and where he/she comes from originally:

Until now I've been back like eight or nine times..... so I love being there..... so every year like in the summer when I'd eh my holiday I go back there and I've always wanna keep in touch with family back home..... I've always wanna to have that root in me..... like you know I don't wanna lose the root because your roots are also important it doesn't matter where you from eh I meant it doesn't matter where do you live in the world you s'posd to know where you came from that's important and..... so I've always been interested to know my own culture like eh how the society is back there and how is even though is different but you still need to know both eh..... for example later on when I have my own kids I can also tell them where I came from and like..... know where I started like new life so it's all important to know umm everything about yourself. (Darin, 23)

The contradictions revealed in these accounts and others that I have witnessed throughout my fieldwork provide new insights in regard to transnational families and also challenge researchers in the field to consider its complexity. Having said that, this ambiguity and the occasional contradictions that I have found in my interviewees' accounts are reflected in the life of members of the Kurdish diasporic communities.

Toba (55), a female interviewee, has a mixed background (Kurdish father and Turkish mother). Toba's life story is unique; expressed simply she does not fit into a generational category. Unlike the rest of my interviewees who were either parents (first generation) or children (second generation), she arrived in the UK as a student when she was 15, then later, due to her father's political persecution, the rest of her family joined Tara in the UK. Toba is

now a Kurdish activist and lives in London with her only son. We discussed much and she told me her life journey in detail (this was my longest interview).

I've always all my life..... I've had eh..... I've struggled with a sense of home even when I was young I mean it started when I was a child because my mother been a foreigner and she's never felt at home although she created home for us like a family home but I was always aware that they're part of me that's was do not belong the fact that we're Kurds and my father's living in Baghdad..... so we never belong there neither and then coming to England and then my parents came over as well they never belonged to here they always lived in the past ehparticularly my father lived in the past always lived in the past. (Toba, 55)

Toba insists that because her father was involved in politics and was a Kurdish nationalist, “he [always] wanted to inject his thoughts into me and he did. More than that he also wanted this (feeling proud of being a Kurd) to be continued with our generation, when my son had started to talk my father was determined to talk to him in Kurdish and so on.” She told me that she does not want to pass this on to her son, instead she stressed that her son had his own life. In psychoanalysis, this is referred to as projection which is a situation in which the ego feels threatened and takes on a form of defense in which unwanted feelings are displaced onto another person where they then appear as a threat from the external world. Weiss points out that:

The term projection in current usage, refers to every kind of externalization, particularly to every process in which ideas, impulses, or qualities belonging to oneself are imputed to others (Weiss 1979, p. 358).

Toba, as a mother of a mixed-race child (who has a Kurdish mother and an English father), identifies herself with her own mother (she has a Turkish mother and a Kurdish father). She states that:

“if you ask me now where am I come from I would say the same as my mother’s answer 40 years ago when I asked her, Mum where were you from? She said I belong to my children and my family. Now I also say that I belong to my son. He is my home by all meaning.” (Toba, 55)

Toba’s narrative confirms a personal life strategy when she chooses to erase her home memories or at least not to impose her memories on her son which echoes the experiences of many more members of transnational families. For example, in her study of Chinese immigrant families in Germany, Lung (2008) provides many accounts of exiled people such as Toba who were forced to establish a new home, but one which was a family oriented ‘home’. This does not mean that only a ‘complete’ family can become a home for individuals; sometimes people choose a home simply because of one family member. Hence, scholars have questioned a contemporary family structure. In transnational families in particular, it is sometimes the case that a father lives on one continent, a mother lives on another and the children live on a third. In a sense, this challenges notions of the nuclear family and the structure of the traditional family. In this scenario, there is a strong emphasis not only on the immediate family but also on the attachment to the extended family. Many Kurdish diasporic community members in the UK are strongly family orientated; they refer to the situation of living away from their own family (and extended family) as a discontinuation or a cut-off generation.

Sara (38), a Kurdish first-generation female, lives in Bristol with her husband and daughter. When I asked how she felt about her family in Kurdistan, Sara reminisced for a while and then said:

Obviously I go back every year..... any money I save here I go back in the spring or in summer and spend it on our travel which is very expensive travelling to Iraq and yeah I go and visit my family and I stayed in my parent's house eh..... as a holiday eh.... I see it as holiday now like holiday.... visiting your family and taking my daughter back to there and she sees her nanny..... I think she needs that connection as well..... because we're here very isolated um..... you know the social life and family like a pizza when you cut part of it so our family is not complete because is only my husband, me and my daughter here there is no(emphasis)..... no aunty eh no uncle we are like a cut- off generations yeah the family is not complete here..... you don't have aunty you don't have grandfathers and grandmothers with you which's very important..... I see other mums eh how they been helped by you know grandparents eh like collecting their children at school and they're happier of course. (Sara, 38)

In this situation, I argue that members of diasporic communities often tend to establish a new home and erase others in a very complex way due to their family commitments and their self-strategies (new life experiences). The family plays a significant role with regard to someone's sense of belonging and homemaking; many of my participants are family orientated. Although many scholars have argued that the contemporary family structure has significantly changed, most Kurdish families in diaspora see the family as providing continuity and contributing to survival. Family connections strengthen their inclusivity and support (Chamberlain, 2006). Furthermore, they see the family as representing 'home' and being a

mediator between the institutional home (country or state) and their everyday home (life experiences).

5.6 The concept of ‘home’ seen through Shared Memories /Rituals and Festivals

Shared memories of the homeland function as a powerful tool among diasporic communities (Safran, 1991). Working closely with members of Kurdish diaspora in the UK reveals that memories of the homeland play an important role in diasporic identities and first generation diaspora in particular. One can argue that these shared memories of the homeland are practiced on multiple levels within the community. For example, in the case of the Kurdish diaspora in the UK, there are annual festivals like the Newroz (Kurdish New Year), when Kurdish families gather in one place (sometime outdoors) sharing traditional food, wearing costumes and dancing around the fire. The community run regular Kurdish language classes, so-called supplementary schools or Sunday schools, to teach children their mother tongue and to learn about the history of the homeland. Above all, the power of memory can also contribute to creating and maintaining social networks with members of Kurdish communities. This phenomenon can be interpreted in many ways; for instance, older generations participate in the mourning of their fellows. Regular visiting (*miwani*) is very important as is maintaining regular contact with family and friends back home. In an emergency such as flooding, displacement due to war, or disease, unofficial fundraising procedures were established by members of the community. Additionally, for the younger generation, the significance of the power of memory exercised by parents has played a major role in their lives. Many of my second-generation respondents disclosed that they benefited hugely from being part of the community. Residing with their immediate family for as long as they wanted and having access to free resources in the community are some examples of this. In other words, to some extent Kurdish diasporic communities across generations are reproducing collective memories and keeping them alive in various forms.



Figure (8) Newroz Party in London, Finsbury Park, March 2012

Source : 'Image in the Public domain ', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4mZoeR_e4A

Last September (2012) I visited Kurdistan to participate in the 2nd World Kurdish Congress in Irbil, hosted by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). After a few days of intensive discussion and seminars, I was desperate for some fresh air. At that particular time the weather begins to cool down and it is the start of the pomegranate season. Pomegranate is not only a fruit; it is more a symbolic cultural item in Kurdistan and surrounding countries as has been illustrated superbly in Kurdish literature and poetry. I remember when departing the conference with a friend who also accompanied me on that journey that we passed a fruit shop and when we realised that the shopkeeper sold them we could not stop ourselves entering the shop and buying a huge basket of pomegranates. After 13 years of living abroad that was the first time I had returned to Kurdistan in autumn and enjoyed fresh Kurdish pomegranates. Of course, that shopkeeper was puzzled as to why we were desperately eating them and excited about them. In the UK, I have witnessed on many occasions (in my early years of living in the UK) members of Kurdish communities waiting for Wednesdays to buy pomegranates in Turkish markets across UK's towns and cities. For diasporic communities, sometimes tools and food are not just items but cultural productions associated with the

memories of individuals. Moreover, these items become symbolic and a part of their belief system. In daily life I have seen many Kurdish people complain about the lack of particular food ingredients or about the difficulty of finding a particular home item. Thus, it is very common among Kurdish communities to ask their friends and family members when they travel back home to bring them certain items.

Shared memories can be images of places and events or nostalgic feelings, recollections and reminiscences. The memories of the older generation relate to descriptions of childhood in Kurdistan, the beauty of certain places and especially the family home before emigration but less often the traumatic events surrounding the flight. Human beings by nature want to preserve happy memories and delete the sad ones, unless someone evokes them. The memories of parents recall peaceful village life, the pomegranate and walnut trees and the most beautiful landscape. Often, to keep these memories alive, families organise regular visits home to convey to their children their roots and their culture. Memories can fade with time especially among children, and consequently the children of immigrant families do not necessarily retain those memories they gather during a short visit to Kurdistan. This is similar to little Bruno in John Boyne's brilliant novel (2007), when he was confused between his older memories (the good time spent with his friends in Berlin) and his newer memories (the current friendship with Shmuel near his new home Out-with). In contrast, many of my first-generation interviewees have been emotional about their past lives and remained explicitly nostalgic.

Shanya (35), a married woman, she has been living with her husband in Manchester for eight years but with no children. I interviewed her in a small neighborhood café where we talked extensively and openly. While I was listening to her fascinating story she seemed to me deeply emotional. I noticed that with no symptoms of a cold or illness and during the mild temperature of that time of year she was wearing many clothes and had covered her body

extensively and especially around her neck and shoulder areas. Soon I realised why: what she told me when first we met was her impression of the harsh weather in the UK and how she missed the beautiful sunshine there (Kurdistan). She had strong negative views and feelings towards everything in the UK including the social and political systems, the weather and even the Kurdish communities based in the UK. In contrast, she had nostalgic memories of back home when she was among her people. She recalled her 'family's warmth' and her enjoyment of being 'under warm sunshine':

Yeah..... a first thing weather is important I mean sunshine eh.... you know we as a nation suffered a lot in the history but we always smile..... do you know why that is? This all because of the beautiful sunlight that we've in my country..... The nice weather and beautiful seasonal rhythm in my country..... like three months of snow, three months of flower and spring three months of sunshine and three months of beautiful fallen leaves in autumn..... but here look in all twelve months (emphasis) of year you only see darkness and cloudiness you can't see any rhythm..... That's in terms of weather and how this affected us..... secondly in terms of your own family in here you've only a few friends or cousins or your cousin's wife that's all.... you don't have any family member here your close family eh.... you can't find someone understanding you..... sorry I have to say ugly sentence eh what is life.... our life is our joys or smile the rhythm around us day and night..... you know the light I have in my little room in here eh..... I always see it like the darkness of my grave..... believe me some people ask me do you scary to die but I say I've already died..... do you know why? Because for me a person only alive when he's among his family among his friends eh to see different things but I spent almost ten years of lonely nights in my little room eh because my husband working in night shift.... most of us here are suffering from an illness because we can't adapt this climate eh..... I

personally, from my first day of coming to this country I am suffering from illness and we all mentally ill..... you can go and talk to people then you see how they have been affected. (Shanya, 35)

The sun in this case is a metaphor, like rain in Aeschylus's ancient Greek play, *The Suppliants*; two lovers flee a forced marriage and enter Argos and ask the king, Pelasgus to protect them. Later in a ceremony which ends the play, the goddess of love, Aphrodite, praises the marriage between the sky (the groom) and the earth (the bride) from which rain comes, nourishing cattle, corn and fruit. Similar to Greek mythology where rain is a metaphor for rebirth and refreshing life, Shanya sees the sunshine as a source of happiness and the continuity of life. She recalls her nostalgic memories of beautiful sunshine and living among her family on a daily basis where now she faces cold weather and feels loneliness.

Shanya told me that the only way she enjoys her life in the UK is when she looks back to her past life through her photos taken in Kurdistan. She said: "Every single night I take out my photo album and enjoy with the moments that I spent on those day." I have noted that many members of Kurdish diasporic communities across European countries recall memories through images capturing important moments in their past lives. Images such as the moments they are proud of like a graduation ceremony, a wedding party or a family photo. Often the message behind these reminiscences is to reveal how useful they were, as immigrants are sometimes portrayed as unemployed and benefit seekers. Similarly, the image of a particular place or venue where individuals spent some pleasant time will also evoke memories.

Visiting Kurdistan and taking photos (and videos) in towns, mountains or among families and then returning to the UK with these images to share with friends and other immigrant families is a repetition of social activities among Kurdish diaspora. Amir (45) is an artist and a community organiser living in Manchester with his wife and three children. After a long

and fascinating journey, he finally settled in the UK and talks calmly of how he dealt with his childhood memories when he visited Kurdistan.

When you go back to Kurdistan ehyou know you return to your memory's destination.... I think in my first visit to there I almost took about 2500 to 3000 photos of my city Sulaymni..... photos of everywhere.... if you look through these photos this can be told how much I miss my country and eh even in my last visit and every time when I go back to there I have to visit Bardaky Sara (Square Centre) for some time to remind myself my childhood's memories..... You know under the Saddam regime that was only place we could visit freely and I met with my friends..... so each time when I go back I visit this place to live with my memories..... so some parts of the city were very important in my trips to Kurdistan like Sarchinar and to see my mum and my family again (Amir, 45).

There is strong evidence in this research that examples of the “imaginary home” can be witnessed through cultural rituals as well as in the daily practice of members of immigrant communities. A clear example here is that often Iraqi Kurdish families visit Cheddar in Somerset (South West England), because we, the Kurdish people, originate from a mountain landscape and Cheddar is the only local area whose features resemble the Kurdistan landscape (see Ch4 Fieldwork Notes 2). We see it as identical to our home. This is a fitting example of how facets of the physical features of one's original ‘home’ are then re-imagined in a different context.

5.7 Conclusion

The chapter contributes to an understanding of the structure of the new diaspora and Kurdish transnational families in particular. Alongside their parents' view of home and belonging, the experiences of the children of Kurdish diasporic families were also discussed. Instead of

providing generalisations with regard to whether the younger generation will follow their parents or take a different route, my findings suggest a more complex picture about the degree of parental power and political interest. The narrative of individuals provides new insights into a better understanding of the younger generation's experiences of everyday identity and hybridity. Moreover, the significant role of the family as an institutional mediator and the notions of transnational family as a modern phenomenon have also been discussed. Based on the life stories of members of Kurdish exiled families, I conclude that these people are negotiating the making of new homes on a daily basis. However, a great number of my participants have suggested that most of the members of diasporic communities are family orientated; one can argue that often members of these families tend to establish a new home and erase the other in a very complex way due to their family commitments and self-strategic planning.

The chapter has suggested that the majority of respondents shared collective memories of their ancestral culture in a divergent way. Although members of the Kurdish diasporic community across generations are reproducing collective memories and thus keeping them alive, for the younger generation in particular this is viewed pragmatically. Unlike their parents' nostalgic memories and their continuation to live in the past (in some cases they are depressed), the children of immigrant families have reflected on their shared memories with the older generation and being part of the community. These are positive strategies in their everyday activities. This challenges the ideas of unresolved collective mourning introduced by Volkan (1998). The chapter has also revealed that the notions of imagined communities introduced by Anderson (1984) and an imaginary home, need a closer look especially when associated with transnational families who live in a more intense, globalised and stateless world (Kurds without their own nation-state). This is the case, in particular, with respect to the Kurdish experiences in the diaspora where the relationship between an 'imagined home'

and a 'real home' has become blurred. Occasionally, it is not easy to say which is real and which is imagined as belonging to a geographical home becomes more problematic. Finally, the research findings have suggested that imagining home (mostly through past memories) and the generational perception of home and belonging is dynamic. Hence, in the next chapter I shall debate the gender distinction in the diaspora and conceptualise Kurdish men and women in terms of home and belonging.

Chapter Six

Family orientations:

The dynamic identities of Kurdish women in the diaspora

6.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces gender into diaspora studies by analysing Kurdish women's experiences in Britain. I first conceptualise Kurdish women within a Kurdish family and then consider the gender differences in diaspora and in which way, if any, the Kurdish patriarchal background impacts on the relationship between Kurdish men and women in the UK. An investigation will be made into whether Kurdish women living in the West enjoy more rights within a domicile of emancipation, or whether they are still oppressed. Drawing on the narratives of my female participants, this section explores the voices of Kurdish wives, mothers and daughters to discover how they situate themselves in terms of equality with their husbands, sons and brothers and also in respect of their lives living between the two cultures of the Kurdish and the West.

6.2 Kurdish Society and Gender Inequality: Nationalism vs. Feminism

Kurds have always been subject to forms of violence such as war, genocide and ethnic cleansing by pre-modern and modern nation-states (McDowall, 2004; Van Bruinessen, 1989). The history of Kurdish victimhood continues from nineteenth-century colonialism through to the twentieth century of nation-state violence where they have been repressed by the varying countries among which Kurds are divided. In response, Kurds throughout modern history, have developed ways of resistance starting from forms of tribal, heretical revolts to modern political and nationalist forms. The history of the Kurds' struggle has been viewed by the feminist as a history of Kurdish men. Although there were some significant Kurdish female figures in Kurdish history who fought alongside their male counterparts, from a feminist point of view the history of Kurdish resistance is strongly linked to patriarchal ways in the form of both tribalism and nationalism. This has led many researchers in Kurdish feminist studies to argue that Kurdish nationalism mobilised women regardless of any genuine attempt to transform the existing patriarchal power relations of Kurdish society (Al-Ali, 2011; Mojab, 2004 and Begikhani, 2005).

Despite this, most Middle-Eastern societies are considered patriarchal, where men dominate in the most important roles in society; it has been reported that gender inequalities appear more in the common culture of the region. For instance, a number of studies have reported on particular aspects of gender-based violence in the Middle East and North Africa, especially so called honour killings and female genital mutilation (Boy, Kulczycki, 2008 & Douki, Nacef, Belhadj, Bouasker & Ghachem, 2003). This is due to the fact that women are perceived in a certain way or ill-treated because of certain Koranic passages which have been taken out of context to create a religion justifying gender-based violence. Although this view could lead to generalisations and include all types of societies in any particular region of the Middle East, they could also all be viewed as part of a homogenous entity. However, Kurdish society

cannot hold an exclusive position within the wider political landscape and social structures of the region because of the shared culture and values among communities. This does not necessarily mean that all societies practice the same norms and values in equal measure. For instance, in these regions we have many versions of the practice of Islam and there are differences among Muslim communities in respect of women's rights. In Kurdistan there are female taxi drivers, police officers, judges, MPs and many more public roles occupied by women but in Saudi Arabia women are still waiting to be allowed to drive or participate in sports activities. It is important to move from the general to the more specific and from the macro-political level to the micro-political perspective. This is more problematic when the discussion focuses on diaspora with regard to Kurdish women and whether they feel more nationalist or feminist. Based on narratives from my participants in this research it will be argued that Kurdish experiences in diaspora and Kurdish transnational families have established a unique relationship between their national identity (i.e. nationalism) and their personal identity (i.e. feminism), which distinguishes them from other diasporic communities. It could be claimed that the historical fact of the Kurdish struggle emanating from the largest nation without a nation-state is a significant reason behind drawing a comparison between Kurdish and other diasporic communities. In other words, the question could be posed as to whether Kurdish women in diaspora feel the same way as their counterpart women from other Middle-Eastern backgrounds in respect of their adaptation to the host society, woman's emancipation and sense of belonging. Unlike Kurdish women, those women originated from countries that were formally known as nation-states such as Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey. These are countries between which the Kurdish homeland has been divided. In what follows at least two aspects of gender relations between men and women in the diaspora will be reviewed. First, the question as to whether Kurdish women share the same sentiments as Kurdish men towards a lack of state will be investigated.

Secondly, there will be a discussion into whether there is any gender inequality in respect of Kurdish women in diaspora who have connections with two cultures and who consequently could be influenced by both the patriarchal culture in their former home as well as the liberal culture in the country in which they now live.

6.2.1 Stateless or Status-less?

In order to obtain a deeper understanding of Kurdish women living in a diaspora as individuals who came from a patriarchal society and who are now living in a modern and supposedly liberal society which is promoting gender equality through equalities legislation, this section explores the dynamic interplay between being a stateless person (someone lacking a recognised country) and their personal lifestyle. Based on my female participants' perspectives of the Kurdish women's situation, an understanding regarding gender relations in the diaspora and flexibility in respect of woman's emancipation and national independence will be drawn. In this study, all the female respondents living in the UK are either living with a partner who was born in Iraqi-Kurdistan or are here as daughters (living with the family) who were born in Iraqi-Kurdistan but have grown up and been educated in the UK (apart from one female participant who lives alone and independently). Consequently, in terms of migration journey all participants have shared the same route having had a similar journey to the UK to join their partners through their refugee status visa or through a spousal visa. This is apart from one participant who arrived in the mid-1970s independently as a student and settled permanently in the UK. It is important to bear in mind that all Kurdish women who arrived in the UK to join their husbands under the home office's refugee programme spousal visa went through a very unpleasant process to gain their visa. This included waiting for a significant amount of time and providing a huge quantity of documentation from both husband and wife in order to be recognised by the UK consultancy and visa office. During the fieldwork it was noted that one of my interviewees arrived in the UK as a married person

and under an assumed name given by her husband to the immigration officer on the husband's arrival even before their marriage took place. This is common among newly arrived asylum seekers who pretend they are married in order to obtain permission to remain in the UK; they then later have the right to apply for a spousal visa. She vividly expressed her frustration and strong feelings about losing her previous identity and acting as someone else. She told me in a mumble voice that: *“from the day I arrived this country I lost my real identity”*. This is simply an example out of many unresearched cases and reveals the complexity amongst immigrant communities; it also reveals that this woman is heavily dependent on her husband's status and that she has to behave as an unknown person. In the following section the narratives of Iraqi Kurdish women in the UK in respect of their personal status as women and as members of the Kurdish diaspora will be discussed.

The following description by Sara (aged 38), a Kurdish woman activist, vividly shows her frustration at being someone who is stateless and reveals how this has had an impact on her personal feelings. Despite this she considers herself a liberal and has been influenced by feminist thought; she supports the idea of a fully independent Kurdistan led by Kurdish nationalists. Sara sees herself as a Westernised and liberal woman with regard to women's rights and freedom, but equally demands her ethnic rights as a way of full emancipation both collectively and at a personal level.

You know they classify people in forms like British white, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and etc. I'm nothing I'm (laugh) nothing.....none of those..... I'm the other and the other ...and sometime I have to say Iraqi because it's more obvious.....they don't know Kurdish or Kurdistan so unidentified eh identity.....and unknown people..... I have toWe've to fight for that identity yes we're Kurdish we're always part of our history.....as Kurdish we have always been struggling ...to make the people and the world understand who we are..... so basically you need to

say to Kurdish people to make an extra effort in order to say to people who you are, yeah, because of lack of nation state, I mean the proper state yeahso we're proud of where we come from anyway but unfortunately it's the most problematic area in the world..... (Sara, 38)

The above account demonstrates the dynamic process of identification and frustration which Kurdish women share with men being stateless people in diaspora. This is contrary to what has been suggested by some studies in the field (Mojab & Gorman, 2007) which is that Kurdish patriarchal nationalism has grown stronger in the diaspora and Kurdish women have to prioritise their issues as women only. She is not the only activist from amongst my participants who feels disappointment at the lack of a proper state. She has even asked to perform extra hard work and has requested more political involvement and mobilisation among Kurdish diasporic communities to promote the Kurdish question. This kind of frustration has been experienced repeatedly amongst my participants when they are confronted with completing endless questions on the government's official forms in regard to the applicant's ethnic background (for further details see Chapter 3). These thoughts have been echoed amongst my female interviewees from two generations. Juwan (aged 22), is a female undergraduate student completing a psychology degree. As a second-generation student, she told me how being a stateless person has affected her life:

Yeah a bit frustrating like when I say I'm from Kurdistan.....people say Kazakhstan?.....and I say no they say Pakistan I said no (emphasis) Kurdistan..... and then say oh we've never heard of Kurdistan where is Kurdistan and then I have to say Kurdistan is a part of Iraq and eh when I say Kurdistan is a part of Iraq they think there is a lot of terrorists there.....so yeah it's a bit frustrating (laugh)for example Turkish people have got their own country eh like Arabs have got one too.....so every people have their own country and we still don't have our own

country..... yeah like we're lots of people.....we have a lot of people but we still don't have our country. (Juwana, 22)

In our discussion about the topic I have asked her, as she is a psychology student who may be aware of people's emotions and feelings more than others, what she understands by being a stateless person herself.

Yeah basically it makes you feel stress like.....makes you angry.....makes you like eh.....you know we can't go back to our country and we can't stay here for forever.....we've got like family here and we've got family back there.....we still miss it.....it is part of us and in here we don't have that..... (Juwana, 22)

Indeed, many Kurdish families who live in exile state political instability in the region as their reason for not returning to their country and have always borne in mind the lack of a proper Kurdish state to protect its people across borders with other nation-states. Furthermore, this kind of dilemma and frustration at being stateless persons has been acknowledged by the majority of my interviewees regardless of their gender, religion or age. Both the female interviewees above and many more in this research have vividly expressed their frustration at being stateless and have also expressed the problem of insecurity in Kurdistan due to the lack of protection from a recognised state. This is unlike previous studies that have suggested that Kurdish women are either mobilised in the nationalist agenda or have prioritised their ethnic rights as women (Mojab & Gorman, 2007). The above narratives have revealed the complexity of the position of Kurdish women in the diaspora and the dynamic identity that Kurdish women are managing between personal rights and ethnic rights.

6.2.2 “My ways were different to their ways”.

The above direct quotation is from one of my second-generation female interviewees who expressed this while recalling her unpleasant memories during her visit to Kurdistan with her family. For many Kurdish immigrant families, living in Western countries is a good opportunity to promote women’s rights and improve gender inequality, while for others diaspora experiences are more to do with cultural preservation. These two views exemplify the concepts of feminism and nationalism. The latter views women’s rights as part of the nation’s right for independence, namely the nationalist project of forming a nation-state. Any other aims are considered as obstacles in achieving that goal. On the other hand, Kurdish feminism views Kurdish nationalism as patriarchal and demands the emancipation of Kurdish women. In this section, a review will be presented of the accounts and concerns of my female participants from both generations in regard to their experiences of living within two cultures. Additionally, I shall consider the position of my female participants in regard to the above division and whether they confirm this division or have different ways of situating themselves in the context of the diaspora.

Kurdish women have experienced violence and discrimination from men in their own community in Kurdistan. This has been well-documented recently by observers both inside and outside the country (Alina, 2013; Gill, Begikhani and Haque, 2012). This includes physical, emotional and economical forms of violence against Kurdish women internally while their ethnicity has also been externally repressed. In general, Kurdish women have experienced various forms of violence and have a long history of victimhood. This includes discrimination based on gender differences and most notably violence against Kurdish women referred to as ‘honour killing’. Iraqi Kurdish people have had an opportunity to live semi-independently since the First Gulf War of 1991 when a no-fly zone was established by

the Western powers. For many commentators, this is a significant step forward toward the nation-building process in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Generally speaking, after the formation of the Kurdistan regional government in 1992 as the first Kurdish functioning government, many former Iraqi personal law affairs were amended (Kaya 2016). However, Kurdish feminists continually see the KRG administration as patriarchal and privileged towards Kurdish men. However, women's status has improved to some extent. For example, in the Iraqi Kurdistan region (KRG), polygamy was abolished in 2008 by law and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) was also disallowed by the Iraqi-Kurdistan parliament passing a law in 2011 banning the practice (KRG 2013, 2014). In the spring of 1994 the KRG slipped into internal armed conflict and as a result significant numbers of families had to flee the area. For many Kurdish women, fleeing the country was not only escaping from hunger and a war zone but also meant escaping from a men's prison. Soon after settling in one of the European countries, many Kurdish families faced separation and family division due to domestic violence (Mojab & Gorman 2007; Akpınar, 2003). One possible explanation for this is that men brought with them the notions of 'manhood' that conformed with their patriarchal way of living. They see themselves as breadwinners, fighters and therefore decision makers; this does not conform with the Western way of living. In particular, the new life experiences of those men is quite different from their past lives; they were influential financially but now some of them see themselves only as passive state benefit receivers. On the other hand, newly arrived women are not well prepared to face a completely new environment and new life challenges. For example; it is common fear among conservative families and Kurdish communities in both diaspora and Kurdistan that some individuals soon become 'Westerners' in terms of clothing (being naked) and in their relationship (sex without marriage) with men regardless of their cultural backgrounds. This behaviour, in particular, is confronted by their husbands and their families (father and

brother) where we have unfortunately witnessed many cases of so-called 'honour killings' in the last decades especially in Sweden and the UK contexts. Banaz Mahmood, for example, was a Kurdish-British girl who was killed by her family in London in a so-called 'honour killing' and the British media paid significant attention to this case. She moved to England with her family when she was 10 years old and married at the age of 17 a man 10 years older than her in an arranged marriage. Within months the marriage turned violent. Banaz wanted a divorce and fell in love with someone of her own choosing. This behaviour was found to be shameful by her family leading to her death in January 2006 at the age of 20. As I mentioned, this was not an isolated incident as such incidents have occurred occasionally among both Kurdish communities living in Sweden and the United Kingdom. Tulay Goren, for example, was killed in the UK in 1999, Heshu Abdulla was killed in the UK in 2002, Fadime Sahimdal was killed in Sweden in 2002 and Maria Barim was killed in Sweden in 2012. According to the Honour Based Violence Awareness Network (HBVA), more than 11,000 cases of so-called honour crimes were recorded by UK police forces from 2010-14. New figures show that there were 12 honour killings per year in the UK alone. To begin with, I agree with Alina 2013 who has suggested that; "Such killings are the most extreme form of violence in the name of honor but this violence is widespread and takes many other different forms", (Alina ,2013,p.1).

In my conversation with my female research participants I was keen to understand their perspectives with regard to these tragic incidents occurring within the Kurdish diasporic communities. A significant question is whether there is only one single element behind these brutal acts or whether there are multiple factors. I am also keen to hear their views and their experiences of being a woman living in the context of multiple cultural influences.

The following passage is from the Kurdish activist and actress Shanya, aged 35, who lives with her husband and has no children. In response to my question about why she thinks some

families behave in an extreme way (and we have witnessed many cases of so-called honour killing among Kurdish communities), she reflects on the issue of women's ill-treatment by placing the responsibility on women first and emphasises the adoption of undesirable 'Western' behaviour and how for some newly arrived Kurdish women freedom appears to relate only to restrictions regarding the wearing of some types of clothing.

I think when a woman killed..... I'm not saying she was deserved to be killed but what I am saying you know a murder will not happen in a vacuum..... I mean when a man after ten years living in this country decide to kill his wife or daughter..... I think he must has a big reason behind this decision.....the problem starts by woman first.....our women's dream is only one day to be naked to remove her clothes..... and then I don't understand why you can't talk to your partner tell him your thought why you keep it secretly.....why you not speak openly..... if you want marry someone say it to your family.....if you're already married and not happy with your husband tell him....don't build a secret relationship.... you have to be enough brave to discuss this with your father and family..... sorry if I look more conservative but I want my children to talk to me and tell me their view not running away from me..... OK Banaz was brave to run away from home she'd also to be brave enough to talk to her family or tell police to protect her..... Banaz left home and went with that man but why she'd returned again while she knew they'd kill her (Shanya, 35).

Frequently, the reference by my participants to nakedness and the removal of clothes has its own implications in this context. It could be argued that in her case she identifies with the male gaze and the patriarchal culture is reproduced. Yet these Kurdish women participated in the research in a way similar to the other Kurdish women including women from traditional Muslim societies who are preoccupied with a particular perception of Western culture and Western women. There is a stereotypical view about women's freedom and role in Western

societies which could be termed the 'Western fantasy' where sexual roles and behaviour is quite different from the Kurdish lifestyle. This, in itself, produces fear of the unknown and fear of 'others' in that they 'do not do things like us'. Foucault's concept of heterotopia from his seminal work (1984) of other spaces, is significant. For Foucault, in both primitive and modern societies, there are areas that are frightening or forbidden venues and he insists that heterotopia exists in many societies. To begin with, he distinguishes two types of spaces. He refers to one as a utopia and the other as a heterotopia. They exist he insists, but he argues that places of this kind are outside of everything that is familiar and fixed in our minds even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality (Foucault 1986). The Western concept can be seen as 'other' places; this is not necessarily restricted to only Western culture but applies rather to the 'other', unknown and unfamiliar other. The same interviewee in the same interview explicitly expressed this fear which at the very least was fear of her family, of being with the other.

The concept of freedom has been abused by our women.....they only see freedom of sex... you know in here also their culture is different from our culture... this is why I am saying we can't live in here or not easy to live here because we've always to think about there... you know if my daughter goes with a black man and my mum hears this she would've heart attack straightaway.... (Shanya, 35)

From a sociological perspective this seems to be a cultural conflict that occurs when different cultural values and traditions clash. Although cultural conflict appears in all aspects of life, there are historical and social factors that expose these differences more explicitly in respect of the violence against women in Muslim diasporic communities in particular. Kornblum (2011) defines this kind of cultural conflict as occurring when conflicting norms create opportunities for deviance and criminal expansion in deviant sub-cultures (Kornblum, 2011, pp. 191-2). In the context of immigrant generational conflict, extreme situations

sometimes arise such as when a father murders his daughter in a so-called “honour killing”. In addition, Kornblum states further that whenever laws impose cultural values on a group that does not share those views, such as when the majority (the host society) impose their laws on a minority (immigrant communities), it will be more convenient to circumvent those laws or seek for alternatives that meet the background culture of these individuals. Another Kurdish actress interviewed was Sara (aged 38), who lives with her husband and child. Similar to the previous interviewee, she said that Kurdish women have different lifestyles in the UK due to the fact that they brought an element of their culture with them but have also to adapt to the culture in the UK. Consequently, when they experience problems they have to find a different way to deal with their issues on a daily basis. She expresses her view on tackling violence against women and the way that Kurdish women have been supported by the British administration and women’s rights organisations as follows:

There is something I need to say really.....when comes to resolving our problems as women in Britain.....for example they have Next Link for solving women's problems..... I don't think it works for every Kurdish women.....because the first thing that they help you is escaping you to a refuge.....which is not working for every woman and the first thing they think is your husband is too dangerous, is like a dragon.....you not allowed to see him again..... not getting in contact with him.... they make it very serious.... I think maybe this works for English people but it's not working for Kurdish..... some of our women tried the services of the Next Link and it didn't work.....like taking children from their dad..... so mediation and consultation yeah but it's very harsh taking away children from the man let dads getting involved as well..... I think in Britain they take away the men from family responsibilities, they're putting all responsibilities on the women (Sara, 38).

Flagging up family commitment and men's responsibilities, in particular, in her remark, Sara presents a very complex situation of those women who live in a similar way to hers in a diaspora. Her dilemma could be seen as a contradiction as she sees and considers herself as a Westernised woman as this has been repeated on several occasions in her interview; she also sees herself as an exiled woman who wants to meet the expectations of her family back home. This could be referred to as a struggle of double stereotypes as she is under pressure from her community and from her background culture simply because she is a woman living outside her country of origin and there are more expectations from those who are living at home (further examples of this follow). She is also keen to promote her position in the receiving society as educated and as an actress that believes in gender equality and women's emancipation. Her desire is to inform those outside her community that she is an ordinary woman and does not want to be seen as a traditional Muslim woman.

Another aspect of the cultural tension for the female Kurdish participants and the younger generation in particular who are living between two cultures is about women's rights and the volume of pressure placed on them by their own community in this respect. For example, many of my interviewees constantly revealed their concern about their appearance and behaviour when they returned with their parents to visit their country of origin. In the following account, Mashkal (aged 24), who was born in Kurdistan but raised in the Netherlands and now lives in London, recalls her experiences when she returned for a visit with her family two years ago.

My first trip I was about fourteen years old and I was thinking I am going back to my country..... but when I left.... when I got through the experiences of being there for a few weeks I did not feel at home..... because my ways were different to their ways and my opinions were different to their opinions..... so I was quite happy to back to Holland.....my difficulty was more cultural stuff..... cultural aspects like.... a

basic....basic thing in Holland I could go out I could go to the shops go shopping with friends but in Kurdistan I had to be with someone always..... it had to be a man always and that is kind of hard for me. Obviously now I am 24 years old now and I am ten years older than the first time I went back home I was more understanding this time..... I could understand their ways more than I could understand when I was fourteen.....so it was easier for me to live there this time..... I was there for a longer time but also it was hard sometime I really felt pain because of the way people are living there and the way they treat women (Mashkal, 24).

Similarly, Juwan (aged 22) had unpleasant experiences on her recent visit while staying with her extended family in her home town in Kurdistan. In the following extract she shows her frustration regarding gender inequality in social relations and the culture from which her family originated. Clearly, she makes a comparison between boys and girls and how girls are not allowed to do certain things which are acceptable for boys.

We went back after two years we've been here which was in 2009..... I don't know the weather was so hot for me I couldn't deal with..... I was like thinking oh my god how I could dealt with before..... and also my uncles and my aunties used to tell me don't wear this and don't go out..... it was like..... in here we've got more freedom..... like I used to study and came back home at night..... my parent used to be ok with it but in there just it was so strict.... yeah many things concerned you know people like my uncles and my aunties used to control me..... was ok for boys like go out but it wasn't like ok for girls to go out and we used to be at home like all the time..... and of course you get bored..... you get tired..... like you just sitting at home watching tv..... sometime I wanted to come back..... like I used to tell my dad all the time let's go back please I want to go back this so boring..... I don't go back any more like I've

been here for five years since I went back..... I haven't been back and I still don't want to go back yeah. (Juwan, 22)

The above descriptions from my female participants reveal the difficulties and frustrations they experienced while staying in Kurdistan on a family visit. Regardless of the generational differences between the young girls and married women, both have experienced discrimination compared to their brothers, fathers and husbands. They have not hesitated to tell me that even if the Kurdistan which they dream about were one day to become an independent state, they feel they would still be discriminated against to a certain degree. This, in particular, has led me to draw the conclusion that the tension of being a woman and Kurdish is more strained when these women return from Western countries. Thus, a common perception of a Western woman in Kurdish society is of a 'free' and 'liberal' woman. This means they are less constrained with regard to social norms and sexual relationships and clothing in particular. When a woman returns from the West to her traditional society all eyes are on her to observe how she behaves, eats and what she wears. They want to know how much she has changed culturally, whether she has become westernised or is still Kurdish. In my observations of the life of Kurdish-Muslim women in exile, I have noted the phenomenon of many Kurdish women not covering their heads when in Kurdistan but covering them when living in the UK. This reveals how Western culture and non-Muslim societies have been perceived by a traditional society such as the Kurdish as well as the stereotypical view of gender otherness. It also displays a contradiction on the whole and exposes a hidden meaning: Kurdish women in the UK have become more conservative despite having greater personal freedom regardless of their gender and cultural background. The only explanation for such a complex phenomenon among the Kurdish communities in diaspora, is, as I have already argued in the thesis, the significance of reproducing the home culture in exile. It also shows how members of diasporic communities negotiate life on a

daily basis in order to find an acceptable position in both the host and home cultures. Further, there are generational differences in this respect which I, personally, have witnessed. My data has shown that unlike their mothers, Kurdish daughters have quite conflicting experiences. Thus, the younger generation enjoy the personal freedom that they have here in the West in terms of wearing different types of clothing and leaving home without being accompanied. In their visit to Kurdistan their freedom was restricted and they vividly expressed their frustration during their time in Kurdistan (See interviews 2, 3 and 4).

Finally, the tension I have discussed above can be seen in the context of a broader picture of gender relations in Kurdish society and among Kurdish diasporic communities in particular. This is evident, for example, in how a Kurdish man perceives a woman and also how a Kurdish woman sees herself in terms of women's rights and emancipation. As indicated earlier, this tension is part of an ongoing wider theoretical debate about Kurdish women's rights and freedom which could be described as a confrontation between nationalism and feminism. As researchers in the field have suggested, with regard to the relationship between feminism and nationalism, the Iraqi-Kurdish case demonstrates that the tensions between these two 'isms' cannot be resolved per se; they require an intersectional and in-depth empirical approach to grasp the full complexity and nuances of a specific context at a specific historical moment, including the configuration of social and political forces that make up nationalist parties and women's movements and the types of nationalism and feminism articulated by these different forces (See Mojab & Gorman 2007).

6.3 Conclusion

The chapter has shown how individually and collectively diasporic spaces are significant platforms in the construction and reconstruction of gendered identities. Kurdish transnational family structures have been changing gradually and experiencing new social power relations.

Despite the fact that Kurdish women are more independent in exile compared to women living in Kurdistan, Kurdish women maintain their ethnic identity and have strong affiliations with the Kurdish question (i.e. the nationalist project of the nation-building process). This, in particular, describes the unique dynamic of the Kurdish case in regard to gender relations in diaspora and which has not been researched in the existing literature so far.

The chapter has also endeavoured to show that both the young and old generations of Kurdish women in diaspora are, in some, way experiencing discrimination based on gender inequality. Kurdish women have gained much freedom and are exercising their rights in Britain but they still have concerns about some forms of patriarchy which are practiced among the communities. It needs to be taken into account that patriarchy has many forms and cannot be restricted to a particular community. One could argue that muscularity, gender identity and notions of home and belonging may all be infused. Of course, this when comes to diasporic communities it will become even more complex. The tension between a woman's private life and public space has been intensified and felt especially by men when women have crossed cultural barriers. New challenges and new opportunities face Kurdish women in diaspora as they live between two cultures in a dynamic way. Iraqi Kurdish women in the diaspora conceive the concept of "home" in a complex way; many of my female participants have vividly expressed their frustration regarding the patriarchal culture at home (country of origin), but at the same time they have struggled to integrate into the receiving society (country of settlement). Instead they are living in an imaginary home; this home (the UK) is neither here nor there; they are living somewhere in-between.

Chapter Seven

The Iraqi-Kurdish in the UK: a State of Limbo

7.1 Introduction

I had begun this research in order to follow up on certain queries in respect of Iraq-Kurdish life in the diaspora and as an attempt to understand its complexity. It is important to state that the research began with uncertainty and has been through a period of uncertainties. Uncertainty is one of the main themes that is constantly present in the thesis. In this chapter I will present my conclusion by referring to my informants' perspectives in order to provide a better understanding of why the study of the Kurdish diaspora generally and the study of the Iraqi-Kurdish, in particular, abounds with uncertainties and complexity as has been shown elsewhere in the thesis (chapters 5 and 6).

Unlike other diasporic communities who live in the United Kingdom, Kurdish diaspora have unique characteristics that can easily be distinguished in a number of ways from other communities. First, the Kurds living in diaspora lack recognition in two ways. One is their country of origin and another is their country of residence. Kurdish people have not been registered officially as belonging to any ethnic background category in the UK. They are considered as 'other' in both the UK's census and governmental official forms (see Chapters 2, 4 & 5 for more details). Instead, Kurds have been registered by their country of origin such as 'Iraqi' or 'Turkish' referring to the countries from which Kurds escaped from persecution and to which they have difficulty belonging. Likewise, in their countries of origin such as Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria, the Kurdish have again struggled to be recognised officially; they have been treated as second class citizens. The Turks in Turkey, the Arabs in Iraq and Syria and the Persians in Iran are dominant and superior nations. Second, the Kurdish diaspora have originated from the aforementioned four countries and in addition and unfortunately, political instability and internal armed conflict are intensifying in these areas. For many commentators, the Kurds' presence in these four countries is the main reason for causing such uncertainty. It is beyond the scope of the current research to investigate all the factors behind this, however, in the following short section I will draw various conclusions with regard to the uncertainty among the Iraqi-Kurdish living in the UK as this thesis has mainly focused on this group.

This chapter is divided into seven sections and sub-sections. The first section of the chapter provides final remarks on the issues that this research has found in relation to the Iraqi-Kurds' diasporic communities in the UK. This is with respect to both theoretical and methodological challenges within the research. This refers to the issue of uncertainty where individuals and families are reluctant to decide whether to stay, (the process of integration), or maintain the dream of returning. In this section, I have drawn my conclusions based on

insights from my participants on the issues and obstacles that members of these groups have faced. They have confronted them in order to integrate with the host society by focusing on the practical implications rather than engaging in ongoing discussion on theoretical elements. In the last part of the chapter the current situation in Iraqi-Kurdistan is discussed there is an update on the new political instability in the Middle East and Iraqi Kurdistan in particular in order to structure an understanding of the situation ‘there’ in Kurdistan and how this impacts on ‘here’ which is the United Kingdom. The purpose of the chapter is to provide a framework for a deeper understanding of the practical issues of integration among intergenerational Iraqi-Kurdish diasporic communities in the UK.

7.2 The Myth of Return and the Reality of Staying

Based on the life stories of members of exiled Iraqi Kurdish families, it became clear that these people are, on a daily basis, negotiating the making of a new home. However, a large number of my participants have suggested that most members of diasporic communities are family orientated; one can argue that members of these families often tend to establish a new home and quietly erase the other in a very complex way due to their family commitments and self-help strategies. According to the data presented in this research (for example, chapter 5), it can be inferred that uncertainty was one of the major themes to emerge. Yet some of the issues emerging from this finding relate specifically to difficulties that members from both generations of the Iraqi-Kurdish immigrant communities face in respect of homemaking. Parents are still bound to the dream of returning and nostalgic memories of their ancestral home are active; but their children also struggle to choose because, to some degree, they still rely on their parents’ decision. Neither parents nor children are fully integrated into the wider society or fully prepared to return; they are living in suspended time and space.

For instance, Sara (38), one of the first-generation participants and a mother of one child has expressed her feelings as living in a state of limbo as a Kurdish/British person and expresses her feelings as someone who cannot settle in one place:

“Of course (emphasis) makes you..... It makes you not settle..... It makes you eh..... your feet are not on the ground..... you always dreaming about it you don’t have a homeland..... eh nearly you don’t know where you belong to eh..... one year you say I am going back one year you say no no I am staying here in the UK..... so you can’t work like that..... you can’t have a job like this because you’re not fixed your head always in the sky (laugh) you know..... so you can’t work like this you can’t have a job you’re always lost..... you know it’s a mess.....”

(Sara, 38)

This concern has been confirmed by the younger generation too. When I interviewed a young Kurdish/British graduate, Darin (24), in London, and asked him about his future plans he said:

“I think at the moment is not easy to decide maybe when I have my own family and then maybe I love to go back..... you know and also spend some time there..... I don’t want just spend the whole of my life in one place eh.....” (Darin,24)

This has been echoed among the younger generation. Jawid, (20), an A Level student, when asked the same question said:

“ if my family go back there..... I may just stay here..... Like finish my study and to finish my university..... then maybe I go back there or maybe I staying here..... yeah.....” (Jawid,20)

Shanya, (36), a married woman living with her husband, when asked whether she wanted to stay in the UK or return to Kurdistan, quickly responded saying:

“I don’t think you can find a Kurdish person who would totally attached to this country..... I mean in terms of his friendship, his relationship and family life eh..... we became like those people who are not benefited from neither parties (Kurdish proverb)..... we cannot be an European and we cannot return to our home easily..... but I personally can do it now if my husband with me on this eh..... there is nothing stopping me to do so, except my husband eh..... I always say this if I can live respectfully in my homeland among my family and friends..... so I cannot make that life anywhere else..... here we have many young Kurdish males who’re in relationship with European girls but do you know why they don’t tell this to their families back there..... because they’ve always thinking of return to Kurdistan..... because of their mums there.....” (Shanya, 35)

Some of my first generation interviewees said that they wished to return to Kurdistan but there were two things delaying their plans . One reason was that they needed their children to finish university and another was that they worried about the situation there. In particular, they are concerned with the security situation and legal system there.

There are at least two possible explanations for this regarding the Iraqi-Kurds, but before explaining this the issue of uncertainty cannot be restricted only to immigrant communities. Due to the significant increase of human movement globally and the general increase in the world population, migration and emigration will contribute to the status of uncertainty internationally. First, as this thesis has continued to argue, unlike other Kurdish segments, the Kurdish from Iraq (Southern Kurdistan) have special circumstances and political features that can easily be distinguished from the experiences of the Kurdish in other parts of Kurdistan as well as in the diaspora. However, the Kurdish from Iraq gained semi-independence in 1991 and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), has ruled that area for more than a decade. After Saddam Hussain’s complete removal from power in 2003, the KRG has been the main political actor in the region representing the Kurds. The political and stable security

position in the region along with positive economic development, mostly through oil trade, has attracted many foreign companies to the KRG with Western companies particularly prominent. This has also had an impact on Kurdish communities in diaspora encouraging them to return to Kurdistan.

Interview data from families participating in this current study has shown a strong tendency among them to return to the KRG. It is therefore likely that links exist between this hope by parents of returning and the determination by children to choose a certain degree subject that will increase their job prospects in Kurdistan. Many young interviewees have stated that they have difficulty in deciding which subject to follow in their further education; they are unsure as to whether they should choose the one that might secure employment in Kurdistan or follow their own preferences. For example, oil management and oil engineering are subjects preferred by parents and they encourage their children to engage in these areas as the oil industry is booming in Kurdistan.

I interviewed an A Level student, Halmat (17), who was unsure which subject or degree to complete at university because he does not know whether his family will remain in the UK or return to Kurdistan in the future.

“Anything I consider..... I need to make sure that it’s valuable in both Kurdistan and here..... and I didn’t make decision based on one place..... because I am not really sure (emphasis) what I am going to do..... but when I choose oil management there is a lot of opportunity in Kurdistan..... so my plan was to study oil management in London..... then go back to Kurdistan and get a job there and then maybe with experiences I get from there maybe come back here my plan was to return to Kurdistan yeah after uni yeah.....” (Halamat, 17)

Lana, 18, is another A Level student and like the previous interviewee is struggling to know what to do with regard to her education.

“Well I have two different choices..... it’s either to stay here in this country and study pharmacy or I move back to my country and study architecture there (laugh)..... so I’ve two different choices. I basically want to return to study there and live there with my family and close friends and then maybe after I finish university I wanna work somewhere in Kurdistan..... or maybe I don’t return at all I don’t know (laughing)....” (Lana, 18)

However, the rise of ISIS in the region from 2014 onwards and the dispute over oil revenue between the KRG and the Iraqi central government has affected Kurdistan politically and economically. KRG now suffers from a number of crises which has also persuaded Kurdish immigrant communities to stop and delay or even suspend their plans to return. Hence families and individuals are facing further ambiguities with regard to staying or leaving.

The second possible explanation which can be drawn here is the fact that not only has the situation in Kurdistan dramatically changed but there has also been a change in the diaspora; a significant shift in regard to refugee communities has occurred. The rise of the right-wing political parties in Europe where tackling immigrants is a priority on their agenda has given rise to manifest hatred toward minorities. This is encouraged, for instance, with ISIS recently conducting a number of terrorist activities against civilians in some Western European countries. These anti-immigrant groups have been misused and have publicised such incidents in order to attack immigrant communities and Muslim communities in particular. This also contributes to a rise in fear and feeling of uncertainty among Muslim immigrant communities and Kurdish communities are not excluded.

During my fieldwork and in my connections with individuals and families from Kurdish communities here in the United Kingdom, I have witnessed some frustration where immigrants have become scapegoats and easy targets to blame from the public and media.

Some Kurds have been victimised twice: once by ISIS at home when the Kurdish people were attacked by them but they are also being victimised because of ISIS's terrorist activities in diaspora where some Western media and politicians have blamed them for being members of Muslim communities. This, in particular, has contributed to frustration among families and even more to an increased state of uncertainty among Muslim immigrant communities with the Kurdish community being one of them.

Hamera, (20), is a second-generation Kurdish female who moved to the US with her family in the mid-1990s when she was only five years old. She was raised and educated there but now lives in the UK with her husband. When I asked about her new life arrangements and where they want to live as a new family she told me that she has been through some difficult times as a foreigner and had encountered some discrimination.

“Right actually I thought Kurdistan was a lot of better than America because in America you don't really know anyone..... like in Kurdistan everyone Kurdish so is like everyone just like you..... so there is really no differences and then is like when we go outside there and you go shopping and everyone so nice to you they've so much respect for you..... but in America not always like that some people disrespect you..... some people they treat you differently because you're Kurdish or because you wearing scarf because you're different yeah.....”

(Hamera, 20)

Unexpectedly, I have noted that this particular experience of being a victim of racial discrimination has been indicated more by the participants from the younger generation. This raises some awkward questions with respect to the conclusions that were made in the previous research which suggested that the older generation is in a more vulnerable position. Jwan, (22), another second generation female, relates her story and the unpleasant experiences she had with her peer group and classmates when she told them about where she

came from. She vividly expressed her concerns in regard to how she was perceived by people merely because of her appearance.

“Like when people ask you questions like are you Kurd or Kurdish from Iraq this and that..... and then start calling you you’re a terrorist..... they think like Iraq is all about war and nothing..... I just I used to tell them that Iraq is not all about war Iraq can be about peace as well..... and you know I lived in Kurdistan peacefully..... then pupils in my class used to be surprised what (emphasis) I was like yeah.....” (Jwan, 22)

7.3 The Issue of Integration: Torn Between Suspension and Settlement

A general understanding of classic diasporic communities is about a people waiting to return to the ‘homeland’, but, in reality, this can be delayed forever. With increasing transnational activities in a globalised world, the dream of return and the reality of settlement is challenging theorists in the field of migration and new diasporic studies. Consequently, scholars have devised a number of different theories and models to understand the shifts that have occurred in this respect. These include assimilation, acculturation, adaptation, integration, transnationalism and new diaspora to explain the migrant communities’ process of settlement in their country of residence (Pedraza 1999). Each concept has its own implications and describes the way in which migrant communities settle in their new society. Assimilation, for example, assumes migration to be a one-way process (Dominic, 2014), meaning migrants become fully part of the wider society regardless of their cultural background which includes entities such as linguistics and values. However, integration can be seen as a dynamic, two-way process in which immigrants and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant and cohesive communities (GCIR 2008).

My emphasis here is on the issue of integration among Iraqi-Kurdish migrant communities in the context of UK society. It is beyond this research to provide a clear conclusion in respect of the process of integration as increasingly the issue of settlement and integration has become more problematic in the early decades of the twenty-first century. Frequently, studies of immigration and the process of integration which are informed by policy targets usually pass over the reality of immigrant lives and their daily experiences. Therefore policy discourse assumes a more or less linear path of 'integration' ignoring the fact that the complex interplay of acculturation, identification, social status and the concrete interaction patterns of individuals may produce many 'outcomes' (Penninx, Berger and Kraal, 2006). From the above understanding of this concept it was realised that integration is not a one-way process which is straightforward but is rather an extremely complex journey dependent on many other factors which determine the success or failure of that process. A few examples reveal the difficulties of integration with regard to Kurdish communities in the United Kingdom. I stress that these examples are only relevant to the Iraqi-Kurdish with respect to the integration process as the situation of other Kurdish sectors is quite different. I argue that this differentiation from 'back home' has an impact on diaspora in the UK when integration and settlement are discussed.

Although the results of this study indicate that all of my participants have experienced the naturalisation process and are now citizens of the United Kingdom, this does not necessarily indicate that they have integrated into UK society. Rather, I argue that being a British citizen has contributed negatively to their process of integration. There are several possible factors for this which could be both external, such as the historical and political background of the Kurdish people themselves, and internal such as the experiences of living as a minority group in the context of UK society. In addition, as mentioned in the literature review chapter, the Kurdish people lack their own nation-state and have always been perceived as second-class

citizens. Kurdish people have been repressed and their land has been invaded for centuries, including both the era of empires and that of modern nation-states. For example, many have argued (Chaliand, 1980) that the first time Kurds were politically divided and their land was occupied was in the 16th century as a result of the Battle of Chaldiran, 1514, between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires (see chapter 2). Since the creation of modern nation-states in the region, for instance the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 and the Kingdom of Iraq established in 1932, Kurds in these two countries have experienced a series of political repression and ethnic cleansing. As a result, they have experienced difficulty belonging to the countries in which they were divided. Therefore, being recognised as full citizens of a powerful country like Great Britain has its own advantages and of which they feel proud.

I have noted how members of Kurdish refugee communities have made a considerable effort to meet all the requirements of the naturalisation process and become British citizens. They do so in order to enable them to travel for an unlimited time and without restrictions. These are freedoms they have not previously enjoyed. Unlike the refugees own travel documents, which mainly allow them to travel to certain countries (i.e. you are not allowed to travel to your country of origin) for a certain period of time, UK passport holders can remain for as long as they want and can return to their country of origin. This access to travel without limitations persuades many families and individuals from Kurdish communities in the diaspora to vacillate between living here and living in their country of origin, neither fully returning to Kurdistan nor fully settling in the United Kingdom. Accordingly, their plan of settlement and return is determined by the situation there; if there is some sort of political stability and economic development, as it was from 2008 to 2014, they would return. As mentioned previously in this thesis (see chapter One), I have noticed many families who have returned to Kurdistan from the UK from 2008 onwards. I have also witnessed many who

have returned to the UK after ISIS attacked and the aftermath of the economic crisis which affected the KRG.

What is surprising is that those who became asylum seekers unexpectedly and those who have claimed asylum and are waiting for the outcome and who have little access to social services and cannot travel at all, are managing better in terms of integration in comparison to their fellow Kurdish/British citizens. This is despite the fact that they are new arrivals and have encountered many issues on a daily basis, including financial, cultural and linguistic difficulties as well as lacking any legal status. For example, in Bristol alone I have met many Kurdish new arrivals and asylum seekers who have been engaged intensely in learning English and have associated with other members of the wider society and participated in many cultural and sports clubs. This is not to say that there are no Kurdish/British passport holders who have settled well. Indeed, some have but they are not fully integrated. The reason for this, as I mentioned earlier, is that they have ease of access to travel with no limitations to remain at their destination and this has made them more mobile people with one foot in Kurdistan and the other in the UK. In the following section I debate the UK's policies in respect of immigration and integration in particular and obstacles that they face on a daily basis.

7.4 Towards a Holistic Policy

Most of the policies in regard to immigration in the European countries, the United Kingdom included, deal only with 'entry control' but are likely to ignore the issues of settlement and the integration of immigrants into the host society. Researchers in this field have made demands for a new shift in respect of migration and refugee policies and, in particular, have recommended that a distinction be made between immigrant policy and immigration policy (Dell'Olio 2004). Immigrant policy addresses the question of what to do about immigrants

once they have arrived in the UK and have established a new life and made connections in society. However, immigration policy addresses the question of who should be allowed to immigrate and in what numbers (ibid). In other words, the former deals with the issue of settlement and the process of integration while the latter relates more to border control and entrance limitations. Often policymakers have overlooked this distinction and as a result the debate on the issue of immigration is restricted to immigration policy only. Unfortunately, this has been misused in some anti-immigrant propaganda by far-right groups all over Europe including the United Kingdom. Additionally, this raises the issue of the categorisation of migrants in their country of settlement and also raises the question on the reasons of leaving the country of origin. Consequently, there are different reasons and motivations for people being displaced or wanting to move and once they have migrated there are different stages and processes to be followed. This is why there are many different labels and categories with some often confusing such as economic migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and guest workers. I argue that any policy must reflect these differences and recognise the particularity of them.

In the last ten years the number of asylum seekers in the UK has risen significantly. According to the Office of National Statistics, the data reveal that there is a sharp rise in the number of immigrants to this country since 2000. Most of them originate from the Middle Eastern region such as Iraq, Syria and Iran. The sequence of events that has arisen in the last two decades including the war on terror in the aftermath of September 11, 2001(Iraq and Afghanistan), the Arab Spring 2010 and the rise of ISIS 2014 have all contributed significantly to increasing waves of immigration from those areas to the West and the United Kingdom in particular.

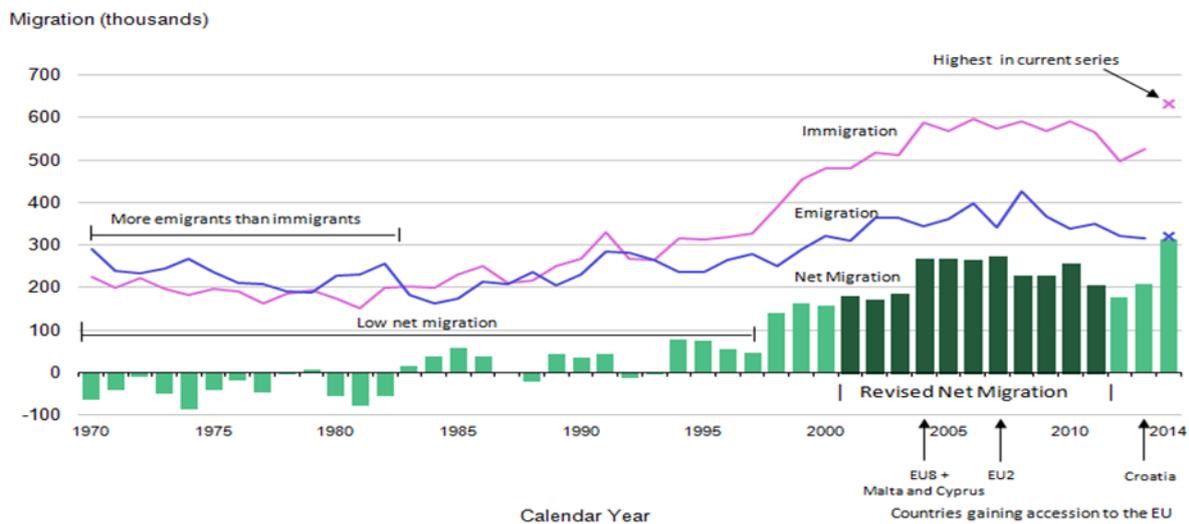


Table (2) shows net migration (immigration & emigration)

Source: Office of National Statistics

Kurds originate from those countries that have been considered as the most unstable regions in the world rankings for decades. Since the First Gulf War, 1991 and following the Second Gulf War of 2003, Iraq has been one of the main countries experiencing displacement both locally and internationally. Recently Syria has been ranked at the top of countries with citizens suffering from war and displacement; the UNHCR 2017 has reported that the number of Syrians displaced has reached five million. The number of Kurdish asylum seekers has coincided with the general increase of asylum seekers in the UK. Apart from one, all participants in this research have resided in the UK in the period when the number of asylum seekers rose, i.e. from 2001-2005.

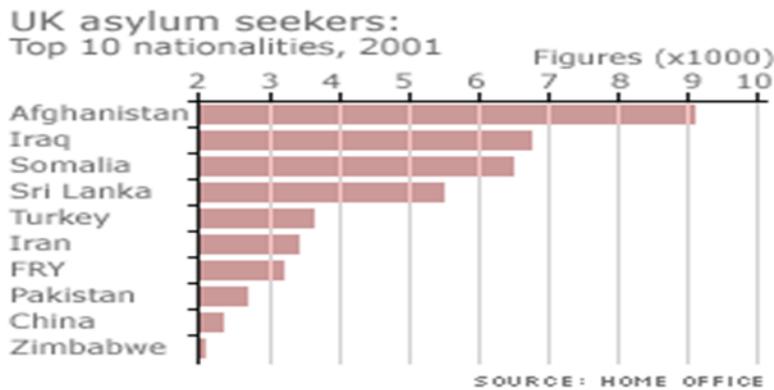


Table (3) UK asylum seekers from 10 nationalities, 2001

Source: Home Office

In the United Kingdom, the government has responded to the increasing number of asylum applicants by introducing legislative measures under the 1993 Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act, the 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act, and finally the 1999 Act which continues the policy trend set by the government's predecessors both Conservative and Labour (Bloch 2000). In fact, these Acts represented the government's policy towards immigration where the main purpose was to restrict and control people entering the UK illegally. One can argue that the dominant policy is related to immigration rather than with immigrants and those who have settled.

7.5.1 The Kurdish as Citizens in the UK

The scope of this research focuses on passport holders and those who have gained citizenship. Therefore, policies regarding asylum seekers who are waiting for the outcome of their applications and refugees who have a legal status but might be limited are not being discussed. Instead it is important to understand the way in which 'citizens' feel in regard to belonging and their rights in the UK and whether holding British citizenship assists them in

integrating fully as the current literature has suggested (Knox, 1997, Joly, 1996, Robinson, 1993, Bach & Carroll-Seguin, 1986, Klein, 1979).

A considerable body of literature argues that full citizenship provides access to all institutions and that as a consequence of gaining citizenship their quality of life will improve in the host society (Oommen, 1997). Equally, it has also been suggested that access to employment assists in the settlement and 'easing-in' process of integration (Valtonen, 1994). It is doubtful that by gaining a British passport someone is able to gain full citizenship as I have witnessed many barriers facing Kurdish/British passport holders in their desire to adapt and integrate into UK society. This includes language, cultural and employment barriers. Many Kurdish/British passport holders still cannot speak English despite having lived in this country for many years. The current study (chapters 5 & 6) found that there are many obstacles which prevent Kurdish individuals integrating fully such as cultural differences and, in particular, the different perceptions of women from both the Iraqi-Kurdish and British cultures (see chapter 6).

Additionally, many participants in this research have explicitly said that being a British citizen is not necessarily a path leading to full integration into the wider society. Sara, (38), is a Kurdish woman who has been a British citizen for several years but does not feel that she has the same rights as the rest of the citizens in this country.

" It's tricky to say what um eh what layer or what group of social that I belong to at the moment..... it's very eh it's mix up I've been here for seven years in the UK eh..... I am a citizen now but I don't think (emphasis) I am a fully citizen eh..... I think I am in another level of life likelike I.....I mean a lower level.....we've never know eh..... what we are properly what we are belong to..... I don't know is a middle class..... do we belong to the..... I am a citizen but I still live as an asylum seeker as a refugee..... it's tricky to belong

to a particular layer eh a social layer or social group..... because the culture is different and I tried my best to mix with the culture but I still don't feel that I belong to..... you know.....”

(Sara, 38)

Darin, (23) has just graduated. He talked to me about how he felt with respect to being British. He implicitly refers to some other elements that determine who you are, like background and physical appearance.

“Yeah..... maybe like where you originally from or just like where your parent from..... because I grew up here it doesn't automatically make me a British citizen..... because I am notyou know..... still even though eh I am a British citizen now..... but still I am thinking of myself as Iraqi you know or like Kurdish.....” (Darin, 23)

I argue that all types of employment do not necessarily help integration. However, there is no official information available from government sources to show which type of employment the Kurdish occupy in the United Kingdom. One can argue that it has become a pattern among Kurdish people living in the United Kingdom to work in the four following common employment types: car valeting, barber shops, take-away shops and taxi driving. I doubt that these types of employment ease the process of integration for a number of reasons. First, unlike most ordinary work where people are held both a social and financial point of view and where promotion may occur gradually, these types of employment occur in an isolated situation with both less integration and less promotion. Accordingly, it requires fewer communication skills and less language competence. Second, these are occupations divided on a gender basis. I argue that you cannot find a single Kurdish woman working as a car valeter, taxi driver or in a men's salon or working till late in the evening in a take-away restaurant. I conclude that Kurdish/British passport holders, similar to new arrival immigrants

and refugees in the UK who are working almost exclusively in secondary sector jobs, are characterised by low pay and poor terms and conditions of standard employment (Bloch 2000).



Figure (9) Hand Car Wash Garage

Source: 'Image in the public domain', <https://www.flickr.com/photos/iancvt55/5602160189>

However, in her study, Bloch (2000) has identified that immigration status is most often referred to as the main factor affecting settlement and integration. Other factors include lack of services, lack of confidence, the weather, being homesick, access to education and feeling like an outsider; these were seen as less frequently mentioned. The evidence from my study shows quite the opposite scenario and I argue that despite all my participants having legal status they seem to have been affected by other factors such as marginalisation and discrimination. Researchers have identified a number of solutions that accelerate the integration process and ease access to both the labour market and social life in general. These include more employment opportunities and the provision of training for all types of jobs including assistance with the English language (Bloch, 2000, Carey-Wood et al., 1995). The need to recognise immigrant qualifications and professions must be addressed. However,

most importantly, the government and policymakers have to tackle each immigrant community group separately and take into account its distinctiveness. Therefore, any policies that deal with the integration process should avoid assimilation and marginalisation.

7.6.1 Future of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and its people in the UK

The KRG is the official ruling body of the predominantly Kurdish region of Northern Iraq referred to as Iraqi Kurdistan or as the predominantly Kurdish in the diaspora prefer to call it, Southern Kurdistan (Chapters 2 and 3). In 1992, six months after the Kurds gained their freedom, the first elections were held and the first cabinet was established with the two main political parties. However, the government collapsed resulting in a civil war breaking out in 1994. After Saddam Hussain was completely removed from power in Iraq in 2005, the Iraqi people including the Kurdish entered a new era and for the first time general elections were held. Despite the fact that the Kurdish people had already been represented by their local government they were heavily involved in building a new Iraq and shared power with their counterparts in the new central government in Baghdad. Since then there have been unresolved issues between the Kurds and the central government (controlled by Shia-Arab), with the tensions mainly related to oil revenue, political power, disputed territories and the armed forces. In addition, the KRG faces a number of internal challenges and also lacks recognition by the international community which can be seen as an extra factor resulting in uncertainty in the region (see chapter 2.6 for more details).

As part of the Kurds extended dream for an independent Kurdistan, Iraqi Kurds have built a semi-autonomous region with their own regional government, armed forces (Peshmerga) and an oil-dependent economy that has attracted large foreign investors. On the ground, the KRG has been the main government body representing Kurds in Iraq for almost two and half decades but it is still bound to Iraq and has been restrained by its disputes with Baghdad over

territory and oil exports. Regional and international interests also confine the Kurds. Iraqi Kurdistan is a landlocked region with powerful neighbours who have long been masters at power play across borders. For example, Iran and Turkey are opposed to Kurdish independence, fearing that their own restive Kurdish populations may be inspired by the Iraqi Kurds' example. Furthermore, the other political actors in the region such as the Arab states and Western powers seem to be against any breakup of Iraq.

Although this research has not paid considerable attention to a returnee's experience and post-diasporic experiences with regard to members of the Iraqi Kurd communities living in the United Kingdom, data in this research has revealed that the unstable political and security situation in the KRG controlled area has an enormous impact on them in a number of ways. However, this kind of situation causes members of this particular community to feel more uncertain. On the one hand, they worry about their connections and family attachments away from the UK such as their extended families, relatives and friends. On the other hand, they are also concerned about their plans for the future and investing in their children such as supporting them to complete a degree in a subject which may be useful to their children in the KRG. They are also concerned about business activities they have been involved in in the UK and the KRG.

7.7 Conclusion:

Based on my findings in the first section of the chapter, I have come to the conclusion that there is intergenerational uncertainty which both parents and children of Kurdish immigrant families face regarding homemaking. This is the issue of being torn between settlement and return. The chapter provides an understanding of these issues and discusses all the possible reasons behind decision-making in this regard. It has been argued therefore that the political instability and economic crisis in the KRG, has an enormous impact on the Iraqi Kurds living

in diaspora. This is less likely to have an effect on other Kurdish communities from Iran, Turkey and Syria as their situation is different. As Kurds from Iraq have been directly affected by the political and economic instabilities in the KRG controlled area and this is their geographical home. Having made that comparison between Iraqi-Kurds and other Kurds this does not necessarily mean that there is no impact, at least emotionally, on the Kurds from other parts of Kurdistan. This is because the KRG is an inspiration for them and gives them more hope towards self-rule. Finally the chapter discusses the issues and obstacles that members of these groups have faced in order to integrate with the host society. One of the purposes of the chapter is to provide a framework for a deeper understanding of the practical issues of integration among intergenerational Iraqi-Kurdish diasporic communities in the UK.

Chapter Eight

Final Remarks and Limitations of the Research

8.1 Introduction

The initial aim of this research was to examine the way in which those involved in the Kurdish diaspora conceptualise 'home' and a sense of belonging. The second aim was to investigate the effect of nostalgic memories of home from first generation Iraqi-Kurdish immigrants on their children living in the UK. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of the diaspora and transnational studies and making use of diverse ethnography, the study has identified the unique and triadic relationship of members of Kurdish transnational families between Kurdistan (first home) to the United Kingdom (second home) and also to the family home (mediator). The term mediator is defined in Chapter 5. The thesis presented an examination of the main themes and sub-themes that relate to the dynamic experiences of the Kurdish transnational families in the United Kingdom, namely home, a sense of belonging, family commitment, being stateless, gender relations in the diaspora and political instability in Kurdistan. The thesis also examines how these themes have impacted the Iraqi-Kurd diaspora in the UK. This is the first time that the family has been used as a social unit to explore the narratives of the Kurds in the UK. Hence, this study is among the few emerging research attempts to investigate the Kurdish diasporic identities from multi-dimensional perspectives and through the deployment of multi-sited ethnographies and autoethnography. The present study makes several noteworthy contributions to the field of Kurdish diasporic studies and particularly with respect to transnational families' experiences.

The first part of the final chapter of the thesis discusses the following theme: the context of the research with the development of the literature in the field of Kurdish studies. Significant

consideration is also given to the research findings, including new diasporic identities and the sense of belonging and the diaspora as space for emerging new belonging, as well as questions on the narrative of Kurdishness and the diaspora within the diaspora. The chapter then discusses the theoretical approach of the research and reconsiders the Kurdish diasporic identity. Following this, the chapter presents certain conclusions with respect to the ways in which the research was conducted considering both multi-sited ethnography and autoethnography as appropriate approaches. The chapter then discusses a new paradigm shift that has occurred in social research, with self-reflexivity becoming more prominent in a researcher's work particularly with those researching migrant and refugee communities. Finally, it discusses the limitations of this research and my recommendations and suggestions for further work in this field of study.

8.2 Kurdish Diasporic Studies: From the General to the Particular

One of the significant issues facing Kurdish studies throughout the whole of the twentieth century in the region of the Middle East is the issue of affiliation. Generally speaking, political fragmentation in Kurdish studies has always been disputed and placed into different categories. For example, sometimes it has been categorised under Iranian studies or Turkish studies. This has also reflected on the diasporic activities and Kurdish diasporic studies. Recently a group of voluntary researchers established an academic journal titled *Kurdish Studies* (*Kurdish Studies*, 2012). Although considerable studies have been conducted both inside and outside of Kurdistan by Kurdish and non- Kurdish researchers during the last three decades of the twentieth century, this research cannot all be seen as academic. With regard to Kurdish academic studies it has always been difficult to make a distinction between what is considered academic and what is viewed as *journalese*. For example, the state-owned research centers have perceived academic work by Kurdish researchers as biased and anti-state propaganda; in contrast, the Kurdish researchers have also viewed any work published

by these centers as anti-Kurdish. This is due to the fact that the presence of the Kurds has been denied by major actors in the region. In contrast, these countries through their wealth and state-owned academic propaganda have managed to establish an influential discourse. Consequently, there is always the issue of political sensitivity and often Kurdish researchers have been accused of being biased. Indeed a generation of Kurdish researchers have followed the course of resistance against state dominance and view research as a tool against the suppression of discourse. One can argue that most of the features of this kind of research discourse among Kurdish academics are to approve and ratify the Kurdish presence. They were predominately studies of Kurds as a whole and as a homogenised entity in both Kurdistan and the diaspora (Bozarslan 2001; Meho, 1997; Izady, 1992; Bedirkhan, 1959).

The current study is one amongst a new research shift that has occurred in Kurdish academia and which concentrates on particularity and micro-social/economic perspectives rather than only on a macro-political orientation. This research sees Kurds as a diverse people in respect of their linguistic background and religious and political affiliation. With regard to diasporic and transnational experiences in the age of globalisation, the Kurdish diaspora cannot be excluded from that heterogeneity which any other diasporic community is associated with. Exceptional conclusions might be drawn in regard to stateless diaspora like the Kurdish, the Tamil, the Palestinians and the Berbers but there is no evidence to suggest that the members of these communities significantly differ in terms of home and belonging from other ordinary diaspora. Hence, one of the primary aims of this research was to highlight the features of the Kurdish diaspora, and Kurds from Iraq in particular, with reference to identity formation and homemaking; these features would also be highlighted from a different generational perspective. The research has attempted to perceive individuals and families as unique in their social relations. This research departs from general perceptions of home and identity formation among immigrant communities to a comprehensive understanding of one's

lifestyle in the context of transnational experiences. The evidence for this study suggests that an enhancement of our understanding towards transnational experiences will require a bottom-up approach not a top-down one as the former takes into account the particularity of each social actor while the latter only categorises people into groups in a general manner. Hence in regard to undertaking research on Kurdish communities in a diaspora the dominant narrative views all Kurds as a unified people regardless of their diversity.

8.2.1 The Narrative of Kurdishness

This study has come to the conclusion that the authoritative discourse of Kurdish narratives should be replaced by more diverse as well as specific stories. Some of the issues emerging from my research findings relate specifically to the way previous research has viewed the Kurdish entity. This combination of findings provides some support for the conceptual premise that Kurds in the diaspora are not only heterogeneous in terms of their linguistic background and religious affiliation but should also be viewed in terms of generational and political differences and the diversity in their gender identity.

The current study found that there is a complex issue with regard to Kurdish communities living in Europe generally and Iraqi-Kurds living in the UK in particular. This issue can be stated as follows: any conclusions made in this regard should take into account the complex nature of the Kurdish people particularly with regard to understanding diasporic communities. In general terms a diaspora is a group of dispersed peoples (not only migrants) who maintain a collective memory of their homeland (Safran 1991). Consequently a diaspora can be a space for a collective identity where members of a particular diasporic community have mobilised themselves to achieve their political goals. At this point I would argue that a diaspora can also be understood as an opportunity for individuals to make a choice between being 'in' or 'out' of a group. While this freedom of choice is limited to their ancestral home,

mostly due to ethnic and religious repression by the state, it occasionally happens due to the rights of small minorities being denied by larger minorities within one community. Woo (2010), for example, explains how some traditional (non-institutional) religions of the Chinese diasporic communities in Europe and North America have reformed themselves in order to attract younger members who are growing up in a world that is dominated by Western media, education and values (Woo,2010, p.166). Similarly, both Zazaki-Kurds and Hawrami-Kurds maintain their distinctiveness among the Kurdish diaspora in Europe.

8.2.2 Being a Hawrami or a Kurd: a Diaspora within a Diaspora

However, my experience of being a Hawrami conducting research among the Kurdish communities here in the UK is not only limited to a different spoken dialect but also affects my sense of belonging when I reflect on my journey from childhood to the present and from life in my ancestral home to life in the diaspora. This raises the question of the insider/outsider dichotomy in respect of researcher and researched. The perception the ‘others’ (participants) have of me is as a researcher but simultaneously I have identified myself as being “in” the research and in the community. As has been suggested earlier in this chapter, the diaspora can be seen as a space for individuals to promote a realm of their uniqueness and particularity. My own diasporic experiences among the Kurdish diaspora have always been stimulated in a way that made me think about my sense of belonging. I tend to involve myself in many activities in my diasporic position to support the Hawrami; this was not always possible while living in Kurdistan. I have experienced a loss of identity and belonging in the diaspora as I grapple with, and seek to resolve, the disjunction between my everyday lived experience of being born and raised as a Hawrami and my awareness of the differences between me and other Kurds. This can be true for all sub-groups and small-identities among Kurdish diaspora and includes ethno-linguistic, political, social and generational divisions. It is the position of a distinctive group amongst a larger group and in

the context of the Kurdish diaspora I prefer to call it a diaspora within a diaspora. This study has raised important questions about the nature of Kurdish diasporic identities in general and in particular Iraqi-Kurdish diasporic communities in the United Kingdom in terms of home and belonging.

8.3 Reconsidering Kurdish Diasporic Identities

Diaspora trends: this study has argued that the new diaspora can be seen and must be seen as a heterogeneous entity particularly when it comes to considering the younger generation in respect of home and belonging. It has also been argued in this research that the diaspora as a conceptual framework will not be able to analyse the current movement of people in a globalised world. This is due to the fact that motivation and the reason behind people's movements are various and the Kurdish diaspora cannot be excluded in this regard. As I have suggested in chapter three of the thesis another useful term such as transnationalism is needed to understand new migration experiences. Therefore this study has departed from previous research on the Kurdish diaspora in Europe where it has been suggested that political immigration and political repression are two main important causes of the diaspora as they represent the forced movement of people from their homeland. Therefore this study is in line with the idea that sees economic crises as distinctive causes in the new diaspora of the late twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century. For example, diaspora have developed in the age of globalisation when significant shifts have occurred in the world's political power balance and economies.

It has been strongly suggested that the presence of the Kurdish diaspora in Europe is due to the political situation in their countries of origin (Van Bruinessen, 1999; Wahlbeck, 1998). One can argue that this kind of conclusion only applied to the older generation of Kurdish immigrants and refers to those who left Kurdistan during the second part of the 20th century.

However there are many reasons behind the recent Kurdish immigration to Europe and the United Kingdom including economical ones and the desire for a better life. This study has come to the conclusion that the Kurdish diaspora should be viewed in at least three ways as being heterogeneous:

1- The first, and most important, is to consider the Kurdish diaspora from the perspective of its particularity, i.e., from an individual's experience (Alina, 2004) and also its social practice. It is not only apolitical domain. This means challenging the essentialist and nationalist approach that is, unfortunately, dominant in researching diasporic communities, and the Kurdish diaspora in particular. Hence, this study's distinctive features takes into account lived experiences from the community and the research is from the bottom-up rather than considering only the political activist or the political elite. Furthermore it considers generational differences and transnational family experiences in the age of globalisation and the intensity of people's movement. The thesis has concluded simply that the second generation do not behave like their parents in terms of their experiences with their ancestral home; they are just not a continuation of the first generation. Rather they need to be treated as a complex phenomenon (Levitt, 2009).

2- This study considers the familial experiences of the Kurdish diaspora alongside generational differences within one family household. It also considers gender differences. It has been argued by nationalists that when it comes to home and belonging the Kurdish diaspora, regardless of their differences, I have all shared Kurdishness in the same way. However, contrary to this, the Kurdish feminist idea strongly attacked the nationalist movement and argued that Kurdish nationalism is all about Kurdish men and is patriarchal. This thesis has challenged these two dominant views on the role of gender and gender identity in the diaspora by taking into account the experiences of Kurdish woman as individuals. For example, many participants in this research have vividly expressed their

frustration at being stateless and have also expressed the problem of insecurity in Kurdistan due to the lack of protection from a recognised state. This is unlike previous studies that have suggested that Kurdish women are either mobilised in the nationalist agenda or have prioritised their ethnic rights as women (Mojab & Gorman, 2007). The narratives from my female participants have revealed the complexity of the position of Kurdish women in the diaspora and the dynamic identity that Kurdish women are managing balance between personal rights and ethnic rights. Additionally, there is the way in which a Kurdish man perceives a woman and also how a Kurdish woman sees herself in terms of women's rights and emancipation. As indicated earlier, this tension is part of an ongoing wider theoretical debate about Kurdish women's rights and freedom which could be described as a confrontation between nationalism and feminism. In the light of my discussion with my participants from Kurdish communities in the United Kingdom the thesis has suggested, with regard to the relationship between feminism and nationalism, that the Iraqi-Kurdish case demonstrates that the tensions between these two 'isms' cannot be resolved per se; they require an intersectional and in-depth empirical approach to grasp the full complexity and nuances of a specific context at a specific historical moment, including the configuration of social and political forces that make up nationalist parties and women's movements and the types of nationalism and feminism articulated by these different forces (See Mojab & Gorman, 2007).

3- Another distinctive conclusion is that the Kurdish diaspora cannot be viewed as a homogenous entity and this involves the scope of the research. This research has argued that the Iraqi-Kurdish in exile occupy a unique circumstance in comparison to other segments of Kurdish diaspora (see Chapter 7 for details). Therefore any conclusion in regard to the Kurdish diaspora in terms of home and belonging must consider the particularity of that group and, most importantly, its relation to the notions of return and staying among diasporic

communities. This thesis strongly emphasises the issue of uncertainty where individuals and families are reluctant to decide whether to stay, (the process of integration), or maintain the dream of returning. Based on the narratives from my participants I have come to the conclusion that there is intergenerational uncertainty which both parents and children of Kurdish immigrant families face regarding homemaking. This is the issue of being torn between settlement and return. The thesis provides an understanding of these issues and discusses all the possible reasons behind decision-making in this regard (see Chapter 7). It has been argued therefore that the political instability and economic crisis in the KRG has an enormous impact on the Iraqi Kurds living in the diaspora. This is less likely to have an effect on other Kurdish communities from Iran, Turkey and Syria as their situation is different. Additionally, there are issues and obstacles that Iraqi-Kurdish members in the diaspora have faced in order to integrate with the host society. The study has suggested that a new framework is needed for a deeper understanding of the practical issues of integration among intergenerational Iraqi-Kurdish diasporic communities in the UK.

Finally the thesis has also revealed that the notions of imagined communities introduced by Anderson (1984) and an imaginary home, needs a closer look and heterogeneity understanding especially when associated with transnational families who live in a more intense globalised and stateless world (i.e. Kurds, Berbers and Palestinian). More particularly, with respect to the Kurdish experiences in the diaspora the relationship between an 'imagined home' and a 'real home' has become blurred. Sometimes it is not easy to say which is real and which is imagined when belonging to a geographical home becomes more problematic. The research findings have suggested that imagining home (mostly through past memories) and the generational perception of home and belonging is dynamic and complex. In this respect the research has faced many theoretical and methodological challenges; the

following section will address the way in which the research was conducted and why the thesis has come to this conclusion in regard to its methodology.

8.4 Unique Ethnography: Towards Embodied Research

This research has adopted a unique method of utilising ethnographic approaches combining both ethnography and auto-ethnography to generate data and examine the different forms in which diasporic identities are constructed with regard to the Iraqi-Kurdish in the United Kingdom.

This thesis contributes in a number of ways to the field of the diaspora and migration studies including methodological and theoretical contributions. This is achieved by exploring the diaspora from different perspectives and in a different format, individually and collectively, rather than from a fixed angle of observation or perception of some individuals in a single location. During my field work I visited family homes and observed the family setting. I interviewed both parents and their children and on some occasions I was fascinated by the generational interaction with regard to ‘belonging’ but sometimes also witnessed tension between the generations. This thesis provides unique evidence of the methods the transnational families engage with when employing various strategies as well as revealing how parents offer endless support to their children in order that they might enjoy a successful future. The children of immigrant families have strong feelings of gratefulness and responsibility towards their families. There is a dynamic relationship between the generations as well as a dynamic identity with regard to their sense of belonging.

Another strength of this study lies in its use of my own biography and the way that I have been immersed in the research and been able to build rapport with my participants and minimise the issue of the internal/external researcher. Auto-ethnographic research is not only

about a known entity, which is what ethnography is involved with, but also engages with the embodied experiences of the researcher's own life. This, in particular, reveals the uniqueness of this type of research and represents one of the few efforts to explore diasporic communities through combined ethnographic methodology. The thesis lies within the growing literature in the social sciences and many other disciplines demanding more empathy and research reflexivity (Bourdieu, 1990; Giddens, 1991; Ellis, 1995; Grafanaki, 1996; Plummer, 2001; Sin, 2004). In this sense, the researcher is in a relationship with everything else in the research field, being both researcher and researched and therefore the research cannot be conducted in a value-free way (McNiff and Whitehead, 2006).

Significant shifts have occurred in social research with self-reflexivity becoming more prominent. The researchers' emotions and personal experiences have become an essential part of the research outcomes. Scholars in the field have suggested that the researcher and the researched are no longer divided. Lee (2002) argues that researchers need to be critically aware of their own self and the influence of their lived experiences and knowledge of their research performance. In this regard the issue of objectivity has been raised by many researchers (Atkinson, 1997; Delamont, 2009) who still assume that research can only be conducted from a neutral, impersonal and objective stance. The new research paradigm challenges accepted assumptions and expects more flexibility. In addition, I argue that the line between subjectivity and objectivity has been blurred. Throughout this research I have maintained that I have always been passionate about the current research and this reflects positively on large aspects of my research journey from collecting data to analysing and writing up the process.

For example, during my fieldwork with Kurdish communities across the UK's cities I have been voluntarily supported and assisted by members of the community. This included making contacts and links in order to gain easy access to the families for interview purposes. During

actual interviews there were times when I sympathised considerably with my participants' stories and on occasion was deeply touched (see examples in Chapters 3, 4 and 7). I am aware that this has sometimes caused difficulty for me as a researcher working within my own community but occasionally I have benefited from Kurdish community networks which have widened my capacity and led to a snowballing effect when recruiting my participants. Being among Kurdish people in particular has been beneficial as they are a hospitable people. Moreover, at an emotional level, the research was not easy to manage but I drew strength and inspiration from my participants who encouraged me enormously to continue.

8.5 Limitations of the Research

As with any research this research has some limitations; this section provides a number of the limitations which I encountered. However, although most were identified before the commencement of the study, some were unexpected. The first expected limitation concerns the so-called '1.5' generation; children who were born in Kurdistan but were raised in the UK. Originally there were insufficient numbers to be interviewed with regard to the second generation, i.e. those who were born and raised in the UK of Kurdish participants, but the family demographic has changed and this number has gradually increased. Consequently, I relied mostly on those young Kurdish participants who were born in Kurdistan and left the country with their families at an early age (between approximately 5 to 10 years old). An explanation for this is the fact that Iraqi-Kurdish communities in the United Kingdom are relatively new in comparison to other ethnic minorities in the country. Apart from one woman, the remainder of my participants came to the UK during or after the Second Gulf War 2003; usually the father came first and the family joined him later. Consequently, I can argue that the Kurdish communities in the United Kingdom are dominated by first generation single males and there is an insufficient number of the younger generation above 18-years-old to be interviewed.

The second expected limitation was to do with the way I could access more relevant information and thoughts from my interviewees about the topic that was being discussed with them. As expected, many of my younger generation participants did not find it easy to engage with the discussion and I had to provide considerable prompting and probing questions. In contrast the older generation participants were 'unstoppable' and I had to be aware of gathering unnecessary and irrelevant information.

In regard to other issues that were not anticipated, I had not expected that the language used in communication with the participants would become an issue for some of my older generation participants. During my interviews some of my interviewees had told me that it would be difficult for them to express themselves in English if they were asked questions I introduced or had to engage in any discussion about homeland and identity. For that reason I had to conduct some interviews in the Kurdish language and then translated them into English. Additionally, this could be part of a wider issue which could be regarded as cultural differences. One can argue that, as in many cultures, politics is to be left to the politicians and other topics like sport, celebrities, films and music are topics most discussed. However, in Kurdistan, politics is the most popular topic among Kurdish people. Kurdish people by nature love to talk about politics and when they talk about it they say much, hence they need a large vocabulary and are familiar with many concepts which they find difficult to express in English.

8.6 Further Work

The research presented in this thesis seems to have raised more questions than answers; these questions are in need of further investigation. Clearly there are several areas of research arising from this work which should be pursued. Firstly, the inductive nature of the study has provided new and rich understandings generally about the sense of belonging and homemaking among Iraqi-Kurds living in the United Kingdom. Investigating children's experiences (and younger people generally) and those who can be considered fully as members of the second generation and their relationship with the parents is an important area of further investigation arising from this study. Secondly, it would be interesting to assess the effects of religion on Kurdish individuals and families as well as the extent to which Kurds in the diaspora maintain their religious identity as Muslims or prioritise their Kurdishness above their religion. More research is required to determine the efficacy of religious identity (Islam in particular) and to examine Kurdish diasporic communities in the United Kingdom and investigate whether they are affiliated more with the Muslim identity or their ethno-national identity. My interviews with members of the Kurdish communities in this research suggest that the question of religious identity is much more complex than the literature has suggested. Participants have revealed new insights revealing that the relationship between Kurdishness and the Muslim identity cannot be simply restricted to only one side of the coin. One does not have to be either Muslim or a non-Muslim Kurd; it rather suggests it is an intertwined and dynamic relationship.

Further work needs to be completed to establish whether Kurds from other parts of Kurdistan living in the diaspora feel the same as Iraqi-Kurds in terms of belonging, their dream of returning and the process of integration. It would be interesting to compare the experiences of individuals within the Kurdish diaspora with respect to their Kurdish national identity as it has been argued that the division at home has an impact on the diaspora as well.

Consequently, further research could usefully explore how Kurdish individuals living in the United Kingdom but originating from the different national states of Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria are conceptualising their Kurdishness in the diaspora. Another possible area of future research would be to investigate Syrian Kurds who have arrived in large numbers recently due to the political instability and armed conflict in the Middle East. Approximately one hundred thousand Kurds have been displaced because of the ongoing war in Syria but at the same time and similar to their Kurdish fellows in Iraq they have a semi- autonomous administration which is mainly represented in self-governing cantons that include three dominant Kurdish cities in north Syria. More research in this field would be extremely worthwhile in understanding these new arrivals and their demands, both emotionally and physically.

8.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed a number of issues in the thesis that require further elaboration. In the first section, I have argued for a departure from the dominant discourse of Kurdish studies from both theoretical and methodological perspectives. My research suggests that we need to be more focused on the particularity of Kurdish cases with respect to Kurdish diasporic studies in Europe generally and in the United Kingdom in particular. Secondly, the chapter questions the homogeneity of the Kurdish diaspora and the way that members of diasporic communities identify themselves. In a sense, this contextualises the term “Kurdishness” and the way, if any, this concept can be seen as an umbrella term for all Kurdish experiences both ‘home’ and abroad. Here, in this thesis, the notions of a diaspora within a diaspora have been developed in the sense that I have referred to my own experiences and my own sense of belonging as a Hawrami speaker.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Questions: First Generation

- What do you do, what type of job do you do, tell me about yourself?
- When did you come to England, how old were you when you came to here or left your country, why did you leave your country?
- Did you remember your childhood, any memories of wartime, or persecution?
- How many times did you visit Kurdistan? How often do you contact family and friend there?
- What does home mean to you?

- Did you vote for Iraq and Kurdistan elections?
- Do you participate in any online forum or do you use social media and networking for political discussion?
- What ‘Kurdishness ‘ means to you?
- Do you have any plan to go back to Kurdistan permanently?

Proposed duration: 40 to 60mins

Appendix B

Interview questions: Second Generation

- 1- What type of job do you do or what do you study, what do you want to be?
- 2- when did you come to England , how old were you when you came to here , what do you remember about it , tell me about your journey , can you tell me about your first day when were you arrived , your first day at school here and did you note any differences with your home country school ?
- 3- How many times did you visit to Kurdistan and tell me all about your trip? How often do you contact friend and family in Kurdistan?
- 4- What does home mean to you?
- 5- How often do you go to Kurdish cultural festive i.e. Nawroz and social ceremonies in the community i.e. wedding party?

6- Which language do you speak at home and in which language do communicate with your Kurdish friends?

7- Did you vote for Iraq and Kurdistan election? Or are interested in politics at all?

8- Do you participate in any online forum or do you use any online social networking for political and other discussion?

9- 'Kurdishness' what it means to you?

10- Do you have any plan to go back to Kurdistan and live there permanently, how about if your family does?

Proposed duration: 40 to 60mins

Appendix C

Extracts from interviews and generating codes

Databits 3: 2end G interviews

Category: multiple homes

Databits	Code	Comment
(Laughing) um I would say both as much as eh my um my English stuff yeah I would say both like yeah I like both side Kurdish and English yeah. [case ref : interview 2, data ref : HK, text location : P13,L25]	Both 3 Side Kurdish-English	{most of my younger interviewees refer to their family (parents & siblings) as a home, in contrast my older generation interviewees often refer to country of origin this for two
I do not thing I am belong to one place or home I think I am spouse to travel around and see everywhere instead of been in one place. [case ref: interview 3, data ref: Ml, text location: P17,L22]	Belong One place Everywhere	

<p>I understand obviously it depends on person sometime when you don't know people you do kind of feel a bit different from them like you don't belong there , but eh often I just erm ignore those kind of people when I found out () like that I do not talk to very much but mostly I mean is fine is eh obviously is different here in the sense like well is quite a bit different but yeah (0.5) I um honestly I feel more English in terms of traditions and everything then I feel Kurdish because I am not rally been part of Kurdish culture too much erm if you know what I mean that why I think anyway. [case ref: interview 4, data ref : HI, text location : P21,L40]</p> <p>Erm honestly here... that's where I always been that's where I always be I think so anyway I hope so (laugh) um I think definitely here well where my family and my parents are where my siblings are so that why I think.[P22,L12]</p> <p>my home is now is for me is England but my nationality is Iraqi and Kurdistan and still I am Kurdish eh but eh if they ask me where is my home I say England and here because I'm living here and I need to be here have to be here (0.5) if I live outside of eh the eh if live in my country or outside then my home is that place (0.5) [case ref : interview 5, data ref: NA, text location : P28,L3]</p> <p>this question eh regarding home is like hard question if they ask me like I say do you mean like my country or do you mean my home eh in Bristol (laugh) if umm they ask me like um like where are you from like or where you from eh that kind of question I say did you mean my country or did you mean where I live now here in Bristol if say yeah I mean your country then I tell them where I come from yeah. [case ref : interview 6, data ref: JA, text location : P33,L43]</p> <p>Eh (long breathing) eh well if I eh someone asks me that question I would say eh I was born in Greece I was born to Kurdish parents and but always feel like erm I am a mixture of two races eh even know both of my parents are Kurdish I still feel eh that part of my souls lives in Greece and part lives in Kurdistan and eh I was raised in the UK so eh yeah I do feel a bit British as well. [case ref : interview 7, data ref: MA, text location : P41, L4]</p>	<p>Depend</p> <p>Feel</p> <p>Belong</p> <p>Here</p> <p>There</p> <p>More English</p> <p>Here2</p> <p>Family</p> <p>Siblings</p> <p>Home3</p> <p>Nationality</p> <p>Living</p> <p>Outside</p> <p>Home 3</p> <p>Country 3</p> <p>Question</p> <p>Live</p> <p>Where</p> <p>Born</p> <p>Parents</p> <p>Mixture</p> <p>Race</p> <p>A bit</p> <p>Not easy</p> <p>Come from</p>	<p>reasons, one that place matches with their past memories and also where is extended family based. }</p> <p>{some of my second generation</p>
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<p>These kind of thing is not easy to define um but if someone ask me where are you come from then obviously say I am Kurdish eh Iraq and then obviously know where that is and if they say where I do live at obviously say here (emphasis) where I would feel at home (emphasis) probably here there are been occasions where're been racism but I think that makes difficult but I've never really lived that (0.5) eh I ...I don't know just never bothered me ehyeah I would say two cultures. [case ref: interview 8, data ref: HH, text location: P47,L30]</p> <p>Right eh usually if someone would ask me where I am from I would say from America right but if they like ask me my home country I would say Iraq (0.5) eh but for me like home would be somewhere where my family is so if my family in America or if they in Kurdistan or if they're in some other country that would be home for me. [case ref: interview 9, data ref : HE, text location: P52,L14]</p> <p>To be honest eh home to me is not just one place or not one country or one city eh home to me is where the family is you know wherever your family is I consider that's my home because I eh I can't say like England is my home now or like Iraq is my home because eh I don't eh to me always been like wherever your family is or wherever you start your own family that's your home and that's where you should always continue from and adopt everything upon that eh yeah that's. [case ref: interview 10, data ref: DO, text location : P57, L23]</p> <p>Eh Kurdistan is like my mum's and dad's country obviously is like my background eh my everything but England eh England done a lot of thing for me as well so I can't just forget what England done for me and like just represent Kurdistan I would like to represent both of them because both done so (emphasis) much for me that I can't I can't blind myself to eh towards them eh I just like appreciate both countries yeah I would represent both of them with all my heart to be honest yeah England like England gives you hope and Kurdistan like your homeland which you have to do something in your life time yeah. [case ref: interview 12, data ref: QK, text location : P71, L38]</p>	<p>Live at</p> <p>Two cultures</p> <p>America2</p> <p>Home 3</p> <p>Iraq</p> <p>Family 2</p> <p>Kurdistan</p> <p>One place</p> <p>Family 3</p> <p>Home 3</p> <p>Wherever 2</p> <p>Own family</p> <p>Background</p> <p>England</p> <p>Kurdistan</p> <p>Represent</p> <p>Both</p> <p>My heart</p> <p>Hope/homeland</p>	<p>participants have connections with more than two countries, not only here(where they raised) and there (where their parents come from) but also the third country involve. }</p>
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Databits 4: 1st G interviews

Category: multiple homes

Databits	Code	Comment
<p>Of course (emphasis) of course makes you it's makes you not settle it's makes you eh you're eh your feet are not on the ground you always dreaming about you don't have a homeland eh nearly you don't know where you belong eh one year you say I am going back one year you say no no I am staying here in the UK so you can't work like that you can't have a job like this because you're not fixed your head always in the sky (laugh) you know () so you can't work like this you can't have a job you're always eh lost you know it's mess. [case ref : interview 1a, data ref : TR, text location : P6,L15]</p> <p>actually in my recent exhibition one of my painting was about that I tried to say that all countries in the world all governments and sates are like Kurdistan for me because now I am looking to this in a humanist way eh I don't mind whether this government or that state accepting me or not eh Britain is accepting me or not a country in Africa is accepting me or not I have my own way of thinking we are more like those people who in between sky and ground like suspended people eh now we've a new home which I can called humanity homeland... for me now everywhere is home. Home is a lace the you feel respected.. [case ref : interview 2a, data ref: AM, text location : P16,L35]</p> <p>- Erm homeland actually homeland means your home your own home</p> <p>+ Your own home do you mean your private home ?</p> <p>- Yes your own home but I didn't have that eh I was like foreigner in my country (0.5) if the state doesn't treat you fairly so you became a foreigner they treat you differently so when you love your homeland eh even your own father if treats you differently with the rest of other sibling you don't like your father and you don't</p>	<p>Settle Ground Homeland Going back-staying here Fixed</p> <p>All countries Humanist Sky-ground Suspended Everywhere</p> <p>Homeland Own home Foreigner State Treat Differently</p>	<p>{ I noticed that so participants are c home as a place v he/she protected respected, this d sometime from a leftist/humanist v influences while l noticed that some participants have influenced by a n ideology. }</p>

<p>consider that family your beloved family eh you see so I'd treated badly eh differently.[case ref: interview 4a, data ref : MH, text location : P33,L15]</p> <p>Eh I've always all my life eh I've had eh I've struggled with a sense of home (0.05) um even when I was young I mean it started when I was a child because um my mother been a foreigner and she's never felt at home although she created home for us (----) a family home but I was always aware that there're a part of me that's was do not belong the fact that we're Kurds and my father's living in Baghdad so we never belong there neither um and then coming to England and then my parents came over as well they never belonged they always lived in the past eh particularly my father lived in the past always lived in the past.[case ref : interview 5a, data ref: TJ, text location : P40,L26]</p> <p>being his daughter eh he injected that in to me so eh became part of it eh so I would living his dream I would start thinking of um eh oh yes I want to go back and I want to do whatever like what my father wasn't able to do it so I want to go and be part of that eh so my home (emphasis) or my imagined became his memories (----) influencing me and eh so there was so in terms of belonging here um it's very difficult to eh to even allow myself to feel at home eh here um and I think I am living in here since 1976 so from 1976 to 2014 eh makes um 1976 eh to 2014 eh(calculating in lower voice) nearly 38 years so 38years eh I don't belong anywhere I belong eh I belong yes maybe I can say I belong maybe I belong everywhere but because eh I didn't say because my son was born here and obviously my son eh my son is a British and he is British his friends are all British he speaks English I speak with him in English um and my mother once told me something because you know I asked her eh just a question that you're asked me earlier I said do you think that where do you belong you know you left Turkey and came to Baghdad and she said for a mother home is you know where her child was born and I know now that is so true (emphasis) you know my son was born in here he eh he's from here and this is his home (---) he doesn't have these problems that I do he belongs to here he doesn't belong anywhere else eh and other thing that i haven't done that I haven't injected to his memory to confused him you know um so my home is where he is my son is yeah.[P41,L4]</p> <p>I've problem with no belonging so I don't belong here I've never felt at home here but at the same time I've never felt completely part of the Kurdish community</p>	<p>Struggled</p> <p>Sens of home</p> <p>Family home</p> <p>Belong</p> <p>Past</p> <p>Father</p> <p>Injected</p> <p>Part</p> <p>Imagined</p> <p>Difficult</p> <p>Belonging</p> <p>Anywhere</p> <p>Everywhere</p> <p>Son</p> <p>Mother</p> <p>Born</p> <p>Memory</p> <p>Confuse</p> <p>Home</p> <p>My son</p> <p>Belonging</p> <p>Completely</p> <p>Outside</p> <p>Wherever3</p> <p>Happy</p> <p>my country3</p>
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<p>people eh because my mother eh my mother was Turkish and also I grew up in Baghdad yeah so I always felt on the outside (0.05)[P42,L36]</p> <p>I think is wherever you live that's your country eh wherever you've a good life and you're happy with that so this is mean eh you can say this is my country because if you're living in a country and you're not happy so always you want to open your eyes and run out from the country so this is eh I don't know to explain you know but eh whenever you happy and have everything eh so this mean that's your country and um so if I work here or in Kurdistan is the same but I can find a better work here eh and good life and eh so this mean this is my country if you mean my background that's right I was born in Kurdistan I am Kurdish still I am working eh still my first language is a Kurdish eh my mother language eh but I am living in this country and I feel this is my country eh.[case ref: interview6a, data ref: EA, text location: P51,L15]</p> <p>Of course I am saying I am from Kurdistan north of Iraq because still eh yes I've got a British passport I've got eh and we're living in England but our background is Kurdish. [case ref: interview 7, data ref : H1, text location : P57,L40]</p>	<p>here</p> <p>background</p> <p>language</p> <p>living</p> <p>from</p> <p>British passport</p> <p>Background</p> <p>Living</p>	
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Appendix D

Interview Consent Form



University of the West of England

Department of Health and

Applied Social Sciences

Interview -Consent Form for:

Kurdish generational diasporic identities; perceptions of “home” and belonging within families, among Iraqi Kurds in the UK

Please tick the appropriate boxes

Yes No

Taking Part

I have read and understood the project information sheet dated 08/11/2012.

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project, including funding, my benefits and possible harms.

I agree to take part in the project. Taking part in the project will include being interviewed and recorded (audio or video).

I understand that my taking part is voluntary; I can withdraw from the study at any time and I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part.

Use of the information I provide for this project only

I understand my personal details will not be revealed to people outside the project.

I understand that my words may be quoted in academic publications, reports and presentations. I also understand that my real name would not be used during or after the research.

Use of the information I provide beyond this project

I agree for the data I provide to be archived at the researcher private files.

Time to reflect

I understand that i have been given plenty of time to reflect, before and after making a decision to join the study.

Name of participant [printed] Signature Date

Researcher [printed] Signature Date

Project contact details for further information:

Ali Zalme , Phone No: 01172398198 , Email :ali2.zalme@uwe.ac.uk

Appendix E
INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS



**University of the
West of England**

Department of Health and Social Sciences
Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences
University of the West of England

Ali2.zalme@uwe.ac.uk

Research Title: Kurdish generational diasporic identities; perceptions of “home” and belonging within families, among Iraqi Kurds in the UK

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS (interview)

My name is Ali Zalme; this study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of a PhD degree and this is a self-funded project. I would like to invite you to participate in my research. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with other members of family or myself if you wish. Please contact me if anything is unclear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this study is to explore the extent to which Kurdish immigrants construct their ‘identity’ in relation to experiences and perceptions of ‘home’. The study will explore the possible ways in which memories of ‘back home’ narrated by parents, influence and interweave their children’s constructions and experiences of ‘home’ in the UK. I look into the everyday experience of Kurdish youths in comparison to their parents (first generation Kurdish immigrants), the models of constructing identities and belonging they use to talk about themselves, their plans for the future and the way they perceive and integrate into the United Kingdom context.

How will the results be used?

The data from this research will be used for:

1. PhD thesis
2. Academic research papers and presentations
3. A summary report to be circulated to all interested participants



University of the
West of England

Why have I been chosen?

You are being invited to take part in this study, as a Kurdish individual you are in a good position to offer insight into this topic, and express views on political belonging, national identity and exile experiences and how do you position yourself in between two cultures.

What will participation involve in face- to- face interview?

The interview can be carried out within the preferred and agreed locations; whichever would be more convenient for you. The interview will be based around a semi structured interview pattern and will take approximately 1hour. It is intended as an opportunity for you to express your views on the topic. The interview will be tape recorded, and later transcribed into text form. Interviews will be held in their preferred location. The Easton Community Centre is one possible, well known venue amongst the local Kurdish population which affords privacy and security. You would be very welcome to a copy of the final report if you want to, this might be done by contacting me or the department (see below the contact details).

As part of the presentation of results, your own words may be used in text form. This will be anonymised, so that you cannot be identified from what you said. All of the research data will be stored as hard copy at my private files for at least one year after the research has finished.

Please note that:

- You can decide to stop the interview at any point
- You need not answer questions that you do not wish to
- Your name will be removed from the information and anonymised. It should not be possible to identify anyone from my reports on this study.

It is up to you to decide whether to take part or not. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw from the study at any time until the data are reported, without giving a reason. If you withdraw from the study all data will be withdrawn and destroyed. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form.

If there is anything you feel troubled about and you find that you need extra support to deal with it, please contact Refugee Action or Bristol Refugee Right here in Bristol.

Refugee Action Bristol

43-45 Easton Business Centre
Felix Road
Bristol BS5 0HE **Tel:** 0117 941 5960

Email:

info@refugee-action.org.uk

Refugee Council

PO BOX 68614
London ,E15 9DQ
Tel: 02073466700

Department of Health and Applied Social Sciences
Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences



University of the
West of England

University of the West of England
Coldharbour Lane,
Bristol BS10 1QY
Tel: 0117 3283424

Who has reviewed this study?

The study has been approved by the University of the West of England, Research Ethics Committee (UREC).

If you have any complaints about the way this study has been conducted, please contact Dr Stella Maile, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, University of the West of England, Bristol, by e-mail: Stella.Maile@uwe.ac.uk or telephone: 01173283424.

For further information please contact: Ali Zalme

Phone:01172398198

Email : ali2.zalme@uwe.ac.uk

Date: 08/11/2012

Note: if you have a difficulty reading English, this information would be available in your preferred language.

Thank you for your time and help.

Appendix F

List of the Kurdish Organisations in the UK to help refugees

Bristol Refugee Rights

St Paul's Learning Centre, Grosvenor Rd, Bristol BS2 8XJ, Tel: 0117 914 5480.

Kurdish Association Centre in Greater Manchester

335 Stretford Rd, Manchester, Tel: 07761 616535

Kurdish Community Centre -London

11 Portland Gardens, Harringay, London N4 1HU, Tel: 020 8880 1804

Kurdish House Association-Derby

Unit 1, 1st Floor Block D, Stanhope Street, Derby, DE23 6QJ, Tel: 07861653461

Appendix G

My Interview as an eye witness of the Halabja Chemical Attack 1988

MED

Middle East Diplomatic

27/01/2014

Halabja witness tells about Saddam's poison gas

attack

By Lorin Sarkisian

Brussels, March - Ararat News (ANP) - Ali Zalme from the Kurdish city Halabja eye witnessed the tragic events on 16 March 1988, when 5 000 Kurds lost their life and more than 7 000 people were injured or suffered long term illness by the poisonous gas attack of Saddam Hussein's regime.

Lorin Sarkissian: Could you shortly present yourself ?

Ali Zalme: I was born on 11 March 1972 in Khormal-Hawraman town of Halabja, city of Sulaymania in Southern Kurdistan. My mother died when I was only 5 years old and my father re-married. At that time my family consisted of five brothers and six sisters, but unfortunately during the mass exodus in April 1991, I lost one of my brothers and later, during the American invasion in Iraq I lost another young brother who was only 19 years old.

I've lived and I was raised in Halabja and the surrounding areas until 15 March 1988. Like everyone else during these times, we were forced to move a lot and live in nearby towns until the uprising in March 1991, when people freely returned to the city of Halabja.

In 1999 I left Kurdistan and after 6 month of very tiring and long journey I finally stalled in the United Kingdom. My wife and little son joined me after 2 years in exile. I am currently living in Bristol, UK with my wife and our two lovely children.

Lorin Sarkissian: You have witnessed the Halabja poisonous gas attack. Can you describe the days of 15 and 16 March 1988? How did the attack happen and what was the context of the events preceding the attack?

Ali Zalme: If we want to have a real picture of the Halabja massacre, we should understand all the aspects of this tragic event. First of all, Halabja chemical attack came just before the end of the Iraq-Iran eight years war. Halabja was a symbolic city of the Kurdish recent resistance against the Ba'ath regime in Iraq. Saddam and his brutal regime were looking for an opportunity to take revenge on the people of Halabja region (Hawraman and Sharazoor). Particularly just 10 months before the Halabja attack, on 13 May 1987 people from the city of Halabja and the surrounding areas including Khormal, Sirwan Hawraman and Sharazoor had rebelled, which is known as May Uprising against the Ba'ath government.

I and thousands of other mostly young Kurdish students came to the streets and demonstrated to stop razing Kurdish villages and rural area, while the regime was forcing the local people to live in controlled camps. For at least 5 hours we all celebrated the short freedom in the Halabja, but soon Saddam's army came back with assistance from other Iraqi army units and they were able to control the area. They used heavy artillery and helicopter gunship. Many innocent people were killed and many others were injured, in addition the army randomly arrested hundreds of people, who were instantly killed by the Iraqi army and buried in mass graves near the town of Sayidsadq. Three of my cousins and one of my closed friends were among them.

Secondly, we also need to know that prior to the Halabja attack the Iranian intelligence forces were working with some high ranking Iraqi army individuals, mostly Shias, to plan an attack against the Ba'ath regime. Some Kurds also believed that, in the context of strong oppression from the Iraqi army and regime, an eventual cooperation with Iran will help them liberate Halabja. On 13 March 1988, the initial attack of Iranian artillery and soldiers started. It was midnight, when I saw many Iranian soldiers marching and they told us to stay at home until all the region of Halabja would be cleaned from the Iraqi regime. But the Iraqi regime started fighting back by using helicopters and jet fighters, people were confused. Civilians split, some people fled the area, but many others stayed in the liberated towns. My family decided to stay in the city until 8.00 pm on 15 March. Later we realized that we should leave the city and we were lucky to escape on time. The five-hour attack began early in the evening of 16 March 1988, following a series of random attacks using rocket and napalm, when Iraqi Mirage aircraft began dropping chemical bombs on Halabja's residential areas, far from the besieged Iraqi army base on the outskirts of the town.

An Iraqi aircraft conducted up to 20 bombings in sorties of seven to eight planes each; helicopters coordinating the operation were also seen. We all eye witnessed clouds of smoke billowing upward "white, black and then yellow", rising as a column about 50 m in the air. Later many of my relatives and friends who were victims of the attack, said to me the gas at first smelled of sweet apples; they said people died and were wounded in a number of ways, some of the victims "just dropped dead" while others "died of laughing"; while still others took a few minutes to die, first "burning and blistering" or coughing up green vomit. It is believed that Iraqi forces used multiple chemical agents during the attack, including mustard gas and the nerve agent Sarin. Most of the wounded people, including my own maternal uncle, were taken to hospitals in the Iranian capital Tehran with heavy suffering from mustard gas exposure.

Lorin Sarkissian: What is the current situation in Halabja today? What do you think is the role of Halabja in the construction of the modern Kurdish identity abroad?

Ali Zalme: Halabja is the unfinished story of the Kurdish nation; it is also a symbolic city of a crime committed against the humanity at whole. Unfortunately, there are many more victims from Halabja who are still suffering from the mustard gas exposure. Of course, Halabja now is looking alive and people are happier than before, but there are many other things, which have to be done. For example, recognising Halabja and Anfal as genocide crime by the United Nation and the international community is what people from Halabja need urgently. I think our new generation here in exile is well aware of those tragic events that happened to us just because we were Kurds. My daughter is only 8 years old and her date of birth is accidently on 16 March. But as respect to the victims of Halabja, she decided always to celebrate her birthday in a different day. Halabja now becomes an identity of the Kurds everywhere and becomes an ambassador of the Kurdish oppressed people in the world. Deep in my heart I pay tribute to my thousands of brothers and sisters who died innocently in Halabja.

<http://araratnews.com/nuce.php?aid=683>

