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Parallel Nation-ness:
Invocation(s) and Performance(s) of Kurdish Nation-ness among Kurdish Immigrants in Finland

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Abstract - Tiivistelmä - Referat

This thesis investigates how Kurdish nation-ness is invoked and performed among Kurdish immigrants in Finland, through focusing on the case of Kurdiliitto (an umbrella association unifying 24 Kurdish-Finnish organizations throughout Finland.) Using an alternative concept, i.e. nation-ness, this study attempts to underline the historicity and ideological grab of nationalism, which often goes overlooked when adopting more conventional concepts such as 'diaspora', 'belonging' or 'identity'. As nation-ness is a novel concept with little scholarly attention, additional effort is directed towards defining it. Nation-ness is described in this thesis as a term conveying "*the state of being a nation.*"

This thesis provides answers to two main research questions: firstly, "how is Kurdish nation-ness invoked and performed among Kurdish immigrants in Finland?" and secondly, "what are some of the most recurrent patterns utilized in these invocations and performances?" It is argued that such division of questions directs analytical attention equally both towards the social actors' actions and the discursive, visual or auditory content found in these actions. Kurdiliitto is utilized to provide an empirical anchor for the investigation and to avoid an analytically shallow referencing of an "ethnic" or "diasporic" community. The data used in the answering of these research questions are elicited through ten observations at various events of Kurdiliitto and three semi-structured interviews with the leading members of the organization. The thesis adopts the abductive analysis method to focus on "surprises" within the collected data and emphasize an effort towards theory construction.

This study introduces an alternative analytical concept: i.e. 'nation-ness as performance.' Through this concept, it is argued nation-ness is, fundamentally, *performed*. An analogy between the performances of 'nation-ness' and 'gender' is emphasized in this context in order to determine the properties of nation-ness as performance.

In regard to the research questions, this thesis asserts that Kurdish nation-ness is invoked and performed mainly *as parallel to "other nation-nesses"*. The use of an internationally shared language of nationalism, as well as the flagging of nation-ness through various visual and auditory markers, are found to be the most recurrent patterns in the invocation(s) and performance(s) of Kurdish nation-ness.

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1 Introduction

Over the course of centuries, the world has become increasingly more connected[1], and the interrelated and complex flow of ideas, technologies, capital and people has created a disjuncture as to how we understand ourselves and the world around us (Appadurai 1996). However, one grand narrative about the world and ourselves has managed to remain assertively influential. So influential that, notwithstanding this disjuncture, its position and presupposed importance is rarely questioned. Whether the issue at hand is "making America great again", declaring a "victory of independence" from EU for Britain, or voting for Catalonian independence[2], we are still trying to protect, honor or establish the *nation-state* and the *nation.* To have a national identity is so natural, so given for the modern man that the historicity and constructedness of such notion often goes under the radar. In the current, "national order of things" (Malkki 1992), "a man must have a nationality as he must have a nose and two ears" (Gellner 1983, p. 6) or, "as he or she 'has' a gender" (Anderson 1983, p. 5). As such, the lack of a politically recognized national identity – and in several cases, the lack of a nation-state – is often understood as an anomaly and leads to real or perceived political and social 'problems' (Malkki 1992).

Although the myth of nationalism firmly contends otherwise, this specific way of 'being' a nationality (e.g. 'Turkish', 'Kurdish', 'Finnish' etc.) or understanding ourselves on such terms is a relatively recent phenomena; whether it is traced back to Kant (Gellner 1983; Özkirimli 2017), to the French Revolution (Rowe 2013), to the start of print capitalism (Anderson 1983) or to industrialization (Gellner 1983). The point here is not to discuss which of these proposed 'origins' is more plausible; but it is to remind that nations "are a *contingency*, and not a universal necessity" (Gellner 1983, p.6) [Italics mine], despite presenting themselves as such and having been quite convincing in doing so. As Altinay boldly points out, "there are no nations that have existed for hundreds or thousands of years, because 'nation' is a new identity category" (2005, p. 94).

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[1] This is *not to* claim that such "connectedness" affects people across different socio-political positions, genders, nationalities and races in the same way or to the same extent. Indeed, it is important to acknowledge that the effects of increased flow or connectedness are unequal and multi-faceted across socio-political classes.

[2] Catalonian Independence Referendum conducted on 27 October, 2017.

The forgetting of the history of 'nation-ness' and nationalism – or the "amnesias of nationalism" as Anderson describes it (1991, p. xv) – seems to make this ideology even more elusive. Following this, the research at hand should be understood as an attempt to *remind*; to look closer into the "national order of things" as it is poses as the "natural order of things" (Malkki 1992).

The late 1990s and early 2000s saw the proliferation of two different streams of sociological theorization. Combined together, these streams pushed nationalism as a point of examination to the peripheries. The first of these streams attributed nationalistic sentiments and objectives to the realm of 'others'; e.g. minority groups claiming independence. As such, the nationalism "waving with fervent passion" (Billig 1995, p. 8) was analyzed intensively, while *our* nationalism continued to remain unseen. As an unfortunate consequence of this, nationalism predominantly came to be understood as sentiments, or goals of certain groups in particular moments of time; not the dominant ideology that have moulded the world – i.e. terrains, humans, languages, even foods – to the shape it has today.

Additionally, the second stream of sociological theory – as demonstrated by Beck and his discussions on cosmopolitanism (2005) – were anxious to declare the supposed downfall of nationalism, since globalization and its effects were rapidly transforming the social psyche of the postmodern individual. The applicability of this narrative across borders and socio-economic classes has since then been problematized (see, for instance, Appadurai 1996). Furthermore, the proposed decline or weakening of nationalism has continuously been repudiated by numerous scholars (see Anderson 1983; Billig 1995; Hall 1996; Eliassi 2013). To this day, "nation-ness" still continues to be "the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time" (Anderson 1983, p.3) and as such, it certainly deserves scientific attention.

1.1   Situating the Research: Aims and Objectives

Before going further into the study at hand, it is imperative to clarify where this research stands in terms of its premises, aims and objectives. Such explanation is also meant to aid in grounding *why* certain concepts and ideas were consciously left unadopted throughout this research.

The principal aim of this study is to present an alternative approach in the fields of Kurdish studies and nationalism studies, by examining how Kurdish nation-ness is

invoked and *performed* among Kurdish immigrants in Finland. Consequently, an additional aim is to provide research that displays nationalism *as an ideology*; through adopting *Kurdish nation-ness* as a unit of analysis. Here, one point to draw special attention to is that concepts such as Kurdish *identity* and *national identity* – as well as notions of belonging, homeland and diaspora, which have been traditionally adopted in studies with similar subjects – are intentionally not utilized within the scope of this research. A conscious decision of this sort necessitates a clarification as to why the aforementioned concepts are not adopted in this study.

The first reason to omit the concepts of identity, belonging, homeland and diaspora is related to the effort of appointing a distinctive aim and premise for this study. In a way, this research can be thought to exist at an intersection between *Kurdish studies* and *nationalism studies*. Throughout the course of this research, establishing a distinct focus – i.e. Kurdish nation-ness – has proven to be a taxing process. This was partly because previous well-established studies with comparable subjects – i.e. Kurdish immigrants in a European context – have had dramatically different approaches and points of focus. Wahlbeck's focus on refugee *diaspora* (1999), Alinia's conceptualization of *homeland* (2004), Eliassi's account of *identity* (2013) and Toivanen's approach to *belonging* and non-belonging (2014a) are few among the influential examples with similar subjects. In contrast, however, it should be noted that this study's main point of examination is *not* per se Kurdish diaspora, homeland, identity or belonging among immigrants; it is Kurdish nation-ness. In this context, nation-ness is used a*s* an alternative to the previously widely used concepts in Kurdish studies, primarily with the aim to call attention to the holistic aspect of nationalism. To sum, as its main unit of analysis, this study chooses to utilize the concept of *nation-ness*, as coined by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities* (1983).

Additionally, it is imperative to assert that the study at hand *does not* aim to examine "nationalism as expressed by the Kurds." The basic premise adopted in this aspect is more holistic and contends that *nationalism creates the nation*; not the other way around (Gellner 1983). In arguing otherwise, one would risk falling into the trap of methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Schiller 2002), by treating certain 'national' entities as starting points; or as real objects that are 'out there'. As put forward by Breuilly, "[n]ationalism is not a sentiment expressed by pre-existing nations: rather *it creates nations where they did not previously exist*" (Breuilly 2006, p. xxv) [Italics mine]. In other words, in terms of this "chicken-and-the-egg" problem, this research

understands nationalism as an ideology, as a grand narrative that *engenders* nations, and that affects human life in a holistic manner; as opposed to viewing nationalism as a 'feeling' or a 'reaction'.

The second reason to avoid using concepts such as *identity* or *national identity* comes from the pronounced mismatch between these concepts and the objectives of this research, as well as the motivation on the researcher's behalf to present a study with an alternative approach. By itself, the view that identity as a concept is "too complex, too under-developed and too little understood in contemporary social science" (Hall 1996, p. 597) should not lead to an absolute discouragement in terms of adopting it. On the contrary, numerous researchers in the field make use of this concept while keeping in mind this critique. For instance, adopting the concept of identity, Eliassi argues that "the problem is situated not solely in the term itself but also in the way we use it through our theoretical, empirical, and interpretational frameworks" (2013, p.52). However, considering the specific objective and premise of this particular research, the concept of identity stands, at best, as an inadequate alternative.

This is because an attempt to examine nationalism through identity could potentially lead to *understating* the historicity and ideological grab of nationalism, which are two aspects the research at hand attempts to highlight. In his book *Banal Nationalism*, Billig also warns social scientists against a "temptation to explain nationalist consciousness in terms of 'identity', as if 'identity' were a psychological state, which exists apart from forms of life" (1995, p. 65). The potential danger here is that identity (i.e. national identity) comes to be analyzed independently from the social and political systems it exists in. As such, the specific workings of nationalism as an ideology, its hegemony, and its history tend to be neglected. Ultimately, this study agrees with Billig's view that "nationalism is more than a feeling of identity" (ibid.) or "an inner psychological state or an individual self-definition" (1995, p.69).

More importantly, "belonging to a people" or claiming "to have a national identity" *cannot* be considered an affirmation solely of that specific "identity'. On the contrary, such a claim points out to certain normative assumptions and rationalizations about the "nature of things" in the world we live in. As Billig contends, "a person cannot claim to have patriotic feelings for their nation, *unless they have assumptions about what a nation is* and, indeed, what patriotism is" (1995, pp. 60-61) [Italics mine].

In the context of this study, nationalism is understood as an *ideological hegemony* where "nations, national identities and national homelands appear as 'natural'" (Billig 1995, p.10), and where "the 'world of nations' is represented as a 'natural', moral order" (ibid.). This points to a clear mismatch between the concept of (national) identity – i.e. its capacity to bring forward the ideological grab of nationalism – and the aims of this research, which is to provide a more holistic approach by adopting instead the concept of 'nation-ness'. In other words, analyzing nationalism through the concept of identity would, in the context of this research, bring along the risk of painting an incomplete picture of nationalism.

To conclude, this research's main objective is to examine the ways Kurdish nation-ness is invoked and performed among Kurdish immigrants in Finland. In doing so, this study takes a holistic approach, and understands nationalism as a hegemonic ideology. In clear contrast to previous research in its field, the research at hand utilizes a new and alternative concept – i.e. nation-ness – with the aim to underscore nationalism as a dominant ideology that sets the standards and norms for today's political and social life.

1.2   Defining Nationalism and the Nation

The previous chapter established the basic premise, aims and objectives of this research. To complement, this chapter is meant to discuss further some of the concepts mentioned above and explain more in detail what they mean, as well as how they are used, in the context of this research.

Paradoxically, numerous prominent scholars in the field of nationalism studies have argued that providing a "scientific definition" of nationalism is either extremely difficult, or simply not possible (Anderson 1983; Billig 1995; Seton-Watson 1977). Part of the reason for this, as Billig (1995) maintains, is that the very scholars attempting to define or examine nationalism are not exempt from the moral norms and political order this ideology has established. Thus, while aiming for a "metaphorical bracketing" (Billig 1995, p. 14) of nationalism, this research, as well, exists in the same structures nationalism have instituted. Keeping this mind, the following is a discussion of the challenges and different strategies to define nationalism and 'the nation'.

In the context this study, nationalism is defined as an ideology that attributes particular characteristics (such as shared language or shared culture) to certain communities – which makes them 'nations' according to nationalism – and stipulates a specific

relationship between 'the community' (i.e. the nation), the state and the territory, all the while idealizing this specific relationship as a universal norm. As argued by Gellner, according to nationalism, this relationship ought to be one where "the political and the national unit should be congruent" (1983, p.1).

In *Banal Nationalism*, Billig draws attention to a problematic tendency that certainly needs consideration during the process of defining nationalism. This tendency seeks to define nationalism through "invented permanencies'" (1995, p.29). Among "invented permanencies" exist notions such as 'shared language', 'shared culture' or 'will to live together'. This thesis agrees with Billig's remarks on the problem of utilizing "invented permanencies" when describing nationalism. As he argues:

> Notions, which seem to us so solidly banal, turn out to be ideological constructions of nationalism. They are 'invented permanencies' which have been created historically in the age of modernity, but which feel as if they have always existed. This is one reason why it is so difficult to offer explanations for nationalism. Concepts, which an analyst might use to describe the causal factors, may themselves be constructs of nationalism (ibid.).

The following example illustrates this point clearly: A search on Dictionary.com for the term *nationalism*, displays interesting options, among which the first four are as follows: "spirit or aspirations common to *the whole of a nation*", "devotion and loyalty to *one's own country*; patriotism", "excessive *patriotism*; chauvinism" and "the desire for *national advancement* or political independence" [Italics mine]. All of these descriptions carry tones of methodological nationalism, as they treat notions such as 'nation', 'one's own country', 'patriotism' and 'national advancement' as given, or as natural objects that are out there (Wimmer & Schiller 2002).

The search for *nationalism* on Dictionary.com also embodies a crucial paradox Anderson discusses in *Imagined Communities*: Namely, the nationalists' way of understanding nationalism and its artifacts essentially derives from *the ideology itself.* What follows is an echo chamber[3] where nationalism is described *with its own interpretation of the world*, thanks to "invented permanencies" (Billig 1995). Thus, the notions and norms nationalism asserts as an ideology are rarely understood as ideological constructs. This should not be surprising since, just like any other ideology,

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[3] "Echo chambers", in this context, are understood as a specific type of content where nationalism is defined through its own ideological constructs. As result, nationalism, and the socio-political organization it stipulates, *appears* as "natural" or ideal. This points to the existence of an "echo chamber" around this ideology, especially if echo chambers are to be understood as "environment[s] in which a person encounters only beliefs or opinions that coincide with their own, so that their existing views are reinforced and alternative ideas are not considered" (Oxford Dictionaries).

also nationalism "operates to make people forget that their world has been historically constructed" (Billig, 1995, p.37). Ergo, this study makes it a crucial point to avoid using descriptions of nationalism – as well as of 'nation' – which are based on "invented permanencies."

Another important aspect to consider in the process defining nationalism is that it *creates*; it creates a world order where individuals can have one or multiple 'nationalities' and speak 'national languages'; an order where 'national teams' compete in inter*national* competitions, or an order where new ways of belonging and identifying oneself are negotiated through trans*national* social realities. One thing to be sure is that the phenomena mentioned above exits in a world where certain norms and standards have been internationally institutionalized by nationalism. This is not to claim that the order institutionalized by nationalism cannot be negotiated, modified or transformed by individuals or groups. Indeed, concepts such as *transnationalism* and *postnationalism* embody the theoretical conceptualizations of such negotiations. However, even in such endeavors, nationalism as an ideology is not excluded from the picture. The ideology's certain artifacts (e.g. 'the nation' or 'the nation-state') stay looming and stand as reference points: things to move *between* or *beyond* of. Oftentimes, in discussions of transnationalism and postnationalism, "what is often at stake is *not an argument against nationhood*, but an argument about *the nature of the nation* and who should be taken as representing the nation" (Billig 1995, p. 146) [Italics mine].

To restate, throughout this thesis, nationalism is *not* defined as a momentary feeling or sentiment, as 'patriotism' or as the "desire for national advancement or political independence"; these are seen as the ideological constructs of nationalism. Nor is nationalism understood as an ideology that is withering away in the face of postmodern identity politics, globalization or capitalism. On the contrary, in this study, nationalism is understood as a far-reaching ideology that institutionalized the world order we live in today; an order where having a national identity and patriotic feelings are understood as "natural" and "given"; as well as an order where living in a nation-state and having a nationality are accepted as normative standards.

Similar to nationalism, approaches to describe 'the nation' can be characterized in two manners; one that sits comfortably in the *echo chambers* of nationalism, and one that *attempts* a "metaphorical bracketing".

According to Oxford Dictionaries Online, a nation is "a large body of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular state or territory." As seen clearly, this description derives from the ideology of nationalism itself. As mentioned earlier in this subchapter, nationalism attributes particular characteristics (i.e. "common descent, history, culture or language") to certain communities, and stipulates a specific relationship between the community, the state and the territory.

In the description above, notions of "common descent, history, culture, or language" are not accounted for; they are taken as starting points. This is merely how nationalism *imagines* nations to be; Oxford Dictionaries Online's method of defining a 'nation' is more of *an idealized image* then a description. At this point, another approach to describe nations emerge: that is, to understand them as an ideological product of nationalism (Anderson 1983; Billig 1995; Gellner 1983). As Gellner asserts, it is nationalism that "invents nations where they do not exist" (1964, p. 169).

Nevertheless, it should most importantly be kept in mind that the *imaginedness* (Anderson 1983) or the *inventedness* (Gellner 1983) of a 'nation' should not be directly translated into nations not existing as a social reality of our time. As the Thomas theorem asserts, "[i]f men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas 1928, pp. 571-572). This theory is certainly applicable to the case of 'nations.' As Seton-Watson (1977) and Anderson (1983) similarly agree, nations come into existence when people, or communities, imagine themselves as such.

1.3   The Research Question(s) and the Unit of Analysis

This subchapter's purpose is to establish the research questions, introduce the research setting, as well as to identify clearly the main unit of analysis in this research. Such elaboration is done with the intention of stating clearly what is being researched and what questions are to be answered through this study.

As mentioned earlier, the objective of this study is to examine the ways Kurdish nation-ness is invoked and performed among Kurdish immigrants in Finland. In attempting to achieve this objective, the research utilizes two main research questions, as stated below:

- How is Kurdish nation-ness invoked and performed among Kurdish immigrants in Finland?

- What are the most recurrent patterns utilized in these invocations and performances?

As can be seen, while the first question addresses issue of *how* – i.e. in what manner, in what kind of context, through which actions or processes – social actors do things, the second question addresses primarily *the content* of such actions; i.e. what do the actions consist of in terms of their theme(s), and are there any common patterns in the visual and discursive content? The reason for adopting two research questions addressing both *action* and *content* is rooted in the intention of portraying a more comprehensive image of the phenomenon being studied.

Prospective answers to research questions presented above are investigated through the setting of *Kurdiliitto[4]* – which is an NGO acting as an umbrella association, unifying 24 smaller Kurdish-Finnish organizations throughout Finland – as opposed to through a random group of Kurdish immigrants in Finland. Kurdiliitto was chosen as a research setting for the study, with the purpose to function as an empirical anchor, and reduce the risk of "the facile use of concept[s] of 'ethnic community'" (Schiller 2008, p. 3).

In her article *Beyond Methodological Ethnicity*, Schiller criticizes the superficial use of ethnic groups as units of analysis in diaspora studies and migration research. The main problem with this phenomenon is that it "results in the exclusion of non-ethnic forms of social settlement and connection", which can conceivably carry great significance for the social actors in the field being studied (Schiller 2008, p.4). Although this study, considering its aims and objectives, is not located within diaspora studies or migration research *per se*, it agrees with Schiller's argument that using ethnic groups as primary unit of analysis often leads to an unsophisticated report, especially in terms of portraying the field and social actors which are being studied.

To reiterate, the main unit of analysis in this study is Kurdish nation-ness; *not* e.g. Kurdish migrants, Kurdish diaspora, first- or second-generation Kurdish immigrants, Kurdish entrepreneurs; not even the community of Kurdiliitto in itself. These are merely a list of possible *social actors in the field*, but they are not per se what is being studied throughout this research. Kurdiliitto's events were chosen as *a setting* for data elicitation, for the reasons of constituting a sound empirical anchor, the high possibility of meeting different social actors in the field, and because of its convenience on the

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[4] More information on Kurdiliitto as an association is discussed more in detail Chapter 5.1, as this chapter's focus is to discuss the research setting in a theoretical manner and present the theoretical justifications for such decision.

researcher's behalf[5]. Ideally, additional institutions or settings with various causes – in which an invocation and performance of Kurdish nation-ness is present – could have been added as sites for data elicitation, however, this proved not to be a quite viable option in terms of the scope of a Master's Thesis, as well as not corresponding directly with the main unit of analysis, which is Kurdish nation-ness.

Keeping in mind and agreeing with Schiller's (ibid.) critique of the use of ethnic labels in migration research, it is imperative to clarify here that, the word *Kurdish* in "Kurdish nation-ness" is not in direct reference to the social actors in the field. It refers to the specific *content* found in this "nation-ness". As such, Kurdish nation-ness can be invoked – with positive or negative connotations – by individuals and groups *regardless* of their ethnicity or nationality. Therefore, there is a clear difference between the uses of the word the *Kurdish* in, e.g. "Kurdish second-generation immigrants" versus "Kurdish nation-ness." The first refers to a specific group of social actors in a field, while the second denotes *the content* of an abstract phenomenon, which can be invoked by any person or group. With that in mind, this study chooses to focus on Kurdish nation-ness as invoked and performed by Kurdish immigrants who have been present or active in the events of Kurdiliitto. As stated earlier, the reason for this is because such choice has proven to be a feasible option within the scope of a Master's Thesis.

2　Theoretical Framework

2.1　Reading the Narrative of National Culture

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce one of the theoretical standing stones influencing this study, which is Stuart Hall's discussion on the concept of "national culture" in *Modernity: an introduction to modern societies* (1996). Hall's relevant chapter in the book, titled 'The Question of Cultural Identity', might seem like an unlikely reference material at first, since the main focus of Hall in this chapter is not nationalism or even national identity itself, but the transformation of how "identity" was understood and experienced from Renaissance to modern times. In other words, Hall's chapter primarily addresses the questions of "what is happening to cultural identity in late modernity?" and "how is this identity being affected by globalization?" Nevertheless, one particular concept – i.e. "the narrative of national culture" – Hall introduces while tackling these questions holds great value for our discussion on

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[5] The practical reasons for such choice are elaborated further in Chapter 5.1.

Kurdish nation-ness.[6] This is because Hall's concept can aid in understanding, dissecting and analyzing the *shared* and *standardized* ways of how nation-ness is performed and invoked in banal as well as "overtly national" contexts. Thus, such conceptualization can assist in answering both of the research questions in this study, as presented in the previous chapter.

Hall's discussion on the "narrative of national culture" is initiated by a rather compelling hypothesis: "If we feel we have a unified identity from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comforting story or "narrative of the self" about ourselves" (Hall 1996, p.598). The same point, by extension, can also be applied to larger entities such as nations, who often seem to construct a unified image based on a "comforting" narrative. This premise is indeed followed in Hall's article, where he argues that analyzing the narrative of national culture can be beneficial in making sense of the other modern forms 'identity' is understood and experienced. Needless to say, for Hall, nations and national cultures[7] are two "distinctly modern form[s]" (ibid. p.612).

In this regard, as an answer to the question "how is the narrative of national culture told?" (ibid. p.613), Hall presents five elements: "narrative of the nation", "emphasis on origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness", "invention of tradition", "foundational myth" and "the idea of a pure, original people or 'folk'" (ibid.). These are understood as the common content and strategies employed upon constructing the narrative of national culture.

The first element, *the narrative of the nation,* is described as "a set of stories, images, landscapes, scenarios, historical events, national symbols, and rituals which stand for, or *represent*, the shared experiences, sorrows, and triumphs and disasters which give meaning to the nation" (ibid. 613). More significantly, it gives "importance to our humdrum existence, connecting our everyday lives with a national destiny that pre-existed us and will outlive us" (ibid.). In the study at hand, *the narrative of the nation* is understood mainly as a collection of familiar and widely recognizable content, employed in everyday life as well as in special events, to invoke and perform a specific nation-ness.

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[6] It is important to note here that, in his chapter, Hall *does* use the concept of identity. Any direct quotation from his work, therefore, might include the word "identity".

[7] Hall defines *nations* as "[…] a symbolic community" that carries power to "[…] generate a sense of identity and allegiance." (p. 612) and *national culture* as "[…] a discourse – a way of constructing meanings which influences and organizes both our actions and our conception of ourselves." (ibid. p.613)

Additionally, certain elements forming the narrative of the nation, such as *the landscape*, were also highlighted by several other scholars mentioned in this study. (See Chapter 4.1) In a similar fashion, Hall, too, cites the traditional "English landscape" with its "green and pleasant land, gentle, rolling countryside, rose-trellised cottages and country-house gardens" (ibid.) as giving meaning to *Englishness* and *England*.

The second element to be discussed from the narrative of national culture is the *emphasis on origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness*. Hall describes this as follows: "The essential of the national character remain unchanged through all the vicissitudes of history. It is there from birth, unified and continuous, "changeless" throughout all the changes, eternal" (1996, p. 614). The same characteristic of the concept of "a nation" is also observed respectively by Gellner (1983), Anderson (1983) and Billig (1995). Besides communicating an image of the nation as everlasting, the *emphasis on origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness* also signifies a unique essence and a character for the nation, both of which have remained unchanged and uncompromised throughout history. This essence is often referenced and highlighted in the construction of nation-ness.

Inspired by Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983), the third element to be presented by Hall in his discussion on the narrative of national culture is the *invention of tradition*. In this domain, traditions and rituals that are invented (or appropriated) in modern times – nevertheless, which are presented/believed to be old or "ancient" – are actively being linked to "the nation", its essence and a specific national culture. A reaffirming example is presented by Billig in *Banal Nationalism*: "During the heyday of nation-making in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many seemingly ancient traditions were invented. New artifacts, such as Scottish Kilts or Coronian rituals were created, but they were *presented as if age-old traditions*" (1995, p. 25) [Italics mine]. In a way, the traditions and rituals work as "reminders" of a specific nation-ness; the existence of a unified and collective being as "one's nation" and its respective history.

The fourth element Hall addresses as a part of the narrative of national culture is *foundational myth*, which is described as "a story which locates the origin of the nation, the people, and their national character so early that they are lost in the mists of, not "real", but "mythic" time" (1996, p.614). In a similar fashion to the *invention of tradition, foundational myths* "make the confusions and disasters of history intelligible, converting disarray into "community" and disasters into triumphs" (ibid.). In other

words, *foundational myths* help people make sense of "their community's" or their own resentments on intelligible terms.

Fifth and final element highlighted as a part of the narrative of national culture is the idea of *a pure, original people or "folk"*. Much like the "traditional" landscape of a nation, this image of an "original people" is romanticized and idealized in the narrative of national culture. The idea of a pure folk works to reify certain characteristics and behaviors imagined as "the essence" of a nation. Oftentimes, the narrative of national culture *appropriates* pastoral and/or ancient subjects and objects, conceiving of them as part of a rather recent and modern form of being, i.e. "the nation". Hall observes this same point by making a reference to Gellner: "When [simple people] donned folk costume and trekked over the hills, composing poems in the forest clearings, they did not also dream of one day *becoming powerful bureaucrats, ambassadors and ministers*" (Gellner, 1983, p.61 in Hall, 1996, p. 615) [Italics mine].

Hall's taxonomy might initially appear to be a vague collection of clichés on nations and national cultures; however, it most critically should be considered a perceptive theoretical look at the *shared, standardized ways* nations are constructed. In a way, "the narrative of national culture" portrays a *common language,* one that is rather fluently spoken by all modern, "national" subjects born into a world instituted by nationalism. As such, the researcher and the research participants of this study – as the analysis of collected data will demonstrate – are no exceptions.

2.2   'Our' Forgotten Nationalism: Banal Nationalism

An unprecedented analysis at the time of its inception, *Banal Nationalism* (1995) can best be considered a pioneering theory *holding the mirror of nationalism up to ourselves*; which, in spite of Billig's many warnings in *Banal Nationalism* against the temptation to notice predominantly the fervent manifestations of nationalism, has remained a rare approach until now. It is this uniqueness in Billig's approach to present an analysis of nationalism in first person plural that carries significance for the study at hand; since, previous studies dealing with questions of Kurdish nationalism, Kurdish (national) identity and identities of Kurds residing in Europe have unfortunately been oblivious to the insight Banal Nationalism offers on how nationalism is (re)produced in everyday life through even the most mundane, banal acts and narratives.

Billig's critique of the "theoretical neglect" of nationalism (ibid.) – i.e. treating nationalism as a fervent ideology belonging predominantly to the realm of "others" – and how this contributes to the forgetting and rebranding of "our nationalism" is paralleled by one of the main aims of this study; i.e. is to counter such theoretical neglect by presenting a research that displays nationalism instead as a mainstream ideology that sets the standards for many of today's political and societal norms.

The rebranding of "our nationalism" in research often takes many forms. It is also important to note here that the pronoun "our" should not only be taken literally; as the word "our" is often determined by where a researcher's political alignments or sympathies lie. Nevertheless, as Billig argues, this rebranding presents nationalism as "patriotism" or – especially in the case of minority groups – as a fight for "identity" and "justice." In fact, Billig *lists* Kurds as one of these minority groups: "It is easy to sympathize with nationalism movements battling against more powerful majorities – to see Basques, Catalans, Kurds, Scots etc. as progressively rectifying historic injustices and challenging existing bases of power" (2009, p. 350).

Nevertheless, such "sympathetic" analyses in research portray only a *partial picture* of Kurdish nationalism. While one cannot deny the humanitarian disasters and social injustices that happened (and are happening) in Kurdistan, Billig's statement should be understood primarily as *a critique* to the cliché approaches in nationalism studies; i.e., a critique to the failure to see common patterns, common narratives of nationalism at work, across different groups. As mentioned, there is no denying that Kurdish nationals (as a minority) and Turkish/Iranian/Iraqi/ Syrian nationals (as majorities) occupy different subject positions, therefore, their nationalist claims and interactions with each other do not take place on equal footing. However, from a theoretical perspective, the basic ideological claims – concerning national identity and the characteristics of a 'national' narrative – either party makes seem *eerily similar* at most times.

Regardless of whether one is analyzing a "majority" national identity or "minority" national identity, one is just as likely to come across *the similar signifiers of nation-ness, similar discourses on nationhood* at work; be it the emphasis on the landscape, the flag or on the idea of a pure folk. This points out to *the common language of nationalism*, which sets many of the political and societal standards of the world we live in today. As Billig maintains, "[t]he way 'we' assert 'our' particularity is not itself particular. 'We' have a history, identity and flag, just like all those other 'we's" (1995, p. 72). Indeed, Stuart Hall's taxonomy of "the narrative of national culture" was

previously presented in this study with the purpose of portraying this common, cliché language of nationalism.

Banal Nationalism (1995) can best be considered as a theoretical effort to shift nationalism studies' focus away from the grand, fervent nationalist statements oversaturated with academic and mainstream attention, and redirect it on a (seemingly) unlikely realm: the most mundane and miniscule. The rationale for such a shift in attention is founded on a simple but compelling phenomenon: we never forget our nationality or national identity. While one can suggest that identities and alliances have become more liquid and easily interchangeable in postmodern times, it is tricky to postulate the same about nationality and national identity. As Billig contends, "one can eat Chinese tomorrow and Turkish the day after; one can even dress in Chinese or Turkish styles. But *being* Chinese and Turkish are not commercially available options" (1995, p. 139). Such a statement demonstrates that there is something particular *of value* about national identities; something that makes them impossible to forget and not universally possible to interchange. Here, *Banal Nationalism* offers several analytical tools to dissect how nationalism operates in everyday life to reproduce and maintain the *particularity* of "our nation" and national identity in a world of nations.

After all, in media, everyday conversations, schools, pubs etc. we are reminded *daily* and *continually* of our nationality, and that our nation is "a nation in a world of nations" (Billig 1995, p. 61). These daily "reminders" operate through a set of common strategies, two of which Billig names *flagging* and *homeland making deixis.* The upcoming paragraphs will introduce and exemplify these strategies, as, for the study at hand, they have been the most fruitful ones among others in Banal Nationalism.

Through coining the term *flagging,* Billig attempts to dissect the banal ways a nation, national identity or nation-state is flagged and signified; or, in Billig's terms, "reminded". Flagging may take place in a wide variety of contexts, ranging e.g. from the physical flag in front of a school building to the particular use of language and imagery in news broadcasts. Indeed, on the topic of "unwaved flags" in front of school buildings, governmental offices etc., Billig declares: "One can ask what are all these unwaved flags doing, not just in the USA but around the world? In an obvious sense, they are providing banal reminders of nationhood: they are 'flagging' it unflaggingly" (1995, p. 41). To add, the emphasis on the unwaved flag is not coincidental for Billig; as the unwaved flag, as well as citizens' nonchalantness towards it, embodies the very core of Banal Nationalism: "The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag

which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building" (1995, p. 8).

Nevertheless, flagging need not always include the literal image of an unwaved flag. As an illustrative case, Billig dissects the "British Pub Week" coverage of the popular tabloid *Mirror,* where pubs are portrayed as more than places to merely drink and socialize; indeed, they are "presented as icons of nationhood" in a series of articles constituting an "example of waved, celebratory flagging" (Billig 1995, pp. 113-114). Here, Mirror's special supplement – i.e. the "British Pub Week" – does not only embody a celebratory coverage of *British* pubs and advertisements from brewing industry; it also presents a medium where narratives on British nation-ness and Britain become reinforced and reproduced. Needless to say, in this context, *pubs* serve as the icon through which British nation-ness is *flagged*.

Additionally, words – especially "small", unsuspecting ones – carry a position of particular importance in the process of flagging, as well as in banal nationalism. According to Billig, "banal nationalism operates with prosaic, routine words, which take nations for granted […]. Small words, rather than grand memorable phrases, offer constant, but barely conscious, reminders of the homeland" (1995, p. 93).

Coined as a term to capture a particular repertoire of words used in the process of flagging, *homeland making deixis* refers to expressions such as 'we', 'the' 'here', 'our' and 'us'. What specifically counts for homeland making deixis can be context dependent, however the above-mentioned words are among the most "easy to overlook. They are not words to grab the attention, but they perform an important task […]. Banally, they address 'us' as a national first person plural; and they situate 'us' in the homeland" (Billig 1995, p. 174). Semantically, they also reinforce the borders of nationhood, by carrying the implication with them that there exists a "they", "there", "their" and "them".

Precisely how homeland making deixis operates is illustrated in *Banal Nationalism* through a "kitchen-within-a-home" analogy:

> Consider the utterance 'it's in the kitchen', spoken within a house by one member of the household to another. The speaker might know that, within the neighbourhood, there are hundreds of other kitchens. [However] There is only one kitchen – the kitchen – in this context. The universe has shrunk to the boundaries of the home (Billig 1995, p. 108).

As can be observed above, *homeland making deixis*, upon utterance, determines the members and draws the borders of a (national) homeland instantaneously. In doing so, it reinforces the perceived existence of this national homeland and its members. By coining this analytical tool, Billig demonstrates that (national) communities are not imagined solely through grand nationalist literary texts; they are also imagined continuously in the moment, through small phrases: i.e. through homeland making deixis.

As an unorthodox analysis of nationalism with a distinguishably micro approach, *Banal Nationalism* (1995) helps fill a theoretical gap in nationalism studies, as well as in the study at hand, respectively. Namely, it demonstrates that the echoes of nationalism ring much deeper and more continually than traditional analyses of this ideology would postulate. Through continuous *flagging* and use of *homeland making deixis*, "the citizenry are daily reminded of their national place in a world of nations" (Billig 1995, p. 8). This study makes use of flagging and homeland making deixis as analytical tools to help observe such "reminding", and analyze its role in the invocation and performance of Kurdish nation-ness.

3 Overview on Previous Research

Due to the specific nature of this thesis – i.e. using an alternative concept (nation-ness) which has not been applied in previous research – this chapter is divided into two parts. The first part presents previous research on the concept of nation-ness, as well as describes and defines how nation-ness has been understood in this research.

The second part of this chapter, nevertheless, should be understood as an attempt to *roughly* sketch out what has been scientifically put forward surrounding the general theme of "Kurds in Western European/Northern European context". It should be noted that the studies that are presented in part two of this chapter bear no similarity to the study at hand in terms of their use of concepts, viewpoints and theorization. However, they are included in this chapter for the reasons of presenting comparable scientific analyses and discussions. It is vital to note here that an additional discussion between the claims and findings of previous research versus the research at hand will be engaged in separately in the upcoming chapters.

3.1 Nation-ness: An Alternative

In the introduction chapter, nation-ness was introduced as the main unit of analysis, and as a fruitful alternative to the previously widely used concepts in the fields of nationalism studies and Kurdish studies. This chapter will examine the concept of nation-ness and its theoretical utility more in detail.

A quick glance at "nation-ness" might lead to the impression that the term is analogous to "national identity" or "nationality". Such confusion is to be expected, since, although having coined the term in *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson never really proposed a clear description for the concept of "nation-ness."

Furthermore, few considerable slippages occur in the ways Anderson utilizes "nation-ness" in *Imagined Communities* (Taylor 1997, p. 276). For instance, in the introduction chapter, Anderson states "nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that word's multiple significations, nation-ness, […] are cultural artefacts of a particular kind" (Anderson 1983, p. 4). Consequently, the differences or similarities between "nationality" and "nation-ness" are left unclear or subdued in this statement; while earlier in the same chapter, Anderson attributes great significance specifically to nation-ness, declaring it "the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time" (ibid. p. 3).

As a result, it seems that Anderson's usage of the term leaves it fairly open to interpretation. In such case, consulting other examples of how nation-ness has been adopted in few relevant studies is of assistance in making sense of nation-ness. Nevertheless, prior to such an attempt, a deconstruction of the word "nation-ness" is needed in the process of defining this concept.

In the English language, the suffix "-ness" is typically attached to the end of adjectives, in order to convert them into nouns. In this context, the added suffix often refers to a particular "state of being", depending on the adjective it has been joined with. For instance, in the case of the adjective "happy" and the noun "happiness", the latter precisely means "*The state of* being happy" (Oxford Dictionaries) [Italics mine]. Similarly, for the adjective "clean" and the noun "cleanliness", the latter refers literally to "*The state or quality of* being clean" (Oxford Dictionaries) [Italics mine]. Examples can be multiplied, but the bottom line does not change: the added suffix "-ness" commonly invokes a specific "state or quality of being".

In the case of *nation-ness*, although "nation" is not a noun, the effect of the attached suffix seems to be quite similar: By attaching the suffix "-ness" to "nation", Anderson attempts at a rather significant *theoretical rupture*. He coins a term conveying "the state of being a nation", or rather imagining "the state of being a nation". This embodies the kind of "metaphorical bracketing" Billig argues in favor of in *Banal Nationalism* (1995), because it underscores the historicity and the constructedness of nations and national identities. More significantly, nation-ness, while conveying the state of being a nation, also indirectly suggests the existence of a state *lacking* such imagining. This is in direct contrast with the concept of "nation" itself; which always seem "to loom from an immortal past and glide into a limitless future" (Anderson 1983, p. 11). Considering this aspect, nation-ness proves to be a suitable concept to be adopted throughout this study, which aims for a "metaphorical bracketing" of nationalism.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, consulting examples of how nation-ness has been adopted in relevant studies is considered to be necessary in the process of defining this term, as Anderson's usage of nation-ness is left open to interpretation. Therefore, four academic works, whose uses of nation-ness resemble the most how the concept has been understood in this research, are chosen as examples for consultation. It should be noted that none of the selected works carry a direct relation to the topic of Kurdish nation-ness. This is an unavoidable outcome, since there are *no* previous studies found using the concept of nation-ness, while focusing specifically on the Kurdish nation. Consequently, the selected works to be consulted as examples are as follows: Brubaker's conceptualization of *nationness as an event* in his 1996 book *Nationalism Reframed*, a 2009 research titled 'Performing Nation-ness in South Korea' by Lee and Cho, which focuses on South Korean nation-ness during the 2002 World Cup; a book titled *Disappearing Acts* (1996) by Diana Taylor, which is an investigation of how Argentinian nation-ness and gender identities were performed during the 1976-1983 dictatorship in Argentina, and 'Experiencing the Nation in Everyday Life' by Palmer (1998), which is an article analyzing the theoretical links between the concept of nation-ness and Billig's *Banal Nationalism*.

At first glance, the decision to combine these studies might seem arbitrary, as their topics relate nor to each other, neither to the research at hand. Nevertheless, each selected study carries a specific function for the research at hand: Brubaker's study demonstrates how nation-ness can be conceptualized *separately* from the notions of 'nation' and 'nationhood' (1996), Lee and Cho's research provides *concrete examples*

on how performing nation-ness can be observed within the field (2009), Diana Taylor's discussions on the concept of nation-ness (through an analogy with 'gender') present *a clear descriptive framework* for the concept (1996), whereas Palmer's article offers a theoretical discussion on how nation-ness is constructed *in everyday life* (1998), by linking one of the theoretical standing stones for the study at hand (i.e. Banal Nationalism) and the concept of nation-ness[8]. In short, each of the selected studies plays a significant role in how the concept of nation-ness has been understood in this research and will be discussed in such regard.

This is in direct contrast to numerous other studies in the field, where the concept nation-ness is used almost interchangeably for national identity (see for example: Rajah, 2002, and van der Pijl & Guadeloupe 2015) or as a synonym for nationality and ethnic identity (see: McCrone & Kiely 2000). Although these studies are insightful in their own respective topics, they do not go into detail by attempting to deconstruct the word, and decouple the concept from "national identity" and "nationality", which results in even more ambiguity and slippage in the use of nation-ness.[9] This can be illustrated by presenting direct quotes from the three articles attempting to define nation-ness:

> 'nation-ness', by which I mean the individual, subjective experience of a s*hared sense of identification* with a community larger than one can in fact empirically experience (Rajah 2002, p. 518) [Italics mine]

> the rethinking of much-used notions such as nationness, a cultural concept that binds people on the basis of *shared identifications* or feelings of belonging (van der Pijl & Guadeloupe 2015, p. 89) [Italics mine]

As can be seen in Rajah and van der Pijl & Guadeloupe's descriptions, "nation-ness" appears to be synonymous with a sort of "identification" that seems to be rather depicting national identity instead. In the study at hand, nevertheless, nation-ness is not understood as "shared identifications or feelings of belonging" (ibid.). These elements are understood merely as *characteristics* to be utilized or constructed, in order to "make up" and legitimize a nation. In other words, the idea of "a nation" *signifies* shared identification and feelings of belonging; but nation-ness – considering the deconstruction of this word earlier in this chapter – connotes a *specific state* of being or

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[8] With this said, the selected studies will not be discussed as a whole; since, as mentioned, their specific topics are not related to the current study. The selected studies will, however, be presented and discussed in relation their specific contributions to this thesis.

[9] The studies to be used as examples with ambiguous uses of nation-ness were chosen randomly, as there are an overwhelming amount of studies adopting the concept in different fashions, and as the use of nation-ness is the most relevant criteria for the purposes of this chapter; not the specific topic of the chosen study.

imagining such state of being. This act of imagining and the historicity of nations unfortunately gets overlooked in Rajah (2002) and van der Pijl & Guadeloupe's (2015) understanding of nation-ness as "shared identification."

As presented below, McCrone & Kiely's (2000) study on nationalism and citizenship demonstrates another slippery use of nation-ness:

> One's nationality – nation-ness might be a better term – would be Scottish or Welsh, whereas citizenship – their stateness – is British (McCrone & Kiely 2000, p. 19).

> Liberal social science in the twentieth century has, by and large, treated civic identities (citizenship) as good, and what it defines as ethnic identities (nation-ness) as bad (McCrone & Kiely 2000, p. 23)[10].

McCrone & Kiely's use of nation-ness is an appropriate one in demonstrating just how slippery this concept can be, when not used with a clear definition and parameters. As can be seen above, in their efforts to analyze the relationship between (national) identity and "British" identity, McCrone & Kiely use nation-ness as a synonym for *both* nationality and ethnic identity. Examples can be multiplied almost infinitely, however, the crucial point is that nation-ness is a concept that requires specific attention to prevent it from becoming a catch-all term in the field of nationalism studies. Judging by the versatility of nation-ness, it would be a futile effort to come up with an all-encompassing definition of the term. Nevertheless, because of this very reason, it is of utmost importance to specify what nation-ness means in the context of *this research*.

The slippage between the concepts of 'nations', 'nationhood' and 'nationalism' seems to be one of the reasons why also Brubaker advocates for the use of nationness to address specific events in time (1996). He criticizes previous literature surrounding the theme of nationalism and nations for their ambiguous uses of the above-mentioned terms and proposes a structural framework defining the concept of nations, nationhood and nationness separately: "we should focus on nation as a category of practice, nationhood as an institutionalized cultural and political form, and nationness as a contingent event or happening" (Brubaker 1996, p. 116).

In this framework, nationness is defined "as an event, as something that suddenly crystallizes rather than gradually develops, *as a contingent, conjuncturally fluctuating, and precarious* frame of vision and *basis* for individual and collective action, rather

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[10] It is important to note that both uses of the word nation-ness *are within the same article*, only a few pages apart.

than as a relatively stable product of deep developmental trends in economy, polity, or culture" (ibid.) [Italics mine]. Comparatively, the study at hand defines nation-ness as 'the *state* of imagining or being a nation', similarly to the word "happiness" referring to "the state of being happy" (Oxford Dictionaries).

The paralellity between this definition and Brubaker's (1996) definition of nation-ness is quite apparent. For Brubaker, nationness is crystallized *as an event* (ibid.); for this study, respectively, nation-ness refers to a particular *state* of being/imagining. Both definitions have a time-specific focus, whether it is a particular *event* or a *state*. Furthermore, this study agrees with Brubaker's conceptualization that nation-ness is "contingent, conjuncturally fluctuating, and precarious" (ibid.). As mentioned in Chapter 1.3, Kurdish nation-ness can be constructed – with positive or negative connotations – by individuals and groups *regardless* of their ethnicity or nationality. As such, by definition, there can be no uniform description of a given nation-ness; it is ought to be contingent and fluctuating.

To reiterate, in the study at hand, nation-ness is described and understood as the *state of imagining or being a nation*. As opposed to notions such as "identifying with" or "belonging to" a national community, *nation-ness* refers to imagining the existence of a body of being as "one's nation" and performing this imagination. By adopting this kind of understanding, it becomes possible to use a concept that does not rely solely on identity or identification. Neither of these theoretical advantages would be fully available when using a term such as "national identity".

Due to a similar reasoning, Lee and Cho (2009) too argue in favor of avoiding the notion of "national identity". This is exemplified in their study of South Korean nation-ness during the 2002 World Cup tournament, where they utilize instead the concept of nation-ness, in order to better "encapsulate the idea of nation" (ibid. p. 93). In their article, Lee and Cho describe nation-ness as an omnipresent factor which link different phenomena such as nationality, nationalism and the nation-state (ibid.). Through adopting social performance theory in their analysis, Lee and Cho "portray this [2002 World Cup] sporting event as a national stage, with Korean supporters as performers and the worldwide audience as spectators" (ibid.). Overall, they "suggest that nationness was performed as a set of cultural practices" during the festivities that took place in the 2002 World Cup football tournament (Lee and Cho 2009, p. 95). This finding is relevant for the study at hand, as most of the events observed during the data elicitation process include various (Kurdish) cultural practices.

Although the study at hand does not use social performance theory, many of Lee and Cho's findings pertaining to the *displays of South Korean nation-ness* are parallel to this research's findings on the invocation and performance of Kurdish nation-ness. Especially, three out the five "scenes" Lee and Cho observe throughout the performances of South Korean nation-ness can be brought forward as examples: i.e. the "refashioning [of] the national flags", "chanting the nationalist mottos together" and "the national conflated with the individual" (Lee and Cho 2009, pp. 105-111). These elements will be presented and analyzed further in upcoming chapters, along with the elicited data from this research.

One of the first "scenes" Lee and Cho observe in South Korean football supporters' display of nation-ness refers to the re-appropriation of the South Korean flag as a fashion statement, which often entailed using the flag as a clothing piece or an accessory. According to Lee and Cho, "to use the flag as a performance accessory demonstrated that people were now able to transform this sacred national symbol into a fashionable trend" (2009, p.105). A similar use of the Kurdish national flag and Kurdish peshmerga military uniform(s) were observed in many of Kurdiliitto's events. This aspect will be discussed further in the upcoming chapters, however, for the purposes of this chapter, it suffices to state that particular national elements – e.g. the Kurdish national flag, Kurdish peshmergas' military uniform, Kurdistan map – were utilized as props for photos, or accessories in clothing strategically to invoke and perform Kurdish nation-ness.

A second scene analyzed in Lee and Cho's study entails "chanting the nationalist mottos together" (2009, p. 109). According to Lee and Cho, national chants and mottos sung by South Korean supporters operated as "another way of performing nation-ness" during the 2002 World Cup (ibid.). More importantly, Lee and Cho underline in their study the "banality" of these chants; namely, their primary function was to allow supporters to have fun and be creative, "rather than [overtly act] as political or ideological propaganda" (2009, p. 111). A comparable use of Kurdish slogans and songs were noted during the fieldwork process for this study. Nevertheless, in addition to the "banal" function of the nationalist chants, as found in Lee and Cho's analysis, an overt political meaning and function of the chants were also present in Kurdiliitto's events. Indeed, these two functions, banal and overtly political, often became conflated in the case of Kurdiliitto.

Another scene in the performing of South Korean nation-ness, as observed by Lee and Cho, is the *conflation of the national with the individual*. This refers to a process in which "national dreams such as the victory of the Korean team and the advancement of South Korea as a first-class nation became goals that supporters could transpose onto their own personal desires" (2009, p. 112). According to Lee and Cho, such conflation was due to the "[impossibility] for any Korean to escape the constant presence of the World Cup in mass media broadcasts, street displays, and daily conversations" (2009, p. 111). The conflation of individual and "national" dreams has a strong presence also in the case of this study, where in all three interviews – as well as spontaneous conversations during observations – participants drew *direct links* between the political, societal and economic advancement of Kurds and their own personal lives.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that two out of the three selected studies for consultation - i.e. Lee & Cho (2009) and Taylor (1997) - adopt social performance theory. As a result of integrating nation-ness in performance theory, these studies highlight the *imagination* and *presentation* aspects involved heavily in this notion. This seems to be the very reason why Diana Taylor (1996), too, favors the concept of nation-ness, instead of other widely used concepts such as 'national identity' or 'national character': "Rather than posit an essentializing notion of "national character" and attempt to "psychoanalyze" it, I look at how nation-ness is shaped through spectacle" (1997, p. 91)[11].

Amongst other studies adopting the concept of nation-ness, Taylor's description of the term (1997) resembles the most how this concept has been understood in the study at hand. Taylor contends that nation-ness "is about our way of *imagining* community, of creating and performing civil bonds" (1997, p. 92) [Italics in original]. As addressed in the introduction chapter of this research, nation-ness, understood in this manner, does not stem from the ideological echo chambers of nationalism; but aids in a metaphorical bracketing (Billig 1995, p. 14) that is hardly attainable when utilizing notions such as 'national identity' and 'nation.'

Nevertheless, the most convincing contribution of Taylor in emphasizing the potential of nation-ness as a concept is rooted in her discussions comparing and contrasting gender identity and nation-ness (1997). Such comparison aids in creating a clear description for nation-ness in a simple and effective way. This is a significant contribution, especially when keeping in mind the slippages and varying usage of the

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[11] It is important to note that Taylor's reasoning for adopting nation-ness echoes very much the reasoning presented in the current subchapter and the introduction chapter of this study.

term in previous literature. According to Taylor, "just as gender is a performative act, […] nation-ness is also *performative*. Both gender and nation-ness […] are *oppositional and exclusionary*. […] Both are inscribed on *physical bodies*" (1997, p. 92) [Italics mine]. Whilst the study at hand does not include in its scope the aspect of gender identity, Taylor's analogy between the two assists significantly in *creating a clear framework for what nation-ness is* – a previously ambiguously and varyingly used concept – and how it operates in society.[12] Indeed, the analysis of the elicited data in the upcoming chapters will help to demonstrate this claim.

In 'Experiencing the Nation in Everyday Life' Palmer (1998) investigates three areas of life as illustrations of Billig's taxonomy of "everyday flagging" in *Banal Nationalism*: the body, the food and the landscape. By presenting the interwoven relationship between nation-ness and the everyday uses of body, food and landscape, Palmer seeks to support Billig's main argument in *Banal Nationalism*, i.e. the "national" is not only within the grand or within the fervent; it is also lying within the most mundane and the banal.

Palmer's main argument is that "nation-ness is not just a feature of specifically identifiable national events, it is not just something that comes to the fore in times of uncertainty and danger such as wars and conflicts." (ibid.). This is a significant finding, especially bearing in mind the previous examples presented in this subchapter: i.e., Lee and Cho's study (2009) focuses on the concept of nation-ness during an inter*national* sports competition, while Taylor's book (1997) addresses nation-ness during the 1976-1983 military junta in Argentina. Needless to say, neither of these two studies focus on "banal" events or nation-ness in everyday life. It is particularly in this vein that Palmer's work contributes to the elaboration of the concept of nation-ness.

According to Palmer, the first of the "everyday" elements nation-ness is often inscribed to is *the body*. The body's surface, the use of its extremities and its relationship to the surrounding environment can often be utilized in strategic ways to construct nation-ness and demarcate it from others. In a way, the body provides a tangible and immediate way to mark and distinguish one's nation-ness. This argument is also noticeably parallel to Taylor's finding, i.e. nation-ness is "inscribed on physical bodies" (1997, p. 92).

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[12] Such assistance is considered to be sufficient to justify the inclusion of this analogy in the current subchapter.

A second element utilized in the construction of nation-ness, as presented by Palmer, is *the food*. Food and construction of a "national cuisine" can be considered to flag nation-ness just as much as national costumes, coins or anthems (Palmer 1998). According to Palmer, the emergence of "national cuisines" essentially coincides with the emergence nation-states and the spread of print capitalism, which allowed "styles of eating and actual cooking recipes to be disseminated beyond local and national borders" (1998, p. 187). It is in this regard where it becomes possible for specific dishes[13], cooking styles and eating patterns (e.g. the "British tradition" of 5 o'clock tea) as well as celebrations (e.g. Thanksgiving or Christmas) to be understood as part of a specific nation-ness.

The final "everyday" element to be employed in the construction of nation-ness is *the landscape* (Palmer 1998): "A nation's landscape, its territory, is not merely a physical expression of boundaries" (1998, p. 191); on the contrary, the landscape is often understood as deeply attached to its specific nation's "character", history and future. More importantly, the landscape has great potential to evoke sentiment and compassion. As an example of this, Palmer highlights the common habit to glorify landscapes in national anthems. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to note that the landscape provides the basis for *both* an all-encompassing nation-ness, as well as regional identities (ibid.).

Prior to concluding this discussion, a schema outlining and comparing the consulted studies should be presented as follows:

Table 1

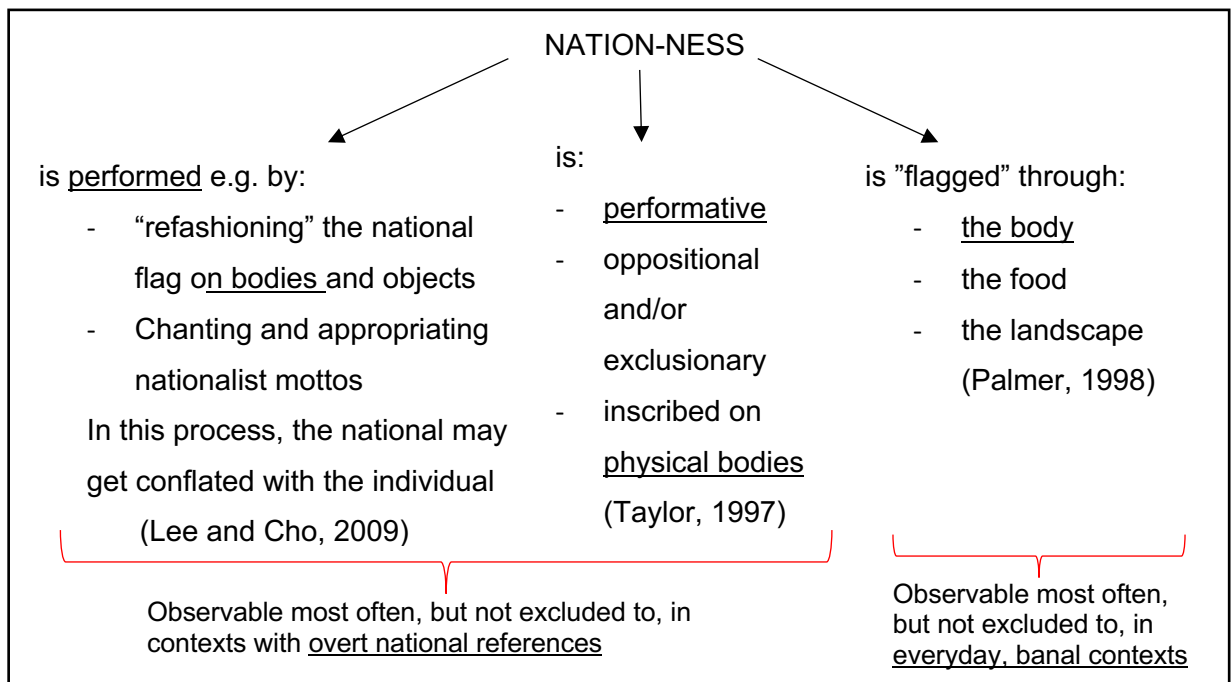[13] E.g., "Baklava" – a dessert pastry – and its origins have long been a topic of debate between Turkey and Greece, as to whether it is a Greek or Turkish dish. One example of such debate was in 2012, when former U.S. President Obama caused "controversy", stating he loved "Greek" Baklava. (Schleifer, 2018)

The purpose of the table above is to summarize and present clearly how the findings from each consulted study relate and compare to each other. It is also meant to visualize how nation-ness is understood in the study at hand. Consequently, aspects relating the most to this research were depicted in the schema.

In light of this table, the following points can be underlined: Nation-ness is observed *both* in overtly national contexts, as well as in banal contexts in everyday life; nation-ness has a performative aspect and its flagging utilizes a variety of resources such as the concrete, readily available bodies and landscape or more overtly nationalist repertoire, such as nationalist mottos or anthems. The objective of this subchapter was to clarify and demonstrate how the concept of nation-ness has been understood in this research. This was an essential step to avoid possible theoretical ambiguities and slippages during the use of this elusive concept.

3.2   Previous Research on Kurds in Europe

The large body of literature on themes surrounding the topic of Kurds in Europe allows for a wide variety of approaches of introducing and presenting previous perspectives and analyses. Consequently, components of previous literature that are deemed significant and relevant to the study at hand will be organized and presented under several themes in this chapter. This is done with the purpose of navigating through previous literature in a coherent and consistent manner, which is important in not diverting from the main aims and objectives of the study at hand.

Before proceeding further, it is vital to underline that a substantial part of the previous literature which are considered relevant and/or comparable to the study at hand utilize concepts and present analyses that are *significantly* different than the study at hand. A more crucial point that needs to be addressed however, are the *terminological differences* this variety brings. If left unaddressed, this difference can lead to ambiguity and inconsistencies in the reporting, comparing and contrasting of previous literature.

Earlier in this thesis, it was addressed clearly that the main point of examination in this study is *Kurdish nation-ness*, which can be defined as the imagining of "the state of being a *Kurdish* nation". While Kurdiliitto's events were chosen as data elicitation sites in this study, all individuals who were personally interacted with during the data elicitation process happened to be Kurdish immigrants. The term 'Kurdish immigrant' in this context refers merely to the *research subjects/research participants* of this study;

which are understood as those individuals who have *moved* to Finland from Kurdish inhabited countries (Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria). Certainly, the terms used to describe the *research participants* can be subject to debate as well. Comparatively, previous studies have used a diverse range of terminology to define their research subjects and/or units of examination. Common ways to refer to research subjects or specify certain groups of focus in previous research include notions such as 'diaspora', 'first generation', 'second generation' etc. Additionally, there are arguments in previous research pointing out that, for instance, young Kurds in Finland do "not refer to themselves as "immigrants". Instead, they contest[ed] being labelled as "immigrants" on the basis of having grown up in Finland, speaking Finnish and for some having Finnish citizenship" (Toivanen 2014b, p. 196).

Nevertheless, it is vital to underline here that none of the interviewees, or the individuals directly interacted with during the participant observation sessions, were not born or did not spend their childhood (i.e. pre-teen years) in Finland; and are considered as full-grown adults rather "young" people. It is therefore more accurate to describe this study's research participants as "Kurdish immigrants". Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that, the main unit of examination and focal point of this study is *Kurdish nation-ness, not* the research participants themselves.

The terminological difference outlined above means that "borrowing" some of the vocabulary used in previous literature whilst addressing a given study is inevitable; in order not to disrupt the integrity and misrepresent the analyses of previous research. Hence, terminology which is omitted elsewhere in this study – e.g. 'diaspora' – will be used in this chapter. However, this does not denote that, for instance, the terms 'Kurdish immigrants' and 'Kurdish diaspora' are understood as interchangeable in this study. As stated, specific terminology used in a given study is preferred only for the reasons of protecting the integrity of previous studies and addressing their analyses in an accurate manner.

With that being said, the chosen material from previous literature will be presented and discussed through the following themes: a "historical" understanding of diaspora, homeland and political differences/internal otherization within Kurdish diaspora. The selection of themes was based on the prevalency of the use of the corresponding concepts, as well as their relevancy and significance to the study at hand.

3.2.1 A "Historical" Understanding of Kurdish Diaspora

A closer look at previous literature reveals that an overarching pattern of polarity among different studies can be spotted in terms of their understanding of the Kurdish diaspora. This pattern of polarity, which can be described as "cultural" understanding of diaspora vs. "historical" understanding of diaspora, is addressed in detail by Mojab and Gorman in their 2007 article, where they point to a wide variety of problems found in the common analyses and viewpoints with a cultural understanding of Kurdish diaspora. As one of the many examples of this, Mojab and Gorman bring forward the case of "a women's group in Sweden [being] organized as "immigrant" women rather than as "Kurdish" women, because they were not able to compete with Kurdish mainstream, male-dominated cultural organizations for funding and recognition from the Swedish government" (2007, pp. 66-67). What this means is that, "in the eyes of Swedish policy makers and the Swedish media, they [Kurdish women] are overwhelmingly seen as *cultural appendages* to the male-defined Kurdish community" (Mojab and Gorman 2007, p. 79) [Italics mine].

While this study does not include Kurdish women's organizing in its scope, Mojab and Gorman's critique is important to begin this chapter with; since it is relevant and insightful for the general field of Kurdish studies. The research at hand agrees that a historical understanding of Kurdish diaspora is more favourable than a cultural one – as demonstrated by Mojab and Gorman in the above-mentioned example from the Swedish context (ibid.) – since, a cultural understanding of diaspora often results in a specific kind of methodological nationalism, where the diaspora is presented as one homogenous body and where conflicts, minorities, as well as differences within a given diaspora become largely overlooked. Instead, Mojab and Gorman advocate for a "historical understanding of diaspora", which "would focus on the events of and precursors to war or repression (before a dispersal, if there has been one), or oppression (in the diaspora itself). These are the historical events through which *a community comes to understand itself as a political entity*" (2007, p. 79) [Italics mine].

Numerous works from van Bruinessen on the topic of Kurds in Europe (1998, 1999, 2000) can be considered as ideal examples of the "historical understanding of diaspora." The reading process of previous literature proved that approaches with an overt historical understanding and portrayal of the Kurdish diaspora are relatively rare among studies surrounding the theme of Kurds in Europe. However, it is also important to note

that an "historical approach" is not limited to the works of Van Bruinessen. For example, Baser's book on the conflicts within Kurdish diaspora is another example among works presenting a historical approach (2015b).

As in line with this historical approach, van Bruinessen conceptualizes Kurdish migration to Europe and the mainstream adoption of Kurdish nationalism by reference to sequential migratory flows to Europe from Kurdish inhabited countries. According to him, undoubtedly, (forced or voluntary) Kurdish migration stands as a vital ingredient for the mass adoption – if not the establishment – of Kurdish nationalism. Thus, he contends that "there is an intimate connection between exile and nationalism. The experience of exile has been part and parcel of the history of Kurdish nationalism" (2000, p. 5).

Examining this standpoint more closely is vital for the study at hand, since this research upholds that *nationalism creates the nation*; and not the other way around (Gellner, 1983). As mentioned in Chapter 1.3, the two research questions of this study investigate how Kurdish nation-ness is performed and invoked, and what some of the most recurrent patterns in this performance are. Hence, more information on the history of mainstream dissemination and adoption of Kurdish nationalism can provide valuable insight in answering these research questions on Kurdish nation-ness.

The Labor Recruitment Agreement[14] between Turkey and Germany in 1961 could be vaguely considered a starting point for the forming of a larger Kurdish diaspora in Europe and the wide dissemination of national ideas/ideals among Kurds in Europe (Van Bruinessen, 1999). According to van Bruinessen, among the first migrants arriving from Turkey, there were only a small number of Kurds. In the 1970s, however, a considerable number of workers from Eastern Turkey – where Kurdish population forms the majority – migrated to Germany. Nevertheless, a substantial section among them were initially not subscribed to, nor actively supported Kurdish nationalism (ibid.). At this point, different ethnic groups of migrants shared the same diasporic spaces and were regarded as one unitary group (mostly as Turks) by the host society (Van Bruinessen 2000, Baser 2015b, p. 150).

The 1980s, however, marked a significant shift in the above-mentioned conditions among migrants. As van Bruinessen notes: "Until the late 1970s, relatively few migrant workers emphasized their Kurdish identity. […] The 1980 coup in Turkey led to a great

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[14] Anwerbeabkommen in German.

influx of politicized, mostly young Kurds as asylum seekers. Their presence, and of course the news about the guerrilla war in Turkey, worked as a catalyst on the Kurds' ethnic self-awareness" (1998, p. 45).[15] As apparent in this account, Kurdish nationalism becomes widely accessible and gains more momentum with the arrival of 1980's politicized asylum seekers.

Here, it is important to remind that van Bruinessen's historical understanding of the formation of Kurdish diaspora and the mainstream adoption of Kurdish nationalism goes hand in hand with Anderson and Gellner's assertions in the 1980s on the dissemination and mass adoption of nationalism. Namely, both for Anderson (1983) and Gellner (1983), the dissemination and mass adoption of nationalism is *not a historical coincidence*; but rather it is related to *a large-scale societal shift* taking place in specific periods in history.

As a case in point, it can be underlined that for Anderson (1983), the dissemination of nationalism and nationalistic ideals are closely related to the spread of print capitalism. For Gellner (1983), on the other hand, industrialization and the change from agricultural society to modern and urban society marks a point in history where nationalism becomes more than just a romantic ideal discussed in elite circles. Comparably, migration to Germany through the Labor Recruitment Agreement first in 1961, and the following arrival of politicized Kurdish asylum seekers to Europe in 1980s, could be considered to embody a similar *societal shift* for Kurdish nationalism. Indeed, van Bruinessen's observation (1998) largely validates Anderson and Gellner's insight.

When investigated closely, additional elements – besides migration to Europe – arise that could be considered as catalysts for the mainstream adoption and dissemination of Kurdish nationalism. In this regard, Van Bruinessen makes the following observations:

> The reemergence of Kurdish nationalism is closely related to *the greater accessibility of higher education* in the post-war years and *the increasing geographical and social mobility* (both of which contributed to the integration of the Kurdish elite in Turkish culture and politics) and to *the rapid decline of traditional structures* in those years (1998, p. 41) [Italics mine].

A fourth significant catalyst, in this context, is Kurds' increased access to and use of media sources without censorship after migration (which would otherwise be imposed in the countries of origin): "Kurdish institutes, Kurdish print media, and Kurdish

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[15] A similar development is also reported by Demir, in relation to Kurdish immigrants arriving in Great Britain. (Demir 2012, p. 819)

language courses that operate in Western Europe outside the control of the Turkish state have provided the Kurdish movement with *instruments of nation building* comparable to those normally used by states" (van Bruinessen 1999, page unknown) [Italics mine].

To summarize, the combination of Kurds' increased access to higher education, increased geographical and social mobility, the decline of traditional social structures among Kurds, as well as access to nation building resources (such as language courses, cultural institutions and print media) makes an illustrative case on how nationalism becomes an ideology adopted and supported by the mainstream.

As much as nationalists conventionally have likened masses' adoption and support of a national identity to "a nation waking up from its sleep" (Anderson 1983, p. 198), the research at hand aligns itself with the approach that *nationalism invents the nation* (Gellner 1983, p. 49). With reference to this approach, Gellner conceptualizes the three elements (which are highlighted also in van Bruinessen, 1998) – i.e. increased access to higher education, increased geographical and social mobility and the decline of traditional social structures – as *typical characteristics* of the shift from an agricultural society to industrial society; which plays a determinative role in the dissemination of nationalism (ibid.).

Interestingly, the close relationship between the dissemination of Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish migration to Europe points to a phenomenon which might seem *paradoxical* on the surface. As highlighted by van Bruinessen "The complex of transnational networks […] has made the Kurds into much more of a nation than they were two decades ago" (2000, p. 26). In other words, it can be claimed that *transnationalism* catalyzed Kurdish *nationalism*. However, a closer look would clarify that the relationship between transnationalism and Kurdish nationalism is *not paradoxical*, but instead quite rational. Precisely, the tools and possibilities for the nation building of Kurds (access to media resources, possibility to organize and establish NGOs, language courses and cultural institutions, possibility to build an ethnic network etc.), could *only be facilitated by transnationalism*; since in the countries of origin, such tools and possibilities would not be accessible to Kurds for nation-building, as this would be considered antithetical to the nation-building agendas of the already existing nation-states in the Kurdish regions. This points to a classic nationalist cul-de-sac, as underscored by Gellner:

> To put it in the simplest possible terms: there is a very large number of potential
> nations on earth. Our planet also contains room for a certain number of

independent or autonomous political units. On any reasonable calculation, the former number (of potential nations) is probably much, *much* larger than that of possible viable states. If this argument or calculation is correct, not all nationalisms can be satisfied, at any rate at the same time. The satisfaction of some spells the frustration of others (1983, p. 2).[16]

In sum, van Bruinessen's assertion on the close relationship between transnationalism and the dissemination of Kurdish nationalism should not come as a surprise. It is, however, interesting to notice that this paradoxical relationship has not been addressed to the same length by later studies utilizing the concepts of Kurdish diaspora and transnationalism.

3.2.2 Homeland

A quick glance at the studies surrounding the theme of Kurds in Europe would reveal that the concept of 'homeland' has been quite frequently used in previous literature. It has been utilized in various ways; for instance, 'homeland' can be employed as a concept to gain more insight on the identities (e.g. Eliassi 2013, Khayati 2014) or on the political activism and social networks of Kurdish diaspora (e.g. Khayati and Dahlsted 2014). It carries significance for the study at hand to investigate how exactly previous research conceptualizes the term 'homeland'. This is because the concept of 'homeland' is central to one of the theoretical frameworks utilized in this study: namely, *Banal Nationalism* and 'homeland-making deixis' as discussed by Billig (1995). A survey of how previous literature employs this term certainly assists in demonstrating the different approaches to the concept 'homeland' between this study and previous studies, as well as *among* the previous studies.

Whether they are focusing on first-generation (Alinia 2004), the generation-in-between (Toivanen 2014a), second-generation (Eliassi 2013), or literary characters in Kurdish novels (Galip 2014), a considerable portion of previous research seems to share a similar perspective in regard to their analyses of the Kurdish diaspora's understanding of the term 'homeland'. Specifically, they point to different types of dichotomies in terms of Kurdish diaspora's relationship with the concept. According to Toivanen, this

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[16] The inclusion of this quote by Gellner should *not* be understood as an argument asserting that *all* Kurds want their own state, or an autonomy. On the contrary, this research acknowledges that such might not be the case for the majority of Kurds *currently*. In fact, such phenomenon is presented clearly by Emanuelsson in her 2013 article. (See the reference list). However, this research also maintains that, as an ideology, nationalism idealizes *a specific relationship* between the nation and the state: i.e. they should be congruent. (Gellner, 1983) This quote is included in relation to *this* specific ideal designated by nationalism.

dichotomic relationship is rooted in the ambivalence caused by the non-existence of a Kurdish nation-state (2014a, pp. 211-212).

Certainly, the study at hand agrees that in the "national order of things" (Malkki 1992), "a man without a nation [state] defies the recognized categories and provokes revulsion" (Gellner, 1983, p. 6). If not "revulsion", this at least leads to a perceived oddity in a world order institutionalized by nationalism, where national identity and the nation-state are perceived to be, ideally, congruent (Gellner 1983). As caused by this "unideal" situation, according to the thesis of nationalism, the dichotomic relationship of Kurdish diaspora with concept of 'homeland' is defined with slightly differing terminology in various studies. It is, however, still clearly visible as a pattern across numerous accounts.

For instance, in their 2014 article, Toivanen and Kivistö – where the question of what constitutes "home" in Kurdish diaspora is one of the central themes – conceptualize this relationship with reference to two different notions: i.e. "home" and "homeland". According to them, "young Kurds attach different meanings to the notions of "home" and "homeland". These notions entail both symbolic and more concrete dimensions as well as territorial and de-territorial elements […]. *Home is considered to be located in Finland, whereas Kurdistan represents the homeland*" (Toivanen and Kivistö 2014, p. 71) [Italics mine]. Especially in regard to the "political projects of belonging", homeland seems to be defined in more territorial terms (Toivanen and Kivistö, 2014, p. 66).

In a similar fashion to Toivanen and Kivistö's dichotomic conceptualization (2014), Eliassi's book *Contesting Kurdish Identities in Sweden* conveys homeland as "a contested and *poetically and imaginatively loaded* concept often used as a synonym for belonging and identity" (2013, p.116) [Italics mine]. In contrast to this "imaginatively loaded" homeland, he also presents numerous experiences of second-generation Kurds travelling from Sweden (where his research subjects reside) to the de facto state of Iraqi Kurdistan (2013, pp. 116-121). Eliassi's report displays that – based on the accounts of his interviewees – two different types of homeland can be conceived: *an imagined Kurdistan*, which plays a significant role in terms how belonging and origin is presented and constructed, and the *physically existing* de facto state of Iraqi Kurdistan, towards which Eliassi's research subjects initially report celebratory attitudes, albeit adopting a critiquing stand after their travels to the region; reporting feelings of non-belonging (Eliassi 2013, pp. 118-120).

Using a similar dichotomic approach, whilst adopting an insightful terminology, Demir investigates how Kurds originating from Turkey/Northern Kurdistan construct and present their relationship with their country of origin (2012). Demir's research adopts a slightly different angle, since she solely focuses on the relationship with the "home" that is left behind (i.e. Turkey); and not the currently inhabited country[17] (ibid.). Additionally, her research does not have a distinct focus on the younger generation; which is found in Toivanen and Kivistö's (2014), as well as Eliassi's (2013) studies. These points should be kept in mind when presenting Demir's conceptualization around the notion of homeland. Nonetheless, the two main analytical concepts conceived by Demir to describe the dichotomic relationship Kurds construct with their country of origin are 'battling' and 'memleket'[18] (Demir 2012, p. 816).

'Battling' refers to the opposition and resistance positions/sentiments adopted by Kurdish diaspora towards their home country. It is vital to remind here that these concepts are *not* meant to reflect a homogenous reaction/feeling presented by a single group (Demir 2012, p. 823). As underlined by Demir, such opposition/resentment are on different levels of intensity (varying e.g. from having resentment, to being active in the political sphere), and have different motives (ranging e.g. from requesting more rights for the Kurdish minority, to aiming for an independent Kurdistan) based individuals' experiences and opinions (Demir 2012, p. 826). Comparatively, 'memleket', is understood as "a reflection of the close and intimate relationship Kurds continue to have with their country of origin in spite of the battling", and it "can refer to the soil that a nation-state occupies, or to a particular region, or even to a small town or village" (Demir 2012, p.820).

Based on Demir's research, it can be observed that accounts of 'battling' and 'memleket' coexist in Kurdish diaspora's understanding and construction of their homeland and past experiences (Demir 2012, p. 821). This is possible due to "a distinction between Turkey the *state*, and Turkey the *country*: while they have a dispute with the former and its construction of the Kurdish problem, they continue to feel attached to the country" (Demir 2012, p. 826) [Italics mine]. Keeping in mind nationalism's main principle as an ideology – i.e. "the political [state] and the national unit should be congruent" (Gellner 1983, p.1). – it is not unexpected that the Kurdish diaspora makes a distinction between *the Turkish state* and *the geographical, physical*

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[17] Demir's research is conducted among Kurdish immigrants living in London, United Kingdom.
[18] The Turkish word 'memleket' literally translates to "homeland" in English.

area the Turkish state occupies, in regard to their relationship with the concept of homeland. This allows for *seemingly* contradictory feelings to be included in a single narrative about one's country of origin and homeland.

In terms of how 'Kurdistan' is understood in Kurdish diaspora, on the other hand, Demir's account is similar to Eliassi's findings on second-generation Kurds' narratives of a symbolic homeland (i.e. Kurdistan) versus their personal experiences in Iraqi Kurdistan.[19] According to Demir: "Identification with 'greater Kurdistan', the territory that includes parts of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria, was never explicitly verbalised" and, "[w]hen asked the meaning of the maps of 'greater Kurdistan' which hang in the KAC in Tottenham and the KCC in Haringey[20], it was pointed out that pictures of greater Kurdistan were 'symbolic'" (2012, p. 821). To remind, a comparable narrative, presented in the previous page, was present among Eliassi's research subjects, for whom 'Kurdistan' conveyed a largely *symbolic* meaning.

In contrast to Demir's focus on analyzing Kurdish diaspora's relationship with the 'homeland' that is left behind, Khayati and Dahlsted investigate the Kurdish diaspora's relationship and activity in regard to both the 'former' and the 'new homeland' (2014). In their article, Khayati and Dahlsted maintain that "diasporan populations act both outwards, towards the former homeland, and inwards, towards the new homeland" (2014, p. 57). According to Khayati and Dahlsted, this simultaneous homeland orientation can be observed, for instance, in the events and activities of Kurdish associations in Sweden (2014, p. 60). A strong 'former' homeland orientation can be exemplified by Kurdish associations' efforts to

> follow the course of events in different parts of Kurdistan and endeavour to reach a level of political mobilisation that enables them to promote the so-called "politics of homeland". For instance, celebrating Newroz and other Kurdish cultural events, promoting Kurdish publishing and broadcasting, organising political demonstrations […] are among those activities that constitute the performance domains of the Kurdish associations in Sweden (ibid).

Nevertheless, Khayati and Dahlsted assert that these associations take an active role also in the politics of the 'new homeland', for instance, "through maintaining an anti-racist and integrationist discourse and working for the good of the Kurdish people in Sweden" (ibid.). Moreover, they add that Kurdish youth organizations "direct their activities both

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[19] It is vital to note that Demir's research does not focus per se on second-generation Kurds, but on "Kurds from Turkey" living in London (2012).
[20] Kurdish Advice Center (KAC) and Kurdish Community Center (KCC) are Kurdish diasporic organizations in London, United Kingdom where Demir's research was conducted

toward Kurdistan and Sweden, [and] consider themselves as both Swedish and Kurdish organisations"[21] (Khayati and Dahlsted 2014, p. 61).

Khayati and Dahlsted's (2014) analysis of Kurdish associations' events and activities in relation to the concept of homeland are relevant for the study at hand, since events organized by *Kurdiliitto* – which is an umbrella association, unifying 24 smaller Kurdish-Finnish organizations in Finland – were chosen as the *research site* for the current study (additionally, three active members of this organization were chosen as interviewees). Based on the participant observations conducted at Kurdiliitto's events, it is safe to claim that Kurdiliitto's activities and role as an NGO in Finland is quite comparable to the Kurdish associations in Sweden, as reported by Khayati and Dahlsted (2014). Nevertheless, as a contrast, it is vital to emphasize that this study does not focus per se on simultaneous homeland orientation or transborder citizenship (ibid.); as stated, the main point of examination is *Kurdish nation-ness* as invoked and performed at Kurdiliitto's various events. In other words, although a direct comparison between the two studies are not feasible, Khayati and Dahlsted's presentation (2014) of Kurdish associations' activities and events in Sweden paints a parallel picture to their counterparts in Finland.

In a similar fashion to the previously discussed studies, Galip investigates the narratives in three Kurdish novels from Turkish Kurdistan surrounding the theme of 'homeland' and underlines the existence of an ambiguous/dichotomic relationship (2014). Her research presents "the way Kurdish characters have experienced their "home-land" through tracing the themes of displacement and exile" as well as the "meanings and values […] attributed to Sweden as the host country" (2014, p. 82). According to Galip, the main characters in Kurdish novels view the host country as a "temporary space", although "the notion of returning to the "homeland" is not turned into an actual plan" (2014, p.85). This is not considered unconventional, since similar findings have been presented in previous research. For instance, Alina contends: "Homeland, in the sense of the places to which they [Kurds in diaspora] are emotionally attached, is inaccessible for many of them in different ways. It is […] associated with traumatic memories, danger, and risk" (2004, p. 219). This angle is also explored by Khayati in his 2014 article on Serhedî Kurds[22] living in France. According to him:

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[21] Comparatively, the existence of a hybrid identity among Kurdish youth is also reported by Eliassi (2013).
[22] According to Khayati, "Serhed" is an originally Kurdish term, and refers to "a particular vast sub-region of the Kurdish area of Turkey called Serhed. This region is adjacent to the Armenian and Iranian borders and includes thousands of villages and major towns and cities" (2014, p. 36).

The popular homeland narrative among the Serhedî Kurds in the region of Marseille is evidence of a persistent negative and traumatic memory of a native place, associated most often with population movements (kocberî), war (şer), persecution (eşkence), political instability (tevlihevî siyasî), state of emergency (rewşa awarte), atrocity (hovêtî, bêrehmî), assimilation (asimilasyon, helandin), national struggle (berxwedan) and nostalgia (xerîbî). This memory is essential for maintaining diasporic boundaries (2014, pp. 39-40).

Parallel to Khayati's (2014) findings, a seemingly unconventional perspective in Galip's research is found in the characters' relation to the concept of 'homeland' that is left behind. According to her, there is a "realist" and critical viewpoint in the imagination of the homeland, as opposed to the common emphasis in previous studies on the *idealizing* and *romanticizing* of the Kurdish homeland (2014, p. 87). However, as different to Khayati's analysis, Galip focuses on Kurdish novel characters' (and by extension, Kurdish novelists') critique of the practical conditions – i.e. the current economic situation, education levels, the preservation and valuing of Kurdish culture – in the Kurdistan area; not traumatic memories. In other words, Galip's "analysis of Kurdish diasporic novels shows that "home-land" in these novels is not romanticized or idealised, a finding that contradicts the fictionalized "homes" model argued by leading theorists and scholars" (2014, p. 87). However, it was found during the reading of previous literature that, in actuality, the negative portrayal and internal critique aspect in regard to 'homeland' is present in numerous former studies (For instance, see Eliassi, 2013).

Additionally, the example of an analysis using the concept of 'homeland' similarly to the current study is found in Kirmanj's investigation of how Kurdish history textbooks – used in Kurdish Regional Government's (KRG) public schools – contribute to the construction of a Kurdish national identity (2014). As can be seen, Kirmanj's study does not include the theme of "Kurds in Europe" in its scope. However, it is still included here, specifically for the purpose of demonstrating *a similar approach* to the concept of homeland (in relation to the study at hand) among previous research. In his article, Kirmanj addresses the aspect of the *visual representation* of homeland as follows:

 Geography [textbook] is utilized as a tool to provide visibility to their [Kurds] homeland and demonstrate the boundaries of Kurdistan through cartography. This aims at creating a visual sense of the Kurdish homeland, through demarcation of Kurdistan from the surrounding countries and nations. In the first pages of a fourth grade history textbook, students are asked to locate their "country" on a map (2014, p. 374).

The concept of 'homeland' as a country and Kirmanj's theoretical attention to the visual representation of this "country" through geography is also explored in detail by Billig in *Banal Nationalism* (1995, pp. 74-78). According to Billig, it is a merely modern phenomenon, instituted by nationalism, that individuals have come to imagine "themselves to be living within a 'country', in the sense that *nation-states are countries*" (1995, p. 74) [Italics mine]. On the other hand, imagining oneself as "living in" or "being from" more immediate surroundings – such as specific villages or towns – is a historically older phenomenon (Billig 1995).

For Billig (1995) and Anderson (1983) the logical premise behind the imagining of "our country" is similar to the imagining of "our nation", in that they both stretch beyond what an individual can realistically experience in their lifetime. Namely, one can never meet all the fellow members of "their nation", yet they are imagined to belong to the same entity. Similarly, it is quite unlikely to experience "one's country" in its geographical totality, however it is still imagined as "our country". As stated by Billig, individuals "can even be tourists, indeed strangers, in parts of 'their' own land; yet, *it is still 'their' land*" (1995, p. 74).

For most in the Kurdish diaspora in Europe, however, this kind of imagining of a "Kurdish country" – i.e. a Kurdish nation-state corresponding with the geographical area of one's origin – is not accessible. As reported by Kirmanj, nevertheless, such an imagining is being constructed through various discursive and visual strategies – e.g. using cartography, as presented above – in Kurdish school text books in Kurdish Regional Government (2014). This points to an interesting condition where "Kurdistan as a country" and "Kurdistan as a symbol of one's origin" are distinguishable, albeit co-existing, features. As mentioned before, reports alluding to this condition are also presented by Eliassi (2013) in his discussion of second-generation Kurds experiences in Iraqi Kurdistan.

To conclude, the study at hand maintains that there is a theoretical need to distinguish between an *idealized, mythic narrative* of "Kurdistan as homeland" versus "Kurdistan as country". In certain accounts, these two narratives can overlap, while in others, they diverge. Such divergence is visible, for instance, in Demir's (2012), Eliassi's (2013) and Galip's (2014) research, as presented above. Nonetheless, the theoretical distinction between "Kurdistan as homeland" versus "Kurdistan as country" assists in making sense of the dichotomic relationship many Kurds in diaspora seem to have with their

origins. In other words, while "Kurdistan as homeland" can be *praised and idealized* as place of origin for one's roots and culture; "Kurdistan as a country" or 'countries' of origin with a considerable Kurdish population, on the other hand, can simultaneously be *criticized* due to traumatic memories, or due to the current political/social/economic situation in the region. It should also be noted that the co-existence of these narratives is not exclusive to Kurds. For instance, it can clearly be observed in the discourses of numerous populist parties in Europe that, while the mythic image of the nation and the *national homeland* is idealized; the "current situation" of *the country* is viewed in a negative light.[23]

3.2.3 Differences within Kurdish Diaspora

A historical understanding of diaspora was advocated earlier in this chapter, based on the premise highlighted by Mojab and Gorman (2007), in that it assists in observing the conflicts and differences within a given diaspora group. Moreover, as emphasized by Baser et al., it is important continuously to keep in mind that "[t]he Kurdish diaspora is not a monolithic body. It consists of various groups with divergent ideologies, religious backgrounds and profiles. There are generational, tribal as well as linguistic differences" (2015, p. 129).

While it is crucial restate that 'Kurdish diaspora' is *not* the main unit of analysis, *nor* the term of choice in describing the research participants[24] throughout the study at hand, it is also to be acknowledged that this study is still committed to avoid a "facile use of concept[s] of 'ethnic community'" (Schiller 2008, p. 3). This premise applies to the reporting of previous research as well. Hence, under this theme, previous studies focusing on various differences and conflicts *within* Kurdish diaspora will be presented. Since it is not realistic to present here *all* studies reporting various forms of difference within Kurdish diaspora, this chapter will focus primarily two reoccurring themes, namely; political/ideological conflicts and orientalism within the Kurdish diaspora. Proceeding with these themes will provide accounts of the "internal others" in the diaspora, as it pertains to Kurdish nation-ness. The reasoning behind presenting primarily the above-mentioned differences and conflicts is to demonstrate that *Kurdish*

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[23] This example, however, should *not* be understood to say that the discourse of European populist parties and diasporic imagination of homeland are *in themselves* similar. It only aims to demonstrate that an idealized and a critiquing narrative of the homeland can co-exist.

[24] Previously in this chapter, it was stated that the research participants of the study at hand are "Kurdish immigrants", since this choice of a term reflects more accurately the individuals interacted with during the data elicitation process.

nation-ness, as the study at hand is concerned, *is* performed and invoked differently by various groups in the diaspora. It is expected that the following paragraphs will demonstrate this aspect clearly.

The first among the above-mentioned themes – the theme of political and ideological conflicts in Kurdish diaspora – is present among numerous previous studies. For demonstrative purposes, however, this chapter will primarily address Baser's article (2015a) on KOMKAR's (Association for Kurdish Workers Kurdistan) position in the Kurdish diaspora and Mohammadpur et al. (2017) study on representations of Kurdish nationalism in Newroz TV[25]. It is believed that examples found in these articles establish the political and ideological conflict aspect with the most brevity.

The reading of previous literature on Kurdish diaspora and its political processes establishes beyond doubt that it would be epistemologically naïve to assume that the Kurdish diaspora/Kurdish communities has uniform political claims, strategies or aims regarding the political direction and future of Kurds as "a nation" or as "a people". The variety of political claims, strategies and aims is tied to both a change in the global political climate – from political commitments to self-determination and independence, to an increased emphasis on improving human rights and democracy on behalf of minority/diaspora groups (as presented in Emanuelsson 2013) – as well as the existing ideological differences in the Kurdish diaspora (presented, e.g. in Mohammadpur et al. 2017).

Focusing on smaller, or more "unheard voices" in the Kurdish diaspora, then, proves a sufficient strategy to observe such differences, which is one of the reasons why Baser's 2015(a) article focuses on KOMKAR. According to Baser, "[w]hile the PKK[26] was successful in mobilising the masses and becoming a social movement with mass appeal in diaspora, the other Kurdish movements remained elite-initiatives, without substantial support" (2015a, p. 113). KOMKAR is considered to be one of these organizations. It is not feasible to address in detail here which political parties/organizations occupy which positions and implement which strategies in the Kurdish political landscape, since it does not fit to the scope of this Master's Thesis. However, it can be summarized that the

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[25] Newroz TV is described as "[o]ne of the most popular satellite TV channels among Iranian Kurds" (Mohammadpur et al. 2017, p. 165).
[26] "Kurdistan Workers' Party" in English or "Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê" in Kurdish. PKK is regarded a "terrorist" organization in Turkey (Barrinha 2011), has been in an armed conflict with Turkey since 1984, excluding a ceasefire during 2013-2015 (Baser 2015b). The organization initially aimed for establishing an independent Kurdish state, however later redefined it as aiming for equal rights and Kurdish autonomy in Turkey. (Emanuelsson 2013)

main ideological/political disagreements between PKK and KOMKAR (as well as the PSK[27], which KOMKAR is affiliated with) lies in KOMKAR's "differing aims from the PKK's political agenda and its rejection of violence as a means of reaching its aims for the Kurdish cause" (2015a, p. 114).

However, a more interesting dynamic, considering the study at hand, between the two entities in Kurdish political sphere are revealed by the following accounts:

> According the KOMKAR representative in Berlin, the PKK used violence against other Kurdish movements and jeopardised the activities of KOMKAR in Europe. Seminars organised by KOMKAR were sabotaged and raided by PKK supporters. Their members were threatened or beaten. […] For example, there was an attack during a Newroz celebration in Munich in 1987 and following this some PKK supporters burned KOMKAR offices and archives. […] Another tense episode was the Newroz celebration of 2003, when a concert organised by KOMKAR was sabotaged by PKK supporters (2015a, pp. 119-120).

The above-mentioned events evince a significant fact about the nature of nationalism: namely that it is grossly insightless to assume that "nationalism" represents a single, homogeneous voice in a given community or a "nation". Certainly, there is a shared language of nationalism with its references to particular elements, themes and characteristics, which have been discussed earlier, under the concept of "the narrative of national culture" by Stuart Hall (1996). However, there are also a high level of disagreements and contradiction as to the politics of how nation-ness (and the governmental/administrative bodies corresponding such entity) should be constructed and maintained. In the case of KOMKAR (as well as PSK) and PKK, for instance, "the PSK wanted no less than a federal solution while the PKK maintained that they did not want a separate state and opted for democratic autonomy in Kurdish majority regions" (2015a, p. 121). In short, Baser's findings on the disagreements between PKK and KOMKAR, as exemplified above, pertain to the non-existence of a uniform set of nationalist ideals and strategies in a given community. Such is precisely the reason why, as stated in Chapter 1.1, the study at hand refrains from examining "nationalism as expressed by the Kurds", since such a unit is theoretically inaccessible as a totality. Therefore, it is important to remind that *Kurdiliitto's events* and *individuals active in these events and the organization* – as opposed to e.g. "Kurdish diaspora in Finland" – were chosen as empirical anchors for this study.

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[27] Kurdistan Socialist Party.

Political and ideological disagreements in Kurdish diaspora are also visible in media outlets, as Mohammadpur et al.'s study demonstrates (2017). In their study, Mohammadpur et al. "explore how Kurdish identity has been represented in Newroz TV, one of the most popular satellite TV channels among Iranian Kurds" (2017, p. 167). Their research establishes that, while Kurdish nationalism is primarily "defined in opposition to Persian, Arabic (as in Syria and Iraq) and Turkish national identity" (2017, p. 168), there is also a significant existence of "partisan ideological divisions among Kurdish political groups" (ibid.). Similar reports were present also in Baser's study (2015a), as discussed above.

Mohammadpur et al.'s findings display the "complex interplay of what it means to be Kurdish, shifting between locating Kurdishness in opposition to nation states, yet *defining it further between different Kurdish actors*" (2017, p. 175) [Italics mine]. In other words, there is no homogenous definition of "being Kurdish" and more significantly, "Kurdishness" is also defined internally; possibly in contradicting ways. Such might be the case for many other nations around the world, however, in the Kurdish case, it becomes quite pronounced as there is no nation-state providing a legally standardized framework surrounding the concept of "being Kurdish".

In the process of this defining, "an internal 'other' is created […] against which the Kurdishness and Kurdish goals are defined" (Mohammadpur et al. 2017, p. 176). In the case of Newroz TV, this "internal othering" takes place in the partial depiction of various political organizations and entities in Kurdish politics. For instance, Mohammadpur et al. report that "[i]n contrast to the traditional Kurdish parties of Iran and Iraq, Newroz TV demarcates the military resistance carried out by the PKK and PJAK as *truly Kurdish*" (2017, p. 176) [Italics mine]. Additionally, Mohammadpur et al. emphasize the importance of providing the political context behind such partial positionings. Hence, they explain that "PJAK advocates replacing Iran's theocratic leadership with a democratic, federal system that would grant autonomy not only to Kurds' but also to the Azeri, Beluchi and Arab regions of Iran. While PJAK claims that it resorts to military actions only if provoked by the Iranian government, it criticizes KDPI[28] and Komela[29] for their neutral stance" (2017, p. 175).

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[28] Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (In Kurdish: Hîzbî Dêmukratî Kurdistanî Êran).
[29] Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan (In Kurdish: Komełey Şorrişgêrrî Zehmetkêşanî Kurdistanî Êran). Both KDPI and Komela leftist parties and are currently in exile in Iraq.

These findings establish that nation-ness is constructed not only in relation to external others; but also through partial *internal* positioning. Mohammadpur et al.'s research (ibid.) provides new insight since, their unit of analysis – i.e. content broadcasted in a Kurdish television channel – have conventionally been investigated through its construction of national identity in relation to the external others. As a side note, it is important to state that existence of internal others in the construction of Kurdish nation-ness has not been overtly observed in the data elicitation process of this study. However, focusing on the role of internal others in the process of invoking and performing nation-ness makes a fruitful case for future research, as demonstrated by Baser (2015a) and Mohammadpur et al. (2017).

A similar case of internal othering, not exclusively in relation to the scene politics, but in relation to certain population groups have been presented by Eliassi (2013) and Demir (2012). For instance, Demir depicts that, during her research, she did not come across "pan-Kurdish activity or mobilisation on the part of Kurds from Turkey." (2012, p. 823). She states:

> On the contrary, I came across Orientalised views amongst some Kurds from Turkey towards Kurds from other countries. When I asked about interactions between Kurds from other countries, I was told by a Kurdish cafe´ owner from Turkey: 'Their culture is very different from ours. They are backward'. Another Kurd from Turkey, who is a prominent member of a leftist organisation stated: 'Their [Kurds from other countries than Turkey] culture is very different. They are feudal' (ibid.).

Certainly, a lack of perceived shared socioeconomic status or shared cultural traits with "Kurds from other countries" does not mean that individuals with such attitudes do not relate to an imagined community of Kurds. It does mean however, that Kurdish nation-ness is imagined *in specific ways*. Certain qualities are being frowned upon in terms of their relation to the concept of "Kurdishness".

A similar account is visible in Eliassi's research. In his 2013 book, *Contesting Kurdish Identities in Sweden*, he addresses the issue of "self-orientalization" or "internal otherization *among* young Kurds in Sweden (pp. 158-162). Eliassi reports that, during his discussions with the research participants, "the word i*mport* was often used and was followed by a laughter as a way to classify and solidify a gendered notion of undesired ethnic Kurdishness" (2013, p. 158) [Italics in original]. In Eliassi's interviewees' narratives, ""imports" were portrayed as "backward" Kurds untouched by civilizations, modernity and progressive ideas" (ibid.). Such depiction is similar to Demir's (2012)

respondents' remarks on "Kurds from other countries" (than Turkey) being backward, as presented above. This type of "self-orientalization", as well as "internal otherization" of political entities discussed by Baser (2015b) and Mohammadpur et al. (2017), was not observed in the data elicitation process of this study. On the contrary, the elicitated data displays that the unifying aspect of Kurdish nation-ness was emphasized. It can be argued that this is due to the specific interview questions being asked in the interview, or due to the status of Kurdiliitto in Finland as a unifying umbrella organization for Kurdish NGOs.

Nonetheless, the self-orientalization among Kurds can provide valuable information as to who and which groups can claim access to an idealized notion of Kurdishness. This dynamic is visible in one of Eliassi's interviewees' statement: "I think that they believe that *we don't want to be Kurdish*, but that is not true. I just don't want to be *the sort of Kurd who is like them*" (2013, p. 159) [Italics mine]. Based on also other statements as reported by Eliassi (ibid.), it is clear that a "modern" version of Kurdishness which is "integrable" to Swedish society is idealized. Additionally, it should be noted that while internal otherization is clearly visible in both Demir's (2012) and Eliassi's (2013) interviewees' statements, the respondents are still not denying the internal others' Kurdish identity.

4 Methodology

As established in earlier chapters (see Chapters 1.1 and 1.3), the main objective of this research is to examine the ways Kurdish nation-ness is invoked and performed by Kurdish immigrants in Finland. In reaching such objective, two main research questions are posed: firstly, "how is Kurdish nation-ness invoked and performed among Kurdish immigrants in Finland?" and secondly, "what are the most recurrent patterns utilized in these invocations and performances?" This chapter presents the epistemological premises and the methodological choices through which the above-mentioned questions are answered.

4.1 A Case for Abductive Analysis

The study at hand utilizes the abductive analysis framework as developed by Tavory and Timmermans (2012, 2014). It should be noted that, throughout this study, abductive analysis is adopted not solely as a method for *analyzing* data; instead, the framework

presented by Tavory and Timmermans informs the general structure and process of this research as a whole. Hence, a concise description of the abductive analysis approach can help establish the epistemological and methodological standpoint of this research further.

The abductive analysis framework is largely based on the early American pragmatist tradition; influenced especially by the work of Charles S. Peirce. This influence is particularly highlighted in Tavory and Timmermans' utilization of notions such as the 'abductive' logic of inference (as opposed to deduction or induction), the "semiotic chain[s] of meaning-making" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 33), and in the emphasis placed on the elements of "surprise" (or unexpectedness) and "creativity" during the research process. These four components can be considered to embody most of the vital tenets of abductive analysis.

As a type of logical inference that is distinguishable from induction and deduction, 'abduction' refers to a "form of reasoning through which we perceive the phenomenon as related to other observations either in the sense that there is a cause and effect hidden from view, […] or in the sense of creating new general descriptions" (Timmermans and Tavory 2012, p. 171). In the case of *abductive analysis*, Tavory and Timmermans apply this form of reasoning to qualitative research, by defining abduction as "the process of producing theoretical hunches for unexpected research findings and then developing these speculative theories with a systematic analysis of variation across a study" (2014, p. 132).

The abductive analysis framework considers theorization as an inherent part of the research process. In this regard, "[b]elieving that one can construct theory within a research context presumes a specific epistemological position" that rejects the rather "artificial" divide between discovery and justification (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 6). As asserted by Tavory and Timmermans, an inductive method such as grounded theory, on the other hand, poses an intrinsic epistemological dilemma. Namely, researchers using this method are expected to generate new theories without attending to pre-existing theories, while simultaneously maintaining a level "theoretical sensitivity" to distinguish what can be considered "new" in their respective fields (ibid. p. 14).

Tavory and Timmermans define theory construction as "the production of an understanding, of a new claim regarding the empirical world, that we hope others will

take up, argue with, refute, or employ" (ibid.). In this regard, abductive analysis'
emphasis on theory construction through developing a systematic explanation of
unexpected empirical findings pairs well with the aim and framework of this study. To
remind, through adopting the concept of nation-ness – as opposed to the more
conventional concepts such as diaspora, identity or belonging – this study aims to
present *an alternative approach* surrounding the theme of Kurdish immigrants in
Europe. As such, abductive analysis' aptness for *generating new theoretical insight* can
assist immensely in the execution of the main aim of this study: i.e. presenting an
alternative approach.

One of the most fundamental questions driving abductive analysis is the question of
"[h]ow do we construct meaning?" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 22). In fact,
examining the process(es) and/or consequences of meaning-making can be considered
as "the basic building block" of qualitative research in general (ibid.). This fundamental
question's critical role in abductive analysis is relevant for the research at hand, because
this study's *two main research questions* are essentially *questions of meaning-making* as
well; with the first question investigating the general practices/processes of meaning-
making and the second question focusing on the repertoire found in the processes of
meaning-making. Tavory and Timmermans incorporate key principals from Peirce's
semiotics to qualitative research, in order to dissect meaning-making as it occurs, and to
guide theorization in abductive analysis.

As opposed to Saussure's semiotics, Peirce's semiotics are comprised of three main
elements: the sign, the object and the interpretant (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p.
23). More importantly, Pierce conceptualizes meaning-making not as an abstract and
static practice, but as practical and continuous (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 122).
In this framework, the 'sign' is understood as a "vehicle", representing or signifying an
'object' in a certain way. For instance, a word, a picture or an utterance can all be
considered as 'signs' in particular contexts (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 23). The
'sign' is always tied to an 'object' and does not exist separately (ibid.). The 'object', in
this relationship, refers to "any entity about which a sign signifies" (ibid.). Lastly, the
third element in Peirce's semiotics – i.e. the 'interpretant – is critical; because it
captures the constant and consequential nature of meaning-making. The 'interpretant'
can be described fundamentally as the "effect of signification"; in other words, *the
outcome* of the relationship between the 'sign' and the 'object' (Tavory and
Timmermans 2014, p. 122). This "effect" can be, and often is, as simple as

"understanding"; although it can lead to more complex outcomes as well (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 22).

Tavory and Timmermans conceptualize this relationship between the sign, the object and the interpretant as "a spiral" or as "a chain" of meaning-making (2014). Because meaning-making is continuously occurring, an 'interpretant' of one interaction, can become the 'sign' of the next one, carrying on indefinitely (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 29). If one considers that "[m]eanings are […] strung together in semiotic chains", examining these chains, then, can assist in attempting to answer the fundamental question of qualitative research: "how do we construct meaning?" (ibid.). In the context of abductive analysis, tracing and investigating these semiotic chains of meaning-making in the collected data can be considered as *the first step of analysis*, on the road to theorization.

4.2 Data Elicitation Process and the Elicitated Material

Observation and *interviewing* were chosen as data elicitation methods in this study. The decision to perform two distinct elicitation methods within a single research project was prompted by the duality of the research questions. Namely, while the first research question investigates *how* Kurdish nation-ness is invoked and performed; the second research question focuses on *what* kind of repertoire is utilized in such processes. As a result, collecting a more multi-dimensional form of data, through observation and interviewing, was deemed to assist in answering the questions of *how* and *what* with more comprehensively.

As discussed in Chapter 1.3, Kurdiliitto was utilized in this study as an *empirical anchor* to reduce the risk of "the facile use of concept[s] of 'ethnic community'" (Schiller 2008, p. 3). This decision also reflected on data elicitation process. Thus, eleven various events organized by Kurdiliitto were observed, and three semi-structured interviews were conducted with active members of the organization.

4.2.1 Kurdiliitto

Kurdiliitto works as an umbrella organization unifying and assisting 24 smaller (and local) associations catering to Kurds in Finland. The decision to utilize *specifically* Kurdiliitto as a research setting was based on two reasons: firstly, considering the time limit and the scope of a Master's Thesis, it was deemed more viable to choose

Kurdiliitto (which operates mostly in Helsinki, where the researcher resides) as a research setting, rather than to travel throughout Finland to observe different events at smaller, various Kurdish NGOs. Secondly, Kurdiliitto proved to be the most active and easily reachable organization in the internet (especially in social media) as a result of the researcher's online exploration on possible research sites and/or participants. While some of the smaller associations do have Facebook pages, they do not update it regularly and well in advance for upcoming events. Contrarily, Kurdiliitto regularly uploads information and material on the upcoming (and past) events organized by them. This presence in social media proved to be of great assistance for the researcher, especially in terms of locating the observation venues and collecting more specific information on the themes, activities as well as possible speakers prior to conducting the observations.

The third reason to utilize specifically Kurdiliitto is based on the organization's target audience and areas of activity. Namely, Kurdiliitto arranges a broad category of events and activities that cater to a wide variety of Kurds (or foreigners) in Finland. While certain gatherings are clearly directed towards Kurdish asylum seekers, refugees or immigrants in general; other events might have more of a generalized target audience. For instance, one of the observed events were the "Learn Finnish while Walking" ("Opi Suomea Kävelleen" in Finnish) event, and was directed more towards Kurdish asylum seekers in the metropolitan region. This event started with trip to a reception center and meeting a group of 10-15 asylum seekers. The event consisted of having a daily excursion outdoors as group and talking in Finnish. However, approximately three months later, Kurdiliitto also participated in – as an organization representing Kurdish culture – the "Multicultural West" ("Monikulttuurinen Länsi" in Finnish) event, organized in Kannelmäki, Helsinki. This event hosted a collection of NGOs with different areas of activity and focus on various ethnic minorities (such as Russian or Somalian).

Clearly, Kurdiliitto's presence at "Multicultural West" was targeted to a larger audience than solely asylum seekers. Considering the main objectives of this research and the inherent non-uniformity of the concept of Kurdish nation-ness – which are addressed in the first chapter of this study – observing a wide range of events with various participants and audience is regarded to lead to a more multi-dimensional analysis of Kurdish nation-ness. This premise was certainly one factors influencing the sampling

process of observation sessions; while the other factor was feasibility in terms of timetables and distance to the researcher.

4.2.2 Observations

As a part of the data elicitation process, eleven observation sessions were conducted, at events organized exclusively, or participated by Kurdiliitto. The observation "period" took place from 14.04.16 to 22.09.2017. The rather long stretch of time in the observation period is rooted in the fact that, the number of observations to be conducted were not specified prior to contact with the field. Instead, this number was the result of an "organic" satiation level, i.e. a point where the researcher accumulated a body of data that can be considered both appropriately penetrative and manageable within the scope of a Master's Thesis.

Additionally, the reason for the lack of a pre-specified number relates to this study's overall methodological approach; where continuous contact and rapport with the field was emphasized; and possible need for further observation (or interviews) were identified d*uring* the data elicitation process. As Charmaz contends, a continuous relationship with the field is essential for gathering useful data and producing rich analysis, as opposed to a 'smash and grab' strategy and a 'superficial analysis' followed by it (2006, p. 18).

All of the observed events were open to public, with only 4 peer support group meetings requiring prior registration. The list of observed events, in chronological order, are as follows: a public seminar commemorating the Anfal genocide, Kurdiliitto's programme at their stand in the "World Village Festival" ("Maailma Kylässä" in Finnish), two "Learn Finnish while Walking" excursions, Kurdiliitto's stand and performance of Kurdish songs at the "Monikulttuurinen Länsi" event, a public seminar on the topic of "honor" and its place in Kurdish society, 4 peer support sessions on the topics of integration, Finnish society and finding work in Finland and a demonstration for supporting and celebrating the results of the 2017 Iraqi Kurdistan independence referendum.

As can be seen from the concise list above, the observed sessions consist of different themes and activities. Such variety was intended to match the theoretical characteristics of the main concept utilized in this research: i.e. nation-ness. As discussed in Chapter 3.1, nation-ness can be invoked in contexts with *both* overtly national meaning as well

as in banal, everyday settings and conversations. Hence, it was determined that a considerable variation of observed contexts can better reflect in analysis *the banal ubiquity* of nation-ness and nationalism.

The length of observation sessions ranged 2 to 7 hours. The researcher introduced herself to the chairman and other board members of Kurdiliitto during the first observed event (a seminar commemorating Anfal genocide on April 14th, 2016). In this introduction, it was explained to the chairman and the two board members of Kurdiliitto that the researcher was writing a Master's Thesis surrounding the theme of Kurdish immigrants in Finland, and was planning to do observations at their events (as well as possibly interview them). The chairman and others were affirmative from the outset; and throughout the data elicitation process, they have been immensely helpful in resolving practical issues such as facilitating access to the field, introducing the researcher to other participants at the events, and translating certain Kurdish conversations/sections in observed events.

In events consisting of a small group of people (less than 15-20 people), the researcher informed the participants of her reason to be present at the event (i.e. to elicitate data). However, in public events with a larger audience (such as the "World Village Festival" or the "Multicultural West" event) it proved to be impossible to inform everyone on site about the researcher's presence and purpose in the field. During the observation sessions, the researcher *did* engage in small talk or initiate conversations with others present in the field, especially in smaller groups. These conversations were not solely about the study at hand; on the other hand, some of the exchanges revolved around everyday topics such life in Finland or the researcher's background.

During the observations, the researcher wrote *brief* fieldnotes on site. These brief, usually descriptive notes consisted of keywords or short sentences reporting a scene, a conversation or certain objects on site. Depending on convenience and the nature of the event, the fieldnotes were written on a notebook, a mobile phone or a laptop computer. After the researcher left the event site, usually within the same day, she then focused on writing more detailed reports of the observation sessions on a computer. On par with the abductive analysis method, these more detailed notes were in written with a slight focus on surprising or unexpected observations in the field.

4.2.3 Interviews

To create a more multi-dimensional data set and gather complementary information, the researcher conducted 3 semi-structured interviews with the chairman and two board members of Kurdiliitto. These individuals were selected due to *consistency* and *convenience*. Namely, although some observed events attracted a considerable amount of people, selecting a "random" person for an interview at these events might have led to an unfavorable position; since not all attendees at Kurdiliitto's events have regular ties to the organization. Contrarily, at least one of the selected interviewees were *consistently* present in every observed session, which meant that the researcher had more opportunities to build rapport with them and ask them for an interview. Furthermore, due to their positions in Kurdiliitto, they had the ability to provide more information about the organization, and the specific purpose and content of the observed events.

The interviews took 60 to 90 minutes and were organized in October 2016, after the majority of observations were conducted. The interviews were conducted in Finnish language, as this seemed to be the easiest language to use in communicating with the interviewees. Translations of the interview excerpts (from Finnish to English) which are used in the thesis were done by the researcher herself.

As mentioned earlier, on April 2016, the chairman and two board members of Kurdiliitto were informed and were affirmative of the researcher's upcoming plans to conduct observations and perform interviews with them. Additionally, prior to approximately a week before the interviews (in October 2016), the researcher still obtained direct oral permission from the interviewees to record the interviews, as well as to use directly or make mention of their statements in her thesis. The interviewees were informed that this thesis was a public document in Finland; accessible to anyone. Finally, after meeting on site for each interview session, the permission to conduct interviews as a part of a Master's Thesis was once again re-iterated, and the interviewees' affirmative reply was recorded on tape.

The researcher did not bring a list of pre-made questions to the interview; however, she did have a list of topics to go through during the session. The topics ranged from e.g. "reasons for establishing Kurdiliitto", "best/worst countries for Kurds", "life before immigrating to Finland", "experiences in neighboring countries" etc. Many of the topics were determined by themes that needed further exploration based on the field notes of prior observation sessions. In alignment with the methodological premises and the research questions of this study, the researcher held a constructivist approach during the

interviews, which can be summarized as an effort to "emphasize eliciting the participant's definition of terms, situations and events and try to tap his or her assumptions, implicit meanings and tacit rules" (Charmaz 2006, p. 32). Hence, during the interviews, the researcher's main purpose was to explore and examine how *the interviewees* defined, invoked and performed Kurdish nation-ness in a conversation; and what kind of context/narratives such invocations/performances included.

4.3   The Use of Analytical Practices

This subchapter will present in closer detail how various methods commonly used in qualitative research to analyze and organize elicitated data – i.e. taking field notes, transcribing interviews, coding etc. – are utilized in the context abductive analysis. It will also address the roles of previous literature and reflexivity in the abductive analysis framework. All of the methods and processes mentioned above are performed in the study at hand; hence the upcoming paragraphs will provide *the methodological ground* for the utilization of these practices in this research.

As mentioned previously, the elements of surprise and creativity embody some of the most vital tenets of abductive analysis[30]. This is because both of these elements play a significant role in abduction and theorization (Tavory and Timmermans 2014). Admittedly, with a lack of "surprise" and a stalled creativity, the conditions for abduction and theorization become significantly unfavourable; since insights on what can be considered "unexpected" or "new" become subdued. Thus, substantial knowledge of previous studies and theories in one's field plays a crucial role in the processes of abduction and theorization. This is because, "[f]or an observation to become surprising it needs to clash explicitly or implicitly with a vision of what the world should be like" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 42).[31] Tavory and Timmermans' statement here on "surprising observations" is intentionally left open, since – unlike deductive methods – the abductive analysis approach does not appoint an *exclusive* role to academic theories in the context of qualitative research. Oftentimes, researchers' own life experiences and "explanatory frameworks" can assist in abduction and theorization as well (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 43).

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[30] The element of "surprise", in this framework, can refer to a momentary feeling the research experiences in the field. More significantly, however, it can refer to possible "unexpected" empirical findings within the data set.

[31] Moreover, as stated in the previous subchapter, *phenomena are always perceived in relation to other observations* in 'abductive reasoning'. In 'abductive analysis', this logical premise is translated to the context of qualitative research.

In this regard, the researcher's position *in this study*, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.1, should be considered as an *integral part of the methodological framework* of this research. In line with the abductive analysis approach, such a discussion was presented to portray a picture of the researcher's own "explanatory framework" as a result of her own life experiences; which, subconsciously or consciously, alerted the researcher to a *particular* set of "surprises" and unexpected findings. In other words, the concept of "reflexivity" – i.e. a level of acknowledgment and self-inquiry of "the way[s] in which the products of research are affected by the personnel and process of doing research" (Davies 1999, p. 4). – is *embedded* to the abductive analysis framework from the outset. The emphasis on "surprise", "creativity" and the researcher's own "explanatory framework" all reflect this embeddedness.

Nevertheless, noticing unexpected findings (i.e. the element of "surprise") and conceiving creative strategies to make sense of them (i.e. the element of "creativity") do not occur by themselves (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 51). Researchers often need some kind of "assistance" to help initiate these two processes. In other words, in abductive analysis, "[t]heoretical misfits do not automatically develop as we immerse ourselves in a research site or literature. Such misfits need to be *drawn out through careful data analysis and an immersion in multiple theories*" (ibid.) [Italics mine]. In the context of the study at hand, Chapters 3.1 and 3.2 display this *immersion* in previous literature.

More specifically, Tavory and Timmermans appoint three distinctive roles to various methodological practices commonly undertaken within qualitative research. These are: mnemonics, defamiliarization and revisiting observations. The "first movement" into the data, i.e. mnemonics, assist in *familiarization* with the elicitated material, and serves as a "method[s] of justification, helping the researcher to ensure that the path to the completed argument is not mired in incompetent memory and other cognitive biases" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p.54). However, familiarization and justification are not the *only* function of the above listed methods in abductive analysis. When performed, they can also alert researchers to surprises "lurking" in the data (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 55). The "second movement", i.e. defamiliarization, is the conceptualization of this exact function. Tavory and Timmermans define defamiliarization as "a technique that pushes us to question the relation between the sign-object and our habits of thought and action in producing an interpretant" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 57). Defamiliarization constitutes a highly *vital step* for

abductive inferences, since, through "defamiliarizing the object, we can begin to *ask questions that we simply wouldn't think of if we took the object for granted*" (ibid.) [Italics mine].

The third function of qualitative methods such as writing field notes, coding or transcribing is that they facilitate *revisiting observations*. As the name suggests, this function refers to "the researcher's revisiting of recorded phenomena *in light of existing theoretical accounts*" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 58) [Italics mine]. In abductive analysis, "defamiliarization" and "revisiting observations" are viewed as complementary processes, assisting in abduction and theorization. In other words, "[d]efamiliarization makes sure that we mull over aspects we took for granted on the basis of *our preexisting ideas and proto-theories*, and revisiting allows us to case the same observation in *different theoretical ways* as we go along" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 60) [Italics mine].

In line with this approach, a coding scheme complementing the above-outlined 'mnemonics', 'defamiliarization' and 'revisiting observations' aspects was performed in this study. The utilized coding scheme was proposed by Charmaz in her book *Constructing Grounded Theory* (2006). The first performed step was *initial coding*, where the researcher "mine[d] early data for analytical ideas to pursue in further data collection and analysis" (Charmaz 2006, p. 46). This step was utilized to complement the mnemonic function of qualitative methods as outlined above. The initial coding process was then followed by *axial coding*, which assisted the researcher to *develop categories* and elaborate on the properties of these categories. The last step of coding was theoretical coding, which focused on "how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into a theory" (Glaser 1978, cited in Charmaz 2006, p.63). The steps of axial and theoretical coding were also meant to reflect the 'defamiliarization' and 'revisiting observation' aspects of qualitative methods. The coding was performed using the Atlas.Ti software.

The practices outlined above – i.e. taking field notes, transcribing and coding – do not in themselves result in the construction of an analysis or theorization. Providing a scientifically salient analysis and theorization, nevertheless, is facilitated by the processes of probing the data for *variation*, as well as accounting for *causality* in such variation, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

5 Findings and Analysis

5.1 The Pathway to Theorization: How Are Findings and Analysis Achieved in This Study?

This chapter will present the findings and analysis of this study with regards to the two main research questions. It is, however, essential to firstly address *how* findings and an analysis of findings are achieved in this study. As discussed in the previous chapter, while procedures such as coding assist in mnemonics, defamiliarization and revisiting observations, the result of these practices are not to be considered as 'findings' or as 'analyses' in and of themselves.

In the abductive analysis framework, the processes of establishing findings and developing an analysis are built upon the concepts of 'variation' and 'causality'. More significantly, the utilization of these concepts "illuminate the pathway to theorization" in the abductive analysis framework (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 86). The following paragraphs demonstrate precisely how the elicited data have been processed in order to arrive at a theoretical statement in this study.

5.1.1 Variation

In abductive analysis, "variation denotes the difference and similarities among a preconstructed set" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 68). The process of constructing a "set" – and examining the data for *variation* of such a set – is certainly not an arbitrary process. As Tavory and Timmermans argue, there would be no theoretical or conceptual utility in accounting for the existence of a "variation between the sun and a moose *unless we assume that we are comparing them in relation to something they share*" (ibid.) [Italics mine]. This brings forth the question of how "sets" are constructed in the abductive analysis framework. Such is fundamentally done "by tracing the consequential processes of meaning-making" in the data against a backdrop of relevant previous research and theories (ibid.).

Simply put, the construction of a set begins by inspecting the elicited data for *similar or comparable iterations of meaning-making*. Then, these iterations are dissected into the three facets of Peirce's semiotic chain framework: the sign, the object and the interpretant. This is done with the purpose of pinpointing the interpretant(s) in a given interaction or observation: i.e. identifying the "consequence(s)-in-action". The role of "consequence(s)-in-action" is methodologically significant in abductive analysis,

because it provides leverage "to work from consequences to concepts" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 70). This is in direct contrast, for instance, with deductive approaches. In abductive analysis, the goal is *not* to start with a pre-constructed concept, and survey the data to collect instances to support the theoretical/analytical accuracy of a given concept. Thus, as Peirce states when theorizing or developing concepts "we must not begin by talking of pure ideas […] but *must begin with men and their conversations*" (Peirce 1931, p. 83) [Italics mine].

The dissected components of the sign, the object and the interpretant constitute a basis, on which the researcher can build a set. Thus, "[l]ooking for variation then means searching for shared facets of semiotic chains that can be grouped into a set in a theoretically cogent manner, while differentiating them from those that seem dissimilar" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 70). Concepts are then developed *to make sense of* these variations. Finally, *theorization* is reached when the researcher is able to provide a consistent account for the existence of such variation.

In the abductive analysis framework, the data can be examined for three different kinds of variation: i.e. dataset variation, variation over time, and intersituational variation. 'Dataset variation' refers to comparing observations that are "proto-theoretically understood as "instances of the same thing" —for example, teacher-student exchanges, the socialization of new army recruits, […] or people answering a survey question" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 72). In the case of 'variation over time', on the other hand, the goal is to investigate how iterations of meaning-making change or maintain *over time* (ibid.).

The study at hand, however, utilizes the third kind of variation in this framework, which is 'intersituational variation'. Intersituational variation can be understood as "a corollary of dataset variation" (ibid.). Namely, while in dataset variation it is proto-theoretically assumed that observations or interactions in the data are of similar nature, in intersituational variation, "the key move is to convince readers", that a specific facet of meaning-making – i.e. either the sign, the object or the interpretant – are similar enough to make a set (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 79). To put simply, in intersituational variation, researchers "keep one semiotic element constant—whether signs, objects, or habits of thought and action—and follow it among situations" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 72).

5.1.2 The Utilization of Intersituational Variation in the Study at Hand

Following the above-outlined framework, the process of creating a set and examining the data for intersituational variation began in this study by examining the codes of the elicitated material. During this process, the researcher noticed that the code with the most entries was "comparison or confrontation with 'others' ". This code referred to instances in the data where Kurdish nation-ness was presented or defined with reference to other nation-nesses – either in terms of juxtaposition or of similarity. Additionally, the code referred to instances where Kurdish nation-ness directly "confronted" other nation-nesses in a physical or discursive context.

Inspecting the instances with this code, the researcher came across a considerable number of intersituationally "comparable" cases, where one semiotic facet seemed to be consistently shared. This facet was *the interpretant.* The researcher noticed that across different events, people and conversations existed *a consistent reiteration of a specific semiotic chain.* This chain manifested in the data as displayed below:
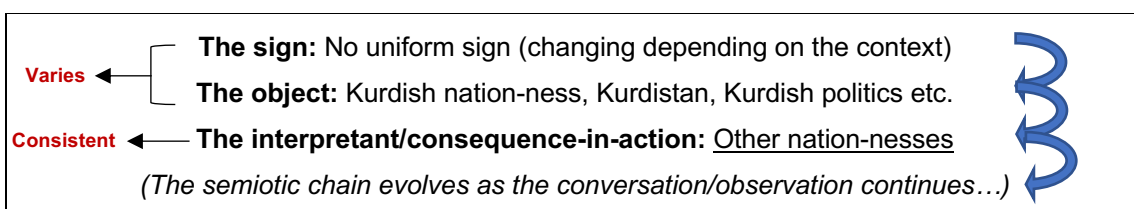

Table 2

To demonstrate how the above-outlined semiotic chain was deduced from the data, it is imperative to present here an example where the said semiotic chain can be observed. This instance is picked from field notes of an observation session. The observation session took place in a public seminar commemorating the Anfal genocide, where a number of politically active Finnish and Kurdish figures gave speeches. The first speaker was Erkki Tuomioja, former Minister of Foreign Affairs in Finland. Tuomioja's speech emphasized the role of promoting democratic values and human rights in the Kurdish region, to resolve political and democratic issues. The excerpt below captures the end of his speech and the audience's consecutive reaction.

> […]
> - Tuomioja argues that "states need not to be built based on a single nation or culture anymore." He stresses that we should rather focus on basic values such as democracy and human rights.
> - He then refers to the independence cases of Scots and Catalans.

The interpretant

- Tuomioja states that he hopes Turkey and the EU states do not turn their backs to these basic values when attempting to resolve issues in the Kurdish region.
- After Tuomioja's speech, the audience is encouraged to ask questions. One commentator refers (in an emotional tone) to Silopi, Nusaybin and other areas in Turkey where violence persists towards local Kurdish people. He questions the EU's relationship with Turkey. The interpretant
- The microphone is then passed on to another member of the audience.
- This commentator also makes a (rather resentful) remark about Turkey. He argues that Turkey is ignoring human rights; as Iran, Iraq and Syria do. This The interpretant commentator asks why the former minister referred to Turkey as a potential EU member. He also asks: "why did the EU pay Turkey millions of Euros and negotiated visa-free access when Turkey ignores human rights?"
- The microphone is given to a third commentator. He also has a question about Turkey. He asks what does the former minister think about Turkey's The interpretant negotiations on Turkish citizens possibly entering Europe visa-free?
- Tuomioja answers that closing the borders often creates humane and economic problems. He says that he would like to keep an open door to a democratic Turkey.
[…]

Excerpt 1 (Observation from a public seminar commemorating the Anfal genocide)

In this observation excerpt, the semiotic chain presented in Table 2 can be spotted numerous times. Following the 'intersituational variation' approach, one semiotic element – i.e. the interpretant – was kept constant and followed among interactions (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 72). 'The interpretant', in this case, is identified as the mentioning of Turkey as a response to a speech that did not carry "Turkey" as 'the object'. It can be distinguished from the excerpt above that, most of Tuomioja's speech was about democracy and human rights' role in resolving the political problems *in the Kurdish region*. Nevertheless, *all three of the audiences' questions* were *directly* about Turkey; not Kurdish politics or Kurds per se. This is *not* to claim that the audience's remarks were somehow "incorrect"; on the contrary, it is just to identify a particular *pattern* existing among the audience's reactions.

The specific interpretant in this interaction was then abstractified to be identified as "other nation-nesses", in order to search for interactions with a comparable semiotic chain. This interpretant – i.e. "other nation-nesses" – was observed consistently throughout the collected data; suggesting a potential theoretical and conceptual utility in building a set based on it. As a consequence, the researcher built a set marshalling instances with similar semiotic chains (depicted in Table 2) carrying this specific interpretant. Namely, among the instances gathered to this specific set, the signs kept

varying, the object was varied between e.g. Kurdish politics, Kurdish culture or Kurdish nation-ness; but the interpretant was consistently other nation-nesses.

The variation of signs and objects in this set were also accompanied with a variation of the discursive contexts on how other nation-nesses were present as the interpretant. Namely, not all "other nation-nesses" were portrayed or mentioned in an antithetical fashion. In certain cases, similarities or comparability with other nation-nesses were invoked. An instance of this can be observed in the excerpt below, in how Interviewee 1 responds to the question of describing Kurds with one word:

> […]
> **Interviewer:** Okay. This can be a bit of a challenging question, but if you had to describe Kurds with one word, what word would you choose, and why?
> **Interviewee 2:** One word? I would say Seven Brothers[32].
> **Interviewer:** Okay. Why?
> **Interviewee 2:** Because Seven Brothers, the novel written by Aleksis Kivi, somehow… Although it is about Finns, it very much describes Kurds also. The interpretant
> **Interviewer:** How? For instance?
> **Interviewee 2:** They [the main characters in the novel; the seven brothers] are not orderly, they are not organized, they are not cohesive. They always run into problems. They somehow cannot seem to build a collective aim or a home for themselves.
> […]
> *Excerpt 2* (Interview 2)

It can be seen in this interaction that the interviewer chose a *Finnish novel* to describe *Kurdish nation-ness*. More interestingly, it can be observed that he did not choose an arbitrary novel. He responded with Seven Brothers by Aleksis Kivi; which is widely considered as one of "the greatest of Finnish novels, and […] a story of the creation of the Finnish nation, literacy and education" (Hyvärinen 1999, page unknown). Although harshly criticized upon its publication, the literary (and public) opinion on the novel changed after Finland's independence[33] in 1917; understood to portray a rather realist account of the "Finnish nation" in the countryside (ibid.). It can be clearly dissected in this interaction that 'the object' was Kurdish nation-ness, and 'the sign" was the word(s) used in describing Kurdish nation-ness. 'The interpretant', however, was the reference to another nation-ness, as similarly seen in Excerpt 1.[34]

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[32] Seitsemän veljestä* in Finnish. This novel is one of the most known works by Aleksis Kivi, published in 1870.

[33] Unfortunately, during Kivi's lifetime, Seven Brothers was heavily criticized for misrepresenting the "Finnish nation." (Hyvärinen 1999)

[34] The theoretical basis for such a specific choice on the part of the respondent will be analyzed in the upcoming chapter. This chapter's purpose is to address the variation aspect of findings in the data.

Nevertheless, also a brief look at previous research would suggest that meaning-making processes with "other nation-nesses" as an interpretant is not exclusive to this study. This can be discerned, for instance, in van Bruinessen's research, where he argues that Kurdishness as a national identity gained momentum after Kurdish asylum seekers' migration to Europe in 1980s, and Kurds' following *encounters with other* diasporic communities (van Bruinessen, 1998, 1999, 2000). Similarly, Mohammadpur et al.'s research, as presented in Chapter 3.2, also establishes that Kurdish nationalism is fundamentally "defined in opposition to Persian, Arabic (as in Syria and Iraq) and Turkish national identity" (2017, p. 168).

Moreover, it can be observed in studies surrounding the concept of homeland, that there is a relative consensus implying that this concept – i.e. homeland – does not solitarily refer an exclusively "Kurdish" homeland; contrarily, it is also defined through references to other (nation) states and nation-nesses. This is clearly visible, for instance, in Toivanen and Kivistö's 2014 study, where they argue that among young Kurds living in Finland, "[h]ome is considered to be located *in Finland*, whereas Kurdistan represents the homeland" (p. 71) [Italics mine].

In sum, *a physical or discursive proximity to other nation-nesses* and nation-states is present across different cases in Kurdish studies. It can also be discerned that among previous studies, too, this physical and discursive proximity can present itself in antithetical and analogous terms. As stated in Chapter 1.1, it is one of the aims of this research to conceptualize the existence of this physical and/or discursive proximity through a novel approach.

5.1.3 Accounting for Variation: Causality and Explanation of Findings in Abductive Analysis

In the abductive analysis framework, variation in data is surveyed to "craft an abductive generalization that fits observations by specifying common grounds of elements in a set" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 86). Previous paragraphs demonstrated how this process was applied in the study at hand. Nevertheless, an explanation of "why observed events occur" is left untreated in this process. This methodological gap needs to be addressed, because as Tavory and Timmermans argue, "[a] compelling data analysis not only moves from observations to an abstracted description, but also provides readers with a *causal explanation* of variation" (ibid.) [Italics mine].

Tavory and Timmermans' incorporation of "causality" into qualitative research might initially raise some question marks. It is therefore imperative to address how this concept is treated to provide an analysis or an explanation in the abductive analysis framework. Firstly, it should be acknowledged that there are "various working definitions of causality" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 88). As such, abductive analysis' approach to "causality" is bound to be different than, for instance, the approach to "causality" in natural sciences.

For Tavory and Timmermans, this "niche" understanding of causality in abductive analysis stems from utilizing the semiotic chains of meaning-making in the framework. Namely, "the definition of meaning-making as iterative semiotic chains that are built on one another also presumes that one iteration of meaning-making shapes the next" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 87). As such, working with the processes of meaning-making in the data readily assumes, on a fundamental level, a kind of "causal" relationship between the indefinitely linked semiotic chains. This causality, however, does not assume a superior, ultimately true or sole "cause" affecting the meaning-making process. Instead, the abductive analysis framework utilizes a "mechanism based processual understanding of causality" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 90). Tavory and Timmermans emphasize that "[t]his form of causality gains its explanatory power by tracing how a social phenomenon came into being or how it acts" (2014, p. 88).

As mentioned above, a mechanism based approach to causality does not assume a *sole cause* determining the properties of meaning-making. Instead, Tavory and Timmermans list four possible explanations found in a given research setting: "*a social science explanation* of the observed variation as a patterned semiotic structure; *research subjects' own explanations*; *an alternative explanation* found in the social science literature; and *an account that goes beyond the initial observed variation* to point to a deeper underlying causal explanation" (ibid.) [Italics mine]. These explanations can coexist; however, in order to be *scientifically salient*, they need to account for the chosen variation in data – whether it is dataset, over time or intersituational variation – in a consistent manner. In other words, "the test of an explanation is how it fits the observed variation across cases when we retrace semiotic chains and consequences-in-action"[35] (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 98).

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[35] Chapter 5.1.2 addressed in detail the utilized variation, set and semiotic chains in this research. Such discussion is presented to assist the readers of this thesis in testing/evaluating the researcher's analysis.

5.2   Performing "Parallel Nation-ness"

[…]

Interviewer: Do you notice any differences between Kurds who come from different countries? If so, what kind of differences? And despite the differences, if you are to consider them as one community, what makes them a community in that case?

Interviewee 1: Yes, there are some differences. But the differences come from the environment and the [social and political] system they grew up in.

[…]

Interviewee 1: But like they say in Finland "we are not Swedish, we do not want to be[come] Russians, so let us be Finns." In Kurdish, this is actually a song. I translated it in my book. It goes like "her Kurdun, her Kurd ebin": "We have always been Kurds, we are always going to be Kurds."

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee 1: So, we have always been Kurds, we are always going to be Kurds. And in that sense, we are no mountain Turks either. [Laughs]

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee 1: We are not Iranians. We are not Arabs.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee 1: We have always been Kurds and are going to be Kurds. It's like… There are actually some similarities with Finland. In Finland, they had an internal war too, the Reds and the Whites. There have been those, and maybe still are, who would want that Finland would be a part of Russia, those who do not want an independent Finland.

 […]

Excerpt 3 (Interview 1)

In *Banal Nationalism*, Billig underlines a rather indisputable historical fact: "Liberalism and Marxism have been territorially limited, as was Christendom or Islam in the Middle Ages, *but nationalism is an international ideology*" (1995, p. 22) [Italics mine]. What Billig seeks to capture with this approach, is not only that nationalism has been more widespread in influencing how states and politics are organized in the world than other ideologies; more significantly, this *internationality of nationalism* indicates the existence of *a shared language of nationalism*. In this language, myths, histories, languages, national groups can be context "specific"; but what they signify, and how they are utilized to perform and narrate nation-ness are not specific. As Billig contends:

> 'We' have a history, identity and flag, just like all those other 'we's. In this, 'we' […] speak […] *a universal code of particularity.* This mixture of universality and particularity enables nations to proclaim themselves as nations. If 'we' are to imagine 'ourselves' as unique, 'we' need a name to do so. […] The category not only categorizes 'us', in our particularity - demarcating 'us' as an 'us' - but the

category is to be categorized (or proclaimed) as a national label in its universality. (1995, pp. 72-73) [Italics mine]

The non-specificity of "the category" itself means that it can be reproduced; "translated" from context to context; as Interviewee 1's statements demonstrate in Excerpt 3. After all, in the (inter)national order of things, "Kurds will be Kurds"; and "Finns will be Finns", vis-à-vis their "others." More importantly, however, the translation or translocation of "the category" across national contexts *reifies* the category itself. The concept of "parallel nation-ness" was developed in this thesis to capture this under-researched aspect of nationalism, especially in regard to diasporic or immigrant groups. The researcher conceived of "parallel nation-ness" when the she attempted to theorize and construct a framework that could methodically explain *why* a particular interpretant – i.e. "other nation-nesses" – consistently emerged in otherwise different contexts and settings in the elicited data. All of the three data excerpts presented so far in this chapter display this interpretant; whether it is Turkish or Finnish nation-ness operating as the interpretant. The logistics of this process was already described in the previous chapters: namely, a specific interpretant (i.e. "other nation-nesses") was leveraged by semiotically dissecting observations where "comparison or confrontation with 'others' " was a consistent theme, and then was traced through the data in order to build a "set". Instances in (and outside) this set were then compared to each other until the research was able to develop a framework that could consistently account for the existence of this variation.

In the most fundamental form, the proposed theorization in this study stipulates that nation-ness can be observed as a "performance" or emulation of the "universal codes of nationhood" (Billig 1995, p. 80) – which are informed by the ideological hegemony of nationalism – that in turn re-constructs itself. This "performance" aspect is presented in agreement with Diana Taylor's assertion – that "just as gender is a performative act, […] nation-ness is also *performative*" (1997, p. 92).

It is important at this point to state that this study does *not* argue nation-ness and gender are cognates: as opposed to, for instance, Taylor's approach in *Disappearing Acts* (1997). This study instead suggests that the two could be, to a certain extent, observed analogously. Thus, the study at hand does not aim to make a statement about 'gender' per se. 'Gender' is only used as *a demonstrative agent* to depict certain qualities of nation-ness and how it operates in the world.

Namely, following this analogy, it can be considered that both 'gender' and 'nation-ness' are "a kind of imitation" with no original copies; however "natural" they appear to be. Indeed, what Butler puts forward for gender – i.e. "Gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original; in fact, it is a kind of imitation that produces the very notion of the original" (1991, p. 21) – can very much be applied to the ideology of nationalism, and the various institutions it has legitimized; e.g. the "nation", "national identity", the nation-state etc. This is the reason why developing a framework that understands nation-ness as a performance is valuable; it provides a basis for an analysis can effectively avoid analyzing *an imitation* as if it was *natural*.[36] Such advantage is not available to the same extent when utilizing concepts such as "identification" or "national identity".

Most importantly, the conceptual comparison of 'gender' and 'nation-ness' can assist in establishing the differences between 'national identity' and 'nation-ness'. This is significant, since "nation-ness" as a concept is prone to slippage[37]. In this comparison, it can be deduced that, while the term 'gender identity' primarily emphasizes an individual experience/feeling of identification, the term 'gender' *as a concept* infers a widely accepted social system that engenders gender identities and stipulates their characteristics. Gender identities can be 'fluid', or individuals can identify themselves as 'genderless' even; however, as one of the main norms in modern society, the idea of 'gender' itself stays looming as a reference point – something to "not have", or not subscribe to in a mainstream sense.

A similar point, then, can be made about the difference between 'national identity' and 'nation-ness'. Namely, while the term 'national identity' brings forward mostly an individual (or collective) experience/feeling of identification, the concept of 'nation-ness' highlights the politically and socially accepted and praised "state of being a nation." It refers to a specific *social and political norm* that is prevalent in modern societies; regardless of individuals and communities choosing to relate to their 'national identities' in new forms (e.g. postnationalism, transnationalism) or not.

In light of this perspective, Anderson's remark on "the formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept" where "everyone can, should, will 'have' a nationality, as he or she 'has' a gender" obtains a new kind of significance (Anderson 1983, p. 5).

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[36] Additionally, this is the kind of research Wimmer and Schiller criticize when using the term "methodological nationalism" (2002); i.e. a research that fails to see this "imitation" aspect and treats nations as "original" or "natural".
[37] See Chapter 3.1 for examples of such conceptual slippage.

Namely, this thesis argues that, when it comes to nation-ness, there exists a shared language of nationalism, where through emulating certain elements, this universal socio-political norm can be "performed." This "performance" is critical, since, "doing one's nation-ness […] "correctly"" (Taylor 1997, p. 92) assures a set of positive outcomes that is available to those conforming to the general norm, especially in a world instituted by the "national order of things" (Malkki, 1992).

While Anderson did not elaborate further on these points in *Imagined Communities*, the theorization in this study attempts to explore precisely this framework, through developing a novel concept: i.e. *performing parallel nation-ness*. In regard to the question of "how is Kurdish nation-ness invoked and performed among Kurdish immigrants in Finland?" this study *responds* and *demonstrates* that Kurdish nation-ness is performed *primarily as parallel to other nation-nesses.* Moreover, reasons for the prevalence of such specific performance – i.e. paralellity – is also explored in this thesis.

5.3   Performing Nation-ness through Antagony and Analogy

It was presented in the previous chapter that nation-ness as a category can be emulated and "translated" across different context. This study finds that Kurdish nation-ness is performed on such basis. Hall's discussions on "the narrative of national culture" provides a fruitful framework through which one can pinpoint how such emulation or translation is possible. In his article 'The Question of Cultural Identity', Hall argues that "[i]f we feel we have a unified identity from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comforting story or "narrative of the self" about ourselves" (Hall 1996, p. 598). "The narrative of national culture" should, essentially, be considered as the outcome of applying such conceptualization to the level of nations.

As discussed in Chapter 2.1, according to Hall (1996), "the narrative of national culture" is told through utilizing five elements: 'the narrative of the nation', 'emphasis on origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness', 'the invention of tradition', 'foundational myth' and 'the idea of a pure, original people or "folk"'. It is important to note that Hall does not argue his framework represents in totality how *all* narratives of national culture are told; it only displays a general, and more importantly, a *shared* pattern. In the context of this thesis, it is precisely because of their sharedness that the aspects in Hall's framework can be emulated across different national contexts, and when emulated, can carry particular functions.

This thesis argues that in the narrative of Kurdish national culture, there is a rather frequent allusion of "other nation-nesses". Some of these "others" are ascribed an antagonistic role, while some carry an *analogous* position. The first part of this chapter addresses how the interpretant – i.e. "other nation-nesses" – is ascribed an antagonistic role in the narrative of Kurdish national culture, while the second part investigates how the same interpretant is *translated* across different national contexts, to perform (and reify) Kurdish nation-ness through analogy to other nation-nesses.

5.3.1 The Antagonistic Role of Other Nation-nesses in the Narrative of Kurdish National Culture

This thesis argues that an overarching narrative of Kurdish nation-ness is one where the interpretant, i.e. "other nation-nesses", are assigned a particular role. In this narrative, *if* the "other nation-nesses" are groups in relation to whom Kurds are a minority in their countries of origin (Turkey, Iran, Iraq or Syria), the role attributed to them seems to be one that *disrupts* Kurds' inherent unity as a nation. This narrative of "disruptive outside forces" is often tied to Kurds' own narrative of their nation, the Kurdish nation's origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness, and the nation's foundational myth.

A striking example of this overarching narrative can be observed in how the Kurdish nation's 'foundational myth' is told. As stated by Hall, 'foundational myth' refers to "a story which located *the origins of the nation, the people, and their national character* so early that they are lost in the mists of, not "real", but "mythic" time" (1996, p. 614) [Italics mine]. The excerpt below showcases how this foundational myth is narrated in the Kurdish context.

> […]
> **Interviewer:** Do you recall a moment in your life where you were proud to be Kurdish? If you do, what was that moment like? Can you describe it?
> **Interviewee 1:** [Clears throat] Yes, I do have moments like that. I have a lot of such moments, actually. Hmm… I feel quite proud when I read Mem and Zin.[38]
> **Interviewer:** Oh, yes.
> **Interviewee 1:** Mem and Zin was written towards the end of 1660s, back then they didn't really have nation-states, not even one. But Ahmad Khani, in that book, in that epic, talks about national identity. Even the French Revolution had not happened at that time.

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[38] "Mem û Zîn" in Kurdish. Ahmad Khani, the creator of Mem and Zin, is "commonly hailed as the founding father of Kurdish nationalism." Additionally, it is important to note that "Khani's work Mam v Zin is central to the contemporary conceptualizations of Kurdish nationalism […]." (Vali 2003, p. 63)

Interviewer: [Laughs] Yes, it had not.

Interviewee 1: So, actually, you're able to see that throughout the book– from the book, that even though you didn't have nation-states, you still had your own language and own culture, that represented how other nations in the area were and lived. Persianness were quite strong there. It even was so that both Arabic and Turkish languages were being influenced by Persian language. Umm, so, they excluded other groups who lived there and… Ahmad Khani, umm, in his poems, it becomes quite obvious that the national identity, and how much he thirsted for Kurdish people's independence.

[…]

Interviewee 1: But yes, it [Mem and Zin] is, in my opinion, something to be proud of for Kurds. But it hasn't been appreciated enough.

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Interviewee 1: And, you can see also Kurdish history in there, umm, in 1514, when Persians and Ottomans were at war with each other, that is when they first divided Kurdistan between those two countries. But immediately some discontentment started [among Kurds].

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee 1: And in 1609 happened the first [Kurdish] uprising. An uprising that questioned the Ottomans' and Persians' power in the area. Umm, but during the Ottoman time, the Kurds still lived relatively freely.

[…]

Excerpt 4 (Interview 1)

It can be observed in this excerpt that Interviewee 1 presents other nation-nesses (such as Persian and Ottoman) as disrupting and disturbing the inherent unity of Kurds as a nation, and Kurdistan as a homeland of Kurds. Additionally, it should be emphasized that in this narrative, nation-states are considered a contingency, while the origins of Kurdish nation and national character are placed earlier in history, with no clear timeline. Through this ambiguous historicity (or ahistoricity), the interviewee is able to narrate Kurdish "nation-ness" as a given, almost as an inherent characteristic, predecessing nation-states. As such, the Kurdish epic Mem and Zin is utilized to represent the 'foundational myth' of Kurdish nation-ness.

It is important to consider here that Interviewee 1's reading of Mem and Zin is not an obscure one. On the contrary, similar approaches to the epic is present among academia as well. For instance, Hassanpour underlines that Khani identified as a Kurd, and considers Khani's effort to create an epic in Kurdish language to "resemble, on the surface, the beginnings of […] 'linguistic nationalism'" (Hassanpour 2003, pp. 126-127). This position, however, is disputed by Vali, who argues "Hassanpour's

essentialist conception of Kurdish nationalism" fails to consider that "Khani was not a nationalist, but a patriot[39]" (Vali 2003, pp. 96-102).

All in all, it is safe to claim that Mem u Zin is utilized in the narrative of Kurdish national culture to represent the 'foundational myth'. This myth also places the aspiration of Kurdish independence quite early in time, narrating it as a centuries long pursuit. Needless to say, the kind of "independence" Khani inferred in Mem and Zin was not exactly akin to the modern political aspirations of nationalism, such as autonomy or an independent nation-state; since, as Interviewee 1 himself mentions, nation-states were certainly not a form of political organization at the time.

The antagonistic role ascribed to other-nationnesses is present in yet another element in the narrative of national culture, i.e. 'the narrative of the nation'. Hall describes the narrative of the nation as "a set of stories, images, landscapes, scenarios, historical events [...] which stand for, or *represent*, the shared experiences, sorrows and triumphs and disasters which give meaning to the nation" (Hall 1996, p. 613). Most, if not all, of the elements Hall underline above as part of the 'narrative of the nation' are utilized in the following excerpt:

> [...]
> **Interviewer:** What does "Kurdistan" mean to you? Do you consider it as a country or a homeland, or as something more than that? What is "Kurdistan" for you?
> **Interviewee 3:** Kurdistan is in my heart.
> **Interviewer:** Okay.
> **Interviewee 3:** In my heart.
> **Interviewer:** Yes.
> **Interviewee 3:** I never forget it. Not for an hour, not for two hours. I am always thinking of Kurdistan. I think that Kurdistan is the most beautiful country in the world. And Kurdish people, if they didn't have war, if nobody came to their– to, for instance, Kurdistan, umm, they wouldn't have problems with anyone. [Sighs] Kurdistan, in my opinion, somehow– I have to say, a sad country. Because for so long [foreign] government, governments, have been killing people. And it is– Kurdistan is big and green, and... I think it is the most beautiful country, in my opinion. [Laughs] And it is in my heart.
> [...]
> *Excerpt 5* (Interview 3)

---

[39] This thesis agrees with Vali that it is at best anachronistic to consider Khani a nationalist. Nevertheless, Vali's use of the word "patriotism" should still be questioned. This is because, as Billig argues, "patriotism" is often a strategically utilized word to conceal *our* nationalism. (1995, p. 17) As such, it would be beneficial to find another word to describe Khani's "identification with the oppressed" (Vali 2003, p. 96) instead of "patriot." Such task, however, falls beyond the topic and scope of this Master's Thesis.

It can be seen in this excerpt that the Kurdish landscape ("Kurdistan is big and green"), historical events ("If nobody came to Kurdistan") and sorrows ("Governments have been killing people") are all part of a narrative that attempt to cohesively define Kurdish nation-ness. The disruptive effects of other nation-nesses on Kurdish nation-ness embody *an integral part* of this narrative. As such, paradoxically, other nation-nesses' disruptions gives, in part, meaning to "being Kurdish": it provides *content*, and it ties individual experiences and sorrows to "a national destiny that pre-exists us and will outlive us" (Hall 1996, p. 613).

"Other nation-nesses" is also present as an antagonist in the narrative's emphasis on origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness. According to Hall, this aspect of the narrative of national culture highlights "the essentials of national character" which "remain[s] unchanged through all the vicissitudes of history" (1996, p. 614).

> […]
> **Interviewee 1:** Kurds always have been good soldiers. Iran, for instance, used them, umm, against the Mongolians when they attacked Iran.
> **Interviewer:** Okay, yes.
> **Interviewee 1:** They brought thousands of Kurds to hold– protect against the enemy's attacks. And nowadays there lives more than two million Kurds, in the Horasan region.
> **Interviewer:** Yes.
> **Interviewee 1:** It's not "Kurdistan", but they have strong Kurdish identity. Because it's like… Same in Konya [Turkey], among the ones living there. Those who have been moved there in the old days, they are– they speak Kurdish, still feel themselves to be Kurdish. And then you have those who have been forcibly moved in the last century. And so…
> **Interviewer:** Yes.
> **Interviewee 1:** Those have been managed to be assimilated. There they don't necessarily speak their mother tongue, but still many of them identify as Kurdish. So, you have a lot of moments in history that makes Kurds, how to say, insubordinate.
> **Interviewer:** Yes.
> **Interviewee 1:** Umm, they can't submit or don't submit to any outside forces attempting to eradicate them. They have their own track. They like to walk their own path. Umm, that's a really good thing, because otherwise Kurds wouldn't perhaps exist today.
> […]
> *Excerpt 6* (Interview 1)

As can be seen in this excerpt, *insubordination* is narrated as an essential character of Kurdish nation-ness. More importantly, this essential trait is tied to the very existence and definition of the nation-ness.

The excerpts presented in this subchapter exhibit a consistent, prevalent and shared narrative. In this narrative, certain nation-nesses (e.g. Turkish, Ottoman, Persian) are ascribed an antagonistic role, while Kurdish nation-ness is defined oppositional terms, being performed as a "resistance". In this resistance, Kurds' pursuit of independence, assumed "insubordinate" character and the atrocities they endured throughout history are depicted as part of the same narrative; they are attributed an essential and perennial status in defining Kurdish nation-ness.

The significance of *resistance* in defining Kurdish nation-ness is addressed in previous academic literature as well. Sheyholislami (2011), for instance, adopts the notion of "resistance identity" to elucidate Kurdish identity, as well as minority nationalism in general. For him, the Kurdish case can be considered "[t]he struggle of minority nationalism against the assimilationist majority nationalism is an example of resistance identity" (2011, p. 12). As such, it is not surprising "that resistance identity is a prominent characteristic of the nationalist discourse of the minorities whose rights and demands are not respected" (Sheyholislami 2011, p. 198). The elicited data in this study exhibits sufficient instances to regard such claim as relevant. Such dynamic can be observed in the excerpts below:

> […]
> **Interviewer:** What do you think is the worst country for Kurds?
> **Interviewee 2:** Iran.
> **Interviewer:** Why?
> **Interviewee 2:** Because in Iran, when you're Kurdish, you are a second-class citizen. Not even that. You're not first, not second, not even third-class… And then you have all these barriers in front of you. You have to struggle for everything, throughout your whole life; you have to be on guard all the time.
> **Interviewer:** Yes.
> **Interviewee 2:** And you have no sense of safety in your environment, or around you, because you are constantly being persecuted.
> […]
> *Excerpt 7* (Interview 2)
>
> […]
> **Interviewer:** So, how did you decide to join the Peshmerga when you were 14? How did it happen?
> **Interviewee 3:** I was first part of this youth community.
> **Interviewer:** Okay.
> **Interviewee 3:** When I was 12, I joined this community. I always saw that the Iranian government came to Kurdistan; the army came to Kurdistan, and killed, until now, about 50.000 people.

Interviewer: That is a lot of people.
Interviewee 3: Yes. When they, for instance, killed a Kurd, the government, the law; they didn't do anything about it. They didn't say anything.
Interviewer: Yes.
Interviewee 3: I then thought, "this is not my government." This is not my country. I have to reject this [treatment]. I am not going to sit around and wait until, for instance, my relatives, my friends get killed by the soldier– like the Iranian soldiers, Iranian police would come and kill them, and I would only say "oh, that's fine."
[…]
Excerpt 8 (Interview 3)

It is surely beneficial to make sense of these accounts through the concept of 'resistance identity'. However, such position does not align itself fully with one of the main goals of this thesis: i.e. to present of a study of nationalism that displays it as a hegemonic ideology. The fundamental problem with using the notion of "resistance identity" is, then, that it overlooks *the basic paradox of nationalism*. The study at hand accounts for the statements in excerpts above, and the performance of Kurdish nation-ness as a parallel (both in antagonistic and analogous terms) through this fundamental paradox. Namely, it is not just that minorities' or Kurds' claim of a specific nation-ness can be conceptualized through resistance identity; on the contrary, it is that any national group's (minority or majority) claims of nation-ness ought to carry, in its root, an eventual counter-vision. The reason for this is astutely stated by Gellner:

> there is a very large number of potential nations on earth. Our planet also contains room for a certain number of independent or autonomous political units. On any reasonable calculation, the former number (of potential nations) is probably much, much larger than that of possible viable states. If this argument or calculation is correct, *not all nationalisms can be satisfied, at any rate at the same time.* (1983, p. 2)

Ergo, a paradox emerges, especially if nationalism is to be understood as a political principle that stipulates the political and the national unit to be congruent (Gellner 1983, p.1). Concurrently, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, nationalism is an *international* ideology; in fact, it has been more widespread and influential then communism, or Christianity, for instance. Nevertheless, the basic stipulation of congruence and the concomitant universality of nationalism ought to *create problems*, as they exist simultaneously in the world. This is precisely the reason why Appadurai is right in stating that "[o]ne man's imagined community is another man's political prison." (1990, p. 588) The same dynamic is observed also by Brubaker (1996), in his assertion of the

'impossibility theorem'; i.e. the notion that nations are "essentially contested concepts" and that this "chronic contestedness is intrinsic to nationalist politics" (pp. 279-280).

This theorization or explanation can possibly be stretched out to account for *why certain nationalisms had the opportunity to be "satisfied" and others not*. However, such explanation would go beyond the scope of this thesis. Moreover, in abductive analysis, Tavory and Timmermans warn researchers on accounting for "causes behind causes" (2014, p. 98). In the abductive analysis framework, the academic merit of an explanation is based on how well "it fits the observed variation across cases when we retrace semiotic chains and consequences-in-action" (ibid.). Thus, searching for causes behind causes "becomes problematic when it seems to relax the research's evidentiary standards" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p.99). Needless to say, the elicited data in this research does not exhibit variation or consequences-in-action that can explain properly how and why specific nationalisms are satisfied while others are not. Hence, the researcher made the decision to *not stretch this theorization any further*, as it would loosen the evidentiary standards up and become speculation; which are outcomes that should be avoided in scientific work.

To conclude, this study does not state that accounts of Kurdish immigrants can *only* be analyzed through the proposed theorization in this study. On the contrary, excerpts 7 and 8 can also be, for instance, analyzed through the notion of 'homeland.' Indeed, a brief look the previous literature indicates – as discussed in Chapter 3.2 – that 'homeland' has been a relatively popular concept to use in Kurdish studies. Demir's notion of "battling" – which refers to the *opposition* and *resistance* sentiments expressed by Kurdish migrants in regard to their country of origin (2012) – would assist immensely in accounting for Interviewee 2 and Interviewee 3's rather traumatic accounts on their lives in their countries of origin. However, the notions of "battling" or "resistance identity", for instance, explain only why "other nation-nesses" are ascribed antagonistic/oppositional roles. They fail to clarify why a separate set of "other nation-nesses" are invoked rather through positive analogy.

In the context of this thesis, the elicitated data exhibits that Kurdish nation-ness were invoked also through analogies to Finnish nation-ness. The analogies did not ascribe Finnish nation-ness an antagonistic role; on the contrary, the emphasized the similarities between the two nation-nesses. This phenomenon is better accounted for through the concept of "parallel nation-ness", the proposed conceptualization in this study, as such notion takes into account that nationalism is a universal, internationally translatable

ideology, thanks to the ideology's shared language: the narrative of national culture. The following subchapter will explore this aspect more in detail.

5.3.2 The Analogous Role of Other Nation-nesses in the Narrative of Kurdish National Culture

As discussed in the previous subchapter, the argument of Kurdish nation-ness being performed as oppositional to "other nation-nesses" portrays only *half of the empirical picture*. The concept of "parallel nation-ness", nevertheless, captures how in certain instances Kurdish nation-ness is performed and invoked *as oppositional* to "other nation-nesses"; and how in others, as represented below, it is performed *as analogous* to "other nation-nesses".

> […]
> **Interviewee 3:** But that is Kurdistan, it has four parts. We don't have our own count– we have our own country, but we don't have an independent country. Always the four governments are killing us. Our language is banned there [in Kurdistan]. We, we would like that, umm, that we live there together with everybody, like brothers and sisters.
> **Interviewer:** Yes.
> **Interviewee 3:** But unfortunately, governments, the system… The four governments [Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria] do not allow this. We always say, "we want peace", they always respond: "war." When I'm speaking of this, you [the researcher] are also half Kurdish, so perhaps you don't– because you know about these [issues]… So, I know you are upset, but I understand that [sighs], umm, others [Finns] wouldn't be so upset about these issues.
> **Interviewer:** Yes.
> **Interviewee 3:** And they [Finns] think this [life in Finland] is the normal thing. Because here in Finland, they haven't, for many years they have had– an independent country. Although they also had problems with, umm, Russia, with Sweden, with Germany.
> **Interviewer:** Yes, I guess they also had problems. Why do you think Kurds still continue to have problems and are still fighting, but Finns got to be independent and live in peace?
> **Interviewee 3:** Because Finns don't have oil.
> […]
> **Interviewer:** Oh, okay, so it is because of the valuable area?
> **Interviewee 3:** Yes, and also gold. There is a lot of it there [in Kurdistan]. They want these [resources]. And also, they [Finns] had, at the latest, problems only with Russia. But in Kurdistan, if Kurdistan becomes independent, the other four countries would– it's about their [four countries'] borders.
> […]
> *Excerpt 9* (Interview 3)

In the excerpt above, it can be discerned that the interviewee makes direct an analogy between the history of Finland and the present (and the past) of Kurdish nation-ness. As such, what is on display in not solely an oppositional performance of Kurdish nation-ness against "the four governments" (of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria); but there is also and performance of similitude vis-à-vis Finnish nation-ness. The basic premise is that Finland "*also* had *problems* with […] Russia, with Sweden, with Germany" (Interviewee 3, excerpt 9); but Finland happened to be at a more advantageous position compared to Kurds, since *they* didn't have *any* valuable resources and fought their latest wars with only *one* country [Italics mine]. In this performance and narrative, the wars and political struggles Finland historically went through are deemed comparable and contrastable to the struggles of Kurds. Such a dynamic communicates something particularly significant about the universal and normative nature of nationalism. Namely:

> Nationalists live in an international world, and their ideology is itself an international ideology. *Without constant observation of the world of other nations,* nationalists would be unable to claim that their nations meet the universal codes of nationhood. […] Even the most extreme and unbanal of nationalists do not shut out the outside world from consciousness, but often show an obsessive concern with the lives and outlooks of foreigners. (Billig 1995, p. 80) [Italics mine]

The study at hand does not claim that parallel nation-ness is a performance of extremes, or that the research participants in this study have "obsessive" interest in other nation-nesses. On the contrary, this study aims to exhibit, through the Kurdish example, how nationalism, as a hegemonic ideology, *regularly* operates in the world. As such, it would be naïve to assume that performances of nation-ness are *always* oppositional or exclusionary. Because nations (and nation-ness) are ideological constructs, their performance require an analogy in order to define and reify itself. This is yet another aspect where using 'gender' as a demonstrative agent, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, proves to be illustrative. Indeed, it can be considered *gender socialization theory* is based on a somewhat comparable premise to this: if appropriate performances of gender roles are discerned through observation of others (Stockard 1999) and reified through imitation of others (Butler 1991), similarly, it can be stated that the performance of nation-ness depends on observation and imitation of *other national contexts* as well.

[…]

> **Interviewer:** If you had to describe Kurds with one word, what word would you choose, and why?
> **Interviewee 1:** [Clears throat] With one word?
> **Interviewer:** Might be a bit challenging maybe...
> **Interviewee 1:** Umm, I think– I believe it would be what Finns say about themselves: "sisu."
> […]
> *Excerpt 10* (Interview 1)

One of the main goals of the theorization in this thesis is to explain *how* and *why* is it possible, that when the research participants in this thesis are asked to describe Kurds with one word, they reply with "Seven Brothers" (see Excerpt 2) and "sisu" (see the excerpt above). It is argued here that the translation and transfer of two particularly significant elements in the narrative of *Finnish* national culture to the narrative of *Kurdish* national culture require scholarly attention. This thesis argues that such dynamic – i.e. performing Kurdish nation-ness as a parallel through analogy – is way to justify and reify the "national" status of Kurdish nation-ness. As stated by Billig: "[…] the new nation has to resemble other nations to gain their recognition. It must adopt *conventional symbols of particularity*, which, because of their conventionality, are simultaneously symbols of the universality of nationhood" (1995, p. 86) [Italics mine].

As discussed in the previous subchapter, Hall's framework of "the narrative of national culture" assists significantly in identifying what some of these universal and "conventional symbols of particularity" are, and how they are used in speech. This way, it also becomes possible to account for the similar narratory dynamics in Excerpts 2 and 10.

It can be seen in the excerpts presented in this subchapter that the "narrative of the nation" is *transferred* between the Finnish and the Kurdish contexts, which in results in the categorization and reification of the "national" in Kurdish nation-ness. This transfer of particularities is also visible in the excerpt below:

> […]
> **Interviewer:** Can you tell me how did you end up in Finland? And why Finland?
> **Interviewee 2:** I came here as a quota refugee, so we didn't have a say in where we would like to go. But the fact that I happened to be able to come to Finland is something I considered lucky.
> **Interviewer:** Okay.
> **Interviewee 2:** So although I didn't know anything about Finland beforehand, umm, only after they have told me– us, that we are going to have interviews,

when they told us "now you're going to have an interview with the Finnish delegation", I had a month's time in advance, so I went to the library and read about Finland every day.

[…]

Interviewee 2: I always said that I was luck– lucky to be able to come to Finland, who had been through the same struggles that Kurds have been– are still struggling. And have been for a long time, struggled, umm, for their own existence, own identity, umm to determine their own destiny, their own right… Umm, and through all these, they have unfortunately experienced a civil[40] war, and then the second world war– the winter war[41] and the continuation war[42]… After all this, Finland has been able to build a progressive and successful country.

[…]

Excerpt 11 (Interview 2)

In *Nations and Nationalism*, Gellner identifies this particular dynamic by describing "[m]ost of the potential nations" as "latent differentiable communities which could claim to be nations by criteria *analogous to those which somewhere else have succeeded*" (1983, p. 49) [Italics mine]. In this perspective, Interviewee 2's detailed account of Finnish history and the rather "successful" present is not a surprising narrative to observe. It is also important to note that the analogical reference to Finnish nation-ness in these excerpts does not interrupt the overarching narrative of "other nation-nesses disturbing/disrupting Kurdish nation-ness"; in fact, it *supports* such narrative by pointing out to the similarities/nuances between Finnish nation-ness and its "others"; and the Kurdish nation-ness and its "others." In other words, the performance and invocation of Kurdish nation-ness involves *simultaneously* both analogous and antagonistic references to other nation-nesses. What is constant, however, is the *parallel national contexts*.

As such, nationalism's ideological premise that "[t]he nation is always a nation in a world of nations" (Billig 1995, p. 61) is always looming in the background; *that* itself is never resisted. What is being resisted, with the performance of Kurdish nation-ness, are the *particulars*; not the *norm*. This is exactly the reason why applying the concept of

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[40] The Finnish Civil War ("Suomen sisällisota" in Finnish) took place between 27.01.1918 – 15.05.1918 and emerged out of conflicts for the governance and control of Finland. The war fought between the Reds (supported by Soviet Russia) and the Whites (supported by the German Empire).

[41] The Winter War ("Talvisota" in Finnish) was fought between Finland and the Soviet Union, between 30.11.1939 – 13.03.1940.

[42] The Continuation War ("Jatkosota" in Finnish) was fought between Finland and Nazi Germany, between 25.06.1941 – 19.09.1944. Each war referenced by the interviewee holds a significant place in Finnish history, as they had dramatic impact on Finland's socio-political climate and culture. The wars are rather often referenced in popular culture.

"resistance identity", for instance, onto the Kurdish context, is inadequate. The proposed framework in this thesis – i.e. "performing parallel nation-ness" – contrarily, takes this ideological premise into account; and does *not dissociate* the ideological construct (i.e. nation-ness) from the ideology (i.e. nationalism) itself.

5.4   "Flagging" Nation-ness in Performance

It is argued in this thesis that the performance of nation-ness is not limited to utilizing a specific narrative: i.e. the narrative of national culture (Hall 1996). On the contrary, such narrative is often *accompanied* by visual and auditory markers that effectively work to *flag* nation-ness in everyday life. It was emphasized in the previous subchapter that the parallel performance of nation-ness indicates *an acknowledgment of the universal code of nationalism*. In this performance, the *particularities* of the universal code are translated and transferred across (national) contexts. This, in turn, indicates a constant awareness of the (inter)national context we exist in. The particular importance of *flagging* stands out here; as it ubiquitously re-produces this (inter)national context. As Billig contends, "[f]lagging, in this respect, is always a reminding, a re-presenting and, thus, a constricting of the imagination" (1995, p.103).

The notion of 'nation-ness' was previously defined in this thesis by building on the conceptualizations of Brubaker (1996), Lee and Cho (2009), Taylor (1997) and Palmer (1998). In this defining, specific visual and auditory aspects identified previous studies – such as "refashioning the national flag on bodies and objects", "chanting and appropriating nationalist mottos" (Lee and Cho 2009), and "flagging the nation through the body, the food and the landscape" (Palmer 1998) – were used to address how nation-ness is performed in social settings[43]. In the context of this subchapter, the use of bodies and objects (such as maps or flags) are considered as *visual markers*, while elements such as national anthems, songs or mottos are considered as *auditory markers*. An examination of visual and auditory markers is significant. Extrapolating the analogy between "gender" and "nation-ness" to the notion of flagging clarifies the reason for this; namely, the ubiquitous flagging or marking of gender plays an important role in the re-production and normalization of gender stereotypes and norms. Similarly, through flagging, "the world of nations" is reproduced and *reminded*, "as *the* world, the natural environment of today" (Billig 1995, p. 93) [Italics mine]. The current subchapter

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[43] See Chapter 3.1 and Table 1 for a more detailed account on the bodily, auditory and discursive aspects identified in previous studies.

will explore specifically this dynamic; namely, it will analyze how nation-ness is flagged through utilizing visual and auditory markers. In doing so, it will also provide an answer to the research question: What are the most recurrent patterns utilized in the invocations and performance of Kurdish nation-ness?

Visuals markers such as flags, maps and traditional "Kurdish" clothing were among the most frequently observed flaggings of Kurdish nation-ness in the context of this research. Needless to say, the interpretant – i.e. "other nation-nesses" – often (but not at all times) accompanied the flagging of Kurdish nation-ness in a considerable number of observations. In terms of the current analysis, however, observations with a negative *variation* – i.e. with a lack of the interpretant – proved also to be significant for the analysis at hand. In other words, observations where Kurdish nation-ness was overtly (or banally) flagged, but "other nation-nesses" were left unflagged, communicates something significant about the nature of flagging and the thesis of Banal Nationalism.

Billig states that "in the *established nations*, there is a continual 'flagging', or reminding, of nationhood" (1995, p. 8) [Italics mine]. However, this flagging in established nations is understood mostly as banal. Thanks to its ubiquity, the flagging often goes unnoticed, it becomes "normal." It is nevertheless important to pay attention that such is the case specifically in *established nations[44]*. In the context of Kurdish "nation", nonetheless, this thesis argues that flagging can be observed both overtly and banally. As a result, the differences between the flagging of "other-nationnesses" – which refers to, in this case, "established nations" such as the Finnish nation – and Kurdish nation-ness demonstrates the process of *how* the (inter)national world is normalized and naturalized.

The encounter between the banal flagging of an "established" nation, and the overt flagging of a "non-established" nation was observed clearly in the support demonstration for the Iraqi Kurdistan independence referendum in 2017. The demonstration took place in advance to the referendum, on 22 September 2017 in Helsinki. The purpose of the demonstration was mainly to show support for the anticipated referendum and its results. The referendum itself took place on 24 September 2017, in Iraqi Kurdistan[45]. The field note excerpt below from the event exhibits one such "encounter":

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[44] "Established nations" are understood here as nations with a politically established nation-state operating through a standardized language(s), where armed forces and governmental bodies are either centralized or are standardized through state efforts.

[45] In the referendum, 92.73% answered "yes" to the question "[d]o you want the Kurdistan Region and the Kurdistani areas outside the administration of the Region to become an independent state?" (Park et al. 2017, p.202-204)

[…]
- The square area is filled with men, women, children, flags and Kurdish music.
- The sheer amount of Kurdish flags present here is somehow appalling. Flags that are, at any other time, folded and stored in a drawer in the demonstrators' houses. But on this specific day, they are brought out and waved. Couple dozens of them, to be exact.
[…]
- I notice that one demonstrator wants to wave a flag with Abdullah Öcalan's[46] photo on it, however other around him prevent him from doing so. He puts the flag back to his bag without insisting on it.
- I see appalled or questioning expressions on many of the onlookers faces. They seem to be of "Finnish" or "European" descent. Some of these passers-by stop and stare, seemingly trying to grasp the meaning and the purpose behind the rather loud and crowded demonstration. Most stop for a few seconds, watch, and continue to walk. Some, however, walk closer to the demonstration site, trying to make out the nature of the event. They gaze at the stage, at the [Kurdistan] flags, at the people dressed in traditional Kurdish clothing and military outfits.
[…]

Excerpt 12 (Observation from support demonstration for Kurdish Independence Referendum)

The excerpt above exhibits a moment where one can clearly notice the contrasts between two nation-nesses. To the onlookers, the celebrating Kurds display an eerie episode from *the past*. Living in "their own", 102-years-ago established nation-state, this fervent flagging of Kurdish nation-ness has become *an unfamiliar performance* for the "nationals" of an "established nation." From the appalled facial expression of the onlookers, one can detect that the "national context" they exist in, has become *the* context. Accustomed to this context's subduedness, an encounter with the overt flagging of the Kurds supporting a referendum for Kurdish independence is unexpected. After all, in "established nations", *nationalism* becomes "historic", "forgotten" or "the property of others"; only to be remembered again at the passport lines, at independence anniversary celebrations or when reading the "domestic news" section of a newspaper. As such, the onlookers' surprised expressions make a telling case for Billig's thesis of banal nationalism.

Visual and auditory markers such as Kurdistan flags and Kurdish music were observed rather frequently in various settings during the data elicitation process and, as such, is not exclusive to the excerpt above. Thus, it is significant for the analysis at hand to

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46 One of the founding members of PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party). PKK is regarded a "terrorist" organization in Turkey (Barrinha 2011), has been in an armed conflict with Turkey since 1984, excluding a ceasefire during 2013-2015 (Baser 2015b). The organization initially aimed for establishing an independent Kurdish state, however later redefined it as aiming for equal rights and Kurdish autonomy in Turkey (Emanuelsson 2013).

establish that the flagging of nation-ness takes place in a variety of contexts and fashions; of which not all are overtly "political" or "national", as opposed to the excerpt displayed above. The concepts of "refashioning the national flag on bodies and objects" and "chanting and appropriating nationalist mottos", as discussed in Chapter 3.1, provide a fruitful framework to dissect such instances (Lee and Cho 2009). Through these concepts, Lee and Cho aim to emphasize a specific dynamic: namely, in these "banal" performances of nation-ness, the exclusively nationalist subtext of flags and mottos are *appropriated* for other means: whether it is the South Korean flag as *a fashion statement*, or the nationalist mottos as *fan chants* for the South Korean football team.

This does not mean, nevertheless, that the national subtext melts away. On the contrary, the commonplace use of such elements in sporting events makes the subtext ever more ubiquitous and "natural." An instance of this can be seen in a very common audience practice during international sporting events: painting once entire face with a national flag. This very palpable flagging of nation-ness – literally flagging one's nation-ness *through their face* – is not questioned, not deemed as an instance of extreme or obscure case of nationalism. This is further verified by the observation that in mainstream media outlets, for instance, while numerous separatist movements are represented as "extreme" cases of nationalism (Billig 1995, pp. 49-50), the "nationalistic" practices or style choices during sporting events are presented on different terms: i.e. as expected fan behavior; or as entertainment (Billig 1995, pp. 120-127). Certainly, how the flagging of "our" nationalism is understood versus how the flagging of "their" nationalism is understood and presented is highly different. As Billig contends: "In established nations, it seems 'natural' to suppose that nationalism is an over-heated reaction, which typically is the property of others. The assumption enables 'us' to forget 'our' nationalism. If our nationalism is to be remembered, then we must step beyond what seems to be common sense" (Billig 1995, p. 37). Failing to do so, the onlookers in Excerpt 12 are expectedly *surprised* when "our" naturalized, institutionalized nationalism confronts "their" (i.e. Kurds) "strange" nationalism.

As mentioned, throughout the data elicitation process, the use of numerous visual and auditory markers in the performance and flagging of Kurdish nation-ness was observed. Some of these instances are displayed in the excerpt below:

[…]

- After having walked for some time, we decided to take a break to eat something.
- We found and settled at an empty spot near a basketball field, next to a forest.
- Several people left to purchase some groceries and food. After their return, we started eating and conversing together.
- At some point, the group started singing the Kurdish national anthem and pose in front of the Kurdish flag to take photos. This was surprising since it happened all of a sudden during our picnic.
- After signing the Kurdish national anthem and posing in front of the Kurdish national flag for a photo, the participants sang the Finnish national anthem as well.
[…]
- Some participants suggested that we play volleyball. Several other agreed and they proceeded to play volleyball in the empty field. I noticed that the ball someone had brought together had the Kurdish flag's colors: red, white and green.
[…]
- We continued with our walk to Seurasaari. Near the shore, some men in the group started taking photos of themselves and others with their cellphones.
- The rather large Kurdish flag that used during group photo earlier, was used as a background prop in almost every photograph. Some made the peace gesture, and some stood neutrally in front of the flag for while having their photos taken.
[…]

Excerpt 13 (Observation from the first "Learn Finnish while Walking" excursion)

As mentioned, in the excerpt above, the use of visual (e.g. the flag of Kurdistan, the ball with Kurdish flag's colors on it, specific use of bodies such as making the peace gesture) and auditory elements (i.e. the Kurdish and Finnish national anthems) as performance of Kurdish nation-ness depicts a double flagging of nationalism that is simultaneously overt and banal. In this excerpt, the "national" elements are appropriated for aesthetics (e.g. Kurdish flag as background for a photo) or creativity (e.g. incorporating Kurdish flag's color on a ball). This does not mean, however, that the national subtext is lost; it is only accompanied by additional intent (aesthetic, creative or practical).

In conclusion, by contrasting the excerpts 12 and 13, it can be observed that *flagging* takes place in variety contexts; not all of which are overtly political or "nationalistic." As such, it can be concluded that dissecting the notion of "flagging" into two further aspects – banal and overt – is a fruitful addition to Billig's framework of banal nationalism (1995).

6 Limitations of the Study

As with any other research, the study at hand, too, has numerous limitations. Some of these limitations are linked to the researcher's position, the research participants, and methodological processes. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss these aspects in regard to their effects in the study at hand.

6.1 The Researcher's Position

In *Sociological Imagination*, C. Wright Mills argues for a sociology that underscores the intricate links between the minute and the grand; as "neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both" (1959, p.3). Coining the notion of 'sociological imagination' – i.e. understanding the links and relationship between history and biography – Mills considers it the "task" of social scientists to "translate personal troubles into public issues, and public issues into terms of their human meaning for a variety of individuals" (Mills 1959, p. 187).

Mills asserts that "no social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history and their intersections within a society has completed its intellectual journey" (Mills 1959, p. 6). In this regard, it is important to consider that this study is conducted by an individual with specific life experiences, socio-economic position(s) and alignments. As such, the topic of choice in this study is not a mere coincidence, but refers to a conscious interest of the researcher in a theme that is connected to her "biography." Presenting a qualitative research, it is critical for the researcher to avoid presenting herself as a scientist in a white lab coat, displaying "[…] a view from nowhere" (McCarthy 1994, p.15).

On the other hand, in *When Method Becomes Power*, Patai criticizes the "[…] excess of rhetoric and methodolatry" in research (1994, p. 61), and questions whether self-reflexivity directly results in a better research (ibid.). Although Patai's wariness towards the misuse of self-reflexivity is important, this study agrees with Pillow's view that the solution to such misuse is not "[…] to stop talking about our positions" altogether (2003, p. 177). Nevertheless, a considerable amount of caution and awareness should be employed when discussing the researcher's position, in order to avoid presenting a 'me-search' or "navel-gaze" (Pillow 2003).

Becoming increasingly popular after the interpretive turn, *reflexivity* and *self-reflexivity* have come to be understood in substantially differing approaches; so much so that it is

not a feasible task to provide a single, all-encompassing definition of reflexivity and the ways it is utilized in qualitative studies (Pillow 2003). Consequently, it is of considerable importance to distinguish how reflexivity is understood and utilized specifically within this research. The study at hand makes a conscious effort distance itself from "comfortable reflexivity", which can be understood as "taking comfort in common usages of reflexivity" (Pillow 2003, p. 187). The previously mentioned approach of simply listing the researcher's decisions and positions is an appropriate example of "comfortable reflexivity". In other words, providing a facile list of the numerous positions the researcher occupies is avoided throughout this study. Instead, the preferred strategy aims to discuss *what kind of a role* such real (or perceived) positions play in the data elicitation and analysis processes. This is done by adopting the concept of "uncomfortable reflexivity."

"Uncomfortable reflexivity" constitutes "a reflexivity that seeks to know while at the same time situates this knowing as tenuous" (Pillow 2003, p. 188). As such, the focus is not on creating a storyline of the researcher's various decisions or positions during research, but on a self-critiquing look at the research process. Uncomfortable reflexivity "calls for a positioning of reflexivity not as clarity, honesty, or humility, but as practices of confounding disruptions" (Pillow 2003, p.192). Furthermore, according to Pillow (2003), self-critiquing should not be understood merely as constantly criticizing one's own research, but as a general recognition that no research is absolutely "innocent" or "successful". Nonetheless, uncomfortable reflexivity necessitates that even in the presence of such "impossibilities", the researcher stays aware and receptive to the challenges.

In the study at hand, one instance in which the inherent tenuity of "knowing", as Pillow (2003) describes it, is emphasized relates to the researcher's perceived position in the field. The researcher of this study comes from a Kurdish background. Living in Turkey for the most of her life, she occupied a minority position that is somewhat similar to her Kurdish research participants, immigrating from Kurdish-minority countries. This "shared" position allowed the researcher to build rapport with the participants, but also led to her being perceived in a specific fashion in the field. In the excerpts below, it can be observed how the researcher's perceived in-group identity influenced her interactions with research participants during the data elicitation process.

[…]

Interviewee 3: I am [working] in an integration project. I am a teacher [there]. I have currently have a course for Finns who would like to learn Kurdish.

Interviewer: Oh, that's interesting.

Interviewee 3: You too– You should come. You should also learn Finnish because it is your father's language.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee 3: [Laughs] It's good for you and… The life here, how do I say… [Sighs] It's different. Different weather, different culture. Because in our land, it is, it always is– the weather is different. For example, we have spring, winter, everything. But here, they do not– they have a dark and cold winter.

Interviewer: Yeah, the days are getting shorter again this time of the year.

Interviewee 3: Yes. It is hard for us and we are also very social [people].

[…]

Excerpt 14 (Interview 3)

[…]

- After visiting the museum, we came to a Kurdish restaurant to eat.
- Because we were a group of 12-15 people, it made more sense to write down everybody's dish of choice first, and place the order at the cashier after that.
- I noticed that the person writing down our orders wrote my name as "Hêlin", specifically with the Kurdish accent mark, although this is not how my name is "officially" spelled out, as using Kurdish accent marks and letters (such as the letter X) was forbidden in Turkey at the time of my birth.

[…]

- When it was time to leave, the participants of the excursion made sure to show their appreciation; they thanked us so many times at the end. We shaked hands and said goodbye.
- Some of the participants referred to me as "Kurdityttö" ["Kurdish girl" in English] at the end when they were leaving.

[…]

Excerpt 15 (Observation from the second "Learn Finnish while Walking" excursion)

As can be seen in Excerpt 14, Interviewee 3 perceives the researcher/interviewer as a member of the in-group (as a Kurdish person), and suggests her to join Kurdish language classes, because it is her "father's language." This perspective is further supported by interviewee's utilization of *homeland making deixis*, through using of words such as "*our* land", "*the* weather" "*we* are", "they [Finns] do not" etc. In this case, homeland making deixis not only works to reify Kurdish nation-ness and its *national* homeland, it also works to demarcate certain subjects (i.e. the researcher) as a part of this nation-ness. In this sense, it can be observed that the interview is not only an exchange of information for scientific means, but also an area where social proximity is negotiated.

A similar phenomenon is observed also in Except 15, where the participants of the excursion refer to the researcher as "Kurdish girl". In addition, it can also be argued that the Kurdish accent mark one research participant uses when writing the researcher's name is another form of homeland making deixis, as it *flags* Kurdish nation-ness through this specific accent mark which is found in Kurdish alphabet. One can claim that such analysis becomes *too* linguistically specific or detailed oriented for the study at hand, but as Billig contends, in order to explore how the (inter)national world institutionalizes "us" and "them", "it is necessary to examine familiar habits of language", even if it "means becoming linguistically microscopic" (Billig 1995, p.94).

Nevertheless, as mentioned, the excerpts displayed above not only showcase the use of homeland making deixis, but also communicates that the research participants' perception of the researcher, influences the nature and the content of the elicitated data. This is not a "limitation" in itself, but instead can be considered a part of this research. As such, the analysis presented in this study ought to be dissimilar, even contrasting, to others presented by researchers with different subject positions and interactions with research participants. This should be kept in mind when interpreting the analysis and theorization provided in the study at hand.

6.2   Research participants

It can be argued that another "limitation" – or rather, "specificity" – of this study is linked to general characteristics among the research participants. As with any other qualitative research, the research participants of this study bring along specific backgrounds and experiences to the field. Notably, having a large or "representative" sample is not the main concern of *qualitative* research in the first place. Nevertheless, the readers should take it into consideration that the analysis and theorization offered in this study is based on elicited data with participants carrying certain characteristics and backgrounds. For instance, the research participants in this study consist of mostly of adult men, who immigrated to Finland either as grown-ups or in their teenage years, as opposed to second-generation immigrants or women.

Besides such demographical traits, however, stands out a characteristic that is certainly more influential in regard of the analysis of this study. This trait pertains to the 'conflation of the national with the individual', as discussed by Lee and Cho (2009). Lee and Cho describe this notion as "an example of nationalist rhetoric in which each *citizen's dreams are cited as equivalent* or even as prerequisites to the nation's goals"

(2009, p. 112). It can be stated that the research participants of this study largely exhibited this phenomenon in terms of their invocations and performances of Kurdish nation-ness. This was, for instance, emphasized in one of the observation sessions, conducted at a group meeting for Kurdish immigrants in Finland. The meeting was part of a peer support programme offered by Kurdiliitto. The main goal of this programme was to provide information and guidance on living, finding work and networking in Finland. In the first peer support meeting, the participants were prompted by the moderator to write shortly about where they "see themselves in 10 years." As a result, the researcher observed that more than half of the participants in the group included "Kurdistan's independence" as a part of where they see *themselves* in 10 years. This "conflation" was not exclusive to the peer support group, and was also spotted during the interviews, as the following excerpt demonstrates:

> **Interviewer:** If Kurdistan was established and diplomatically recognized as an independent nation-state tomorrow, what would you think? How would you feel?
> **Interviewee 1:** Kurdistan– Kurdistan will become independent, whether they recognize it or not. Then, umm, at that point, my biggest dream would come true. It really is the dream of my life that I see, in my lifetime– that I experience independent Kurdistan.
> *Excerpt 16* (Interview 1)

It can be seen in Excerpt 16 that the independence of Kurdistan holds great personal significant for Interviewee 1. This, however, is not be stretched to apply to all "Kurds"; as if they are a homogeneous, uniform group. As mentioned in Chapter 1.1, this study utilizes Kurdiliitto as an *empirical anchor* in its theorization, and does not claim to investigate "nationalism as expressed by Kurds." Having said that, when interpreting the analysis presented in this study, it is critical to keep in mind that among the research participants of this study, "conflation of the national with the individual" is a specifically recurrent pattern.

6.3 Methodological Processes

It was previously discussed in Chapter 4 that in the abductive analysis framework, exists four possible explanations for an observed variation in any given study: a social science explanation; the research subjects' own explanations; an alternative explanation found in previous literature; and a historical, macro-scale account that goes beyond the initial observed variation (Tavory and Timmermans 2014). Due to the space and time limitation in a Master's Thesis, in this study, the social scientific explanation is

prioritized. Moreover, as addressed in Chapter 5.3.1, a more "macro-scale" explanation – i.e. "causes behind causes" (Tavory and Timmermans 2014, p. 98) – is consciously not offered in the study at hand. This is because – based on the observed variation in this research – such further exploration would ultimately result in the loosening of evidentiary standards in this study. As such, these decisions can simultaneously be considered "limitations" or conscious decisions taken to provide a more grounded and accountable analysis.

7 Conclusion

In *Contesting Kurdish Identities in Sweden*, Eliassi (2013) makes a rather compelling point on analyzing Kurdish nationalism. According to him:

> Kurdish nationalism can rightly be understood as an answer to the political homelessness of the Kurds in the Middle East, since the Kurds, as a result of their statelessness, have been nobodies and politically superfluous and sacrificed by assimilationist and violent state structures in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. *Kurdish nationalism is not a proactive nationalism but a reactive nationalism* competing with already established and institutionalized Turkish, Persian, and Arab nationalism in the Middle East (2013, p. 180) [Italics mine].

As can be observed in this statement, Eliassi's approach seeks to emphasize the differences and contrasts between the nationalisms of dominant – i.e. Turks, Iranians or Syrians – and subaltern – i.e. Kurds – groups. Without ignoring the clearly unequal positions of these nationalisms, this thesis, on the other hand, aims to present an alternative approach: i.e., to present an analysis that highlights the shared socio-political norms engendered by nationalism. This is done in the study through developing the concept of nation-ness, which is a term conveying "the state of being a nation". The utilization of this concept is considered significant, because it provides the researcher a framework where the ideological hegemony of nationalism is not overlooked, which is among the main objectives of this study.

This thesis poses two questions: "How is Kurdish nation-ness invoked and performed among Kurdish immigrants in Finland?" and "what are the most recurrent patterns utilized in these invocations and performances?" In answering such questions, Kurdiliitto, an umbrella association unifying 24 smaller Kurdish-Finnish organizations throughout Finland, is utilized as an *empirical anchor* and a research setting. As can be observed from the specific wording of the research questions, it is inferred that nation-ness is, essentially, *performed*. In the study at hand, this performance is understood to

be similar in characteristic to the performance of gender. Through adopting the abductive analysis method, this thesis reports that Kurdish nation-ness is invoked and performed as parallel to "other nation-nesses", as well as through the continuous "flagging" of Kurdish nation-ness. Additionally, the use of the "narrative of national culture" (Hall 1996) – understood in this thesis as "the shared language of nationalism" – is the most commonly observed pattern in referencing "other nation-nesses"; while the strategic use of visual and auditory markers – such flags, maps, national anthems – is the most commonly observed pattern in the flagging of Kurdish nation-ness.

What the study at hand seeks to emphasize through the concept of "performing parallel nation-ness" is that the Kurdish performance of nation-ness should not only be analyzed in terms of its rejection or opposition to other nationalisms – which has been the common approach hitherto in Kurdish studies (see e.g. Eliassi 2013; Sheyholislami 2011) – but in terms its *reification* of the category of nation-ness itself. In such dynamic one can clearly see how nationalism operates as an international and hegemonic ideology. In performing Kurdish nation-ness, members of such community not only "have to imagine themselves as nationals; not only do they have to imagine their nation as a community; but they must also imagine that they know what a nation is." (Billig 1995, 68) Thus, this thesis argues that there is a clear need for future studies with similar approaches to nationalism in the field of Kurdish studies. Additionally, a fruitful area of focus in future research can considered to be the internally otherizing performances of Kurdish nation-ness. As discussed in Chapter 3.2, there are significant accounts of the existence of such phenomenon among Kurdish communities in Europe, as various studies (Eliassi 2013; Demir 2012) suggest. This angle, however, was not explored in the thesis at hand, as the elicited data did not display such variation. Thus, focusing on this angle in future research would be the next step of analytical progression.

In conclusion, this thesis verifies that it is sociologically naïve to assume that nationalism "is the fruit […] of ideological aberration" or "of emotional excess" (Gellner 1983, p. 35). As this thesis demonstrates, the notion of nationalism is built on specific norms and narratives concerning the "ideal" characteristics of a sociopolitical unit. These idealized characteristics are, at their core, internationally *translatable* and *transferrable*. It is through such translocation that nation-ness re-establishes itself and continues to be "the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time" (Anderson 1983, p.3).

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