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BACHELOR THESIS

**Critical Discourse Analysis of Iraqi Kurdish
Regional Government**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my independent work. It is written only by using the literature and resources which are duly cited and it is not used in order to receive any other degree from another institution in the Czech Republic or abroad.

In Prague, April 16, 2018

signature: _____

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ABSTRACT

The state of Iraq is defined as a failed state by many scholars. Kurdistan Region of Iraq, on the other hand, seems to be on the course of becoming a state. This thesis analyses several texts in which the policies, objectives and causes are embedded in the Kurdish political discourses so that the course that led to the independence referendum of September 2017 is explicit. These discourses are analyzed through the Critical Discourse Analysis methodologies. The period under the consideration of the thesis starts with the United States' Invasion of Iraq in 2003 and pursued via the statements, speeches and articles which were created by or for the authorities of the regional government until the independence referendum. In order to have a comprehensive understanding, the discourse analysis is put into the historical, social and international context.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis	
ENKS	Kurdish National Council	(Syria)
EU	European Union	
HRW	Human Rights Watch	
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Sham	
KCK	Kurdistan Communities Union	
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party	(Iraq)
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government	(Iraq)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization	
NFZ	No-Fly Zone	
PDA	Political Discourse Anlysis	
PJAK	Kurdistan Free Life Party	(Iran)
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party	(Iraq-Turkey)
PMU	Popular Mobilization Units	(Iraq)
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan	(Iraq)
PYD	Democratic Union Party	(Syria)
RGB	Regional Guard Brigades	(Iraq)
TAF	Turkish Armed Forces	
UK	United Kingdom	
UN	United Nations	
US	United States	

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Cradle of Civilizations is an appropriate definition that not only refers to the historical meaning of the Mesopotamia but also represents a reality of today. The basin of the rivers of Euphrates and Tigris procreated the civilizations of harmony and chaos throughout thousands of years. Today, this “cradle” hosts over ten different ethnicities divided by their religions, denominations and furthermore, ideologies.¹

However, there are only four countries in the region that those ethnicities live in: Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. One major common point of these states is the Kurdish population on the intersection of their borders. Kurds, with different dialects, denominations and cultural backgrounds are too significant to be described as a single community. Otherwise, it would degrade the position of this population and lead to misunderstandings of the dynamics of the region.

This thesis therefore, analyzes the various Kurdish communities of Iraq by avoiding a singular approach. The reason that the analysis is specific to the Iraqi Kurds is the fact that Kurdish Regional Government (abbreviated to KRG as of this moment) is the only autonomous authority belongs to the Kurdish people. The aim of the thesis is to reveal the actual ideologies, policies and objectives of the KRG by analyzing its discourses within the process towards the Kurdish independence referendum of September 2017. The exact time period of the analysis is from 2003 to 2017 i.e. from the US Invasion to the Referendum.

Chapter 2 is informative of the history of the region and interprets the function and the position of the Kurds until the US Invasion of 2003. The chronological narration of this chapter is supported by various illustrations. In this chapter, the core secondary sources are McDowall (2001), Aziz (2013) and Stansfield (2003). Even

¹ These are: Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Persians, Armenians, Maronites, Druses, Jews, and various migrants from Caucasia e.g. Circassians.

These are divided by religions and denominations: Sunni-Alawite Turks, Shia-Sunni-Nusayri Arabs, Christian Arabs (Maronites), Catholic-Orthodox Armenians, Yazidi-Shia-Sunni Kurds, and etc.

though there are many sources published in West, the lack of sources published by the scholars of the region is evident. The sources related to the Kurds are either in their countries' respective languages or they are primary sources such as archive documents. I, as a Turkish, had the chance to search for the primary sources from the Ottoman archives which allowed me to find the map in the Figure 1. and *Seyahatname* of Evliya Çelebi yet, the scarcity of the secondary sources obliged me to benefit from the Western-origin theories and interpretations.

Nevertheless, Chapter 3 follows the previous one by contextualizing the KRG in different domains. Various data are required in order to indicate the economic activities and demographic levels whereas those data are obtained from sources as CIA Factbook or KRG's official statistics office. Due to the fact that each of the domains is connected with the others (e.g. geography's effect on economics or politics' effect on military), this chapter is written down to specialize the comprehensive information on the previous chapter.

Chapter 4 is the part that the Critical Discourse Analysis (abbreviated to CDA as of this moment) is applied on the KRG. The methodology is explained by a separate section before starting the analyses, and periodization is used in order to ease the understanding of perspectives of the KRG with respect to each particular period that has different circumstances. The changes, developments and comparisons are parts of this chapter while various statements, speeches and/or articles concerning the KRG are used. The main source is KRG's official web page that the press releases and those articles are published.

As stated above, the aim of the thesis is to make explicit of the period that led the KRG to the independence referendum through CDA. The answers to the following questions are sought by studying the discourses:

1. What are the perspectives of the KRG after the US Invasion?
2. How the discourses are affected by the events occurred during this time period?
3. Do the discourses show any change in the policies of the KRG during the process that led to the independence referendum?

Each chapter has a short abstract of its own while the conclusion part summarizes and answers of the questions above.

CHAPTER 2

A HISTORICAL GLANCE INTO THE REGION

There are certain features of the Kurdish ethnicity that are discernible by our contemporary understanding which can be traced back in history. In order not to burden the readers by the details which are likely to distract the general course of the argument, this chapter focuses on the aspects of primary importance that had any substantial influence on the future of the Kurdish population ergo the current regional government. The narration is divided into four periods chronologically while aiming not to provide entire information about the Kurds but to demonstrate the events in a coherent collection before connecting this very section to the contemporary KRG.

2.1 The Early Period: People on the Borders

The early concept in the Middle East on the Kurds was surely different from the latter understanding that emerged in consequence of the conclusive conquest of the region by the Muslims from the Sassanid Empire in 637 AD during the reign of the 2nd Caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab.² Nevertheless, Kurds were incorporated to the newer perception which is often related with the Islam subsequent to those conquests since they paved the way for the Kurds to “*emerge from historical obscurity*”.³ Therefore, the Kurds have acquired different functions for the empires ruling them except one fact which has been continuing since that emergence: Being on the borders.

At this point, it is necessary to briefly mention the geographical conditions of the region in order that the reconstitution of the aforementioned incorporation is explicit. In this regard, the history of the current KRG is bounded to the supreme powers of the region which had access to the ethnical and religious fractions of this isolated area.⁴ The mountains that border Iraq and Iran go through the southeast Turkey before they veer their angle to the southwest into the Northern Syria. Such mountainous geography has allowed the Kurdish ethnicity and language to be formed and survived from the other ethnicities.⁵ These are Shia Arabs on the south and Sunni Arabs on the southwest, Persians on the east and the Turks after their migration and decisive settling in the Anatolian peninsula after the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 AD, as well as the other autochthons of the region e.g. Armenians, Assyrians etc.⁶

In his famous book *Seyahatname*, the Ottoman scholar and traveler Evliya Çelebi describes Kurdistan as a geographical concept by attaching importance to its role in interstate relations:

² Akram. *The Muslim Conquest of Persia*. Birmingham: Maktabah Booksellers and Publishers, 2009, pp.199.

³ McDowall, David. *A Modern History of the Kurds*. Rev. ed., New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001, pp. 21.

⁴ “Iraq.” *The World Factbook*. Central Intelligence Agency, 2018. Web. Accessed 11 Feb. 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>

⁵ Aziz, Mahir. *Irak Kürtleri: Irak Kürdistanı'nda Milliyetçilik ve Ulusal Kimlik*. Translated by Zülal Kılıç, Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2013, pp. 76

⁶ Commena, Anna. *The Alexia*. Translated by Elizabeth A. S. Dawes, Ontario: In parentheses Publications, 2000, pp.10.

- “It is such a big country (...) If there wouldn’t have been the barrier of six thousand Kurdish Clans over the high mountains between Arabic Iraq and Ottoman lands, it would be such easy for Ajams (Persians) to invade the Anatolia.”⁷

On the other hand, the battle took place in the year 1514 between the Ottomans and Safavids on Chaldiran plain west of today’s Tabriz was conclusive in terms of being the political barrier rather than a socio-geographical one. According to David McDowall, “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”.⁸ He argues that the Safavid Empire was decentralized and the power of the governors (*walis*) was tolerated while the Ottoman Empire was highly centralized and powerful enough to overlook some exceptions for the tribes on the borders and, inter alia, had a quasi-feudal system which both, in return, allowed the people residing on the high mountains between those two empires to sustain their respective features.⁹ Maria O’Shea concurs with the opinions of such effect of the geographical conditions on the acquired function of the Kurdistan region by describing it as being a buffer zone for centuries.¹⁰

However, the fact that the physical geography has an effect on the human geography should not compel us to seek for correlation between them but also to take the causality between events into consideration. This aspect is highly crucial in order to contextualize the conditions of the period and to reflect them to the recent history without falling into the error of seeing the region on its sole basis since it incorporates the other factors and parties into the enquiry as we proceed forward in this enquiry.

⁷ Çelebi, Evliya. *Seyahatname*. Edited by S.A. Kahraman and Y. Dağlı, Vol. 4, Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010, pp. 110.

⁸ McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, pp. 25.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-31.

¹⁰ O’Shea, Maria. *Trapped Between the Map and Reality*. New York: Routledge, 2004, pp.71-74.

2.2 Modern Period: Agreements and Mandates

The permanent demarcation of the 2000 km borderline between the Safavids of the Persia and Ottoman Empire was finally set over when the nearly 150 years old conflict between two major poles of the region was drawn to the close by the end of the war within 1623-39. The Treaty of Zuhab (also referred as *Qasr-e Shirin*) consolidated the Ottoman rule over the Mesopotamia by enabling the governance of the Shahrizor *Vilayat* (later named as Mosul *Vilayat* which present day borders of the KRG was a part of) and Baghdad along with the Western Armenia and Georgia while Safavids were ceded Azerbaijan and Eastern Armenia and Georgia.¹¹ This demarcation however, did not only concern the borders between two empires but also conclusively determined the regions which were to be dominated by them on the social, economic and religious bases until the region became a central field of interest for the global actors of the World War I.



Figure 1. Eyalets of the Ottoman Empire in Atlas-ı Cedid¹²

¹¹ Lewis, Bernard, et al. *The Cambridge History of Islam*. Vol. 1A. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 339-40.

¹² The province colored in blue on the east of the map is named as “Kurdistan (کوردستان)” in Arabic script. This map was drawn by western cartographic techniques and published in *Konstantinniye* (Istanbul) in 1803.

This borderline has been sustained with minor changes among the parties by becoming the innate border of Iran between Iraq and Turkey after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I.¹³ What ensued the defeat and withdrawal of the Ottoman armies in the “Great War” is one of the most substantial incidents affecting the recent history of the region, while at the same time is not subordinate to any of the other regions of the globe regarding their significances since the agreements were also of particular concern to the major parties of the world.

The Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 was a “*secret convention made between Great Britain, France, with assent of Imperial Russia for the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire*”.¹⁴ The final agreement ending the war on behalf of the Ottomans was officially signed under the name of *Traité de Sèvres* in 1920.¹⁵ As Paul Helmreich adverts, recent policies of Britain included considerations of an independent Kurdistan established by the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in order to “*prevent Turkey from retaining control of the territorial gap between Armenia and Mesopotamia. Moreover, it would give the British a firmer hold on the Mosul Vilayet, which was ethnically half Kurd, as well as provide a buffer zone for that oil-rich province*”.¹⁶

Distinguishing two different perspectives from the Ottomans and the British which were formed and used in order not only to seize the region but also to be able to rule it with minimum attrition throughout the years is highly important.¹⁷ A short glimpse into the previous title is going to ease this comparison. The understanding originated from the region which was labeling the Kurdistan as a bordering region divided between the two powers so that they were able to counteract each other altered with which coerced the region to become a *buffer zone* of a third party.

Mosul was at the core of the dispute between the Great Britain and the Ankara government while British tended to conclude the Great War which was long since

¹³Tucker, Ernest. “From Rhetoric of War to Realities of Peace: Evolution of Ottoman-Iranian Diplomacy through the Safavid Era.” *Iran and the World in the Safavid Age*, edited by Willem Floor and Edmund Herzig, London: I.B. Tauris, 2012, pp. 81-90.

¹⁴“Sykes-Picot Agreement”. Encyclopædia Britannica, 2016. Web. Accessed 14 Feb. 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Sykes-Picot-Agreement>

¹⁵ Richards, Erle. *Peace Conference: Memoranda Respecting Syria, Arabia and Palestine*. 1919. Accessed 23 Feb. 2018, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/peace-conference-memoranda-respecting-syria-arabia-palestine>

¹⁶ Helmreich, Paul. *From Paris To Sèvres: The Partition of the Ottoman Empire at the Peace Conference of 1919-1920*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1974, pp.27.

¹⁷ O’Shea. *op. cit.*, pp. 108-10.

over for each of the other parties; and the Ankara government who managed to vanquish the Greek armies that were seeking to impose the Treaty of Sèvres to the last remaining Turkish authority.¹⁸

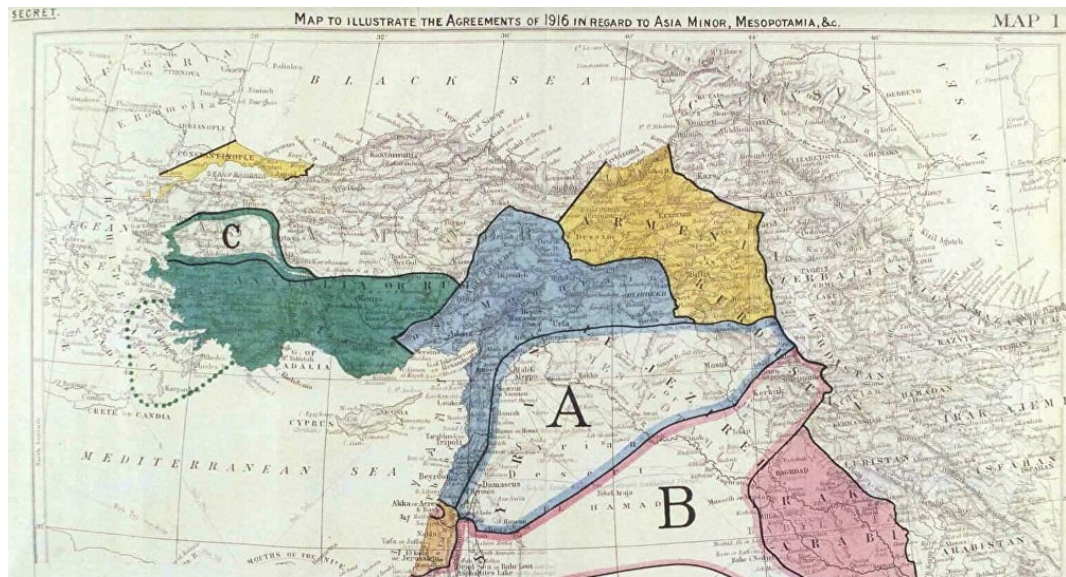


Figure 2. The Partition of the Ottoman Empire in Sykes-Picot Agreement¹⁹

Nevertheless, the signatories of the Treaty of Lausanne agreed on the long-lasting borders between Iran and Turkey and the Mosul dispute to be investigated by the League of Nations.²⁰ Turkey's transition from monarchy to parliamentary republic was agonizing hereby the council took a resolution on behalf of Iraq under the British Mandate.²¹ Thusly, Mosul has come into the prominence in its own terms by the western intervention due to its rich oil resources, ethnic composition. Furthermore, what follows such factors diplomatically is the emergent interplay between Turkey, Great Britain and Iraq after the year 1932 when they were guaranteed independence from the British.²²

¹⁸ Ankara government was founded in Ankara by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to retake the lands which were to be shared and divided among the victorious parties of the World War I. McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, pp. 143-46.

¹⁹ The agreement also shows the intentions to create the "United Armenia", French and Italian sovereign areas; and the *Bosporus* under the control of International Coalition.

²⁰ Şimşir, Bilal. *Kürtçülük II (1924-1999)*. Istanbul: Bilgi Yayınları, 2011, pp. 115.

²¹ Martin, Lawrence, editor. "Treaty of Peace with Turkey Signed at Lausanne, July 24, 1923." *The Treaties of Peace 1919-1923*. Vol. II, New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1924.

²² McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, pp. 172.

2.3 An Independent Iraq: Formation of a Nation

As the timeline approaches to the first hand constituents of the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq, the key factor to be underlined in this subchapter is the ideology of the new state of Iraq intending to create an abstract notion of “Iraqi nation” composed of various ethnical groups, religions and denominations that have never been compelled to melt in the same pot throughout history.

During the reign of the Hashemite dynasty, from the date of the official independence to the coup d'état of 1958, the externalities concerning Iraq (British influence and invasion e.g. 1941 Anglo-Iraqi War²³) and the internal conflicts (revolts, coups and overthrows e.g. 1935 Yazidi Revolt; 1936 and 1941 coup d'états) were hampering the establishment of any supra-local bonds which are crucial for the process of proto-nationalism as stressed by Hobsbawn.²⁴ Mahir Aziz notes that during '40s and '50s the British policies were still in force while the “Iraqi nation” had a heterogeneous structure composed of Shia and Sunni Arabs, Kurds, Turkmens, Armenians, Assyrians and even a small Jewish minority. The British escalated the conflict by means of ethnical policies which led the Sunni Arabs to be in a higher social position instead of neutralizing the ethnical and religious differences.²⁵

Judging by the argumentation of Hobsbawn, such situation conduced to further fragmentations within the imagined Iraqi community instead of establishing common grounds among them.²⁶ It is not surprising to find the birth of the Kurdish nationalism during the Hashemite rule as various subnational political activities and the succeeding revolts took place. Mustafa Barzani who was the father of the current leader Masoud Barzani of the Kurdistan Democratic Party manifests himself as an example of the conditions of this period owing to his revolt in 1943 against the central Baghdad government and assembling the KDP in 1946 which we can still observe his legacy through.²⁷

²³ Anderson, Liam and Gareth Stansfield. *The Future of Iraq: Dictatorship, Democracy or Division?*. US: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, pp. 18.

²⁴ Hobsbawn argues that there are different types of proto-national bonds among people (e.g. language, ethnicity, religion- in this case mostly denominations). Hobsbawn, Eric. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. 2nd ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 46-79.

²⁵ Aziz, *Irak Kürtleri*, pp. 102-105.

²⁶ Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed., London: Verso, 1991, pp. 6.

²⁷ McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, pp. 287-95.

The turning point of this course of events was the Ba'athist coup of 1963 which succeeded in overthrowing the military regime of General Qasim who also overthrew the Hashemite monarchy in 14 July Revolution of 1958, and lasted until the US intervention in 2003 thereafter. During these 40 years of a totalitarian regime it is possible to state that the ideological gap of the previous half-century was intended to be filled within the country and the externalities of Iraq started to play a more important role compared to the previous regime since they accelerated the destabilization of the country.

Ba'athism is a pan-Arabic and leftist ideology that enabled Sunni Arabs to take the control of the Iraqi State despite the fact that Shia Arabs constitute the majority of Iraq.²⁸ Arguing about the effects of this ideology does not make sense unless it is reflected on the Kurdish population of the country considering fact that the externalities included the regional clash of interests and there are three other countries with a non-negligible population of the Kurds.²⁹ Therefore, the Ba'ath regime of Iraq was compelled to come to terms with the KDP in order to prevent the Iranian support to them, end the revolts and social indignance among the Kurdish population and solidify the central government by establishing a quasi Kurdish authority loyal to Baghdad, according to Aziz.³⁰ However, such developments which seem tolerant were not hindering the acceleration the external conflicts of Iraq with Israel (Yom Kippur War of 1973³¹), Iran (Iran-Iraq War of 1980-88³²), and USA (Gulf War & UN embargo following the invasion of Kuwait in 1990³³).

²⁸ The ethnic and religious parties of Iraq are dominant majorities of their regions within the country. Shia Arabs on the south of Baghdad to Basra, Sunni Arabs on the north of Baghdad to Mosul and Kurds on the northeast of the river Tigris (see Figure 7).

²⁹ O'Shea. *Trapped Between the Map and Reality*, pp. 157-59.

³⁰ Aziz, *Irak Kürtleri*, pp. 111.

³¹ Iraqi militia fought against the Israel on the Golan Heights. Israel struck a convoy of Iraqi army on the second week of the war. Bolia, Robert. "Overreliance on Technology in Warfare: The Yom Kippur War as a Case Study." *Parameters*, United States Army War College, 2004, pp. 46-56.

³² Iran-Iraq War lasted 8 years without any border change. Casualties are estimated to be over 1 million. Johnson, Rob. *The Iraq-Iran War*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

³³ See Chapter 3.4.

2.4 The Ba'ath Regime Period

The state of Iraq waged four major wars and been in an ongoing armed and diplomatic conflict internally during rule of the Ba'ath Party in nearly 40 years. In addition to the wars that were mentioned in the previous section, the reign of the Saddam Hussein was terminated by the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. This subchapter is to focus briefly on this turbulent period of time and to interconnect them with the purported Kurdish governance in the Northern Iraq.

Herein, the vital point behind how the Kurds are being understood as nothing but a unit composed of various fractions steps forward as opposed to today's perception in the western countries. To be more precise, the speeches, articles or the popular books about the Middle East would make statements by consistently mentioning the word "Kurds" thus, treating the ethnicity as a monoblock but neglecting the diverse range of the ideologies, religious branches, political stances, traditions and so forth among the Kurdish population.³⁴ It has to be borne in mind that the Kurds have been disintegrated into four countries (Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria) and moreover, in each of those countries there are multifarious communities among them.³⁵ This statement is the framework of the circumstances that emerged during the rule of the Ba'ath regime and subsisted thereafter.³⁶

The fragmentation of the Kurdish parties requires to be expounded by the specific events. Accordingly, McDowall makes a clear exposition on the power play which, at the first appearance seems to be in between the Kurdish authorities and the central regime however, the regional rivalries on the tribal, political and surely economical grounds become evident as the readers continue with the examination of the internal politics of the Iraq.³⁷ Yet, such unbalances lead to a deeper armed conflict and brought the reputation to the Ba'ath regime (by extension to Saddam

³⁴ This interpretation is based on the survey of the following online sources and the collected work of the articles from the world media:

BBC Archives. Accessed 22 Feb 2018, <https://www.bbc.co.uk>

CNN Archives. Accessed 22 Feb 2018, <https://edition.cnn.com/>

İnanç, Zeri, and Çeto Özel, editors. *Dünya Basınında Irak (2003-2005): Kürtler, Şii ve Sünni Araplar*. Istanbul: DOZ, 2006.

³⁵ These differences arise from the dialectical differences (Kurmaji, Sorani and their sub variations see. McDowall. *A Modern History*. pp. 9-10), religious differences (Yazidis, Sunnis, Shias and the further sects e.g. Naqshbandi, Qadiri see. Aziz. *Irak Kürtleri*, pp 36), political differences (Turkish Hezbollah, Iraqi PKK-KDP-PUK-Goran Movement- Kurdistan Islamic Union, Syrian PYD-ENKS) and the various historical backgrounds that were addressed in the previous subchapters.

³⁶ Stansfield. "The Kurds Divided." In *Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 71-74

³⁷ McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, pp. 324-25.

Hussein) of the massacres.³⁸ The Iraqi-Kurdish conflict lasted during the Ba'ath period led both parties to weaken therefore, deepen the future internal conflicts they are to encounter. Henceforth, Barzani's KDP and Talabani's PUK started to become the central parts of the future dispute. On the other hand, the official creation of the autonomous region consisting of *Dohuk, Erbil (Hawler) and Suleimaniyah* governorates took place as the conflicts preceding the Ba'ath regime were come to terms under the March Agreement.³⁹

Stansfield also urges upon the other actors' actions that were directly effecting these disagreements such as Barzani's appealing to US in order to assist them due to their coinciding interests in the region was different in reality (this situation is going to rise to the occasion once again under different circumstances in 2017 Kurdish Independence Referendum):

- *“US policy towards the Kurds was one of keeping the status quo in order to secure its own vital interests, a policy which has arguably persisted to the present day (...) Both sides verbally attacked the other for not keeping to the terms of the agreement, and the strength of the attacks brought about its collapse. Both were guilty of failings which caused irreparable damage to the intrinsically fragile working relationship. In 1974, the Ba'ath regime went ahead with a development of the autonomy law, and chose to negotiate with 600 independent and anti-Barzani Kurds, including the Ahmed–Talabani faction (...) Barzani, increasingly dependent upon Iranian supplies and assistance, was similarly preparing for a confrontation.”*⁴⁰

These internal imbalances and rivalries with predominantly Iran are still the core disputes over the current events which, as discussed above, inherited from the Ba'ath period.⁴¹

³⁸ According to the Human Rights Watch, there have been human rights violations during the Al-Anfal Campaign of the Iraqi Army by the end of the Iraq-Iran War. For further information refer to Human Rights Watch. *Genocide in Iraq: The Anfal Campaign Against the Kurds*. USA: Human Rights Watch, 1993. Web. Accessed 23 Feb. 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/reports/1993/iraqanfal>

³⁹ Stansfield defines this agreement as “the best the Kurds were ever offered” yet, indicates the discontent of the KDP. Such postponement of the problem is to deepen the lines between the PUK and KDP herewith, leading to the further conflict of 1974. Stansfield, *Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 75.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 76.

⁴¹ Refer to Chapter 4 for further information.



Figure 3. Kurdistan Autonomous Region in 1975

According to Mahir Aziz, the real date of the consolidation of the Kurdish national identity and the national formation of the “Iraqi Kurdistan” has begun after March 1991 and the elections of 1992.⁴² The aforementioned rivalry among the Kurdish parties set to turn into an armed conflict among them when the Iraqi Republican Guards seized the major Kurdish cities following the revolts of March 1991.⁴³ What might seem contradictory was actually made possible because of the reason that the Saddam threat was prevented by the UN Security Council Resolution 688.⁴⁴ The US, UK and France used this resolution to establish NFZ’s north of the 36th and south of the 32nd parallels even though there is no such official decision in the resolution.⁴⁵ The North NFZ established by those actors enabled the PKK organization to establish headquarters on the Qandil Mountains.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the militia camps (e.g. Metina, Zap, Avasin-Basyan and Gap⁴⁷) were founded next to the Turkish border. Such actions increased the effectiveness of the PKK which, within

⁴² Aziz, *Irak Kürtleri*, pp.122.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp 124.

⁴⁴ United Nations Security Council Resolution 688. *Iraq (5 April)*, S/RES/688, 1991. Web. Accessed 23 Feb. 2018, [https://undocs.org/S/RES/688\(1991\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/688(1991))

⁴⁵ For further information see. Marr, Phebe. *The Modern History of Iraq*. 2nd Ed., Colorado: Westview Press, 2004, pp. 256.

⁴⁶ Editors of Stratfor. “The Kurdish Qandil Mountains.” 28 Mar. 2013. Web. Accessed 23 Feb. 2018, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/kurdish-qandil-mountains>

⁴⁷ Editors of Anadolu Agency (AA). “PKK Camps in North Iraq Targeted by Turkish Airstrikes.” 09 May. 2017. Web. Accessed 23 Feb. 2018, <http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/pkk-camps-in-north-iraq-targeted-by-turkish-airstrikes/814333>

the eyes of Turkey, EU and the NATO has been a terrorist organization.⁴⁸ Thusly, the PKK insurgency boosted in Turkey during ‘90’s (see Figure 4) yet, the causes should not be limited to the instability of the Northern Iraq and needs to be addressed along with the social conditions in the southeast Turkey on another enquiry.

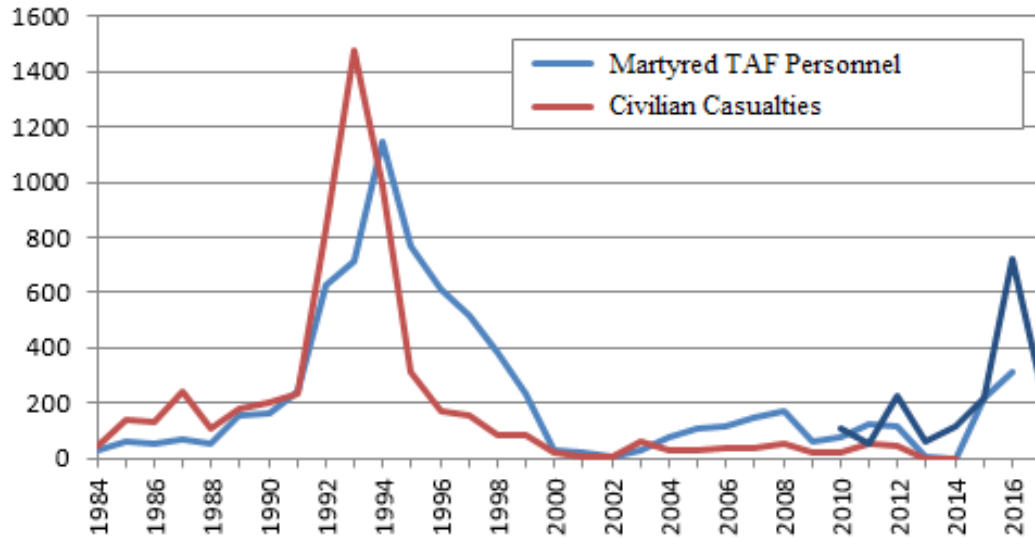


Figure 4. Official Data Chart of the PKK Insurgency⁴⁹

The lack of a single authority on the Northern Iraq sparked a civil war between the Kurdish parties predominantly KDP versus PUK as they were supported by different regional actors from 1994 to 1998 and PKK was able to gain territorial control due to the weakened local authority. On the May 1994, the power-sharing model of the KRG (50:50 system, see Chapter 3.4 for further discussion) could not preclude the tensions resulting from the revenues of the border trade with Turkey to become an armed conflict on the regional income and control.⁵⁰ The significant point here is that as a border neighbor, KDP was supported directly by Turkey and fought alongside with the Turkish army in the Operation Hammer in 1997 against PKK⁵¹; or looking from another perspective Turkey assisted its trade partner who is fighting for

⁴⁸ “Who are Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) Rebels?.” BBC. 4 Nov. 2016. Web. Accessed 23 Feb. 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-20971100>

⁴⁹ Editors of Milliyet. “26 Yılın Kanlı Bilançosu.” 24 June 2010. Web. Accessed 23 Feb. 2018, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/26-yilin-kanli-bilancosu-gundem-1254711/>

⁵⁰ Stansfield. *Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 101.

⁵¹ Turkish cross-border operation in Northern Iraq which lasted nearly 2 months against PKK.

the territorial and economical control against Iran-backed PUK thus, gaining validity to the military intervention against PKK.⁵²



Figure 5. The Partition of the KRG According to the Washington Agreement

This situation lasted until the parties settled on dividing the authorities within the KRG which resulted for the KDP to govern Erbil and Dohuk while PUK to govern Suleimaniyah areas according to the Washington agreement of 1998 (see Figure 5).⁵³ The governmental separation lasted until 2006 as the parties reached an agreement on a unified KRG under the presidency of Nechirvan Barzani who is successor of KDP however by sustaining their own local *Peshmerga* forces and separate seats in the Iraqi parliament which revived again during the dispute on the Independence Referendum in 2017. Stansfield hereof supports the idea that “*a divided political system allows them to target their internal inconsistencies without being overly concerned with the activities of ‘the other side’.*”⁵⁴ Mahir Aziz agrees with Stansfield’s opinion by stating that “*The efforts to the power-sharing or participation generally contribute to reduce the contradictions considering the minor parties in Kurdistan*”, yet not failing to point out the benefits of this unification.⁵⁵

⁵² Gunter, Michael M., “Turkey and Iran Face off in Kurdistan.” *Middle East Quarterly*. US: Middle East Forum, Mar. 1998, pp. 33-40

⁵³ Aziz, *Irak Kürtleri*, pp. 129.

⁵⁴ Stansfield, *Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 120

⁵⁵ Aziz, *Irak Kürtleri*, pp. 133-34

CHAPTER 3

CONTEMPORARY KRG

The following chapter targets a pause from the chronological narration of the previous pages; yet by making no concessions of being informative. It is designed to clarify the features of the Kurdish Regional Government of Iraq through conceptualizing the various aspects in six subchapters. In order to ease the understanding of the content, the readers are presented with charts and figures related to such aspects and are going to encounter, once again, the further questions addressing the further investigations. These features belong to the recent period so that the analysis part can be built on strong foundations combined with the previous historical background. Therefore, it is necessary to comprehend the chapters 1&2 as two separate parts brought together in order to create a sensible argumentation on the discourses of the regional government.

3.1 Geography of the KRG

The state of Iraq is founded upon the historical Mesopotamia i.e. Cradle of Civilizations. The plains of the country are deeply tied to the of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers that fertilize the lands as they cross it before merging into one called *Shatt Al-Arab* and flow into the Persian Gulf. The KRG, on the other hand, is established on the mountainous Northern Iraq neighboring Turkey on the north, Iran on the east and Syria on the west with a warm to cold semi-arid climate (BSh and BSk according to Köppen Climate Classification).

The terrain elevation towards the northeast of the country which is a part of Zagros range enabled the Kurds to populate this region from the east of the Tigris River to the lands of Iran (see Figure 6). It is irrefutable that these mountains have been providing various positive functions for the Kurdish ethnicity e.g. cultural and language isolation that led to a distinct Kurdish ethnicity. Aziz accurately draws attention to the physical geography's influence on human geography.⁵⁶ Furthermore, Izady describes this phenomenon as the “*single most important and they have shaped the Kurdish history, people, tradition, and culture*”.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, this portraying fails to explain the causes behind the high population density of the region even though it is reasonable to expect it to be low.⁵⁸

It is a requisite to mention the border changes of the regional government because of the reason that there are no stable conditions in Iraq or within the KRG since the day of the independence of Iraq. The previously aforementioned armed, political and economic conflicts have not been concluded however, led to the changes in territorial control. The reason for that type of concentration of the population towards the mountainous terrain is to be understood by considering the

⁵⁶ Aziz. *Irak Kürtleri*. pp. 76.

⁵⁷ Izady. *The Kurds*. pp. 13.

⁵⁸ Population density of the KRG controlled areas is 126 people/km². This ratio is higher than Iraq in general by 50% and Turkey by 25%.

Kurdistan Region Statistics Office. “Indicators.” Web. Accessed 25 Feb. 2018, <http://www.krso.net/Default.aspx?page=article&id=899&l=1&>

“Iraq.” *The World Factbook*. Central Intelligence Agency, 2018. Web. Accessed 25 Feb. 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>

“Turkey.” *The World Factbook*. Central Intelligence Agency, 2018. Web. Accessed 25 Feb. 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html>

disputes between the central government and the KRG, especially the incidents as Al-Anfal campaign.

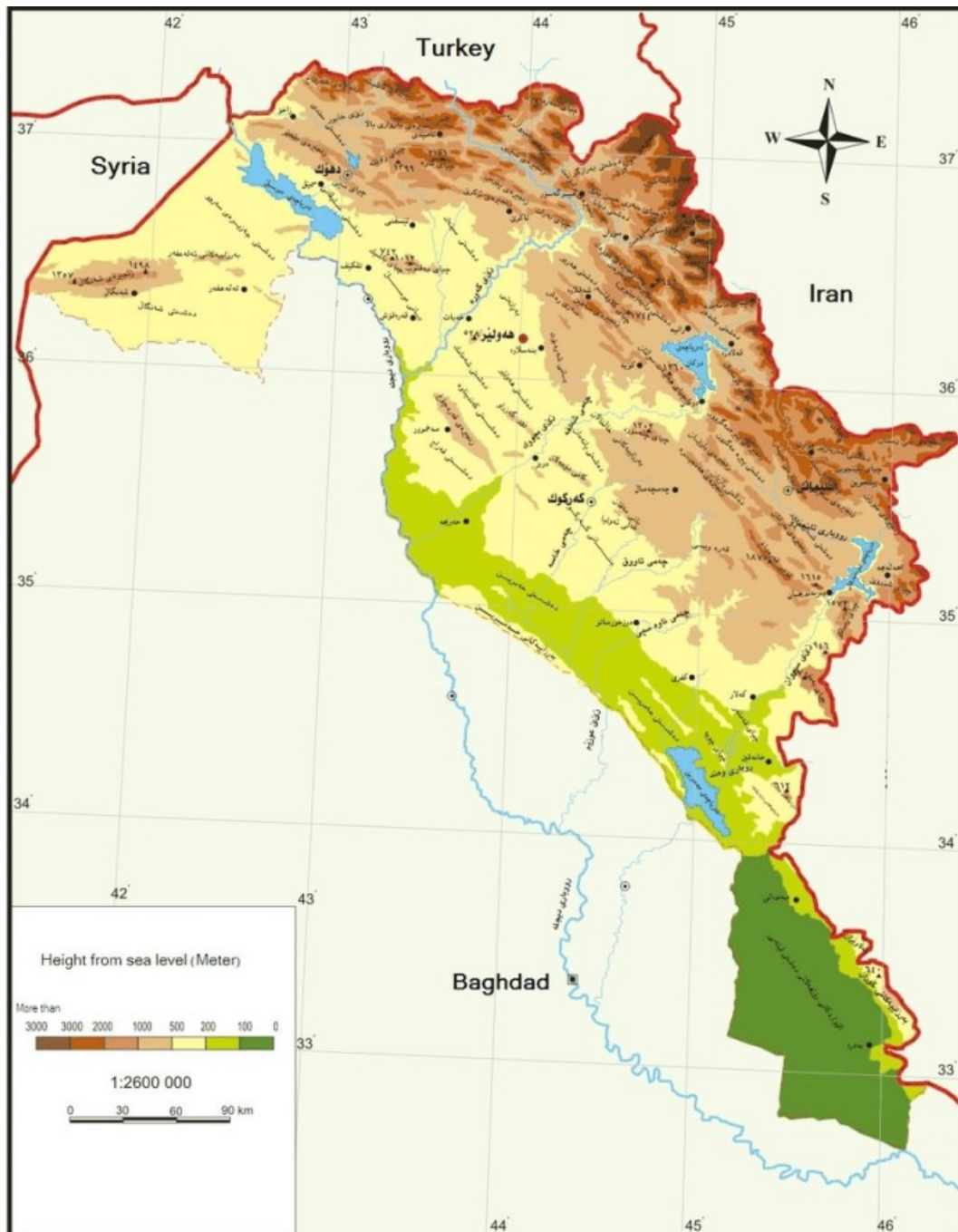


Figure 6. Physical Geography of the Kurdish Populated Areas

3.2 Economics of the KRG

The KRG as a part of the state of Iraq and a participant of the power play in the region is in need of a sustainable economy. Just like the other actors of the Middle East, KRG has been dependent on oil and taking advantage of being on the route of the pipelines e.g. Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline which transfers the oil of the Kirkuk to the Mediterranean by crossing the southeast Turkey.⁵⁹ Kirkuk has 470.000 of oil production capacity per day thus, has been the subject of conflicts since Ba'ath period until now.⁶⁰

Another aspect is the border trade of the KRG which Turkey, as the 3rd largest export partner of Iraq plays the most important role here by taking over the $\frac{3}{4}$ of the construction business in the region.⁶¹ The central government of Iraq is obliged to limit such partnership between KRG and Turkey in order to break a possible monopolization and include itself in the power play since Turkey has been establishing strong ties with KRG due to its increasing energy need.⁶²

On the other hand, the main tributaries of Tigris River (Greater and Lesser Zab, and the Diyala) have hydro-electric generating facilities built on them which provide with artificial irrigation and domestic supplies to the KRG controlled areas.⁶³ These installations are crucial for the traditionally agricultural Kurdish population and expedient since they are alternatives of the oil besides being the water sources in such arid geography where each party is predicted to encounter with water crises in the forthcoming days.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ "KRG Statement on First Oil Sales through Pipeline Export." KRG Cabinet, 23 May 2014. Web. Accessed 26 Feb. 2018, <http://cabinet.gov.krd/a/d.aspx?l=12&a=51589>

⁶⁰ Parts of Nineveh, Kirkuk, Saladin and Diyala Governorates are under KRG control and witnessed forced handovers throughout the years. Kirkuk city is the most significant of these due to its population, oilfields and pipelines. Al-Mehaidi, Kamil. "Geographical Distribution of Iraqi Oil Fields And Its Relation with the New Constitution." Revenue Watch Institute. May 2016. Web. Accessed 26 Feb. 2018, pp. 4, http://archive.resourcegovernance.org/sites/default/files/052706_0.pdf, pp. 4

⁶¹ Fidan, Christina B. "Turkey: The Kurdistan Region's Largest Trading Partner." Invest in Group, Feb. 2015. Web. Accessed 26 Feb. 2018, <http://investingroup.org/analysis/195/turkey-the-kurdistan-regions-largest-trading-partner-kurdistan/>

⁶² Turkish military bases in Kurdistan Region is another aspect of the dispute between the Iraqi central government and Turkey. Karadeniz, T and E. Gurses. "Turkey Says Its Troops to Stay in Iraq Until Islamic State Cleared From Mosul." Reuters, 12 Oct. 2016. Web. Accessed 26 Feb. 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-turkey/turkey-says-its-troops-to-stay-in-iraq-until-islamic-state-cleared-from-mosul-idUSKCN12C0KF>

⁶³ Stansfield. *Iraqi Kurdistan*. pp. 30

Considering these factors all together reveals that the KRG is dependent on the external events that would affect:

1. Its oil production and transfer.
2. Its land trade since there is no connection to the sea.
3. Its climate and water resources.

Such economic activities reveal that Turkey is more important than any of the other neighbors of the region due to the fact that:

1. The main oil reserves are within the Kirkuk Governorate which has significant number of Turkmen people and the oil is transferred through Turkey.
2. Turkey is the biggest trade partner and has the most active trade routes of the Kurdistan Region.
3. The water stream of the main rivers is from Turkey to south therefore, Turkey has the control of the water.

⁶⁴ Tropp, Hakan, and Anders Jägerskog. "Water Scarcity Challenges in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)." *Human Development Report*. Stockholm International Water Institute, 26 Oct. 2006. pp, 8-11.

3.3 Demographics of the KRG and Iraq

The administrative, economical and political issues of the Ba'ath period have irreversibly divided all the fragments of the Iraqi community (see Figure 7). To be specific, the country is disintegrated as follows:

1. 7 million Sunni Kurds on the North-Northeast are in the majority of the territories constitute 15% of the total population of Iraq (including Kurdish speaking Yazidi population).
2. Sunni-Shia Turkmens around Mosul (especially Tal Afar) of half a million, and half a million living in Erbil and Kirkuk in total and up to 300,000 in Baghdad constitute around 3% of the total population.⁶⁵
3. Sunni Arabs from northern Baghdad (Tikrit-Fallujah-Samarra triangle) up to Mosul constitute 20% of the country.
4. Shia Arabs dominating Basra region and south of Baghdad constitute 60% of the total population.

Apart from the ethnic and religious diversity, it is possible to find out the social causes for hatred and alliance with the local/regional organizations, and each of these groupings has been identified differently by each neighboring state e.g. Turkey, Iran, Qatar or Israel or world powers e.g. US, UK or Russia such as PKK or Iran backed Shia militia PMU (*Al Hashd Al-Sha'abi*) which Turkey sees as “an organization that terrorizes the region”.⁶⁶

In his famous article, The Israeli strategist Oded Yinon stresses the ruling class of the Iraqi state to be an elite minority 20% which prevented the other 65% of the total population to have a voice in politics. What is interesting is that the remaining 15% is the Kurdish population and he abstains from making statements on their fragmentation within the Iraqi society. On the contrary, he even includes Kurds in a projected Mosul state alongside the Sunni Arabs. It is highly possible that he went towards a revision of ideas by the end of the Iraq-Iran war since the circumstances went on a change until the US invasion of 2003.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ SOITM. “Demography.” *The Turkmen of Iraq: Underestimated, Marginalized and exposed to assimilation Terminology*. The UN Working Group of Minorities, 08 June 2005.

⁶⁶ “Turkey Warns Shia Militias Fighting ISIL for Iraqi Town”. Al Jazeera, 31 Oct. 2016. Web. Accessed 26 Feb. 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/turkey-warns-shia-militias-fighting-isil-iraqi-town-161030172800454.html>

⁶⁷ Yinon, Oded. “A Strategy for Israel in the Nineteen Eighties.” Translated by Israel Shahak. Massachusetts: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1982.

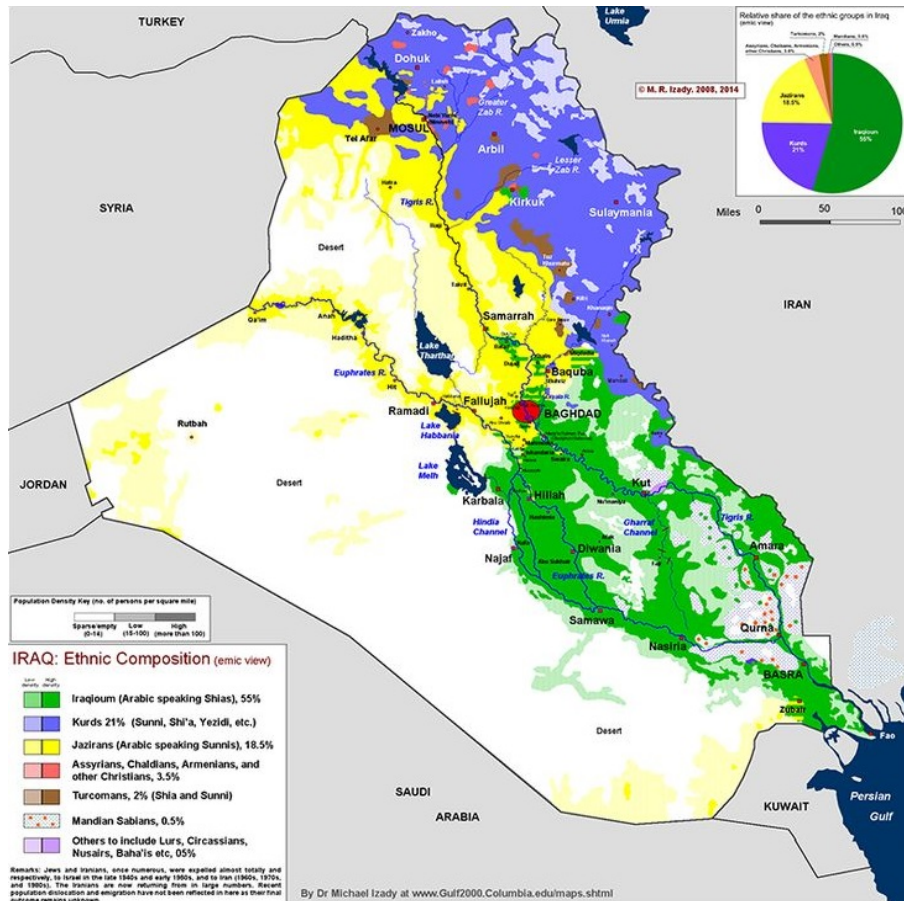


Figure 7. Demographic Map of Iraq

In order to have an easier understanding in the next subchapter on the KRG dynamics, the governorates of the Kurdistan Region are as follows by their size and population from north to south:⁶⁸

- Dohuk 10955 km² population over 1.5 million
- Erbil (Hawler) 14872 km² population over 2 million
- Suleimaniyah 20143 km² population over 2 million
- Halabja⁶⁹ 888 km² population nearly 100 thousand

3.4 Features of the KRG

Kurdistan Regional Government is established in 1992 owing to the administrative gap as a consequence of the northern NFZ and the previous socio-political conditions

⁶⁸ The population numbers are calculated from the official data of Kurdistan Region Statistics Office.

⁶⁹ Halabja is established as a governorate in 2014 by splitting from Suleimaniyah Governorate.

as mentioned in the Chapter 2.4. However, the internal disputes among the Kurdish parties centered around the KDP and PUK forced a division of the regional governments of the Dohuk, Erbil and Suleimaniyah based on the 50:50 system, as Stansfield asserts. Therefore, it is important to see the outcomes of this system.⁷⁰ Due to these conditions, the administrative rivalry between the central government and the KRG has been over the status of disputed areas instead of the recognized Kurdish territories.⁷¹

As a result of this system, territorial control became the means of the administrative control. Thusly, establishing and enhancing armed forces in the KRG which is called *Peshmerga* has come into prominence not only to enforce the local law but also to maintain control over the energy fields considering the importance of the oil in the region. The elections of the Kurdistan National Assembly have been the common ground for the KDP and PUK to congregate therefore, the preventive factor of a complete separation which set the basis of the future unification by becoming the parliament of the KRG.⁷² Yet, it became the factor of a complete alienation since it was dominated by KDP and led to the contradictions.

Another perspective to this division of the administration is given by Mahir Aziz. He remarks the 6 years of civil war in the region as a result of the contradictions of this system between the parties. The Washington Agreement signed in the end of this turbulent period indicates the fact that KRG required a compromise on the division of economics and administration rather than an elementary level political balance judging by Aziz's economical causality of such armed conflict.⁷³ After this division, the common ground devolved on the Judiciary until the parties agreed on establishing a unified government and administration in 2006 (see Figure 8).

⁷⁰ Stansfield. *Iraqi Kurdistan*. pp. 121

⁷¹ Stansfield, Gareth. "Can the Unified Kurdistan Regional Government Work?." Carnegie Middle East Center, 18 Aug. 2008. Web. Accessed 27 Feb. 2018, <http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/20844>

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 131

⁷³ Aziz. *Irak Kürtleri*. pp. 128-29

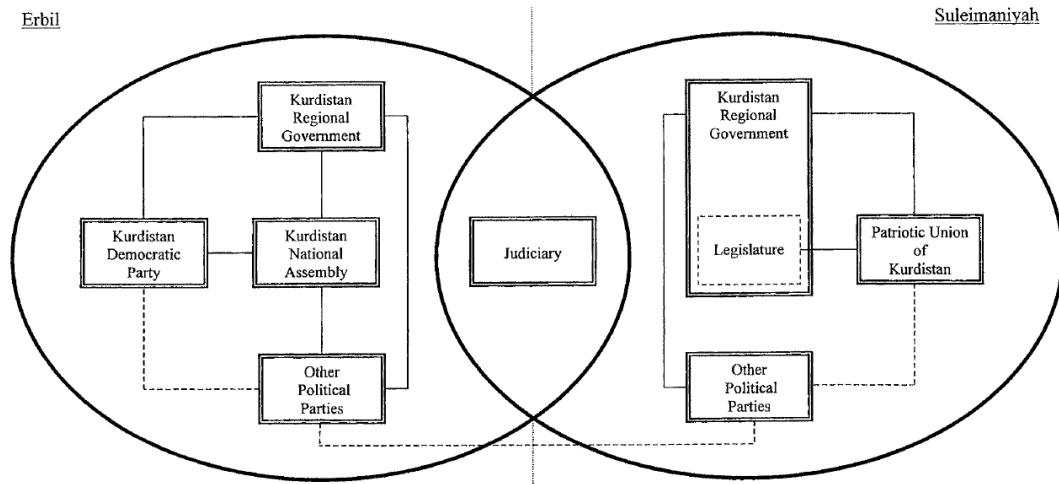


Figure 8. Constituent Parts of the Political System of the KRG in 1996, retrieved from Stansfield. *Iraqi Kurdistan*. pp. 156

The answer to the question of how in the first place Barzani was able to dominate the KRG is that the ongoing armed conflicts of the state of Iraq but mainly the Invasion of Kuwait in 1990 confronted the Ba'ath regime with a series of embargos by the UN Security Council.⁷⁴ Ba'ath efforts to isolate the Kurdistan region and dominate under the pan-Arabic ideology altered with using the region's instability and problematic sovereignty on behalf of the Iraqi benefits. By the year of 1992, Iraq and Iran were both in economic sanctions and anti-US while Turkey was in armed conflict with the PKK on the southeast of the country next to the Iraqi and Iranian borders. These complications pushed Saddam government to turn the KRG into a smuggling route into Turkey and Barzani was exploiting this state of affairs economically and politically.⁷⁵

After all, the division of the KRG compelled each of the parties to establish their own Peshmerga forces and to be supported by the other regional actors such as Turkey and Iran similar to the situation during rule of the Ottoman Empire and Safavids as their zone of conflict was on the same territories. Therefore, the following section is to briefly advert the *raison d'être* of any authority in the region.

⁷⁴ United Nations Security Council Resolution 661. *Iraq-Kuwait (6 August)*, S/RES/661, 1990. Web. Accessed 21 Feb. 2018, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/661>

⁷⁵ Risen, James. "Iraq is Smuggling Oil to the Turks Under the Gaze of US." *The NY Times*, 19 June 1998. Web. Accessed 27 Feb. 2018, <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/06/19/world/iraq-is-smuggling-oil-to-the-turks-under-gaze-of-us.html>

3.5 Military of the KRG

The main military unit of the KRG is called *Peshmerga* which in Kurdish means “those who confront death”. There were efforts to unite these forces by establishing RGB’s under the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs in 1995 after the KRG became officially founded in 1992. However the civil war prevented such compact regional government along with its single military force. Henceforth, these units are “*divided along partisan lines*” and influenced by the unstable internal politics of the KRG. The direction of the causality here needs to be discussed further since it is not clear if the political fragmentation led to the military one or vice versa.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the political unifications after 2006 are followed by this very aspect and up to 40.000 Peshmerga forces are brought under the authority of the ministry. Despite all these steps, it is hard to come to the conclusion of a single Peshmerga of KRG.

The partisanship is to stay as long as the political separations last and the very recent events indicate the revival of a less military but more political division than before.⁷⁷ There has been an ongoing mutual distrust and the factors affecting the politics are open to transume due to the passing events in the region e.g. the ISIS offensives on the KRG towns in the disputed territories after the fall of Mosul in 2014 pushed both these parties to cooperate against a third threat in order to continue their existence.

The last thing to be briefly mentioned is the US military presence not only in KRG but in the territories controlled by the central government as well. The combined joint operations base in Erbil has been the center of the arms transfer along with its men forces of international coalition (over 5000 US soldiers were present in 2017). Therefore, the conflicts among the parties of Iraq are overseen and steered in accordance with the international actors’ benefits.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Van Vilgenbur, Vladimir, and Mario Fumerton. “Kurdistan’s Political Armies: The Challenge of Unifying the Peshmerga Forces.” Carnegie Middle East Center, 16 Dec. 2015. Web. Accessed 27 Feb. 2018, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/12/16/kurdistan-s-political-armies-challenge-of-unifying-peshmerga-forces-pub-61917>

⁷⁷ In October 16, 2017 the Iraqi PMU’s conducted operations and took over the Kirkuk city along with its oilfields after the Independence Referendum of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. There has been claims that the Iran-supported PUK withdrew its Peshmerga forces by reaching an agreement with the central government. “Iraqi Forces Take Kirkuk, Lower Kurdistan Flag”. Rudaw, 16 Oct. 2017. Web. Accessed 27 Feb. 2018, <http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/151020177>

⁷⁸Ali, Nasr. “New US Base Supporting Tal Afar Ops Provides ‘Certainty’ Says Local.” Rudaw, 22 Aug. 2017. Web. Accessed 27 Feb. 2018, <http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/220820171>

3.6 Politics of the KRG

Admittedly, the most important event in terms of affecting and changing all the aspects examined above has been the US Invasion of Iraq from 20th of March to 1st of May in 2003. This short war ending the Ba'ath rule in Iraq by a successful military operation wasn't able to prevent the following turmoil since it enlarged the existing administrative and economic gap of the '90s Iraq. Henceforth, nongovernmental fractions exploited the power vacuum and routed the country towards insurgency also because of the quick change of the ruling elite of Iraq which were Sunni Arabs before the US campaign and the Shia Arabs (Maliki government of 2006-2014).⁷⁹

At this point it is crucial to mention two aspects so that the new conditions are relevant to the KRG. Firstly, on 1st of March 2003, Turkish parliament rejected the proposal to allow US troops to be operated and dispatched from Turkey in the event of a war with Iraq.⁸⁰ This constrained the US troops to carry out the operations from south by the initial fights in Basra and raised the importance of the Kurds on the north against the central government. Therefore, the KRG was to become a strategic ally of US and got an official foothold in the international arena.

Second aspect came into the prominence on the short term is the parallelism between the denominational Shia centers of Shia Arabs of Iraq and Shia Persians of Iran, Najaf and Qom. These *écoles* are shaped by a strong culture of allegiance to their cult leaders (Imams) in which these states are brought into close contact owing to the successful invasion of US that enabled the Shia Arabs to seize the power.⁸¹

In the light of these, it is highly conceivable that the future of Kurdish population has become closely tied with the US support since, on another perspective KRG remained to be the sole instrument to limit the Iranian influence in Iraq. The perspective of the KRG is thusly positive for the US presence in Iraq which they avoid defining as an "invasion" and which surely affected by the planned US withdrawal starting from 2007.

⁷⁹ Bengio, Ofra. *Contextualizing the Kurdish National Project: The Failed Iraqi Nation-State Thesis*. British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, 19 Feb. 2018, pp. 8.

⁸⁰ CNN News Editors. "Turkey Rejects U.S. Troop Proposal." CNN, 2 Mar. 2003. Web. Accessed 01 Mar. 2018, <http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/03/01/sprj.irq.main/>

⁸¹ Al-Qarawee, Harith H. *Iraq's Sectarian Crisis: A Legacy of Exclusion*. Washington: Carnegie Middle East Center, 2014, pp.6-8.

In January 2005, the National Assembly of the US occupied Iraq altered with the Transitional Assembly by the elections and 2 days after, the new KRG council was elected before the two major parties of the regional government unified the cabinets in 2006.⁸² The leader of the PUK Jalal Talabani officially took the Presidency of Iraq until 2014 while Nechirvan Barzani who is the nephew of the president of the unified KRG, Masoud Barzani became the prime minister of the KRG.

After the US withdrawal Iraq along with the other Middle East countries was to face with the increase in the turmoil arising from the revolutionary movements which generally called in popular language as the “Arab Spring”. Just as the other minorities of the region, the Kurds and the KRG was in the interstices of the conflicts. These conditions obliged the KRG to follow day-to-day policies instead of establishing long-term strategies.⁸³ Furthermore, they augmented the conflict areas around the Kurdish controlled territories of Iraq such as Syrian Civil War, ISIS insurgency and the fall of the Mosul in 2014.⁸⁴ When the Iraqi Army abandoned Kirkuk as ISIS was moving towards south after seizing Mosul, the Peshmerga forces took control of the city ergo the oil resources until the re-seizure of the Iraqi Army in October 2017.⁸⁵

On the other hand, there have been different searches of political stability among the population of the KRG. The opposition arose against the KDP and PUK’s “Kurdistan List” under the name of the Goran (Change) Movement. These fragmentations, dependencies, different military actors and the external factors have been affecting the socio-political conditions of the KRG. Therefore, a simplistic singular understanding of the “Kurds” in general, as it is often done in the west, is highly misleading and unfounded.

⁸² Knights, Michael and Eamon McCharty. “Provincial Politics in Iraq Fragmentation or New Awakening?” Washington Institute for Near East Policy Policy Focus, vol. 81, Apr. 2008. USA: Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

⁸³ Bozarslan, Hamit. “The Kurds and Middle Eastern ‘State of Violence’: The 1980s and 2010s.” *Kurdish Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2014, pp. 6.

⁸⁴ “After ISIS: Perspectives of Displaced Communities from Ninewa on Return to Iraq’s Disputed Territory.” PAX. Netherlands: PAX, June 2015, pp. 54-65.

⁸⁵ Cockburn, Patric. “Iraq Crisis: Baghdad Prepares for the Worst as Islamist Militants Vow to Capture the Capital.” *Independent*, 13 June 2014. Web. Accessed 25 Mar. 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iraq-crisis-islamist-militants-warn-battle-will-raise-after-seizing-mosul-and-tikrit-9530899.html>

Chapter 4

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

After going through the past and recent developments in the KRG's region and talking about the functions, features and differences of the Kurds; it is possible to seek for the relationship between the policies, political and social aims, ideologies and their reflections on the discourses concerning the KRG. In the following chapter, the Critical Discourse Analysis methods are going to be put to use in order to reveal those relationships. First of all, the methodology section is going to demonstrate the reader how such analysis is done and what are the limits of it. Then, the periodization will shape the general course of the argumentation as each of the discourse is shared within each specific period so that there is a cohesive line of deliberation. Each period has two discourses to be analyzed and supported by a conclusion section in the end of each chapter. Period A concerns with the US Invasion of Iraq in 2003 until the 2005 Parliamentary Elections of Iraq and KRG. Period B follows this date until the end of the US withdrawal in 2011 which coincides with the "Arab Spring" protests while the last one, Period C connects these events with the ISIS insurgency and ends in 2017, excluding the process of the KRG's independence referendum in September, due to the fact that it is relatively recent and the results of the process are still ongoing.

4.1 Methodological Framework

A text is traditionally understood as a piece of written language.⁸⁶ However, it is broadly and generally accepted that it includes every type of communicative utterance therefore, composed of either written or spoken discourse.⁸⁷

According to Norman Fairclough, who is one of the pioneers of the CDA, cognition and representation of the world, and social interaction are two fundamental social processes which simultaneously occur within the texts. Due to this fact, texts are multifunctional and a model that allows multifunctional analysis is required.⁸⁸ The following analysis is a set of methodologies which are supplementary of the three-dimensional model of Fairclough that fulfills that function (see Figure 9). This framework constitutes the basis of the following discourse analyses of the KRG along with other textual/lexical and social analyses that are supportive of the model.

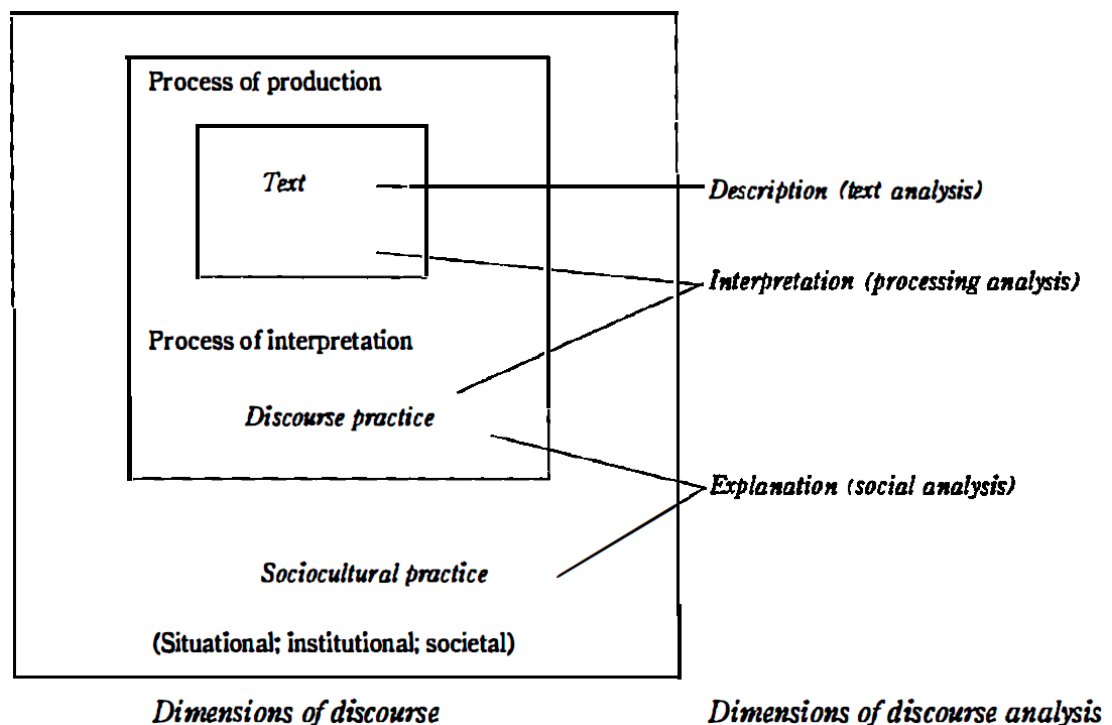


Figure 9. Three-Dimensional Framework of Fairclough

⁸⁶ Fairclough, Norman. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London and New York: Longman, 1995, pp. 4.

⁸⁷ Titscher, Stefan, et al. *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis: In Search of Meaning*. 1st ed., London: SAGE, 2000, pp. 20.

⁸⁸ Fairclough, *op. cit.*, pp. 6.

Fairclough asserts that the division between the description and interpretation dimensions is not a sharp one since both involve formal features of the texts. He indicates that the first dimension (i.e. the description) can be organized under:⁸⁹

- Vocabulary
- Grammar
- Cohesion
- Text structure

For this reason, the following discourses are going to be analyzed primarily through the lexicalization, how each vocabulary is put together to constitute sentences, their situational meanings/metaphors that lead to a general meaning, the coherence between those meanings their tenses and their ways of combinations and orders.

The discursive practice, on the other hand, involves processes of text production, distribution and consumption.⁹⁰ Therefore, the second dimension is the interpretation of the relationship between the text and the discursive processes. These processes vary by the social factor which suggests that the discourse is also contextualized in social practices.⁹¹ There are three main headings as well to be used in the analysis of the discursive practice:⁹²

- The force of utterances
- The coherence of the texts
- The intertextuality of the texts

Along with the textual analysis, the target of the discourse i.e. what sorts of speech acts (demand, clarification, request etc.), how are the sentences connected into a meaningful whole, who they address or refer to and how they are connected with the other texts are going to be looked at together in the second dimension (i.e. the interpretation) of the texts. At this level of the analysis, Bazerman's

⁸⁹ Fairclough, Norman. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992, pp. 75-78.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 78.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-81.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 75.

Intertextuality⁹³ and Baker's opinions on the frequency and dispersion of the words are going to be used.⁹⁴

At last, the social practice is going to be approached with the relation of the discourses with the ideology (especially with the political perspectives and their reciprocal effect on each other) due to the fact that, as Fairclough asserts:

- “(...) *ideologies to be significations/constructions of reality (the physical world, social relations, social identities), which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination.*”⁹⁵

The policies, ideologies and objectives that have become visible by the description and the interpretation of the discourses are going to be explained in relation to each other and the circumstances of the period. Those explanations are going to be made right after the analysis of the previous dimensions if necessary in order to maintain the cohesion of the discussion. However, the broader explanations are set to be in the subchapters after each period. Political argumentations of these discourses are explained with Political Discourse Analysis techniques which is an approach contributing to CDA.⁹⁶ Particular vocabulary, the grammar of the sentences, their clauses and structures are going to be evaluated by the analysis of the argumentation methods (e.g. their goals, means, values/concerns, circumstances and claims).⁹⁷

⁹³ Bazerman, Charles and Paul Prior, editors. *What Writing Does and How It Does It: An Introduction to Analyzing Texts and Textual Practices*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2004, pp. 83-94.

⁹⁴ Baker, Paul. “Frequency and Dispersion.” *Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis*. GB: Bloomsbury, 2006, pp. 47-69.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 87.

⁹⁶ Fairclough, Isabela and Norman Fairclough. *Political Discourse Analysis: A Method for Advanced Students*. Oxford: Routledge, 2012, pp. 1.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-116.

4.2 Period A (2003-2005)

The following analysis aims at disclosing the situational stance of the KRG following the US Invasion of Iraq in March 2003 which, then became the source of the internal imbalances. In this section, the texts cover only the period until the elections of the Iraqi Transitional Government due to the reason that during the US presence the central authority of the Baghdad administration has faded away, the Iraqi insurgency arose and religious extremism was centered around various groups; and the KRG exploited of being on the winning side of the war by increasing its territorial and administrative power which led to the unification of the Erbil-Dohuk and Suleimaniyah governorates in 2006. These events surely can be traced back by the discourses of the regional authorities along with the western publications and speeches concerning the KRG or, with a similar logic one can say that the events following each discourse were affected by it, vice versa. Therefore, they both are going to be addressed with respect to this principle of dialectical interaction.⁹⁸

It is also a requisite to mention the texts to be used on the following pages which are the subject of the CDA. The first text is an article by an Iraqi-Kurdish BBC journalist which includes a collection of in-text quotations of KDP leader Masoud Barzani 1 year before the invasion. This text is going to be followed by an interview with Mustafa Barzani, ex-leader of the KDP and the father of Masoud Barzani. They are significant in terms of the possible policy and the discourse changes came to pass within the 1-year period between those two texts. Henceforth, the reader will be able to grasp the approach of the KRG to the upcoming US invasion and to establish connections with the subsequent stance of the Kurdish authorities after the fall of Baghdad and during the US military presence. Next, the discourses will be paying attention to the aforementioned exploitation of the circumstances as the mutual letter of Barzani and Talabani in 2004 is going to be evaluated. The 3 dimensional analysis of this period will be concluded via the examination of the discourses as a whole by reflecting them to the broader scale.

⁹⁸ Fairclough. *Discourse and Social Change*, pp. 88.

4.2.1 KRG's Perspective on the US Invasion of Iraq

As the US notion of “war on terror” became prominent to be extending to the Iraq, KRG's authorities put their cautions into words without any direct support or disapproval. In the BBC article titled “Iraqi Kurds Cautious on New US War” of March 2002, the leader of the KDP Masoud Barzani replied the question of whether the Kurds will support an American strike against Iraq or not as follows:⁹⁹

- *“Is (the question) not a simple one and we need many answers before we are able to answer such a question.”*

His statement can be examined into two clauses within the utterance-type meaning task.¹⁰⁰ The first part of it *“is not a simple one and we need many answers”* expresses an assertion since it is an independent clause and ensued by the dependent clause *“before we are able to answer such a question”* which provides a conditional meaning to the sentence. Furthermore, his remark is to avoid a direct answer to the question of “support or not” and the shortness of the answer is evident. His previous experience of the region led him to abstain from any direct confrontation with the other authorities present in the region while he passes his direct remarks on a possible scenario of “an independent Kurdish state” as follows:

- *“We have not asked for the establishment of a Kurdish state. This does not mean that it is not our right to do so, but we know that it is not realistic, and we do not have the power to do so.”*

Here, he makes a distinction of the ethical “righteousness” and the rational “ableness” due to the possible future circumstances that might create a reversal in their political achievements. However, by using the phrase *“this does not mean that it is not our right to do so”*, Barzani leaves the doors open by uttering a situated meaning to the assumed “Kurdish state” based upon the righteousness which can be legitimized afterwards by extrinsic actors even though *“they are not asked for the establishment of a Kurdish state”*.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Osman, Hiwa. “Iraqi Kurds Cautious on New US War.” BBC, 26 Mar. 2002. Web. Accessed 19 Mar. 2018, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1894662.stm

¹⁰⁰ Gee, James P. “Discourse Analysis: What Makes It Critical.” *Critical Discourse Analysis in Education*. 2nd Ed., New York: Routledge, 2011, pp. 24-25.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

On the other hand, the ex-leader of the KRG Mustafa Barzani's interview with the NY Times correspondent indicates a more romantic discourse compared to his son's statement in the previous year as addressed below.¹⁰²

- *"We have had a saying for a thousand years: "The Kurds have no friends."*

His remarks on the question whether they trust Americans are initiated with a proverb which stress an agitation for the Kurdish ethnical identity without any signified character of Iraqi, Turkish, Syrian or Iranian descent but *"the Kurds"* in general. As he continues to answer the questions, he reveals the intentions of his successive pragmatist policies by stating that:

- *"You (US) agreed to their (Turkey's) demand not to arm my son Massoud's forces in Iraq. Together with Jalal Talabani's Kurds, that's 70,000 fighters who could be on your side to defeat Saddam. But you deny us the weapons to fight our common enemy."*

Furthermore, this time he alters the discourse in which he addresses the *"the Kurds"* as a single population by emphasizing the *"Jalal Talabani's Kurds"* as a separate authority within KRG. At this point, the word selection is important as well. The sentences that he uttered which were subject to his ideas of two divided Kurdish groups are linked with *"togetherness"* among them along with the intentions to stand next to the US forces to *"defeat"* their *"common enemy"*.

Here, it is necessary to concisely remark the relationship between national consciousness and national programs as examined by Miroslav Hroch.¹⁰³ According to him, as one investigates these concepts, two aspects become prominent apart from the ideological content. First is the "course of the process", in this case the Kurdish nation formation attempts (as argued on the previous chapters) not only considering their setbacks but also their increasing intensity; and the second is the "intellectual content of the national program" with respect to the individuals' material interest which, in this particular incident the interest of the leaders of the KRG whose pragmatic policies are reflected on their discourses.

¹⁰² Safire, William. "The Kurdish Ghost". NY Times, 3 Mar. 2003. Web. Accessed 19 Mar. 2018, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/03/opinion/the-kurdish-ghost.html>

¹⁰³ Hroch, Miroslav. *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985, pp. 11-13.

Now that the theoretical explanation is given, Barzani's following keynotes further this agitation-interests relation as he, later on establishes bond between his pragmatist ideas to increase administrative and territorial power of the KRG; and the coinciding interests with US by using metaphorical phrases which is to label Turkey as an unreliable and intruding partner of the US. The dependent clause "*because they (Turkish) want to crush Kurdish culture in Turkey, not because separation is a threat*" should be interpreted with his initial agitation on the Kurdish people to notice the inconsistency of his argumentation for the wholeness of the discourse. It is related to the proposal which allows the US army to be present in the KRG controlled areas at the upcoming war against their "*common enemy*" by by-passing working with Turkey who rejected stationing the US troops in its country.

The sentence "*You're lucky their Islamists in Parliament double-crossed you*" is an outspoken insinuation to that refusal which in return, he completes with mentioning an attractive offer on the bases which US Air Force can utilize along with another 5000 US troops. This technique of connotation is an inexplicit level of intertextuality which is argued by Bazerman. The situated meaning is familiar to those who priorly have the specific knowledge.¹⁰⁴ "*And we'll be at your side*" is the conditional assertion that can be accepted if such reciprocal compromises in the field becomes a diplomatic one as well, not vice versa.

Barzani continues with referencing the tragic events of the past by using sensitive verbs, nouns and phrases with each word is connected within the sentences to stress the final clauses. For example, as he demands material support by "*When you give our Peshmerga the guns, mortars, rockets, chemical suits and gas masks they need*", his sentence initiates with making mention of the chemical weapons that Saddam regime possesses. Calling attention to the tragic but also world-wide known incidents is brought together with the material needs of the Peshmerga as a legitimization factor and followed by the sentence "*They will not only wipe out Al Qaeda's allies of Ansar al-Islam*" which is the justification of such support not only for them but for the western interests as well.

¹⁰⁴ Bazerman. *What Writing Does and How It Does It: An Introduction to Analyzing Texts and Textual Practices*, pp. 86-89.

4.2.2 KRG's Stance after the fall of Baghdad and during the US

Presence

During the 2nd week of the US Invasion of Iraq, Masoud Barzani gave a speech on the recent developments and the expectancies from the coalition.¹⁰⁵ The type of his statement was a “request” in which he expressed his concerns but avoided any serious accusations.

He starts his speech with the Islamic greetings “*In the name of God (Allah), the Merciful, the Compassionate*”. This initiation is significant to notice the fact that the target of this speech is not actually the international community due to the fact that the anti-Islamic views in the western societies simply would not match with such an actor as partners of the coalition. But a speech that seems so, so that the Kurdish community can be relieved by the expression of concerns is a logical strategy paving the way for the Barzani’s public policy. Another aspect that supports this idea is that this is not a written statement but a TV broadcast that allows Barzani to be seen as appealing to the coalition actors yet, in the same time addressing the Kurdish people.

His speech can be subject to review under 3 parts due to their lexical cohesion.¹⁰⁶ In the first part, his sentences refer to the future of Iraq which he defines as “*a profound change*” what was to follow the US operation. He describes this war as a “*liberation*” and takes advantage of the phrases relevant to the western values such as “*democratic parliamentary and federal system*”, “*prevalence of freedom*” and “*a democratic solution*”. These positive portrayals are supported by the following sentences:

- “*The KDP has remained committed to the decisions and the pledges made with the Kurdistan national parties for the sake of safeguarding the gains of liberation and freedom. It has also remained committed to the agreements and pledges [made] with the Iraqi democratic opposition forces and parties*”

Evaluating the terms used to describe the future of Iraq and an internal line of vision which strictly stresses the commitment to the agreements both with KRG and

¹⁰⁵ “Kurdish Leader's Solidarity Call.” BBC, 12 Apr. 2003. Web. Accessed 20 Mar. 2018, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2943503.stm

¹⁰⁶ Woodside, Haley. “Language, Power, and Participation: Using Critical Discourse Analysis to Make Sense of Public Policy.” *Critical Discourse Analysis in Education*. 2nd Ed., New York: Routledge, 2011, pp. 163.

Iraqi oppositions can openly support the fact that the aforementioned addressing is for the people of the country rather than the international community.

The 2nd section of Barzani's speech is the one where he actually addresses the external actors by expressing his concerns to them and also the one that he altered his speech pattern by not only directly addressing the Kurdish people but also mentioning negative possibilities e.g. a possible "*regional interference*", "*looting and pillaging*" or "*administrative vacuum*" that are concerns of the international community and the regional countries.

- "*From the outset we were concerned about the threat of the security and administrative vacuum that occurs during the liberation of towns. We warned against this at the time. Now, we condemn the looting and pillaging.*"

The phrase "*from the outset*" along with the narrative past "*we warned against this at the time*" indicates the justification attempts of being on the side of the ones who were the subjects of such actions whilst the condemnation is used in present tense to conclude the argument.

On the last cohesive part, Barzani thematizes the city of Kirkuk by fronting the dependent clause of "*Regarding the beloved city of Kirkuk*" in order to make assertions on the ambiguous situation of the city.¹⁰⁷ The independent clause continues as follows:

- "*We still believe that there is a pressing need for cooperation, understanding and coordination by the coalition forces with the Kurdish sides to set up a joint administration of Kurds, Arabs, Turkomans, Christians.*"

By attributing positive characters to the discourse such as "*beloved*", "*understanding*" and "*cooperation*", he enables the speech to be continued by making reference to the aforementioned previously signed agreements which he offered to be pursued by further positive terms such as "*cooperation*", "*joint administration*" and "*forgiveness*" at the end of his speech. Such dulcet discourse is sensible considering the relative power of the KRG compared to the other actors in the region and importance of the Kirkuk city due to its human and energy resources.

¹⁰⁷ Gee, James P. *Discourse Analysis: What Makes It Critical*, pp. 24.

Another example of discourse in this period is the letter from the Barzani and Talabani to the US president George W. Bush on June 1st, 2004.¹⁰⁸ The force of utterance is the presentation of their views and concerns as clearly stated in the initial paragraph of the letter. The grammatical analysis of the letter per each sentence reveals that the authors consistently use past and future tenses unorderedly without any regard to the cohesion integrity. Therefore, a more small scale look on the word level is necessary to ease the understanding.

1. *“America has no better friend than the people of Iraqi Kurdistan.”*
2. *“The people of Kurdistan continue to embrace American values, to welcome US troops, and to support your program for the liberation of Iraq.”*
3. *“The United States supports our plans to own and manage Kurdistan’s natural resources.”*
4. *“No coalition soldier has been killed in the area controlled by the Kurdistan Regional Government.”*
5. *“The people of Kurdistan will no longer accept second-class citizenship in Iraq.”*
6. *“Our Kurdistan Regional Government has given up many of its current freedoms in the interest of helping your administering authorities reach compromises with other Iraqis.”*
7. *“And (Coalition Provisional Authority) repeatedly tried to “derecognize’ the Kurdistan Regional Government (Iraq’s only elected government ever) in favor of a system based on Saddam’s 18 governorates.”*

The first noticeable difference in the word use is that the sentences referring to the future by emphasizing the alliance and good relations with US include the word *“People of Kurdistan”* and *“Kurdistan”* whereas, the sentences referring to the past by addressing the international coalition in general include *“Kurdistan Regional Government”*. Such discursive difference arises from the attempts to increase the credibility and legitimacy of the KRG since positive appeals on values are directed to the US and the international community is addressed with more administrative issues.

¹⁰⁸ “Letter from Barzani and Talabani to President Bush.” KRG Cabinet, 1 June 2004. Web. Accessed 20 Mar. 2018, <http://cabinet.gov.krd/a/d.aspx?s=010000&l=12&a=89>

Secondly, both the US and the international coalition are external actors that were subject to the positive representations. As Norman and Isabela Fairclough stated, argumentation is a discursive strategy in which one finds positive self-presentation and negative other presentation in the political discourses.¹⁰⁹ For this reason, if those external actors are on the side of the positive self- presentation since the international coalition was the ally of KRG during the invasion, the “negative other” presentation is the past regime of Iraq.

The representation of the internal affairs of the country is divided by references to the past and future as well as it was for the external actors. As the discourse indicates the ongoing processes or the future expectancies for the country, the words and phrases that are used such as “*no longer accept*”, “*new Iraq*”, “*support your program*”, “*liberation*” “*only stable part of Iraq*” and etc. have positive sense. However, the words and phrases used in the sentences referring the past such as “*neither nor*”, “*window dressing*”, “*without power*”, “*destroyed*” and etc. have adverse content.

In conclusion, the most recognizable features of the text and discursive practices are the positive and negative-meaning word selection regarding the past conditions and future expectancies. This contrast in the discourse is also reflected on the 3rd dimension of social practice (in this case political) by addressing themselves more formal for the international coalition while for the US, the representation is based on loyalty (“*We will be loyal friends to America even if our support is not always reciprocated.*”), friendship (“*America has no better friend than the people of Iraqi Kurdistan.*”) and alliance (“*The people of Kurdistan continue to embrace American values, to welcome US troops, and to support your program for the liberation of Iraq.*”).

4.2.3 Explanation of the Discourses

The texts analyzed in the previous pages are not only significant due to the fact that they reflect the social, economic and political settings within the discourses but also

¹⁰⁹ Fairclough, and Fairclough. *Political Discourse Analysis: A Method for Advanced Students*, pp. 22-23.

the effects of the ideological conditions to the discourse and vice versa.¹¹⁰ Thus, the texts evaluated under two different subchapters needs to be examined here together as the same method is going to be applied to the texts as a whole in the conclusion chapter.

The discourses before the US Invasion indicate a more cautious approach of the KRG to the incidents that were affecting and to affect the region in the next upcoming years. It has already been drawn attention to the pragmatist policies of the Mustafa Barzani yet, the first discourse can be interpreted in the same manner if one thinks that the cautious moves are pragmatist means as well. The question of whether such actions caused by the ideological stance of the Barzani's KRG or by the lack of a sustainable administration due to the internal conflict within the KRG can only be answered by the next chapter of the analysis since it is going to cover the period in which the administrative gap of the Iraq starts to be filled and the unification processes took place within the regional government. However, the most notable difference between Mustafa Barzani and his son's is their discursive contrasts since the former is more romantic and idealistic while Masoud Barzani is aware of the relative power of the KRG and more rational. As a consequence, the unification of the two KRG's in the future has a relation of causality with this course of events and perspectives.

On the other hand, the following discourses represent the change in the argumentation. The efforts to get a foothold in the newly created state structure precede the short-term exertions while the pre-war conditions are started to be referred not only "the old" but also "unfavorable". At this point, requests and calls get ground within the discourses as it is explicit in the mutual letter of Barzani and Talabani. Such text is important to demonstrate the discursive consensus which developed into the official unification of the two Kurdish parties because of their common interest and reliance on the US since it is also explicit in the solidarity call of Barzani.

4.3 Period B (2005-2011)

On the following part of the analysis, the new positioning of the KRG after the 2005 elections is going to be studied through the extraction of the ideologies and power

¹¹⁰ Fairclough, Norman. *Discourse and Social Change*, pp. 89.

relations from the interplay between the text and social relations.¹¹¹ Unlike the previous period of the analysis, this part includes the perspective of the KRG along with the contextualization of the given discourses within the transition period. Also the outcomes of this activity require to be looked at from another point of view: The western perspective. In fact, those two types of discourses will not be complementary in terms of reflecting the same events, but the western approaches are going to chronologically follow the former as a supplementary.

There are going to be two discourses per section to be analyzed. The section that KRG's stance is reviewed starts with the article of Nechirvan Barzani two days prior to the first Iraqi elections after the Saddam era and US invasion; and three days prior to the KRG elections which, for the first time, the two parties of the regional government participated in the elections under a single list. The subsequent text is also written by Nechirvan Barzani in 2007 and significant to state the similar and different spots within the discourses of him during the elapsed time.

Later on, the western discourses reflecting an external perspective to the situation of the region to be discussed firstly with the article from *The Sunday Times* in order to demonstrate the western singular approach to the various Kurdish communities and political parties. At last, KRG's efforts to act as a direct legitimate counterpart and the western outlook on that endeavors awaits for the interpretation through the political discourse analysis methods.

This period is going to be concluded with the 3rd dimensional explanation of the discourses in general even though the analysis of the socio-political practice is carried out during the textual and discursive analyses in order not to disrupt the cohesive integrity.

4.3.1 KRG's Perspective and Objectives in New Iraq

In January 30th and 31st, 2005 the transitional assembly of Iraq was elected after the post-invasion government and KRG witnessed the unification processes after the Washington Agreement of 1998. Nechirvan Barzani, who was the prime minister of

¹¹¹ Fairclough. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, pp. 97.

the unified list of the KDP and PUK, provided two official statements with approximately 33 months in between them. Therefore, it is highly important to have a comparison of those discourses within the limits of CDA.

To begin with, the article “*Kurdistan and Iraq*” is not a discourse of request or expression of concerns as Masoud Barzani’s statements analyzed in the previous chapter; but it is a text of clarification of aims and perspectives on the polemic issues that address the community of Iraq along with the other regional actors, not the international community.¹¹²

The second prominent aspect of his statement is the usage of terminology which belongs to the state administrations. The phrase “*the citizens of Kurdistan in Iraq*” is used as an umbrella notion of citizenship which consists of not only Kurds but as Barzani stated:

- “*I speak not only of the Kurdish people, but of all the people who live in Kurdistan -- Kurds, Arabs, Turkmen, Christians, Assyrians, Armenians, and Chaldeans, Shia, Sunni, Yezidis.*”¹¹³

The aforementioned ethnicities are identified under the Kurdistan citizenship after his official rejection of aiming independence and before he refers to the past tragic events of the Saddam era as the discourse is directed towards the humanitarian concepts in order to draw attention to the contrast with the old conditions such as “*developing democracy*”, “*appreciate and cherish our freedom*”, “*secure environment*” and talking about the social investments since the official recognition of the KRG in 1991 such as “*homes, roads, water systems*” or “*schools, health centers and universities*”.

The important point here is that such positive values that he attributed to the KRG are followed by laying claim to the Kirkuk governorate as he defined this disputed area as “*an area that is historically and culturally an integral part of Kurdistan*”. The claim is pursued by the aforementioned umbrella citizenship due to the diversity in the demographics of the city.

¹¹² Barzani, Nechirvan. *Kurdistan and Iraq*. The Washington Times, 28 Jan. 2005. Web. Accessed 22 Mar. 2018, <http://cabinet.gov.krd/a/d.aspx?s=040000&l=12&a=698>

¹¹³ Refer to Chapter 3.3 for the demographics.

This practice is a part of the clarification of aims regarding the regional issues. On the other hand, the lexical structure of the discourse promotes attempts to procure the equivalency between the state actors, in other words, indicates the KRG trying to establish a level of reciprocity between them and the adverse parties. The following sentence is probative of those efforts.

- *“We have repeated these words with utmost sincerity to our colleagues in the interim Iraqi government, to our neighbors, to our close friends and allies of the multinational coalition and to others.”*

The people in the interim Iraqi government are considered as the counterparts of the KRG by the phrase *“our colleagues”* while the inward portrayal of the regional government is evident to be also a counterpart of its neighbors; which means Turkey, Iran and Syria are addressed as equal parties. This is one of the discursive dissimilarities compared to the cautionary policies of Masoud Barzani before and during the US invasion due to the fact that the administrative gap in the region that the overthrow of Saddam left behind had been started to filled in by the unified parties of the KRG.

Nevertheless, Nechirvan Barzani is rational as well as Masoud Barzani in terms of evaluating the circumstances of this period. However, it must be remarked that such increase in hegemony of the KRG was possible because of the alliance with the US. The force of the utterance that was mentioned above as the statement directed primarily to the people of the Iraq, not to the international community, is one side of the aim of the discourse. The actual target of the statement is to emphasize the inter-state reciprocity as it is concluded by the following paragraph which aims at pointing out this fact to the US authorities:

- *“We thank the American people for their sacrifice on our behalf and we thank President Bush for his steadfast leadership in support of our freedom. We are proud to be your allies.”*

The following article to be analyzed is also Nechirvan Barzani’s which was written in 2007, as stated in the abstract of the Period B.¹¹⁴ His text at first appearance is a welcoming of the meeting between the Turkish Prime Minister

¹¹⁴ Barzani, Nechirvan. *Kurdistan’s Hope for Talks*. The Washington Post, 5 Nov. 2007. Web. Accessed 23 Mar. 2018, <http://cabinet.gov.krd/a/d.aspx?s=040000&l=12&a=21188>

Erdoğan and US President Bush. He remarks that this is a meeting to discuss the “*ongoing conflict*” with the PKK, the organization which is identified as terrorist by both the US and Turkey; and KDP fought against with Turkey in the Operation Hammer in 1997. He draws attention to the length of the conflict and defines it “*decades-old*”, also in order to describe the differences between the past regional government and the new KRG that they have been trying to establish on the reciprocal bases with the other state actors as argued before. Indeed, his reference to those past events admits that the ‘90s led them to the crisis:

- “*We ourselves fought against the PKK in the late 1990s with help from the Turkish military, and 10 years later we again find ourselves at a crisis point.*”

His perpetual mentions of the past with its negative aspects such as “*military means*”, “*crisis*”, “*violence*” and “*failed strategy*” are directed towards the ongoing processes at that moment, particularly to the economic dependence on Turkey as Barzani offers to be the party that mediates the diplomatic talks with PKK and Turkey therefore, not only endeavors to be a counterpart of a state but also to have the PKK sit on the other side of the table as one of the contracting parties. Such legitimization attempt from KRG would have advantages of internal stability since it aims at cessation of the armed conflict and gaining more human resources for the social sphere due to the fact that this guerilla-type organization attracts many people living under the KRG’s borders.

Drawing these benefits all together, Barzani purposes a beneficial short-term solution considering its relative power within the region during the period in which its best ally, the US, announced the initiation of the withdrawal of its troops from Iraq. Furthermore, such short-term actions are supported by positive descriptions directed towards Turkey since the biggest trade partner and the most important regional state in terms of the military cooperation with the KRG is going to continue to be the determinant actor of this conflict.

Barzani addresses Turkish authorities as “*our Turkish friends*” while condemning the “*unwarranted PKK attacks*” and asks for its members to “*lay down arms immediately*”. This type of rhetoric is one of the differences that he did not use for any of the regional actors in his previous article. Even though, the article is initiated by mentioning the meeting of Bush and Erdoğan, it does not end with any

acknowledgments to the international coalition, in particular to the US. It is explicit to see that the interest of the KRG is directed towards the regional powers due to the US withdrawal and the discontent it roused for KRG.

4.3.2 The Perspective Comparison: Western versus KRG

After interpreting the discourses of the KRG starting from the US Invasion of Iraq, it is essential to peer through the perspective of the main addressee of those discourses: the west.

The first discourse to be analyzed is narrated relatively recent to the previous article of Nechirvan Barzani therefore, is going to give clear insights to the efforts of KRG to establish itself as one of the counterparts of the states influencing the region.¹¹⁵ Sullivan starts his argument by stressing the fact that the US troops' withdrawal is in immediate future and certain.

- *“There will be a withdrawal of US troops from Iraq. Quite when it happens, how it happens and who will take credit or blame have yet to be determined. But it will happen.”*

The certainty is his foundation upon which he created his strategic projections. The political actions occur only in situations where alternative choices might be made as Colin Hay remarked.¹¹⁶ Therefore, they are connected to the numbers and scarcity of the alternatives. Such type of certainty obliges the author to coincide the interest of the US through the enabling *“an effective soft-partition that keeps the Kurdish dream alive.”* since he believes reasonably that the US withdrawal is going to create a security vacuum just as it created the administrative vacuum after the fall of Saddam. His sentence as follows must be perused with regard to the particular dependency on a single alternative:

- *“The Kurdish peshmerga have been the only seriously competent force in Iraq since the fall of the Ba’athists and the disbanding of the army.”*

Furthermore, KRG's the efforts of the reciprocity become more of an issue for the author due to the lack of alternatives. The references to the tragedies of the past such as *“Saddam's butchery”* is represented to be fixed by the US presence thus, a drawback is evident by the withdrawal. His following projections are circled around *“primarily to defend and police the territorial integrity of Kurdistan”* whereas the old notion of a buffer zone is uttered once again to them. The discourse makes explicit of the potential regional projections along with the preservation of the US gains in the Iraqi soil. He attributes direct functionalities to the “Iraqi Kurdistan” as follows:

1. *“a democratic buffer against Arab extremism”*
2. *“a focus for Kurdish unrest in Iran's north”*

¹¹⁵ Sullivan, Andrew. *The Kurds: New Key to Long-Term Victory*. The Sunday Times, 16 July 2007. Web. Accessed 23 Mar. 2018, <http://cabinet.gov.krd/a/d.aspx?s=040000&l=12&a=19096>

¹¹⁶ Fairclough and Fairclough. *Political Discourse Analysis: A Method for Advanced Students*, pp. 26.

Also, the situated meaning of the paragraph that he exemplifies the global models of capitalist democracies is the KRG to become one of those models under the “*democratic*” US alliance to create a “*domino effect*” in the region. Concluding the article by drawing similarities with the Jews, Sullivan makes reference to the establishment of the Israeli state after the tragedy of the genocide by asserting that “*they have endured centuries of persecution in other people’s lands*”. Considering the fact that even Masoud and Nechirvan Barzani is more cautious and rational in terms of their demands reflected on their discourses, Sullivan is *plus royaliste que le roi* as French phrase puts.¹¹⁷

Another crucial moment of this period is the President Obama’s speech at Camp Lejeune, not due to his arguments on the KRG, Barzani or Kurds in general, but because he did not mention above all a single term or aspect related to those.¹¹⁸ His speech was originated from the revision of the time of the US troops’ withdrawal and has clear insights on the US’ function during the transition of the Iraq. Moreover, he makes references to the sovereignty of Iraq by stating “*It is time for Iraq to be a full partner in a regional dialogue*”. This is a clear cutback for the KRG’s “sovereignty within sovereignty” efforts that were argued above. However, it is also necessary to evaluate Obama’s another speech as it is published by the KRG authorities in order to uncover if Obama’s total negligence of the KRG in Camp Lejeune is an indicator of something else.

The statement of the “Kurdistan Presidency” is titled as “President Obama Supports President Barzani’s Efforts on Gov’t Formation” which manifests that the reciprocal ambitions remain in the discourse of the KRG as a state counterpart.¹¹⁹ However, the indirect quotations of the intertextual representation from the Obama’s sentences remain positive as long as they are related to the mediator function of the KRG to the Iraqi state.¹²⁰ In other words, it is remarked that:

1. “*President Obama expressed his strong support*
2. *for President Barzani’s efforts and his role*

¹¹⁷ Idiom: “More royalist than the king”.

¹¹⁸ “Obama’s Speech at Camp Lejeune, N.C.” NY Times, 27 Feb. 2009. Web. Accessed 24 Mar. 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/27/us/politics/27obama-text.html>

¹¹⁹ Kurdistan Presidency. *President Obama Supports President Barzani’s Efforts on Gov’t Formation*, 6 Nov. 2010. Web. Accessed 24 Mar. 2018, <http://cabinet.gov.krd/a/d.aspx?s=040000&l=12&a=37652>

¹²⁰ Bazerman. *What Writing Does and How It Does It: An Introduction to Analyzing Texts and Textual Practices*, pp. 88.

3. *in government formation talks in Iraq.*” and,

1. *“President Obama expressed his appreciation*

2. *for President Barzani’s positive role*

3. *in trying to bring other Iraqi leaders together.*” and,

1. *“(President Obama) expressed his administration’s strong support*

2. *for an initiative by President Barzani*

3. *to break the current political deadlock over government formation.*”

Clauses number 1 are the aforementioned positive representations, clauses number 2 refer to the actions of the subject (mediator) while clauses number 3 are the functions of the subject. These representations prove the fact that the role of the KRG is to balance the power play by remaining a minor ally of the US in the region so that the transition of a sovereign Iraq is monitored and influenced when necessary. Therefore, in following paragraphs Obama describes the “Iraqi Kurdistan” as “*Kurdistan Region*” in order to stress the position of the KRG within the Iraqi administration. This type of discourse eases the understanding of the perspective that the KRG is to establish for themselves and the perspective that the west attributes to the KRG.

4.3.3 Explanation of the Discourses

The period of 2005-2011 is different from the previous and the following periods in terms of the armed conflicts within Iraq that directly concerns the KRG. The political, economic and diplomatic efforts supersede the military struggles especially for the Kurdish regional authorities that endeavor for reciprocal acceptance.

Nechirvan Barzani's statements therefore, indicate the initial demands after the US invasion unlike the cautious policies of Masoud Barzani. The difference between those discourses arises from the difference in the circumstances that KRG was able to manage the gains profitably.

Furthermore, we see the actual reflections of these efforts on the western discourses. Andrew Sullivan's article takes the aim of the KRG one step forward as he refers to the functions of the KRG in the same way as Obama. Whether these discourses are results of the social preconditions that best match with the US interest or the US initiatives to reshape the region are causing such discourses should be examined by further studies. However, the dialectical understanding of the CDA conduces the examiner to see the social actions and its consequences in a mutual causality.¹²¹

Regardless of the exact relationship of the aspects of this dialectical theory, this very period is the most recent social basis for the next conflicting one. It is essential to bear this fact in mind in order not to directly find ourselves in the middle of the analysis of the upcoming period of the instability, not solely for the KRG but for the Middle East in general. The effects of the Arab Spring and the ISIS insurgency on the region is connected the relationship of the KRG and the US as well as the other regional actors such as Turkey, Iran, Syria, or the states in the Arabian Peninsula.

4.4 Period C (2011-2017)

The last period of the analysis goes into the events in which the insurgency and instability are revived. The protests of the 2011 among the many Arab countries led to overthrows of the leader of Egypt, Libya, Tunis and Yemen whereas Syria and Iraq faced with civil wars. The Sunni Arab population of Iraq has been a part of the insurgency that started within Syria and expanded to the east under the name of ISIS

¹²¹ Fairclough, Norman. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, pp. 131.

or *Daesh*. The catastrophe and terror that this extremist terrorist organization created is evident and recognized worldwide. However, the post-US sectarian Iraq left the Sunni Arab population of the country no other alternatives but to take the side against the Shia-led Baghdad government and KRG.¹²²

The first analysis of the perspective of the KRG thereby consists of the initial events of these chaotic years. Their positioning on the protests, steps to prevent mass disturbances and discursive strategies with the other actors are going to be analyzed firstly by an official respond to the HRW and Amnesty International. Secondly, KRG's rhetoric is going to be looked at concerning their positioning with Turkey.

The second section is going to concern with the facts that emerged after the ISIS insurgency, mainly shaped around the conditions created after the fall of Mosul in June 2014. Masoud Barzani's call for an independence referendum is going to be analyzed in context of the Iraqi power vacuum. This chapter is going to be concluded with Nechirvan Barzani's statement on the launch of the Mosul liberation campaign along with some deliberations on the end of the operations by the July 2017.

4.4.1 KRG's Stance during the Arab Spring and the following Protests

The aforementioned protests obliged the KRG to take cautionary measures in order to prevent the increase in the social instability. The letter of the Head of Department of Foreign Relations Falah Mustafa Bakir to the HRW and Amnesty International is both an assurance for the international community that the KRG has been fulfilling

¹²² Zucchini, David. "As ISIS Is Driven From Iraq, Sunnis Remain Alienated." NY Times, 26 Oct. 2017. Web. Accessed 26 Mar. 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/26/world/middleeast/iraq-isis-sunni.html>

its administrative duties and an explanation for the diplomatic actors that those protests are to be dealt with the democratic solutions rather than oppressions.¹²³

In the first paragraph, the aim of the letter is specified as a “*response to Human Rights Watch’s statement on April 21, 2011 in relation to the protests in Suleimaniyah between February and April of this year.*” The following positive remark on such “*intervention*” described as “*consistent*” reveals the KRG’s objective to pursue parallel policies with the international community. The reaffirmation of the “*gratitude and appreciation*” of the HRW’s work “*in defense of Kurdish Rights*” is supportive of this argument.

The following paragraphs mention the negative aspects of those protests as Bakir stresses the extremism by referencing the protests leaders’ “*call for Jihad*” and their “*damage to public and private property*”. Rather than making a distinction of the political opposition and those extremist protesters, he claims that it is “*a result of political opportunism*”. This description in which he defines the opposition with their violent aspects is an outcome of the ambitions to maintain the power of the governing parties; not a reconciliatory approach as being democratic is often attributed to the KRG.

The explanation of the “*key facts*” is the supportive part that indicates the indisputableness of the KRG elections due to the observation of the EU and UN. The justification which constitutes the basis of the following argument is the concept of the political majority that was elected democratically and which allegedly allowed the opposition to make “*significant gains*”. The call of the Goran Party to bring their people to the streets as the main opposition thusly depicted as “*a direct challenge to democracy*”.

The rest of the statement consists of evidencing the precautionary steps that have been told to be initiated before the protests began. The concepts which are critical for the western governmental systems such as “*transparency*”, “*elimination of corruption*”, “*public access to services*”, “*rule of law*”, “*women rights*”, “*independent judiciary*”, “*freedom of the press*” and “*Code of Ethics and Conduct*” stressed and used as a response to the following criticisms on the KRG’s measures during the protests. These emphases are the reflection of the previous political

¹²³ Bakir. *Letter to Mr Kenneth Roth, Executive Director, Human Rights Watch*, 23 May 2011. Web. Accessed 26 Mar 2018, <http://cabinet.gov.krd/a/d.aspx?s=040000&l=12&a=40161>

parallelisms in particular with the US on the broader international arena and demonstrate that the scope of the KRG is enlarged compared to the past. In addition to those aforementioned indicated policies, Bakir asserts that what were to follow these concepts regarding the protests are attempts to a democratic solution. The following sentences are significant not only because they are parallel with the western democracy but also they address the people in those protests by documenting their demands.

1. *“The government has listened closely to the people’s demands”*
2. *“Parliament has passed an extensive program to institute 17 points of reform”*
3. *“A committee was formed by the Council of Ministers to investigate the events that took place in Suleimaniyah and elsewhere”*
4. *“Establishing a committee to work on a mechanism for coordination”*
5. *“The Prime Minister and Ministers of Peshmerga Affairs and the Interior have all attended sessions of parliament to be questioned about events related to the protests”*
6. *“President Barzani laid out a list of 20 reforms that he called on parliament and the other appropriate entities to enact in response to many of the legitimate demands of the protesters”*

The sentences are formed in the way that they address the international community. Nevertheless, their situational meanings are directed to the protesters. In other words, the sentences address a third person grammatically but the content aims to defuse the protests.

On the other hand, the conclusion part of this letter is one of the many that have been shown previously. It draws distinctions with the past of the KRG, the tragedies of the Saddam era (*“Saddam Hussein’s oppressive regime”*) and the progress that has been made by the KRG (references to the increase in number of the schools, hospitals, road etc.). The last intertextual sentence quoted directly from the Prime Minister *“the lives and the safety of the people, as well as the stability of the region, are above all of the political positions that we hold”* is the humanitarian perspective that KRG targets to identify itself with along with the connotation for the softening in the anti-protest measurements.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Marsh, Josephine and Jayne C. Lammers. “Figured Worlds and Discourses of Masculinity: Being a Boy in a Literacy Classroom.” *Critical Discourse Analysis in Education*. 2nd Ed., New York:

One year after the tremors of the Arab Spring, KRG continues balance policies with different actors in the region and Turkey has been the supportive figure behind Barzani's KRG against the PKK insurgency and Talabani's PUK. The following speech given in a press release is demonstrative of these policies.¹²⁵

Nechirvan Barzani's speech at an energy conference in Erbil with the participation of Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources give insights on the bilateral addressing, wording and lexicalization as Fairclough puts as they imply processes happening in different times and places; and for different people.¹²⁶ In the case of this meeting, the first remarkable thing is the difference between the text and the quotations within the text. In the beginning of it, the indirect quotation of Barzani's assertion that:

- *"Kurdistan's relations with Turkey in the energy sector have entered a new phase"*

includes the utterance-token/situational meaning of two reciprocal subjects, as it is often used within the discourses of the KRG; and these two subjects are on a promising future due to their compromise or as it is put in the sentence, *"relations"*. Even though, the word *Kurdistan* representing the KRG is quoted to be said by Barzani, the rest of the statement including direct quotations consistently speaking of either *"Kurdistan Region"* or *"Kurdistan Regional Government"* as can be seen below:

1. *"Turkey's Minister Yeldiz spoke about the vital trade partnership between Turkey and the Kurdistan Region"*
2. *"With the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Iraqi government"*
3. *"The Kurdistan Region is very dynamic"*

It is evident in the direct quotations i.e. the speeches of the contractors of the meeting as they address each other directly that the official identification of the administration is *Kurdistan Regional Government*. However, the indirect quotations

Routledge, 2011, pp. 96-97.

¹²⁵ "Prime Minister Barzani: Kurdistan's Energy Relations with Turkey to Enter a New Phase." KRG Cabinet, 21 May 2012. Web. Accessed 27 Mar. 2018, <http://cabinet.gov.krd/a/d.aspx?s=040000&l=12&a=44020>

¹²⁶ Fairclough. *Discourse and Social Change*. pp. 76-77.

within the text show the efforts of the KRG to indirectly identify themselves as *Kurdistan*:

1. *“Dr Hawrami criticised what he said was akin to an economic embargo against Kurdistan by the federal government”*
2. *“Dr Hawrami emphasised that in terms of sharing revenues, there is no difference between Kurdistan’s oil and Iraq’s oil”*

Such endeavors can be explained by the pragma-dialectical approach in the argumentation theory.¹²⁷ According to van Eemeren, the argumentation arises in response of some difference of opinion and its function is essentially critical (it doesn’t concern with justification). The pragma-dialectical approach takes the normative ideal as its goal of analysis. In van Eemeren’s words cited in Fairclough (2012), it is “a complex speech act, or a type of social verbal action, argumentation has a goal, a purpose or point”. Here, the normative ideal that the argumentation is constructed upon is the long-lasting ambitions of reciprocity. The discourse in the press release of the KRG Cabinet thusly differs from the discourse that the statements are directly quoted from. The increased regional instability not only obliged the KRG to take measures concerning the internal policies as it is argued above but also to establish stronger connections with its neighbors, in particular with Turkey. Therefore, a discourse that can indicate efforts to enlarge the scope of the regional government towards statehood is avoided in order to sustain the support of Turkey.

4.4.2 KRG’s Positioning at the War Against ISIS

The extremist terrorist organization Islamic State of Iraq and Sham or commonly known as ISIS has come to the fore mainly after the Syrian Civil War started in 2011. However, the success of their military offensives in Iraq depends on other factors instead of a simplistic explanation of extremism within the Islam. By deferring this broad topic for the next enquiries, it can be asserted that the power vacuum and the quick change in the Iraqi ruling class led the insurgency to grow thus, allowed ISIS to access a social base among the Sunnis of Iraq.

¹²⁷ Fairclough, Isabela and Norman Fairclough. *Political Discourse Analysis: A Method for Advanced Students*, pp. 53.

On the other hand, the positioning of the KRG is often underestimated considering the 3 years of ISIS hegemony nearby the KRG controlled territories. Mosul was fallen to the ISIS on the second week of the June as Iraqi Army retreated from the largest city in the northern Iraq in a few days. Approximately 4 week later, KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani announced that they are going to stay out of the liberation campaign to retake Mosul and concern with the protection of the KRG areas.¹²⁸

Nevertheless, one of the most notable statements is KRG President Masoud Barzani's speech in parliament which he demonstrates a political opportunism.¹²⁹ His immediate request from the parliament to initiate the process of the independence referendum coincided with the major retreat of the Iraqi Army from northern Iraq and Peshmerga's takeover of the Kirkuk city along with its oil fields. His speech is shaped around the highlights as follows:

1. *"immediately undertake the task"*
2. *"strengthen our hand"*
3. *"the time has come"*
4. *"determine our future"*
5. *"we will protect these (disputed) areas"*
6. *"also ready to help both Shia and Sunnis"*

These facts show the complete disengagement of the KRG from the Iraqi authority. Such precise discourse is contrary to the previous cautionary statements and policies as argued before. In comparison to the rational statements, the clauses and phrases are broad in terms of their meaning i.e. "protection of the disputed areas" are inconclusive since it is not specified from whom those areas are going to be protected, whether from ISIS or the government forces who may try to recapture those areas back.

Lastly, Barzani takes one step forward as he asks the support of the Iraqi people against who *"destroyed the country"*. Here, the word *"destroy"* is not used in order to represent the ISIS but the people who he accuses of paving the way for such

¹²⁸ "Iraq Conflict: Kurds 'Will not Help Retake Mosul'." BBC. 17 June 2014. Web. Accessed 27 Mar. 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27883997>

¹²⁹ "President Barzani Asks Parliament to Begin Work on Referendum." KRG Cabinet, 4 July 2014. Web. Accessed 27 Mar. 2018, <http://cabinet.gov.krd/a/d.aspx?s=040000&l=12&a=51812>

destruction therefore, just as guilty. This linkage addresses the Iraqi people yet, created so that the Kurds are encouraged to have parallelisms with their administration since Barzani has created a discursive separation among the Iraqi people as Shia, Sunni and Kurds.

27 months after the fall of Mosul into the hands of the ISIS, the international coalition which was founded by the US on September 2014 initiated the liberation campaign of the city.¹³⁰ The operation lasted 9 months by different actors such as the international coalition, Peshmerga and the Iraqi Army including Iran-backed PMU. Peshmerga forces did not participate the operations within the city but advanced on the north and east of the governorate to a certain distance (see Figure 10).

In the previously analyzed text Masoud Barzani stated that the Peshmerga forces are not going to be a part of the recapture of the city. The KRG took advantage of the power vacuum that ISIS created and their seizure of the Kirkuk to start the independence processes. On the contrary, Nechirvan Barzani announced the participation of the Peshmerga forces in 2016 without any mention to the previous statements asserting that they will not.¹³¹ Hence, the last discourse to be looked at is his statement.

¹³⁰ "Statement by the President on ISIL." The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 10 Sep. 2014. Web. Accessed 28 Mar. 2018, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/10/statement-president-isil-1>

¹³¹ "Prime Minister Barzani's Statement on the Launch of Operation to Liberate Mosul." KRG Cabinet, 17 Oct. 2016. Web. 28 Mar. 2018, <http://cabinet.gov.krd/a/d.aspx?s=040000&l=12&a=55024>

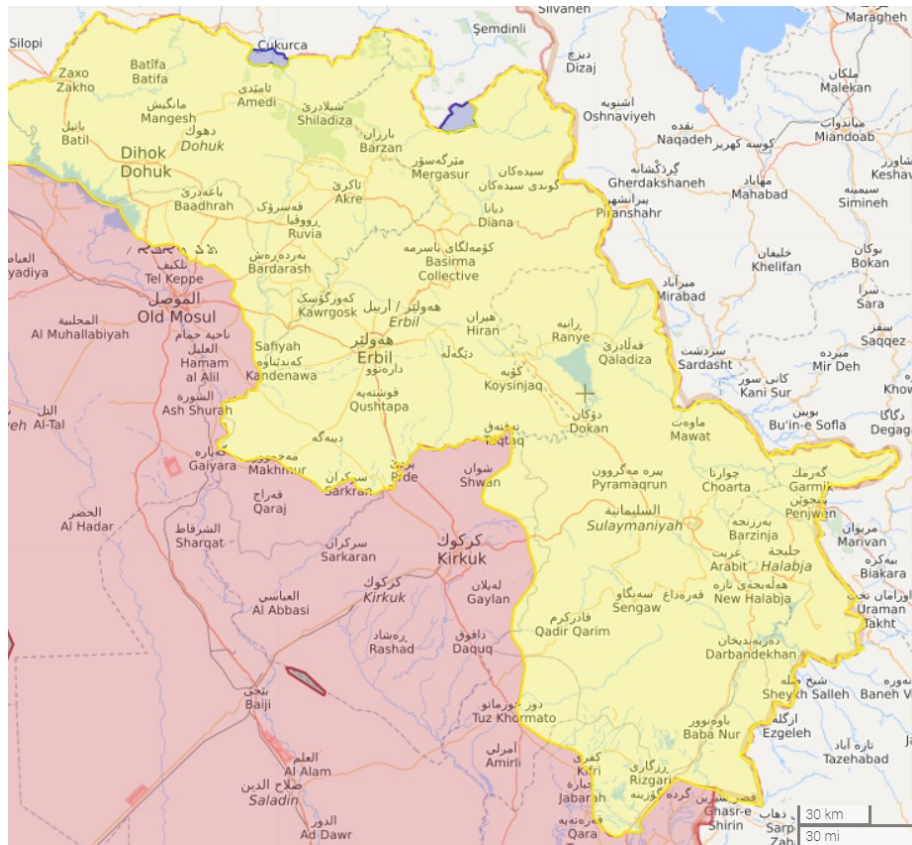


Figure 10. Territorial Control of the Northern Iraq as of April 2018

The initiation of the statement indicates a dual operation due to the ISIS threat on both the globe and the KRG.

1. *“Today, the Kurdistan Regional Government Peshmerga and security forces launched an operation to liberate the City of Mosul.”*
2. *“ISIS used the city as a launching pad for attacks against the region and the world.”*

Herewith, the KRG Peshmerga represents the liberators of the region whereas the *security forces* referring to the Iraqi army and the coalition as the providers of the world security since *“ISIS was able to attract extremists to its ranks”*. The following paragraphs exaggerate the circumstances and tend to be metaphorical (demonstrated below by the underlined phrases and words) as some examples are as follows:

1. *“The Peshmerga forces, led by the President of Kurdistan Region and Commander in Chief of the armed forces Massoud Barzani”*
2. *“crushed the myth of ISIS in Kobane and Sinjar that marked the beginning of the terrorist group's fall elsewhere”*
3. *“the heroes of Peshmerga forces started the largest operation to destroy ISIS”*

4. *“with limited capabilities, the Peshmerga forces have displayed unmatched resilience and heroism against the most dangerous terrorist organization in the world”*

5. *“The Peshmergas also protected the humanity from a major threat”*

Furthermore, the statement constantly addresses the international community as Barzani remarks:

1. *“the international community should recognize the role of the Peshmergas”*

2. *“the guardians of the free world (Peshmerga)”*

3. *“they are (Peshmerga) proud to fight to protect the free world”*

4. *“the Kurdistan Region has fulfilled all its obligations within the international coalition against ISIS”*

5. *“the global security is integrated and connected together”*

6. *“the countries in the region and the international community must work together”*

Combining those two aspects, the stated role of the KRG/Peshmerga and their functions concerning the international sphere, makes explicit of the fact that the previously commenced independence processes are still followed by the policies reflecting on the discourse of the Prime Minister of the KRG. In addition to these efforts, the discourse became much more idealistic compared to the prudent statements during the US military presence.

At last, the independence referendum started to be put into the words after the campaign to recapture Mosul started. After Masoud Barzani asked the parliament to begin the work on referendum, there is only one statement released in the KRG Cabinet related to the referendum. However, by the beginning of the 2016 the statements concerning the independence released more often. While between the January 2016 and the start of the Mosul campaign there are 3, after the Mosul campaign there are 21 press releases defending and legitimizing the independence.¹³² Therefore, it can be inferred that instead of the administrative gap or the ensuing instability within the region, the catalyst of the independence referendum process was the quick changes of the administrative authority around the KRG controlled territories.

¹³² The numbers are acquired from the official page of the KRG Cabinet.

4.4.3 Explanation of the Discourses

The previous statements are from a period of massive changes that had not only served the interests of the KRG but also created setbacks. The protests of the 2011 had different echoes on each of the actors whereas KRG's policies were successful in avoiding unwelcomed consequences for the KDP and PUK coalition, considering the strong opposition of the Goran Movement, economic instability and the regional insurgency.

However, it also possible to see that there are small changes on the rhetoric of the discourses. Since the beginning of the analysis of the discourses from 2002 there has been a slow but continuous shift in the rational assertions towards idealistic objectives. The sudden call of the Masoud Barzani for an independence referendum which followed the takeover of Kirkuk by Peshmerga forces and retreat of the Iraqi Army from north of the country levered the ideals of the nation building and took advantage of the conditions of the country.

On the other hand, the recapture of the Mosul has strengthened the position of the Iraqi central government and led to an increase in the administration of the areas nearby the KRG controlled territories. The Kurdish Independence Referendum of September 2017 is thus held during the period in which the power of the both parties was on the rise. The inconclusiveness of the referendum by the current time of March 2018 therefore, is fundamentally a cutback for the KRG that has become idealist in its objectives.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

First and foremost, the analyses of the discourses show no linear increase in the administrative power of the KRG since March 1970 Agreement. The skirmishes with the central government during the Ba'ath Period prevented such linearity for the KRG while it created internal imbalances for the Iraqi state. The background of the Kurdish politics in Iraq, as argued in the 2nd and 3rd chapters, is full of setbacks yet, the general course of events shows that the intensity of the efforts of the KRG has been increasing when examining the general course of the events.

Secondly, the time course that begins with the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 provided the Kurdish authorities and figures with more representation in the country as well as the international sphere. Jalal Talabani's presidency of Iraq and the alliance of the KRG with the international coalition during and after the invasion are proving factors of these developments. However, the period that the US war on Iraqi state directed to the insurgency within Iraq is the period of the manifestation of the actual intentions of the KRG i.e. after 2005.

On the other hand, the discourses which have been analyzed in the first period indicate specific policies and objectives of the KRG, as well as the following one. In the Period A (2003-2005), KRG manifests itself as a rational and cautious actor, avoids radical moves during the period that massive changes in the region occur, and follows rational policies to maintain their power such as initiating the unification of the "KRG's" of Erbil-Dohuk and Suleimaniyah. The common letter of Barzani and Talabani to US President Bush is a result of these policies.

On the Period B (2005-2011), the discourses demonstrate a development in the administrative efforts of the KRG while international reciprocity becomes prominent as the leading objective due to the withdrawal of the US troops from Iraq. Despite the fact that the KRG continues its prudent policies without voicing the intentions of a complete independence, the discourses often refer to its functions of being in the region as the follower of the western values and as the ally of the western interests

thusly, legitimizing the actions that seek for their support. Therefore, this period doesn't show a complete change in the KRG's policies but an increase in the intentions to be recognized as equals which made the Kurdish authorities more demanding than before.

The last section which analyzed the discourses in between the years of 2011 and 2017 indicates a radical and instantaneous change in the KRG's objectives. The sudden stability decrease started with the protests which then named after Arab Spring obliged the KRG to take precautions in order to maintain its authority and prevent the opposition movements in the region to come to the forefront such as Goran movement. However, the ISIS insurgency furthered the ambitions of the KRG for independence as it also pushed the central government of Iraq away from the control of the territories near KRG.

Here, we see a change from the pragmatist policies of the previous periods in the discourses of Nechirvan and Masoud Barzani towards opportunist actions. During the protests, the aim was to balance the internal stability with the external factors such as the trade partnership with Turkey or seeking the support of the international community. As the power of the central government faded away, the discourses suddenly turned inwards and asserted the righteousness and requisite of an independent Kurdish state. Even so, the further objective has been to put across the KDP-led government to prevail against the other Kurdish parties e.g. PUK, Goran or PKK.

Even though it is possible to see the bilateral effects of the discourses and the events upon each other and thus, the change in the ideology, posture and policies both internal and external; one thing remains unchanged: various parties separated from each other and compromised with each other due to different ideologies, objectives, religion and denominations, and allies. The main parties of the region that is controlled by the KRG are KDP, PUK, PKK, Goran Movement and Kurdistan Islamic Union, and they seem to remain separated in a foreseeable future because of the reason that the tendency to dominate the other instead of establishing common grounds remains as well.

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