SPECIAL COLLECTION
INHABITING THE MARGINS: MIDDLE EASTERN MINORITIES REVISITED

Trans-border Minority Activism and Kin-state Politics: The Case of Iraqi Turkmen and Turkish Interventionism

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ABSTRACT

A growing literature acknowledges the necessity of studying minority politics as a dynamic process taking place within a complex web of relations that cut across state boundaries. In an effort to contribute to this approach, I examine the possibilities and limits of minority agency through the case of Iraqi Turkmen, accentuating the relational character of minority movements. Thinking with Rogers Brubaker (1996), I historicize the Turkmen's relationship to Iraq, the state in which they reside as a marginalized "national minority," and to Turkey, which Turkmen usually view as their mother country. I thereby problematize the putative kinship ties between the Iraqi Turkmen and ethnic Turks in Turkey in the context of "kin-state" politics, as the latter implies a political stance that represents a state as a protector and sponsor of "ethnic co-nationals" abroad. I focus on the complicated and increasingly conflictual relations of Turkey and the Turkmen, who are caught up in a double bind between engaging in Iraqi politics independently of the Turkish government and enjoying its support at the risk of losing their voices. Combining historical methods with ethnographic research, I ask

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how ethnic elites make practical sense of their minority status. In doing so, I discuss the political dynamics and consequences of self-essentialism in the Turkmen case, where minority activism has been conditioned by Turkish interventionism and Turkish nationalism, as much as by the exclusionary politics of Iraqi governments. While "national minority" could be empowering as an officially imposed and internationally sanctioned category with certain civic and political rights attached to it, for the Turkmen elites it has mainly implied disempowerment. This has at times swayed the Turkmen toward Turkish irredentism. However, as demonstrated in the article, the desire for Turkish tutelage is giving way to a more pragmatic understanding of kin-state politics. [Keywords: Iraqi Turkmen, minority politics, minority activism, (self-)essentialism, kin-state, Turkish irredentism].

It was my second visit to the Istanbul office of the Iraqi Turks Culture and Charity Association (*Irak Türkleri Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği*), housed in a flat of a five-story building centrally located in Aksaray, one of the old quarters of the city. The occasion was the 46th annual commemoration of "the Kirkuk Massacre of 14 July 1959." No sooner than the ceremony ended, I decided to walk around the office and take some pictures, before returning to mingle with those among whom I would end up doing ethnographic research. That is how I encountered the object that would spark my interest in the subject of this article: a framed poster, idly stood up on a stack of chairs in one of the rooms set aside for storage rather than for socializing (Figure 1). The poster contained an image of a contoured map of Turkey against a blue background, and the caption on the red and white colors of the Turkish flag read: "Motherland, safeguard the Turkmen" (*Anavatan, Türkmenlere sahip çık*). I quickly snapped a picture of it even though I did not appreciate the full extent of its significance at that time. Symbolizing the strong ties between the Turkmen and Turkey, the poster itself was interesting enough, but I was more intrigued to see it in the storage room rather than the meeting hall. I left the place with this image in my head: a neatly framed map of Turkey, neither kept in its "proper" place nor replaced by anything else.

It would take me several months of fieldwork to interpret the picture I took in terms of the political dilemma in which the Turkmen nationalists had found themselves. Only later did I come to realize that the Turkmen

nationalist movement had recently been challenged by an intra-communal debate on the right political action in Iraq. Some leading figures, on the one hand, had sought material and moral support from Turkey in its capacity as a "kin-state," while their community had to live under the threat of annihilation by the Baathist government for decades prior to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. Many Turkmen were, on the other hand, increasingly tempted to act with free will for their cause and to avoid manipulation and intervention by any outsider. The dilemma I photographed is a snapshot of the Turkmen's complicated—and at times uneasy—relations with Turkey with regard to their community politics in their country of origin.

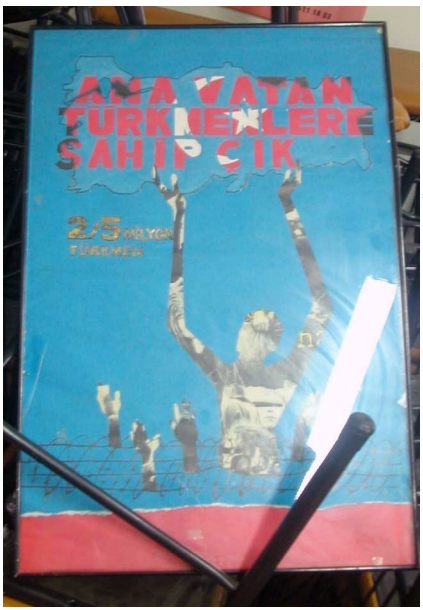

PHOTO BY GÜLDEM BAYKAL BÜYÜKSARAÇ

Figure 1: "Motherland, safeguard the Turkmen." Iraqi Turks Culture and Charity Association, Istanbul, July 14, 2005.

The Turkmen are a Turkic-speaking group that originate from northern Iraq and are dispersed across various locations outside the country as a result of massive migrations caused by political instability. They hail from various towns of northern Iraq, which as a whole constitute an ethnic enclave in the Turkmen nationalist imaginary, named *Türkmeneli* (the land of Turkmen). The region is marked on the map of Iraq as a diagonal swath of territory, running from the Turkish and Syrian borders down to the Iranian border, covering the three major cities of northern Iraq—Mosul, Erbil, and the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, which is designated "disputed territory" in the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 and whose political status is still a highly contested issue in the country (Figure 2).[1]

Through the case of Iraqi Turkmen, I examine the possibilities and limits of minority agency, accentuating the relational character of minority movements. In a way, I want to challenge the conventional theorizations of "minority" by liberating the concept from the analytical constraints of the nation-state.[2] Largely inspired by multi-disciplinary discourses on transstatism[3] and diasporic nationalism,[4] I conceptualize minorities within the context of relationships among various socio-political actors besides and

beyond the national government directly involved in the process of minoritization. I focus on the increasingly conflictual relations of Turkey and the Turkmen, as the latter are caught up in a double bind between engaging in homeland politics independently of the Turkish government and enjoying its support at the risk of losing their voices.[5]

Minority politics is a site of contestation and negotiation, where all actors instrumentalize the category of minority in their own ways, yet similarly resort to strategic essentialism in the form of ethnification or culturalism. In this article, I ask how the members of putative minorities themselves make sense of this category. I explore what ethnic elites do with their status of national minority and how their "national minority" stance shifts in response to changing political conditions across time. In doing so, I also discuss the political dynamics and consequences of self-essentialism in the Turkmen case, where minority activism has been conditioned by Turkish interventionism as much as by the exclusionary politics of Iraqi governments.

SOURCE: https://merryabla64.wordpress.com/2008/05/24/map-of-turkmeneli/

Figure 2: The Türkmeneli map.

The popular Turkmen historiography takes for granted the kinship ties between the community[6] and ethnic Turks in Turkey, tracing their common origin back to the Oghuz tribe of Central Asia as the founding element of the Ottoman Empire (see, for example, Al-Hırmızı 2003). This is, in fact, a widely shared historical perspective that came to shape perceptions about the Turkmen in Iraq, informing both their self-understandings and their identifications by others. Ethnic elites maintain historical bonds with the Turkish Republic as the only heir of the Ottoman Empire, claiming cultural affinity with the Turkish "majority" (ethnic Turks). Iraqi governments, on the other hand, have viewed the Turkmen first as imperial remnants to be watched carefully then as the "spies" of Turkey to be liquidated, while Turkey itself has been juggling kin-state pragmatism with humanitarian goals in its pro-Turkmen diplomacy.

Political sociology has provided some theoretical tools to explore cases analogous to that of the Turkmen, and Rogers Brubaker's study on the

poly-ethnic nation-states of post-imperial Europe and Eurasia is particularly insightful. Brubaker (1996:60–69) offers to reframe the question of minorities based on the dynamic interplay between three elements: "national minority" (a form of collective self-representation, not a social and demographic entity), "nationalizing state" (a set of discursive practices that promote the political and cultural hegemony as well as the economic domination of the "core nation"), and "external homeland" (a political stance that represents a state as a protector and sponsor of "ethnic co-nationals" abroad). This is a Bourdieusian framework that treats each element as a "field of forces, i.e., as a set of objective power relations that impose themselves on all who enter the field and that is irreducible to the intentions of the individual [or institutional] agents or even to the direct interactions among the agents" (Bourdieu 1985:724; see also Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:79–101). It is crucial to note the contingency and variability of the triadic nexus between national minorities, nationalizing states, and external homelands. To put it briefly, the triadic relationship is "not everywhere and always conflictual" (Brubaker 1996:57–59). Robert Cribb and Li Narangoa (2004) have contributed to this argument by demonstrating that the "external homeland" stance is by no means hegemonic in East and Southeast Asia. The governments of Mongolia, Laos, and Malaysia, they argue, cannot maintain a tutelary relationship with "fraternal communities" across their borders (the Mongols in China, the Laos in Thailand, the Malays in Indonesia respectively) due to a number of common as well as unique reasons tied to strategic dynamics and cultural politics. Nonetheless, the history of international politics offers many other examples (e.g., the successor states to Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union) where the "external homeland" stance, an acute source of tension between neighboring states, can lead to dire consequences in the lives of putative members of a minority.[7]

The very objective conditions of competing nationalisms and inter-state affairs necessitate the widening of the scope of analysis in studying minorities. Minority politics is a dynamic process that takes place within a complex web of relations that cut across state boundaries, except that these relations can exceed the triadic nexus between minorities and the states they are associated with. I will elaborate this in the following section, as I explain how a range of actors tactically reifies minority identities through "naming" (Bourdieu 1985).[8]

The growing literature that has similarly adopted a transnational perspective on minority politics mostly relies on interest-based accounts of

ethnic mobilization. In such accounts, minorities are envisioned as collective subjects that closely monitor other actors' stances and maneuver in order to react accordingly (e.g., Koinova 2008). The issue of minority agency, however, requires more nuanced analyses than purely instrumentalist or situationalist explanations allow.

Minoritization and Minority Politics: Key Terms to Dissect

"Minoritization" is an ambivalent term that has come to be used differently, sometimes in terms of a *symptom of discriminatory government* and at other times to describe a *project of emancipation and empowerment*. Much of the political and historical research has focused on the first meaning of the term, by explaining, through various case studies, how the concepts of "majority" and "minority" are historically constituted categories.[9] When engaged with that sense of the concept, one can explore the particular historical conditions that paved the way for the systematization and perpetuation of exclusionary politics in a nation-state.[10] In recent anthropological and human rights studies, on the other hand, the second meaning prevails. Here is a quite plausible definition offered by Jane Cowan:

> This is the process—which may also be a project—by which the identities of a diverse population and the meanings of its cultural practices are reformulated to fit within the framework of the moral, conceptual and legal category of minority. Minoritization is a distinctive strategy within a global political field that eschews territorial objectives and seeks rights within existing national borders, it may develop a reformulation and alternative to an explicitly nationalizing project. (2001:156)

The two senses of minoritization mentioned above cannot be considered independent of each other, as they denote historically intertwined processes pertaining to minority politics. What I mean by "minority politics" is a domain of action and counter-action, a web of relations, marked by negotiation and contestation that take place among multiple actors functioning at local and inter/trans-national levels. In this domain, there are national governments, not only "nationalizing states" but also regional powers engaged in "kin-state" politics if not in irredentism. And yet there are also supranational institutions that define the legal framework

and policies addressing minority protection, as well as non-governmental agencies participating in emancipatory projects of minority rights, besides minority movements and their diasporic extensions.

Each sense of minoritization seems to have established a differential relationship with the concept of minority, one in such negative terms as discrimination, exclusion, marginalization, and disempowerment, and the other in such positive terms as protection, emancipation, and empowerment. What these two senses have in common, however, is the act of naming they both imply as the fundamental premise of all minoritization processes. The State is undoubtedly the principal agent of social labeling (Bourdieu 1985), with its nationalizing project that entails the construction of majorities and minorities within the governed population. Modern state systems tend to view and represent the population as the sum of distinct, fixed, and enumerable collectivities, even though group identities are, in fact, fluid, dynamic, and changeable.[11] Regarding the example of Iraq, the official habit of naming communities as "majority" and "minority" has a long history dating back to the mandate period. The British colonizers had a highly fragmented vision of Iraqi society as divided along ethnolinguistic (Arabs/Kurds/Turkmen), sectarian (Sunni/Shiite), and religious (Muslims/Christians/Jews) lines, as well as between urban and rural domains (Klein 2014, Dodge 2003). Sunni Arabs were viewed as the "majority" socio-political grouping, although they were by no means a numerical majority (Slugglett 2007:214). Thus, they predominated in the parliament and occupied the upper echelons of the state bureaucracy, whereas the Council of Ministers included a few Shiites and Christians, with only one representative from the Jewish community (Davis 2005). Socio-cultural differences in Iraqi society were given some constitutional recognition, and yet this did not lead to the effective protection of minority rights, primarily because the principle of popular participation was not sincerely promoted. The mandate legacy in Iraq has been long lasting, as the mistakes of the past have been repeated and reproduced by postcolonial regimes, and thus the state-minority relationship has been locked in a loop of exclusionary politics and securitization (Büyüksaraç 2015).

This is not to attribute absolute free will to national governments as they define who constitutes a majority or minority. As a matter of fact, state policies regarding minority rights are never formulated in the cocoon of national space isolated from regional and global politics and economy. This wider reality imposes itself on all states mainly through international

legal mechanisms that operate not only to arrange diplomatic affairs but also to regulate each national government's relations with its majority and minority populations (see Cowan 2008, Mahmood 2012). Thus, in any case, the international community should be taken into account as a set of global agents in labeling a social group as "national minority" and in defining the terms of debates on minority rights.[12] Apart from international governing organizations (IGOs), such as the United Nations (UN) and its various agencies, there is the global civil society, with its NGOs. The latter, in its capacity as the "critical conscience" of the IGOs (Donini 1995:421), pushes these organizations forward to more effectively address political and social crises across the world, or strives to at least make sure they will not generate new crises. When sub-national peoples and their collective rights are under threat, however, NGOs come to act like the states and the UN they criticize, given that they partake (on purpose or not) in labeling. For the sake of the emancipatory projects they endorse, international agencies frequently resort to strategic essentialism in the form of ethnification or culturalism. They are equally responsible for totalizing a wide range of experiences within each non-dominant group under a single context-neutral category, such as "national minority" or "indigenous people."

The primary focus here, however, is on the members of putative minorities, whose rights are both persistently violated by national governments and passionately defended by agents of liberal multiculturalism and the human rights discourse. How do community members make sense of the category of national minority to which they have been assigned? What do they do with the particular group identity to which they supposedly belong? As earlier studies have demonstrated, individuals may constantly move from one group to another, change the language they speak, or define themselves in different terms across the span of a generation or a lifetime.[13] In spite of that, there is still a universal tendency to categorism, or to essentialism, manifested in various ways. A variety of actors seek to instrumentalize the category of minority for particular reasons. Besides national governments, the UN, or NGOs such as Human Rights Watch (HRW) or International Crisis Group (ICG), there is the community context where strategies of self-essentialism are considered totally legitimate and meticulously employed by minority representatives. It is significant to see here that global discourses of human rights and multiculturalism have a tremendous influence on ethnic elites' thinking about the politics of recognition. As Cowan (2001:11) argues, minority groups' tendency to essentialize is

not merely a consequence of their enchantment with the presuppositions of ethno-nationalism. It can also be viewed as a political tactic for strengthening one's claims of recognition, while complaints are by default framed in terms of human or minority rights.

The Formation of Modern Iraq and the Mosul Dispute[14]

When the mandate for Iraq was awarded to Great Britain in 1920, the political status of Mosul was left open for negotiations between the Turkish and British governments, which would eventually take place at the Lausanne Conference of 1922–1923.[15] The Mosul province (*vilayet*), divided into the districts (*sancak*) of Mosul, Suleimaniyya, and Kirkuk, was populated by Kurds, Arabs, Turkmen, Chaldeans, Assyrians, Jews, and Armenians (Eroğlu, Babuçoğlu, and Özdil 2005). It had been under British occupation for two years, although the official mandate included only Baghdad and Basra. The other claimant state, Turkey, still retaining legal sovereignty over the disputed territory, refused to renounce their rights.

In the memorandum submitted by Turkish delegates at Lausanne, the Mosul region was described as a "naturally" integral part of Anatolia, with its similar geographical features in addition to the strong commercial and cultural ties it maintained. It was argued that the Turkmen dialect used in Mosul was the same as the one in Anatolia, rendering language an indicator of Turkish presence in northern Iraq. In the very same memorandum, however, language lost its capacity to distinguish the group identities when it came to the local Kurds or Arabs. The Kurds (including the Âzidis)[16] were claimed to be Turks as they had common religion, customs, and ethnic/racial (*Turanian*) roots.[17] The Arabic-speaking residents were also represented as Turks "who, having been in constant contact with the Arabs for a long time, learned both languages."[18]

Having failed to reach a resolution at Lausanne, the two states agreed to submit the dispute to the League of Nations Council. The league assigned a commission to investigate the wishes of the local people. The commission interviewed 800 individuals, including urban notables, tribal chiefs, religious sheikhs, and laymen. Following the inquiry process, the League decided in 1926 that the region be included as a whole in Iraq. Soon afterwards, highly charged public narratives emerged among the Turkists and Turanists of both Turkish and Iraqi origin to name the annexation of the province as a traumatic event of *detachment* from Turkey and

from Anatolian Turks. The Turkmen intellectuals at the time—the locals of Iraq as well as the expatriates in Turkey—increasingly internalized a Turkey-centric perspective on the question of Mosul. Several examples from folk poetry also depict the affective leanings of Turkmen nationalism.

Hızır Lûtfî (1880–1959), an Iraqi Turkmen poet, was a newly retired army clerk when he moved from Istanbul to Kirkuk in 1924 (Demirci 2005, Terzibaşı 2000).[19] Coming from a religious background,[20] he was in close contact not only with Muslim scholars (*ulamā*) but also with pro-Turkish notables and his contemporaries who were also engaged in "patriotic" (Turkist) poetry (such as Hicrî Dede). As a self-defined Turkist, Hızır Lûtfî refused to work with the Iraqi government after his retirement from the Ottoman army, while he continued to publish in Iraq and Turkey.[21] He wrote in Ottoman Turkish and with Arabic script, and yet some of his writings and poems were translated into Arabic and published in Baghdad newspapers. While Turkmen in Iraq got to know his literary works through Kardaşlık (issued in Baghdad since the early sixties), the organ of Kardaşlık Ocağı (the Turkmen Brotherhood), Turkish nationalists discovered him more recently through anthologies (e.g. Saatçi 1997) or periodicals issued by the Turkmen themselves. The following quatrain is taken from a biography of Hızır Lûtfî that was published in 2005 by his grandson, Nefi Demirci, a retired medical doctor and a die-hard senior nationalist, living in Istanbul since 1952. While not providing the original date of publication, Demirci (2005:12) notes that Hızır Lûtfî wrote this poem "after the separation [of Mosul] from the motherland."

I was eternally ailing; my beloved was wrenched away.
The separation crippled me down. I cannot escape anguish.
A rift opened with each step I took.
My half departed while I was still alive.[22]

From the perspective of the ethnic elites, the founding of the Iraqi state not only marked an absolute detachment from Turkey—something they would mourn for years—but also the beginning of their political and cultural marginalization. In 1937, when the Iraqi government carried out mass arrests of Turkmen nationalists, Hızır Lûtfî was sentenced to four years in prison for "doing Turkist propaganda and leading clandestine organization" (Demirci 2005:11). Under the pressure of Sunni-Arab nationalism, the monarchy had increasingly become intolerant of sub-national groups.

Based on the Local Languages Act (1931), Kurds and Turkmen were in principle allowed to use their mother tongue at public offices, including schools and courts, in places (i.e., northern Iraq) where they constituted the majority of population. Yet, the Act proved to be ineffective, while the government acted capriciously in granting cultural rights to its minorities (Al-Hırmızı 2003, Saatçi 1996). In response to the state's restrictive and discriminatory policies, the Turkmen, mostly state officials and teachers in particular, became more vocal in expressing their desires to unite with the Turkish Republic.

Nazım Refik Koçak (b. Kirkuk, 1905 - d. Kirkuk, 1960) was one of those dissident civil servants, who is remembered today for his literary work as well as his political activities. I quote below a well-known stanza from "The Trouble of My Country," penned by Nazım Refik in 1933 but not immediately published due to state oppression (Saatçi 1996:205). The Turkmen scholar, Suphi Saatçi (1996:205) notes that this poem was not published in Iraq at that time, yet widely circulated among the Turkmen. In the poem, Nazım Refik pleads with the leader of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Atatürk), to rescue the Turkmen from the suzerainty of Amir Faisal, an Arab king of non-Iraqi origin:

> Gazi [Mustafa Kemal], indomitable, another's flag flies above us, save us.
> Kirkuk is Turkish; do not separate the mother from her daughter.
> A sad and sorrowing orphan is here,
> crying day and night for her country.[23]

These lines convey an affect of loss that manifests itself in multiple ways.[24] First, there is the loss of authority, embodied in the loss of the father who was being imagined in the guise of the Turkish State, headed by Mustafa Kemal. At another register, there is the loss of land, the mother figure, Turkey—a different territory as it is now, so near and yet so far. And yet, an equally unsettling experience of loss is the loss of power. Having been pushed aside in politics since the kingdom was installed, the Turkmen elites in particular detested the idea of being a "minority." They had infelicitous connotations of disempowerment and degradation, which utterly destroyed their self-image as members of the Ottoman ruling class.[25] A major consequence of this was a prolonged denial phase, where "minority" as a category would remain largely outside the scope of identitarian politics as practiced by community elites

and nationalist activists. In its stead, one finds the persistent desire to reunite with Turkey and to recover one's place in a majority culture (i.e., the Turkish culture).

Unable to find their niche in party politics in Iraq, the Turkmen had a hard time reconciling with the fact that the Mosul–Kirkuk region would never be part of Turkey. For them, Iraq was just a make-believe state founded by the "merciless infidel (*gavur*)" (the British) and his Arab collaborators who were "too inept to run a state on their own." "There is no such thing as the state of Iraq for our grandfathers," Battal[26] exclaimed, a Turkmen expatriate and a retired engineer in his mid-60s, who had been engaged in oppositional politics in exile and in northern Iraq.[27] He was sharing with me an anecdote the day he took his grandfather from Kirkuk to Baghdad. When they were stopped and asked to show their ID cards at one of the checkpoints, the old man started yelling: "What is this state with shitty ass! I've got [Sultan] Abdulhamid's tezkere [identity document]!"

After many years under the flag of Iraq, Battal's grandfather, who used to be a merchant in Kirkuk, felt as if he was a subject of the Ottoman Empire rather than an Iraqi citizen. This particular attitude, I suggest, reflects the crisis of political belonging the Turkmen went through during the monarchic period (cf. Zubaida 2000), traces of which I could find in the personal accounts of many informants I interviewed in Turkey. As an influential figure in the Turkmen lobby in Turkey put it during a conversation at the Kirkuk Foundation,[28] "there is the Turkish State and there is the Iraqi State. I did not found it, but have to live with it, just as people diagnosed with cancer have to live with it!"

Ethnic Mobilization in the Post-monarchic Period

With the breakdown of the Ottoman state in the aftermath of World War I, the socio-political predominance of the Turkmen elites gradually weakened (Batatu 1978). Under the monarchy, the Turkmen "enjoyed a relatively trouble-free existence," but once the republican regime was installed with the 1958 Revolution, they "found themselves increasingly discriminated against by the policies of successive regimes that focused upon communal differences within society" (Stansfield 2007:72).[29] Article 3 of the provisional Constitution of 1958, indicating that the Kurds and Arabs were co-partners without referring to any other minority groups (Khadduri 1969:175), was a harbinger of systematic discrimination, from which the

Kurds themselves would not be able to escape in the long run. Having been recognized in the Constitution of 1925 as a constitutive component of the Iraqi nation, alongside the Arabs and the Kurds, the Turkmen were now denied this status (Stansfield 2007:72). They were left with a feeling of injustice and insecurity, doubled by the strengthening of the Kurdish opposition that had its own strong territorial claims to the oil-rich city of Kirkuk.[30] This had two significant implications for Turkmen politics: the emergence of passive-aggressive hostility toward the Kurds and, as the next section will show, the reproduction of Turkish irredentism in the public discourses of Turkmen leaders.

In any case, all post-colonial governments would view the Turkmen community as potentially treacherous or irredentist, based solely on its historical relations with the former empire or its supposed ethnic affiliation with the majority group in Turkey. From the late 1950s onwards, the Baathists began to take severe measures to prevent the infiltration of minority leaders into national politics and even into civil society (Sluglett 2007). This is also when ethnic nationalism became increasingly hegemonic in Turkmen circles, including laymen as well as intellectuals. [31] Unlike the secessionist Kurdish movement, Turkmen mobilization --which peaked in the 1960s and 1970s until a group of leaders was executed in 1980-- had a non-militant character. A theater company was established in Kirkuk where Turkish plays would be performed, local journalism was revived, and studies of Turkmen folklore were published by local printing houses. Turkmen teachers around Kirkuk unionized in 1960 to negotiate over cultural rights, primarily the right to education in one's native language. A group of intellectuals living in Baghdad established Kardaşlık Ocağı (Brotherhood Club), an organization at the heart of the capital that served for years as the hub of intellectual and cultural life for the Turkmen.

The political environment in the early 1970s was somewhat less restrictive compared to the earlier decade (Davis 2005:153), and this had significant implications for the community's cultural life. The Revolutionary Command Council, the supreme authority established right after the 1968 coup, passed an act on January 24, 1970 to recognize the cultural rights of the Turkmen. However, it was only until 1974 that the community was allowed to have education (limited to primary schools) in the Turkmen language (with only Arabic script) (Al-Hırmızı 2003, Nakip 2007). As the official ideology in Iraq was geared toward Pan-Arabism (Davis

2005:148–175), Turkey sought to get actively involved in the Turkmen's cultural sphere, particularly in educational matters. Many young people in Kirkuk were taught modern Turkish language and literature, as well as the Latin script, at the Turkish Cultural Center (TCC) that was founded in 1970 by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and staffed by teachers from Turkey until the center was closed down in 1978 (Nakip 2007) **(see Figure 3)**. Kemal Beyatlı, former head of the Iraqi Turks Culture and Charity Association, narrates his own experience at the TCC:

> I went to the Center until 1976. I learned our mother tongue in the Latin alphabet [...] We were all interested in Turkish literature. Some of us moved to Turkey for education afterwards. [...] We learned marching songs. We already knew the Turkish national anthem by heart but did not know who Mehmet Akif [Ersoy] was [the author of the anthem]. We learned it there, […] and they did not teach it by force. *It was us who wanted to learn* [his emphasis]. [32]

As Beyatlı has pointed out, wealthy merchant and land-owning families of Kirkuk would habitually send their children, or rather their sons, to Turkey for university education.[33] As early as the late 1940s, the Turkmen students in Istanbul and Ankara, a young community socialized among Turkist circles, were organized for political purposes (Kerkük 2011), and it was the very same people who founded the Iraqi Turks Culture and Charity Association (hereafter, the Association) in the early 1960s.[34] Unlike other immigrant associations that typically seek to facilitate migrants' social integration in the host country, the Association was established as a diasporic organization aimed at sensitizing the public opinion at the international level about the plight of the Turkmen in Iraq (Danış and Parla 2008). Through press releases, public meetings, and street rallies, the Turkmen expatriates particularly wanted to create awareness throughout Turkish society about the growing inter-ethnic conflict over Kirkuk, or about the "Kurdish threat in Kirkuk" in their own expression. Framing the Kirkuk events of 1959 in ethno-territorial terms,[35] they also called for Turkey to take action in its capacity as a kin-state.

Until the mid-1990s, the Turkmen opposition could survive only in exile, in northern Syria, for example, where the National Democratic Turkmen Organization of Iraq (NDTO, *Irak Milli Demokratik Türkmen Örgütü*, 1981–1985) collaborated for a while with other dissenting groups, including the

SOURCE: THE KIRKUK FOUNDATION ARCHIVES, ISTANBUL

Figure 3: Turkish Cultural Center, Kirkuk. Photos taken on May 18 and 19, 1970.

Kurds. After the NDTO disbanded under the pressure of the Syrian government, the Turkmen opposition moved to Ankara, where the National Turkmen Party of Iraq (NTPI, Irak Milli Türkmen Partisi) would be founded with the support of Turkish elites.[36] The party's headquarter was relocated to Erbil after the establishment of the no-fly zone in northern Iraq in 1991.[37] Until the foundation of the Iraqi Turkmen Front (see the final section), the NTPI was the most promising nationalist group to represent the Turkmen

in international forums and to establish diplomatic relations with the White House,[38] as the latter supported the Iraqi National Congress (INC) that was preparing to topple Saddam Hussein.

Negotiating Irredentism and Kin-state Intervention

Once the lengthy arbitration process regarding Mosul ended in 1926, the Kemalist government, increasingly dictated by the exigencies of Realpolitik, became engaged in a series of diplomatic arrangements with Iraq (Şimşir 2004). Turkism, particularly its Turanist fraction, was considered something to be kept under control lest it be hazardous to national politics, especially to foreign relations. Kemalists would accuse the pan-Turkists of being "adventurous," while the latter felt "betrayed," because the Republic had forsaken the "Cause of Turkism" (Ertekin 2002:359). Territorial imagination, more specifically the issue of territorial borders, was the most critical point of contention between Turkism on the one hand, and Kemalist and post-Kemalist official nationalisms, on the other. The Kemalist government had promised harmony with other states and compliance with international law, as long as "national interests" were not in jeopardy (Durgun 2011). This was the main reason why the Turkish delegates at Lausanne did not blindly insist on disputed territories such as Alexandretta, Batumi, and Mosul. The international negotiations over the political status of these places were soon terminated, except for Alexandretta (İskenderun-Antakya) that would be annexed to Turkey in 1939 once the French withdrew from Syria. A major implication of this process was that any claim to Turkish sovereignty beyond the redefined political boundaries would be considered illegitimate and thus illegal.[39] This is where official Turkish nationalism parted ways with pan-Turkism and irredentism during the period of single-party rule.

Throughout the following decades, as Turkish policies regarding Iraq fell short of their expectations, Turkmen intellectuals and activists would gravitate toward romantic nationalism, at times unable to hide their desire to reunite with Turkey. The ideas of the prominent Turkist ideologue, Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924), were particularly inspiring. Gökalp's pan-Turkism was premised on linguistic and cultural nationalism as a unifying factor for all Turkic groups. The ideal (*mefkûre*) of Turkic unification was eloquently represented in poetic forms such as the geographical metaphors of *Turan* ("the land of Tur," alluding to the Turkic "ancient homeland" in

Central Asia) and *Kızıl Elma* (the name of an imaginary land, literally meaning red apple). Gökalp himself was claiming that Turan, or Kızıl Elma, was "an ideal which existed in the realm of imagination, not in the realm of reality" (Parla 1985:34), yet this does not change the fact that the renderings of his poetry harbor irredentist aspirations. Consider his poem, "The Shepherd and the Nightingale," which was first published in January 1920, when there was no "Iraq" yet.

> The shepherd said: the lands from Edirne to Van,
> to Erzurum are all mine.
> The nightingale said: İzmir, Maraş, Adana
> İskenderun, and Kerkük, my purest Turks…
> Embrace, shepherd, embrace, don't leave the land
> Don't leave the nightingale in a foreign land.[40]

After many appearances in various Turkish publications, the very same quatrain was printed in 1971 on the cover of an edited volume issued by the Association in Istanbul. Entitled *Iraqi Turks in the Turkic World*, the booklet contained a series of essays reflecting a Turkey-centric, paternalistic perspective that treats the Iraqi Turkmen in terms of "outside Turks" to be emancipated. Its cover illustration was quite telling: a prototype of the Türkmeneli map against a backdrop of Turkish flag with Gökalp's quatrain underneath (see Figure 4). This map is a precursor of the currently used map that was for the first time publicized in the early 1990s (for the recent Türkmeneli map, see Figure 2). One could argue that the maps produced recently function as a statement to assure the Iraqi government, as well as the international community, that the Turkmen today imagine themselves as part of a polity that is totally independent from the Turkish Republic, namely the Iraqi nation.[41] In an interview at the Kirkuk Foundation in Istanbul,[42] Suphi Saatçi (a Turkmen scholar and one

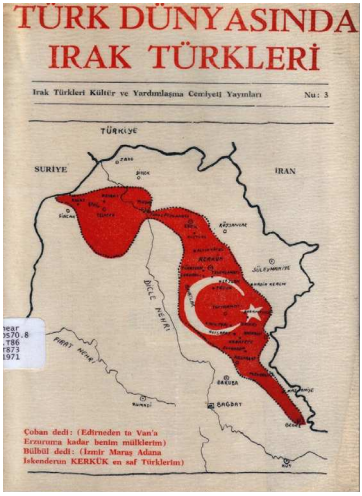

Figure 4: Cover of a booklet titled, *Iraqi Turks in the Turkic World,* published by the Iraqi Turks Culture and Charity Association in 1971.

of the designers of the Türkmeneli map) insisted that their current point of view is a far cry from what is implied by the cover of the Association's publication in 1971.

However, interestingly enough, there are still references in the Turkmen's public discourse to the original stance of the Kemalist government on the Mosul question. Take the example of the Association's membership cards that are issued for Turkmen migrants in Turkey. The card not only documents the identity of the person but also points at the image of motherland that is attributed to Turkey, though it is not clear whether the addressee here is the Turkmen or the Turkish government. The backside of the card features a map of the Turkish Republic with a picture of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the Turkish flag in the background. The caption, on the other hand, hints at a larger Turkey, with its borders envisioned by the National Pact of 1920 (Misak-ı Millî).[43]

> Mustafa Kemal says:
> "The province of Mosul-Kirkuk is within the national boundaries. We shall not detach these regions from the motherland and give them away to anyone else."
>
> January 30, 1922

In 2007, I came across the same words of Atatürk on a placard in a meeting hall of a hotel in Istanbul, where a Turkmen crowd gathered with a group of Turkish politicians, diplomats, and intellectuals for a panel, organized by the Eurasian Turkic Associations Federation (*Avrasya Türk Dernekleri Federasyonu*) and entitled "The Kirkuk Referendum and Its Effects on Turkey." The point I am trying to make with these examples is not that the Turkmen have clung to irredentist aspirations; rather I believe that some kind of "mourning" has been experienced, as many of them have abandoned the ideal of reuniting with Turkey. Therefore, any references made by community leaders or by Turkish nationalists to the Mosul crisis of the 1920s and to the Kemalist government's territorial claim to the province at that time should be read as part of attempts to represent Turkey as a rightful stakeholder in the region. History is instrumentalized to advance political motives in a way that implicitly justifies possible Turkish interventions in Iraqi politics.

In other words, irredentist reflexes have given way to a more realistic understanding of kin-state politics; and the Turkmen elites in the diaspora,

particularly those in Turkey, acting more like a lobby than an activist group, have been the major actors in this process. The Turkmen today avoid irredentist overtones in their public discourses and instead try to justify their claims of ethnic particularity (and for that matter, their cultural ties to the Turkic world) based on international law of human and minority rights.[44] The vignette below is an excerpt from an interview I conducted with Erşad Hürmüzlü, a senior Turkmen nationalist who, until recently, acted as the Advisor to the Turkish President for Middle Eastern Affairs:

> If I wished that Kirkuk be annexed to Turkey, I would not be different from a man in Çorum or Kastamonu (both are Turkish cities). More importantly, that would not be different from the Kurds' expansionist politics. For this reason, we stand for the unity of Iraq. […] If you tell a layman in Kirkuk that the Turkish army arrives tomorrow to raise the Turkish flag here, he would cry out, "Allah!" It's an innermost wish [for an Iraqi Turkmen to live under the Turkish flag]. But, he is a layman. [T]hat would be nothing but map fascism, and we should avoid this. […] That place [Kirkuk] is Turkic soil; it might not be Turkish territory, but it is Turkic soil! […] It is my right to like Azerbaijani Turks just as an Arab in Tunisia likes an Arab in Iraq. The UN is saying this, I am not![45]

Hürmüzlü's words epitomize the attitude of the Turkmen lobby in Turkey toward the ongoing Kirkuk crisis between the central government in Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The lobby has declared at various occasions, including meetings in Europe and the US, that they defend the territorial integrity of Iraq, provided that Kirkuk province is connected to the central government, whether given a special administrative status or not (Natali 2008).

The Debates around the ITF: Collective Agency and the Politics of Representation

The political existence of the Turkmen in Iraq is often reduced to the activities of the Iraqi Turkmen Front (*Irak Türkmen Cephesi*, hereafter the ITF), founded in 1995 in Erbil as a result of collaboration between the Turkish government and the Turkmen lobby in Turkey. With headquarters in Kirkuk, the ITF is a local actor that consistently calls on Turkey to support the Turkmen cause. Although it managed to incorporate several Turkmen

parties and civil society organizations (Duman 2012), a significant portion of the Shiite Turkmen (constituting at least half the Turkmen population) has preferred to join the Turkmen Islamic Union or United Iraqi Alliance under the leadership of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani.[46]

With the US-led intervention in 2003, the administrative system of Iraq went through a radical transition from a government run by Sunni Arabs to a "bicephalous" state dominated by Shiites and Kurds, in the central and regional governments respectively. This implied the redistribution of power along ethno-sectarian lines in a way that dismayed not only the ex-Baathists but Sunni Arabs in general. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) viewed the latter as a "uniform, homogeneous entity, inhabiting a relatively defined territory dubbed the Sunni triangle, enjoying a privileged status under the deposed president and bound together by common hostility toward as well as resistance to the new order" (ICG 2013:5, see also ICG 2005). Sunni Arabs were thereby relegated to a minority status they would hardly accept after having retained political domination throughout the last century.[47] Under the Shiite-led government of Nouri al-Maliki, de-Baathification policies originally implemented by the CPA reached a point where this recently constructed minority would be subjected to institutionalized discrimination operating simultaneously at different levels: the exclusion of Sunni Arabs from government offices, the stigmatization of individuals as Baathist or terrorist with alleged links to Al-Qaeda (an excuse for arbitrary arrests and torture), the suspension of municipal services in Sunni districts, and so on (ICG 2014). As the prime minister resorted to violence in securing Shiite hegemony, frustrated Sunni Arabs would gradually gravitate toward radical militancy in Sunni-populated governorates (Anbar, Salah-al-Din, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Diyala). The movement, at least at its early phase, was local and eclectic in character, supported by various groups (tribal, religious, and ex-Baathists), each with their own agenda in addition to a common anger toward the government and a common feeling of injustice (ICG 2014:2).

Until recently, rampant sectarianism seemed to concern only Arabs while other groups were stuck in ethno-territorial conflicts. Throughout the 2000s, the political status of Kirkuk and the problem of power sharing in the province remained the most pressing issue, particularly for the Kurds and Turkmen, the region's two major ethnic groups, along with the Arabs, Chaldeans, and Assyrians. Turkey, on the other hand, continued to use the Turkmen card as a bargaining tool against the central government and

also against the KRG, whose leaders had for years run a successful public relations campaign to establish Kirkuk as the "Jerusalem of Kurdistan."[48]

The ITF now acts as a regular political party, trying to increase the number of Turkmen seats in the Iraqi parliament since the national elections held in December 2005. Turkish interventionism, in the meantime, has proved to be indispensable to the Turkmen's participation in national politics. The Ankara government led by the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, hereafter AKP) was able to negotiate with al-Maliki over the number and names of Turkmen ministers,[49] even when their relations were quite strained largely due to the former's tendency to sideline Baghdad in building up commercial partnerships with the KRG.

Turkey's kin-state politics, and particularly the way it manipulates the ITF, has been a subject of contention among the Turkmen in both Iraq and the diaspora. While Turkmen nationalists generally seem to support the ITF, they usually think that it is an organization with foreign provenance, and this obviously raises the questions of representation and legitimacy.[50] Many activists I interviewed during my fieldwork in Turkey in 2006 and 2007 openly criticized the ITF, some of them claiming that the organization has hardly served the Turkmen cause and those who work for it are doing their job only for economic interests. The Turkmen in Iraq do not have too many options, they also admitted, but even those who spoke more favorably of the ITF would agree that it is too tied up with the political will of the Turkish government. I heard some of these comments at a Turkmen meeting organized on May 6, 2006 in Istanbul where Sadettin Ergeç, the ITF leader of the time, gave a speech. The younger audience,[51] I noticed, was more critical of the ITF as well as of Turkey's Turkmen policy. They did not openly discuss their concerns with Mr. Ergeç. They did, however, talk among themselves before and after the talk, exchanging thoughts about how to defend their community in Iraq and how to survive in the midst of daily violence. Their common concern was that the Turkmen did not have an armed force of their own,[52] like the Kurds' *peshmerga* ("those who court death"), an issue that is currently more pressing than ever, given the ongoing sectarian war in the country. "Turkey won't allow it," one of them muttered. When a man in his late 40s addressed the issue in the Q&A session, a couple of youngsters spoke loudly: "If you organized it, we'd come back right away and fight when necessary!"

Sadettin Ergeç gave this speech at the Iraqi Turks Culture and Charity Association six months after the national elections of 2005 at which the ITF

had won only three seats in the Iraqi parliament.[53] Although party members tried to play down the seriousness of their failure by often referring to electoral fraud, the representative power of ITF, as well as its autonomous character, had become more controversial than ever. Mr. Ergeç remarked upon recent criticisms as follows:

> We could have won more seats in the parliament, but on what condition! If we had collaborated with the Kurds, we would have secured at least 20–25 seats and taken at least five ministries, and it was the easy way [Celal Talabani had offered the ITF to join the elections with Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)]. But what were we supposed to give them back! Of course what they want [that is Kirkuk]! We would have lost our nation [the Turkmen]. A nation is not a "nation" without its history, without its land. To remain as a "nation," should we secure the present, or the future?

Bargaining with the Kurds, or with the KRG, has until recently been a political taboo for many Turkmen, a position that effectively stifled deliberations about the fate of the Kirkuk province for decades. It turns out that this is not the case any more. Different political actors from within the community—the lobby in Turkey, the ITF and other Turkmen parties in Iraq, as well as diaspora organizations—today try to figure out how they could negotiate directly or indirectly with the Kurds without compromising Kirkuk. It is by no means an easy process and needs to be analyzed in light of recent developments in Iraq and its surrounding region.

From 2012 onwards, Sunni masses started to more vocally express their frustration and grievances largely caused by al-Maliki's discriminatory politics.[54] The crisis escalated leading to civil war, as the government searched for palliative solutions to Sunnis' demands and tightened the security measures rather than negotiating with the protestors.[55] On April 23, 2013, a violent crackdown in the al-Hawijah protest camp in the Kirkuk province led to a phase of radicalization, in which insurgent groups increasingly joined the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), an al-Qaeda splinter organization that would in a year proclaim an Islamic state with a caliphate in attempt to erase post-colonial borders and establish their own territorial sovereignty across much of Syria and Iraq. Following the parliamentary elections of April 30, 2014, as a result of which al-Maliki was able to form another coalition government, jihadist groups fighting

under the banner of ISIS swiftly conquered and claimed rule over major urban centers in Sunni-populated governorates. As of June 10, 2014, the city of Mosul fell to ISIS, as the Iraqi army and security forces abandoned their weapons and posts. In a couple of days, the peshmerga took control of Kirkuk, and Kurdish forces have since then assumed the defense of almost all surrounding regions besieged by the ISIS.[56]

Soon afterwards, the KRG announced that they had no plans to relinquish Kirkuk, reviving the discussions on the Kirkuk referendum. The AKP government in turn pretended for a while that they were willing to recognize Kurdish independence. This was noteworthy, given that the state elites in Turkey had for long remained hostile to the idea of Kurdistan in northern Iraq, with or without Kirkuk under its jurisdiction (see Natali 2008:437). The full import of this seemingly radical shift in Turkish position can be pursued in the AKP's political and economic ambitions that operate to recast Turkish interventionism toward the Middle East in accordance with its "neo-imperial (neo-Ottoman) fantasies" (Altuğ 2013:126). Most remarkably, in late 2013, the KRG signed a strategic energy agreement with Turkey in order to distribute crude oil to world markets from Turkish shores without Baghdad's permission.[57] Observers had foreseen that "Turkey's thirst for oil and gas" would eventually align with the "Kurds' thirst for statehood" (ICG 2012:ii). However, this momentary rapprochement between Turkey and the KRG was not premised solely on the former's economic and the latter's political interests. Ever-changing conditions call for careful consideration of Turkey-Iraq relations together with ongoing political processes in the wider region and particularly in Syria. The AKP government had been actively involved in the anti-Assad uprising since Spring 2011, striving to sideline the PYD (*Partiya Yekîtiya Demoqrat*), a political party that Turkey views as the Syrian extension of the PKK (*Partiye Karkaren Kurdistane*) and a constitutive element of *Rojavayê Kurdistanê* (Western Kurdistan), the autonomous region in northern Syria (declared in November 2013). Turkey approached the KRG leader Masoud Barzani this time to manipulate the "tensions within the Kurdish High Council and undermine the PYD's power and influence" (Altuğ 2013:127–128).

The Turkmen representatives, highly irritated by Turkey's ambivalent attitude to the KRG, have been anxiously following the maneuvers and tactics of the AKP government. A local official complained to a Turkish journalist: "Turkey is now advising us to get closer to the Kurdistan administration. This has sparked serious reactions among the Turkmen"

(Taştekin 2014a). A Turkmen in his early 30s who works at a government office in Baghdad pointed out how Turkey speaks through the ITF: "If you would like to see how Turkey has changed its policies regarding the KRG, just watch Türkmeneli TV [a pro-ITF television network funded by Ankara]. Anchormen call it now 'Kürdistan,' not the 'Kurdish Region' as they used to."[58] The feeling of being abandoned haunted the community once again, as implied in the remarks of a businessman from Kirkuk who spoke to *Al-Monitor*:

> We used to see Turkey as sacred, and the Turks as blessed. When I was a child in the 1960s, our elders would ask us to go ask for coins from Turks visiting the tombs of the prophets Daniel and Ezra on their way back from Mecca. We would keep those pennies as a sacred treasure. Today, Iraq means nothing but money, oil, and trade for Turkey. (Taştekin 2014b)

Shiite Turkmen, one of the most vulnerable groups in places captured or besieged by ISIS, have their own grievances (Human Rights Watch 2014). An academic from Tal Afar, a town to the west of Mosul that is predominantly Shiite Turkmen, talks about Shiites' anger with Turkey:

> This is the explosion of feelings accumulated [over the years]. In 2008, Shiite-Sunni strife erupted in Tal Afar after a truck bomb targeted Shiite Turkmen. Both sides suffered, but only Sunni Turkmen received humanitarian aid from Turkey. This had a huge impact on [Shiite] opinion of Turkey. Then, when the Syrian crisis broke out, they saw that Turkey nurtured the same al-Qaeda-linked groups that have befallen them here in Iraq. Also, many believe that ISIS got arms supplies via Turkey. Those groups are now openly targeting Shiites because of their sect. In Tal Afar, about 20 percent of Sunnis support ISIS, including people who have close ties with Turkey. This has fueled the indignation against Turkey. (Taştekin 2014b)

The ISIS nightmare in the region has revealed the increasing fragility of Turkmen–Turkey relations, but more importantly, it has made visible the tendencies toward sectarian schism within the community (Taştekin 2014c). This urges us to look more closely at the inner dynamics of Turkmen politics and to question the public legitimacy of an ethnicity-based political

tradition epitomized by the ITF and other nationalist parties in Kirkuk. It is at this point that the issues of recognition and representation should be put into a dialogue. One could ask here the very same questions Cowan has addressed to international human rights NGOs:

> By what authority do [community] elites speak, and whose past and present experience is being made to stand as "representative" for the group as a whole? Is a part of the group being taken for the whole? (2001:171)

These are crucial and timely questions, particularly taking into account the intra-communal debates and conflicts that are increasingly audible in Iraq as well as in international forums, while rather covered up or trivialized in Turkish and Turkmen media. Consider the following remarks made by Riyaz Sarıkahya, head of *Türkmeneli Partisi*, a Kirkuk-based nationalist party that has earlier proposed projects of federation in Iraq, as an alternative to the proposals developed by the ITF:

> Turkey has recognized [and] supported only one Turkmen party in Iraq, [that is] the ITF, not the Turkmen people themselves. Only one quarter of Turkmen population vote for the ITF. Turkey has not invested in the Turkmen constituency as a whole. […] Our Shiite brothers urge our motherland (Turkey) to work for the entire community rather than one part of it.[59]

Many people think that the ITF's belated efforts to include more Shiite Turkmen in the party are futile. Iran, as well as the political and militant groups backed by it, have generously provided humanitarian and military support to all Shiites trapped in places claimed by ISIS, and, therefore, enjoy much greater prestige among Shiite Turkmen (Çevikalp 2014). Notably, the Turkmen of Taze Khurmatu (a town near Kirkuk), armed with weapons provided by the central government and Iran, defend their lands against jihadist forces, fighting next to the peshmerga and as well as other Shiite brigades (Söylemez 2014).

As summarized in this section, recent debates related to the ITF and Turkmen politics in general revolve around two major issues: the Kirkuk crisis that has entered a new phase with the presence of ISIS in the region and the (im)possibility of finding a niche for Shiite Turkmen within

the ethnicity-based minority politics. Moreover, these debates reveal that Turkey-centered Turkmen politics came to a dead end, forcing the local actors to re-consider the limits of their collective agency as a minority group.

Conclusion

It is possible to describe the Iraqi Turkmen as a "double-minority" and characterize their relationship to the Iraqi and Turkish states as "one of a periphery to two centers" (Cribb and Narangoa 2004:166). In this article, I have explored the implications of this doubly peripheral, and doubly precarious, situation with respect to Turkmen's self-understanding and political inclinations. When established under the British mandate, the Iraqi state had promised to be impartial to all sub-national identities. The very first constitution of Iraq was drafted in 1925 in order to demonstrate compliance with international obligations concerning the protection of minorities. The government introduced the category of "minority" into state discourse and gave legal recognition to group differences, even though it failed to establish a democratic system in the long run (Büyüksaraç 2015). I have explained this in terms of the State's ultimate power to impose a legitimate vision of its population through naming communities as "majority" and "minority." 1958 is another moment in Iraqi history, when the republican government identified Arabs and Kurds as co-partners of the Iraqi nation, without referring to any other minority groups. These official acts of naming and not naming, while seemingly contradictory, actually fit in with the very same political paradigm, where the processes of nationalization and minoritization are intertwined. The politicized Turkmen ethnicity can be viewed as an expression of explicit discontent with the paradigm of the "nationalizing state." On the other hand, there is Turkey, in the guise of the "external homeland," with its totalizing view of the Iraqi Turkmen as ethnic kin. Turkmen's minority activism, as argued above, has been largely conditioned by Turkey's kin-state politics and Turkish nationalism (both official and popular versions), as much as it has developed in response to the discriminatory practices of the Iraqi state.

What, then, characterizes the Turkmen elites' understanding and experience of minority politics? Thinking with Brubaker, I have tried to historicize the Turkmen's position and stance as "national minority" vis-à-vis the other two elements of the triadic nexus. Their stance, or their political

attitude, is prone to change across time and generations, as demonstrated above. The Turkmen ethnicity emerged as an injured, melancholic identity that promotes a backward-looking politics, as an expression of nostalgia for Ottoman times, when everything and everyone seemed to be in its right place. The Turkmen stance resembled that of the "minoritized majorities" in post-imperial Europe, like Germans in Poland or Hungarians in Slovakia (Kymlicka 2008:25–27). While "national minority" could be empowering as an officially imposed and internationally sanctioned category with certain civic and political rights attached to it, for the Turkmen it has mainly implied disempowerment. This sense of "minoritized majority" has often swayed the Turkmen elites toward irredentism. However, it seems that the desire for Turkish tutelage is giving way to a more pragmatic understanding of kin-state politics. This is accompanied by a growing tendency to refer more often to the international law of minority rights, although the latter lacks a framework for addressing the challenges of ethnic diversity in Iraq or elsewhere (Büyüksaraç 2015:18–25).

Nevertheless, there are two major interrelated issues that presently challenge the Turkmen politics in Iraq, both causing discontent among local people. One is the inability of an ethnicity-based political tradition to embrace sectarian differences within the community, which raises the questions of public representation and legitimacy, as I have discussed in the context of the relations between the ITF and the Shiite Turkmen. The other issue is the increasingly intricate and precarious relations between the Turkmen elites and and the Turkish government. In current circumstances, where Turkey cannot live up to its image as the Turkmen's "kin-state," it is reasonable to expect that the Turkmen will become increasingly skeptical of the virtues of transnational ethnic solidarity. It remains unclear, however, if such skepticism could lead them to create alternative mechanisms of solidarity that would nurture a sense of self-sufficiency when engaging in Iraqi politics. ■

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Endnotes:

[1]Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution prescribes that the political status of Kirkuk and other "disputed territories" would be determined within a certain timeframe (before December 31, 2007) by means of "normalization" (a multifaceted reversal of Arabization) as well as a census and referendum. Given that the proposed referendum has been deferred to an undefined date, the issue of power and resource sharing in Kirkuk remains to be a major concern for all parties, the federal and regional governments, as well as the local communities. For recent developments regarding the Kirkuk crisis, see ICG (2011, 2012).

[2]For the minority studies that have been helpful in framing my arguments in this piece, see Brubaker (1996); Cribb and Narango (2004); Cowan (2003, 2006); Cowan, Dembour, and Wilson (2001); Kymlicka (1995, 2000); Povinelli (2002); Rabinowitz (2001); Robbins and Stamaopoulou (2004); Kymlicka and Pföstl (2014), and Mahmood (2012).

[3]See, for example, Appadurai (1991), Donnan and Wilson (1998), Hannerz (1996), Kearney (1995), Miles and Sheffer (1998), Vertovec (1999).

[4]A significant number of the studies on diaspora nationalism deal with expatriates who are (self-)represented as members of a "nation with a state," i.e., with people who view themselves as members of a majority group laying claim to a state. Consider, for example, the relations between the Armenian diaspora and the Republic of Armenia (Payaslian 2010; Tölölyan 1996, 2000, 2010) or Turks in Europe and the Republic of Turkey (Kaya and Kentel 2005, Kastoryano 2004). For exemplary studies of diasporic minorities, see Daniel (1997), Fuglerud (1999) on Tamils from Sri Lanka; Østergaard-Nielsen (2001, 2003a, 2003b), Wahlbeck (1998a, 1998b) (Kurds from Turkey); McClure (2001) on Assyrians from Turkey.

[5] Data for this study were collected from various sources and at various times. A significant part of the article is based on historical documents (both official and unofficial) in addition to the ethnographic research I carried out among Iraqi Turkmen migrants in Turkey in 2006 and 2007. Most of the people I interviewed were Turkmen expatriates in Turkey, and yet there were also Iraqi locals (all self-identified Turkmen) among my informants, who were temporarily staying in Istanbul or Ankara at the time of my fieldwork. In the last section, I draw upon news and non-governmental organization reports as well as ethnographic research in Istanbul and online interviews with the Turkmen currently living in Baghdad (2006 and 2014, respectively).

[6] What Brubaker (1996: 56) suggests about "groupness" is also applicable to "community." Both concepts indicate a political project rather than a social fact.

[7]On irredentism and kin-state intervention, see Caspersen (2008), Garment and James (2000), Itzigsohn (2000), Koinova (2008).

[8]By naming, Bourdieu refers to the work of representing the social world through institutionalized taxonomies.

[9]See, for example, Burguiere and Grew (2001), White (2007).

[10]On the Iraqi case, see Büyüksaraç (2015) and Saleh (2013).

[11]On this general tendency, see Chatterjee (1993:220–239), Kaviraj (1992), Pandey (2006). On Middle Eastern cases, see Shami and Naguib (2013).

[12]Such labeling, as Cowan (2000:10) asserts, foregrounds markers of difference from the mainstream culture, "often without investigating, or with scant concern for, perceptions of similarity and difference" within the social group under question. Installing a legal regime of minority protection on a national or international scale entails the construction of minorityhood and the production of subjects-in-minority status, a process that "forecloses other possibilities—of identity, of action, of imagining the political" (Brown and Halley 2002 as quoted in Cowan 2006:18). For historical analyses of international regime of minority protection, see Luard (1967) and Musgrave (2000). On the internationalization of minority rights, see Kymlicka (2008).

[13]See Agelopoulos (1997), Barth (1969), Brown (1999), Cowan (1997, 2000), Danforth (1995), Werbner (1996).

[14]The discussions carried out in the following two sections are based on three sets of data: official documents, intellectual and literary works produced by the community members (see, for example, Demirci 1990; Al-Hırmızı 2003; Kerkük 2004; Nakip 2007; Saatçi 1996, 2003), and ethnographic interviews I carried out in Istanbul and Ankara in 2006 and 2007.

[15] The Mosul dispute has so far been studied primarily from state-centric and diplomatic perspectives. See Beck (1981), Coşar and Demirci (2004), Demirci (2010), Kedourie (1978:75–213), Öke (1991). For a relevant study in international law, see Wright (1926).

[16]The name "Âzidi" has been used here in place of the usual term "Yazidi," a name that is rarely used in self-identifications as it is deemed derogatory.

[17]"Turani" refers to "the people of Turan," a geographic region originally cited in a Persian myth as a place located in Central Asia, particularly in Turkestan. The word acquired ideological significance in the lexicon of Hungarian Turanists in the late 19th century to denote a large language family that encompasses Turkic (*Türki*) dialects as well as the Ural-Altaic languages including Finnish and Hungarian (Czaplicka 1918, as cited in Özdoğan 2001). The Hungarian pan-Turanists called for the political union of all peoples of alleged Turanian orgin. The word "Turani" was used interchangeably with "Türkî" by pan-Turkists and Kemalist nationalists to exclusively denote the "Turkic" peoples who lived outside Turkey and were claimed to share historical and ethnic/racial roots (Özdoğan 2001). See Curzon (1923:342-343).

[18]Lausanne Conference on Near Eastern Affairs (Curzon 1923:342).

[19]Here I rely on two significant resources. One is a biography of Hızır Lûtfî as noted above (Demirci 2005). The other is an anthology published in 2000 by Ata Terzibaşı (b. Kirkuk, 1924 – d. Kirkuk, 2016), an interesting figure in Turkmen literature, who never left Kirkuk. Terzibaşı was a lawyer by occupation, but more importantly, a prolific self-taught folklorist, who, since 1949, had been publishing his researches on local culture and history. He frequently wrote in the fifties about Turkism and particularly introduced Turkist ideologues to Arabic-reading audiences in Iraq and Egypt (Nakip 2007: 346-353). At the time this article was being written, the Kirkuk Foundation was preparing the Latin script edition of Terzibaşı's 12-volume anthology, Kerkük Şairleri (1968-2000, in Arabic script). I thank Suphi Saatçi (Turkmen scholar and active member of the Kirkuk Foundation) for sharing with me the section about Hızır Lûtfî while the book was in press (the sixth volume of the anthology, cited here as Terzibaşı 2000).

[20]His lineage is traced back to a disciple of the Persian Sufi mystic Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī, who migrated in the 17th century (circa 1635) from the Anatolian town of Konya to Kirkuk where he would disseminate Rūmi's ideas. Hızır Lûtfî himself followed the Naqshbandi order (a Sunni path whose spiritual lineage is traced back to the Prophet Muhammad).

[21]According to Terzibaşı (2005), the Turkish and Turkish-Arabic newspapers and periodicals issued by the Turkmen of the monarchic period include *Kevkeb-i Maarif* (1915–?), *Necme* (1918–1926), *Kerkük* (1926–1972, issued with the name *Gavurbağı* between 1959–1960), *Afak* (1954–1959), and *Beşir* (1958).

[22]"Dertli idim ezelden, yârim gitti elimden. / Ayrılık büktü belim, kurtulamam elemden. / Attığım her adımda, bir uçurum açıldı. / Daha hayatta iken, yarım benden ayrıldı" Demirci (2005:12).

[23]"Büyük Gazi kurtar bizi yağıların bezinden. / Kerkük Türktür gel ayırma anasını kızından. / Burada bir gözü yaşlı bağrı taşlı öksüz var. / Gece gündüz ayrı düşen yurdu için kan ağlar" (Saatçi 1996:205).

[24]On the cultural and political implications of loss/melancholy/mourning, see Eng and Kazanjian (2003). I owe special thanks to Serra Hakyemez for her theoretical intervention on the affective leanings of Turkmen nationalism.

[25]The Iraqi historian Hanna Batatu (1978) argues that there was a correlation between ethnic identities and class positions in the Mosul province during the late Ottoman period, where the Turkmen and the Kurds formed numerical majorities in the Kirkuk city and the rural areas, respectively. A significant part of the Turkmen belonged to the land-owning and bureaucratic elite, and mercantile classes, whereas the Kurds usually formed the poorer segment of the urban population. Batatu (1978: 212) describes well-established Turkmen families (such as the families of Avcı, Çadırcı, and Neftçi, whose descendants I got to know in Turkey during my fieldwork) as a segment of the "governing [Turkish] race." Note that Batatu's findings are largely compatible with the socio-economic descriptions of the local communities provided by the British military and civil servants who had been familiar with the region during the mandate period (see, for example, Edmonds 1957, Fieldhouse 2002). For a relevant study based on Ottoman archives, see Eroğlu, Babuçoğlu, and Özdil (2005).

[26]I use pseudonyms, unless the informant is a public figure who needs to be mentioned.

[27]Interviewed at the informant's house in Istanbul, August 11, 2006.

[28]Istanbul, August 10, 2007.

[29]On the 1958 Revolution, see Haj (1997) and Khadduri (1969).

[30]Mullah Mustafa Barzani's visit to Kirkuk in late October 1958, as the first thing to do after his return from exile, had instigated violent clashes between the Turkmen and the Kurds of northern Iraq. This visit symbolized the Kurds' territorial claim to the city, as it was widely interpreted among the Turkmen as well as Turkish circles. On the very day of Barzani's arrival in town, the Turkish News Agency in Baghdad reported that "about 5,000 Kurds, welcoming Barzani, attacked the local Turkmen, looted their shops, and people from both sides were wounded in the skirmish" (Avni Doğan, Vatan, 19 November 1958, cited in PRO, FO 371/140682).

[31]For the community elite perspective on this period, see Demirci (1990), Al-Hırmızı (2003), Nakip (2007), Saatçi (1996).

[32]Interview conducted in Istanbul, August 17, 2006.

[33]With the Educational and Cultural Cooperation Protocol signed in 1946, a growing number of Iraqi students had access to Turkish universities (Şimşir 2004). The official text of the Iraq–Turkey Agreement signed in Ankara on March 29, 1946 and composed of six protocols (including the one mentioned above) is available at http://www.internationalwaterlaw.org/documents/regionaldocs/Iraq-Turkey-Friendship_1946.pdf (Last accessed on January 2, 2015).

[34]More recently, in 1997, İzzettin Kerkük (b. 1929 Kirkuk- d. 2014 Istanbul), a leading Turkmen figure in Istanbul and a journalist by occupation, established the Kirkuk Foundation (İzzettin Kerkük Vakfı) that would specialize in publishing about Turkmen politics and folklore. The Foundation issues Kardaşlık (Brotherhood) since 1999, a monthly journal named after the original Turkmen periodical, published in Baghdad from the early 1960s onwards.

[35]The Local Committee of the Iraqi Communist Party (the ICP), as the chief power in Kirkuk at the time, organized a rally for the very first anniversary of the July 1958 revolution. As the marchers "reached the Fourteen July Coffee-house, a haunt of the Turkmen, shots rang out" (Batatu 1978:916). Official accounts never clarified who started the firing, yet there were several references to Kurds in the documents of the British Embassy (cited in Al-Hırmızı 2003:132–138). The marchers were so agitated that a scuffle followed, which quickly led to discharges of firearms by soldiers and a communist group from the People's Resistance Forces (the armed forces of the government). During the curfew at night, a police station, a movie theater, as well as shops, cafés, and Turkmen houses in the area were attacked. The final official estimate for the injured was 130 (Batatu 1978:918–919). The Kirkuk events of July 1959 would provide the Turkmen elites with a powerful emotional argument for expressing the community's concerns about their safety in a region increasingly dominated by the Kurds (Anderson and Stansfield 2009:60); the "Kirkuk massacre" soon became a crucial trope in the nationalist discourse, perhaps second only to "Mosul's separation from the motherland."

[36]Interview with Bahattin Türkmen, who was a member until the NDTO disbanded in 1985 (Istanbul, August 11, 2006).

[37]Following the Gulf War of 1991, a no-fly zone was established by the international community in northern Iraq to prevent further aerial attack by the central government and to facilitate the return of Kurdish refugees to their hometowns. As Kurdish insurgents continued to fight government troops, Iraqi forces finally withdrew, leaving the region to be governed by the Kurds de facto independently (see ICG 2005, Gunter 1993, Natali 1999, Stansfield and Ahmadzadeh 2007).

[38]Interviews with Bahattin Türkmen and Mehmet Tütüncü, members of the NTPI (August 2006, Istanbul). See also Şemsettin Küzeci's interview with Muzaffer Arslan, a founding member of the NTPI (2009), available at http://www.yalquzaq.com/?p=439 (Last accessed on November 10, 2014).

[39]About the criminalization of pan-Turkism in the 1940s, and the "Trial of 1944" in particular, see Ertekin (2002), and Özdoğan (2001).

[40]Çoban dedi: Edirneden ta Van'a/ Erzurum'a kadar benim mülklerim/ Bülbül dedi: İzmir, Maraş, Adana/ İskenderun, Kerkük en saf Türklerim/ Sarıl çoban sarıl mülkü bırakma/ Yad elinde bülbül Türk'ü bırakma. See Beysanoğlu (1976:96). The two quatrains of this poem were first published in Genç Yolcular (No. 3, January 1920:35) with the title of "Felaket İçinde Teselli (Solace in a Time of Catastrophe)."

[41]However, while the Turkmen want to give an impression that they are acting independently of Turkey, the name they have given to their homeland in Iraq is a product of a Turkist imagination. During a conversation about the emergence of the word "Türkmeneli," Riyaz Sarıkahya, head of the Turkmeneli Party (*Türkmeneli*

Partisi), referred to an essay by Nihal Atsız, where the author attributes the name Türkili (the land of Turks) to Turkey. Nihal Atsız (1905–1975) is a legendary figure symbolizing the racist-irredentist wing of Turkism in Turkey. For more on Atsız and his trial in 1944, see Ertekin (2002), Landau (2003), Özdoğan (2001).

[42]June 23, 2007.

[43]For the map of the National Pact, see Tunçay (1976:15).

[44]For Erşad Hürmüzlü's related remarks, see Al-Hırmızı (2003). For another exemplary public text, see the *Turkmen Declaration*. Last accessed from http://www.irakturkleri.org/sayfa.php?oku=turkmen-deklarasyonu on June 27, 2014.

[45]August 2007. Hürmüzlü refers here to the 1992 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities.

[46]For further details on party-based Turkmen opposition in Iraq, see Anderson and Stansfield (2009) and Strakes (2009).

[47]Population proportions have been re-estimated as follows: 60 percent Shiite Arabs, 20 percent Sunni Arabs, and 17 percent Sunni Kurds (ICG 2013).

[48]In an invincible fear of territorial loss, the Turkish political elite had always been worried that the Kurdish ascendancy in Iraq would stir up secessionist sentiments among their own Kurdish minority.

[49]From 2010 through 2014, ten members of the Iraqi parliament and three ministers were Turkmen (Duman 2012:61).

[50]For example, in 2009 a Turkmen organization based in the Netherlands (Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Research Foundation) published a report on its website that is severely critical of Turkey's Turkmen policy. The report describes the ITF as a "puppet organization" that has marginalized the Turkmen in and outside Iraq and acted against their national interests Accessed from http://www.turkmen.nl/1A_soitm/Rep.6-B2208.pdf on June 19, 2014.

[51]While a few of the young audience were university students, many of them (all single men in their 20s or early 30s) worked at wholesale textile or import–export companies run by Arabs or Turks, living on tiny salaries with neither health insurance nor residence permits (see also Danış 2006).

[52]The ITF held at its disposal a small armed force known as *akıncılar* (raiders, alluding to mytho-historical Turkic soldiers), but, apparently, Turkey has never been favorable of the idea of a Turkmen paramilitary force in Iraq (see Duman 2012).

[53]On the performance of the ITF at the 2005 elections (see Duman 2012:59).

[54]In December 2012, government's security forces stormed the residence of Rafea al-Issawi (Sunni Finance Minister and member of Iyad Allawi's cross-confessional coalition, al-Iraqiya) in his hometown of Falluja in the Anbar province, arresting his staff and guards on charges of participating in terrorist attacks. In response to this, thousands of protesters poured into streets of Falluja, and later, of Ramadi, blocking the highways around. Ten protestors were reported to have died in clashes with the government (ICG 2013:1).

[55]Sunnis' demands (13 points in total) mainly included "the release of al-Issawi's guards and female prisoners, cancellation of the Counter-Terrorism Law (Article IV), passage of the General Amnesty Law and reform of the Justice and Accountability Law, as well as respect for ethnic and sectarian balance in all state institutions" (ICG 2013:2).

[56]This article reflects developments through January 2016.

[57]On the Erbil–Baghdad conflict over natural resources in northern Iraq, see ICG (2012).

[58]Online conversation with the interlocutor on November 8, 2014.

[59]This excerpt is based on two different interviews published in local papers (July 31, 2012 and July 20, 2014) and posted on the party's website (accessed from http://www.turkmeneliparty.com/news.php on 1 November 2014).

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Foreign Language Translations:

Trans-border Minority Activism and Kin-state Politics: The Case of Iraqi Turkmen and Turkish Interventionism
[**Keywords:** Iraqi Turkmen, minority politics, minority activism, (self-)essentialism, kin-state, Turkish irredentism]

Sınır ötesi azınlık aktivizmi ve akraba devlet siyaseti: Irak Türkmenleri ve Türkiye bağlamında uluslararası müdahalecilik
[**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Irak Türkmenleri, azınlık siyaseti, azınlık aktivizmi, özcülük, akraba devlet, Türkiye ve uluslararası müdahalecilik]

跨边境的少数民族行动主义以及亲属国政策：以伊拉克土库曼与土耳其干预主义为例
[**关键词**：伊拉克土库曼，少数民族政策，少数民族行动主义，（自我）本质主义，亲属国，土耳其领土收复主义]

Трансграничный активизм национальных меньшинств и политическая конъюнктура в государстве, строящемся на родственных отношениях: Кейс иракских туркменов и турецкий интервенционизм
[**Ключевые слова:** политика нацменов, активизм нацменов, (само)эссенциализм, государство, строящееся на родственных отношениях, турецкий ирредентизм]

Ativismo de Minorias Transfronteiriças e Políticas de Estados Hospedeiros de Diásporas: O Caso dos Turcomenos Iraquianos e o Intervencionismo Turco.
[**Palavras-chave:** Turcomenos iraquianos, política de minorias, ativismo de minorias, (auto-) essencialismo, Estado hospedeiro de diásporas, irredentismo turco]

نشاط الأقلية عبر الحدود وسياسات دولة القرابة: حالة التركمان العراقيين والتدخل التركي
كلمات البحث: العراقيون التركمان، سياسات الأقلية ،نشاط الأقلية، جوهرية (الذات)، دولة-القرابة، السعي التركي لاسترداد الأرض