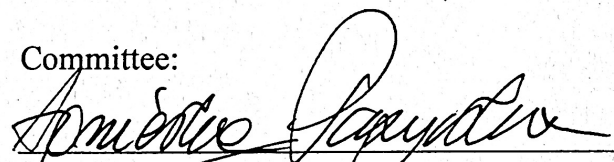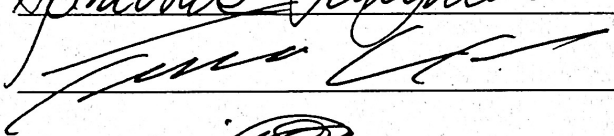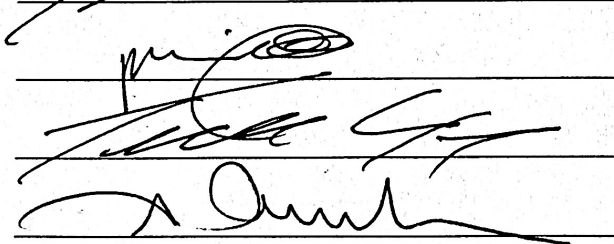# DYNAMIC INSURGENCY: DOES TARGET AUDIENCE CONFLICT PROXIMITY AFFECT THE COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAMES OF A TRANSNATIONAL INSURGENT GROUP?

by

Charles E. Davidson
A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
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of
Doctor of Philosophy
Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Committee:

_____ Chair of Committee

_____

_____

_____ Graduate Program Director

_____ Dean, School for Conflict
Analysis and Resolution

Date: _November 12, 2019_____ Fall Semester 2019
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA

Dynamic Insurgency: Does Target Audience Conflict Proximity Affect the Collective Action Frames of a Transnational Insurgent Group?

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at George Mason University

By

Charles E. Davidson
Master of Arts
University of Arkansas, 2015
Bachelor of Arts
University of Arkansas, 2008

Director: Agnieszka Paczynska, Professor
School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Fall Semester 2019
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my loving wife Abby, my sister Chelsea, and all of my family who blazed the trail in front of me.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family and friends and my cohort and colleagues at George Mason University's School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution for supporting me in so many ways toward the completion of this research. A special thanks to my wife, Abby for all of your hard work for our family and to Drs. Paczynska, Lyons, and Mandaville for all of your inspiration and wisdom.

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Abstract

DYNAMIC INSURGENCY: DOES TARGET AUDIENCE CONFLICT PROXIMITY AFFECT THE COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAMES OF A TRANSNATIONAL INSURGENT GROUP?

Charles E. Davidson, Ph.D.

George Mason University, 2019

Dissertation Director: Dr. Agnieszka Paczynska

Transnational insurgent groups operate within an ongoing dual system of receiving outside support and garnering new sources of sustainability. Civil conflict scholarship therefore examines various insurgency support provisions such as political influence, finances, and manpower which originate from ethnic diasporas, NGOs, and outside governments among other sources. Recent scholarship also examines insurgent group strategies of gaining support within their areas of influence and how these strategies affect group behavior and structure. Less has been done, however, to understand how insurgents project and promote to potential outside sources of support. This project therefore engages how transnational insurgent groups seek to develop effectiveness in promotion to outsiders through shifts in their collective action frames (CAFs). While there is ample evidence that CAFs are influenced by certain economic, demographic, and political variables of the intended audience, this study suggests another variable,

proximity, may also have an effect on CAF production and dynamics and asks, *"does target audience conflict proximity affect the collective action frames of a transnational insurgent group?"* The project utilizes the analytical lenses of framing process and proximity and engages the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (PDKI) and its collective action frames at differing distances from its conflict with Iran. It finds that proximity has several effects on CAF dynamics and demonstrates the need to expand the idea of proximity to include not only the effects of geographic distance, but temporal proximity as well.

Chapter 1: Introduction

"If we sit and wait till we all get united, till the situation is ripe and the rear defense lines are fortified, till all means are provided, that means never…Yes, it needs unity, means and right situation, but you have to create the situation, obtain the means and start the action otherwise it means no struggle."

-Hassan Sharafi, PDKI Second-in-Command

After the end of the Second World War and the subsequent recession of European colonialism, civil wars grew in both quantity and intensity. Before their subsequent decline and present fluctuations in frequency,[1] civil wars had occurred in between one-third to over one-half of the world's countries[2] (Checkel 2014: 3; Blattman and Miguel 2010: 4). Both persistent and devastating, civil wars lasting at least 10 years have plagued 20 percent of the world's countries over the last half-century, accounting for the deaths of millions[3] (Blattman and Miguel 2010: 4). Despite the magnitude of the effects of civil war, only since the late 20th century has scholarship responded in range and frequency of approach to the study of its causes, actors, and transnational dynamics. Milestone works such as Charles Tilly's *From Mobilization to Revolution*, qualitative approaches like *Why*

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[1] As of 2019

[2] Per Blattman and Miguel (2010: 4), civil war, defined as a conflict resulting in 1000+ deaths per year, has impacted about 1/3 of the world's nations while civil conflict, resulting in at least 25 deaths per year, has impacted more than half of the world's countries since 1960.

[3] Obtained from http://necrometrics.com/20c1m.htm on 24 Dec 2016.

Men Rebel by Ted Gurr and the quantitative work *Greed and Grievance* by Paul Collier

and Anke Hoeffler have illuminated the need for scholarly nuance to better understand

the causes, perpetuation, effects, and possible resolution strategies of civil war.

More recent scholarly research has responded to this need with studies on more

specific characteristics of civil war such as conflict spillover, socio-cultural factors,

insurgent group structure, recruitment methods, governance practices, unit control, and

the impact of transnational dynamics. Weinstein (2007), Kalyvas (2006), Wood (2003),

Christia (2012), Staniland (2014) and Checkel (2014), among others, demonstrate how

preceding studies formed critical quantitative and qualitative gaps which account for the

variances in civil war dynamics.

One of these dynamics, transnational factors, influences the commencement,

processes, strategy, resource procurement, and the conclusions of civil war. The study of

transnational dynamics shows that while civil wars take place within a sovereign state,

they are shaped by processes which occur both inside and outside national boundaries

and do not occur within an international vacuum, thereby impacting nations and people

that exist both inside and outside the war-affected area. Therefore, it is imperative to

continue to expand the study of the transnational dynamics of civil war through the

examination of conflict spillover, ethnic linkages, political ties, and the economic,

political, and the cultural interests of outside parties such as ethnic diaspora, insurgent

operatives, and other states in order to better grasp the extent of the effects of civil war as

a whole.

Among these transnational dynamics is a subset of influencing factors which remains relatively underexamined, namely, how transnational insurgent groups project their cause to outsiders for the sake of gaining support. While the study of outside support for insurgency, as well as how insurgents influence others within their areas of operation has garnered a robust research context (discussed later), this work examines how the inherently transnational nature of civil war affects the dynamics of insurgent group promotion to outsiders through an examination of the construction and shifts of collective action frames (CAFs).

While factors such as local and regional politics, the economic environment, demographics, and group culture and goals influence the dynamics of CAFs, there remain many questions associated with CAF construction and shifts with respect to the transnational characteristics of civil war. When considering extant literature, it became apparent that one characteristic associated with transnationalism, distance to the conflict, remained under-studied. Transnationalism, after all, can mean both half a world away and just across country's border. While taking this into consideration within a scholarly context of literature on the subject, it became clear that it was both possible and logical that for a litany of reasons, audience conflict proximity could have an effect on insurgent promotional strategies and therefore insurgent group CAFs, yet the topic remained under-examined. To begin to fill this gap in the scholarly literature on the transnational dynamics of civil war, this project asks *does target audience conflict proximity affect the collective action frames of a transnational insurgent group?*

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This study, through the examination of the collective action frames of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI), a Kurdish opposition group which fights for the civil and ethnic rights of the Kurdish people of Iran, finds that proximity to the conflict affects insurgent group collective action frame construction and dynamism in three ways. First, the PDKI constructs collective action frame differently in response to the preexisting realities of both their target audience and their members in ways that are distinctly tied to proximity. While these differences are connected to contextual variables such as politics, economics, and demographics, proximity itself incorporates a unique influence that is discussed in detail in this work.

Second, proximity affects unofficial CAFs as constructed by members and supporters living in differing proximal contexts. This differs from official PDKI CAF construction and dynamics and relates both to the audience engaged by members and the conflict proximity of the members themselves. This is demonstrated in this study through a collection of interviews of people in varying proximities to the conflict with Iran, and by PDKI members who have changed proximities in the past and therefore shifted the construction of their own communication of group collective action frames.

Finally, there is an element of proximity that affects CAFs that was unanticipated at the outset of this study which relates not to physical proximity but proximity as a function of time. Dubbed "temporal proximity" in this work, time elapsed since an individual's latest engagement in the conflict or residence within the conflict area affects the CAF construction of PDKI members and former members and even has an influence on official PDKI CAF construction.

Project Justification

Why study shifts in collective action frames as a result of proximity, or address the larger questions related to insurgent group marketing to outsiders at all? In particular, why is it important to understand the connection of CAF shifts as they relate to proximity among an insurgency such as the PDKI? These topics are an important addition to the body of knowledge of civil war and insurgent group studies for reasons expounded upon below.

First, this project develops the discussion of civil war in general. Through an added study on the conceptual unity of transnationalism and civil war, this work demonstrates yet another reason why the analysis of civil war should not be separated from its transnational dynamics in modern times. Indeed, transnationalism is a part of civil war that should be regarded as one of its inherent elements rather than an outside mitigating force that occurs independently. Therefore, by grasping this new facet of transnational group marketing, we gain a larger understanding of modern civil war through an inherent and dynamic characteristic of transnationalism: proximity to conflict.

Recent scholarship on the transnational dynamics of civil war has addressed the intertwined issues of transnational insurgency and the dynamics of group marketing and recruitment. Works such as Bob (2005), Mandaville and Lyons (2012) and Van Hear and Cohen (2017) outline how insurgent groups functionally project their missions transnationally. Not only do groups cross borders in search of safety and staging areas, they also recruit, fundraise, and promote themselves transnationally. For instance, the PDKI is currently based in Iraqi Kurdistan for operations in Iran but promotes group

interests such as marketing, fundraising, recruitment and lobbying at various location locally, regionally, and worldwide. Therefore, this project adds to the literature by systematically investigating the strategic choices insurgent groups make to procure support and how these choices are impacted by their target audiences.

A proper conceptualization of transnational insurgent support necessitates an understanding of the duality of the flow of resources into and the support-raising efforts originating from an insurgency. It is therefore important to understand how and why support is provided to an insurgent group from outside sources and how groups formulate strategies to procure this support.

Understanding sources of support provision helps illuminate the role outsiders play in the catalyzation of civil conflict, civil war duration and perpetuation, rebel groups' willingness and ability to stay engaged, and possible conclusions to civil war. Support for opposition parties and insurgencies may enter from the outside through overt political power interests expressed as proxy war, ethnic and religious diasporic support for their people and homeland, non-governmental organizations' engagement in the societal benefits that accompany non-state programs, among other avenues.

It is also important to acknowledge that civil wars take place in an ever-growing arena of interconnectedness through various means of media, communication, and connectivity. This project presses further into how proximity, both because of and in spite of this interconnectivity, plays a role in insurgent group decision making.
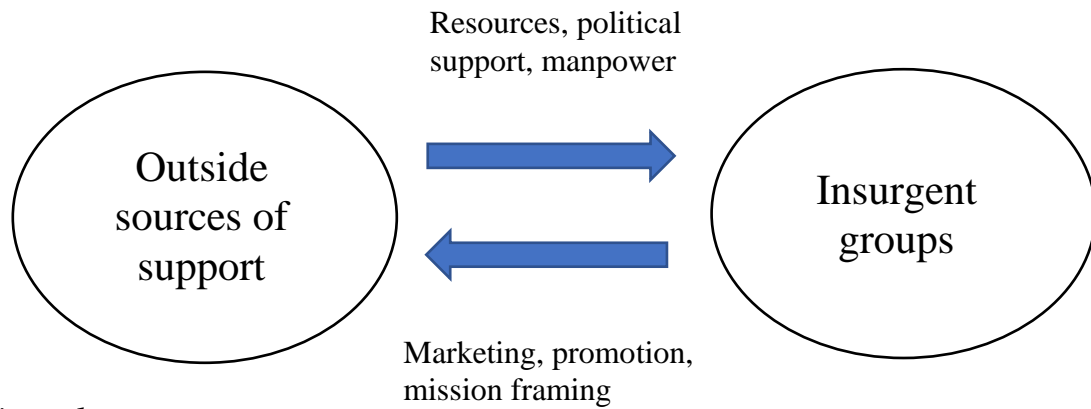
Figure 1

Second, this project expands the understanding of insurgent group marketing, thus helping to illuminate the tactics and philosophies of insurgency in general and provides insight into the decisions that are made both in official capacities and "on the ground" among group members themselves as they relate to their social surroundings. It produces more insight into the reasons for a lack of rigidity in insurgent group marketing processes while investigating beyond "rational actor" explanations toward more specificities concerning group decisions related to marketing and group sustainability.

Much of the previous research on the dynamics of recruitment and sustainability efforts is limited to examinations of how insurgent groups, *within the group's areas of operation,* recruit manpower, operational support, and political backing and how these affect group behavior, structure, alliances, and strategies (Christia (2012), Staniland (2013), Weinstein [2007]). Less has been done to examine how insurgents project and

market to potential sources of support outside their sphere of influence,4 which, despite

works such as Bob (2005) continues to form a noticeable gap in the broader

understanding of the flow of support into insurgent groups and their corresponding

support raising efforts. This observation of a scholarly gap forms the heart of the

justification for this project. If we can better understand insurgent group support raising

and pair it with existing work in insurgent group support, we can better predict who is

being marketed to and the types of recruits and resources sought, and thus could more

broadly illuminate insurgent conflict in general and develop more effective efforts in

conflict analysis and resolution.

Additionally, this study grows the understanding of diaspora support of

insurgency. It better defines ethnicity's role in civil conflict to show that lines of

recruitment may not just fall by happenstance "because of ethnicity," but be purposefully

drawn for the sake of effectiveness in recruitment and sustainability of purpose. Through

an understanding of these processes, we can better gauge how and why diasporic

communities choose to support an insurgency or abstain from doing so.

This project also illuminates group responses to the reality that insurgent group

support is often self-interested and varies with response to distance from the conflict.

While support may directly benefit the insurgent group recipient, it can be assumed that

the provisions are somehow benefitting the provider. It is therefore necessary for the

recipients to understand this link and what may be required of them later; in other words,

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4 A notable exception to this is Clifford Bob's *The Marketing of Rebellion* (2005) which
shows how the same dual flow of support and support-raising exists between rebel groups
and international NGOs4.

what "strings may be attached." These types of support take many forms such as finances, arms, political support, or a safe haven for operations, among others (Um (2015), Hepner (2009), Adamson (2005), Lyons and Mandaville (2012), Smith and Stares (2007), Bob [2005]), and the "strings" may include future political and/or military alliance, a repayment of finances, or even publicizing the "good deeds done" by non-governmental or charitable organizations.
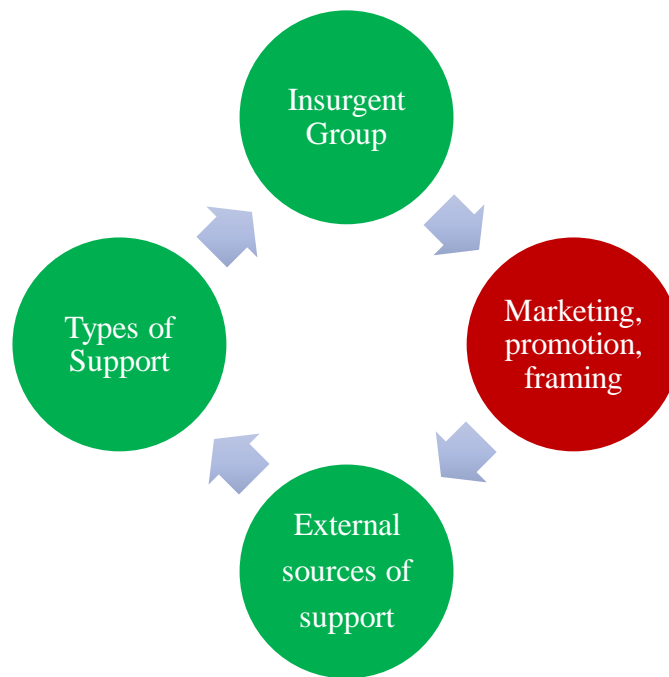
Figure 2

Third, why study proximity's relationship to insurgent CAFs specifically? The literature review expounds upon this question, but in summary, it can be said that proximity permeates a large amount of existing civil war literature related to ethnicity, diaspora groups, immigration, and geographic proximity of surrounding countries. If

proximity has this magnitude of effect on other elements of civil war and insurgency, then a response by insurgencies to these effects in their recruitment and promotion should also be found and reflected in their collective action frame dynamics. As the results indicate, proximity- both geographic and temporal- does indeed affect insurgent group collective action frames. By understanding the relationship of CAFs and proximity, we are better equipped to understand an insurgent group's priorities abroad and how those relate to the propagation of their mission "at home."

Interestingly, the PDKI constructs and shifts CAFs for the sake of effectiveness in raising external support through various sources and means, but the group also adjusts CAFs for the sake of internal sustainability in various places. In other words, CAFs perform a binary function that is observable in this study to not only project purposes to outsiders to but to perform a function of collective identity maintenance through the same mechanisms. This is discussed at length in the results chapters especially in the "distant proximity sections of chapter five and much of chapter six. Therefore, because this work demonstrates the multipurposed nature of the PDKI's CAFs both externally and internally, it should also help develop a broader understanding of the various purposes of other insurgencies' CAF constructions and shifts.

Fourth, and most narrowly, this project gives some explanation of the reasons for and successes of PDKI sustainability. At 75 years old, the PDKI is one of the oldest active opposition groups in existence, which leads to the questions: how and why? By examining sustainability efforts of the group, we can better understand how the PDKI persists through both coincidence of choice and through a purposeful effort to stay

engaged. However, the fact that the group has been around for 75 years and yet continues without major sustained success also merits an explanation and is expounded upon in the results as well.

Research Question

This project aims to build a mechanism through which a larger understanding of insurgent group marketing to external parties can be incorporated into the discussions about insurgent group decision making and group dynamics. In order to institute scholarly standardization of the analysis of marketing, promotion, and framing for the sake of support-raising from "the inside out of" an insurgent group, this study draws upon the theory of collective action frames.

While I discuss this at length in chapter two, collective action frames, as outlined in Benford and Snow (2000), are defined as the ways an opposition group justifies its own existence through the definition of the problem(s) it intends to address, the solution(s) that it presents in response, and the actions it chooses in pursuit of those solutions. Collective action frames are then projected to outsiders as a form of group promotion.

It is important to note a particular point of nuance with regard to CAFs and this study before moving forward. While collective action frames are studied as an official outlet through which a group projects its reasons for existence, this project engages both official and unofficial CAFs. That is, the CAFs and shifts therein that were studied are

both those produced by official communication outlets of the group as well as in the conversations, interviews, and observations that were engaged during the research.

Analyzing collective action frames (CAFs) is an effective way of addressing shifts in insurgent group marketing from the inside out because they respond, as Benford and Snow (2000:628-630) shows, to different "contextual constraints" of "political opportunity structure[s], cultural opportunities and strengths, and audience effects." The challenge, however, was to find an "independent variable" that might systematically and simultaneously affect change on CAFs while understanding that these contextual constraints also play a role in CAF shifts independently.

Van Hear and Cohen (2017) provide a clear candidate for a variable of focus. In their 2017 article, they examine the links between "distance, contiguity and spheres of engagement" and how these variables affect diaspora support in civil conflict. While their article does not address the question introduced in this study, it provides a starting point on the utilization of the study of *proximity* and its effects on the collective action frames of an insurgency for the sake of effectiveness in promotion. This is discussed at length in the literature review found in chapter two.

Why Proximity as the Variable of Focus?

Why investigate proximity rather than any number of the other variables that may influence insurgent group collective action frames? The answer to this question is based on three theoretical foundations which argue that proximity affects outsider support of

insurgency, and therefore inherently suggest that proximity could reciprocally affect insurgents' promotion to outsiders as well.

First, it is apparent from recent works on diasporic influence in civil wars such as Van Hear and Cohen (2017) that proximity plays a large role in how diaspora groups support political opposition. Second, proximity is already a very widely discussed variable related to the likelihood of conflicts to spillover or be influenced by state and non-state actors within the region. Therefore, it would seem likely that opposition groups would interact with and respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by proximity and civil war.

Third, as mentioned above, the questions asked about proximity in this project join a larger existing literature on proximity and support discussed in Van Hear and Cohen (2017), as their writing suggests that insurgent groups might have different incentives for marketing and recruitment among target audiences proximate to the conflict compared to those located farther away.

Therefore, based on the nature of insurgent group promotion and the need to adapt to the nuanced environments in which they seek support, this project begins with a theory of change, that conflict proximity-based contexts related to politics, culture, and audience (as mentioned in Benford and Snow, 2000) impact a transnational insurgent group's collective action frames for the sake of effectiveness in promotion and recruitment of new resources among local and transnational co-ethnics.

Literature Reviewed

To properly define and problematize the gap regarding proximity and its possible effects on collective action frames, the literature review found in chapter two positions the project within recent research addressing the causes of civil war, insurgent group behavior, and the effects of transnational dynamics and accomplishes three goals. First, it explores how the understanding of the roots of civil war has developed in the past 20 years from rather broad to more nuanced, while illuminating parallels and contradictions as well as how the knowledge gaps developed which this work aims to address. Second, it addresses existing works on transnational dynamics of insurgency and civil war and how those dynamics may lead to patterns in proximity-based collective action frame strategies. Third and finally, it examines existing research of how opposition groups pursue effectiveness in group marketing and promotion.

The literature review also more comprehensively defines what is meant by "proximity," "collective action frames," and "support" when considering if insurgent group collective action frames change as a result of proximity for the sake of effectiveness in garnering support. For instance, if the collective action frame of a transnational insurgent group shifts because of "proximity" to the conflict, is the idea of proximity complicated by the characteristics of diasporic populations? If it is found that prognostic frames are centered around recruiting foot soldiers close to the conflict, do similar patterns emerge in diasporic populations gathered in countries half a world away? Additionally, has the internet and differing forms of telecommunications diminished the effects that proximity to a conflict has on insurgent group CAFs?

In this study, the measure of proximity is limited to "near," meaning within the bases and other areas that are controlled by the PDKI in Iraqi Kurdistan; "intermediate," meaning the ethnically contiguous areas comprising the rest of Kurdistan; and "distant" meaning those area beyond the ethnically contiguous regions of Kurdistan including in Europe and the United States.

What is meant by "collective action frame?" This theory is taken from Benford and Snow (2000) and states that CAFs develop as an opposition group's mode of self-understanding and a portrayal of the group's reason for existence to others. It affords significance to their purpose and communicates their intent as a movement. CAFs generally arise as a response to something with which a group disagrees, or a problem they identify, while providing a counter-position. CAFs are comprised of "diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational" subframes known as "core framing tasks" that address the problem, the solution, and the path forward (Benford and Snow 2000:615). Collective action frames are a 30-year-old subject that have been analyzed by more than just Benford and Snow in more recent years. The literature review examines their development and how these subsequent analyses affect the perception of CAFs for the purpose of this project.

What is meant by "support?" The project will look at the different types of support sought by transnational insurgency in different locations. As is evidenced in extant literature, money, political backing, material provisions, intelligence, and manpower are all types of support sought by insurgency (Wood 2003 and Bob 2005).

In addition to the dyad of social context and effectiveness in promotion, it is difficult to understand the effects of proximity to the conflict on a transnational insurgent group's collective action frame without highlighting the *master frames* of the group. It is too reductionist to simply say that a group "wants to win." There may be many paths to victory and perceived timelines set out by the group where short-term successes appear very different than long-term aspirations. Therefore, to understand the effects of conflict proximity on a group's CAFs, the master frames of the group are also considered and integrated into the overall analytical processes of this project and are discussed further in the literature review.

Group Focus

Described in chapter three, The Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI, or KDPI) serves as the research subject for this project. The group was chosen because it is a transnational insurgency that currently stages for incursion in a separate country (Iraq) from its area of opposition focus (Iran), seeks support from different entities worldwide (such as the United States and several European nations), has branches and members in many countries around the world (The United States, Sweden, France, and many others) and is not deemed illicit by the United States government.[5] Additionally, the PDKI is centered in Kurdistan, a region of vital importance in global politics and conflict, and the Kurds have played a central role in many of the past and present conflicts in the Middle

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[5] In fact, it is considered an ally: Reese Erlich, Robert Scheer (2016). Iran *Agenda: The Real Story of U.S. Policy and the Middle East Crisis*. Routledge, p. 133.

East. It is likely that whatever events transpire in the years to come, the Kurds will continue to influence geopolitics in the region, especially as they pursue cultural and national autonomy. The PDKI is also an accessible group to study, with offices and large contingents in Washington, D.C., Paris, Erbil and Koysinjaq, Iraq, along with numerous cities across Scandinavia including the capitals of Stockholm, Oslo, Helsinki, and Copenhagen, and smaller cities and towns across those same countries, all of which were accessible for me as an American researcher.

A prominent characteristic of the PDKI as an active insurgent group is the fact that it publicly admits that it has a slim chance of absolute victory without some sort of outside intervention or assistance against the government of Iran, or some other dramatic shift in Iranian power dynamics. This is true for all of the Kurdish insurgencies in Iran, none of whom are engaged in all-out war with Tehran due to their "limited capacities" (Zaman, 2019).

At present, one of the ways the PDKI conceptualizes a transition of power is through a unified governing body comprised of ethnic groups within Iran that would give proper representation to all Iranian ethnicities to replace the current theocratic regime. The PDKI remains engaged in exile and is working to develop the opportunity to confederate with other ethnicities, should the seat of power in Tehran vacate through other means. They prepare for this through regular meetings and points of contact held online. However, the PDKI also contends with Iranian politics and policies through various weapons of the weak, by a resurgence of military activity known as *Rasan*, and by orchestrating protests and social action inside Iran and outside from their bases in Iraqi

Kurdistan and their regional and national offices around the world. The PDKI therefore joins a section of civil war research which examines groups that have a slim chance of immediate victory yet continue to pursue both sustainability and growth for various reasons.

While I describe in detail several reasons that likely contribute to the sustainability of the PDKI as an insurgency based on this research and previous academic studies, I suggest that, importantly, the sustainability of the collective identity of the Iranian Kurds themselves is also fostered by the presence of the PDKI and vice-versa. The PDKI oscillates in identity as transnationals, in one reference being "local" (in Iran), in another being "related as ethnic kin" (in Kurdistan outside of Iran), and in another as complete "outsiders" (sometimes in Iraqi Kurdistan, outside of Kurdistan, and back in Iran [explained more in chapter three]). This fluid identity impacts the conclusions that are reached in this study and shows that one reason that variables associated with proximity affect insurgent group collective action frames is that they respond to the needs of the sustainability of collective Iranian Kurdish identity around the world.

The Research Design

To test the previously mentioned arguments, and as discussed in chapter four, I conducted fieldwork comprised of nearly 150 interviews along with participant observation across seven countries and 17 cities over the course of one year. I also analyzed primary and secondary sources which project or address the collective action frames of the PDKI including websites, literature, party materiel and other various

outlets. To further standardize the study and control for variables related to ethnicity, I limited my study to Kurdish co-ethnics, regardless of where I was in the world, and was able to vary my interviews among Kurds who originate from across all four of the major Kurdish origins including those from Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. These included Kurds who were both citizens of the country in which I was presently conducting research, and non-citizen residents in almost every location. In doing so, I further limited the study, controlled for ethnicity, and could better situate the idea of ethnic (un)contiguity within the analytical framework of collective action frame analysis. This is discussed further in chapter four which illuminates the fieldwork, methodology, and data collection employed.

The group proved to be a very available and even eager organization which made it very easy to conduct this type of fieldwork, and I explain more about why this is in chapter three. The interviews and the snowballing research network that was engaged were made accessible by the willingness and excitement of the members to engage in my study. As will be discussed more later, the group members saw this project as an opportunity to tell their stories, both past and present, and to feel like they were contributing to "getting the word out" through my interviews and subsequent writing. In this way, I was aware that even I was on the receiving end of group collective action frame projection.

The Research Findings

The findings of the research found in chapters five and six show that proximity directly correlates with the PDKI's collective action frames, the collective identity needs of the target audience, and the needs of the members themselves, especially as they are affected by contextual constraints and opportunities described by Benford and Snow (2000) of politics, culture, and audience. As shifts in Kurdish co-ethnic identity respond to the necessities derived from collective identity of the surrounding social environments, so too do the PDKI's approach and execution of collective action framing. Benford and Snow's understanding of CAF variables also predicts PDKI shifts in scope, resonance, flexibility, and inclusivity among PDKI CAFs in varying proximities. These variables are functionally employed in response to the shifts in proximity and the accompanied contextual opportunities and limitations through adjusting diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational CAF components. They do not shift only because of audience (possible new recruits/supporters) and their proximity to the conflict, but also because of the members' needs as a result of their proximity. These results which include PDKI CAF's responses to proximity are presented systematically in chapter five.

Additionally, three results returned on the study that were rather unexpected. First, what could have been predicted, especially in light of the abovementioned reactions of CAFs to contextual opportunity and constraint, is that the study shows a dramatic drop in engagement and proactive framing characteristics found in the "intermediate" space of co-ethnic contiguity, as defined by "Kurdistan outside of Iran." This included a decrease in activity among Kurds who are not of Iranian descent as a matter of policy. This was

reflected in the relative lack of awareness among Iraqi Kurds of PDKI activities, or even the group's existence. My thinking was that proximity would allow for a more robust engagement of PDKI CAFs in the intermediate proximity among other Kurds, but this was not supported by the data. Instead, proactivity in collective action frames spike in the "near" spaces inhabited by Iranian Kurds, drop dramatically in the intermediate spaces inhabited by non-Iranian Kurds, and then escalate again in the "distant" spaces in the diaspora.

This is tied to a history of political and cultural problems experienced by the Kurds and the splits in their nation implemented by the boundaries of ruling nation states, intertribal fights, (lack of) alliances, and power struggles. More simply, the PDKI does very little to project their frames to non-Iranian Kurds living in Iraq; even less than Kurds living in the distant diaspora, and certainly less than Kurds living in the near proximity. Chapter five illustrates more deeply why this is true.

Second, urgency is seen as a functional variable employed, possibly unbeknownst to the members themselves, but is nonetheless apparent to the outsider. Simply put, the farther the audience is from the conflict, the more urgent the CAFs become. By "urgent" I mean that the hope and planning for larger overall victory becomes a part of the more general CAF dialogue in spaces that are farther away. This too will be described in more detail in subsequent chapters.

Third, one of the most surprising results of this study shows that PDKI CAFs respond to proximity as a function of time rather than just geographic space. These results, discussed in chapter six, show that the time spent by the member away from the

conflict has a direct impact on her projections and perceptions of the PDKI CAFs. What was most surprising about this result was that these patterns responded with an unexpected hiccup in the intermediate chronological proximity just as they did in response to the intermediate geographical proximity. In essence, those who are no longer in the fight, but who have not spent a long time away from the group are the least likely to be outspoken about formulating and executing PDKI CAFs, but rather, must focus on the reestablishment of their lives and their families' lives in their new situations, especially those who have moved to a new location outside of Kurdistan.

In conclusion, chapter 7 engages summarizing themes and final thoughts, discusses the project's limitations and implications for further academic analysis and research, and presents possible practical applications for both the region and the PDKI.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

     This review situates the dissertation within the scholarly research of civil war's causes and individual motivations to join rebellion especially through transnational dynamics of civil war and insurgency. It also develops a more specific review of the literature concerning opposition group collective action framing, self-promotion, and the mobilization of individuals who adopt rebel causes in different ways. It demonstrates the gap that this project fills in the study of rebel group provisions and situates the research within the larger understandings of transnational insurgent group dynamics. It also addresses the key terms mentioned in the introduction that are important to contextualize the project within extant literature.

     First, the key terms "proximity," "collective action frames," and "support" are defined to provide rhetorical and contextual clarity within the study and to limit the scope of the project to develop more applicable conclusions within the bounds of the research question. This allows the project to speak to other research within the field so as to join the conversation about the covered topics and expand upon the theories engaged.

Second, this review explores how the understanding of the causes and dynamics of civil war has developed in the past 20 years from quite broad to more nuanced, while illuminating parallels and contradictions that led to the scholarly gaps this work addresses.

Third, it addresses existing knowledge of transnational dynamics of insurgency and civil war especially as they relate to ethnicity, politics, and economics and how those dynamics influence collective action framing patterns. This assists in isolating proximity as a defined independent variable with respect to shifts in collective action frames.

Fourth and finally, this chapter examines research on insurgent group promotion and demonstrates how existing analytics of civil war and insurgent groups can be utilized as tools of analysis of how insurgencies promote their causes. Figure 3 illustrates how this chapter progresses from the broad to the more nuanced in reviewing existing literature related to the topic.
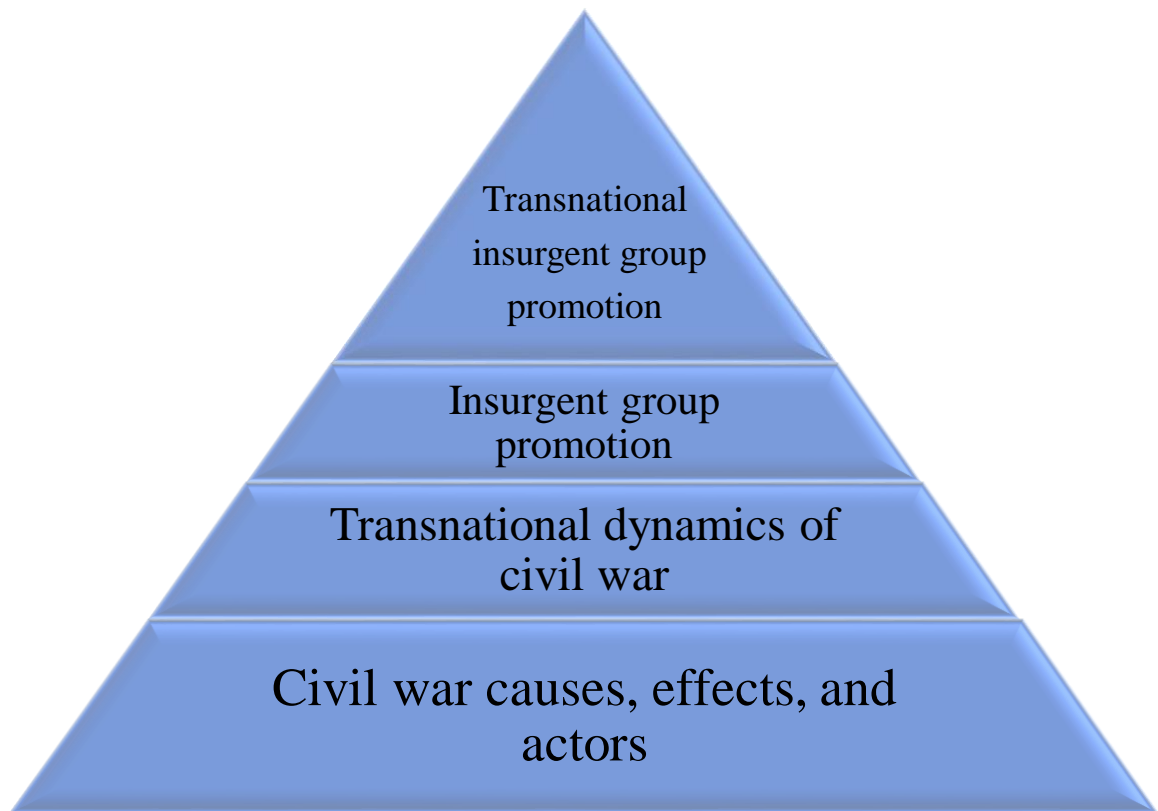
Figure 3

Key Terms: Proximity, Promotion, Collective Action Frames, Support

      It is necessary to well-define the terms and subjects involved in this study in order

to limit the scope of the research, define the results, and properly position the research

within the progressive categories of analysis in the field. Importantly, I define key terms

used in this study to avoid the reification of the ideas presented and to clarify that I am

not studying a "thing," but rather processes and ideas that are fluid across a dynamic set

of people. Insurgency and other social movements should not be viewed as passive

carriers of active ideas, purposes and goals; rather, it is the actors themselves who

produce ideological meanings for others who would support, oppose, or otherwise

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observe them. Therefore, when a topic such as a collective action frame is discussed throughout this project, it should be remembered that it does not exist as an independent, reified ideology which controls its own mediums. Rather, it is a production of those actors through whom ideas and actions flow and how they are subsequently received by the recipient. In light of this, in this section I work to clarify what I mean by the terms "proximity," "collective actions frames," and "support," as they relate to transnational insurgent groups and civil war.

Proximity

The notion of "proximity" is conceptually and theoretically flexible and needed to be well-sharpened in order to conduct concise research and better understand the associated results. As mentioned, this project suggests that proximity affects how insurgents construct their collective action frames, which differ based on the distance between the active conflict area and the area in which the CAFs are projected. Van Hear and Cohen suggest a similar theory in their 2017 work "Diasporas and Conflict," in which two types of diasporas characterized by their distance from the conflict are defined as either ethnically "contiguous" or "distant." The work shows that there are noticeable variants in whether and how diasporas choose to support a conflict based on their relative distance from the area of conflict/homeland, specifically whether they are contiguous or distant. These variations include engagements in the real community with respect to their own well-being and the expectations of their ethnic kin, or the imagined community,

which can often increase the level of commitment within the relative safety of the "distant" proximity (Van Hear and Cohen 2017).

It is based on this theory that I choose to measure proximity as a function of co-ethnic contiguity. As I am studying one particular group of Kurdish people, this is taken a step further to also regard ethnicity in terms of their national origins (i.e., Kurds from Iran, Iraq, Turkey, etc.). This will be expounded upon in chapter four on research methods.

An obvious prerequisite question concerning proximity and its effect on insurgent group framing would be "what exactly is meant by proximity, and certainly, what is meant by 'proximal?'" It is clear that a group of co-ethnics living 5,000 miles away could still be considered "close" to the conflict through the connection provided by the internet, email, television and other digital applications such as Skype and WhatsApp (Mandaville 2001). Though true, I focus rather on the arguments and definitive guidelines of Van Hear and Cohen. No matter the perceived connection based on any number of mediums, the evidence presented by Van Hear and Cohen suggests that physical distance impacts diasporic engagement in a conflict and/or support for a certain movement or group in their homeland, especially once the ethnic continuum is broken.[6]

Therefore, this project postulates that there is reason to believe that the reciprocal is true: that if co-ethnic support is affected by a literal, physical distance, then distance

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[6] To be clear, the "ethnic continuum" refers to the region around an area that expands as far as a certain ethnicity remains the majority ethnic group. For example, the ethnic continuum of Kurdistan extends as far as the majority people group in the area remains Kurdish.

should -for the rational, promotionally-minded insurgent- also have an effect on how framing for the sake of promotion is composed. Importantly, whether or not a group "feels" close to a conflict based on the connection established through various digital resources is, for the purpose of this study, irrelevant, since this project addresses literal distance based on ethnic contiguity. How proximity is measured in this project will be further outlined in the methodology section of this work.

Collective Action Frames

The totality of the functions and mediums of self-promotion of an insurgent group is both multifaceted and dynamic, making group "promotion" difficult to properly define in a single analytical context. This necessitates a limiting of the scope of analysis of insurgent group promotion for the sake of the study. Promotion could mean actions as small as a subtle suggestion from one friend to another about the merits of an organization. Alternatively, and at the opposing end of the spectrum, promotion could take the form of a worldwide media campaign which reaches millions. Additionally, it is important to remember that in many cases, especially regarding insurgent groups, "promotion" is oftentimes a euphemism for "coercion," or the threat of violent retort if support is not rendered.

In light of this, to conduct a well-focused project, this research limits insurgent group promotional efforts to the construction and dissemination of collective action frames (CAFs) as an indicator for how the group is promoting in a particular area. In

other words, this project only considers "promotion" through the lens of the construction of collective action frames in order to standardize the approach to promotive analysis.

According to Benford and Snow (2000: 611), current literature on social movements affords a robust understanding of how collective action framing is conceptualized across a range of social scientific approaches including "cognitive psychology (Bateson 1972, Tversky and Kahneman 1981) linguistics and discourse analysis (Tannen 1993, Van Dijk 1977), communication and media studies (Pan and Kosicki 1993, Scheufele 1999) and political science and policy studies (Schon and Rein 1994, Triandafyllidou and Fotiou 1998)." To properly conceptualize the purposes of an insurgent group (or any social movement), it is necessary to understand how their collective action frames are constructed and communicated (Benford and Snow 2000:612). Along with procurement of resources and political influence, which are inextricably linked to movement frames, collective action framing processes are, according to Benford and Snow (2000:611), "a central dynamic in understanding the character and course of social movements."

First addressed directly in 1986 by Snow, et. Al., but greatly expounded upon by Benford, Snow, and Hunt in numerous works,[7] collective action frames develop as an opposition group's mode of self-understanding and a portrayal of the group's purposes and reason for existence to others. Through CAFs, a group communicates its intent as a movement to both members and outsiders, including those whom they oppose and those

[7] See also Benford (1993a, 1993b, 1997), Benford and Hunt (1992), Benford and Snow (2000), Snow (2004), Snow and Benford (1988, 1992, 2000).

from whom they are trying to procure support. CAFs generally form as a response to a situation or reality (social, political, economic, etc.) with which group members disagree and then provide an alternative. As Gahan and Pekarak (2012:761) discuss, the collective action frame transforms a perceived social problem or "'misfortune' beyond the control of the individual, to a grievance which can be acted upon" by those who join or support the group and its ideas.

According to Benford and Snow, the existence of the CAF necessarily precedes the actual formation of the group itself. For if there is no purpose or reason for existence, the group itself does not (cannot), exist. According to Klandermans (1984), consensus of the problem, solution, and proposed collective action are problems that must be solved by a group while constructing a group framework. In essence, any opposition group, from as small as a street protest to as large as a rebel army, must agree about with what they disagree, agree on how to solve the problem, and then finally agree on how to mobilize around those solutions.

Benford and Snow (2000) articulate how these exact group collective action problems are addressed. CAFs are constructed with three smaller mechanisms or subsections of framing, known as "core framing tasks," namely, "diagnostic, prognostic and motivational" frames (615). By breaking down the CAF into three parts, opposition groups are able to more clearly define problems (diagnostic), solutions (prognostic), and actions to pursue those solutions (motivational). Diagnostic frames identify perceived injustices and victims and work to clarify what exactly the group stands against. This is

often the source of why some political, economic, or social change is sought and is at the heart of the issue of diagnostic framing (Benford and Snow 2000:616).

Collective action frames begin with master frames, which are broad sweeping frames that both form the basis of approach for contextually-based frames, are more generic in nature, describe the injustice that the group is protesting, and can be used to attract outsiders through the communication of injustices that can be grasped cross-culturally due to their broad nature (Gahan and Pekarak (2012:761-62). Some, such as Gamson (1992), argue that all collective action master frames contain an element of addressing injustice, though Benford and Snow also add protection, democracy, and rights to that list (Gahan and Pekarak 2012:759). I argue that they are one in the same and tend to side with Gamson as it seems that any perceived grievance associated with the abovementioned is a form of injustice.

Once the identification of the problem and its sources are settled, especially who and/or what is "good" and who and/or what is "evil," it is then necessary for the group to define a solution to the problem. This is referred to as "prognostic framing." This includes a plan and a strategy for effective change and outlines the foreseeable benefits and challenges which could arise as a result of a path of specific action. It is important to note that prognostic framing is often the departure point from where multiple organizations can form in response to the same problematic issue, as is the case in Iran, where multiple Kurdish opposition groups have formed over the years, including Komala (now split into three competing groups, including one that is communist), the PDKI (now

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split into two competing groups), and PJAK (that is often suspected by the other groups as cooperating with Tehran) (Zaman 2019).

Finally, "motivational frames" develop as a means by which ideas and conceptualizations turn into actions. This type of framing is used to convince others to engage in the prescribed solutions and encourages the application of human agency toward a collective idea. This type of framing also adds what Benford and Snow (2000) refer to as "vocabularies of motive." Vocabularies of motive flow between all types of participants, are used for recruitment as well as the procurement and sustainability of support, and include communication of "severity, urgency, efficacy and propriety" of the actions deemed necessary in support of the group's pursuit of solutions.

Collective action framing is a more than 30-year-old concept that has been written about and utilized in a large amount of studies that extends widely across opposition group and social movement studies. They have been used to analyze numerous political opposition groups such as those studied by Goh and Pang (2016), Volpe (2015), Zaidise (2011), as well as feminist movements (Franceschet, 2004) labor unions (Gahan and Pekarak 2012), authoritarian resilience (Bondes and Heep, 2012), LGBT movements (Swank and Fahs, 2012), environmental ethnic mobilization (Kuhn 2018), and even cross-border Christian missionization partnerships that counter colonial mission structures (Bakker 2011), among a litany of other wide-ranging topics.

While it is challenging to find works that explicitly challenge the veracity of collective action frame theory, in the past 30 years the concept has expanded and challenges have been identified concerning their effectiveness in varying scenarios. For

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instance, Goh and Pang (2016) investigate the role of collective action framing in social movements that develop through social media. Wlodarczyk et al. (2017) show that both anger and hope serve as emotional impetuses that move participants toward social action through collective action framing.

Other works have demonstrated the weaknesses of CAFs for recruiting certain members of the public that are crucial for a movement's success. Wahl (2017) illuminates how CAFs failed to recruit police in India to a social movement based on their differing beliefs from the public and, as Wahl argues, because of the tendency of CAFs to oversimplify the issues that they address. This is a particularly crucial point for this project's investigation of CAFs. While Wahl discusses these weaknesses of CAF construction and characteristics, this work, through the investigation of both official and unofficial CAFs as constructed by members and supporters in various locations, finds that groups and group members do have the ability to shift CAFs in order to grow their efficacy in differing contexts. Therefore, as this project will show, it is necessary to redefine the fullness of CAFs as a hybrid construction of official and unofficial framing rather than as derived from official communications only.

Additionally, while this work and many others remain within the structures of qualitative analysis, commonly based on case studies, Vicari (2010) argues that there is a need to further develop collective action frame analysis in order to be able to compare and contrast social movements vis-à-vis their framing. She responds by developing an empirical method of measuring "frame semantic grammar" using a "linguistically based approach to textual analysis" (2010:505). Her work was a response to Gerhards and

Rucht (1992: 573) who argued that "Although the importance of framing to mobilization processes has been emphasized time and again in recent years…there are no empirical analyses of frames and framing processes."

Support

"Support" is the final term discussed so as to understand what an insurgent group is pursuing through its efforts of promotion. Most literature on the study of civil war organizes the idea of support into one of three categories: resource provisions, political support, and manpower.

Resource support takes the form of financial provisions, material goods of all types, or trade agreements. It can include the smallest provisions like a loaf of bread or a cup of water, or the largest such as the provisions of heavy military equipment or substantial financial sums to sustain the entire rebellion. Political support is expressed through a range of provisions such as an external state's stance against the insurgents' state opponents (war-making, sanctions, provision of political resources, safe-haven/staging, locational provisions, etc.) or individual/group political support through lobbying or other political efforts. It can also include propping up candidates that are pro-insurgency, convincing other nations to support a rebel group politically, or practically countering the established government on the international stage. While this is not directly "offensive," it is certainly still a form of aggression to a neighboring state. Manpower not only includes joining the group as a member but all types of interpersonal support (word of mouth, providing quarters, advocating, provision of services etc.).

Manpower, as the results of this study show, is one of the most variant forms of support, especially when the scope of the analysis moves beyond the locations of military operation. Additionally, as the history of the PDKI shows, being a supporter of an insurgency can be hazardous to one's person and one's relatives, even if not engaging in active, armed rebellion.

It must be noted that "support" may oftentimes appear as projecting a neutral position. As is seen in many cases of civil war, doing nothing or choosing not to act on behalf of the state's interests (providing intelligence, allowing resources to be procured by rebels, etc.) can be a form of support of an insurgency (Wood 2003). As Wood (2003) shows, one of the most active forms of rebellion can simply be not providing information to the government about the movement, tactics, locations, etc. of an insurgency. It can also include actions such as simply providing a house or village to dwell in undercover or providing much-needed resources such as food and water, which is a common way for even the least capable "rebels" to join in active rebellion and was and is how civilians support the PDKI in Iran.

Now that I have surveyed the key terms used in the design of this project, I inspect at a deeper level "civil war" and "insurgency" and the dynamics of both in order to situate the project within the literature to both clarify my approach to the topics and justify the purposes and necessity for broadening the understanding of transnational insurgent group collective action frames. What follows begins with an examination of civil war.

Causes of Civil War and the Development of Insurgency

Since the early 2000s, research of civil war has expanded, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods and illuminating the causes of civil war based on greed, grievance, spillover, and socio-cultural issues, among many others. To better understand the scholarly foundations of these topics as they relate to my research question, it is important to understand their theoretical foundations. This section begins by examining these foundations through Haavelmo's Contest Model (1954), Gurr's Relative Deprivation Theory (1970), and Collier and Hoeffler's work on Greed and Grievance (2000). These were some of the works which moved the field into its present era. Additionally, the deficiencies apparent in these works, rather than invalidating them, acted as a roadmap for future scholarship development and direction to expand the understanding of civil war and its actors in a more thorough and nuanced way.

While there is no single "equation of everything" for civil war, if one was built, it might start with the Contest Model (Haavelmo 1954; Hirshleifer 1988; 1989; and Garfinkel 1990 from Blattman and Miguel 2010: 9-10). Called by Blattman and Miguel (2010:9) "the workhorse of the formal conflict literature," the Contest Model is a base function of the study of conflict and postulates that the likelihood of either side realizing victory during violent conflict is directly correlated to the efficiency of the use of their human, technological, and environmental resources (Blattman and Miguel 2010: 9-10). While its basic claim is valuable -whichever side in a conflict is more resource-efficient will be victorious- it is deficient in that certain assumptions are necessary to make the theory work. These assumptions include the notions that there are only two sides in civil

war, each side is a single, unified actor, there is relative power symmetry during civil conflict, and "effectiveness" is the only independent variable. While these deficiencies in the model are blatant, they are useful as they provide launching points for further research to generate a more holistic view of the dynamics of civil war and insurgency.

Works that followed the Conflict Model addressed these shortcomings. First, opposing sides in civil wars are not conglomerated units, but groups of agency-possessing individuals who must be recruited, sustained, and made to sacrifice for the sake of the collective. Ted Robert Gurr's seminal work *Why Men Rebel* (1970) provided a breakthrough in the study of individual motivation as a catalyst for civil war. His work examines the roots of individual political grievance and the choice to employ violence in pursuit of change. Central to his argument is the theory of Relative Deprivation. Gurr argues that individuals perceive the discrepancy between their "value expectations and their value capabilities" and eventually reach a critical mass of dissatisfaction where the cost of rebellion no longer exceeds the cost of continuing under their current state of (perceived or real) oppression (Gurr 2016: 13). On the other hand, if value expectations and value capabilities are relatively equal, there is, per the theory, no reason to feel discontent. The move toward rebellion requires that this personal discontent foment into political discontent, which, when joined with others who are willing to employ violence as a means of change, becomes political violence (Gurr 2016). Ideas about relative deprivation are important to understand for the study of insurgent group marketing, as it can be utilized to both recruit individuals who feel similarly "relatively deprived"

(diagnostic framing) and/or to paint a picture to external entities about the group's plight of deprivation (motivational framing).

But what more of grievance-based motivations for civil war? How do groups overcome problems such as the collective action problems and the "rebel's dilemma" (Lichbach 1998) that question what moves people from feeling grievance to actually joining movements, especially when those movements will occur with or without them? The field of research is rich with responses to these questions and I focus on these more later.

Gurr's argument of personal motivation and relative deprivation formed a foundation for the analysis of grievances in civil war but was soon challenged by a pivotal quantitative work on civil war of that brought to light a new set of analytical challenges. *Greed and Grievance* by Anke Hoeffler and Paul Collier set a precedent for asking specific questions about the causes of civil war. Like the works it proceeded, it was impactful but full of questions and challenges which needed to be explored further. Rather than acting as a weakness, these deficiencies instead provided an initial conceptual framework employed by researchers until today.

Next, I explore more thoroughly these works on greed and grievance, as well as another variable that came to heavily influence the field of civil war studies, feasibility.

Greed, Grievance, and Feasibility

For some, civil war is not a regrettable undertaking based on moral or political necessity, but an enterprise based on an opportunity for profit and power. For others,

rebellion is catalyzed by grievance-based motives, while for still others it is some combination of greed and grievance. Recent research has made the case for all three scenarios and is outlined in the following sections. It is important to understand this foundational argument as a tool not only for explaining the causes and catalysts of civil war, but also to explore how insurgencies leverage these feelings for the sake of recruitment, support, and marketing.

The arguments for greed-based causes of civil war focus on the opportunity that rebels have in financing their rebellion, the profitability of rebellion, opportunity cost considerations, strategic advantages, and a lack of social and state resistance (Keen 2000, Fearon and Laitin 2003, Weinstein 2007, Christia 2012, Marten 2012, Mwanasali 2000, Collier 2000, Collier and Hoeffler 2004). The term "greed" is considered quite problematic since it implies that insurgents rebel and wage war out of an inability to admit, willingly or otherwise, when they've gained enough from engaging in conflict, or that they are willing in the first place to engage in violence simply for the sake of personal gain. In reality, "greed" based arguments more often simply mean an opportunity/cost analysis performed by the (would be) rebels. The decision the potential rebel(s) must make is whether the potential benefit justifies the costs and risks of pursuing gain through rebellion (Grossman 1991, Shapiro 2011). This involves a cost/benefit analysis that is in flux throughout the conflict (see Staniland 2014, Christia 2012, Weinstein 2007), and the cause and/or perpetuation of civil war may not be a push for a solution to political or social grievance, but an enterprise based on continued profitability.

In his 1991 article entitled "A General Equilibrium Model of Insurrections," Herschel Grossman (1991:912) suggests that financial opportunity is the main reason why people take up arms against one another within the same country. Considering this, Collier and Hoeffler performed a scholarly risk assessment of civil war to see if financial opportunity (greed), social-based grievances (such as Gurr 2016 and others), or some combination of both increase the risk of rebellion. Their justification highlights the importance of understanding how both greed and grievance are related to one another in the analysis of civil war based on (mis)perceptions -both of those involved, and those conducting research (Collier and Hoeffler 2004:564). Profitability and grievances based on real or illusory circumstances could lead to conflict which could then form grievances which lead to more conflict, forming a cycle (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). The augments for greed and grievance, therefore, needed to be tested.

Based on a quantitative analysis of the causes of civil war through measurable proxy variables, Collier and Hoeffler concluded that civil war is quantifiably predictable as a function of opportunity, or greed, rather than grievances (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). Additionally, variables related to opportunity such as access to funding, low opportunity cost for joining a rebellion, a widely-dispersed population, and (to a lesser extent) a mountainous terrain, all returned as significant variables in increasing the risk of a civil war, while variables related to grievance such as "inequality, political rights, ethnic polarization and religious fractionalization" were found to be insignificant (Collier and Hoeffler 2004: 588).

In their conclusions, Collier and Hoeffler note that the variables found to be significant may be influential because of their direct and indirect effects, but without a way to measure personal motive, the conclusions remain nebulous. For instance, countries whose economies are based on primary commodity export have a higher risk of civil war; but is the risk of conflict statistically higher because a single export is easy to extort, or because simple economies lead to less effective governance, creating grievances (Collier and Hoeffler 2004:588)? The need to examine the causes of civil war and the associated collective action problems at a more nuanced level were highlighted by conceptual and analytical impasses such as these and are addressed in scholarly works examined later in this literature review.

The theory of "greed" not only contributes to the understanding of why conflicts begin but can explain why conflicts persist. In his preceding work, "Doing Well Out of War" (1999), Collier addresses the lack of sustainability in grievance-based conflict, showing why conflicts are more likely to be initiated and sustained through greed rather than grievance. Civil war, while often devastating on the economy and society, is not always as fraught with irrationality as might be supposed. Oftentimes, those engaged adjust to a wartime economy as a way of sustaining personal income and profitability. Resource control, rent-seeking, protection, extortion and bribery, drugs, control of trade routes, and arms dealing are some of the ways that a wartime economy can sustain profitability (Keen 2000, Weinstein 2007, Christia 2012, Duffield 2000, Marten 2012, Mwanasali 2000, Collier 2000, Collier 1999). While seeking profitability through insurgency is unfortunate enough, it can also produce problems for the groups themselves

including but not limited to recruiting combatants that are difficult to control (Weinstein 2007, Christia 2012 discussed below).

While Collier and Hoeffler's work was invaluable to the field, many have criticized its methods and conclusions. One major argument critiques the seeming randomness in both the selection of the proxy variables and their effects on the results. As Laurie Nathan (2005:1) suggests, "the research is filled with empirical, methodological and theoretical problems that lead to unrealistic results and unjustified conclusions," noting the lack of justifiable connection between what the proxies are measuring and their results. Though this may be overstated, the criticism still points to the need for further investigation of techniques, especially as it would apply to future related research endeavors. Some of the more disagreeable proxies, according to Nathan, include the percentage of a country's population living as immigrants in the United States as a proxy for diasporic financial support; "mean income per capita, male secondary schooling and the economic growth rate prior to the onset of war" as a proxy for "forgone income" among rebels, and "the ratio of primary commodity exports" to GDP as the proxy "for natural resources, which include food, non-food agriculture, oil and other raw materials" among many others (Nathan 2005: 3). All of these are problematic as they allow for too many explanations to the contrary. Nathan then goes on to point out that these proxies might be spurious at best if not entirely arbitrary, and that the "meaning of the proxies are too restrictive," meaning that they could lead to both instances of greed (opportunity) and grievance, and not just singularly one or the other (Nathan 2005:5). Nathan also expounds upon "unsubstantiated explanations of results; incomplete, inaccurate and

biased data; and theoretical and analytical flaws that preclude an adequate understanding of the causes of civil war," that demand further justification of the legitimacy of Collier and Hoeffler's work (Nathan 2005:2).

Another critique of Collier and Hoeffler which I find especially pertinent is the lack of consideration for the dynamism of civil war's motivations which stem from individual agency. "Greed" is certainly a motivating factor, but it is impractical and seemingly dehumanizing to think that rebellions have no grievance-based motivations. Works such as Taydas, Enia, and James (2011), Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug (2013) Wood (2006), Kalyvas (2006), and Lichbach (1995), all demonstrate that both rational opportunity cost/benefit analysis as well as cycles of grievance are necessary for a thorough analysis of rebellion and the individual action therein (more on grievance below). Ballentine and Nitzschke (2003) also show that the greed-only debate makes it more difficult to derive conclusive motivational certainty given its inability to measure individual preferences, goals, and motivations. It is simply too difficult to constrain the causes of civil war inside a quantitative function, as human agency will produce different motives for rebellion which are either incredibly difficult or impossible to capture and measure through any proxy variable. Since Collier, Hoeffler, and other "greed" theorists do not claim to describe individual motivation but rather perform a "conflict risk assessment," this leaves important questions unanswered both in how individual grievances generate motivation for rebellion and how identity-based grievances are used to both recruit and manipulate the willing individual or group to rebel. As a final critique, it is difficult to aptly label those who are living in abject poverty as "greedy." Though the

word is used as a rhetorical device, capitalizing on financial opportunity should not always be defined as "greed," especially in instances of desperation involving the self, family, and friends (Murshed, S. and Tadjoeddin M. 2009: 88).

On the other hand, other works produced around the same time agree with the greed-based motivation for conflict. Some are unrelated to *Greed and Grievance* while others intersect or theoretically diverge from the work or respond to the scholarly questions it produced. In Collier and Hoeffler's later work, "Beyond Greed and Grievance" (2006) and Fearon and Laitin's "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War" (2003), the results suggested that *feasibility* based on finances and military capability (Collier and Hoeffler 2006) or *favorability* (Fearon and Laitin 2003) of conditions such as past civil wars, poverty, political instability, mountainous terrain, and large populations, are the sources of risk of civil war, rather than personal motivation (or grievances).

How might these works based on "greed" help develop a theory of proximity and incentive for the purposes of this study? Two types of useful connections could be developed. First, the group would need to present itself to the local population as being a publicly beneficial entity with long-term sustainability. It is easy to suppose that the closer the group is to the conflict the more emphasis will be put on demonstration of long-term gain both in resource procurement and the sustainability of the individual who may choose to join the group in lieu of performing other income-seeking activities. Alternatively, the group would be less likely to form a marketing strategy based on the procurement of large funding contributors in and near the area of operation as conflict often diminishes or incapacitates local economies that are not driven by conflict

themselves (Keen 2000, Weinstein 2007, Christia 2012, Duffield 2000, Marten 2012, Mwanasali 2000, Collier 2000, Collier 1999).

It is tempting to categorize the entirety of greed-based functions for shifts in marketing strategies into a rational choice-based framework of analysis. I suggest, however, that while this may be true in some cases, it is unlikely that insurgents will always simply choose the "most profitable" route. Instead, extant works of rebel group behavior support the likelihood that some marketing strategies are based on long-term sustainability goals and considerations of future shares of power rather than immediate profitability. This can include reasons related to those found in Jeremy Weinstein's *Inside Rebellion* (2007), which distinguishes between long and short-term investment of "consumers" and "investors" and Fotini Christia's work on alliance formations, changes, and sustainability of rebel groups (2012). Marketing strategies can also relate to the manipulation of collective identity and collective trauma, as well as the manipulation of religious beliefs (which often comprise parts of collective identities themselves) (Cunningham and Seymour, undated). Having explored greed-based theories of the causes of civil war as well as the contests to such theories, I now turn to the examination of grievance-based theories on the causes of civil war.

Grievance

One of the best contests to the *greed* theory of civil war is expressed in a question by David Keen: "Where greed has gained a hold, what grievances have made people so violently greedy?" (Keen 2012: 777). In his 2012 work, Keen takes issue with Collier and

Hoeffler and the greed-centered debate in general and suggests that the argument does not consider the motivations of the rebel, society, or outside influences. As Ballentine and Nitzschke (2005: 4) point out, the greed debate also diminishes the role of the state, focusing only on the actions of the rebels and not on how the state may initiate or prolong the fight. This produces a pro-state bias of analysis which dismisses any grievances the rebels may hold as illegitimate and non-causal. But what if there are legitimate grievances, or at least grievances which seem legitimate enough to cause people to rebel? The greed debate, especially that which is largely based in quantitative methods, strips the individual of agency and lends analytical credence only to statistics rather than also including people and their personal motivation(s).

In her 2002 work "Horizontal Inequalities as a Source of Conflict," Frances Stewart argues that horizontal inequalities are a primary source of grievance and civil conflict. Stewart defines horizontal inequalities (HIs) as social inequalities between groups as opposed to vertical inequalities (VIs) which are experienced between people in social hierarchy. Inequalities in financial, social, or political power distributions associated with differing social groups such as those based on ethnicity, religion, culture, or other categories, can provide a powerful motivation for both individuals and groups to rebel once grievance is experienced among a critical mass of people (Stewart 2002, and Stewart and Brown 2007). This argument builds on Ted Gurr's theory of Relative Deprivation, as inequalities are impactful when they are perceived relative to others in their own country or area and can lead to the development of grievances which become politicized and ultimately violent.

It is clear that greed and grievance do not form a dysfunctional scholarly dichotomy in their attempt to explain the causes for civil war, but rather, many conflicts demonstrate elements of both working linearly, reciprocally, and/or sometimes cyclically. As Ballentine and Nitzschke (2003) show, a conflict can begin for non-economic reasons and morph into a war based on the need to financially persist once the fight becomes profitable for those involved. Similarly, Gurr (2016) and Christia (2012) argue that the issues around which organizers of rebellion legitimize their objectives may not be the same issues used to recruit and maintain the loyalty of those involved. In other words, "I would like for you to help me become rich and powerful" is not an attractive leadership model or message to motivate others to put themselves in harm's way or to support the insurgents who do, even though this is oftentimes the exact reality of insurgent leadership. Poverty, discriminatory treatment, and loss of autonomy related to structure, politics, and culture, on the other hand, can be exploited to provoke the sentiments of future recruits by these conflict entrepreneurs (Gurr, 2016, Stewart 2002, Christia 2012). And, as both Gurr and Stewart suggest, the greater the perceived discrepancy of the situation (which is oftentimes expressed through collective action frames), the easier it is to motivate people to go to war or to elicit support for those who claim to fight for the sake of this perceived or demonstrated inequality.

Works such as Christia (2012) argue that conflicts not fundamentally based on grievances associated with group identity can still have these identities exploited to motivate continued fighting. These may include interethnic hatred, religious heterogeneity, and historical identity, among others. "Identity entrepreneurs" can

manipulate identity grievances, often falsely, to justify an alliance shift that would lead to a greater share of power in the post-conflict state (Christia 2012). This type of identity-based grievance and its manipulation or promotion among possible supporters becomes a key aspect in the marketing strategy of those looking to recruit both inside and outside of the theater of combat and is discussed at greater length later in this chapter.

It is also important to understand that the dualistic nature of a greed and grievance-based conflict may be cyclically developed. Per Bar-Tal (2000), an insurgency may form based on greed, but the violent acts involved may lead to retribution, revenge and a sense of injustice which creates grievances among those affected, thereby perpetuating the war under a different set of motivations (Bar-Tal 2000, in Cuhadar and Dayton, 2011). While this is true in many instances of civil war, it is vividly illustrated in the book *Refugees of the Revolution* by Diana Allan which argues that the motivation for many Palestinians to continue to revolt is based primarily on what the Israeli government has done to their communities during wartime (Allan 2013). Finally, there are those who dismiss greed and grievance altogether. Authors such as Murshed and Tadjoeddin (2009) argue that it is a "breakdown of the social contract" which leads to intrastate struggle that demonstrates the elements of conflictual cause otherwise regarded as opportunity or grievances.

Grievance-based conflict and recruiting play enormous roles in the overall marketing strategies of an insurgency. As the existing literature suggests, there is a point where the cost/benefit analysis tips in favor of rebellion. Is it possible, then, that the collective action frames of rebel groups will include grievance-based narratives if they

are within a close enough proximity to the conflict that grievances are still felt but change when they are not?

It is possible that two scenarios will occur based on grievance. First, I suggest that if the target population of recruitment is close enough to a conflict to feel the relative deprivation felt by those who rebel, grievance-based collective action frameworks will be employed. In other words, they will seek support from those who can offer *empathy*. Additionally, as proximity to the conflict increases and grievances are no longer impacting the target population personally, I suggest that it is likely that the CAFs will transition. While the narrative will continue to air grievances, it will change to garner support based on *sympathy* for those grievances or create CAFs that hearken back to earlier times for those who used to be engaged more closely with the conflict but fled or migrated out of the most proximal areas. As it turns out and is shown in the results section, all of this proved to be true, with a special emphasis on those in the distant proximity not only showing sympathy, but acting with much more urgency as a result of their distance from the conflict, which shields them from much of the day-to-day struggles of the near proximity.

While greed and grievances play a major role in the analysis of any civil war, the arguments about what is actually the source of civil conflict will likely be perpetually debated and will remain unique to individual scenarios. I feel that in total, and for the sake of this project, it is important to recognize the validity and usefulness of both frames to analyze the way that CAFs are constructed, delivered, shifted, received, and subsequently acted upon or ignored by the audience.

Since greed and grievance do not encompass the entirety of the reasons and dynamics behind any civil war, this literature review continues. I turn now to socio-cultural issues which affect the commencement and dynamics of civil war and how those issues affect the analytical approach to this project. I pay special attention to those issues which are also illuminated within the analytical structures of collective action frames.

Socio-Cultural Issues

As will be shown in the results section of this work, socio-cultural issues play a major role as contextual variables that affect the construction of PDKI collective action frames. It is therefore important to review, both for the sake of this work, and for completing a broader analysis of civil war causes and dynamics of socio-cultural issues within civil war scholarship. Three socio-cultural issues -ethnicity, culture, and social identity- play such a vital role in various aspects of civil war analysis that they merit a closer examination. This section reviews these three issues as they relate to the broader field of civil war and insurgent group dynamics and how this dissertation positions itself with respectively.

Ethnicity is one of the most influential and impactful variables in civil war and civil war research, especially as it concerns identity politics, grievances, and transnational dynamics of civil war. While many cause and effect relationships have been revealed, ethnicity is found to be an underlying factor in many studies regarding insurgency and civil rebellion, regardless of the analytical angle or the population. However, many rational political analyses are critically devoid of considerations of culture and group

identity (Ross 2007:1). Ethnicity is a central theme in my research as I consider that Kurds in the diaspora are likely to support the cause of the PDKI, but that Kurds of Iranian descent might be the most robust supporters among the Kurds. It is also important for the purposes of this project to be able to analyze how inter-ethnic strife results because of interests associated with national origins. As I will show, this becomes possibly the most important factor in understanding why there continues to be a lack of cooperation between groups of Kurds of varying state origins, which keeps each individual group weaker than might otherwise be possible.

The field is divided as to whether ethnic heterogeneity leads to higher risk for civil conflict (Fearon and Laitin 2003 vs. Ellingsen, 2000; Cederman & Girardin, 2007). A general acknowledgement, however, suggests that civil war usually does not start *because* of socio-cultural reasons but rather, when conflict does begin, it often delineates *along* socio-cultural lines, particularly ethnic lines (Denny and Walter 2014: 199). While societies group themselves within different social categories such as religion, class, ideology and geography, civil wars are often fought between ethnic groups, as ethnicity alone accounts for the divisions of 64 percent of all civil wars since 1946 (Denny and Walter 2014: 199).[8][9]

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[8] This includes wars that were fought for hopes of secession, of which 98 percent were fought along ethnic lines where the group rebelling was of a different ethnic group than the government. When these wars are removed from the statistic, still almost half of all remaining civil wars are fought along ethnic lines (Denny and Walter 2014).

[9] Research by Bormann, Cederman and Vogt (2015) adds an interesting yet specific caveat to the study of ethnic conflict and shows that as ethnicity can be defined along numerous characteristics, it is important to note that linguistic difference will comprise the dividing line in civil war more often that religious differences. As an example, note

Research shows a clear connection between ethnicity and reasons for civil war based on greed, grievance, and spillover and is generally associated with one of two bodies of literature. The first asks why some ethnic groups are motivated to go to war as opposed to others (Horowitz 1985; Posen 1993; Gurr and Harff 1994; Fearon 2006); the second body of literature conducts state-centric analyses based on ethnic makeup and their propensity to engage in civil war (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Posner 2004; Blimes 2006).

Despite ethnicity's many connections to and influences on the dynamics of civil war, why is it that civil wars tend to delineate along ethnic lines as opposed to other social categories? Denny and Walter (2014) assert that three characteristics of civil conflict associated with ethnic groups have a greater propensity to lead to civil war: common grievance, mobilizing ability, and challenges in bargaining (Bormann, N., Cederman, L., and Vogt 2015; Denny and Walter 2014: 299). During my research, I bore these in mind when considering if/how ethnicity affects collective action frames as they relate to promotional effectiveness and proximity. If these characteristics lead to civil war, could they also be used to charge the message of recruitment and support garnering through other means of promotion?

Additionally, since I am defining "close" and "intermediate proximity" to a conflict by the unbroken majority of an ethnic group in a certain area, do collective action frames shift when ethnic majorities or intra-ethnic nationalities shift? For instance, do the

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that the secessionist Kurds of Eastern Turkey are Muslim like much of the rest of Turkey but speak Kurdish as their mother tongue as opposed to Turkish.

PDKI keep a consistent collective action frame strategy among all Kurds in Kurdistan because they consider themselves in close relation to the conflict because the PDKI are Kurdish? It is for this reason that I consider "near" to mean those Kurds of Iranian origin living in and around Koya, but "intermediate" to mean the point in Iraqi Kurdistan that is no longer inhabited by an Iranian-descended majority (this is discussed more in the research methods and design section). This acknowledges the fact that motivation to join a rebellion based on ethnicity can be affected by nationality and did return dramatic results with regard to shifts in PDKI CAFs.

While the considerations of culture can coincide with ethnicity, there are notable differences. First, as Kevin Avruch (1998) shows, the way that conflict and conflict resolution are perceived is linked to culture. Who fights, why and when it is okay to fight, interpersonal and community expectations, and even the debate of what "violence" is can all be culturally relative. It is therefore necessary to consider what locals perceive as a possible path forward before embarking on analysis, resolution, and peacekeeping tactics. Second, much of the literature concerning culture and civil war in the past 20 years has responded to Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" (1996), or other works which claimed that differences in culture lead to conflict (Horowitz 1995; Connor 1994). In opposition, Cederman (2001), Johnston (2001), and Comer (2001) postulate that cross-cultural miscommunication is to blame for the onset of violence. Third, cultural identity and self-understanding through "psychocultural narratives" are important to understand as they can strengthen a community's resolve to fight or be reframed in a movement toward sustainable peace (Ross 2007). It is important to delineate considerations of ethnicity and

culture in civil war analysis, and the differences associated between the two are noted in the results of this work.

Finally, social identity theory fills a large analytical gap and accounts for issues concerning individual and group psychology and why the employment of violence and group cohesion is so highly variant (Cuhadar and Dayton 2011). Per Brown (2000), Social Identity Theory is based on the inherent ability of human beings to recognize patterns in their environment and society. As individuals recognize social patterns, they identify with and consider themselves members of certain groups. As an individual's identity becomes more tied to his or her group, behavioral and social expectations arise that are tied directly to perceived virtue and esteem, which consequently leads to expected behaviors from members of other groups.

According to Cuhadar and Dayton (2011:274), it is this process which leads to the creation of in-groups and out-groups, prejudice and stereotyping and perceptions of esteem. If the behaviors and beliefs of the in-group are perceived as virtuous, this leads to feelings of high esteem among group members. When these behaviors and beliefs contrast with an out-group, the out-group can be dismissed as negative, evil, or otherwise unjust and unworthy in order to justify in-group behaviors. This leads to expectations of bad behaviors from the out-group, which is what leads to prejudice and/or stereotyping (Cuhadar and Dayton, 2011: 275). Bar-Tal and Teichman (2005) show that it is this formation of prejudices which leads to the justification of poor treatment of the out-group and can be the eventual reasoning or justification for the commencement of conflict or its

perpetuation, violence, or civil war. Notably, it is this mindset which can also lead to the entrenchment of intractable inter- or intrastate conflict.

Ethnicity, culture, and social identity are three issues that are likely to problematize the idea of proximity and its relation to CAFs. Studies on diasporic support of civil conflict frequently demonstrate that there is some interest by diasporic populations in their home country's conflict. More importantly, distant diasporic communities oftentimes act in ways that are more intense than those near the conflict because they ultimately have less to lose because of the anonymity, safety, and lack of possible ramifications provided by positioning within the distant proximity (Smith and Stares, 2007, Van Hear and Cohen, 2016). I suggest then, that ethnic proximity throughout Kurdistan plays a dominant role in PDKI collective action frame construction, but it is possible that this could be challenged by those who live outside Kurdistan but stay actively engaged for any number of reasons, not the least of which could be this feeling of protection provided by distance; distance from Iran, distance from the acts of military action and retaliation, and distance from the day to day lived experience of persecution and rebellion.

While this review thus far has highlighted the current debates of the causes, motivations, and perpetuation of civil war based on greed, grievance, ethnicity, culture, and socio-cultural issues, to understand these issues more fully, an individual or group must be situated within the transnational realities and influences which affect the conflict and the socio-cultural context in which they reside. These topics are discussed next and

form a major basis for the foundation of my study, as transnationalism is defined by the notion of proximity, and the PDKI is a transnational opposition group and insurgency.

Transnational Dynamics of Civil War

While a common analytical dichotomy separates interstate war from intrastate war, it is a fallacy to assume that civil wars exist within a "closed polity" and operate in an international vacuum devoid of outside influence (Gleditsch 2007: 295). Since 1945, at least 55 percent of all rebel groups have had identifiable transnational connections (Salehyan 2009:5). I argue, however, that nearly all insurgent groups have at least some system of influence originating from transnational influences of civil war including spillover, economic and political opportunities for outsiders, diasporic influence, the transnational flow of materiel, and ethnic and social issues of mobilization (Checkel 2014: 3). This section draws on recent literature to explain the transnational dynamics of civil war and the international linkages which facilitate third party involvement in rebellion in order to situate the PDKI and the focus of this study within the existing literature.

Because many of the world's civil wars are clustered in countries that are within proximity to one another, it is important to understand the difference between the concept of spillover and other transnational issues of civil war (Bosker and Ree 2010:7). Scholarship by Bosker and Ree (2010) Brown (1993), Brown (1996), and Lake and Rothchild (1998) address the differences. While conflicts can be affected and influenced by outside actors, spillover is defined as occurring when conflict moves from one country

to a neighboring country, almost literally "spilling over" into the adjacent state. While socio-cultural identities such as religion, culture, class, and ideology delineate and influence civil wars, only ethnic wars spill over, only across ethnic lines, and only in countries which are prone to a spillover due to economic or military weakness, ethnic ties between neighboring countries, and ethnic heterogeneity (Lake and Rothchild 1998, Brown 1996, Bosker and Ree 2010).

According to Bosker and Ree (2010), though spillover only occurs across ethnic lines, it can do so in four different ways. First, violent consequences of civil war such as shelling or combat may (literally) cross state borders. This occurs when fighting takes place near borders, such as the contemporary fights in Syria and Turkey, or when borders are porous and offensive groups enter new territory, as Rwandans did during the Congolese civil wars. Second, refugees and foreign fighters looking for safe haven may enter the non-embattled country and bring the fight with them such as has happened in Iraqi Kurdistan, both on the Iranian and Turkish sides. This occurs when foreign fighters enter the country to use it as a launching platform and/or refuge and engage in recruitment within refugee and diasporic communities (Bosker and Ree 2010: 207, Davidson, 2015). Third, ethnic and familial ties may provide the structure for alliances which spill into neighboring states when the ethnic groups cross state boundaries (Brown 1996: 595). This is certainly the case for my focus group, the Kurds who are of Iranian descent, whether or not they are members or supporters of the PDKI. Finally, conflict may spill over when a neighboring state feels as though the conflict will inevitably be incited and fighting commences as the result of a "self-fulfilling prophesy" (Bosker and

Ree 2010: 207). This is a feeling of inevitability of the commencement of conflict as a result of the close proximity of fighting.

Other than spillover, different transnational dynamics impact the causes, perpetuation and outcomes of civil wars. As Jeffery Checkel (2014: 3) asserts, "civil wars nearly always create opportunities and incentives for outside actors to intervene." And yet, Kristian Gleditsch (2007: 294) warns that not enough attention has been paid to the transnational dynamics of civil war which could lead to inaccurate or misleading conclusions. What has been researched includes outside intervention toward the cessation of conflict (Regan, 2000), transnational culture and identity issues which contribute to or contain civil conflict (Gartzke and Gleditsch, 2006), and outside influence to incite or prolong a conflict to achieve a certain preferred political, economic or social outcome (Gleditsch 2007). These transnational actors can contribute both to the onset of civil war and mid-war processes and dynamics (Gleditsch 2007). While the reasons to support the initiation or the perpetuation of a civil war are numerous, certain linkages account for most of the motivations for international involvement and help explain why civil war might diffuse into other countries. These include ethnic, political, and economic linkages, examined next.

Ethnicity as a transnational linkage can affect civil wars in several ways. Oftentimes, civil wars ignite because an ethnic group desires autonomy from the existing state leadership. Sometimes, such as with the Kurds in Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Syria, ethnic groups straddle formal state borders or reside in non-neighboring countries in the diaspora which may lead to strategic support from one neighboring country to the next.

This support includes but is not limited to direct and indirect support, the provision of staging areas (Salehyan 2009), diasporic financial support for insurgencies (Davis and Moore, 1997, Petersen, 2004, Saideman, 2002), political and activist influence (Sasson 2010), and materiel and other resource provisions (Gleditsch 2007: 298). Ethnic support from other countries can be particularly problematic for the state to combat as it may be difficult for the state to counter the efforts of the diaspora or other members of an ethnic group outside their sovereign borders. Thus, the diaspora can be much more effectively supportive of rebellion, with less cost or risk (Gleditsch 2007: 297-98) because of the safeties associated with distance from the conflict, mentioned above. This is clearly the case with Iranian Kurds in the diaspora[10].

International politics and power play another role, and the ways in which transnational political linkages affect civil war should be examined from two angles. First, does an ongoing conflict, or the prospects of a successful rebellion in one country, benefit another country? If so, this would be conducive to third party, state-sponsored support. Second, it is important to consider the political restraints in a supporting country as well as pressure from other countries in the international neighborhood. As Gleditsch (2007) asserts, it is easier for a leader of one country to support rebellion in another if there is little or no accountability or paths of resistance to the contrary. In this way, the leader both spends less resources joining the fight and does not lose political credibility or favorability in her own country or the international community. Straddling the ethnic

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[10] Though, as mentioned later, Iran sometimes still manages to intimidate and harm those who they believe to be active enemies of the state, even while they are in the diaspora.

and political line is the linkage to refugees. As Davidson (2015) shows, a refugee

population, especially in a neighboring country, may not only provide cover for rebels to

be concealed and stage subsequent incursions, they can also be a fertile recruiting ground

for insurgent groups who offer economic incentives or an outlet for the refugees seeking

retribution against offenders, as is the case with the PDKI in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Finally, transnational economic linkages can affect the cause, dynamics, or

outcome of a civil war. While economic relations between two countries may reduce the

possibility of interstate war, it may also help mitigate the possibility of civil war

(Gleditsch 2007). This is a result of neighboring, economically interrelated countries

pressuring the state which is experiencing the threat of civil war to address the grievances

of potential rebels. By leveraging their own economic advantages, they are able to force

the issue and thereby address their own interests in the unsettled nation. Likewise, once a

war has begun, outside actors will intervene based on their own economic and trade-

related interests (Gleditsch 2007).

Transnational Insurgent Groups

There are still broader questions that need to be discussed about transnational

insurgent groups themselves and the effects that being transnational has on the groups as

entities in and of themselves. These questions are addressed from two different angles in

extant literature: how insurgents or insurgent motivations from one country affect change

in another country and how insurgent groups themselves change after crossing

international borders. First, most existing research asks *what* makes countries susceptible

to conflict diffusion and *how* this diffusion occurs. The answer to the first question is through militant refugee return. Key examples show that the Taliban of Afghanistan and the Hutus of Rwanda used "socialization, resource control and security entrapment" to bring the fight back to their home country (Wood 2014:248). The answer to the second question is that transnational insurgent diffusion occurs through mechanisms which spread physically or ideologically. If outsiders from other countries are allowed in by local insurgent groups, they can bring with them resources, new ambitions or goals, and/or new or adjusted strategies for opposition or insurgency (Bakke 2014, Schmitz 2014). However, pre-existing norms such as well-established mechanisms of rebellion or a firmly rooted opposition group strategy will mitigate the effects of transnational diffusion, and over time, their effects may diminish (Schmitz 2014).

Ideologically, diffusions occur through relationships or mediation (connecting two parties), which are facilitated through learning or emulation (Bakke 2014). Non-relational diffusion can also occur through witnessing tactics through mass media or other means of communication which spread ideas and mission framework of one insurgency which incites rebellion elsewhere (Bakke 2014). Nome and Weidmann (2014) add that social connections and common identity will play a significant role in this type of diffusion, which further asserts ethnicity as a necessary line of spillover.

But what of groups who cross international borders without a mission to accomplish? In other words, when a group diffuses for reasons other than tactical advantage, how might resources and support still be sought after and procured, and in what way(s) might this shift depending on the location? Little has been done in the field

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to address this question directly apart from returning refugees or host countries providing areas of refuge. However, this existing work helps me develop further thoughts about proximity and collective action framing. First, it is likely that the closer an insurgent group is to a conflict, the more likely they will find those who are currently and directly affected by the conflict, as mentioned above. However, it is also likely that refugees, after following the path of least resistance to safety, will also be found near the conflict. It will therefore be important to consider social context when addressing issues of proximity, as, for example, the mission framework pitched to those who are refugees may be different than marketing aimed at non-refugees.

How else might the social context of insurgency matter for the sake of this study? This topic was studied widely in my research through the examination of how an insurgency, the PDKI, changes when crossing international borders. When considering the results, social context was shown to be one of the most deciding factors in how proximity affects collective action frames. It therefore merits further review of the literature, which I do at length in the next chapter as I discuss the analytical framework employed during this project.

Next, I will review how research has addressed issues of insurgent promotion through the lenses of recruitment, sustainability, and governance starting from a point of reference of domestic group promotion and expanding to a larger understanding of the work which has addressed some aspects of international promotion to situate the necessity of my research topic within the diaspora, and towards co-ethnic outsiders.

Promotion of Insurgency: Recruitment

Four questions have been addressed in recent works concerning the issue of recruitment among insurgent groups that form a foundation of understanding about the overall processes of marketing from the inside out and joining from the outside: what motivates people to join insurgent groups, (Lichbach 1995; Weinstein 2007; Gutierrez 2004; Peters and Richards 1998), what affects the recruitment strategies of insurgent groups (Humphreys and Weinstein 2006) what leads people to support insurgent groups without formally joining them (Wood 2003; Petersen 2001), and what does "joining" and or "supporting" mean in terms of financial contribution, protests, and information sharing (Wood 2003; Allan 2013; Van Hear and Cohen 2017)?

First, what motivates people to join armed insurgent groups? It is difficult to have a conversation about rebel recruitment without mentioning Mark Irving Lichbach's *The Rebel's Dilemma*. The book addresses the collective action problem in Mancur Olsen's 1965 work *The Logic of Collective Action* and its application in Gordon Tullock's 1971 work *The Paradox of Revolution.* Both Olsen and Tullock assert that for any rational actor, it makes no sense to join a social movement of dissent or rebellion against an established authority as rebels "have everything to gain and nothing to lose by staying home" and "freeriding" while everyone else rebels (Lichbach 1995:6-7). In other words, if the group is going to rebel, and changes will occur, it will do so with or without the participation of the single individual, and the individual is or should be aware of this. Why invest time or money into an opposition group or risk the litany of possible negative outcomes of rebellion or protest if the act of opposition will likely occur unchanged with

or without one person's support? This additionally applies to anyone involved in opposition group support. The logical conclusion that defines the collective action problem is that, in theory, only irrational people rebel. This is clearly not the case, but the question remains, how does individual relative deprivation vis-à-vis Gurr (1970) transform into collective action (Lichbach 1995)?

Lichbach outlines over 20 solutions to the rebel's dilemma framed within the general categories of "market, community, contract, and hierarchy" (Lichbach 1995). Market solutions explain the "personal goods" which can be pursued by rebels as an incentive to join (plunder, resources, political opportunity); community solutions explain the move from common belief to collective dissent; contractual solutions address collective actions and agreements; and hierarchical solutions study how preexisting social structures affect collective action (Lichbach 1995). This exhaustive look at possible paths of reasoning clarifies the rebel's dilemma and helps reach conclusions about insurgents joining across a spectrum of possibilities.

Lichbach's conclusions explain both the strategies and tactics that rebels employ to recruit despite collective action problems as well as the strategic dichotomy in which states try to exacerbate the problems associated with collective action while rebels attempt to alleviate them during recruitment (Lichbach 1995). Lichbach also argues that it is impossible to predict the move from individual dissent to violent action and it is difficult to determine, without a more quantitative analysis, what the general outcomes to such motivations of enlistment and recruitment strategies will be. Jeremy Weinstein made strides toward these queries regarding recruitment and group behavior.

Jeremy Weinstein's *Inside Rebellion* defines the types of groups that attract potential insurgents, and in doing so, also provides a robust explanation of the employment of (non)violence among rebel groups and those with whom they interact (discussed more under "governance" below). Per Weinstein, the "consumer" and the "investor" are two opposing types of individuals recruited for a rebellion. The consumer joins for immediate gain and does not care as much about future promises or prospects of wealth and power. Additionally, he is not moved by the ideology or the message of the group but is focused on himself. Thus, he is a liability both in the ability to be controlled and in the possibility of desertion. Collective action frames used to recruit the consumer are less about the problem and solution and more framed toward personal benefit or material gain. Alternatively, the investor buys into the ideals and goals of the rebellion and is content with the notion that personal gain may come later, if at all.

Collective action frames take a more traditional route in the recruitment of the investor, detailing the problem, the solution, and the motivations of the group based on principles and values that oppose the current seats of power. A hope for future reward, either in finances, power, or a shift in the system that she feels should change is enough to motivate her recruitment and sustain her allegiance. The investor is less liable to desert and more likely to adhere to unit control (Weinstein 2007). More will be discussed about the ramifications of these recruiting patterns and how they affect the mission and actions of the group in the "sustainability" section below.

While Weinstein's work explains patterns in recruiting, it is a largely structural explanation, seems impermeable to the factor of human agency, and demands a more

qualitatively robust supplement. Like *Greed and Grievance*, however, it provides a base on which to build greater understanding that insurgent groups will utilize a collective action frame of one sort or another based on those who seek different types of personal gain through group association.

Francisco Gutierrez's work on the FARC in Colombia and Krijn Peters' and Paul Richard's work on child soldiers in Sierra Leone expand on the rationale of recruitment and show how shifts can occur in rebel groups after enlistment. Gutierrez (2004) qualitatively examines rebel recruitment in Colombia and illuminates the problems with Weinstein's possible quantitative overstatements. His argument is based on the critique of the two main "families" of motivational explanation. He first critiques the economic-based theories of motivations and argues that some groups, like the FARC, did not offer material incentives, and more importantly, they incorrectly assume that the groups' leaders and the recruits have similar economic goals. If someone is recruited with the promises of economic gain, it is important to realize that these goals may quickly divide, causing group inconsistencies and problems which lead to intra-group strife and group breakdown.

Secondly, even when analysis does assume a collective, non-economic based objective, it often does so with over-generalizing statements that are naïve to the realities of warfare. To simply say that an enlistee's ideology aligns with the group's does little to "flesh out expressive needs" of the individuals involved (Gutierrez 2004:2). In other words, it is unlikely that any faction is comprised of people with the exact same personal motivations, even if they are not in the group for the pursuit of profit (Gutierrez 2004:2).

It can therefore be assumed that collective action frames will respond to these inconsistencies and demographic variances, but whether proximity plays a similar role in this process and design of CAFs is the focus of this project. My discussion on collective action frames joins this debate from the inside out. As shown, there are complications and inconsistencies inherent in why people choose to join insurgencies, and therefore, tactics of recruitment must respond accordingly. Therefore, it seemed likely from the start of this project that collective action frames would respond to the variables inherent in recruitment affected by proximity.

Krijn Peters and Paul Richards (1998) provide an eye-opening supplement to the more rational-choice-based reasons for recruitment of adults by examining the choices made by child soldiers. Because of the difference in the motivations (or lack thereof) unique to children, they do not fit comfortably into the Weinstein model and expound upon the idea of coercion. While the following seems a bit far afield for the purposes of this project, I argue that it helps expand the notions of individual reasoning for joining rebel groups and illuminates the purposes and implications of individual agency in the process. More applicably, it is important to understand human agency in the recruit in order to understand how the design of insurgent group collective action frames might respond and change as a result.

Children and youth are recruited either through involuntary conscription and kidnapping or through the subtler forms of manipulation described in the powerful quote from page 187: "some were looking for revenge, others to survive…joining a militia group is both meal ticket and substitute education…The pay may be derisory, but weapon

training pays quicker dividends than school ever did; soon the AK-47 brings food, money a warm bath and instant adult respect…the combat group substitutes for lost family and friends." Using interviews of former child soldiers, the article illuminates the realities of child soldiers and confirms that while many of the child recruits into insurgent groups are volunteers, they are often coerced and manipulated in ways that demonstrate that the "choice" was no choice at all. While they may be kidnapped or recruited through promises, they are often psychologically conditioned to serve the group purposes as "brave and loyal fighters." (Peters and Richards 1998: 183) This raises questions about what "agency" means in many of these contexts and, thus, it is impossible to qualify them either as investors or consumers.

While the article provides a more complete demographic overview of recruitment, I disagree that the needs mentioned are unique to children. Of course, children present a unique social and psychological problem when considering their enlistments, but I would argue that none of the reasons mentioned in the article are unique to children. Food, security, respect, revenge, and education are human needs, not just the needs associated with childhood, albeit certainly magnified in children. It can therefore be assumed that similar means of coercion could be employed as a "promotion" or "recruitment" strategy and it is something that must be analyzed with regard to proximity. For example, is it possible in a city dominated by a certain movement that people feel more coerced than welcomed to join based on social pressures? This project adds to the conversation demands, coercion, and social pressures regarding support for or recruitment into a rebel

group but expands the scope of analysis beyond the group itself and into varying distances, both socially and geographically expanding outward from the group.

Promotion of Insurgency: Sustainability

While there is an abundance of work on motivation and recruitment in rebellion, less has been done until recently concerning its sustainability. However, three works published by Staniland (2014), Christia (2012) and Weinstein (2007), provide a scholarly and several paths forward for future research in these areas. Much of this work has regarded group control in combat and it is important to bear these concepts in mind when assessing how strategies of recruitment and marketing change as the scope of analysis expands to include operators in non-combat countries.

Staniland's *Networks of Rebellion* provides an explanation of insurgent group cohesion and control and defines relationships between both leaders and followers and between leaders of different groups. His theory encompasses two arguments. First, political and social networks and structures such as political parties, religious groups, and tribal affiliations in existence before the commencement of rebellion determine initial insurgent group structures. While the groups are often not violent, the robustness of cohesion felt before the outbreak of war through "information, obligation, and trust" derived from socio-cultural dynamics is translated and mobilized along the lines of conflict once it has begun (Staniland 2014).

Second, Staniland examines relationships within insurgent groups and why organizational change occurs mid-war. While he states that the structures on which the

groups are founded are difficult to change, each "type" of group has its own paths toward

cohesion over time. These types are integrated (high central and high local control),

vanguard (high central, weak local control), parochial (low central, high local control)

and fragmented (low central, low local control). These varying levels of control originate

from the level of vertical and horizontal control. If a group has strong horizontal ties

between the leadership, there will be a strong central command, whereas strong vertical

ties between leaders and the communities in which they operate and recruit will lead to

stronger local control, and vice-versa (Staniland 2014).

Integrated groups, though resilient, can experience shifts when top leaders are

eliminated or when expansion of the group outpaces the rigidity of the network control.

Vanguard groups can easily experience fragmentation when the leaders are eliminated,

and local groups do not have incentive to cooperate with one another. However, the

vanguard leaders can facilitate cohesion within the groups, especially if there are existing

grievances which can be manipulated and reformulated for the purposes of group loyalty.

Alternatively, because parochial groups are strongly managed at the local level and not

through central leadership, they are difficult to entirely root out, but also have trouble

with unification, even if a unifying attitude would make them a stronger force (Staniland

2014).

These distinctions carry substantial weight for the project for reasons of framing

analysis. Who is giving the directives? Are all frames constructed from the central

authority in Koysinjaq, or is there latitude given for local authorities to construct their

own frames in response to the local support climate(s)? Additionally, do the dynamics

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change in the diaspora? As in, does central leadership vary from country to country and from major city centers, etc.? As the results of this project show, the PDKI has done well to integrate their authority structures, and it is likely that this diffusion of power between both their central locations and those overseas including their diaspora headquarters in Paris and the national and regional offices worldwide have kept the group strong and able to weather even the repeated assassinations of their leaders. Sustainability of the group over the past 75 years bears witness to this.

Why would groups not simply unite to win a war, and what makes seemingly rational rebels pursue combative strategies other than those which offer the quickest path to victory? Fotini Christia's *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars* (2012) examines this question. Christia asserts that recent scholarship addresses the causes and conclusions of civil war, but that not enough work has attempted to explain mid-war relationships and group behavior. Rather than dismissing alliances because of socio-political identity, Christia argues that the share of post-war power and resources is the main reason that groups unite and divide during civil war, even at the expense of inevitable victory.

She states that if a group perceives that their alliance is going to win, but their faction (namely, the leadership) will not reap an acceptable portion of the spoils of war, the leadership will realign the group and perpetuate the conflict to be a part of the "minimum winning coalition" (Christia 2012:53). But how does the group leadership convince their followers to realign, even if it means the continuation of fighting and the perpetuation of self-risk for the sake of the gains of the leadership? "Identity entrepreneurs" manipulate feelings associated with socio-cultural group cohesions based

on ethnicity, religion, geography, and other identity groups and convince the individuals that a switch in allegiance is necessary for the protection and perpetuation of their group and way of life (Christia 2012).

Christia also asserts that the relationships fighters have with their leaders can and will diminish or shift in the wake of battlefield losses. When this occurs, socio-cultural factors which influenced the initial formation of the groups will also predict both schism lines and realignment (Christia 2012). Battlefield losses and the general feeling of failure and/or lack of safety also affect the relationships within insurgent groups through a rise in infighting and a general decrease in unit control, leading to problems and/or splintering (Christia 2012). This is yet another dynamic that must be considered when analyzing collective action frames of opposition groups in general, but especially those engaged in active combat, and those who, like the PDKI, have not experienced much notable victory in recent times. I will discuss more about this in chapter three which focuses on the PDKI and its history.

While Staniland and Christia provide insight as to how socio-cultural issues influence intergroup behavior and structure, as well as their durability and sometimes their demise, Weinstein illuminates how issues of unit control are affected by access to resources and how this control or lack thereof affects the civilians with whom the group interacts.

As shown above, insurgent groups attract either consumers or investors based on their initial access to resources (Weinstein 2007). If a group is well-endowed at the time of its formation, it can offer immediate payment to those who would join them. In

contrast, if a group is not well-funded in the beginning it must recruit based on promises of future gains of power, money, or ideological shifts (Weinstein 2007). This affects how much control the leadership of a group has over the individuals involved. If the success of the group is tied to the eventual payout, followers are more likely to comply with group order. Conversely, individuals driven by immediate gain will be less likely to care about the results of the conflict, as it likely does not have an impact on their future gains. This ties into the claim that participants will stay engaged in conflict solely for profit (Keen 2000, Weinstein 2007, Christia 2012, Duffield 2000, Marten 2012, Mwanasali 2000, Collier 2000). As well, some group leaders may allow the pillaging and plunder of the local population as a *means* of payment (Christia 2012), which ultimately affects the level of violence perpetrated on the local population.

For the purposes of this project, Staniland, Weinstein, and Christia's works show that it is important to understand the role of the identity entrepreneur, the consumer, the investor, and reasons for group cohesion and splintering in the overall analysis of framing. This is especially poignant to understand different ideas of Iranian "Kurdishness" while analyzing the strategies behind PDKI framing objectives and sustainability. As a final analysis into the promotion of insurgency, this review next looks at extant work on rebel group governance and its impact on recruitment and promotion.

Promotion of Insurgency: Governance

The motives behind the ways that a group chooses to govern and promote are impacted by socio-cultural, political, and economic environments, as well as the civilian

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response to insurgent behavior. As a group governs an area, either formally or informally, they should have control over the way their mission is framed and marketed in a way that is more absolute than in other situations. Additionally, the way an insurgent group interacts with the civilian population and how it chooses to govern (or not) helps explain its actions and could shed light on the ways that they interact with the civilian populations they recruit internationally. Specifically, the examination of the intersection of socio-cultural issues and rebel group governance illuminates issues of legitimacy and uses of violence, governing structures, and variances in rebel group community outreach and development.

The analysis of rebel governance and legitimacy accentuates two key points in the larger analysis of insurgent groups in general: insurgent groups do not exist in a political or socio-cultural vacuum, and to define their actions as being a result of simple economic or grievance-based motivations is reductionist and leads to erroneous conclusions which do not account for the civilian population, the political, social, and cultural environment in which they operate, or the state itself (Péclard and Mechoulan 2015). Unlike the common neorealist perspective, anarchy is not a prerequisite for civil war and rarely do political power vacuums ever truly exist, either because the state is attempting to maintain control (hence, the war) or the state has vacated an area and it quickly fills with non-state authorities, as is the case in post-Gadhafi Libya (David 1997:561).

Nor do groups operate in socio-cultural vacuums. They must calculate how they use violence and to what extent coercion is utilized if they intend to govern with any popular support in the future. As Mampilly states "the most important challenge for

insurgency is how to resist the brutal efficiency of coercive tools if they hope to mobilize civilians behind their cause" (2011:50). As Klaus Schlichte (2009:14 in Péclard and Mechoulan 2015:21) confirms, "converting military power into rule is their ultimate task…[and] the success of armed groups in these attempts differs enormously." This also helps explain the shifts in mission and rationale of the group as it moves from place to place. If rebel groups intend to garner support from the civilian population, they must do so in a socio-culturally sensitive way that includes but is not limited to both *changing their own message* and indoctrinating others into their new group beliefs and standards. Kasfir (2005: 281) shows this is done through "rhetoric using heroic tales, symbols, speeches, and sophisticated doctrines…useful for convincing people of the legitimacy of violence" or, put a different way for the purposes of this dissertation, shifting their collective action frames (Schlichte, 2009: 65 in Péclard and Mechoulan 2015:21).

Second, an analytically reductionist view of the causes of civil war does not accurately portray many of the governance choices that are made by rebel groups. If rebel groups were simply greedy, profit seeking enterprises, there would be little need to analyze their socio-cultural interactions or shifts that occur. This is, however, not the case in reality. Mampilly shows that much of the interactions that rebel groups have with civilians is not offensive or violent, but regular and banal, and Charles Tilly (2003: 12) tells us, "Even in zones of civil war and widespread brawling, most people most of the time are interacting in nonviolent ways." Put another way, violence during times of civil war is the anomaly and not the norm, most of the time. This was an interesting part of my findings which will be shown in chapter five as well. PDKI CAFs largely had to respond

to the day to day norms in every location and respond to the fact that many potential supporters were not going to make the PDKI's goals their priority focus.

Security, dispute resolution services, and resource provisions are among the most important societal necessities that rebel governance must provide if they are to gain legitimacy among those they are governing and/or intend to govern upon the successful outcome of a civil war, (Mampilly 2011: 17). This also helps explain variances in group governance structures, as different societies will make different demands and demonstrate differing levels of support and resistance of the rebels. This may include demands for more provisions beyond those mentioned above including healthcare, education, food production, international trade facilitation, and other services normally associated with state-building (Péclard and Mechoulan 2015:13). The PDKI certainly fills these types of roles and projects plans for larger governing efforts (unified with other groups), should they ever displace power in Tehran.

Finally, it is important to note that variances in rebel group governance do not always stem from either legitimacy or ability, but from the characteristics of the movement. Kimberly Marten's *Warlords* (2012) show that not all insurgent groups will work toward state-like government formation, especially those acting as warlords, with or without the sanctioning of the state. Others, like the Kurdish KRG, do not have the desire to control the entire state, but only their territory, while still others fight for cultural autonomy and the rights they feel they deserve, such as the PDKI. Whether a group is looking to replace state authority, the mechanisms by which they govern and interact with the civilians they encounter will affect socio-cultural issues and these issues will affect

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rebel governance. Therefore, I adopt the view of Mampilly to not frame every rebel group governance position as an attempt to replace the state, but rather, classify them as "counter state sovereigns" (Mampilly 2011: 27).

The effects of what has been researched concerning rebel group governance and the interactions of insurgencies with local populations is emphasized in the findings of my research among the PDKI. While they do not necessarily "govern" the areas in which the operate any longer, they do enact many government-like decisions, and protect both their influence among their supporters by regarding their fellow Kurds as not only "their people" but also an indispensable asset for their cause and sustainability. This in turn shapes group CAFs that look to sustain that influence and perception.

Conclusion

In conclusion, civil wars and the insurgents involved are impacted through various internal and external processes and mechanisms born out of competing interests. The choices that insurgent leadership and recruits make are directly correlated to present and future gains and possible losses. Current studies show that insurgent groups are dynamic entities capable of shifting and restructuring based on the needs of the group. It also shows that recruitment and governance respond to issues associated with transnationalism and the state of affairs in the country of residence and/or operations. Little has been written which seeks to understand if patterns of marketing and recruitment adjust as a function of proximity outside of conflict spillover areas such as in refugee camps or cross-border ethnic groups.

It is also known that ethnic groups are more likely to join transnational rebellion of fellow ethnic group members and that spillover only occurs across trans-border ethnic lines, but it is still important to understand how insurgencies respond to the socio-political and economic climates of those trans-border regions and beyond as a function of proximal variance. Why is this important? In addition to the reasons mentioned in the introduction chapter of this work, understanding how proximity affects recruitment and marketing in insurgency broadens the scope of analysis of insurgent group behavior from the very limited and close, to wherever the group has a presence the world over. In this way, insurgency can be better engaged, predicted, and countered or supported. By growing understanding, we can also better analyze the connections between governments, economies, and people groups both within, next to, and distant from civil conflict.

This project therefore further explores the shifts of PDKI collective action frames as a result of proximity to the central areas of conflict. In doing so, it expands the scholarly understanding of the transnational dynamics of civil war, insurgency, and the populations that are engaged in the process.

Chapter 3: The Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan

Introduction

To investigate whether proximity affects the collective action frames of a transnational insurgent group, the project required research among an insurgency that would allow for a safe, effective, and dynamic research project that could be accomplished in a timely manner. Focus was therefore was placed on finding a group that was presently engaged in an active insurgency, posed acceptable safety precautions, presented no legal issues while conducting fieldwork or secondary-source research, and would allow research with broad permissions. A group was also sought which occupies a space of influence within a broader spectrum of academic and political impact in order to encourage relevance for future research and practical application. With regard to these criteria, I chose the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, also known as the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran, referred to commonly by the acronyms PDKI or KDPI, as the subject of my case study. This Kurdish political party is steeped in insurgent history, having opposed the government of Iran in a litany of ways for the entirety of its roughly 75-year existence as an organization. After initial contact with the group through a former member in Washington, D.C., the project launched among Kurdish co-ethnic group members and co-ethnic non-members. The research lasted one year from first contact to final interview.

To orient the dissertation's understanding of the group, this chapter explores its history from regional, national, and local levels, and how this history developed the PDKI into its present form, thereby underlining its relevance for the purposes of the project's central question. An understanding of the group's history is vital to the analysis of the group's past and current collective actions frames. While it would be easy to collect PDKI collective actions frames across any number of platforms and interactions, these would be nearly impossible to analyze without historical, socio-political, and anthropological context.

This chapter provides these contexts and is comprised of three parts. Part one focuses on the choice of the PDKI specifically as this project's case study while expounding upon the criteria mentioned above for the purposes of effectively choosing and studying a contemporary insurgency. Part two provides a short history of the Kurds and then more specifically the Kurds in Iran, whose history in the past 75 years is strongly tied to the existence of the PDKI itself. Part three then examines a short history of Kurdish separatism in Iran and demonstrates the origins, history, and a short contemporary exposé of PDKI activities.

Throughout this chapter, the missional and visional themes of the PDKI and its long-lasting and ongoing conflict with the government of Iran are discussed. The chapter also demonstrates the roots of PDKI collective action frames in response to the identity-related oppression that became part of the Iranian power structures which contribute to the perceived oppressions and injustices that the PDKI have addressed both in the past and in present times. Additionally, this chapter works to situate the group within the

theoretical framework of the dissertation as it outlines how the PDKI evolved from an

opposition party to a governing body, and back to an opposition party and active military

insurgency. Finally, the chapter explores the history of the PDKI and its present situation

with regard to its opposition of the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to frame the analysis

of collective action frames both at home and abroad and how those frames react to

proximity both in terms of physical distance and time.

Choosing the PDKI

The following outlines in greater detail the processes of consideration used to

arrive at the conclusion that the PDKI would be an adequate choice for a case study for

the purposes of this project. First, I needed to gain access to a group that is presently

engaging in an active insurgency in thought, message, and practice, is decidedly

transnational both in the receiving of support and in operational reality, and is engaging

in recruitment and propagative activities outside of the area of engagement and at

differing distances (proximities) to the conflict area and/or the group headquarters. The

PDKI is currently exiled in the semi-autonomous Kurdish region of Northern Iraq,

conducts oppositional and insurgent activities near the Iranian border and within the state

of Iran (in the Kurdish region), and is actively engaged in dynamic official and unofficial

party operations in the diaspora in over a dozen countries worldwide, including the

United States.

While their actions in the past included offensive military actions, and while they

are today trained in the use of military arms and tactics, their main goals are not

completely dedicated to the use of offensive military force for the sake of gaining ground in Iranian Kurdistan. Rather, their tactics also employ psychological elements based on the solidification and mobilization of the Iranian Kurdish collective identity and instilling hope for a brighter future in the hearts of Iranian Kurdish communities both in Iran and worldwide. To be more precise, the PDKI is a political party that employs the use of a military wing that has in the past employed varying levels of offensive and defensive military force. Today, however, it is engaged in similar but less offensive actions compared to the more active military state which defined it in the second half of the 20th century.

Second, while the choice to study an active transnational insurgency presented plenty of focus group options to be considered, I concluded that as a priority, I needed to be able to work among a group safely, legally, and without major logistical complications. Additionally, I needed to be able to interview group members and those with whom the group interacts to conduct primary source research rather than just seeking secondary source material from abroad. This would allow me to explore my research question more broadly and deeply and gather first-hand reactions from a large spectrum of participants including those in the group, former group members, and those to whom the group projects their collective action frames in order to assess the reality of *if*, *how*, and *why* PDKI collective action frames are projected in a certain way in different locations, rather than just consuming material printed from official and/or nonofficial sources.

Direct access to different types of participants would allow me to perceive the dynamics of possible CAF shifts and explore more of the nuances and irregularities inconsistent with official group messaging. This meant that I needed to choose a group that was considered allied to the United States, or was at least considered a neutral party, and whose enemies did not pose a substantial threat to my person while in their areas of operation.

I also had to choose a group that would itself not face backlash or possible danger from associating with me. For instance, there are groups that may be able to blend in well with their demographic surroundings, but if they are seen with an American or a westerner more generally, it could possibly draw suspicion toward the individuals from those against whom they are rebelling. These criteria diminished my possibilities substantially but emphasized the possibility of a Kurdish group within the bounds of Iraqi Kurdistan even more so as it is a region that is historically friendly and open to Americans.

The PDKI is considered an ally of the United States and has joined armed coalitions which battled forces of the Islamic State in recent years. The group also holds offices in the United States and in many major cities of U.S. allies around the world. Given the nature of my question, having a group be present in different geographic settings was needed to investigate the impact of proximity on group collective action frames. As well, the PDKI welcomes and encourages the presence of westerners among their people and their party all over the world and even on their headquarters base outside

of Koysinjaq (Koya) in Iraqi Kurdistan.[11] While they face military threats in Iraq, the risk was deemed low enough at the time of my assessment to commence the project. This changed several months after my exit as on Saturday, September 8th, the military of the Islamic Republic of Iran sent rockets into the PDKI camp at Koya where I had conducted research in Iraq, killing 11 people and wounding between 20 and 30 others (Reuters 2018).

When considering conducting research among this group, I had concerns about group accessibility, especially because I am not Kurdish. I was informed however, that I stood uniquely poised as a researcher precisely because I am *not* of Kurdish descent. As it was made clear to me by several members of my research network, it would actually be easier to conduct my research as an outsider because I do not possess the socio-political baggage that can be associated with Kurds from other groups. This is a result of history and current socio-political complications that originate from the splits within the Kurdish tribal and political spectrum that will be discussed at length below. Interestingly, this particular reality check served as a foreshadow to many of the results obtained and conclusions reached concerning the questions that were examined during this study.

Finally, I wanted to research among a group whose existence was influential within multiple capacities of academic and political import to develop a greater understanding of regional and world politics, conflict, and intercultural dynamism. In essence, I was motivated to choose a group about which an understanding of particular

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[11] In fact, while conducting my research, I met with a western Christian mission organization that was being hosted on the main PDKI base in Koya, Iraq.

characteristics might be useful and generalizable to other scholarly and practical pursuits outside the specifics of this study; could the "so what?" regarding the conclusions of this puzzle be substantial and relatable beyond just the sake and purposes of this one study? During an interview with a PDKI leader in the United States, I learned first-hand that the PDKI aspires to be a "lynchpin" on the world geopolitical scene. As a result, after an initial investigation of the group, the abovementioned dynamic relevance was, in my opinion, confirmed.

I also considered a Kurdish group in general as their presence in the Middle East and within the individual countries they occupy affects local, regional, and world politics. It is difficult to tell a story in the Near/Middle East in the present day, and certainly a story of the past, that does not in some way intersect with the plight and the objectives, the history and the struggles of the Kurdish people. Because the PDKI met all of these criteria, and through the establishment of some personal acquaintances with group members in the United States who confirmed the feasibility of the proposed study, I chose the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan as my case study for this research.

What follows in this chapter serves as an introduction to the history of the Iranian Kurdish people set within a broader view of Kurdish history in general, and then develops a history of the PDKI, which is nearly inseparable from the history of the Iranian Kurds in the past 75 years, and lastly provides an overview of how the PDKI came to oppose the Iranian government as a political party and an insurgency.

Kurdish History, Kurdish Division

Any history of the Kurdish people will likely include reference to and lamentations of the past and present struggles that resulted in a division between the Kurds as an ethnic group, as a nation, and briefly, as a nation-state. These analyses of Kurdish history often ultimately lead to a discussion of why and how Kurds have (or were) split into different and sometimes competing groups whether through outside force and influence or through self-imposed division. These divisions, regardless of the reason, perpetually weakened the political and military stance from which the Kurds were able to negotiate across all the countries in which their lands were confined as a result of the decisions of outside political and military forces.

This perpetual and forced geopolitical division between the Kurdish people, especially in the past 100 years, has oftentimes been overlooked as a major cause of division between the Kurds as a nation, or understood differently, as a people-group. Instead, these types of inter-Kurdish divisions have been mistakenly marked as being a result of some inherent characteristic of what it means to be a Kurd. One of the earliest texts I referenced while researching this project is a 1920s era memoir of a British Army officer recounting his two years spent in Iraqi Kurdistan as a political officer, austerely titled *Two Years in Kurdistan.* In the book (Hay, 1921), one of the author's first reflections mentions not only the Kurdish propensity for intra-ethnic rivalry, but also states that this very propensity was the only thing deterring their ability to achieve independence. It reads as follows:

They [the Kurds] are a collection of tribes without any cohesion and showing little desire for cohesion. They prefer to live in their mountain fastness and pay homage to whatever government may be in power, as long as it exercises little more than nominal authority. The day that the Kurds awake to a national consciousness and combine, the Turkish, Persian, and Arab states will crumble to dust before them. That day is yet far off.

There is a temptation among other observers of Kurdish history to simply ascribe the long-standing and oft-repeating conflicts between Kurds to the ethnic identity of Kurdishness. Among other descriptions, Kurds in older literary observations have been described as "shedders of blood, raisers of strife, seekers after turmoil and uproar, robbers and brigands, and evildoers of depraved habits, scorning the garment of wisdom" (Hamilton 2004: 56). Even today, some outsiders will generalize the Kurdish plight as an inherent struggle of Kurdishness and, more specifically, the problematics of Kurdish identity. For example, one western missionary's marketing material was sent to me aiming to recruit for a short-term mission trip. It included a call to participate in evangelization among the Yazidi Kurds in the nation of Georgia, citing their propensity and cultural traditions of "worshipping Satan."

While tribal alliances, schisms, and inter-family rivalries certainly mark the history of Kurdistan throughout time, it is problematic to equate pre-World War I divisions among the Kurds to the splits that have occurred since. Rather, as this chapter outlines, the differences and divisions experienced by the Kurds today are more generally derived from tribal and individual interests in response to the multiple governments that have since come to dominate and envelop different parts of Kurdistan. To be more

illuminating, the idea of the "Iraqi Kurds" being different from the "Syrian Kurds" did not exist 100 years ago because at the time, there was no such thing as Iraq or Syria as they are thought of today. Certainly, the Kurds did not divide along ethno-national lines out of necessity or otherwise except through the periodic influence of the Ottoman and Safavid empires, discussed more below. Instead, in many cases, the way to identify Kurdishness in many current geopolitical contexts is to define the Kurds by what both binds them together as a people and delineates and isolates them from the other ethnicities and the citizenry of the countries in which they reside (Vali 2014, xiii). The following gives a general history of how these splits were formed and how they led to both the current state of geopolitical affairs between Kurds and the Kurdish separatist movements in Iran[12].

From the 16th century until the reformation of the Middle East after World War I, Kurdistan was politically split in half between the Safavid and Ottoman Empires, both after the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514 and more formally as a result of the Treaty of Zuhab in 1639 (Dahlman, 2002). Apart from intermittent (though substantial) incursions by Persia into the Ottoman empire through the 400-year period and at least 18 different treaties readdressing border issues, the majority of Kurdistan (with the exception of some eastern parts, located in modern-day Iran) was under Ottoman rule until the empire's collapse after World War I.

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[12] There have been and are, of course, numerous Kurdish separatist movements throughout the Middle East and across time, but for the sake of range of focus, this chapter only discusses the events in Iran, and how they led to the formation and perpetuation of the PDKI.

As with many other regions of the world, the political situation changed after the post-World War I collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent foundation of many new nation-states through treaties established by the victorious Allies. The Treaty of Sèvres in particular tried to determine the fate of the Kurds and the boundaries of Kurdistan, but it was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne and other British and French Mandates including the Sykes-Picot agreement which ultimately split the Kurds, dividing them among what became several modern-day countries including Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Syria, Armenia, and Georgia, with the first four being home to the vast majority of the Kurdish people (Arin 2015: 3, 10). While each of these areas experience turmoil, marking Kurdish history with several rebellions throughout the Kurdish region within the other nation states, it was the push for independence among the Kurdish population inside of Iran that led to the formation of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, or the PDKI.

While the history of the Kurds is an extensive one, and there are vast amounts of literature regarding the Kurds in Iraq, Turkey, and Syria, less has been written about the Kurds in Iran. The following section reviews this less-studied Kurdish history in Iran and transitions to the history of Kurdish rebellion in Iran, which is distinctly tied to the origins and history of the PDKI.

Kurds in Iran

The Kurdish region in Northwestern Iran is known by the Kurds as Eastern Kurdistan or *Rojhilate* in Kurdish. It is comprised of the Iranian provinces of Kurdistan, Kermanshah, West Azerbaijan, Ilam, and Hamadan. The Kurds comprise 11-15% of the

total Iranian population, numbering at least 8 million (though some, especially the Kurds, argue that that number is more). They are the third largest people group in number only to Persians and Iranian Azerbaijanis and are majority Sunni Muslim, though the Kurds of the North Khorasan Province in the northeast of Iran make up a notable Shi'a exception (UNPO.org). While there is an area considered as "Kurdistan" informally and traditionally, Kurds are dispersed throughout the country, yet they maintain distinct ethnic and linguistic identity (Vali 2014). The geography of Kurdistan within Iran is mountainous and green and contains vital infrastructure such as international roads and pipelines. Despite the presence of important natural resources, especially water, and a history of multiethnic coexistence in the region, Kurdistan remains one of the poorest and least-developed regions in Iran (Zambelis 2011:19). This is a result of a history of Iranian oppression of the region, especially in the last 110 years, which has forced the area to remain mostly agrarian in its economic character and has therefore kept it dramatically underdeveloped compared to the rest of Iran and the neighboring region (Amnesty International: 2008:3).

The underdevelopment of the Kurdish region in Iran is the result of roughly 500 years of restrictive intervention by Tehran that started in 1514. It was in this year that the Ottoman Empire began to incorporate parts of Kurdistan into their empire and proposed incorporation to the majority Sunni Kurdish principalities within the Shi'a-majority Safavid Empire. Through this Ottoman-offered allegiance, the Kurds would be granted political autonomy and the freedom of religion (Vali 2014: 9). In an attempt to stymie the further shifting of allegiance of the Kurdish principalities from their empire, the Safavids

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loosened control over the financial ties with the Kurds and strengthened their political

control by appointing Kurdish tribal chiefs as local governors, thus reducing Kurdish

unity in the buffer region between the two empires (Vali 2014: 9). This led to the

propagation of the effects of power based on lineage and tribalism and reduced the

growth of Kurdish urban areas as would-be systems of cooperation were diminished.

    Kurdish chiefs continued to fill these seats of power until the turn of the 19th

century and the occurrence of the Ubaiudollah uprising. To some, the Ubaiudollah

uprising marks the advent of the expression of political and military Kurdish nationalism

in Iran. While this revolt was actually carried out against the Ottomans by Kurds living

within the Ottoman Empire, it is said to have spilled over (as transnational civil wars do,

across ethnic lines [Bosker and de Ree, 2010]) in the 19th century, thus "plant[ing] the

seeds of modern nationalism in Kurdish soil in Iran." (Vali, 2014:1).

    Vali (2014) however, argues that Kurdish nationalism within the modern Iranian

state is actually a newer phenomenon that was fostered well after the Ubaiudollah

uprising, and one that precipitated out of the constitutional reforms and the advent of the

Pahlavi dynasty in the middle of the 20th century, thereby marking it as a phenomenon

that is roughly 75 years old. Vali goes on to show that Kurdish nationalism was formed

as a response to the Iranian nationalism that grew from the constitutional revolution of

the early 20th century which demanded ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic

homogeneity and left the idea of what it meant to be a "citizen" rather poorly defined

(Vali, 2014:3), limiting the identity of "citizens" to those who were both male and

literate, thereby excluding the vast majority of the population.

This revolution prompted the Persians to replace Kurdish leaders in Kurdistan with appointed national government authorities who subsequently used a manipulative tactic to pit Kurdish tribal chiefs against one another in order to destabilize and dissociate existing native power structures within the region. While disunity among Kurds and non-Kurds in more urban areas was primarily based on the Sunni/Shi'a religious split, the rural areas continued to experience separations based on tribal affiliation and lineage (Vali, 2014:11), and these were exacerbated by the tactics of the Iranian government. This disunity would last throughout the constitutional era and serve to weaken Kurdish political power.

The Iranian Constitutional Revolution and the Door to Kurdish Nationalism

While the era of the constitutional revolution from 1905 - 1911 in Iran signaled the advent of the modern era for Iran as a whole, it also serves as a convenient starting point for the story of the PDKI within the larger context of Persian/Iranian geopolitical history. Additionally, it is an opportune moment in time to begin to analyze the advent of modern Kurdish nationalism and separatism because most major modern Kurdish revolts took place after the turn of the 20th century. It therefore seems logical to examine what was taking place in Iran around the same time. However, it must be noted that this history is not comprised of a neat line of events with step-by-step consequences drawing from the past to the present. Rather, it is a conglomeration of events, passive, active, and reactive originating from Tehran, Kurdistan, and from outside that local geopolitical sphere entirely. What follows in this section and the subsequent section shows how these

forces collided to produce the PDKI and its subsequent history leading up to the modern day.

Like so many other revolutions, the basis of the Persian Constitutional Revolution of the early 20th century was seated in the real and perceived economic injustices that were fueled by the corruption of those in power before the revolution. Reformers argued that the systems of economic and political power were ultimately tied to foreign powers and primarily served to keep the ruling class in Iran powerful and sustainably wealthy at the expense of the Persian citizenry. The reformers, alternatively known as the constitutionalists, thus sought to end this corruption and foreign influence in Persia by imposing monarchical limits through the institution of a constitution that would define the people's will with regard to the rulers of the country (Encyclopædia Iranica 1996). The dire economic straits of the country at the time were especially influenced by the amount of foreign debt that its ruler Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar owed to foreign powers both through product concessions and through subsidies which funded his extravagant lifestyle and foreign travels thus crippling the Persian economy (Cleveland, W. and Bunton M. 2013: 132). This led the educated, religious, and upper classes of the country to demand checks on the financial powers of the ruler which up until this point were nearly absolute, as it became clear that Persia was becoming ever-more beholden to foreign powers through this crippling debt, trade imbalance and the lack of temperance on the part of Qajar (Mackey 1996:150-155).

Beginning in 1905 there were various protests across Persian society which eventually pressured the Shah into allowing a majles (or parliament) to be assembled.

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After the elections, this parliament would become a constitutional assembly and would write a constitution that limited royal power under the rule of law. It would also establish the understanding that the granting of the position of the shah was done so by the people. In a dramatic finish to the episode, it was known that Mozaffar's successor did not want the reforms to occur, and Mozaffar was ill. Mozaffar eventually approved the establishment of the constitution and died five days later (Metz 1987).

What followed was a series of conflicts within the country between those loyal to the new shah, the constitutionalists, and the foreign powers that backed each side, continually vying for power and power reforms. After an agreement between the Russians and the British which split Iran between a British zone in the south and a Russian zone in the north with a neutral band in the middle, the British eventually stopped backing the constitutionalists and abandoned them in favor of supporting the shah. This would lead to more conflict between the shah loyalists and the constitutionalists, and these struggles would continue until the constitutionalists marched on Tehran in an action known as the Persian coup of 1921. This successful coup would eventually replace the Qajar dynasty with the Pahlavi dynasty which was officially recognized by the Iranian parliament in December of 1925 and was led by Reza Khan (Ghani 2000). It would be the Pahlavi dynasty that would witness the rise of the short-lived Kurdish independence in Iran and the establishment of the PDKI.

The time in Iran between the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1925 until the Islamic Revolution in 1979 was marked by secularism, modernity, and cultural homogenization throughout Iran, but also witnessed the birth of formal and persistent

revolt by the Kurds. While many of these reforms were opposed by the religious class, the middle and upper class of society in Iran generally approved of the undertaking to shift the country of Iran toward these national characteristics. It was also the first time that the leader of Iran would signal to the outside world that he preferred the use of the name "Iran" for his country rather than "Persia."[13] These institutions of culture, marked especially by homogenization, would later prove oppressive for the Kurds, but a door was left open for revolt as the disrupting effects of the constitutional revolution, a subsequent revolt by a Kurdish chief and the disquieting effects of World War I would usher in an era of Kurdish separatism in Iran and the advent of the PDKI. This is discussed more in a following section.

Kurdish Separatism in Iran and the Foundations of the PDKI

Like Kurdish populations in other countries, Iranian Kurdish history is marked by multiple uprisings and rebellions as well as periods of marked attempts for independence stretching back to the 13th century. However, it was the last 100 years or so that became the most consequential in terms of the overt oppression of the Kurdish region of Iran by the Iranian government.

The instability in Iran generated by the constitutional revolution opened the doors for the Simko Shikak revolt. This uprising was an Ottoman-supported revolt of Kurds against the Iranian government, which at the time was ruled by the Qajar Dynasty. The

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[13] It should be noted that later, in 1959, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi announced that both "Persia" and "Iran" would be acceptable interchangeably.

movement was led by a Kurdish chief named Simko Shikak. While there were some elements of Kurdish nationalism expressed within the movement and its leader, many argue that the revolt was more aimed at Shikak establishing personal power and wealth through the seizing of power from the government while leaning on traditional tribal power and networking. Other arguments against these events being labeled "a revolt in the name of Kurdish nationalism" are supported by the fact that Simko's forces were responsible for the killing of Kurds and non-Kurds alike during the campaign (as many of the Kurds killed during this time were in non-tribal regions this begins to demonstrate some of the issues in alliance between rural and urban Kurds in Iran [Vali, 2014:14]). However, this uprising, while controversial, is still regarded by some as being a bid for Kurdish independence, regardless of the underlying motivations and outcomes. As the revolt failed in 1922, Simko tried again shortly thereafter to ignite rebellion, but was defeated quickly after some 50% of his army deserted the armed insurrection (Bruinessen 2006: 21).

The Simko revolt and other skirmishes based on the power structures of tribalism were nurtured by the government of Iran at the time. It was therefore the strategy of Reza Shah after the constitutional revolution to control the Kurds by quelling military force and establishing control over tribal political organizations, rather than directly attacking the Kurds as an ethnic group.

This is not to say that the Kurds as an ethnic group did not threaten the centralization of the Iranian state power in the eyes of the regime -evidenced by later preemptive pacts between Turkey and Iran against the Kurds- but the policy of the

Iranian government never would take on the characteristics of ethnic exclusion, like the Turks, but rather, their policy would be one of coerced assimilation, and as a matter of policy, the forced disappearance of the Kurdish ethnicity in Iran. This was carried out first through the dissolution of Kurdish landlord structures and the reintegration of the landholding class into existing Iranian structures and the drafting of Kurdish men into the Iranian armed forces. In this way, the Kurds were not forced to arbitrarily deny their Kurdishness, but rather, to submit its existence to the "greater good" of the nation (Vali, 2014: 17-18).

The two elements of restructuring power in the Kurdish region and requiring service in the army would mark the beginning of a socio-cultural shift toward forced national identity uniformity and the assimilation of all Iranian ethnicities into one, known more commonly as Pahlavi absolutism. The shift toward absolutism, however, would prove to be one of the most consequential in both generating feelings of oppression in the Kurds, and serving as a rallying cry for Kurdish independence for years to come; indeed, until the present day. These changes were accompanied by the forced adoption of Persian as the singular national language in Iran and the banning of Kurdish in all written forms, including in educational systems in 1935 (Vali 2014, 18).

Not only language, but other cultural markers including traditional dress, culture and history were now marked as targets of forced assimilation under Pahlavi absolutism. What was once recognized as "different" from other Iranians now became espoused as the "other" from the constructed uniform nature of Iranian identity, thereby treating the very existence of the Kurdish identity as a threat to the sovereign power of the Iranian

state. To be outwardly Kurdish was now to be an outsider, and a break in the cultural and political oneness of the state. Kurdishness was therefore now a threat to both the sovereignty of power structures established through absolutism, and to Iranian identity, which now necessitated the absence of any non-Persian ethnicity to perpetuate its own legitimacy. This therefore redefined the Iranian identity to include the necessity to oppose outside threats. To be Iranian was to oppose outside ethnic influence and to oppose outside ethnic influence was to oppose Kurdishness (Vali, 2014:19).

The forced assimilation which was the hallmark of Pahlavi absolutism, its ramifications across many spheres of Kurdish society, and the "othering" that was derived from the sovereign identity in Iran would provide the collective identity-based grievances that would form the fodder for the foundation of Kurdish Nationalism in Iran (Vali, 2014:19). Though there had been revolts before this, this was the turning point for Kurdish separatism in Iran. Never again would the Kurds not see themselves as "the others" in Iran and therefore thus derive a sense of identity and nationalism. As this project shows, this feeling would produce ramifications through the modern day and would continue to define the Iranian Kurd both in their homeland and scattered throughout the diaspora.

In response, the Kurds would lay the foundations of the Jiyanaway Kurdistan (J-K, known as the Society for the Revival of Kurdistan), the first Kurdish Nationalist Party in Iran and the party that would eventually change its name and function to the PDKI. Before discussing the advent of Kurdish nationalism in formal politics through the J-K and the PDKI, it is important to first describe the events which opened the door for such

actions to gain popularity and feasibility- the start of World War II and the Allied

invasion of Iran.

Because of the disagreements and the riddled past of British and Russian

influence in his country, Reza Shah avoided working with these two countries in a

commercial capacity and as a result, did not engage the development capabilities that

they possessed to grow the projects being undertaken at the time to improve Iranian

infrastructure and economic growth. Instead, Reza Shah tended to hire companies from

Germany, France, and Italy along with other European countries for technical

development assistance, with Germany being Iran's largest trading partner before World

War II (Parsetimes 1987). However, because the United Kingdom had a monopoly on

Iranian oil through the mechanism of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), this

created both problems for Iran at the start of World War II and a perceived rift between

Tehran and the Allies. Even though Iran declared that they were a neutral party in the

conflict, because of Germany's presence in Iran, Britain insisted that Germany was using

foreign intelligence officers masked as technicians to spy on and sabotage British oil

facilities in the country. Because of this, the UK demanded that Iran deport the German

engineers and technicians in the country, but the Shah refused, citing the detriment that

such an action would have on his country's development initiatives (Beaumont, 1981,

Roberts, 2019)

These interactions led to the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran in 1941. Codenamed

Operation Countenance, the main goals of the invasion were centered around securing

British oil interests in Iran which supplied the Allies on the Eastern Front of the war.

Because of the previously mentioned push back from Reza Shah to not expel German technicians from his country due to development interests, and even though Iran declared itself neutral in the war, the Allies viewed Iran and Reza Shah to be allied with Germany, and as a result, after the invasion, the Allies deposed and replaced Reza Shah with his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. These events, and those that followed during and after World War II, would set the stage for the final push of Kurdish independence and the formation of the PDKI (Beaumont 1981, Roberts 2019).

Other Notable Iranian Kurdish Revolts

Two other notable pre- and mid-World War II Kurdish revolts include the Jafar Sultan Revolt and the Hama Rashid Revolt. While the Jafar Sultan revolt lasted a short while in a small region in Northern Iran and remained rather inconsequential in the larger scope of Iranian Kurdish history, it was the Hama Rashid revolt that proved to be more noteworthy (McDowall 1996). This occurred after the English/Soviet invasion of Iran during World War II. Amidst a larger environment of anarchy in Iran at that time as a result of the Allied invasion and subsequent power vacuum, Muhammed Rashid led two unsuccessful revolts in late 1941 through April 1942 and then again shortly in 1944 (McDowall 1996). While the movements were ultimately crushed by Tehran, they are considered to be the penultimate moves toward Kurdish independence and a precedent for the establishment of the Republic of Mahabad after the successful Kurdish independence movement and the foundation of the PDKI.

The PDKI

The PDKI was founded on the 15th of August 1945, nearly concurrent with the founding of the only Kurdish state to ever exist in the history of the world, the Republic of Mahabad, on the 22nd of January 1946. The party was founded under the leadership of Qazi Muhammad who subsequently led the newly independent Kurdish state. The party originally existed as Komalay Jiyanaway Kurd (J-K) or "The Society for the Revival of Kurdistan." The Komalay Jiyanaway Kurd itself grew out of the early covert organization the *Komalay Azadixwazi Kurdistan* that was founded in 1938. Komalay J-K existed as a nationalist party that was organized by Kurdish leaders after the Allied forces forced the abdication of Reza Shah from power and with him the legitimacy and force behind the homogenization efforts of Pahlavi absolutism. The Komalay J-K was a strictly political force and did not use military strength as a part of its political repertoire. Rather, its strategy sought to accomplish nationalist objectives within the confines of the political process and under the influence of Soviet foreign policy. While this influence was extensive and complicated, the implications that would go so far as to imply that the J-K was a communist organization were unfounded (Vali 2014).

Because its armed force was diminished, the party was under less pressure to stay within the good graces of the tribal leaders who themselves controlled Kurdistan's main supply of military manpower. This would therefore initially submit the leadership of the tribal chiefs to the party and not the other way around. Ultimately, however, as the party grew, it had to incorporate the landowning class into its leadership processes in order to reap the benefits of the social power and influence therein, regardless of the lack of use of

a standing armed group. In doing this, Komalay J-K was in a perpetual state of balancing the needs of the pre-capitalist social power structures with its goals (the tribes) and propagation of nationalist intent. Adding to this was the necessity to continue to parlay the requirements and benefits of the Soviet presence and protection In the midst of its ever-growing power, and this socio-political quagmire, the J-K was abolished and transformed without conflict into the PDKI on August 15th, 1945 just before the establishment of Mahabad and after the Kurds met with the Soviet powers that were backing their movement away from Tehran. This occurred after the Soviets encouraged the Kurds to join the newly independent Azeri state that was developing simultaneously, and the Kurds resisted (Vali, 2014: 46-47).

As my interview subjects' sentiments claim, the PDKI was the first Kurdish party in the country established by "ordinary people," and set the precedent for the nature of the political priorities to come that were based on "Kurdayeti" or the belief that Kurds deserve to be in control of their own sovereign nation. Also, according to my interview subjects, who were both full-time party members and active peshmerga at the time of the interviews, the precedent for the party to be changed from the J-K to the PDKI was established because of four major changes to the organization's composition and mission, which I outline below.

First, the organization had grown substantially and therefore necessitated a more robust and democratic governing body in order to integrate the new members. Second, the new organization and its members required a clearer political vision (thus integrating the first concepts of collective action frames, laying out the "diagnostic" and

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"prognostic" forms of the party's CAF). Third, they moved to integrate forms of motivational collective action through the integration of Kurdish and Iranian armed and unarmed resistance against Tehran (which they deemed as fascist). Finally, they had to turn their CAFs outward in order to market themselves to outside liberal (and liberating) political organizations worldwide. They were especially keen on finding organizations who shared their sentiments as anti-colonialists and anti-fascists who would be willing to support them (Author interview, 2018). These visions accompanying the establishment of the PDKI precipitated the founding of the Republic of Mahabad.

The Republic of Mahabad, founded as an independent Kurdish state while separating from Iran, was a part of a larger ethnic movement within Iran that also saw the rise of the Azerbaijan People's Government, a similar but not as well-recognized secessionist attempt that also lasted until December 1946. While the history of the short-lived Republic of Mahabad had its tangible roots planted after the Allied invasion of Iran in August of 1941, this was accompanied by a Soviet attempt to attach parts of Northern Iran to the Soviet Union. The Soviets therefore promoted Kurdish nationalism and worked to promote the desire for secession among both the Kurds and the Azeris of the region. The conditions in Iran during this time were marked by the consolidation of power in Tehran through the cultural and ethnic homogenization onus that suppressed Kurdish and other ethnonational identities. However, the subsequent diminishment of power in Iran due to the Allied invasion created a moment for the possibility of secession.

In September of 1945, Kurdish tribal leaders were summoned from Iran to Baku by the Soviets and were informed that it was the desire of the Azeris that the Kurds

establish a new Democratic Party of Kurdistan within the recognized national boundaries

of the newly forming Azerbaijani autonomy. Attempts at detribalization concerned

Kurdish leaders and the desire to maintain collective identity within governance led to the

Kurds eventually declaring their own Kurdish People's Government on December 15th,

1945 led by Qazi Muhammad as the Azeris had done with the Azerbaijan People's

Government only 5 days prior on December 10th. Shortly thereafter, Qazi Muhammad

declared the foundation of the independent state of the Republic of Mahabad.

The manifesto composed in the midst of the foundation of the Republic of

Mahabad included provisions for the goals which follow (these goals would eventually

transform into the foundations of the collective action frames of the PDKI after the

dissolution of the Kurdish state, and continue to be articulated through PDKI CAFs today

in some form or another): an autonomous region within Iran, the recognition of Kurdish

as the official language, a provincial Kurdish council to oversee issues of state and

society, origins of state officials being local, harmony with the Azeri people, and a

common law for both the upper and lower classes. This was accompanied by widely

encouraged political freedom of expression and discourse and the encouragement of

engagement by civil society within the socio-political processes in the newly formed state

(Vali, 2014: 64). While these established provisions were primarily related to the political

foundations of Mahabad, they comprised the first official frames of the PDKI and were

accompanied by other socio-cultural and ethno-national provisions, discussed next.

During the interviews, my research subjects mentioned the following

accomplishments of the Republic that enhanced the views of the state and illuminated the

visions of the state that extended beyond political systems and structures and related more to the growth and maintenance of a common, ethno-national identity: The national anthem and flag were adopted as official symbols of Kurdistan. Kurds from other areas supported the independent state, including the Barzanis from Bashur (Southern Kurdistan, i.e. Iraq). They echoed regularly the fact that Kurdish was the official language of the nation state. The state produced regular publications including Hawari *Nishtman* magazine, *Gur u Gali Mindalan* (a publication for children), and *Kurdistan*. In addition to publications, the state sponsored theatric productions. Finally, and importantly, especially for the future of the PDKI, the peshmerga (the armed forces of the country, who later, after the state's collapse would continue to fight) was created at this time along with women's and youth organizations that encouraged and empowered these groups to participate in the public arena and civil society for the first time.

In spite of these missions, visions, and the provisions for both, and in spite of the fact that it was now independent, the newly formed state of Mahabad was fully dependent on the outside support of the Soviet Union, especially in terms of the sustainability of finances, provisions, and national defense. This would eventually lead to its demise as the relationship that was necessitated between Mahabad and the USSR turned many western powers away from the support of the Kurds in Iran toward the government in Tehran who, as the Kurds at the time noted, misled the West into believing that because Mahabad was supported by the Reds, that the Kurdish Democratic Party was also communist.

As what is now seen in hindsight as inevitable, western powers eventually convinced the Soviets to pull out of Iran under UNSC resolutions 2, 3, and 5. After the departure of the Soviet Army, the Iranians very quickly retook the Azeri portion of Northern Iran and began to isolate the Kurds. With no more help from the USSR and with no ability to work with the Iranians due to a lack in bargaining power, the Kurds had to make a choice as to whether or not to surrender or continue to fight Tehran unassisted and unprovisioned. The difficulty of this choice would be exacerbated by the preexisting divisions within the ranks of the Kurdish tribal leaders, some of whom would shortly begin to declare their allegiance to Tehran (Lortz, n.d.).

Infighting among the Kurdish tribes was especially aggravated through this now lack of military and financial support but had existed well before the departure of the Soviets. Throughout the entire experiment of the independent Kurdish state, tribal leaders continually demonstrated inconsistent loyalties, especially as it regarded their perceived notions of who would emerge victorious (see Fotini Christia's *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars* for an in depth look at the nature of this widespread phenomenon among rebel groups). Once the Soviets pulled out of Iran, some of the tribal chiefs immediately returned their allegiance to Tehran (even joining welcoming parties as Tehran marched on Kurdistan [Vali 2014: 109-110]) and made it apparent to Qazi Muhammad that not only were the people split in allegiance, but his forces would be diminished. According to Vali, this was not a new reality; the chiefs had quite often granted their support to Tehran, even during the time of independence. This would often bring overt and official rebuke by the Mahabadian government, though its ineffective and threatened punishments were

not often carried out, as the Kurdish government could not risk the outright revolt of the Kurdish leaders.

These unfortunate realities for the apparent future of the Republic of Mahabad eventually brought Qazi Muhammad to surrender to Tehran, rather than to fight. While he and other leaders initially sought to dig in against Tehran, because of the divisions in his ranks and among his people, he reckoned that the result of a standoff would be a Kurdish massacre. The Republic of Mahabad was thus reentered by Iranian forces on December 5th, 1946, was disbanded, and once again became part of Iran. Despite objections by the American ambassador George V. Allen, the Shah of Iran executed Qazi Muhammad and his brother by hanging on March 31st, 1947. They were convicted of treason (Wilford 2013:53)

One of the leaders of the Kurdish armed forces during this time, Mustafa Barzani, along with many of his soldiers, eventually fought their way into Soviet Azerbaijan and subsequently, in 1958, returned to where they came from in Bashur (southern Kurdistan, in Northern Iraq). His political efforts in Bashur led to what is now the established semi-autonomous state of Kurdistan in Northern Iraq (Edmonds 1971: 96). This remains in the minds of many of those I interviewed as a major point of ethnic continuity and an example of what functional *Kurdayeti* has the possibility of precipitating into despite the fact that in the years to come following the downfall of Mahabad, Barzani's government would juggle allegiances between the Kurds and Tehran, especially during the conflicts between Iran and Iraq. While the Kurds that I interviewed find little in common with the political situation in present day Rojhilate and Bashur*,* the fact that the Barzanis'

effectual power began in Mahabad serves as a reminder that the present-day national boundaries were once overcome by the manifestation of Kurdish nationalism in the independent state of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad.

The PDKI after the Fall of Mahabad

After the dissolution of Mahabad and the previously mentioned displacement of the Qajar dynasty by the Pahlavis, major social changes were under way in Iran. Reza Shah died and was replaced by his young son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. This change of guard was accompanied by major shifts in Iranian culture including those that continued to demand cultural homogenization. Unlike Turkey, where Kurds were forced to integrate or be excluded from society, Iran demanded assimilation. It was assumed that while Kurds in Turkey were simply oppressed and neglected from the larger functions of society and government, Kurds in Iran by some measures simply "did not exist." Instead, the Kurds were generally regarded as Persians of a different sort. If they spoke the language differently, it was explained as a different dialect of Persian. Indeed, it was through this continued oppression and suppression of ethno-linguistic identity that roots of Kurdish rebellion in Iran took hold in its current state (Vali 2014).

The oppression and denial of the Kurdish ethnicity and language continues to be a source of mobilization of nationalism that both substantiated Iranian oppression and served as a rallying cry for the Kurds in pursuit of their own rights. As Vali (2014, xiv) tells us, and as was echoed in my fieldwork, especially among those with outside perspective, ethnicity and language are therefore, yes, a force of political motivation and

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the pursuit of inherent "natural rights," but ethno-linguistic differences only *exist* as a result of political othering by the government and as a rallying cry for the oppressed Kurds. As one interviewee (May, Iraq) would put it,

> We have a problem with the term "ethnic." Iran uses this term to deny self-determination. Kurdish people consider themselves a nation, not an ethnic group; by considering [the Kurds] as an ethnic group, you can deny them rights. As an ethnic group, [we are] now just a subgroup of their nation. When someone says that the Kurds are an ethnic group, it is political.

The PDKI has been in existence for nearly 75 years. During that time, its reasons for existence, the problems it responds to, the goals and visions it casts, and the ways that it has mobilized have in some ways shifted, and in others, remained constant since the beginning. As was mentioned above, during its beginnings, the PDKI was focused on state formation, state building, and state sustainability in response to the aggressive othering mandated by Pahlavi absolutism. Therefore, its earliest collective action frames eventually transpired into statements of official government policy that had to balance between nationalist aspirations for the Kurdish people, responding to the "othering" imposed on the Kurds by the Iranian government, and responding to the forces outside of itself including the political power imposed by the existing tribalism structures and the influence of outside governments including the Iranians, the Russians, and the British, among others. Once the PKDI gained independence, from a scholarly perspective these frames ceased to be collective action frames since the group was no longer considered in opposition to the state; rather, they became matters of state policy and sustainability among other structures such as military forces and taxation.

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What is fairly unique about the PDKI is that it went through the rare occurrence of transitioning from the state of being an opposition group, to presiding as an official governing body of an independent republic, back to the station as opposition group identifying as the governing body of a state that no longer exists. This would prove to be a major source of inspiration for the PDKI in the years to come as their ultimate goals as a group, the visions for their people, and even who "their people" were would shift across space and time. This would lead to pronounced delineations between their collective action frames across time and continues to have an effect on collective action framing today.

In the time between the fall of Mahabad and the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the PDKI fluctuated in size and influence. Soon after the fall of Mahabad, the PDKI fizzled in number and effect. Although it experienced a brief reprise of influence under the administration of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh from 1951 to 1953, the group again diminished after the British and American led coup d'état that overthrew the prime minister and reasserted the power of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. In 1958, the Iranian secret police, known as SAVAK, prevented the PDKI from unifying with the KDP (the Barzanis) in Iraq. While much of the PDKI continued to align with the KDP, this came to an end as Tehran officially aligned itself with the KDP against the government in Baghdad. This required the KDP to officially rescind support for the PDKI as Mullah Mustafa of the KDP announced that the PDKI was no longer welcome in Iraq (McDowall 1996)

These occurrences precipitated a shift in PDKI leadership from conservative to socialist. What followed in 1967 would be the next major engagement of the PDKI's military forces in the 1967 Kurdish revolt in Iran. Building on the momentum of several tribal revolts in Iran starting in 1966 and gathering motivation from the contemporary KDP revolts in Iraq, this struggle was the first organized attempt at seizing Kurdish autonomy in Iran since 1946. The group began an assault on Iranian forces that, though defeated, would last for 18 months and experience several military victories. Yet again to blame for the failure of the movement was the distinct lack in unity and social and logistical support for the undertaking (McDowall 1996).

Following the defeat, the group met for its Third Congress in Baghdad in 1973 and elected who would become the group's most famous and influential leader, Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou. It was also during this Third Congress that the PDKI would adopt its slogan and vision statement that would last for decades, "Democracy for Iran, autonomy for Kurdistan." This would be a pivotal moment in the history of the PDKI as it established itself firmly against the government in Tehran and openly aligned itself with other opponents of the state. Armed insurrection would follow (McDowall 1996).

During the Iranian Revolution of the late 1970s, the Kurds fought with those looking to overthrow the Shah. As partakers in the revolution, the Kurds had hoped that this shift in power would result in greater autonomy for their people, but it was soon apparent that this would not be the case. Throughout the transition, the Kurds tried to form a tolerant allegiance between Tehran and Kurdistan, especially by marking their common Islamic religious identity. This would be ignored by Tehran in light of the

majority Sunni nature of the Kurds. While some Shi'a Kurds and other tribal leaders chose to side with Tehran, it had been made clear that the Kurds' bid for tolerance from Tehran would be ignored. This would be heighted when Dr. Ghassemlou, the now elected leader of the Kurds to the Iranian "assembly of experts" was denied his seat at the table by the Iranian government. By March of 1979, the PDKI announced an 8-point plan for Kurdish independence. This would set into motion a series of uprisings and protests calling for Kurdish independence in their region. This open rebellion targeted police and military posts and was met with calls by Khomeini for the Kurdish leaders' arrest and execution (Nourizadeh 2004, Vali 2014).

What would follow would be months of open civil war between allied Kurdish groups including the PDKI and the leftist Kurdish group Komala, and the Iranian military. The Ayatollah would declare jihad against the Kurds and place a fatwa on the Kurds and their leaders. Various military operations benefiting one side or the other would take place, including the siege of the city of Mahabad. During this time, the governments of Iran and Iraq, at war with one another, would equip Kurdish fighters in the opposing countries to fight against their respective enemies. This process would prevent Kurdish unity across the Iran-Iraq border. While the majority of the Kurdish rebellion of 1979 diminished by 1981, small skirmishes would continue throughout the 1980s (Ward 2009: 231-233)

1989 saw yet another large and active insurgency of the PDKI against the Iranian government. This time, the fighting lasted until 1996 when the PDKI was officially ousted from Iran. The conflict was sparked by the assassination in Vienna, Austria of

Ghassemlou, the now long-time leader of the PDKI, and subsequent Kurdish protests in Iran, eventually leading to widescale arrests. Attacks by the Kurds on Iranian military targets drew heavy retaliatory action by Iran that would lead to losses among the Kurds. Tehran also instituted a policy of ongoing targeted assassinations of Kurdish leaders including their new leader Sadegh Sharafkandi and many others (UCA: n.d.).

By 1996, much of the fighting had subsided. During (and by) this time, many of the peshmerga who are now living in the diaspora (who would sit for many of my interviews for this project) left Iran for refugee camps in Iraq (a large number lived in Ramadi) or had fled to Turkey. Many then made their way to Sweden, one of the first European countries to accept Iranian Kurds on a large scale, while others started to scatter throughout Scandinavia, France, and the United States, where much of the Iranian Kurdish diaspora reside today.

While targeted assassinations continued, formal and open conflict between the PDKI and Tehran waned in the years after 1996. Since then, the PDKI set up its main military base in Koysinjaq Iraq, and continued to conduct resistance campaigns, mostly through political organizing by their covert secret organizers in Iran, known as *tashkillat* (singular, *tashkilla*). These protests would take the form of strikes and protests of various kinds but would also include different types of organizing including women's and youth groups. While these groups are encouraged and organized indirectly by the PDKI, they were and are not "officially affiliated."

In 2016, after 20 years of relative quiet, the PDKI peshmerga resumed military operations in Iran in an operation known as *Rasan*. While many of my interviewees noted

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this as meaning "standing up" or "resurrection," the official meaning, as was advertised on the PDKI's twitter account, is "standing up with a vengeance to an enemy" (Author interview, Washington, D.C., November 2017). While I will discuss the causes and effects of *Rasan* more in chapters five and six, it is what defines the latest "phase" of the PDKI concerning its official policies toward Tehran. While it would here be appropriate to discuss the current collective action frames of the PDKI, they will rather be explored in the following two chapters.

Conclusions

It is important to note that throughout their bids for independence, autonomy, and cultural freedom, it has generally been the position of the PDKI that the Kurds' main desire and focus is to be integrated into the population of Iran as Kurds and that their nation, like the other nations in Iran, be afforded "national" rights including the right to use their own language, religious tolerance, and proper representation in the Iranian federal system. Even during the independence of Mahabad, it was the stance of the Kurdish leadership that Kurdistan would remain independent until such a time as they would be afforded these abovementioned rights, among the others that were demanded. This position persists today. While the slogan has changed from *Democracy for Iran* to *Federalism for Iran,* the sentiment remains the same: the PDKI does not tolerate Iran's stance to deny the Kurds' rights as a nation.

Systems of linguistic and cultural exclusion underpin the goals of cultural homogenization that uphold structures of power within the Iranian government. This

started first under the Pahlavi dynasty and continues now under the theocratic rule of the Islamic Republic of Iran (which also excludes Sunnism, the religious sect of most Kurds there). Because of this decades-old policy of imposed paradigm, the Kurds, in spite of their desire to be counted among the Iranian population as equals, continue to be "othered" as a matter of government policy.

As this project will show, this othering continues to be a reality that the PDKI addresses not only in Iran, but elsewhere in Kurdistan and across the various locations of the Iranian Kurdish diaspora. This deeply ingrained othering has not only served as the catalyst for protest, rebellion, and all-out civil war, but nudges the nuance of Iranian Kurdish identity all over the world. More strikingly, this is even more heightened among their fellow Kurds elsewhere in Kurdistan than it is in other, more distant locations.

As will be shown, the results of this dissertation research demonstrate that collective action frames of the PDKI are affected by this history of Kurdish separatism and being forcefully "othered" at home and abroad while fighting to claim "ethnic" recognition in Iran. However, both proximity *and* time have an effect on these frames as they fight toward these goals. Both of these will be discussed in chapters five and six.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Analytical Framework

The research for this project required a broad-scope focus of analysis to study how the PDKI projects its collective action frames at differing distances from the conflict centered in Iran to thus perceive any possible group CAF shifts resulting from proximity. Depth of analysis and breadth of approach were accomplished by utilizing a wide range of qualitative research methods and interviewing a diverse set of research subjects on both their projections and perceptions of PDKI CAFs. This chapter details the research design and analytical framing employed to investigate questions seeking to illuminate the possibility of shifts in PDKI collective action frames as a result of proximity to the focal point of the PDKI's conflict with Iran, named by this research as the PDKI's headquarters in Koysinjaq, in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Part one outlines the process of fieldwork through a description of the interviews, interviewees, methodology, data collection, field site choices, and control mechanisms used to isolate the possible effects of proximity on PDKI collective action frames. Part one concludes with ethical research considerations accounted for during the pre-, mid-, and post-fieldwork stages of the study, networking strategies, and accomplishments, and credibility considerations that helped propel the expansion of my research base and larger network. Part two follows and includes a description of my data analysis, theoretical and epistemological framework, the furtherance of key term descriptions beyond what was

outlined in the literature review, and an account for the possible null hypotheses that could have been found in the study along with possible other variables that could have had an effect on the PDKI's collective action frames.

Research Overview

To accomplish the necessary research objectives, I employed a series of interviews and comparative case studies among diasporic Iranian Kurdish communities and individual Kurds of Iranian, Iraqi, Turkish, and Syrian origins living in 17 cities in the United States, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, France, and in Iraqi Kurdistan. In every location except Canada, I embedded myself within the party and interviewed and conducted participant observation among those who are members of the PDKI, supporters of the PDKI, those with whom the PDKI interacts more generally, and those that oppose the PDKI for a number of reasons. All of the participants interviewed during this study were of Kurdish ethnic origin, and most had lived part or all of their lives in Iranian and/or Iraqi Kurdistan. I also examined primary and secondary source documents associated with the group in these areas including websites, meeting records, and historical accounts found in autobiographies, biographies, books and articles written about the group as well as numerous word-of-mouth accounts of the group. Throughout this research, I recorded any instance of the projection of collective action frames, either formalized or coded within other communications, interactions, and conversations, either intentionally or unintentionally. While observing and recording these, I took note of possible shifts in PDKI collective action frame projection and perception, and how those

frames are perceived and received by target populations and populations that were not the

targets of the CAF projections but received and interacted with them nonetheless.

As discussed above, I determined if a message or other dialogue was to be

classified as a CAF if it related to the group's attempts to communicate its diagnostic,

prognostic, and motivational frames even if these messages were not being delivered to

an outsider. Additionally, CAFs for the purpose of this study were noted both in official

communications and from everyday members who expressed some form of CAF

expression, even if not in an official "marketing" capacity; in other words, in everyday

conversations.

The research was accentuated by an ease of accessibility and a willingness of the

party members and non-party members to interact with me at a rate and with a depth that

I had never experienced in previous research endeavors. This willingness and its impacts

and implications for my project will also be discussed further in below. The following

section outlines the project's fieldwork.

Research Design - Fieldwork

Fieldwork for this project was conducted to gain an accurate measurement of the

possible effects of proximity on the collective action frames of the PDKI if any such

effects existed. Therefore, numerous field sites needed to be engaged to increase the

amount of "data points" available for the study. Increasing the sample size served to

increase the certainty that results of the study in any one city or location were not the

result of any spurious or alternative variables such as those related exclusively to politics,

culture, economics, or other environmental factors. Additionally, as mentioned in the

literature review, the conceptualization of proximity needed to be limited for the sake of

the scope of analysis of this project. Therefore, as explained below, measures of

proximity were grouped as "proximal," meaning in and around PDKI bases in Iraqi

Kurdistan, "intermediate," meaning elsewhere in Iraqi Kurdistan, and "distant," meaning

all of the diaspora outside of Kurdistan. I limited the interviews to Kurdish co-ethnics in

order to bound the scope of the study and to restrict the influence of other possible

outside variables associated with ethnicity. While respecting these boundaries of

proximity and ethnicity, the goal of the fieldwork was to interrogate the question as

widely as possible through interviews, observation, and participant observation.

The most proximal fieldwork location, or the "starting point" of the study was

Koysinjaq (Koya) in Iraqi Kurdistan which is home to the central command of the PDKI.

Kurdish co-ethnics living on the PDKI base in Koya are considered "local" and most

proximal to the conflict for the sake of the project as it is the hub of all operations and

much of the strategic planning aimed at both Iran and elsewhere across Iraq and the

diaspora. The base also serves as a municipal and cultural hub as a "city within a city" as

members and their families and PDKI peshmerga (soldiers) live on the base as well.

While I have visited Iraqi Kurdistan many times, I have never experienced a culture and

"city" quite like this one, as everyone on base is of Iranian Kurdish national origins and is

involved in PDKI activities to some extent.

Second, fieldwork took place in Erbil and in the areas surrounding Erbil in Iraqi

Kurdistan. While those living in Erbil are still majority Kurdish, the majority are not

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Iranian Kurd, nor can the Iranian Kurdish community be considered contiguous between Koya and Erbil as mostly Iraqi Kurds occupy space in between. Therefore, Erbil and the rest of Iraqi Kurdistan are considered "intermediate" as they occupy a space that is ethnically contiguous, but not occupied by a majority Iranian Kurdish population.

Research also took place in Washington, D.C., Paris, France, and in several cities across Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark, where not only are there communities of Iranian Kurds, but also major PDKI contingencies and hubs of diasporic operations. While it is not the largest or the most central of these, Paris is considered the headquarters of PDKI diasporic planning and operations. All of these locations served the purposes of the study in the capacity of "distant" proximity. I chose multiple sites so I could test the project in several locations to try to account for the effects of host-country-based variables that could affect PDKI collective action frames. More about accounting for variables unassociated with proximity explicitly or those effects that could be spurious are discussed at length later in this chapter.

Progression and Conceptualization of Fieldwork

The design and order of the fieldwork was conceptualized in four stages. Each stage built a foundation for the subsequent stage to make the most out of the interactions with interviewees and participant observation and to expand the existing network of contacts. Each stage was focused on gaining clarity as to whether or not proximity has any effect on insurgent group collective action frames. Therefore, the fieldwork was planned and executed in order to test this hypothesis, and sites were chosen accordingly.

By choosing "near" sites in Iranian-Kurdish-majority locations of Northern Iraq, "intermediate" sites elsewhere in Iraqi Kurdistan, and "distant" sites elsewhere across the world with Iranian Kurdish immigrants, the fieldwork was set to test proximity and its effects on insurgent group CAFs.

Stage one was comprised of area research and planning. The goal of this stage was to ensure effectiveness of research approach and networking in each location and was used to procure as much information about both the area and the PDKI in that area as possible so that the research could launch efficiently. Stage two was comprised of several types of interviews and was conducted among PDKI communities in 17 cities in seven countries around the world and resulted in almost 150 interviews using different qualitative methods including one-on-one interviews (both public and private), group interviews of varying size, conversations that were not structured, and even teaching a class on conflict resolution and research at the University of Erbil where I was able to interview the entire class about the PDKI using a semi-structured interview process. Stage three, concurrent and in strategic conjunction with stage two, was comprised of observation and participant observation. It included attending events, parties, official and unofficial meetings, and gatherings of family and friends. Finally, stage four included reflection on the results of the previous stages and follow-up with individuals and groups, when necessary, in each location.

This section outlines the above stages in detail and provides further insight into each. It describes how my fieldwork progressed and presents the challenges and accomplishments along the way. First, however, the chapter begins with a description of

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each field site and how and why they were chosen. While this chapter outlines much of how the fieldwork was conducted and why the methods and locations were chosen, results from each stage and location are outlined in detail in chapters five and six.

Seventeen sites in seven countries were chosen for fieldwork based on the presence of the PDKI, their accessibility, geographic variance, centralized locations of outreach operations and the quantity of individuals in each location. They were also chosen as a result of network snowballing where someone simply called a contact and sent me on to the next location. The following describes the general progress of research and the logistics of the fieldwork, while the analysis of the effects of each location on the PDKI and the broader political, cultural, and economic implications of each location on the project are discussed in further depth in chapter five.

Washington D.C. served as the commencement point of my research, as there is a large contingent of PDKI members and supporters in my home city. There the active members of the PDKI focus on lobbying the United States through government channels and media. I initiated contact with the PDKI in Washington through a mutual acquaintance. PDKI operations in Washington serve the Iranian Kurdish population through events, news, and other forms of community outreach and by building solidarity efforts among both Iranian Kurds and the larger Kurdish community in the area. As I am local to D.C., it also served as a launching point to build my interviewee network and plan for fieldwork in other locations.

I also chose Washington D.C. as it is far from Iranian Kurdistan. It served as the point of greatest geographic distance relative to the other field sites and provided

something of an "outside, in" perspective, allowing me to exercise my fieldwork and research methodology techniques with some room for ease of access, correction, and adjustment in my approach before launching into fieldwork overseas. Time spent in this site included about four months of preparation, network organization and engagement, conducting interviews, and attending gatherings and parties. This provided a highly effective launching point from which to begin the networking necessary to travel to and conduct research in other countries while limiting time wasted organizing logistics and meetings and gaining credibility.

Sweden was the second country in which I conducted research. I conducted interviews in the major cities of Stockholm and Örebro, as well as the smaller towns of Rimbo and Haninge. While the exact statistics of how many PDKI members exist in any one country are classified by the PDKI (and were not shared with me), because Sweden was one of the first countries that received PDKI and other Iranian Kurds *en masse* as immigrants and political asylees, it is likely that Sweden has one of the largest numbers of PDKI members in the diaspora. In Sweden I was not only able to meet dozens of party members through snowball sampling but was able to attend meetings in the group headquarters and learn about the ways in which the Swedish government supports the party as a civil society organization. Because Sweden is a government that greatly encourages civil society and citizen engagement, especially because of the organization of their government a social democracy, the PDKI is given money as so many other groups are who engage political and civic participation in the country. My contact in Sweden propelled me across Europe and connected me to others in Finland and Norway,

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providing credibility and networking information, and arranging places for me to stay along the way.

Finland followed Sweden in my fieldwork. There, I began research in Helsinki where I interviewed several people mostly in the home of a local party member. I then traveled to the port city of Turku where I met Iranian Kurds who are members of the PDKI, those who are not members of the party, and other Kurds of different national origins.

Norway followed where I was welcomed into the home of a of an Iranian Kurdish immigrant family who had been in Norway for over two decades and who were well-connected to the PDKI community in that country and around the world. This couple functioned as my next large networking source as they were historically well-connected to members in Iraqi Kurdistan and opened the doors for my research in Denmark. Interviews in Norway were conducted exclusively in Oslo.

From Norway, I traveled to Erbil, Kurdistan, in Northern Iraq where I was formally welcomed and received by the party and resided in the guarded PDKI compound in Erbil. Iraqi Kurdistan is the home of the PDKI, acts as a staging country for operations in Iran, and is the world hub of the PDKI. As the PDKI officially left Iran in the 1990s, many Iranian Kurds who live in Koysinjaq (which is the home of the headquarters and major military base of the PDKI) have called it home their entire lives and do not have any lived experience in Iran.

This site was very fertile interview ground for leaders, members, supporters, and citizens who interact with the PDKI. There I was able to visit numerous PDKI locations

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and bases including the main military base in Koysinjaq. While in Erbil and in Northern

Iraq more broadly, I interviewed other PDKI members, non-members, Kurds of Iranian

descent, as well as several dozen local Iraqi Kurds. This location also afforded me the

opportunity to attend meetings and events and generally reside and exist among the party

for extended periods of time to conduct observation from a very proximal point of view.

Erbil is the capital city and the home of the Kurdistan Regional Government, the

KRG. Unlike many of the insurgencies which operate in Iraqi Kurdistan, the PDKI is not

condemned by the KRG and they have many times cooperated militarily, especially in

recent years against the Islamic State. In fact, as I was received by PDKI soldiers at the

airport, the members reclaimed their "checked" AK-47 assault rifle at the airport

entrance, with the trusted KRG police. Unlike the PKK and other Kurdish separatist

groups, the KRG, like the United States and others, do not consider the PDKI a terrorist

organization or in opposition to their own political interests. Therefore, it was necessary

to interview many of those who interact with the PDKI but are not official supporters and

not of Iranian descent in order not only to understand the projection of PDKI collective

action frames in this area, but also to understand how these CAFs were being perceived

and communicated from the point of view of non-members. This was an especially

abundant source of interviews with those who are members or supporters of the Iraqi

Kurdish ruling party, the KDP, and other opposition parties.

After Northern Iraq, I journeyed to Copenhagen, Denmark where I was received

by a prominent member of the PDKI in that country. After several interviews in

Copenhagen, I traveled to Horsens on the other side of the North Sea from Copenhagen

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to conduct interviews and stay in the home of a family that has always been engaged in PDKI activities.

The overseas portion of the fieldwork concluded in Paris, France, which is the home of the PDKI diaspora offices and acts as something of a *de facto* headquarters of diaspora activities. While the city is not home to as many PDKI members or Kurds in general, because Dr. Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou resided there and his widow still does, the party regards it as a centralized location, regardless of logistical convenience. While there are other hubs of PDKI operations that I did not engage in Europe, all of the locations chosen overseas were chosen by direct recommendation of the party. While there is much about the party that is classified, it was obvious that the places that I conducted research contained robust Iranian Kurdish communities that were widely variant in their desire to engage in and their approaches to politics both in their new home countries and their old.

After concluding research overseas, I returned to Washington, D.C. and used the remaining time to reach conclusions about the interviews, conduct follow-up discussions, and interview other Kurds and experts in the field. While discussions were held in English and a bit in Arabic, the two languages with which I am familiar, I employed Kurdish translators familiar with the project when necessary.

Finally, my research also engaged an additional "field site" which exists between locations. This the space in between geographic locations (Mandaville 2001) made up of websites, networks, social groups, transnational networks, and those who move between those locations. Of specific focus in this site were questions such as, "who are those who

act as network nodes of communication and how do they address their transnationality?"

Additionally, how the mission is framed by the PDKI for the general audience, regardless

of geographic location was an important focus, and served as an experimental control.

Fieldwork Stages

Before commencing fieldwork in each location, stage one of the project was

comprised of area research. The aim of this stage was to familiarize myself with the

history of the PDKI in each area, current efforts and aims of the group, and how the

group has been received by and interacts with the locals. This stage included consuming

relevant secondary sources such as news, television, and reputable internet sources,

accessing primary sources related to the PDKI's actions in each area, and interviewing

people familiar with the group in the area. The intent behind the first-stage strategy was

to enter the area of research well-versed in PDKI history, politics, culture, and current

events in order to have an immediate context of approach for the research and interviews

and to be able to recognize contextual and intercultural nuance when necessary in order

to increase research timeliness and effectiveness. This stage lasted several months leading

up to my fieldwork among the PDKI in Washington, and was repeated before entering

any new area, including gathering information from the people who helped me to

establish contact in the new areas, making further use of the snowball technique in

research network development.

Stage two was comprised of formal and non-formal interviews. The process of

approach to the multiple population sets of the PDKI, PDKI supporters, and those with

whom the group interacts in all of the locations investigated was important as a control device in the study. While this is a qualitative case study-based research project, it was necessary to interview more than just those who are in charge in the PDKI's promotion efforts in each of the field sites. How the PDKI intends to market, how their members and supporters perceive those marketing goals and how those with whom the PDKI interacts may have different perceptions and generate different intended or unintended consequences of these strategies. Therefore, group CAF intent and perception were both studied to triangulate the reality of the effectiveness and clarity of implemented collective action framing strategies.

I needed to remain cognizant that CAF strategies could change in multiple ways and for multiple reasons. The perception of specific audiences could change without the PDKI's message changing, and alternatively, the message could change without any public perception of said change. What is intended and what is accomplished needed to be delineated to be able to uncover the truth in how CAF strategies and messaging changed, if at all.

As discussed above, it was important to vary the type of interviewee engaged to grasp the full range of perception from members, supporters, and non-supporters, and to gather a diverse set of responses to grasp the range of perceptions of the promotional and recruitment techniques from their point of view and to compare these perceptions to what the official PDKI correspondence communicates. To do this, I conducted structured interviews using the questionnaire found in the appendix of this dissertation and allowed the interviewees to add to the conversation as he or she deemed necessary. Interviews and

the subsequent conversations related to the interview questions, therefore, lasted

anywhere from about a half an hour to as long as two days.

I conducted interviews through purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive

sampling was employed to focus on Kurdish co-ethnics. While the opinions of the PDKI

by other locals in each country in which I conducted research may have been

illuminating, for the sake of limiting the scope and focus of the study, I only engaged

Kurdish co-ethnics (including non-Iranian Kurds), though their party affiliation,

involvement in politics in general or their national origin was not used as a filtering

device. This is because I wanted to be able to sample a large cross-section of the Kurdish

population in order to measure the effects of proximity in differing communities to

ensure that the results I obtained were not limited by the PDKI and/or Iranian Kurdish

perceptions and intentions. It was also because, as the study later confirmed, PDKI CAFs

are aimed both at Iranian and, though differently, non-Iranian Kurds.

Within each community, I used a snowball method of network construction not

only to establish more contacts but to gain associative credibility. While in the past, I

have struggled with gaining credibility and establishing networks of interviewees,

especially among conflict-affected communities, the networks that I had already

established with the Kurdish community prior to the launch of this project delivered quite

unexpected results. While more of this is discussed later, I found that rather than being

skeptical of my intent or my identity, the PDKI was quite open to my project, encouraged

it, and spread the word about it among their fellow party members and the Kurdish

community in general because, as it was broadly thought, I am one of the only scholars to

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have ever engaged in a project of this kind among their party, and they felt that the work could increase the awareness of their cause. Therefore, I experienced the benefits of doing the proper legwork before and during the engagement of research and interviews.

Interviews were conducted across a large demographic variance. While there was no age limit, to simplify the study, I only interviewed men and women who were 18 years of age or older. The interviews were structured using the questionnaire included in the appendix of this dissertation, but I allowed and encouraged the interviewees to extend beyond the questionnaires to access a more in-depth and robust understanding of the respondents' views. While I worked to arrive at answers for all the stated questions, my general aim was to acquire relevant information that precipitated while using the questionnaire as a template. I was also purposeful to conduct observation, and when possible, participant observation if I was invited to participate, though I did not cross international borders illegally nor did I enter Iran at any time. During any informal observation or participant observation (discussed further below), I took brief, hand-written notes that were reviewed and expounded upon at the end of each day. Eventually, all hand-written notes were transcribed to a secure digital format and the hand-written notes were destroyed.

Four types of co-ethnic interviewees were sought: PDKI members, PDKI supporters, co-ethnics with whom the PDKI has interacted (including non-supporters) and other Kurds who did not have any meaningful interaction with the party or who purposefully avoided politics in general for any number of reasons. The grouping of persons into these four categories was loosely based on Elisabeth Jean Wood's criteria in

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her work *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. In it, she describes how the participants of the Salvadoran Civil War segmented themselves into three types of groups regarding those who were in some way "supporting" the rebel FMLN (Woods 2003:16).

The first type of participant was those who were both "unarmed and unorganized" but who stood in opposition to the government regime. This differed from those who felt as though they needed to supply the rebels with food, water and safe haven when requested. As Wood states, whenever forces from either side would come into contact with civilians, everyone that she interviewed felt that they had to supply those basic needs when asked, and therefore this was not a reliable determining factor of loyalty or allegiance. Instead, group one did overtly oppose the regime, but did not "join" any function of rebellion. In my project, I selected one group of Kurdish co-ethnics who were not involved in PDKI actions and did not support their movement in any tangible way. In fact, as I learned, some of them opposed the group's principles and collective actions frames. Like the *campesinos* from Wood's study, this does not mean, however, that they supported the Iranian regime.

While I initiated my fieldwork being as open-minded as possible to the idea that I might encounter Kurds who were on the side of the regime, I did not. In fact, I now understand that it was unlikely that I would have found any such Kurdish supporters of the regime as they are labeled by their co-ethnics as a "josh," which, in Kurdish is the word for a juvenile donkey, or one who is protected by or subservient to the parent

donkey, which in the metaphor, represents Iran. There will be more about this perception of traitors in the Kurdish community described below.

The second type of interviewee that Woods describes and that I encountered was the non-armed supporter. While Woods describes this type of supporter as someone that might be a member of an armed local organization in full support of the FMLN, this differed from those that I encountered only with the distinction that the affiliations of the PDKI in different areas outside of Iraq and Iran are not armed. Rather, these types of supporters that I encountered were members of the PDKI and supported the organization across a spectrum of ways, from simply paying annual dues, all the way to organizing local party activities while taking direction from party headquarters in Koya and/or Paris or their local party-affiliated authorities. This type of supporter usually had other employment, even if they were head of the party in a certain area, usually held citizenship or long-term residence permission in the country in which they resided and had varying levels of commitment as far as time and resources were concerned.

The third type of supporter described by Woods was the full member whose full-time focus was armed, mobile rebellion against the Salvadoran government. Since the FMLN was fashioned amidst and for the purpose of violent rebellion, those who were full-time party members certainly engaged in or supported a full-time combat mission. This varies somewhat from my research subjects, but still helps to classify my third type of interviewee. Instead, the full-time party member of the PDKI can hold a variety of roles. One of my initial contacts is a full-time party member who works to represent the PDKI to the American government and lobby for its interests. Others worked to

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coordinate the diaspora in France and Iraq among other places. Still others were members of the PDKI military forces located in places such as Erbil and Koya whose main goal was military readiness and coordinated rebellion inside Iran. These included male and female combatants, party leaders and administrators, and those that played a full-time support role in everyday life as the headquarters in Koya operates as a small, independent town-within-a-city.

I did, however, encounter a fourth type of participant, not represented in Wood's book per se, but which deserves a note here. This was the person who was an ardent supporter of the PDKI, who worked hard to support its mission and vision (sometimes harder than members) but, for whatever reason, be it personal or professional, did not formally join the party, or left the party in the past as an official member. These types of interviewees gave interesting interviews, and their impacts on the group will be discussed later among the rest.

Additionally, it should be noted that I encountered many non-participants. These were Kurds of differing national origins, including Iranian, that did not have the knowledge or desire to participate in politics. Many were young, but they varied in education and income levels. I describe them as co-ethnic non-participants and I regard their views equally for the sake of the study because they comprise part of the target audience whose support the PDKI looked to recruit and at whom the group may have aimed their collective action frames for the sake of marketing and recruitment.

It was useful to interview these types of non-participants for three reasons. First, and foremost, they provided an outsider's view and perception of PDKI collective action

frame projection and communication. This allowed me to analyze not only the intended frame projections, but to see what was actually being communicated and how and if this delivery versus reception differed. In this way, I could see if what members intended to communicate (or told me they wanted to communicate) actually underwent alteration depending on the audience. These results returned very important and are discussed at length in chapter five.

Second, interviewing non-participants showed me how the PDKI chose to engage people who were not already interested in politics or the rebellion. This revealed different points of approach for the PDKI CAFs, especially with regard to audience engagement and the flexibility of the frame components.

Third, interviewing those who were disinterested or unengaged provided a view that otherwise could not be obtained about the overall reach of the PDKI message, and even the awareness of their existence. As a major insurgency that has been in existence for some 75 years, I assumed that the group would be well-known at least throughout the co-ethnically contiguous region, but I found this to be untrue. In fact, as will be discussed later, there were several Iraqi Kurds living in close proximity to the group that had never heard of the group at all.

Interviews were conducted in three ways. One-on-one discussions comprised the majority of my interviews as I wanted to gather plenty of insight from different sources from all the groups mentioned above. In this way, I could control more for answers without the burden of peer pressure or feelings of insecurity. Second, I conducted small group interviews that were comprised of 2-4 people. These types of interviews lasted for

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hours and usually included a sit-down meal or discussion over coffee in someone's home. Though they started with a questionnaire, as I was rigorous in maintaining a consistency of approach for all of the interviews I engaged in, the time I spent in these groups usually transpired into deep discussions about opposing viewpoints and often included members of the different types of interviewees listed above. This is where many of the conclusions that this project ascertained were first discovered.

It was in these types of groups that I could present questions and follow-ups to the surveys that I used on every other interview that would help me dig deeper into the project and an understanding of my questions in ways that I had not conceptualized or even thought of beforehand. While this project also involved participant observations, which will be mentioned later in this chapter, this type of interview was also participant observation. I felt that it was in these settings, when multiple cups of tea were drank, when voices were raised and laughs exchanged well into the night, that much of the group's growth, action, and motivation were developed in conversation sessions precisely like the kinds that I would see transpire.

The third type of interview I conducted were large-group interviews. These were done sometimes out of necessity, especially among the active-duty military members on the PDKI bases for the sake of time as I was given a limited amount of time where I could distract them from their duties. This also included groups of party members who could all meet at once in a certain city. This style of interview, however, was also utilized in such a way so as to ascertain some views of the group that would arise among a group of peers. Would being around a large group of party members elicit different types of

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responses? Would they toe the party line or allow debate to arise even among many others? I would find, surprisingly that both would be true.

The 10 interview questions were standardized for both content and order for every participant to avoid the biases of how and what questions are presented. I followed up the questions for the sake of clarity or learning more about specific responses and to elicit conversation after the questions concluded.

Stage three was comprised of observation and participant observation and was connected with stage two. This stage focused on gathering insight that was missed or misunderstood during the formal interviews and looking for new information that could be gathered among groups, as a part of formal meetings, or attending group functions across the spectrum of field sites. What was being told through words and what was being told through actions needed to be conglomerated to effectively analyze group behaviors and CAF projection. Scenarios in which I conducted participant observation included group gatherings, visiting places of business (such as the PDKI offices in Washington, D.C.), training sessions and subgroup functions such as attending a meeting of the PDKI youth movement in Northern Iraq, and less formal settings such as households, parties, and other informal gatherings. Some parties among PDKI members and the general Kurdish community in one location or the other were arranged specifically on my behalf. During these times, I observed both interactions between members and between members and non-members and took note of the goals and outcomes of the scenarios in which I was able to engage.

Participant observation also allowed me to engage with group dynamics and scenarios that could not be predicted or planned for. Group subtleties, proprieties, cultures, and histories existed within a tangible landscape around me during these times, and I was able to grasp new understandings during these times that I did not know to look for. This developed many ideas and conclusions and helped me to adjust the study time and again. It also certainly contributed to the sustainability of my project and the growth of my research network among both members and nonmembers.

Stage four was reflective and focused on follow-up and reaching conclusions. This included transcribing interviews from paper onto my computer, reflection and interpretation of field notes from observation, data triangulation, and some follow up with interviewees. It was a continuous process during my fieldwork and allowed me to extend the research in certain areas I felt needed to be further explored from previous interviews and observations. It also allowed me to extend my network contemporarily and develop field sites and locations of research for which I had previously not planned. This included meeting with interviewees when they came to the United States, both in my home and out at restaurants for reflection and follow-up questions about the project. Stage four was also highly introspective. It was a time for me to sit on what I had learned and experienced and wait for an understanding to precipitate from the information and responses that I collected. It was a time of both frustration and illumination as patterns would become clear. This was the final stage that I utilized both before I began writing this final draft, and how I would manage writer's block during draft composition.

Methodology

This project employed process tracing methods to reach conclusions through the fieldwork and insight analysis. Beach and Pedersen tell us that there are three variants of process tracing methods (2013:13). This project engaged two of those variants of process tracing to arrive at the outcomes and analytical results of the study. First, the process generated the need for "theory-building process-tracing." My hope was that a robust enough pattern would emerge that the project would yield a new theory in transnational insurgency dynamics. For this to occur, two important predeterminations needed to be made according to Beach and Pedersen. The first was that "fact would have to exist before theory" (2013: 16). In this case, the "fact" that strategies of collective action framing change as a result of proximity would need to exist before a theory is built around it as to "why and how." At this point, it would be up to the project to uncover a theory of process and causal mechanisms that could then predict outcomes in other locations and across other groups. As chapters five and six illuminate, this turned out to be the case. Proximity does in fact have a noticeable and predictable effect on the collective action frames of the PDKI, and this research demonstrates "why" and "how."

Process tracing is also used in "explaining-outcome process-tracing." Under this assumption, the project would adopt a more nuanced approach to explain different outcomes of collective action framing strategy and seek to discover robust explanations without building a theory where "x" change will always lead to "y" outcome (Beach and Pedersen 2013: 18). This scenario would be the result of a successful study which uncovered either or both of the following: First, that a pattern would emerge as to how

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framing strategies shift in response to proximity and the different social environments in which the PDKI works; and, second, that these variables would be identifiable by the parties involved with PDKI membership and support. As the results show, there is not only a pattern revealed in CAFs as a result of differing proximities, but the PDKI both identifies and employs the strategies of patterning in order to reach different audiences with the marketing and projection of their collective action frames.

Finally, it was important to remember that the research project could have uncovered that proximity has little or no effect on PDKI collective action framing. In this case, it would have been just as important to understand and define why. By employing process tracing, it was my goal to assess whether proximity influences opposition group collective action frames, and if so, how. It was important to consider before embarking on the research that the patterns or lack thereof in PDKI CAFs were a result of proximity or not. By tracing back sources of shifts as they were observed, I determined these CAFs were in fact recognizably a function of response to proximity and that they were not spurious and/or related to other, alternative means and variables.

Analytical Framework

In order to analyze themes of proximity, collective action frames, and support recognized in the fieldwork phase, this short section defines how responses were grouped and coded. The research analysis grouped proximity in terms of proximal, intermediate, and distant, as mentioned and defined previously. CAF analysis organized CAF subcomponents, or "core framing tasks," into the three groups mentioned above from

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Benford and Snow, including diagnostic (the problem), prognostic (the solution), and motivational (the prescribed actions). For instance, I remained aware that it could have been possible that diagnostic and prognostic framing remain the same, but motivational framing changes. Further, within motivational framing from Benford and Snow, I also considered methods of communicating "severity, urgency, efficacy, and propriety." In this way, I analyzed more succinctly shifts in CAFs rather than simply suggesting that a frame has, in general, shifted. I also took note of the goals of framing: what types of support are being sought and how/if those goals affect CAF construction. This included manpower, political support, material or financial resources, or any other type of support. Finally, I also noted instances of urgency, or lack thereof, throughout this analysis. While this gives some insight as to how I coded my data, the concepts are well-expounded upon in the results chapters.

Consideration of Other Impact Variables and the Null Hypothesis

It was certainly possible that proximity is simply a spurious variable and that frames shift in response to variables associated with proximity but not as a result of proximity. For instance, a shift in organizational frame could have been observed between Koya and Paris, but not because Paris is farther away, but because Paris is on the whole a more financially stable city than Koya or because their political system is different. In order to say with certainty that there is a definite relationship between proximity and frame shifts, there needed to be reasons to believe that other independent variables such as politics, ethnic environment, and the economy are not affecting framing

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without the independent influence of proximity. To know this, I needed to find trends that were traceable to proximity only, could not be explained or predicted by the other possible variables, and did not noticeably follow similar trends related to these variables. For instance, it was important to gather shifts related to politics *because of* proximity rather than just a shift in the political environment as a whole. Of course, CAFs would shift as a result of political changes, but this project worked to find if proximity was the underlying cause of said shifts.

Additionally, I needed to operationalize my awareness of frame shifts. How would I know a frame shifted? At the outset of the project, there was little to predict this. As time went on, however, it became increasingly clear that the obvious changes in frame subcomponent composition (diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames), as well as responses of the frames to "contextual opportunities and constraints" (Benford and Snow 2000: 628) through the adjustment of their variable features (Benford and Snow 2000: 618) would help me to understand when and how a frame shifted.

If there was little or no connection between proximity and insurgent group CAFs, this project would have reached an equally useful conclusion. In this case, it would be possible to conclude that there is a CAF stability that is unencumbered by "closeness." CAFs would have demonstrated a rigidity, stability, and durability to the message of the PDKI that is more unapologetic and less linked to strategy in recruitment than it is to the central and essential framework of the group. In essence, I would have seen the same CAF strategy everywhere, regardless of location.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical concerns in this project focused on the social positions of the interview subjects: those who are members of the PDKI, supporters of the PDKI and those who interact with the PDKI but are not associated, and those who are unassociated and do not interact. As with any violent conflict or political opposition, the ethical concerns of research among these communities were paramount before, during, and after the project's completion.

The PDKI is not considered an illegal organization in any of the research locations, and the organization works elevate its perception in its existing location throughout the world and to raise public support for itself. That said, it was important to heed the requests of every participant that I interacted with as the Iranian government has been known in the past to target individuals associated with the PDKI for assassination or to intimidate and threaten their friends and relative still living in Iran. I heeded the advice of party members as well as any directives that party leaders gave me for the safety and security of the interviewees. Non-members who are supporters or who have received benefits from the PDKI were given similar treatment. Special attention was also given to those who are not supporters but who have interacted with the PDKI, and care was taken not to divulge their information to the PDKI, and vice-versa.

Throughout the process of research, I was constantly reminded by the majority of my subjects that they either "felt safe because they were far away," or it was made clear to me, especially by active duty soldiers and other party members and leaders that they were not afraid of being targeted because they are engaging in willing opposition and

their goal is to promote the messages and purposes of the PDKI. Some of the older members of the group told stories of being hunted by the Iranian government, even while inside the borders of friendly countries.

Indeed, several of their leaders and members had been assassinated in the past, and some were even mortally attacked just months prior to the launch of this project. I was also taken by members to the graves of some of these members and supporters to illuminate the reality and gravity of the situation. Because of this, I assured them that I would keep their answers and even the fact that they had been interviewed by me confidential, but many of them protested, saying "no, publish my name if you wish, it is my contribution to the cause." Regardless, of whether or not I used their name in this work, I still employed the same precautions that I originally intended to use otherwise.

While considering my precautionary measures and how they impacted my work, I noticed two important effects that ethics and caution had on my research efforts. First, there were several members of the group that refused to meet with me. It is hard to say why, though some group members and I had hunches. Though I ascertained from many of my networking partners that some did not know the intent of my work, this was never made clear. From an academic perspective, I could speculate, but it seems beyond the scope of the project to do so. However, if past personal experiences in field research hold true, it is likely that some members or supporters simply did not trust my identity or my intent, or my ability or willingness to keep their identity and/or responses to interviews confidential. Additionally, the majority of these came from those residing in the United States; some in the U.S. agreed to meet with me, but under the condition of relative

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anonymity, only providing their first name and their general station in life (though they were open about their experiences with the PDKI). My general understanding as to why this was a trend remains limited and any attempt to explain would only be speculative.

Second, I considered the ethical ramifications of my biases as a researcher. I paid special attention to treating every interviewee the same, regardless of their position with respect to the PDKI, their willingness to answer the questions, or their willingness to meet in public or private. I also worked to not let the language barrier affect my interpretation and went go to great lengths to understand the true meanings of the answers whether given in English or Kurdish. Many of my interviewees spoke English fluently as they reside in countries where English is spoken fluently such as Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. However, in instances where the interviewee did not speak English, I recruited the help of translators who were able to serve as both linguistic and cultural interlocutor in order to achieve they most accuracy in both questions and answers. It also was important to consider my role as a foreign researcher and the possible biases that could be introduced as a result of the point of view of all of those with whom I conducted interviews and interacted.

Logistically, while every interviewee was informed as to the nature and goals of my research, I employed the following ethical initiatives to protect my interviewees and those with whom they are associated and to comply with the George Mason University's Human Subjects Review requirements. First, I protected the subjects' identities both within and outside the networks within which I worked. I only referenced participants for the sake of network snowballing if the participant expressly allowed it. To make the

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participants feel more secure and sure of my purposes as a researcher, however, I made these network connections as often as possible to provide the interviewee with a sense of my accountability to the network.

Second, the entirety of the pre-, mid-, and post-interview process was voluntary. Consent forms were made available to the interviewees and they were all made aware that they could cancel the interview at any time, could refuse to answer any questions and could rescind their willingness to participate and any of their responses up until the publishing of the work.

Third, the level of anonymity employed was set by the interviewee. I took all possible measures to guard the identity of the interviewee including name, location, occupation, associates, interview location, and family members. Real names were only used in the work with the express request and/or permission of the subject and all interviews took place in a location within which the interviewee was comfortable and which the interviewee usually chose.

Fourth, all data collected including (with the consent of the interviewee) written conversations, research notes, travel itineraries, emails and any other means of correspondence were kept confidential either through digital passwords for computer data or under lock and key for physical notes. Both measures are being taken in perpetuity or until the data is destroyed. Finally, all data, notes, transcripts, and final works will be made available to any of the interviewees and they will be responded to if questions arise about the project or its results and conclusions.

Credibility

It was important to maintain the integrity and validity of the data collected to arrive at reliable and valuable results. This was achieved through three processes. First, as mentioned above, I used research triangulation to achieve the most accurate conclusions. This was accomplished through primary and secondary source research (desk research) including news, radio programming, television, and the internet, and by accessing primary source documents related to the PDKI's actions in each area such as official correspondence, inter-group communications which were made available to me, a process of standard interview and follow-up, general observation and participant observation. This provided multiple angles at which to view the situations, ascribe credibility to overarching conclusions and omit any outlying assumptions made in error or miscommunicated.

Second, I recorded to the best of my ability all the interviews and notes of observation and used reflective practice when analyzing my notes at the end of each day. I also allowed and encouraged participant validation of my transcribed notes to ensure accurate communication and assumptions and allowed participants to review my work as it concerned them personally and conclusions in general at any time before publishing. Finally, I pursued a rigorous peer review of my procedure and theory during my research and writing processes, especially among those who are familiar with or from the region of study and sought critique of methods, data, and conclusions to avoid errant interpretation.

Conclusions

If there was one surprise to this project, it was just how easy it was to collect the insights that I obtained. I never could have anticipated the fact that interviewing members of the diaspora would engage them in a way that would empower them to feel as though they were doing a service to the cause of the PDKI by engaging with me about their group. Throughout the process, I met with people who not only felt as though it was their patriotic duty to engage with this project but would introduce me to others readily and with sincerity and excitement. My interviewees cooked for me, drove me around, introduced me to their families and allowed me to stay in their homes. Some refused to let me purchase my train tickets to the next location, opting to drive me in their personal vehicles or purchasing the tickets for me.

Repeatedly I asked, "why is everyone such a wonderful host?" and repeatedly I was met with notions about how not only they saw it as their duty as a Kurd and a Kurd from Iran, but even more so, for those who are members, their duty and their investment in the cause of the PDKI. While the results of this project remain unaffected by these sentiments, I certainly do hope in some ways that my time and my efforts will somehow repay the favor to these willing people.

What follows are the results of this project and my time spent with Kurds around the world who are seeking a better future for themselves, their families and for their fellow Kurds worldwide.

Chapter 5: Results, Physical Proximity

Introduction

Does proximity to the conflict affect PDKI collective action frames? The conclusions of this research demonstrate that it certainly does, but in ways that are more dynamic than were expected at the outset of this study. Shifts in PDKI collective action frames occur in ways that are decidedly linked to the history and current state of Kurdish collective identity. These shifts respond to proximity's effects on the geopolitical and social realities which encompass group member's lives and the places they call home. Proximity as a function of co-ethnic contiguity has major impacts on how the PDKI both changes official strategy in different areas, and how members themselves interpret and regenerate CAFs to respond to their current and sometimes brand-new situations depending on where they are relative to the conflict. The results of this study demonstrate the robustness of proximity as an active and unique agent of change for PDKI collective action frames. This is because proximity acts as an agent of change for the entirety of context, rather than simply changing one contextual variable that a group may or may not have to respond to. These diverse effects are discussed in this chapter.

While the results show that there is a connection between proximity and CAFs, a major related connection was also discovered. Discussed in chapter six, the results returned an inherent responsiveness to what I call "temporal proximity" as compared to

"physical proximity." Namely, the amount of time that separates the member and former member from their last interaction with PDKI activity affects their projection of PDKI CAFs. In hindsight, this was certainly foreshadowed in the realities of PDKI social structures and history, but the results of this project clarify that although the purpose of the study was to analyze the effects of proximity in terms of co-ethnic contiguity, the effects of time and its emotive entanglement with the effects of nostalgia, memory, and location outside of (Iranian) Kurdistan and PDKI bases all have noticeable effects on the collective action framing of the PDKI members and the interpretation of current group CAFs by former PDKI members.

Included in both chapters are three repeating themes. First is that the collective action frames of the PDKI are affected as a direct result of the physical or temporal distance from the conflict. Second, these differences are well-defined through shifts in the collective action frame subcomponents categorized as diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames. Third, these results are tied to how proximity affects CAF contextual constraints and the collective identity needs of Iranian Kurds in varying proximities to the conflict as a function of co-ethnic contiguity or time.

To illuminate the findings associated with geographic distance, the current chapter is divided into three parts. First, I illustrate what are dubbed PDKI "master frames." These frames are the publicly accessible, well-advertised frames that make up the public message of the organization. They provide a departure point for the study as a "constant" to compare how CAFs respond to shifts in proximity. Second, I demonstrate in detail how the collective action frames of the PDKI shift in response to proximity.

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Each of these sections is grouped according to which proximity is analyzed and how these proximities affect PDKI CAFs. They begin with a broad-base analysis of shifts or lack thereof in the CAF subcomponents of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames. The second part of each section then more finely analyzes these shifts with respect to how specific contextual variables and their related constraints and opportunities respond to differing proximities, and by what variable feature(s) the frames shifted.

The organization of my analysis and the resulting structure of this chapter is outlined visually in the figure below.

	Proximity		
	Near	**Intermediate**	**Distant**
Diagnostic			
Prognostic			
Motivational*			
***Political Opportunity**			
***Cultural Opportunities and Constraints**			
***Audience Effects**			

Figure 4

Throughout these subsections I pay special attention to contextual constraints described by Benford and Snow (2000:628) and mentioned in the literature review. These

are "political opportunity structure," "cultural opportunities and constraints," and "audience effects" as well as other contextual nuances found throughout the study. I also utilize the collective action frame "variable features" concepts discussed in Benford and Snow (2000:618) described as "problem identification and direction/locus of attribution," "flexibility and rigidity, inclusivity and exclusivity," "variation in interpretive scope and influence," and "resonance," as a way to standardize my approach of collective action frame shift analysis. My descriptions, however, are not limited by these mechanisms, and I include my own analyses that fall outside these categories and are more specific to the PDKI. By expanding this frame of analysis, my hope is that this study could contribute to both the canon of collective action frame analysis and the study of insurgent group dynamics.

Third, and in conclusion, I provide a general summary of my findings, including large-scale observations that permeated the study and formed themes of occurrence and interplay between proximity and PDKI CAF formation. These themes include the large trends associated with distance vis-à-vis co-ethnic contiguity, a discussion on how and why central CAF formation differs from how general members discuss and project PDKI CAFs, and how the results expand the study of insurgency in general as well as how they expound on the literature of civil war and especially its transnational dynamics.

Throughout the course of these discussions, I postulate on the actions and perceptions of the Iranian Kurds living in Iran. While I did not conduct research in Iran, I have gathered enough contextual information from my research subjects as well as secondary source information to piece together a well-formulated perception of how my

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results compare to the realities for the Kurds within Iran itself. While this conjecture is outside the formal purview of analysis gathered in this study, I provide insight in order to situate comparison and behaviors with some relativity to the situation among Iranian Kurds in Iran to provide as broad a picture as possible of the realities for Iranian Kurds, the PDKI, the nuances of their struggle, and the group's responsive CAFs there.

Additionally, I touch on how the results demonstrate the variant of urgency in CAFs that was not expected. Although urgency is generally regarded as part of the motivational subcomponent of CAFs, this project shows that urgency of approach influences CAFs not due to group master frames, but as a result of proximity to the conflict. This is intricately linked to diasporic conditions and shows a connection to existing literature on diasporic participation in civil war.

What follows in the next section forms a prelude to the analysis of PDKI collective action frame shifts as a result of proximity. Before shifts can be studied or even recognized, the question needed to first be answered, "shifts from what?"

PDKI Master Frames Introduction

To analyze PDKI collective action frame shifts, it is first necessary to understand the official CAFs that are made public and can be described as the "master frames" of the group.[14] In this section, I describe these official frames found in the realm of the public sphere. I use these master frames as the analytical base from which the observation of

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[14]These "master frames" are not to be confused with general master frames that comprise a summarizing trend of collective action frames in general as described by Benford and Snow (2000).

CAF shifts can be conducted. While this was not a quantitative study, these official and publicly expressed collective action frames can be considered the "control" by which the shifts are compared. The frames are analyzed and discussed in the same way as mentioned above, using the CAF subcomponents of diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing tasks, while also addressing the political, cultural, and audience contextual effects. Interestingly, while official PDKI communications are found on their website, the site itself is rather informatively austere. Rather, the group defaults to news agencies and social media to communicate much of their official messaging and CAFs and thus their core framing task subcomponents.

PDKI Master Diagnostic Frames

The master diagnostic frames of the PDKI are composed in response to the oppression that has been and still is imposed on the Kurdish people living within Iran as well as the violence -both structural and physical- employed against them. While Benford and Snow (2000: 615) argue that not all collective actions frames have to possess a stated "injustice" component, the diagnostic frames of the PDKI certainly do.

The first mistake that many uninformed considerations of the state of Kurdish affairs make is assuming that all Kurds are fighting for a free and independent Kurdistan that is united across Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. This was an initial assumption of my own and misinformed my initial analytical approach. This statement is untrue regarding the PDKI presently (among other groups), as a free and independent Kurdistan carved

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from a multitude of existing nation states is nowhere on the present PDKI agenda or within their collective action frames.

Rather than addressing the need for an independent Kurdish state, the PDKI diagnostic frames focus on the policies of the Iranian government toward ethnic minorities in the country, and specifically the Kurds. Even a short analysis of PDKI public statements, official speeches, and outlets such as social media, YouTube, and other platforms intended for public consumption, demonstrates that the PDKI identifies the source of the problem to be the Iranian government, its policies of ethnic homogenization used to control the Iranian people, and the violent and nonviolent mechanisms the government uses to conform its population to these policies.[15]

The specifics of the PDKI master diagnostic frame components indicate that the Iranian government is an oppressive force against the Kurds and other minorities that violates their human rights through the limitation of their economic prospects, the restriction of the use of their mother tongue, the restriction of Kurdish representation within the Iranian government, restriction of self-governance in general, and the persecution of their identity as Sunni Muslims (though this is less emphasized).

As well, the PDKI regularly points to the Iranian government's use of violent and oppressive force including the employment of torture, intimidation, imprisonment, and execution against anyone who would protest or counter them. This includes not only the direct threat to those who engage in or are accused of engaging in this behavior but

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[15] While much of this conclusion is derived from my interviews, sources such as PDKI.org, Twitter, and books written about Kurds in Iran such as Vali (2014) repeatedly echo these sentiments as well.

extends this threat to their family members. This was confirmed by the many interviewees that I met in the diaspora who continue to be concerned for their family members' well-being in Iran as a result of their behavior outside of the country (Author interviews, multiple, 2018).

Some had confirmed that they had been contacted by the Iranian government and warned that if they did not desist, that their family would be taken in and harmed and/or killed (Author interview, Norway, April 2018). Still others had confirmed that this had already happened to them and their family because of their actions both inside and outside of Iran (Author interviews Finland and Sweden April 2018). This oppression is especially pertinent for the population of Iran because the government, like other theocratic states, declares that anyone who would openly oppose their intentions and challenge their legitimacy not only deserve punishment for government opposition, but are opposing the will of god (Bruno 2008, Vali 2014). As one member in Finland explained, this means that the PDKI themselves are the enemies of god,

> According to Iran, we are illegal. In 1984, a fatwa was issued that declared that the PDKI is an enemy of god and is therefore an illegal party. Members are also classified as the enemies of god, and their right hand and left leg should be cut off (Author interview, Finland, April 2018).

Therefore, the official diagnostic frames of the PDKI are two sides of the same coin; one which demonstrates *that* the government of Iran persecutes the Kurds and other ethnic and religious minorities in the country, and the other, *how* the government

persecutes (www.pdki.org, Ghassemlou 1965, Author interviews with PDKI leadership, Iraq, May 2018).

Because large-audience diagnostic collective action frame components are aimed at the general public, they will often illuminate the Iranian government's actions as an assault on the general state of the well-being of humanity, addressing offenses as against human rights, human dignity, and the very concepts of freedom, independence, and the right to self-rule, rather than just an assault on individual Kurds with differing ideas. Some examples of this include recent tweets on the PDKI's twitter feed, which include Iranian government attacks on Kurdish identity, and the identity of other minorities in Iran:

> ...institutionalized degradation and humiliation of the languages and cultures of the non-Persian national minorities; forced demographic change in the regions of the non-Persian nation, as well as the use of the state's economic resources in the service of such policies #IMLD2019 (From @PDKIenglish on February 21st, 2019)

and

> The forced assimilation policies of the Iranian state take various forms; including the denial of the human right to education in mother tongue for national minorities; assimilation of the non-Persian population in the Persian language and culture.... (From @PDKIenglish on February 21st, 2019)

and

> Iran is a multicultural and multinational country. Each one of the nations that constitute Iran has its own particular language and identity #InternationalMotherLanguageDay #Mother_Tongue #TwitterKurds #MotherLanguageDay #UNESCO #Kurdish (from @PDKIenglish on February 20th, 2019)

Others seek to expose the military action that Iran employs against the Kurds, thus calling for, or at least justifying, a military response:

> #Iran has deployed tens of thousands of #IRGC and #Basiji terrorists to #Kurdistan for a large military exercise that will last a week. However this so-called exercise could be used as a pretext to attack Kurdish political parties. #Twitterkurds #Rojhelat #PDKI #KDPI" (from @PDKIenglish on October 3rd, 2018)

They also work to point out the threat, both militarily and ideologically to outsiders:

> For anyone wondering if the missiles had a message to the world: Iranian state media boasts that the missiles launched had the texts "Down with #USA", "Down with #Israel" and "Down with Saudi Arabia" written on them. #Iran #Kurdistan #Rojhelat #IRGC (from @PDKIenglish on September 30th, 2018)

and

> Second video of #Iran's launch of several surface to surface missiles from outside the Kurdish city of Kermanshan. This is yet another message to the world: Iran will attack any country it wants, and the world cannot our[sic] anything about it. #Rojhelat #TwitterKurds #Kurdistan (from @PDKIenglish on September 30th, 2018)

and

> In another flagrant violation of international law, #Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps fired several surface-to-surface missiles from outside the Kurdish city of Kermanshan towards Syria according to the Islamist regime in Tehran. #Rojhelat #TwitterKurds #Kurdistan (from @PDKIenglish on September 30th, 2018)

From an interview of PDKI leader Mustafa Hijiri, entitled "Iran attempts to create

instability and conflict all around the region," the PDKI shows Iran as an agent of

regional instability:

> By supporting these different groups, the Islamic Republic of Iran
> attempts to create instability and conflict all around the region in order
> to increase its own power and influence, and this policy have both direct
> and indirect impact on the Kurds. Iran chooses to spend billions of
> dollars on terrorist groups outside of Iran instead of investing inside the
> country.

The PDKI is even willing to call out other countries who they feel did not respond

to Iranian aggression sufficiently,

> …instead of prosecuting the perpetrators of this crime, the Austrian
> authorities escorted the terrorists to Vienna airport to facilitate their
> return to Iran.[16]

PDKI diagnostic messaging often also takes the form of public statements which

highlight the general assault on Kurdish humanity, especially as compared to other

Iranian nationalities. For instance,

> The violence inflicted on the Kurdish people by the Iranian state occurs
> in various forms and contexts…it is the violence in the context of the
> economic underdevelopment of Iranian Kurdistan in comparison to the
> central parts of Iran that is highlighted. This kind of violence manifests
> itself in the indiscriminate killings of the Kurdish civilians[17]

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[16] Taken from http://pdki.org/english/carol-prunhuber-our-demand-has-never-changed-we-insist-that-justice-be-done/ on October 32, 2019.
[17] Taken from http://pdki.org/english/figures-and-facts-on-the-situation-of-kurdish-kolbars/ on October 31, 2019

If the PDKI has an obvious strength in their messaging, publicity, lobbying efforts, and within their collective action frames in general, it is that they are consistent in the approach to their diagnostic framing and they do not mince words when it comes to pointing out what they perceive to be the crimes and oppression of the Iranian government. I suggest that it is because of this and their desire to project their diagnostic frames to the world that the group uses interviews and social media to project those frames rather than burying them in official correspondence.

Even the most basic understanding of every Iranian Kurd I interviewed had a firm grasp on the problems that the PDKI exists to solve. While this chapter will show some of the shifts in PDKI collective action frames that result from proximity (and in the next chapter, because of time), it will be further emphasized that diagnostic frames change the least. They are generally stable and most resistant to context. Furthermore, the PDKI diagnostic frames have remained the most unchanged of the core framing tasks since the party's founding.

As the Iranian government's acceptance and opposition of the group has fluctuated (even if only for short periods of time), on the whole, the grievances that the PDKI expresses and responds to which originate from Tehran have remained largely unchanged. It is obvious from both secondary sources and from my research that the PDKI struggles in some ways to project their cause to those outside of the Iranian Kurdish community. This is based on both the official PDKI policy of unacceptance of members from outside Iran and a self-admitted struggle[18] that the group has at appealing

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[18] based on member interviews

to outsiders in general. Mostly, they hypothesize, this is based on the group being stuck in a rhetorical and actionable rut due in part to the underutilization of digital communications media of all sorts. The diagnostic frame component of their CAFs, however, stands in contrast to this general lack and is one area in which the group excels as they seek to gain the hearts and minds of non-Kurds and non-Iranian Kurds, especially in light of the human atrocities committed by the Iranian government that they highlight.

PDKI Master Prognostic Frames

The master prognostic frames of the PDKI center on solutions based on socialism and a multinational democratic confederation of states within Iran. These prognostic frames also call for respect for human rights within Iran, and an end to Iranian malignancy in international relations, especially in the region. To reiterate, the prognostic frames of an opposition group are the *solutions* proposed to counter what is perceived as a problem, thereby both mitigating the negative effects of the problem and justifying the existence of the opposition group. It therefore takes a bit more discernment in frame analysis to parse the difference between prognostic and diagnostic frames, and the even finer difference between prognostic (*what* the solution is) and motivational (*how* to pursue the solution) frames.

The master prognostic frames of the PDKI paint the picture of what Iranian Kurds, other minorities in Iran, and the Iranian population as a whole would experience if

PDKI policies were adopted. In pursuit of their goals, the prognostic frames of the PDKI

fall into three major categories as described on their website:[19]

> The PDKI is a social democratic party and is a member of the Socialist
> International (SI). For us, democratic socialism entails the belief that all
> human beings, whether as individuals or as members of nations, should
> be free and equal in all spheres of life. The PDKI's policies on **economic,
> political and social issues** are based on these beliefs. (bolding mine)

The economic solutions discussed in official PDKI prognostic CAFs center on a

democratic socialist economic paradigm but are not usually the focus of public message.

Rather, these solutions are implied through their descriptions of oppression of the

Kurdish people and are discussed at length in party materiel such as Dr. Abdul Rahman

Ghassemlou's seminal work "Kurdistan and the Kurds," in which the assassinated party

leader goes to nearly unnecessary lengths to describe the economic oppression of the

Kurds and the resulting structural violence and purposed oppression. However, there are

some prognostic frames, especially those highlighted in the news that adopt a more overt

tone of the construction of a solution, that is oftentimes matched with a report of goals

accomplished,

> In response to the Iranian regime's closure of the border between eastern
> (Iranian) and southern (Iraqi) Kurdistan, a general strike has entered its
> first week. The Iranian regime has closed the borders between the two
> parts of Kurdistan in order to force the people of Kurdistan to trade
> with Iranian goods. This is due to the failure of the economic policies of
> the regime and the severe economic crisis in the country[20]

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[19] www.pdki.org/about

[20] Taken from http://pdki.org/english/general-strike-in-kurdish-cities/ on October 31, 2019.

While there are many sources within the PDKI marketing that describe their prognostic political aspirations based on federalism and democracy, one of the most succinct messages is found on their website, and best summarizes their goals:

> The PDKI struggles to attain Kurdish national rights within a federal and democratic Iran. Since there are other nations in Iran, the PDKI supports their struggle to achieve their national rights and regards them as strategic allies in pursuit of ending dictatorship and brining about a federal democracy that reflects the rights and interest of the country's diverse national communities. To this end, the PDKI co-founded the Congress of Nationalities for a Federal Iran (CNFI) with organizations representing the Azeri, Baluchi, Turkmen, and Arab nations in Iran. CNFI, which is one of the main opposition groups to the sectarian theocracy in Iran, believes that a federal system of government would accommodate the different nationalities' quest for self-rule within a free, united and democratic Iran" (from www.pdki.org/about, accessed 26 Feb 2019).

The PDKI are therefore working toward a federal system for Iran, rather than for an independent Kurdistan. While they have taken it upon themselves to fight Iranian oppression of Kurds, they believe that the best path forward politically is to join forces with other ethnic groups in Iran (including Persians) in order to form a government that is both federated among ethnic nations and representative of the same. Indeed, they even recruit and sustain members in their ranks who are not of Kurdish ethnicity,

> It is not true that we only gather Kurds from Rojhilate. Every nationality in Iran can be a part of our party. And some of them have even been martyred. I confirm this personally, one of my friends (Turk-Azari) joined the party and he was martyred and a lot of others Fars, Turk-Azari, Baluch… (Author Interview, Paris, May 2018)

The social prognostic frames of the PDKI are some of the most emphasized throughout their marketing and public outreach capacities. This messaging is summed up with a sentence found on their website:

> For us, democratic socialism entails the belief that all human beings, whether as individuals or as members of nations, should be free and equal in all spheres of life. The PDKI's policies on economic, political and social issues are based on these beliefs."[21]

These social prognostic frames are communicated through various means across their public messaging.

Along with these overt messages of solution and visions for the future, there is an undertone in PDKI messaging that demonstrates CAF prognostic functions in what is implied. This is especially true of pictures and videos, and their associated captions. Much of the PDKI social media often involves videos of serene views of Kurdistan, their people, and their land. These images seem to imply the realities that would be prevalent in a more peaceful future should the oppression of Iranian Kurdistan ever subside. These images are unique in that they are exclusively of Kurdistan and not the rest of Iran. Whereas much of the PDKI messaging of proposed solutions involves the whole of Iran, their marketing through videos and images remains exclusively Kurdish, which certainly hinders the effectiveness of what is being pursued. This exclusivity of approach is demonstrated in other contexts, not only between the Kurds and other minorities in Iran, but between Kurds in Iran and Kurds elsewhere.

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[21] (from www.pdki.org/about, accessed 26 Feb 2019).

What is to be made of this? In some ways, this limitation on prognostic framing is indicative of a larger problem experienced by that PDKI that is ultimately self-imposed. While PDKI CAFs point to a larger, multiethnic solution for the whole of Iran that will liberate their people, their solutions in the day-to-day are hindered by communicative and messaging limitations that certainly signal a different prognostic frame than the one that is being officially projected. Could this be a reason why the PDKI has not yet ultimately gained more ground with recruiting the support of outsiders, expanding their influence, and achieving their goals? Some of my interviewees stated "yes."

There are also the themes of prognostic components of PDKI collective action frames that are inherently and overtly tied to military response. This, too, complicates (though maybe the better description is "adds dynamic to") the larger messaging of the PDKI. For instance, there are often messages of the death of martyrs, indiscriminate killing of civilians and peshmerga (diagnostic messages) that are prognosticated through messages of military strength and robustness of response violent-force related grievance. This serves to develop the image of at least a tit-for-tat ability to respond, and at best is an intimidating force of armed Kurds that would discourage future attacks in Kurdistan.

Why might this complicate the issue of PDKI CAFs? Because, again, the Kurds make up the vast majority of peshmerga forces (most of my interviewees know of at most only one or two non-Kurdish peshmerga), thereby painting the military response as distinctly and exclusively Kurdish fighting exclusively in Kurdistan. This implies exclusivity and again complicates the federation solution, but the PDKI seem to have no

other option to the contrary until those interethnic relations and alliances can further develop.

Unlike the above, however, this is not totally the fault of the PDKI. They certainly welcome, at least passively, other Iranians to serve in their forces, but are limited by what ultimately may draw people to pick up arms in the first place. As mentioned in the literature review, ethnicity is often the driving factor of joining armed rebellion and it is likely that individuals of different ethnicities are not joining the PDKI simply because they are not Kurdish. Therefore, the PDKI would do well for themselves to open up the purview of their identity if they hope for a change at the national level or an expansion of recruiting. While this type of expansion would be challenging, it is hinted at with the current inter-ethnic alliance building.

Master Motivational Frames

The PDKI motivational frames are split in their approach to publicity. Sometimes they are overt and public on the one hand and sometimes more obscured, especially when compared to the diagnostic and prognostic components. As mentioned before, the motivational CAF component is comprised of severity, urgency, efficacy and propriety. Therefore, because much of what the PDKI undertakes has public as well as covert components (especially in Iran), much of the motivational framing is never announced, as these frames do not apply to the general public but rather to those who are being specifically targeted as a possible recruit or supporter. This split is especially apparent when motivational frames are understood as "a 'call to arms' or rationale for engaging in

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ameliorative collective action, including the construction of appropriate vocabularies of motive" Benford and Snow (2000:617). While this project focuses more on public CAFs, throughout the analysis of the results, I comment on some of the more inward focused motivational frames, especially among members.

The master motivational frames are organized into three categories for the sake of this analysis by what they are aiming to achieve: membership, protest, and general support. Membership is a specific call to action and with it comes both benefit for the group and some responsibility for the member. It is used when people are being encouraged to formally join the group. This is employed through invitations that are usually delivered through the word of mouth and are nurtured through relationship building between members and prospective members. For instance, while in Paris, I visited a prospective member in the suburbs with a long-time member who was helping this newly arrived immigrant settle into his new location. This man had spent his life as a porter crossing the Iran-Iraq border and eventually immigrated to France to start a newer, hopefully easier life for himself and eventually his family. He told me that as a refugee and as a newly interested recruit, the PDKI was helping him begin his new life and that he very much wanted to join the group to help grow their cause as a way of saying thank you for all the ways they had helped him both in France and in Kurdistan. In this way, the PDKI were projecting prognostic frames of community building and collective unity through motivational frames carried out in acts of service. Through this, but not in a transactional way, the member was encouraging this new individual to become a member of the PDKI and support the group functions in France.

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More membership generates benefits for the group including more dues being received, a stronger base around the world, a stronger armed force and party for those who join full-time, and a number of ways that the group may benefit from the different talents, abilities, and connections that the new members might bring to the table upon entry into the group. This membership may also include admittance to ancillary groups such as the PDKI youth party, Lawan, or the PDKI Women's Union, though a person can be a member of one of these and not a member of the main party.

Protest also takes many forms as an expression of action for the PDKI and its supporters, as well as the Kurds in general in Iran. As I learned from both observation and from my interviews, this includes a number of non-violent protests in Iran and around the world, taking part in demonstrations at various strategic locations, refusal to work or other types of strikes, or active or passive lobbying against the Iranian government and its policies from whatever strategic angle the PDKI supporter may have access to. This behavior, as stated, is not limited to members, but rather anyone including non-Kurds and non-Iranians who would support in solidarity for whatever action is being taken and through whatever medium is being employed.

"General support" is a group of motivational goals of PDKI collective action frames that I use to classify all other types of responses that they PDKI work to elicit from their supporters and possible supporters. While it would be impossible to list all of the types of support sought after, below are examples that illuminate the dynamism of this topic.

First, all types of political and social support are sought by the PDKI. From conversations in coffee shops and bars to gathering in official meetings with legislators, the PDKI wants to be talked about because they want their issues to be discussed. In this way, it helps promote their cause and their group and presses these issues toward their hopeful, eventual success. This also takes a more public profile, as the PDKI looks to be discussed in the public forum among and from sources other than themselves. This is one of the ways that PDKI motivational frames are the most pointed outward to those who are not a part of their group. This includes journalism, research, literature, and historical accounts; good publicity is something the PDKI seeks to gain in order to further their mission and better their image among outsiders. They are not, however, shy about the military action that they undertake against Iran. As a news story published in K24 shows

> Loghman Ahmedi, head of PDKI's Foreign Relations, told K24 in an email interview that a peaceful solution with the Iranian regime is impossible when it comes to the Kurdish political and cultural demands. "Therefore, our decision [to started armed resistance] is fundamentally linked to our people's desire to attain freedom from the Islamic regime in Tehran," Ahmedi added.[22]

Finally, while the PDKI does not seek support among other Kurds directly, they work to develop good standing with other Kurdish political and social groups, as well as among Kurds of other nationalities. This is a very important caveat and will be discussed more in this chapter.

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[22] Taken from https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/e977cea5-a78e-458e-8dd6-759841d6c895/PDKI-resumes-armed-resistance-in-Iran- on October 31, 2019

What has been described above is a breakdown of the PDKI's master collective action frames. These are found in official notices, programs originating from central and local sources, and from PDKI leadership, and are communicated through radio programs, their own television station (Tishk TV), speeches, meetings, interviews, the internet, and social media outlets among many others. What follows is the analysis of how geographic proximity to the conflict as a function of co-ethnic contiguity causes the group to shift these master collective action frames.

PDKI Collective Action Frames' Response to Proximity

This section outlines the shifts in the collective action frames of the PDKI as a result of their proximity to the conflict as a function of ethnic contiguity. The proximities utilized in this study as a frame of analysis are "near," "intermediate," and "distant" according to the variance in co-ethnic contiguity. "Near" is defined as within areas that are a majority Iranian Kurd including in and around PDKI bases in Iraqi Kurdistan, with a major focus for the purposes of this research on the PDKI headquarters in Koysinjaq, Iraqi Kurdistan. "Intermediate" is defined as the rest of Kurdistan outside of the majority Iranian Kurdish areas. "Distant" is defined as outside of Kurdistan.

PDKI collective action frames were analyzed in these three ranges according their "core framing tasks," or subcomponents, as described by Benford and Snow (2000:615). These are "diagnostic," "prognostic," and "motivational" frames. Each of the following subsections will commence with a summary of major trends discovered in each of the proximities and will be followed by a more specific set of insights that will explain the

conclusions about shifts related to proximity expressed in the primary summaries and will present analytical and theoretical explanations.

The Near Proximity – Summary of Diagnostic Frames

Near locations included Koysinjaq, Iraq as well as other military installations throughout Iraqi Kurdistan including a military base near Erbil. If I had been able to access Iran, those areas would have been included in the near proximity, but for political and safety reasons, it was not possible for me to conduct research there. Two important distinguishing features of the "near" proximity for the sake of this study include, first, that people living in these locations do not just include active PDKI peshmerga, but also family members of active party members and general members of the Iranian Kurdish diaspora. Many live on these PDKI bases and perform supporting roles or are simply living as anyone else would in a village, but in the diaspora outside of Iran.

Second, it need not be assumed that the collective action frames expressed in the "near" proximity are automatically conflated with PDKI master frames. Indeed, many of the master frames are at least expounded upon in the near proximity, if they are not otherwise dramatically shifted for the purposes of addressing the target audience in these areas, namely, Iranian Kurds who feel some of the most dramatic effects of Iranian opposition and violence. Put another way, the PDKI must shift their CAFs when projecting their purposes to those who are already invested in their cause and whom they want to continue to motivate and sustain as opposed to those whom they are recruiting

such as young people and those whose station in life has changed, especially in the intermediate and distant proximities.[23]

As was the general trend in the rest of the observed proximities, the diagnostic frames shift the least as a result of near proximity. Diagnostic frames are consistent concerning liberty, representation, and problems with limitations on culture. One of the main differences, however, between the near proximity and others is that in the near, the PDKI discusses more frequently and in more detail the assaults by the Iranian military and government. It is likely because these attacks have a more intimate and immediate impact on the people in the near proximity as they are the group of people that the Iranian government has immediate access to through the use of military force, and on whom they carry out the types of oppression and attacks that are most frequent, systematic, and effective.

> ...ordinary people just want to feed their families, but the Islamic Republic is arresting and torturing them and throwing their bodies under bridges and saying that they committed suicide (Author interview, male peshmerga in Iraq, May 2018)

Other than overt force, Iran enacts several types of structural violence against the Kurds as mentioned in chapter three. This includes a lack of jobs, depleted economic development, and a lack of government representation, among many other methods, echoed throughout my interviews.

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[23] These two groups comprised the largest number of recruits I encountered during my fieldwork.

Projecting diagnostic frames by the PDKI in the near proximity also includes methods of incorporation of secondary source information of atrocities and describing some scenarios that are conspiratorial in order to better project the magnitude of the problems that the PDKI address regarding the treatment of the Kurds by the Iranian government.24 For instance, a female peshmerga interviewee in Iraq told me that:

> The regime also has the policy of spreading narcotics so that the people don't turn to politics and dissent, this is a problem because people who are drug addicts have increased…they [also] send young girls from Persian to Kurdish cities as prostitutes that don't take money just to destroy marriages. They even tried to change the demographics of the cities because people don't have job opportunities, but the regime brings in Persians and employs them in the Kurdish cities.

Oftentimes, these diagnostic frames are peppered with contemporary grievances that might otherwise look like the cycle of grievances demonstrated in any other civil conflict (i.e. we must do "x" because they just did "y," with "y" joining the narrative of their diagnostic frames). For instance, a male member spoke about Iranian military action being carried out in Iraq,

> Iran targets the low-level members here…there is a duty to be observant…264 members have been assassinated in Bashur [Iraqi Kurdistan] (Author Interview, male peshmerga, Iraq, May 2018).

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24 It is difficult to understand the sources of and reasons for the (albeit rare occurrences) conspiratorial nature of some of the PDKI beliefs and messaging. This particular instance is not an isolated event, nor is it the only instance mentioned in this research. While I could hypothesize on the reasoning behind the incorporation of conspiracy, it would likely need to be better researched in order to arrive at any meaningful conclusions.

These contemporary grievances are likely connected to recruiting as well. In other words, when the atrocities committed in current times are illuminated to the public, it allows the PDKI to provide a route and an action to resolving or avenging these grievances through membership. In this way, they join the older generation, who had grievances of their own in the past by adopting new personal grievances of today.

The Near Proximity – Summary of Prognostic Frames

Similarly, prognostic frames in the near proximity are affected by contemporary issues and a cycle of grievances and include overt military and other covert and clandestine actions to be taken as a response to the diagnostic issues expressed. It is in this proximity that the military solutions are most overt. For instance, one female peshmerga I spoke with said, with a fierce demeanor,

> before…I believed in civil disobedience, but now I believe we need to take up arms and fight…the regime forces you to do that, they even put the weapon in your hands. Civil disobedience and NGOs still have a role, but they won't get you anywhere real. (Author interview, female peshmerga, Iraq, May 2018).

The prognostic frames in the near proximity are also noticeably more focused on "what is best for Iranian Kurds" than in any other location. This is especially emphasized by the overt military interactions (albeit, allied) that the PDKI engage in with other Kurdish political parties and peshmerga. In other words, while they are usually an independent force, sometimes it is best for the PDKI to ally themselves with other

Kurdish forces in order to protect themselves against a stronger foe; most recently, the armies of the Islamic State.

These prognostic frames also demonstrate a "long-game" characteristic, where the solutions to the problems experienced and expressed do not seem to be focused on effective solutions for pursuing immediate change and demonstrate less urgency for the grand solution. Rather, they are prognostic frames that aim to solve immediate problems faced by Iranian Kurds in the day to day, but not always the larger, overall goals of the PDKI. In other words, an urgency for a long-term fix seems to be diminished in the near proximity as compared to prognostic frame expressions elsewhere. While the conclusions of my research did not demonstrate an answer as to why this might be, it is supposed that there are far more short-term tasks associated with group governance and action in the near proximity, especially because the near proximity is where the PDKI both directly engages and is engaged by the Iranian government the most.

The Near Proximity – Summary of Motivational Frames

The motivational frame components of the PDKI in the near proximity are unique for a few reasons that include active recruitment, especially into the peshmerga ranks, engagement in acts of active and passive rebellion within Iranian borders, and a robust portrait of framing that elicits a sense of the "all in" mentality. First, it is in the near proximity that the motivational component of collective action frames include elements of armed resistance and/or armed defense as protection and responsory mechanisms. It was emphasized to me repeatedly that the armed component of the organization is purely

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defensive and used for protection of Kurdish civilians in Iran. As was stated to me, concerning the new strategy of Rasan,

> The main objective of the peshmerga forces is not to engage the military forces but to spread what we believe is important for the future of society and to raise others up against the regime. We are preparing society. (Author interview, female peshmerga, Iraq, May 2018)

The PDKI however, is not always nonviolent, either in word or in action, and the talks about an armed response is the most accentuated in the near proximity. The fact the group says one thing, and often does another, is indicative of their need to demonstrate characteristics of the group in certain ways to certain message recipients. The PDKI need to be perceived by outsiders as a peace-seeking rational alternative to the Iranian government, especially to foreign government actors, but on the other hand, they must respond to the collective trauma of their people by presenting themselves as guardians who are willing to fight using non-violent, but sometimes also violent means.

Second, the near proximity motivational component includes the engagement of acts of active and passive rebellion against Iran. Such acts in Iran include civilian education and organizing, political action group formation within different professional and demographic categories, small acts of signaling such as graffiti and printed propaganda, business closure, and sit-ins on the street to oppose government policy, among other activities. While my research did not take place within Iran, it was made clear to me that the group's activities in Iran are orchestrated in Koya and managed by secret members, known as Tashkillat, who live within Iran and communicate with the headquarters. For instance,

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> They (the PDKI Tashkillat in Iran) organize strikes and demonstrations, for example against executions. Right now, there are strikes on border cities saying, 'no food, no work, no life.' They close down their stores. (Author interview, male peshmerga, Iraq, May 2018)

These activities may even include only the most subtle form of rebellion,

> We also want to have an active presence amongst the people to know what they are doing and give them instructions. Even if you are not a peshmerga or a member of the party, when ordinary people show dissent, the Islamic Republic knows that they are against them. For example, Nowruz, the party issued a statement that the people should wear the same colored scarf [in solidarity]. (Author interview, female peshmerga, Iraq, May 2018).

There are other interesting forms of mobilization (and what would seem to be peacebuilding initiatives) in the near proximity (including inside Iran) that have various motives attached to them such as organizing campaigns and seminars on important anniversaries, meetings with local branches of government, demonstrations, poetry slams, and even football teams playing one another across ethnic lines.

Third, it is stark to me in the near proximity how invested every Iranian Kurd is in the cause of the PDKI. While on the one hand, it is arguable that the people I talked with were in Iraq to begin with because of their actions and connections to the group (and residence on the party bases) but it was nevertheless striking to see how everyone's daily lives are devoted to the cause of the PDKI. From teachers to shop owners and children to the aged, everyone is engaged with PDKI purposes in their daily lives. This is certainly unique compared to the intermediate and distant proximities where members are not constantly engulfed in the daily tasks of the party.

The Near Proximity and the Natural Environment

Before moving on to the finer analysis of the near proximity, I wanted to pay attention to one additional component of the PDKI CAFs in the near proximity, their focus on the natural environment. This theme was found throughout the interviews in all of the diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames. That is, the PDKI both in official and unofficial capacities in the near proximity speak often of the natural environment especially more often as compared to the other proximities. Throughout the interviews, I listened as the members told me about how the Iranian government uses weapons and tactics against the Kurds in Kurdistan as a way of subduing them. Some of the problems seemed easy to comprehend such as the Iranian government restricting access to clean water by allowing Kurdish lakes to dry up as well as deforestation efforts that led to a host of problems for the Kurds. Some actions mentioned by the group seemed more conspiratorial such as government-induced earthquakes. Still others, though seemingly farfetched, were noteworthy of more attention. As in the very interesting case of how the government of Iran engages the bat. Members told me about a "de-batting" of Kurdistan. Though Iran claimed it was for health reasons (though some speculate it is religious superstition) some PDKI felt this anti-bat campaign was aimed at harming the Kurdish natural environment. Also, they claimed, it was a way for Iran to encourage outsiders to go into caves in search of bats, while simultaneously outing peshmerga hiding spots (by happenstance).

Other environmental issues penetrate PDKI diagnostic and prognostic frames. Citing reasons to conserve their environment and their land, the PDKI also pitches

prognostic and motivational frames aimed at conservation. One member in Iraq told me that alongside general conservation efforts, the PDKI has outlawed hunting for their members in certain areas of Iranian Kurdistan, even if the groups are hungry, in an attempt to conserve the wildlife there.

Another mentioned that environmental education is an important focus among the party within Iranian borders. Though I did not reach any definitive conclusions as to why this might be, it is likely that the reason for the inclusion of environmental stewardship in the PDKI CAFs are threefold. First, they want to be perceived as the larger caretakers of Kurdistan in Iran in general. In order to perpetuate and expand this perception, they would need to expand their areas of influence, thereby including the natural environment. Second, they are the defenders of Kurdistan, and when Iran attacks Kurdistan vis-à-vis their environment, it is the PDKI's self-ascribed job to defend against such attacks. Last, the PDKI want to be perceived by their own people as a group that is doing no harm. Their constant message is that they would never harm, impose on, or take from local resources or people. It can then be assumed that this extends into the local natural environment.

These efforts join the larger wholistic self-view of the PDKI not only as protectors of the Kurdish people, but the protectors of the Kurdish land and legacy, especially in this, the near proximity. While the above painted a generalization of the shifts in PDKI collective action frames in the near proximity, the following works to parse out the specific shifts expressed in the "variable features" mentioned by Benford and Snow (2000) as a response to the context of the near proximity and organized

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through the lens of the same article's "contextual constraints" but expounding upon those

constraints as an analytical approach to this group's construction of collective action

frames.

Variants as a Result of Contextual Constraints and Opportunities in the Near Proximity

Why would the abovementioned shifts in collective action frames happen

uniquely as a result of occurring in the near proximity? How the political, cultural, and

audience effects on CAFs are formed in the near proximity plays an orchestrating part in

these strategic adjustments by the PDKI. These patterns of effects also follow the trends

of inter-Kurdish relations that exist outside the purposes of the PDKI but whose profound

effects on the Kurdish existence penetrate the collective action frames of the group.

This research shows that inter-Kurdish socio-contextual realities described at

length in chapter three join other contextual realities to form the collective action frame

differences found in the various proximities in which the PDKI operates. However, in the

near proximity, these inter-Kurdish complexities have some of the least (though not non-

existent) influence over PDKI CAFs. With this is mind, this section further details the

PDKI collective action frame shifts and the causal variables found in the near proximity.

First, the political context of the near proximity is unique and the PDKI CAFs

respond accordingly. This political context is unique because it is constructed by the

PDKI for the purposes of the PDKI and its sustainability. However, it is contained within

the political context of another state. This paradox was illustrated nearly the moment I

was received at Erbil International Airport by the group. After being picked up, my

driver, clothed business casual with slacks and a button-down shirt with shined shoes

stopped at a security office on the outskirts of the airport grounds and emerged with an

AK-47 automatic rifle. While I was then taken to the Erbil offices of the PDKI and these

offices exist in the "intermediate" proximity, this began a trend of realization for me that

the PDKI is a fully armed force existing lawfully and openly within the political

boundaries of another nation.

This was also starkly illustrated by the lack of political outreach by the PDKI.

While this will be discussed more below, the political context in the near proximity,

existing within a closed system surrounded by the political systems of a different state.

During my time there, the KRG was in the middle of an election. Everywhere we went

there were party flags, pictures of candidates, and political rallies, some of which drew

hundreds of participants. There was at most, however, only passing mention of these

political processes by the PDKI. Instead, the political context within their boundaries in

the near proximity are focused on the politics of Iran. The near proximity acts as a

political context insulator. When you are within the near proximity, on PDKI bases,

politics are about PDKI purposes, and PDKI purposes are focused on Iran. In the words

of a top commander of the PDKI in Iraqi Kurdistan,

> By principle our focus is Rojhilate (Iranian Kurdistan) and we don't try
> to mobilize people here (Iraqi Kurdistan) …we don't actively seek
> support or support raising here. If other parts of Kurdistan get involved
> in our activities, there might be frictions (Author interview, male
> peshmerga, Iraq, 2018).

As another, lower-ranking member in Iraq put it,

we only engage in diplomatic affairs in Bashur (Iraqi Kurdistan) (Author interview, male peshmerga, Iraq, 2018).

This was a short but illuminating point showing that Rojhilati (Iranian) Kurds do not consider themselves at home in Iraq, even if they have lived there for decades. Therefore, even their political context in the near proximity is one that is regarded as "diplomatic" and not "domestic."

While there was some, albeit different, need for the PDKI to engage more as a group in the Iraqi political context, this was strictly limited to the intermediate proximity and is discussed more in the "intermediate" section of this chapter. These forthcoming analyses also reveal how this political engagement is still focused on the sustainability of the group itself, and not necessarily the betterment of Iraqi Kurdistan.

As was often made clear to me, outsiders are not welcome to join the PDKI in an official capacity. As a leader in the PDKI Women's Union in Iraq asserted, "Just the people from Rojhilate can become members." This, along with the abovementioned reasons, limits the amount of non-Iranian politics that are engaged in the near proximity. Instead, CAFs are aimed toward the existing members and those who are recognized by their Iranian national descent. The PDKI works to get these people more involved through numerous outlets of engagement such as the youth organization or the teaching of children. This, however, may not be entirely an imposition of the political context as it is well-defined in the PDKI's master frames that they limit their membership to those of Iranian descent.

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It is clear from the interviews that I conducted with Iranian Kurds, Iraqi Kurds, and Kurds of other descent that even if they did want to recruit outsiders, it is unlikely that many non-Iranian Kurds would join the cause of the PDKI for reasons already discussed in this work and which will be elaborated on more in the "intermediate" section of this chapter. Additionally, it is consistently made clear to the PDKI that they are guests in a foreign land by the KRG, the PDK, and other Iraqi Kurdish parties including the PUK. This is also elaborated on more in the conversation of the "intermediate" proximity.

As mentioned above, the problems identified by the PDKI in the near proximity add to the master frames by addressing a more real-time category of problems in Iran both within civilian and military contexts. They address the cycle of grievances more directly in the near proximity as they are engaged and receive news from the front line of resistance. This is demonstrated in all three diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational components, and was shown to me as my contacts were suddenly called away to accomplish what I was only told were "missions" that I was not allowed to be privy to.

The political engagement of the PDKI in the near proximity with non-PDKI in the area (Iraqi Kurds) is born mostly out of group sustainability and compliance. They obey the laws imposed upon them and submit to local authorities as was demonstrated by the forced checks that the KRG and additionally the PUK imposed upon us while we traveled by car. But beyond accepting the requirements of their hosts, the PDKI is largely focused politically on Iran alone in the near proximity. This would, of course, be even more pronounced within Iran.

PDKI political CAF flexibility and scope in the near proximity is limited, or, put more aptly, sharp. This is where they are the most focused even though they are complicated and dynamic and expressed in differing outlets. These rigid CAFs contributed to what I perceived as a fairly robust overall approach to the strategies they employed even if their force and ability to sway Tehran was limited. Therefore, the limits of the political context placed on PDKI CAFs in the near proximity largely originate from limits imposed by the KRG and other Iraqi Kurdish groups.

Resonance of the PDKI CAFs, in the near proximity, is also very robust. Residing in this proximity are active members of the PDKI who all have some connection, either personally or through family, with Iranian persecution, violence, oppression or even military attack. Therefore, there are very few limitations with regard to PDKI CAF resonance, except when it comes to an understanding of PDKI activities outside of the region. A vast majority of the interviews that I conducted included stories similar to each other in that everyone has a personal understanding of the violent toll Iran takes on the Kurdish people, especially those involved in party activities. Prison, torture, execution, assassination, threats and the persecution of family members were common grievances.

While I am not insinuating through this analysis that Kurds in the near proximity do not understand PDKI CAFs in other areas, I do make mention that PDKI activities in more distant proximities were rarely mentioned, and when they were, it was done so by those who had resided abroad and had returned to join the PDKI in the near proximity.

Culture as a limitation or opportunity for CAF promotion in the near proximity was much less consequential. By culture, I mean the social institutions, values, traditions,

and behaviors of a certain people, namely Iranian Kurds in this context. Iranian Kurds in the near proximity have for many reasons remained within their culture inasmuch as their situation in Iraq would allow, or sometimes, demand. This was starkly demonstrated throughout many of the interviews that I conducted both with Iranian Kurds and Iraqi Kurds.

The biggest impact on Kurdish culture in the near proximity is much more focused on the military way of life, and therefore it does little to engage with the community beyond the explicit purposes of the party and its armed component, and rarely engages cultures outside of the PDKI establishment. Their lived experiences are very limited to life on the base and many seemingly had little interest in engaging with Iraqi culture. Many would emphasize their liberal way of life as Iranians surrounded by the "much more conservative Iraqis," making mention of their lack of empathy for the way problems that such a conservative way of life negatively impacted, in their view, the lives of Iraqi Kurds. This insulation remained consistent in the intermediate proximity but changed significantly in the distant proximity.

Audience effects are similar but with one notable exception. The people living in the near proximity are mostly all already members. Their lives are a testament to the problem they have identified, and they are living in a state of rebellion away from their homes and separated from their communities and oftentimes their families. There is, therefore, little concern for PDKI CAFs to be flexible, inclusive, or exclusive of their audience in the near proximity, because they are all living in a community of exile and "included" in the day to day functions of the PDKI. The audience context in the near

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proximity also allows for a limited (sharp) scope and does not struggle with limitations of resonance. Rather, the PDKI are able to respond through motivational frames that lead to a litany of types of engagements within the near proximity, both in Iraq and especially in Koya. Said one interviewee,

> Our main goal is to organize inside Rojhilate and to focus the dissatisfaction of people against Iran. We have different initiatives: multifaceted education, general education about self, national rights, Kurdish history, democracy, human rights, women's rights, social media, diplomatic relations, and the strengthening of our peshmerga forces. We are working on environmental education…language and motivating people inside Rojhilate to do that…directly we can 't manage them, but indirectly we motivate them to do that. (Author interview, PDKI leader, Iraq, 2018).

This quote also shows that the goals of the PDKI motivational frames are not only to accomplish their stated missions within the confines of the near proximity, but to recycle these frames and reproduce them through the initiatives of other newly empowered (motivated) people. By this it was emphasized to me that the hope of the PDKI is to grow both the vision and the effects of their organization to Kurds around Iran, rather than to continually position themselves as the locus of action.

In summary, two major points should be discussed in order to understand the larger view of the PDKI CAFs in the near proximity. First, they are affected in a major way by their proximity to Iran. They are attacked by Iran in Iraq from afar with rockets, and up close with targeted assassinations. According to one of my interviewees, these killings also include hundreds within the sovereign borders of Iraq over the past 20 years. They are also attacked within the Iranian borders and at the border of Iran and Iraq on a

consistent basis. As a result, members have plenty to lose as a result of their association with the PDKI and therefore the PDKI must respond. Therefore, the CAFs do not demand as much urgency of action but are much more cognizant of the lived experience of the Kurd in these areas. Secondly, the intensity of the CAFs remains high in the near proximity, because they respond to the collective identity needs of their people which require this type of sustainability of morale, especially in the face of the consistent threat posed by the Iranian military.

The collective action frames of the PDKI in the near proximity are affected by the lives of the Kurdish people both in exile in Iraq and at home in Iran. Their lives are engrossed in this conflict and the PDKI must consider how their actions and strategies are going to affect both the group and their co-ethnics across the border. Overall, the military component is amplified in this proximity and almost everyone is already a member of the PDKI. The collective action frames respond to this. From the daily wage to the environment, and Iranian limitations on their freedoms of religion, language, and political representation, the problems, solutions, and motivations of the PDKI collective action frames respond to their near proximity in unique ways that are illuminated in contrast to their master frames, but can and will be better understood relative to the intermediate and distant proximities. I now turn to an analysis of the shifts in PDKI collective action frames in the intermediate proximity.

The Intermediate Proximity

The intermediate proximity studied in this project refers to areas in Iraqi Kurdistan other than the locations that are majority populated by the PDKI. Since this study was limited to areas of Iraq for the sake of observing PDKI CAFs I did not get the opportunity to research in Turkey or Syria for reasons of politics and safety.[25]

Iraq has throughout history witnessed numerous transborder migration events of Iranian Kurds for various reasons. Whether political oppression, civil war, or simply the flow of relatives living in different parts of the region, the Kurds have regarded the Iran/Iraq border as something of an outsider's imposition. In recent times, however, these borders have served as a source of a great deal of protection for the PDKI because while they view the border as porous, the governments of Iraq and Iran do not. As a result, the Iranian government makes limited incursions into Iraq with some obvious devastating examples to the contrary mentioned earlier in this work including rocket attacks and targeted assassinations. Therefore, when the PDKI fled to Iraq in the late 90s, they found sanctuary in Iraqi Kurdistan from which to exist, recoup, and begin to function productively again. While the fluctuating political situation for the past 20 years has caused complications and shifts in their ability to function freely, the government of Iraq as well as the KRG have never attempted to rid the area of the PDKI. Much to the contrary, the PDKI's military headquarters, as well as several small bases are located there. Where then, is the classified "intermediate" proximity? For the sake of this study, it

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[25] Though they would have fit into this category as they are considered co-ethnically contiguous and would make for an interesting expansion of the study if the situation ever allowed.

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is classified as everywhere else in the KRG-controlled areas of Iraq where there remains the ethnic contiguity of the Kurdish people as a majority.

These are places that are a majority Iraqi Kurd. These are also the places where some of the least overt CAFs are employed by the PDKI because of a distinct lack of knowledge and relevance of the PDKI among Iraqi Kurds. This was unexpected. As I have mentioned earlier, I expected every Kurd to be aware, at least somewhat, of every other Kurdish cause; but this was certainly not the case. In fact, several of my interview questions often had to be filled in as "no response" because some of the Iraqi Kurds being interviewed had never heard of the group even though they live within a few miles of the PDKI bases.

This ignorance is partially due to the lack of influence and interest that the PDKI has on and in Iraqi Kurdistan. In this area, I interviewed both Iraqi Kurds and Iranian Kurds in order to gain a better understanding of the full scope of PDKI CAF projection among Kurds in general. It should be noted that most Iranian Kurds I interviewed in this area were already a member or a supporter of the PDKI. While there are surely more Iranian Kurds living in Iraq that are not affiliated with the PDKI, my research was limited to the scope of those who are.

Responding and perhaps contributing to this, PDKI CAFs possess three major goals in the intermediate proximity. First, they aim to gather Iranian Kurds living in Iraq into their fold as members and/or supporters of the party. They do this both as a benefit to the party and to provide socio-political refuge for the displaced Iranian Kurd in Iraq. Second, they look to influence KRG opinions and actions toward them. This is pursued

mostly through official government relations and through interparty cooperation. Third, they hope to sway Iraqi Kurdish opinions of them by presenting themselves as good Kurdish citizens who are productive and benevolent members of the society in which they are hosted, and in the society that they are trying to build in Iran.

The stance of the PDKI in the intermediate proximity was summed up nicely in a conversation I had with a PDKI leader who resided there. Over the course of an interview that lasted approximately an hour, he discussed with me, among many other things, the PDKI's objectives and strategies in Iraqi Kurdistan, the intermediate proximity. The following quote was particularly illuminating of his views,

> In the case of any crucial issue we team up (with the KRG) like countering the IS. Iran puts pressure on the KRG to make us stop fighting. However, we have always been a positive factor here. In the 1991 uprising, we stopped our confrontation with Iran…In 1991 and 92 we made an agreement with them [the KRG], instead of stopping our confrontation with Iran we needed to have some camps here and it was their duty to protect us…The reason for the popularity of the PDKI in Bashur? We didn't act against the people any time during Iran Iraq war. When they fled to east of Kurdistan, during the events in Halabja and in the 91 uprising, they fled to Iran and PDKI helped them (Author interview, PDKI leader, Iraq, 2018).

This section looks at how PDKI CAFs are affected by the intermediate proximity. It examines the shifts in CAFs through the diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frame subcomponents, while the subsequent section seeks to understand and describe these shifts as a result of the intermediate proximity even further in response to specific contextual constraints as was accomplished in the previous section.

The Intermediate Proximity – Summary of Diagnostic Frames

The diagnostic frames of the PDKI in the intermediate proximity, similar to the near proximity, are some of the most robust and resistant to shifts. There are two exceptions to this especially when projecting collective action frames to *Iraqi* Kurds who are the majority people group in the intermediate proximity. First, the PDKI adjusts its diagnostic frames to demonstrate the problems that need to be addressed in tandem with the Kurdistan Regional Government in Northern Iraq. This works with a special focus to demonstrate PDKI alignment with KRG interests in order to keep their hosts happy with the PDKI's presence, as was mentioned in the quote above.

Because of this, it is only in the intermediate proximity where the PDKI has taken up arms against an enemy other than Iran as they joined forces with other Kurdish peshmerga, primarily the forces of the KRG, to fight the forces of the IS advancing toward Kurdistan. Otherwise, it is typical for the PDKI to adjust their diagnostic frames to show how Iran negatively affects Iraqi Kurdistan by trying to influence their politics, sending spies to Iraq, and conducting assassinations on Iraqi soil. In other words, they adjust their frames to demonstrate how Iran is an Iraqi/KRG problem, not just an Iranian Kurdish/PDKI problem.

This was especially emphasized to me during my time in Kurdistan as many members would comment on Iranian influence in KRG politics. It is widely believed among the PDKI and others that the PUK which is in power in the eastern part of Iraqi Kurdistan and their leader Jalal Talabani are heavily influenced by Tehran (Khalil 2018). As Khalil (2018) mentions, "It is hard not to see the PUK's current unwillingness to

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cooperate in running Kurdistan as part of a wider drift toward increasing Iranian influence in the region." The PDKI even went so far as to express their overt discomfort in my travelling to the Sulaymaniyah district and elsewhere in the eastern part of Iraqi Kurdistan as they were convinced that Iran likely had spies in the area who would know of my arrival and could possibly interfere or even harm me should my project have become public while I was still researching there.

Second, the PDKI diagnostic frames in the intermediate proximity are not as focused on the day-to-day military issues and social problems in Iran. Because Iraqi Kurds are rather unaffected by this fight and do not participate in the cycle of grievances derived from military contact, this military-related violence is not as amplified by the PDKI CAFs there. Additionally, in order to protect Iraqi Kurdistan, the PDKI is under an agreement with the KRG that they will not launch offensives from Iraq. This was implemented by the KRG to protect Iraqi Kurdistan from possible retaliatory measures, either political or military, or both. While the PDKI continues to train and send soldiers from Iraqi Kurdistan, the problems associated with direct military-engaged conflict are downplayed in their diagnostic frames in the intermediate proximity (as it is in their prognostic and motivational frames as well, discussed below).

The Intermediate Proximity – Summary of Prognostic Frames

When projecting collective action frames in the intermediate proximity, the prognostic components again closely resemble master prognostic frames in order to recruit the scattered or recently displaced Iranian Kurds living in Iraq who do not belong

to the group already. Additionally, the prognostic and motivational frames aimed at Iranian Kurds in the intermediate proximity adopt a more passive and part-time tone. By this I mean that the PDKI understands that there are competing necessities and interests for members and potential members and supporters in the intermediate and distant proximities, and so they devise frames that allow for different levels of commitment, investment, and buy-in. While they still recruit peshmerga and full-time members, and the prognostic frames remain unapologetic, more options are presented in the intermediate proximity.

This is largely because in the intermediate proximity there are Kurds who are not completely devoted to the PDKI cause professionally and full-time. Rather than living on PDKI bases and being employed by the PDKI, the people residing in the intermediate must hold full-time jobs and engage in social circles outside of the PDKI. For instance, I met many Iranian Kurds who are homemakers, journalists, and students who all have active lives outside of the PDKI, but who have been recruited as members who act part time. The PDKI provides more points of entrance and commitment for part-time members such as paying dues, recruitment, meeting attendance, event organization and attendance, and fundraising for PDKI causes.

Concerning prognostic subframes, official solutions suggest that solidarity in the diaspora can have a meaningful effect on the overall mission of the group. Paired with motivational frames, these courses of action include becoming a dues-paying member, joining a PDKI affiliated group such as the Women's Union or youth group, or being an evangelist for the PDKI cause among nonmembers and Iraqis. In this way, the

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motivational frames are tempered to allow for a meaningful entry point at multiple levels, and the prognostic frames make space for this diversity as a viable solution. Said one woman involved in the Women's Union in Iraq,

> When we attract new members, the first criteria is that they must be familiar with party and be a reputable person, then if a member wants to attract someone, they give the constitution of the party to them, explain it to them, if he doesn't have the ability to read it, they explain it to them. If they are willing to join, they register them. It is an interpersonal task (Author interview, Women's Union member, Iraq, May 2018).

It is at this point, however, that one important caveat to PDKI CAFs must be understood in context with the PDKI master frames and tenets of the organization. As mentioned before in this chapter and in chapter three, the PDKI is an organization that is unapologetically structured around Iranians; namely, Iranian Kurds. For this reason, it is also true that much of the PDKI recruitment, regardless of the constructs of CAFs, are built around the recruitment of family. While this certainly does not negate the importance of CAF construction and proximity's effects thereon, the element of familiarity must not be discounted, especially in the intermediate proximity. As one female member in the intermediate whose mother was PDKI before her stated,

> 80% of members will choose to become a member because of family, but the other 20% don't because they just choose not to… they just don't join because they don't want to be in politics (Author interview, female member, Iraq, May 2018).

The prognostic as well as the motivational frames in the intermediate proximity aimed at *Iraqi* Kurds, however, are some of the most diminished of the entire study. The

PDKI generally lacks the projection of these frames to the Iraqi Kurds for reasons mentioned above, and because they are not interested in recruiting Iraqi Kurds to join their cause, because only Iranians, even non-Kurdish Iranians, are welcome to join. They also struggle to engage civil society and the population in general (something they do well in the near proximity), opting rather to focus on the other Kurdish political parties, and even these interactions are largely limited to the PUK and KDP in order to keep them complacent with their presence and activity in Iraq.

There are a few exceptions to this lack of actionable projection in the intermediate proximity. The PDKI presents itself as a benevolent group that works to promote solidarity among Kurds in Iran and sometimes throughout Kurdistan. They therefore present their "solution" as a larger effort to promote Kurdish solidarity in their corner of Kurdistan. This will sometimes take the form of answering the larger "Kurdish question" of solidarity across borders as the PDKI takes part in inter-Kurdish celebrations, and often hosts cultural events such as poetry readings as well as organizing conferences, gatherings, and seminars related to Kurdish unity and history.

The Intermediate Proximity – Summary of Motivational Frames

Motivational frames in the intermediate proximity again remain focused on the local contingent of Iranian Kurds, but struggle to project very far into the Iraqi Kurdish community. Motivational frames in this proximity do, however, include encouraging Iraqi Kurds to support the PDKI, if not in action and financial and material provisions, then in thought and word. They do this by presenting themselves as a group with a wide

range of actions that are useful to the local communities across Kurdistan. This includes

the PDKI youth group in Iraq, for example, who solicited donations from all ethnicities in

order to send support to Iranian Kurdistan after a disastrous earthquake. They also made

efforts to provide goods to those affected by the war in Syria, projecting their group's

efforts by writing "From the PDKI" or "From the Rojhilate Youth Union" on the delivery

vehicles. The young man who informed me about these actions provided further insight

into his and the PDKI actions originating from the intermediate proximity in Iraq, not

only reaching out through their actions, but supporting the PDKI's full-time members on

the bases and their people outside of Iraq:

> The youth congress is in July [in Iraq] and members come from all over the world to participate… but they don't come from Rojhilate. In Koya, they have a lot of youth guys who are helped, they can help members get married. When we went to the Rojava [Syria] camps, 80-90% were Kurdish... we wrote on the cars "From PDKI" or "From Rojhilate Youth Union" we brought aid. The youth union sent aid after an earthquake to Rojhilate, we helped them in a certain city after Bashuri and European people gave us money and we helped a Bashuri town. A lot of groups and people helped.

> We also make festivals talking with the businesspeople to sponsor us to make festivals like for children's day on the first of June and for youth day and Mother's Day, like we make small gifts for the mothers. The Youth Union is working for the freedom of youth in Rojhilate, for all parts in Kurdistan but actually for Rojhilate…because Rojhilate is very, very bad, they feel very bad, we want to make them happy.

> We are Kurd and then we are human. We do this for the world, for all humanity…today if you help someone and tomorrow something happens to you, maybe they help you (Author interview, male Youth Union member, Iraq, May 2018).

What these sentiments demonstrate is that PDKI CAF motivational subcomponents respond to the mixed environment in which they originate. Like the prognostic frames, they are more flexible and variant in their approach to the types of audiences they engage, and the results they hope to obtain. They are also largely centered on improving the outsider's view of the PDKI not only for the sake of recruitment, but because the PDKI know that they must maintain good relations with their hosts in Iraq. Otherwise, it would be seemingly impossible for the PDKI to accomplish what they currently endeavor to do, namely, operate a covert and slow-paced rebellion in Iran that is directed from their base in Koya. Next, I will show in more detail how the specific contextual realities in the intermediate proximity provide both opportunity and (mostly) constraint for PDKI collective action frames.

Variants as a Result of Contextual Constraints and Opportunities in the Intermediate Proximity

The intermediate proximity observed in this study is fully in Iraq and is therefore located in the KRG controlled semi-autonomous region known more simply as "Kurdistan." The lived experience for the Iraqi Kurds is much more "normal" than the Iranian Kurds who are exiled in their land. As a result, some Iranian Kurds argue that they are more "patriotic" than Iraqis because the Iraqis have lately experienced a time of relative peace and prosperity. Therefore, the presence of peace and stability in the eyes of some PDKI diminishes Iraqi patriotism in favor of complacency. But while they are no longer at war, the Iraqi Kurds do have their own political, cultural, and collective identity

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concerns that contrast with their neighboring Kurdish brethren. As a result, the PDKI collective action frames diminish dramatically in these areas except in the circles that the PDKI influences, or when they are operating in an official capacity, which may include any number of political, charitable, or community engagements.

These political, cultural, and audience contextual effects make it challenging for the PDKI to project collective action frames in the intermediate proximity, but to understand each of these makes it easier to define the intermediate context and the PDKI CAF shifts therein. This shift to the intermediate proximity and its effects also highlight to the greatest extent the weaknesses of the PDKI, especially as it involves ethnonationalist politics, group projection and recruitment tactics, and communication strategies (or the lack thereof) with other groups. The rest of this section highlights these the contextual effects of the intermediate proximity on the PDKI CAFs in that area and especially highlights group perception of these shifts both from members and nonmembers.

The context of the intermediate space is defined as a region fully controlled by the KRG and occupied by a majority Iraqi Kurds. The PDKI and the KDP (the party of the Barzanis, and the one that is currently in control of the KRG) split after the fall of the independent state of Mahabad. Once the Kurds realized they were defeated with the departure of the Soviets and Tehran advanced, Barzani returned with his troops to Iraq and eventually reestablished himself and his ranks in what is today the semi-autonomous state of Iraqi Kurdistan. Now the situation is just as complicated as in any other point in

Kurdish history, and the PDKI acknowledges this through their collective action frames in this area.

In the intermediate proximity PDKI collective action frames are low in outward recruitment of audience support and action beyond the scattered Iranian Kurds. Even though the intermediate proximity is still defined as "Kurdistan," it was made clear to me during several interviews with PDKI leaders that Kurds rarely engage in each other's affairs across national boundaries and quite often oppose each other within national boundaries as is the case with the KDP and PUK in Iraqi Kurdistan (Salih and Fantappie 2019).

This sets political limits on PDKI CAFs in the intermediate space. While the problem identification variant is not as affected due to politics in the intermediate space, the flexibility, influence, and resonance are affected by the political context. The political context in the intermediate space demands that PDKI CAFs be more exclusive to the Iranian Kurdish position, but also increases CAF flexibility, especially when the politics of the times require the PDKI to submit to the political will of their hosts. For instance, Iran often puts pressure on the KRG to limit PDKI activity originating from Iraq through the PUK, Baghdad, and even the KRG (Jamestown Foundation 2011).

The political context also limits PDKI influence. While the PDKI focuses on keeping a stable relationship with the KRG, its political focus is often turned toward Iran. More specifically, the political context in the intermediate space produces PDKI CAFs that more generally work toward alliance-building with the KRG in much the same way that any other foreign government would. This greatly emphasizes the lack of

cooperation between the PDKI and other Kurdish government entities and parties and was also the subject of heavy criticism of one member living in Erbil, explained next.

There are some both Iraqi and Iranian, in the intermediate space, who criticize the political tenets of the of the rebellion of the PDKI. They are viewed more as inconsequential or comprised of misplaced objectives in pursuit of the nebulous idea of freedom. One such criticism was described at length by an Iranian Kurdish scholar living in Iraq who spent much of our interview discussing the philosophies of the PDKI rebellion with me. His insights were unique among my interviews but provided a sobering view of the PDKI's collective action frames and their formation. As a Kurdish person living in the intermediate proximity of Iraq but who's family is from Iran, his views were tied to his context. During our interview, he stated,

> Kurdish nationalism is a reactive nationalism…it is an opportunistic nationalism. Only when there is an upheaval or revolutionary situation…you see a Kurdish national movement or rebellion or something coming up. During WWI the Simko rebellion was a successful (Kurdish) rebellion [The implications of the Simko Rebellion are that it was opportunistic]. My family has been struggling in Kurdish nationalism since 1918 and Simko. The second rebellion was opportunistic…soviet invasion of NW Iran. This invasion made it possible to found the republic. When the central government is weak, they use the opportunity. The only organization that is not opportunistic is PKK which started in 1984 when Turkish military government was experiencing its most powerful period… [These are] power related movement[s] (Author interview, male member, Iraq, 2018).

Resonance in the political context of the intermediate proximity is strictly limited as many within the political context are not listening, and generally only regard the PDKI within the purview of its effects on the KRG, which are limited, or its military alliance

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capabilities, or pay no attention to them at all. But as has been stated, this distance is partially perpetuated by the PDKI themselves. This separation, though, sometimes comes at a cost, especially as it regards the possibilities of support among nonmember Iranians and Iraqis. One Iraqi woman I interviewed declared an overt indifference about her perceptions of the PDKI. She made it clear that while she perceived the PDKI to be a disciplined group, her perceptions of the group are that they totally ignore Bashur, and do not provide any benefit or detriment to Iraqis except when they draw the military attention of Iran.

Culture and audience contextual constraints and opportunities in the intermediate proximity demonstrate some of the PDKI's biggest weaknesses in their CAF's approaches to sustainable recruitment and communication strategies. It is within the intermediate space that CAFs respond to the notion that the PDKI is an outside group and therefore must address outside interests. As was shown in this chapter, the PDKI uses its mission to address the needs of the larger view of humanity, especially as humanity is affected in Iran. While the PDKI continues to recruit among Kurds of Iranian descent in the intermediate proximity, their actions strike a chord of benefit to the greater good in response to problem identification originating in Iran. For instance, as mentioned above, a recent campaign that had taken place prior to my research saw the PDKI youth group LAWAN raising funds and provisions for the victims of the earthquake in Iran and war in Syria. This was an overt demonstration of CAF flexibility, inclusivity, and scope as the group reached across national lines to garner support.

Resonance is certainly where the PDKI struggles the most in terms of culture and audience. While they are both Kurds, Iranian Kurds view themselves as distinct from the Iraqi Kurds. As is found in PDKI master frames and more starkly in many of my interviews, the PDKI consider themselves on the whole to be much more politically progressive, less culturally conservative, and much less beholden to the restrictions of religion and conservative tradition. Indeed, throughout my interviews of over 100 Iranian Kurds, not one seemed particularly beholden to their religion, other than how being a Sunni affected their collective identity as Kurds in Iran. Many times, I would hear things such as "we go on dates" and "we as Muslim women are not required to cover," and even, "religion has the same use as an old pair of shoes." While these may seem mundane on the surface, these anecdotes were strong signals to their collective cultural differences and how they used them to differentiate themselves from other Kurds, especially the more religiously conservative Iraqis, and certainly the Persians and Arabs of Iran and Iraq.

Therefore, the limitations on PDKI CAFs were measurable in terms of resonance. When I asked a classroom full of Iraqi Kurdish college students about the PDKI, only two could make nominal mention of the group's existence (one because of family affiliation), and the majority returned blank stares to my questions. It is important to note that this was at a top-tier university in the region, and one located 50 miles from the PDKI's headquarters base and less than 15 miles from two other major PDKI installations. In general, this seemed to be the case of most Iraqi Kurds I spoke to who

did not otherwise have a specific reason for understanding Iranian Kurdish politics or group activities.

Others that I spoke to who were more familiar with the PDKI usually had both respect and pointed criticism for the group which echoed why they thought the group was not more supported by the larger audience. Everyone I talked to had a measure of admiration for the dedication of the PDKI and never felt as though the PDKI did any harm to them. Those who added criticism sometimes made mention of their opinions that the PDKI conceived of their rebellion incorrectly, especially from the point of view of their role as rebels, but also as a group too closed off to be accessible to outsiders. For instance, a scholar I spoke with said,

> I and others consider Kurdistan to be a colony…we are not subjects of a sovereign, we are not citizens…we are a colonized nation…deprived, plundered marauded exploited culturally, materially, and politically. And if we are a colonized nation why do our parties call themselves "opposition" is it based on changing the regime and sovereignty, will they share? Which ethnic group has the monopoly on sovereignty? These are questions that must be answered by political parties. If your nation is colonized, how can you call yourself opposition and not liberators (Author interview, male member, Iraq, May 2018)?

In spite of this type of criticism and others, the PDKI remain unapologetic about their role as primarily Iranian opposition and not Kurdish liberators and the effect that this has on the limited accessibility of the group. From a larger perspective, their reasoning makes sense. Allowing members from other nations would likely complicate their mission and make it more difficult to control their ranks. When considering this as a cultural and/or audience limitation, it is obvious that allowing other nationalities to

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wholesale join their group would make little sense and be quite out of the ordinary as far as the status quo of rebel groups goes. Additionally, it is unlikely that many people from outside nations would want to join anyways.

There is also the issue of discrimination in Iraq against Iranian Kurds that challenges PDKI CAFs in the intermediate proximity and maintains feelings of distance between the Iranian and Iraqi Kurds in spite of their common ethnicity. As a young woman who lives now in France but was raised in Iraqi Kurdistan told me,

> When you passed them they know the adults are members. If they didn't know you are a member of the PDKI they know from your accent and behavior, and they ask, "are you Rojhilati?" All in all, this is not our fault, but the society forces this discrimination. We would integrate but they choose to stay separate.
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> I didn't understand them, but always they have this behavior, but maybe they imagine that we are from another culture or have grown up in PDKI camps. Sometimes they have this feeling that we are better than them, and sometimes they feel they are better than us (Author interview, female member, France, May 2018).

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The intermediate context illuminates these sentiments as the PDKI are still among Kurds, but Kurds of a different nationality. This therefore generates many questions about what an opposition group should look like, what problems they address, what solutions they pursue, who they should employ, and what their mission should be. Put more succinctly, "what should be the CAFs of the PDKI?" is a question debated (figuratively speaking) among many in the intermediate proximity mainly because there are different opinions among Kurds about what the future of Kurdistan in the larger sense

should look like. Because the PDKI has no interest in the liberation and independence of Kurdistan writ large, this immediately limits their audience among those who do.

Therefore, since politics, culture, and resonance present a limiting factor for PDKI CAFs in the intermediate proximity, their actions remain largely focused on Iranian Kurds. These range from convincing someone to become a full, dues paying member, to recognizing the commitment-level of someone who might move to Koya and become a peshmerga. As was described to me by a female member, "The conditions of being a peshmerga and the level of belief in the party differentiate between becoming a peshmerga and not."

As a result, variance in recruitment activity elevates in the intermediate to recruit members, fundraise, or get active members more involved with ancillary groups such as Lawan and the Women's Union or with main party activities. It should be noted that while the women's, student, and youth groups support the PDKI and are kept somewhat accountable for their actions by the PDKI leadership, they are themselves independent groups.

As was mentioned to me by an interviewee in Erbil, politics is what "others" a Kurd from her fellow Kurd. It is within the intermediate proximity that the PDKI, though among co-ethnics, must adjust their collective action frames to the "othering" imposed upon them as outsiders and as a different political group. As the politics of nationalism has for so long been a dividing agent between groups of Kurds, the Iranian Kurds in Iraq must deal with being outsiders in a land called Kurdistan. These realities become even more diverse and imposing once the proximity exits co-ethnic contiguity and the group

finds itself projecting collective action frames outside of Kurdistan. These effects both diminish the sense of othering between Kurds, but also requires a much more inclusive and diverse approach to PDKI collective action framing.

The intermediate proximity is also the first time where the PDKI's communication strategies demonstrate overt weakness especially in their lack of communication to outsiders via the internet social media. As many people complained throughout the study in the intermediate and distant proximities, the PDKI seems nearly inaccessible to those who do not speak English or Sorani Kurdish. This, however, only further reiterates the PDKI's notion that they are an Iranian group that exists for the betterment of Iranian Kurds.

Next, I turn to the analysis of the distant proximity, the locations studied during this project that exist outside of the ethnically contiguous region of Kurdistan and describe the shifts in PDKI collective action frames that took place therein.

Distant

> There is no method [of killing] we haven't seen…we don't say the Fars are our enemy. We say that that way of thinking [denial of human rights] is our enemy. We are ready to work with them and build our country. All Kurds are ready in their respective countries (Author interview, refugee/member, Finland, April 2018).

Research for the distant proximity was conducted in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, France, and Washington, D.C. I interacted with dozens of PDKI as well as Iranian and non-Iranian Kurds from a diverse set of backgrounds and stations in life.

Upon reflection of PDKI CAFs in all proximities, I noticed a major pivot in my research and the analysis thereof while in Finland. I learned that Kurds there and throughout the distant proximity are now seeking what is best for them through a variety of collective identities, and dynamically shifting among them when necessary.

For instance, in Finland, a Kurdish person in a single day would have to react and respond to situations as a Finn, an immigrant, a person of color, a Middle Easterner, a Muslim (or assumed as such), a Kurd, an Iranian Kurd, and for some, an Iranian Kurd who is also a member of the PDKI. Many of the interviewees met all of these criteria, and thus the needs of their collective identity required a change with respect to the situation,

> We are defined by who the others are depending on where we are. When we are here (Denmark), we are Kurds and the others are Arabs, Danes, Indians, etc., but in Kurdistan, there are many Kurds, so we have to find other others (Author interview, nonmember, Denmark May 2018).

The PDKI collective action frames respond to this. Both diminishing in some respects, but in others, greatly widening their frames to adjust both entry points and actionable empowerment. This section looks at PDKI CAFs in the distant proximity as a whole (all of the countries are conglomerated into one analysis), and how their diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational subcomponents adjust accordingly. While there were certainly differences noted in each location, another project could analyze each of these locations independently. I chose rather to analyze the whole in order to gain a broader perspective of how the PDKI shifts CAFs strategically, and sometimes unwittingly.

The Distant Proximity – Summary of Diagnostic Frames

It is among the diagnostic subcomponents in the distant proximity that Iran's effect on the rest of the world becomes amplified through PDKI collective action frames. These diagnostic frame component amplifications which accompany the more common master frames, can be classified into three parts in pursuit of three objectives.

First, these diagnostic frames in the distant proximity describe the general oppression of Iran on the Kurdish people both in Iran and around the world but also relay the atrocities and injustices against humanity in general, therefore suggesting that Iran is a threat to almost everyone. Second, the diagnostic frames include Iran's threat to the national security of other nations, and they often speak through social media and more traditional forms of media about Iranian incursions into those particular countries through spying, assassinations, or indirect actions through proxy wars and assaults on allied governments,

> It has been a long time that the European community knows Iran has nuclear weapons. That is seen as a threat especially for Israel. And they know that Iran has the second highest execution rate after China and they also know that Iran has before been active and openly assassinating people overseas. We try to update locals and governments to our situation (Author interview, male member, Finland, April 2018).

Third, the PDKI amplifies Iranian oppression on other ethnic minorities in Iran,

> The main issue is national identity. It is not recognized during the Pahlavi time until now. When your identity is not recognized, your humanity is not recognized. Self-determination rights are what the PDKI addresses (Author interview, PDKI leader, Finland, April 2018).

Diagnostic frames target both Kurds and non-Kurds in the distant proximity. As I

mentioned, however, for the sake of limiting the scope of this study, I limited CAF

analysis to Kurdish audiences. Much of the diagnostic framing engaged by the PDKI in

the distant proximity is affected by the members' status as new citizens of their country

and their former way of life, often as active party members or peshmerga. Both of these

are discussed later, but it is important to note here that the problems that are identified in

the distant proximity often have the advantage of comparison. For instance, problems

faced by Iranian Kurds under the Islamic Republic of Iran are narrativized in terms of

relativity and are often described in much more detail once the member has been exposed

to the benefit of alternative systems of government in places like Scandinavia and the

United States. For instance, during an interview I conducted in Finland I was told,

> The Kurdish nation is demanding rights like any other nation. They want
> a federal, democratic government in Iran, like Switzerland or Canada.
> We believe in democracy and human rights more…Kurds in the diaspora
> and all Kurds want human rights more than these countries (Author
> interview, male member, Finland, April 2018).

Later, in Denmark, a similar sentiment was expressed,

> I have seen the peshmerga and grew up with the PDKI and also with the
> political situation. Now that I live in Denmark, and see what the PDKI
> wants, it is similar to what already exists in Denmark…a social
> democratic view (Author interview, PDKI leader, Denmark, May, 2018).

The Distant Proximity – Summary of Prognostic Frames

The prognostic frames of the PDKI in the distant proximity match the diagnostic frames in formula of approach. It is in the prognostic frames that the PDKI presents solutions that are considered wide in terms of the relatability of the group. They emphasize their efforts to consolidate minority power in Iran and illuminate the need for the party and its solutions produced in Iraq. Additionally, they work to increase the visibility of the group in their respective countries by pursuing solutions that are multinational and multi-political. These prognostic frames in the distant proximity were summed up as focused on the sustainability of the group, even from a distance,

> For me, the main aim of the PDKI is: "Be." …To be as you are or to be as you are forced to be. "To be as we are" is the main goal of the PDKI in my opinion (Author interview, member, France, May 2018).

Prognostic frames in the distant proximity also involve solutions that look to incorporate and empower Kurds establishing themselves as residents in a new country while continuing to grow support and awareness for the PDKI's actions in the near proximity. These solutions demonstrate that even the smallest effort can play a part in advancing the cause of the PDKI. They include the growth of the group in membership and support, lobbying the governments of their new residence for Kurdish, PDKI, and human rights causes, and the demonstration of solidarity among both Iranian Kurds and Kurds in general in these new places. They pay respect to the fact that these Kurds are now in a new place and are therefore engaging a new culture and so encourage productivity with respect to the new collective identity needs of their audience.

Additionally, in the distant proximity, there is a shift in prognostic frames away from violence and toward non-violence. The party in the distant diaspora are just that: a party. They seek solutions and support from governments, organizations, and people who would back them for the peace and human rights they desire, and not the violence that they threaten through actions such as Rasan. The help that they are likely going to find in the distant proximity will likely not be people who are willing to uproot and move to Kurdistan (though some do), but more generally, the prognostic frames aim at what can be accomplished among the audience in those areas. This is also motivated by the fact that the group wants to project the notion that they are good for society and are not a threat to those around them. "They know we are not terrorists" spoke one member in Denmark.

It is also in the distant proximity that the PDKI looks toward investment resources for the whole of Iranian Kurdistan as a prognostic frame. As one member put it,

> In Sweden demonstrations don't help the PDKI because it doesn't lead to politicians supporting us. We need to give Kurds in Kurdistan more resources to do their jobs and expand economic interest in the area (Kurdistan). We need the resources of the USA. In Sweden, the PDKI is for humanitarians (Author interview, Member, Sweden, April 2018).

Finally, it was in the distant proximity where I found that Kurds were especially open to criticize the prognostication of the PDKI and express their dissent both in terms of countering PDKI solutions and offering some of their own. This is partly a product of their distance. As a nonmember in Stockholm noted,

The PDKI try to organize people inside Rojhilate to close shops and participate or not in elections as they send those messages, but they haven't succeeded. Rather, if we are Iranian, and we don't want to separate, why would we participate in these protests? …and they don't involve people in other parts of Kurdistan… Is our problem clothes or language or something more? Dialogue is the answer – not PDKI tactics. PDKI is one of the best parties (of what we have). They are flexible, they are dynamic, can change faster, but this is a Kurdish problem as well – and they don't say that (Author interview, Nonmember, Sweden, April 2018).

The Distant Proximity – Summary of Motivational Frames

The motivational frames of the PDKI in the distant proximity are some of the most variant and open of this study. These frames allow for participation from many angles, and like the prognostic frames, allow for a freedom of expression, protest, support, and investment. From Kurdish celebrations, to membership in support groups, the PDKI encourages official actions not only in support of the PDKI and Kurds in Iran, but also inter-Kurdish union that de-emphasizes the structures that cause division in the closer proximities. For instance, the first event I was invited to during this research was a Kurdish Nowruz celebration attended by the PDKI but which involved Kurds of various political parties and from several nationalities.

Among Kurds of differing organizations in the diaspora, the fact that they are Kurdish, regardless of political affiliations, brings together Kurds of all nationalities while they are immigrants in non-Kurdish countries. The motivational frames of the PDKI in the distant proximities respond to this collective identity need to be among those whom you "are like."

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The distant proximity also allows for much more outsider support and action. While non-Kurds in Iran are allowed to join the PDKI peshmerga (and have died for this cause), this cross-ethnic unity is only useful to the PDKI in Iran. However, this exclusivity bends in the distant proximity, and while non-Iranians still cannot officially join the party, they are heavily encouraged to attend events, join protests, lobby and support the PDKI in different ways.

Finally, the motivational frames of the PDKI in the distant proximity work to garner overt government support through political clout, funding, and public support. This is especially powerful in places like Sweden who give the PDKI grant money every year as a local civil society organization. It can also be more subtle, such as in the USA where, for instance, members of congress will meet with PDKI representatives to discuss party issues and international policies.

In general, the distant proximity opens up PDKI CAFs to a number of new approaches and objectives. This is because, as the following section will show, the group expands their approach to outsiders, but also has to reckon with the fact that Kurds in this distant diaspora have new lives and new roles and thus new collective identities that must be addressed as these affect context variables.

Variants as a Result of Contextual Constraints and Opportunities in the Distant Proximity

Upon the commencement of this research, my assumption was that the distant proximity would be riddled with nuance that would overwhelm the project with data and

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ultimately necessitate its own endeavor. Instead, many of the results of this study showed

consistency in their return, regardless of where the data was collected. This could be

considered a strength in the PDKI's messaging approach and mission focus. On the other

hand, this could be perceived as the dull side of a two-edged sword as a consistency in

CAF approach might illuminate a lack of dynamism of approach. I argue that both are

partially true.

The mission and vision consistency are an obvious strength, even if it means

sacrificing smaller victories or a chance at group growth in the near term. But this

consistency often alienates the intended audience of the CAFs with the perception (and

accurately so) that this group is an Iranian Kurdish party, leaving the approachability of

the party with much to be desired. This, however, is not an accident and the

complications and negative ramification are consistently shown to be a price that the

group is willing to pay for integrity of mission and vision. This leads many of the PDKI

and their collective action frames in the near and intermediate proximity to demonstrate a

lack of urgency compared to those in the distant proximity, where the PDKI opens up

actionable processes to outsiders more broadly. This section continues the analysis in the

same fashion as the previous two while illuminating these mentioned trends.

Political contexts in the distant proximity obviously vary depending on the

location, but there are a few notable trends. First, the PDKI are a welcome presence in the

places that they have official offices and some unofficial delegations. The only place in

the world where the PDKI is present and unwelcome is Iran. Additionally, the countries

in which the PDKI is present are mostly western democracies with more open political

systems, asylum processes, and economic opportunity. Many of the countries, especially in Europe, are places that Iranian Kurds fled to in the wake of their oppression in Iran, especially in the last 40 years with the realization that the Islamic Republic would not be kind to their opinions or existence as Kurds and not "Iranians" or "Persians."

With that said, the approach of PDKI collective action frames in this proximity are well described by a metaphor that was given to me by the representative of the PDKI to the United States. He described the PDKI's desire to serve as a "lynchpin" of world political interaction not only in Kurdistan but also in the Middle East. In this way, the PDKI shift their CAF's problem identification not only on Iran, but also on how Iran's policies affect the world and especially the interests of the countries in which they (the PDKI) are residing.

Therefore, some of the tactics of the PDKI in distant political contexts include emphasizing negative Iranian effects of insecurity, economic impact, human rights abuses, and the specific threats that Iran makes on those particular countries. The PDKI also draws lines of comparison, thereby not only highlighting the negative effects of Iran politically, but the positive effects of their organization and the approach that they would take to governance in the same way as their host countries. This is especially easy in places like Sweden where the governments have socialist components. As well, the presence of the PDKI is encouraged by governments like Sweden through mechanisms such as funding for group activities in the country to foster civil society engagement. This also helps us understand why the PDKI in the past chose to emigrate to certain places like Scandinavia in particular.

The PDKI also try to expand formal relations with government in the distant proximity, especially through efforts to legitimize themselves and to make themselves more visible. Not only do they utilize the "lynchpin" technique mentioned above, but they work to increase dialogue with the governments of the countries in which they are residing. Indeed, the PDKI sends out what amounts to "ambassadors" to accomplish their foreign policy objectives, and utilize CAFs to engage these governments, both formally through diplomacy, and informally through less structured dialogue with the various political parties in their respective host countries. It is at this point that CAFs transition to the purpose of recruiting outside support from non-Kurds. Though this should be explored in detail, it is beyond the scope of this particular study to do so.

Some members even wind up running for office in their new countries. As one member in Finland told me,

> Our party has a good relationship with major parties in Finland, many of our members are also politicians in Finland and our members meet regularly to discuss the actions of the Iranian regime in Iran. But of course, we indirectly criticize their relationship with Iran because they violate human rights (Author interview, Member, Finland, April 2018).

The political context also allows for the group to engage Finnish civil society, as elsewhere in the diaspora, in pursuit of PDKI political issues as well as larger Kurdish political issues. This demonstrates the necessity for the PDKI to project onto the multiple layers of their own collective identity as well as those from whom they are seeking support, namely, from the quote mentioned below, Kurds from other areas,

In Kurdistan, people are full time, here they are flexible. In Europe, we are the most mobilized Iranian Kurdish party. There are dozens of PDKI members, and in almost every Finnish city we have member committees. All these have connections and there is a country-wide committee. We have different activities, some related to Kurdish (both all Kurdish and Rojhilate) activities in Finland and some related to Kurdish activities in Kurdistan. For example, if a member is seeking asylum in Finland, and is denied, we do things to prevent his deportation. And also, if there are some injustices in Iranian Kurdistan, we Rojhilate people together join to try to make actions or demonstrations within the bounds of Finnish law. Also, when we see that there is a need for solidarity in other issues for other Kurds, we join their efforts, like Sinjar, Afrin, and Kobani. And also, for the referendum for the independence of Bashur, we were more active than the Bashurian people. Because their happiness will help us achieve our goals as well (Author interview, member, Finland, April 2018).

CAF flexibility especially as it regards inclusivity in the distant political context remains rigid, however, when it comes to official membership. Even in the diaspora, there is still no room for outside political membership in the group. However, it is in the distant proximity that the group expands is CAF scope and attempts at resonance with outsiders in order to include those whom they seek to recruit as members or supporters who are the most distant from the conflict itself, such as 2nd generation Iranian Kurds (as members), and Kurds of other nationalities and non-Kurds (as supporters or allies, but not members). This will be discussed at length below with regard to audience context.

How the PDKI addresses the cultural contexts in the distant proximity was one of the most fascinating discoveries of this project. The following takes a bit of authorship license to demonstrate the flexibility of the PDKI's CAF's with regard to cultural context, but also works to illuminate the Iranian Kurdish population's adaptability in the diaspora, which helps to better illuminate the PDKI's CAFs.

The PDKI and the individual Iranian Kurds themselves respond to the collective identity needs of Kurds in the areas in which they reside. This is pronounced through culture and the group's ability to adapt to new and different cultures the world over. As with most diaspora communities around the world, it only takes one generation to completely adapt to a new culture and many of the young adults of Iranian Kurdish descent that I interviewed were wholly enveloped and adapted into the cultures in which they were born, or where they immigrated to as a child. Also noteworthy was the adaptation of the first-generation adults. These migrants either fled because of the persecution accompanied by party activity or emigrated in search of a better life during and after the conflict. This was preeminently demonstrated to me with the lighting of a candle. One evening outside of Oslo, as we settled into a homecooked meal of salmon served on a wooden board, a woman who was a formerly high-ranking PDKI official struck a match to light two tall, slender candles that she lit every evening and every evening would burn completely down. She and her husband, as everyone else did on my journeys throughout the Kurdish diaspora, took extraordinary care of me, including constant homecooked meals and plenty of drinks.

Noting this ritual of the candles every evening, I expressed how nice the setup was. My hostess just uttered the word "hygge." I was baffled. "What does that mean?" I asked. "Hygge!" She responded. As she was fluent in Kurdish and Norwegian but could speak very little English without her smartphone translator, she directed her husband to translate. He, being much better versed at English but still not more than 50 percent fluent, could not gather the accurate interpretation either. She therefore took to the

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smartphone and exclaimed "cozy!" but then proceeded along with her husband, to tell me

that it is a very Norwegian word and that there was no literal translation. In other words,

it was culturally ingrained and beholden to the knowledge of what it means to be

Norwegian; to have a Norwegian past and a Norwegian paradigm. After researching the

term later to a deeper extent, I found that there really is no way to understand Hygge

unless you are Norwegian. They did, and they knew that I did not.

I provide this anecdote to demonstrate the cultural realities of Iranian Kurds and

PDKI in the diaspora. The PDKI not only integrate to the cultures into which they have

been transplanted but some that I interviewed even work to *assimilate*.

The process of assimilation goes beyond integration or existing well as a foreigner

in another country. Rather, these PDKI members work to become a part of their new

culture and often strive to identify as such. Do they abandon Kurdishness? Without a

doubt, they do not. Said one nonmember of the PDKI accounting for his knowledge of

PDKI activities in his area:

> Supporting Kurdish identity, organizing events, collecting people
> together, these help Kurdish society to take care of its roots. Those
> children who are growing here they don't have many opportunities to
> study or get more information by themselves about Kurdishness.
> Through these kinds of events they get a chance to get to know
> themselves and why they are here. For adults, it's a way of keeping up
> the network, talking to people from the same background and to be in
> touch in general (Author interview, nonmember, Finland, April 2018).

However, as it was made clear to me during my interviews and from other

scholars' research, the members also desire to become a part of the local culture as the

they are also Norwegian, French, Danish, Swedish, Finnish, and many others (Wahlbeck

1999 and Raja-aho 2018). What determines the balance between this back and forth between Kurdishness and "local-ness" is the desires of the individual.

This is further illustrated by a second encounter I had during my research, this time in Finland. Upon arrival by train in the western coastal city of Turku, I was received by two recently transplanted Kurds in a car who did not speak any English. Their overt efforts to make me feel comfortable were both endearing and accompanied by regular reminders that "Šeida would soon be there" in a mixture of signs, Kurdish, and the scant English word.

Šeida soon arrived and sat in the back seat with me. Her fluent English and command of the Kurdish and Finnish language demonstrated to me that she was likely very young upon arrival in Finland but was in fact an immigrant. What followed was an evening filled with some of the most insightful conversation on Kurdish politics and the situation of the Kurdish diaspora but accompanied by a robust conversation about Finnish politics especially regarding youth in politics. Because of her feelings about Iranian Kurdish politics, I asked her why she would not become a member of the PDKI in Finland. Her answer was unexpected. She plans to run for political office in Finland, and she does not want to be perceived as anything other than dedicated to Finland by her possible future constituents.

Whether to manage the needs of the collective identity of its members or to appeal to the cultural realities and requirements of possible recruits, it is necessary for the PDKI to adopt shifts in their CAFs in order to respond to these new realities for their members and to attract other potential members who have experienced a similar cultural journey as

both Kurds, and as members of a new, often very different socio-cultural situation. They do a good job of it as a result of the culture of the PDKI of being open, progressive, and having a willingness (and, indeed, the necessity) to cooperate with outsiders for the sake of sustainability as people and as a party.

The cultural and audience contexts in the distant proximity does not impose problem identification variants, but greatly affects flexibility, scope, and resonance. These are derived from the abovementioned collective identity needs of Iranian Kurds in the distant diaspora. The PDKI meets the member, the supporter, and the hopeful where they are at and allows for a number of expressions of support including community engagement in their area to bolster the image of the party, and public protests in favor of both Iranian issues and other Kurdish issues.

Flexibility is most pronounced in the distant proximity with regard to culture and audience as the needs of approach to potential supporters stratify in the distant diaspora. In this proximity, there are now innumerable paths that Iranian Kurds take professionally, religiously, financially, culturally, and communally among so many others, and the PDKI shows that it is willing to meet these potential members where they are at in order to bolster their inclusivity. This makes for a dynamic group of members in the distant diaspora, so many of whom that I interviewed were on different life paths, and yet united in their support for the PDKI.

Flexibility is also utilized in and of itself as a recruiting tactic in CAF messaging, especially in the distant proximity. The PDKI presents themselves as an organization not only able and willing to accept the support of people who are from different socio-

cultural positions including religion, nationality, and economic status, but they project these frames as the rightful alternative to how they plan to change Iran for the better should they achieve a regime change in Tehran. Time and again during my interviews, the members and recruits would mention how objectionable and oppressive the Iranian regime is on cultures and values different than their own and therefore the PDKI works to demonstrate the flexibility among themselves and to outsiders that they hope to bring to pass under governance in Tehran.

Scope expands also, much in the same ways as with political contexts, but with an important difference. In the distant proximity, the scope of the PDKI collective action frames expand to match the focuses of the people among whom these CAFs are projected. Namely, the collective identities of Kurdish people who must in some contexts identify as generally "Kurdish" for the sake of solidarity among Kurds while sometimes releasing the needs of their own ethno-nationalist issues as described to me by a PDKI leader in Paris.

This collective identity shift among Kurds in the distant proximity especially as it concerns culture and audience variants demands that the PDKI CAFs adjust accordingly so as not to alienate those who express solidarity with Kurdishness in general and not just Iranian Kurdish issues. This reveals yet another unfortunate truth that the Kurds who are unable to unify in Kurdistan due to outside political influence such as the PDK and the PUK are ignoring the fact that unity among Kurds is possible and demonstrated time and again outside of those contexts.

In the distant proximity, the PDKI and its members have the ability to express Kurdish unity, even if it is not with PDKI purposes or even Iranian Kurdish purposes. It is in the distant proximity that they are regarded as just simply "Kurds" and often present themselves as such.

This is illustrated by an experience I had in the Washington, D.C. area at a celebration of Nowruz, the Kurdish New Year celebration. Upon arrival at the gathering location at a public event venue in Northern Virginia, I immediately felt out of place. Men, women, and children were dressed in the traditional Kurdish manner. Everyone was speaking Kurdish of various dialects. Nearly everyone was Kurdish. As I walked in, my contact took me to a table labeled "PDKI." As a looked around, I noticed that intermingled with the various unlabeled tables were signs noting various Kurdish affiliations from all over Kurdistan and yet everyone was there together, celebrating their Kurdishness. Through the night, I spoke to many about various Kurdish issues, especially those in the United States including the recent attack on Kurds at the Turkish embassy in Washington D.C. by unidentified Turkish men (likely government officials).

This situation illustrates yet another component of the cultural necessities of the PDKI and their CAFs in the distant proximity. That is, sometimes Kurds in the distant proximity have the need to simply identify as Kurdish because the needs of being Kurdish supersede the needs of the PDKI to try to implement PDKI specific cultural context objectives (or political and audience objectives as well). As Kurds in the distant proximity both told and demonstrated to me time and again, they have varying competing levels of collective identity need depending on the context or the situation.

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Resonance in the distant proximity presents a challenge in the cultural and audience contexts as it there that the CAFs of the PDKI are competing with other voices of opinion about the way forward for the target audience of the PDKI. In the distant proximity, those who have emigrated from Kurdistan are no longer surrounded by the realities competing for their attention, and even though they may be tethered to the area through their Kurdish community in the new location and by family and friends back in Kurdistan, they are under little obligation to continue forward. Additionally, they may have competing interests (as is true in any proximity) vying for their attention concerning Iranian Kurdish politics. The PDKI is not the only group that exists in the diaspora representing Iranian Kurdish concerns, even if they are the largest. Many of the people I talked to in the distant proximity aligned themselves with other political views and parties, while the vast majority of those who do not belong to any group expressed their overt desire to stay out of politics completely and simply engage their new life in the diaspora.

This was especially true for second generation immigrants or those who emigrated as a child. So often, those who were younger did not express interest in the PDKI's functions, even those whose parents were famed former peshmerga (sometimes both mother and father). Instead, they may have expressed some rhetorical support, but would often lack even the basic understanding of why the PDKI even exists. It is among these audiences that PDKI resonance stands little chance of impact, especially with their current methods of communication and media delivery. This is especially because many

of these second-generation Iranian Kurds identify more with their new homes than their old; some even running for local office (mentioned above) or even serving in the military.

Finally, it should also be understood that the PDKI does plenty to increase its resonance among potential members and to sustain current members in the distant proximity especially through mechanisms mentioned concerning flexibility and inclusivity. However, there is one major difference here. In the distant proximity, there is a sense of urgency expressed as the imposition of a chronology of anticipated events among the PDKI and in their CAFs that exists in a different way in the distant proximity than in others.

Distant diasporic support for insurgency, rebels, or even existing governing bodies, as is the case with Americans of Jewish descent and the government of Israel, those who are in the distant proximity often times work with an immediacy and abandon that is not possible in the closer proximities. This is because there is oftentimes much less to lose for those who are far away because they are removed from the possible ramifications related to violence, finance, political oppression, etc., and have systems of sustainability for themselves and their families that are untethered to stability in the conflict region.

This freedom of expression is demonstrated in the resonance of the PDKI CAFs in the distant proximity. "Doing something" now, active, daily, and overtly is a common occurrence and is promoted as a part of their prognostic and motivational strategies, compared to the near and intermediate proximities. It is in the near and immediate proximities, on the other hand, that PDKI actions are often much more calculated,

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tempered, and must consider the immediate effects not only on the group and its

sustainability, the individuals and their safety, but also the Kurds living in Iran who could

be affected by the choices that the group makes inadvertently, or who are called upon to

implement the plans that are made by the PDKI from the outside.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have provided a summary of my findings, including large-scale

observations that permeated the study and formed themes of occurrence and interplay

between proximity and shifts in PDKI collective action frame formation, as well as

factors of politics, culture, and audience, and the common variables of scope, resonance,

flexibility, and inclusivity. These themes include the large trends associated with

proximity shifts between the near, intermediate and distant proximities. I also showed

how and why master collective action frames differ from how members discuss and

project PDKI CAFs in varying proximities, and how urgency is also affected in these

same locations. The results expand the study of transnational insurgent group dynamics

as well as marketing strategies of the same. Also presented were issues of ethnicity, co-

ethnic contiguity, and collective identity on PDKI collective action frame formation and

delivery.

This chapter illuminates further the notion that while ethnicity is one of the most

important features of civil war alignment and/or spillover, the Kurdish case presents a

distinct caveat in how nationality supersedes these interests in the name of group

sustainability and interests. The story, however, does not end here regarding proximity

and PDKI CAFs. As the results show, there was another large effect that proximity has on CAFs, but in terms of temporal proximity rather than geographic/co-ethnic proximity. The next chapter illuminates these results while the concluding chapter discusses all of these results and their ramifications.

Chapter 6: Results, Temporal Proximity

Introduction

Chapter five demonstrates that proximity directly impacts the collective action frames of the PDKI among Kurdish co-ethnic audiences. These changes are the result of the shifts in contextual constraints and opportunities of the Kurds in those specific areas. These shifts are demonstrated through variable features of collective action frames and respond especially to the collective identity needs of their members and potential members and supporters. Throughout my exploration of these features of collective action frames, I noticed a response as a result of proximity that otherwise did not fit into the structures of analysis that I set before commencing the research. That is, in some instances and among certain members, collective action frames also respond to proximity as a function of time since engagement in the conflict or in active participation in party activities near the conflict area. This is especially true among members of the former generation of PDKI who last engaged in formal PDKI activities 20 or more years ago. These effects can be seen across the strata of chronological proximity from near, intermediate, and distant. It is therefore necessary to separate the concepts of distance as a function of co-ethnic contiguity from the more emotionally and mentally integrated concepts of distance as a function of time.

I again utilize the analytical framework of near, intermediate, and distant in terms of time to discuss how "temporal proximity" affects PDKI CAFs. While I illuminate the effects of distance as a function of time, I still utilize these proximities as a basis of analytical structural continuity to bolster the organization of the project.

Second, I discuss how the project's results were impacted by what could be described as notions of nostalgia, collective trauma, and collective identity. This expands upon the more rigid analysis of CAFs and explores the emotional connection between past and present for former (or older) members. This insight is especially important as we see the effects of what this emotional connection means for the former PDKI peshmerga, and those who are related to or supported former fighters in a number of ways. As these members and former members remember and reminisce on what was happening in and around Iranian Kurdistan 25-30 years ago as it compares to the realities on the ground today, I show how these memories and feelings of nostalgia affect the perceptions and constructions of the PDKI's collective action frames presently and how they contribute to the formation of the base on which PDKI CAFs are constructed. These act as a rallying cry of collective trauma, collective identity of rebellion, and the support the PDKI's place as the protectors of the Kurdish community through means of self-sacrifice and sometimes, (super)heroes of the community.

I also reexamine the issue of urgency, and how perceived achievability of end-state goals affect the means of approach in PDKI CAFs. While this is similar to the discussions in chapter five, this section extends the discussion to illuminate further

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complexity. Finally, I end with a discussion on the idea that temporal proximity can be perceived as fluid.

CAFs and Proximity as a Function of Time

What is meant by proximity as a function of time? As the PDKI has been in existence for some 75 years, several generations have been involved in varying capacities, in varying locations, and for different amounts of time. As members have finished their time with the PDKI as peshmerga, active members, or in other capacities, they have found new lives sometimes in different countries and undertaking new goals in their lives that are unrelated to the PDKI. Regardless of whether or not these people remain official, yet rather inactive, members, time starts to grow between their last experiences with direct involvement in the PDKI and where they are today. I refer to this amount of time as temporal proximity, or proximity as a function of time.

This chapter examines how temporal proximity causes shifts in PDKI CAFs among various members. It demonstrates that this distance affects both the perceptions and projections of PDKI CAFs of active and less-active members and supporters.

The Near Temporal Proximity

The near proximity as a function of time is defined for the purposes of this study as those who are living in the revolt. Their day to day is either entirely defined by their purposes in the PDKI or they are living in the intermediate or distant proximities but are fully employed by the PDKI. While there are fewer of these positions, they do exist, such

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as group liaisons to certain governments, or serving in a similar capacity as an ambassador or group coordinator in a particular non-Kurdish area.

This category also includes those who are part-time functionaries of the party who also have outside jobs. Both of these groups of people comprise the PDKI's active promoters and projectors of collective action frames. They are the ones who are responsible for understanding and/or constructing the current CAFs of the party and projecting them to the audiences which surround them and equipping other members to do the same. They not only work as mouthpieces for the party, but functionaries that help to reform and adjust the PDKI CAFs for their areas in order to address political, cultural, and audience contexts. CAF shifts often originate from these members who have been given the license to do so, or unofficially. Physical proximity divides this group especially in terms of urgency and boldness, both as has been mentioned in chapter five and as will be discussed below.

The members who occupy the near temporal space, or those who are currently active in PDKI activities have different roles. They may be peshmerga, or peshmerga in training. They could provide support for PDKI military activities or be full time politicians. They are mothers who teach their children about Iran and their struggle while their fathers are away. They are members of the Women's, Student, and Youth Unions who meet regularly to discuss community service and recruiting projects and who fight over leadership roles as I witnessed at a Youth Union meeting one warm morning in Koya.

They are also people like Hawreh. Hawreh is a young man who lives in Maine, who, like his father and grandfather is an active member of the PDKI. However, unlike his elders, he has always been a member of the PDKI while *outside* of Kurdistan. Yet, he considers himself a peshmerga and works hard to project both the Iranian oppression of the Kurds, and to support PDKI activities as he can. He is also, as a youth still in his 20s, the only person I met during the entirety of my study who has published a book specifically about the plight of the Kurds in Iran.

In the eyes of those who occupy the "now" the PDKI rebellion is one that is daily influenced by the lived experience of the member. It is also within this temporal proximity that I find those who as members are willing to critique the choices of the group the most as these decisions often affect them directly. In line with this there is also the need to discuss PDKI CAFs projection versus the perceptions among those who occupy their current aim.

Among those who are recruited for support are those who are not interested in joining or supporting the group. These include people who are not interested in politics, or who specifically want to stay removed from it or who choose not to join the PDKI for other reasons. Almost all of these, however, if they are not related to the specific political differences, relate to how they perceive the PDKI versus how the PDKI projects itself to the contrary. For instance, one nonmember who was uninterested in joining the group said,

> What's our problem? Not just Iran – all colonizers don't believe in a democratic solution and the Kurds are still a minority. Is our problem clothes or language or something more? Dialogue is the answer – not

PDKI tactics. PDKI is one of the best parties (of what we have). They are flexible, they are dynamic, and can change faster. However, this is a Kurdish problem as well – and they don't say that, and don't involve other parts of Kurdistan. I think that democracy is good but doesn't solve our problems. They fight and send peshmerga, they say they don't want war, but then send peshmerga to Rojhilate, they are working there with guns. They say they don't want to fight but when you come with guns, so it is natural to fight (Author interview, nonmember, Sweden 2018).

Another interviewee in the same city stated,

I agree that this is a Kurdish issue, not religion, not Iran, not ideology. But I disagree with the PDKI in that they are not acting strategically… plans could be more active, in lobbying in Europe, but they don't have the self-confidence they should have in these circumstances. They are more radical when they talk to Kurds than when they talk to the Persian BBC, this could affect future negotiations. Why should we accept something less than rights of a nation (Author interview, nonmember, Sweden 2018)?

There are also perceived differences that exist between Kurds of other nationalities. While these groups are never in direct competition with the PDKI because Kurds from other nationalities are not allowed to join the group, their critiques still come across as a difference in perception from what is normally projected. For instance, in a rather funny, yet serious critique, a Kurdish woman living in Sweden of formerly Turkish nationality who was formerly a member of the PSK stated,

I am neutral about the PDKI because I feel isolated from their communication, the PDKI uses Arabic letters and Sorani language and we also cannot understand each other culturally. The PDKI is too open with security. PDKI women put too much emphasis on women's things…they are too soft…they should be all or nothing like we were in the PSK. Problems should not be a hobby… PDKI women are not tough like we were (Author interview, female nonmember, Sweden 2018).

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While the PDKI does their best to project that they have certain solutions, the limitations that are usually self-imposed based on their principles that affect their CAFs will oftentimes be perceived as weaknesses in the overall CAF design. This is based on the limitations of membership, an unwillingness to diversify messaging approach, especially across social media, and much of their messaging being based on past events, past heroes, and the "old way" of doing things; all of which arrest their innovative potential and appear as weakness in group constructs to the outsider.

Relatedly, there an interesting discrepancy observed among some of the active members related to women's empowerment. While I do not go too far in my analysis on this subject because of a lack of depth of follow up, it is important to mention the disconnect between PDKI messaging and perceived reality in this case. That is, the PDKI prides itself as being empowering to women and holding progressive views toward women's rights. The PDKI employs women fighters, does not force women into marriage, advocates for girl's education, and advocates for equal gender rights. However, there are some women who are active participants in the party that state that they still perceive the need for improvement in their day to day opportunities within the party and interpersonal interactions between men and women. While no one ever stated that they had felt threatened (though, maybe they would not have told me if they had), some alluded to the fact that the party still has work to do to bring their message into congruence with their practice.

This section has discussed the ramifications of the temporally near proximity. While in general, it mostly outlined the current state of affairs for the PDKI as well as its

critiques, it gains more relevance relative to other proximities. I now turn to the intermediate temporal proximity to examine its effects on PDKI CAFs

The Intermediate Temporal Proximity

There is an interesting trend in terms of those who occupy the temporal intermediate space. These are those who are recently removed from active engagement, and who, although they may or may not retain their membership, are working to establish themselves in their new scenario, be it professional, geographical, national, or otherwise, and who are focused on investment in their new lives elsewhere.

Many of the members or former members who talked to me the least (if they would talk to me at all) were those occupying this temporal space. I received the most suspicion from these transplants. They are investing in a new life in a new place and one in which they are oftentimes rather unfamiliar. This is interesting because it was also in the intermediate geographic proximity that PDKI CAF activity declined noticeably as well. While it could be argued that this is mere coincidence, I would argue otherwise. There is much to be said about occupying an "almost" space as these two categories of members and former members do.

While the concept of liminality is not fully appropriate here per se, there are elements of being "not quite in and not quite out" that have effects on these realities. In the same way that the PDKI had to navigate the intermediate geographic proximity surrounded by people that they, though related to "ethnically" as Kurds had little in common with otherwise, those occupying the intermediate space as a function of time

also find themselves in unfamiliar territory that is difficult to navigate, but close enough to the original situation to be hazardous. For instance, I met several hard-working immigrants in many of the countries that I visited. Their memories of fighting and covert activities were fresh on their minds, they did not yet speak the local language, and they had poor paying jobs. Yet, the PDKI still pursued them and encouraged them to situate their membership with the PDKI within their new reality, and oftentimes, the PDKI would help these people with aspects of integration into their new way of life.

The intermediate temporal proximity is where the former or current member begins to choose which direction her life is going to take with regard to the PDKI. I talked to about an equal number of people occupying this newly relocated space who both wanted to avidly remain a part of the group they had just left, and those who were for the time being ready to move on and start new lives in their new location. They were oftentimes shy, could not speak the local language well yet, and were suspect of my questions and presence. This, therefore, would make for an interesting subject of further investigation.

The Distant Temporal Proximity

Those occupying the distant space as a function of time are a class in and of themselves and have some of the most resounding impact on the current PDKI CAFs, especially as gatekeepers of memory, collective trauma, and the collective identity of the group. They were certainly the best storytellers. These were the people I interviewed who had "hung it up" a long time ago with regards to their active participation, usually as

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active peshmerga or supporting members during the active times of military conflict, but who were mostly still enrolled as members.

They still carry a rousing and overt sense of both support and urgency for the cause. This is partially because at this point in their association with the PDKI, they had very little left to lose. They have safely distanced themselves from the conflict both as a matter of time and more often than not as a matter of space and citizenship as the majority have long been citizens of their receiving nations. While many of those who occupy the distant proximity in terms of time also now exist mostly in the distant proximity as a function of physical space, this is surely somewhat a matter of sampling.[26]

PDKI CAFs for these members experience a tension between what the current CAFs entail and what they once were. This is expressed in storytelling, remembrance, urgency, and prophesying about what is to come. But it is also expressed in terms of personal completion or retirement. For them, their jobs are mostly done. They contributed and now they project personal "frames" that they have constructed for themselves regarding their experiences with, contributions to, and remembrances of the PDKI and its mission.

These "frames" are expressed through the illustrations of their history, the grief of their trauma, and the constructions of their identity. These are discussed in the next section and hold a place of high importance for the understanding of the PDKI CAFs in

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[26] It is possible that there were plenty of Iranian Kurds living in Iraqi Kurdistan who had not engaged with PDKI activities for a long while, but I was not made aware of them. This would make for an interesting follow-up project if those belonging to this specific demographic do in fact exist.

general. If PDKI CAFs have frames that operate within and throughout temporal and geographic proximity, then these three, nostalgia, collective trauma, and collective identity, certainly comprise some of the master frames. As well, because the PDKI is so tied to its own history as a means of group identification today, these former and older members who occupy the distant temporal space act as gatekeepers and guardians to the sources of that collective identity. The following section explains further as it illustrates issues of nostalgia, collective trauma, and collective identity about and among the PDKI members, former members and how these are utilized in the construction of collective action frames.

Nostalgia, Collective Trauma, and Collective Identity

Nostalgia, collective trauma, and collective identity occupy a space of importance both for those who reminisce about times past, especially in the temporally distant proximity, and for those who continue to engage actively today. Members who were formerly engaged in the active rebellion of the past but who now may only be passive members (if they are members at all), recollect times when sacrifice was the price they paid to maintain the integrity of their community's collective identity and to instill hope in the Kurdish community which experienced great oppression.

These sacrifices occupy not only the space of memory, but, as this section discusses, comprise a major rallying point in the current diagnostic frames of the PDKI. These memories, then, and those who share them act as gatekeepers, or community

storytellers who maintain the identity of the Iranian Kurds as it relates to the struggle against the forces who have for so long challenged their collective identity.

My first research contact was a seasoned member of the PDKI who had been a peshmerga in the 1980s and 90s. Many of his friends who I was subsequently put into contact with were fellow former members of the peshmerga. Through these interviews, I was able to understand the position of honor and the nearly immortal status of the peshmerga in the eyes of Iranian Kurdish citizens, especially during the time before the PDKI fled from Iran in the 1990s. During one interview, a former Peshmerga mentioned the following story about his perception of peshmerga as a young child:

> I took one of his shoes, [the older member recalled, referring to a peshmerga who had stopped in his village to stay the night and recharge] he left his shoes behind for some reason when they went to back to the mountains and I kept one in my room, and I treasured it; they were like superheroes to us and I had one of his shoes. Think of the way that famous basketball players are regarded in this country [the USA]. They are like that, everyone knew who they were when they walked into a village, they were like the basketball players here, except they were fighting for our freedom (Author interview, member, USA 2018).

Not only were the peshmerga famous, but they were regarded as nearly indestructible and seen as superheroes. Every account I was given that involved some violent exchange between PDKI peshmerga and the Iranian troops spoke of tales of great valor but also lopsided causalities in favor of the peshmerga.

These types of stories were joined by heavy reminiscing, mundanities, strategies, tales of fear and near-death experience and times when it seems as though God was on their side and times when they lost those who they were close to in battle. To those who

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tell these stories, this is their fight now, to keep memories alive and to exist as a peshmerga today who is armed with the memories of nostalgia, collective trauma, and collective identity.

Interviews with these older members were by far the longest of the study. Some would last for hours or even more than a day. I would listen as they would recall stories of their time before, during, and after their membership, and ultimately, how they came to places like the United States to settle in their new lives. But the nostalgia certainly remained, and to them, sharing these stories was a new way to fight the battle.

Why talk about nostalgia as a part of the discussion on collective action frames? It is because this distant temporal proximity plays an important role in maintaining the PDKI of the past, around which current notions of the PDKI CAFs are built today. Tales of glory and rebellion, but also tales of oppression and trauma maintain the legitimacy of the PDKI and their purposes so that they are not just responding to an endless cycle of tit-for-tat grievances in the present, but can address the collective trauma and oppression of the past which impact the current lived experience. When the PDKI speak of Iranian regime oppression and violence, these stories are what they have "in the bank" in order to justify their reasons for existence, especially as they are constructed through diagnostic frames.

These stories are also what construct the self-image of the PDKI at the present moment, because currently, there is no hope for an ultimate victory for the PDKI except that they would sustain and wait until a strong force aligns with them to topple Tehran, or

they align with enough minorities in Iran to do the same, or by some act of Providence, the regime collapses.

The stories of collective identity and collective trauma also act as a source of virtue signaling that align with current and past PDKI collective action frames. One particularly lengthy interview I conducted with an older former peshmerga included a litany of virtuous qualities of the PDKI and the peshmerga at the time. All of these topics came with an evidential story or stories about how the PDKI demonstrated these virtutes; and they were often repeated by others:

No salary, but belief in the cause

Procured arms through defeated Persians

Captured material not used were burned

Villagers did not take weapons as the Iranian military might take back over and kill them

PDKI never takes from villagers

No instances of taking advantage of civilians

Party has judges to punish wrongdoing

Safety and security committees like a JAG military justice

Kurdish justice systems persist today

He joined for freedom of Kurdistan, representation in Tehran, language freedom, cultural freedom, religious freedom

Respect of the Iranian flag even after defeating a base

Caring for POWs

Acting against perceptions of being associated with terror

Persians became PDKI members because of the cause

Democracy and rights

"Winning hearts and minds"

Changing Persians' minds about who they [the PDKI] are and how they treat people

The references to the past and idealizing of the same illustrate the meeting of two very basic human needs that the revolt and the peshmerga served for the persecuted Iranian Kurds and continue to do so today. They provided hope and a perceived future. They were the first and last line of defense against an attack on the Kurds' very existence in Iran, not only their bodies, but on their collective identities. They were, in fact, just men and women who would fight like any other insurgency, but they were the bearers and instruments of all of the hopes of retribution, protection, and vengeance placed on them by the oppressed Iranian Kurds. But now one major thing has changed: they are no longer peshmerga, and their current employ starkly belies their past and the attempts at gaining rights for themselves and their communities.

One woman discussed in detail her engagement in combat. She was a seasoned peshmerga engaged in all sorts of covert activity. She now drives a bus for school children in Northern Virginia. Her old reality of fighting for the freedom of her people and for her nation now starkly contrasts with school children passing, parents waving, and horns honking as cars speed by with no realization that the woman behind the wheel was a warrior who was a specialist in mountain warfare and in covert operations against an vastly better-armed force in Iran (Author interview, member, USA 2018).

These older members are bus drivers, dump truck owners, window washers, journalists, auto glass installation specialists, and retirees. They walk with limps and are marked with battle wounds, shadows of a much more glorious past in their eyes that they can escape into. Their nostalgia for the past not only helps them remember the hope that they used to instill both in others and in themselves, but it becomes a sort of current active rebellion, an understanding that what they did was active rebellion against their oppressors and their stories keep the rebellion alive.

These stories also serve to keep alive the collective trauma that they experienced and become central to the collective action frames of those still engaged in collective action framing today. They recall their desire to protect their people, their villages, and their families. They recall acts of oppression, self-sacrifice, of injury, starvation, deprivation, and death not only among their forces, but among the general civilian population.

These stories serve as a rallying cry not only for what was necessary, but for what continues to be necessary, and serves as the base of PDKI collective action frame diagnostic components. These diagnostics do not just point to "policies" that originate from Tehran, but are made alive, approachable, and reprehensible by the remembrance of collective trauma.

Another expression of nostalgia could be more accurately described as "unrealized goals." Seemingly every interviewee that I spoke with who was a former fighter or member who was active in some supporting role in operations against the Iranian government expressed a subtle communication of an emotion that was not quite

regret, but could certainly be described as disappointment that all of their efforts, sacrifices, and injuries both physical and mental have not yet amounted to freedom for their people. The stories of action and combat and covert operations mixed with the hero/heroine's welcome that they received from their countrymen serve as a place of escape where they perceived themselves as being actively engaged, certainly more so than they are now in a time so distant from those events.

How do PDKI CAFs respond to these realities of unrealized goals? To some extent, I argue that PDKI CAFs are born out of these memories. These "times in memorial" serve as a stalwart projection of what the rebellion was, even if it is not so now. That, in a sense, there is always what the rebellion could be again if things were to change. This pours fuel on the fire for current PDKI CAFs as even though the "old days" are behind them, the fight continues in the same pattern as before, even if more subtly.

The exception to this rule, however, is the current offensive known as Rasan, the new PDKI plan for actively engaging the Iranian government which was mentioned in previous chapters. While the effects of Rasan are not yet clear, it seems that the PDKI desires to resurrect their old ways of working, if even for the sake of morale and group sustainability, rather than for any real belief that they could bend the will of Tehran in their direction. While conducting this research, especially in the near geographic proximity, I perceived that Rasan was a way of rallying behind a contemporary action that served in some ways the same cause as collective remembrance.

Notions of nostalgia and hearkening to the past as a source of collective identity certainly come with their share of criticism by members and nonmembers alike. Not the

least of these reasons is how much emphasis the PDKI puts on the standing, wisdom, and almost immortal status of their former leaders, especially Dr. Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou. His leadership of the PDKI as well as his writings and international influence gained him such renown that it is hard to tell what the PDKI might have been without him. His assassination solidified his place in PDKI history and lore not only as a great leader, but as a martyr. Therefore, his gravesite, nestled in an enormous Paris cemetery is visited by many as a pilgrimage among Iranian Kurds in France and elsewhere.

Ghassemlou, along with other leaders, and his teachings and leadership remain a focal point of PDKI organization today. While his memory and the memory of others serves as a rallying point for PDKI, many criticize the group's inability to evolve and innovate past Ghassemlou's ethea toward a more relevant vision and means of approach.

Not just through Ghassemlou, but in many other ways, the PDKI remains tethered to the "old way of doing things." Their leadership is noticeably old and many of the youth I interviewed spoke about the challenges of trusting a leadership that seems so unwilling to evolve. "The PDKI is a group stuck in the past," many say, and this is the reason why so many members critique their current leadership and why nonmembers feel the PKDI struggle with relevancy. In this way, memory serves as both an asset and a liability, and this is unlikely to change quickly as was illustrated by a young member who led me to Ghassemlou's grave. She proceeded to kiss her hand and touch his gravestone as though he were a lost member of her own family, though she was born after his death.

Urgency and Fluidity

It is important to note that urgency of approach to the PDKI goals is expressed in somewhat of the opposite way as a function of temporal proximity as opposed to geographic proximity. Those in the near proximity in terms of time are certainly more urgent than those in the intermediate or distant. Those in the distant proximity of time live, for the most part, in the past. While they engage with the group presently, as I mentioned before, they have other things on their mind now such as raising a successful family and participating as a citizen of a new nation. This comes into dramatic contrast with those living in the near proximity of time. It is their day to day, and they see their situation with more urgency.

Finally, an important point to add to this discussion includes the fluidity of these proximities as a function of time. It would be a mistake to classify these proximities as rigid and unwavering like a door that cannot be returned through once crossed. Rather, certain events and connections can fluctuate these feelings (and realities) for the Iranian Kurds, especially as it involves personal connections to those directly impacted by the conflict. Examples of these scenarios include many who have family, friends, and/or community still embattled in Iran or in the near proximities mentioned in chapter five. Though the lives of those in the safe and distant proximities are mostly not directly affected, some continue to experience the indirect oppression of the Iranian state vis-à-vis their contacts. This, as I came to understand, is the source of emotional tension for those who personally are not threatened, but feel the effects of the conflict, making it arguable that it is never possible for someone to truly be "removed" from the conflict entirely.

This work concludes next in chapter seven with a discussion about the entirety of the results of the project and what the ramifications of these findings are on the larger study of transnational insurgency, civil war, insurgent group marketing, collective identity and rebellion, how the PDKI might utilize these insights, and my thoughts on future research in light of the findings to fill gaps revealed by this project.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusions

Does proximity affect insurgent group collective action frames? As the results of this study show, the answer is most certainly "yes," and in ways that are far more dynamic than would have been previously thought. This chapter, which concludes this dissertation, discusses the results of this study as a whole while addressing its theoretical conclusions. It shows that, among other things, in order to understand the effects of distance on collective action frames, you must have a firm grasp on collective identity needs, but to do this, it is important to have an understanding of ethnicity and ethnic histories. I also discuss theoretical lessons from this project that can be used to study other transnational insurgencies, and how this study opens up new questions both about insurgent group dynamics and the PDKI itself.

This project fills a gap in the literature of civil war, insurgent group action, and the effects of transnationalism therein. While there are known patterns concerning how support from the outside-in is affected by different issues of supporter interests, less is known about how promotion and marketing are changed from the inside-out. While it can be assumed that insurgent groups shift their framing strategies based on the type of support that they want to garner, this project has asked, *does target audience conflict proximity affect the collective action frames of a transnational insurgent group?* Through a better understanding of shifts in insurgent group framing, this project provided

steps forward in the overall understanding of insurgent group self-interests and how that might relate to insurgent group self-promotion. As research on the subject has shown, transnational effects play an important role in the dynamics and outcome of civil war and insurgent group behavior. What this project has added to the understanding of these dynamics is that distance from the conflict, as a function of both co-ethnic contiguity and time directly affects PDKI collective action frame construction and dynamism and therefore it can be assumed that similar effects exist as they relate to other insurgent groups around the world.

Understanding the relationship between these two types of proximities and the construction and dynamics of collective action frames is important for three reasons. First, this relationship expands the understanding of civil war by strengthening the argument that its analysis must not be separated from its transnational dynamics. Instead of conceptualizing transnational dynamics as an ancillary consideration, this study among others shows that civil war in the modern era will always be affected by transnational variables. It also shows how both insurgents and those to whom they are marketing and from whom they are receiving support can both catalyze and restrict conflict through the choices they make within this dyadic relationship.

Second, the findings of this study help fill a gap in existing literature related to insurgent group marketing and promotion. While extant studies have widely addressed insurgent group promotion among those within group areas of influence as well as how and why different outside entities choose to engage in insurgent group support of various kinds, less has been done, with few exceptions, to illuminate how insurgent groups

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strategically aim to promote their cause to outsiders. Through the type of research methods employed, the study also importantly illuminates how interconnectivity is employed through these marketing strategies and even dominates the ways that some collective action frames are projected. This helps explain how insurgents respond to the needs of people whose support will quite often be impacted or mitigated by self-interest in a number of ways.

Additionally, as mentioned in the introduction, by better understanding insurgent group support raising and pairing it with existing work in insurgent group support, we can better predict who is being marketed to, the types of recruits and resources sought, and now more broadly explain insurgent group activity in general which can thus better equip efforts of conflict analysis and resolution.

Third, this project has shown the need to better understand the connections between collective action frames and proximity. In general, by understanding this relationship, we are better equipped to analyze an insurgent group's priorities abroad, and how those relate to the propagation of their mission. In doing so we have better learned how these CAFs not only project missional frames to outsiders, but how they are used to build and sustain group collective identity and sustainability. In other words, while this project set out to study marketing to outsiders, along the way, it helped illuminate the truly binary function of CAFs to both grow and sustain the group.

Finally, this work added to a better understanding of both the sustainability but also some of the lack of overt success of the PDKI, a group that has been in existence for some 75 years. By outlining these characteristics of the PDKI and pairing it with all of

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the abovementioned development in theory and understanding of insurgent groups and civil war, this project can be utilized among scholars of the PDKI, CAFs, civil war, transnationalism, and marketing and the connections therein. Finally, from an even broader perspective, it is obvious that transnationalism affects societies all around the world in different ways. Therefore, this project could not only help expound upon the understanding of social movements in general but be a method of approach to understanding our ever more connected and transnational world as a whole.

Theoretical Conclusions

By addressing the connections between distance and CAFs this study has arrived at two main conclusions. First, the construction and dynamics of PDKI CAFs respond to proximity to the conflict as a function of co-ethnic contiguity, especially as those proximities affect collective identity needs as a function of both distance and time. Second, this project has shown that the existence of nostalgia, memory, and collective trauma from members who are older and have experienced different stages of the lifetime of the group can both bolster the strength of identity of the group and its resolve to take action, but can also negatively impact the group by keeping it tethered to the past, thereby limiting its ability to innovate and therefore evolve in order to respond to necessities that might otherwise attract more support.

The PDKI's collective action frames respond to the proximity at which they are projected and received. While there are well-constructed and consistent master collective action frames that are projected publicly and officially through media such as news

interviews, YouTube, and twitter, both official and unofficial frames shift depending on where they are projected relative to the conflict with Iran.

The near proximity, which defines locations that are a majority Iranian Kurd and include PDKI bases in Northern Iraq, demonstrate some rigidity in the diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames with a few exceptions. While the diagnostic frames continually point to Iranian oppression, there are day to day problems especially tied to life in Iran and Iran's military actions that are elevated in dialogue since it is in this proximity that Iran is able to affect Kurdish life most directly and consistently.

As a result, the prognostic frames in the near proximity are much more focused on a military response compared to the master frames and frames in other areas especially as it concerns the new operations enacted under the banner of Rasan. These prognostic frames then direct the motivational frames in the near proximity, allowing for much more military and covert responses, but also include public organizing, protests of different types, education, and civil society organizational foundation and direction.

The intermediate proximity, defined as areas in Kurdistan not occupied by a majority Iranian Kurds, sees a shift in PDKI CAFs. This is largely a result of the history and current state of affairs of inter-Kurdish relations. Here, the PDKI must shift their frames to become more relevant to their hosts and project themselves as a more useful and benevolent group to the population in general and not just themselves. Although separation between the ethnic groups is obvious and purposeful, the PDKI must still align themselves politically with the local government(s) and especially the KRG in order to assure the sustainability of their presence in the area.

While the diagnostic frames remain robust, they expand to include Iran's negative effects on the whole of Kurdistan, and humanity in general. The prognostic frames also respond to the collective identity needs of the locals and allow for some ability of non-Iranians to support the group and its sentiments, even if they are not allowed to join. These frames, along with the motivational frames also respond, importantly, to Iranian Kurds who are not interested in full-time employment with the group but still want an accessible point of entry to be able to support the PDKI while maintaining a separate life.

The distant proximity is where the group opens up the most to be able to attract Kurds of all walks and stages in their lives as immigrants and to be able to respond to the multiple collective identities that they have in these places. It is also here where the group must present themselves as both important and amicable on the world stage and engages in a number of practices to be able to receive support from Kurds and non-Kurds alike. Diagnostic frames in the distant proximity now point to both Kurdish oppression in Iran as well as Iran's danger to the rest of the world. Military solutions are downplayed significantly in the prognostic frames while diplomacy and international partnership are accentuated. Motivational frames are at their widest in the distant proximity as the PDKI realizes that they must be able to employ actionable support from members and supporters across collective identities, abilities, and associations.

Urgency is also clearly affected by proximity. As is in line with other scholarly works on the topic, the closer you get to a conflict, the more one's actions directly affect daily outcomes and safety. Therefore, it was common to see in this study members acting aggressively and boldly regarding their actions in the distant proximity while many in the

nearer locations exhibited more signs of calculated risk and patience. Timelines were often talked about in the diaspora where I never once was told of a time of expected success in the near.

Nostalgia, memory, and collective trauma are all associated with distance from the conflict as a function of time. Older members, many men and women who are former warriors and who played active military support roles tell the stories of the PDKI and in doing so maintain the collective identities and collective traumas of the group. This acts as both a mechanism of group solidification but can also hinder the group's ability to evolve and innovate, especially as it regards younger members and the recruitment of younger people. During the interview process, many of the younger members, especially under the age of 40, communicated their frustration with this reality, but as the group is still largely controlled by older members, these narratives that dictate PDKI frames are perpetuated. This is especially evident in the PDKI's treatment of the memories of their assassinated leaders and martyrs as the group has a distinct tethering to these deceased's memories but oftentimes have difficulty transforming their leadership beyond the leadership styles and even words and tactics of these martyrs. As was often expressed to me, this can frustratingly "keep the group in the past."

Limitations and Considerations for Further Research

As with any dissertation research, this project experienced some predictable limitations and some that were discovered along the way. First, I undertook research with Kurdish co-ethnics only. Because of this, it is likely that different returns would be found

concerning adjustments that the PDKI may be making among non-Kurds including the societies within which they are living as diaspora, the governments of host nations, and other nations friendly to their cause, neutral to their cause, and even in Iran.

Second, as with any insurgency, and as was discussed in chapter three, the level of "active insurgency" exists along a wide and ever-changing spectrum. While the PDKI was ramping up their active engagement known as Rasan at the time of my research, and as a result was seeing more intimate confrontations, engaging in more robust military training, and making more trips to the mountainous border regions, they still exist toward the less confrontational side of the spectrum of engagement. This is an important consideration, because it is possible that groups engaged in more active, violent confrontations may approach in CAFs differently, which could provide the departure point for future comparative research.

I once asked one of my Kurdish interviewees, "why does everyone trust me?" and he responded, "it is not about trust, it's about getting the word out, maybe you are US government or something like that, but what do we have to hide? We need the world to know about our struggle" (Author interview, member, USA 2018). Therefore, I certainly did not encounter the same limitations that I might otherwise have. The Kurdish/American interpersonal relationship is one that continues to be easily facilitated and I reaped the benefits. However, it is likely that I did not get the whole story. As with any group engaged in rebellion, there are going to be limitations of what can be talked about, revealed, discussed, or hinted at. While I ensured the privacy of all involved, I know that it is hard, and surely unwise for someone to be trusted implicitly in these types

of situations. Therefore, I acknowledge the fact that I likely was not given the whole story at any point especially with regard to official group communication, and, as time progresses, maybe more can be learned by others from different communities and demographics. As the struggle against Iran evolves, maybe more can be discussed in hindsight, rather than having to be guarded as a current tactic, or future plan.

Third, I chose CAFs as my dependent variable of focus in order to understand the ramifications of proximity on a transnational insurgency. While the results of this study are illuminating, it reveals only one aspect of the overall effects of transnationalism on insurgent group marketing and self-promotion tactics. To broaden the perspectives gained in this study, it will be necessary to continue to test the effects of other independent variables that may affect CAFs of insurgent groups, but the field will also need to continue to try to understand and expound upon other dependent variables as well.

Finally, the data that I gathered varied widely across a spectrum of sources and became rather idiosyncratically related to each location. In the future, it would be beneficial to seek symmetry in a research set of CAF-generating actors and mechanisms in pursuit of more standardization of the results. In spite of these limitations, my hope is that this project provides a roadmap of approach for these types of studies and motivates future researchers with an understanding of the importance of these conceptual areas.

Farther-Reaching Conclusions and Considerations for the PDKI

There are also a few conclusions related to the findings of this research that would require more work to solidify. These conclusions are related to how I might advise the

PDKI if I were inquired of as an outside consultant based on the results of the project about policy changes and possible approach changes to their systems of influence and propagation. The outsider's view that I gained not only as a non-member, but also a non-Kurd left me uniquely equipped to view the situation without those associated biases and left me curious as to how the group may pursue success and proceed in the future.

In general, as with any research project that looks at the Kurds of any nationality, the advice would stem from the seemingly obvious handicap in Kurdish domestic and foreign policy: that divisions within the Kurdish people themselves across the historical and political boundaries must be addressed. As was mentioned previously, even when small successes seemed available, it was ultimately the splits and divisions within the Kurdish nationalities themselves that led to the demise of future returns on these successes and the prospects for growing strength as a Kurdish "nation."

How might this be remedied? Looking at the results from the study, it can be assumed that although it would behoove the PDKI to more properly align with other Kurdish groups, this is not desired by the PDKI because they are not interested in a free Kurdistan, but rather, a democratic Iran. Therefore, they must and do turn to other Iranian groups. The problem, however, discovered in this research is that PDKI CAFs are going to perpetually inhibit a strength of alliance between other Iranian ethnicities until the PDKI are willing to expand their CAFs, including all of the associated core framing tasks, to include more about Iranian freedom and not just Kurdish freedom.

To do this, the Kurds would not only have to open up their diagnostic frames and be more overt about Iranian oppression in general, but they would have to dismiss much

of their identity that is tied to the "old ways." While revering assassinated leaders and memorializing the past, these constructs that appeal to the collective identity of the Kurd in Iran rather alienates non-Kurds and leaves very little room to empathize with their history. Ghassemlou was not a Baluch or a Turk or a Persian, Ghassemlou was a Kurd. Instead, if the PDKI were to project Ghassemlou as an Iranian, this might grow the group's potential appeal to other Iranian groups and allow for greater motivational discourse power to mobilize many other Iranians and not just Kurds.

Another important conclusion that could use an entirely separate research undertaking concerns the role of women in the PDKI. As stated, the PDKI does a fantastic job of promoting women's equality and rights but in the perception of many PDKI women themselves, falls short of equal empowerment. Therefore, I find that to enhance their CAF's potential to grow in influence on outsiders, they could start by electing women leaders to positions of higher importance and not just relegated to "women's" roles such as the Women's Union and lesser roles within the ranks. This would likely demonstrate the progressive nature of the group more and provide a starker, more beneficial contrast to the Iranian regime.

Finally, and related to the above, if the PDKI is to diminish focus on the past and memorialize rather than exclusively utilize the ethea of their deceased leaders (or, even if they choose not to) the PDKI must work to expand the accessibility the group both in form and function. First, if they do diminish their ties to the past as the defining feature of their present, the PDKI must work on the effectuality of what they are replacing these with. If they truly desire independence in Iran as the reason for their existence and not

just be a center and source of Kurdish identity in the face of oppression, the PDKI must open their doors with what they hope to accomplish as an Iranian people and as citizens of the world. They are too small of a group to demand freedom for Iran but then not allow others to play a significant role. This would be different if they were seeking secession or an independent Kurdistan, but they are not. Therefore, demonstrating more of their regional and world identity would allow them to propagate and seek more relevant support from outsiders.

They must also expand their communicative outreach. As one interviewee mentioned, she is a Kurd from Turkey and even she is not able to understand what the PDKI advertises and communicates (Author interview, nonmember, Sweden, 2018). As well, the PDKI must elevate their accessibility for youth including embracing a stronger youth culture and utilizing more media that attract and communicate to a younger generation. This includes generating a more robust, dynamic and approachable internet presence and speaking more directly to young people about their opportunities as members and supporters. This would also involve projecting in more world languages as many second-generation Iranian Kurdish immigrants only read English and/or the language of their new countries.

By engaging in these improvements, it is possible that the PDKI could garner worldwide support. As with many "trendy" civil movements, such as Freedom for Tibet and the campaign to find Joseph Kony in the Central African Republic, freedom movements possess the capacity to attract worldwide support while maintaining distinctly

local causes. It is possible that the PDKI could move forward in this if they were to make

themselves more accessible to outsiders, even outsiders who are not Iranian Kurds.

Appendix A

Interview Questions for PDKI Members

1. Name, age, current nationalities(s).

2. How long were you/ have you been a member of the party?

3. Jobs held within the party.

4. Did you ever cross the Iran/Iraq licitly and/or illicitly? How many times?

5. Were you ever engaged in battle?

6. Were you ever wounded as a result of your actions with the PDKI?

7. Did you ever encounter adversity as a result of your actions with the PDKI?

8. Do you have family history of involvement with the party?

9. What problems does the PDKI address?

10. What solutions does the PDKI propose to these problems?

11. Does the PDKI mobilize action for these solutions…is it different depending on location?

12. How does the party mobilize in your country?

Appendix B

Interview Questions for Non-Members

1. How would you describe your involvement with the PDKI, if at all? Are you a supporter, opponent, or unaffiliated?

2. Why did you choose to support or abstain from support of the PDKI?

3. Overall, what is your opinion of the PDKI and its existence: positive, negative, or neutral? Why?

4. What problems does the PDKI address?

5. What solutions do they offer to those problems?

6. Does the PDKI mobilize action for these solutions…is it different depending on location?

7. How would you describe the tactics of recruitment and garnering of support that the PDKI employs in your city? Through what medium do the PDKI advertise themselves and spread their message in your city?

8. How would you describe the reputation of the PDKI in your city?

9. How do members and supporters of the PDKI benefit from their existence?

10. How do non-supporters, the public, and the local community benefit from PDKI existence, if at all?

11. How are members, supporters, the public, and non-supporters negatively impacted by the PDKI, if at all?

12. In your opinion, has the message of the PDKI changed over time?

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Biography

Charles Davidson graduated from Walnut Ridge High School in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas in 2003. He received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Arkansas in 2008 and his Master of Arts from the University of Arkansas in 2015. He has been employed by ForgottenSong, Inc. for the past 10 years focusing on community-level economic peacebuilding in war-torn countries. He lives in Washington, D.C. with his loving wife Abby and two cats.