Mariette Hägglund

PROVE YOU SUFFER, PROVE YOU AREN'T DAESH
An empirical study on internal displacement in the Ninewa region in Iraq

ABSTRACT

Throughout its history Iraq has been plagued by colonialism, the Iran-Iraq war, the U.S. invasion of Iraq and sectarian violence more broadly. Since June 2014 when the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) captured nearly a third of Iraq, the threat of acts of terror and the 'influx' of forcibly displaced people have been in the limelight of international attention. During this period there have been reports on the plight of minorities and the brutality of IS, particularly in the Ninewa region in Iraq. In the summer of 2017, Mosul was the site of a large military battle involving the international coalition, the Iraqi government, Kurdish troops and militia groups working together in a coordinated effort to defeat IS. These events have resulted in a large number of internally displaced persons (IDP), amounting to more than 3 million at the height of the humanitarian emergency, highlighting a need for reviewing the consequences of displacement in Ninewa.

With the help of open-ended interviews and ethnographic observation conducted in Iraq in July 2018, this thesis seeks to understand the context of internal displacement in Ninewa and contribute to the very limited academic literature on internal displacement in the region. It examines the label 'internally displaced person' and highlights the term's interconnectedness with violence and the role of the trauma story. By using intersectionality as an analytical tool, this research analyses how the violence experienced by internally displaced persons is impacted by factors such as gender, ethno-religious background and socio-economic situation. It also looks at the role of the 'local' and the 'international' in this state of emergency.

The findings of this thesis are that the dynamics of internal displacement in Ninewa paint a much more complex picture than the one painted by international reports. This research also concludes that the violence that led to displacement was the major cause of marginalisation, which, through intersections with gender, socio-economic situation and ethno-religious belonging shapes individual displacement experiences and vice versa. The management of the crisis has largely been shaped by the historical consequences of the various conflicts in Iraq and by the specific threat that the Islamic State posed not only to Iraq, but also on the international community more broadly. This has made the situation in Ninewa an 'exceptional state of exception', which the securitisation of the management of the crisis has legitimised in ways that have concrete impacts on locals through checkpoints and require individuals to verify their identity and experiences. The involvement of and diffusion between multiple actors on the local and international levels have further complicated the experiences of IDPs and the power dynamics in Ninewa.

Keywords: internal displacement, internally displaced persons, intersectionality, Iraq, violence, Islamic State

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

AGD	Age, Gender and Diversity
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IS	Islamic State
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PMF	Popular Mobilisation Forces
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service

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Figure 1: Map of Iraq
Ninewa top-left corner, Wikimedia Commons, retrieved from
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/46/Un-iraq.png

1 Introduction

The United Nations (UN) defines Internally Displaced Persons (henceforth IDPs) as "people who are forced to flee their homes due to armed conflict, generalised violence, violations of human rights, natural or human-made disasters, but who remain within their own country" (OCHA n.d.). At a time when internal displacement is at its all-time high with around 41 million internally displaced persons (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, IDMC 2018) and with estimates of nine-digit numbers of forcibly displaced in the upcoming decades there is a need to critically review forced internal displacement.

As a result of having been plagued by decades of violence, Iraq is among the top 10 countries with the largest number of internally displaced persons. Most recently, Iraq made headlines as one of the centres for the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS)[1], or 'Daesh'[2] as it is called in Arabic in the region. This in turn, had dramatic impacts on the people, many of whom fled to other parts of the country. At the height of the crisis in 2015, 260,000 Iraqis had fled internationally (UNHCR n.d.-a) compared to 3,289,740 who remained internally displaced (IOM 2018), the majority of whom went to the autonomous Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI). The highest proportion of IDPs compared to the overall population in Iraq was in Ninewa at 43 percent (REACH 2018).

In 2014, Daesh took over one third of Iraq, and particularly the Ninewa region remained Daesh-held territory for a longer period of time. From Iraq's second largest city, Mosul, Daesh leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared the Islamic caliphate. Eventually, the city became the location for one of the largest urban combats in modern history. Despite the 'liberation of Mosul', parts of the city are in ruins, attacks conducted by Daesh occur on a regular basis, and rebuilding projects proceed slowly. In April 2019, the number of IDPs in Iraq still amounted to roughly 1.7 million (IOM 2019a).

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[1] Also called also called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Daesh in Arabic.

[2] I will be using the Arabic name 'Daesh' in the thesis (with the exception of direct quotes from the literature) as that was the name used in all the interviews and discussions throughout my field trip, including in Kurdish, Arabic and English. Hence it feels better contextualised to use the same term.

While "IS sex slaves"[3], the "plight of the Yazidis"[4], "refugee influx to Europe"[5], "epic battle of Mosul"[6], and "IS wives"[7] all have made headlines in international media, internal displacement has attracted much less attention. Indeed, despite the large contrast between the number of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons in Iraq, the so-called refugee-crisis dominated and still dominates the political agendas in European debates, media discourses and public attention in general.

Notably, besides being a 'local' concern for Iraq, the 'refugee flows' and acts of terror Daesh executed increased the stakes in Iraq for European countries. It is exactly this humanitarian crisis with its exceptional circumstances that caused concern about the conflict and its external effects in Europe. Due to the lack of an international legally binding framework for internal displacement and its minor regional effects on Europe, the issue around IDPs has, however, was overlooked. Therefore, this study seeks to tap into internal displacement more broadly, and IDPs in Ninewa, specifically.

With regard to the outline of this thesis, I will first briefly present a brief overview of the contextual background and some events in Iraq's history that have contributed to the situation in contemporary Iraq and Ninewa in the second chapter. The third chapter, the literature review, is divided into two parts, the first of which will look at categorisations and management of crises. In its first section, I will examine the category "internally displaced person". I will then continue with looking into camps as systems of control, while also discussing how these systems take different forms for those located outside camps. Thirdly, I will present some literature on the concept 'state of exception', and briefly show how this is relevant for the management of IDPs and in the case of Iraq. Indeed, within the discussion on state of exception, some of its clearest characterisations are camps for forcibly displaced persons. As all these aspects are highly interlinked with power, the last section will present how trauma and proving your belonging become administrative processes within the framework of state of exception. As will later explained, the IDP label builds on the experience or threat of violence and these will be analysed by utilising Johan Galtung's work on direct, structural and cultural violence.

The underlying notion in this thesis is not to "find an absolute truth" or judge whether the narratives are "true" or not, but rather to analyse the underlying power relations in them.

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[3] Used by Fox News, The Guardian, Irish Times among others.
[4] Used by Deutsche Welle, Forbes, Jerusalem Post, The Telegraph among others.
[5] Used by Carnegie Europe among others.
[6] Used by The National Interest among others.
[7] Used by Independent, The Guardian and NPR among others.

In the second part of the literature review, I will first present the academic debate on intersectionality - a concept which has gained traction, particularly in the last decade. Secondly, I will show how, by employing intersectionality as an analytical tool, I research the complexity of displacement in Ninewa and the various social locations found within the label of IDP. Moreover, I will briefly discuss the larger themes that usually are part of an intersectional analysis— gender and race—as well as those that will be part of the analysis section in this thesis: gender, socio-economic situation and ethno-religious belonging. This will be to show the most dominating factors of social locations, that based on the IDPs themselves, have affected them the most, both in their reasons for leaving their homes and in their experiences in displacement.

In the fourth chapter on methodology, the data gathering methods used in the research will be discussed. Building on qualitative data gathered during my field trip to Erbil and Mosul and other villages in 2018, I will provide viewpoints on how it is to conduct interviews and do ethnographic observation in a region such as Ninewa. In fragile settings ethical considerations become more important than ever, as do interpreters and gatekeepers. Since they were a crucial part of making this research possible, their impact will be discussed in detail.

Finally, in the fifth and last section, I will intertwine the qualitative data, including quotes from interviews, field notes and photos, with the literature discussed in the third chapter. Through an intersectional lens, I will discuss how one marginalisation, the violence linked to displacement, intersects with the three other social categories, and how they mutually reinforce each other.

1.1 Research questions

By answering the research questions below, the contribution of this research will be a critical analysis of "internal displacement" as a phenomenon and "internally displaced persons" as a label, adding up to the very limited literature existing so far. To date, the academic literature predominantly focuses on refugees and refugeehood rather than internal displacement. Furthermore, literature on internal displacement in Iraq, specifically from the onset of the latest conflict and in particular about Ninewa, remains extremely limited and is mostly covered only through media outlets in a similar fashion as the tag lines mentioned earlier. As a case study on Ninewa it highlights some of the problematics around generalised labels in a diverse region like Ninewa.

1. What does internal displacement look like in contemporary Iraq?
2. What kind of impact has the displacement had on the people?
   a. How have their social locations contributed to displacement?
   b. How has displacement impacted their social locations?
3. How is power contextualised in the lives of the IDPs and their spatial locations?

Hence, this thesis provides a more comprehensive view of what it means to become displaced and remain emplaced and uses Ninewa as a case study to show the complexity of internal displacement and the managing of the humanitarian emergency. Building on themes that were continuously observed during the research process, this thesis expands the usage of intersectionality in its analysis to cover those of gender, socio-economic situation, and ethno-religious belonging, and analyse their intersections. The unique set of data analysed with the help of intersectionality provides a nuanced perspective of i) the complexity of the label IDP itself, ii) the diverse setting of Ninewa, iii) the intersecting marginalisation between displacement (violence) and the other categories.

1.2 Own positioning and background

Considering the very fragile setting that Iraq, Ninewa and Mosul present, I will already at this point note that this field research was not undertaken plainly through 'an interest in Iraq' without a proper knowledge of the situation. In fact, the year before in 2017, I had spent a month in the KRI coordinating a book project that I had been tasked to do by my employer at the time – a think-tank at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University in the U.S. This included travels around the KRI, meeting civil society organisations, government representatives, religious leaders and private persons, and visiting various camps. I also had the chance to participate in and follow the distribution of humanitarian aid in various locations, including East-Mosul a few days after Mosul was declared liberated, although clashes were still taking place (IOM 2017, p. 5; own observations). Through the work I did during that trip, being based in Erbil, and the free time I had while I was there, I got to know more about the country, the people, the culture, and the displacement aspects in general, which all were useful for my next undertaking in the region. More specifically though, the visits I had the chance to do to several villages in Ninewa, to camps for forcibly displaced and the contacts I got when I was there, had a significant impact on making this research possible in the first place. Furthermore, before the trip in July 2017, while working in the U.S., I had already

been involved in some projects on Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and built a network that was useful for my first trip to the region. These experiences provided me with an understanding of what I was getting myself into, far better compared to had I only read literature and done background research. In other words, I was aware of the prospect of a heavy focus on violence and other sensitive or traumatic experiences as well as the fragile settings that Ninewa represented. It is for these reasons that the methodology chapter with the ethical aspects is fairly long.

In regard to the timing of the research and the publication of the thesis, shortly after I had returned from Iraq at the end of July, I moved to South Africa for the fall, and thereafter to Iran in the spring, both for full-time work. Hence, I decided to focus on my work and learning experiences in both of the countries there and finish my thesis once I was back in Finland. This postponed the finalisation of the thesis with 8 months. Consequently, the research is based on the situation in the region in 2018, and I am currently not aware how the dynamics have changed.

To sum up, my trip and work the previous year helped me prepare both with practicalities such as getting access and the expectations for the quite heavy topics that are part of this thesis. I would argue that without my initial visit in 2017, I would only have been able to do a fraction of what I was able to do now. Of course, as I will discuss more in the section about ethics, no matter how much preparation or reading you do, it is never the same as being on the ground.

2 Background

To shed light on the situation in contemporary Iraq and internal displacement more broadly, I will start with an overview of internal displacement, and continue by providing a brief overlook of Iraq's history over the last few decades. I will summarise some major events and examples of persecution that have led to displacement in Iraq, and their impact on the country, and more specifically on the Ninewa region. Indeed, the main geographical area of inquiry in this section is the Ninewa region and Erbil, both due to my research focus there as well as its role before, under and after[8] the Islamic State.

2.1 Forced displacement as a phenomenon

Displacement and migration "are, and have always been, permanent features of the global order" (Lisle and Johnson 2018, p. 25). Based on United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA) data there are more than 40 million internally displaced persons worldwide, which is more than ever before (OCHA n.d.). In 2017 alone, 30.6 million new people got displaced, 11.8 million of whom were displaced due to violence and conflict. The UN estimates that the amount of IDPs will be increasing over the coming decades, mainly due to natural disasters and other environmental factors, amounting up to 143 million by 2050 by some calculations. The phenomenon of displacement will, therefore, continue to be a permanent feature of the global order, particularly in those settings that are already fragile[9] such as Iraq.

To set the scene to the displacement and violence in Ninewa, I will start by giving a brief summary of Iraq's modern history, with a focus on violence. Over the past 150 years, Iraq has been under colonial rule, subject to imperial policies and struggled for independence (Chatty 2010; Enloe 2010; Ali 2011; Al-Ali 2018)[10]. Furthermore, the last few decades have been characterised by various violent conflicts and instabilities. Al-Ali et al. (2009, p. 65), describe the Iraqi pre-2014[11] context as:

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[8] By 'after', I refer to the time after the liberation of Mosul, and do not claim Daesh has disappeared.

[9] According to the Fragile State Index, Iraq is the 13th most fragile country in the world. Fragility is defined as "the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks (OECD States of Fragility report, 2016, 22). For academic discussions on the concept, see e.g. Milante and Woolcock (2017); Aembe and Dijkzeul (2019).

[10] For a more comprehensive take on Iraq's history, see Anderson and Stansfield (2004).

[11] Although Daesh did not emerge out of the blue, the summer of 2014 is usually seen as the tipping point to when Daesh became a widely recognised group.

not a typical situation. It has been through three wars, decades under a repressive regime, sanctions and occupation. You may find a country that has been through one of these but it is very rare to find a country that has gone through all of these things.

The dynamics in Iraq go beyond ethnic, religious and tribal affiliations (Siddiqui et al 2019; Haddad 2011). Previous research show that this displacement has had sectarian[12] and arbitrary characteristics in Iraq (see for example Al-Ali et al. 2009; Ali 2011; Enloe 2010; Chatty and Mansour 2011; Marfleet 2011a; Al-Ali 2018). However, as Haddad puts it, the ethnic, religious or tribal groups are "themselves dissected by various social, economic and political categories that in themselves may unite 'Sunnis' and 'Shi'as' on the basis of, for example, class or political ideology" (Haddad 2011, 8). While some argue that the fall of the Ba'ath regime increased sectarian violence, others argue that it had already existed in the country before (See Haddad 2011, p. 143; Isakhan 2015), for example with tensions in the 1950s (Anderson and Stansfield 2004), Saddam's favouritism of Sunnis, attacks on Kurds or increasing divisions due to Saddam Hussein's 'faith campaign' in early 1990s (Orton 2015). Dodge (2006, p. 215-216) estimates that 80 percent of the violence in Iraq post invasion was by organised criminal groups and 20 percent by Iraqi Islamism, again portraying the complexity of actors committing violence.

Notably, the context of displacement in Iraq is particularly multifaceted and unique. The country's complicated history has caused displacement internally and internationally for various groups of people in Iraq for several decades (Morton and Burnham 2008; Davis 2019). Some of the most recent causes for displacement include, but are not limited to, the U.S. invasion of Iraq 2003[13], sectarian violence (Ali 2011; Marfleet 2011a) and the rise of Daesh in 2014. Displacement and violence are thus no new phenomena in the region but were accelerated because of Daesh.

2.2   Security in Iraq, Ninewa and Mosul

Fawn notes that "at the time of U.S. invasion Iraq's armed forces [were] a third of what it had been in 1991" (Fawn 2006, p. 23) and in the "post-war chaos" (Fawn 2006, p. 9), Iraq's security sector became even more impeded (Mansour and Jabad 2017; Munson 2006). A report issued by the National Intelligence Council in 2007 noted the increasing ethnic and sectarian violence and warned

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[12] Without going further into the definition of sectarianism, this thesis recognises the reductionist impact that making broad categorisations and drawing lines between "Sunni and Shiia" or "Kurds and Arabs" have, and this term will in this thesis rather refer to the divisions in the narratives of the IDPs and their positioning in and against some group.

[13] For more about the U.S. invasion, see for example Fawn and Hinnebusch (2006).

against the security implications of the potential of "sustained mass sectarian killings, assassination of major religious and political leaders, and a complete Sunni defection from the government".

The security vacuum was exploited by various actors, which later came to contribute to the situation in Ninewa. The situation in Mosul had been complicated for several years after the U.S. invasion and the sectarian violence "between rival militias in and near the city of Mosul in 2008, 2009 and 2010 produced a series of new displacements" (Marfleet 2011, p. 286). The International Crisis Group recognised the risks in Mosul, and the Ninewa region more broadly already in their 2009 report, warning that

> in the aftermath of the 2003 war, Ninewa underwent a spectacular evolution from an area of relative calm, seemingly resigned to the new order, to a stronghold of resistance against, first, the occupation and then Kurdish hegemony. In the process, the governorate suffered huge losses: its economy was paralysed, and a large portion of its population either took refuge in neighbouring countries (chiefly Syria) or was internally displaced. […]. To this day, the scale of destruction in Mosul city is striking, and many who stayed behind continue to live in fear. (ICG 2009)

The contested and weak security situation became particularly significant in 2014 when Daesh captured a third of Iraq, including towns and villages in the Ninewa governorate. Already after the U.S. invasion, the police had fled Mosul due to insurgencies, which highlighted the "difficulty of recruiting reliable security forces" (Fawn 2006, p. 13). A similar issue arose again when Daesh seized Mosul in June 2014 despite being outnumbered by the retreating Iraqi army, making it even easier for Daesh to take over the city. Mosul became one of the largest cities seized by Daesh with its 1.4 million inhabitants (UN Habitat 2016).

The failure of the Iraqi army to push back against Daesh in Mosul and elsewhere led to the creation of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), called Hashd al-Shaabi or Hashd[14] in Arabic. Iraq's then prime minister Nouri al-Maliki called on Iraqis to volunteer and defend the people against Daesh in June 2014. Shortly thereafter, Iraq's most senior religious Shiite leader, Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani, issued a religious fatwa[15] for the same matter, which, despite its national appeal mobilised mostly militia groups[16] (Mansour and Jabad 2017; El-Dessouki 2017). Mansour and Jabbad note that these developments were reflected in the public opinion against the Iraqi army:

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[14] I use the term "Hashd al-Shaabi and Hashd in the thesis (with the exception of direct quotes from the literature) as those were the names used in all the interviews and discussions throughout my field trip, including in Kurdish, Arabic and English. Hence it feels better contextualised to use the same term.

[15] Al-Sistani also called for resistance against the U.S. invasion.

[16] Notably though, during Saddam Hussein's regime, 80 percent of the conscripts were Shiite (Dodge 2006, p. 214) and Shiites are a majority group in Iraq.

By 2014, many Iraqis had begun claiming that it [Iraqi army] is lucky if it can be considered the fourth-strongest army in Iraq—behind the PMF, Kurdistan's peshmerga forces, and Iraqi tribal fighters. (Mansour and Jabbad 2017, p. 5)

The estimates of the number of members in Hashd vary between roughly 60'000 to more than 100'000 and between 40 to 60 different groups (Mansour and Jabar 2017). The term Hashd thus refers to the umbrella of these various groups and it is not a unitary militia group. Although the majority of the members are Shiite, the forces also consist of other ethno-religious groups (El-Dessouki 2017). Hashd quickly became an integral part in the fight against Daesh, and in 2015 they were officially fighting alongside the Iraqi army. In 2016, they were legally incorporated into Iraq's armed forces, despite concerns of serious human rights abuses and the potential weakening effect it could have on the Iraqi government (Human Rights Watch 2016; Amnesty International 2017; Mansour and Jabar 2017). However, the incorporation of Hashd into the official security forces was also seen as a measure to limit their power and prevent them from growing into a parallel armed group that may challenge the Iraqi army itself (Mansour and Jabar 2017; Hannah 2019). However, although Iraq's prime minister Haider al-Abadi is the official head of the armed forces in Iraq, his power is said to be limited with the Hashd, which gives them more leeway. The role of Hashd as a legitimate part of the armed forces, some groups with links to Iran (ICG 2018; Blanchard 2018), and with an increasing role in politics has also raised concerns in Iraq.

Another major player in the region has been the Kurdish troops called Peshmerga[17], which became a formal security organisation of the autonomous Kurdish region of Iraq post-invasion, although they have existed in various forms throughout the 20th century. They currently consist of some 150'000-190'000 fighters (See Fliervoet 2018; BBC 2014). Despite the diversity of the Peshmergas, they can be roughly divided into functioning under the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs and the two largest political parties in the KRI, namely Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) that administer different parts of KRI. (Fliervoet 2018) This internal relationship has been historically strained, for example due to the Kurdish civil war in the 1990s and political differences among other issues. Despite attempts to unify the separate groups, they continue to organise themselves separately. In the fight against Daesh, they organised themselves separately (Fliervoet 2018), but these specific dynamics will not be further discussed in this thesis as the dynamics are more detailed than is possible to portray here.

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[17] Literal meaning is "those who face death".

The Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) outward relationship between the central government in Baghdad and the capital of the autonomous Kurdish region Erbil has been historically strained, dating back to World War I, and several deteriorating events thereafter, such as the "on-off civil war" until 1991, including Kurdish cooperation with Iran and the bombing of Kurdish villages (Anderson and Stansfield 2004, p. 44). During Saddam Hussein, many Kurds were persecuted and some of the Kurdish groups supported the U.S. invasion of Iraq (Munson 2006). The Baghdad-Erbil and Kurdish-Arab dichotomies continue to be mobilised in politics.

Finally, Mosul was one of Daesh' last strongholds and was only liberated in the summer of 2017 by the Iraqi government together with Hashd, Peshmerga, and the U.S.-led international coalition.[18] In September 2017 when the largest battles against Daesh were over, the KRI held an advisory referendum on independence, which caused a backlash not only from Baghdad, but also Tehran and Ankara. Some of the recently gained areas that had been under Peshmerga's control during the fights against ISL were taken back from them (Blanchard 2018) and the KRI's autonomy was limited, for example by canceling international flights to Erbil and limiting the border checks on the KRI and Iraqi border. Kurdish troops were driven out from towns such as Sinjar, called Shengal in Kurdish[19], by Hashd and Iraqi security forces (ICG 2018). Consequently, the dynamics between Erbil and Baghdad became more fluid and shifted the local dynamics in Ninewa as well.

2.3   Consequences of violence on contemporary Iraq

Iraq's history of violence has had severe short- and long-term impacts on society. The liberation of Mosul was a large-scale military operation, the largest urban combat in decades, which did not come without costs. According to Lafta's (et al 2018b) household survey, the reported death rates in Mosul increased dramatically during the liberation campaign and the consequent air bombardments. Although the battle of Mosul and other cities in Iraq are officially over, casualties have emerged due to improvised explosive devices (IED), explosive remnants of war (ERW) and levels of violence remain high among various armed groups and Daesh claimed an average of 75 attacks per month in Iraq in 2018 (CSIS 2018; Blanchard 2018; Iraq Body Count n.d.; OCHA 2018).

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[18] For more about Mosul profile, demographics displacement trends see UN Habitat (2016) and IOM DTM-Iraq Mission (2017)

[19] Sinjar and Shengal were both used in the interviews, but due to the larger number of people talking about Sinjar, I will be using that name in the thesis for the purpose of clarity.

The Ninewa plains have historically been inhabited by various ethnic and religious groups, but many had to flee due to violence or threat of violence that Daesh or other groups posed to them (Burnham et al. 2017). Minority Rights Group International (2018) warns that several communities are currently at risk, including Shia, Sunni, Kurdsmen, Christians, Mandaneans, Yazidis, Shabaks, Faili Kurds, Bahai's and Palestinians. The sectarian violence has increased divisions and led to violence between different fractions of society. The international community reported widely about Daesh atrocities towards all fractions of society and the large-scale persecution of minorities, whereby the Yazidis were portrayed as the quintessent victims of Daesh brutality (Al-Ali 2018; Foster and Minwalla 2018).

Christians and Jews, who Daesh considered apostates and were theoretically allowed[20] to stay where they are, provided they pay the *jizyah*[21] or convert. If they opposed both alternatives, they were allowed to be killed. Notably, there are varying reports on the arbitrariness on how this was applied. Threats and harassment by Daesh, Hashd, Peshmerga and other armed groups towards Christians have been widely reported. Additionally, there are numerous examples of Christians who have been killed and sexually assaulted. (U.S. State Department 2018)

The Yazidis are a closed, monotheistic group pre-dating Islam, that Daesh considered infidels, 'devil worshippers' and not belonging to the 'People of the Book', which justified their slavery (Jalabi 2014; van Zoonen and Mirya 2017). Some of Daesh doctrines established that "their [Yazidi] women could be enslaved" with no possibility for the jizyah available to Christians and Jews (Dabiq 2014, p. 14; see also van Zoonen and Mirya 2017), although there are reports on forced conversions by Yazidis (U.S. State Department 2018), including to avoid slavery. Throughout the years, Yazidis have been subject to several persecutions, including in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion. The Yazidis themselves claim to have experienced dozens of genocides. The Yazidi communities have been located in disputed areas such as Sinjar (Shengal in Kurdish), controlled mainly by Peshmerga, and Bashiqa between Baghdad and Erbil, which has further increased tensions between various groups amidst contestations about the administration of the area (Abouzeid 2018). Health and education services are poor, they have had no reserved seats in the parliament in the KRI, and Yazidis attending universities in cities such as Mosul have reportedly been threatened (van Zoonen and Mirya 2017).

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[20] There are varying reports on the arbitrariness of how it was applied, including in my own data. See for example Figure 8 with a threatening message against Christians on page 86.
[21] A tax paid by non-Muslims.

The mistrust between the Yazidis and other groups thus goes beyond 2014, although it significantly deteriorated due to Daesh. Many Yazidis have reported that they feel betrayed after they were left to fend for themselves when Daesh approached (ICG 2018).

Shiites, who represent a religious majority in Iraq, but a minority in Ninewa and Mosul, also faced threats and violence by Daesh. In its online publication Dabiq, Daesh has outright called for the killing of Shiites and condemned "the rejecters" and "followers of deviant desires", comparing Shiites to Jews as equally treacherous (Dabiq p. 2016, 33). Furthermore, Daesh categorises for example soldiers, followers of manmade laws and anyone who does not purely follow Allah as apostates, and Daesh has declared to "fight anyone who resists any part of it [Allah's law] […] unless they forcibly accept the jizyah and submit to the rule of Islam" (Rumiyah 2016, p. 6). Indeed, Sunnis also witnessed coercion, threats and control, and those rebelling against Daesh were killed. Apart from this, many Sunnis, including tribes and other groups, have been suspected of Daesh affiliation and been threatened, arbitrarily detained and tortured (Taub 2018), sometimes to avenge crimes committed against the Shia. (U.S. State Department 2018; Human Rights Watch 2016)

Furthermore, decades of violence have undermined the healthcare and education systems across the country, which has further deteriorated access to healthcare and schooling (UN Iraq 2013). Noticeably, the political economy of a post-conflict region tends to become increasingly patriarchal and masculine, as Enloe (2011) portrayed in post-invasion Iraq. Moreover, the gendered consequences of the violence (See Al-Ali 2018; Al-Ali, Pratt and Enloe 2009; Enloe 2011), include thousands of widowed women and male relatives who died in the battles. This in turn, has led to high levels of poverty among female-headed households. High levels of domestic violence and child marriages have also been reported, which are even more common in conflict and post-conflict settings. (UN Iraq 2013; Lafta et al 2008; OCHA 2018).

As a consequence of all the violence, there are now a large number of forcibly displaced people in the country. Ninewa and Erbil alone host nearly a million IDPs (Ninewa 501,000; Erbil 212,000) (UNHCR n.d.) and the KRI has been complimented for hosting a large number of IDPs as well as Syrian refugees. The displacement movements both nationally and internationally caused a wide European reaction to "the mass influx of refugees" a few years ago in particular (Betts 2015, Henley 2018; Betts 2015; Grote 2018). This also sparked national political debates of the response to the so called "migrant and refugee crisis" (European Commission 2017). However, as stated before, the overwhelming majority of forcibly displaced stayed within the country, not crossing international

borders. In 2018, the number of IDPs had reduced to 2,1 million, 360,000 of whom were living in informal settlements such as unfinished and abandoned buildings (UNHCR 2018). 43 percent of the IDPs were located in Ninewa (REACH 2018). According to IOM (2018), 30 percent of the IDPs were in emergency camps, 10 percent in emergency sites, 8 percent in private settings and half of them in unknown shelter arrangements.

Having very briefly contextualised the situation and internal displacement in Iraq[22], I will now present the academic literature on displacement and provide examples of Iraq and Ninewa.

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[22] Noting that many issues have been simplified and are much more complex than is now portrayed here.

3 The intersections and diffusion of categories

Throughout my field research, power was contextualised in various forms, in different ways to different people, depending on their social location in categories and the experiences they had had. Hence, the literature review will focus on various ways that power takes form in the context of humanitarian emergencies and displacement. The first section will look into how previous literature considers IDP management specifically with regards to the complexities in the Iraqi context – at the levels of the sovereign, the camp as an administrative power, technologies of power through "truth", the everyday and the idealisable figure of the traumatised other. Due to the much more limited literature on internal displacement and the *de jure* clear, but *de facto* diffuse relationship between forced international and internal displacement, this thesis will utilise literature on refugees to analyse IDPs.

The second section in this chapter will elaborate the academic debate on intersectionality and explain how it will be used as an analytic tool in this research. Due to intersectionality's focus on power and violence, and their strong interlinkages to displacement, I will show how the category "IDP" intersects with the other categories that most frequently arose during my field research, namely gender, socio-economic situation and ethno-religious belonging. With displacement being a specific kind of marginalisation, intersectionality is well-suited to the study of this phenomena.

3.1 Displacement

There are several characteristics and positionalities to highlight in order to contextualise the complexity of displacement, specifically in a country such as Iraq. The rich history of displacement in Iraq as described in the previous chapter brings in more levels of different kinds of displacements taking form at different times throughout the 20th and 21st century Iraq. However, these are important in order to understand contemporary Iraq. Iraq hosts refugees from Syria, is a country of origin for refugees and has a vast number of IDPs, some of whom have slowly started to repatriate or resettle to new or old regions of origin. Iraq has been inhabited by various ethnic, religious, national, tribal and other groups for centuries. Moreover, Iraq's sovereignty has been challenged both internally by KRI referendum on independence and internationally due to the 2003 U.S. invasion, making the Ninewa context even more unique.

Although most of the literature is focusing on camps, it is important to re-emphasise that the majority of IDPs are located outside camps in unknown settlements, makeshift camps or rented

apartments, all of which are significantly less covered in academia. In fact, most articles on makeshift camps are limited to news articles.[23]

In this section, I will elaborate more on the literature surrounding humanitarian emergencies, internal displacement as one component of an emergency, and how these build into the rationale on how IDPs are managed.

3.1.1 Displacement and labelling

As mentioned earlier, literature on forced internal displacement is rather limited in comparison to international migration or refugeehood. The term "internally displaced person" as such is a description of people who have been forced to re-locate due to various forms of violence and disasters within their own countries (OCHA n.d.). Again, in comparison to the refugee-label, the IDP label does not constitute any binding law despite being based on international human rights law and humanitarian instruments (Koser and Martin 2011, p. 1).

Koser and Martin note the "misalignment between existing labels, categories, and constructions and migration realities; and the consequences of falling into legal, normative and institutional gaps" (2011, p. 2) and criticise that this categorisation exists in both academia and policy making. The categories are often based on three dimensions. Firstly, whether the displacement happens nationally or internationally (refugee vs. internally displaced; international migrant vs. internal migrant). Secondly, the differentiation between the different causes for displacement: persecution is constitutive of refugeehood while economic deprivation and climate change are not. Thirdly, the duration of displacement and the consequent needs: are we talking about emergency or protracted displacement? (Koser and Martin 2011)

The categorisations and labelling of people into specific needs-groups based on such criteria is arguably problematic. For Hacking, the categorisation of people makes them a generalisable figure, with similar positionalities and characteristics (2007), as it ascribes the same kind of needs or vulnerabilities irrespective of the individual's personal experiences (Koser and Martin 2011). Koch further elaborates on this and states that "there is a disjuncture between official categories and lived experiences" (2015, p. 137). Malkki touches upon the protective and constraining effects that this kind of labelling may have, noting that "refugee status as a legal status functions socially in complex

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[23] See for example Hennessy-Fiske (2017) and Schmitt (2018) on Iraq.

ways" and should be considered as having different meanings and consequences for each individual (Malkki 2002, p. 358). Thus, "the very category of IDP is contingent and negotiated through shifting relationships between the displaced, local populations and formal interventions" (Koch 2015, p. 137; referring to Feldman 2007, p. 137 and Malkki 1995). Hence there is no generalisable type of refugee or IDP, but it is individually constructed.

Apart from the terms migrant and refugee, other widely used labels within action plans and international organisations in (im)mobility are for example 'stateless', 'paperless', 'returnee', 'person of concern', 'undocumented' and 'stayer'. Many of these have their own interventions and plans of actions in the international domain. The UNHCR includes refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless people, IDPs and returnees all under the umbrella of person of concern. Literature on refugeehood seems to be the most researched among them, whereas the undocumented fall outside the scope of these action plans as they are "unknown" to the international community.

Malkki also highlights the often-overlooked issue of the people who stay and emphasises the need to study the factor of "what it means to be, or remain, emplaced" (1995, p. 515). The term 'stayer' is used fluidly in academic literature, making the term itself unclear and interchangeable with other groups. For example, Bozzoli et al. (2012) have looked at 'stayers' as those who remain in camps after having become displaced in post-conflict Bosnia. In her research, Mata-Codesal has looked at stayers through the lens of migration in Mexico and found three types of stayers: desired, acquiescent and involuntary stayers (2018). In their research on health in humanitarian emergencies, Heudtlass et al. use the term "resident" instead of stayer (2016). Consequently, the differentiation between and categorisation of who is a 'stayer' and who is an 'IDP' is vague.

Finally, Malkki argues that in refugee studies, it is often assumed that upon displacement the 'international refugee' becomes separate from that of his or her previous lifeworld – despite the fact that family and friends might remain there, and the connection between the new and the former lifeworld continue (Malkki 1995). Marfleet (2011a) noted in his research on displacement in Iraq that while often differing in terms of socio-economic status, refugees and IDPs had in fact faced similar experiences prior to their forced displacement but had very different forms of protection schemes. Additionally, many of the refugees had initially sought refuge within their country as IDPs before crossing the borders, indicating that displacement can take place on many different levels and that fitting into one category does not exclude belonging from another.

3.1.2 Governing internally displaced persons

Although the dominating perception of forcibly displaced is that most of them live in camps, as mentioned earlier, only a third of the IDPs in Iraq actually lived in camps in 2018 (IOM 2018; IOM n.d.). Half of the people I spoke with were located in the camps and the other half either in rented/own apartments or makeshift camps, and hence the camp setting will be given due attention. On top of that, the literature on IDPs in emergency sites or unknown shelter arrangements is very limited compared to literature on camp management, but both will be, though unevenly, touched upon.

According to Malkki, refugee camps as "generalisable technologies of power" were created in the aftermath of the Second World War as a solution for managing the vast masses of people who had fled the war and violence. (Malkki 1995, p. 498; Malkki 2002, p. 352) Malkki adds that "the refugee camp was a vital device of power" through its administrative and bureaucratic processes, health programs and segregation of people based on nationality and organisation of repatriation (1995, p. 498). Initially, refugees were seen as a military issue, but the establishment of international morality later shifted the responsibility to international humanitarianism (Malkki 1995, p. 499) and refugees became a standardised concern for the international community (Fassin and d'Halluin 2007). A wave of international efforts to mitigate the issue of mass displacement and overseeing their protection emerged: the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, establishment of the United Nations refugee agency UNHCR in 1950 and the approval of the Geneva convention in 1951. However, internally displaced persons fell outside the scope of the refugee-specific Geneva conventions.

Up to the Cold War, governments were expected to manage internally displaced people. When abuse emerged, they referred to the sovereign powers of the state and considered IDPs as an internal matter of the state. (Orchard 2010) After decades of various conferences on displacement did the issue around internal displacement get more recognition due to events that also affected Iraq: The Gulf War, Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and repressed uprisings in Iraq (Orchard 2010, p. 289). Orchard (2010, p. 282) argues that the development of the principles on displacement was due to a shifting understanding of the 'sovereign' and a normative change in seeing IDPs as part of international protection schemes. Indeed, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement adopted in 1998 lay down that "while responsibility for the protection of IDPs rests first and foremost with national governments and local authorities, it is important for the international community to see how

best it can contribute to enhancing the protection of IDPs in conflict and crisis situations" (OCHA 2004), shifting some of the responsibility on the international community.

However, looking at various statistics and maps compiled by the UNHCR, IDMC and other international organisations, it quickly becomes clear that the majority of the global numbers of IDPs are located in the Global South (See illustration in UNHCR 2015, p. 10). Conflict-driven internal displacement is particularly evident in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, where Middle East and North Africa accounted for 19.8 percent and Sub-Saharan Africa for 69.1 percent of the total new cases of displacement in 2018 (IDMC 2019). In comparison, the percentage was 0.2 in Europe and Central Asia respectively (IDMC 2019). This makes the management of IDPs primarily an issue for the Global South. Despite this, the management of forcibly displaced has become a concern for the West, though more so with regards to refugees. In European debates it has been presented "as if the presence of refugees was threatening the demographic or economic equilibrium of the continent" (Fassin and d'Halluin 2007, p. 310). In this sense, the IDP issue does not pose the same kind of 'existential treat' for Europe as refugees do. Following this logic, it is then of European interest to keep IDPs settled in their countries.

Another example of the increasing interest by the international community in the management of displacement are the international organisations, whose presence can be noted in most countries with large numbers of IDPs. Barnett (2013, p. 386-387) argues that 'the West' governs much of the camps through the broad base of international organisations operating in the region as well as funding states through the UN. The number of IDPs, including those in 'IDP-like conditions' has grown significantly from 4.3 million in 1995 to 37.5 million in 2015, 35 percent of whom were assisted or protected by UNHCR (UNHCR 2015). The presence applies to Iraq as well, where the UNHCR states that

> despite restricted access to IDP locations, UNHCR maintained its humanitarian commitment to providing assistance to hundreds of thousands of individuals in Iraq. Of the 4.4 million IDPs reported in that country at the end of 2015, 1.1 million received UNHCR assistance. (UNHCR 2015, p. 30)

The notion of "restricted access" is reflective of the delicate balance between national sovereignty and international interest with regards to management of refugees or IDPs. For example, Owens argues that the management of refugees by international organisations is attempted to be done "in a manner that does not radically undermine the framework on which the nation-state rests" (Owens 2009, p. 571).

In the context of Iraq, its national sovereignty has been widely debated particularly in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. For example, Al-Ali et al. (2018) argue that the interference in Iraq's sovereignty post-2003 was largely based on U.S. priorities rather than on the benefit for the Iraqi people, which had severe effects on the welfare and rights of the people and particularly women. The divergence from the official narrative by the United States can be seen through the interference by the U.S. in the economic aspects of Iraq's future, while the issue around women's rights was largely ignored despite earlier promises of aiming at safeguarding their rights. Al-Ali argues that "women's rights and gender relations became one of the only areas over which Iraqi political leaders could assert their sovereignty against the occupying powers" (Al-Ali 2018, p. 18). This led to an increased crackdown on the previous gains in women's rights during the Ba'ath regime as women remained one of the few issues that was under the sovereign control.

Richmond sees the above mentioned constellation between the local and the international as hybrid forms of politics, stemming from "the attempt of the liberal, developed world to evolve interventionary practices designed to end conflict and poverty" and to "maintain the legitimacy of the liberal self, state and international organisation and their encounter with local forms of power" (2015, p. 43). This form of international responsibility or international humanitarianism has been criticised as a modern version of imperialism (Duffield 2007; Bricmont 2006). With regard to military humanitarianism, Asad further argues that "external powers […] perform their humanitarian duty - but without giving up all other rights of sovereignty", which leads to a situation where they are not "hampered by any responsibility for the consequences of their military intervention" (Asad 2015, p. 408).

Mitchell (2011) further highlights that another important aspect to consider is that the control need not necessarily be imposed from the outside by international actors but can also done from within the community or 'the local' itself in order to preserve quality of life. Lisle and Johnson (2019) argue that the management of displacement is a natural part of the sovereign order that "wants to hide these troubling features" in order to claim itself to be a well-functioning order with no disruptive features. Hence there is a national interest of a state to be able to manage the masses of people successfully without the intervention of the international community. Furthermore, the 'local' is not restricted only to the state, but the humanitarian sector is becoming increasingly diversified with other new emerging donors and actors (Barnett 2013, p. 386-387). For Duffield, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are part of the equation as they often possess the power to decide "whom to help and champion and,

consequently, who can be left behind" (Duffield 2007, p. 52). Therefore, there is a constant negotiation between the local and international, between the level of intervention versus the local agency as well as between the various levels of the 'local'. If, simultaneously the primary responsibility lies with the state, but as Al-Ali et al. (2009) argue, Iraq's sovereignty throughout the past decades is largely questionable, combined with the societal and political complexity in the country, what does that mean for IDP management?

3.1.3 State of exception

In response to migrants as a troubling feature, Fassin considers migrants in the margins of both the territory and the law (Fassin 2011, p. 217; Das and Poole 2004). Owens similarly questions the fluidity in the judicial and political order. She argues that "opt outs from various human rights legislation are normal, […] not rare or marginal phenomena" (2009, p. 571). She uses suspensions of law and establishment of asylum-seeker detention camps as examples of exemptions. Owens further states that "everything is permitted in the name of national security, the right of territorial sovereignty […] in order to protect the way of life of 'normal' citizens" using the rational of "instrumentality" (2011, p. 575). Similar discrepancies in the respect of law are also raised by Arendt, according to whom human rights ought to be inalienable, including for stateless and displaced people (Arendt 1951). In similar vein, Malkki argues that the law is often at odds with practice. For example, international law guarantees freedom of movement, but the actual implementation remains much more arbitrary due to 'reality' (Malkki 2002, p. 354). In the context of Iraq, this has been reflected in surveys of IDPs in various camps located in the country, where the principles of free mobility do not align with the reality either through outright mobility control or structural barriers such as poverty (REACH 2018).

The normative understanding around the diffusion of rights is that the exceptions and restrictions are justified based on a broader security rationale or a utilitarian approach: the rights of the subject can be traded for the greater good of the rest of the population. Duffield writes that in the European context "although […] asylum seekers are not criminals in seeking to enter Europe, their freedom to do so is experienced as a threat." (Duffield 2001, p. 207) Conversely, Puumala notes that one of the main concerns of the nation state is to lose the control of its borders (2012). Following this rationale, it is then in the interest of both the 'sovereign state' and the international community to contain the IDPs within the set boundaries, due to and with the help of the "state of exception" (Agamben 2005).

For Agamben, the establishment of 'the state of exception' or 'permanent state of emergency' has "become one of the essential practices of contemporary states" that allows for "the physical elimination […] of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system" (2005, p. 2). According to Duffield, like "all states of exception, humanitarian emergencies challenge existing laws, override social constraints and question political limits" (Duffield 2007, p. 33-34). In these settings, exemptions from the various international frameworks, laws and norms then become accepted. Collins and Bilge name mass incarceration and securitisation of the nation state as a coercive turn of the democratic state (2016, p. 138) which could be broadened to include forcibly displaced people as well. This issue highlights the increasing security-discourse around humanitarian engagement. For Malkki, the initial military management of forced displacement has shifted away towards a humanitarian approach (Malkki 1995; Malkki 2002). Bernstein on the other hand argues that there has been a development towards a securitisation of migration by problematising migrants (2010).

According to Agamben, the Taliban captured in Afghanistan are one example of this "de facto rule", as they are neither charged for crimes, official prisoners or released, but rather in an indefinite detention "removed from the law and from judicial oversight" (2005, p. 4). Similarly to the Taliban, refugees (and IDPs and asylum seekers) are in an arbitrary legal sphere that can be managed through de facto ruling, and they lack eligibility from being part of the political system. Instead they are removed from oversight into camps or to the margins of law and geography (Das and Poole 2004) and are treated as a problem in the "national order of things", as an exception in the regular matters of the state (Malkki 2002, p. 356).

Agamben suggests that this state of emergency may become engrained in peacetime institutions as well. In other words, the state of emergency becomes the new norm. For example, Duffield builds on Schuster's (2003, p. 246) argument that "since the 1980s the European states have developed immigration regimes and practices 'that once would have been only possible in wartime, but are today considered "normal", part of the everyday experience of hundreds of thousands of people across Europe" (2007, p. 208). Agamben calls this evolution of the exception becoming the norm the "zone of indistinction", which camps are the epitome of. Although the purpose of humanitarian response is meant as a short-term solution to safeguard the basic needs of the people, there are several examples of protracted displacement lasting for decades, for example in Colombia and Somalia (OCHA 2017). Hence, the notion of what constitutes "required by circumstances" is up for interpretation.

If opt-outs from binding laws are possible with refugee management and international law, the context of IDPs and soft law and norms then becomes much more questionable. The 12th paragraph of the Guiding Principles provides some room for flexibility in restricting freedom of movement: "they (IDPs) shall not be interned in or confined to a camp. If in *exceptional* circumstances such internment or confinement is absolutely necessary, it shall not last longer than required by the circumstances" (OCHA 2004; emphasis added). Furthermore, although the Guiding Principles "do not constitute a binding instrument", they "reflect and are consistent with international human rights and humanitarian law and analogous refugee law" (OCHA 2004). If only the 'sovereign' can suspend a law, but the 'sovereign' is supposed to be guided by normative understandings of rights (Owens 2009, p. 571), how does this reflect in the IDP context?

When moving away from the abstract balance of the sovereign with the international to the micro-management level of camps, there are a number of ways how power is shaped in this context. According to Giorgio Agamben's "bare life" or "bare humanity" concept refugees earn protection in exchange for docile bodies (Agamben 2005), meaning that the governed subjects (refugees/IDPs) trade their political selves with security in the administrative processes as mentioned above. Duffield similarly agrees that migrants and asylum seekers have been "stripped of all legal and political rights" outside the law and society through the process of bare life (Duffield 2007, p. 208). Mitchell (2011, p. 1630) approaches power through Foucault's concept of "biopolitics", where the power lies in "making live or letting die", and the control of everyday life, such as hygiene, food and safety. Mitchell argues that exchanging the political self for the benefit of getting the basic elements in life fulfilled outwins the loss of the political self or submission to bare humanity. The circumstances can even be felt as providing the subjects more freedom compared to before. (Mitchell 2011, p. 1630)

However, this view has been criticised for offering too simplistic a portrayal of refugees. For example, Squire and Kynsilehto both caution against reducing the politicality of migrants and thus stripping away their agency (Squire 2015; Kynsilehto 2011). For Lisle and Johnson, agency exists in small actions in everyday life (2018, p. 28) and hence things that might at first glance not seem as political acts actually represent the agency of the person. Owens argues that the "blurring of the distinction between our biological and political lives" as suggested by Agamben, should be given due attention (Owens 2009, p. 568). Hannah Arendt also approaches refugees as political beings and argues that they possess agency in everyday life action. Owen builds on Arendt's argument by exemplifying everyday agency through the case of refugees who sewed their lips together as an act of protest (Owens 2009).

3.1.4 Extraction of truth and the trauma story

With regards to IDP labelling and camps as administrative powers, there are a number of technologies within the framework of managing IDPs. This section is mainly concerned with knowledge production and truth when it comes to IDPs and their experiences and the various ways this appears. The importance of certificates, documents and other concrete items for the purposes of legitimising or producing a 'truth' and its connection to power will thus be discussed.

Proof, evidence or truth can include things such as documents, certificates, pictures and other concrete items with which the body can complement the justification of why the individual is deserving of a specific label. Using Foucault's "governmentality" (See Foucault 1991) concept, Fassin and d'Halluin agree with this notion and add that the extortion of truth is done for psychological and institutional purposes (2007, p. 304). For the purposes of categorisation and for managing various groups of people, the process of deciding who is a refugee, migrant or an IDP depends on which characteristics the individual fulfills, based on the knowledge produced on IDPs, making the extraction of truth and processing claims for asylum an administrative issue.

There are several problematics with this kind of administrative processing. The 'desire to provide testimony is a universal response to trauma', but the repetition and production of this testimony can be perceived as a means of having to "prove one's innocence" (McKinney 2007) or even be a traumatic experience in itself (Malkki 1995). In order to justify one's refugeehood, the subject has to produce a truth that fits within the framework/margins of the 'suffering other' (Haskell 1985). Thus, the experiences of trauma and sharing them with others, whether to officers in detention centres or psychiatrists, is at the core of the problematic of the narrative. In their case study on asylum seekers in France, Fassin and d'Halluin point out that the trauma itself says less about a refugee's "truth" than about the "truth" of political asylum (2007, p. 325). What follows is what Wittgenstein describes as:

> The importance of the true confession does not reside in its being a correct and certain report of a process. It resides rather in the special consequences which can be drawn from a confession whose truth is guaranteed by the special criteria of *truthfulness*. (Fassin and d'Halluin quoting Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations II, xi, 222)

Malkki argues that in the prioritisation of suffering, physical wounds are more evident, and thus more reliable (Malkki 2007). Therefore, the truth from physical marks is more legitimate compared to that

of mental suffering, because its truthfulness cannot be verified as easily. As a result of a medical examination or visit to the psychiatrist, the subject may be given a medical certificate for physical or mental trauma confirming the legitimacy of the trauma story (Fassin and d'Halluin 2005; Fassin and d'Halluin 2007). For the extraction of truth, the body has then become the object for examining trauma and the truthfulness of the trauma story (Fassin and d'Halluin 2005). This kind of administrative process of fact-checking of trauma by a psychiatrist, psychologist or medical doctor become "administrative acts of verification" (Fassin and d'Halluin 2005, p. 603), which in turn helps in the screening for 'true' and 'fake' refugees, where fakers include economic migrants, who are not considered deserving of the "universalised humanity" (Malkki 2007).

Although the label of 'IDP' does not constitute an automatic description of trauma (Malkki 1995, p. 510), the individual trauma story described above reproduces the perception of the IDP as a suffering other. What follows is a constant negotiation or re-production from the general to the particular and vice versa, where the individual experience becomes generalised and overlooked, with certain characteristics and experiences automatically imposed on or expected from the refugee/IDP. Consequently, it refuses the social personhood of the particular person (Malkki 1995), leading to a dichotomic approach between the general perception of the IDP and the individual experiences by the person.

Naturally then, when the definition itself has connotations of violence and trauma, the extent to which the person is seen sufficiently traumatised or in need of help for "earning" protection or help is decided by the other side of the administrative processes who either decides to approve or disapprove the IDP's story. This is particularly interesting considering that the knowledge of 'displacement' is produced by the administrative processes or 'humanitarian experts' (See Barnett 2013), who define how much and what kind of suffering is needed to be considered eligible for these various statuses that could include labels like refugee, traumatised or IDP. Indeed, when experts produce classifications, particular characteristics become attributed to those populations (Hacking 2006). This raises the question on who is a legitimate producer of knowledge and what impact does the knowledge have on the IDP? For example, in her research in Georgia, Koch (2015) identified that the people she worked with were not able to fit within the margins set for those eligible for social assistance, or, put in other words they were not considered vulnerable enough. Correspondingly, the consequences of not conforming to the narrative of IDP's as a universal category with similar experiences can lead to exclusion from the camp or denial of asylum process and the decision-maker then possesses power

in his/her decision. Consequently, the price of not conforming to the expectations can be high and the key is to properly convince the subject for persuasion whether a doctor, researcher or asylum officer.

Then what exactly constitutes trauma, suffering and violence? While trauma often has connotations of violence, Malkki argues that other kinds of trauma such as poverty or losing one's economic status may be equally traumatising to that of witnessing direct violence (1995, p. 341). For Galtung, the *sudden* "needs-deficit" caused by direct and structural violence causes trauma (1990, p. 295; own emphasis). However, Miller and Rasmussen (2010) suggest that sometimes daily stressors, such as poverty, political violence and social isolation might be even more traumatising or cause more stress than a sudden, traumatic event such as the death of a family member, both of which are common in conflict and post-conflict settings. The daily stressors are characterised by continuity, lack of control of the situation and usually exist within an already affected population, while the sudden traumatic event, despite its indirect and long-term consequences, may be a one-time shock and can sometimes make it easier to cope with (Miller and Rasmussen 2010).

The potential cause for trauma—violence—is an inherent part, and the clearest illustration, of power. Violence can be expressed in both direct and indirect ways, through outright violent behaviour such as rape and hate crimes to structural aspects in society like colonialism, imperialism and patriarchy that marginalise people (Collins and Bilge 2016, p. 55). In peace and conflict research, Johan Galtung refers to three types of violence: direct violence (an event; children are murdered) and structural violence (a process; children die through poverty), justified through cultural violence (whatever blinds us to this or seeks to justify it), all of which can also be found in the Iraqi context as described below (Ramsbotham 2011, p. 11; Galtung 1990; Webel and Galtung 2007).

As mentioned earlier, the IDPs and population as a whole in Iraq have in the last few decades been subjected to various kinds of violence. In the 20th century it was dominated by colonial powers and later subjected to what has been seen as U.S. imperialism. Most recently, the involvement of the international humanitarian community has been seen as modern imperialism by critical humanitarianism theories. Apart from this kind of structural violence, countless people in Iraq have faced severe direct violence due to war, sectarian killings, sexual and domestic violence, aerial bombardments and torture. As elaborated before, the threat of violence was constantly present under life of occupation with Daesh as the occupying force, and previously due to e.g. militia groups before 2014 and military troops during and after the invasion. Apart from the above-mentioned versions of violence, Malkki includes contemporary migration schemes and asylum-processes as a form of violence due to the requirements on refugees to produce the trauma story and legitimising themselves

as 'true' refugees, which constitute a "performed psychic trauma of formulaic political violence" (Malkki 1995, p. 341). In a conflict, post-conflict and displacement setting, it is then highly likely that people have been subjected to one or several types of violence that have affected them in one way or another. Building on Galtung, these types of violence will be further elaborated upon in the analysis chapter to portray the various forms of violence the IDPs in my research have experienced and how power is intertwined within it. Before that though, I will introduce the concept 'intersectionality' and explain how it will be used as a tool in the analysis section.

3.2 Intersectionality

As has been portrayed, displacement and the violence that IDPs may have experienced constitute a form of marginalisation. To better grasp how these forms of marginalisations interact and intersect with one another, I will be utilising intersectionality as an analytical tool as it is well-suited for studies on marginalisation and violence. First, however, I will start by providing a brief introduction to the emergence of intersectionality and the academic debate around it.

3.2.1 Intersectionality's diffuse definitions

Intersectionality was a response to the binary approach employed by race-based and gender-based theories and their lack inability to recognise multiple marginalisations (McCall 2005, p. 1780; Cho 2013). Intersectionality gained more traction through Kimberle Crenshaw's work, where she highlighted how women of color are marginalised in both the groups "gender" and "race" (1991, p. 1244). Within the gender category, the dominant discourse was represented by the white woman, while race mostly implied black men, which lead to the exclusion of black women since they could not fit within the dominant representations within either of these groups. That is, feminism became emblematic for white women and critical race theory for black men, whereas women of color were confined within both. (Crenshaw 1991, p. 1252)

Although intersectionality was originally used in the context of race and gender, many scholars have acknowledged the need to introduce a wider range of categories, while others have warned against the risks of broadening the focus of intersectionality as limiting its analytical potential (Bastia 2014, p. 224). Throughout her text, Crenshaw highlights other social aspects, such as employment, socio-economic status and education as other issues affecting the marginalisation and oppression of black women. Arguably, if the purpose of intersectionality is to research the "multidimensionality of

marginalised subjects lived experiences" as Crenshaw herself mentions (1989, p. 139), it implies a need to involve a much wider range of categories beyond purely race and gender. Yet Crenshaw does not specifically tackle them in the same way as she does with gender and race, which she has been criticised for by scholars like Nash, according to whom Crenshaw ignores how the experiences by women of color are "complicated by class, nationality, language, ethnicity and sexuality" (Nash 2008, p. 9). However, the fact that Crenshaw repeatedly mentions the other categories leads to the understanding that other categories are indeed necessary to properly catch the multiple victimisations or marginalisations that marginalised subjects face, which will be the approach in this thesis as well.

With regards to the broadening scope of intersectionality, Bastia (2014, p. 238-239) refers to a number of scholars that research other relevant categories: "disability and sexuality" (Valentine 2007), nationality and ethnicity (Yuval-Davis 2006) and migration condition and transnationalism" (Chow 2011). For Bastia, the purpose of intersectionality is ultimately to "analyse how different forms of disadvantage intersect", mainly with focus on women's oppression (2014, p. 238-239). Collins further summarises intersectional scholarship to cover five fields of inquiry: i) core constructions such as family, identity and work; ii) sexuality, ethnicity, age and ability; iii) social problems like violence; iv) identity; and v) intersectionality and epistemology (Collins 2015, p. 11). Several scholars have also applied intersectionality to migration and displacement research (See Fruja Amthor 2017; Bastia 2014; Koirala and Esghavi 2017; Kynsilehto 2011), and some to internal displacement in particular (See Logie et al 2016). Consequently, intersectionality has been widely adapted to various fields of inquiry and it is for these reasons that it is well-suited for interdisciplinary studies (Collins 2015, p. 6), including peace research.

Apart from the increasing number of categories in the study of intersectionality, there are disagreements and diffusions about the theoretical debate. Due to its "definitional dilemma" the study of intersectionality can be difficult to grasp (Collins 2015; Cho 2013). In other words, there is no clear definition among academia of what the study of intersectionality actually is, and thus far it has been described as a theory, a heuristic and analytic tool and a reading strategy for doing feminist analysis and critical praxis (Collins 2015, p. 3; Davis 2008; Carastathis 2014). Some scholars see an advantage in giving intersectionality a specific definition (See Davis 2008), whereas others argue the opposite, namely that the flexibility of intersectionality is in fact its strength (See Collins and Bilge 2016; Nash 2008).

Nash mentions the differing viewpoints on intersectionality as "a theory of marginalised subjectivity or a generalised theory of identity" (2008, p. 10), where the former has been used more commonly. Furthermore, Davis suggests that there are differing viewpoints of intersectionality as "a crossroad (Crenshaw 1991), "axes of difference" (Yuval-Davis 2006) or "dynamic process" (Staunaes 2003). The thematic, theoretical and definitional quagmire around intersectionality arguably makes it difficult to grasp how and what contexts to utilise it in. For the purposes of this thesis, intersectionality will be applied as an analytical tool, guided by the following generally understood definition of intersectionality:

> Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analysing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. Intersectionality as an analytical tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves (Collins and Bilge 2016, p. 2)

Collins and Bilge list six themes that consistently arise in intersectional literature when used as an analytic tool: social inequality, relationality, power, social context, complexity and social justice (2016, p. 25), whereby power, social context and complexity were the themes that most frequently arose during my own field research. Intersectionality is indeed well-equipped for exploring power relations between and within categories and how power affects them through e.g. racism, sexism and class exploitation (Collins and Bilge 2016, p. 7). As was pointed out in the previous chapter, these kinds of phenomena can be seen as a form of violence, making power an inherent part of them. The vantage point of this thesis is to broaden these categories to include issues like humanitarianism as a liberal form of intervention due to their significance in the context of Iraq and the management of IDPs as discussed in the previous chapter. In conclusion, intersectionality as a methodological tool will be utilised in order to better understand the various sub-groups within the IDP-label, how subject positions have shaped IDP experiences, made them flee or re-locate and now affect them while they are displaced.

3.2.2 Categories

Notably, the challenge with intersectionality and its vagueness in terms of methodology is its complexity. The more groups and inter-groups within the categories are used for analysis, the more intersections there are between them. This brings the next point to categories. In their work on

marginalisation and intersections, scholars have applied different definitions to refer to the various categories or groups. While most scholars, including Crenshaw, use category, Davis utilises the term 'social location' and Nash mentions 'social processes of categorisation' (2008). McCall furthermore shifts between group, social group and social category in her discussion on intersectionality. The reference point to use thus becomes diffuse.

According to Crenshaw, categories as such are not problematic but the "values attached to them and the way those values foster and create social hierarchies" are (1991, p. 1297). For McCall, categories in themselves are socially constructed, making them contingent on knowledge production and mutual construction between different realities. Therefore, categories will change or at least be challenged over time as have been seen with gender. (McCall 2005, p. 1778) Due to this, McCall argues that the usage of categories can be politicised even unwillingly (McCall 2005, p. 1777).

McCall exemplifies the intersection of multiple categories through the Arab American, middle-class, heterosexual woman who is socially located between and within race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexual identity (2005, p. 1781), which increases the fields of intersection to a large number. Even when simplifying the inter-group dimensions, gender has two dimensions: the biological sexes woman and man, whereas class could be simplified and reduced to three: working-class, middle-class and upper-class, bringing the dimensions already to six even with only two categories (2005, p. 1786). Within each of these categories, the Arab American woman is marginalised, as she does not represent the dominant subject of inquiry in any of the categories.

When it comes to various categories, there have been a few attempts to make intersectional analysis more structured. For example, Knudsen has developed the terms 'additive' and 'transversal' intersectionality, where the former refers to the separate analysis of each category, and the latter to the interrelatedness between categories and their intersection (Knudsen 2006). McCall on the other hand discusses three different approaches to categories: the anticategorial, intercategorical and the intracategorical complexity. The anticategorical complexity denounces analytical categories as a whole, while the intracategorical complexity speaks for a strategic use of categories to map out "relationships of inequality among social groups" (2005, p. 1785). The intercategorical approach is placed somewhere in between these two as it takes a critical stance on categories while also acknowledging the "durable relationships that social categories represent" (2005, p. 1774). The starting point is, then, to challenge the generalising effects of labels and categories, while not rejecting their use. Since internal displacement is the starting point for this analysis, whereby I build outward

to include other categories and their mutual influences on each other, the intracategorical approach is the basis in my thesis.

With reference to the main concern of this thesis, the IDPs, the question of what the category of IDPs are constituted of arises. Although there are no official subgroups defined in neither the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement nor the Plan of Action to Reduce and Resolve Internal Displacement, the dimensions mentioned in various reports and data on forced displacement are usually divided into categories such as "person of concern", "stayer", "returnee", "IDP", "refugee", "asylum seeker", "undocumented" and "stateless". The OHCHR refers to returnee as "a person who was a refugee, but who has recently returned to his/her country of origin", noting that it is dependent on having previously been a refugee. This definition does not actually have a basis in international law but has been shaped through international consensus. (OHCHR 2001, p. 205; Mooney 2005) The UNHCR on the other hand categorises both refugees and IDPs within the returnee category (UNHCR Glossary).

Furthermore, in its report on Ninewa, IOM defines returnees as those "previously displaced from their location of origin since January 2014 who return to their sub-district of origin, irrespective of whether they have returned to their former residence or to another shelter type" (IOM 2019b, p. 7). In other words, returnees can technically still be displaced even if they are considered returnees. According to a background paper produced by UN Stats, the "concept of returning refugees and IDPs are not mutually exclusive" and sometimes a person can fit within both categories (UN Stats 2015, p. 20). The complexity in analysing IDPs is arguably the changing character of displacement and the diffuse lines between the various subgroups. Some people may have faced several phases of displacement, been placed somewhere in between groups or have had different migration statuses. Either way, the idea here is to analyse how one marginalisation (displacement) has impacted some of the other social aspects and potentially caused additional layers of marginalisation.

Though most intersectional literature focuses on women, this thesis will cover both men and women. In peace research, some scholars have noted that men's experiences are often overlooked or considered taboos, although men are equally affected by torture and violence, including sexual violence (Feron 2018), and constitute on average 90 percent of the death rates in conflict (UNFPA 2015). By excluding men of the picture, I would be guilty of assuming marginalisation and impact of displacement and ignoring gendered experiences in conflict and displacement. In fact, sometimes the otherwise privileged gender (male) can, when contextualised, be a burden as noted by Chang and

Culp in their example of the black heterosexual man "who was killed by two white men for allegedly whistling at a white woman." They argue that had it been a black female, she would likely "not have been subjected to the same kind of violence." (2002, p. 489) Apart from having analytical value in themselves, male IDP experiences and positionalities can also have a significant impact on women, which in the worst-case scenario can further marginalise already marginalised women as an indirect consequence. This thesis thus aims at recognising the interplay between inter-group and intra-group experiences and the mutually constructing characteristics of these various groups and the power play that is emblematic in them and contingent of the social context. Furthermore, due to the nature of my data, including both men and women was the most practical.

In its "Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD)"-training manual regarding persons of concern, the UNHCR has acknowledged the variety of people fitting within that category. UNHCR refers to diversity as "different values, attitudes, cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnicities, nationalities, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, health, social and economic status, skills, and other specific personal characteristics" (UNHCR 2018, p. 19) and highlights their importance for ensuring proper measures to safeguard the well-being of persons of concern. As already mentioned, the social environment is particularly diverse in Iraq, consisting of various ethnicities, religions, tribes and nationalities. Moreover, scholars like Siddique argue that the general population demographic in Iraq is "multifaceted and goes much deeper than ethno-religious groupings: rural versus urban divides, tribal affiliations as well as tribal versus non-tribal orientation" and warns against underestimating their impact (Siddique 2018, p. 85). In his work on internal displacement of Dinka in Sudan, Duffield on the other hand concludes that the displacement and the difficulties faced due to displacement are resulting primarily from their social location in some category of the people he researched – from the fact that the people belonged to the Dinka group (2001, p. 205). Thus, it was their subject position and not the conflict itself that forced them to leave as other groups were able to stay.

Notably, while looking at the societal complexity in Iraq, it is evident that more categories beyond gender and migration status are needed to fully grasp the phenomena of displacement and its impact on people. This is confirmed for example in Al-Ali's research on the impact of the U.S. invasion of Iraq on women, where she notes that "aside from the fact that there are many other religious and ethnic groups in Iraq, differences derive much more from social class, educational and professional background, place of residence, experiences of the previous regime, political orientation, and attitude toward religion" (Al-Ali et al. 2009, p. 2). However, rather than focusing on class, which is significant in intersectional literature, this thesis will look at socio-economic status and the potential change in

the status as a consequence of displacement or the violence leading up to it. Furthermore, although the role of ethnicity and religion in contributing to violence and identity in Iraq has been debated, this thesis will recognise their impact in this context as they have been consistently mentioned in the data. These examples are by no means exhaustive and do not include every relevant category for an intersectional analysis like Ninewa.

Since it is not only the categories as such (gender, religion, race etc.) that come to shape people's experiences, but their *location within these categories*, I will be referring to IDP, gender, ethnoreligious background and socio-economic situation as categories. As already mentioned, what these categories are constituted of, have and will continue to be shaped through constructed understandings as McCall (2005) exemplified about gender. Since people's locations within these categories are connected to the 'social process of categorisation (Nash 2008), I will be using 'social location' as a reference for people's positioning within and between categories-their intersections.

3.2.3 Power and social context

From the categories framed by Collins and Bilge as continuously upcoming topics in an intersectional analysis, this thesis is concerned first and foremost with power, complexity and social context. While complexity has already been noted multiple times through the diversity of the region and the complex history of Iraq, the intersection of the categories combines both complexity and social context. The experiences of the IDPs, as will be later shown, have been shaped by their locations in these categories.

Furthermore, with regards to the analysis of power, Collins and Bilge write that "intersectional frameworks understand power relations through a lens of mutual construction", meaning that people's lives construct and are constructed in various ways by for example gender, age, ethnicity, nation and religion, with none of these alone having power in themselves (2016, p. 26-27). These categories should then be analysed within and between the points of intersection. Collins and Bilge further categorise the organisation of power into four different domains: interpersonal, disciplinary, cultural and structural, arguing that they can be used as a heuristic device (2016, p. 7-13). Although this thesis will not specifically separate between these various categories in its analysis on power, it may nevertheless be helpful to see the interlinkages of power with both the situation in Iraq based on the literature review and the categories of violence as discussed by Galtung (See Table 1).

Table 1: Organisation of power

Interpersonal	The "interplay" and mix between categories forms the experiences of each individual: "the multiple nature of individual identities and how varying combinations of class, gender, race, sexuality, and citizenship categories differentially position each individual
Disciplinary	Power operates by disciplining people in ways that put people's lives on paths that make some options seem viable and others out of reach. In other words, people are treated differently, and social rules apply differently on everyone
Cultural	The cultural domain of power helps manufacture explanations for social inequality and that the patterns of winners and losers in life is always fair
Structural	Refers to how intersecting power relations of class, gender, race, and nation shape institutions and society themselves

Adapted from Collins and Bilge (2016).

As a starting point for the analysis, particularly the interplay between the pre-displacement and post-displacement setting with the current displacement will be factored. Some of the guiding questions are:

- How did their social location in categories contribute to the reasons why people were forcibly displaced?

- How were/are these various social locations shaped by displacement?

- How is power intertwined within and between these various categories?

4 Methodological challenges in post-conflict settings

This thesis research uses both interviews and ethnographic observation as data collection methods. I chose qualitative methods because they provide the necessary tools for capturing "the meaning people attach to things in their lives" (Taylor 2016, p. 18; Taylor et al. 2015).

The interviews were conducted mainly in and outside of Erbil with participants who had fled from several towns or villages in the Ninewa region and Mosul. The informal discussions took place in Mosul and Erbil. Since in-depth interviews are normally used in combination with other methods of data collection (Johnson 2002, p. 104), utilising ethnographic observation as part of my research complemented the data gathering process and was done by spending nearly a month in Iraq, based in Iraqi Kurdistan, in July 2018. In order to reduce any kind of recognisability, I have chosen to only provide approximate locations, approximate ages[24] and only use pseudonyms.[25]

4.1 Doing field research in Iraq

To better illustrate why the Iraqi context poses challenges apart from the violence discussed in this thesis, I will briefly enlist some aspects to take into consideration. As mentioned in the background chapter, the political dynamics not only in the KRI, but also in the rest of Iraq are difficult. Following the 2017 referendum the border control and the borders themselves had changed as the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) lost some of its autonomy and the areas that the Peshmerga had taken control of during the fights against Daesh were taken from them.

Simultaneously, the hottest month of the year, July, has had a continued trend of protests against corruption, poor water management and lack of electricity among other issues, in previous years. The same happened during my field research again, and protests erupted in Basra, the second biggest city of Iraq, and elsewhere. There was also pressure for having protests in Mosul as well, but the response on social media seemed largely denouncing them by referring to the already bad situation there. Initially, the whole internet was blocked, which meant that virtual private networks (VPN) and other means did not solve the problem of connectivity. When I was there, I was closely following the situation as it affected my research plans as well.

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[24] I did not specifically ask the people about their ages.
[25] The names should not be associated with any group belonging as they have been chosen at random and I am not familiar with the contextual meanings/usage of the names.

> *"The richest city of Iraq, Basra, is protesting against corruption, lack of jobs, for better services, water and so on. The government has blocked internet and social media. Some people do not have internet at all. The protests have spread, and some people are even talking about a revolution. Everybody is talking about it."* (Field notes 7/2018)

Moreover, although Erbil is a safe city in the country, it also faces challenges with the extremist groups. Some locals told me that Erbil is full of Daesh sleeper cells, and one incident that happened when I was in Erbil fired up the discussion (privately with people), while the media's message remained the same:

> *"There were some armed men, 3 apparently, storming a building in Erbil, killing some poor tea-man. Some are suspicious about the whole thing, saying it's their[the government's] attempt to take attention away from the real issues, while some are claiming they would never do that because it hurts their reputation and scares away tourists and others like Westerners, who consider it [KRI] a safe base. Other information included that it had been done by Daesh and they were close to being successful in their attempt in blowing up the building. Which one of those versions it was, if any, I will probably never find out."* (Field notes 7/2018)

Many months later, I came across a U.S. State Department report that confirmed that the gunmen had indeed "links to a terrorist group" but failed to "gain entry to the Erbil governor's office" and instead killed a Christian employee before getting killed themselves (U.S. Department of State 2018).

4.2 Interviews

Using interviewing as a data-gathering method was a challenging but rewarding process. Because of my sensitive topic, I had already beforehand decided that a qualitative method that captures the narratives by the people I research would be the best approach. The interviews varied a lot in their length, location and structure, but they all were open-ended interviews where I tried to have as little of a role as possible in the discussions, with the exception of some leading questions here and there. Getting access was not as challenging as it could be in a setting like that, although at times there were some significant barriers or changes, which required me to make new plans.

4.2.1 Interviewing as a method

Qualitative interviewing as a method is particularly good for accessing individuals' attitudes, interpretations of events, understanding and values (Bridge Byrne 2004, p. 182). Small-scale mapping

enables a more personal elaboration of the issues and experiences and for presenting follow-up questions. Notably, open-ended interviewing was the most suitable way in my research to include a varied amount of experiences, given my assumption that the displaced persons that I interviewed would have a variety of subjectivities. By researching their everyday lives, I got a glimpse into their opinions of the situation and their lived experiences. In-depth interviewing in peace research does facilitate a possibility to capture the everyday experiences of people living in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Before conducting interviews, it is often recommended to prepare a set of guiding interview questions in order to clarify "whom, where and how" to interview (Brouneus 2011, p. 132) and to start the interviews with lighter warm-up questions before digging deeper into the topic (Höglund and Öberg 2011, p. 193). Although I did prepare a set of guiding questions[26] (See Table 2) and got them approved by my supervisor prior to my departure, upon conducting the research I quickly made the judgement that it is better to leave out the notebook with my questions as it made the situation feel more official. Due to the sensitive nature of my research, I wanted to reduce the formality of the interviews and make it feel more like an informal setting, where the interviewee has enough space to provide his or her perspectives with only limited guidance from the interviewer's part (Shesterinina 2018, p. 130). Additionally, handing them a questionnaire would have felt too impersonal.

Table 2: Guiding interview questions

Themes	Questions
Background	Tell me a bit about yourself? Who do you live with? Are you a student/working/at home? When did you arrive here? When and why did you decide to leave? How does a "normal" day look like to you? What are your daily routines?
Education	Are you currently a student? / Would you like to study? Do you/your kids/siblings go to school in the camp/Mosul/Erbil? Were you able to attend university in your hometown (despite Daesh)? Why/Why not?
Employment	Do you work? Would you like to work? / Does your husband/brother/father/sister etc. (partner/siblings/family members) work? Can you leave the camp for work or to go and look for work? Did you work in your hometown? / Were you able to look for jobs in your hometown/Mosul/Erbil? (Are you content with your work and financial situation?)

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[26] These questions were applied on a case-by-case basis depending on the evaluation of the circumstances. The questions in brackets were not asked unless considered appropriate to do so. In most cases the participants brought up the topics themselves.

Health	Would you say you are in good health? Do you feel like you get medicine and help from a doctor if you need it? Do you have to/can you leave the camp to go "shopping" or to see a doctor? / Were you able to go to the doctor or get needed medicine when you lived in your hometown?
Security	Do you feel safe in the camp/in Mosul/in Erbil? Is the camp safe for your children? (What made you decide to leave your home?) (Were you ever threatened by Daesh? / Have you ever been threatened in the camp?)
Future	Are you planning on going back to your hometown? Do you know anyone who has returned? / (Are you planning on staying in Mosul?) (Is there anything you would want to change about the situation?) Is there anything you would want from the government/international community/camp management/city/"locals" to do? How do you see your future? What do you want from the future?

As often happens while conducting qualitative research in the field, my topic also developed during my research and my research questions slightly shifted. Initially, my focus lied more on the consequences of displacement and how the people's lives had changed due to the forced movements, and not so much on the underlying power dynamics that later became one of the main themes of the thesis. Prior to my field trip, I had thought about discussing one thematic area such as gender, education, health or employment more in-depth depending on what comes up in the data. Eventually I decided to take a broader perspective because of the complexity of the topic and provide more of an overview of the interconnectedness between the categories. Indeed, it is not possible to know exactly which questions to ask before starting the research (Taylor 2016; Taylor et al. 2015). Had I known about this development, my guiding questions and focus would arguably had been somewhat different.

The characteristics of an interview, being based on a one-directional questioning, does in its essence entail power relations (Kvale 2006, p. 484). In an effort to mitigate the asymmetrical power relations between the participants and myself, I tried to let them lead the conversations based on the pre-defined broad topics yet leaving space for any other subjects that the participants highlighted or led the interview towards. By using a structured interviewing, I would have imposed my own perceptions and assumptions on what experiences and aspects are of importance to the participants.

The approach for myself was to be an active listener and to take note of the narrative, without judging or providing my own perspectives. In active listening, the interviewer's role is accordingly, to receive information and be neutral towards the information that is being communicated (as defined by Given 2008). Active listening enabled me to capture the narratives from the time before, during and after displacement.

Consequently, I tried minimising this kind of epistemic violence by using open-ended interviews, which were more alike conversations than structured or semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, I encouraged them to talk about issues they want and to ask me any potential questions if they wish to do so. However, at the end of the day, in an interview it is usually one of the parties that "seeks understanding and the other part serves as a means for the interview's knowledge interest" (Kvale 2006, p. 483), which was the case of my research as well. This kind of constellation is by no means a dialogue, but a hierarchical setting (Brinkmann and Kvale 2005).

Financially and timewise, an open-ended interview was more feasible due to the language barrier. A survey would have required me to find other people to translate the survey, the responses and the potential conversations. Lastly, in my faculty, the approval of research plans by the board of ethics extends only to larger research projects, and not that of a master's thesis.

4.2.2 Knowledge production

Residents in civil war settings are often willing to share their personal stories (Wood 2006; Cronin-Furman and Lake 2018, p. 609). It is worth critically reflecting on why certain people agree to the interviews and why some do not. Assessing the potential incentives and bias is particularly important, as there are bigger interests involved in the representation of facts and knowledge in conflict or post-conflict settings than in less contested ones (Höglund and Öberg 2011, p. 189; Höglund 2011, p. 120). For some, interviewing can provide a space for otherwise excluded or marginalised people, who normally do not get their point of view communicated to a broader audience (Kvale 2006, p. 481). On several instances, the people expressed how much they would have to say by saying things like "if I'm going to talk about it, I'm not going to finish until tomorrow" (Talitha from Mosul, 35, living in a camp with her husband and 7 children) or "you need thousands of pages to record everything" (Ibrahim, 45, living in camp, hometown unknown). On the grassroots level people are often most affected by the violent conflict yet have the least set of means to participate in the decision-making processes with regards to that specific conflict (Brouneus 2011, p. 130). This was reflected in some of the interviewee's accounts when they said that they finally feel like somebody cares:

> *"We really appreciate that you're listening to our stories. We feel like we are human. Nowadays nobody is listening to us." (Abdullah and his wife Hanah 60, son Omer 25 and two daughters 18 and 20 years old, living in an apartment Erbil)*

However, Cronin-Furman and Lake highlight the problematics of these kind of narratives, as there may be underlying expectations behind sharing the stories, such as receiving some form of help,

which later leads to a failure to meet those expectations due to the nature of research (Cronin-Furman and Lake 2018, p. 609). For example, Layleh (Yazidi from Sinjar speaking on behalf of a group of 10 women, ages ranging from 15 to 65, living in a makeshift camp) stressed that there is "a lot of talking but nobody is doing anything" and exemplified it with an American researcher who brought nothing but water, which may have been a message to me as well. Similarly, Gayatri Spivak's work on the subaltern highlights how voices may remain unheard despite efforts to speak. According to her, the subaltern, the marginalised, are silenced and remain unheard, not because they do not speak or try to get their voices heard, but simply because what they say and how they speak is not acknowledged or heard by the 'privileged' (Spivak 1988), constituting what Spivak calls 'epistemic violence'. This builds into the question of who is a legitimate producer of knowledge?

Nevertheless, as noted by Cerwonka and Malkki "knowledge production is not necessarily an unethical, violent, or colonising enterprise" (2007, p. 28), despite coming as a 'stranger', researching a topic outside one's own lifeworld. The researcher can never be completely objective, because "we always understand through a set of priorities and questions that we bring to the phenomenon/objective that we are researching (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007, p. 28). Throughout my research, I tried to take the various subjectivities into consideration and clarify the purpose of my research and reflect the impact of my own background.

Simultaneously, with their agency, the participants could potentially have used their own knowledge production as a means of countering the above stated asymmetrical power relations. In other words, they were still able to control and decide what information to share and what to leave out, giving them space for defining or renegotiating our positions by possessing something that I, as a researcher desired while not being able to give much, if anything, in return. Verifying their narratives was impossible for me to do and I simply had to rely on what was told (Höglund and Öberg 2011; Kvale 2006). The fact that my research did not research 'perpetrators of violence'[27], but those who said they had fled the violence, might have lowered the risk for misrepresentation of 'facts' or 'truth'. Of course, I cannot be sure about whether someone actually had participated in violent acts and it is not the purpose of this thesis to assess that.

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[27] The categorisation into "victim" and "perpetrator" is highly problematic and has been acknowledged in peace research. For more discussion on this, see Govier 2009.

4.2.3 Selection of people

Approximately half of the interviews took place in the IDP camp and were conducted at three different camps. I approached a fourth camp but was denied access by the camp manager with the argument that he wants the people at the camp to leave and having me interview them would only give them more hope to be able to stay longer.

The selection process in the camps was relatively randomised. Together with the NGO gatekeeper, my interpreter and I drove or walked around the camps and stopped by people whenever we saw someone outside their tents or crude shelters, presented what I was doing there and asked them whether they would be willing to talk to us. Those not located in the camps were harder to find because they were either living in regular houses or in crude shelters in unfinished buildings on the outskirts of Erbil. Through the so-called "snowball-method" I was able to identify the people located in these urban settings. Snowball-sampling means that participants suggest other people to participate in the research, which is particularly useful when one wants to access members from a specific community (Given 2008, p. 815).

In some cases, people approached me when they heard what my research is about and asked me whether they can share their experiences with me. For example, on one of the IDP camps, a young girl around 18 years called Shakila approached me and said she had heard about my research already the day before when we were there and asked if we would have time to talk to her mother. She then called her mother Sofya to double-check and said we can go to their tent. Another family living in Erbil had invited me to their apartment after they had heard about my research from my non-camp gatekeeper. Moreover, as I was meeting up with a local organisation to ask whether they could help me with getting access to a camp, a couple working there heard what I was researching about. In the beginning, the man, Ayoob (50, from Qaraqosh), sat next to me and showed me some pictures on his phone while gesturing and using a few words in English in an effort to explain what had happened. Later on, his wife Maryam joined us to give the whole story and they asked another worker to come and translate. In this spontaneous situation I did not have my interpreter with me and ended up relying on a young man who Maryam and Ayoob asked to help out.[28]

Although the idea had initially been to mainly interview those in Ninewa who had fled after 2014 or lived under Daesh occupation, some interviewees proved to have a slightly different background.

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[28] Using another interpreter may, in general, have an impact on the research. However, due to the context and the spontaneous nature of the discussion I found it quite unlikely that there would be some major concerns involved in the interviewing.

Some of them had fled already as early as 2011 due to the violence or intimidation they had been fearing by either Daesh, Shia militias or other unknown actors. Additionally, all but one of the IDP families had been living in Ninewa at the time they were forcibly displaced: Sofya (40, five children, living in a camp), had been living in Baiji in Salahaddin, but also ended up living in Mosul after they were threatened by Daesh and forced to move there. Consequently, as a part of the research process, my focus slightly broadened once it was got confirmed that Daesh is not the only reason why people ran away and that the displacement started earlier for some. This proves the complexity of the situation in the Ninewa region with all its diverse groups, different armed groups and the various threats, and similarly it also challenged my own assumptions of what timelines I would be touching upon.

Another important, and slightly surprising aspect in the Ninewa context that arose while I conducted interviews was the 'Daesh factor'. Semi-randomly selecting people to be interviewed and the broad inclusion of IDPs in the camps, meant that I ended up interviewing a few female Daesh members. Their husbands had been captured by Hashd al-Shaabi and were in jail. Two of the women said they had been part of Daesh, while two other cases were more unclear. There are, however, reports that many camps have Daesh members and these same issues were mentioned during my trips in the region both in July 2017 and 2018. Some have been cleared of suspicion after having spent time in jail.

4.2.4 Interview process

The interviews lasted from 15 minutes to almost two hours. Altogether I did 15 interviews, one with each family. Two exceptions include the interview with the group of Yazidis, of whom approximately ten women were present in the discussion, and one interview at a camp where another man wanted to join the conversation. With regards to the Yazidis, I cannot distinguish how many separate heads of household were present, and, during the discussion they referred to the other villagers as "sisters, fathers, brothers" and so on, indicating a different definition of family in comparison to the fairly narrow Western definition. All in all, approximately 20 families were involved in the interview process. Indeed, an interesting observation that I had not realised prior to my field trip, was that against the expectations and guidelines of how an interview "normally" is conducted one-on-one, only two of the interviews ended up being such. In the rest of the cases, the whole family, including children or even extended family members or friends, were present at the interview, ranging up to 8 or 9 people in the tent or room at times. On average, around five people were present during an

interview, sharply increasing the number of people involved in my interview process. Usually one person functioned as the main spokesperson in the interview, but occasionally many of them spoke at the same time, making translation and transcription difficult. The presence of children added to the ethical challenges of the research, in particular with regards to the issue of re-traumatisation.

The interviews that had been recorded were transcribed upon return to Finland. In the interviews where I was making notes, I added comments and additional remarks as soon as I was in a place to do so or very latest upon return to my host family's home. Despite varying guidelines regarding compensation for interviewees (Shesterinina 2018, p. 135) I decided to minimise any incentives for people to participate by clarifying in the beginning that no kind of compensation will be provided for an interview.

4.2.5 Using an interpreter

I found my interpreter through a friend who was based in Erbil. He in turn reached out to some of his acquaintances and friends, and I managed to find Dila, a Kurdish woman in the same age as myself and who was fluent in English, Kurdish (Kurmanji and Sorani dialects) and Arabic. Prior to starting the research, I was texting her to tell her more about my research, agree on the compensation and send her some reading material to go through in order for her to familiarise with the topic. It was her first time working as an interpreter and my first time using one, which arguably made it a learning process for the both of us. However, we got along very well, developed a friendship during my month there and her flexibility considerably facilitated the research project.

Using an interpreter is a two-edged sword. As noted by O'Leary (2009, p. 49-50), messages can be lost in translation, which in turn might affect the meaning of words and simplify the richness of the language. However, using an interpreter enabled me to broaden the target group for my research, had I only conducted interviews in English, as I now ended up conducting interviews both in Arabic and Kurdish. In other words, using an interpreter enabled me to broaden my focus and depart from the "dominant voices" (O'Leary 2004, p. 48), whereby not many people in Iraq have sufficient English skills (EF EPI 2018). Only one of the people in my research knew English.

All but two interviews were conducted in Arabic, while two were in Kurdish (in Kurmanji). With her knowledge in not only the languages, but also in the cultural considerations, the interpreter functioned as a cultural interpreter or 'verifier' (since I was already familiar with certain cultural aspects from my visit the year before), exemplified in the situation below:

Dila: "The camp manager invited us for lunch"
Me: – I figured it will most likely be meat, so as a vegetarian it could be a little tricky. And
we would not have time either way.
Dila: "You have to have a good reason to decline" she said. "Otherwise they might get
offended." (Excerpt from field notes 7/2018)

I covered the costs for using an interpreter myself.

4.3   Ethnographic observation

The contrast between my previous time there in July 2017 and 2018 was compelling. The most significant development was that the active war was over. Access to Mosul was different, different measures needed to be taken into consideration, and there were less IDPs in the region in general. Another development that had changed the situation in the region and the dynamics between the parties included the independence referendum. The voting results of the referendum were not acknowledged, and caused more of a major backlash from Baghdad, e.g. through a flight ban for international flights to Erbil, which was only lifted in the spring 2018. When I was thinking about thesis research topics in the spring, I initially thought that my research will not be possible due to the ban. The referendum challenged the sovereignty of Iraq, which, as discussed previously, has been a peculiar issue in Iraq for a longer time, but particularly since 2003. Prior to my trip, I was encouraged by locals to keep an even closer eye on both internal and external political developments. To this background, I will now explain in more detail how my role as a researcher was influenced by my participants and the other way around.

4.3.1   Research process

Since communication is as much about the spoken and unspoken, an ethnographic approach allowed me to gather more comprehensive data and understanding compared to using only quantitative data or interviews as a single method. The goal of ethnography is that of "building and interpreting understandings from the perspective of the researched (O'Leary 2004, p. 120), normally through a longer period of time of fieldwork. Due to time and financial constraints, and other barriers such as language and security, an extensive period at the camps, Mosul or makeshift houses was unfortunately not possible, and this research recognises the shortcomings or limitations of a visit of only a month.

One of the key aspects for any qualitative research, including ethnographic field research is preparation (Brouneus 2011). Prior to my field trip I was reading a lot of both academic and non-academic material to prepare for as many aspects of the field trip as possible. This material included

both thematic and methodological material. I consulted my supervisor and some of my peers who had previous experience of field research. The fact that I had spent a month in the region the year before for work was another very helpful aspect as I knew people, knew many of the cities and the general circumstances in the region. However, many things had changed in one year, which added to the complexities in the region but luckily, I had been following the situation ever since my first visit. Furthermore, in order to get a more up-to-date analysis of the situation, I discussed with friends and acquaintances who were more familiar with the situation.

Apart from learning more about the general circumstances in the region, I also looked into specifics aspects of the violence and the threat that people may have had faced. Even if Daesh as a 'terrorist organisation' was not the main concern for my research I assessed that it was necessary to have some kind of idea of what some of the topics people bring up may be. Consequently, I watched some cruel, visual material videos that Daesh had posted, familiarised myself with their publications Dabiq and Rumiyah in order to get a more comprehensive view of some of the violent aspects of Daesh and their discourse.

Concerning the time in the field, the improvising characteristics of ethnography poses many challenges for a beginner, (Cervonka and Malkki 2007) arguably even more so in a challenging environment such as Iraq. The ethnographic process in its essence is a flexible one (O'Leary 2004, p. 120). Similarly, even more important than being well-prepared, was in my case flexibility. Most of the plans that I made ended up getting cancelled, postponed or changed in one way or another, due to mismatching schedules, the heat, local customs, tragic events that put the research aside and so on. Many ethnographers, such as Wood (2006), highlight the challenges of sudden, unexpected events that change the field research. The challenges of the very fluid working environment were documented in my field diary that I kept throughout my field trip.

> *"Update again. It's now 100% sure that the wife is dead. Death is an everyday thing here it seems. The other one survived. I spoke to him saying that we should skip the interviews altogether because it did not feel appropriate to start discussing what they've been through now that they just lost a family member and are waiting for the other one to return."* (Excerpt from field notes 7/2018)

4.3.2 Fieldnotes

The aim of field research is to "record in-depth descriptive details of people (including themselves), places, things, and events, as well as reflections on data, patterns, and the process of research" (Given 2008). Throughout my field research, I consistently wrote fieldnotes in order to capture the everyday

data, experiences and thoughts. I aimed at doing it as soon as I was back in the apartment and before reflecting on my thoughts with anyone else in order to avoid any influence on my thought process. The field notes included viewpoints and feelings about the interviewees and the situation as well as my own thinking processes or revelations. However, multiple times I postponed or skipped writing altogether, either when I was busy with other things or too tired. In some locations, I also took photos, which also are counted as fieldnotes (Reyes 2018). Occasionally I met up with friends and acquaintances, did brief trips to some other cities to explore something outside my research and also ended up helping some families out as an attempt to "give something back" (Shesterinina 2018). Long days, lack of sleep and privacy combined with 45-degree heat, intense program and irregular eating contributed to the tiredness, and in the fieldnotes I checked this off with brief notes of "too tired to write tonight" several times.

4.3.3 Lifeworlds

The exhaustiveness was partly because of the radical change in environment: from the university library to the camps in Iraq. The very different life-worlds (Husserl 1970) between the researcher and the participants put additional challenges for the research process. Walking around in the camps and particularly in Mosul was a window to the life-worlds of the people who had lived, left or died there, including the lives of the 'stayers', 'IDPs', 'refugees' and 'returnees', and Daesh members.[29] The initial views and notes of Mosul were captured in the field notes:

> *"We walked around for several hours, went through rubbles to get into a church. One of them had been a Daesh camp back in the days. Found some blankets and food remains and clothes. Women's shoes. In two of them [of the buildings] we walked upstairs to the roof and could see the city, or what was left from the city, from up there."* (Excerpt from field notes 07/2018)

The items function as "evidence that lives were lived in this space, beyond simple static waiting and the empty 'bare life'" (Lisle and Johnson (2018, p. 34), challenging the previously discussed concept of 'bare life'. One can draw conclusions based on the signs and the previous knowledge gathered about the topic and make assumptions but will not get certainty. For example, seeing boxes of medicine made me conclude that the space must have been a small clinic or pharmacy, which I then got confirmed by asking my gatekeeper for more information. Indeed, the observer "makes sense" (See Lisle and Johnson 2018) of the things he or she observers and interprets it based on the researcher's existing knowledge or tries to confirm the information by asking 'the locals'. On the one

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[29] Similar experiences have been written by for example Lisle and Johnson's (2018) about the abandoned former refugee housing in Greece.

hand, many of the items lay in places looking like they had been left there on purpose and functioned as traces from the life that had existed there before the battle. On the other hand, considering how the city was liberated, I assumed that some other items were either left there in a haste of leaving, were traces of the final moments in that specific location or had been moved by voluntary or military forces who have been cleaning up the city. In some places the items had indeed been collected in piles of debris and elsewhere there were random items inside houses.

Figure 2: Remains of old lifeworlds.
(© Mariette Hägglund, 2018)

Throughout the field notes one can note similar observations as those made by Lisle and Johnson in Greece (2018, p. 34). The items signify the continuation of practices, life, or agency even within the limited frameworks imposed by Daesh. Thanks to my field trip the previous year in the region, I was able to draw some conclusions of some of my observations on the road when I did not have the possibility to ask questions due to the lack of a mutual language.

"Now and then on the highway there were some big bumps or holes, just like the road has been cut in half. Taking a closer look at the surroundings with some dug up sandbanks along it as far as the eye can see, it quickly reminded me of last summer and the frontlines I visited. They had dug up a very very long patch and cut off roads to be able to survey who's coming and going and control that no Daesh can get through in a car or another vehicle. They must have been remains of them." (Excerpt from field notes 07/2018)

This brief kind of 'diving into the lifeworlds of some of the people' can be criticised. For example, Lisle and Johnson (2019, p. 29) raise the issue of these kinds of brief peeks into the lifeworld of others, saying there lies a risk of another version of colonialism. In her famous book Spivak (1988) criticises research as a colonial process "over there", bringing information "over here", for the purposes of the West. Hence it can be questioned why someone with my background should go to Iraq and "try to understand" and utilise the knowledge back home, instead of having that knowledge produced 'locally'. Nevertheless, as noted in the interview section many people who I spoke with said they were glad that somebody was still interested in them and their stories, as many felt that their voices had not been heard by any party whatsoever, which also may build into Spivak's point about the subaltern.

Either way, the ethnographic observation gave me a much better insight into the circumstances from which people had fled or the reasons why returning is difficult compared to had I only relied on other sources of information. Since literature on internal displacement is very limited, I also did not see how I would be better able to research the topic without actually visiting and talking to the people concerned. Arguably, the open informal conversations I had while I was there added to my knowledge and perspectives of the topic. Apart from visiting the camps and Mosul, I visited many of the other villages people spoke about the previous summer through work. These include i.e. Al-Qosh, Bartella, Baashiqa/Qaraqosh, Batnaya, Telskuf and Lalish. These experiences were useful in contextualising the circumstances in Ninewa when the participants asked me if I knew about their village and in understanding the settings from which they had fled.

4.4 Positionality

Al-Ali, Pratt and Enloe note that "how we see ourselves and how others see us (our "subject positions" or "positionalities") necessarily affect our relationships to those whom we interviewed for this research, as well our audience" (2009, p. 7). Being a graduate student in her late 20s, female, Finnish, with a Western academic background, my lifeworld as such was and is radically different from those part of my research. How this positionality influenced the willingness of people to be interviewed

and their accounts during the interview is yet another aspect to consider. Being in a transitional phase of an obvious 'stranger' (Schuetz 1944) or outsider wherever you go might have worked both against me and in my favour. For example, in their research, Pratt considered her positionality as a Western woman as both an advantage and a disadvantage (Al-Ali, Enloe and Pratt 2009).

4.4.1 Assumed belonging

On the one hand, coming there as an outsider might have lowered the barriers to talk to me, as I, as a non-Iraqi, did not represent any of the different ethnic, tribal or political fractions, and therefore, may have been perceived as an outsider to the conflict. As noted by others (See Al-Ali, Enloe and Pratt 2009), people may tell a 'stranger' (Schuetz 1944) information that they would not tell friends or family. Particularly when considering the sectarian and complicated history described earlier in combination with the recent violence by Daesh and other groups, as well as the mistrust expressed by some of the minority groups I interviewed, my positionality might have been to an advantage. On the other hand, being a white woman possibly perceived as Christian, European or American might have affected how the locals approached me. For example, many of the people initially thought I was an NGO representative or a doctor, which I always made clear I am not to mitigate any false hopes or misunderstandings by the IDPs. Furthermore, due to the difficult involvement of the 'international' in Iraq, particularly by the U.S., some may have perceived me negatively.

My positionality also made me more of a target in Mosul as I did not fit in with the rest of the population and was an obvious outsider, and could have been considered to be an (American) spy, foreign former 'Daesh wife' or in general of value for kidnapping, all of which I was warned about beforehand by friends and gatekeepers. Moreover, opposed to the perceived positionality, often seen as a Christian, I sometimes had to lie about my religious positionality as I would rather consider myself as some form of a mix between agnostic and atheist. Being a 'non-believer' can in some contexts be a major taboo and sometimes even dangerous [30], which is why I deemed it more appropriate not to correct people when they assumed me to be Christian.

Since I was also using an interpreter, who was a Kurdish woman from Erbil, this builds yet another layer of aspects to take into consideration in terms of positionality as she accompanied me during most interviews (Brouneus 2011, p. 146). Considering the still very conservative gender norms in a relatively conservative region like Ninewa, it might have worked in our favour in terms of access that both of us were women. We were allowed to speak to women-headed households inside their tents

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[30] For example, the Iraqi constitution excludes atheists from the protection of religious freedom.

and in the families with daughters they were present in the room as well. For example, Siddique mentions gender as a barrier for men to be "interviewing women in a safe and culturally appropriate manner" (2018, p. 83). As single young women, we were probably not seen as "threats" in comparison to how two single young men could have been perceived in the cultural context. For example, whether the young girl, who suggested an interview with her mother at the camp, would have approached us had we been men, is impossible to say, but seems quite unlikely.

Simultaneously, my different background probably added to some confusion or misunderstandings regarding what I deem safe and acceptable, versus what the locals do. This also applies to cultural perceptions of gender roles, in particular when it comes to security. One of the camp managers had been shocked by the fact that I was a woman and was upset that nobody had told him that. When I asked my interpreter why she thinks he was shocked she said she did not know, but we speculated that it might have had something to do with the fact that we had been allowed to walk around at the camp with only one of the NGO workers joining us. The different perceptions were particularly evident with my host family. For instance, the other women in the host family stayed at home all day and did not go out without one of the men in the family driving them or accompanying them, whereas I went alone and did not want anyone to accompany me. The father in my host family, Kamal, was continuously concerned about me and my security, which he expressed in different ways, i.e. through Google translate with messages like "I am worried; be careful; it is dangerous". Due to my different positionality, the issue of honour and modesty was most likely not applied in my case as an outsider, considering that I had much more freedom than the other women in the family, or alternatively, they chose not to leave the house alone. Of course, I did limit myself much more in order to respect them and came back 'home' earlier then I would have otherwise, let them drive me in the evening and followed certain norms and various miscellaneous requests they had. The cultural differences were evident but were respected through mutual flexibility.

This exchange of perspectives was both challenging and interesting due to the lack of a mutual language. It was manageable with the help of Google translate, gestures, limited vocabularies and occasional translation help from friends and some of their family members or friends who occasionally visited, and simply, perseverance. Just as they had never interacted with a Westerner before, I had never stayed with an Iraqi family before. Staying with them gave me further glimpses into their life-worlds, their representations of the situation and their lived experiences, much more so had I lived in a house by myself as was initially planned. An example of how the painful and complicated history of the country/region is portrayed in the perceptions of the people on the local

level, was that the family had told my friend that they had been surprised that I was a friendly and nice Westerner who actually cared about the people, and not an ignorant, exploitative Westerner. Although I was happy to learn that it had been a positive experience for them, it was sad to hear that the past events have led to such disappointments. I will always be grateful for their hospitality during my stay and helpfulness in my research, taking in a stranger to live with them for almost a month and treating me like family.

Lastly, what is of interest is how the people in my research positioned themselves in the various categories. As stated before, I did not specifically ask them about their ethnicity, religion or political affiliation, but many expressed their positionality as for example "Christian Kurdish", "Kurdish", "Yazidi", "Arab Sunni", or positioned them as a contrast to "Arabs" and "Muslims", despite the multitude of sub-groups in all of these categories, which may have been a conscious choice.

4.4.2   My own approach

Although a researcher's role in active listening, as stated above, is not to be reacting to the participant's accounts, the heavy stories and people's reactions made it hard to "stay neutral". I will, however, take a more constructionist perspective and argue, that on the contrary bringing in the 'personal' is expected, if not desirable, in certain situations. Being mindful of the ethical aspects of the research, one might do more damage by striving for 'neutrality' in his or her approach, in particular with regards to sensitive topics such as mine (Sluka 1995). With empathy, the researcher can attempt to try to understand the topic from the participant's point of view and 'develop a deeper understanding' of the topic (Given 2008, p. 252). In these circumstances, the researcher's objectivity might become biased, and hence, the researcher should reflect how empathy may affect the research results (Shesterinina 2018, 4-6; Brinkmann and Kvale 2005). However, the perception of objectivity can be contested, as the researcher automatically brings with him or her perceptions and subjectivities that have been constructed in the researcher's different lifeworld back home (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007). Finding a balance between empathy and academic objectivity is indeed a challenge in field research (Wood 2006, p. 384; Shesterinina 2018). Occasionally, I became extremely aware of my own reactions as a researcher and positionality as a woman in comparison to the observed positionalities of other people in the room when I conducted interviews:

> *"During this conversation, which was a spontaneous one, I was a little bothered by the presence of so many people in the room. In my mind I was thinking that I don't want to be the typical emotional woman, whereas they were in their typical masculine roles. If the presence of so many people did not affect her, it certainly affected me and my*

approach. Retrospectively, I regret I didn't comfort her in any way." (Excerpt from field notes 07/2018*)*

With regards to production of knowledge, it is impossible to assess whether the participants left out some important information. Participants might have had an interest in leaving out, inventing or changing some information and portraying themselves in a certain light (Höglund and Öberg 2011, p. 193). This does not necessarily have to be to deliberately lie to the researcher but can be a consequence of trauma or coping mechanism. Another interesting aspect in this production of 'truth' or knowledge, is why they are changing their narrative about their experiences. The important part here is to reflect upon the alternative visions of the 'truth' (Thomson 2009, p. 120). Participants might be saying certain things to accommodate the assumed expectations of the researcher (Shesterinina 2018) or as an attempt to benefit in one way or another from their label as an IDP. However, judging the 'truthfulness' is outside the scope of the thesis.

4.5   Ethics

Although the most extreme violence had ended by the time of my field research, several violent and deadly attacks took and are still to date taking place. There have been various accounts of fake check points, killings and kidnappings (CSIS 2018), which has made the rebuilding and cleaning up of the city significantly harder. Additionally, the city of Mosul and the nearby villages are still full of improvised explosive devices (IED), which have caused a lot of casualties. Mosul alone has 7,6 million tons of debris (UNMAS 2019; UNEP 2018). Conducting research in a post-conflict setting, especially a setting like the Ninewa region, requires a complete set of ethical considerations (See Wood 2006; Brouneus 2011; Daigle 2015; Cronin-Furman and Lake 2018; Shesterinina 2018).

An overarching theme for the research was the principle of **do-no-harm** (Shesterinina 2018; O'Leary 2004, p. 50-55). By ensuring informed consent orally prior to each interview, the participants can be given a sense of control (Höglund and Öberg 2011, p. 196). It was highlighted that the respondents could end the interview at any time without having to provide any reason. If they expressed any kind of hesitation or seemed uncomfortable, we did not pursue the interviews at all.

Anonymity and confidentiality were of particular importance in such a sensitive setting, and all the interviews were conducted anonymously. Indeed, a researcher should be able to distinguish his or her research from the possible emotional challenges that arise during the field research, and never endanger the data and the research participants by sharing information about the research with friendly strangers or others (Wood 2006, p. 384). I have no records of any of the personal details of

the participants and the recordings were treated with care. During my fieldwork, I never shared any information about my research or my research participants to anyone else and had an oral agreement with the interpreter not to do that either.

Before the interview, the participants were also asked about whether they are comfortable with having the interview recorded, or me taking notes, or prefers neither one. Those wishes were always respected. If anyone expressed the slightest form of hesitation, we automatically discarded the idea of recording the interview and in general we always adhered to the preferences of the participants. Speaking on record does involve risks for people and these risks always have to be accounted for.

> *"The older couple said that previously they would not have been able to speak to anyone on record because some relatives lived under Daesh in Mosul, and if they were caught talking to someone and their voices would have been recognised, the family would have been in danger. Now it is fine, they said. However, I still tried to make it clear that the recordings would be for my use only."* (Excerpt from field notes 07/2018)

As sometimes is the case in peace and field research and vulnerable populations, the risk for **re-traumatisation** was also present throughout the research (Brouneus 2011), and prior to my trip I consulted my supervisor and other staff at the university as well as read up on ethical considerations. To mitigate these risks, the questions for the interviews were very broad and vague and did not directly highlight any of the possibly traumatic topics or experiences the participants might have gone through. In all of the interviews and conversations I strived to make the participant feel comfortable and did not specifically pinpoint any sensitive issues. During the interviews, I always made clear that they do not have to share anything they find sad or sensitive, especially so when they were visibly scattered by what they were talking about or if there were children present. However, in all of the cases they insisted on wanting to tell me what had happened. It is though important to bear in mind the issue around knowledge production. With regards to the previously discussed 'suffering other', some of the participants might have tried pleasing me by talking about their traumatic experiences, either because they thought that is the knowledge I want to hear, or potentially because they considered that they might benefit something, hence building into the notion of a 'victim'. Additionally, previous experiences with people with similar positionalities as myself, might have contributed to the expectations of the participants in certain cases when they thought I was a doctor or NGO worker.

As for the people I met while I travelled to and spent time in Mosul, I made my purpose very clear before setting anything up, confirmed several times with them, and asked them for any specific recommendations from my end to improve my preparations. Since they were either from Mosul or

lived there, I thought they are better qualified to judge themselves the potential consequences of being seen or associated with me while I was in the city.

Assessing the potential risks that the field research might impose, the researcher must consider not only the participants' immediate **safety**, but also the long-term consequences of their participation. Hence, assuring the confidentiality and anonymity of research participants is crucial and may even be a stress factor during the field research (Wood 2006; Thomson 2010). Apart from assessing the risks for participants, the researcher must consider the safety of translators and gatekeepers and other people involved in the research (Cronin-Furman and Lake 2018; Thomson 2009; Thomson 2010). The possible risks involved with some trips made me not to ask Dila to join me at all. Throughout my research I made sure to have open conversations with my interpreter about when she feels comfortable regarding security, her own well-being and emotional state, or any other issues that might arise. Although I had less limitations, I respected her considerations and set them as the baseline.

Yet another layer here is the stress-factors on gatekeepers. As they often are the ones establishing connections and access, they might feel a sense of responsibility of the researcher, particularly when that relationship has been built over a longer period of time. For example, on one of the days that I went to Mosul, I first ended up having quite serious problems with militia members and I had to quickly ask one of my gatekeepers for help, as had been agreed beforehand that I would do should there be any problems. Thanks to the comprehensive preparations taken beforehand in combination with my network and some luck, nothing serious happened. This type of luck should, however, "not be an underappreciated aspect of fieldwork" (Sluka 1995; Wood 2006).

Later that day the protests against the government had started escalating, there were rising insecurity and tensions, and consequently the government blocked the internet completely. One of the gatekeepers who I was with in Mosul urged us to return to Erbil earlier as he was worried that some of the checkpoints will be closed and they will not let us through back to Erbil. Staying the night in civilian settings with no protection could have been dangerous for me especially due to the night raids that had been taking place by different armed actors. Due to the blocking of the internet, the other gatekeeper who was helping me with organising my Mosul trip and who, together with Kamal's sons, had helped me with the incident earlier that day could not reach me or the people I went with, which caused him plenty of stress, particularly because of what happened the same day and the potentials of what can happen in a setting like Mosul with various militia groups, government groups and Daesh members:

> *"I was so afraid. None of you have internet"* (Gatekeeper, WhatsApp conversation 7/2018)

Finally, the researcher needs to not forget about him or herself, including with getting exposed to fatigue or secondary trauma in such settings. Wood (2006, p. 383) argues that "in carrying out research in conflict zones, the researcher inevitably comes to wonder why the research is worth pursuing over purely humanitarian relief work." This thought was persistent throughout the research, and in particular when interviewing the people whom I perceived as 'most vulnerable', living in camps or crude shelters in the outskirts of Erbil. I was, however, aware that this probably was partly based on my superficial perceptions grounded on the interviews and my own bias of "who is the most vulnerable" or suffering more than the other, but I was taking this bias into consideration throughout my research.

> *"I don't get the point. Why should I inflict this pain by asking questions about their experiences and make them cry, without bringing them anything in return?"* (Excerpt from field notes 07/2018)

Despite these thoughts, it was often the research participants stated that the research is worth doing and they somehow saw an added value in it. In fact, some of them encouraged me by saying that it is important that someone talks about this and raises this issue outside Iraq. Yet again, though, knowledge production, the subaltern and expectations are matters to consider.

Wood mentions the possibility to feel "fear, anger, outrage, grief, and pity, often through observing, suffering, or fearing the effects of violence" (2006, p. 384), especially during extended periods of field research. Although my field trip of one month was extremely short, it entailed several of those emotions, but mostly not stemming out of fear for my own safety but rather due to some extremely unfortunate events, discussions about traumatic events every other day and witnessing a lot of suffering and desperation without really being able to do much about it. Not only was the topic itself timewise exhausting, but the circumstances themselves posed several challenges, for example through lack of privacy, lack of a common language, extreme lack of sleep, cultural differences, 45 degrees heat and electricity outbreaks, government blockage of internet and lack of predictability, which all added up to the occasional feeling of frustration. It was difficult to balance between processing your own thoughts and emotions while recognising the privileged situation one as a researcher has when coming to a conflict/post-conflict zone for the purpose of conducting research. Complaining about fatigue felt unjustified considering the things that my participants had gone through and my very brief period of field research. However, the researcher should not overlook the

importance of de-briefing, which I learned the hard way by realising it only after I already was exhausted:

> *"Emotionally I'm very tired. I hear these crazy stories all the time [...] and I haven't been able to properly de-brief about these things with anyone yet and it's pretty tiring."* (Excerpt from field notes 07/2018)

Although I got the necessary support and advice from my supervisor and some of my peers, one thought that arose was that it could be useful to give field research more attention during graduate studies, in particular to address the complex ethical considerations. This could be useful not only within peace and conflict research but also in social sciences more broadly. After all, the field of peace and conflict is highly connected to fragile and more risky areas where one can witness one thing or another, whether through a career in academia, United Nations or NGOs and so on.[31] Even without the urge to conduct concrete field research in fragile areas, learning more about how this research may be conducted provides some valuable insights into the complexity of peace and conflict research.

4.6   Gatekeepers and access

Due to the sensitive nature of peace research, dependency on gatekeepers can prove greater compared to other fields within social sciences (Brouneus 2011, p. 134). Access to conflict and post-conflict settings is notably a major challenge due to local restrictions from governments among other issues (Thomson 2009). For example, Pascucci has highlighted the issue around over-research in places that have proved more easily accessible for researchers (Pascucci 2017). This applies not only to the practicalities of gaining the access to the field, but also to the potential security risks that the access entails. Judging what is necessary for the purpose of the research should guide the decision-making, but not pose a threat to either the participants or the researcher. The decision ultimately lies on the researcher's own judgement (Brouneus 2011, p. 135; Höglund 2011, p. 125). Throughout my research I relied on the help and support of the gatekeepers with access, security and information.

Establishing a relationship with the gatekeepers prior to the field trip is important to ensure a less painful process once in the field as they can either close or open the doors for accessing certain places (Rossman and Rallis 2003, p. 163). The access to some of the sites, in particular IDP camps and Mosul, was very much dependent on gatekeepers in the case of my research. Fortunately, I had

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[31] For useful questions for consideration prior to field research, see for example Cronin-Furman and Lake (2018, 612) and Sluka 1995.

managed to establish relationships with an organisation the year before when I visited Erbil for a month, which proved very significant in terms of access to specific camps since I received permission to visit the camps without any issues. In other circumstances, negotiating access can take a considerable amount of time (Högberg and Öberg 2011, p. 192), but I had already upheld the relationship for nearly a year when I decided to do field research. The significance of this contact can be illustrated in situations where there were some sudden news or changes:

> *"The day before I found out that the camp is not managed by the NGO so my whole plan of getting access to it through them was spoiled.* (Field notes 07/2018)

Having been in the region the year before also helped me to know where and how I want to get access to certain places. Other practicalities, which otherwise might have proven cumbersome, were also easier to arrange had I come there for the first time (Brouneus 2011, p. 133). I used local contacts to arrange accommodation, transportation and some other practicalities such as sim-card and picking me up at night from the airport. However, despite the preparations there were many challenges along the way and other events that made it considerably more difficult to access certain sites.

Another gatekeeper was a Mosulian man, Mahmoud, whom I got in touch with through social media. We established contact, called each other on WhatsApp and arranged everything through the phone, and he ended up becoming my gatekeeper in Mosul. Contrary to how most, if not all, Westerners, and in particular journalists who went to Mosul, I did not rely on a "fixer" and/or armed convoys but organised everything privately. This kind of an approach arguably has its risks particularly for an outsider who does not know the exact context in the specific post-conflict setting. It also is much more challenging as fixers usually organise things from point A to Z, including access and people to talk to. For a researcher, however, the way I did it was a more attractive option because it was financially feasible as it was not a question of transaction of services for money but was based on a voluntary basis. Moreover, it better showed me aspects of the situation without too strict of a structure of where to go and what to do. Of course, setting and understanding mutual expectations of these kinds of interactions (e.g. does the person decline money out of politeness or is he or she sincere about it?) may take time, but in this situation it all worked without any issues.

Throughout my Mosul trips I consulted locals on all the various aspects to take into consideration. For example, there were some ideas about me staying the night in Mosul, which, in theory, would have been possible to execute. We had identified the family but based on further discussions about security it became clear that it would require plenty of efforts from so many different stakeholders and pose a risk not only for myself, but more importantly, for the family, that I considered the idea

not worth pursuing. The night raids that I was told about, done by both the Iraqi military as well as militia groups, could have been one of the major issues had I stayed the night in Mosul.

A third gatekeeper during my field trip was the Mosulian family I stayed with in Erbil: Kamal and Jalile with their sons. They were not only my hosts, but also the ones who took me to Mosul, and eased the process at one of the checkpoints thanks to the contacts that Kamal had. Thus, I was dependent on their help to reach Mosul in the first place, and afterwards dependent on the gatekeeper to show me around in the city. During my time in Erbil, they also often drove me to the camps, but that was more of their hospitality than my dependence on them as my translator also had a car.

My fourth gatekeeper was Mohammed, a Mosulian man who had left the city and whom I had met the previous summer. I relied on him with practicalities, such as information, communication translation help with the host family, as well as security arrangements for Mosul. Considering that civilians from Europe did not visit Mosul as individuals without an armed convoy or inan official role at the time of my visit, the backup organised through him proved crucial when things did not go as planned.

In my research, some of the gatekeepers were partly involved in the process of finding interviewees. Although they did not outright point out whom to talk to, they assisted in walking or driving around the camp and asking people whether they are interested to talk or not. Although the gatekeepers could potentially have lowered the IDPs negotiation positions for declining the interview, this did not seem the case. For example, a few families indicated they had nothing to share or were busy, and some only briefly responded with a sentence or two outside their houses. Here my interpreter proved to be a gem as she could confirm whenever someone seemed hesitant to talk. In these cases, we always thanked them for their time and immediately moved on.

Some of the instances where the presence of the NGO worker seems to have affected the narrative of the interviewees was when they praised the NGO, and particularly senior management, for their work. Whether it was sincere or done with incentives of being viewed in positive light by the NGO, is hard to say. What probably did help to make it less official was that the man who accompanied us was more of an all-rounder employee rather than a high-level representative, which probably would have significantly changed the dynamics of the conversations. In terms of having the gatekeepers' presence working in our favour, was the fact that many of the people living in the camps seemed to trust the man who accompanied us. Sometimes he was also able to clarify certain things both to us and the IDPs, and their conversation was also interesting for the research.

Regarding the gatekeepers outside the camps, the snowball method might have led to a specific viewpoint being overrepresented had I only used one gatekeeper. However, as I was able to access a various group of people in several different ways, I would consider one gatekeeper's influence limited.

5 Analysis

Having established the context of Iraq, the academic discussion on forced displacement, and elaborated the use of intersectionality in this thesis, I will now combine all of these in the analysis section. Firstly, this chapter will shed light on the complexities of displacement in Ninewa, how violence is an inherent part of the IDP label and portray the various characteristics of why and where people left. Secondly, I will analyse the variety of categories of gender, ethnic and religious belonging and socio-economic situation, and show how they interlink with displacement and vice versa. At this point, I already want to emphasise that there would have been many other categories to be taken into consideration, but in the interest of time and the scope of a master's thesis, I chose to focus on the topics that most often occurred in the discussions. Thirdly, I will analyse how power presents itself in the various relationships, whether on the international, local, or interpersonal level.

It is worth noting again that only two interviews were conducted with one person in addition to some informal conversations. In all other cases, the whole, or almost the whole family, other family members or friends were present. Hence, the names mostly represent the family/group speaking. The experiences of displacement are of course individual and personal, but due to the nature of most of my conversations and interviews I could not always distinguish between individual family members or collective group members in my quotes. As I mentioned, there was usually one 'spokesperson' for each group, although the dynamics did somewhat shift among the different groups. Hence most, but not all, quotes are usually representative for all or some members of the group talking.

5.1 Multiple phases and locations of displacement

To illustrate the complexity of the label of IDPs in the context of Ninewa/Mosul, I will start by referring to Table 3 that summarises some descriptions of the people I spoke with during my field research. Notably, it is simplified and includes only a fraction of the people and very limited amount of information. The point is only to illustrate, through a simple overview of examples, how many different categories and lived experiences fit within just a few samples of internally displaced persons in Ninewa and hence complement the literature on the complexity of internal displacement in Ninewa. The table shows that the group of people defined as IDPs actually includes former refugees, returnees, and IDPs, and depending on the definition, also 'stayers', which brings me to the next two sections: various phases and locations of displacement.

Table 3: Overview of IDPs in Ninewa

Gender	Ethno-religious	Socio-economy	Violence	Displacement	Location
Woman	Yazidi	No job, relies on donations. Husband used to provide for her	Daesh killed most male relatives and villagers; witnessed killings, suicide and kidnapping	Left from Sinjar to Syrian border, then Duhok, then Erbil	Makeshift camp
Man	Arab Sunni	Relatively stable job after the liberation	Mobility control both under Daesh and after liberation, witnessed violence and deaths	Did not leave Mosul, but moved to another house within the city	Apartment
Man	Kurdish	Lost his job, now no stable job, but primary provider	House was destroyed, all belongings stolen and burned. Received death threats	Left first time in 2005 but went back. 2014 went to brother near Mosul and then fled to Erbil	Apartment
Woman	Arab Sunni	Camp support. Used to be a tailor and get money from Daesh	Was jailed, husband is imprisoned, mobility control	Left from Sinjar to join ISIS in Mosul in 2014, then taken to jail and by Asayish[32] to camp	Camp
Woman	Arab Sunni	Sons provide for her and she gets camp support. Used to get "widow-pension"	House was destroyed, has health problems due to poverty	Moved from home to camp in mid 2016	Camp
Man	Arab Sunni	Pension from state	House was raided and destroyed by Daesh; Hashd al-Shaabi has threatened him	Left from Mosul to Turkey in 2015 through two towns, and then to Erbil	Apartment
Woman	Christian	Stable minor job	House was destroyed	From their village to Duhok, and then to Erbil	Apartment

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5.1.1 Multiple mobilities

During the interviews and conversations it became very clear that although the process of displacement was somewhat linear for some, for most of the people it was characterised by several phases of displacements, exhaustion of other alternatives before actually leaving, leaving and being forced to return, attempts for enduring the situation at home and partial displacement with only some family members leaving. Examples of the **several phases of displacement** and their various journeys are illustrated through their own narratives and maps below.

> *"In the beginning when Daesh came to Mosul we escaped straight away, we didn't stay. We went to Hazr and stayed there in the camp for 3 months. After that we stayed a little bit in the checkpoint, and after that some Kurdish people here helped us to enter Erbil and to come to this camp. And this camp it has been years since we are staying here."* *(Talitha)*

> *"Most people fled, and so did I, I left to my brother's house. We thought it [the liberation] would take 1-2 months. But once we found out that it will be longer, we left to Erbil to start a new life."* *(Karim from Mosul, 30, renting an apartment in Erbil)*

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[32] General Security forces operating in the whole KRI and were established in 1992 along with the KRG.

"When they tried to take Daesh out, we moved to the other part of Mosul, to the East part and when they got rid of Daesh we returned to our home. But we went back to our home and found nothing." (Safa from Mosul, 70, living in a camp)

"It was 1ˢᵗ of January 2015, we travelled to Turkey, and we lived there for about 1,5 years. We found out that the situation in Iraq won't be stable, and for Daesh to go out from Mosul was really hard, so that's why we decided to travel to Europe. When we decided to go to Europe, we found out that we need more money, we need an income, and we had no money left. [...] So after that we decided to come back to Kurdistan because Iraqi army started to release Mosul from Daesh." (Abdullah)

"We stayed close to Salahaddin during Daesh, but then the Iraqi army asked us to leave because there will be war and it won't be safe. No more than 2-3 days they said, but we ended up staying for almost two years. [...] Then we went to Hawija. On the way to Kirkuk Daesh got us and pointed a gun at us and demanded us to go back to Mosul. [...] Iraqi army transferred us with trucks to the camp, but I spoke with the manager and he helped us to move to this camp" (Sofya)

As can be seen above, the movements of the IDPs in these examples have varied to a great extent. Whereas some families left much before Daesh arrived, others stayed and followed the situation for a while before also deciding to leave or were forced to relocate within the city. Moreover, the destinations for the families ranged from moving only within the city, to going to KRI to leaving for Turkey. Three IDP families expressed that they, in their current situation, are planning on moving elsewhere. Abdullah's family noted that "we cannot live anymore here, the only thing that we have is migrating to another place, not Iraq, not staying here". A man in his early twenties, Asad, had recently moved back to his apartment in the old town of Mosul and had been spared some of the worst destructions to the extent that he had been able to restore his house. The destruction that the violence had contributed to in Mosul, however, made him consider leaving for Europe with his pregnant wife as he saw no future in Mosul. This raises the question: "when does displacement end?" – a question which has also been asked by other scholars conducting research on internal displacement (See Willner-Reid 2016; Mooney 2005). Currently, there is no consensus on the answer.
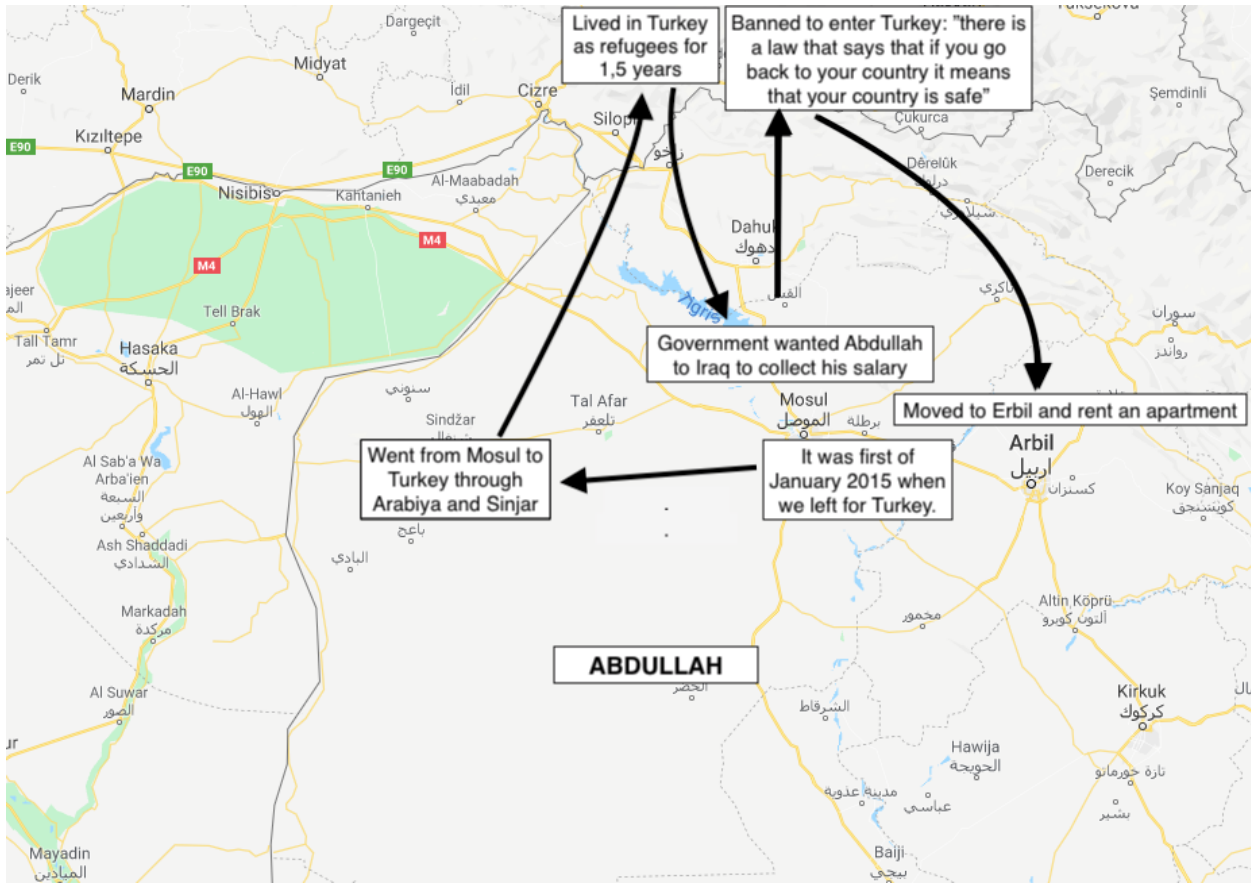
Figure 3: Abdullah's displacement journey
© Google Map data 2019
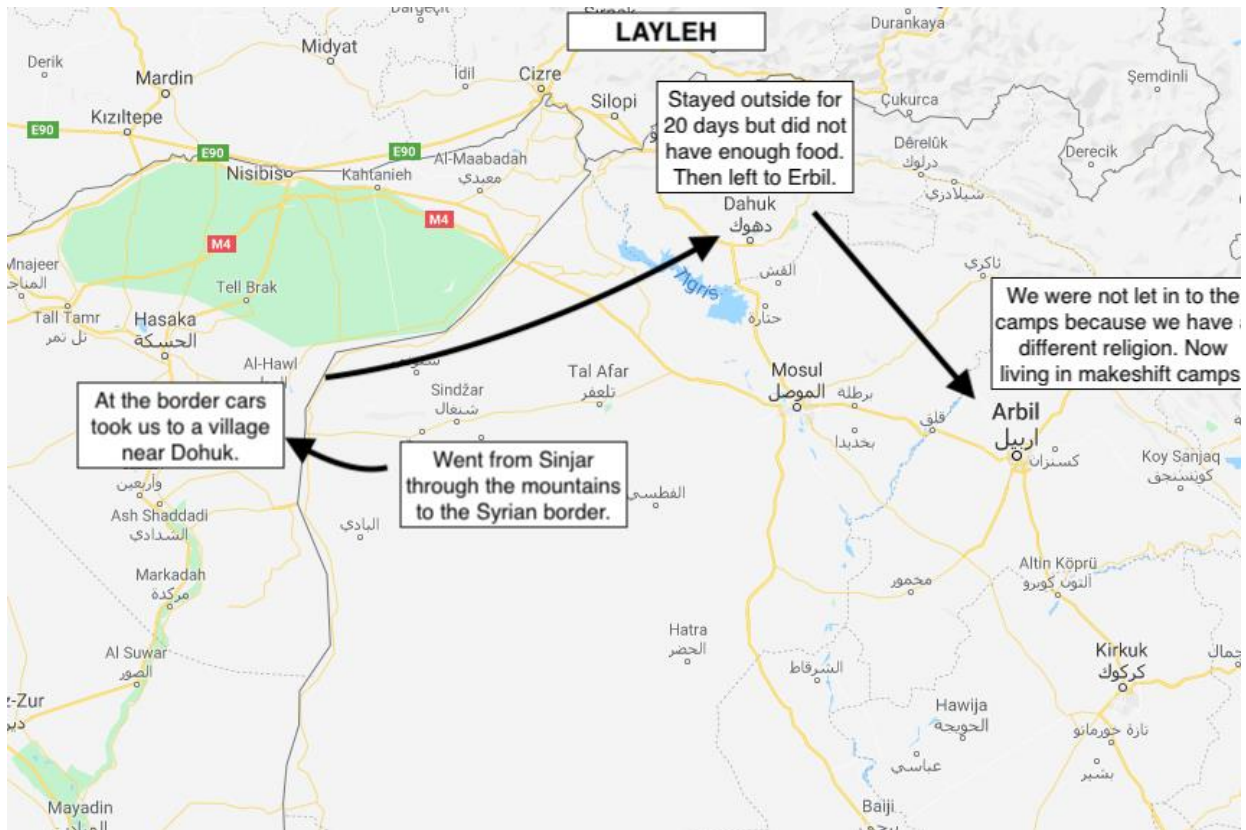
Figure 4: Layleh's displacement journey
© Google Map data 2019

Figure 5: Zainab's displacement journey

We left to Shendoha which was under Kurdish control.

We stayed in Tal Afar for 4 months.

We left when Hashd came in 2015. It took us 7 days to walk from Mosul to Tal Afar.

Peshmerga brought us to Erbil. There I spent 7 months in jail because they said we're terrorists. I got free in January [2018].
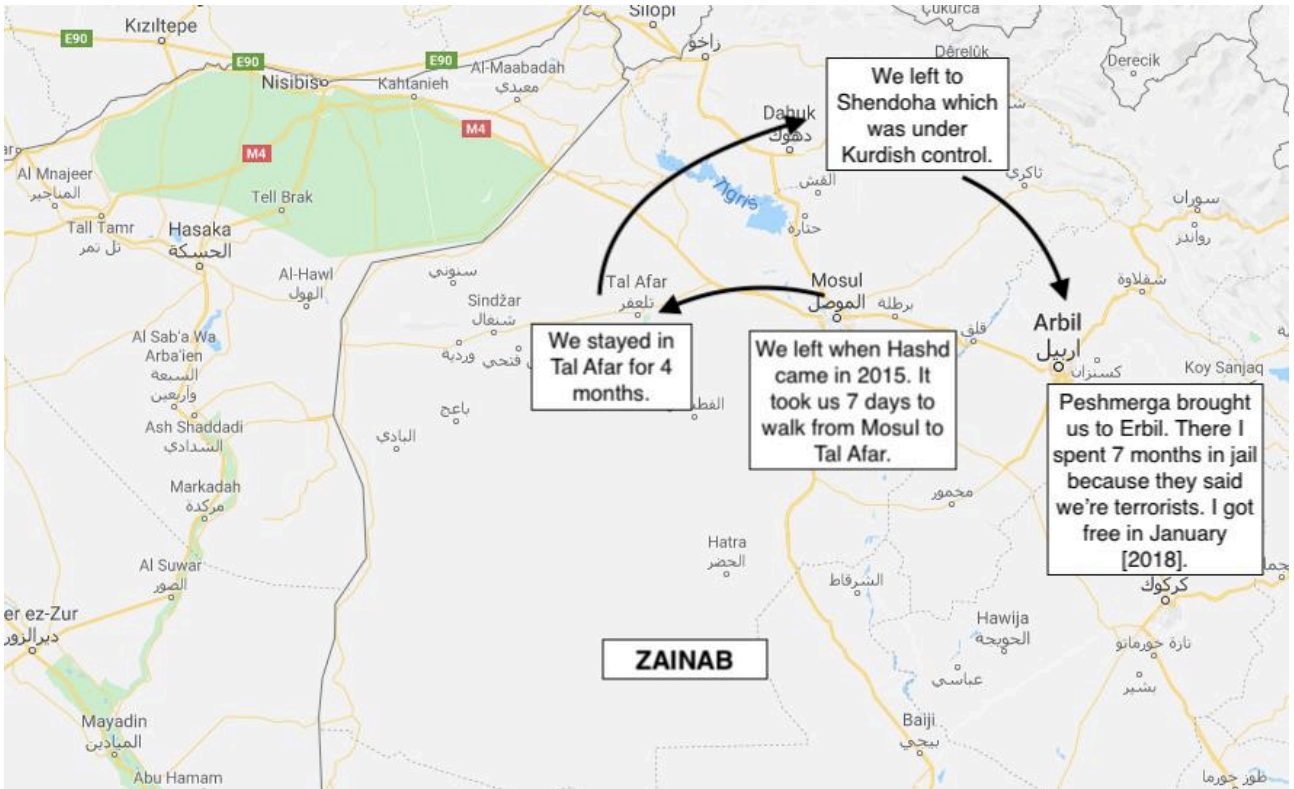
ZAINAB

Figure 5: Zainab's displacement journey
© Google Map data 2019

Figure 6: Sofya's displacement journey

SOFYA

Iraqi army transferred us with trucks to a camp

While we waited for the Iraqi army, five families were living together because it was safer.

The camp manager helped us move to another camp

On the way to Kirkuk Daesh got us and forced us to go to Mosul

Stayed in Hawija almost 2 years

In Baiji until Iraqi army asked us to leave mid 2015

Figure 6: Sofya's displacement journey
© Google Map data 2019

The several phases of displacement show another layer to that of Marfleet's (2011) observations. In his research, he noticed that many of the refugees had initially sought refuge within the country before leaving internationally. The examples above illustrate a similar phenomenon: some IDPs crossed international borders and then returned to Iraq, some left for the KRI (which can also be seen as a form of border-crossing due to its autonomous sta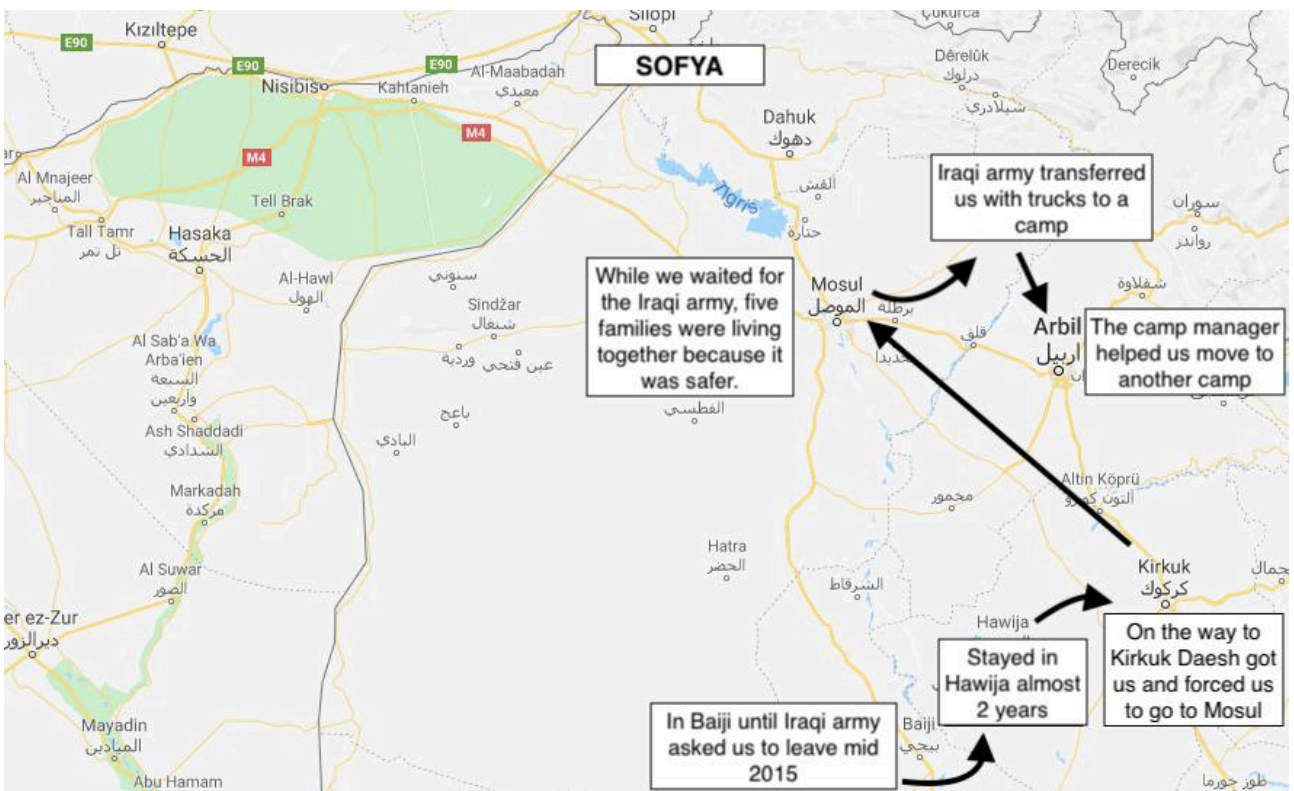tus – a discussion I will return to later), and some moved between cities and some within them. This shows us that talking about "IDPs and refugees" as somehow distinct categories faults us with a dichotomic and simplistic approach with regards to displacement. In reality, both categories are intertwined, and not even the IDP label itself is clear-cut.

The same diversity could be noted within families as well. The decisions to leave were often done collectively, with the family deciding who will leave and when, which sometimes meant that they will be separated from each other. Maryam had encouraged her sons to leave while she and her husband fled within the country and now lived in an apartment in Erbil: "I told him [her son] to leave for Turkey, from where he left for Germany". Mansur from a village close to Sinjar left to the camp together with his wife Jesenia and later on encouraged some of his adult children to join to the camps too:

> *"It was 10th of June 2014, when we left Mosul. In the beginning I came alone, and later on my sons, I told [them] they have to come with us." (Mansur and Jesenia, 65, from a village outside Mosul, living in a camp)*

While some were planning on re-joining their families or had already done that, others only hoped to visit them or met them rarely. The husband in one of the families, Serkan, had the rest of his family nearby the camps, while the wife Nadia had not seen her family for a long time after they left their village near Mosul:

> *"When Daesh came [...], I couldn't visit my family members for 4 years, but after that, before I came to this camp, I was able to go to Mosul and visit them. But since then, it has been about 7 months I haven't seen any of my family members." (Nadia, 40, from a village outside Mosul, living in a camp with her husband Serkan)*

In all cases, they tried to stay in touch with their families, providing they still had family members left. The lifeworlds did consequently not get detached due to displacement and the connection between the 'new' and 'old' locations thus remained relatively strong, similar to what has been argued by Malkki in the case of refugees. In the quote below, Zeena, from a village near Mosul, reported that she had split her up from the family, but that was rather due to an interpersonal feud than due to

displacement. The only exceptions were those suspected or confirmed as Daesh members, who were prevented from or unable to be in touch with their jailed husbands.

> *"My parents didn't let me in because I don't like my sister in law. My brother is listening more to his wife than to me. So we came to the camp." (Zeena, 35, from a village outside Mosul, living in a camp)*

As was seen in the example above about Sofya's displacement journey (Figure 6), they themselves were often dangerous and risky in many ways, due to armed actors, challenging environment, lack of money and the fact that many left without any possessions.

> *"Only way between camps and Hadapa was a desert, but by then the weather was very cold. Many families died. We tried to make a hole in the ground to get warmth. We had no food or water."(Dilshad and Ada from Tal Afar, in their 40s, living in a camp with their 5 children)*

> *"They were on a boat on their way from Turkey to Cyprus to join the family, but the boat sank yesterday. The mother died." (excerpt from field notes 07/2018)*

> *"The road that we took to enter a safer place was really really dangerous, there were bombs planted on the roads all over, and it was full of Daesh. [...] I went to many wars, including the Iran-Iraq war and I was fighting, but none of the situations were worse than when we went from Mosul to Turkey."(Abdullah)*

Consequently, these narratives confirm that the process of displacement is far from linear and straightforward. Many IDPs had various phases, temporal locations with family members, camps, apartments and even different countries, making every displacement journey unique. Additionally, the displacement journeys show us the discrepancy in the label IDP. As portrayed above, most of the IDPs had experienced various phases of displacement, whether within their city, between Iraq and KRI, or across international borders, which came to shape their broader experiences and, as I will show below, their spatial locations.

5.1.2 Location

Another categorical feature linked to the nature of the displacement in Ninewa is the **physical location of the IDPs**. As mentioned before, IOM has noted that only roughly a third of IDPs are located in camps, while most are in unknown shelter arrangements. In the context of my research, eleven IDP families were living in camps, whereas six lived in private rental apartments and approximately seven families of the same interview group lived in a makeshift camp. The reason for these locations were usually mentioned in the context of socio-economic aspects and the violence

they had experienced. Irrespective of their location at the time of the interviews/discussions (camp, apartment, makeshift camp) or journey of displacement (within Mosul, in Ninewa, to the KRI, internationally), all of the IDPs reported similar experiences. Renting an apartment was the first choice for those with financial means to do so, while camps offered an alternative for those who had lost their money due to the violence or exhausted all their savings.

> *"In the beginning we stayed in a house in Erbil, but [then] we couldn't pay any longer. Because we didn't have enough money we decided to come to the camps and live in the camps." (Jesenia and Mansur)*

Abdullah and Hanah, who were living in Erbil, were currently struggling with making ends meet as they were relying only on Abdullah's government pension. They said they sometimes had to sell furniture to afford living in the apartment. Therefore, their current location in a rental apartment was endangered due to the economic insecurity, meaning that they may be forced to move, and get yet another phase in their displacement journey. In Mosul I talked to people who had fled from their homes elsewhere within the city, usually to a family member's place and were still residing there. As stated earlier, Asad had recently returned to his apartment in Mosul with his wife and was now getting settled while saying that he is also looking into the option of going to Europe.

Turkey was mentioned several times as as a transition phase or a gateway to Europe, highlighting its role in-between the desired destination Europe and the place of origin Iraq. Turkey's role for Iraqi forcibly displaced people is significant statistically as well, as Iraqis are the third largest group of refugees in Turkey (UNHCR 2017). The deal signed in 2016 by the European Union (EU) and Turkey that practically made Turkey administer the refugees there and prevent them from going all the way to Europe, has also functioned as a buffer zone in favour of EU's attempts to manage the 'refugee crisis'. Abdullah with his family had spent 1,5 years there and family members of other IDPs were living in Turkey at the time of the interviews.

> *"My brother was living in Turkey and asked us to join him so he could provide for us. But we were taken at the border and brought here [to the camp]." (Fatima, 40, from a village in Salahaddin, living in a camp with her children)*

Furthermore, many had weighed between Turkey and the KRI when deciding where to go, and in several cases family members had chosen different locations.

> *"My sister left to Turkey. I'd like to stay in the country because it's so close to my place. That's why I didn't leave to another country like Turkey. I prefer to stay in Kurdistan" (Talitha)*

"We had 2 options: Turkey or Kurdistan and ended up going to Kurdistan [...] Only hope is here, better future here compared to Turkey." (Dilshad and Ada from Mosul)

Nevertheless, this portrays the complexity of displacement and indicates that each displacement story, actually includes various phases of displacement, before their location during the interviews and discussions in July 2018. The displacement also does not end when the person/family leaves, and the character of whether someone is forced to move again or not is highly dependent on the financial means for the families to provide for themselves and on having something to return to. I will now continue by elaborating more on the most dominant categories that shaped these displacement experiences.

5.2   Categories

As mentioned earlier, the label "internally displaced person" is, by definition, dependent on the experience or threat of violence. With internally displaced persons as a starting point as a category for analysis, I will start by looking into what experiences they have had as IDPs, particularly when it comes to violence. The framework for the analysis of violence will be Galtung's definition of violence, including direct, structural and cultural violence. Secondly, I will build outwards from the IDP category to display how the three other larger themes, namely gender, socio-economic situation and ethno-religious belonging, mutually intersect with displacement.

5.2.1   Experiences of violence

Power is deeply rooted in any intersectional analysis, and the use of violence is one of the clearest examples of the use of power. As stated earlier, the IDP label is itself a synonym for violence since the categorisation is dependent on the experience or threat of violence: "Internally Displaced Persons are people who are forced to flee their homes due to *armed conflict*, generalised *violence*, *violations of human rights*, natural or human-made disasters, but who remain within their own country." (own emphasis) Violence and/or the threat of violence were recurring themes throughout my interviews, discussions and observations in Ninewa. These experiences combined with the violence inherent in the displacement label will consequently be the overarching themes in this section.

I will utilise Galtung's definition of violence (direct, cultural, structural) in order to portray the multiple levels of violence the IDPs have experienced or still are experiencing as it best incorporates other aspects beyond purely direct violence. I will then continue by elaborating the interlinkages

between the violence and its impact on the IDPs and vice-versa. The aspect around violent experiences and trauma will be intertwined throughout this section to be later incorporated with the other sections. To start off, I will show how the three categories of violence can be found in someone's experiences through an IDP family's statement:

> *"Daesh killed my brother, father, mother, sister in front of my eyes. Some people without a car could not escape to the mountains. Some even left their kids as they ran away from Daesh. Especially young people committed suicide, often by jumping down from tall buildings. Old people were left behind as they were not able to escape."*
> *(Layleh)*

Based on Galtung's definition, the direct violence in the quote would be the killing of family members. The threat of violence was acknowledged by the Yazidis themselves, which made them commit suicide rather than be killed or captive. As mentioned in the background chapter, this direct violence in turn was justified by Daesh violent ideologies that legitimised the killing of Yazidis, which constituted a form of cultural violence. Those who were captured faced various forms of violence, including death, 'sexual slavery' and forced conversations. Both Mohammed and Mahmoud reported that they had seen the markets where Yazidis were being sold in Mosul but noted that it was not possible to do anything about it without getting yourself in danger.

The second sentence in the quote—"people without a car could not escape to the mountains" – highlights a structural factor that may have contributed to levelling out who was killed or captured and who was not. As will be explained in the section on economic insecurity, having a car can be a representation of someone's financial situation. The Yazidi community on the other hand, is highly hierarchical (Attewill 2007; Kizilhan 2017). If violence is defined as something that could be avoided, or as "the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual" (Galtung 1969, p. 168), the fact that someone has not had a car would then constitute structural violence as "the violence is built into the structure and shows up as […] unequal life chances" (Galtung 1969, p. 171). In other words, those who did not possess a car may have had been in a lower socio-economic situation to start with, and this unequal starting point prevented them from leaving, leading to their death.

Figure 7: Destruction in the Old Town of West Mosul
(© Mariette Hägglund)

The examples of **direct violence** experienced by the IDPs are vast in the data, but they usually circled around theft, threats, injuries, witnessing the death of a family member by Daesh and the destruction of homes both by Daesh, Hashd and the aerial bombardment. The deaths and violence that were reportedly done by the Iraqi army or the aerial bombardments by the international coalition, arose several times in the discussions. On numerous occasions, the direct violence perpetrated by Daesh had been justified by cultural violence: "they [Daesh] told us 'you don't know God' [...] and later on they came to our house and destroyed everything that we were working on" (Abdullah). Whereas most IDPs reported direct violence solely by Daesh, in some cases they had faced violence by several different actors. Mansur and Jesenia lost all their property to Daesh, while also living under their occupation before leaving. Their daughter was more unfortunate as she was shot during her attempt to leave:

> *"When they [daughter's family] tried to come out from their house and tried to escape, Iraqi army was striking by airplanes all around, so my daughter got two shots in her back […] she cannot walk properly now." (Mansur and Jesenia)*

Moreover, the significance and severity of the indirect violence, usually in forms of threats or other forms of psychological violence and manipulation, often led to self-censorship and control. Safa

commented that "[Daesh] was not doing anything to be honest, because we stayed in the house all the house" but added that they had taken the cars and the televisions. Threats and control were also mentioned by several other IDPs, mostly by those who had lived under Daesh occupation for some time:

> *"Killing is not only killing people by their heads [beheading] and their lives, it's not just like that. In the beginning they [Daesh] started to kill people's emotions and their thinking. (Abdullah)*

> *"Before we weren't able to speak or record voices, because our family was living in Mosul, and Daesh, if they heard our voice [...] they were threatening or killing us, that's why." (Masud and Jesenia)*

> *"Holding a phone was punishable by death because they considered you a spy. It was death by hanging." (Karim)*

Some of those who stayed were subjected to Daesh indoctrination and faced distress, which has been noted by IOM (2019) reports on Mosulian stayers. Those who were affiliated with the government, such as Abdullah, faced a significant threat by Daesh despite being Sunni. Karim explained how Daesh had forced government employees to swear allegiance to them:

> *"When Daesh entered, they took over all government buildings and got information about the people. They then called them in to apologise and swear loyalty to them – most went and said they're with them. Those who didn't go were hung." (Karim)*

Furthermore, if we include internal forced migration into contemporary migration schemes as violence, as argued by Malkki (1995), we find examples of it in Ninewa as well. Indeed, apart from the direct violence, some IDPs expressed frustration with their current situation and the lack of action from the local and international communities. The structural aspects of humanitarian work (or the lack of it) contributed to the IDPs' feeling of despair.

> *"They [the organisations] are just coming to record our names, but they are not doing anything. They are not doing anything, so I'm just telling them to bring me some medicines, they just record my name and later I won't receive any." (Safa)*

Additionally, the location of some of the camps themselves, far away from society, could per Galtung's definition of "repression" be considered as a form of violence. "Repression" includes both the detention of people (e.g. in prisons) and their expulsion (to a distant part of the country). The current forced migration/displacement scheme in Ninewa seems to incorporate a variety of both of these aspects. The location of the camps with very few means for the people to get into town, together with some of the intentional (suspected or confirmed Daesh members) and unintentional mobility

barriers (structural barriers like poverty, no ID cards), the camps may constitute a form of prison – although with much more favourable conditions than an actual prison. While some IDPs reported great levels of freedom of mobility, some where constricted within the borders of the camp, which will be analysed more in depth in a later section. Moreover, though also explained more in detail in a later section, some IDPs suspected of Daesh sympathising or membership have been detained in prisons. Reportedly those who happen to have a similar name to a Daesh member have also come under scrutiny (Taub 2018; own discussions).

Finally, within the framework of violence and the label of IDPs in Ninewa, there is one arising group that, based on the IDP definition, fits within this framework. When looking purely at narratives on experiences and threats, Daesh members fit within the definition of IDP as they were "forced to flee their homes due to armed conflict, generalised violence, violations of human rights, natural or human-made disasters" (OCHA n.d.) and had indeed experienced it.

> *"We left when Hashd al-Shaabi came, in 2015. It took us 7 days to walk from Mosul to Tal Afar, and we were among the last ones to leave. We stayed in Tal Afar for 4 months. Then I was pregnant with my daughter. We left to Shendoha which was under Kurdish control, to Peshmerga who brought us to Erbil. There I spent 7 months in jail because they said we're terrorists. My husband is still in jail. I got free in January." (Sawa from Mosul, 35, living in a camp with her children)*

Tal Afar was Daesh' "very own heart of darkness" and an area that had been favoured during Saddam's regime, whereas Shias had been marginalised (Stansfield 2016, p. 2). Hashd openly claimed to avenge on Sunni jihadists in Tal Afar in the addition of adding up sectarian characteristics dating back on Shia-Sunni divides (Stansfield 2016). Like the other IDPs, Daesh IDPs had fled violence and the threat of violence, and similar to some widows, the person in the above quote was without her husband since he was in jail, causing similar kind of marginalisations as for the widows as will be further elaborated on later. Thus, the threat of violence was the common denominator for all, however, difference lay in the actor who was posing the threat or perpetrating the violence, forcing them into displacement, the location of which was the camp in these cases. Based on humanitarian principles of impartiality, aid should be "distributed on the basis solely of need" (Mooney 2005, p. 19). When contextualising the issue, however, it becomes much more problematic when considering

that IDPs fleeing Daesh and members of Daesh were all living in the same camp, which may have security[33] and mental health implications.

5.2.2 The trauma story

Connected with experiences of violence is trauma. All of the IDPs that I spoke with reported experiences of at least one form of violence. It is worth reiterating though, that despite these experiences, and despite the connotations of violence in the definition of internally displaced persons, it does not mean that the label IDP is equal to trauma. Indeed, McKinney among others warn against reducing the personhood by idealising victims, sacralising trauma, and thus, sanctifying the victim (McKinney 2007, p. 288-294) The reactions to the violence were, however, present during the field research and I will thus now look into how it has affected them and show examples of how the trauma story (Fassin 2005) is created. The point is though not to define who is traumatised and who is not, but to explore the concept of trauma and the narratives around it in this specific context. Because 'trauma' is often treated as medical process of verifying a traumatic experience, I will be using 'trauma story' 'traumatic experiences' instead of trauma to map out their narratives on how the violence has impacted their well-being.

The trauma stories became more explicit once the people showed pictures of their destroyed houses and dead relatives. As mentioned earlier, the "desire to provide testimony" is a "universal response to trauma (McKinney 2007). At least seven of the IDP families showed me pictures of their destroyed houses or the houses themselves or showed me some other concrete examples of the violence and trauma, or pictures of their dead family members.

> *"Tara was showing me pictures of their house when they first arrived there after their house had been bombed. She said it was an airplane that bombed it. Her husband died as he was saving the grandkid [...] and she started crying as she was talking about him and showing me pictures. [...]Her daughter showed me a video of him that she had posted on Instagram." (discussion in Mosul with Tara, 50, and her family, field notes* 07/2018*)*

Although this may have been only to provide a more concrete view of the situation, it may also have served as a means to confirm their experiences to an 'outsider' who may not understand, be familiar or believe their trauma story. According to Malkki (1995), this kind of legitimisation can be

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[33] For example, in the IDP camp al-Hol in Syria there have been cases of murder according to the Washington Post. Retrieved 20 September, 2019, from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/at-a-sprawling-tent-camp-in-syria-isis-women-impose-a-brutal-rule/2019/09/03/3fcdfd14-c4ea-11e9-8bf7-cde2d9e09055_story.html

traumatising in itself or, seen as a measure of how to "prove one's innocence" (McKinney 2007), since the process of reliving the experiences by telling them may be disturbing.

Along with descriptions of her experiences, Layleh explained that her husband's second wife "has pain in her stomach, and she is screaming and screaming" and added that she has been to the doctor and they have performed gastroscopy many times. She then went to pick up a medical document, where it read that the wife is suffering from major depression disorder. The very physical symptom of the grave traumatic experiences is only one example of many on how violence has impacted the IDPs lives, but also on how the legitimisation of one's suffering may take place. My interpreter Dila explained that the women showing the medical document were themselves illiterate. The "proof" provided by the medical doctor was, however, treated as an important document, becoming an administrative act of verification of the trauma story (Fassin and d-Halluin 2005, p. 603). Can trauma only be confirmed through medical professionals, who possess the knowledge production authority to confirm someone's trauma story? Does an officially confirmed "trauma" make an experience more legitimate?

Other embodiments of the traumatic experiences were that some IDPs expressed that they were afraid of strangers and felt as if everyone around them was a potential member of Daesh. Moreover, one person explained how his brother had changed completely during Daesh occupation and had become "afraid of everything" and very apathetic (field discussion 07/2018). The apathetic feeling was repeated by Mahmoud, who said that the violence they had experienced or witnessed, whether direct or indirect, had already "killed them" and desensitised them from the violence: "We died 1000 times a day under Daesh, it doesn't feel like much anymore" (field discussion 07/2018).

The violence the IDPs had witnessed were exacerbated by the daily stressors, which varied depending on the people's previous experiences and spatial locations. Some of the IDPs who continued living in Mosul but in a different part of the city, or who had lived under Daesh occupation, reported a variety of means how Daesh imposed power on them through the control of their everyday lives.

> *"First thing Daesh did was to prevent water and electricity from the people, the dam was under Daesh control." (Karim)*

Sofya reported that many people, and women in particular, were killed while fetching water. The daily stressors from the consequences of the violence and displacement were still heavily present in their lives and were repeatedly mentioned as significant stress factors. Issues related to unemployment and economic insecurity were commonly specified as they impacted other aspects in life as well.

These stressors prevented them from seeing a future for their families, being happy, for making a living and for rebuilding their lives among other things.

> *"There is no future for kids, they're not going to school." (Fatima)*

> *"It's ok if I have lost everything, but how about their [the children's] future, I wish they have a better future." (Talitha)*

> *"Future is unknown, no work, everything is on hold." (Dilshad and Ada)*

> *"I'm unemployed, I have no future, and I am sad about it." (Ibrahim, 45, a friend of Dilshad and Ada who also lives in the camp and spontaneously joined the conversation)*

> *"I am so worried about my son [Omer]. He wishes to get married, wishes to build his own life, so he is really worried about his future." (Hanah)*

Apart from these factors, though Daesh was officially pronounced defeated in Mosul in July 2017, many IDPs considered the threat of violence everything else but over, irrespective of their location in Mosul or in camps. As mentioned, Daesh has consistently been conducting attacks ever since the official declaration that it had been defeated and there are concerns that Daesh will become even more active in the right circumstances.

> *"I am most afraid of the [Daesh] sleeper cells." (field discussion 07/2018)*

> *"Many Arabs are living around our village, we are too afraid to go back." (Layleh)*

The lack in outlook and disbelief to ever have a better future was mentioned both in connection with the sudden violent trauma, but also through the daily stress they experienced. What exactly is a trauma then? Is it only limited to its definition of "a sudden, potentially deadly experience, often leaving lasting, troubling memories" (Figley 2012)? Scholars like Miller and Rasmussen have encouraged practitioners and academics to have an increased focus on the impact of daily stressors in life, which may constitute severe traumas and require more resilience than sudden traumatic events (Miller and Rasmussen 2009). Malkki similarly points out that the loss of one's economic status may be equally traumatising as witnessing direct violence (Malkki 2007). If trauma only includes drastic violent, potentially deadly experiences, but the impact of daily stressors may be equally significant, though not recognised as a trauma, what impact does this have on the IDPs, and more broadly, on reconciliation and humanitarian efforts?

5.2.3 Remaining emplaced vs. becoming displaced

In the UN reports dealing with internal displacement, the statistics on IDPs are usually focused on formal settlements such as camps, despite the large amount of IDPs elsewhere. The IDPs in the camps thus become more easily administered objects by humanitarian experts (Barnett 2013), part of administrative processes. However, data on those who were displaced within Mosul is unclear. Although not directly 'emplaced' since they were displaced within the city, the displacement journeys of the IDPs in Ninewa were short enough to go unnoticed by administrative authorities, aligning with the recognised difficulties mentioned by the UN to capture small-scale movements (UN Stats 2015, 56). Indeed, there seems to be a discrepancy on who is a 'stayer' and who is 'displaced'. Literature and data on IDPs focus on those who fled further away outside Mosul, as can be seen in the UNHCR formal settlement tracking (UNHCR n.d.-b), yet I met many people who had moved within Mosul. In some cases, the IDPs are interchangeably categorised as 'stayers' (IOM 2019a), meaning those who stayed in the conflict setting. UN Stats again sets two criteria for being considered internally displaced: i) the person has experienced forced physical movement as defined in the Guiding Principles, and ii) the person is located within internationally recognised borders (UN Stats 2015, p. 55). Again, much of the statistic focuses more on camp settings. How far away does a person have to be displaced to be considered displaced?

Whether these distinctions are important to draw or not, it is nevertheless important to note the fluidity of the definitions, especially since "falling into legal, normative and institutional gaps" (Koser and Martin 2011, p. 2) exist in academia and policy making, and may have consequences on the displaced lives as can be seen in the example of Abdullah and his family who left for Turkey. They demonstrated how the refugee-IDP labels and international rules or principles within refugee management can clash with the requirements of the state (local), and thus marginalise the IDP:

> *"In the beginning when we went to Turkey, we started to think about going to Europe, and with the UN we give our reports and everything, that we don't want to go back to Iraq. While we did that, in Iraq, they [the government] didn't give me my salary, they wanted me back to Iraq to give me my salary. That's why our situation was bad in Turkey, and that's why we had to make the decision and return back to Iraq. [...] There's a law by the UN that says you cannot break the law, if you are going back to your country it means that your country is safe." (Abdullah)*

While the stress living in Mosul proved too great to cope with, the decision to leave the country ultimately did not help them. The requirements by the government vis-à-vis the regulations by the United Nations of when a country can be considered safe clashed. This forced the family to make a decision between living with more freedom but without Abdullah's salary in Turkey, or return to Iraq, unable to return to their homes and give up the possibility to return to Turkey but receive the salary.

Choosing the latter, due to the predefined regulations on what is safe and what is not, without contextualising the issue, contributed to the fact that the family and Iraq were now perceived to be in safety.

Those who 'remained emplaced' or were displaced within the city occupied by Daesh (depending on the categorisation), had various reasons for this decision, and sometimes lacked the freedom to make the decision. One of the examples previously mentioned was Sofya's family whose attempt to leave had failed because Daesh caught them and forced them to go to Mosul. During the field research some of the people who had left Mosul and other villages occupied by Daesh had initially attempted to stay but left only once their house was bombed. A few said they stayed because they owned property or wanted to stay with relatives. Sofya further elaborated that they had considered another attempt for leaving Mosul but had been lucky not to do it:

> *"Some families decided to leave to Iraqi side, but later we heard that they were killed. I'm thankful to God we didn't go." (Sofya)*

Those who stayed witnessed violence while living under Daesh occupation, seeing hangings, executions and stonings among other things. At the time of the air bombardment by the Iraqi government and the international coalition, some of the people I spoke to had got part of their house destroyed and family members killed in airstrikes. One was shot dead because he was thought to be a Daesh member, not even able to prove his social location as not belonging to Daesh as he was shot suddenly without questioning. A few of them mentioned that following the liberation there have been raids[34] done by both the Iraqi military forces and militia groups "looking for Daesh members or anything" (field discussion 07/2018). Consequently, the people who had stayed had been subjected to Daesh occupation and the violence therein, endured the airstrikes and liberation war in Mosul, and now were subjected to various kinds of infringement of privacy, threats, and cycles of violence.

Although some IDPs stayed in Mosul voluntarily, we need to account for the socio-economic aspects that are intertwined in the decision. As was portrayed in the violence section and will be further discussed in the section on socio-economic situation, the car was a means for transportation: something to either flee with or a commodity to trade your freedom for. In some cases, becoming displaced was the less marginalised status in terms of violence compared to remaining emplaced, because those who were able to escape, escaped death or were able to fulfill their wish to leave. Three

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[34] Explained by Abdulrazaq and Stansfield (2016) referring to leaked WikiLeaks papers. Mohammed also commented that the armed groups had learned that tactic "from the Americans".

interviewees reported that many of those who wanted to flee were prevented from doing so, through direct violence or threat of violence. Notably, the possibility for leaving was not a given.

> *"Many families died because of Daesh, they prevented them from leaving. We were trapped, we couldn't leave." (Dilshad and Ada)*

What these examples show is that the label IDP indeed is an indication of violence, yet not an absolute definition or measurement of vulnerability. Indeed, sometimes leaving meant more privilege than staying. Having established that the label of internal displacement is connected to violence, I have now explained the various forms of violence that led to displacement and those experienced while in displacement. I will now build outwards from the category "IDP" to look into other aspects that have had a major impact on the people, starting with socio-economic status, then continuing with gender and ethno-religious belonging.

5.2.4 Economic insecurity

As I explained in the previous section, there were structural barriers that hindered people from leaving. This is perhaps best exemplified through the car, which was repeated throughout the discussions as a means for mobility and as a commodity. Owning a car was crucial for people to afford paying for smuggling, for fleeing from Daesh, for returning to their homes and for enabling them to provide an income for themselves.

> *"Only those are returning back who can provide for them, essential things like they have money, or those who have a car, so they can do things or provide for an income." (Mansur and Jesenia)*

> *"There was a camp in Hassaka government, which was under Syrian Kurds. But we were not able to go, only those with cars could sell it to pay for the smuggling." (Dilshad and Ada, and soon after Ibrahim also started speaking about it)*

The most apparent impact of the violence and displacement was the deterioration of the socio-economic situation of the people. These same themes, economic insecurity while in displacement and the risks for violence, were also mentioned as barriers for return and making a living. This in itself led the IDPs, in particular in the camps or makeshift camps, to feel like they were in limbo, with neither the possibility to stay where they are, nor able to move back to their homes. Layleh depicted it as "living here is really hard and leaving is really hard". In the cases where IDPs expressed willingness to go back, their socio-economic situation sometimes combined with the destruction of their homes prevented them from doing so.

"The West part of Mosul is all destroyed, but people are trying to rebuild their houses, only those who have enough money. But those who don't have money they cannot leave." (Talitha)

"If I find a job, I'm planning on staying in Erbil, I will not go back to Mosul, I will never go back there because the situation is really bad there. I don't feel like there will be life there anymore and we don't like to live there. Also, its really hard to find a job in these places because everything got destroyed, and few people are living there, so it's better for me to build a future in Erbil." (Serkan and Nadia)

As became clear in the interviews and as portrayed in the table, some of the IDPs have faced multiple rounds of displacement, fled internationally or moved within Mosul. For some of those who initially rented an apartment in Erbil, the camp setting offered the only solution once they ran out of money. Along with the threat of violence, the economic aspects were the most commonly mentioned reasons as for why people left to the camps, with the exception of the Yazidis who said they had been denied access to a Christian camp, which I will explain in more detail later.

"Since we couldn't provide for our needs, we left the house [in Erbil]. He [Serkan] was working as a painter, but later couldn't find any other jobs, so we were forced to move to camps." (Serkan and Nadia)

Those living in rental apartments were slightly more content with their situation, but the restraining effects of the economic insecurity were apparent. The families living in rental apartments were consistently going back and forth between Mosul and Erbil, for work, house reconstruction and to see relatives. Due to the economic impact of displacement, one person was worried about his opportunities to continue providing for his family with his tiny pension from the government and considered options to go to Europe or elsewhere.

"It [life in Erbil] requires a lot of money, and we don't have it. Sometimes we have to sell something from the house to provide. The salary that I am getting, it's just, it can't provide things for the family." (Abdullah)

Thu, the impact of the violence and displacement have had major impacts on the socio-economic situation and can potentially lead to further phases of displacement, portraying the interrelatedness between the two categories. For most IDPs, their current displacement location was seen only as a transitional phase as most hoped to be able to move elsewhere, return home, improve their living standard through work and so on. Their location was often connected to their socio-economic situation, as renting a house was directly dependent on their ability to sustain a life there. Those who lived in apartments were more eager to stay where they are compared to those in camps or makeshift camps. Having looked at the aspects of economic insecurity, I will now continue with the second of the three categories—gender.

5.2.5 Gender: Is death the ultimate marginalisation?

Another manifestation of the violence and displacement is the gendered impact. Within the category gender, the consequences epitomised in different ways for women and men. Firstly, I will start by explaining how violence impacted women both directly and indirectly through their socio-economic dependency on a male relative or husband, or a so called "protector" (Enloe 1989), and sometimes shifted the gender norms. Secondly, I will show how men's ability to provide for their families reduced along with the displacement, which impacted the rest of the family. Naturally, there may have been other experiences involved, but I am only highlighting those raised by the IDPs themselves.

Women

Although the large majority of the IDPs reported to have lost a male family member, there were a few exceptions. For example, Sofya explained that on their way back to Mosul after Daesh had caught them, her daughter "got killed due to rockets". Furthermore, she mentioned that while they lived in Mosul, mainly women were the ones who died while fetching water. In most cases, however, the women's situation had deteriorated due to the loss of a male family member. Many of the women had been relying on their husband's income, but as a consequence of sickness, injuries, killings, arrests or difficulties finding a job in general, their economic status had worsened along with the absence of their husbands. The abrupt change in the financial situation took a toll on their socio-economic status.

> *"Before Daesh our men were working in the farm, we were harvesting it, and were happy with daily life. It was really nice. All family members were living together. Now our men have not been able to work, and we've been living on what people give."*
> *(Layleh)*

> *"We had a big house and we were very wealthy people. Now we have nothing."*
> *(Sofya)*

The radical shift due to the husband's, the main provider's death led to a downward spiral affecting other aspects of their lives. This was apparent particularly in combination with the displacement itself that had led to unemployment for other male relatives, who also became unable to support their families. The widow-pension one woman was entitled to by the government had been suspended for three years due to Daesh occupation of Mosul, and since then she had depended on her sons to provide for her.

> *"Yes, my sons were selling gas by then, so they could provide for medicine. They were taking me to the doctor, my sons, they were taking me there, and I was able to buy medicine and everything." (Safa)*

Upon displacement, the financial means were further restrained as her sons became unemployed and had difficulties supporting her, which negatively affected her health as she was dependent on insulin for her diabetes. The same change was highlighted by others as well:

> *"I feel so bad and my husband is not working, he is really sick, he is old and sick. He is suffering from so many problems, blood pressure, everything. I haven't studied, that's why I was working as a cook, and in a bakery, to make some bread. I was working in cafeterias for tea and this stuff, I was working with everything I can do."* (Talitha)

> *"Before my husband was doing everything. I am baking to sell to people so I can buy gas. My kids need diapers. They do provide things at the camp but it's not enough."* (Zeena)

Consequently, the women's dependence on their husbands and male relatives in terms of money immediately made them more vulnerable in the event of their husband's death, imprisonment or disappearance. They had no means of securing themselves financially, although some were supported by the camps, other relatives, and some tried bringing in the money themselves. Some of the Yazidis living in makeshift camps were dependent on the help provided by locals. These same trends are reflected in many UN reports, highlighting high levels of poverty in female headed households in Iraq (UN Iraq 2013).

Sawa complained about her ex-husband who "was really bad, he didn't even provide for me" and despite her attempts to sow and sell things they had been very poor. To this backdrop, she then was pleased with her second husband, who was a Daesh member but reportedly took care of her:

> *"Previously we were very poor. My father was disabled, and my brother was really young. When the American man saw how it was, he decided to marry me and raise the kids. [...] I was very happy with my second husband."* (Sawa)

Her poor background, the dependency on a man to make a living and the fact that her first husband divorced her and disappeared had all put her at a disadvantage. Later the same dependency, this time combined with her social location as a female Daesh member, both worked against her and in her favour: as a man she would have been in prison, but since she was a woman she was allowed to be in the camp. Yet she had no possibilities for mobility, both due to her Daesh-affiliation as well as lack of financial means.

The women who worked, felt that they have had to take up 'men's jobs' now that they were the heads of household, which contradicted the oftentimes conservative gender roles in the region where the man is supposed to be the main provider.

> *"I'm a woman but at the same time like a man. I put water in the tank, bring oil for cooking, bake and clean the house." (Zeena)*

Women who tried looking for job opportunities to fill the gap left by their husbands faced further barriers partly connected to their gender. Zeena mentioned breastfeeding as a difficulty to balance with work, whereas Talitha considered herself not educated enough as "all they [companies in Erbil] need is educated people and I am not enough educated, I couldn't finish school in university". Considering the already low levels of education among women in Iraq[35] and high illiteracy levels[36] among women in Ninewa, this structural and gendered problem of lower access to education for girls and women is not surprising. The double-effect of being women and considered as caregivers for their children and the biological impact of childbearing itself, combined with the sudden change that forced them to look for alternative means to provide for themselves was ultimately a major challenge.

Moreover, gender norms and the security situation in general created further barriers for accessing employment and increasing mobility. The risks for traveling alone as a woman have been acknowledged by humanitarian organisations like OCHA (2018b). The lack of "a male protector" and provider consequently doubled the effect on widows and those without male relatives.

> *"We don't have ID or any documents so no kids can go to school. In order to get our IDs we need to go back to Salahaddin but we cannot go because we don't have money." (Fatima)*

The above quote illustrates the combination of multiple marginalised belongings: a widow with several children, no means to provide for herself due to the death of her husband, dependency on what the camp provides them, dispossession of ID documents, and immobility due to lack of money, all of which reinforce one another. The lack of proof, in this case ID cards, put barriers for the children to access education. Lack of access to education is typical for post-conflict societies and will most likely have a long-lasting structural impact on the children, creating a cycle of marginalisations. Similarly, in one of the camps Lila (50, from Sinjar speaking on behalf of the three families living together in the camp) explained they had "accepted one of the girls without dowry", who were 14 and

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[35] Female enrollment in secondary education lies at 44.6% (UN Iraq 2013)
[36] Between 20.7-24.5 % in Ninewa and 24.6-28.6 % in Erbil governorate according to UN Iraq (2013)

15 at the time of the field research, meaning that they had been married off as children. Although this was the only such case in my discussions, child marriage increases during conflict and is common in Iraq (UN Iraq 2013) and is sometimes seen as a means to protect the girls. Marriage has been reported to hinder access to education for girls, which again portrays the cycle of marginalisation.

To sum up, the initial violence that either killed the male provider or forced the family into displacement, deprecated the lives of the family and the woman. This in combination with conservative gender norms, with women as the primary caretakers of the family and the need for them to have a male protector and provider, put them at increased risk for poverty and diminished options to get along financially. For those women who were working or wanted work, their initial positioning as women with the roles it entails and the structural barriers such as the lower access to education for women, had a negative impact on their situation. Finally, not only did the social locations frame the circumstances, but also the humanitarian management scheme through the requirements of IDs, which will be further commented on in a later section.

Men

The situation for men was quite different. Although female-headed households have larger vulnerabilities than other groups, the male positionality seems to have put them at greater risk for direct violence and death. Men were considered more of a threat or security issue by the security and military forces managing the crisis, particularly in the camp settings. Although some of the women were put in jail for some time, the men were incarcerated for much longer, and sometimes never even heard of again.

> *"They took me to jail for 6 months because all my brothers were in Daesh. Asayish[37] brought me here, I've been here for a year. [...] Life is not secured. No idea for how long he will be in jail, nobody could go there." (Zainab, 40, from Singal, living in a camp with her children)*
>
> *"There I spent 7 months in jail because they said we're terrorists. My husband is still in jail. I got free in January (Sawa)"*
>
> *"Life was good, but after Hashd came they took my husband. My cousins and others spoke badly about Hashd. My uncle was also taken by Hashd" (Zeena)*

In the first two quotes the women mentioned they were part of Daesh, while the latter one did not. Without taking a stance on the role of women in Daesh, as this is outside the scope of this research,

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[37] General Security forces operating in the whole KRI and were established in 1992 along with the KRG.

it is however, important to note the gendered aspects of the issue. Although the women had spent time in prison, they had been freed after a shorter time and were now living in the IDP camps, while the men were, assumably, still imprisoned. The judicial system, prison conditions and extraction of truth from suspected Daesh affiliates has come under scrutiny for example by Human Rights Watch, which has reported arbitrary detentions and confessions under torture (2018). Hence, there is an increased risk for men who are seen as potential Daesh members to be subjected for such violence.[38] These views were also reflected by some of the people I spoke with. Moreover, apart from the increased risk for detention, in the majority of the discussions the reported cases of death involved a man.

> *"One of the sons of the oldest woman had died in an explosion that Daesh was responsible for. Her husband was a policeman and was shot dead." (Lila)*
>
> *"They [Daesh] killed my brother [...] Daesh killed most men as you know. That's why there are only a few of them here." (Layleh)*
>
> *"She said it was an airplane that bombed it. Her husband died as he was saving the grandkid." (field notes from a discussion with Tara where the translation was done through the phone)*

Certainly, as noted in global statistics on male death rates and, more specifically in the Mosulian context in Lafta et al. (2018a) household survey, the death rates of men were consistently higher among men compared to women in almost all age groups.[39] Some interviewees reported that their female relatives had died, but these cases were, with a few exceptions, mostly linked to nonintentional-violence deaths, whereas the deaths of men were highly linked to intentional violence such as airstrikes and gunshots. It remains, however, unclear whether or not the nonintentional deaths were somehow linked to poverty, lack of access to medicine or other structural barriers, which in themselves would constitute structural violence as unequal access to resources (Galtung 1969; Webel and Galtung 2007).

The third quote illustrates the gender roles and masculinity in Iraq, where men often are expected to take a more active role as a protector of the family (Enloe 1989). Additionally, although both men and women have been participating in the clean-up efforts of Mosul and other towns, men still account

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[38] However, it is also important to note that although women usually are detained less due to their own agency, they might be imprisoned, questioned and in worst cases tortured, to extract information about their husband or use them as a tool against them.

[39] Except under 5-years and above 70-years in Mosul over a period of three years. In the age group 5-9 both genders were on par (Lafta et al 2018a).

for the majority of those returning first and cleaning up the towns, which puts them at increased risk for injuries and death due to improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and boobytraps among other things.

> *"Some people went back. Daesh had placed bombs in their houses, one man died because of that." (Layleh)*

Furthermore, apart from the direct violence, due to the displacement itself many men were having difficulties meeting their roles as heads of households and the expectations to provide for their families, which impacted the well-being of the whole family and their own identity. This expectation was apparent both in conversations with women and men, such as Sawa who, when talking about her first husband said he "was really bad, he didn't even provide for me". The stress to support their families had significant impacts on the men's future outlooks. Karim had lost all the gold he was supposed to give to his wife and as a part of polite gestures at the end of the interview he offered his help, with a very pessimistic tone: "If you need a drive somewhere, just please feel free, that's the only thing I can offer because that's the only thing I have left".

> *"Now our men have not been able to work, and we've been living on what people give. Sometimes they have worked [in construction]. One was working and sometimes earning up to 20'000 Iraqi dinars a day but is now suffering from backpain." (Layleh)*

> *"I am so worried about my son [...] he wishes to get married, wishes to build his own life, so he is really worried about his future. Lots of people in his age got married and have their own children, so I feel like I cannot provide a future for him, I feel sorry for him." (Hanah)*

Their positionality as men put them at increased risk for direct violence. In the context of violence and intersectional analysis on gendered consequences of violence, this raises the question of marginalisation and vulnerability: can death be considered the most extreme form of marginalisation? As Chang and Culp (2002) noted, in some circumstances, the otherwise privileged group, may, when contextualised, be the marginalised one. Thus, are men in the context of Ninewa and violent conflicts in general, the more marginalised group, or is this an unnecessary distinction to make?

5.2.6 Ethno-religious belonging: Who do *they* think you are?

Diving further into the various categories affecting displacement and experiences of violence, I will now look into the aspect of religion and ethnicity. The reason I combine both of these is that they were used fairly interchangeably by the people themselves in broad categories and I did not explicitly ask them about their religious or ethnic belonging. Since none of the people mentioned that they

identify as any of the other groups, I will be using only the ones mentioned in the conversations. As explained in the introductory chapter, the ethnic and religious setting in Ninewa is arguably much more diverse than will be portrayed here. The purpose is to, although simplified, show how ethno-religious belonging has impacted some of the IDPs.

The violence and/or threat of violence for minority groups such as Christians, Kurds, Shia and Yazidis were repeatedly mentioned in the discussions, usually by the themselves. For example, Karim explains in the quote below how "Sunnis had more authority" and consequently the other communities were more at risk, reflecting some sectarian characteristics. Although none of the people I spoke with mentioned they were Shia, the Shia communities in the region faced a threat from Daesh due to its strong opposition towards Shia Muslim as mentioned in the background chapter.

> *"We were scared of our lives because we were Kurdish, but there was also a threat on Christians, Shia, Kurds because most people in Mosul are Sunni, who had more authority. [...] In the beginning people believed them, but in 2-3 months they [Daesh] started threatening Christians and Yazidis. Before there were many Christians in Mosul. Daesh told them to convert or pay a lot of money, so many left to safer places." (Karim)*

> *"He is [...] Kurdish, that's why he got threatened, and they asked him to not work anymore in Erbil in the north, otherwise he will be killed." (Nadia talking about her husband Serkan)*

These ethno-religious divisions, or sectarianism are, as portrayed earlier in this thesis, no new phenomena in Iraq. Maryam explained that initially the houses in their predominantly Christian village "were destroyed by Daesh, and some by Hashd al-Shaabi", but "two days after the liberation they [Hashd] were destroying Christian houses only". Some of the previously predominantly Christian villages have become contested areas for example due to a federal law granting land to martyrs, "mostly Shia Muslim PMF" and Christians have claimed that some Hashd brigades have "sought to prevent and disrupt the return of the displaced Christian community to facilitate the settlement of Sunni Arab and Shia Shabak populations" (U.S. State Department 2018, p. 10). The destruction of buildings was visible on the ground in the villages as well. The previous summer I had seen many churches and villages with a predominantly Christian population destroyed and partly inhabitable, some because Daesh destroyed them and some because of the fighting that took place to drive Daesh out. The walls had threatening messages against Christians, Jews and Americans among others written on them (Figure 8). This time around in Mosul I saw churches that had been used as Daesh camps and the interior symbols had been destroyed, and instead sketched with messages about the greatness of Daesh (Figure 9).
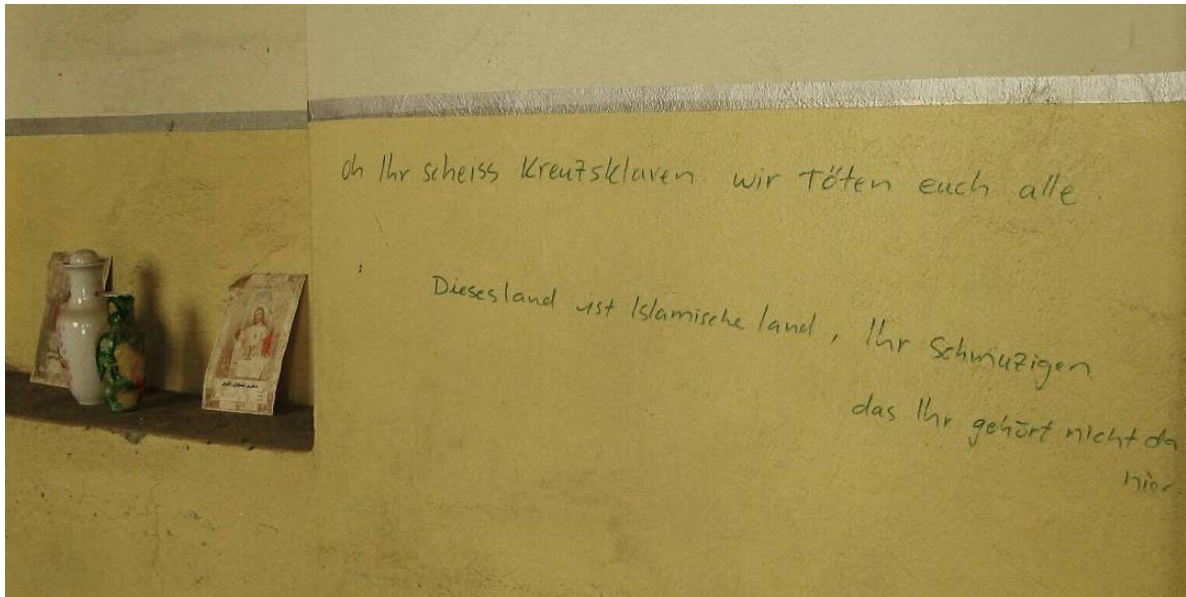
Figure 8: Village in Ninewa – German text by Daesh
"Oh you awful cross slaves, we will kill you all – This land is an Islamic land, you filthy, you don't belong
here. (own translation) (© Mariette Hägglund, 2017)

Figure 9: Church Wall in Mosul
(© Mariette Hägglund, 2018)

Not only was the ethno-religious belonging relevant for why people left, but they were also of significance in displacement. The Christian social location seemed to have been important in terms of getting access to the KRI in the first place, as they were more easily excluded from being potential Daesh members, who predominantly were Sunni. This was exemplified in the border control stations:

> *"We came to the checkpoint in Dohuk, and were crying that Daesh is after us, but were not let in. Once we showed our personal IDs and the officials saw we are Christians we were let in." (Maryam and Ayoob)*

This illustrates the importance of proof, documents, or the confirmation of the trauma story. The key issue then seems to lie in the persuasion of the other party to make them believe that your social location is what you say it is: Is your *perceived* positionality the same as your *argued* positionality? The perceived positionalities were also a key element in terms of who was brought to the camps in the first place, as those considered a threat or as Daesh members were taken to the camps by various security forces.

> *"They took me to jail for 6months because all my brothers were in Daesh. Asayish brought me here [to the camp], I've been here for a year." (Zainab)*

While being Christian offered some privileges, it also negatively affected dozens of families in one camp. I was denied access to the camp on the premises that talking to me would give them hope to stay there, which the camp manager did not want because "the Christians here are wealthy, they don't need to stay" (field notes 07/2018). Consequently, the perception by the camp manager is what determined the vulnerability (or the lack of it) of the Christian IDPs in the camp and forced them to leave elsewhere. Thus, it was the IDPs positionality together with the perceived positionality by the camp manager as being wealthy that limited their options.

The Yazidi families living in makeshift camps faced further barriers. Although they were let into the KRI, they were denied entry to the camps because they "were of different religion" (Layleh), which exacerbated their situation as they were forced to live in makeshift camps, rely on donations and help by locals instead of receiving the basic livelihood provided by the camps. Being outside the administrative system of camps posed various challenges because the support had decreased over time, constraining their situation even further as they had difficulties to find any other means for a living. In addition, their social location as women and the dependency on a male provider further aggravated the situation. On the one hand, the Yazidis were partially privileged by getting access to KRI, but on the other hand, their social location prevented them from getting access to the camp. Consequently, the denial of access to camps and the provision of basic necessities combined with the men's unemployment following the displacement and loss of other family members led to multiple marginalisations for the women and their families.

Moreover, apart from forcing the IDPs to leave and causing severe issues in their daily lives, the violence has destroyed inter-group trust drastically. A manifestation of the erosion was characterised by the narrative "we used to live in peace, without borders between different groups. We were all the same" (Asad), which was repeated multiple times in different ways in the camps and Mosul by various ethnic and religious groups. Notably, though, some people I spoke to, painted a more grim picture of

the situation pre-2014 rather than an ideal "Before Daesh everything was good, we were living like kings" (Maryam), and indicated that the inter-ethnic relationships had been bad for a longer time already. This same scepticism has also been reported in IOM's interviews (2019) and the reports by International Crisis Group among others (2009). A few people mentioned marriages as a concrete example of the divisions: previously inter-religious marriages had been very common, but nowadays they are rare (conversation with my host family Kamal and Jalile from Mosul, 45, renting an apartment in Erbil and live together with their adult children and their spouses). The IDPs belonging to a minority group in Iraq were reluctant to ever return back home due to the mistrust towards "Arabs" and "Muslims":

> *"Many Arabs are living around our village, we are too afraid to go back." (Layleh)*

> *"The children do not want to return because of the fright of Muslims." (Maryam)*

Layleh and the other women had lived in a city with both Arabs and Yazidis, but now seemed to feel like the 'Arabs', not particularly Sunni Arabs that Daesh represented, or Muslims, were a threat to them. Although Sinjar had been under the control of Peshmerga, who eventually withdrew from the area when Daesh arrived, they did not note having been let down by the "Kurds" or "Muslims", which may be connected to their identity[40], personal experiences in the villages as well as broader politics as they now resided in the KRI. The sectarian characteristics of the most recent violence had contributed to people's status quo in a form of limbo: they felt they had no future where they were and no future in their hometowns. Their financial situation, the destruction in their hometowns and the mistrust towards other groups were all intertwined as barriers for return. Whether the intergroup relationships were bad already before 2014, or deteriorated only due to Daesh, the outlook for the relationships and trust between and within the ethnic and religious groups is nevertheless grim. Thus, it aligns with the warnings issued by the Minority Rights Group International's (2018) report of groups at risk.

Mahmoud indicated that a "completely new version of sectarianism has emerged" (field conversation 07/2018) due to the conflict with Daesh. These new divisions have now materialised between those who left Mosul and those who stayed, as well as between those living in the Eastern part of Mosul and those in the Western part. East-Mosul had experienced much less destruction than West-Mosul, whereas West-Mosul had already been the poorer part even before Daesh (IOM 2019a; field discussions), and now had suffered much more from the urban war. The differences in the concrete

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[40] Additionally, Yazidis are sometimes categorised as solely Yazidi and sometimes ethnically Kurdish, but there are mixed views on that issue.

destruction were very visible between the two parts. Whereas East Mosul had more life, more people, bazaars and although some houses had been completely or partially damaged and the walls had signs of shots that had been fired, it looked more like a normal town. West Mosul[41] was more of a ghost-town, with relatively few people to be seen, but with very significant destruction and endless amount of debris. The perception that much less is being done in the West part has created new divisions in society. [42] The IOM has also recognised the importance of perceptions: "The fact that many residents of west Mosul perceive this disparity as intentional discrimination reveals an important gap between perceptions and reality" (IOM 2019a, p. 42).

Some IDPs felt that they are being suspected for Daesh affiliation simply because of the fact that they remained in Mosul, despite also having been displaced and experienced violence. This caused them plenty of difficulties for mobility as they were "considered Daesh just because we are from Mosul, particularly going towards Baghdad" (field conversation 07/2018). This stigma and the perceived security risk they now pose puts increased pressure on proving yourself innocent and backing up the claim with a legitimate document, which leads me to the next section on how this was managed.

5.3   Management of the internally displaced persons in Ninewa

Ever since 2003, Iraq's sovereignty has been more or less questionable and challenged. The state of Iraq was in an existential crisis when Daesh captured a third of the country and approached Baghdad. In addition, it faced challenges to its sovereignty through the Kurdish referendum on independence in 2017. I will now look at how these exceptional developments have shaped the management of IDPs in Ninewa through the lens of 'state of exception' and show how this status quo has contributed to an increased securitisation/militarisation of the crisis.

5.3.1   Exceptional on several levels

Humanitarian emergencies are prime examples of Agamben's "state of exception" (2005). As a consequence of the potential security threats of the IDPs both internally and externally, and the risks for the infiltration of Daesh members in society and camps, the Ninewa region has become even more of an exception in the already exceptional state of the country. The security threats of the conflict

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[41] West and East Mosul are mostly used by internationals and not used in the same sense by locals.
[42] The unequal situation between the two sides has been identified to be because i) West-Mosul was more destroyed during the liberation war, with 9511 houses listed as needing reconstruction, compared to East Mosul at 782 according to IOM 2019a, using UN Habitat data, ii) West-Mosul was liberated much later, iii) West-Mosul has more significant security issues, such as ERWs and IEDs

have enhanced the need for and justified the presence of armed troops even further, while, at the same time, creating a field for various actors to establish their power. This in turn, has led to the militarisation and securitisation of the IDP management and humanitarian crisis as I will portray below.

If we go back to the 12th paragraph of Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, it says that "they (IDPs) shall not be interned in or confined to a camp. If in *exceptional* circumstances such internment or confinement is absolutely necessary, it shall not last longer than required by the circumstances" (OCHA 2004). As I have portrayed in the previous sections, mobility is not a straightforward issue. Due to the perceived security threat of IDPs due to Daesh, an organic Iraqi organisation, there has been an increased state of exception for several years (if not longer). This state of exception has allowed for the "physical elimination […] of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system" (Agamben 2005). These include both Daesh members currently located in camp settings, banned to enter the cities, and those who have fled the very violence imposed by Daesh. While technically having the freedom of movement, many of the IDPs do not have that privilege in practice due to structural barriers, the impact of the displacement and the many check points along the way. The movement around the region, in and outside of camps, was highly dependent on several factors, some of which were related to direct mobility control and structural factors:

- *Whether they were allowed to move*, meaning the person was clear of any suspicions: "Condition in this camp is very good, we can leave the camp and nobody says anything. (Dilshad)
- *They were allowed, but not able to due to structural issues* such as poverty. For example, Fatima mentioned that "it's difficult to live in the camps. In order to get our IDs we need to go back to Salahaddin but we cannot go because we don't have money."
- *They were not allowed due to their confirmed or suspected affiliation with Daesh*: "No idea for how long he will be in jail, nobody could go there. I'm banned to enter Erbil so there is no way I can go there." (Sawa)

The security concerns of the camps, the Sunnis, the Mosulians, the stayers and the IDPs constitute a threat that has allowed for this state of exception where law and principles are "secondary" to national and international security, similar to what has been argued by Fassin and d'Halluin (2007, p. 308). The question then is, for how long can "required by the circumstances" (OCHA 2004) be extended? Due to the broader security threat, it ought to be in the interest of European states and the international

community to continue the exceptional confinement of IDPs in the camps, in the borderlines of both law and territory. With no concrete, legal timelines, but rather only up to interpretation by the sovereign of what constitutes 'required by the circumstances', there is no significant pressures per se to resolve the status quo if there are no viable solutions for the parties, except perhaps when it comes to funding this humanitarian governance. However, funding is scarce, rebuilding efforts proceed slowly, and according to the IDPs the interest of the international community has waned. Simultaneously, the IDPs are situated in a limbo, dependent on basic necessities of what the camp provides or living on a minimum budget, reluctant to return home and unable to move anywhere due to economic insecurity. Hence there is a risk that this already heightened state of exception in Ninewa develops into a permanent state of emergency, beyond what it has already been in Iraq for many years.

It is also interesting to bounce around the idea of what the situation would look like, if the recent challenge to Iraq's sovereignty, namely the advisory referendum, had passed. Had it been approved against all odds, a completely new situation would have arisen in Ninewa, whose Iraq-KRI borderlines have been contested long before 2014. Apart from the geographical boundaries, the labelling and management of the IDPs would have been another matter of concern. Would the shift in the legal status of the KRI, given that there would have been international recognition to legitimise the result, have impacted the international-local dynamics in the region and how? Would the IDPs in that case still have been seen as IDPs or, if parts of Ninewa had become part of the KRI, would they then have been recognised as refugees? These are only hypothetical questions since the result was denounced and the changes were not as drastic, despite the already different circumstances between 2017 and 2018. With regards to the management of the camps and the everyday life of the IDPs, I will now briefly explain how it looked like at the time of my field research.

5.3.2 Management of the camps: In a state of exception but not docile

I will now discuss the idea of forcibly displaced as "docile bodies" (Agamben 2005) in the camp settings, which represent an environment for "bare life. The control of everyday life, such as food and safety, that I discussed in the literature review through Mitchell (2011), was present in camp settings as well, which are clear attributes of the state of exception. Despite the general economic hardships and daily stressors in life, most of the people I spoke with in the camps said they were relatively content in the camps thanks to the basic security and provision of basic needs as exemplified in Safa's and Mansour's quotes below.

"Everything is available here, and I feel like I'm in a safe place." (Safa)

"We feel in peace here. We feel secure and they provide for us what we want, they bring us food and bring us anything. […] That's the good thing about being here. I feel secure, we have electricity, we have water, things that we need for our daily life." (Mansur)

However, even if some of the basic needs were somewhat satisfied in the camps, Fatima pointed out how "life is not just about basic things, like rice and flour". She continued by indicating a form of docile body approach to her situation as a widow in limbo: "In the night we are waiting for the day to come, and in the day, we are waiting for the night to come". The bare life rational also extended beyond the camp, as Abdullah reiterated how other aspects in life, apart from food and safety, are necessary. Moreover, in one of the conversations in Mosul, Mahmoud said, when asked about life in Mosul under Daesh occupation, that the word 'life' is too positive, and referred instead to existence. Although this was not in the camp context, it is still interesting as an observation of the perception of life and the discussion on IDPs as docile bodies.

"It cannot be called life. It was hell. Life is to feel safe, not to be told what to do and what not to do." (Discussion with Mahmoud, 35, from Mosul, still living there, field notes 07/2018)

Simultaneously, contrary to these examples, some of the IDPs expressed their political selves in subtle ways, usually by criticising the international and local community or championing the NGOs that also managed the camps. This may have been a sincere opinion, political statement or strategy, bringing in the aspect of knowledge production and interests behind statements. The locals were complaining about the non-existence of rebuilding projects, and criticised both the lack of interest by the international community to be present now that the liberation was over and the Iraqi government for not doing anything.

"Many organisations are helping, both internal and international, but many have a lot of corruption, doing bad things like stealing or not providing the things we need. The NGO is good, it's the best." (Dilshad and Ada)

"Iraqi government didn't help us, but the KRG treated us well." (Maryam)

Whereas I might have represented an NGO worker or doctor to many, the knowledge production in the narratives may have, as elaborated in the ethics section, impacted what and how they chose to tell me things, or what expectations they might have had from interacting with me, despite the fact that I repeatedly mentioned my position as a student and reiterated that there will be no compensations

involved. The earlier example of Layleh and her complaint about the American researcher fits into this category as well.

5.3.3 Proving and disproving belonging

The sections on violence and the stayers brings attention to the idea of IDPs as a generalisable and helpless figure. In this section, I will show how the concept of generalisable figure is now used in a more extreme way in humanitarian management. The previous summer I had been told that Daesh members had attempted to get to the camps by pretending to be "regular IDPs" fleeing Daesh, and some had been caught after having been busted by family members, while others have been able to avoid getting caught. Later on, female Daesh members have consciously been taken to camps as well. Notably, the gendered perceptions make women seem less of a threat compared to men, which makes it possible for them to remain detained in the camp context instead of prisons.

> *"They took me to jail for 6 months because all my brothers were in Daesh. Asayish brought me here, I've been here for a year."* (Zainab)

> *"We left to Shendoha which was under Kurdish control, to Peshmerga who brought us to Erbil. There I spent 7 months in jail because they said we're terrorists."* (Sawa)

Being confined to the camps and banned to enter Erbil, indicates that the camps serve as a form of pseudo-prisons/pseudo-camps: neither are they traditional refugee/IDP camps with "helpless figures" (Malkki), nor prisons, but rather something in between for those whose social location have made them suspicious for the humanitarian governance. Being allowed to the camps, the KRI or avoiding prison, has been dependent on proving oneself, not only as a suffering or threatened person, but also as a non-Daesh member. Or, if confirmed as a Daesh member, still be seen innocent or non-threatening enough not to be kept in jail. Here, the social location as a woman has been more favourable, as despite the failure to denounce their connection to Daesh, they have been let into the camps. Although the female Daesh members I spoke with also spent time in prison, the implications for men for belonging to or sympathising with Daesh, or the lack of proof of not being and Daesh member meant more severe punishments. Dilshad and Ada explained how the ability to proof one's innocence has been enabled particularly through IDs, documents and the confirmation from other people:

> *"Only way was Syrian border. Iraq requires, especially Baghdad [requires] that 3 people are saying you're not Daesh and you need paper that you have a house. Our ID's were kept, but we could take other passports"* (Dilshad and Ada)

Simultaneously, while not only being linked to the religious belonging, the location and timeline for displacement have been of significance as well. In several reports, those staying in Mosul have been met with suspicion or considered Daesh sympathisers or members (Taub 2018; field discussions 07/2018), even if being emplaced is not equal to Daesh sympathising as was discussed in the section being emplaced and ethno-religious belonging. Indeed, Mahmoud as well as Mustafa and his family (living in their house in Mosul) argued that they have become demonised only because of the fact that they are from Mosul, as if they had not endured enough by living under Daesh occupation.

With regards to the Daesh label itself, there are several reports on the unreliability of the judicial proceedings, confessions and naming of Daesh members, notably in international media articles like the New Yorker (Taub 2018) and the Guardian (Abdul-Ahad 2017). Can the imprisonment of possibly innocent people be justified with a "rather safe than sorry"-rationale or the utilitarian approach that the injustice faced by 'a few' still compensates for the potential risk posed at the larger society? According to Human Rights Watch, many of the detainees have pleaded guilty for belonging to Daesh under torture or other suspicious circumstances. Naming enemies as Daesh members as revenge and the use of torture, which in itself is quite an extreme form of violence, in detention facilities were also expressed as issues by some of the people I spoke with. Where does the 'extraction of truth' lie here? Is a confession done during torture more truthful?

Consequently, the IDP label has, in the context of Ninewa, become a connotation for security risk: any IDP could be a potential Daesh sympathiser or member. This means that the IDPs need not only prove their suffering, trauma and victim-status (Hacking 2007), but also disprove the possibility of being Daesh members, which was repeated by many IDPs. As elaborated in the previous section, being anything but Sunni Arab was an advantage when proving one's innocence, though it was dependent on the ability to back the claim up with concrete documents or proofs confirming their social location. On the contrary to what Duffield writes that "asylum seekers are not criminals in seeking to enter Europe" (Duffield 2001, 207), the current situation in Ninewa ultimately represents that for Europe.

5.3.4   Militarisation and securitisation of the humanitarian crisis

Similar to Bernstein's research on migration (2010), this thesis research found that there has been a shift towards securitisation and militarisation of migration in Ninewa. This development is a combination of many things and can be characterised by the following issues. Firstly, an increased diffusion of local actors and the power play between them. Iraqi sovereignty itself was at stake in

2014, when Daesh captured a third of the country, its own military left when Daesh came to Mosul and the power vacuum was substituted by i.e. Peshmerga troops and Shiia militias. Secondly, the perceived high security threat of Daesh fighters and sympathisers, both internally (within the country) and externally (to Europe). The outward effects to Europe through refugee flows were described as threats to liberal values in international media and sparked national debates on the response to Daesh as well as the 'refugee crisis'. Most recently, in the Finnish context, there has been ongoing discussions on how to deal with female Daesh members and their children, who are currently located in the refugee and IDP camps, primarily in Syria.

Furthermore, many of the camps or IDPs have been siloed by militias, militaries and other armed groups rather than by traditional humanitarians. The IDPs mentioned Asayish, Peshmerga, Iraqi army and Hashd al-Shaabi as local actors involved in bringing people to camps or imprisoning them.[43] Humanitarian workers the previous year told me how the Iraqi army and Peshmergas siloed the arriving IDPs, brought them closer to the camps and interrogated suspects. Only the ones seen as innocent or not perceived as big of a security threat (female Daesh members) were then brought to the camps. Therefore, it is not as much the NGOs, who initially possess the power to decide "whom to help and champion, and consequently, who can be left behind" (Duffield 2007, p. 52), as it is the military actors, who possess the power to decide whom to believe and help and, consequently, who can be imprisoned. Alternatively, put in Foucault's words, the armed actors may be "making live or letting die" through their decisions. This biopolitical power was also reflected in the narratives of the participants, whether they were actual Daesh members or IDPs fleeing Daesh, showing the complexity of local dynamics, which will be further elaborated on below. As mentioned by Zainab, she was taken to the camp by Asayish, while Sawa had been imprisoned by Peshmerga. Other examples include these quotes by Mansur and Zeena:

> "After [the airstrikes] the Iraqi army took them [daughter's family] to the camps." (Mansur)

> "Life was good, but after Hashd came they took my husband. My uncle was also taken by Hashd." (Zeena)

The same phenomenon of various actors was also heavily visible in Ninewa and Mosul. The multitude of actors in Ninewa has brought with them power play, which can be seen by various means of how

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[43] It is important to reiterate that these examples and generalisations of the groups are by no means exhaustive, as they are much more complex and fractioned within than can be explored in this thesis. Additionally, the IDPs themselves did not mention any specific sub-groups, but talked generally about the armed groups by their 'umbrella names'.

to establish that power. The one-hour road from Erbil to Mosul had more than five checkpoints, by Asayish, Peshmerga, Iraqi army, one that I was not able to identify, and another one that I believe to have been controlled by Hashd. Indeed, Mohammed told me that "Hashd have checkpoints on the way and they share it with many other armed forces" (phone conversation 07/2018). In Mosul I saw two minor checkpoints, which I was not sure whom they were administered by. In some places it was unclear whether the border control station even was a 'legitimate' one since arbitrary checkpoints are fairly common. Hence, there was a major diffusion of which border control station belongs to whom and what their interests may be.

The approaches that Kamal took on some of the border controls were also interesting to follow. He had connections in one of the checkpoints and had notified them of our arrival beforehand. On some instances passing through the checkpoints went effortlessly, but on others they started asking questions about me and the family, although they never addressed me directly but always looked at me and then spoke to Kamal, all in Arabic, perhaps as a part of local customs because I was a woman or simply because they assumed that I, as a foreigner, did not speak Arabic. They then took my passport and went inside to the office, asked one person to have a look at it and then yet another one. This may have been a part of power play or intimidation, or simply to actually check my background. Some people mentioned that it is more difficult to pass the Kurdish checkpoints toward Erbil than the other way around. On the day of the escalation of the protests in southern Iraq, this was indeed a reason for us to leave earlier from Mosul, as Kamal was worried that they may not let us through if they decide to close the border.

Moreover, as mentioned in the background chapter, due to the complex politics and security situation in the region, the Yazidis felt left alone when Daesh arrived and were unable to defend themselves against them. Karim, who said he was Sunni Kurd himself, explained that

> "Because the Peshmergas are not more than 200 000 and half of them are not working, and because Daesh took the weapons from the Iraqi army, Peshmerga couldn't fight them. At that point Peshmerga […] had no time to tell them [people in Sinjar] to leave, so Daesh went and took control and did bad things."

Compared to 2017, the referendum seemed to have shifted some of the power and autonomy away from the KRG/Peshmerga, which has been noted by ICG among others (2017). This was most observable by the border control stations. The parallel security systems in place between the central government and the KRG was seen on some of the frontlines in 2017, since some of the Peshmerga

frontlines were in the vicinity of the ones controlled by the Iraqi army (see Figure 10). However, this was before the 2017 referendum. The shifting of the borders also aligns with the fact that some disputed areas that Peshmerga had taken control of during the fight against Daesh (Stansfield 2016) had been lost to the Iraqi army or Hashd as a return to pre-2014 borders (Blanchard 2018; BBC 2017), despite Kurdish claims to them (O'Driscoll 2016). One gatekeeper explained that after the liberation Hashd is controlling much of the Ninewa Plains and disputed areas between Baghdad and Erbil.

Figure 10: View from a Peshmerga frontline with the Iraqi frontline in the horizon
(© Mariette Hägglund, 2017)

The road from some of the camps also had similar checkpoints, although to a lesser extent. With their presence they represent a heavy control or power dynamic on the mobility of the people, and persisted threats of Daesh (and other groups) as they possess the power to decide whether to let people through the border control or not, or whom to interrogate or threaten. Based on interviews and other reports (for example O'Driscoll 2016), there have also been different levels of violence conducted by the various local groups. Thus, they have established their own spheres of influence. The incorporation of these various groups into the normal governance, or business as usual, in the region has, however security implications according to the locals themselves.

> *"Sometimes I went back to Mosul to bring my [retirement] papers […], but it was kind of hard for me to keep up with Hashd al-Shaabi, because you know, they are not good people […] they take things, persons"* (Abdullah)

This quote sheds more light on the role of other armed actors. For example, Amnesty International notes abuses reportedly done by Hashd, such as subjecting Sunni men and boys to torture and other ill-treatment at checkpoints or detention facilities (Amnesty International 2017, p. 14). One of my gatekeepers said that "Hashd al-Shaabi has power to do whatever they want", reflecting the issue of their leeway mentioned earlier and the dispersion of the use of violence. These violations are, however, not only limited to Hashd, but other armed groups as well based on the conversations I had with some locals. For example, one of my gatekeepers had been accused of being a Daesh member, tortured and kept for days in prison, until they let him go after he managed to make some phone calls and was able to have his identity confirmed by another person. For Daesh members, Hashd posed a major threat, while some other IDPs had fled before the "peak of Daesh" in 2014 due to Hashd and other threats. For example, Serkan, who left already in 2011, had received death threats "because he is Kurdish" by unknown actors. Others had experienced violence by them only recently, which was highlighted in the previous quote by Maryam and Ayoob who said that "most houses were destroyed by Daesh, and some by Hashd al-Shaabi".

Figure 11: A Hashd al-Shaabi flag in Mosul
(© Mariette Hägglund, 2018)

The exceptional situation of Daesh, a "phenomenon" that had never happened before, required exceptional strategies, including what for example Mahmoud said that Daesh now had "legitimised the militias as a part of the security forces". As mentioned earlier, due to the inability by the Iraqi security forces to push back against Daesh, they lost the territory that previously officially was under their responsibility to Daesh. Karim explained his view of how Mosul was captured:

"Daesh entered the city, it took them 2h to control the whole city. They were about 700-1000. How could they take the whole city? Because Mosulian people helped them. Why? Previously they had gone to the army and threatened them and could take all weapons the Iraqi army had and invaded a weapon storage." (Karim)

As a consequence of the the need to involve actors such as Hashd, Peshmerga and other minor groups in the fight against Daesh, the Iraqi army did not control the areas captured back from Daesh, which shifted the power relations and allowed Hashd to operate more freely. As Mansour notes, "this has affected the government's ability to claim a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence" (p. 2017, 5). The role of Hashd in the fight against Daesh was visible in Mosul as well through flags and checkpoints among other things. The incorporation of Hashd into the armed forces also meant that they now received funding and arms from the government (Mansour and Jabar 2017). Consequently, the problems within the Iraqi state and security forces had concrete impacts both in Iraq more broadly with the loss of a third of the country's territory to Daesh and through the scattered divisions of legitimate actors in the region.

In conclusion, it is the state of exception that has made it possible for the militias to become a part of the legitimate governance of the humanitarian crisis in Iraq that in itself has become securitised. Another exceptional situation, the challenging of the sovereign through the Kurdish referendum on independence, further contributed to the need for local actors to establish their power within the areas that still were under their control or contested. In similar fragile settings with "contested territorial control", Cronin-Furman and Lake note that obtaining "formal permissions from parallel authority structures" may be required "to avoid risks to […] personal security" (2018, p. 697-698). This aspect of field research was a constant in the political and security climate on border controls and Mosul as well, not just for me, but all the other people as well. Mosul itself has been contested among the local actors and receiving the permission of one actor does not mean another actor will recognise that permission.

5.3.5 International-local nexus

Although not as visible as 'the local' on the ground (Mitchell 2011), the international-national-local dynamics are particularly complicated in Ninewa. Many international stakeholders have been and still are involved in the region. For example, the United Nations is present through its various agencies in the camps and governments participated in the international coalition against Daesh and now support the rebuilding initiatives. The involvement of the international community has not been

without criticism either and there was a general sense of discontent of the lack of action and rebuilding efforts.

The discussions tended to be more critical outside of the camps, not towards the humanitarian management per se, but towards the general situation in Mosul and around it. In one conversation with Kamal, he argued that the U.S. is bombing Mosul because the city resisted the occupation in 2003 (field notes 07/2018). Furthermore, many IDPs had lost their family members and houses in the airstrikes and were strongly opposed to the use of excessive force. One of the gatekeepers explained that "to kill one Daesh member they blew up a full house". This was exemplified by Sofya's daughter Shakila, who described how it had concretely happened to them:

> *"One time a Daesh came to our roof. I asked them to leave the roof, and while that happened a rocket hit." (Shakila)*

Sofya continued by explaining how angry they were at the Iraqi government for saying they will keep them safe, yet "while Iraq and US were fighting Daesh, they destroyed all neighbourhoods", reflecting yet another failure by the Iraqi army and the Iraqi government in general, to protect the citizens— a continuous issue throughout the years. She said that the whole family of the husband of her eldest daughter had been killed, with the exception of their baby. Arguably, the death rates during the liberation war were considerable (See Lafta et al 2018b). There are official statements issued on failed strikes that mistakenly killed a lot of civilians, such as this one by the U.S. Department of Defense:

> *"The secondary explosion triggered a rapid failure of the structure, which killed the two ISIS snipers, 101 civilians sheltered in the bottom floors of this structure and four civilians in the neighbouring structure to the west."* (Department of Defense news briefing 2017)

Similar incidents have been widely reported by other outlets as well (See Solomon 2017; Markey 2017; The Atlantic 2018; Remeikis 2019; New York Times 2017). There were estimates on the civilian death toll going up 9000 and 11'000 according to Associated Press (2017). Scepticism towards official narratives of lower death rates were contested on the ground in Mosul.

The targeting of Daesh members with asymmetric death tolls for civilians seem to follow a similar logic as the confinement of IDPs, unnatural in the normal functioning of the state, into camps: several lives of civilians can be sacrificed for the purpose of eliminating the threat of a Daesh member

(without diminishing Daesh atrocities). Does the suffering of the few, then, outweigh the benefit for the many? These kinds of military involvements, particularly on the side of the Western governments, who stepped in "to protect the Iraqi people from Daesh", but just so happened to protect their own security interests at the same time, have been criticised as modern imperialism. This again, would also count as a form of violence (Galtung 1971; Webel and Galtung 2007; Collins and Bilge 2016; Asad 2015), beyond the mere use of (excessive) violence to eradicate violence (Daesh occupation), in the name of humanity. Although the ideal goal is based in 'ethics' and 'rights', the application of the intervention actions "lie in a domain that excludes ethics in favour of pragmatism (Asad 2015, p. 408). Is it then pragmatic to bomb a house to kill two Daesh members despite not knowing for sure whether there are civilians in the building or not?

Figure 12: View of Old Town/West-Mosul a year after the liberation
(© Mariette Hägglund, 2018)

Without going further into the discussion on what remarks imperialism or neo-colonialism, whether the death toll estimates are 'true' or not, and whether the Western interests were based on "self-protection" or not, the involvement of the international is arguably complicated. Along these lines, Richmond looks at the difficulties of foreign intervention as a form of hybrid politics that aims at ending conflict: "whether, when, how and why intervention should take place and whether it protects international norms or respects local difference" (Richmond 2015, p. 56; Chandler 2010, p. 5). In this case, it seems that the state of exception that was exacerbated by Daesh, developed to something way beyond merely a "local difference", to an emergency, making the intervention even more justifiable (Duffield 2007, p. 48).

Furthermore, the legitimacy of the knowledge production with regard to the consequences of the violence and war is contested from all sides: the people criticise government estimates, the government argues against the people's estimates, while the international coalition has been careful about offering any official numbers. If the locals, the ones who experience the consequence of the use of force and the use of violence, consider that the measures have been unjustified or exaggerated, it does bring an aspect to consider the hybrid politics and interventions, particularly in a country like Iraq that already has a difficult history with foreign interference.

Moreover, in a situation like the liberation war in Mosul, the roles of the different parties in the liberation war may not have been completely clear. In most cases people were blaming the Iraqi government for the destruction, but the official 'division of labor' in the war appears to have been that coalition forces provided the air support while Iraqi forces were on the ground. Consequently, yet another characteristic of falling in between categories appears, but this time in the international-local nexus. This is yet another interesting aspect to consider, especially if the government forces are solely blamed for something that has actually been a cooperation between the local and the international. It is again the *perception* of who is responsible and why that matters.

Consequently, the complexity of internal displacement extends to multiple levels. Firstly, the definition of the IDP, and the people who fell in between international and national frameworks and definitions, between different definitions of who is a stayer, returnee or IDP. Second, the social locations between and within categories and the consequences of the various marginalisations. How has one event or category led to further marginalisation? Thirdly, the humanitarian-security issue, reducing freedom of movement to an issue between rights and threats, as every person moving back and forth now can be seen as a potential Daesh member and a threat for the larger society. Fourth, the variety of actors contesting for power, who go beyond what has been discussed here, mixed with the dispersed applicability of the sovereign in Iraq. Fifth, the involvement of the international and the diffusion or unclarity about the responsibility and interests in dealing with the conflict and IDPs.

6 Conclusion

The diversity of Ninewa is astonishing. The various ethnic, religious and tribal groups combined with the multitude of actors—local and international—add up to the number of stakeholders. With so many different actors, the weak sovereignty of Iraq, the power struggles between Baghdad and Erbil, and the interest of the international community to keep the conflict intact, the dynamics in Ninewa are extremely complex. Who is the 'sovereign' in the Ninewa context if power is in the hands of dozens of actors? Who can change the status quo as it looks like now? Currently, the IDPs are torn between different points of interests by different parties.

Despite supposedly being an issue within the boundaries of the 'sovereign', the IDPs in Iraq have had relevance for Western states, both as a matter of own national security (foreign Daesh fighters, Daesh' acts of terror) and immigration policies (refugee flows). The external interest can be seen, for example, through the involvement of Western governments in the coalition against Daesh, which has not been completely unproblematic. Some people have lost their lives and others have become marginalised not only due to Daesh and groups like Hashd al-Shaabi, but also due to airstrikes. The exceptionality of the crisis has justified any means necessary to contain the crisis. Due to its perceived security implications, this state of emergency is not purely a humanitarian crisis, and this has led to a militarisation and securitisation of internal displacement.

With these perceived risks, proving one's innocence and one's detachment from Daesh has become one of the key features of the management of the IDPs. The technologies of power in and outside the camps and in the management of forcibly displaced are multi-fold and scattered across different levels of society, between various actors with different interests and contestations of power. How do others perceive you and can you actually prove your belonging? This does not apply only to IDPs, but to any person moving across borders or border control stations which are heavily present in the region.

With regard to proving your belonging, the experiences of violence among the IDPs are multifaceted and go beyond purely direct violence. The marginalisation, oftentimes extending to multiple marginalisations, have had and will continue to have long-standing consequences on the people, not only in terms of personal trauma and losses, but intergenerational impacts. As discussed in the analysis section, different kinds of marginalisations are closely linked to one another, leading to a cycle marginalisations. Violence, a virtue of forced displacement, has had a considerable negative

effect in Ninewa. Unfortunately, the history of violence has not yet ended, making the future in Ninewa look grim. Perhaps this assessment is unnecessarily pessimistic.

All things considered internal displacement is not an automatic description of vulnerability. Indeed, sometimes leaving and becoming displaced equal to being more fortunate, because some of those who remained were prevented from leaving or unable to flee, which sometimes led to their death. In this regard, this research noted a gap in the research of 'what it means to stay emplaced'.

Additionally, in this research it appeared that many of those who would be seen as stayers based on official data by international organisations, actually have been displaced as well. These displacement journeys are extremely complex, but the common features for many were that the displacement had not been a straight line from A to B and that their current situation was a transitional state, expected to continue, even for those living in apartments. This is an important aspect to remember when talking about internal displacement. Despite the fact that most, and in Ninewa approximately half of the IDPs, are located outside camps, there is a large gap on literature and data particularly on those groups. This extends way beyond the context of Ninewa and Iraq, to the broader discussion on internal displacement. Through this case study, this thesis tries to contribute to both concerns.

Furthermore, the fluidity and unclarity between categories noticed throughout the research extends from the local level all the way to the international. The fluidity in the IDPs actual label is at odds with the very specific separation between the categories of refugee vs. IDP, where the only distinction is the border crossing and the stronger protection mechanisms based in international law. Yet, despite the lack of a palpable differences in the circumstances before embarkation between IDPs and refugees, the programming and protection schemes for the respective groups differ significantly. This is not to say that categories are bad, but to note how one category may be more diffuse than it initially seems. While the 'refugee' label is clear-cut, the IDP label remains diffuse and dependent on the interpretation by the researcher or organisation. Whether this is a shortcoming or a strength, I am not quite sure, but ending up in the in-between position is arguably problematic.

Social locations came to shape experiences prior to and during the displacement journey. Experiences of one form of violence or another was the most significant factor and common denominator to drastically shape the IDPs lives, no matter the other social locations. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the intersections of gender, socio-economic situation or ethno-religious belonging together with one another and violence further formed the situations of the people in July 2018. Indeed,

although the purpose of this thesis was to provide an overview of internal displacement in Ninewa, the complexity of the social dimensions found in this research is relevant in other contexts as well. With regards to the analytical method used, namely intersectionality, by adapting it on internal displacement this research has contributed to the expansion of the thematic usage of intersectionality. Whether the broadening of the scope of intersectionality is good or bad, is something that surely will continue to be debated.

All in all, despite only scratching the surface, the complexity of the topic, the geographical area and the analytical method, as well as the massive amounts of other interesting data outside the scope of this thesis that I managed to gather, this study has hopefully provided a better understanding of violence, displacement and the *exceptionally* unique context in Ninewa.

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