

**Title:**

**Education as an Ethnic Defence Strategy: The Case of the Iraqi Disputed Territories**

**Declaration**

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Kelsey Shanks .....

## **Abstract**

The oil-rich northern districts of Iraq were long considered a reflection of the country with a diversity of ethnic and religious groups; Arabs, Turkmen, Kurds, Assyrians, and Yezidi, living together and portraying Iraq's demographic makeup. However, the Ba'ath party's brutal policy of Arabisation in the twentieth century created a false demographic and instigated the escalation of identity politics. Consequently, the region is currently highly contested with the disputed territories consisting of 15 districts stretching across four northern governorates and curving from the Syrian to Iranian borders. The official contest over the regions administration has resulted in a tug-of-war between Baghdad and Erbil that has frequently stalled the Iraqi political system. Subsequently, across the region, minority groups have been pulled into a clash over demographic composition as each disputed districts faces ethnically defined claims.

The ethnic basis to territorial claims has amplified the discourse over linguistic presence, cultural representation and minority rights; and the insecure environment, in which sectarian based attacks are frequent, has elevated debates over territorial representation to the height of ethnic survival issues. The existing literature and research on the region focuses heavily on the governance outcomes and little has been written about the impact of heightened identity politics on the everyday lives of citizens. It is in this respect that the thesis examines the evolution of the education system post 2003. Drawing on over 50 interviews with regional education officials and community representatives, the thesis presents the impact of amplified ethno-politics on the reconstruction of education in Iraq. The research provides the first academic exploration into education in the region, exploring the significance of cultural reproduction and the link between demands for ethnically specific education, societal security and the wider political contestation over the territory.

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## Terminology

### Education and Language

***Mother-tongue instruction or mother-tongue medium instruction*** refers to the use of the learner's mother tongue as a medium of instruction (UNESCO, 2003, p. 14).

***Bilingual education*** refers primarily to the use of two languages in a formal education system (UNESCO, 2003, p. 17). Bilingual education need not include a local language; however the most common type of bilingual education (also called *mother-tongue-based bilingual education*) attempts to use the students' mother tongue somehow in the curriculum. The more extensive the use of the mother tongue for instruction, the 'stronger' the bilingual education programme is considered to be.

***Transitional bilingual education or multilingual education*** refers to the objective of a given education programme (Stroud, 2002, p. 26). If the programme involves a planned transition from one language of instruction to another, at any grade, it is called transitional.

***Immersion education*** refers to a model in which the student is entirely 'immersed' in a language that is not the mother tongue for most or all curriculum content (Thomas and Collier, 1997, p. 58). Where the student is from a majority language community, immersion education can be quite effective, but when the student is a minority language speaker, immersion can significantly impede academic achievement.

***Dominant language*** is used to refer to language which is spoken within the administrative structures and government offices of a district.

***Mother-Tongue*** refers to a child's first language, the language learned in the home from older family members. (UNESCO, 2003, p. 15) In some places, the term has taken on more of a culturally symbolic definition, so that an individual might say, 'I

don't actually speak my mother tongue'. A related term, *home language*, refers to the language or languages spoken in the student's home.

**Traditional Language** refers to a language which is/was traditionally spoken by members of an ethnic groups, but may have been lost or become less used over time.

**Minority language** refers to the language spoken by a numerically smaller population and/or to the language spoken by a politically marginalized population whatever its size (UNESCO, 2003, p. 13). In the second case, the term *minoritized language* is sometimes used (Lewis and Trudell, 2008, p. 266).

## **Education and Management**

**Education Structure**, in the context of the thesis, refers to the structuring of the education system in terms of diversity management; whether schools are integrationist, separatist, or assimilationist.

**Education Management**, in the context of the thesis, refers to the structures and influences who fund and make school management decisions.

**Capacity Gap**, refers to any gap in management which leads to a deficiency in education delivery.

## **Regional terminology**

**Ethnic group / Community / Societal group**, all refer to a distinct group of people bound by identity markers and differentiating themselves from the wider national group.

**The Disputed territories** refer to the land disputed between the Kurdish Regional Government and the Central Government in Baghdad. When thesis uses this term it refers primarily to the two most ethnically diverse governorates; Kirkuk and Ninewa. (But reference is sometimes made to the third governorate of Diyala.)

## Frequently used Acronyms

KRG;	Kurdish Regional Government
Gol;	Government of Iraq
MoE;	Ministry of Education
UNAMI;	United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq
UNICEF;	United Nations Children's Fund (formerly <i>United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund</i> )
UNESCO;	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

## THE RIGHT WORD

by Imtiaz Dharker

Outside the door,  
lurking in the shadows,  
is a terrorist.

Is that the wrong description?  
Outside that door,  
taking shelter in the shadows,  
is a freedom fighter.

I haven't got this right .  
Outside, waiting in the shadows,  
is a hostile militant.

Are words no more  
than waving, wavering flags?  
Outside your door,  
watchful in the shadows,  
is a guerrilla warrior.

God help me.  
Outside, defying every shadow,  
stands a martyr.  
I saw his face.

No words can help me now.  
Just outside the door,  
lost in shadows,  
is a child who looks like mine.

One word for you.  
Outside my door,  
his hand too steady,  
his eyes too hard  
is a boy who looks like your son, too.

I open the door.  
Come in, I say.  
Come in and eat with us.

The child steps in  
and carefully, at my door,  
takes off his shoes

## ***Chapter One - Introduction***

### **1.1 Overview**

The oil-rich northern districts of Iraq were long considered a reflection of the country with a diversity of ethnic and religious groups: Arabs, Turkmen, Kurds, Assyrians, Yezidi, Shabak and Chaldeans, living together and portraying Iraq's demographic makeup. However, the Ba'ath party's brutal policy of Arabisation in the twentieth century created a false demographic and instigated the escalation of identity politics. Consequently, the region is currently highly contested with the disputed territories, or disputed internal boundaries (DIB's), consisting of 15 districts stretching across four northern governorates and curving from the Syrian to Iranian borders. The city of Kirkuk lies at the centre of the dispute due to its symbolic importance to both Kurds and Turkmen, and strategic significance to Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The official contest over the city's administration has resulted in a tug-of-war between Baghdad and Erbil that has frequently stalled the Iraqi political system.

Subsequently, across the region, minority groups have been pulled into a clash over demographic composition as each disputed district faces ethnically defined claims and an administrative solution for the disputed territories remains evasive. As the political impasse continues, ministries from both the KRG and Baghdad maintain varying degrees of administrative influence across the territories. These overlapping jurisdictions have created a complex system of service-delivery based on ethnic

identity. While the two linguistically distinct centres of governance vie for control, inter-ethnic communal tensions are rising and questions of identity increasingly overshadow day to day life. The existing literature and research on the region focuses heavily on the governance outcomes and possible administrative solutions. Little has been written about the impact of heightened identity politics on the everyday lives of citizens. Regardless of the final administrative outcome, the multi-ethnic population of the region requires services and systems of co-existence. It is within this context that the thesis examines the development of education systems across the region post 2003.

In the fragile ethno-political environment of the DIB's, the way in which the education system manages ethnic diversity is crucial. Access to linguistically appropriate education, equality of resource allocation and communal integration or segregation; all hold the potential to influence the wider identity-based conflict. The seminal paper by Bush and Santeralli (2000) *The two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict* brought together a considerable body of literature illustrating the negative outcomes of mismanaged education systems in conflict and post conflict environments. The UNICEF study argues that education in many conflict areas can have extremely negative implications for inter-communal relations. Education can become a weapon against ethnic groups in the hands of the power holders, serving to suppress cultural expression through practice of traditions, art forms, religious customs and cultural values (Bush and Sallteralli 2000).

Yet, there is a complete absence of scholarly analysis in terms of, not only the emergent formal education system post 2003 in the Iraqi disputed territories, but also



the purpose bestowed on education by education officials and its possible role within the wider identity-based contest. Therefore it is the purpose of this thesis to provide the first mapping exercise of education in the disputed territories and explore its relationship with identity and ethno-politics. The thesis will seek to examine the purpose of education, exploring the significance of cultural reproduction and investigate the links between demands for ethnically-specific education and the wider political, and often violent, contestation over the territory. It is the intention of this thesis to determine what factors have influenced the development of education structures in the disputed territories post 2003 in order to approach the central research question of '*How has ethnic identity influenced the education narrative in the disputed territories*'.

## **1.2 Theoretical Framework**

In respect to the research question, two fields of influence have become increasingly significant: firstly, the ethnic basis of territorial claims which has heightened the role of ethno-politics within the region and amplified the discourse over linguistic presence, cultural representation and minority rights; secondly, the contested and insecure environment in which sectarian-based attacks have served to elevate debates over territorial representation to the height of becoming ethnic survival issues. Within this highly sectarian environment the thesis will seek to examine the purpose of education in the region, exploring the significance of cultural reproduction, the role of identity in everyday life, and investigating the links between demands for ethnically specific education and the wider territorial conflict.

Such an examination of education requires a theoretical focus which will allow the investigation of various influences on the education system. The overall political and security environment necessitate consideration and, as such, the role of identity protection will be central to the investigation of education practice and management in the region. In this respect the application of a societal<sup>1</sup> security lens to the analysis has been deemed a highly beneficial tool. The organising concept in the societal security sector is identity. Societal insecurity exists when communities define a development or potentiality as a threat to their survival as a community. Such threats can come from outside the traditional security spectrum of violence and may include threats to the continued practices and traditions of a group. Therefore the focus on societal security allows for the education system to be viewed through the lens of ethnic identity protection, viewing education policy, access and practice in terms of cultural preservation, minority rights and ethnic survival.

In order to address the research question from the perspective of societal security it is necessary to explore the theory's application in relation to education provision in weak states. Therefore it will be essential to merge the academic exploration of societal security and securitisation with the relevant theoretical literature on education in weak states. By drawing on the two discourses, a hybrid framework will develop which will allow the demand for ethnically specific education access in fragile environments to be examined within the societal security sector. It is not suggested that the development of the framework in this way will be conceptually neat. Yet it is hoped that it will enable the thesis to identify how ethnic identity

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<sup>1</sup> The term societal security can lead to two misunderstandings about its definition; firstly a confusion with the term social security, with its individual and economic focus. In contradiction to this, societal security is about the collective and their identity, and refers to what Buzan et al call the 'we identity'. The second problem with the use of societal is that the related term society is often used to designate the wider state population as a whole. Buzan et al state that this group often does not carry a group identity. Instead they use the term societal to indicate 'a community with which one identifies'.

protection has influenced education, to what extent the issue has become part of the wider security framework in the region, and finally identify any potential negative practices which may have resulted.

Therefore, this section will seek to set forth the theoretical framework within which the exploration will take place. Firstly it will present the relevant concepts surrounding ethnic identity and minority rights before linking into the influential work of the Copenhagen School<sup>2</sup> on societal security. The second section will examine the separate body of literature pertaining to the influence of education on identity, minority rights and cultural reproduction within fragile environments. Then the concluding section will examine the dialogue surrounding securitisation, specifically within the societal sector. This section will introduce the idea that ethnically specific education holds more than a symbolic significance to societal security, that access to ethnically specific education can play a vital role in ethnic survival and as such emergency action may be taken to protect education access.

### **1:2:1 Ethnic Identity**

A general definition of an ethnic group is a community of people who engage in shared social practices that reinforce their sense of identity (Bush and Sallteralli, 2000; 12). Identity indicators which mark this can vary from traditional practices and cultural communities to language or religion and commonly portray a shared belief in collective descent, birth or kinship. This collective descent can be based on assumed national origins, or on shared phenotypic characteristics such as skin colour, but most importantly it emphasises the 'we' identity of the group (Roe, 2004). It is

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<sup>2</sup> The Copenhagen School, named after the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, proposed that social groups be considered as equally important and distinctive consumers of security.

important to note that such defining features of ethnic identity, which enforce a sense of belonging, preserve the collective identity, can vary significantly and are contextually specific. Paul Brass defines ethnicity as the “subjective, symbolic, or emblematic use by a group of people of any aspect of culture in order to create internal cohesion and differentiate themselves from other groups” (1991:19). This understanding of ethnicity recognizes that the internal and external functions of group identity are cohesion and differentiation.

Commentators examining ethnicity have differed in their view of whether ethnicity is innate or malleable and as such whether an ethnic identity evolves gradually, or is imposed or some combination of the two. At a theoretical and conceptual level, therefore, ethnic boundaries can be considered socially constructed or timeless and primordial (Lindholm, 1993;10). Both ontological positions provide settings for questions of collective identity and both acknowledge the strength of collective identity and ethnicity. They vary, however, on the nature of ethnicity’s ascription. Paul Roe suggests that ‘the problem lies in whether identity - and thus society itself- can be seen as either an object or a process; that is, whether identity is something solid and constant or whether it is something fluid and changing’(Roe, 2004;193).

Yet the assertion that ethnic identity is socially constructed is currently commonplace among social scientists. The constructivist stance assumes that ethnic identity is dynamic rather than unchanging. This view suggests that identity is constructed by social, political and historical forces, and that individual identities change over time as social contexts change. Furthermore, people exhibit different identities in different contexts (Gee, 2000). Identities disappear and return, sometimes re-invented (Peterson, 2003). In the face of forced assimilation, ethnic groups can choose to take

on the dominate group identity or intensify group solidarity and identity as an act of resistance (Rex, 1995; Waever et al 1997). This can be demonstrated by the shifting definitions of Yezidi ethnic or religious identity in Iraq.<sup>3</sup>

Regardless of its conceptual origins and construction, ethnic affiliation establishes a particular community as distinctive and bounded in some way or other. Walker Connor (1999) notes that, as such, distinct ethnic communities exist within all regions of the world creating minority or majority status to each of the communities' concerned. He states that they are found in '*Africa (for example, Ethiopia), Asia (Sri Lanka), Eastern Europe (Romania), Western Europe (France), North America (Guatemala), South America (Guyana), and Oceania (New Zealand). The list includes countries that are old (United Kingdom) as well as new (Bangladesh), large (Indonesia) as well as small (Fiji), rich (Canada) as well as poor (Pakistan), authoritarian (Sudan) as well as democratic (Belgium), Marxist-Leninist (China) as well as militantly anti-Marxist (Turkey). The list also includes countries which are Buddhist (Burma), Christian (Spain), Moslem (Iran), Hindu (India), and Judaic (Israel)*'(1999;164).

Although geographically dispersed and politically distinct, the groups presented in Connor's quote share the fact that they have minority and majority ethnic groups within them. Consequently the minority groups share a common goal; they each strive to resist the effects of their dominant culture's homogenising tendencies. This opposition to assimilation is based on the premise that "there is only one correct, true or normal way to understand and structure the areas of life" (Parekh, 2002;1).

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<sup>3</sup> Yezidi key identity markers have shifted from religion to language in order to survive under suppressive governments. This has resulted in a division amongst their members between identifying themselves as being ethnically Yezidi to being ethnically Kurdish with a Yezidi religion.

Each of these national minorities shares the opinion that they are different from their respective wider societies. As such they are battling with the state over issues of political representation, language rights, control over resources and internal migration and thus seeking legitimate recognition of their differences, especially those differences viewed as key identity makers.

The emergence of ethnicity and minority rights on the political theory mainstream agenda has resulted in a focus on the demands made by minority groups. How the rights of minority ethnic groups are handled in social and political arenas can be seen to reflect the wider acceptance of diversity in a state. The demands of minority ethnic groups have been categorized into three comprehensive types (Kymlicka 1995). The first type concerns rights which pertain to governmental representation, such as special representation rights, devolution and national self-determination. These rights can be seen to be at play in the governmental structures of both Lebanon and Iraq as examples. Lebanon's consociational democracy allocates seats based on ethnic identity within its government structures and the regional status of Iraqi Kurdistan demonstrates the call for more power over areas deemed ethnically homogenous.

The second category concerns the rights which seek to incorporate a variety of distinct cultural practices within larger states, including both exemption and affirmation rights that aim to give special assistance to minority groups. The European debate over religious symbolism in the public sphere can illustrate these demands clearly. The UK has introduced a number of exemption and affirmation rights for minority communities living in the country (Sikhs who wear the turban are

exempt from using a motorcycle helmet and Muslim school girls are allowed to wear the head scarf in school) yet secular France has taken no such steps to incorporate inclusive rights. The final category pertains to requirements which relate to the issue of collective esteem through representation. These requirements become “a matter for public policy when the symbolism of flags, currencies, names, public holidays, national anthems, public funds for cultural activities bear on a minority’s fragile presence in the public culture” (Seglow 2002:158). Within this type of demand is the right to representative education for minority groups; the content of school curricula, the language of instruction and the right to religious education. Each become a means to protect the ethnic ‘we’ identity and prevent assimilations into the wider majority group.

Therefore, each of these demands is attempting to secure the continued existence of the ethnic group and as such protect what the Copenhagen School<sup>4</sup> refer to as their ‘societal security’. The relationship between ethnic identity and the security of ethnic groups is clarified in Waever and Buzan’s work on the concept of societal security (Buzan, 1991, 1993; Buzan & Waver, 1997; Kelstrup, 1995; Wever, 1993, 1994, 1995, Waver et al., 1993a). The concept of societal security was initially developed by Barry Buzan in *People States and Fear* (1991) where it was one of the sectors in his five dimensional approach to national security, alongside military, political, economic, and environmental concerns. Society was just one sector of the state which could be threatened. This work represented a widening of international security spectrum (Buzan et al, 1983), but the overall view remained state centric until it was redeveloped by Ole, Waever et al. in *Identity, Migration, and the New*

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<sup>4</sup> The works of Buzan, Wæver and others on societal security and the concept of securitization have become known collectively as the Copenhagen School<sup>4</sup>.

*Security Agenda in Europe (1993)*. Waever reconceptualised societal security by retaining it as a sector of state security but also examining it as a referent object of security in its own right. Waever emphasised the key notion of ethnic survival. Yet, Waever et al have faced criticism for the seemingly primordial and innate nature they have ascribed identity (McSweeney, 1999).

In their defence, Waever et al go on to suggest a more constructivist stance; *If one studies only the process by which identities are formed, then identity never becomes a 'thing' at all; there is never a product as such.... Why can one not think of identities as being definitely being constructed by people and groups through numerous processes and practices, and when an identity is constructed... it becomes a possible and referent object for security* (Buzan & Waever 1997: 2). Thus the Copenhagen School define an ethnic group or society as a social unit that is a large, self-sustaining *identity* group. Because identity is so crucial to the concept of society, it is not surprising that the Copenhagen School treat societal security as synonymous with ethnic identity security (Buzan, 1998). Societal security is thus defined as; *the ability of a society to persist in its essential character under changing conditions and possible or acute threats. More specifically, it is about the sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture, association, and religious and national identity and custom* (Waever 1993:23)

The extent to which a threat can emerge depends upon an ethnic groups' degree of vulnerability. When an ethnic group is a minority within the population (as with Connor's previous examples) it may fear that the majority ethnic group seeks to



assimilate them into the dominant identity, as was the intention of the Arabisation and state-building projects in Iraq under the Ba'ath. Therefore, it is important to note that threats to societal security 'span from the inhibition of its expression to the prevention of its continuation' (Waever, 1993) and are not just found in the physical acts of war. Thus, threats to societal identity can be found outside of the realm of physical security and ethnic cleansing. By suppressing an identity and thereby preventing it from replicating or reproducing itself, the identity cannot be transmitted effectively from one generation to the next and a group's societal security is threatened (Buzan 1993: 43). Buzan, Waever and de Wilde Buzan, 1998) divide threats in the societal sector into four main categories: *migration, horizontal competition, vertical competition and depopulation*. In cases of migration, the host society is changed by the influx of those from outside. Horizontal competition refers to groups having to change their ways because of the overriding linguistic/cultural influence from another group. Vertical competition refers to those instances where, either due to integration or disintegration, groups are pushed towards either wider or narrower identities. The final category concerns the depopulation of an ethnic group through conflict or economic migration.

Although analytically distinct, in practice each of these threats can be placed on a spectrum running from intentional, programmatic and political at one end to unintended and structural at the other (Collins, 2005). In the case of Migration for example, people may make individual decisions to move for reasons varying from economic opportunity to environmental pressure or religious freedom. But they may also move as part of a political programme to homogenize the population of the state. Within the Iraqi disputed territories all these motivations have resulted in

shifting demographics over the last century; Employment in the oil fields, perceived greater religious freedoms for Christians in the North and the state sponsored Arabisation policy of moving Arab families to Kurdish populated areas. Horizontal competition equally may simply reflect the unintended effects of interplay between large, dynamic cultures on the one hand and small, traditional ones on the other. But it can also be intentional, from the remarking of territories, as with the Ba'ath party's repression of non-Arab groups. For the purpose of this exploration, the focus will be firmly on the intentional end of the spectrum. Buzan states that such deliberate threats to societal security may span from '...forbidding the use of language, names and dress, through closure of places of worship and education' to 'the deportation or killing of members of the community' (1993; 23).

The acts of aggression found within Buzan's description can be clearly divided into the categories of 'ethnic cleansing' and 'cultural cleansing'. Cultural cleansing is committed not against populations, but manifestations of group culture: for example religious and educational establishments. Cultural cleansing strikes against the very core of societal identity. Robert Gurr (1993;6) also distinguishes between the two forms of oppression; *'In extreme circumstances, systematic discrimination threatens communal groups' most fundamental right, the right to survival. Many groups also face cultural discrimination and the risk of de-culturation or so-called cultural genocide in the form of pressures or incentives to adopt a dominant culture, or denial of cultural self-expression'*.

The extreme form of this threat can be referred to as 'Ethnocide'. This can be defined as *"the process whereby a culturally distinct people loses its identity as a*

*result of policies designed to erode its land and resource base, the use of its language, its own social and political institutions, as well as its traditions, art forms, religious practices and cultural values”* (Stavenhagen, 1990). For societies which perceive a threat to their societal identity, whether the threat be real or imagined, a clear defensive strategy is to strengthen societal identity. ‘This can be done by using cultural means to reinforce societal cohesion and distinctiveness, and to ensure that society reproduces itself correctly.’ (Waever et al 1993b 191). Waever argues that culture can be defended ‘with culture’, and that: ‘If one’s identity seems threatened... the answer is a strengthening of existing identities’ (Weaver 1995:68). The strengthening of identity can be achieved through the pursuit of what has become known as ‘cultural nationalism’. John Hutchinson (1994) describes the purpose of cultural nationalism as ‘the moral regeneration of historic community, or in other words, the re-creation of their distinctive national civilization. Furthermore, he emphasises the establishment of ‘cultural societies and journals’ which educate communities of their common heritage ‘of splendour and suffering.’ Cultural nationalism endeavours to stress similarities such as language, religion and history (Alter 1994).

The appeal for recognition that drives cultural nationalism contends that in multi-ethnic states, “each constituent nation (ethnic community) has an equally valid claim to the language rights and self-government powers necessary to maintain itself as a distinct societal culture” (Kymlicka 2004;147). In trying to evade assimilation, national minorities look to rights and legislation which allow them to maintain their own culture through the creation of their own economic, political and education institutions. Therefore, formal education can play a vital role in the pursuit of cultural

nationalism. Education systems provide an obvious vehicle through which to transmit cultural practices, historical accounts, religion and language to the next generation of a community.

### **1:2:2 Education and Societal Security**

The current dilemma of education in many countries, especially newly established ones intent on forging a national identity, is how to create unity and national identity while celebrating the ethnic diversity of the population. The position of education in most societies allows it to take on an important role in the socialisation of ethnic identity. In this sense education offers an ideal means of non-military defence when faced with threats to societal security or equally a perfect mechanism for state assimilation projects. Schools can yield significant influence over ethnicity through curriculum content, providing the opportunity to reproduce dominant language and culture and ensuring their transmission to future generations. Curriculum can teach history, religion and even geographical interpretations of homelands through the channels of history and geography. As such, the curriculum and content are often used to deny shared history and oppress minority language rights (T Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002).

Early analysts of nationalism have noted the important purpose endowed on education by 19th century state building projects, noting the significant role of schools for state communications with the population, serving to disperse an image of the nation, and promote loyalty (Hobsbawm, 1996). The transmission of nationalist propaganda through, what Gallagher (2004;23) refers to as, 'common rituals and

practices toward iconic images of state and nation' has seen education commonly used to assimilate populations. Equally, Coulby's (1997) work on education and diversity emphasises various ways in which education has influenced the achievement of cultural homogenization, for example the use of a national language as a means of instruction and catalogues of 'national literature' within the curriculum. Churchill (1996) suggests that education helps to not only construct, but also impose a common culture which is founded on a common language and a shared sense of history. In this respect, public education has provided states with the opportunity to ignore social division and emphasise the unity of society, resulting in educational institutions which operate in accordance with the values of dominant tradition and consequently neglect minority interests (Smith and Vaux, 2003).

Yet as the previous section suggested, education can also serve as a vehicle to promote collective esteem through the representation of ethnic groups within the state education system. Education can serve as the perfect medium through which culture and identity can be strengthened in the face of assimilation. Each aspect of the curriculum provides an opportunity for education to be used as a non-military means of societal defence and strengthen culture with culture. The medium of instruction and curriculum content can just as easily be used to transmit minority cultural practices as it can to assimilate into the dominant cultural environment. Ethnically specific poets and artists can be honoured and historical achievements commemorated, all of which can be a vehicle in expressing a pride in identity and belonging to the group. Thus, education management can serve to defend against migration, horizontal competition and vertical competition based threats to societal security. The structural organisation of institutions can have a direct influence on the

pursuit or oppression of societal security and whether education is used for integration or cultural or ethnic nationalism. Hence, the management of education institutions can reflect the way in which diversity is managed in wider society and demonstrate how minority groups are treated by the state. For example in the United States the school system was created to provide a “melting-pot” which would ‘fuse a multitude of migrant communities into American citizens’(Bush and Sallteralli 2000). In contrast schooling in Canada used the metaphor of a multicultural “mosaic” in which differences were recognized and highlighted, rather than overlooked and blended.

The UK Department for International Development (DfID) has documented the *Characteristics of education institutions*, suggesting that the issue of ‘trust’ between ethnic groups in conflict may also be related to the way in which diversity is managed within the education system. DfID (Smith and Vaux 2003) characterise education systems and their institutions as either: assimilationist, separatist or integrationist. Integrationist systems are defined by ‘*common or shared institutions with diversity represented within the population of each institution*’ (2003;49). In its ideal form this model of school should pose no threat to societal security and cultural identity, allowing all communities to be represented equally, although it is worth noting that in a fragile multi-ethnic society the strategic implications for achieving this form of schooling are extremely difficult. Choices of dominate language and equal representation can create ideological battlegrounds.

Conversely, assimilationist systems which provide ‘*single institutions operating according to the values of the dominant tradition, where minority needs and interests*

*are often neglected'* (Smith and Vaux 2003;46) These systems present a direct threat to the societal security of minority groups. They deliberately seek to repress cultural identity through the denial of representation. The important ethnic indicator of language is often the first victim under assimilationist school systems, as minority languages are forsaken in favour of a dominant regional language. The repercussions of this for societal security can be vastly influential as it is "through its language, a given group expresses its own culture, its own societal identity; languages are related to thought processes and to the way the members of a certain linguistic group perceive nature, the universe and society" (Stavenhagen, 1996;68). The dynamic is evident in the conflict between the Turkish State and the Kurdish minority in eastern Turkey. Kurds were prevented from using their language in schools and were subjected to corporal punishment for doing so. Teachers themselves were dismissed for permitting Kurdish to be spoken in their classrooms (Hassanpour and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996).

Another extreme form is illustrated by education policy in Kosovo during the Albanian and Serb conflict. To counter Albanian efforts to assert their minority national identity, the Serbian government adopted a policy of aggressive assimilation. Education policies prohibited teaching in the Albanian language and introduced a unified curriculum. Education institutions using the Albanian language were no longer assigned government funding and the major Albanian publishing houses were closed down. Bush and Saltarelli (2000;8) state that there can be no doubt that assimilatory education in Kosovo was a major contributor to the rise in violence that reached its appalling pinnacle in 1999, they note that; "*in its report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 1994, the Yugoslav government admitted that it was*

*encountering major problems in the education of Albanian children in the provinces of Kosovo and Metohijo. Parents refused to send their children to schools working according to the “legitimate programme of the Republic of Serbia” and suggesting that the curriculum and the approach of teachers in the official schools were highly politicized. Instead, Albanian children attended non-accredited parallel schools, treated by the Government as illegal’.*

Therefore communities which wish to avoid assimilation often turn to other structural systems of education in order to protect their societal identity. Thus, as demonstrated by the Albanian case, one such means of protecting societal identity against deliberate attempts of cultural repression would be through seeking separatist institutions. Separatist systems are characterised by ‘*separate institutions each serving different constituencies with relatively homogeneous populations*’ (Smith and Vaux, 2003;15). Separatist education structures can present themselves in a myriad of guises which can further complicate the debate over their implementation (Davies, 2008). Discussions over separatist institutions depend on the historical, geographical and political contexts within which they operate. The divided societies which necessitate separatist structures exist in a number of conditions: the peaceful educational pluralism of Canada and Belgium, the complicit character of separatist schooling in Bosnia, and the imposed nature of apartheid in South Africa (Davies, 2008)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> The minority rights group (MRG) argue that the right to separate schools for minorities is compatible with international standards on human rights, but that an important distinction would have to be drawn between those situations where separate schools are imposed which they classify as segregation.



The thesis would suggest that in order to examine this categorisation with reference to societal security, separatist education would benefit from further division into *Sought Segregation* and *Forced Segregation*. *Forced segregation* would include the uneven distribution of education to suppress an ethnic minority and therefore its societal identity from the mainstream society, for example the apartheid system which the education structure in South Africa sustained and perpetuated. The second division of *Sought Segregation* would be more relevant to our discussion of a societal security. Examples of *Sought Segregation* can be found where ethnic groups, whether based on religion or language, seek to reinforce their societal identity for reasons of cultural nationalism. These systems can be illustrated by the examples of education in Northern Ireland which was totally segregated along religious lines until the 1980s and the mono-nationalist schools of Bosnia and Herzegovina which still persist (see studies by Gallagher, Tawil, & Sobhi).

The outcome of separatist education in fragile and diverse environments shows that inter-ethnic group interaction is often adversely affected and thus education can become party to wider ethnic conflicts. Gallagher (2004) suggests three hypotheses to explain the negative impact of separatist school structures in Northern Ireland, each of which can equally be extrapolated to illustrate the problems faced by other contested societies. Firstly, the cultural hypothesis suggests that separatist schools enhance community divisions by introducing potentially opposing cultural environments. Education content can be used to emphasise the inferiority of the 'other' and glorifying ancient ethnic battle victories. Different curricula, containing the potentially political subjects of history, geography and language, serve to emphasise the differences between communities and fail to acknowledge mutual dependency.

This can be illustrated by an examination of the textbooks used in the segregated schools of Sri Lanka in the 1970s and 1980s. Sinhalese textbooks were strewn with descriptions of the Tamils as the historical enemies of the Sinhalese and actively celebrated those who had vanquished Tamils in ancient wars (Nissan, 1996). Nissan affirms that historical fact was ignored and Tamils, Muslims and Christians were portrayed as non-indigenous and irrelevant to Sri Lankan history, a manipulation of the curriculum that contributed to the conflict. In this sense the role of education can take on a more ethnically nationalistic character. The same channels which are used by cultural nationalism to celebrate identity can be manipulated to politicise it.

Secondly, the social hypothesis suggests that regardless of what is taught, separatist schools serve to emphasise and validate group differences and hostilities, encouraging mutual ignorance and suspicion. Davies (2008) concurs that if pupils rarely meet those from other groups, then stereotypes are easily reinforced, and once this is combined with grievance there is little possibility to counter it. The character of separatist schooling has been accused of preventing not only the integration of pupils but also of parents, who are denied the opportunity of interethnic mixing at the school gates. Davies (2008: 69) draws attention to Rabbi Jonathan Romain's rejection of separatist schooling in the UK on this basis. He suggests that separatist schooling is a 'recipe for social disaster' and states that 'schools must build bridges, not erect barriers' (Davies, 2005).

Thirdly, Gallagher puts the accent on wider inequality between groups and blames this gap for the Troubles, rather than any issue concerning education in schools. Gallagher suggests that in the case of Northern Ireland, all three perspectives were

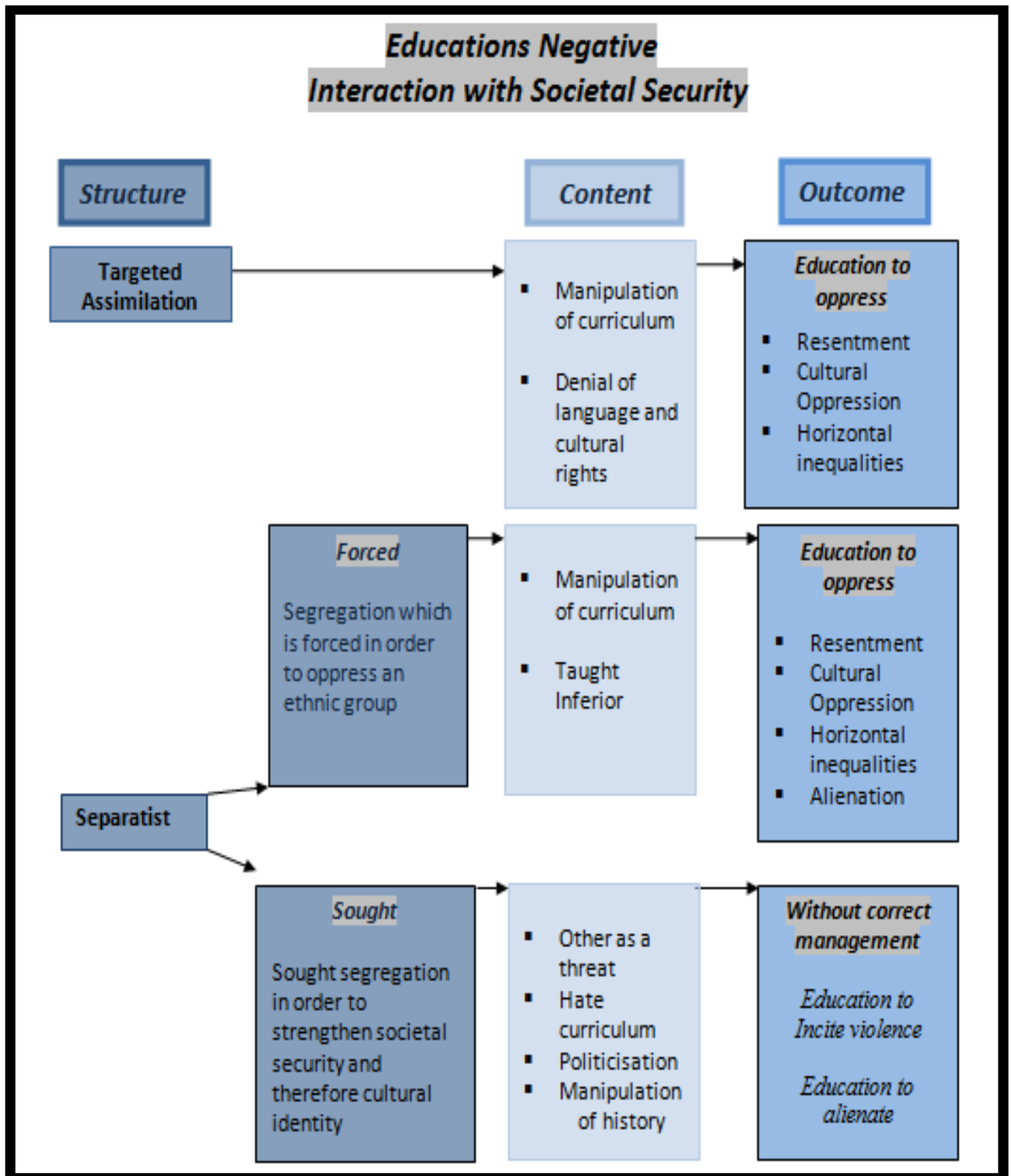
at play and therefore no consensus on a specific explanation has been reached. However, the issue of equality between ethnic groups in wider society can be linked back to the education debate and warrants further attention. The separatist school structure presents an opportunity for inequality of education provision between ethnic groups. Equality concerns may arise in terms of education 'inputs' (Smith and Vaux 2003:30) such as the transparency in the allocation of resources for different ethnic separatist school systems and the recruitment, training and deployment of teachers. Such issues have the potential to create immediate grievances between ethnic groups and pose threats to societal security through decreased resource allocation for cultural reproduction.

Additionally, inequality of educational inputs between separatist systems can lead to long range equality issues in terms of educational 'outputs' such as differentiated education attainment between ethnic groups (Smith and Vaux 2003:30). Education 'outputs' have important consequences for equal opportunity of employment which can sustain horizontal inequalities (and create inadequate representation of some groups in the political arena. Both forms of educational inequality carry the potential to inflame conflict between different groups within society and threaten societal security through immediate inadequate cultural reproduction and long term political representation. As such, this thesis suggests that the importance of equal provision between separatist institutions warrants addition to Bush and Saltarelli's (2000) 'watching brief', alongside the overall restriction of access for ethnic groups.

The influence of education on societal security is undeniable, both content and structure can aim to strengthen or weaken a group's cultural position within a society and affect inter-group relations. It is apparent that ethnic communities recognise the

important role of education in safeguarding societal security. Thus, both ethnic and cultural nationalisms can seek to control the provision of education in society for purposes outside that understood of conventional formal education. Any attempts to inhibit the reproduction of culture through education are taken by communities as grave assaults against a community's ability to reproduce itself and hence threatens their societal security. If we are to take the Copenhagen school's logic to conclusion it would therefore suggest that protecting access to ethnically specific education becomes a non- military means of defence in the societal security sector. In this sense the framework must now look at the consequences of framing education in such a way and therefore the next section will examine the process by which education may become securitised.

Figure 1: Educations Negative Interaction with Societal Security.



### 1.2.3 Securitisation

In order to address our education research questions through a societal security lens we need the framework to be able to ascertain the extent to which education has become a societal security issue in the disputed territories. The concept that we shall incorporate to achieve this returns us to the Copenhagen School and their idea of securitization (Buzan et al 1998). The Copenhagen School posit a spectrum along which issues can be plotted with regard to their status within the security realm. The spectrum ranges from those issues that have been politicised but can be managed within the existing political system, to those issues which require action beyond the state's normal political procedures and have therefore been securitized. Therefore, the issue is only placed at the securitised end of the spectrum when emergency measures have been adopted. Hence to declare that an issue has become securitized 'is to not only claim that it has become a security issue but also that the elite have responded by adopting emergency measures' (Collins 2003;573).

To securitize something an actor has to present the issue as an existential threat to security, in this investigation a threat to societal security. A securitising actor can come from any sphere of life, but the overall recognition is that if a securitizing actor has been elected to represent a community within a certain domain, as long as the securitizing move is within their remit, then the actor has legitimacy (Collins, 2003;571). The threat perceived by the actor must be deemed significant enough to require 'emergency measures' and therefore it must necessitate priority over all other issues. It must be presented to the audience with the presumption that 'if we do not tackle this problem, everything else will be irrelevant, because we will not be here or

be free to deal with it in our own way' (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998: 24). By suggesting that an issue is an existential threat to societal security the actor is therefore asking permission to take action which takes 'politics beyond the normal rules of the game' (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998: 24). If the actor is successful, then an emergency measure to tackle the issue will take place outside of the usual arena and therefore the issue will become securitized. However, not all issues presented in this way will necessarily be successful; some issues may just experience 'securitizing moves' (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998: 23), securitising speech and politicisation, without becoming securitised.

In this sense securitisation can be viewed as a three stage process. First the issue must be presented to an audience by the actor, second for an issue to be regarded as a security issue the audience has to adopt the elite's interpretation that the threat is sufficiently dangerous that emergency resources must be mobilized to overcome it. Once the first two stages are achieved the issue has become a security issue. The final stage is the mobilization of resources to overcome the threat, known as adopting extraordinary measures. Securitization therefore not only provides the definition for what a security issue is – an existential threat – it examines which actors initiate the securitizing move, the need for the audience to accept this interpretation of events for it to become a security issue and, finally, the type of response adopted.

The type of response adopted is of particular importance within the process detailed above and to this investigation. What constitutes 'extraordinary measures' is defined by the adoption of action outside the political process and the normal realms of the

issue securitised. Therefore the extraordinary or emergency measure, must be an action beyond the usual remit of the actor. To extrapolate this concept to our investigation of education as a societal security issue, it would be necessary to have a framework covering what would constitute an emergency action within the education arena. To provide a clear example it is possible to return to the case of the actions of the Albanian community in the province of Kosovo. When faced with the states assimilationist education structures communities choose to 'defend their culture with culture' and open their own ethnically affiliated schools.

By refusing to send their children to the state-run schools and favouring the non-accredited parallel schools, treated by the Government as illegal, the Albanian community took emergency action to tackle the perceived threat to their societal security. These schools were outside the state system and the normal arena for education policy and practice. All three stages of the process were met in this case and access to ethnically affiliated education became securitised for the Albanians in Kosovo. Community leaders presented the threat from state education to the group's societal security, the audience accepted the presence of the threat and emergency action was taken in the form of non-accredited, non-state school provision.

When an audience enables an actor to take these emergency measures they grant the actor extraordinary power over that issue. The labelling of a problem as a 'security issue' may result in little or no assessment or regulation imposed on the implementation of the emergency measures taken (Grayson, 2003). Collins (2003) states that 'there exists, therefore, the danger that having granted the actor the right to implement extraordinary measures, the audience forfeits its authority to determine



the legitimacy of future actions undertaken by the actor'. As such, by securitizing the issue the audience and actor have jointly contributed to placing it 'beyond the realm of reasonable public scrutiny' (Collins, 2003).

Grayson (2003) provides a valuable analogy involving Frankenstein's monster to caution how precarious securitisation can be. Collins (2003) states that it is a valuable metaphor for securitization because 'it not only captures the loosening of constraints on the elite that allows them to act almost with impunity, but it also visualizes just how powerful the securitizing actor can become.' In this sense Waever (1995) also recognised the negative implications of securitisation and was quick to emphasise the importance of de-securitisation. He observed that once a security issue is declared and accepted the elite 'can easily use it for specific, self-serving purposes [and this] is something that cannot easily be avoided' (Weaver 1995: 54, 55). Within the education arena the abuse of power and authority can lead to a number of negative outcomes. As discussed in the previous section the purpose of education can be manipulated to serve the interests of political elites and nationalist extremists. If emergency measures are granted within the education arena and that power is abused, it can lead to wider repercussions for the rest of society and inter-ethnic relations. The concept of securitisation within the societal security realm is not unproblematic, and its incorporation within the theoretical framework is not proposed as conceptually neat, but it will provide an analytical tool with which to examine the extent ethnically specific education has become a matter of ethnic security in the region.

### 1.3 Rational

By acknowledging the significant pool of literature on societal security protection and the concept of protecting culture with culture, the thesis will seek to investigate the purpose bestowed on education in the disputed territories and determine whether it has become a means of non military self-defence for ethnic groups who wish to protect culture with culture in the fragile environment of the disputed territories. Subsequently, if education has been framed in terms of identity protection, it will be necessary to explore whether non-military threats to societal security have been generated from within the state delivered system and if so what the reaction to such threats has been. Therefore this investigation will seek to approach the central research question of; '*How has ethnic identity influenced the education narrative in the disputed territories post 2003*'. The thesis will unpack this question as it moves through the chapters addressing four key sub-questions;

#### 1.3.1 Question 1 - *What role did ethnic identity play in education provision prior to 2003?*

At the outset of the investigation, this was the very first question that the author posed. When establishing the parameters of the thesis it was necessary to consider the foundations upon which reconstruction of education was taking place. The current role of identity in formal education structures cannot be investigated in isolation from the education system that preceded it. How education influenced identity in the past will undoubtedly have significant influence on how it is perceived in the present. To understand the role of identity in today's Iraqi education system

the thesis must first unpack how education has previously been used to fortify, diminish or assimilate ethnic identity and culture in the region.

1.3.2 Question 2 – *What role has ethnic identity played in the formation of formal education structures in the region post 2003?*

This question is central to the investigation. In order to explore this, a number of factors must be explored: Firstly, the influence the previous regimes' educational system may have had on the evolution of the current system. Secondly, the constitutional rights of ethnic and religious groups under the new Iraqi constitution and how they have been interpreted in the education arena in the disputed territories. Finally, the role of the current conflict has had on heightening identity and representation within the education sector will be analysed.

1.3.3 Question 3 – *What role does ethnic identity play in the current education Narrative?*

The next enquiry will explore the current role of identity protection in education and examine the consequences of bestowing education with societal security protection. If education has the purpose of fortifying ethnic identity, does this affect how educationalists view restrictions to its support? Do education narratives present access in terms of academic merit and achievement or in terms of identity protection?

#### Question 4

*What is the relationship between education and the wider ethnic conflict and fragility?*

The concluding pursuit will be to explore the reaction to any such threats, asking how ethnic groups in the disputed territories countered or accepted such threats. The thesis will examine whether action taken has opened the door for the manipulation of education structures by nationalist and extremist groups for their own purposes?

The main research question will remain at the centre of the thesis throughout. The four sub research questions will serve to direct the chapters and keep the theoretical link structured. The specific education arena focus will result in the exploration of societal security from a non-military perspective. It will seek to determine whether education has become a means of self-defence for ethnic groups which wish to protect culture with culture in Iraq's fragile environment. While, additionally exploring any non-military threats to societal security that are perceived from within the state delivered education system and how they are countered or absorbed.

#### **1.4 Contributions to the Literature**

The thesis speaks to both practitioners and researchers working on or in the disputed territories of Iraq. The project to which this work is attributed to (see Appendix: 12 for project research report), Conflict in Cities which, sought to better understand the ways heavily contested cities may become viable for all inhabitants. A team of researchers from three UK universities, Cambridge, Exeter and Queen's Belfast, investigated the common subject of conflict management from a variety of

different perspectives. The multi-disciplinary initiative included: architecture, urban studies, politics, geography, and sociology. These lenses are used to try and understand conflict management in a number of European and Middle Eastern cities: Jerusalem, Belfast, Brussels, Berlin, Mostar, Nicosia, Berlin, Beirut, Tripoli and Kirkuk.

More specifically, the project sought to understand how urban structures and institutions may strengthen cities to withstand state struggles, and establish to what extent cities may be transformed into effective and equitable sites for human settlement. In other words, the project is concerned with mechanisms for the confrontation and absorption of conflict as opposed to conflict resolution or solution<sup>6</sup>. This dissertation contributes directly to these objectives. The research unpacks the ways in which ethnic communities in contested regions of Iraq have employed education institutions as a means of ethnic resilience and identifies how this use can influence inter-communal relations within a contested territory.

Despite the academic recognition of education's influence in post conflict settings and the significance of ethnic identity in post war Iraq, there is a complete absence of scholarly analysis in terms of, not only the emergent formal education system post 2003 in the Iraqi disputed territories, but also the purpose bestowed on education by education officials and its possible role within the wider identity-based contest. Academic explorations of the disputed territories concentrate heavily on the possible governance outcomes and political power-sharing solutions within the region (Stansfield, 2011; Wolff, 2011; Anderson, 2013; Leezenburg; 2010). Equally,

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<sup>6</sup> More detailed information about the project and the nature and scope of the various associated research projects can be found at [www.conflictincities.org](http://www.conflictincities.org).

examinations of the state education are limited to country-wide reviews of higher education (Harb 2009; Kaghed 2009; Al-Dabbagh 2005), targeted investigations of mainstream education for disabled youth in Iraq (Alborz, Al-Obaidi and Brooker 2011) or assessments of literacy rates (Holmes, 2010).

It is in this respect that the thesis contributes to two fields of understanding. Firstly, the author conducted the first ever mapping of education structures in the post 2003 Iraq disputed territories. The data collection for the research includes previously uncollated statistical data on the number of ethnically defined schools in the two governorates and a regional assessment of educational capacity gaps for each ethnic community. Additionally the author has classified different kind of schools which have developed in the region, a typology which explains for the first time the complex linguistic provisions unique to schools in the disputed territories. Secondly, and more significantly, the thesis presents the first scholarly exploration of the purpose bestowed on education by education officials in the disputed territories post 2003, demonstrating its role within the wider identity-based contest and the consequences of the political manipulation by officials.

## **1.5 Thesis structure**

Thus far the author has presented the subject to be tackled in the thesis and framed the investigation with the theoretical underpinnings of both education in conflict literature and the concepts surrounding identity and societal security. I have underlined the contribution the thesis will make to the understanding of education as

an actor for peace or conflict in the Iraqi disputed territories. The plan of the dissertation is as follows:

Chapter two will introduce the methodological approach employed for the thesis, presenting the importance of the pilot study conducted, the methods employed to secure over 50 elite educationalist and community leader interviews and the constraints to data collection within the fragile conflict environment. Chapter three will then provide a contextual overview of the Iraqi context. This chapter will focus on the role of ethnic identity in Iraq, both past and present, to provide the reader with a contextual understanding of the wider security environment. Despite the focus on non-military defence and non-military threats to societal security through education, it is necessary to understand that the education system is not in a vacuum and the wider security environment will have a significant influence on the perceived level of threat that an ethnic group will feel. For this reason it is essential that chapter three sets out the contextual background to the region and provides a historical framework for understanding the Iraqi disputed territories, identity politics and ethnic conflict.

Chapter four will move on to address research questions one and two. The first section will provide an analysis of the role of identity in Ba'ath party education provision in the two decades before the invasion. This will then be taken forward in section two to present the influence of identity in the reconstruction of education in the region. This section will explore the legacy of Arabisation , the current constitution provision for minorities, and the ongoing insecurity in the region and how these elements have shaped the current system. The final section will present how

consequently identity protection is at the core of education management in the territories.

Chapter five will take the investigation forward to explore how the framing of education in terms of societal security and identity protection has influenced the wider education narrative. It will present the capacity gaps in education and how these gaps are increasingly presented by education actors as the deliberate denial of ethnic resources and thus threats to the continued access to the means of cultural reproduction for non-Arab ethnic groups. This chapter will demonstrate how the securitising narratives of education actors has lead to a variety of external influences entering the education sphere and explore the consequences of this new dimension.

Chapter six will take the conclusions drawn from chapters four and five and move on to explore the consequence of these findings on the wider fragile environment. It will explore the existing interactions between the education system and conflict, and use the theoretical framework to explore education's potential impact on the wider ethnically defined conflict in the region. The chapter will take the findings of the previous two chapters and explore the significance for wider inter-ethnic relations. While references to the conceptual framework are made throughout, chapter seven will draw together the empirical findings of the research. It revisits the aims of the research and, in doing so, this final chapter considers the implications for further research and identifies some recommendations for policy-makers.



## ***Chapter Two: Methodology***

### **2.1 Overview**

The absence of scholarly analysis in terms not only of the emergent education system post 2003, but also its role within the wider identity-based contest, directly influences the research design for the thesis. The thesis drew on a variety of primary and secondary resources in its investigation: policy documents, media reports, UN and NGO education assessments and the completion of fifty eight interviews with education officials and community representatives across the territories. Data was collected over the course of four separate research trips to Iraq, Iraqi Kurdistan and Jordan between 2010 and 2011.

To achieve an accurate picture of post 2003 reconstruction, within the climate of conflict and growing tension, open qualitative interviews with elite level education practitioners and community representatives were chosen as the most appropriate primary means of data collection. In-depth interviews are a significant qualitative method that enabled the researcher to ascertain the given purpose to education without influencing the interviewee with leading questions. They are used to gather rich, detailed information and give the flexibility of being able to take place in a one-to-one or group situation. The research design indicated that this was the most appropriate modality of data collection in order to gain an in-depth and thorough understanding about peoples' experiences of education policy and practice. The use of such open interviews would aim to establish the necessary factual information as

well as the perceptions of interview participants over education's purpose and real and imagined threats to societal security through the education system. Walker Connor (1997: 33) proposed that 'identity does not draw its sustenance from facts but from perceptions; perceptions are as important or more than reality when it comes to ethnic issues'. This influential work resonated with the objectives of the thesis and further confirmed the necessary modality for primary data collection.

This interview modality hoped to provide detailed information and insights about people's experiences of education policy formation and education structures which could not be accessed through rigidly structured questionnaires. The ethno-political context and contemporary neglect of education in the disputed territories require that the research obtained detailed, complex information which would be difficult to quantify or anticipate in advance and therefore in-depth interviews were judged to be a highly suitable method of data collection. Hence a structured list of pre-prepared questions in a questionnaire format was deemed inappropriate and questionnaires were equally deemed unsuitable because of their pre-formulated, standardised nature preventing the deep, complex detail from being captured.

In-depth interviews are commonly used when researching personal or sensitive issues and people's emotions and feelings. The particular ethnic history and current political standoff over territory have created a situation where discussions of education provision, ethnic minorities and language rights carry an emotive and confidential element. Such interview modality allowed for the interviewer to be responsive to any difficulties and able to sensitively manage the interview so that the interviewee felt comfortable enough to talk openly and honestly about the topic. The

interviewer's role was to encourage the interviewee to speak freely in his/her own words about education provision and feel comfortable enough to freely critique any areas they felt necessary. Open interviews allowed the interviewer to reorder, reword and develop new questions to suit the interview context and the direction in which the interviewee was taking the interview. Such unstructured interviews provided the necessary flexibility for the researcher to gain a much greater grasp of the details and nuances of the interviewee's perspective.

Yet the design of an in-depth interview needs to be based on a clear sense of the purpose, scope and use of the research, so that relevant questions can be formulated and the interview conducted to encourage full, detailed answers. In order to maximise the data quality and achieve the most efficient interviews it was necessary to formulate a topic guide for interviews (see appendix 8). The topic guide was used to provide a list of themes and questions relevant to the research question in order to direct questions and keep the interview on track. However, the previously unstudied nature of the topic and limited availability of information on the education structure made the formation of such a guide very difficult. Due to the complete absence of factual information on the current education system in the region, pre-empting the ordering of topics was impossible. Therefore to counter this restriction it was deemed necessary to conduct a pilot study to ascertain the basic facts on the ground and disposition of the discussion which surrounded education provision at this time.

## 2.2 Pilot Study

The pilot study aimed to aid the development and focus of the research and assess the suitability of questions to reveal any deficiencies in the design (see appendices 5 to 8 for interview questionnaires). This allowed any such problems to be addressed before time and resources were expended on the larger study. Thus the intention was to counter any potential problems arising from the relatively unexplored nature of the topic by using the results of a pilot study to direct the formulation of a topic guide. Due to the restrictions of time and funding, the pilot study required an interview modality which would be cost efficient and quick to implement. In order to achieve this, the use of structured asynchronous email interviews was chosen<sup>7</sup>. The pilot study involved semi-structured online interviews<sup>8</sup> to establish the issues, facts on the ground and general areas of discussion surrounding current education provision in the city. Additionally, it served to assess sensitivity to terminology and the wording of questions and the conflict sensitive nature of the material to be discussed. The pilot study also tried to identify potential practical problems in following the research procedure, such as poor response rates, so that precautionary procedures or safety nets could be devised. The pilot study also hoped to uncover local politics or problems that may affect the research process.

The pilot study was intended to improve the internal validity of the interview techniques and address the following issues;

- ask the subjects for feedback to identify ambiguities and difficult questions

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<sup>7</sup> A further discussion of the use of email interviews is presented later in the chapter in discussing a suitable secondary interview method for the main study.

<sup>8</sup> Interview questions found in appendixes

- discard all unnecessary, difficult or ambiguous questions
- assess whether each question gives an adequate range of responses
- establish that replies can be interpreted in terms of the information that is required
- check that all questions are answered
- re-word or re-scale any questions that are not answered as expected
- shorten and revise (Source: Table 3.23 in Peat et al. 2002: 123)

For the initial pilot study it was deemed appropriate to seek preliminary participants working outside the education system, but with a vested interest in it, for example NGO workers and human rights activists. It was felt that an external view of education was of most benefit at this point in the research due to the emotive nature of education and societal identity in the contested territories. This was to determine factual information with regards to the education system in the city as well as gauge perceptions of the purpose of education. These online questionnaires and email exchanges enabled the researcher to question participants “on a topic of interest to the interviewer and of relevance to the interviewee” (Watten and Kamer, 2007;116), but more importantly seek factual answers alongside an interpretation of meaning from responses (Kvale, 1996).

Of equal importance was that participants for the pilot study presented a representative sample from each of Kirkuk’s ethnic communities and were unconnected with one another. Therefore, contact was established with a number of key humanitarian actors in the city and a series of initial introduction emails were exchanged. The initial sample included NGO workers, an Institute of War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) trained journalist, UNICEF personnel and a human rights activist,

each from different ethnic communities (See appendices 2 and 3, attached for letters of invitation and participant list). From this selection, further participants were found through a process of 'snowballing'. Participants were found from within existing social networks, beginning with the initial contact. The criteria for the recruitment of further participants were then extended to include elite education professionals, such as head teachers and members of education councils. Once a small focus group size sample was established, a series of open emails were exchanged with each participant.

The content of each email exchange, although between only interviewer and participant, influenced the further interactions with all participants and facilitated the collection of rich and informative data regarding the education system in the city. Once this information was gathered it was possible to focus the area of study for the large scale research. In addition, a number of valuable insights were gained with regards to question formation and sensitivity to terminology. For example, the use of the phrase 'separate education institutions' although descriptively accurate, caused concern for many participants who associated the word 'separate' with that of political separatism and had reservations to associating with the phrase.

### **2.3 Interview methodology**

Once the pilot study was conducted and the topic sheet formulated for further research, it was necessary to determine how the next stage of qualitative interviews would be conducted. In order to construct a research model for the thesis the suitability of different forms of qualitative interviews were considered. Face-to-face

interviews were held as the most significant of interview modalities due to the advantage of being able to view social cues such as voice intonation and the body language of the interviewee. These cues are regarded as important sources of information which serve to supply the researcher with additional data that can be added to the verbal answer of the interviewee. Face-to-face interviews also allowed the researcher to create both a productive interview ambience and ensure the interviewee was comfortable in the environment, serving to facilitate a more open course of dialogue. However, as valuable as this modality is, it does have its restrictions.

The potential participants for this study were located throughout the disputed territories of Iraq (see appendix: 10 for interview schedule and participants). The geographical distribution of participants and unstable security situation made travelling throughout the region difficult and costly. This ultimately limited the number of participants the researcher would be able to reach. In addition to these restrictions, there is the often overlooked aspect of researcher safety. Sturges and Hanrahan state that “researcher safety is too seldom discussed in the methodological literature” (Sturges, 2004). Traveling to a conflict zone obviously creates risks and ethical decisions for the researcher to overcome. Furthermore, research accuracy can be questioned in these circumstances. Lee draws our attention to the threats posed by data collection in dangerous locations, claiming that such an environment can “shape research agendas by deterring researchers from investigating particular topics,” (R. M. Lee, 1995) and preventing the participation of wary interviewees.

The ethnically divided and often violent nature of the region has inevitably influenced the research design. Although face-to-face interviews were deemed the most valuable to the research, the exact location of interviews and logistical organization needed careful consideration. In conclusion, official buildings such as government offices, mayoral buildings or the UN compound in Erbil were chosen as interview locations. The interviewees were to be invited to the location to meet with the researcher. This type of location allowed the researcher to remain highly visible and negated the need to travel extensively throughout the territories.

However, it was necessary to consider the influence of official offices on the ambience of the interview itself and the data collection. It was possible that the type of building would be intimidating for some interviewees and prevent free and easy dialogue. In this respect the issue of participant selection became significant and held influence over the reaction to location. For example, participants who seldom deal with official channels may find the environment more intimidating. This problem is invalidated slightly by the type of participant sought for the research. In order to ascertain the information necessary, participants would be sought from elite level positions such as education officials and community representatives, the justification for this selection criterion will be addressed further in the following section.

Therefore face-to-face interviews were championed and conducted wherever possible. Yet the reality of the working environment necessitated that the researcher was open to other modalities of interview when face-to-face were not possible or when interviewees felt uncomfortable with the location. Due to the possible dangers associated with travel for some participants it was necessary to devise a contingency



interview in order to include representatives from all communities. Therefore a number of interview methodologies were required in order to fully explore the research question. Unfortunately, a small number of participants were unable to attend face-to-face interviews due to security concerns. In these circumstances the issue of methodology subsequently became a matter of finding forms of interview which could be offered which closely replicated the process of face-to-face interviews.

Telephone interviews were therefore considered as a possible 'back up' interview methodology. Telephone interviews were considered as a substitute which "preserves the research endeavour" (Lee, 1995) and accuracy of the data and allowed for the access of hard to reach participants (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004). However, several key issues presented themselves with telephone interviews; as Arksey and Knight affirm, the medium of telephone interviews can generate short answer responses in interviews, and not in-depth descriptive and reflective accounts (Arksey and Knight, 1999). Additionally the linguistic variation of participants in this research presented restrictions in terms of their use. Kirkuk has three functioning languages, none of which are the researchers' mother tongue. The use of a second language in interviews by either the researcher or participant would no doubt have created situations where meaning is 'lost in translation'. This was confirmed when a number of trial interviews were conducted via telephone with participants who spoke English, the issue was further complicated by the poor quality of telephone lines in Iraq. Hence, telephone interviews were dismissed for fear of low quality data collection and asynchronous email interviews, alongside emailed open questionnaires were considered.

Asynchronous email interviews and emailed open questionnaires provide a number of technical advantages which are often overlooked. Time efficiency and cost of email interviews allow a researcher to gather information rapidly and at relatively little expense. The advantages of rapid data collection in terms of travel are equally matched by those of automated data collection. The cost of recording equipment, flights and telephone bills can all be negated and issues of geographical dispersal and researcher safety are equally resolved. Moreover the internet enables communication among people who may be hesitant to meet face-to-face, for example, individuals with unpopular political views may be hesitant to express themselves openly. Therefore email interviews present additional perks which are of particular relevance to this study. The political tensions in the region may prevent the vocalizing of certain views which can be more freely expressed in text-based communications. Email interviews provide a degree of anonymity which allows participants to speak more unreservedly.

Email interviews can be neglected by qualitative research, suffering from a bias which leaves the practice portrayed as a substandard alternative to face-to-face interviewing. The primary critique can be found in reference to the absence of non-verbal and contextual data which is regarded as vital to the interview process (Creswell, 1998). The use of text-based communications is seen to deprive the researcher of the participant's informal interaction Cresweall (1998) acknowledges this, but states that it is appropriate when the researcher does not otherwise have access to the respondent. This view is further complimented by Stephens' work on interviewing elites in which he states that the articulate nature of his interviewees

made telephone interviews more viable. This thinking can be extended to assume that the professional make-up of the participants required for this study will enhance the quality of text provided (Stephens, 2004).

Establishing trust in the identity of a person through email communication is often raised with regard to email based research. If the participant does not benefit from the reassurance of face-to-face meetings they have little to base their trust upon. Paccagnella recommends the existence of "...strategies of visibility...which make up for the lack of traditional social clues" (Paccagnella,2004). Within the proposed research these concerns were negated in some instances as the participants and interviewer had already met. In addition, establishing the participants' trust in the researcher was aided both by the initial contact's recommendation and by the affiliation with a wider research project – Conflict in Cities. Providing a link to the website of an ESRC funded project which represents three UK universities and affiliation with the United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI) aided the researchers' credibility and proof of impartiality.

In addition to accessing participants who were unable to travel, this modality was deemed useful for the purposes of conducting follow-up contact. Due to the politically sensitive nature of the topic, some interlocutors felt unable to speak completely freely in person. Therefore each participant was given the opportunity to follow-up on the interview via email or telephone. Those interlocutors who felt they had more to share after the interview provided follow up information via email. This generally consisted of a written report pertaining to the issues we had discussed during our interview. This was intended to ensure the most accurate data collection.

## **2:4 Participant Selection**

The criteria for interviewee selection centred around two focal points. The first was the general rule of achieving purposive sample which was representative of the groups in the region. In this respect it was necessary to achieve an equal representation of ethnic groups from each governorate. The geographical settlement patterns of ethnic groups meant that this required different representation for each governorate and was geographically varied. For instance there is no Yezidi community in the Diyala governorate and therefore Yezidi education access in this area is of no consequence and no interlocutor was sought. Equally participants who did not officially represent an ethnic group, but who could speak in general were sought, although these proved harder to find. Secondly the interviewee needed to be in a position of authority and able to discuss knowledgeably the research questions on education. Therefore elite level education and community representatives were selected. This criteria was expanded to include not just education officials from within the Ministries of Education but also academics and education specialists from within political, religious, civil and international organisations operating within the area. This reflects the myriad of actors currently influencing the provision of education in the disputed territories due to the failing capacity of the ministries of education in Erbil and Baghdad.

Participants were located through a number of varied channels and all efforts were made to ensure a diverse range of participants. To map the evolution of education and the impact of identity over the two governorates it was vital to ensure all

perspectives were given a voice. Ministry of Education officials were the initial contacts sought in each region, yet not all ethnic groups have Ministry staff allocated for the provision of their education needs. Therefore, a form of snowballing was achieved from initial Ministry contacts which resulted in additional participants for interview. Additionally, two of the research trips were facilitated by the United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq and as a consequence the research was granted access to the UN lists of interlocutors on UNICEF and UNESCO education lists.

These lists of potential participants proved incredibly beneficial to the research, providing contact information for representatives of many harder to reach minority groups in Ninewa and again snowballed to further non-listed participants from each ethnic group. Yet it was still deemed essential to seek independent participants who were not already working with UN agencies or associated with those who were not implicated in any way with these groups. The third source of participant came from within the local civil society organisations and academics with a vested interest in the formal education system. In conclusion, interview data and secondary resource materials, such as school lists and pupil numbers were collected from nearly 50 interviews with education officials and community representatives across the territories. This data was collected over the course of four separate research trips to Iraq, Iraqi Kurdistan and Jordan between 2010 and 2011.

## **2:5 Constraints to Data Collection**

The political realities of the contested territories impacted on the data collection and consultation process. Interviews often ended abruptly due to security alerts and the

subsequent necessity to travel at certain times for security reasons. In this respect it was essential to have an open research design which could be flexible in achieving the required data collection. The use of asynchronous email interviews for accessing participants who were unable to travel, those where interviews were cut short, or who were un-forthcoming in the interview setting, became a very useful tool. Providing each participant the opportunity to follow up on the interview via email actually enriched the data collection more than was anticipated. Many interlocutors who felt they had more to share after the interview provided follow up information via email. This generally consisted of a written report pertaining to the issues we had discussed during our interview and opened the channels for continued communication and clarification of issues raised in the reports provided.

The environment of insecurity has also bred distrust and a number of interviewees requested that I listened without taking notes. It became apparent that as I wrote some interviewees became uncomfortable. In these cases interview notes were written up directly after interviews but without direct quotes, for fear of misquoting participants.

The aim of establishing factual and statistical information of school numbers, enrolment etc was also met with obstacles. Quantitative data records on the number of grades offered, numbers of students by sex and age, numbers of repeaters, number of teachers by sex and qualification, statistics on gender, ethnicity and income would have added additional depth to qualitative research interviews. However, education in Iraq suffered considerably under the internationally imposed sanctions in the 1980-90's and subsequently from the conflict in 2003. Education

authorities had neither the resources necessary, nor the systems of management, to routinely collect information on schools as part of their regular operations. Therefore answers were often vague and lacked any evidence of the use of Educational Management Information Systems (EMIS).

Educational management information systems are designed to collect and analyse data on educational system to improve planning, resource allocation, monitoring, policy formation and decision making. However, in situations of conflict and post conflict this information ceases to be a priority and data is often not collected. Although some data was available through the Ministries of Education in the KRG and Baghdad, the statistics were often out-dated and always very limited. To illustrate this point I can recount numerous meetings with Ministry of Education officials who provided school numbers and sizes on scraps of paper which seldom corresponded with additional data offered by the same office they represented. It was often representatives of ethnically affiliated civil society groups who provided more detailed statistics on school numbers and sizes. The option to collect this data independently was restricted by time, funding, security and the overall scale of such a project. Therefore although a considerable amount of statistical data was collected, it cannot be verified as accurate at this time.

The wider political debate has no doubt influenced the discussion of education access and answers were often openly politically motivated. Therefore the possibility must be considered that there was a reluctance to submit data on linguistic education access because of its implications for the territorial representation of communities in the disputed territories.

## **2:6 Ethical Issues**

The project created and engaged with a number of ethical issues. However, the author is well versed in the proper actions to take in order to address the ethical issues; having studied such issues in detail during a Masters of Research, which was passed with distinction. These principles were applied and the thesis adhered to the University's ethical guidelines for the conduct of projects regarding protection, confidentiality and sensitivity where programme beneficiaries are participating as informants and objects of study.

Information sheets and letters of invitation were provided to potential participants. The letter of invitation (see appendix 1- 5) clearly stated the voluntary nature of participation, the option for anonymity and the right to withdraw at any time. The information letter clearly outlined the purpose of the research. Interviews only took place after they were read and verbal consent was obtained from each participant. Written consent would prove too culturally and politically sensitive to obtain in Iraq.

## **2.7 Data analysis**

The data analysis process involved coding all interview notes and transcripts to identify key themes emerging from the interviews. Once coding was complete it was possible to enter interview summaries into a comparable spread sheet so that issues surrounding each code could be compared within ethnic groups and between ethnic groups. This enabled the researcher to clearly view the relationships being



presented within the data. Once summaries were analysed in relation to one another, overviews of the perceived education provision and its purpose could be written for each ethnic community.

## **2.8 Data verification**

The author placed a high level of importance on validating the findings and analytical conclusions; both from the communities involved in the research and also from academic peer review of the findings and theoretical framing applied. The first was achieved through a number of channels: the provision of report findings via email to a number of key community members; the provision of report findings to key members of the journalist community and NGO workers; and, finally face-to-face consultations during a final trip to Iraqi Kurdistan for the Second Annual Conference of the Iraqi Kurdistan NGO Network (IKNN). The second verification objective was met through the organisation of an academic workshop on the central themes of the thesis; Ethnicity, Education and Conflict. A number of key scholars in the field of education, identity and conflict (including Professor Tony Gallagher, specialist in education and identity in Northern Ireland; Professor Lynne Davies, specialist on education, identity and conflict, and Dr Lori Heninger, Director of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) ) were invited to the workshop in which a summary of the thesis was presented. In both rounds of validation, feedback was overwhelmingly positive, but issues which received constructive criticism were subsequently revisited, and feedback was incorporated into the current version of the thesis.

In addition to this, I was very aware that my lack of fluency in the three main languages of the region may have resulted in the failure to obtain academic literature outside of the English medium. In order to ensure this was not the case, I contacted two Iraqi academic research centers in Amman. I spent a day at each and interviewed the academics working on Iraq in Arabic to ascertain if there were any publications which I had missed. In addition, I was aided by the Turkmen human rights NGO, the Turkmen Human Rights Foundation (SOIMT), to identify the Turkish literature on the subject. Finally, I was aided in my Kurdish literature search by colleagues. Although I did not find anything which tackled the main topics of the thesis, I was able to identify key texts which fed into the contextualization of the work.

Throughout the duration of the research project the local news agencies and online ministry bulletin boards were monitored for issues pertaining to both education and identity. Any events or comments discovered and of interest were then verified by other actors and interview participants in the region to establish their authenticity. Those events that have been verified have been included in the following chapters. The author took a number of measures to verify the information gathered in this thesis and ensure that the perspectives presented are not that of a small number of people. The research strove to triangulate information and authenticate the findings. This was a vital process when working in such a political environment.



## ***Chapter Three: The Iraqi Context***

### **3.1 Introduction**

It is the purpose of this thesis to determine whether ethnicity and identity have influenced the development of education structures in the Iraqi disputed territories. In this respect two fields of influence are significant to our comprehension, both of which illustrate the significant relationship between identity and security in the region. Firstly, we can note how the history of ethnic conflict and co-existence within the region and how the brutal suppression of identity by the previous regime has left a legacy which influences identity issues in the region today. The second element to consider is the post-2003 national environment of insecurity, where groups are subject to seemingly sectarian-based attacks which are escalating throughout the country. The heightened role of identity throughout the country is subject to a mosaic of complex overlapping conflicts each with their own unique origins and goals. The aim of the thesis is neither to unpack individual conflicts nor to determine their exact influence over the security of each ethnic group. The focus of the study is to examine the influence of the general rise in ethno-politics and sectarian fragility on the evolution of the education system in the disputed territories. However, that is not to say that a wider understanding of the conflict actors is not necessary.

The following chapter will therefore provide the reader with the contextual background required to proceed with the investigation. Specifically, in order to explore the role of identity in the reconstruction of education, the reader must first understand the Iraqi context. To achieve this, the chapter will briefly introduce both the national and regional environments. Therefore, this chapter will begin by

introducing the historical context of the disputed territories, covering the ethno-political manipulation that has led to the territories' contested position and defining the ethnic claims to the regions of Kirkuk and Ninewa. This will be followed by an evaluation of the impact of the 2003 invasion on identity issues and security in the country, before returning to look specifically at the current situation in the disputed territories.

### 3.2 The Ba'ath Era



**Photo: 1**

Kirkuk Citadel holds significant symbolic value for many of Iraq's Ethnic groups

The oil-rich northern districts of Iraq were long considered a reflection of the country with a diversity of ethnic and religious groups; Arabs, Turkmen, Kurds, Assyrians, Yezidi, Shabak and Chaldeans, living together and portraying Iraq's demographic makeup. However, the region has historically constituted a buffer zone between the Arab South and Kurdish North which has witnessed Kurdish uprisings against the central government and the Ba'ath party's policy of Arabisation in the twentieth

century. The systematic policies which expelled hundreds of thousands of Kurds and other ethnic minorities, destroying hundreds of Kurdish villages and appropriating Kurdish and Turkmen-owned land (Inter-peace, 2011). Baghdad's creation of a false demographic and the genocidal Anfal campaigns of 1987 and 1988 have resulted in the region being highly contested between ethnic groups. What is now Iraqi Kurdistan eventually gained autonomy from Saddam's Iraq in 1991. By the end of the first Gulf War the majority of Kurdish areas of northern Iraq became effectively outside of Baghdad's control, separated by a no-fly zone and the unofficial boundary known as the Green Line. This resulted in the Iraqi Kurdish region achieving relative autonomy from Saddam's Iraq. However, the areas which lay beyond the green line continued to fall under central Baghdad's control, most notably the oil rich governorate of Kirkuk. The disputed territories, or disputed internal boundaries (DIB's), consisting of 15 districts stretching across four northern governorates and curving from the Syrian to Iranian borders, are currently subject to heightened identity politics and sectarian insecurity. In the aftermath of the 2003 invasion the Kurdish Regional Government and Government of Iraq both laid claim to land spread over the districts. The tug-of-war between the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the federal government in Baghdad (GoI) has seen the regions' minority ethnic groups drawn into debates over ethnic composition.

### **3.2.1 Kirkuk**

Kirkuk, the oil-rich city which lies within the Iraqi Governorate of the same name, has been central to the territorial dispute in the region. Its place in the Iraqi state has been disputed by the Kurds since the creation of the country by the British in the

1920s. Claiming the majority ethnic status in the region, Iraqi Kurds passionately rejected their addition to the new Arab state and it has long been the cause for Kurdish revolt and intermittent conflict with Baghdad. Throughout the twentieth century identity politics plagued Kirkuk and demographic composition served as a catalyst for frequent conflict. The symbolic importance of Kirkuk to the Kurds and Turkmen lay in direct opposition to the strategic importance of the region to Baghdad.

Consequently, Baghdad sought to counter the Kurdish claim to demographic dominance and set about a deliberate and cruel policy of Arabisation. Intent on increasing Kirkuk's Arab population and achieving a majority status in the oil rich territory, the central government sought to assimilate or expel non-Arab ethnic groups from the region. Arabisation took hold of every aspect of society in Kirkuk, from the renaming of streets to reflect Arab nationalism through to education provision for minority groups. By 1975 Baghdad had stepped up its programme of Arabisation in the region, forcibly expelling Kurds, Turkmen and Christians. The central government aimed to achieve an Arab majority by persuading poor Shiite Arabs from the south to settle in the newly vacant homes in the north with enticing grants of up to 10 000 Iraqi Dinars (Romano, 2007). During the 1980–1988 Iran–Iraq War, Iraqi Kurdish involvement with Iranian forces led to the Arabisation policies deteriorating into all-out genocide. The subsequent Anfal campaigns claimed the lives of 100 000 to 200 000 Iraqi Kurdish civilians in northern Iraq (Romano, 2007).

After the Kurdish region gained autonomy, the Kirkuk Governorate and areas to the south of the green line, continued to experience expulsions at approximately 1000 a

month until 2003 (Romano, 2007). From the beginning of the Ba'ath Party's reign in 1968 until the fall of Saddam's regime in 2003, an estimated 200 000 to 300 000 people, mostly Kurds, were expelled from the Kirkuk region, drastically changing the demographics of Kirkuk city (Baker, 2004). From 1997 onwards the Ba'ath Party government applied pressure to those non-Arabs living in areas under their control such as Kirkuk, Khaniqin, Sinjar, to "correct" their ethnicity. Nationality Correction Forms, were issued to the remaining non-Arab population (Kirkukui, 2007). These required registration as either Kurd, which resulted in expulsion over the green line into the Iraqi Kurdish Region (IKR) or as Arab, which often necessitated participation in loyalist activities, including volunteering for paramilitary forces such as the popular army (Assyrian Council of Europe, 2010). Additionally, registration of newborn babies with non-Arabic ethnic or religious names was obstructed under the guise of being "alien to the heritage of Iraqi society." (Assyrian Council of Europe, 2010). Every attempt was made to create an Arab dominance in the regions which bordered the green line and in doing so the cultural, linguistic and ethnic rights of the existing populations were denied.

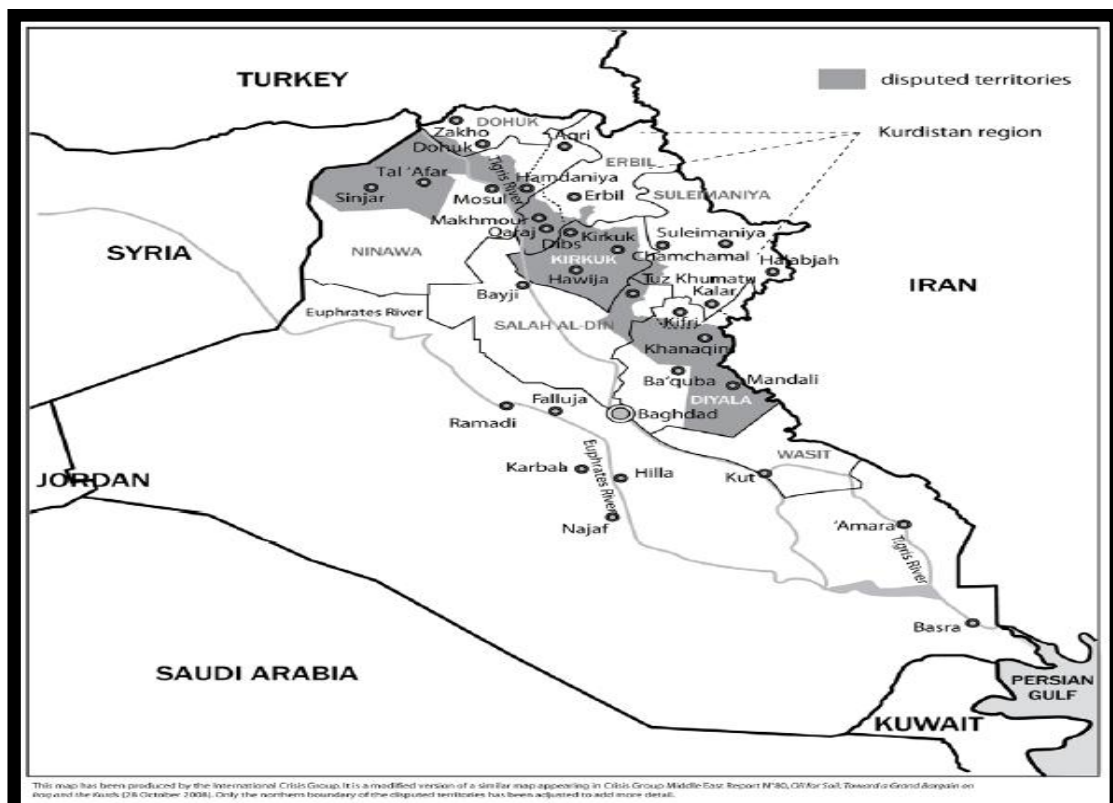
### **3.2.2 Kurdish Jerusalem**

The Kurds hold that accepting Kurdistan's claim to Kirkuk is the only geographically, historically, demographically and morally sound action (O'Leary, 2007). The position of the Kurdish authorities is unwavering. They demand the preservation of a protected autonomy similar to pre-2003 and the opportunity, via referendum, of extending the Kurdish Autonomous Region to include Kirkuk. The history of persecution appears to drive the imperative to control their destiny in Kirkuk and



Kurdistan. The issue of Kirkuk is closely linked to Kurdish national identity and has become symbolic of the Kurdish struggle. Subsequently, Kirkuk has become a powerfully sacred concern and is described by the Kurdish leaders as their “Jerusalem”(Rafaat, 2008;252). Public opinion would not accept the forsaking of Kirkuk and therefore it is not likely that a Kurdish politician would make such a proposal. This has led to the Kurds consolidating their authority in Kirkuk post 2003. Kurdish authority is visible everywhere in the city. In addition to the provincial government and the police force, Kurdish military forces and the Kurdistan Regional Government intelligence service, the Asaish, are active in the city.

Figure 2: Disputed Territories Claimed By The KRG



(Taken from the International Crisis Group, 2008)

### 3.2.3 Turkmen homeland

While Kirkuk is also often referred to as ‘The Heart’ of Kurdistan,<sup>9</sup> it is equally important to the Turkmen people, who regard the diagonal strip of land stretching from the Syrian and Turkish border areas in the north of Iraq to the town of Mendeli on the Iranian border in Central Iraq to be Turkmeneli, Turkmen land. The Turkmen lay claim to Kirkuk city through an historical narrative in which their ancestors have been present in the region for centuries and have enjoyed key moments in the region’s leadership (Stansfield and Anderson. 2009). The question of who the Turkmen are and from where they originate is one of a complex series of narratives and debates. Stansfield states that few facts about the Turkmen population of Iraq are easy to establish and that it is not clear how many Turkmen inhabit Iraq or where they came from (Stansfield and Anderson. 2009).

Figure 3: Land Claimed as Historically Turkmen



(Taken from SOIM, 2005)

<sup>9</sup> Kurdish Leaders frequently use Kirkuk to appeal to national sentiment. For example since 1991 Talabani has referred to Kirkuk as the Jerusalem of Kurdistan and the heart of Kurdistan, an emotional metaphor rather than a direct comparison.

Academics and commentators alike tend to focus on the Kurdish demographic movements and suffering in the region and the vast majority of the literature from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century onward focuses either on Iraqi elite level political history or, falls into a smaller body of literature, which can be deemed romantically pro- Kurdish (Stansfield and Anderson. 2009). Consequently, the Turkmen community of Iraq has expressed concern that their suffering in the history of Kirkuk has been underplayed or ignored entirely (see Kerkuklu, 2007; Stansfield, 2009; Al-Hirmizi, 2007). The Turkmen narrative is framed by the injustices inflicted upon them throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century at the hands of the state and also the ever encroaching Kurdish population. During this period the Iraqi political landscape was characterised by ethnically-affiliated ideological choices and change was sought through violent action (Stansfield and Anderson. 2009). This led to Kirkuk's Kurds and Turkmens taking up arms against each other and creating a legacy of massacres in the city. Such events have developed a 'powerful symbolic dimension used to emphasise not only the plight of the Turkmens in the twentieth century but also the threats that may still exist' (Stansfield and Anderson. 2009;62). One such event is the 1959 massacre, referred to by Al-Hirmizi as an 'ever bleeding wound' for the Turkmen community (Al-Hirmizi, 2007;103) it remains as a stark reminder to the Turkmens of the dangers of living in a Kurdish dominated region of Iraq (Stansfield, 2009).

The Turkmens consider themselves particularly wronged by external discussions of regional demography in terms of Arab, Kurd, and Turkmen proportions (Stansfield, 2009;58). The 1957 census of the Kirkuk region is considered particularly significant in this discussion as it was conducted prior to the large scale population movements

of the Arabization policies. The results showed the Turkmens forming the majority group within Kirkuk city, while Kurds held the majority of the governorate in general. However, Turkmen academics suggest an overall inaccuracy of these numbers due to the mis-registration of many Turkmens as Arab or Kurd (Kerkuklu, 2007;74). Stansfield (2009;59) notes that Turkmens often refer to the writings of Batatu to illustrate support of their majority status. Batatu declared Kirkuk to have been Turkish 'through and through' in its recent history and suggested that the economic rewards of oil industry had encouraged Kurdish immigration into the city in the twentieth century (Batatu, 1978: 913). Batatu also argued that by 1959 the Kurds had swollen to one third of the population and Turks had declined to just over half.

The Turkmens believe that the under estimation of their population size illustrates miscalculations by western academics and journalists and a denial of their suffering at the hands of the Iraqi state. They maintain that the land taken under Arabization was in fact Turkmen land and not that of the Kurds. This belief serves as the foundation of their claim that they are the principle victims of Ba'ath party Arabization policies. Disputed as this may be, there is no denying that this linguistically and culturally distinct ethnic group has suffered from deliberate persecution. By 1973 they were omitted from the provisional constitution of Iraq and during the 1970's tens of thousands of Turkmen families were deported from Kirkuk against their will into the south of Iraq with hundreds of Turkmen villages being destroyed by the Iraqi regime under a variety of pretexts (Kerkuklu, 2007: 30). Turkmen communities are generally located in and around the citadel, which is the oldest location in the city, believing that their community settlement patterns reflect their primacy; Turkmen maintain Kirkuk to be their city. When this historical view of the city is coupled with

the suffering at the hands of Saddam's regime, it becomes apparent that they are unlikely to yield their claim. Kirkuk's Turkmen have stated that they will under no circumstances support the incorporation of Kirkuk into the Kurdish Region, preferring power sharing arrangements. They fear for their rights under the Kurdish authority and maintain their own historical claim to the city.

### **3.2.4 Indigenous Arab and Christian populations**

Furthermore the governorate is home to a large Arab demographic who are both indigenous and as a result of forced migration, and to a smaller Assyrian population. The Kurdish authorities push for a forcible reversal of Arabization in Kirkuk has been met by fervent opposition from Kirkuk's Turkmen and Arabs. The sheer complexity of the issue is illustrated by the fact that the timescale of the Arabization policies has allowed for original Arab settlers to intermarry within the pre-existing population of Kirkuk and see their children and grandchildren born in the city. Expelling the Arab settlers, who were principally coerced by Saddam to settle in the north under the banner of 'return' is seen as perpetrating further injustice (Interview AB2, ABA, KD9). The very conceptualisation of 'return' is highly contested and frequently seen in terms of the forcible expulsion by the Arab community.

### **3.2.5 Article 140**

The Coalition Provisional Authority, which governed Iraq in the year after the invasion, responded to the situation in Kirkuk by implementing a "stay-put" policy for Arab settlers. A legal process for determining property claims in the city was

employed: The Iraqi Property Claims Commission, but the body has been criticized for its extremely slow response (Interviews KD1, KD4, TM1). Displeased with the lack of action over Kirkuk, Kurdish parties insisted that the permanent Constitution replicate Article 58 of Iraq's 2004 transitional Constitution. Negotiations over the permanent Iraqi Constitution almost failed over the Kirkuk question, but the Kurdish parties were ultimately successful. The resulting Article 140 of the new Iraqi constitution necessitated a three stage process: normalization, census, and referendum. Normalization would be achieved by the assisted return of internally displaced people and the recovery of their property. Arab settlers who choose to return to southern and central Iraq would be helped in doing so and the boundaries of the governorate of Kirkuk would be restored to that of pre 1974. Subsequently, a census and a referendum would be conducted to decide the future of the city and the governorate. The set deadline for the implementation of this article was December 2007. However, this deadline has expired, been extended and expired again.

Negotiations over the permanent Iraqi Constitution almost failed over the Kirkuk question and efforts to resolve the status of Kirkuk have currently stalled over non-implementation of Article 140. The issue is further complicated by the absence of reliable statistics on the ethnic composition of the governorate. With no exact data available due to frequent accusations of vote rigging and disputes over voter eligibility, each group is free to claim the majority status and instigate IDP movements to reinforce their claim. This precarious situation has led to fluctuating demographics within the region; IDP's of different ethnic origins have moved toward the region, while existing members of the population have fled, with sources noting at least 2,000 families having left Kirkuk alone in the latter half of 2007 (IRIN, 2007).

### **3.2.6 Ninewa**

Due to its significant oil reserves, ethnically mixed demographics and symbolic importance to the Kurds and Turkmen, Kirkuk has become the focus of the Arab-Kurdish dispute. Much Iraqi and international attention has been devoted to defusing the ethnic tensions within the region. However, despite Kirkuk's significance in negotiations, the territorial contestation extends far beyond its boundaries. The Kurdish Regional Government and Government of Iraq continue to contest land spread over three additional governorates, Diyala, Salah al-Din and Ninewa. The Governorate of Ninewa is of particular interest in terms of ethnic identity. Identity politics in Ninewa are especially intricate as the governorate is home to a diverse range of competing and often antagonistic ethnic identities. It has witnessed significant clashes between Kurdish and Arab nationalist movements in the capital of Mosul and further minority ethnic groups have demographic dominance in their regional locations.

The governorate has a majority Arab population with a strong Kurdish minority (ICG, 2009). Under the Ba'ath party, Kurdish national aspirations were suppressed in Ninewa through forced displacement and discriminatory resource distribution administered from the Arabist capital of Mosul. In 2003 the Kurds set out to redress their position in the region. Kurdish forces moved across the Green Line and laid claim to six of the governorate's nine districts (Sinjar, Tal Afar, Tilkaef, Sheikhan, Hamdaniya, and Makhmour) as well as two additional subdistricts (Qahtaniya and

Bashiqa)<sup>10</sup>. With the exception of Arab dominated Mosul this constitutes the governorate's remaining arable land and populated areas (ICG, 2009)<sup>11</sup>. In 2005 a Sunni Arab boycott of provincial elections allowed the Kurds to gain regional political control which was disproportionate to their population size. The conflict dynamic in Ninewa witnessed the Kurds gaining unbalanced control in an area in which they were actually a minority (ICG 2009).

Meanwhile, between 2003 and 2008, Ninewa's strong Arabist, military and Sunni religious traditions resulted in a growing number of Sunni insurgence groups operating in the governorate (Russel, 2010; Eisenstadt, 2005; Dagher, 2009). Driven by mounting anti-Kurdish and anti-Shiite resentment, former officers, Baathists and an increasingly destitute youth have been recruited by religiously motivated insurgency groups to enforce rule over predominantly Sunni Arab areas (ICG, 2009)<sup>12</sup>. Traditional Arab-Kurd friction was overlaid with the essentially Sunni versus Shiite sectarian struggle previously centred in the capital. However, the political environment changed gradually as Iraqi forces strengthened the resolve to stabilise Ninewa and Prime Minister al-Maliki sought to push back Kurdish territorial advances.

The 2009 provincial elections saw Sunni Arab leaders re-enter the political arena uniting around a 'resolutely nationalist and anti-Kurdish platform' (ICG, 2009;9) Unified around Ninewa's strong Arab identity and the non-negotiable existence of the 1991 Kurdish boundary, the al-Hadbaa National List achieved success in the

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<sup>10</sup> Most maps of Ninewa also show the district of Akre as part of the province. However, this district is entirely above the Green Line and has been fully administered by the KRG since 1991.

<sup>11</sup> Find quite Ninewa's southern districts of Al-Ba'aj and Al-Hadr are largely desert and sparsely populated.

<sup>12</sup> A further exploration of this is addressed in the following section.



elections. Al-Hadbaa subsequently set about reasserting the provincial governments' authority in the disputed territories previously under Kurdish control. Rising tensions have seen clashes occur where Arabs and Kurds vie for administrative control and where Iraq's army and Kurdish peshmergas face off across an increasingly tense divide.

### **3.2.7 Minorities**

Further complicating the issue of demographic majority in these areas is the heavy concentration of smaller ethnic and religious minorities. Ninewa has been home to indigenous Assyrian Christians<sup>13</sup>, Yazidis<sup>14</sup>, Shabaks<sup>15</sup>, Turkmen, and other minorities for centuries. They account for 10 per cent of the Iraqi population and are concentrated in disputed borderlands between Kurdistan and Arab Iraq. All districts in question demonstrate ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity beyond the two conflicting parties. Many of these minorities hold demographic dominance in their districts and they have been represented in Ninewa for millennia. These groups frequently complain of being caught up in the larger Arab-Kurdish struggle. Non-Kurdish groups interviewed in Ninewa suggested that their continued existence was threatened by the introduction of restricted rights based on ethnic identity, denial of the means to reproduce cultural identity and politically motivated forced migration of Kurds into parts of the region. These actions are perceived as a deliberate policy of

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<sup>13</sup> The Assyrian community or Assyrian-Chaldo community are an ethnic group characterised by their religious and linguistic markers. Assyrians are a Christian group who speak a Neo-Aramaic dialect. 1947 census 3.1% of Iraqi population concentrated primarily in the northern governorates. UN 2003 1.2%

<sup>14</sup> The Yezidi community are a unique ethnic group with a religion, language, and culture distinct from the Arab and Kurdish cultures among which they live. However, in the pursuit of security the Yezidi community have alternately claimed to be Kurds, Turkmen, Arabs and Assyrians and this has caused great divisions within their representation. Therefore their political alliances are split and two distinct interpretations of education provision are provided from within the community. Ninewa has various heavily-populated Yezidi areas in Sinjar, Sheikan and Talkif and Ba;shique. 1947 census 0.67% of population./ 2003 UN1%

<sup>15</sup> The religious and ethnic minority community of the Shabek reside to the east of the Ninewa province in the region often referred to as the Ninewa plain.

Kurdification which threatens to assimilate minority non-Kurdish groups. The Kurds are accused of moving systematically to increase their control of territories to guarantee annexation into the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) while Non-Kurdish groups in the region continue to resist what they see as Kurdish encroachment.

### 3.3 Operation Iraqi Freedom, Security and Identity



**Photo: 2**

Erbil Road  
sign in  
English and  
Kurdish

#### 3.3.1 Overview

It is impossible to consider the current ethno-political environment in the disputed territories without an understanding of how the US invasion of Iraq influenced security. As briefly eluded to in reference to the political contest over Ninewa, the ethnically defined contest in the disputed territories is not clearly divided along neat ethnic lines. Instead it is influenced, entwined and intrinsically linked to the wider

sectarian-based identity conflicts that have been exacerbated post 2003. It is for this reason that the following section will examine the decisions made by the US administration in the aftermath of the invasion and how they have contributed to fortifying ethnic identity in the region and creating ethnically defined insecurity

### **3.3.2 Operation Iraqi Freedom's fortification of ethnic identity**

Despite strong opposition, Operation Iraqi Freedom was instigated by a coalition of troops from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Poland on March 20<sup>th</sup> 2003. According to the then U.S. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, the objective was "to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, to end Saddam Hussein's support for terrorism, and to free the Iraqi people"(White House, 2003). Tragically, over the course of the last ten years these aims have not been met. It is now widely accepted that the reason weapons of mass destruction were never found was because they never existed in the first place (Phythian; 206). The link between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda is highly contested and the activity of terrorist cells in Iraq has undoubtedly increased post invasion (BBC, 2003). And finally, although the Iraqi people were liberated from the rein of dictator Saddam Hussein, their freedom from terror has not been achieved (Freedom House, 2012). In 2012 Iraq was considered one of the most dangerous countries in the world, appearing fourth from the bottom of the Global Peace Index (2012), with only Sudan, Afghanistan and Somalia proving less peaceful. Furthermore, in 2012 Iraq featured at the top of the Global Terrorism Index and was classified as 'not free' by the Freedom House democracy scale (FreedomHouse, 2012).

Understandably, the war in Iraq has since been described by former secretary of state, Madeline Albright as possibly “*one of the worst disasters in American foreign policy*” (New York Times, 2006), with Bush stating that the intelligence failure in Iraq was the biggest regret of his presidency (The Guardian, 2008). Yet the initial flawed intelligence was only the first mistake in a long road of coalition miscalculations which have contributed to Iraq’s current security status and influenced ethnopolitics. In the months following the US invasion officials faced the daunting challenge of occupying and reconstructing an Iraq that had been devastated by decades of sanctions and war. With the benefit of hindsight it is clear to see that the decisions made in this initial period contributed to fortifying sectarian identity and shaping the political landscape in terms of ethno-political influence (Barak, 2007)). A series of ill-advised coalition policies formed the future of conflict in Iraq and served to divide communities according to identity.

The first of such steps was the decree that Iraq’s ruling Ba’ath Party would be disbanded without consultation or review. These party members were banned from future employment in government roles, which resulted in 15,000–30,000 of Iraq’s officials being excluded from participating in the new Iraqi government (Megally and Mufti, 2005). This ruling was upheld and few attempts were made to incorporate any members of the Ba’ath party into the new government formations. A consequence of this action, highlighted by Barak (2007), has been the grave impact on governmental competency through removing all those with administrative experience. By removing the Ba’ath Party collectively and at great ‘cost of administrative efficiency’ (Bremer,

2005:45), the US officials failed to recognise the differentiated motivations of party members.

The former regime had ultimate control over state affairs and as such party membership offered the only means of social mobility. The Baath party contained members with varying levels of ideological affiliation. “By failing to distinguish these self-motivated Ba’ath members from their ideological comrades, US officials in fact pushed the two groups closer to one another” in their resistance of the US occupation (CSIS 2006). The move also created a political vacuum which the existing parties and returning exiles failed to fill. The only influential actors who operated outside Iraq’s tightly controlled political system before 2003 and managed to remain in place after the invasion were religious leaders. As such it was these leaders who entered the previously secular political arena to address the void (Barak, 2007).

In an equally unconsidered move, the same logic was applied to the Iraqi Army. US Chief Administrator in Iraq, Paul Bremer, issued a statement that the institution was officially disbanded on May 23, 2003<sup>16</sup>. This caused hundreds of thousands of Iraqi soldiers to lose their jobs, their salaries and pensions, and their honour and prestige (Hashim, 2003; Tripp, 2004). As such it is estimated that 350,000 soldiers, described as ‘well trained, well armed, and deeply angry at the Americans’, were ‘sent out into bitter shame and unemployment’ (Danner, 2003). US officials failed to appreciate

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<sup>16</sup> This step has been explained in several ways. Some argued that the USA disbanded the Iraqi Army in order to prevent it from opposing the USA’s ‘nation-building’ project owing to the troops’ loyalty to Saddam Hussein and the army’s own, dubious character (Slevin, 2003). Others explained that the Iraqi Army in fact fragmented soon after the invasion (Slevin, 2003; Slocombe, 2003; Perito, 2005; Rathmall et al., 2005; Bremer, 2006). Finally, it was suggested that Shi’is and Kurds, who had been oppressed by the army and were, moreover, underrepresented in its ranks, demanded its total dissolution and, perhaps, made their support for the ‘nation-building’ project conditional on this (Slevin, 2003; Hickey, 2005; Bremer, 2006: 59).

both the central role of the military and the particular history of the Iraqi Army (Barak 2007). Despite its negative associations for Iraq's Kurds and Shi'is (Sahil 1996), the military was the state's most patriotic institution. The Army fought on behalf of the Iraqi state almost continuously for nearly a quarter of a century, having been involved in three inter-state conflicts in the past three decades. The dissolution of the army consequently held symbolic significance and was 'tantamount to erasing its entire institutional history' (Barak 2003). Its un-ceremonial dismissal was perceived as a dishonour to all those who had given their lives for their country (Barak, 2007). This action consequently fuelled the opposition to the US-sponsored 'nation-building' project and the dismissed soldiers had the necessary training and weapons to do so actively (Hashim, 2003; Janabi, 2004; Qassab 2005; Al-Jazeera, 2004).

The disbanding of the Iraqi Army, like the Ba'ath Party and Iraq's ruling elite, was misguided and had direct consequences for the relationship between ethnic identity and security (Barak, 2007; Roth, 2004; Gordon 2004). Barak describes it as 'the single most important action that induced Iraq's inter-communal security dilemma' (Barak, 2007;455). The weakness of the emerging political parties coupled with the decreasing security environment encouraged Iraqi citizens to take responsibility for their own safety. The absence of an effective and legitimate authority thus prompted many Iraqi citizens to rally around religious leaders and communal militias, which were continually growing in the country. Iraq's prime minister, Iyad Allawi stated that 'since the state was developed in Iraq, institutions have disappeared and people have withdrawn into their clans and tribes (New York Times 2006)'. The dismantling of Iraq's formal institutions, regime, and political elite aggravated the tensions between its major communities by making security their primary concern. While

dependence on clan or tribe for security occurred principally in rural areas, in the cities it was the communal militias that provided security (Barak, 2007). In addition, the reformation of the Iraqi security force resulted in ethnically homogenous units, made up mostly of Shi'as and Kurds. This increased Sunni apprehensions towards the new security sector and impinged on the willingness of Sunni leaders to cooperate on the political level (Filkins 2005).

As the security vacuum grew, so did crimes perpetrated by opportunistic criminals and terrorists seeking to destabilise the country's fragile security situation. Consequently, the Iraqi people sought out the security offered by their respective communities as they faced a decrease in security throughout the country. Al-Khoei (2012) suggests that the Iraq people did not turn on themselves in a sectarian conflict, and suggests that the 'Sunnis and Shia of Iraq are not killing each other, instead, violent jihadists are killing both Sunnis and Shia' (Guardian, 2012). Such groups are ruthlessly exploiting Iraq's descent into political turmoil since the US troop withdrawal to further their own aims. Under these circumstances, it was logical for many Iraqis to resort to self-help: While Sunnis formed armed groups that engaged in 'resistance' against the US forces and their local allies, Shi'is and Kurds formed militias and joined Iraq's new security sector, where they became dominant (Stansfield; 2010). Yet, all of these steps, designed to increase the security of the communities involved, exacerbated inter-communal tensions. The result was a country drenched in private militias and unstructured security forces, each acting in isolation to protect their own communities from criminals and terrorist acts.

The nature of the fighting in Iraq *'evolved from a struggle between Coalition forces and former regime loyalists to a much more diffuse mix of conflicts, involving a number of Sunni groups, Shi'ite militias, and foreign jihadists'*(CSIS 2007;3). A complex pattern of conflict has emerged which reflects a broader fight for sectarian and ethnic control of political and economic space (CSIS 2007). There is little cohesive sense of nationhood or common agreement on national Iraqi identity. Stansfield (2011;29) writes that political identities have been *'broken by the initial chaotic devolution of power that afflicted Iraq in the first years following regime change, with these localized, sectarian and ethnic identities being ossified in a most brutal civil war, and then normalized as being the way politics works in Iraq in the post-US setting since 2011'*. Consequently Iraqi politics now operates according to identities and the Chatham House report (2011) on Iraq's future suggests that security in Iraq will depend *'not only on the government's success in reining in militias and strengthening the security forces, but on the perceived utility and effectiveness of participation in peaceful political processes, from elections to protests'*(2001;3).

Regardless of international attempts to stem the violence and establish the legitimacy of political institutions, ethnic and sectarian tensions continued to push the country further toward civil war (CSIS, 2007). Iraq now faces a complex mix of civil wars. Each conflict involves a different level and mix of violence. Each also involves political, ethnic, religious, and economic struggles for control of space and resources, as well as sheer political power (CSIS, 2007). In 2007 the Pentagon defined the conflict in Iraq as follows: *Much of the present violence is focused on local issues, such as sectarian, political, and economic control of Baghdad; Kurdish,*



*Arab, and Turkmen aspirations for Kirkuk; and the political and economic control of Shi'a regions in the south (Department of Defence, 2007;8).* The concentration on local politics means that each governorate in Iraq has its own specific conflict actors which generate threats to ethnic and religious groups in that locality. As such in the multi-ethnic northern governorates of Ninewa and Kirkuk, religious sectarianism, disengaged populations and rejection of the occupation is accompanied by ethnic competition for regional control.

### **3.2.2 Current Context: Identity and security in the disputed territories**

Thus far this chapter has presented the contextual history to the regional dispute of territory in the north of Iraq, both administratively between Baghdad and the KRG, and symbolically between the ethnic groups in the region. It has investigated how the regime change in 2003 simultaneously opened the door for administrative change in the region and fortified ethnic identities due to heightened insecurity and absence of political control. In this final section of this chapter the thesis will unpack the influence of these two factors on security and ethnic identity in the region.

Due to the growing insecurity and heightened regional competition both minority groups and dominate ethnicities in the region have retreated into their own communities with increased ethnic enclaves and ethnically homogenous residential patterns (Rydgren, 2011). The perception of threat against religious and ethnic groups in the region is compounded by the absence of a functioning security service in the region which operates in the interests of all Iraqis. Numerous security and military groups are operating in both Kirkuk and Ninewa, each representing their ethnic groups and resulting in a lack of a unified command or operational structure.

For example there are the units of the Iraqi Army's 12th Division in addition to local police forces and the Kurdish security and armed forces known as *asayish* and *peshmerga*. Mohammed Khalil al-Juburi, an Arab member of the Kirkuk Provincial Council suggests that "*there is a security chaos in the disputed territories. Each one of the security groups acts on their own.... There needs to be a framework to address this.*" (Interview AB10) The political debate around security forces and their presence and power in the disputed territories is framed in terms of ethnic composition and access to equal protection for each ethnic group. The Turkmen and Arab representation have been vocal in their objection to the presence of Kurdish forces in the disputed territories, with the Turkmen calling for their own security forces to be created (Aswal al-Iraq, 2012)<sup>17</sup>. The declaration of distrust in the security forces (referring specifically to the Kurdish *Asayish* forces) was justified by claims that the existing force was either infiltrated by insurgents or run by political parties whose wider political aspirations influence their dealings with other ethnic groups.

Security has become framed by ethnic identity because each community has experienced threats to its continued existence in the region. The lack of national security structures and the continued ethnic competition over administrative control have fuelled inter-ethnic tensions over the last ten years. Return migration of Kurds is seen by Arabs and Turkmen in Kirkuk as an attempt by Kurdish elites in Erbil to influence the outcome of a future referendum, while Kurds view Arab hostility to the

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<sup>17</sup> The Iraqi government has showed approval for the formation of a Turkmen armed force to protect the Turkmen residential territories, according to a Turkmen member of the Kirkuk Provincial Council. The Iraqi government has approved the recruitment of 500 Turkmen taskforce members as protection for the Turkmen residential territories of Kirkuk will be their main duty. Read more: <http://kirkuknow.com/english/index.php/2013/08/government-approves-turkmen-security-forces/#ixzz2dBgKS4UM>

return process as simply a continuation of Arabization policies.<sup>18</sup> In the absence of reliable statistics on the ethnic composition of the governorate and no exact data available due to frequent accusations of vote rigging and disputes over voter eligibility, each ethnic group is free to claim the majority status and instigate IDP movements to reinforce their claim. Arab communities have accused the KRG of expelling them from their lands in the aftermath of the initial invasion and face continued aggression from Kurdish security forces (Interview, AB6; see Radwar; 2010. 2013). In 2003 in the town of Khanaqin, PUK Persmerga reportedly expelled up to six hundred Arab families, comprising some four thousand individuals, according to Human Rights Watch (2006). Turkmen representatives also report increasing intimidation and threats, according to the latest report by the Iraqi Turkmen Front Human Rights Office in Kirkuk. The report states that there have been sixty eight targeted attacks of violence against Turkmen individuals or assemblies during the last 6 months alone in the North of Iraq (Turkmen Front, 2013). Assaults are directed at Turkmen residential areas and businesses and have resulted in a climate of fear for the Turkmen communities in the Disputed Territories.

The larger ethnic groups, Arab, Kurd and Turkmen, have all documented acts of targeted violence and denial of representation. In addition, other forms of “cleansing” have become at least as important as major overt acts of violence. The territorial dispute and wider political and religious conflicts have seen groups seeking domination over others or seeking to push the weaker side out of areas where they have the majority or have superior power. These forms of “soft” ethnic cleansing include threats, physical intimidation, blackmail, seizure of property, raids on homes

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<sup>18</sup> However, Kurdish return migration is not universally popular among all Kirkuk Kurds either, with some of them fearing a deterioration of interethnic relations. (Interviews KD 3; KD8, KD9)

and businesses, use of checkpoints to push other factions out, kidnappings and extortion, misuse of government offices and the police, and disappearances. Such incidences are frequently reported by Turkmen, Kurds and Arabs (See Human rights reports from; Human Rights Watch, SOIM, Kurdish Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Assyrian Aid Agency, Minority Rights Group and others).

The religious divide between Sunni and Shia has also led to sectarian violence, with the targeting of places of worship and ethnically homogenous residential areas. In April 2013 a raid upon the protest site in Hawija, Kirkuk incited a wave of fresh violence across Iraq. The demonstrators were openly connected to the Baathist Naqshibandi insurgent group who oppose the current government (Musings on Iraq; 2013). Government troops entered the camp under the pretext of searching for a criminal. During the encounter security forces used excessive force which led to dozens of protesters' deaths (Telephone Interview AB8; BBC, 2013). The government offered to form a fact-finding committee on the Hawija incident, to be chaired by the current Sunni Deputy Prime Minister Saleh al-Mutlag. But the Education Minister Mohammed Tamim and Science and Technology Minister Abdul Karim al-Samarrai, both Sunnis, said they were resigning as a consequence of the events, bringing the total of Sunni ministers who have resigned since March to four. Iraqi Sunnis accuse the government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki of widespread discrimination, citing that they are targeted by the heavy-handed anti-terrorism policies.

Additionally, opportunistic criminals who commit crimes motivated by greed but often interpreted through sectarianism exacerbate these divisions. The decreased security

in the region has led to increased unscrupulous crime, such as kidnapping for ransom and carjacking which are motivated by money but interpreted as acts of sectarianism. Organized criminals are faking a jihadist identity to mask a real motive of extortion and thievery (Amnesty International, 2011). Amnesty International (2011) report that Christians are regarded as rich and without protection, traditionally lacking tribal or militia links, making them easy targets for exploitation.

Currently, minority groups find themselves to be disproportionately targeted for terrorist attacks motivated by ethnic and religious prejudice and criminality. This has led to high levels of emigration from the province, particularly among the Chaldo-Assyrian community. Negotiating between being co-opted and being threatened, they have become vulnerable pawns in the wider dispute. A string of deadly attacks following the pull-out of US troops from Iraqi cities and towns in June 2009 exposed the continuing vulnerability of minority groups in the disputed territories. Four bombings, targeting Christians, Sabean-Mandaeans, Yazidis, Turkmen Shi'as, Shabaks and Kaka'is, took over 100 lives and left many hundreds more wounded. The defencelessness of minority groups is compounded by a lack of affiliation to a security force and impotency within the political arena. Furthermore, members of religious minorities are easily identifiable through traditional occupations and customs which are seen as in contradiction to strict interpretations Islam. For example, the sale of alcohol has been largely the domain of Christians and Yazidis, making them a target for Islamist armed groups and militias. The Iraq Sustainable Democracy Project (ISDP; 2008) reports that Christian groups in Ninewa believe persecution by extremists arose because they are perceived as co-religionists and collaborators with the Americans. Fear for their lives has driven a disproportionately

high number of members of minority communities to flee Iraq in recent years resulting in a distinct threat to the continuing existence of such groups in the region.

### **3. 4 Concluding Remarks**

The ethnically motivated dispute over the six governorates in the north of Iraq has resulted in a perpetual state of limbo in the region. Iraqi politics have stalled over the issue of Kirkuk and a final administrative resolution appears to be out of sight. The ethnic basis to territorial claims has heightened the role of ethno-politics within the region and amplified the discourse over linguistic presence, cultural representation and minority rights. Communities are increasingly ethnically homogenous and retreat into themselves for protection. The wider insecure environment, in which sectarian based attacks are frequent, and the disengagement of ethnically and religiously affiliated militias creates fear and has served to elevate debates over territorial representation to the height of becoming an ethnic survival issue.

Within this climate of insecurity, ethnic competition and fear, the diverse population of the disputed territories has continued with everyday life since 2003. All communities, regardless of ethnic or religious affiliation require the provision of basic services and institutions. It is the purpose of this thesis to examine how the ever present issue of ethnicity has influenced the post 2003 reconstruction of the education system in the region; particularly in the more ethnically diverse governorates of Kirkuk and Ninewa.

## ***Chapter 4: Iraqi Education through a Societal Security Lens***

### **4.1 Introduction**

It is the purpose of this thesis to determine what factors have influenced the development of education structures in the disputed territories post 2003 in order to approach the central research question of '*How has ethnic identity influenced the education narrative in the disputed territories*'. This investigation will be structured around the concept of societal security and the role identity protection has played in shaping education structures and schools. The need to protect identity in the context of the Iraqi disputed territories can be seen to have two fields of influence: firstly, the heightened role of ethno-politics within the region and the continued uncertainty over the final administrative status of Kirkuk; and secondly, the environment of physical insecurity subject to seemingly sectarian based attacks. The ethnically defined territorial and administrative dispute has resulted in ethnic groups fearing marginalisation should administrative power fall to another community, while a myriad of armed groups serve as conflict actors, increasing these fears through targeted sectarian violence. The dispute over territorial control and 'ownership' of Kirkuk cannot be examined solely by analysis of contemporary events. Ethnic competition is based on historical claims and the region's complex history of ethnic-conflict and co-existence. Equally, the current role of identity in formal education structures cannot be investigated in isolation from the education system that preceded it. How education influenced identity in the past will undoubtedly have significant influence on how it is perceived in the present.

To understand the role of identity in today's Iraqi education system the thesis must explore how education has previously been used to fortify or diminish ethnic identity and culture in the region. The need for this understanding became increasingly apparent during the data collection period as interviewees depicted the current system's evolution in direct reaction to the legacy of what went before. Therefore the following chapter will unpack the role of identity in education during the Ba'ath era and highlight the purpose bestowed on education in terms of building a collective Arab identity. The chapter will demonstrate that knowledge of this is vital to understanding the current educational operating environment due to the legacy of Arabisation policies which continue to shape education delivery.

The chapter draws on both the thesis's original interview transcripts and secondary documentation to demonstrate the Ba'ath regimes use of Arabisation policies through education, and furthermore to highlight the influence it has on the current education narrative. The first section will outline the education system which existed prior to 2003 under the Ba'ath party. It will highlight the way in which ethnic identity indicators such as language and religion were managed within the education system from the late 1970's to 2003, and explore the purpose conferred on education by the Ba'ath Party. The second section of the chapter will devote itself to demonstrating the contemporary significance of this legacy on the education sector narrative and current understandings of education's purpose.



## 4.2 The role of education in Iraqi Arab Nationalism

Iraq's education system, established at the country's inception, offered both public and private paths eventually evolving to education becoming public and free at all levels, and mandatory at the primary level (De Santisteban, 2005). Shortly after hosting the 1976 *Baghdad Conference for the Eradication of Illiteracy*, in which Arab leaders and international experts discussed the potential for progressive educational reforms in the region, the Ba'athist-led Iraqi government passed the Compulsory Education Law. Children between the ages of six and fifteen were required to attend state schools; those who violated this law would have to serve time in state prison. This law helped raise the literacy rate in many governorates and strengthened the Iraqi government's role as the chief maintainer and supervisor of the free public education system. The introduction of free education at primary, secondary, and university levels led consequently to UNESCO estimating that primary schools had nearly a one hundred per cent gross enrolment attendance rate in the 1980s (United Nations Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, 2003).

Additionally, the self-declared secular educational system strongly supported women's right to education. In the 1980s the primary education enrolment was split almost equally between male and female; forty seven per-cent female and fifty three per-cent male (UNICEF, 2003). By 1991 thirty per-cent of Iraqi university faculty members were women. (This statistic is often highlighted in the literature in relation to the fact that it is higher than that of many western universities in 2000 – See Romano and Brown 2006; Muftah, 2013; ). Under Saddam Hussein's rule, Iraq's

national literacy campaign was recognized as an international educational achievement and literacy rates drastically increased from fifty two per cent-in 1977 to eighty per-cent in 1987 (UNESCO, 2003). As such, Iraqi education in the 1980's has often been cited one of the best systems in the Arab world. Between 1970 and 1984 Iraq's education system was highly praised and by 1984, major accomplishments had been achieved, which include but are not limited to:

- Gross enrolment rates close to one hundred per-cent
- High level of gender enrolment parity
- Illiteracy among the 15-45 age group declined to less than ten per-cent
- Dropout rates were the lowest in the Middle East and North Africa [MENA] region
- Education spending was six per cent of the Gross National Product [GNP] and twenty per cent of Iraq's total government budget.

(UNESCO, 2005)

Yet the international community's respect for the achievements of the education system failed to objectively assess the education provision in the country. While universal access to education is indeed crucial, ensuring that it is of high quality and serves the interests of the community to which it is delivered must also be a top priority. However, acclaim for the Ba'ath party's education programme was based solely on enrolment indicators and literacy rates. No assessment of the purpose of education or its resulting content was conducted. Therefore inherent failings in the Iraq education system went internationally unnoticed. Under the Ba'ath party regime education was highly influenced by politically motivated state-building projects which

sought unification of national identity under an exclusively Arab banner. The Ba'ath goal of a unified ethnic identity had serious implications for education delivery to the populations of the ethnically diverse northern territories whose distinct mother tongue languages and cultural practices differed from the majority Arab identity in the South of the country. Kurdish, Turkmani, and Assyrian were all active mother tongue languages within the northern territories and each ethnic group equally had its own place in Iraq's historical and geographical narrative.

Within the region, mother tongue language has served as a key identity indicator for communities and the protection of language rights has been central to the negotiation of Iraqi education rights and regional political debate. Officially the right to education in a mother tongue language was constitutionally approved from the inception of Iraq. It has subsequently been subject to various governmental decrees to consolidate these rights. The spoken use of Kurdish and the publication of Kurdish literature were guaranteed by the 1932 constitution and in 1958 the Kurdish language was officially recognised as the second language of the country and was used and studied in schools and universities (Kreyenbroek and Sperl 1992:79). Furthermore, in 1970, following the first Kurdish-Iraqi war the Iraqi government and the Kurdish parties of the north agreed a peace accord which granted the Kurds regional autonomy. The accord recognised Kurdish as an official Iraqi language and amended the constitution to reflect this, stating that; "the Iraqi people is made up of two nationalities, the Arab nationality and the Kurdish nationality" (Iraqi Constitution). Equally the constitutional right to education in the Turkmen language of Turkmeni was further consolidated in 1970 with an Iraqi governmental decree (No (89) dated

24 January 1970) which granted the minorities their cultural rights, including teaching in their mother tongue.

Yet when discussing education in the Ba'ath era with interview participants it was frequently stated that linguistically specific education was routinely denied to non-Arab groups by the Ba'ath Party policies that were in contradiction to the constitutional rights promised them. Interviews suggested that the resolutions and decrees written into Iraqi political history were systematically ignored and overridden by prohibiting decrees which banned non Arabic language education. The ongoing conflict between the Kurdish region and Baghdad, coupled with the implementation of Arabisation policies in the region to solidify the central government's control of the vast oil fields, resulted in the repeated denial of linguistic rights in the region. One interview participant expressed his frustration of continual denial by stating that:

*'Most of Iraq's constitutions have stipulated the rights of the Turkmens to study in their mother tongue. And yet we were always denied. The Divine Constitution in creating human beings in different mother tongues, which is a great miracle of the Almighty demands it. The Iraqi Constitution for 1932 demands it. The dissolved Revolution Command Council Decree No (89) of 1970 demands it. The current Constitution, Article 4/Fourth and the Universal Human Rights Regulations, demands it. And yet still always in Iraq the Turkmen are denied this right.'* (Interview TM3)

The constitutional promise of language rights under Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party are now viewed as a form of political placebo. Such rights were given to non-Arab

communities to placate and subdue them when their demands threatened to influence the perceived demographic of the oil rich northern governorates. It was presented by interviewees from minority ethnic groups that the Ba'ath party never intended to see such policies reach their full implementation. Despite moments of success, minority communities struggled with the ongoing animosity of the Iraqi regime, and failed to achieve continuous access to education in their mother tongue languages. *'The promises were to keep us quiet, they were not honourable promises, there was no intention behind them. When we refused to be subdued they removed our rights altogether'* (Interview KD3).

In 1974 the Iraqi government imposed a draft of the 1970 autonomy agreement which left the symbolic and oil rich Kirkuk under Iraqi government control. Kurdish Mullah Mustafa Barzani rejected the agreement and called for a new rebellion. In the years that followed the central government stepped up its policy of Arabisation in the region until the all out genocide of the late 1980's. The differential treatment of Iraqi citizens across ethno-sectarian lines was a defining feature of Saddam Hussein's regime. Consequently, in addition to the population movements and outright violence of the Saddam era, the ethnic narratives of oppression, from all communities, pay significant attention to this denial of educational rights (Kerkuklu, 2007; Al-Hirmizi, 2005; Minority Right Group, 2011). Throughout the 1970's and 1980's every attempt was made to use the education system of Kirkuk and the surrounding disputed territories to assimilate the non-Arabs in the area and to prevent their cultural development. Education became a deliberate vehicle through which the Ba'ath party sought to implement Arabization in the multi ethnic northern territories. In accordance with the planned systematic assimilation of the non-Arab

population, study in non-Arabic languages eventually became prohibited outright and constitutional promises were retracted. Education became centrally controlled through Baghdad, with the implementation of state sanctioned textbooks and teaching practices. The regime controlled the teaching of all subjects, using history, geography, and civics to enforce Ba'athist ideology. They forbade reference to Iraq's multicultural makeup and as such ethnic historical narratives were omitted from the curriculum (Kerkuklu, 2007: 11).

The Ba'ath Party strove to use education in their state building project and manipulated a curriculum which would facilitate this. The regime used schools to communicate with the population, dispersing an image of an Arab nation, and indoctrinating loyalty to the state. Individual institutions in the city of Kirkuk, and throughout Iraq, were deprived of making any decisions. Non-Arab ethnic identity became the primary casualty in this propaganda war. The study of geography was used to legitimise the wider Arabization policies. Territorial name changes, from traditional names reflecting a particular ethnic group to Arabic names, were justified using geography lessons (Kerkuklu, 2007). Maps were re-drawn and ethnically based historical claims to territory were denied (Stansfield and Anderson, 2007). Equally, history omitted reference to the rich ethnic diversity in the north of Iraq, instead portraying an Arab centric representation of historical events. In the same spirit, non-Arab schools across the disputed territories were assigned Arabic names derived from Arabic heroes in order to facilitate changing their ethos and inspiring allegiance to the new Arab state. Specific examples of Turkmen schools subjected to such changes have been documented by numerous scholars and include the schools of Yildezlar to al- Fajer al-Jadid, Yedi Qardash to Ba'ath and then to

Qadasiyya and Doghroloq to Omar Ben Addulaziz (Stansfield, 2009: 66). Several presidential decrees and directives from state security and intelligence organisations indicate that the Turkmen community was deliberately targeted in this respect (Kerkuklu, 2007).

In addition to the use of the curriculum, the Ba'ath party employed a variety of methods to control languages in the education sector. Due to the concentration of ethnic populations, some school catchment areas had ethnically homogenous pupil intakes. In such circumstances teachers would automatically resort to using the collective mother tongue while in the classroom. In an attempt to prohibit this use of non-Arabic languages as the medium for national education instruction, Turkmani and Kurdish speaking state employed teachers were transferred to the south of Iraq and a variety of legislation was introduced to prevent them from seeking employment in areas populated by their respective ethnic groups, particularly Kirkuk City (Kerkuklu, 2007, Interview TM1, Interview TM5). A decree was passed which compounded this employment legislation by preventing Turkmen graduates in general, but particularly those who had graduated from Turkish universities, from obtaining employment in Kirkuk and the surrounding areas (Kerkuklu, 2007: 11). This served to not only prevent the use of Turkmeni and Kurdish languages but also to limit Turkmen graduates from Turkish universities using their non-Baath education.

Furthermore, all civil servants, including teachers, were obliged to join the Ba'ath Party and were subjected to ideological testing and surveillance (Velloso De Santisteban, 2005: 63). This attempt to ensure that teachers of all ethnic

backgrounds followed the central government's education agenda created a climate of 'paranoia' (Interview KD8) within schools. The state's aim to foster an Iraqi nationalism based on Arab identity meant that ethnic identity issues were often cause for great concern within schools. Ideological observations were not limited to the teaching staff and often extended further into the student body. Schools were an important place of observation for the regime where teachers and students were being constantly monitored (Sassoon 2012, 116).

Interviewees referenced a school policy that insisted that each class nominate a student representative to the Ba'ath party, a tactical tool which served to further the party's influence and ability to observe student activities, including outward expressions of non-Arab ethnic identity. Anyone interpreted as not conforming to the Arab norm was frowned upon and, if reported through these various established channels, met with both aggression from Ba'ath security agents and also punishment through the school grading process. In the school environment traditional dress and languages were hidden for fear of reprisals. Consequently the school environment became 'clouded by fear' (Interview KD5) for many non-Arab students. One Turkmen interviewee stated that this fear was felt throughout his family, so that pressure to conform in order to gain educational achievement was also applied from within his own community:

*'My mother wanted me to do well in school, she wanted me to be safe, get a good job. I could only do this if I acted and looked Arab. If I rebelled against the system my grades would be punished, she didn't want this, so there was pressure to conform from home too. Everyone was scared.'* (Interview TM6)



Annual School Registers were taken which served as a yearly inventory of all high school students in Iraq<sup>19</sup>. These registers, described in the Iraq Memory Foundation documents as the *School Registers collection*, documented pupils' ethnic origin and commitment to the regime through data on political orientation, family reputation as well as other activities with political significance. Sassoon (2012;55) writes that 'one main purpose of the School Register was the potential recruitment of these students.' Consequently, the desire to mobilize and recruit went hand- in-hand with the need to control and coerce. Youth mobilization in the service of the party was a priority of the Ba'ath regime (Blaydes; 2013).

Sassoon (2012, 54) highlights that the party recruited students at an early age. Secondary schools were targeted in this respect. Consequently, the regime retained tight control over educational attainment and this was based on party support. As party support was framed by support of Arabization and the Iraqi Arab identity, the education system favoured those students who registered themselves as Arab and did not portray outwardly a minority identity. Interview participants recounted personal accounts of unjustified exam failures and denied scholarship opportunities had they and their families not joined the regime and denied their ethnic origin. Therefore failure to join the party and register as an ethnic Arab during adolescence restricted career aspirations and social mobility in the future.<sup>20</sup> The Ba'th party regime used the school system to control the political and social opportunities

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<sup>19</sup> This is an annual accounting of the nationwide student population by the party with a focus on boys from ages 12 to 18. The entire School Registers collection consists of 162,628 pages (1,036 volumes) for years 1983-2002.

<sup>20</sup> One participant recalled an encounter with a lecturer at Mosul University in the 1980's. 'Look Falah, it will be for your benefit if you join. If you sign for the Ba'ath Party, then you will not be sent to the front. You will not serve in the army for five or six years. You will go there just for six months and then you can continue with your studies your heart will not be with them. But it will be to your benefit.'

afforded to the non-Arab ethnic groups of the north and ensure Arab control throughout the territory. Within the school system this control was enforced with the threat of direct punishment in order to create a unified Arab national identity.

School registration was not the only means of registration which adversely affected ethnic identity in the territories. The Ba'ath party used every opportunity to limit the parameters of self identification on official documentation. The very certification necessary to access education was also used to coerce affiliation with the Arab identity. Communities were required to produce citizenship cards in order to enrol children in school. These cards included sections to affirm religious and ethnic character, yet the categories were restricted in order to change the demographics in the region to an Arab Muslim majority. For example, in 1977, the Iraqi regime stepped up its efforts to remove Assyrians and Turkmen from the Iraqi ethnic map; this is demonstrated by its decision to prohibit registration under these identities, forcing communities to choose between identification as Kurd or Arab in the 1977 census (Assyrian Demographic Movement, 2008).<sup>21</sup>

Denied self identification on official documentation was an effective means to demonstrate a distorted Arab demographic majority in the region, but the regime sought not only to suppress minority identity in Iraq but also to prevent it from replicating or reproducing itself. The inclusion of policies which specifically targeted education in the Arabisation strategy ensured that non-Arab identity could not be

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<sup>21</sup> It is also important to note that policies did not only target non-Arab ethnic groups, they also oppressed minority religious groups within the Arab communities. Under Saddam Hussein's rule, Sunni Muslims controlled the political power and were guilty of oppressing minority Muslim sects, in addition to the Shi'ite majority. Policies specifically targeted Arab religious minorities. Two examples are Revolutionary Command Council Resolution 201 of 2001, which mandated the death penalty for adherents of the Salafist branch of Islam (Wahhabism), and Law No. 105 of 1970, which prohibited the Baha'i Faith. Equally in 1975, Regulation 358 was instituted and those of the Baha'is faith were forced to change their religious identity records to "Muslim" (Department of State, 2007).

transmitted effectively from one generation to the next. Cultural resources were weakened due to the absence of ethnic history and cultural practice in the curriculum and mother tongue language fluency was eroded. Such cultural cleansing struck against the very core of the non-Arab communities' societal identity. Amir Hassanpour<sup>22</sup> (1993) notes that the forced foreign-language education and lack of political independence meant that the Kurds consequently found it difficult to develop a literate tradition in their native tongue<sup>23</sup>. While some communities managed to maintain a verbal use of their languages in the home, literacy in their native tongue was replaced with Arabic as a necessity for survival. Ethnic communities were divided by two linguistic authorities and adapted in order to survive, resulting in a varied mix of languages learned from birth within each ethnicity. The prolonged Arabisation policy resulted in the erosion of language as an ethnic marker. Consequently, not all members of Iraq's ethnic groups currently have an ethnically traditional linguistic basis for identity identification.

The 1980s Iraq war with Iran resulted in a diversion of state resources towards military spending and therefore an abrupt deterioration in social spending. Accordingly, the state budget allocation for education declined rapidly. From 1984 to 1990 education was not only a source of conflict but it declined to levels where it also became a victim of conflict with damaged infrastructure and failed resource allocation. This combination of education decline and Arabisation policies adversely impacted the identity protection of the communities of the north. Many ethnically

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<sup>22</sup> In Knowledge, culture and power: International Perspectives on Literacy as Policy and Practice describes the struggle of the Kurdish people to promote their national language and education while under the control of successive hostile empires.

<sup>23</sup> Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Sertac Bucak (1994) in "Killing a mother tongue – How Kurds are deprived of linguistic human rights" show how a clarification of concepts, here demonstrated by the concept of mother tongue helps in analysing lack of linguistic rights and in formulating the requirements for a universal declaration of linguistic human rights. Robert Phillipson and Tive Skutnabb-Kangas (1996) in "Colonial Language Legacies: the prospects for Kurdish" establish how the oppression of the Kurdish language is outstandingly severe, and emphasize the importance of language rights for liberation. They also consider whether the language policies of many states that were formerly colonies represent an example to follow.

defined NGO's have released reports which suggest that by 1990, the identity of minority communities in Iraq had all but been erased, to the point where foreign journalists unfamiliar with Iraqi history completely missed these hidden communities of the North (see human rights reports by Minority Rights Group, Assyrian Council of Europe, SOIM, Kurdish Human Rights Watch). Turkmen were rarely recognised and their suffering under-represented in foreign media (Taylor, 2004). Equally, journalists failed to recognise Assyrians as ethnically distinct from Arab Christians, reporting instead on the presence of only Arab Christians (rather than Assyrians or Assyro-Chaldeans) (Lewis; 2003). Through repression and apolitical self preservation, the Assyro-Chaldeans lost their 'ethnic and national identity, their sense of linguistic, historical, cultural and traditional kinship with other wider Assyrian groups eroded' (Assyrian Council of Eurpoe, 2007;18). The smaller communities such as Yezidi and Shabak also conformed to majority identity norms in order to survive and their numbers were drastically decreased. By 2003, non-Arab identities in the northern territories had suffered extreme cultural degradation and languages and cultural practices were weakened to the point of collapse.

After the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) discovered a failing education system which was deprived of qualified teaching staff. Large proportions of the professional classes were recruited into the armed forces and school infrastructures and resources were severely damaged by the 1990's international sanctions (UNESCO, 2003). Enrolment had declined sharply during the 1990's and the curriculum had remained unchanged for 20 years (Velloso De Santisteban, 2005: 63). The first act of the CPA was to abolish the existing national curriculum by decree on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2003 and begin a process of 'de-

Ba'athification' of teachers. Pictures of the former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein were removed from school buildings and his statements from textbooks, and more significantly all Ba'athist ideology was removed from school content (Velloso De Santisteban, 2005: 63). All efforts were taken to remove Saddam's indoctrination of the Ba'ath party Iraqi national identity. UN agencies stressed the importance of Iraqi ownership over the process of educational reform, cautioning that it must be up to the Iraqis themselves to decide structure and content of their future education system (UNESCO, 2003).

#### **4:3 Societal Security through the New Constitution?**

The removal of Saddam Hussein in 2003 resulted in non-Arab ethnic groups becoming constitutionally free to defend their identity and presence in the disputed territories. The concept of Iraqi ownership of education as highlighted by UNESCO (2003) is reflected in the new constitution which guarantees the right to free education at all levels, primary, secondary, post-secondary and university, for all its citizens<sup>24</sup>. In addition it recognises the multi-lingual and multi-religious nature of Iraq and as such guarantees 'the full religious rights of all individuals to freedom of religious belief and practice such as Christians, Yezedis, and Mandi Sabeans', as well as 'the right of Iraqis to educate their children in their Mother-Tongue, such as Turkmen, Syriac and Armenian' (Article 4). As such Article 4 of the Iraq Constitution protects the right of all Iraqis to educate their children in their Mother-Tongue in

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<sup>24</sup> . The Iraqi school system follows a 1+6+3+3 pattern, with one year of non-compulsory pre-school education followed by six years of compulsory primary education. Secondary education is divided into three years of 'intermediate' education, grades 7-9 (Mutawassita المتوسطة ) and three years of 'Preparatory' education grades 10-12 (Iidadiye اعدادية ). There are also schools which provide all 6 years of secondary education together (Thanawiya ثانوية ). These educational programmes are managed by the Ministry of Education, which is also responsible for vocational schools (grades 10-12) and teacher institutes (grades 10-14 or 13-14), and for the Open College of Education

government educational institutions in accordance with educational guidelines<sup>25</sup> and places emphasis on linguistic rights, stating that “the Turkmen language and the Syriac language are two other official languages in the administrative units in which they constitute density of population” and that “each region or governorate may adopt any other local language as an additional official language.” (Article 4)

These articles of the constitution recognise the key identity markers of religion and language, and attempt to declare ethnic groups free to celebrate diversity. However, despite these articles, the constitution has been widely criticised for its lack of clarity on matters of the ethnic and minority rights. For example; in its final version the Constitution states the following;

*Islam is the official religion of the State and is a foundation source of legislation:*

*A. No law may be enacted that contradicts the established provisions of Islam*

*B. No law may be enacted that contradicts the principles of democracy.*

*C. No law may be enacted that contradicts the rights and basic freedoms stipulated in this Constitution. (Article 2 of Iraqi constitution)*

And that.....

*This Constitution guarantees the Islamic identity of the majority of the Iraqi people and guarantees the full religious rights to freedom of religious belief*

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<sup>25</sup> As a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Iraq is now bound by international law to respect, and to provide protection for, its minority communities. The Convention obliges Iraq to ‘prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law’ (Article 5). It further compels Iraq to ‘adopt immediate and effective measures, particularly in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information, with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethnical groups’ (Article 7).

*and practice of all individuals such as Christians, Yazidis, and Mandeans  
Sabeans. (Article 3 of Iraqi constitution)*

Article 2 enforces the Islamic nature of the country while Article 3 explicitly recognizes that 'Iraq is a country of multiple nationalities, religions, and sects'. As Eric Herring and Glen Rangwala point out (Herring and Rangwala 2006: 40–41), this clouds the role of religion in the state. It is entirely unclear how the 'rule of Islam', 'principles of democracy' and 'rights and basic freedoms' are to be balanced against each other. Equally no clear definition of what they mean is provided. The uncertainty surrounding the interpretation and implementation of the religious rights of ethnic groups, coupled with the fact that a number of ethnic groups in the disputed territories share the Islamic faith, seem to have resulted in language becoming a key identity marker for Iraq's non-Arab groups who wish to fortify their distinct identities through the education system.

#### **4:4 The Reconstruction of Education: Constitutional Promises and the Legacy of Arabisation**

As a consequence of the previous oppression, mother-tongue language provision has become central to the education narrative and has enforced language as the key identity marker within the education arena. The right of Iraqis to educate their children in their mother-tongue, such as Turkmen, Assyrian and Kurdish has been translated to infer that all schools are entitled to equal state funding and resource provision regardless of their medium of instruction. This interpretation obliges the government to provide support for community language schools, and this appears to

be accepted by Baghdad in principle. Unfortunately the constitutional promises have not been expanded further to provide guidelines on how they can best be implemented. In the same way that many regional governance issues have been left ambiguous in the post-2003 Iraqi constitution, so too has the extent and implication of mother-tongue education rights (Bowring, 2012).

Subsequently, in 2006 the central Ministry of Education Baghdad issued a memorandum of understanding to further clarify their position; it stipulated that if a minority community constitute more than 25 percent of the population then the government is obliged to provide some form of mother-tongue language instruction (Gol, 2006). Yet the extent of mother-tongue provision was not clearly specified, and consequently it has been widely interpreted to mean the provision of two mother-tongue lessons a week within the standard curriculum, an interpretation which is rejected by many non-Arab communities (Interview Data). Therefore a push for fully immersive mother-tongue schools has occurred in response and a number of emersion schools have been opened through the expression of public interest to the central Ministry of Education. Fully non-Arabic medium schools must follow the affiliated curriculum of the Ministry and translated curriculum must be approved by committee. Once a school and its syllabus have been approved, a licence is granted and the school is deemed an official state school and is entitled to the relevant state support. Where possible, communities are pushing for this form of education, and fully immersion mother-tongue schools are being championed by education



representatives from non-Arab communities<sup>26</sup>, as illustrated by this Turkmen educationalist;

*'I would like to refer to an important and realistic point, as the Turkmen nationality is the third nationality in Iraq, then why are pupils learning their mother tongue in two lessons per week? Is it enough to complete the curriculum? Why do the pupils of the fifth and sixth grades learn English in five lessons per week for example? (Interview TM9)*

Education within the disputed territories remains under the official control of the central Baghdad ministry, in terms of curriculum, examination and financial support. The Ministry of Education in Baghdad provides education for all levels of formal non-tertiary education based on the Arabic medium standard curriculum and oversees all-end-of-year examinations. Despite having been reviewed post-2003, the central curriculum stands accused of being outdated and struggles to reflect the divergent positions of Iraq's multi-cultural society (repeatedly confirmed in interviews with UNICEF staff, UNAMI staff, and education actor interviews). The Ministry of Education in Baghdad demonstrates its support for non-Arabic schools through the *Minister of Kurdish Studies and other languages*. This one position is appointed to oversee the provision of education in all languages other than Arabic throughout the country.

This single minister employed under the Kurdish banner is to represent all other Iraqi groups, each with differing needs. The lack of recognition for other groups has

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<sup>26</sup> Kurds, Turkmen and Assyrians.

fuelled accusations that the central ministry is not committed to equality of provision for Turkmen, Assyrian and other minority groups. The unstructured nature of government support is reflected further within the governorates of the disputed territories. Each directorate has different regional management provision for the supervision of non-Arabic schools. In Diyala, where the population is made up of Arab, Kurd and Turkmen, a Director of Kurdish and other Nationality studies is present within the directorate to oversee both Kurd and Turkmen schools, without explicit mention of Turkmen school requirements. In Kirkuk there are individual Director positions for Assyrian, Kurd and Turkmen schools individually. Finally in Ninewa, the directorate has the standard director of Kurdish and other Nationality Studies, but under this position are officers each responsible for Turkmen, Assyrian and Yezidi schools. The differentiation in positions across the regions has caused complaint from non-Arab and Non-Kurdish communities. The uneven distribution can in part be explained by the increased international focus on Kirkuk elevating its position and forcing the issue of better management structures.

With constitutional promises, and allocation of ministerial attention to the management of non-Arabic medium schools (even if deemed inadequate), Iraq has made the initial steps toward supporting an education system which acknowledges the ethnic diversity of its population. Yet the task of reconstructing education in the disputed territories and the achievement of quality formal education requires a range of influences, and language has clearly become a key factor. Conventional academic understanding suggests that mother-tongue language instruction is key to a child's ability to achieve understanding in the classroom (*Benson, 2004; UNESCO, 2007; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2013*), but in multi-linguist societies, an understanding of the

dominant language is also crucial to a child's development (Dyer, 2010). Yet in 2003 the need for an education system which allowed children to achieve their educational potential, preserve their mother tongue and also prepare them with the dominant language skills required to operate in the wider society was lost. Instead, education actors (Ministries of Education and International actors) chose only to concentrate on only the provision of mother-tongue language and supporting calls for community language schools (Interview data).

Therefore, in alignment with the constitution the Ministry of Education in Baghdad, the Kurdistan Regional Government and international observers, affirmed and supported indigenous rights to equal support for all communities who wish to pursue mother-tongue language education. Educationalists in the region actively pushed for mother-tongue instruction schools. However, this enthusiasm failed to acknowledge the erosion of mother-tongue language in the disputed territories. Mother-tongue language is defined as the language which the child has learnt from birth. In this sense, and from an education perspective, the importance of mother-tongue learning stems from an acknowledgement of better learning outcomes due to better comprehension. However, as is often the case within Iraq, the situation in the disputed territories is more complicated and the thesis would like to draw attention to a number of contradictions that must be taken into account. Due to the historical legacy of territorial dispute and devastating effects of Arabization, not all members of Iraq's ethnic groups have a linguistic basis as an identity marker. Ethnic communities have been divided by two linguistic authorities (Arab and Kurdish) and have adapted in order to survive, resulting in a varied mix of languages learned from birth within each ethnicity. In this sense, for some ethnic groups, the use of the term 'mother-

tongue' is called into question and can be seen to take on a new meaning. 'mother-tongue' comes to represent a language that is traditionally spoken by their ethnic group and not necessarily one in which a person of that group has fluency – a 'traditional language'.

Therefore the Iraqi debate over mother-tongue education access is not clearly defined, terminology between local groups and international observers is confused between language of birth and the traditional language of ethnic community. This allows for cross interpretations, confusing the need for access to mother-tongue education for pedagogical reasons with the desire to revive or protect a traditional language for societal security reasons. There is no division between the debates on 'preserving Iraq's cultural diversity' through curriculum from those of 'access to mother-tongue education'. Although the two debates are not mutually exclusive, clear lines need to be drawn in order to achieve a representative education system which serves each community both academically and culturally. Using an overarching terminology has confused the separate debates on language access and curriculum representation, and has led to an education structure which does not always best serve the academic interests of its pupils. A true mother-tongue education system aims to increase educational attainment and support the learning purpose within schools, whereas calling for schools which teach in a traditional language is pushing for a societal security purpose within schools.

Mother-tongue education access is usually championed with the acknowledgement that instruction solely through an unspoken national language has long been rejected by educationalists, who equate this method to 'holding learners under water without

teaching them how to swim' therefore labelling it as a 'submersion' technique (*Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000*). Therefore a policy of mother-tongue education based on bilingual programmes which use the learner's mother-tongue language to teach initial reading and writing skills alongside academic content is often supported. The second or dominant language, should then be taught systematically so that learners can gradually transfer skills from the familiar language to the unfamiliar one (*Benson, 2004*). Bilingual education can also serve to provide empowerment through pedagogy by the incorporation of home language and culture in the school environment, increasing the self-esteem of minority students (*Garcia, 1997; Giles & Weimann, 1987*).

Yet there are significant issues surrounding this pedagogical approach for the disputed territories. The complex history of ethnic manipulation in the region has complicated the provision of effective mother tongue education for Iraq's communities. It is not as simple as is suggested by education officials both inside and outside the country. The opening of language schools which teach entirely in traditional languages (not mother-tongue) with the addition of the regionally dominant language in additional classes, does not serve the interests of the children who come from communities who have lost their linguistic identity marker. Instead these schools work in the same way as the dominate submersion schools, effectively hampering children's academic progress. Calls for such schools much change the way we view the purpose of education in the disputed territories.

It is also important to note that the representation of each of these ethnic groups does not allow for a one-size-fits-all solution. The intricate nature of Iraq's cultural diversity and political history, coupled with the fundamental need to exist, has led to a multifarious network of both political and linguistic representation within each ethnic community. For example Kurdish and Turkmen families in Diyala, who as a result of Arabization speak Arabic in the home, but who want to have their children educated in their communities' traditional languages, require a very different programme of education from that of children who speak Kurdish in the home and wish to enter the education arena with a familiar language. Because of the unique nature of the DIB's and Iraq's history of identity politics, any exploration of the provision of mother-tongue education cannot be a simple survey of languages of instruction and languages in the curriculum.

In the KRG the system has benefited from the gradual introduction of the prevalent mother-tongue languages of Turkmen and Assyrian through the grade system for the past eighteen years. This has resulted in a three tiered school system with schools teaching in the dominate language of Kurdish and with the inclusion of mother tongue classes (but still ethnically defined by their addition language classes; eg Turkmen schools with Kurdish language instruction), full submersion mother-tongue instruction schools and schools which have both forms of class within them (see table 1). The mixed typology of schools with varying degrees of mother tongue language was necessary to overcome what the KRG Minister of Assyrian Education, Nasar Hana, noted was the *'previous regime's eroding of mother tongue and mother tongue comprehension because of the fear induced when speaking it'* (Interview AS1). Parents can opt for full submersion in mother-tongue instruction, with Kurdish

classes or dominate Kurdish with the additional mother-tongue classes to ensure the child's familiarity with the traditional language. Within the disputed territories the process has taken a similar route, with schools developing along the similar three tier system. However, without the gradual instigation of the language over eighteen years, more pupils are experiencing submersion through mother tongue instruction. A negative consequence of which is that this has resulted in increased submersion schools without the increased linguistic comprehension for some societal communities.

These complexities have lead to a plurality of education institutions opening throughout the disputed territories to cater for the multi ethnic and multi lingual needs of the population. Consequently, different methods of mother-tongue instruction have arisen, varying from entirely mother-tongue education and traditional language submersion to dominant language instruction with the inclusion of traditional language lessons in the school's timetable. This has also lead to a mixed understanding of what a mother-tongue school actually is. All schools in the disputed territories are now categorised by their linguistic provision. Both Ministries of Education list numerous 'Arabic', 'Kurdish', 'Turkmeni' and 'Assyrian' schools across the north of Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan. However, the framing of the education system in terms of linguistic access would be somewhat misleading as schools using the dominant language as the medium of instruction, but offering additional traditional language classes are included under the linguistic head of their additional language. Schools appear to be classified on the grounds of the demographic composition of their intakes, which for the most part are ethnically homogenous. Therefore within each ethnic classification there are schools which provide different levels of Mother-Tongue access. Hence school provision in the region can be seen to fall into one of

four models; *Mother-Tongue*<sup>27</sup>, including Turkmen, Assyrian and Kurdish schools, *Dominant Language* submersion schools or dominant language schools with traditional language provision (See Figure 4: Typology of schools).

**Figure 4: Typology of schools**

School Type	Language of Instruction	Additional Languages Taught
Dominant language schools	Arabic (DIB)	English & Kurdish
	Kurdish (KRG)	English & Arabic
Mother-Tongue instruction schools	Assyrian, (DIB)	English & Arabic
	Assyrian (KRG)	English & Kurdish
	Turkmen (KRG)	English & Arabic
	Turkmen (DIB)	Arabic & English
	Kurdish (DIB)	Arabic & English
Dominant language schools which provide lessons in Mother-Tongue	Arabic (DIB)	Turkish & English
	Arabic (DIB)	Assyrian & English
	Kurdish (KRG)	Assyrian & English
	Kurdish (KRG)	Turkish & English
Dominant language schools with mother-tongue year groups and classes within them – teaching a translated curriculum	Two Languages of Instruction in Each school but pupils opt into only one or the other.  Eg Kirfi Turkmen school which also has two year groups who learn in Arabic within the same school	

Schools have become ethnically homogenous and therefore children are increasingly segregated by ethnic identity. The causality of this can be explained in a number of ways:

<sup>27</sup> It is beyond the scope of this thesis to conduct a regional assessment of language comprehension so for the purposes of this investigation schools teaching in a non-Arab medium will be referred to as mother-tongue (with the understanding of the reader that some of these will be traditional language submersion schools for their pupils).



- As a result of increasingly homogenous residential patterns and therefore catchment areas;
- Because of mother-tongue necessity for educational attainment;
- As a result of ethnic groups having mobilised in attempts to revitalise and protect their ethnic identities through the pursuit of both mother-tongue education and curriculum representation in homogenous schools.

The following section will unpack further the role of societal security protection within the call for linguistic representations in education for the Assyrian, Turkmen and Yazidi<sup>28</sup>. It will illustrate how ethnic communities are negotiating the education arena in the shadow of Arabisation and how identity protection has significant influence.

#### 4:4:1 Assyrian Language Schools: Education to Revive identity



**Photo: 3**

Assyrian  
Children in a  
school in  
Ninewa

<sup>28</sup> While Kurdish education is equally affected by societal security and linguistic provision its situation differs due to the regional backing of the KRG Ministry of Education. As such the Kurdish language schools across the disputed territories receive funding, resources, teacher salaries from the KRG and follow the KRG ministry of education curriculum. Having been subsumed under a ministry with the same linguistic medium of instruction its complexities are different and will be addressed in the next chapter under the subject of education defence.

The Assyrian community or Assyrian-Chaldo community are an ethnic group characterised by their religious and linguistic markers. Assyrians are a Christian group who speak a Neo-Aramaic dialect. In modern Iraq the Assyrian population mostly inhabit the former Mosul vilayet. “Although population statistics are woefully inadequate in northern Iraq, one estimate indicates that Assyrians number maybe 133,000 or less than 1 percent of the Iraqi population”. (Gunter; 1990:86). As previously presented, the Assyrian community suffered a loss of traditional language during the Ba’ath party Arabisation era, yet they actively advocate for access to submersion Assyrian language schools. Consequently, Assyrian schools can be found in Kirkuk and Ninewa and throughout the KRG. They are ethnically homogenous, due in part to the nature of their religious curriculum, and vary in their delivery of Syriac or Assyrian language instruction.

The community is split in its pursuit of the traditional language revival through education. In Kirkuk the Assyrian community has acknowledged the erosion of the community’s fluency, and the associated implications of submersion education. Therefore they have abandoned mother-tongue language instruction schools as a result. Assyrian Educationalists in Kirkuk have rejected the need for Assyrian language schools in favour of Arabic instruction with the addition of traditional language and religious lessons. As one prominent Assyrian educationalist from Kirkuk explained;

*‘In 2003 we wanted to reclaim our language so we tried schools which taught all in Assyrian. But it didn’t work. The parents were not literate in Assyrian, the*

*children struggled and even the teachers encountered problems. We had very few resources and there were arguments over the alphabet. It was better to use Arabic, everyone could understand and it is better for the relationship of our community with its neighbours.’ (ASK1)*

In addition Assyrian educationalist in Kirkuk pointed to the limited options for pupils who graduate from Assyrian language schools, recognising that without Assyrian tertiary level education Assyrian pupils would have very limited future prospects (Interview ASK1,ASK2,AS8). Community leaders in Kirkuk suggested that Assyrian instruction would limit education attainment and further education options.

*‘If the education is difficult because we are not fluent in the language anymore, then our children will not go to university, they will be denied job opportunities and jobs, how is that good for us as a group? How is that good for the Assyrian people? No, Assyrians are smarter than that, we understand that to protect our community we need to do what is best for our children’s future prospects’ (Interviewee ASK2)*

The long term implications of Assyrian instruction submersion schools could hence create horizontal inequalities which would be to the detriment of the community as a whole. In Kirkuk the possible negative consequences of Assyrian instruction schools; submersion, lack of teaching resources<sup>29</sup>, erosion of social cohesion<sup>30</sup> and tertiary education options, were all quickly identified and the community sought an alternative means of identity protection through the education system. The inclusion

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<sup>29</sup> To be addressed further in the next chapter

<sup>30</sup> To be addressed further in chapter 6

of traditional language lessons and religious instruction in schools was deemed more significant to protecting the societal security of the community (Interviews AS2, AS5, AS6).

*'We need to teach our religion, this is not negotiable, our children suffer in state schools where Islam is the only religion taught. For language - lessons in the curriculum are good. That is all we need to show the next generation their culture.'* (Interview ASK1)

Yet this stance appears to be unique to Kirkuk Assyrians as Assyrian communities across Ninewa (and in the KRG) are still campaigning for greater access to schools which provide submersive instruction in the Assyrian language. Ninewa's Assyrian community differs from Kirkuk's greatly in terms of population density. The three districts of Telkaif, Al-Hamandia and Shikhan, often referred to as the Ninewa (see Figure 10: Map of Ninewa Plains), have heavy Assyrian and Christian populations. Interviewees in Ninewa governorate conversely provided the following collection of statements with regards to mother tongue access;

*'As an indigenous people with an endangered language, we are entitled to a education in our own mother tongue, and not just to study it as a language beside a core-curriculum taught in Kurdish, which is the norm for other "Syriac" schools.'* (Interview AS3)

*'It is our right to teach our children who they are, language is central to that, the last regime eroded this. Now we must build it back. How can we do this in*

*just a few hours a week? We need to commit to the language use and teach the main core subjects in the Assyrian language' (Interview AS2)*

*'Our children should be proud to be Assyrian, they can't be proud unless we celebrate who we are, how can we celebrate if we hide our spoken language from schools? We will not hide again.'* (Interview AS8kd)

*'We need our own schools to protect us from losing our identity as we did under the previous regime and the proposal of two hours a week is not enough, why should we only study our language in side classes. No. Its not enough.'* (Interview AS6)

*'Our children can learn this language, they will overcome. It is spoken in families, those who struggle will find support. It is not impossible. And it is our right, like that of the Tukmen and Kurds and Arabs. Why should we not have the same right?' (Interview AS5)*

These statements demonstrate how the revival of the language is a priority for these educationalists. Pedagogy and future utility were not mentioned and when asked they changed the subject or reaffirmed the importance to the Assyrian people of maintaining an active use of Syriac. The linguistic legacy of the Ba'ath party's Arabisation policies can be seen to be having a direct impact on the current management of the system. Assyrians in both Kirkuk and Ninewa can be seen to consider education to have a vital role in the revival of societal security. In Ninewa

this role has taken priority over educational attainment, changing the role of education entirely<sup>31</sup>. In both regions education was presented by Assyrian educationalists as a necessary component in the 'promotion of a lost pride in identity' (Interview AS4) in the wake of Arabisation. Central curriculum failed to recognise their existence and neglected their culture and religion. Ethnically homogenous schools are being sought so that the Assyrian community can use the education system to strengthen the future generations understanding of their cultural heritage.

#### **4:4:2 Turkmen Language schools: Education to maintain identity**

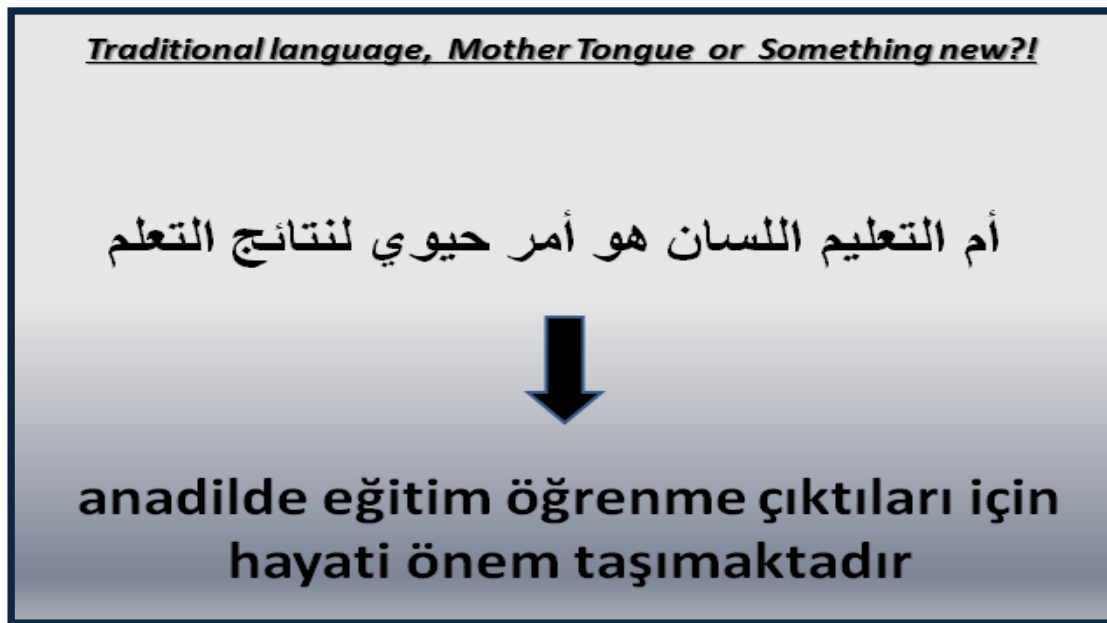
The Iraqi Turkmen claim to be the third largest ethnic group in Iraq, residing almost exclusively in the north and throughout the now disputed territories in an arc of towns and villages stretching from Tel Afar, west of Mosul, through Mosul, Erbil, Altun Kopru, Kirkuk, Taza Khurmatu, Kifri and Khaniqin. Before 2003, there were anything from 600,000 to 2 million Turkmen, the former figure being the conservative estimate of outside observers and the latter a Turkmen estimate (SOIMT: 2010). The Turkmen have actively sought to protect their distinct culture, having great pride in their linguistic origins, dress, poetry and folklore. As a consequence Turkmen heritage is an integral part of the region's history and present day life. Many commentators have noted how the Turkmen language of Turkmeni has persisted against the odds and has survived as an active mother tongue in the region.

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<sup>31</sup> It must be considered that Assyrian is still an active mother tongue for some families and regional villages. With no in-depth survey of languages it is hard to ascertain the degree of Assyrian language use. But interviews and reports from international agencies and ethnically affiliated research groups have documented the loss of league and everyday use. (Assyrian Council of Europe, 2010; Human Rights Watch 2008;SOIM, 2008)

Yet despite the presence of an active and functioning language (spoken as a third language by older generation Kurds and Arabs<sup>32</sup>), Turkmen language schools also provide a vivid illustration of the complexity of language issues in northern Iraq. In 2004 Turkmen language schools began teaching various levels of Mother-Tongue Turkmani, from submersion to traditional language classes<sup>33</sup>. However, it was decided by community leaders in 2005 that the Turkish language would replace the use of traditional Turkmani in Iraqi schools<sup>34</sup>. Although the languages share a degree of oral similarity, Turkmeni uses the Arabic script for the written word and Turkish uses the Roman alphabet (see Figure 5: Turkmen Alphabet Examples).

*Figure 5: Turkmen Alphabet Examples*



<sup>32</sup> The trilingual nature of many middle aged Iraqis in the disputed territories was presented frequently in interviews. Many references were made by interviewees from both Arab and Kuridsh communities to having a good understanding of the Turkmani language.

<sup>33</sup> This information was confirmed through interviews with Turkmen participants.

<sup>34</sup> It was explained during interviews that when Dr. Ala' Al-Deen Elwan resumed the position of the Minister of Education, a commission comprised of those concerned with the Turkoman education was established and met with him on 20 January 2004 and 26 May 2004. During the first meeting, introducing the Turkoman education in the structure of the MoE was discussed. Some of the other topics of discussions were the need for education staff and the reason to use the new Turkoman letters in education. His Excellency, the Minister, expressed his consent to use such letters in the presence of Director of Specialized Supervision, Mr. Mohammed Khorshaid Omar, Mr. Farouq Fayege Koblo and another person working at the office of the Minister. Following that, the two former Ministers of Education, Dr. Sami Al-Muthaffar, and Dr. Falah Al-Soudani approved using these letters.

This decision has been justified by the Turkmen in a number of ways, firstly in terms of apparently inadequate range of vowel sounds and phonetics available with the Arabic script limiting its written reflection of the spoken form of the language<sup>35</sup>.

*“As the Arabic letters have failed to represent the entire Turkoman phonetics, Ottoman had to add six more letters to the Arabic letters to become thirty four instead of twenty eight. However, this addition was not sufficient to present all phonics. Thus, the Ottoman letters are not Arabic ones, and we can't find them all in the Qou'ran. As such, Ottoman letters are for the exclusive use of the Ottomans only.”* (Interview TM4)

In addition, Turkish was declared to have further utility for the Turkman community in terms of educational attainment and intellectual pursuits. Teaching resources are easily accessible and there are more options in terms of tertiary education with greater international recognition<sup>36</sup>. As one Turkmen representative suggested;

*‘As no books or magazines are available in the Ottoman language since its fall, the educated persons who studied in Turkmen language will not find any type of publications to read, whether in his/her area of specialization or in other fields. Such publications are only available in Latin letters in Ankara and Istanbul libraries. These books [Turkmeni books] only discuss Islam, religion, ancient literature, and some old documents of benefit of specialized*

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<sup>35</sup> This was the majority opinion given by Turkmen interviewees and frequently received mention with regards to language.

<sup>36</sup> Interview information provided by community educationalists and leaders rather than Ministry of Education Staff.



*researchers only. Most of which were translated by using Latin letters for the utilization of the public.'* (Interview TM5)

Cigdem Balim Harding, a senior lecturer in the Near Eastern Languages and Cultures Department at Indiana University, suggests that the current prevalence of satellite television and media exposure from Turkey, along with the absence of publishing in Turkmeni, may have already led to a standardising of the Turkmani language toward Turkish, therefore making it a preferable language for instruction for many adolescents associating with Turkish culture (Telephone interview, 20-01-11).

*“Turkish culture popular culture is readily available through satellite television and the internet. This makes access to the Turkish language very easy for young Turkmen. If they are seeking to reaffirm their own distinct identities then this would be a natural source through which they could seek a sense of wider belonging and self identification. If this is the case the Turkmeni language may have slowly standardised toward Turkish for the younger generations.”*

As relevant as these rationalizations may be it is hard to understand Turkmen education as a mother tongue or traditional language pursuit, due to the alphabet change. Unfortunately there has been no recent research on the Turkmeni language, and with differing reports from interlocutors on the ground, the debate remains open as to the level of comprehension of Turkmeni speakers in Turkish. The motives for this decision have been questioned by other ethnic groups in the region. With one Kurdish interviewee suggesting that; *‘the only motivation is to gain international*

*political support for their claims to the city, otherwise they could have used Kurdish or Arabic'* (Interview TM2). Interviewees from other groups questioned the status of Turkish as a mother tongue for the Turkmen community; *'I understand Turkmeni, i have heard it since I was a child, I even speak Turkmeni.... but I do not understand Turkish, I can't watch the Turkish Satellite (Television).. are not the same languages'* (Interview KD1). Yet the debate remains polarised with no further clarification.

The Turkmen stance on medium of instruction for their community appears similar to that of the Assyrian educationalists in Kirkuk, in that they have recognised that education in their traditional language may hamper the progress and survival of their societal group in the longer term. However, rather than turn to the dominate language of their region for the medium of instruction, as the Assyrians have done with Arabic, the Turkmen have moved to standardise the Turkmeni dialect towards what they see as a more functional use of Turkish. Regardless of the possible oral similarities of the languages, pedagogical implications for the written form of the language are undisputable. One indication of the impact on the students' learning environment which was raised frequently in interviews was that parental literacy rates in Turkish are very low, with Iraqi Turkmen families being more familiar and literate in the Arabic script (Interviews). An indication of this is that Turkmen community leaders have called to the international community to help improve Turkmen adult literacy rates. Significantly, community leaders requested Turkish language lessons, and not Arabic or Turkmeni, be supplied by United Nations agencies. Interlocutors noted that the deficiency of the wider Turkmen communities reading and writing ability in Turkish has hampered the students' home learning environment. (Interviews; TM8 and GN6). The Turkmen Directorate of education in

Kirkuk has even started Turkish language lessons for the community, in order to promote an understanding of the language in the wider society. In addition the ministry of education Turkmen officer in Ninewa has made repeated requests to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq for the instigation of Turkish language classes for parents in the region.

The use of Turkish in the education arena also has striking implications for the application of societal security lens to the Turkmen pursuit. It can be seen to initiate a loss of the tradition form of the Turkmani language, a cultural loss which is akin to the linguistic degradation imposed by the Ba'ath era. Therefore can the Turkmen pursuit of so called 'mother-tongue' education be viewed in terms of societal security protection when it is effectively eroding the linguistic element that has, until now, been preserved? Even though the Turkmen educationalists have stepped away from a collective shared traditional language the thesis proposes that the action can still be viewed through a societal security lens. This can be supported by the way in which educationalists framed the discussion of the language choice.

Firstly the move to Turkish can be seen as a means to strengthen the collective 'we' identity by continuing to distinguish it from the other ethnic groups. Aligning themselves with the internationally recognised Turkish language can be seen as an attempt to prevent assimilation into the Arabic and Kurdish cultures through a regional linguistic necessity and maintain their continued presence. By linking with a language which shares the same linguistic Turkic roots, but has greater utility internationally, Turkmen can be seen to be reinforcing their identity through the only option available to them. The use of Turkish was presented as a natural progression

for the Turkmen, any suggestion that the oral languages were different was immediately rejected. Turkmen officials repeatedly, and without exception, referred to the language of instruction in Turkmen schools as Turkmeni. When questioned on whether they meant Turkmeni or Turkish, interviewees became uncomfortable and when the question wasn't avoided, answers lacked any form of clarity;

*'It is the language of the Turkmen people. It is our culture, you would not question the use of Kurdish in schools?'* (Interview TM10)

*'Turkish is the Turkmeni language.'* (Interview TM5)

*'They have differences but they are the same language.'*(Interview TM8)

*'They are not very different, I speak Turkmeni but I understand Turkish easily, it only in the written form that there is a difference we must address, spoken it is OK.'* (Interview TM2)

*'The families will learn together literacy in Turkish, it is better to preserve the language.'* (Interview TMN).

Some interlocutors took this further, referencing the important implications for Turkmen identity;

*'The languages are the same and the use of Turkish only strengthens us. Turkish provides a better medium, and this way we keep our Turkmen*

*identities. If we do not evolve the language will not survive and we will teach Arabic to our children” (interviewee looked disgusted at this thought!) (Interview TM12)*

*‘Verbally they are very similar. It is only the alphabet that has changed. We must evolve to preserve the Turkmen culture in the best way. It is for all the community best.’ (Interview TM6)*

*‘The Kurds make false claims, they say that Turkish is different to stop us. They want us gone from this land. But the languages work together. We will keep our place in Mosul’ (Interview TMN )*

*‘It is better to teach in Turkish with the new script. Or we have to learn in Arabic again. Some Turkmen choose this for their children. But I don’t think it is best.’ (Interview TM8).*

*‘It is important the Turkmen do not die out of the region so we grow to maintain our presence. To not (be) assimilate(d), this is best for our children. Education can help us do this. We need schools which teach and reflect our culture, that way the children have self esteem and pride, which is good for learning.’ (Interviewee TMSJ)*

Not one of the thirteen Turkmen educationalists interviewed acknowledged that the use of Turkish was a culturally detrimental choice, rather it was presented as a means to strengthen Turkmen identity and maintain the presence of their identity in

the region. Access to teaching resources for non-majority communities in northern Iraq are sparse and the Turkmen community also bemoan the same curriculum omissions as the Assyrians. By moving to Turkish, the Turkmen community can be seen to be forging alliances capable of supplying teaching resources which reflect the history and culture of the Turkmen, strengthening the channels through which to teach the next generation about their history and culture. This was certainly an aim presented by a number of interlocutors who referenced that the printing of text books and teaching resources in Ankara enabled the Turkmen community access to ethnically appropriate curriculum (Interviews)<sup>37</sup>.

#### **4:5 Societal Security verses Pedagogy?**

Considering the complexities and varying needs of communities, the question must be asked why non-Arab educationalists are seeking increased access to submersion education structures in languages which children do not have fluency. There is a universal understanding that they are detrimental to learning outcomes and educational attainment. Why are non-Arab educationalists from Turkmen and Assyrian communities across the region calling for greater access to mother tongue language education when there is an accepted recognition that this may be detrimental to their academic attainment? In this sense we should turn to examine languages role in identity protection. Language not only strengthens the sense of belonging to a group but it can also serve to solidify or revitalise ethnic identity and loyalty (Fishman, 1989; Haarmann, 1986; Smith, 1998). Thus language must be considered to be a socio-cultural resource with which ethnic groups may unify and

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<sup>37</sup> This will be addressed further in the next chapter.

separate themselves from the wider national identity. Each group can be loyal to its own divergent, linguistically constructed identity (Haslett, 1989; Scollon & Scollon, 1981).

The concept of societal security can help us to unpack the reasons behind this. Firstly the ethnic communities face a constant threat of persecution. As chapter three detailed, each ethnic group is facing a variety of overlapping threats from conflict actors in the region. This insecurity is coupled with the experience of past oppression. Using the logic of the societal security literature, such threats would increase the groups' desire to fortify their ethnic identity to protect it from threat. As such the pursuit of so called mother-tongue education can be seen as a way of protecting societal security. Mother-tongue schools provide a route to ethnically homogenous schools which can teach ethnic groups shared history, culture and traditions in an exclusive manner. In this sense identity protection is being prioritised over the possible negative outcomes for pupils placed in submersion traditional language schools. As one Assyrian interviewee stated;

*'Recognition of Assyrians in schools is right always denied, we need to ensure that we are not denied again. Our people want to survive, to live and not to disappear. It is our right. Schools.... so that they can know who they are, and not forget.'* (Interview AS6)

This quote was gleaned during a question specifically regarding mother tongue schools. Language is an important factor in education provision in the disputed territories but it is also a means of achieving greater religious and cultural recognition

in the school system. For example, when asked why Turkish and not Arabic instruction was so vital a Turkmen education official stated that Turkmen children should *'learn their history, in their language to strengthen their understating of who they are. This has been denied in the past through the use of Arabic. We won't let this happen again'* (Interview TMN).

Kaufmann (2006) suggests that a history of ethnic domination and a community's past victimisation, can form the basis for a threat perception in the present. As such it can be suggested that the oppression of the Ba'ath era can be seen to have created a fear of the future, lived through the past (Pescis; 2006) within the education arena of the disputed territories. Demands and justification for mother tongue education were frequently framed in terms of fear of continued oppression and the injustice of what was previously suffered. The shared experience of failed constructional promises and oppression have left Assyrian and Turkmen groups fearful for the maintenance, or in some cases actualization, of their rights within the education sector. Interviews with participants from across the ethnic spectrum framed their call for 'mother tongue' education in terms of protecting societal security in the face of past denial and the fear of future oppression. Therefore the securing of these rights has become a priority. Article 4 of the constitution provides legal grounding for the pursuit of state funded ethnically homogenous schools, and so language is the obvious vehicle with which to seek recognition.

Thus, the demands for mother tongue education can be explained when seeing the driving force behind the pursuit as a form of cultural nationalism (Hutchinson 1994). The continued existence of an ethnic group in the face of threat can be seen as a



driving factor for choosing identity protection over pedagogy. Waever's suggestion that identity can be protected 'by using cultural means to reinforce societal cohesion and distinctiveness, and to ensure that society reproduces itself correctly'<sup>38</sup> is very evident in the post 2003 disputed territories. In an attempt to avoid assimilation, national minorities seek certain rights and powers that are needed to maintain their own culture by defining education institutions in terms of their own language.

Yet not all calls are defined by language; the education narrative of the distinct ethno-religious Yezidi community can illustrate the bestowed role of identity protection on education provision without the element of submersion. The Yezidi ethnic group is split between those who speak Arabic and those who speak Kurdish. In the pursuit of security within the climate of fear and ethnic suppression, the Yezidi community have alternately claimed to be ethnically Kurdish and Arab throughout their history in the region. The patronage of the Kurds has shielded their linguistically compatible Yezidi neighbours, but in contrast the Arabic speaking Yezidi face threats to their existence from both religious extremists and Kurdish assimilation. There are many schools in northern Ninewa which are deemed to be 'Yezidi' schools by the district Directorate of Education, this reference is solely in relation to the homogenous ethnic nature of the school as opposed to the linguistically or ethnically specific syllabus provided. These schools can teach in either Arabic or Kurdish.

The Arabic speaking Yezidi community do not have ethnically affiliated donors, political representation or ministerial provision to help shape their education provision. Homogenous Yezidi schools rely solely on the ministry under which they

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<sup>38</sup> (waever etal 1993b 191)

reside, leaving them significantly more powerless to dictate the levels of cultural or linguistic education provision provided to them. The choice of language of instruction is out of their hands. Yet within the Arabic speaking communities there is recognition of a traditional Yezidi language, a language which has been all but lost due to the political realities faced by the community throughout the years of identity politics. (It is important to note that the very authenticity of this language has been questioned by Kurdish speaking Yezidis.) Yet the revival and representation of this language is regarded as an important educational issue within this part of the community.

Arabic Yezidi's have accused the ministries of allowing their children to grow up '*without knowledge and pride in their heritage*' due to the neglect of religious and cultural curriculum which reflect their existence. The community leaders campaign for greater recognition and presence of Yezidi history in the school system. "*We want to teach Yazidi sons in their old language and to revive it, as it has been neglected for hundreds of year.*" (Interview YZ8). They suggest they will lose their 'we' identity through external threats, and wish to strengthen the means of cultural reproduction. Therefore the Yezidi community presented their access to education in the region framed by a need for further cultural representation. Arabic speaking Yezidi fear assimilation into the dominant Kurdish ethnic block, and perceive education to be a tool being used to prevent this (an issue unpacked in more detail in subsequent chapters). Consequently the Arabic speaking Yezidi have voiced the need for greater religious and cultural, as well as linguistic representation within the curriculum. They are calling for education which can revive, maintain and also to protect their identity from attack and assimilation, using increased representation in the curriculum to

resist assimilation and protect their ongoing presence in the locations in which they have demographic majority status.

The position of education in most societies allows it to take on an important role in the socialisation of ethnic identity and in this sense offers an ideal means of non-military defence when faced with threats to societal security. School curriculums provide a limitless opportunity to reproduce culture and ensure transmission to future generations. The subjects of History, Art, Music, Religious Education, Geography and Language enable the celebration of anything from ethnically specific poets to geographical interpretations of homelands and ancient battle victories. Each subject can be used to express a pride in ethnic identity and cultivate a sense of belonging to the group. However, education institutions can often become the first victim in the battle to protect societal security. Education can be used to weaken societal security and oppress minority representation. The curriculum and content are often used to deny shared history and oppress minority language rights.

#### **4:6 Inferences and Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has presented the role of identity protection in the formation of education both during the Ba'ath era and the post war reconstruction period post 2003. The purpose of education was distorted by the Ba'ath Party policies in the disputed territories. The regime bestowed a number of key objectives to education which were not within the internationally understood remit of formal education. Firstly, education was used to enforce the notion of one united Iraqi Arab identity. References to the multi-cultural makeup of Iraqi demography were forbade and

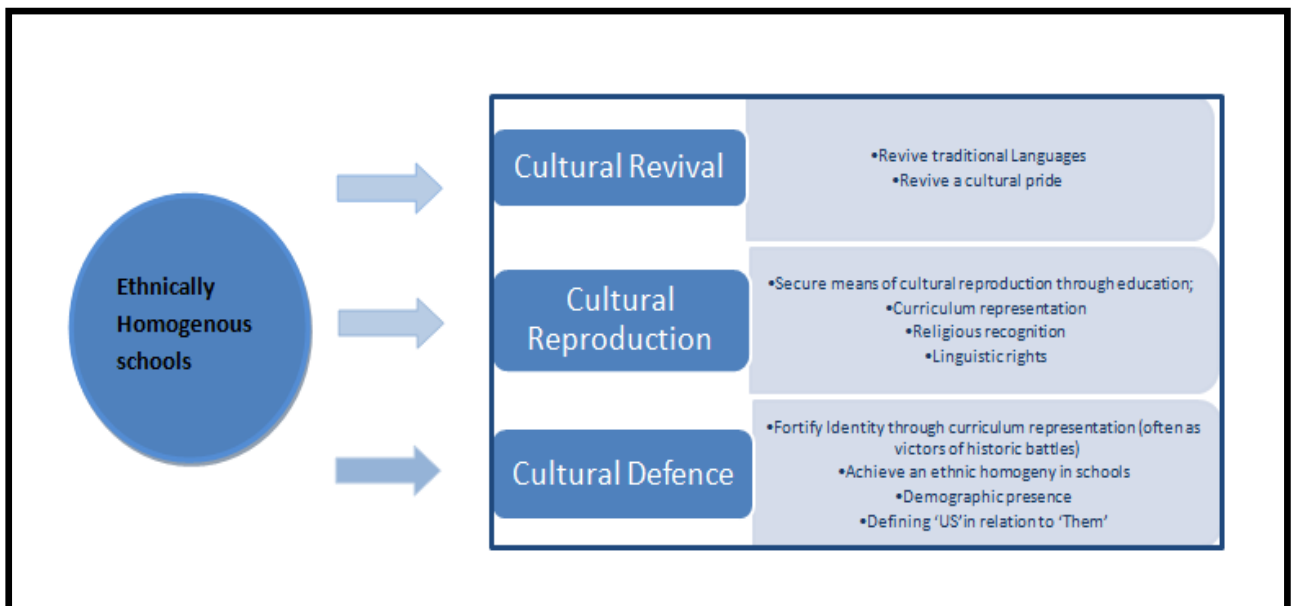
religious and linguistic rights denied. In addition to the lack of representation self assertion as a non-Arab became a punishable offence and educational attainment adversely affected. Secondly, educational institutions were sources of control and observation, where the regime could monitor activity and loyalty to the state system. As a consequence, schools were used as a direct weapon in the weakening of non-Arab identity. Pursuit of education in this system resulted in the weakening of Kurdish, Turkmen, Assyrian, and other minority ethnic identities.

In 2003 the education system was simultaneously a victim of conflict, suffering infrastructural collapse and overall neglect as a result of conflict and sanctions and a source of conflict, continuing to oppress the non-Arab populations of the north. The reconstruction of the country saw a new Iraqi constitution which sought to address this oppression and promised the rights of all linguistic communities to education in their mother tongue language. This right was celebrated by the diverse populations of the north and a drive for schools using mother tongue languages as the medium of instruction has resulted. Yet, the constitutional article was never elaborated upon to provide educational guidelines on how mother tongue education should be delivered. Consequently, current provision fails to take into account the complexity of language ability and rights in the territories. A lack of coherence in terminology over traditional community languages and mother tongue languages has led to the negative pedagogical implications for learning outcomes.

When examining this outcome closely it becomes clear that the protection of societal security is a driving factor which has outweighed educational best practice. Past oppression coupled with the wider environment of threat has resulted in education

having a triple significance for identity protection. Firstly it has significance in Buzan’s realm of cultural **reproduction**; all ethnic groups, whether in post conflict or not, seek to reproduce their distinct identity and pass it on the next generation. Secondly, with the particular experience of genocide and ethnic suppression experienced in the region, education has also become an obvious vehicle for the **revival** of cultural identity that has been eroded. Finally in the disputed territories ethnic communities are facing uncertainty and constant threat, in the face of assimilation or destruction education plays a role in the **defence** of ethnic identity, as demonstrated by Figure 6: societal security aims through education in the Iraqi disputed territories and Figure 7: Influence, intention and Impact.

**Figure 6: Societal Security aims through Education in the Iraqi Disputed Territories**



This triple purpose bestowed on education in terms of identity protection has resulted in its continuation holding great significance to the societal security of groups in the disputed territories. The difference is subtle but important, the motivation for

reproduction and continuation are not the same as revival and reaffirmation, equally defence takes on a new dimension, even if the method to achieve it is the same. As one Yezidi community representative stressed;

*'It is the right of Yezidi people to be acknowledged in the curriculum, to teach all people about our history in Iraq. But is also more important because our history and language is being lost, we need education structures to revive it, education must maintain and renew us to prevent our assimilation.'* (Interview YD2 via email)

Given the significant role of education in identity protection and securing societal security, the next chapter in the thesis will examine the question of what role ethnic identity plays in the current education narrative over provision. Having established the role identity has played in the structuring of the education system, the thesis moves on to examine how identity influences the wider education debate and management. The next chapter will explore any restriction to education delivery in the region and unpack how they are perceived by the community educationalists. The chapter will present the capacity gaps in the regions education system and discuss how the structure and purpose of the education system may result in education becoming party to the wider conflict.

**Figure 7: Influence, intention and Impact**

Influence	Intention	Education impact	Outcome
<b>REPRODUCTION</b> of ethnic identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure the means of cultural reproduction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An aim of all ethnic groups, regardless of threat, is to secure the ability to pass on cultural traditions to the next generation.</li> </ul>	<p>Education is segregated along ethnic lines resulting in a system of separate school systems with homogenous intakes, each seeking to promote their own identities through curriculum and linguistics.</p>
<b>REVIVAL</b> of ethnic Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re introduce native language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The loss of identity indicators under the previous regime have led to;                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of Assyrian as the medium of instruction</li> <li>The Yezidi campaign to revive and teach in Yezidi</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinstate a lost cultural pride</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The need to hide cultural identity and ethnicity under the previous regime have led to;                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all communities seeking greater recognition of their cultural and historical presence in the region through curriculum; calls for recognition of historical victories and celebration of cultural figures. These calls are more prevalent than calls for pedagogical reform or updating curriculum in terms of science etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>DEFENCE</b> of ethnic Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevent assimilation by strengthening culture</li> <li>Demonstrate a regional presence</li> <li>Protect pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above, linguistic and cultural recognition have been prioritised.</li> <li>The more ethnically defined schools the more evident the Assyrian, Kurd and Turkmen are in the region<sup>39</sup></li> <li>Find security in ethnically homogenous schools<sup>40</sup></li> </ul>	

<sup>39</sup> This will be explored more in chapter 6

<sup>40</sup> The use of ethnically homogenous schools as a means of security defence for pupils was raised infrequently in interviews, but it did come up. It is an interesting point of investigation but was not prevalent enough to make it into the scope of the larger investigation.

## ***Chapter 5:***

### ***Ethnically appropriate education; Threats and Survival***

#### **5:1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter we examined how the education system in northern Iraq was used to deny the existence of non-Arab identities under the Ba'ath party and how the issue of societal security and representation is central to the current evolution of education in the disputed territories. Chapter four demonstrated how education is increasingly perceived as a means of identity protection. Ethnic communities in the disputed territories are seeking to revive, maintain and defend ethnic identity through the education system in the region (sometimes at the expense of pedagogy and learning outcomes). This identity protection focus has consequently led to an ethnically segregated school structure.

In this chapter the thesis examines the question; **what role does ethnic identity play in the current education narrative?** Having established the role identity has played in the structuring of the education system (school structures), the thesis moves on to examine in more detail how identity influences the wider education debate and the management and provision of education resources. In order to investigate this question a number of sources were consulted. The analysis draws on the collected interview transcripts to unpack the role that identity was given by key educational actors in the disputed territories during their interviews. Additionally, the chapter will draw on a number of media reports pertaining to education which were broadcast in the region during the data collection period. The reports were



examined to determine if education issues were presented in terms of identity or societal security. Due to the conclusions of the previous chapter, the exploration will look for specific references to the revival, maintenance and defence of identity in the education narratives of both sources.

This chapter will introduce how the issues of identity and societal security indeed feature in the discussion of education by both education actors and media representation. The segregation of schools along ethnic lines, coupled with the status of Iraqi education as in 'a process of reconstruction' (UNESCO 2011) have resulted in the issue of ethnic identity inevitably being raised in relation to resource management and ministerial support for the evolution of different community schools systems. Furthermore, resource allocation and representation in the education system was presented in terms of gaining access to the means of cultural reproduction and not just equal education standards. Societal security was frequently presented in relation to the capacity gaps of ethnically homogenous schools by education actors and media sources. The failings of the education system were demonstrated as preventing the development of mother-tongue or traditional language, cultural representation and religious recognition. For example, teacher shortages were presented in terms of insufficient numbers of linguistically appropriate teachers and resource provision in terms of translation and the representation of identity.

Ethnic identity is consequently playing a central role in the debate over education's reconstruction in the region. The chapter will demonstrate how the role of identity in the education narrative has resulted in any lack of support for mother-tongue or

ethnically defined education systems being perceived as threats to the survival and continued existence in the region. Using the theoretical understanding of societal security the thesis will demonstrate how threats are presented in a securitising manner by educationalists. Therefore the chapter will demonstrate how different ethnic communities have interpreted restrictions to their education systems and taken strides to counter the limitations.

The chapter will be divided into five sections. The first section will present the capacity gaps in the education system across the disputed territories and locate the debate within the understanding of threats to societal security. The following three sections will use the examples of different communities to explore: the presented threats, whether these threats have become framed by ethnic survival; and, finally how these threats are being countered or managed within these communities. The final section will review the findings and discussion implications for the role of education.

### **5:3 Capacity Gaps or Intentional Threats to Societal Security?**



#### **Photo: 4**

The picture shows a school corridor in the Ninewa governorate. The teachers reported struggling with the decay of the school building.

To explore the role that ethnic identity and societal security are playing in the education narrative of the disputed territories three points of significant importance must be emphasised;

- Firstly, Iraqi education is in a 'process of reconstruction' (UNESCO, 2011) and therefore capacity gaps and infrastructural reconstruction are of primary concern.
- Secondly, each community has effectively sought control of their own education systems in order to secure the means of cultural reproduction, coupled with residential patterns. This has resulted in ethnically homogenous segregated schools.
- Thirdly, all schools, regardless of ethnic definition, are entitled to equal governmental support through the central ministry of education.

Therefore across the disputed territories of Iraq ethnic groups are separately seeking to reconstruct schools, develop resources and build educational infrastructure for their own communities. This is taking place under the direction and support of the local education administrations. Consequently, this has effectively created an environment in which ethnic groups are able to compare the level of support received for their community with that of others, compete for resources between themselves and perceive capacity gaps in terms of deliberate attacks on their

community. The persistent status of Iraqi education as a victim of conflict has created low levels of teacher education and insufficient infrastructure which affect all education provision regardless of ethnic affiliation. Many of the issues raised by interlocutors during the interviews pertain to all language communities and are a result of Iraq's suffering education system as a whole. Frequent reference to the lack of school buildings, overcrowding, lack of resources, undeveloped curriculum and unqualified teachers were made in interviews. All interlocutors reported the need to share school buildings in shifts. This has resulted in some instances to a three shift system operating throughout a day. Yet, the significant finding for this enquiry was that each ethnic community presented the neglect of their education system in relation to the means of cultural reproduction. Societal security protection was therefore central to all issues raised. Even standard education requirements were framed by ethnic need.

In terms of basic education, capacity gaps can be found within three specific areas of management: specifying learning (curriculum), pedagogy (teaching methods) and resources. These three elements are normally a central part of education reform and the reconstruction process post-conflict. Often three key ingredients of any education reform proposal are to "modernize" the curriculum, to replace existing textbooks, and to improve the quality of teaching through improved teaching methods and investment in teacher education. Two of the most important aspects of this process, from a societal security perspective, are; who is involved in the decision making, and how is action implemented even between communities.

As the schools in the region are organised around linguistic markers, the provision for linguistically appropriate reforms are essential to the perception of equality in the reform process. Equally, each of the three aspects of reform can be interpreted in terms of linguistic support. Cobarrubias (1984;71) provides a taxonomy of state policy towards supporting minority linguistic groups in education.

- (1) attempting to kill a language;
- (2) letting a language die;
- (3) unsupported coexistence;
- (4) partial support of specific language functions;
- (5) adoption as a recognised language

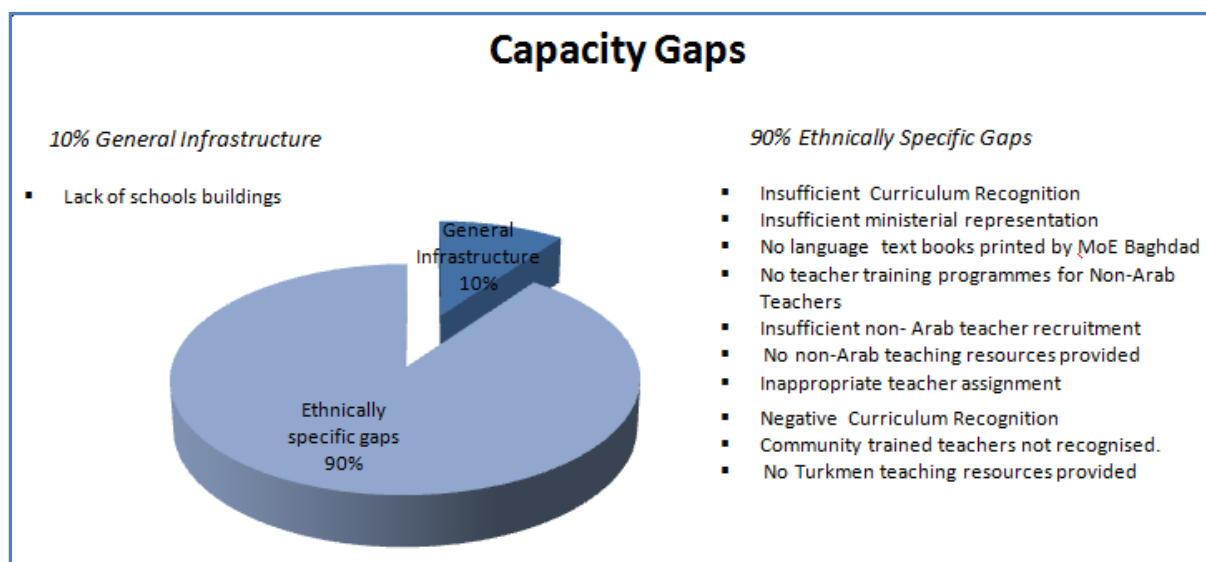
Education reconstruction in the disputed territories falls within the last structure, and is seemingly in the best position to strengthen societal identity through schooling. Yet, although the last policy would seem to make education delivery in a community language safe; Skutnabb-langas argues that it is important to problematise this fifth category, as there are cases where 'adoption as an official language' is not enough to support a language. He uses South Africa's multilingual state policy as an example of a situation where, despite the 11 official languages in the Constitution, implementation does not seem to be forthcoming due to vast capacity gaps for delivery;

*'as many critical voices in South Africa are increasingly beginning to point out: 'everything possible is being done to avoid bringing this to practical reality'; 'government is avoiding the issue at all cost'; 'even with the new language-in-*

*education policy, nothing, not a thing. ....'The policy/principle is useless without an effective implementation plan, spelt out, monitored and regulated- no soft options here at all' (2013; 304)*

This can be seen to be of direct relevance to the education delivery for minority groups in Iraq. Although the constitutional promises have been made, the political will, and therefore the capacity, to deliver is widely criticised and deemed insufficient. Correspondingly, gaps in capacity were overwhelmingly presented, not in terms of general lack of state education spending and resource management, but in terms of ethnically and linguistically specific resource failure, as demonstrated by Figure 7: Ethnically defined Capacity Gaps in Education Services.

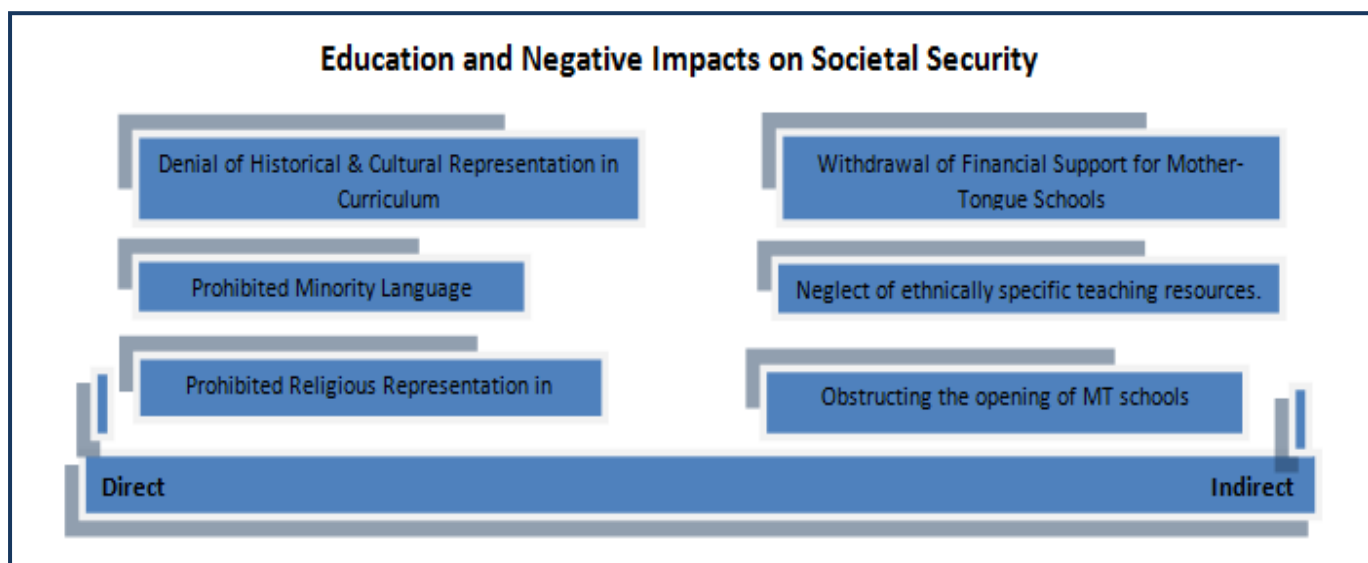
**Figure 8: Ethnically Defined Capacity Gaps in Education Services**



Of even greater significance was the fact that capacity gaps were presented in relation to the wider political debate and deliberate hindering of their access for

sectarian or ethnic persecution reasons. Capacity gaps could be understood in terms of the financial and infrastructural limitations of a ministry of education which is in a process of post-conflict reconstruction, yet they were overwhelmingly presented as attempts to suppress an ethnic group and challenge societal security. Intentional threats to societal security through the suppression of identity in the education sector can include direct threats, which use state policy to specifically assimilate ethnic groups, such as; the direct forbidding of non-Arab languages as medium of instruction, the prevention of teaching of religious or ethnic histories, the prohibiting of ethnic names for schools or the closure of places of education, as seen under the Ba'ath administration. Or more indirect methods which, despite policy to guarantee minority rights, see obstructions to their implementation through the lack of financial support, neglect of ethnically specific teaching resources, curriculum omissions, and obstructing the opening of mother-tongue schools (Jivraj, 2013). Both direct and indirect measures work to suppress identity and thereby prevent it from replicating or reproducing itself, as illustrated in figure 9: Attacks to Societal security through education. Due to the constitutional promises to minority right protection, the ethnically defined capacity gaps presented by education actors can be seen as indirect attempts to limit the development of mother-tongue and ethnically defined schools through denial of support.

**Figure 9: Attacks to Societal Security through Education**



An examination of educational equality within the segregated structure shows that no linguistic and ethnic education officials are satisfied with the provision given to them<sup>41</sup>. The current mother-tongue system is not supported in terms of ethnically or linguistically specific resources provided from the central Ministry of Education. Where resources are provided they are criticized for their lack of minority recognition, providing either Arab or Kurd centric representations of Iraq. The emergent theme from education specialists is one of deliberate inadequate support. A number of grievances surrounding the provision of ethnically specific resources have been raised and have manifested themselves in two main complaints about education 'inputs'. The first is in relation to the management provision of ethnic specific schools and the second is in reference to the provision of school resources. With the exception of a few private schools, all schools are classified as state schools, regardless of their medium of instruction, and are entitled to equal state funding and

<sup>41</sup> Every participant interviewed detailed numerous shortcomings in the provision to schools. Interviews and questions received via email between Feb – July 2009.



resource provision. Consequently, all schools, regardless of ethnic affiliation are provided with stationary kits and textbooks by the Ministry of Education<sup>42</sup>.

However, despite the relatively equal distribution of textbooks among schools, an issue of provision inequality has arisen. All textbooks are printed in the Arabic language and are therefore seen to present an unfair advantage toward the Arabic language schools<sup>43</sup>. The Kurdish autonomous region counters the disadvantage faced by the Kurdish language schools by supplying Kurdish textbooks, a fact which only accentuates the deficiency in other communities. (However this provision actually serves to hamper the educational attainment of Kurdish pupils in the disputed territories, an issue that will be expanded upon in more detail in the next chapter.) The failure to print mother tongue language textbooks for the different communities' usage has been perceived as a direct denial of their constitutional right 'to educate their children in their mother tongue' (Article 4 of the Iraqi Federal Constitution).

The state-provided Arabic textbooks come under criticism not only for their medium of instruction but also for their content. The textbooks provided are deemed in need of development to advance the inclusion of non-Arab history in the syllabus<sup>44</sup>. This critique is also prevalent in the Kurdish Autonomous Region, where Turkmen schools are deemed to receive inadequate Turkmen specific support, lacking representation of ethnically diverse history, culture and language (SOIMT, 2009). Firer (1998) addresses the dangers to societal cohesion from the omission of ethnic histories in relation to the representation of Arabs in Israeli textbooks. She identifies

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42 UNICEF staff confirmed the distribution of stationary kits via asynchronous email correspondence. Received 27th August 2009.

43 Interviews and questions received via email between Feb – July 2009. General view presented in majority of interviews.

44 Interviewee 12 detailed annoyance at the lack of non Arab representation and likened it the previous regimes education provision. Received via email May 09.

the negative effects of the fact that Napoleon and the French Revolution occupy more pages than Arabs in history textbooks, leading to resentment and anger among the Palestinian community.

When a region is contested, interpretations of inequalities will be politically and emotionally charged and have the potential to be elevated to points of ethnic survival and therefore securitised. Therefore, if the state fails to fulfil its social contract with its citizens by neglecting the provision of ethnically appropriate education or there is a perceived deliberate hindrance, then threats to collective identity are felt. Consequently, if collective identity is perceived as being under threat in the education arena, education can become an issue of conflict in the wider dispute over territory and co-existence.

Equally, the perception of threats to societal security in the education sector will no doubt be influenced by the wider security environment. As presented in chapter three, in the disputed territories physical insecurity based on ethnic identity is compounded by ethnic competition over that administration of the territories. Ethnic groups are facing depopulation through the deliberate targeting of people based on ethnicity by violent extremists leading to depopulations (fleeing and death), dilution of identity through adapting to the majority linguistic and cultural influences generated by fear of persecution, and, lastly, the deliberate attempts by majority communities to co-op small ethnic groups to secure numerical superiority on the ground. All these threats are intrinsically entwined with one another, and threats felt through one avenue will influence how threats are perceived in the others areas<sup>45</sup> (Lake &

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<sup>45</sup> Lake and Rothchild's (1996) rational choice approach to ethnic conflict suggests that perceived deliberate threats to the cultural identity of a group are taken as precursors to threats to their physical security. As such, communities who perceive a threat to identity are fearful for their survival and thus invest in protecting it (Lake & Rothchild, 1996).

Rothchild; 1996). Thus, perceptions of threat within the education arena will no doubt be influenced by how societal security is challenged in the wider environment and increase the importance of access to groups.

Communities have reacted to the neglect of non-Arab education in a variety of ways. Each community has sought ethnically affiliated patrons who are able to support their schools with financial or practical assistance (see Figure 12: External Actors). However the level of support varies between groups and therefore so does the level of education provision. The following section of the chapter will present the case of Kurdish, Turkmen, and Assyrian education provision. The section will document the capacity gaps of each community and the perception of such gaps in terms of societal security threats. It will also explore whether educationalists have presented a securitised narrative around education; therefore raising it as an ethnic survival issue. It will examine the ways in which communities have mobilised to resist and counter the perceived threats to their education systems and therefore their continued existence. We will turn first to the Kurdish community as their provision is unique among non-Arabs in the region.

#### 5.4 KRG Patronage in disputed territories Kurdish Education



**Photo: 5**

The picture shows a child running across a newly constructed Kurdish school playground in Kirkuk Province.

While Kurdish education suffers from the same neglect as the other non-Arab communities, its situation differs due to the regional backing of the KRG Ministry of Education. Kurdish education in Kirkuk falls officially under the jurisdiction of the central ministry in Baghdad; however, it is entirely administered by the KRG Ministry of Education. The position of Director of Kurdish studies and other nationalities is a Central ministry post, yet, in Kirkuk and Ninewa, the Directors receive their salaries and instructions from the KRG. The only contribution made to the development of Kurdish language education by the central ministry is the allocation of a desk space in the Directorate of Education's offices in the administrative building. As such the Kurdish language schools in Kirkuk, and across the DIB's receive funding, resources and teacher salaries from the KRG, and follow the KRG Ministry of Education

curriculum. This action is justified by Kurdish educationalists in terms of the absolute neglect of Kurdish education by the central ministry.

Due to its strong presence in the region and regional autonomous area, the Kurdish language has survived as an active mother tongue for the majority of Kurdish families (Interviews KD x6). Therefore the justification of mother-tongue access can be seen in terms of comprehension in the class room and not traditional language revival or societal security. Therefore the KRG ministry has a strong case for intervening in the region. It was suggested that without the involvement of the KRG the Kurdish residents of the disputed territories would be forced to undertake education in Arabic, due to lack of support from the central ministry. It was repeatedly stated that although the central ministry had made efforts to translate the Arabic curriculum into Kurdish, no attempts to print adequate numbers of textbooks were made. Equally, the training and appointment of Kurdish teachers has been neglected, forcing the KRG to employ teachers in schools across the region to ensure adequate delivery of education.

The involvement of the KRG education ministry in the regions under the Government of Iraq ministry remit was justified with emotive language and presented as a necessity for the continuation of Kurdish education. Kurdish educationalists detailed the level of neglect which warranted such action. One Kurdish Ministry of Iraq education official stated that;

*'The central ministry have given us nothing... nothing! The Director of Kurdish language in Kirkuk, he gets his salary from Erbil not Baghdad. The only thing they gave him was a desk..... and a chair! (The interviewee threw his hands in the air and laughed at the total obscurity of it) All they give him is a space in the directorate office. How can he do his job like that? No pay, no resources? Without Erbil we would not have Kurdish schools, just Arabic.'* (Interviewee KD 2)

*"The KRG support has developed from necessity, Baghdad provide NO support... no teacher salaries, not my salary, no text books.... Just this desk..."* (Interview KD Kirkuk)

The framing of Kurdish education as being under threat was not uncommon; all of the Kurdish educationalists and community leaders consulted stated that it would not be possible to provide mother-tongue education if it were not for Erbil; *'The Kurdish authorities acted because they had to... without their support the Kurds in Kirkuk would only have Arabic textbooks.'* (Interview KD3).

Due to the wider political environment (as presented in chapter three) this threat was often portrayed as having a political purpose. It was suggested that mother-tongue education was required to safeguard the continued *'existence of families in their rightful homes and villages'* (interview KD4). The political standoff over the administrative control of the disputed territories was deemed to have a significant influence on the support given to schools in the region. Article 140 calls for a referendum and census, this process places great importance on the demographic

composition of the region. As such the neglect of Kurdish education was often presented as a deliberate attempt to deny Kurds their place in the region and limit their numbers.

*'They (Baghdad) make it hard for Kurdish education. For instance there are not enough Kurdish teachers under the Baghdad ministry to teach (in) all Kurdish schools. When they have a Kurdish teacher they send them to an Arab School, in an all Arab village. This is very frightening, today there is a lot of insecurity, travelling between community locations is dangerous and difficult so the teacher will not go to work..... should they have to travel through checkpoints?'* (Interview KD1)

*'Kurdish language is unimportant to the centre and they think it is politically unnecessary in the region as they want to control the area and have the administration in Arabic. It is a continuation of the Arabisation policies of the past.'* (Interview KD8)

Kurdish educationalists were vocal in their distrust for the Baghdad central Ministry of Education. Officials suggested that there would be no Kurdish education in Kirkuk if it were not for the intervention of the KRG Ministry of Education. They portrayed Kurdish identity as under threat in the region if it weren't for the KRG. This securitising speech is suggesting that without the involvement of the KRG, not only mother-tongue education but also the Kurdish 'we' identity would be under threat from a denial of support and attempt at assimilation.

Yet, despite the imperative for ethnic survival presented by the Kurdish officials, the involvement of two ministries in the Kurdish education system has proven incredibly problematic. By taking significant steps to improve the KRG regional education standards it has moved away from the central system. The KRG has a different and updated curriculum which also reflects the place of the Kurds in Iraqi history. Equally they have restructured the Kurdish school year; which has been divided into two semesters, each ending in final exams. In contrast, The Ministry of Education Baghdad continues with the old system which facilitates examinations at the end of the year and runs on a separate curriculum and timetable. The contributions of both ministries can therefore be seen to conflict in terms of the schools management. For example, despite following the KRG curriculum, pupils in Kurdish schools are required to sit their exams under the Iraqi Ministry of Education exams board. This exam board follows only the Iraqi curriculum and timetable; therefore pupils following the KRG curriculum are at an enormous disadvantage and their examination grades have been seen to be adversely affected as a result<sup>46</sup>.

Further complications have arisen from the updated curriculum. Teachers who were familiar with the Government of Iraq Ministry of Education texts are now required to teach the new KRG syllabus. However there is no provision of additional training to familiarise teachers with the text or syllabus. This has caused the greatest concern in the newly introduced subject areas such as Geology (Interview, KD7, *Kurdish Globe*, 10/2010). Pupil understanding is inevitably hampered if teaching staff are unfamiliar with the subject knowledge. Further curriculum issues arise from the additional language provision within Kurdish schools. The teaching of English has taken

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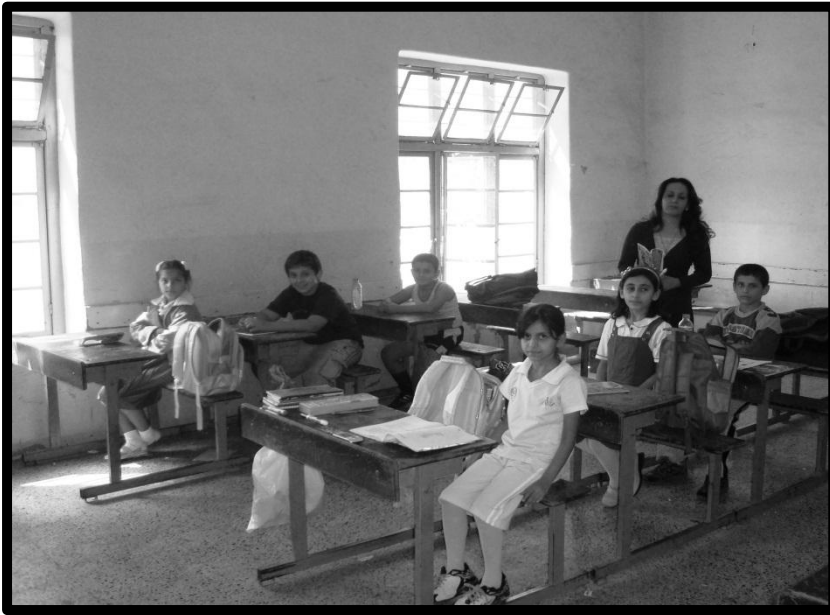
<sup>46</sup> .(*Kurdish Globe* 10/2010).



precedence in the KRG curriculum over the study of Arabic. However, for Kurdish pupils residing in the DIB's there is an obvious need to provide a more serious programme of Arabic study. Pupils require fluency and understanding of the dominant language of administration in the region. Reports from teachers in the Kirkuk governorate have suggested that Kurdish students are failing to achieve a reasonable standard in Arabic. This is due to the inadequate importance given to it in the curriculum and also the fact that teachers who are employed from the KRG often do not have a reasonable standard of Arabic themselves and struggle to teach it. The implications for social integration and conflict are obviously negative and will be examined in detail in the next chapter.

Kurdish language schools have received very little of the support deemed necessary by the constitutional rights afforded to them. This neglect has been presented by Kurdish education actors as not only a threat to the Kurdish mother-tongue language system, but also an intentional attempt to weaken the societal stability of the Kurds in the region. As such the achievement of Kurdish language education is regarded as a matter of societal security for the Kurds. Consequently, the KRG Ministry of education has stepped forward to provide support and funding and ensure its continuation. This support is centred around perceptions of threat and the need to ensure Kurdish identity. The mixed involvement of ministries has had adverse effects on the educational attainment of Kurdish students and additional implications on the wider issue of social cohesion and regional stability.

## 5:5 Turkmen educations' co-ordinated response and resilience



**Photo: 6**

A photo of a Turkmen classroom in Ninewa studying. The teacher was teaching Mathematics.

The Turkmen have not called for a distinct autonomous region like the Kurds but as long as political positions are divided between Arab and Kurd, they call to be recognised for their regional demographic presence. The Iraqi Turkmen maintain a historical claim to Kirkuk and, with Turkish assistance, have formed the Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) to challenge attempts at Kurdish control of the city. Turkmen ethnic relations in the region have a complex history of conflict and co-existence with Arabs and Kurds. As sectarian tensions have mounted in the region the Turkmen have faced threats from a number of sources. Tensions between Kurds and Turkmen mounted following the toppling of the former regime and resulted in a number of inter-ethnic clashes occurring in Kirkuk. Turkmen groups accuse the Kurdish militia of having abducted Turkmen and Arabs, subjecting them to torture and often taking their lives<sup>47</sup>. Additionally violence carried out by Arab extremist groups has been seen to target the Turkmen community<sup>48</sup>. A referendum on Kirkuk

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<sup>47</sup> News article quotes etc

<sup>48</sup> Copied out news clips of Turkmen targeted attacks here.

was set to take place in 2007, but has not yet occurred. In the midst of competition for Kirkuk, Iraqi Turkmen express concerns that they are targeted by both Arab and Kurdish groups who seek to deny their demographic presence and remove their influence.

In keeping with the Turkmen's active position on protecting their distinct culture and historical claims to the city of Kirkuk, a large and growing number of Turkman schools have been opened across the region and in the city of Kirkuk, in particular. As discovered in the previous chapter, these schools are classified in official documentation as Turkman language schools, yet schools teach in Turkish and have a varying degree of Arabic used within them. Regardless of the debate over the use of the Turkish language, Turkmen schools are still regarded as 'mother tongue' and thus remain under the remit of the Ministry of Education in Baghdad. Therefore the responsibility for Turkmen education is subsumed under the Ministry of Kurdish studies and other languages. This administrative arrangement is one of the primary complaints of Turkmen educationalists. There is a call from Turkmen education specialists, from within the ministry and from education wings of political and social organisations, to establish a General Directorate in the Ministry of education in Baghdad to deal specially and officially with the Turkmen schools<sup>49</sup>. Without equality of government representation, Turkmen feel unable to take control of their own education and ensure it is in line with that of the other communities.

Currently, Turkmen education actors feel they are neglected in terms of training, resource provision and curriculum alignment. The Turkmen education officials

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<sup>49</sup> The establishment of a central Turkmen office in the MoE, was a desire echoed through interviews. Interviews and questions received via email between Feb – July 2009.

highlighted the lack of teacher training colleges and supplementary teaching courses provided for Turkmen teachers. These programmes are available in Arabic and sometimes Kurdish, but not Turkish. Equally, the lack of engagement between the ministry and Turkmen teachers with regard to updating pedagogy was seen to be deficient. The following are a collection of some of the statements pertaining to this issue;

*'The ministry does not support us with any training courses. We are on our own. We have to train our teachers in Turkmen and pay their salaries or we would have no teachers. Only Arabic speaking ones.'* (Interview TM7)

*'We do not have enough teachers, I have asked for training and they (the directorate of education) do not reply.'* (Interview TMN5)

*'We have a lack of conferences for Turkmen Language teachers in the Ministry of Education so as to keep them informed of any changes or developments... we cannot directly address the educational issues in the Ministry of Education. There was one conference for Turkmen Language teachers... it was held in March 2005, and organized by the Ministry of Education, Directorate of Kurdish and other Nationalities Studies.... but that is all.* (Interview TMN/D)

*'There is a lack of formal training courses in Turkmen language organized through Diyala Education Directorate Kurdish Section despite the existence of*

*Turkmen lecturers [who are currently] teaching Turkmen in the schools that have Turkmen Language Study Program.'* (Interview TMD)

The provision of up-to-date teacher training programmes is absolutely vital to ensure the advancement of Iraqi pedagogy. The status of Iraqi education as a victim of conflict has elevated the need for the provision of qualified teachers and the progression of pupil-centred teaching and classroom management (Creative Solution Interview)<sup>50</sup>. In light of the previous regime's policy of assimilation and the following decline of the education environment, these training programmes have become essential to the education outputs for the region, and advancing post conflict reconstruction in Iraq in general. Iraqi teachers are often under-qualified and lack the knowledge necessary to advance Iraqi education toward international standards (UNICEF 2005). But we must consider that if teacher training courses are only available from the central Ministry in Arabic, Turkmen language teachers are '*effectively being excluded*' (Interview TM12). With the planned expansion of Turkish language schools, failure to support the Turkmen education system through the provision of linguistically appropriate training becomes significantly more detrimental as the number of teachers using Turkish in that arena will inevitably increase. The level of education and pedagogy will be significantly lower in these schools without training support.

Turkmen educationalists also referenced the complete failure of the government to print textbooks in the Turkish language. Mehmet Halil Imamoglu of the Turkmen Kirkuk ITF stated that "*Baghdad do not print or translate books even though the*

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<sup>50</sup> Information provided by asynchronous correspondence with CREATIVE SOLUTIONS staff. Creative Solutions were the company used by USAID to aid the rebuilt of the Iraqi education system. Received March 15<sup>th</sup> 2010.

*translations have been approved by a committee.” A SOIMT report equally criticised the central ministry’s support by stating that “although the federal constitution of Iraq guarantees the rights of all Iraqis to educate their children in their mother tongue in accordance with education guidelines, or in any other language in private institutions, these obligations have yet to be see full implementation.” The failure of the government to print Turkmani<sup>51</sup> language textbooks has been perceived as a direct denial of their constitutional right ‘to educate their children in their mother tongue’ (Article 4 of the Iraqi Federal Constitution).*

The state-provided Arabic textbooks come under criticism not only for their medium of instruction but also for their content. The textbooks provided are deemed in need of development to advance the inclusion of non-Arab history in the syllabus. They are seen as deliberately portraying the Turkmen people in a negative light.

*“History books portray Turks as wrong doers and killers. This is the remnants of Saddam’s regime, but the bad information about Iran was removed so why not remove the bad against the Turks? I do not understand why we have not been supported in this way” (Interview TMN)*

*‘Turkmen are not represented in these textbooks. They do not show our impact on Iraqi culture. Kirkuk is a Turkmen city, the citadel has the original settlement patterns of the Turkmen people, our history is everywhere.’ (Interview TM3<sup>52</sup>)*

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<sup>51</sup> I will use the terminology of the Turkmen educationalists. Who referred only to mother tongue Turkmeni, regardless of the fact that schools use Turkish and this has been approved by the government.

<sup>52</sup> In reply to this an Arab community representative present in the room commented; ‘*Everywhere but the schools!*’ (Interview AB6) this lighthearted banter continued and demonstrated to me the fact that the problems described are presented at an official level and I rarely witnessed any animosity directed toward other community members; just their political or high level representation.

Unfortunately, interviews with Turkmen educationalists across the region revealed that the inequality is understood in terms of deliberate attempts to deny ethnic representation. Failure to provide mother tongue language programmes is viewed as an intentional effort to limit the use of the language as a means of instruction<sup>53</sup>. For example in Ninewa, to counter the lack of available teaching courses which specifically use Turkmeni and progress the ability of teachers to use the language in schools, the Turkmen community have developed their own teacher training programmes. But the Mosul regional Director of Education has refused to acknowledge the qualifications of those teachers who attend the additional privately run training course in Turkmen education. The rejection is justified on the basis that these teachers require more practical teaching experience. The validity of the argument is questioned by the Turkmen education officials in the region who reference the quality and training available to teachers of other languages such as English. The refusal to accept these additional teachers has been framed in terms of a deliberate obstruction to the Turkmen education system and Mother-Tongue language provision on the grounds of ethnicity, directly referencing their ethnic identity as cause or refereeing to the 'injustice' in the system:

*'They say they need to teach more (gain more teaching experience), but we base our course on the English language teaching course. It has the same structure. And these English teachers are not asked to teach more. It is only*

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<sup>53</sup> Over three quarters of the interview participants noted a deliberate threat to the Turkmen education system. Interviews and questions received via email between Feb – July 2009.

*the Turkmen teachers. (It is) only because we are Turkmen. There is no other reason that I can understand.'* (Interview TMN)

*'The central Ministry of Education and the Diyala Education Directorate do not recognize Teachers who received "Merit Certificates". As such they are not [permitted] to participate in other development courses conducted in Turkmen, it stops the career and stops them teaching, we need to change this injustice.'*  
(Interview TMD1)

Equally the failure to recruit Turkmen specialists or allow existing Turkmen teachers to transfer to regions of high Turkmen population density by the ministry was also presented as a deliberate attempt to hinder the use of Turkmeni. Accusations of ministries making 'excuses' and 'not permitting' teacher appointments reflect the interpretation of these actions by Turkmen educationalist;

*'Recruitment of Turkmens who graduated from Teachers Colleges has not taken place since the collapse of the former regime in 2003 (in Dyala). This is despite the existence of Turkmen schools. It is worth mentioning that according to the regulations in force, priority and preference in recruitment must be given to them. However, they are currently teaching Turkmen language and have not been appointed yet.'* (Interview TMD, reading from prepared notes)

*'The Turkmen language specialization is not mentioned when [the post] "Educational Supervisor or Turkmen Language Expert" is advertised. And,*



*when Turkmen ask for such posts the Education Directorate comes up with numerous excuses in this regard, therefore we have no Turkmen supervisors, just Arab.’ (Interview TMN)*

*‘The Turkmen Language teachers are not permitted to be transferred from their schools to schools with Turkmen language’. The transfer process is very long and they make it not possible to move posts between schools. (Interview TM7)*

The restrictions which are experienced in terms of Turkmen initial teacher training, career development and further training and the appointment of Turkmen teachers are seen as put in place to deliberately sabotage the development of Turkmen schools in the disputed territories. Equally the denied representation of Turkmen in the curriculum and the representation of Turks in the textbooks provided are seen as purposeful manipulations to deny the Turkmen’s place in the region. This is further compounded by the perception that the use of the Turkish alphabet is opposed by many state officials (Interview TM3).

As with the Kurdish interpretation, restrictions placed in the way of the education system of Turkmen are viewed in relation to the wider political environment. Territorial disputes and sectarian politics underpin the accusations and shape the defence and support of Turkmen education. One Turkmen education official stated that:

*The obstacles that are laid down by the politicians of different nationalities, such as the Kurdish, obstruct the process of learning in the mothers tongue –*

*whether these obstacles are through the ministry of education or through the provincial council in Kirkuk.....I think the obstacle is that the administration in Kirkuk greatly politicised by the Kurdish parties who control the administration since occupation<sup>54</sup>.*

This statement demonstrates the perception that the disregard of mother-tongue education is viewed as direct opposition to their linguist presence within the education system and therefore the region. Rightly or wrongly the Turkmen education elite regard themselves as not only ignored in terms of finance and support, but also as intentionally hindered in their pursuit of separatist Turkmen education structures.

The failure to support mother-tongue language development by the central ministry has been countered by Turkmen educationalists in a very productive manner. Ethnically affiliated donors have been sought and now a variety of 'foundations' provide financial and practical support to Turkmen schools across the region. The entire central curriculum has been translated into Turkish, printed and distributed to schools in the governorate without assistance from the central ministry. Volunteer teachers and Turkish linguists provide training courses in Turkish for primary and intermediate stages of Turkmen education. In an attempt to counter the loss of language and increase the enrolment into Turkish language schools training courses have been provided for parents and community leaders in written Turkish in the Kirkuk governorate.

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<sup>54</sup> Interviews and questions received via email June 2009. Also for further information see *Education in Iraq*. Available at: <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/a0f63109ac7c1280032a979?OpenDocument>, accessed 22 May 2009.

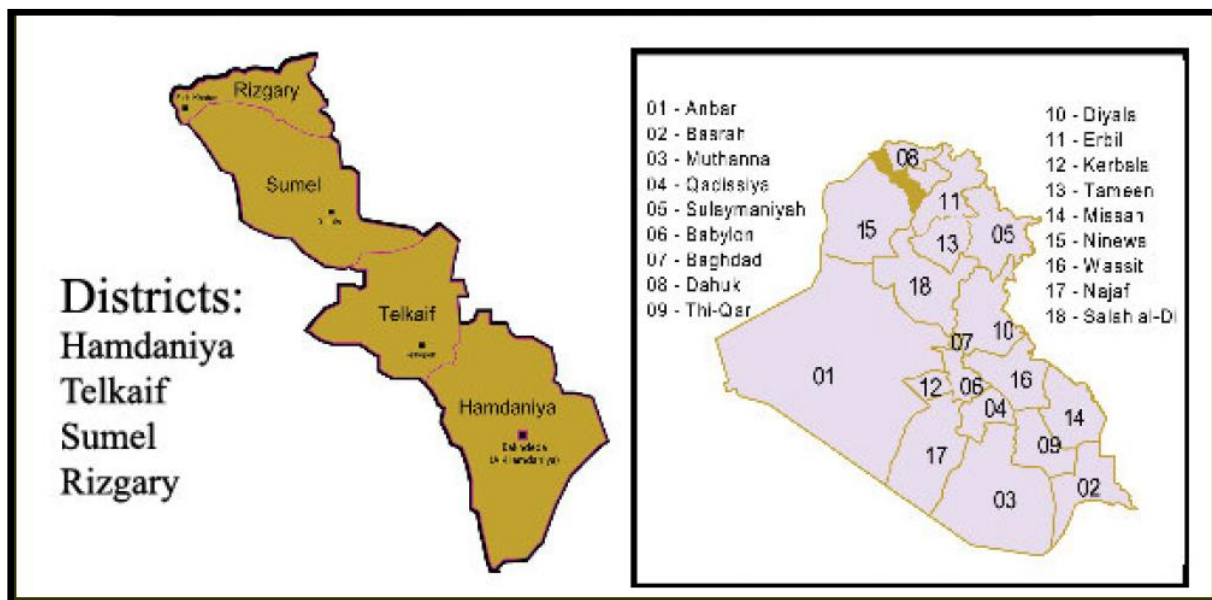
The provision of external support for Turkmen education has come from a number of different actors. As such external influences on the Turkmen education system are varied. As opposed to the influence of one central actor on Kurdish education, Turkmen have a mixed range of influences which are regional specific between, Ninewa, Kirkuk, Diyala and the KRG. In terms of curriculum translation and printing, the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs, Ankara Waqf, translates the curriculum while the political party; the Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) in Kirkuk, take responsibility for printing textbooks and distributing them to schools (Interview TM7). In addition to this support, thirty-day Turkmen teacher training courses have been organised with volunteer head teachers and linguists from groups within the Turkmen community. Courses are run in Al Araida and Telafar to give specific linguistic training to teachers (Interview TMX4). In addition, to counter the current lack of appointments by the ministry the Waqf pay a \$120 a month for 'additional' Turkmen teachers in the governorate. Consequently, there are currently 150 voluntary teachers working in schools across the governorate, 24 in schools in Mosul and 126 in Telafar (Interview TMN). Yet the ministry refuses to take over the salaries of these voluntary teachers on the grounds that they did not qualify in state run teacher colleges (Interview TMN).

With so many unregulated influences within the different separatist school systems, the possibility for purposeful manipulation occurs and within the fragile ethno-political environment the risk of outside donors and actors using education institutes for self-serving nationalistic purposes arises. Without the regulation of donated textbooks

the danger presents that numerous separate curricula will be present in the region as each ethnic group and its ethnically affiliated donor strives to teach its own representation of history, geography and culture. The dangers of this multiplicity of resources are demonstrated in Kreso's (2008) analysis of the Bosnian curriculum. He found that students often learn to hate those who are "different" through separate curricula and history textbooks. Equally, reliance on textbooks from outside donors carries with it the risk of politicisation of the curriculum; for example, Bharati (1992, cited in Bush and Saltarelli 2000 12) noted that in schools in Indian states controlled by the BJP, the principal extremist political party, BJP-sponsored textbooks "depict the Mughals as foreigners and oppressors, and interpret Indians' achievement of freedom from English rule as but the latest episode in a long ongoing struggle to free India from foreign influences. Muslims are, by this interpretation, the contemporary incarnation of the Mughal pattern of dominance". This danger is of particular importance in the disputed territories where the subjects of history and geography are open to conflicting interpretations by ethno-political influences. This will be looked at again in the next chapter.

## 5.6 Ninewa Plains; minorities resisting assimilation

Figure 10: Map of Ninewa Plain



(Taken from Assyrian Council of Europe, 2010)

The Ninewa Plain is home to the most diverse range of ethnic and religious groups in Iraq. It is also stretched across districts which are under de facto KRG control, districts under Gol administration and districts with the influence of both centres. Consequently, education in the region is administered through a complicated mix of both the KRG and Ministry of Education Baghdad involvement. The area has both KRG curriculum Kurdish schools and central curriculum Arabic schools, as well as mixed-curriculum Assyrian language schools. Rather than the KRG taking responsibility only for the ethnically homogenous Kurdish language schools in Ninewa, the KRG Ministry of Education has taken responsibility for the districts which are under their de-facto control, such as Akre, Al-Shikhan and Tilhaif, while

simultaneously involving themselves in the education provision of other disputed districts under the banner of aiding mother-tongue language provision.

Assyrian, Shabek and Yezidi groups in the region presented the education system in terms of the neglect of their ethnic representation. Frequent referral to insufficient curriculum representation, failure to train linguistically appropriate teachers and lack of textbook provision were heard from each community. These calls were aimed at both the centrally controlled directorate in Mosul and the alternative KRG curriculum.

*“The curriculums used in the Ministry of Education come from the central government. It’s in the Arabic language – and it’s a curriculum of a religious character. As for the curriculum used in the Kurdish region, it’s in the Kurdish language which has two different dialects – it’s not Yazidi, and that curriculum has a Kurdish nationalist outlook.” (Interview YZ3)*

The religious and ethnic minority community of the Shabek have opted for education in the Arabic language. However, they do have a traditional language which they state has been neglected in terms of education access. *‘The Shabek language needs to be incorporated into the curriculum in order to preserve the cultural and ethnic heritage of the community’* (Interview SB1). This is currently hindered by the failure to provide teacher training courses in Shabek instruction as well as resource production.

*‘There are no courses available to teach the Shabek languages. About fifty per cent of the teachers teaching Shabek students are Shabeks, although*

*they teach in Arabic. There are many teachers and people ready to teach Shabek but they need training and a textbook. Soryia (interviewees daughter and active campaigner for Shabek rights) met with the Ministry of Education in Baghdad 'a few weeks ago' who informed her that if the community wished to have Shabek taught, they would support it, however, they must first provide a textbook which needs to be approved by the MoE.*

The community has since produced a dictionary and grammar textbook with the aid of community donations, yet the need for a pedagogical review and textbook production remains necessary. Corresponding to the Yezidi and Assyrian community consultations, discussion with education representatives from the Shabak ethnic group, highlight the suppression of Shabak education rights within the region through lack of support. In terms of the provision of linguistic materials for Assyrians, the central Education directorate in Mosul also fails to produce or subsidise linguistically specific textbooks. But linguistically specific resources for Assyrians are available in KRG Kurdish language Assyrian schools by the KRG. Having established a director of Assyrian education in Erbil, the resources in religion and culture are already designed and available to aid the teaching of Assyrian culture and history.

In the Ninewa plain, lack of resource provision was framed in terms of complete oversight and neglect. It was presented as having potential ramifications for an ethnic community's societal security in terms of the means of cultural production, but not as an intentional effort to eliminate Yezidi, Shabak or Assyrians from the region. However, a deliberate threat to the societal stability of groups was seen from the increasing encroachment of the Kurdish Ministry of Education. When analysing

interview transcripts from members of the Assyrian community it became apparent that the primary threat to societal stability was viewed as coming from the KRG's provision of resources and opening of schools. It is viewed by many as an unwelcome interference which is not supporting Assyrian identity, but instead, attempting to subsume it under the category of Kurdish schools (Interview AS2). Allegations abound of financial incentives to enrol children in Kurdish language schools where minority groups claim the deliberate indoctrination of non-Kurdish children through educational programs (Assyrian Council of Europe 2010).

There is little existing literature or academic research to confirm the issue, but many human rights reports originating from the ethnic groups in question claim that a process of Kurdification is taking place throughout the disputed territories. Accusations of Kurdish authorities fostering patronage relationships with minority groups in return for their linguistic allegiance have given voice to claims of a process of Kurdification from interlocutors. Assyrians, along with Shabak and Yezidi, consider their representation in the education system, and therefore their ethnic identity, under threat from both ministries of education; The neglect of the central ministry is viewed as preventing the development of their education system in terms of advancing cultural understanding and language rights, while the offer of 'support' from the KRG is regarded as an attempt to assimilate and indoctrinate children (Interview YZ2; AS; SB1).

In response, the Assyrian Aid Society are working in the area of the Ninewa Plains and provide education support to Assyrian schools. They offer transport for children who reside in remote areas to reach Assyrian schools (rather than Arabic or Kurdish



schools with inadequate identity recognition), dormitories for them to stay in school, the salaries of additional Assyrian language teachers, transportation of textbooks (KRG curriculum) from the KRG to the region, translations and printing of textbooks for the Mol, and donations toward school upkeep. This support is seen to bolster the Assyrian communities' access to ethnically appropriate education and counter the Mol neglect<sup>55</sup>. Assyrian groups have been vocal in their accusations and calls have been made to the KRG to '*cease the indoctrination of non-Kurdish children through educational programs in which they are made to glorify Kurdistan at the expense of their own ethnic identity.*'(Assyrian Council of Europe, 2010). While community representatives have requested that "*curricula be developed by specialists without prejudice to any components.*" (Ivlin Anoya Oraha chaldo). In convergence, Shabak representatives stated that the Kurdish authorities should refrain from building new Kurdish language schools within Shabak villages as they require Arabic instruction and the KRG only intends to '*eliminate our culture and language*' (Interview SB1). The process of active Kurdification is seen to be hindering the promotion and acceptance of their own cultural heritage through education (Interview SB2).

A further point of concern for identity protection through education came forth from the Yezidi interviews; that of religious representation. Whereas the Assyrian and Christian communities are large enough to have create their own religious syllabus within either the KRG or Government of Iraq curricula, the Yezidi and Shabek communities have not yet been given this opportunity.

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<sup>55</sup> Interviewees were not vocal in the objection the KRG involvement in interviews, (although it was often inferred, no explicit mentions were made) most of the narratives revolved around a revival of ethnic pride and not around threat, subsequent email exchanges did refer to Kurdification though. This may be in part due to fear of speaking openly when in front of the interpreter.

*“We can interfere neither with the central or regional curriculums. But we need the two administrative bodies to teach the curriculum of our religion as part of our educational goals to build a noble healthy child.”* (Interview YZ3)

*“The curriculums in Iraq are not suitable for all. For example, the Islamic religious nature overshadows the curriculums in the centre. While the curriculums in the Kurdish region suffer from a nationalist Kurdish outlook, marginalizing the Christians, the Yazidis and the Maldaeans.”* (Interview YDT)

The Islamic nature of the central ministry’s curriculum has received considerable attention and debate across Iraq. The competing Shi’aa and Sunni interpretations of Islam receive differing levels of attention dependent on who is teaching the class or directing the school. The call to review the religious character of the curriculum has been heard from not only in the disputed territories but also from Baghdad with regards to the nature of the Shia and Sunni representations within it. The influence of strict interpretations of Islam<sup>56</sup> has been accused of seeping into the fabric of school culture: with the cancelling of Art and Drama classes, enforced use of the hijab for female students and dictated religious influence over school celebrations<sup>57</sup>. The nature of Islamic faith in the curriculum is causing friction across Iraq and has been subject to much debate. Adeeb (2011) suggests that teaching Islam in an open and unprejudiced manner that accepts not one but all interpretations of Islam and Muslim history is the only way forward with the curriculum. Yet schools must also allow the

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<sup>56</sup> The Arabic population of the disputed territories obviously does not suffer from a linguistic access or ethnic representation issue as their education lies under the direct jurisdiction of the Government of Iraq Ministry of Education. However, interview consultations and national. Although this identity struggle may not directly interact with the regions current political claims to territory it does warrant mention in terms of how Iraq is struggling to establish a modernized national identity.

<sup>57</sup> Various newspaper reports have documented student protests and parental concern over the imposition of strict Islamic codes of conduct in schools post 2003.

religious freedom of non-Muslim students so that the Islamic faith is not imposed upon communities.

The mixed administrative influence within the Ninewa plains, coupled with the large concentration of religious minorities, has resulted in identity and societal security inevitably becoming central to the education narrative of the region. The threats felt from both GoI resource neglect and Kurdish encroachment, and the attempted assimilation by the KRG, has led Assyrians and Turkmen to involve external actors in their education provision to ensure revival, maintenance and defence of their identity (see Figure 11). In contrast, the Yezidi and Shabek communities' lack of larger allies means its only recourse is to campaign for greater recognition to revive, maintain and defend their identities within the education system.

**Figure 11: Summary of Ethnic Community Capacity gaps, Perception and Action**

Figure 5.4			
Ethnic Group	Capacity Gap / Threat	Securitized perception	Defence
<b>Assyrian</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Insufficient Curriculum Recognition; history, place in Iraq, culture and religious curriculums</li> <li>▪ Insufficient ministerial representation</li> <li>▪ No Assyrian language text books printed by MoE Baghdad</li> <li>▪ No teacher training programmes for Assyrian teachers</li> <li>▪ Insufficient Assyrian teacher recruitment</li> <li>▪ No Assyrian teaching resources provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Presented as Baghdad's deliberate denial of their rights in order to deny their historical presence in Iraq.</li> <li>▪ Kurdish assistance presented as deliberate attempts to assimilate and co-opt the groups to increased demographic claims to the region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KRG provide Assyrian language text books and teaching resources that are used in the KRG curriculum to Assyrians in Ninewa</li> <li>• Assyrian Aid Society work in the area of Nineveh Plain and provide               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transport for children who reside in remote areas to reach Assyrian schools</li> <li>▪ Salary of teachers</li> <li>▪ Transportation of text books (KRG curriculum)</li> <li>▪ Translations and printing of text books</li> <li>▪ Donation toward of school upkeep</li> <li>▪ Dormitories</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assyrian Democratic movement also provide levels of support.</li> </ul>
<b>Kurdish</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No support from Baghdad for Minister of Kurdish studies.</li> <li>▪ No text books published or resources supplied</li> <li>▪ No teacher training programmes for Kurdish teachers</li> <li>▪ Insufficient Kurdish teacher recruitment and inappropriate assignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Presented as Baghdad's deliberate denial of their rights in order to deny their historical presence in Iraq.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KRG Ministry of education has intervened in all Kurdish schools across the Disputed territories</li> </ul>
<b>Turkmen</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Negative Curriculum Recognition</li> <li>▪ Insufficient curriculum representation of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Turkmen feel deliberately portrayed as negative or</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnically affiliated donors have been sought and now a variety of 'foundations' provide financial</li> </ul>

	<p>history, place in Iraq, and cultural history</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Insufficient ministerial representation</li> <li>▪ No Turkish text books printed by MoE</li> <li>▪ No teacher training programmes for Turkish teachers</li> <li>▪ Insufficient Turkmen teacher recruitment</li> <li>▪ Teachers who received Turkmen organised training not recognised.</li> <li>▪ No Turkmen teaching resources provided</li> </ul>	<p>neglected in outdated textbooks supplied by Baghdad.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A deliberate campaign is perceived to prevent the continuation of Turkmen schools by Arabs in Ninewa.</li> </ul>	<p>practical support to Turkmen schools in Kirkuk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The entire central curriculum has been translated into Turkish, printed and distributed to schools in the governorate without assistance from the central ministry.</li> <li>• Volunteer teachers and Turkish linguists provide training courses in Turkish for primary and intermediate stages of Turkmen education.</li> <li>• In an attempt to increase the enrolment into Turkish language schools training courses have been provided for parents and community leaders in written Turkish in the Kirkuk governorate.</li> </ul>
<b>Yezidi &amp; Shabak</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No curriculum representation at all</li> <li>▪ No linguistic representation</li> <li>▪ No ministerial representation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Both groups feel intentionally neglected by Baghdad due to religious prejudice and facing assimilation intentional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International calls for support to Diaspora communities and human rights groups</li> <li>• The community has produced a dictionary and grammar textbook with the aid of community donations</li> </ul>
Sectarian debates			
<b>Arab</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Curriculum debates between Shia and Sunni communities over the representation and place of religion in the curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Presented as a battle between the two groups for sole recognition – trying to limit the other.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

**Figure 12: External Influence Actors**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Influence</b>	<b>Region</b>
Turkmen	Dogramaci Foundation Established in 1951 by the Turkish Academic Ihsan Dogramaci funds Turkmen initiatives throughout KRG	Teacher Salary supplements Teaching resources Buildings Curriculum translation Curriculum printing Curriculum Distribution	KRG
	ITF Education Department of the Iraqi Turkmen Front	Printing and distribution of Text books	Kirkuk
	Waqf Ankara Through ministry of endowments and religious affairs	Translation of Text books Voluntary teacher salaries	Kirkuk Ninewa
	Turkish Teacher Training	Teachers sent to complete Teacher training in Turkey - Specifically sciences	Ninewa
Assyrian	Assyrian Aid Agency Humanitarian organization formed in 2003 to aid the Assyrian population of Iraq	Transport to schools Teacher salary supplements School upkeep Curriculum translation Photocopied textbooks Equipment supply Dormitories	Erbil Duhok Ninewa Plains
	KRG Ministry of Education	Provision of the Assyrian language Text books from KRG curriculum	DIBS Arabic schools
Shabek	Community donation	Dictionary and grammar books	Ninewa

## 5.7 Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter aimed to address the question ***what role does ethnic identity play in the current education narrative?*** The section illustrated how the education narrative, presented by those education actors interviewed and various media reports, prioritised two key factors. Firstly, the ethnically segregated structure of education provision in the region has resulted in education access revolving around issues of identity. Secondly, the status of Iraq as a post-conflict country, in the midst of reconstruction, has influenced the education narrative in the disputed territories focusing on issues of capacity development and restoration. The combination of these two issues resulted in education being presented overwhelmingly in terms of the perceived capacity gaps of each ethnic group's provision. The central ministry's support, or lack of it, for non-Arab education is therefore key to the current education narrative.

All the groups presented thus far in the thesis presented neglect of ethnically specific education. Ministerial representation, teaching resources and allocation of funds all came under criticism for unfair distribution. This denial of support from the central government has been viewed in terms of threats to the societal security of various non-Arab communities. The lack of support has consequently led to a limitation on the means of cultural reproduction for these groups, both linguistically and culturally thus placing their 'we' identity in danger. The role of education in reproducing, reviving and defending societal security in the face of the wider hostile political and security environments was clearly of great significance to all communities consulted.

The failure of the central government to support communities, in line with constitutional promises, was interpreted as a deliberate, indirect attempt to limit the presence of non-Arab groups in the region.

The perception of an ongoing process of Arabisation has resulted in larger ethnic groups, Assyrian, Turkmen and Kurds, mobilising to seek external help to secure the vital means of societal security protection that education provides. Similarly, smaller minority groups, who view increasing Kurdish encroachment as a process of intended assimilation, have made frequent calls to the international community to support their traditional languages, religious freedom and culture rights within the education system. In the face of losing, or not actualising, ethnically specific education provision, ethnic groups have sought to defend their education systems by seeking ethnically affiliated and international patrons. Unfortunately, the inclusion of these external influences in the education system has led to a number of further negative consequences for the education attainment of non-Arab groups.

The ongoing perceived threat from Arabisation has influenced the Turkmen educationalists to reject Arabic instruction in favour of the Turkish language. Seeking external support from Turkmen religious, political and social groups, the Turkmen education actors have instigated the use of a new alphabet to avoid what they regard as the spectre of assimilation that is ever present. Equally the distrust of the central ministry and its intentions over the administration of the disputed territories has led Kurdish leaders to take action which sees its pupils adversely affected by mixed administrative influence in Kurdish schools. Assyrian communities in the Ninewa Plain have taken the same militant stance over ethnically specific education provision.



Using ethnically affiliated sponsors they have chosen to champion fully mother-tongue instruction, regardless of the educational implications and future restrictions for Assyrian children. Turkmen, Assyrians and Kurds have sought to protect their societal security through the education system without consideration (or with little concern) for the educational implications.

This demonstrates that societal security has taken precedence over pedagogy and attainment. If we return to the concept of societal security protection presented in chapter one, we can see that the issue of access to ethnically appropriate education has been presented as a security issue. All communities presented the threats to their education systems in terms of the removal of a means of cultural reproduction and a threat to their continued existence in the region. Hence education has become the subject of a range of securitising narratives from within the ethnic groups, each referencing injustices, deliberate threats and sectarianism. Furthermore, education actors have not only introduced securitising narratives but also advanced into taking direct emergency action and thus securitising the issue of ethnically appropriate education access.

Within securitisation theory what constitutes 'extraordinary measures' is defined by the adoption of action outside the political process and the normal realms of the issue securitised (Taureck, 2006). Therefore the extraordinary or emergency measure must be an action beyond the usual remit of the actor. In this sense the emergency action is demonstrated by involvement of ethnically affiliated donors in the formal school system. Despite schools remaining within the state education system, community groups have sought private donors to counter the perceived

threats to education delivery. As such, the education system currently has a myriad of financial backers operating within the ethnically defined state schools. This involvement is demonstrated by two forms of intervention. Firstly, religious and political organisations with ethnic affiliation; these groups have stepped forward to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate textbooks and teaching resources. Secondly intervention from the KRG Ministry of Education within Kurdish schools under Baghdad's control<sup>58</sup>. Both these actions constitute involvement beyond the state's normal political procedures and demonstrate education's move onto the security agenda. By securitising education, the issue has not only entered the wider political contest over territory, but also the presented opportunity to influence it.

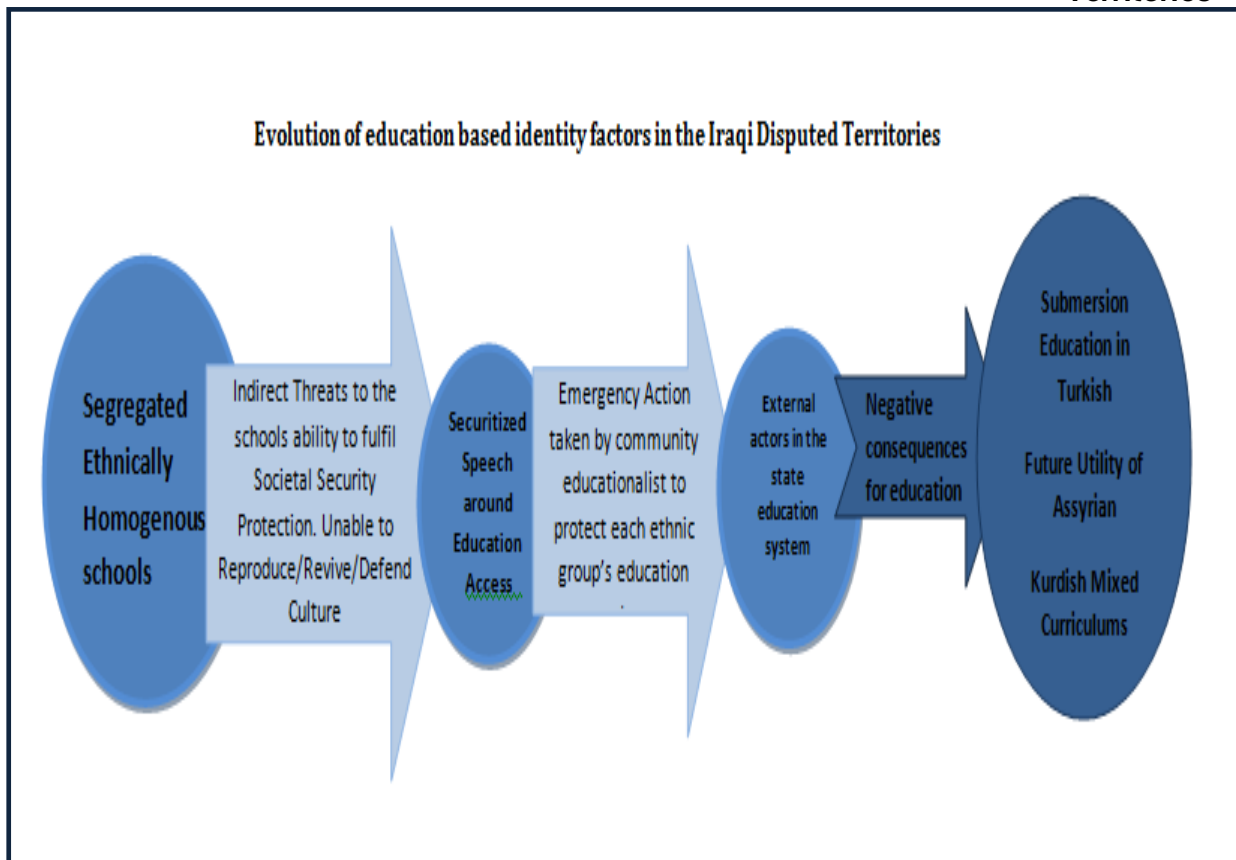
Where education is so closely tied to ideas of identity it can be manipulated by ethno-politics and used to serve the interests of political elites and nationalist extremists (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000:19). The securitisation of ethnically specific education has opened the door for this possibility. When the regional audience enabled education actors to take emergency measures they granted them extraordinary power over the issue at hand. The labelling of a problem as a 'security issue' may result in little or no assessment or regulation imposed on the implementation of the emergency measures taken (Collins, 2005). Therefore there is

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<sup>58</sup> In a declaration of support for Kurdish families within the DIB's the KRG Ministry has taken over the management of Kurdish schools within the region. However, the districts of Kirkuk, Hamdaniya, Baladoot, Telafar, Sinjar Khaninquin and Makmour remain under the central jurisdiction of Baghdad and the KRG has no legal entitlement to set education agendas. Yet, the KRG provides their KRG curriculum, text books, teacher salaries and technical support. Unfortunately this emergency action and interference in schools outside their jurisdiction has led to a number of detrimental consequences for Kurdish schools. While pupils and teachers remain under the central exam and training boards they are teaching and learning a vastly different curriculum, with obvious consequences for pupil achievement and teacher delivery.

an inherent danger that by approving external influences in the education system, ethnic communities are forfeiting their authority to determine the legitimacy of future actions undertaken by the donors. As such by securitizing the issue of education the DIB's audience and education actors have jointly contributed to placing it 'beyond the realm of reasonable public scrutiny'(Grayson, 2003). In this sense Grayson provides a useful analogy involving Frankenstein's monster to warn how dangerous securitisation can be<sup>59</sup>. This evolution of education and the influence of education over it is demonstrated in figure 13, below. The following chapter will explore both the negative impacts of the securitising education in the region and unpack educations relationship the wider territorial contest and ethnic dispute.

**Figure 13: The role of Identity in the education narrative of the Iraqi Disputed Territories**



<sup>59</sup> Weaver also recognised the negative implications of securitisation and was quick to emphasise the importance of de-securitisation. He observed that once a security issue is declared and accepted the elite 'can easily use it for specific, self-serving purposes [and this] is something that cannot easily be avoided' (Weaver 1995: 54, 55).

## 6. Education's interaction with conflict

### 6.1 Introduction

It is the purpose of this thesis to determine what factors have influenced the development of education structures in the disputed territories post-2003 in order to approach the central research question of '*How has ethnic identity influenced the education narrative in the disputed territories?*'. In the preceding chapters the thesis has demonstrated how identity has played a central role in the Iraqi education system for decades. The state-imposed Arabisation policies of the Ba'ath era sought forced assimilation of non-Arab identity in order to gain control of the population in the northern governorates. Post 2003, identity reproduction, revival and defense have been central to the creation of an ethnically separate education system across the territories.

Consequently, any restrictions to the delivery of education are viewed by ethnic groups as deliberate threats to their linguistic or ethnic representation in the education system, regardless of the shared restrictions across the communities. Due to the role given to the education system to protect identity, these threats are seen to endanger the communities' continued existence in the region. Accordingly, access to ethnically appropriate education has been subject to securitizing speech by education and community actors, who present education access as under attack in their constituencies. In reaction to such threats, emergency action is taken by

communities to protect the reconstruction (or construction) of education for non-Arab communities in the disputed territories. Subsequently, the system is now subject to the actions of numerous independent actors who support delivery and whose influence is unregulated and often in detriment to educational attainment.

This chapter of the thesis will present a critical analysis of the role of identity in the education system from a conflict perspective. It will highlight the consequences of education's role in identity protection on the wider problem of ethnic fragility and territorial conflict. It will examine how education and the conflict interact and draw on the theoretical literature to demonstrate possible further triggers for conflict. The chapter will be structured around three main themes: social cohesion, equality and political manipulation. Each theme will be explored with attention to both unintentional conflict triggers generated by the current system, intentional manipulations of the education system by political actors which result in conflict triggers and finally an assessment of possible future triggers which may be generated by the current system.

The first section will locate the discussion in the literature; the subsequent sections will examine the issues of social cohesion, equality and political manipulation in turn. This chapter will conclude with an examination of the findings.

## **6.2 Locating the Argument**

The education provision in the region falls under the definition of a separatist school system, characterised by '*separate institutions each serving different constituencies*

*with relatively homogeneous populations'* (Smith, 2003). Such structures can present themselves in a myriad of guises. The historical, geographical and political contexts within which they operate are of great significance and therefore debates over the use of separatist structures is highly context dependent (Smith 2010). The divided societies which necessitate separatist structures exist in a number of conditions: the peaceful educational pluralism of Canada and Belgium, the complicit character of separatist schooling in Bosnia, and the imposed nature of apartheid in South Africa<sup>60</sup>(Davies 2008). Gallagher's (2010) investigation of education in divided societies states that *'the distinction between separate systems, in which minorities are obliged to use their own schools (such as apartheid South Africa, or the southern states of the U.S. prior to 1954), and separate systems, in which minorities run their own schools as a matter of choice, is important.'* Education in the disputed territories has evolved from a sought form of separate school structure.

Communities which wish to avoid assimilation in the school system often turn to the structural system of education in order to achieve protection for their societal identity. Yet the character of separate schools has been accused of creating conflict and Gallagher also highlights that *'whether schooling systems are segregated or separate, there is evidence that such systems can have a detrimental impact on social cohesion'* (Gallagher 2010). Ethnically defined separate school systems are a common theme in conflict-affected countries. The relationship between conflict and

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**Notes:**

<sup>60</sup> The minority rights group (MRG) argue that the right to separate schools for minorities is compatible with international standards on human rights, but that an important distinction would have to be drawn between those situations where separate schools are imposed which they classify as segregation.

schooling based on identity indicators such as language, ethnicity or religion has been explored by a number of education and emergencies commentators (See Gallagher 2010; Smith 2011; Davies 2009; Brown, 2010; Bush & Santerelli, 2000). Although not proposed as a root cause of conflict, ethnically separated education is present in many conflict affected countries, such as: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Guatemala, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, Rwanda and Sri Lanka. This suggests that there is a relationship with conflict at least. Smith (2010; 11) suggests that an explanation for the prevalence of separate schools in conflict-affected countries is that *'the institutional structures reflect and replicate the political, social and cultural divisions within broader society'* (Smith 2010:12).

Thus the retreat toward shared identity indicators in conflict affected countries can have significant influence over inter-ethnic relations. Gallagher (2004) suggests three hypotheses to explain the negative impact of separate schooling in Northern Ireland, where schools are classified along strict religious lines – Protestant or Catholic. Firstly, the cultural hypothesis suggests that separatist schools enhance community divisions by introducing potentially opposing cultural environments. Secondly, the social hypothesis suggests that regardless of what is taught, separate schools serve to emphasise and validate group differences and hostilities, thereby encouraging mutual ignorance and suspicion. Gallagher's third hypothesis suggests that separate schools are much less important than other factors to community division, and that socioeconomic factors may be of greater influence in the interaction between division and social disturbances. In terms of the last hypothesis it is necessary to emphasise the causality between separate schooling and horizontal inequalities. If separate

schools provide different levels of educational support they can in fact be the cause of such socioeconomic differentiation.

Although the separate education system in the disputed territories has been sought for reasons of identity protection, and not imposed, it has generated a number of key issues which interact with the wider conflict. The post-conflict position of education in the region has also served to exacerbate the system's potential to contribute to conflict and inter-ethnic tension through neglect and insufficient support. The separate education system is going through a process of reconstruction (or construction for those which previously suffered assimilation) post-2003; although ten years have passed, Iraqi education is still plagued by insufficient resources and infrastructural failings due to the persistent political wrangling and ongoing conflicts present in the country. Berchaut (2012) emphasises the need for sensitivity to conflict factors during the reconstruction of education, suggesting that even greater attention must be paid to both the physical (infrastructural) and ideological (depoliticisation) needs of education.

The previous chapters illustrated how infrastructural capacity gaps, and failure to provide funding, has led education and community actors to not only introduce securitising narratives into the debate over support for separate schools, but also advanced into taking direct emergency action to protect ethnically appropriate education access. The consequences of this can be seen to influence the degree to which education interacts with the wider conflict. Unregulated influences within separatist school system raise the possibility for further purposeful manipulation and within the fragile ethno-political environment. The risk of outside donors and actors



using education institutes for self-serving nationalistic purposes arises. In this sense external actors in the education system may bring a political dynamic to their involvement with schools. If external forces are allowed to act, without regulation, it is possible that each of Gallagher's three hypotheses exacerbated for political purpose.

These events can be understood in relation to the concept of securitisation. Thus, it is necessary to consider the three stage process required to securitise an issue that is presented in the literature: securitising speech, audience acceptance, emergency action. State education (which fulfils its given purpose of protecting a group's societal security) has been presented as under threat. These threats have been accepted by the community in so much as parents have accepted language and curriculum choices (which can only be justified in terms of identity protection and not pedagogy). Consequently schools have been opened up to the influence of outside actors, who, under the banner of ethnic cultural rights, language and identity, have taken actions which are outside their traditional remits. In terms of the securitisation literature this final stage of mobilizing resources to overcome the threat can be interpreted as adopting the extraordinary measures presented by Buzan (1998:21). Community leaders presented the threat from state education to the group's societal security, the audience accepted the presence of the threat, and emergency action was taken in the form of allowing non-state actors to provide support to state schools.

The concept of securitisation within the societal security realm is not unproblematic, and its incorporation within the education theoretical framework is not proposed as conceptually neat. But, as discussed in chapter one, it provides an analytical tool with which to examine the process which has led to ethnically specific education

becoming engaged with the inter-ethnic tensions in the region. To understand education in terms of securitisation we must accept that education actors are selected to represent their community and that the securitizing move is within their remit. The issue of who has legitimacy to instigate the securitisation of an issue is one of the most contested elements of the proposed securitisation process. Commentators differ with regards to their conclusions on whether issues can be securitised by non-elite actors, such as NGO's and media sources. For the purposes of this investigation we will apply a widened definition of securitisation actors, such as the media, NGOs, international NGOs (INGOs) and political elites, (as used by Watson (2011)) to included elected community representatives and ethnically defined educationalists.

Collins (2005) states that when an audience enables an actor to take these emergency measures they grant the actor extraordinary power over that issue. The labelling of a problem as a 'security issue' may result in little or no assessment or regulation imposed on the implementation of the emergency measures taken (Grayson 2003). Collins suggests therefore that '*there exists, therefore, the danger that having granted the actor the right to implement extraordinary measures, the audience forfeits its authority to determine the legitimacy of future actions undertaken by the actor*' (2005). As such, by securitizing the issue, the audience and actor have jointly contributed to placing it '*beyond the realm of reasonable public scrutiny*' (Grayson 2003). As discussed earlier, Grayson provides a useful analogy involving Frankenstein's monster to warn how dangerous securitisation can be (Grayson 2003). Collins states that it is a valuable metaphor for securitization because '*it not only captures the loosening of constraints on the elite that allows*

*them to act almost with impunity, but it also visualizes just how powerful the securitizing actor can become'* (Collins, 2005).

It is possible to apply this understanding to the on-going external involvement of actors in Iraqi education. Turning to an example that the thesis has already demonstrated, we can see that by accepting the KRG involvement in schools in the disputed territories (because it was portrayed as necessary in order to maintain Kurdish language education access) Kurdish communities have granted the KRG power to act outside its remit. But by granting this control, actions have been taken which are beyond the control of the community and are detrimental to the Kurdish pupils' education attainment. For example, the use of KRG curriculum despite falling under Baghdad's examination remit.

Within the education arena the involvement of external actors (who are only concerned with their own ethnic group's education) can lead to an abuse of power which seeks to pursue its own vested interests. This can lead to a number of negative outcomes. As such, the new external influences in the education system have the potential to de-prioritise the issue of social integration between groups in favour of promoting distinctiveness and divisions and fortifying mother-tongue language use. Therefore negative consequences are generated in an unintentional manner through the separation of ethnic groups in the education arena to secure societal security reproduction, revival and defence. This could take the form of a lack of inter-ethnic integration, inequality and grievance and the possibility of generating future economic horizontal inequalities through the specific technical issues which have hampered attainment through language choices and curriculum use. In

addition, the opening of education to outside actors can allow the purpose of education to be manipulated to serve the interests of political elites and nationalist extremists. If emergency measures are granted within the education arena and that power is abused it can lead to wider repercussions for the rest of society and interethnic relations.

Therefore, taking into consideration both the literature on education and conflict sensitivity, and the concept of securitisation, the following sections will address the key areas in which the education system in the disputed territories of Iraq can interact with the wider social fragility and inter-ethnic relations, social cohesion, inequality and grievance, and finally political manipulation.

### **6.3 Separate education and social cohesion**

Social cohesion is often a term used when referring to ethnically contested and divided societies. However, the expression is widely used but rarely defined within the literature. Factors such as a relatively harmonious society, high levels of civic cooperation and trust, tolerance, and relative equality are all central to debates. Jensen uses the following definition: *'The term social cohesion is used to describe a process more than a condition or end state ...it is seen as involving a sense of commitment, and a desire or capacity to live together in harmony.'*(1998, p.1) Siddique (2001) suggests that social cohesion can be described as *'the glue that bonds society together, promoting harmony, a sense of community, and a degree of commitment to promoting the common good'* (2001;2). Thus, weak societal cohesion

increases the risk of social segregation and exclusion, and has the potential to erupt into violent conflict (Siddique 2001).

Education's role in the socialisation of identity factors and its significance in building national unity, place it at the heart of creating social cohesion for societies. Bush and Saltarelli posit that education can play a direct role in the creation of positive inter-ethnic relations and thus forge social cohesion between groups (Bush and Saltarelli 2000). In the Iraqi disputed territories, social cohesion can provide a bedrock for conflict negotiation and management. However, elements of the emerged school structure can be seen to be adversely limiting this potential and serving to work against any attempts to achieve social cohesion.

### **6.3.1 Curriculum; Omissions and Manipulations.**

School curriculums provide a medium for the transmission of knowledge between generations. Therefore it can be seen as an *'extremely powerful tool to promote particular political ideologies, religious practices or cultural values and traditions. Every area of the curriculum carries values with the potential to communicate implicit and explicit political messages. Language, literature, history, geography and the place of culture and religion are just some of the areas that often get drawn into controversy.'* (Smith, 2010;17) How a curriculum presents issues of identity can have a great impact on social cohesion. Smith (2005) underlines that education content, in particular the specific subjects of history, geography, culture, art, music, and religious education plays key role in post-conflict education reconstruction. This is because school curriculum provides students with a narrative of the 'past and

visions for the future' (Paulson, 2011). This in turn allows them to locate themselves and their communities within the context of present conflicts and contestation.

Consequently, in 2008, the Iraqi government began a complete curriculum review under the guidance of UNESCO. The process was due to conclude in 2012; however the satisfactory completion of the curriculum has evaded educationalists. Despite the difficulty of the task, the ministry announced that "*the education ministry follows the same strategy in all Iraqi schools – we do not differentiate among our pupils and we do not discriminate against religion or sect, the ministry is doing its best to spread forgiveness and brotherhood*" (IWPR, 2010). The new Islamic curriculum aimed to "emphasise forgiveness and mercy" (Interview ABA4). The IWPR reports that the education ministry also specifically instructed teachers to avoid contentious issues which may create conflict (2010). The need for a curriculum review was met with general consensus from most Iraqis, removing the Ba'ath ideology and creating an inclusive curriculum was the objective. Yet the resulting changes to the curriculum resulted in '*debates that reflected the very rifts in Iraqi society that the curriculum sought to address*' (Islamopedia).

The persistent pattern of ethnic conflict and co-existence in the disputed territories has consequently created conflict over interpretations of national and local histories for curriculum reviewers working post-2003 (Interview UNICEF2). Negotiating a national curriculum in Iraq faces many challenges and consent over history, religion and geography texts have yet to be reached in Iraq. As one Arab educationalist commented:

*'We need a council with members of all Iraq's people to help design a new curriculum for history, we have met with UNESCO, but no final conclusions were made. It is hard to show Iraq's history and keep everyone happy. Battles have winners and losers. No one wants to be shown as the loser in history. We need to find a way to teach history in a neutral way. I have proposed that this could be done through Art, all communities have famous poets and authors who can be used to show history and identity..... and without conflict'*  
(Interview AMAB1).

Controversial historical events have remained particularly problematic. Most histories relating to Israel, the Kurds, the United States, the Iran-Iraq war and the first Gulf War, for example, were deleted rather than rewritten in the haste to redistribute books after the invasion (Interview KR4). A satisfactory solution was never reached, and many modern historical events simply remained out of the curriculum, a situation described by a US advisor to Iraq as going from "*one-sided to no-sided*" (Islamopedia; accessed 2013). Currently, history textbooks that were printed in 2009-2010 still omit these topics, with the exception of Israel, whose relation to Palestinian history is emphasized. Schools do not have a curriculum to teach about any region outside of the Middle East. The contentious nature of the 2003 invasion/occupation/liberation has seen unresolvable tension over its portrayal and the language used to engage with the topic.

The history curriculum remains centred around "Arab and Islamic History" (Interviews) and the historical presence of both Turkmen and Kurds in Iraq's narrative is deemed unrepresented. Equally the religious and ethnic diversity of the north of Iraq is not reflected through any subject curriculum, causing discontent and

resentment within non-Arab and non-Muslim communities. Non-Arab groups in Kirkuk and Ninewa complained that both the central curricula of Baghdad and the KRG lack representation of minority groups in terms of history, art, music, religious education, geography and language. Each group, Assyrians, Kurds, Turkmen, Shabek and Yezidi, all stated that they want to strengthen their presence in the curriculum. Understanding of their identities, though the celebration of ethnically specific poets, artists and histories was deemed a constitutional right. This issue was presented in terms of protection of identity within groups, but it must also be considered that without a shared and representative curriculum, groups fail to understand or learn about their ethnic neighbours. This in turn creates what Gallagher refers to as 'opposing cultural environments' (2008) within schools. Thus the emphasis is placed on the unknown differences between communities and not on any form of mutual dependence or understanding. The curricula's general failure to provide pupils with an understanding of one another in order to foster group tolerance is accompanied by the possibility that the school system is fostering unregulated and opposing curricula, therefore pushing communities further apart and encouraging mutual ignorance and suspicion which can feed into wider negative interactions in the social and political domains.

With the omission of modern historical events and denial of Iraq's indigenous diversity, it is possible that within the ethnically separate system each community will resort to presenting their own conflicting interpretations of history. Graham-Brown points out that the control by an ethnic group of history curriculum often leads to "the construction of a version of history ... which heightens the role of that group at the expense of the others ... Suppression of events or cultural ideas ... viewed as



subversive or divisive is also common”(Graham-Brown, 1994;28). Therefore the curriculum and content can be used to deny shared history and create a picture of the ‘other’ which can hamper social cohesion (Staub, 1989). Thus how these issues are portrayed can in turn affect peace across the region. Numerous accusations were made during interviews that in the disputed territories history was already a matter of group interpretation. In the absence of a workable curriculum the subjects of history and Islamic education have to come to be reflections of the classroom teachers’ ideology as opposed to a unified syllabus. The ethnically homogenous nature of schools has added to the acceptance of this improvised, ethnically biased presentation. As one Assyrian education specialist noted:

*‘The teaching of history in the schools here (Kirkuk) depends on the school and the teacher in charge. It is the same with Islamic classes, it is about the teachers’ belief. Who is to complain when all the pupils are of the same community’ (Interviewee AS2).*

Correspondingly and number of other interviewees made similar accusations:

*‘Turkmen teach Turk history, Kurds teach Kurdish history it is all separate. I do not think that a Kurdish teacher would choose to teach my history would he? No, I think not.’(Interviewee ABA2)*

*‘We need to teach our own histories, it’s our right now under the constitution. We are part of Iraq’s history and that should be recognised.’ (Interviewee TMN)*

*'They each teach their own history.'* (Interview AB6)

Such comments were frequent within interviews, but always directed at members of different ethnic groups. Educationalists and community leaders were quick to suggest that other groups were presenting politicised representations of history within schools, but were not forthcoming when asked about the nature of their own curriculum. Equally, samples of donated teaching materials were not easy to come by. Therefore, the thesis could not ascertain the degree to which the curriculum has been distorted, it can only present the anecdotal evidence provided in interviews. Yet the presence of external actors in the education system, who are acting out of a desire to strengthen societal security, heightens the risk of politicisation of the curriculum and the nurturing of a 'Them' and 'Us' mentality. In this sense, the curriculum may pose a direct threat to the future stability of the region and inter-ethnic relations through the corrosion of social cohesion.

The thesis has demonstrated that schools are being harnessed for their ability to reproduce culture and ensure its transmission to future generations. Each subject can be used to express a pride in ethnic identity and cultivate a sense of belonging to the group. Equally, the new education actors with political affiliations may use their influence to project their representation of history. Without the regulation of donated textbooks the danger presents that numerous separate politicised and conflicting curriculum will be present in the region as each ethnic group and its ethnically affiliated donor strives to teach its own representation of history, geography and culture. The dangers of this are demonstrated in Kreso's (2008)

analysis of the Bosnian curriculum. He found that students often learn to hate those who are “different” through separate curriculum and history textbooks. Equally, reliance on textbooks from outside donors carries with it the risk of politicisation of the curriculum: as illustrated by Bharati’s (1992) example of extremist sponsored textbooks in India. This danger is of particular importance in DIB’s where the subjects of history and geography are open to conflicting interpretations by ethno-political influences. It is possible that the curriculum is being used to fortify ethnic identity at the expense of promoting social cohesion and interdependence.

Religious components of the curriculum have also proven to be deeply contentious, not only in terms of the under-representation of non-Muslim faiths, but also the portrayal of Islam itself. In an endeavour to cultivate a more unbiased religious curriculum than the entirely Sunni one used under Saddam Hussein, additional content on Shi’ism was included. Yet the amended material was immediately decried for now posing a sectarian bias against Sunnis and therefore withdrawn. Since 2003 the Islamic Studies curriculum has been subject to a recurrent cycle of revision, rejection and withdrawal. Each bout of changes has faced accusation of political motivation, and a significant number of politicians and religious leaders have been drawn into the high profile debate (*Throwing the Old Textbooks Out*). The accusations span the religious and political spectrum with accusations of both Sunni discrimination and Sunni bias. The debate continues and many consider the curriculum not finalised.

One of the most provocative issues within the debate has been the portrayal of prayer in primary education. Despite the Sunni focus of the Ba’ath regime, a report

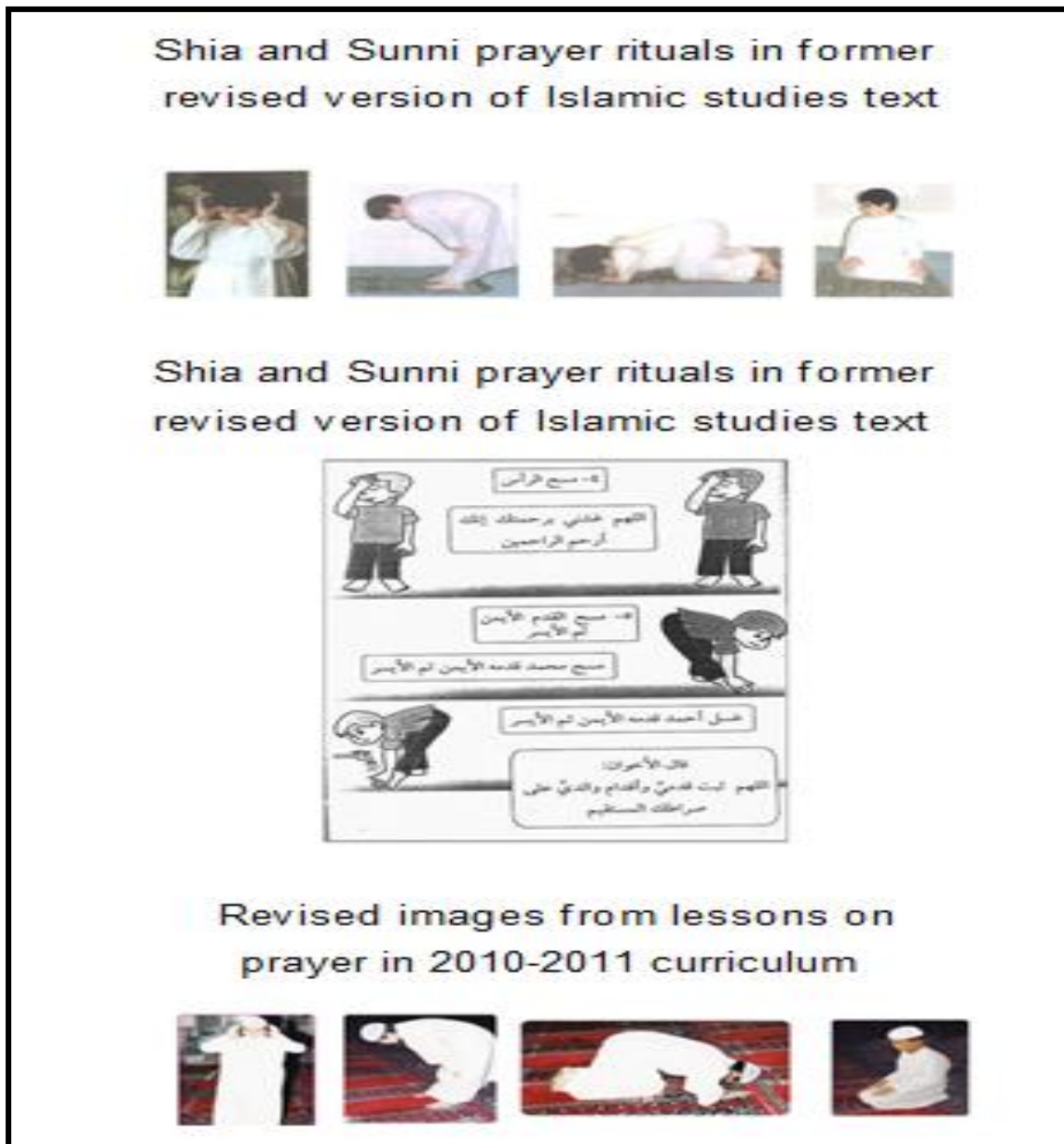
by Islamopedia states that the instructional images for prayer within Islamic education during that period were *'ambiguous and could not be identified with either the Sunni or Shia sects' as elements that would distinguish the prayer as belonging to either of the two were conspicuously missing'* . Yet this was modified in a subsequent review after 2003 and the modified Islamic studies textbook portrayed two boys praying side by side in accordance to Sunni and Shia guidelines respectively. This amendment was justified in terms of seeking a more inclusive approach, but as the Islamopedia report suggests:

*'The move backfired and triggered a wave accusations that the changes were politically motivated and that the Shiite-led government was deliberately "fostering injustice and sectarianism" by differentiating between the Sunnis and Shiites. Parents and teachers accustomed to instruction under the Saddam regime, especially Sunnis, expressed concern that "teaching more than one way of praying might confuse children and "lead to discrimination and sectarianism." .... Politicians and religious authorities immediately joined the dispute, a fact that only fuelled existing accusations that changes to the curriculum were politically motivated.'* (2011)

The dispute entered the mainstream political arena when Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki accused the Education Ministry of distributing the books without his consent (Muftah, 2013). He announced his grievance that the new Islamic studies curriculum could worsen sectarian relations and stated that it should be focusing on "the shared aspects of Islam" (Muftah, 2013). Once more, the textbooks were retracted and were replaced in 2010-2011 with images which were nearly identical to those used during the Saddam era that could not be identified with either sect (see Figure 14:

Iraqi State textbooks). In May 2011, a new educational reform plan was announced by the Ministry of Education Baghdad, with a targeted completion date of 2020. However, the way in which history and religion actively engage students to learn tolerance and promote social cohesion remains to be seen.

Figure 14: Iraqi State Textbook representations of pray



Another curriculum issue raised in interviews which has the potential to directly affect inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony, and therefore conflict and social cohesion, is the presentation of jihad in Islamic studies. Jihad is a central tenant of the Islamic faith. Yet, despite the fact that lessons on jihad in the new books are nearly identical to those they replaced, Mithal al-Alusi, a former independent Sunni legislator argues

that that the term jihad should be removed from textbooks altogether. He suggest that “*there would be a new Taliban in Iraq when current generation of students graduate.(IPN)*” due to the misinterpretations and manipulation of some Islamic studies teachers. Nouri al-Maliki echoed such fears but stressed that jihad did have a place in textbooks because of its centrality in Islam, yet he also felt that the lessons on jihad were unclear and needed to be clarified for students who might misinterpret them, leading to violence (See: *Iraqi Schoolbooks Criticized for Sectarian Bias*). Hence, the presentation of jihad directly impacts the lives of non-Muslim groups in Iraq.

Anecdotal evidence from schools and education actors suggests many teachers exercise their own judgment in the classroom, placing less emphasis on parts of the curriculum that may conflict with their own views. There is a clear danger that the concept of jihad can be interpreted to mean the obligation to fight unbelievers, and therefore non-Muslims. The wave of violence against non-Muslim minorities in the north can be seen to be fuelled by such interpretations from wider society. The risk that Islamic studies can be used to advocate violence against non-Muslims in state funded schools has obvious implications for the future of minority faiths within the region. Shabaks, Christians and Yezidi’s already face increasing persecution and violence across Kirkuk and Ninewa. To allow an institutionalization of the concept that faiths are incompatible and therefore must eliminate each other would be an unimaginable travesty that the education system must guard against. Yet, external actors, low levels of teacher training, and ethnically defined schooling provide a complex number of entry points for education to manipulate identity indicators and enter the conflict.

Iraq's history and religious curriculum negotiations are not unusual and sit with other well-known examples of contest over how to represent contentious issues. Rwanda postponed the teaching of history for ten years following the genocide (Freeman et al., 2008) and in Bosnia-Herzegovina three parallel education systems that each maintain distinct historical narratives has evolved (Jones, 2011). How history and religion are portrayed has influence over how we define the 'other' and how understanding of ethnic groups is achieved. The portrayal of Islamic theology, historical claims to territory, linguistic rights, cultural reproduction, representations of inequality and oppression, all prove to be complex and controversial topics in Iraq, which can impact on social cohesion.

Due to the ongoing negotiations (or lack of) over the administrative fate of the region, issues of geography, history and cultural representation hold even greater significance within the disputed territories. While the contest continues, portrayal of ethnic histories holds emotive value and can be seen to be linked with wider territorial claims and justifications. Each ethnic group in the region varies in their geographical interpretations of homelands and ancient battle victories and experience of genocide. Issues are contentious enough in a post conflict society, but with the added territorial contest which is occurring in the disputed territories, history can be an extremely sensitive topic. The historic claims to territory (as presented in chapter three) can each be enforced through the curriculum if schools fail to provide varying accounts of history and critically objective teaching. While education serves the purpose of fortifying ethnic and religious identities, the curriculum will continue to pose a grave danger to social cohesion and ethnic tolerance.



### 6.3.2 Societal Security Dilemmas

*'It is one of the tragic implications of the security dilemma that mutual fear of what initially may never have existed may subsequently bring about what is feared the most (Herz 1966)<sup>61</sup>*

Regardless of what is actually taught in schools, the very perception that curriculum may be used to downplay ethnic claims to the region may itself interact with the conflict. The separate management of schools by ethnically defined ministry staff and various external actors, means that each community is unaware of what form of ethnically specific history it taught by their neighboring community. Therefore a fear that another community's curriculum may be denying your existence, and claim to have historical rights to administer the region, can in turn influence communities to reinforce their own ethnic narratives. By combining the concepts of the societal security with that of the international relations theory of security dilemmas, Paul Roe suggests the possibility of what he calls an (inter-) Societal security dilemma. 'The actions of one society, in trying to increase its societal security (strengthening its own identity), causes a reaction in a second society, which in the end, decreases the first society's security (weakens its identity) (Roe 2003).'

The lack of education evaluation and monitoring, coupled with the heightened threats to physical security and administrative dispute, has resulted in the perception that the strengthening of one identity group is done to the detriment of another. As one Arab educationalist stated:

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<sup>61</sup> Herz, John, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966). P.241

*'The schools are all separate, so they (the Kurds) can teach that we have no place here. There was forced migration of Arabs under Saddam, but also there are Arabs who have always lived in these territories... and the Turkmen too. But in these schools for only Kurds they do not teach this, they teach that Kirkuk has only a Kurdish history.'* (Interview ABK)

Equally, the Assyrian population are fearful of the impact of the central government's curriculum on the portrayal of their existence in the region, as one Assyrian community leader in Erbil stated:

*'We are not represented in Arab schools, so we must teach our children of our ancestry ourselves. We need our own schools as the other community schools choose to deny us.'* (Interviewee, AS5).

The schools of other communities were portrayed as posing a threat to the societal security of different groups. Roe suggests that if societal security depends on the use of language, religion, or other cultural practices, as suggested by Buzan (1997), then non-military means would be the most likely form of defence against such perceived threats. The strengthening of identity can be achieved through the educational pursuit of what has become known as 'cultural nationalism'. Hutchinson (1994) describes the purpose of cultural nationalism as 'the moral regeneration of historic community, or in other words, the re-creation of their distinctive national civilization (Hutchinson, 1994). Furthermore, he emphasises the establishment of 'cultural societies and journals' which educate communities of their common heritage

'of splendour and suffering.' Cultural nationalism endeavours to stress the identifying feature of a group such as language, religion and history (Allter, 1994).

This nationalism, although innocent at first recognition, does hold with it the potential to underplay and under acknowledge the need for mutual dependence within multi-ethnic communities. By strengthening identity through culturally nationalistic education projects which emphasis difference, historical animosity and religion, education can push communities further apart and rather than strengthen a community's position, can actually hamper it by weakening inter-community relations. The separate nature of the system can create an environment in which the nature of cultural nationalism and ethnic nationalism become undistinguishable and communities are left with irresolvable uncertainty about their neighbour's use of education. The ambiguity of nationalist projects within schools can prompt an action - reaction processes from other communities '*they are teaching their version of events, we should teach ours.*' When coupled with contradictory and vague rhetoric and poor channels for inter-group communication, it can lead to the assumption of a worst case scenario, provoking measures and counter-measures which attempt to enforce a group's cultural existence by denying its neighbour's cultural existence and claims to the region.

### **6.3.3 Language Learning: The Positive use of a Lingua Franca**

Social interaction and cohesion is somewhat dependent on a shared means of communication. Unfortunately the picture presented in the previous chapters demonstrates that within the region, the importance of ethnic interdependence has been forsaken in favour of strengthening group identity. As such, little priority has been given to learning the lingua franca within mother-tongue schools. The submersion language schools, such as the Assyrian, Turkmen, Kurdish and Arabic institutions, have been accused by regional academics and journalists of failing to place the learning of a dominate lingua franca high on the curriculum<sup>62</sup>. In trying to revive or support the use of their traditional language, educationalists and their external donors fail to provide pupils with sufficient language classes in the dominant regional language that they need in order to function in wider society. With the increasing linguistically separated nature of schooling, the maintenance and cultivation of a lingua franca is of significant importance to both social cohesion and access to the bureaucratic administrations of the state.

The issue of medium of instruction was detailed in previous chapters and demonstrated how four separate languages of instruction are being used within the disputed territories: Arabic, Assyrian, Kurdish and Turkish (categorised as Turkmeni in official documentation). Regardless of the previous debates over the pedagogical and educational attainment implications of the uses of languages, it is necessary to

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<sup>62</sup> Information gathered in interviews with Iraqi Academics and journalists both in Amman and Iraq

highlight that the teaching of an additional dominant lingua franca within the curriculum is an absolute necessity in terms of the future interdependence of communities, both socially and economically. Language education has been shown to entail sociocultural products beyond purely linguistic outcomes. Language plays a crucial role in social interaction and the transmission of cultural and social values (Fishman, 1970, 1997; Safran, 1999). If the four communities have no shared means of communication, the risk of inter-ethnic social cohesion drops dramatically.

In such circumstances intergroup relations can be improved by the introduction of bilingual education. The majority linguistic group benefits because bilingualism would not only allow for greater intellectual enrichment, but also provide the social outcome of greater cultural integration and pluralism. Two comprehensive studies by Genesee and Gandara (1999) and Slavin & Cooper (1999) examined the influence of bilingual and cooperative learning on prejudice, discrimination, and the acquisition of new cultural understanding. Genesee and Gandara demonstrated that bilingual education can be used to structure significant attention to matters affecting intergroup relations and thus improve intergroup attitudes and relationships. Correspondingly, Slavin and Cooper point at the importance of emphasising pedagogical factors, such as cooperative educational approaches, so to create the necessary circumstances to address cultural relations.

Yet, the system uncovered in the disputed territories offers minority children a choice between education in the minority language accompanied by some formal teaching of the state language, which tends to leave children with insufficient command of the state language, or education in the state language which tends to leave little room for

learning the minority language. The monolingual model of education, combined with a low level of language teaching and traditional teaching methods, does not meet the requirements of the whole population. Coupled with the ethnically homogenous nature of school structure, the low levels of teacher education and poorly designed, inappropriate curricula, we have a strategic planning dilemma. On the one hand it is necessary to provide linguistic rights to all communities across the DIB's and to support the community rights presented in the constitution; yet on the other hand, there are the rights and benefits of society as a whole which requires the fostering of inter-communal harmony and inter-dependence as well as a common language of communication

Unfortunately, bilingual education systems are not accepted practice, yet academic literature unfailingly reports the pedagogical advantages of bilingual as opposed to monolingual education, advocating a mother-tongue bilingualism which provides children with both their cultural foundations, pedagogical advantages and ability to thrive in the wider society, and the process of social interdependence (INEE, 2013)<sup>63</sup>. To achieve this with any success there needs to be a steady introduction of the dominant language throughout the system (UNESCO 2007). Instead, what we can see in Iraq is a variety of schools which teach in mother-tongue throughout the pupil's academic career and offer instruction in second languages. Turkmen educationalists confirmed their recognition for the importance of a lingua franca and frequent reference was made to the importance of Arabic within the curriculum in interviews (yet no acknowledgment of the need for Kurdish). Yet, they were unable to provide a consensus on the hours of instruction provided for pupils in Turkish

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<sup>63</sup> .(see reviews in Baker 2001; Cummins 2000; CAL 2001):

submersion schools in Arabic instruction. Equally, Arabic schools were also accused of failing to provide adequate Kurdish (Interview KD7; KD9) and Kurdish of insufficient Arabic.

Further complicating this difficulty is the fact that KRG administered schools have chosen to prioritise the use of English in the curriculum over Arabic. Currently the KRG afford English the same amount of teaching hours as Arabic, and there are plans to expand on this in the future (Interview KD1). In addition to this choice, the quality of Arabic language instruction within Kurdish schools in the DIB's has been highly criticised by teachers, with one Kurdish teacher from the governorate of Kirkuk stating that '*The Arabic teacher at my school is Kurdish, from the KRG not Kirkuk, he doesn't speak Arabic well, so the children don't learn. They [the pupils] live here but they can't speak Arabic. It's a big problem.*' It was suggested in interviews that the unwavering stance of the KRG on incorporating Kirkuk into the Kurdish region has resulted in the assumption that Arabic will not be the language of administration and therefore unnecessary. This politically motivated decision fails to take into account the need for the existing population to be able to communicate with their Arabic neighbours regardless of the administrative outcome. This linguistic segregation of children in the district can only have negative consequences for future integration and conflict resolution.

Further impacting the efficiency of dominate language learning is the status of education in post-conflict reconstruction. The need to share buildings and provide schooling in shifts dramatically cuts the hours available to schools for each element of the curriculum. This issue is most prevalent in Kurdish language schools in the

disputed territories. Figure 15; Language hours in KRG managed schools illustrates the reduction in secondary language instruction.

Figure 15: Language Hours in KRG Managed Schools.

KRG Curriculum Language hours per week		
Kurdish medium schools	Primary	Secondary
Kurdish	6	4
Arabic	4	5
English	4	5

Reduced in the DIBs

Kurdish medium schools DIB's	Primary	Secondary
Kurdish	5	3
Arabic	3	4
English	3	4
M/T		

### 6.3.4 Contact and Interaction

The connectedness of everyday citizens to those groups who are culturally different helps determine their susceptibility to ethnic mobilization (Phillips, 2009). Numerous academic investigations have supported the idea that increased inter-group contact can support better ethnic relations. The Contact Hypothesis, in its various formulations and elaborations, suggests that inter-group contact- which takes place under the conditions of status equality and cooperative interdependence- while allowing for sustained interaction between participants and allowing for the potential forming of friendships—might help alleviate conflict between groups and encourage change in negative intergroup attitudes (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1976; Pettigrew, 1998).

One Kurdish interlocutor stated that although identity protection was a priority, he felt that it is only a stage in the region's history. He stated that the presence of



intermarriage between ethnic groups and the history of co-dependence across communities would serve to create the necessary conditions for social cohesion:

'People need to celebrate who they are.. before it was forbidden so they need it (now)... it tells 'you didn't beat us.... We are back stronger. If we use schools to teach our own language and history.. it will separate people yes, but maybe it won't be forever.... We can find our way back to each other. People in Kirkuk have always lived together. I have brothers who are Turkmen and Arab! But now we need to take again our identity then in the future we will come back.' (KDA)

Yet, on closer inspection this optimism appears to have flaws; firstly the increase in residential ethnic enclaves (Rydgren and Sofi, 2011), coupled with the school segregation is removing the opportunity for young people to mix across ethnic lines. Without channels for social interaction, which were previously forced upon groups through the policies of assimilation, the people of Kirkuk are no longer 'living together as the interviewee had suggested was always the case. The rates of intermarriage have fallen drastically post 2003 (Interview data), and the previously integrated nature of the disputed territories has deteriorated.

Therefore the separate nature of the school system can be accused of harming the wider inter-ethnic relations. The sought separate education system of the disputed territories negates the possibility for contact conditions to be met within the education system. Firstly, it is preventing not only the integration of pupils, but also of parents, who are denied the opportunity of inter-ethnic mixing at the school gates, as

discussed earlier. Many investigations have focused on the positive influence of school exchanges between separate identity-based schools and such programmes have been instigated in a number of post-conflict environments to promote social cohesion (see work on Bosnia-Herzegovina, Northern Ireland, Cyprus and more). However, simple interactions between schools would not be beneficial as the second condition of 'conditions of equality' is also missing. The unequal provision of schooling between ethnic groups has created grievance and will be addressed in the next section.

#### **6.4 Equality**

The previous chapter developed how each ethnically categorised non-Arab school system fails to receive adequate support from the central ministry. This failure of the state to uphold its obligation to its citizens can have further consequences for the wider environment by undermining the government's legitimacy. The adoption of measures that cannot be implemented, for example because of a lack of funding or human resources, undermine faith in the Iraqi State Institutions' capacity to address the problems citizens face in this, and other, areas. As a public good provided by the state, education plays a vital role in establishing state legitimacy for the general population. The state's commitment to all Iraq's ethnic groups can be symbolically represented through its commitment to ethnically diverse education access. The inadequate support for the education system across the disputed territories has served to undermine the central government's legitimacy in the eyes of the public as the central ministry in Baghdad stands accused of not fulfilling its constitutional obligations to support mother-tongue education access to non-Arab minorities. A

World Bank survey conducted in 2011 indicates the causal relationship between insufficient services, inequality and violence. Participants from the six countries surveyed named poverty/poor education and justice/inequality/corruption as the two primary drivers of conflict (World Bank, 2011, p.9). Thus, such discrimination in the allocation of public spending has led to serious unrest in many conflict affected countries (International Crisis Group, 2012, (World Bank, 2011, p.9).

There is an established understanding in political science that relative deprivation (Gurr, 1970) and the resulting feelings of grievance can instigate internal conflicts. Stewart (2000) expanded on the application of inequality and grievance within an ethnically homogenous population (vertical inequality) to introduce the notion of horizontal inequality, “severe inequalities between culturally defined groups” (Stewart, 2002, p.3). When such inequalities are perceived to be horizontal, and therefore defined by identity markers such as language, religion or tribe, the mobilisation of groups for the purpose of collective action is a risk that can lead to ethnic conflict and sectarian fighting (Murshed, 2008). Such horizontal inequalities can be found in the economic, social, cultural, security and political realms (Stewart 2010). Brown (2011) highlights the significance of inequality within society by reflecting on three main areas:

- Economic: GDP per capita as an expression of socio-economic differences.
- Political: relative inclusion or exclusion from political participation and power.
- Cultural: ethnicity, religion, and gender as potentially culturally divisive.

For Brown the presence of all three of these criteria is especially “incendiary” (Brown 2011, p. 193). Education has a place in the achievement of equality in all three realms and is therefore seen as important in either maintaining or alleviating situations of inequality. As such, Smith suggests that “conflict-sensitive education systems” which aim at empowerment rather than social control (2005, p. 379), are necessary to achieve equality between groups. Brown emphasizes several important factors which determine how education can achieve this: language of instruction, cultural representation and the context for particular forms of decentralization, notably economic ones.

In this regard the current education structure and management in the disputed territories can be examined in terms of its interaction with these horizontal inequalities. The thesis has already begun to present the experience of horizontal inequalities in two areas: the previous section on social cohesion highlighted disputes around the cultural representation in education; and demonstrated the horizontal inequalities of cultural representation in education and chapter four drew attention to the inadequate political structures within the ministries and the horizontal inequality of ministerial and political representation between groups. Therefore this section will now concentrate on examining the consequences of horizontal economic inequalities in the education sector. Two streams of economic influence can be seen to be at play within the education sector: firstly immediate grievance generated from unequal economic investment into each ethnic group’s school system; and secondly, the future repercussions of such unequal funding between communities in terms of economic earning potential.

The disparity in funding investment between communities is reflected by the resources that they receive. The central ministry in Baghdad is obliged to provide textbooks (received to varying degrees, but in the wrong languages for non-Arabs), stationary kits and the basic running costs of the school and teacher salaries (received in varying degrees but additional resources are needed if linguistically inappropriate appointments are made). As the last chapter demonstrated, the capacity gaps being experienced in the education sector are felt to differing degrees throughout the communities. Educationalists portrayed a funding system that was regionally and horizontally differentiated. Yet a clear consensus was provided that even when resources are received they are 'vastly inadequate' (Interview TMN2). It is worth restating at this point that the entire Iraqi education system is suffering from the status of victim to conflict and therefore lacks infrastructure and funding. However, the move toward separatist education institutions has allowed education officials to become representatives of their respective ethnic communities and, as such, examination of the overall education system has been lost. Thus, education officials and community representatives are presenting all obstacles to funding ethnically specific education access in terms of a societal security threats.

As discussed earlier, one issue which threatens to exacerbate the neglect and disparity of funding from the central ministries is the involvement of external actors in the system. This extreme measure has created further levels of inequality in the funding and support received by ethnic groups. The Kurds have an active and financially stable ministry of education in the KRG to support the building of new

schools, the development of the curriculum, the employment of teachers and other educational needs. The Turkmen have political, ethnic and religious allies which can support the school systems with teacher training programmes and curriculum translation and printing (but to a lesser degree to the Kurds), and the Assyrians are drawing on their own ethnically affiliated NGO's and religious groups for support. Each external actor has a varying degree of influence and resource capability. This has further exacerbated the divisions of funding inequality that are already present between Arab and non-Arab, and also between the education systems within the non-Arab communities.

Therefore, in terms of investment, if schools in the region are ethnically homogenous and receive different levels of support from the state and affiliated actors, it goes without saying that each ethnic group could potentially be receiving a different level of education. If teacher qualifications, teaching resources, and economic investment are not equal between schools, pupil attainment will be differentiated accordingly. This can create grievance and resentment toward neighbouring ethnic groups. The potential of education to contribute to the wider conflict through grievance over perceived economic inequalities in the state education system is significant and was indeed prevalent in interviews with educationalists. Kurdish, Turkmen and Assyrian groups made frequent reference to the lack of central support given to their ethnically defined separate schools, and showed resentment to the sought external support of their neighbours. Perceptions of such injustice have contributed to conflicts erupting in Sudan, Burundi and Rwanda (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000). The perceived inequality

of resource provision suffered by all communities has created accusations and resentment which can only serve to exacerbate interethnic tensions:

*The Turkmen open schools everywhere, they have better funding, they call them Turkmen schools but sometimes they are mostly Arab students, but it is Turkmen money so they can do this. (Interview KD1)*

*The Kurds have better schools because of the KRG. We have to survive on our own. (Interview AS2)*

This resentment is compounded by the absence of channels of communication between schools. The lack of transparency in educational funding and received resources can be seen to be contributing further to the societal security dilemma discussed earlier in this chapter, and the non-regulation of actors is creating hostility toward the unknown motivations behind the expansion of other communities' schools. As each community prioritises its own education provision over its neighbours, creating vast disparities in terms of support, education actors question the purpose and intentions of its neighbours' education systems. The implications of this climate are that inequalities between actors have the potential to spark old conflicts or create new ones. Each group is able to look at its education provision in relation to other groups and see disparities which can cause grievance and ethnic tension.

The second point of horizontal economic inequality in education is the impact it has on future interaction with the job market by each ethnic group. Taking a theoretical

leap into the future, the continuation of these input inequalities could create further conflict. Each of the 'input' inequalities addressed can result in the provision of differing standards of education within the separatist structure. Consequently, this could lead to differentiated educational outputs for each ethnic group in the region. Such variations in achievement between ethnic groups could in turn create wider economic horizontal inequalities within the region. This was the case in Northern Ireland where a government-sponsored study in 1973 revealed that unequal funding arrangements were creating inequality in educational outputs, with Catholic school-leavers, on average, receiving lower qualifications than Protestants and hence diminished job opportunities. State schools, overwhelmingly attended by Protestants, received full state funding, whereas independent Catholic schools had to rely largely on their own resources (Gallagher, cited in Bush and Saltarelli, 2000). In the Iraqi disputed territories pupils from different ethnic groups may leave education with horizontally differentiated achievements and qualifications. Such horizontal inequality in provision will therefore have the potential to influence future employment opportunities. The current system has the real potential to create a society in which one ethnic group receives a superior education to another due to the external support for education and in turn dominate the competition in the job market.

The potential for inequality of education achievement, shaped by ethnic affiliation, is further compounded by a number of technical education delivery issues in the disputed territories. The driving purpose of education to protect societal identity has led to a number of complexities in delivery which in turn are affecting education attainment for each of the ethnic groups;



The choice of medium of instruction, as highlighted in chapter four, may have adverse consequences for a generation of students from certain ethnic groups. The introduction of Assyrian language submersion schools coupled with the de-prioritisation of a lingua franca will potentially restrict Assyrian pupils' access to higher education (as there are no Assyrian language universities in the region). Equally, the use of traditional or adapted languages in education can affect overall attainment of pupils, as with the use of the new Turkish Roman alphabet for Turkmen pupils who are more familiar with the Arabic script.

Curriculum choices are also influencing pupil attainment across the school system. In Kurdish schools the use of KRG curriculum is adversely affecting student attainment in the Baghdad controlled exams, leaving a generation '*without the qualifications needed to get jobs and succeed*' (Interview KD9).

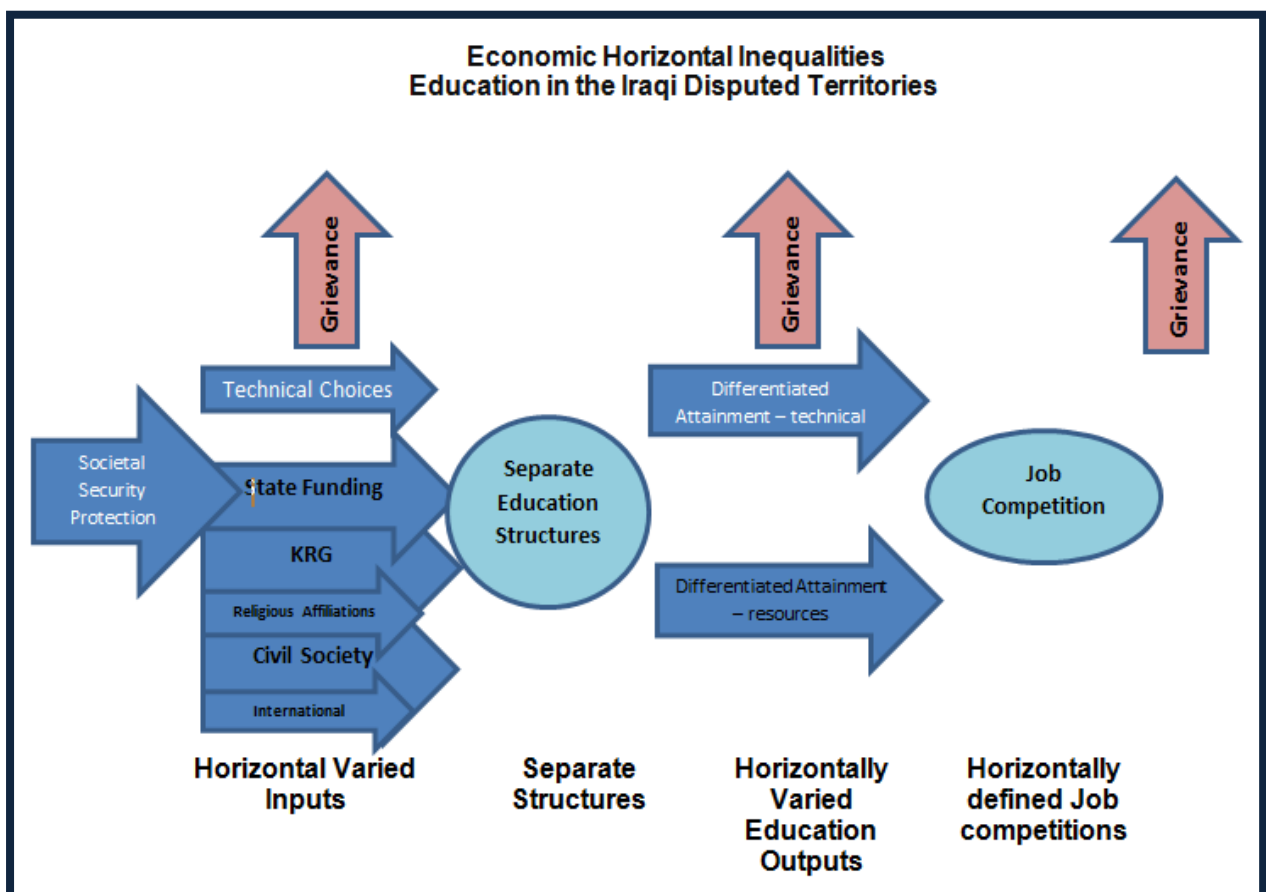
In the same way the central Baghdad curriculum is accused of creating horizontally unequal results between religious defined groups. The inclusion of Islamic studies as an examination subject is deemed to give an unfair advantage to the Muslim population. Non-Muslims in schools following the central curriculum are excused from Islamic studies, but are unable to take up their own religion as a subject to replace it in state schools. This has created an issue of discriminatory practice. Islamic studies is a core exam subject which contributes to the overall grade of the student. It is also considered an easy subject for Muslim students in which they can '*pull up their wider grades*' (Interview YZ6; NP). For followers of other religions such as Christians, Mandaeans and Yazidis, the only option is to skip Islamic education

and for students to boost their grade by better performance in other subjects. The Ministry followed the old regime's procedures and has not provided non-Muslim students with classes related to their own religions. Even communities who do not request religious recognition in the school system object to this disparity. Mandaean and followers of certain other esoteric religions, do not learn about religion until they reach maturity. Yet the community is opposed to having Islam included in the school exam curriculum; "*What we want from the ministry is to add a new subject as easy to obtain good grades in as Islamic Studies to help other students raise their average.*" (NP)

In short the emphasis on societal security protection in the education sector has resulted in a number of ways in which education can lead to grievance and resentment due to economic horizontal inequalities; Firstly the government's failure to recognise education's significant role in identity protection has led to a neglect for school support and therefore grievance from communities over education funding inputs. Secondly the acceptance of external actors in the education arena (to support societal security provision) has further enhanced the funding disparities and grievance between communities. Thirdly, these actions have led to a possible differentiating of education attainment between communities, leading to inequalities in economic earning capability and future horizontal inequalities in the job market. Finally, the inequality in attainment is compounded by a series of technical decisions taken to enhance societal security protection, but at the expense of pupil achievements.

Figure 15, below, demonstrates that these inequalities in the education system have the potential to create grievance and resentment at each stage of the process, over unequal school funding across the communities, over the subsequent unequal education attainment, and finally the possible economic division in the labour market.

**Figure 16: Economic Horizontal Inequalities – Education in the Iraqi Disputed Territories**



### 6.5 Political use

The degree of influence that the perceived resource inequality will have on the conflict can be exacerbated further if it is deemed to be the result of a deliberate threat to the 'we' identity of communities (Waeber, 2003). Unfortunately, interviews

with regional educationalists revealed that the inequality is understood in terms of deliberate political attempts to deny non-Arab or non-Kurdish communities a place in the region. The decade of armed conflict and insecurity has resulted in significant instability within the social and political realms in Iraq. Consequently state institutions are struggling to function and party-based politics have spread into all public sectors, including education. All educational stakeholders are affiliated with, or influenced by ethno-politics and have their own political and economic interests in education. A political economy analysis of the education sector highlights the extent to which such political affiliation and motivation may impact on educational provision. The political economy analysis is concerned with “the distribution of power and wealth between different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time” (Collinson 2003, p. 3). In a post-conflict situation, such an analysis of education examines both “the political and the economic aspects” of education and conflict and “how these combine to affect patterns of power and vulnerability” in the education sector (Collinson 2003, p. 3). In short, the vested interest of political parties has the potential to influence education: how it is managed and for what purpose.

One of the major impacts of the territorial contest is the increased politicization of the education system. Representation in the education sector has become an important arena to reflect political struggles (as we have seen with the curriculum debates over the representation of Shia and Sunni in Islamic studies). The involvement of political parties in education is not unexpected, as Apple (2004, p. 61) observed, education is a “political act” and schools are “caught up in a nexus of other institutions—political, economic, and cultural—that are basically unequal”. However, in the context of the

Iraqi disputed territories, the political involvement in education is predominantly influenced by the territorial contest. Interviews with educational stakeholders across the region made reference to the use of education for the purposes of demonstrating regional presence by the larger competing ethnic groups. Ethnically affiliated political parties have a vested interest in opening schools categorised by their own identity indicators in regions in which they are laying territorial claims. Political parties have mobilized support for the opening or maintenance of schools based on ethnic association rather than on educational policies that serve the best interests of children and inter-ethnic relations which foster a fair society for all (as discussed with reference to technical issues presented through language and curriculum choices).

Interviews with educational stakeholders in the disputed territories indicated that many ordinary functions—including educational management, teacher training, teacher recruitment and redeployment,—all involved political intrusion. In the disputed territories the political role of education is even more dynamic. In terms of the three major competing ethnicities, Kurd, Arab and Turkmen, linguistic representation through schooling can be seen to aid credence to their claims over demographic majority and historical ownership of the city. Without substantial representation in the region, each groups fears it will lose control over the territory. The fight for Kirkuk is a numbers game which demands representation on the ground due to the omnipresent anticipation of article 140. A battle for linguistic supremacy can be seen to be fought in order to demonstrate this. As such, protecting mother tongue education access can be seen to be enforcing their claims to administrative control and therefore safeguarding their future societal security in the region.

This became apparent in interviews with perceptions of government hindrance and ethnic communities adopting education as a means of political and territorial defense. In this respect one Arab education official suggested that in Kirkuk the Turkmen open schools as a '*Screw you to the Kurds*', regardless of their pupils' language requirements and that is why they complain of underfunding (Interview AB2). Equally, accusations of official channels blocking requests for resource allocation and funding, and the deliberate prevention of teacher transfers from dominant language schools to mother tongue community schools, abound. When discussing school funding in Ninewa governorate, one Turkmen Education official suggested that Baghdad '*does not fund the school just because it is a Turkmen school, it is sectarianism.*(Interview TM9)' As such, failure to provide funding for minority language programming is viewed as a deliberate political attempt to limit the use of that language as a means of instruction<sup>64</sup>. Frequent mention was given to this deliberate political interference. Interview participants recounted numerous examples of what they perceived as intentional political obstruction of the development of their schools.

Such perceptions can be unpacked from how the interviewees presented the issue of resource neglect. Due to the absence of non-Arabic teacher training courses and teacher appointments, many communities have instigated teacher training programmes themselves. The Turkmen community in Ninewa have been particularly active in this respect, as discussed previously, teachers are trained in Turkmen community funded institutes (the funding for which was not clarified despite repeated

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<sup>64</sup> Over three quarters of the interview participants noted a deliberate threat to non-dominant education delivery. Interviews and questions received via email between Feb09- march11

requests) and working, on a voluntary basis, in Turkmen schools. Yet the government has refused to appoint these teachers to state paid positions, on the grounds of insufficient classroom experience (not qualifications). Instead, appointments within Turkmen schools seem to prioritise Arabic speaking teachers, this has been viewed in terms of sectarian aggression by many Turkmen educationalists;

*‘The ministry does not accept our teachers; there is no reason for this. The only reason is that the director in Mosul wants to remove the Turkmen [from the region]. He wants to limit our schools. We have to struggle {against} this opposition to us.’* (Interview TM10)

An even more sinister use of education for nationalist purposes has been reported by minority communities across the region. In Ninewa, ethnic minorities perceive the opening of Kurdish language schools as a predatory act by the KRG, suggesting that the KRG education programme strives to *‘eliminate other cultures and languages’* (Interview YZ6) and achieve the illusion of linguistic dominance on the ground. Rather than the KRG taking responsibility only for the ethnically homogenous Kurdish language schools, here the KRG Ministry of Education has taken responsibility for the district which are under their defacto control, such as Akre, Al-Shikhan and Tilhaif, while simultaneously involving themselves in the education provision of other disputed districts under the banner of Kurdish language instruction. However, in this highly political and fractured environment, this has been interpreted by some groups as an attempt to bolster the presence of Kurdish speakers in the contested regions. Allegations abound of financial incentives to enrol children in

Kurdish language schools where minority groups claim the deliberate indoctrination of non-Kurdish children through educational programs (Assyrian Council of Europe, 2010). There is little existing literature and research on this issue, but many human rights reports originating from the ethnic groups in question claim that a process of Kurdification is taking place throughout the disputed territories. Accusations of Kurdish authorities fostering patronage relationships with minority groups in return for their linguistic allegiance have given voice to claims of a process of Kurdification from interlocutors.

Correspondingly, the KRG has just announced plans to open 14 new Kurdish language schools in the Yezidi and Shabak populated district of Sinjar. This initiative has been created under the premise of alleviating overcrowding in the Kurdish language schools in the region<sup>65</sup> but minority community groups reject this basis and state that they are being forced to send their children to Kurdish language schools despite speaking Arabic in the home (Interview YZ/SB/AS). Anecdotal evidence presented a picture of intimidation and even imprisonment for those parents who requested Arabic instruction for their children or campaigned for traditional language elective subjects. In this respect education access in the northern Ninewa governorates was presented as contributing to cultural cleansing. The regional acceptance of the KRG taking emergency measures to protect Kurdish language instruction in the DIB's has provided a cloak for a nationalistic agenda to be played out in the multi-ethnic north of Ninewa.

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<sup>65</sup> The Ministry stated that it currently only has 184 Kurdish language schools in the region with over 31000 pupils. However Sinjar is heavily populated by the Yezidi and Shabak communities who do not all speak Kurdish



Education in the region can be seen to be manipulated for ethnically defined political purpose. This use of education can in turn feed into the wider conflict and create inter-ethnic dispute and resentment. Forced assimilation and aggressive education policies to demonstrate regional presence are both drawing education discussions of quality and towards a purpose which does not acknowledge pedagogy or pupils' futures achievements in the wider society.

## **6.6 Final Remarks and Conclusions**

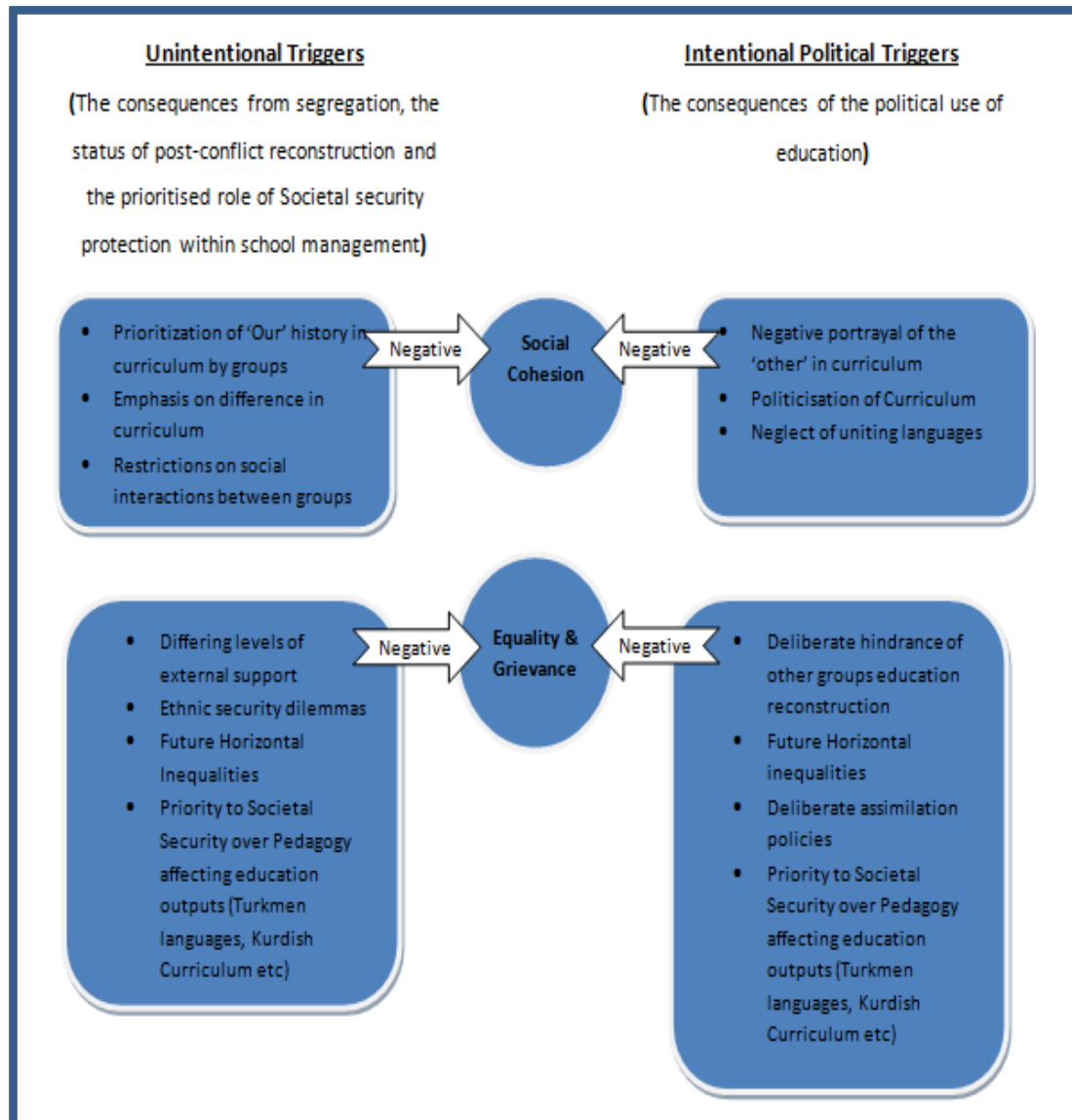
This chapter of the thesis has presented a critical analysis of the role of identity in the education system from a conflict perspective. It has unpacked the consequences of education's role in identity protection on the wider ethnic fragility and territorial conflict; and demonstrated how education and conflict interact to create possible further triggers for conflict.

The chapter has presented the points at which education may enter the wider conflict, by influencing inter-ethnic relations and deliberately manipulating the purpose of education for mal intent (see figure 17: Education System Conflict Triggers in the Iraqi Disputed Territories). Limited social interaction and inter-ethnic contact is further exacerbated by the separate education structures, each serving different ethnic communities. Curriculum can serve to enforce difference, through history and religion, and failing to prioritize the need for a shared lingua franca to promote interdependence between ethnic groups. Furthermore, the inequality of provision and variation of educational funding input and support has created a system which may generate grievance and resentment across the ethnic

communities. Each theme has generated unintentional conflict triggers and opened the system to outside influences.

The impact of ethnic identity on the education system can be seen to be interacting with the wider conflict in a number of detrimental ways.

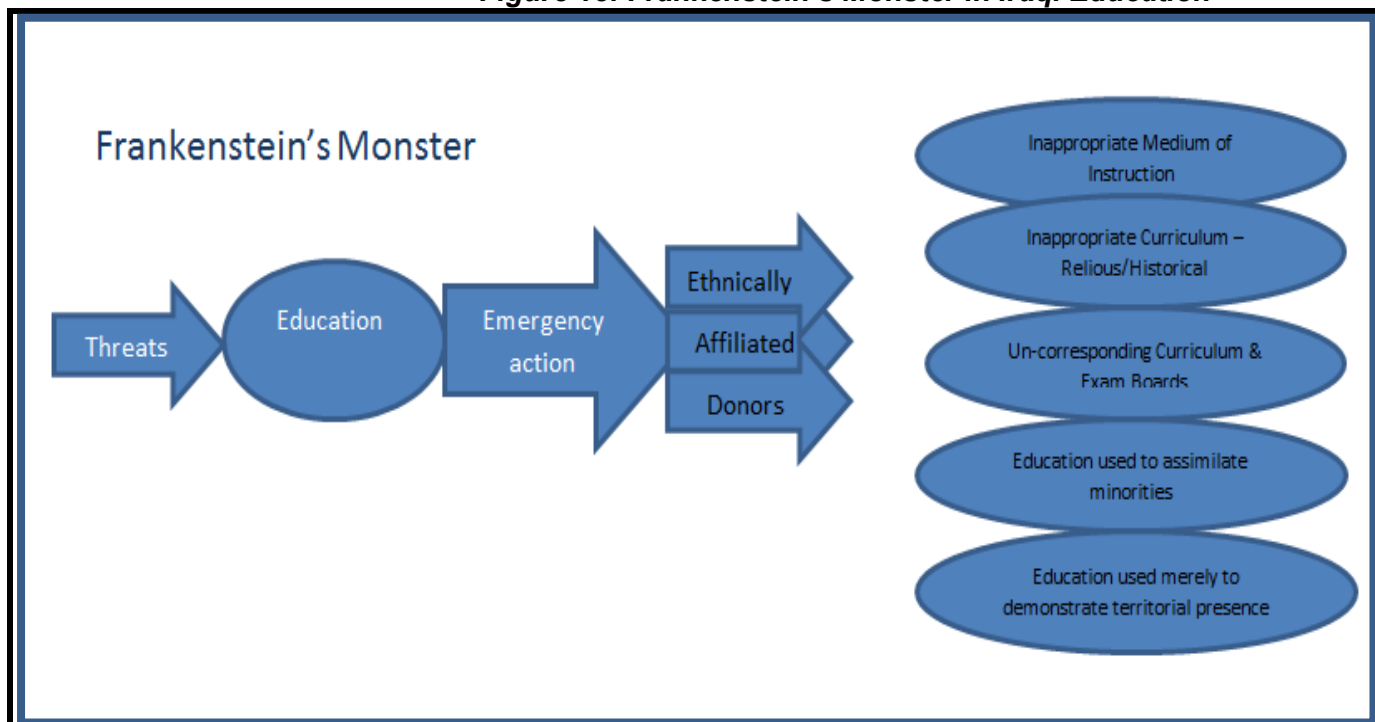
**Figure 17: Education System Conflict Triggers in the Iraqi Disputed Territories**



The securitization of education and the subsequent influence of outside actors in the education arena are responsible for creating technical issues with negative side effects and allowing political influence. Gray's Frankenstein analogy appears to be

very apt in the disputed territories, whereby power has been given to actors with the aim of protecting the threatened means of cultural reproduction, yet this action has allowed the misuse of that power to occur (see figure 18: Frankenstein’s Monster in Iraqi Education). When reflecting on the overall research question and asking how ethnic identity has impacted education, we can see how the securitization of education access in order to protect the means of cultural and ethnic reproduction, has adversely affected not only the education system, but also the wider inter-ethnic relations in the region.

**Figure 18: Frankenstein’s Monster in Iraqi Education**



## ***Chapter 7: Conclusion***

### **7.1 Introduction**

The issue of the disputed territories and their peaceful resolution has become pivotal in the reconstruction of Iraq. The tug-of-war between the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the federal government in Baghdad continues to play out through increased rhetoric and military manoeuvres in the region. The Iraqi political process continues to stall over the issue of disputed territories and tension between Iraq's ethnic groups is mounting. The strain between Kurds and Arabs has reached the point where thinktanks like the International Crisis Group have raised the prospect of clashes between the Iraqi army and Kurdish peshmerga forces (CrisisGroup; 2009, 2011). The resolution of the issue has become viewed as a ticking bomb: to intervene will cause conflict and to abstain will allow conflict to develop. The United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq have suggested the need to explore a range of 'confidence building measures' within the region (UNAMI 2008).<sup>i</sup> Within these measures is the recognition of public services delivery, language rights, and the distribution of government posts. Each of these issues can be interpreted at the level of formal education, yet little has been done to explore education's potential to build or destroy inter-ethnic confidence.

Despite the growing recognition of education's potential negative influences in post-conflict settings, and the significance of identity in post war Iraq, there was a complete absence of scholarly analysis in terms not only of the emergent formal education system in the disputed regions, but also the purpose bestowed on

education and its possible interaction with the wider conflict. Therefore the thesis set out to explore how identity has impacted on the post-conflict reconstruction of education in the Iraqi disputed territories by addressing the central research question of: *how has ethnic identity influenced the education narrative in the disputed territories?* To inform this question the thesis asked;

- What role did ethnic identity play in education provision prior to 2003?
- What role has ethnic identity played in the formation of formal education structure in the region post 2003?
- What role does ethnic identity play in the current education narrative?
- What is the relationship between education and the wider ethnic conflict and fragility?

Through these questions the thesis strove to provide a better understanding of the purpose and function of the reconstructed school system in the governorates of Kirkuk and Ninewa, and how education interacts with issues over identity. This chapter will conclude the overall investigation by first addressing the empirical findings and providing synthesis of findings in relation to the posed research questions. Secondly, it will place the research within the context of the broader Conflict in Cities project and examine the contributions of the thesis to the Conflict in Cities research objectives. The subsequent section will examine the implications of the findings in terms of theoretical approaches to the examination of post-conflict education reconstruction, then moving on to address the implications for education reconstruction policy in Iraq and make recommendations for ways forward. Finally

the thesis will conclude with an examination of the areas identified for further research in this area.

## **7.2 Research Questions**

The main empirical findings are chapter specific and were summarized within the respective empirical chapters: Chapter 4 - Iraqi education through a Societal Security Lens, Chapter 5 - Ethnically Appropriate Education: Threats and Survival, and Chapter 6 – Education and Conflict in Iraq. This section will synthesize these findings to succinctly answer the main research questions posed.

Research Questions 1 and 2;

- What role did ethnic identity play in education provision prior to 2003?
- And how has this influenced the role ethnic identity has played in the formation of formal education structure in the region post 2003?

As demonstrated in section one of chapter four; prior to 2003 the Ba'ath party used the education system in the north of Iraq to deny the existence of non-Arab identities and build Iraqi Arab nationalism. The purpose of education in the disputed territories was distorted and bestowed with a number of key objectives which were not within the internationally recognised remit of formal education. Education was used to deny ethnic diversity and provide a site for observation and control over the population. Consequently, ethnic representation in the Iraqi education system post-2003 has become an emotive issue. The inclusion of ethnic and cultural identity indicators has become a central focus in the process of education reconstruction as ethnic communities seek the rights previously denied them. The previous oppression of

non-Arab identities has left a lasting legacy which impacts greatly on the way in which education is viewed post-2003.

Chapter four went on to show how, in order to guard against the future denial of identity indicators within the centrally controlled education sector, the school system has subsequently become separated, with schools categorised in terms of their ethnically homogenous intakes, often linguistically. However, the thesis has shown that the influence of Arabisation on identity indicators has created complexities in the delivery of education based on linguistic markers. Not all communities have retained fluency in the traditional languages of their ethnic groups and as such do not benefit academically from the organisation of the school structure. Consequently, it has been possible to demonstrate that identity protection has taken precedence over pedagogy and formal education attainment. Education is increasingly perceived as a means of cultural reproduction and therefore deemed a method of protection for collective identity. Chapter four demonstrated how ethnic communities strive to *revive* lost cultural indicators, *maintain* a presence in the region and *defend* their presence in the territories through these separate education structures, even at the cost of the quality of the education delivery.

Research Question 3;

- What role does ethnic identity play in the current education narrative?

Chapter five illustrated that due to the segregated nature of the school system, the education narrative in the region revolves around two central, interlinked ethnic themes: the right to ethnically specific and appropriate education services - in terms

of language and culture- and the capacity gaps which limit the delivery of ethnically specific education, such as teaching resources, teacher training and curriculum. It has been demonstrated that each ethnic community is facing its own specific challenges to the delivery of education which is seen to adequately protect identity and act as a means of cultural reproduction. Due to the significant role of identity protection and revival given to education (as demonstrated in chapter four), restrictions in access are frequently perceived to be deliberate attacks against the communities identity and therefore conceptualised in terms of the group's continued existence in the region. Consequently, educationalists from each community have been heard to introduce securitising speech into the education narratives, raising education to the status of an ethnic survival issue.

Accordingly, education actors have sought enterprising ways to address such threats, and have enrolled help from ethnically affiliated external parties who are not responsible to the education ministries. Thus, this emergency action has resulted in a number of outside actors, each with their own vested interest, being drawn into the state education system to support schools. Chapter five unpacked how this action has had a number of implications for both the technical delivery of education and also the possible educational outputs of communities. Curriculum choices and the fortification of identity can be seen to be having negative impacts on educational outputs. The presence of such external influences has therefore opened the education system up for potential nationalistic manipulation, and also ensured that ethnic identity continues to be central to the narrative over education access and provision.



#### Research Question 4;

- What is the relationship between identity, education and the wider ethnic conflict and fragility?

Chapter Six directly addressed the impact of ethnic identity on the education system and detailed how it can be seen to be interacting with the wider conflict in a number of detrimental ways. The education system has entered the wider conflict at various crucial points. The school system limits the social interaction of children and parents from different communities, and provides children with an educational experience which enforces difference and prioritises the preservation of identity over inter-ethnic dependence and social cohesion. Additionally, schools fail to prioritize the need for a shared lingua franca to promote communication between groups. These issues are compounded by the differentiated and unequal provision of funding inputs across the system due to ministerial neglect and varying levels of external support. The resulting horizontal inequalities have created grievance and resentment between the communities over education issues. Each point of entry has generated unintentional conflict triggers, and also has opened the system up for intentional manipulation by nationalistic political actors. The relationship between education and conflict is undeniable and has the potential to encourage further ethnically defined tensions.

Overriding Research Question;

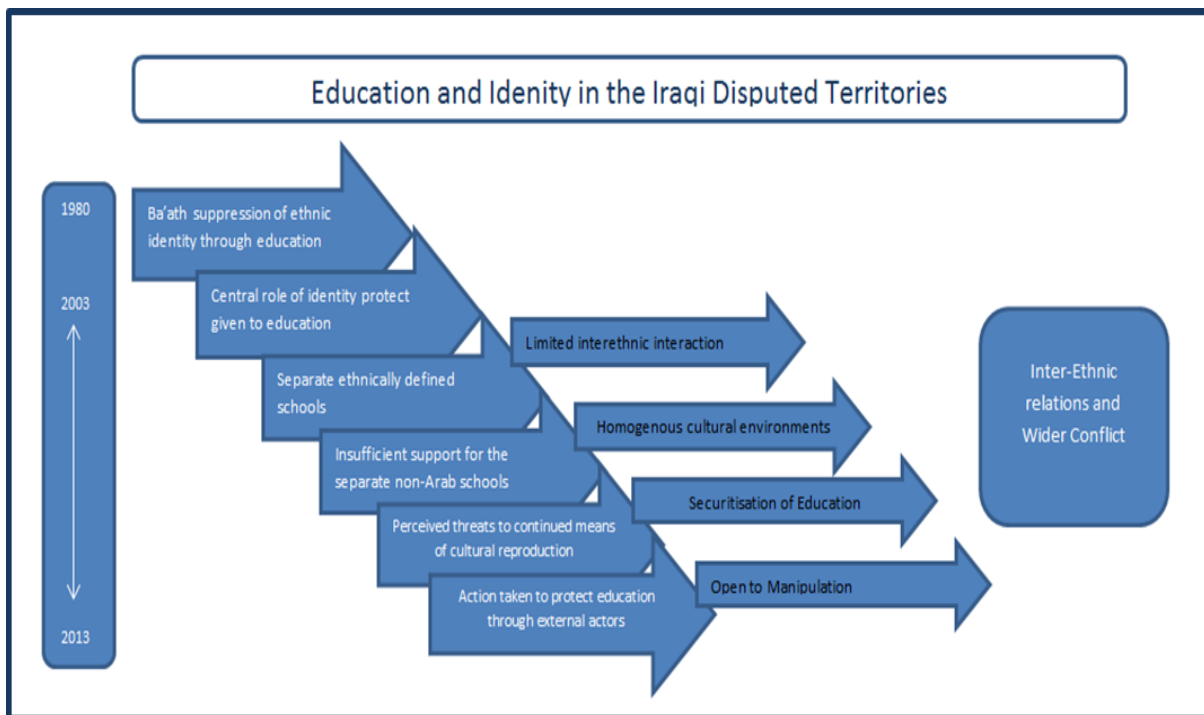
*How has ethnic identity influenced the education narrative in the disputed territories?*

The central research question has been unpacked throughout each of the sub-questions to demonstrate how education structures in the region have been shaped by the pursuit of ethnic identity protection in the post-conflict environment. The lack of infrastructure and the administrative contestation have contributed to creating a prominent security based narrative within the education arena with ethnically appropriate schooling being viewed as under threat. Education access has not only been influenced by the ethno-political arena in which it is operating, but its provision has also been elevated to an issue of ethnic survival, with the potential to hinder wider political negotiations.

Education reconstruction in post-2003 Iraq has been shaped by the omnipresent influence of ethnic affiliation and identity politics. The legacy of past oppression and fear of future uncertainty has led ethnic communities to endow education with a central role in cultural reproduction. The preservation of identity has taken precedence over pedagogy, with schools disregarding standards of good practice in terms of mother-tongue languages in favour of achieving homogenous institutions. The interpretation of education as a societal security tool has resulted in its provision holding significance within the wider political contest. When limitations to education are perceived, they are interpreted as threats to the group's 'we' identity and as such emergency action is taken to protect them. Such emergency action has involved the external support of ethnically affiliated actors within the state education system. This influence has opened the door for the manipulation of education structures by

nationalist and extremist groups for their own purposes. Figure 19 demonstrates the overall interaction in a schematic illustration, to show the overall interaction between the two key issues of identity, conflict and identity.

**Figure 19: Education and Identity in the Disputed Territories**



### 7.3 Conflict in cities and the contested state

The project to which this dissertation contributes, Conflict in Cities, seeks to understand how contested urban environments can absorb, resist and potentially play a role in transforming the territorial conflicts in which they are situated. Furthermore, the project seeks to advance an understanding as to how heavily contested societies may become viable cities for all inhabitants.

The thesis engaged with a number of the research questions posed by the project:

- How structures and institutions may bolster cities to withstand state struggles

Firstly the thesis explores how education institutions actually work in practice within the contested urban society, identifying how they may damage inter-ethnic relations, and highlighting how they may in turn bolster them. The dissertation has taken an overview of two contested Iraqi governorates with attention to the Conflict in Cities project city of Kirkuk. The aims of the thesis are very clearly defined in that I do not seek to analyse Kirkuk city specifically, but the research and its findings will be of relevance to academics and practitioners working specifically on the cityscape. The aim has been to advance a wider understanding of how education can interact with identity and the ethnically defined territorial conflict across the disputed territories, and not purely within the isolated location of Kirkuk city, where a research culture is already quite prevalent. The intention has been to look at education reconstruction through the theoretical lens of societal security and take a fresh approach to the evaluation of education institutions and their role in urban conflicts.

- How the conflict affects the everyday life of citizens, and how do they as active agents continue to cope or resist.

The thesis interacts with the question of how territorial conflicts can affect the everyday lives of citizens by focusing on education provision. Using education as a conflict analysis lens, rather than the issue of governance or power-sharing, allows a focus which has wider impact, reaching even citizens who shy away from political realms. This has demonstrated how even politically inactive citizens can use institutions to resist threats and protect community identity in the midst of identity-conflicts.

- How aspects of everyday city life have been used by conflict protagonists and managers.

Finally the thesis addresses the last question of how everyday life can be co-opted by conflict actors, demonstrating education's key role in ethnic relations, co-existence and interdependence. Education is often targeted for manipulation during times of ethnic fragility. The thesis demonstrated how education has been co-opted for political purposes across the disputed territories and highlights this impact on everyday life. The research has therefore served to open the debate over how resource management in conflict affected cities can be a cause of intergroup conflict.

The Conflict in Cities project has contributed to a variety of aspects of conflict analysis and has approached conflict management through a variety of lenses ranging from architecture and archaeology to sociology, geography, and political science. In this dissertation, I focus on explaining the interaction of education with the problems of the violently contested society, widening the examination further.

#### **7.4 Theoretical Conclusions**

Education in conflict-affected areas has been examined in terms of its negative impact on wider conflict by a broad array of commentators. Yet, in terms of international practitioners and educationalists in conflict affected countries, the same practical indicators and assessment tools are still prevalent: enrolment figures, school buildings and textbook supply are often prioritised over evaluations of education's interaction with conflict. Contextualisation of education policy remains an

often neglected process in conflict affected countries. Therefore the thesis strove to shift the emphasis from standard evaluation of education services in the disputed territories to one which examined education's wider role and community impact. Correspondingly, the thesis has demonstrated that education sector reform management by the international community, in post-2003 Iraq, focused solely on basic indicators and therefore failed to engage with education's potential for social transformation and inter ethnic peace building. International practitioners and educationalists in Iraq continued to rely on the same practical assessment indicators and detrimentally do not engage with education's potential to a) be affected by, and b) affect the conflict.

In addition, the thesis sought to address a second theoretical limitation in the education in emergency literature: one that emerges from the lack of attention to causality. Seldom are the impacts of negative education traced backward to identify the conceptual parameters of their inception. The academic literature surrounding education in conflict asks 'how' far more frequently than it asks 'why.' The thesis would advocate that in order to address the root causes of conflict a shift of focus is necessary, to one which focuses on causality rather than just outcome<sup>66</sup>. Therefore a more innovative approach to analysis is required. Conflict triggers can be generated when the purpose of education differs from that of the internationally accepted norm, as with the role of identity protection in education in the disputed territories. In this respect a wider scope to analysis is required.

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<sup>66</sup> The recent use of a political economy analysis by some scholars in the field of education in conflict affected countries can be seen to start to address this theoretical shortcoming (see Pherali, 2012 and Novelli UKFIET presentation). However, this thesis has demonstrated that not all negative societal consequences of education in conflict affected countries are driven by deliberate intent or vested interest.

In the same way that the origins of conflict have been widely examined academically, the origins of negative education policies should be unpacked to provide more clarity to educationalists involved in a countries post-conflict re-construction processes. In order to address the negative interactions of education with conflict we must first have a clear understanding of their origins. The continued use of traditional education indicators, such as desk counts and gender enrolment, have failed to acknowledge the purpose of education in the disputed territories, just as it failed to acknowledge the purpose of the Ba'ath party regime's education programme in the 1980's. As the thesis has attested, in divided and contested societies, education holds a powerful influence over ethnic interaction and the peaceful resolution to conflict. The thesis has used the societal security lens to identify not only the negative interactions of education with conflict, but also how these interactions have evolved through the role of identity protection and the perceived threats and lack of support. Understanding these factors can help to mitigate their impact.

This failure to concentrate on, and understand, the driving factors behind education's management (or mismanagement) has lead to a neglect of education's potential to build peace. Education has the potential to develop the tools necessary to sustain the relationships and linkages vital to peace-building between ethnic communities, while providing crucial space for integration. Yet there is an absence of common understanding and no consensus over what constitutes peace-building education. Neither is there a common strategy for implementing it. The United Nations has struggled to define and operationalize the concept of peace-building education (Smith, 2010)<sup>ii</sup>, and consequently most education programming in post-conflict contexts is planned without an explicit recognition of education's peace-building

capabilities. The thesis would suggest that by focusing the attention to questions of why and not how this can be achieved more easily.

A conflict sensitive analysis of education is being championed by organisations like the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) and UNICEF's Peace-building Education and Advocacy programme (PBEA), but their efforts have yet to be mainstreamed into standard practice and remain unfocused and broad in their application, failing to influence everyday education assessment methodology. It is therefore the recommendation of this research that monitoring systems to detect and demonstrate the purpose of education and its potential to influence conflict to be further developed. In short, scholars must work toward bridging the gap between academic understanding, origins of action and real world practice to ensure that education in fragile environments is shielded from potential manipulation and unintentional negative consequences.

The following section will lay out a number of policy recommendations specific to the region. These recommendations have been generated by the thesis' adoption of a focused conflict analysis approach to education assessment. It has used this to unpack not only how education has evolved, but also why. By using this approach it is hoped that the policy recommendations are firmly grounded in the principle of 'do no harm'.



## 7.5 Policy Recommendations and Ways Forward

This thesis has been underpinned by an adherence to the following considerations: education provision should strive to preserve the rich ethnic diversity of Iraq; education policies should not create future inter-ethnic hostility or produce negative societal effects for an ethnic group and therefore *do no harm*; and, that education design and structures should be adapted to the Iraqi context and reality. The findings of the thesis emphasise that it is necessary to address the root cause of education's inability to support schools in protecting societal security. Once schools are able to adequately provide the means of cultural reproduction for their communities, it will be possible to remove or monitor outside influence and also instigate methods to mitigate the impact of segregation. Before education actors can think about harnessing education's potential to build peace, it is necessary to ensure each ethnic community has a strong representation. Achieving this will strengthen any attempts to foster interdependence and co-operation between groups. In short, it is necessary to remove the threats to societal security through education before progress can be made.

However, this requires political will and economic commitments. Hence, while the thesis can recommend a number of technical and policy suggestions on how to tackle the delivery of education in the disputed territories, their implementation will ultimately depend upon the sustained political will to resolve the different issues in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory fashion. Therefore, first and foremost, the political commitment to find solutions that will benefit the peace, and overall stability

of the region, whereby pedagogy and minority rights are prized over territorial representation, is required.

Equally, in order to harness education as a force for peace in the disputed territories, a commitment to significant financial and human resources is necessary. And of equal importance is that these resources need to be equally distributed and sustainable. Despite the constructional changes, the Ministry of Education has failed to durably support the development of non-Arab education in the region. In light of the thesis findings, we can see that this has resulted in the opening of language schools without proper regard for best practice, educational pedagogy, or provision of the necessary resources. These limitations have led to further frustration amongst the population, as well as decreased education quality and provision, which can lead to future horizontal inequalities. Correspondingly, due to the significance given to the constitutional promises around identity representation in education, this lack of support has resulted in the school system becoming open to outside influences. Commitment to equality of funding is paramount.

In addition, there is a need to clarify administrative responsibility. Currently, there is no one single institution or body in charge of education in the disputed areas and overlapping jurisdictions have contributed toward the problems documented in the previous chapters. The region's administrative uncertainty must be acknowledged and as such a special status given to the responsibility of education matters in the disputed territories. This is critical in terms of technical delivery as well as with regards to ensuring that the education system does not influence the wider political debate and tension within the region. If one central body is responsible for managing

the education system, there can be some degree of regulation of input from the various parties to ensure that while the school is functioning to protect societal security it is not being exposed to further nationalist aims.

This thesis does, however recognise that support for separatist education structures does carry with it a dilemma: the structures chosen to defend societal security through education can both foster unintentional ethnic bias and allow the interference of deliberate antagonistic nationalistic parties. Therefore, it is necessary that educational strategists in the region consider the needs of the community alongside the requirements of the wider society for systems which promote co-existence. The need to strengthen the societal security of the community groups in the region is undeniable following years of oppression and assimilation. Equally, the need for cultural representation is essential to generate an equal footing for inter-communal co-operation. Yet education's central goal of supporting societal security must be achieved with an acknowledgement of the need for policies which insulate the separatist structure from the problems highlighted in this thesis. This insulation would attempt to prevent the education system from becoming party to the wider conflict.

Therefore the education sector must primarily develop a greater acknowledgement of identity protection as a goal of education and therefore treat the educational rights of each community with equal respect and fair resource allocation to defuse growing tensions in the education arena, and prevent outside manipulation of education. In the specific environment of an ethnically diverse and contested territory such as the disputed region, encouraging the segregation of the community through linguistic

access to education can have numerous detrimental societal affects as previously discussed in chapter six. So it is necessary to take advantage of the point when identity issues within education interact with social relations to create a space for constructive nation-building around shared, common identities. School and classrooms can provide space in which people of different origins can be brought together and taught how to live peacefully. To formulate a way forward, policy makers must be aware of this opportunity and also acknowledge the reality in which they are working. To impose a dominant language or cultural framing on education in the region would be academically detrimental, as well as serving to create an ideological battleground which would further divide communities; to support further segregation through the current system would serve to further divide communities both linguistically and socially.

Therefore, an alternative middle ground must be found. Policy makers must create education policies and programmes which not only protect the rights of all ethnic communities, but which also strive to promote ethnic and religious harmony. There is no single answer to the question regarding how best to reconcile these objectives. The situations in which minority language communities exist vary from district-to-district and the priorities of parents for their children's education will depend on many factors, including political affiliation, maintenance of traditional language under Arabization, and the weight given to their children's acquisition of the skills needed to participate in the wider society. Yet, they do share the need to preserve distinct ethnic identities. But whatever the precise balance, the clear need for all minority children is to acquire real fluency in at least two languages – namely the mother-

tongue and the state or majority language- while enjoying the degree of integration that promotes community relations.

One of the possible ways of solving the problem is the introduction of bilingual models of education. Most bilingual education programmes have two goals; the acquisition of the language of the country and academic success; and the continuing development of the heritage language. There are several different types of bilingual education program models and taking into account the findings of the research and the wider political environment of the region, the thesis would recommend that a variety of models would need to be explored and implemented according to linguistic and regional need. Demographically mixed areas such as central Kirkuk will no doubt require a different form of bilingual language provision to the homogenous Arabic district of Al-Hawiga.

A phased move toward bilingualism in the disputed territories would require advocacy and policy formulation, teaching/learning processes and curriculum-content development, and community participation and ownership. It would no doubt face opposition from minority language communities who have already established mother-tongue secondary education across the region. Therefore, the thesis recommends a gradual move toward a more integrated education system through the introduction of pilot schemes in the more demographically mixed areas and general steps toward the principle of bilingualism in existing mother-tongue schools. Considering the political environment, such a move away from the existing amount of mother provision in secondary education would create resentment and would not be accepted within the political arena. Therefore, concentration on improved language

curricular and teacher training would provide a basis for which schools in mixed areas to develop the foundations for future moves to a more integrated system.

The need to revise the curriculum so that it portrays the true diversity of Iraqi society is high on most Iraqi educationalist agendas<sup>iii</sup> and the failure to provide one common core curriculum which ensures ethnic representation is highly problematic. In the absence of a consensus, one option for exploration may be the use of elective classes in the traditional languages and religion of students within their catchment areas. This may help to alleviate this tension. It is therefore essential to develop a standardised syllabus for each religion and language present in the DIB's which is printed and distributed by Ministry of Education and available to all schools on request and not as a matter of student quota. The study of local languages and religions should be available to non-community members. This would not only support the aim of achieving a representative curriculum, but also cater for those families whose home language is not their traditional language, or families who prefer to have majority dominant language instruction accompanied by traditional language acknowledgement.

These recommendations were presented to UNAMI at their request in 2012, along with a series of quick impact project proposals (Appendix 11) which would begin to address the issues highlighted in this research. In addition, I have recently been invited to present these recommendations and the findings of this project to educationalists in the region at a UNICEF sponsored workshop focused on harnessing education for peace-building in the disputed territories.

## **7.6 Recommendations for Future Research**

As is often the case with research projects, this PhD generated a number of additional questions in addition to the findings presented. It is worth restating that the objective of this project was to investigate how identity has influenced the education narrative in the region. In doing so the thesis has been able to unpack the driving forces of education and the subsequent possible entry points into the wider identity-based conflict. Yet each one of these entry points would benefit from further examination. Unfortunately such research undertakings were beyond the scope of this study. Each of these avenues of conflict has the potential to be examined in further detail with the employment of different methodologies, and each would warrant a PhD thesis in their own right.

The scale of the education and identity debate in Iraq is as extensive and multifaceted as the overlapping conflicts that people are forced to navigate in everyday life. Hence the above recommendations would benefit from further attention to generate achievable development targets with regards to education management and identity representation. There is need for more case studies at the local level to allow further assessment of local dimensions of education. Exploring the following as research strategies can help to facilitate the attainment of this goal:

- *Regional Language Surveys*; although general consensus was presented that traditional languages in the region have been degraded – from both across and within communities – it would be beneficial for an extensive investigation into language use in the region for the purposes of informing the pedagogical design of language programmes. Clear categorisation of mother-tongue and traditional language is required, and as such further investigation is needed.
- *Cultural Material Review*; the presence of actors, external to state education, in the system is of great significance to this investigation. Although samples of materials were presented to this investigation it was not within its remit to perform a full content-based review of such materials across all communities. Such a review would shed further light on the extent to which external actors are acting in nationalist interests and polluting the school system.
- *Teacher Ideology*: the thesis was unable to investigate the impact of teacher ideology in the class room. An investigation of classroom practices would provide an additional avenue for exploration. However these were not issues within the remit of the study.

## **7. 7 Concluding Remarks**

*'We teach our children about themselves and about their neighbours in schools and in the home. If the parents teach hatred and the school teaches hatred, hatred is all that we have. Education in Iraq isn't just about a humanitarian need; it is about how Iraqi's will move into the future, together or apart.'*



(Taken from an interview with an Iraqi Academic based in Amman)

The interaction between education and identity has been a neglected subject in the Iraqi disputed territories. The thesis speaks to both practitioners and researchers working on or in the disputed territories of Iraq to try and address this neglect. It is in this respect that the thesis contributes to two fields of understanding. Firstly, and most significantly, the thesis presents the first scholarly exploration of the purpose bestowed on education by education officials in the disputed territories post-2003. It demonstrates the role of identity protection in education provision and its consequences for the wider identity-based contest, as well as the resulting opening of education structures to possible political manipulation by officials. In order to achieve this, the thesis has provided the first mapping of education structures in the post 2003 Iraq disputed territories. The data collection for the research includes previously un-collated regional assessments of educational capacity gaps for each ethnic community, and the provision of a classification system to identify the different kind of schools which have developed in the region; a typology which explains for the first time the complex linguistic provisions unique to schools in the disputed territories. Underpinning this, the thesis has demonstrated the need to examine not only 'how', but also 'why' education is allowed to be used for purposes outside its usual remit.

Education in Iraq has been given the central role of protecting the identity by all of all of Iraq's ethnic groups. But the disregard of non-Arab education in terms of funding and ministerial support has generated a climate of fear. The consequences for the wider inter-ethnic relations are detrimental and the system is open to manipulation

and political corruption. Education reconstruction in countries affected by ethnically defined conflicts requires early systems of evaluation for the purpose of education and not merely standard indicators. Education alone cannot create violent conflict and the single dynamic of the threat to societal security through education is equally unlikely to cause the out-break of ethnic war. However, what we have discovered is that the education system in Kirkuk is not facilitating peaceful co-existence among all communities. It is laying the foundations for future disputes and dividing an already fractured community.

Regardless of the administrative outcome of the region, all parties should be striving to build confidence and assure the security, both societal and human, of all inhabitants of the region in order to sustain peaceful co-existence. Elite-led discussions, which fail to consider the importance of a community's education structure in maintaining its existence, can potentially draw the wider community into the conflict. This serves to make a peaceful resolution even harder to attain.

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## **Appendix 1: Letter of invitation**

*Conflict in Cities and the Contested State*  
Everyday life and the possibilities for transformation in Belfast, Jerusalem and other divided cities  
[www.conflictincities.org](http://www.conflictincities.org)

### **An Examination of the Education System in the city of Kirkuk**

Dear potential participant,

This is an invitation to participate in research being conducted by Kelsey Shanks under the supervision of Professor Mick Dumper from the Department of Politics at the University of Exeter. The research is part of a wider project entitled Conflict in Cities - [www.conflictincities.org](http://www.conflictincities.org), which is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and coordinated by Clare College, Cambridge University and assisted by Queens University Belfast and The University of Exeter.

The study explores the relationship between education and conflict. The primary goal of the research is to examine the role of education in the city of Kirkuk. The project is seeking teachers and education professionals in the city to examine their experience of the school system post 2003. The research hopes to give a voice to educators and aid the understanding of the problems they face. The information gathered will contribute toward a pilot study for a subsequent PhD thesis and research, the findings of which may be published and will be available to UNICEF education practitioners working in Iraq.

Participation in the study involves answering a small number of questions via email, then a subsequent round of follow up questions. The provision of some background demographic information will also be necessary. The questions will ask about on your personal experiences of education in the city and ask more general questions regarding the schools in your area. The questionnaire package should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Participation in the research is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to use the contact details provided to register your interest. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

At this time I am interested in collecting the names and contact information of



potential participants and sending out questions next month. I am hoping to interview as many people as possible so if you know of anyone else who may wish to participate in this study please forward this information to them.

All information collected will be kept strictly confidential. Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material. Further details of the Conflict in Cities ethics framework are available on request.

Thank you for your time and interest in participating in this study.

Contact - Kelsey Shanks - University of Exeter

Tel 0044 7846943384 email: [kjs212@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:kjs212@exeter.ac.uk)



## Appendix 2: Letter of invitation - Arabic

الصراع في المدن والدول المتنازع عليها  
الحياة اليومية وإمكانيات التحول في بلفاست والقدس وغيرها من المدن المقسمة  
[www.conflictincities.org](http://www.conflictincities.org)

### دراسة للنظام التعليمي في مدينة كركوك

إلى المشاركين المرتقبين ،

هذه دعوة للمشاركة في بحث تجريه كيلسي شانكس تحت إشراف البروفسور ميك دمير من قسم السياسة في جامعة والذي يتم [www.conflictincities.org](http://www.conflictincities.org) أكستر. ويعتبر البحث جزء من مشروع أوسع عنوانه الصراع في المدن : بتنسيق من كلية كليلر ، جامعة كامبردج بمساعدة من (ESRC)تمويله من قبل مجلس البحوث الإقتصادية والإجتماعية جامعة كوينز في بلفاست وجامعة إكستر.

تبحث الدراسة العلاقة بين التعليم والصراعات ويعد الهدف الأساسي من البحث هو دراسة دور التعليم في مدينة كركوك. ويسعى المشروع إلى الإتصال بالمدرسين والمهنيين العاملين في مجال التعليم في المدينة للتعرف والبحث عن خبراتهم في النظام المدرسي في مرحلة ما بعد عام 2003. حيث نأمل ان يقوم البحث بإعطاء صوت للقائمين على شئون التعليم وان يساعدهم في فهم المشكلات التي يواجهونها. وسوف تسهم المعلومات التي تم جمعها في تكوين رسالة ماجستير وأطروحة وإتاحتها للقائمين بشئون التعليم في منظمة اليونيسيف التابعة للأمم دكتوراه لاحقة حيث من الممكن ان يتم نشر النتائج في العراق. (UNICEF) المتحدة

تتطلب المشاركة في الدراسة الاجابة على عدد قليل من الأسئلة عبر البريد الإلكتروني ، والمشاركة بجولة لاحقة من الاسئلة المتابعة . كما سيكون ضرورياً أيضاً توفير بعض المعلومات الديموغرافية الأساسية. تستفسر الاسئلة عن تفاصيل تجربتكم الشخصية في مجال التعليم بالمدينة كما سنطرح المزيد من الاسئلة العامة بشأن المدرسة التي تعمل بها. تتطلب مجموعة الاسئلة التي تكون الاستبيان ما يقرب من 30 دقيقة لإكمالها. المشاركة في البحث طوعي تماما. سوف تحصل إذا ما قررت المشاركة في البحث على ورقة المعلومات هذه حيث ستقوم باستخدام تفاصيل الإتصال المدونة بالأسفل للتسجيل. أيضاً في حال إذا ما قررت المشاركة تتاح لك كامل الحرية في الإنسحاب في أي وقت دون شرح أسباب.

أهتم حالياً بجمع أسماء ومعلومات للإتصال بأى مشاركين مرتقبين حيث أقوم بإرسالهم الأسئلة في الشهر المقبل. وأنا على أمل مقابلة أكبر عدد ممكن من المعلمين. فإذا كنت على صلة بأحد ممن قد يرغب بالمشاركة في هذه الدراسة، رجاء إرسال هذه الرسالة إليهم.

سيتم الحفاظ على جميع المعلومات التي تم جمعها في سرية تامة. وستطبق مبادئ السرية والخصوصية وعدم ذكر الأسماء عند جمع وتخزين ونشر مواد البحث. ومن الممكن تقديم تفاصيل أكثر وشرح متعمق للإطار الأخلاقي لبحث

"الصراع" في "المدن" عند الطلب.

. شكرا على وقتكم وإهتمامكم بالمشاركة في هذه الدراسة

للاتصال - كيلسي شانكس -- جامعة إكسيتير

الهاتف : 00447846943384

بريد إلكتروني [kjs212@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:kjs212@exeter.ac.uk)



## Appendix 3: Letter of Invitation - Turkish

**Çatışma Kentleri ve İhtilafli Devletler**  
**Belfast, Kûdus ve diğler bölünmüş kentlerde günlük yaşam ve dönüşüm imkânları**  
[www.conflictincities.org](http://www.conflictincities.org)

### **Kerkûk Kentindeki Eğitim Sistemi Üzerine bir Araştırma**

Değerli potansiyel katılımcı,

Bu mektup, Exeter Üniversitesi Siyaset Bilimi Bölümü'nden Profesör Mick Dumper'ın yönetiminde çalışmasını sürdüren Kelsey Shanks'in araştırmasına katılmanız için bir davetiyedir. Araştırma, Britanya Ekonomik ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Kurulu'nun (Economic and Social Research Council – ESRC) maddi desteğiyle yürütülen Çatışma Kentleri/Conflict in Cities – [www.conflictincities.org](http://www.conflictincities.org) – adında bir projenin bir parçasını oluşturuyor. Cambridge Üniversitesi, Clare College tarafından düzenlenen projeye, Queens Üniversitesi-Belfast ve Exeter Üniversitesi de katkıda bulunuyor.

Araştırma, eğitim ve çatışma arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanmaktadır. Çalışmanın ana hedefi, Kerkûk kentinde eğitimin rolünü incelemektir. Proje için, 2003 sonrası okul sistemindeki deneyimlerini paylaşacak öğretmenler ve eğitimciler aranıyor. Araştırma, eğitimcilerin sesine kulak vermeyi ve karşılaştıkları sorunların anlaşılmasına yardımcı olmayı amaçlıyor. Toplanan bilgiler, Araştırma Yüksek Lisansı tezinde ve daha sonra Doktora tezinde kullanılacaktır. Bu tez çalışmalarının bulguları, Irak'ta çalışmakta olan UNICEF eğitim görevlilerinin kullanımına sunulacaktır, ayrıca bulgular ileride yayımlanabilir.

Çalışmaya katılanlara e-posta yöntemiyle belirli sorular gönderilecek ve bunları yanıtlamaları istenecek; daha sonra devam niteliğinde sorular da olacak. Ayrıca katılımcıların kendileri hakkında bazı temel bilgiler vermesi gerekecek. Sorular, kentteki kişisel öğretmenlik deneyimlerinizi paylaşmanızı ve çalıştığınız okulla ilgili genel bilgiler vermenizi isteyecek. Anketi tamamlamak yaklaşık 30 dakikanızı alacaktır. Araştırmaya katılmak tamamen isteğe bağlıdır. Eğer katılmaya karar verirsiniz, size daha ayrıntılı bilgi gönderilecek ve buradaki iletişim bilgilerini kullanarak araştırmacılarla iletişime geçmeniz istenecek. Katılmaya karar verirsiniz, istediğiniz zaman bir neden göstermeksizin bilgilerinizi geri çekebilirsiniz.

İlk adımda amacım, potansiyel katılımcıların adlarıyla iletişim bilgilerini toplamak; soruları ise önümüzdeki ay göndermeyi düşünüyorum. Mümkün olduğu kadar çok sayıda öğretmenle görüşmek istiyorum; dolayısıyla bu araştırmaya katılmak isteyebilecek başka meslektaşlarınız varsa lütfen bu bilgiyi kendilerine iletiniz.

Verdiğiniz tüm bilgiler titizlikle saklanacaktır. Araştırma malzemesinin toplanması, saklanması ve yayımlanmasında gizlilik ilkesine bağlı kalınacak, katılımcıların mahremiyetine saygı gösterilecek ve kimlikleri açıklanmayacaktır. İstek üzerine Çatışma Kentleri çalışma ilkelerine ulaşabilirsiniz.

Ayırdığınız zaman ve gösterdiğiniz ilgi için teşekkür ederim.

İletişim – Kelsey Shanks – Exeter Üniversitesi

Tel 0044 784 694 33 84, e-posta: [kjs212@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:kjs212@exeter.ac.uk)



## Appendix 4: letter of introduction – Kurdish

ذیانی روژانقو دەرەزەکانی طوڕانی بنەرەتی لێ بیلفاست و قودس و شارە دابەشبووەکانی تر

[www.conflictincities.org](http://www.conflictincities.org)

### لێکۆڵینەوەیەک دەربارەى سیستەمی تەرورەدە لێ شارى کەزکوک

بەشدار بووی بەرێز،

نەمە بانپههشنانەمەى بەشدار یکردنە لێ لێکۆڵینەوەیەکەدا کە لەلایەن کێلسی شانکس و بە سەرئەرشنیاری ئروفیسور مایک دەمئەر لێ بەشى سیاسەت لێ زانکۆی ئیپزیتەر ئەجامدەریت. ئەم لێکۆڵینەوە بەشیکە لێ تەرورەتیکی فراوانتر لێ دێر ناوینشانی (مەملانی لێ شارەکان)دا [www.conflictincities.org](http://www.conflictincities.org)، کە لەیەن ئەنجومەنی لێکۆڵینەوەی کۆمەلایەتی و ئابورییە (ESRC) خەرجییەکی دابینکراوە و لەلایەن کۆلیجی کلیری زانکۆی کامبریج ریکدەخەیت. هەرۆها زانکۆی ئیپزیتەر و زانکۆی کویز بیلفاست یارمەتیدەرن لێ تەرورەدەکاندا.

ئەم خۆیندەنۆیە لێ تەرورەدەى نیوان تەرورەدە و مەملانی دێکۆلێتۆ. ئامانجی سەرەکی لێکۆڵینەوەیە لێ رۆلی تەرورەدە لێ شارى کەزکوک. تەرورەدەى دێتۆیت لەقطەل ماموستایان و شارەزایانی بواری تەرورەدەى شارەکە بەشدارى ئیکتاک تا کۆ لێزموونیان لێ بواری تەرورەدەدا لێ ئاش سالی 2003 بکۆلێتۆ. تەرورەدە بە هیوایە کە دقنطی فیرکتران بقطەتێت و هاوکریان بێت لێ تپتەشتن لەو طرفانەى روبرۆی دێنۆ. ئەو زانیارانی کۆدەکرینۆ لێ تیزی ماجستیر و دواتریش دکتورا سویدان لیۆرەدەطیردریت. رەنطە دۆزینۆکانیشی بلابکرینۆ و بخرینۆ بەر دەستی ئەو کەسانەى لێ بواری تەرورەدەدا و لەقطەل یونیسف (UNICEF) لێ عیراق کار دێکن.

بەشدار یکردن ئیکدیت لێ وەلامدانۆی دمارۆیک تریاری کەم لێ رپطی ئیمیلۆ، دواتریش ضەند تریاریکی تپۆتەدیار. هەرۆها خستەرۆوی هەندیک زانیاری دیموٹرافیش ئیویست دەیت. تریارەکان دەربارەى ئەزموونی تاکی خۆتان لێ بواری وانۆتتۆدا لێ شارى کەزکوک و تریاری طشنى تپۆتەدیار بە ئەو قوتابخانەى کە کارى تیدا دێکەیت دەیت. ئەواکردنی راترسییەکە نزیکەى 30 دەقیقەى ئیدەضیت. بەشدار یکردن لەم لێکۆڵینۆدا تەواو خۆبەخشانیە. ئەقطەر بریارى دا بەشدارى بکەیت ئەم تەرە زانیاریەت ئیدەدریت تا لات بێت و داواتلیدەکریت کە ئەو ئیمیل و دمارە تەلفونەى کە لێ خوارۆهە هاتوو بۆ زانیاری زیاتر بەکاربھینیت و ئارەزووی بەشدار یکردن تۆماربکەیت. ئەقطەر بریارى بەشدار یکردنیش بدقیت دەوانیت هەزکات بتۆیت بکشینۆ بەبێ ئەوێ ئیویست بکات هۆکارۆکەى دیاربکەیت. لێ ئیستادا دەمۆیت کە ناو و زانیاری تپۆتەدیارى ئەو کەسانەى دێیانۆیت بەشدار ی کۆبکەمۆ و مانطی داهاوو تریارەکان بنیرم. هیوادارم بتوانم ضاوئیکۆتەن لەقطەل زۆرتین ماموستا بکەم لەبەرئۆهە ئەقطەر کەسیکی تر دەناسیت کە رەنطە حەزبکات بەشدار یبیت لەم لێکۆڵینۆدا ئەم زانیاریانەیان بۆ بنیرە.

ئەو زانیارانی کۆدەکرینۆ بە تەواوی بە نهیى دەرێزین. ئاراستنی نهیىکان و ذیانی تاکە کەسى و ناو مسوٹەرە لێ کۆکردنۆ و هەلترتن و بلاوکردنۆ لێکۆڵینۆکەدا. زانیاری زیاتر دەربارەى ئیپتیکى تەرورەى (مەملانی لێ شارەکان)دا نامادەیه ئەقطەر کەسیک بپۆیت بۆ بنیردریت.

زۆر سوئاس بۆ کات و ئارەزووی بەشدار یکردن لەم لێکۆڵینۆدا.

بۆ تپۆتەدیارى:

کێلسی

Contact - Kelsey Shanks - University of Exeter

شانکس/زانکۆی ئیپزیتەر

Tel 0044 7846943384 email: [kjs212@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:kjs212@exeter.ac.uk)

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ذ. تەلفون: 7846943384

ئیمیل: [kjs212@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:kjs212@exeter.ac.uk)



## **Appendix5: Pilot questionnaire**

*CONFLICT IN CITIES*  
*WWW.CONFLICTINCITIES.ORG*

### **KIRKUK EDUCATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Name of interviewee:**

**Name of interviewer:**

**Original language:**

Demographic Information

**Male or Female**

**Age**

**Do you consider yourself to be of specific ethnic origin / race?**

**Please state**

**What is your mother tongue/ first language?**

**What is you connection to the field of Education in Kirkuk?**

Job Title and description

**If connected to a specific school please specify.**

---

### **EDUCATION QUESTIONS**

#### **Instructions**

*All questions refer to secondary education, 11-18 year olds. Although if you feel reference to primary education is necessary please feel free to include it.*

- What issues do you feel are of particularly importance to schools and education in Kirkuk at present?

- Do you regard the ethnic or linguistic segregation of secondary schools in Kirkuk to be deepening alienation between communities? Please explain
- Do you think segregated education provides equal opportunities for all communities in Kirkuk? Please explain
- The provision of first language *PRIMARY* education is a right recognised by the international community and an obvious desire of communities everywhere. However, do you feel the expansion of segregated single language *SECONDARY* schools (as opposed to multilingual schools) has been influenced by factors other than community request? For example, political actors or interest groups?
- Do you think attempts to spread sectarianism and propaganda by actors in the city have influenced the popularity of segregated secondary schools with parents? Does fear of the future play a role in the choice?
- Do you regard mother tongue primary education followed by multilingual secondary education as a viable education strategy?
- Are you aware of any multilingual secondary schools in Kirkuk?
- Are you aware of any initiatives to promote youth integration? Please provide some specific examples.
- If you are native to Kirkuk I would be interested in your own experience with the school system when you were a pupil.





**Appendix 6: Pilot Arabic**

إستبيان حول التربية و التعليم فى كركوك

التاريخ:

اسم الشخص الذي تجرى معه المقابلة:

اسم الشخص الذي يجري المقابلة:

اللغة الأصلية:

المكان:

معلومات ديموغرافية/عامة

ذكر أو انثى:

العمر:

هل تعتبر نفسك أن تكون ذو أصل عرقي (قومي) معين؟

ما هي لغتك الأم / لغتك الأولى؟

ما هي صلتك بحقل التربية والتعليم في كركوك؟

يرجى ذكر الأسم الوظيفي و الوصف الوظيفي:

إذا لديك صلة بمدرسة محددة يرجى تحديدها.

## أسئلة متعلقة بالتربية والتعليم

### تعليمات:

تشير جميع الأسئلة إلى التعليم الثانوي، أي من 11- 18 سنة. رغم ذلك، اذا تعتقد انه من الضروري الإشارة إلى التعليم الابتدائي، الأمر يعود اليك و بإستطاعتك إدراجه.

ما هي القضايا التي تشعر بأنها ذات أهمية خاصة بالنسبة للمدارس و التربية و التعليم في كركوك في الوقت الراهن؟

هل تعتبر العزل أو الفصل العرقي أو اللغوي للمدارس الثانوية في كركوك من شأنه أن يعمق العزلة بين المجتمعات (القوميات أو الطوائف) الموجودة في كركوك؟ يرجى توضيح النقطة:

هل تعتقد أن فصل التعليم يوفر فرص متكافئة لجميع المجتمعات في كركوك؟ يرجى توضيح النقطة:

توفير التعليم الابتدائي باللغة الأولى هو حق معترف به من قبل المجتمع الدولي ورغبة واضحة للمجتمعات في كل مكان. و لكن، هل تعتقد أن التوسع في فصل المدارس الثانوية بلغة واحدة (بدلا من مدارس متعددة اللغات)، تأتي إثر عوامل أخرى غير طلب المجتمعات؟ على سبيل المثال، جهات سياسية أو جماعات مصالح؟

هل تعتقد أن محاولات نشر الطائفية والدعاية من قبل جهات متنفذة في المدينة قد أثرت على رواج فصل المدارس الثانوية عند الآباء و الأمهات؟ هل الخوف من المستقبل يلعب دورا في هذا الإختيار؟

هل تعتبر التعليم الابتدائي بلغة الأم ثم يليه التعليم الثانوي بلغات متعددة إستراتيجية قابلة للتطبيق للتربية و التعليم؟

هل أنت على علم بوجود أي مدارس ثانوية متعددة اللغات في كركوك؟

هل أنت على علم بوجود أي جمعيات آباء-معلمين و التي تسمح بمشاركة المجتمع الكركوكي بأشمله في مناقشات حول المدارس و كيفية الدراسة فيها؟

هل أنت على علم بأي مبادرات أتخذت لتعزيز الإندماج بين الشباب؟ يرجى إعطاء بعض أمثلة محددة.

إذا كنت من مواطني كركوك الأصليين، أرجو و أنا مهتم أن توافيني بتجربتك الخاصة مع النظام المدرسي عندما كنت طالب أو طالبة.



**Appendix 7: Pilot Turkish**

**KERKÜK EĞİTİM ANKETİ**

**Görüşmecinin adı:**

**Görüşmeyi yapan kişinin adı:**

**Dil:**

Demografik Bilgi

**Cinsiyet**

**Yaş**

**Kendinizi belirli bir etnik kökene/ırka ait olarak görüyor musunuz?**

**Lütfen belirtiniz**

**Ana diliniz nedir?**

**Kerkük'te eğitim alanıyla ilişkiniz nedir?**

Yı unvanı ve tanımı

**Belirli bir okula bağlıysanız lütfen belirtiniz.**

---

**EĞİTİM SORULARI**

**Talimatlar**

*Tüm sorular 11-18 yaş arasındaki orta öğretim öğrencileriyle ilgilidir. Bunun yanı sıra, soruların ilköğretime de uygun olduğunu düşünüyorsanız, bundan da söz edebilirsiniz.*

- Sizce şu an Kerkük'teki okullar ve eğitimle ilgili en önemli sorunlar hangileridir?

- Sizce Kerkük'te orta eğitim okullarının etnik açıdan veya dil açısından ayrılması, toplumlar arasında yabancılaşmaya yol açıyor mu? Lütfen anlatın.
- Sizce okulların ayrılması Kerkük'te tüm toplumlar için fırsat eşitliği sağlamakta mıdır? Lütfen anlatın.
- *ÝLKÖDRETÝMÝN* ana dilde verilmesi uluslararası kuruluşlarca tanınmış bir haktır ve çoğu toplum için arzu edilen bir durumdur. Fakat, (çok dilli okullara karşı) tek dilde eğitim veren ORTA öğretim okullarının artması sizce toplumun talebiyle değil de, diğer faktörler sonucunda mı meydana gelmiştir? Örneğin siyasetçiler veya çıkar grupları?
- Sizce kentteki yetkililerin ayrımcılık ve propaganda yaymaya çalışması, ebeveynlerin bu ayrılmış okulları tercih etmesine neden olmakta mıdır? Sizce geleceğe yönelik endişe duyulmasının okul seçiminde rolü var mıdır?
- Sizce ana dilde ilköğretim ve daha sonra çok dilli orta eğitimin sunulması uygun bir eğitim stratejisi midir?
- Bildiğiniz kadarıyla Kerkük'te çok dilli orta okullar var mıdır?
- Gençlerin toplumla bütünleşmesini sağlamaya yönelik bildiğiniz herhangi girişim var mıdır? Lütfen örnekler verin.
- Eğer kendiniz Kerküklüyseniz, sizin okul sistemindeki tecrübeleriniz hakkında biraz bilgi verebilir misiniz?

## Appendix 8: Pilot Kurdish

CONFLICT IN CITIES  
WWW.CONFLICTINCITIES.ORG

### رائرسی لئەسەر ئەقروەردە لئە کەزکوک

رؤذ:

ناوی ضاوئیکەوتن لئەطەل کراو:

ناوی ضاوئیکەوتن ئەنجامدەر:

زمانی بەکار هینراو:

شوین:

زانیاری دیموگرافی/طشتی

نیر یان می/

تەمەن/

ئایا خۆت بە بەشیک لئە ئەقروەردە یان رەطزیکێ ديار یکر او دەرانیست؟

تکایە لیرە بینووسە

زمانی دایک/یەکەمت ضییە؟

ض ئەقروەردە یان بوارێ ئەقروەردە کەزکوکەو هەقیە؟

ناو نیشانی کار و وەسفکردنی

ئەطەر سەر بە قوتابخانەیکێ تاییەتی تکایە بینووسە

### ئرسیارکردن لئەسەر ئەقروەردە

رینماییەکان

هەموو ئرسیارەکان تاییەتن بە قوئاعی ئامادەیی، لئە تەمەنی 11-18. هەرضەندە ئەطەر ئیویست بە ئامادە بە قوئاعی سەرەتایی دەکات تکایە بینووسە.

• ئیست وایە لئە ئیستادا ض مەسەلەطەلیک طرنطی هەقیە بۆ قوتابخانەکان و بوارێ ئەقروەردە لئە کەزکوک؟

• ئیست وایە جیاکردنەوێ قوتابخانەکانی بە طویرەتی ئەقروەردە و زمان لئە قوتابخانە ئامادەییەکانی کەزکوک طوئەطیری نیوان ئەقروەردەکان قولتەدەکات؟ تکایە لیرە هۆکارەکان بینووسە.

• ئیست وایە خویندن بە جیا لئە ئەقروەردەکانی تر هەلی یەکسان بۆ هەموو ئەقروەردەکانی کەزکوک دەرەخسینیست؟ تکایە لیرە هۆکارەکان بینووسە.

• مافی خویندن بە زمانی دایک لئە قوئاعی (سەرەتایی) دا لئە لایەن کۆمەلەطی نیو دەرەخسینیست دانی ئیدانراو و ئارەزووی هەموو ئەقروەردەکیشتە. بەلام ئایا تۆ ئیست وایە فراوانکردنی جیاکاری بۆ خویندن بە یەک زمان بۆ قوئاعی ئامادەیی (کە ئیضەتوانی قوتابخانەتی ضەندزمانییە) لئەبەر

هوكاريكة كة ناطقريتهوة بو خواستی نقتةوكان؟ بو نمونة هوكارى لايقة سياسيهكان يان  
طروثى بقرذوةندي؟

● ثبت واية هةولدان بو بلاوكردنةوهى تايقةطقرى و ثروثاطقندة لة لايقةن لايقةنكانى شارى  
كتركوك بوته هوى نهوهى كة دايك و باوكان قوتابخانهى نامادهي جياكاربيان تى باشربيت؟  
نايا ترس لة ناييندة دهورى هةيه لة هةلبذاردى جوريك لة قوتابخانه؟

● ثبت واية خويندن به زمانى دايك لة قوناغى سقرتاييدا كة بهداويدا قوتابخانهى ضةندزمانى لة  
قوناغى نامادهييدا بيت ستراتيجيكة دهكريت جيبةجى بكريت؟

● نايا هيض قوتابخانهيكي نامادهيى ضةندزمانى هةيه كة تو ناطادارى بيت؟

● نايا هيض كؤممةتيكي مامؤستايان و دايك و باوكان هةيه كة ريطة بدات به بهشدارى فراوانى  
كؤممةلطة لة طفطوطوكردن دهبارةى كاروبارى قوتابخانهكان؟

● نايا وانةى ميذوو ثروطرامى خويندى قوتابخانه جياكاربييهكان تايقت به نقتةوهيكة  
دهخوينريت؟

● نايا هيض هةوليك لة نارادايه به مقبستهى نيكةوه ذيان لة نيوان طةنجانى نقتةوه جياجياكاندا؟  
تكاية نمونةى دياريكراو لييرة باس بكة.

● نهطقر خوت به نهسل خةلكى كتركوكى نيم خؤشة نقرمونى خوت لة سيستهى خويندندا بزنام  
كاتيك خوت قوتابى بوويت.

## Appendix 9: Question Prompts

### Board question prompts

#### Technical

Number of schools,

Locations

Enrolments,

Curriculum,

External support.

#### Capacity of schools

What issues could be improved?

How could they be improved?

#### Integration?

School mixing programmes?

Collaboration between education officials?

Collaboration between teachers from different schools?

Language fluency and use in education?



## Appendix 9

### Appendix 10:

#### Interviews Conducted - 2010/2011

Location	Name	Title	Community	Interview
Ninewa		Director of Education	Arab	24/11/10 Mosul
		Director of Kurdish studies and OM	Arab	24/11/10 Mosul
		S&E Committee	Yazidis pro KRG	24/11/10 Mosul
		S&E Committee	Yazidis pro KRG	24/11/10 Mosul
		S&E Committee	Shabek	26/11/10 Mosul
		S&E Committee	Yezidi Pro Kurd	24/11/10 Mosul
		S&E Committee	Yezidi Anti Kurd	25/11/10 Mosul
		Headmaster - Arabic speaking	Yezidi Anti Kurd	25/11/10 Mosul
		Community education representative	Turkmen	25/11/10 Mosul
		S&E Committee	Christians	12/02/2010
		S&E Committee	KRG Representative	12/02/2010
		MoE Supervisor Assyrian Education	Assyrian	Cancelled to be interviewed by telephone
		MoE Supervisor Yezidi Education	Yezidi	Cancelled to be interviewed by telephone
		MoE Supervisor Turkmen Education	Turkmen	14/10/10
		S&E Committee	Christian	12/02/2010
		Director of Education Akre	Kurd	30/11/2010
		Acting Mayor Akre	Kurd	30/11/2010
		Mayor of Shekhan	Yezidi	30/11/2010
		Director of Education Shekhan	Yezidi	30/11/10

	Mayor of Makhmour		Mission Cancelled to be interviewed by telephone
	Makhmour director of education		Mission Cancelled to be interviewed by telephone
<b>Kirkuk</b>	P/C Education	Assyrian	29/11/10
	DoE Kurdish Studies	Kurdish	30/11/10
	Director of Turkmen education	Turkmen	30/11/10
	ITF Education Committee	Turkmen	30/11/10
	Prof of Education	Arab	28/11/10
	Teacher Trainer	Turkmen	28/11/10
	ITF Education Committee	Turkmen	24/11/10
		Kurd	08/01/11
		Kurd	08/01/11
		Kurd	05./01/11
<b>Diyala</b>	Teacher	Turkmen	12/01/2010
	Teacher	Turkmen	12/01/2010
	NGO	Arab	12/01/2010
	NGO	Arab	12/01/2010
	NGO	Arab	12/01/2010
<b>KRG</b>	Dogramaci Foundation	Turkmen	10/12/2010
	Teacher	Turkmen	13/10/2010
	Minister of Education KRG		10/11/2010
	Director of Assyrian Education KRG	Assyrian	10/12/2010
	Director of Turkmen Education KRG	Turkmen	10/12/2010
	KRG Assyrian education Specialist	Assyrian	10/12/2010

KRG with DIB experience	P Head Teacher	Assyrian	13/10/2010
	S Head Teacher	Assyrian	13/10/2010
	P Head Teacher	Turkmen	10/12/2010
	S Head Teacher	Turkmen	10/12/2010
	Assyrian Aid Society	Assyrian	tel ongoing
	Chaldean Cultural Society	Chaldean	29/11/10
	Kurdish Human Rights Watch	Kurd	29/11/10
	Chaldean Cultural Society	Chaldean	29/11/10
	Amman based Iraqi Academic	Arab	20/11/10
	Amman based Iraqi Academic		20/11/10
Amman Xian	Christian	21/10/10 tel	
-	Arab	20/10/10	
Amman based Iraqi Academic	Arab	21/10/10	
Amman based Academic	Arab	20/10/10	

Community	Number of Interviewees
Christian	
Assyrian	10
Chaldean	3
Kurd	11
Arab	10
Yezidi	9
Pro Kurd	
Pro Arab	
Shabak	2
Turkmen	13
Total	58

## Appendix 11

### INITIAL PROPOSALS FOR QUICK IMPACT PROJECTs

#### Mother-Tongue Education in the DIB's 2012

Kelsey Shanks

United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq – Political Affairs

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## Project Proposals at a Glance

### *Language Curriculum Development*

It is essential that any QIP's considered work toward the recommended goals outlined in the Education Language Rights Survey. Therefore QIP projects should serve as a foundation for the implementation of a bilingual programme of education and not serve to enhance the availability of mono-linguistic schools. Due consideration needs to be given to the findings of the report so that QIPs strive to enhance educational outcome, societal integration and work with the political realities on the ground and are not taken used to further the educational segregation and neglect of bilingualism.

### *Resource availability*

Support the participatory production of literacy material in traditional languages; encourage educationalists to engage with parents and communities and ensure graded reading materials are available in mother-tongue languages to ensure literacy while building on the acknowledgement of the need for Bilingualism.

### *Three stage process*

- 1. Resource development consultations** A series of workshops and consultative meetings with community leaders and linguistic specialists 'in order to create a suitable language curriculum for traditional languages. The purpose would be to create a collection of traditional poems, songs or stories which can be used for standardised resource creation.
- 2. Resource creation workshops** A second round of workshops for teachers and linguistic specialists to formulate syllabus and teacher resources. Using the afore mentioned community-nominated resources to create language syllabi, structured lesson plans and teachers' guides which will reduce the need for teacher planning and allow for a fast track training programme to qualify teachers in mother-tongue languages.
- 3. Teacher Resource Centre** Creation of an online teacher resource centre which allows access to teacher resources, the sharing of lesson plans and a forum for interaction between language community teachers.

### *Teacher Training initiatives*

Inadequate teacher training in mother-tongue languages and neglect for the importance of bilingualism mean that improved teacher training and refresher courses are necessary. A series of different courses can be offered to enhance the provision of languages throughout the region and advance the training capabilities

**1. Design and implementation of short course teacher training - structured curriculum**

Provide a six week training course in structured mother-tongue elective subjects. The course would be open to existing teachers of other subjects and, in exceptional circumstances, where need arises, fluent speaking community members.

**2. Training of mobile Bilingual language trainers**

The training of mobile teacher trainers with specialism in bilingual teaching pedagogy. This will allow a wider coverage of training and a cost effective way to maintain a continual progression in the development of pedagogy.

**3. Development of online training courses in Bilingualism** the development of an online curriculum to provide existing teachers with new skills in language pedagogy. This can be provided through the online teacher resource centre and would require partnerships with schools with good online facilities or community centres with internet access.

### *Advance the principle of Bilingualism*

**Pilot Bilingual schools** Pilot schools to be established on the true principle of bilingualism/multilingualism. Opportunities for the establishment of such schools can be found in areas where more than one language community share a school building. The suggestion of this report would be to investigate the possibility of using a school in Kirkuk for this pilot programme, for example Baghdad road. The increased international attention and focus on conflict resolution in the city would aid the implementation of such a programme. Such schools would require much greater investment in curriculum development, teacher training and community advocacy campaigns.

## *Administration*

**A regional education task force** should be appointed which oversees all districts with unresolved administration issues. The task force should help to facilitate the joint administration of educational affairs in the 15 districts between the KRG Ministry of Education and Baghdad Ministry of Education.

### Considerations

- The taskforce requires active participation from both Ministries to be successful
- Great attention should be paid to the qualifications of directorate staff in term of pedagogical experience and qualifications
- Ideally, the Task Force should also have a small dedicated secretariat that can assist with the implementation of its mandate. In case it is requested to do so, UNAMI could provide and organize international technical assistance to the Task Force and its secretariat.
- The Task Force members must exercise mutual dependency to avoid ethnically defined sections each serving the needs of their own communities.
- A representative sample of communities from across the DIB's must be present

### Remit

- Co-ordinate and ensure Ministerial translation, printing and distribution of textbooks
- Overall coordination of the different efforts to provide mother-tongue education and equality of representation.
- Overall, systematic monitoring of the implementation of the different efforts and ensure that when problems or issues arise the required measures are taken to address it;
- Regulate teacher recruitment and salary
- Establish and clarify relationship with external bodies or agencies. Manage and monitor donors.
- Co-ordinate funding allocations and resource provision

The Task-Force should establish functional Sub-Committees focusing on the particular issue areas to be covered in the subsequent recommendation of this report. Sub Committees may include

- Curriculum Representation
  - Elective tradition language curriculum development
  - Community cultural representation within subjects
  - Bilingual education development
- Exam boards
  - Exam committee to oversee the examination and certification of pupils in the region through both ministries
- Integration
  - Oversee extra-curricular integration initiatives

## **Establishment of Community education Committees**

Establish local management structures through community education committees (CECs) to serve the existing directorates of education in each governorate. Such CEC would provide accountability to community members and parents and track, monitor and oversee the external sources providing support to schools in their communities, organize a regular dialogue and outreach with the different communities to discuss progress and problems faced within the separate school systems. These structures would also identify gaps and education provision issues for which no appropriate solutions exists and formulate and adopt proposals to address them (and, where necessary, liaise with the ministries of education or Baghdad Central Government e.g. for budget requirements). Another objective would be to provide consultation and information gathering for the regional task force.

- CECs would have a consultative role as well as decision making influence.
- Comprised of parents/ community leaders/ teachers/ leader of groups / students NGO leaders – ensure representation but maintain a representation but manageable group size
- Experience of Pedagogy and Learning environments becomes essential in order to avoid the committee becoming a forum for political debate and co-opted for partisan politics.
- The CEC members must exercise mutual dependency to avoid ethnically defined sections of the committee each serving the needs of their own communities.

### **The Remit**

- Provide accountability to community member and parents
- Track, monitor and oversee the external sources providing support to schools in their communities
- Organize a regular dialogue and outreach with the different communities to discuss progress and problems faced within the separate school systems.
- Identify gaps and education provision issues for which no appropriate solutions exists and formulate and adopt proposals to address them (and, where necessary, liaise with the ministries of education or Baghdad Central Government e.g. for budget requirements).
- Provide consultation and information gathering for the regional task force.





### ***Outcome expected***

Develop community consensus over the use of languages/spelling/ vocabulary in the curriculum and opportunity to identify any difficulties in teaching the languages and propose solutions.

Project Title	Resource and structured curriculum Creation Workshops
Issue Area	Elective Language Resource Provision
Objectives	Elective traditional language/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To create a structured curriculum for each language</li><li>• Use materials gathered from previous workshop to create a syllabus, lesson plans and teacher resources.</li><li>• Creation of graded Literacy materials</li></ul>
Participants	Teachers and linguists from each of the minority language communities.
Duration	
Project organisation	Community specific workshops for Yezidid/Shabak/Assyrian/Turkmen

### ***Summary of Need***

Consultation with community education specialists revealed a complete lack of teaching resources and reading materials for minority language education in the region. Some language communities also lack linguistically specific teacher training access and therefore the adequacy of the teaching has been brought into question.

The creation of a structured curriculum and teaching resources would minimise the need for teacher planning and lesson design and allow teachers to sufficiently teach the languages with a fast track training provision.

### ***Activities proposed***

- Selection of participants and necessary components for workshops

Community Leadership	Teachers
Expertise	Education and Linguistic expertise
Collaboration/Partnership	UNESCO/UNICEF
- Selection of workshop location and venue
- Creation of workshop programmes which reflect the specific needs of each language community

### ***Outcome expected***

- Creation of a structured syllabus
- Creation of an accompanying teachers guide with lesson plans and teaching resources
- Creation of graded literacy resources

Project Title	Teaching Resource centre
Issue Area	Improve all aspects of language teaching
Objectives	<p>The creation of an online teacher resource website to provide support through an online forum.</p> <p>Linguistic teaching resources Venue for online training courses A shared space for teachers to communicate ideas and issues that they face</p>
Beneficiaries	All teachers in the region
Duration	Ongoing

### ***Summary of need***

All communities complain of a lack of available resources. Once resources are identified and created in the initial workshops it would be essential to ensure distribution and access of these resources as well as a continued updating and refreshing of resources and ideas. These centres or online forums would allow teachers to share ideas and practices.

The centres would allow for the potential expansion into providing general support to teachers of all subjects.

### ***Activities proposed***

- ***Web design***
- ***Identify access partners in each district – either a school or community centre with internet provision to be nominated as an access point in each district.***

### **Outcome expected**

- **Interactive Teaching resource website**
- **Nominated access locations in each district**
- **Provide a forum for language teachers to exchange ideas**

### *Mother Tongue Teacher training initiatives*

Project Title	Short course teacher training - structured curriculum
Issue Area Objectives	Teacher qualification for minority languages Train teachers in a structured curriculum to allow a fast tracked qualification in the different languages
Participants Duration	Teachers from across the region
Project organisation	Possible Partnership with UNESCO/UNICEF

#### ***Summary of need***

Consultation revealed that there is a lack of teacher training available in mother tongue languages. For some communities this has resulted in either a lack of access or provision by teachers who have had no formal training in language teaching. The previous development of a structured language curriculum would allow for teachers to participate in a 6 week training short-course which would familiarise them with the teaching materials and language teaching methodology. The syllabus development and lesson plans would allow for a flexible approach to who is trained in mother tongue instruction. For elective subjects such as Yezidi or Shabek, if there is a shortage of teachers who speak the mother tongue language, members of the community with fluency can be considered to participate in the training.

#### ***Activities proposed***

- Selection of trainer
- Selection of location and venue
- Creation of a training curriculum using structured syllabus
- Selection of participants from each region

#### ***Outcomes expected***

- ***Fast tracked teacher qualifications***
- ***Reduce teacher workload for mother-tongue lesson preparation***
- ***Open up mother-tongue teaching to community members***
- ***Increase availability of language elective access***

## *Bilingual Teacher Training initiatives*

### *Summary of need*

The future implementation of bilingual programs will aim to create a *variety of models* for bilingual education and teachers in the region will require the correct knowledge and understanding of bilingual pedagogy. Training courses can be offered through a number of small projects which can reach a wide number of teachers in the region.

Project Title	Training of mobile Bilingual language trainers
Issue Area	Teacher qualification in Bilingual pedagogy
Objectives	<p>Enable qualified individuals to conduct in school training in bilingual pedagogy</p> <p>Improve the understanding and importance of Bilingualism and the appropriateness of pedagogical approaches to bilingual language education</p> <p>Increase standard and experience of bilingualism</p> <p>Far reaching access of the training</p>
Participants	Possibly existing Language supervisors/ new positions created
Duration	
Project organisation	Partnership with UN organisation
Activities proposed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Curriculum development for the training course</i></li><li>• <i>Curriculum development for onward training</i></li><li>• <i>Location and venues chosen</i></li><li>• <i>Participant selection</i></li><li>• <i>Training of Language supervisors in Bilingual pedagogy</i></li></ul>
<i>Outcomes Expected</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Increased monitoring and awareness of bilingual pedagogy</i></li><li>• <i>A cost effective way to reach a large number of schools</i></li></ul>

Project Title	Development of online training courses in Bilingualism
Issue Area Objectives	Importance of Bilingual education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online cost effective and easily accessible training courses for established teachers.</li> </ul>
Participants Duration Activities proposed	Existing teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Design of curriculum and course</i></li> <li>• <i>Website design (linked in with teacher resource centres?)</i></li> <li>• Identify partner organisations and access venues</li> </ul>

*Pilot Bilingual schools*

Project Title	Pilot schools
Issue Area Objectives	Importance of Bilingual education  Pilot schools to be established on the true principle of bilingualism/multilingualism. Opportunities for the establishment of such schools can be found in areas where more than one language community share a school building. The suggestion of this report would be to investigate the possibility of using a school in Kirkuk for this pilot programme, for example Baghdad road. The increased international attention and focus on conflict resolution in the city would aid the implementation of such a programme. Such schools would require much greater investment in curriculum development, teacher training and community advocacy campaigns.
Duration Activities proposed	Ongoing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Design of bilingual curriculum to be taught</i></li> <li>• Identify partner organisations and possible venues</li> <li>• Community advocacy campaign</li> <li>• Teacher training</li> </ul>

*Administration*

Project Title	Establishment of Community education Committees (CEC)
Issue Area Objectives	<p>Management</p> <p><b>Establish local management structures</b> (CECs) to serve the existing directorates of education in each governorate.</p> <p>Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CECs would have a consultative role as well as decision making influence.</li> <li>• Comprised of parents/ community leaders/ teachers/ leader of groups / students NGO leaders – ensure representation but maintain a representation but manageable group size</li> <li>• Provide accountability to community member and parents</li> <li>• Track, monitor and oversee the external sources providing support to schools in their communities</li> <li>• Organize a regular dialogue and outreach with the different communities to discuss progress and problems faced within the separate school systems.</li> <li>• Identify gaps and education provision issues for which no appropriate solutions exists and formulate and adopt proposals to address them (and, where necessary, liaise with the ministries of education or Baghdad Central Government e.g. for budget requirements).</li> <li>• Provide consultation and information gathering for the regional task force.</li> </ul>
Activities Proposed	Aid the establishment of CEC’s through consultation and remit design
Duration	Ongoing

## Appendix: 12



### Conflict in Cities and the Contested State

Project Report – June 2012

Kelsey Shanks, PhD candidate

Department of Politics  
– University of Exeter

*Thesis Title: Education and Ethno-politics: The Role of Education in the Disputed Territories of Iraq. (Working title)*

## OVERVIEW

The oil-rich northern districts of Iraq were long considered a reflection of the country with a diversity of ethnic and religious groups; Arabs, Turkmen, Kurds, Assyrians, Yezidi, Shabak and Chaldeans, living together and portraying Iraq's demographic makeup. However, the Ba'ath party's brutal policy of Arabisation in the twentieth century created a false demographic and instigated the escalation of identity politics. Consequently, the region is currently highly contested with the disputed territories, or disputed internal boundaries (DIB's), consisting of 15 districts stretching across four northern governorates and curving from the Syrian to Iranian borders.

The city of Kirkuk lies at the centre of the dispute due to its symbolic importance to both Kurds and Turkmen and strategic significance to Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The official contest over the city's administration has resulted in a tug-of-war between Baghdad and Erbil that has frequently stalled the Iraqi political system. Subsequently, across the region, minority groups have been pulled into a clash over demographic composition as each disputed districts faces ethnically defined claims and an administrative solution for Kirkuk remains evasive.



As the political impasse continues, ministries from both the KRG and Baghdad maintain varying degrees of administrative influence across the territories. These overlapping jurisdictions have created a complex system of service delivery based on ethnic identity. As the two linguistically distinct centres of governance vie for control, inter-ethnic communal tensions are rising and questions of identity increasingly overshadow day to day life. The existing literature and research on the region focuses heavily on the governance outcomes and possible administrative solutions. Little has been written about the impact of heightened identity politics on the everyday lives of citizens. Regardless of the final administrative outcome, the multi-ethnic population of the region require services and systems of coexistence. It is within this context that the thesis examines the development of education systems across the region post 2003. In the fragile environment of the DIB's, the way in which the education system manages diversity is crucial. Schools hold great influence over the integration and segregation of ethnic communities. Yet there is a complete absence of scholarly analysis in terms of not only the emergent education system post 2003, but also its role within the wider identity based contest.

### **Objectives**

It was the purpose of the thesis therefore to conduct the first mapping exercise of education in the region and to determine the factors influencing the development of education structures. The thesis unpacks the central research question of '*How have ethno-politics influenced the education in the disputed territories post 2003?*' The research sought to examine the purpose of education in the region, exploring the significance of cultural reproduction and investigating the link between demands for ethnically specific education and the wider political contestation over the territory. In this respect two fields of influence were important. Firstly, the ethnic basis to territorial claims, which has amplified the discourse over linguistic presence, cultural representation and minority rights; and secondly, the insecure environment, in which sectarian based attacks are frequent and debates over territorial representation have been elevated to the height of ethnic survival issues. Given these fields of influence two important sub research questions arose; to what extent has ethnically specific education become a society security issue? And what is the relationship between education and the wider conflict?

### **Methodology**

The thesis drew on a variety of primary and secondary resources in its investigation. Policy documents, media reports, UN and NGO education assessments and the collection of nearly 50 interviews with education officials and community representatives across the territories. Data was collected over the course of four separate research trips to Iraq, Iraqi Kurdistan and Jordan between 2010 and 2011.

## The Main Empirical Findings



*'People need to celebrate who they are ... before it was forbidden so now they need it... it tells 'you didn't beat us, we will come back stronger' Aziz*

### *Identity and Education Reform-*

With the particular experience of genocide and ethnic insecurity in the region, education has become an obvious vehicle for the reaffirmation of cultural identity. Growing ethnic segregation within the education system provides the perfect means by which to reinforce group identity markers and strengthen societal security though linguistically, historically and religiously specific education. In this sense, the language of instruction has become particularly important and calls for mother tongue education can be heard from all communities.

From an educational perspective, the importance of Mother-Tongue learning stems from an acknowledgement of better learning outcomes due to better comprehension. However, the situation in the disputed territories is more complicated and a number of contradictions must be taken into account. The intricate nature of Iraq's cultural diversity and political history has led to a multifarious network of both political and linguistic representation within each ethnic community. Due to the legacy of territorial dispute and devastating effects of Arabization, not all members of Iraq's ethnic groups have an active linguistic basis for identity identification. Ethnic communities have been divided by two linguistic authorities and have adapted in order to survive, resulting in a varied mix of languages learned from birth within each ethnicity.

In this sense, for some ethnic groups, the use of the term 'mother-tongue' is called into question and can be seen to take on a new meaning. 'Mother-tongue' comes to represent a language that is traditionally spoken by their ethnic group and not necessarily one in which a person of that group has fluency. The emergent school structure is therefore complex, with a plurality of institutional structures and uses of the term 'mother-tongue'. The influence of identity protection has resulted in four models of school to meet the mixed requirements of each community; *Mother-Tongue*, including Turkmen, Assyrian and Kurdish schools, *Dominant Language* submersion schools, Dominant language schools with traditional language/religious instruction provision or Dominant language schools with mother-tongue year groups and classes within them – teaching a translated curriculum.

***Education and Societal security*** – The pursuit of ethnically specific education can be viewed in terms of two benefits; the pedagogical advantages of actual mother tongue education and the protection of societal security. The investigation found the latter to be of greater significance in the disputed territories. Access to ethnically specific education is framed in terms of ensuring access to the means of transmitting cultural heritage and this pursuit takes priority over pedagogical good practice or acknowledgement of international best practice standards. In this sense it is possible to identify children entering ‘mother tongue’ instruction schools because of ethnic affiliation and not because they have fluency in the language. This results in a form of submersion education which has negative educational outcomes for the pupil. Ensuring the transfer of tradition to the next generation and the protection of societal security has taken precedence over good practice. The ambiguity of future governance outcomes has created a need for representation at all costs.

***Threats to Societal Security and Securitising Moves*** - Any challenges to securing societal protection through education have therefore contributed to elevating the education narrative from one of cultural preservation to one of ethnic survival. Perceived deliberate threats include;

- Insufficient ministerial representation for minority languages. (Subsumed under Kurdish studies)
- Official channels blocking requests for resource allocation and funding.
- Prevention of teacher transfers from dominant language schools
- No text book translation.
- No minority specific language text books from GoI.



*'They do not fund the school just because it is a Turkmen school' - Turkmen MoE official in reference to funding for a Turkmen school in Ninewa.*



*'In Kirkuk the Turkmen open schools all over as a 'Screw you' to the Kurds, that is why they complain of underfunding.'* Arab education Official

***Kirkuk, Education and Societal Security*** - In Kirkuk an additional aim can be recognised. In terms of the three competing ethnicities, Kurd, Arab and Turkmen, linguistic representation through schooling can be seen to aid credence to their claims over demographic majority and historical ownership of the city. A more political dynamic emerges, without substantial representation in the region each groups fears it will lose control over the territory. The fight for Kirkuk is a numbers game which demands representation on the ground due to the omnipresent anticipation of article 140. A battle for linguistic supremacy can be seen to be fought in order to demonstrate

this. As such, protecting mother tongue education access can be seen to be enforcing their claims to administrative control and therefore safeguarding their future societal security in the city.

### ***CONSEQUENCES***

Taught curriculum which conflicts with exam curriculum.

Teachers untrained in curriculum of both MoE's.

Unregulated use of donated religious/cultural and history resources.

Loss of Dominate language skills by different communities.

Strategic opening of schools for territorial representation.

Unequal distribution of educational resources – possible future horizontal inequalities.

***Securitisation of Education-*** The lack of funding and threat perception has led education actors representing their communities to advance from securitising narratives toward taking direct emergency action. Despite acting within the state education system, community groups have sought private ethnically affiliated donors to support the schools and allowed outside influences to enter the state education system. This external influence has resulted in numerous negative outcomes for the traditional pursuit of education, both through intentional manipulations by actors using education for self-serving purposes and unintentional administrative complications caused by the mixed involvement of conflicting jurisdictions. Where language is so closely tied to ideas of identity, education can be manipulated by identity politics and used to serve the interests of political elites and nationalist extremists.

The securitisation of ethnically specific education has opened the door for this possibility. Minority communities in some regions perceive the opening of Kurdish language schools as a predatory act by the KRG, suggesting that the KRG education programme strives to ‘**eliminate other cultures and languages**’ and achieve the illusion of linguistic dominance on the ground. Equally such a linguistic battle for regional representation is seen to affect political will in terms of the opening and support of language schools in more demographically mixed areas.

## CONCLUSIONS

In conflict and post conflict environments, education is too often measured and assessed by means of desk counts and gender enrolment. In divided and contested societies, education holds a powerful influence over ethnic interaction and the peaceful resolution to conflict. It is the recommendation of this research that monitoring systems to detect conflict actors within the education system be further developed. Therefore scholars must work toward bridging the gap between academic understanding and real world practice.

### Further Resources

Anderson, Liam D., and Gareth R.V. Stansfield. *Crisis in Kirkuk: The Ethnopolitics of Conflict and Compromise*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.

Gallagher, T. (2004) *Education in divided societies* (London, Palgrave/Macmillan).

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Davies, Lynn (2008) *Educating Against Extremism* Trentham Books

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<sup>i</sup> Assistance Mission in Iraq found at <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/EGUA-7FBQJE?OpenDocument>  
Source: UN Date: 05 Jun 2008

<sup>ii</sup> Alan Smith and Christine Smith Ellison, *Engaging Youth in Planning Education for Social Transformation Youth, Education, and Peacebuilding* UNESCO Centre, University of Ulster 2012

<sup>iii</sup> Interviews with UNAMI and UNICEF Iraq staff; Nordstrand and Bell