‘I’M CURIOUS ABOUT YOU’: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL IDENTITY AND NARRATIVE GENRE IN MUSICKING TURKISH–KURDISH RECONCILIATION

by

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‘I’m Curious About You’: The Role of Social Identity and Narrative Genre in Musicking Turkish–Kurdish Reconciliation

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, in particular to my grandmother, Jo Ann, whose stories helped make me who I am, and to my husband, Abdullah, who inspired me to follow my intellectual curiosity.

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Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) ..... AKP
Boğaziçi Performing Arts Ensemble (Boğaziçi Gösteri Sanatları Topluluğu)..... BGST
People's Democratic Party (Halkların Demotik Partisi) ..... HDP
Islamic State of Iraq and Syria ..... ISIS
Kurdistan Regional Government ..... KRG
Radio and Television High Council (Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu)..... RTÜK
Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partîya Karkerên Kurdistanê) ..... PKK
Democratic Union Party (Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat) ..... PYD
Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu).. TRT
People's Protection Units (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel) ..... YPG

ABSTRACT

'I'M CURIOUS ABOUT YOU': THE ROLE OF SOCIAL IDENTITY AND NARRATIVE GENRE IN MUSICKING TURKISH–KURDISH RECONCILIATION

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George Mason University, 2020

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The literature on music and conflict transformation has grown in recent years, providing a look at the myriad ways in which music can foment violent conflict, promote resilience in the midst of conflict, and facilitate reconciliation in the aftermath of conflict. Yet, the literature is overly focused on claiming the successes of music in conflict transformation, while remaining sparse on the particularities of how music interrelates with conflict dynamics. Taking the music of two reconciliation-focused bands in Turkey—Kardeş Türküler and Bajar—as a case study, this research draws on the theory of social identity construction and on a new matrix around the function of narrative genre in conflict to triangulate the ways in which Kurdish identity is constructed in the music of these two groups. Through a social identity and narrative genre analysis of a sample of songs from each group, supplemented by interviews with three musicians from these groups, this study elaborates how music functions in conflict transformation. Specifically, this study

finds that narratives of social identity and ingroup–outgroup relations can play out in both conflict escalatory and conflict de-escalatory genres while still holding the potential to move away from denigrating outgroups and instead toward constructing generative intergroup relationships.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

If the day comes when a love leaves you breathless
If the day comes when you find yourself in the hands of a foreign land
Take your heart from this suffering
Set it out to sea
– "Denize Yakılan Türkü," Kardeş Türküler

As the 2004 film *Vizontele Tuuba* (dir. Yılmaz Erdoğan) opens, the film's narrator speaks these words from the far future: "I don't know where it came from into my mind, twenty-four years after everything happened and ended." We do not see the narrator—his words are spoken against a black screen. Yet from the quiet tenor of his voice, it is clear that in this moment of reminiscence, he is feeling reflective, nostalgic, and perhaps a bit weary. Somewhere amidst the push and pull of his present life, a memory has come to him: of a rainy, autumn day in the weeks following the September 12, 1980, coup d'état that marked the end of the last summer of his childhood.

Born and raised in a predominantly Kurdish village in Colemêrg (Turkish: Hakkâri), a province in the far southeastern corner of Turkey, the narrator—named Yılmaz, like the director, as the movie is rooted in Erdoğan's own experience of his childhood in Colemêrg before the 1980 coup—has earned good enough marks to send him to Ankara to study. But in the summers, he comes back home to his family and his friends.

In the memory that has come to him in his adulthood, Yılmaz is back in a dark, dour school in Ankara with narrow hallways and muted colors. His teacher comes into

the classroom, tense and foreboding. He not so much tells as yells at the students to begin writing an essay about how they spent their summer vacation, being careful not to exceed the one-page limit or break the strict rules of writing, because "writing is a serious business."

The camera pans across the students as they put their pens to paper. But Yılmaz struggles to begin. In the background, a gentle melody plays—an instrumental version of the song "Denize Yakılan Türkü" ("Song Written for the Sea"), which has been composed by the band Kardeş Türküler ("Ballads of Solidarity"[1]) especially for the film.

The melody is suddenly interrupted as Yılmaz is singled out by the teacher. "Yılmaz, why aren't you writing, son?" the teacher questions. "Write! What is there to think about?" The teacher's tone then shifts, taking on an element of the mocking. "Shame on you! You can't even write two lines." He then asks the class, in a tone that commands response, "*What* can't he do? He can't even write two lines." The other students are forced to intone in unison, "He can't even write two lines."

The class goes back to their writing; the teacher back to his newspaper. Yılmaz, now further disturbed, is unable to write the paper. This is not because he is incapable of doing so, but because this final summer of his childhood has been too beautiful, too joyful—and yet also too painful, too remorseful—to put into words. To be commanded further by a representative of the Turkish state (the teacher) to write the story of a beautiful summer cut painfully short by the military's coup is yet one more instance of

[1] The group's name in English can alternatively be translated as "Ballads of Fraternity." However, I have preferred the translation "Ballads of Solidarity" used by Aksoy (2014, p. 225), who has been a member of the group, as it avoids gendered speech that is not present in the Turkish name (Turkish is a gender-neutral language).

violence. Instead of writing the essay, he resolves to not be commanded into meaning making. Instead, he writes a name in large letters across the page: "TUUBA."

It is the name of the daughter of a couple with whom Yılmaz rides on the bus to Colemêrg when he returns home at the beginning of the preceding summer. While Yılmaz is coming back from his studies in Ankara, the family is coming to the village for very different reasons. The father, Güner, is a government official (implied to be working in education) who has, in effect, been exiled to a post in the rural southeast for political beliefs considered to be disloyal to the state. He has been sent to the town to administer the local library—only to find that the town does not actually have a library.

Thus, the film's main conflict is set. Güner works together with other figures, including Nazmi (who is the mayor and Yılmaz's grandfather) and Deli ("Crazy") Emin, a man gifted in technology, construction, and visual art[2], to put together a library. Comedy sets the tone of much of the film. Alongside the main conflict, many others also play out in alternating waves of joy and sadness. Emin and Tuuba (Güner's daughter) strike up a friendship, implied to understand each other well (despite an age difference) because they are both outcasts in some way—Emin because his behavior and manner are perceived as being "crazy," Tuuba because she is a wheelchair user (an outcome implied to have resulted from an unspecified accident). Another character, Mahmut, who is visiting home following studies in Diyarbakir, is depicted as being deeply involved in leftist political organizing (which he is cautioned against by his elders) while also

[2] Emin is played by Yılmaz Erdoğan, even though the director/actor also voices the older version of the film's narrator.

pursuing a clandestine relationship with a young woman, Fadile. Elsewhere, the local youth—who have organized into rival political groups—fight over the painting of each group's acronym (done by Emin at the request of Mahmut's group) on the mountainside that overlooks the town.

Yet, for all that *Vizontele Tuuba* is a comedic film filled with plenty moments of joy, it is also laced from beginning to end with scenes of sorrow. Yılmaz's grandmother, Siti, constantly asks her grandson what Ankara is like, because it is where one of her sons spent the final months of his life in mandatory military service before being killed in the 1974 conflict in Cyprus.[3] Güner's wife, Aysel, is depicted as feeling the present pain of exile from friends and family in Ankara alongside the ongoing trauma of her husband's (implied) previous arrests.

These little scenes of sorrow unfold as this unsuspecting town—and the rest of Turkey—hurtles toward the bloody 1980 coup. On the morning of the coup, Emin arrives at the library that the town has worked so hard to build, not yet having heard the news. He has brought with him a television he has repaired, because though Güner has successfully secured donations of thousands of books from across Turkey, the town's residents are mostly illiterate, and so the library has been used as a general community space where neighbors can gather in the evenings to watch the news or the latest episode of *Dallas*. When Emin arrives at the library, he finds it ransacked and comes to understand that something has gone terribly wrong. He rushes to the home of Güner, only

[3] This tragic event is the climax of the preceding film, 2001's *Vizontele*, which was also directed by Erdoğan.

to find it has been ransacked as well. In a bedroom, Aysel holds Tuuba. Both are crying on the floor, Tuuba's wheelchair cast aside.

The coup marks the end of a summer of joy and solidarity. The town's politically active leftist youth, along with Güner, have been arrested and sent off to prisons—from which some will not return.[4] For Aysel and Tuuba, who have once again lost Güner to prison, their time in Colemêrg has come to an end. In the film's final scene, Yılmaz is placed on a bus to Ankara much the way he had arrived in the summer. Aysel and Tuuba join him as well. As the bus weaves its way around the mountain, the shot widens. There, on the side of the mountain, instead of the party acronyms painted earlier in the summer, Emin has painted a different name: TUUBA.

Musicking Turkish–Kurdish Reconciliation

"If the day comes when a love leaves you breathless / If the day comes when you find yourself in the hands of a foreign land / Take your heart from this suffering / Set it out to sea," sings the female narrator of "Denize Yakılan Türkü." It is a relatively short song, sung in Turkish (though other songs on the *Vizontele Tuuba* soundtrack are in Kurdish). Its melody is simple but rendered dramatically, the strings between the lyrical stanzas adding a sense of gravity—of pain and of longing. Throughout the film, all of the characters long for something. Güner, Nazmi, and Emin long for purpose through the building of the library. Emin and Tuuba long for belonging. Aysel longs for a life in Ankara—but mostly, for a life without the fear that her husband will once again end up in prison. Mahmut longs for a Turkey where his political beliefs are able to be fully

[4] The impact of this coup will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

expressed—and simultaneously longs for a life with Fadile. Siti longs for the son she has lost. And Yılmaz—well, Yılmaz longs for the warm, promising days of the last summer of his childhood.

The movie tells all these stories of longing in a way that causes it to well up in the viewer. It does so through the deftness of its story and the beauty and tenderness of its cinematography. But when the music of Kardeş Türküler is added, another realm of meaning opens up.

The first time I heard the music of Kardeş Türküler was in the fall of 2012. After three years of learning Turkish, and six years of longing for Istanbul—a place I had never been—I was finally in the city as an exchange student at Boğaziçi University.

Nereden aklıma geldi bilmiyorum. Just as the adult Yılmaz does not know where the memory of the last childhood of his summer came from, I don't quite know what sparked my desire to visit Istanbul. I do know that in high school, I became intrigued by what little I knew of the city. After a brief—*too* brief—Ottoman history unit in a high school social studies course, I became curious about what it might be like to see the domes and minarets of the Blue Mosque in person.

Our high school years do not have a monopoly on our capacity for curiosity, but there is little doubt that they are breathtaking in their ability to impress upon us ideas and beliefs, values and feelings that come back in ways that we might not expect later in life. Like many hearing teens, I had an unofficial soundtrack that constantly played in the background of my high school years, cobbled together from songs that tied me to my parents, or to my friends, or to particular feelings and events and places. As a dancer, my

relationship to music became amplified, associated permanently with the idea of movement; as a creative writer, music helped me understand how to weave rhythm into sentences and paragraphs and stories.

At the time when Istanbul was little more than a spark of curiosity for me, I was listening to a lot of Coldplay. One song in particular, "Postcards from Far Away" from their 2008 EP *Prospekt's March*, caught me up and wouldn't let me go. It stood out because it was a purely instrumental song. It was brief, the notes of a simple melody played across the keys of a piano. For whatever reason, it conjured up images of Istanbul for me—of what it might feel like, finally, to see the sun peeking out from behind the dome of the Blue Mosque. Normally the kind of creative writer who horded away short stories and poems with grandiose dreams of future publication, for the first time in my life, I wrote lyrics to accompany this song that had none:

I made it to the sea;
it sways calmly like the spring clouds
that dance along the horizon's edge.

And what a sight they are:

the minarets that long to pierce the sky
and spend a lifetime reaching just to try
and always fail; they always fail.

I love the splendid colors of the holy Blue Mosque,

much deeper than the ocean's shades;

they remind me of the way

your eyes sparkle in the winter light.

I can see them sparkling here.

Three years after writing this poem, I made it to Istanbul. I saw, finally, the waters of its Bosphorus Strait and Marmara Sea. On my second day in the city, I visited the Blue Mosque for the first time. I marveled at the expanse of its courtyard and the brilliance of the mosaics on the inside of its many domes. I placed a scarf around my head, precarious and exhilarating in the newness of a Muslim identity I had claimed only earlier that year. It was the first mosque I prayed in. It was the end of one journey—and the start of another.

A few weeks later, on the South Campus of Boğaziçi University overlooking those famous Bosphorus waters, I weaved between the tables of various student clubs, seeing what new activities I might be able to join for the brief—*too* brief—months that I would be in Istanbul. Somehow, I learned that the university's folklore club would be giving an introductory performance to invite new students to join. I went with a friend into one of those old buildings, taking my seat in an auditorium that was at once foreign and familiar. As a dancer, how many auditorium seats had I sat in? How many stages had

I performed on? The lights went low. The musicians took up their instruments. In their white, billowing costumes, the dancers poised themselves for the moment when the first note would ring out. It did, and the performance began.

At least some of the pieces that the musicians and dancers performed that day were developed by a band called Kardeş Türküler. At the time, I did not know the relation of the group to the university or its folklore club. I ultimately was not able to join in the club's activities—it required a full year commitment, and I was only at the university for a semester. A little disappointed but ultimately not discouraged, I went off into the rest of my Istanbul semester. I expanded my still blossoming Turkish. I made close friends. I meandered through as many parts of the city as I could, and lamented that a few months would never be enough to hear all of its stories. I resolved to make it the work of a lifetime to get to know as many as I could.

And in the back of my mind, that spark of curiosity about Kardeş Türküler never faded. If you ask me where the longing of Istanbul came into my mind, I will not be able to tell you. But if you ask me where my curiosity about Kardeş Türküler began, it was there on the same campus where the group's founding members, students at Boğaziçi University, all first learned about the folklore club and felt the spark of curiosity that led them to join. Seven years after I sat in that Boğaziçi University auditorium, Selda Öztürk, a founding member of Kardeş Türküler, would tell me her own story of meandering amongst the tables of the clubs during the university's orientation. She would tell me about going to an introductory performance of the club. She would relate to me how she decided, then and there, that this project of telling the stories of the world—and

ultimately, of Turkey's multitude of linguistic, cultural, and religious communities—through music, dance, and dramaturgy was where she needed to be (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020).

She would also tell me a very different story than my own brief experience at Boğaziçi. When she and other founding members first joined the folklore club in the early 1990s, Turkey was at the start of what would come to be known in many circles as the dark days of the conflict between the Turkish military and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (known by its Kurdish acronym, the PKK). Following the 1980 coup, the already stringent restrictions upon expressions of Kurdish identity became even more oppressive. The Kurdish language, long denied as a distinct language in the official discourse of the Turkish state (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008; Gunes, 2014), was banned from public use. This ban (which also included other minority languages) was lifted in 1991, opening the way for Öztürk and fellow members of the folklore club to begin researching, adapting, and performing the music of Turkey's many communities (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020).

Yet, even with the language ban lifted, restrictions on Kurdish identity expression would continue to ebb and flow. When Öztürk and her friends decided to continue the Kardeş Türküler project under the umbrella of the Boğaziçi Performing Arts Ensemble (known by its Turkish acronym, BGST) after graduating, they would achieve both wide popularity *and* censure, like when the song's first music video—of the Turkish–Kurdish song "Kara Üzüm Habbesi" ("The Black Grape's Seed")—was prevented from being aired in Turkey (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020).

Kardeş Türküler has been singing, composing, and performing for almost thirty years. In addition to narrating the stories of Kurdish communities in Turkey, they narrate the stories of many other ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural communities. The goal for the group is nothing less than bringing about the peace of living together. In an interview in October 2020, Vedat Yıldırım, a founding and continuing member of Kardeş Türküler, told me, "As a matter of fact, the name 'Kardeş Turküler' already contributes to an atmosphere of peace. We're saying, 'Let us live together among our differences'" (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020).

At the end of the first decade of the 2000s, following the successes of the Kardeş Türküler project, Yıldırım joined together with other musicians to begin another musicking project, Bajar (the Kurmancî word for "city"). Like Kardeş Türküler, Bajar is a "meeting project" that aims to create its own musical style and sound in service of bringing different communities together to better understand each other's stories (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020). However, while Kardeş Türküler collects, adapts, and composes the music of Turkey's many communities, Bajar focuses more pointedly on the experiences of Turkey's Kurdish communities—and in particular, on the experiences of Kurdish people living in Turkey's big cities. This goal of elaborating these stories and building understanding between Kurdish and non-Kurdish listeners is embodied in the title of its debut 2009 album, *Yaklaş*, which means "come closer" (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 8, 2020).

Today, both Kardeş Türküler and Bajar are musicking Turkish–Kurdish reconciliation in the midst of the ongoing Turkish–Kurdish conflict, which has risen and

fallen—at times with periods of harmony, at times with periods of cacophony—throughout all the years of the Turkish Republic, and most intensely since 1984, the year that the PKK conducted its first attacks against the Turkish military (Marcus, 2007).

In 2020, a little more than four decades after the PKK was founded, two decades after its leader, Abdullah Öcalan, was captured and imprisoned, and one decade after a "Kurdish opening" of the Justice and Development Party (known by its Turkish initials, the AKP) was first announced on the national stage, Turkey remains trapped within a protracted conflict between a Turkish state whose relationship with Kurdish identity has been fraught since its founding and a Kurdish community whose linguistic, cultural, and political rights have been systematically neglected or withheld—to varying degrees—for nearly a century.

The construction of identity—both Kurdish and Turkish—is at the heart of the Turkish–Kurdish conflict. In his analysis of the Turkish state's discourse on the Turkish–Kurdish conflict from the founding of the Republic through the 1990s, Yeğen (1999) found that the discourse is rooted in, and furthers, language that excludes Kurdish identity. In an article written a decade later, Yeğen argued that, even in the midst of a Kurdish opening that resulted in some of "the most radical gestures on the road to the recognition of Kurdish identity in Turkish history," the Turkish establishment had not made progress toward recognizing Kurds in their Kurdishness as full citizens. Instead, it still viewed Kurds as targets for assimilationist policies (2009, p. 615).

This limitation of Kurdish identity plays out not just on a political level but also within the media. In their study of the construction of Kurdish identity within coverage

by *Hurriyet*, a major Turkish daily newspaper, between 1997 and 2002, Sezgin and Wall (2005) found that the mainstream Turkish press leans towards the use of "discriminatory" and "degrading" language to describe Kurdish identity (p. 795). Across their 121-article sample, they found that Kurdishness was consistently associated with terrorism, divisiveness, and unrealistic demands, and that, rather than constructing Kurdish identity through the use of Kurdish voices, the articles relied on the voices of non-Kurdish elites, thus rendering Kurds unheard and ignored within coverage about Kurdish identity. According to Sezgin and Wall (2005), the coverage "suggests that [Kurdish] culture is not worthy of respect and even constructed an image that it is arguable as to whether their language and culture are real entities" (p. 795).

In 2020, despite the progress that has been made toward a greater recognition of Kurdish identity in Turkey, the Turkish–Kurdish conflict remains entrenched, and expressions of Kurdishness continue to be circumscribed by both elites and the general public. While private, non-Turkish mother-tongue language education remains legal in Turkey, many private Kurdish-language schools and programs have been shut down, with many Kurdish news and media outlets suffering the same fate (Hoffman, 2019).

It isn't just the government that sanctions Kurdish identity. In December of 2018, a father and son were attacked on the street in northern Sakarya province when a man questioned them about their identity and they responded that they were Kurdish; the father was killed, while the son was gravely wounded (Barwari, 2018). In July of 2019, Kurdish tourists from Iraqi Kurdistan were attacked in the Black Sea province of Trabzon, allegedly for having taken pictures with the flag of Kurdistan (Dri, 2019).

This contestation of Kurdish identity at the levels of state, society, and interpersonal encounter shows that the Turkish–Kurdish conflict plays out beyond the field of armed confrontation between prominent conflict actors. It is a conflict that is entrenched precisely because it concerns the core question of who gets to belong in Turkey, along with who gets to benefit from the rights and privileges that this belonging entails. As Rothbart and Korostelina (2006a) write, "[q]uestions about 'what happened' in a conflict quickly turn to monolithic explanations of who 'they' are, why are 'they' malicious, and when 'they' will strike" (p. 1). These questions, playing out as they do in terms of ingroup valorization and outgroup denigration, eventually lead to actions by conflict parties that have material repercussions (Ashmore, Jussim, Wilder, & Heppen, 2001, p. 233).

As this research will elaborate, the complex process of social identification and its interrelation with the dynamics of conflict and its transformation are impacted heavily by the particulars of how conflict parties narrate who they are and who they are not. Narrative is a process by which individuals and groups make meaning about themselves and others—and in so doing, set in motion the constellation of actions available to them in conflict (Ross, 2007).

Narrative plays out wherever there is storytelling at work, whether in a conversation between friends, in a political speech, in a newspaper article, or in a work of art. The function of narrative and its impact on social identification and conflict transformation lie in its power to move people toward meaning through aesthetic means. One vehicle of narrative, music, is becoming a popular site of study for its potential to

foster destructive conflict *and* move societies toward more constructive, generative relationships. Yet, the particulars of music—the special techniques with which it becomes a powerful tool for conflict *and* its resolution—remain less explored in the literature (Bergh & Sloboda, 2010; Sandoval 2016).

Taking a conflict transformation approach that places Lederach and Lederach's (2010) sonic metaphor for reconciliation at its core, this study elaborates the role that music can play in addressing protracted conflict—and the Turkish–Kurdish conflict in particular—through an evaluation of the interplay of social identity and narrative genre within Kardeş Türküler's and Bajar's approach to the construction of Kurdish identity.

With this thesis, I have endeavored to answer the following central research question: **How do reconciliation-focused music groups in Turkey construct Kurdish identity in their music?**

To answer this central research question, I have conducted a phenomenological study of the song texts of two music groups in Turkey that are explicitly making music around themes of reconciliation and social cohesion between ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups: Kardeş Türküler and Bajar. The primary analysis of these song texts has been supplemented through secondary interviews with members of the two music groups.

Toward answering my central question, I have also sought to answer the following sub-questions:

- **Sub-Question #1:** Within the context of this conflict, how do reconciliation-focused music groups construct intergroup relations, including collective axiology, outgroup threat, and relative deprivation?

- **Sub-Question #2:** What narrative genres are reflected in the music that these groups make around this conflict?
- **Sub-Question #3:** What intersections emerge between the narrative genres of the music, the construction of Kurdish identity within the songs, and conflict dynamics?
- **Sub-Question #4:** What implications might the interplay of social identity construction and narrative genre within the music of reconciliation-focused music groups have for reconciliation within the Turkish–Kurdish conflict?

To situate my approach to the role of music in conflict transformation, I begin this thesis with a discussion of social identity and conflict dynamics in Chapter 2. There, I elaborate the function of social identity in conflict, discussing social identity from a constructionist viewpoint that centers the importance of boundary-making in the social identity process. I describe some core functions of social identity (including the need for self-esteem, belonging, and purpose through group affiliation) and discuss how social identities can, under specific conditions, solidify into protracted conflicts rooted in ingroup-outgroup animosity. I elaborate these dynamics further through a discussion of three frameworks—collective axiology (Rothbart & Korostelina, 2006b), outgroup threat (Korostelina, 2007), and relative deprivation (Gurr, 1971)—which I have used in the analysis of my song sample from Kardeş Türküler and Bajar.

In Chapter 3, I expand upon this discussion of social identity with a closer look at the function of narrative within the social identification process. I engage with the broad literature on the role of narrative in conflict transformation before returning to the social

identity literature to engage with a specific function of social identity—the provision of a sense of purpose—through an evaluation of the concept of generativity. I describe Simmons's (2020) framework of narrative genre in conflict resolution, which I have additionally applied to the song sample, to further engage with this concept of generativity and present an opportunity to better understand the interplay of narrative and social identity approaches to conflict transformation.

Following this theoretical grounding, in Chapter 4, I elaborate the role of music in both conflict and its transformation. I begin by describing the reason why a conflict transformation approach, rather than a conflict resolution approach, is meaningful for analyzing the function of music, as conflict transformation elaborates a more whole-of-society approach to addressing conflict, providing greater space to evaluate musicking initiatives, which often play an informal (rather than formal) role in conflicts. Within this approach, I incorporate Lederach and Lederach's (2010) sonic metaphor of reconciliation, which allows for an understanding of reconciliation as resounding within small, local containers of activity and relationship (rather than only on the official stage). After addressing the concepts of conflict transformation and reconciliation, I discuss the different ways that music, through its unique approach to narrative, can provide fertile ground for the social identification process. I engage not only with the literature on music and conflict transformation but also with a discussion of the particular sonic properties of music and how they may determine the unique role that music plays in conflict dynamics.

The second half of this paper presents the findings from two phases of data collection: the primary phase, which has included a social identity and narrative genre

analysis of the song sample, and the secondary phase, in which I have interviewed three members[5] from Kardeş Türküler and Bajar to further elaborate these two groups' approaches to the construction of Kurdish identity and the musicking of Turkish–Kurdish reconciliation. In Chapter 5, I present the methodology of this thesis in more detail, followed by a discussion of the history and dynamics of the Turkish–Kurdish conflict and the mission and activities of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar in the midst of this conflict. In Chapter 6, I present the findings from my analysis of the song sample, discussing various trends in the themes of Kurdish experience narrated within the songs. I then move to a deeper discussion of both the collective axiology and narrative genre of each song, and through a comparison of both, discover findings that suggest that it is possible to narrate in both conflict escalatory genres (melodrama, romance) and in conflict de-escalatory genres (tragedy, redemption) while still moving away from denigration of the outgroup toward more generative intergroup relations. I conclude this study in Chapter 7 with a discussion of the implications of these findings for both scholars and practitioners of conflict transformation, including musicians working in informal but critical ways to create spaces in which reconciliation can resound.

[5] During this phase of data collection, I engaged in one-on-one virtual interviews with the following musicians: Cansun Küçüktürk (current member of Bajar) on October 8, 2020; Vedat Yıldırım (founding and current member of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar) on October 9, 2020; and Selda Öztürk (founding and current member of Kardeş Türküler) on October 21, 2020.

CHAPTER TWO: SOCIAL IDENTITY AND CONFLICT DYNAMICS

You are wheat, the one who grinds it
You are food, you are life
Don't leave anyone without faith
Give everyone women and life
– "Mîrkut," as interpreted by Kardeş Türküler and Bajar[6]

In the field of peace and conflict studies, social identity approaches are drawn from a variety of disciplines, including sociology, social psychology, political science, international relations, philosophy, anthropology, and cultural and area studies. As this thesis will explore further in Chapter 3, there is also a growing body of work that engages with social identity at its intersection with narrative studies, elucidating identification processes not just as a composite of the content of narratives but also as a function of the way such narratives are told.

The incorporation of social identity into the study of conflict and conflict transformation takes place at a variety of nodes of tension and synergy, including competing views of what drives conflict, the push and pull between individual and collective identities, the interplay between multiple types of social identity (such as ethnic, religious, and national), the question of what functions social identity plays for its holders, and the very much ongoing debate around how social identity interrelates with

[6] This song was originally performed by Şivan Perwer, a Kurdish musician from Turkey who has made much of his music in exile.

conflict—and how identity-related conflict dynamics can be managed, resolved, and transformed.

The importance of focusing on social identity in conflict and conflict transformation arrives from the limitations of purely interest-based or resource-based views of drivers of civil and social conflict. The interest-based approach sees conflict as primarily the function of competing interests between (presumably) rational actors (Morgenthau, 1948/2006), while the resource-based approach sees conflict as primarily a function of economic variables (Collier, 2007).

Hintz (2018) argues that rationalist approaches rooted in realism are limited in their ability to account for "the ontological and emotional importance of identities and the actor-specific interests they generate" (p. 16). Interests don't arise apropos of nothing, and individuals don't make sense of their interests purely from a standpoint of reason. Economic-related approaches are also challenged by social identity theories, in that the former also fails to account for the reasons why economic inequalities and scarcities so often follow patterns based on social identities. As Inman and Peacock argue (2007), the logical conclusion of such an approach rests on the idea that "if resources are just distributed justly, ethnic tensions will subside and the threat of civil war will decrease" (p. 210). However, as will become clear in this chapter, social identity approaches are needed to understand why resources are not being distributed justly in the first place.

The limitations of the above two approaches open space for a constructionist approach to social identity, one that focuses on identity not as a biological fact but as a social fact. Studies based in a constructionist approach to social identity occasionally take

discreet identities as the unit of study, but a different approach is to instead study the process of identification—to be attuned to the various ways through which an individual ascribes to, casts aside, or otherwise relates to various social identities. Such identification processes take place in a complex system in which identity is constructed at multiple levels, e.g., the individual, the social, and the national (Korostelina, 2007). Individuals construct their own personal identities by ascribing to a combination of identities across these levels, but while they may follow this identification process "actively and independently," they do not do so without being influenced by a system of social identities that is "determined by culture and social reality" (Korostelina, 2007, p. 18). Such processes draw not just on cognitive processes but affective and evaluative processes as well. In brief, an individual's social identity does not start or end at simply deciding that they belong to a certain social categorization, but arises instead out of a social, intellectual, and embodied experience of learning, internalizing, understanding, and eventually taking on what they believe to be the characteristics, values, interests, and norms of a specific social identity.

Social identities derive from social groups that are "organized entities with shared goals, histories and ideas about the future" (Korostelina, 2007, p. 129). One cannot understand how humans interact with, contribute to, and generally live within the social structures that shape their interests and their ability to achieve their economic and political goals without understanding social identity and how it links individuals to these structures (Korostelina, 2007).

A constructionist approach to social identity allows researchers and practitioners alike to account for identities as entities that can be experienced as durable, social fact while also being changeable and adjustable across both place and time. Social identities can be both surprisingly fluid and stubbornly constant. They have "substantive qualities" that "must be grasped in their particulars," and yet the ways in which they serve as a driver of conflict play out in observable patterns (Inman & Peacock, 2007, p. 229). A better understanding of such patterns is even more urgent in the present, as "globalization throws identities into unavoidable contact" (p. 229).

The rest of this chapter will elucidate the process of social identification and the components on which it draws, with an eye to addressing how these processes are related to both conflict and its constructive transformation.

Social Identification Processes and Components

Jussim, Ashmore, and Wilder cite Henri Tajfel's (1981) work in describing social identity as corresponding to the components of an identity that an individual derives from attachment to a social group and from ascribing value and significance to that membership (2001, p. 6). This identification process allows an individual to see themself not just as an "I" but as part of a "we." During this process, an individual will associate positive feelings with their relationship to the social identity in question, and such positive feelings will interlink with the individual's "acceptance of values, beliefs, attitudes, and worldviews" associated with that identity (Korostelina, 2007, p. 18). An individual will have varying degrees of control over certain aspects of this identification process but will also be constrained (or guided) by frameworks set out by history and

culture. The end result of this identification process, replicated over and over again across a collectivity, is a "feeling and understanding of 'we-ness'" (Korostelina, 2007, p. 19) that forms the basis of a social identity.

Inman and Peacock (2007) call social identity a "capacity for associating" (p. 218), and indeed, identification processes rest on the ability of individuals to associate themselves with groups by associating with each other. Thus, interaction between humans—the kind that makes and breaks relationships—is key to any identification process. Tilly (2005) describes humans as constantly connecting with each other,

> renegotiating who they are, adjusting the boundaries they occupy, modifying their actions in rapid response to other people's reactions, selecting among and altering available scripts, improvising new formats of joint action, speaking sentences no one has ever uttered before, yet responding predictably to their locations within webs of social ties they themselves cannot map in detail. (p. 59)

This fact of human behavior anchors the relational aspect of social identities, which according to Tilly (2005) are made up of "boundary, cross-boundary relations, within-boundary relations, and stories" (p. 8). These relational and culturally-informed processes of social identification are also impacted temporally, with identities evolving and shifting not just across the seasons of life but also in response to individual and relational experiences of specific events (Inman & Peacock, 2007).

Understanding the relational component of social identity allows us to envision the lived experience of social identity. It plays out in friendships, in romantic relationships, and in family bonds, where as many identities exist for a person as the social boundaries to which they ascribe meaning at any given moment. Boundaries are also variable. Some are like lines in the sand, observable and yet easily erased, redefined, and crossed. Others might be walls of various heights and composition, some easily scalable or easily torn down, while others are less so. And of course, while the image of a wall might feel solid in a menacing sort of way, not all walls are meant to be foreboding. Some have gates that can be passed through—though who is allowed to do the passing is often a function of power and prejudice. A chain-link fence with an imposing "PRIVATE PROPERTY: KEEP OUT" sign communicates a much different message than a wooden fence across which two neighbors can chat. Social identities function in much the same way. Their boundaries both include and exclude, and the degree to which they do so, and the manner through which they are enforced, are indicative of whether potential destructive or violent conflict might arise between bounded groups (Brewer, 2001).

The relational aspect of social identity involves not just interaction but also comparison. Korostelina (2007) describes social identity as "a dialectic between similarity and difference" (p. 16), positing that the drawing of boundaries between social identities is done based not just on who we are but also who we are not. Thus, social identities take on the construct of 'ingroup' and 'outgroup,' with each group defining the other through both internal evaluations of its own characteristics, values, and interests and an effort to distinguish itself from other groups. Brewer (2001), however, argues that

ingroups can arise "independently of attitudes toward outgroups" (p. 17), describing the former as "bounded communities of mutual trust and obligation that delimit mutual interdependence and cooperation" (p. 29).

The relational aspect of this definition allows us to move beyond an understanding of any particular social identity as composed of fixed, discreet, easily described attributes. Certainly, social identity draws on various wells of inspiration: cultural symbols and sites, such as flags, religious sites, monuments, and memorials (Ross, 2007); different types of expression and practices, such as language, artistic traditions, foodways, and educational approaches (Ross, 2007; Korostelina, 2007); history, territory, and kinship (Brown, 2007); and norms and values (Ashmore, Jussim, Wilder, & Heppen, 2001; Korostelina, 2007). These building blocks can be arranged into different types of social identity, for example, ethnic, religious, national, political, and civic. However, it is not a specific flag that makes a social identity, or a specific practice, or even a historical or territorial connection, but rather the meaning that individuals and groups ascribe to these elements, which is generated relationally within and across group boundaries.

Take, for example, the song "Mîrkut," which has been adapted by both Kardeş Turkuler and Bajar, and which is included in the song sample of this study.[7] Through its lyrics, the song links Kurdish (or at the least, Kurmancî-speaking) identity with themes of labor and hard work. "You are wheat, the one who grinds it / You are food, you are life" the narrator sings. The song's lyrics drum up images of agrarian life—the threshing of

[7] The themes of this song will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

wheat, work in the fields—as somehow indicative of an experience of Kurdishness. And yet, the strength of that connection—indeed, the extent to which it is accepted as an experience of Kurdishness at all—relies on the meaning-making done by individuals and communities in relation to the song. This meaning-making is itself informed by the individuals' relationships to their own lived experiences and to their communities.

There is also significant *within* group debate as to the components that make up certain identities (Ross, 2007), and certain components can be ascribed from *outside* just as readily as from within. As such, social identities are not (inherently) monoliths, and they are not static, though they are often durable. According to Korostelina (2007), "an individual's emerging social identity can be maintained, changed, or reconceptualized in the process of social interaction. The history and culture of a society determine social identity; however, people with specific identities are active builders and developers of history and culture" (p. 19). There are as many permutations of a specific social identity—ethnic, religious, national, or otherwise—as there are individuals who attach meaning to that identity, and they attach meaning through an evaluation of any number of building blocks rooted in culture, history, language, belief systems, and other well-springs of inspiration. It is possible to map these sources of inspiration, but they will always be drawn on in different ways by different individuals and by different sub-communities within a broader social group.

This does not mean that social identity can easily be created, shifted, or done away with on a whim. As Eriksen (2001) writes, "[n]othing comes out of nothing" (p. 50), and if an identity is to be compelling enough to be both durable and attractive to its

potential members, it must especially be "embedded in personal experiences" (p. 50). Studies of social identity can often lose sight of the personal, everyday experiences that help people make sense of their constellation of social identities. This is because while each person has their own unique self-concept based on the ways they differentiate themselves from other individuals (Korostelina, 2007), people also live within a network of different social identities, and it can be difficult to isolate the individual's impact on the network and the network's impact on the individual.

Nevertheless, each individual's experience of social identity is inherently personal, with different identities meaning different things at different points across a lifetime. Each social identity can be experienced across the following three dimensions: salience, when a specific social identity is seen by the individual as the most important identity that they hold; actuality, when an identity is perceived as defining and pertinent to an individual, either as a constant over time or in specific situations when the identity is compared to another (usually contrasting) identity; and valence, which corresponds to the "positive or negative connotations" ascribed to an identity, meaning that an identity will either have positive or negative valence for the one who holds it (Korostelina, 2007, pp. 19–20).

Social identity theorists are in general agreement that establishing attachment to any social identity—and thus, being part of a social group—requires relinquishment to some degree of one's own self-concept (Brewer, 2001; Korostelina, 2007). Thus, for individuals to relinquish self-concept, or otherwise allow it to be subsumed into a larger

group concept, implies that social identities provide various functions that individuals cannot easily or satisfactorily achieve outside of the web of social identity.[8]

Functions of Social Identity

The core function of social identity is considered to be its ability to provide positive self-esteem through positive distinctiveness (Korostelina, 2007; Hintz, 2018; they draw on the work of Tajfel, 1978, 1981). Korostelina (2007) notes that this need for the bolstering of positive self-concept is especially true for social groups in situations of low status. High self-esteem through social identity can be achieved in two ways: through an internal comparison among group members that allows for a sense of pride to flow from appreciating the beliefs, values, history, and achievements of one's own group; and/or through comparison with outgroups. The latter method of achieving a positive self-concept opens the door to potentially destructive conflict dynamics between ingroup and outgroup, as such comparison often entails a sense of superiority on the part of the ingroup that, when taken to its extreme, can lead to patterns of derogation and dehumanization that justify oppression of, or violence against, the outgroup (Korostelina, 2007).

While self-esteem through group esteem is considered the primary function of social identity by many theorists, there are other reasons that individuals choose to attach to certain identities. Social identities can provide a desirable social status, increase the possibility of personal safety, offer group support and protection, provide recognition of

[8] It is worth noting here that being born into, and living within, human society necessitates some degree of participation within social networks (whether willing or not, preferred or not), and thus, it is nearly impossible to live outside the web of social identity.

the ingroup as distinct, and serve as sources of comfort and familiarity (Korostelina, 2007). Brewer (2001) argues that self-esteem alone cannot account for "the strength of ingroup identification" and, through her "optimal distinctiveness theory," posits that inclusion into "large, impersonal social collectives" and differentiation (of self from others) provide additional motives for social identification (p. 21). What all of the above points to is a sense that social identity helps individuals achieve meaning through belonging. There is another function of social identity, however, that remains less explored in the literature: the provision of meaning through purpose.

The idea of purpose as a function of social identity is not incorporated as robustly into the social identity literature as the theme of esteem, though elements of purpose can be found lingering under the surface of discussions regarding interests, values, goals, and norms. Hintz (2018) sees "social purpose," which she describes as "group interests, the goals that the in-group believes it should achieve" (p. 22), as one of the four components of the national identity proposals at the heart of her inside-out theory of identity contestation. However, a further discussion of purpose and social identity requires treating purpose less as something constitutive of social identity and more as a motivation behind individual attachment to social groups, and as a source of the meaning made from such an attachment.

This approach hews closer to the arguments of Inman and Peacock (2007). Drawing on the work of Charles Taylor (1989), they posit that social identification processes include an element of moral orientation, described as "comprising duties to others, spiritual disciplines, and notions of what constitutes a good life" (Inman &

Peacock, 2007, p. 208). They note that moral orientation is underappreciated in studies of social identity, and ethnic and sectarian identity in particular. They argue that an essential component of being human is the development of a moral framework, encompassing an orientation toward good and decisions of where the person stands or sits on issues of moral bearing. These frameworks include not only beliefs but also practices. Inman and Peacock (2007) argue that such beliefs and practices can themselves be shared as part of social identity, helping to draw, shift, or erase the boundaries of a given social group.

It is relatively easy to understand how moral frameworks relate to religious identities, as beliefs and practices are in many ways the primary (though not the *only*) signifiers of who is considered able to belong to a faith community. It is slightly harder to identify how moral frameworks factor into ethnic, national, and civic identities, but such frameworks could be identified in the values the groups hold and the practices the group identifies as holding meaning. One can imagine, for example, specific practices being subsumed into the moral framework of European American communities not just because the practices are perceived as being European American, and not just because the practices are perceived as bringing about moral good, but because such practices are perceived as being distinct *European American* ways of bringing about moral good. Any social identity—ethnic, religious, national, civic, and otherwise—can be substituted here.

This attention to moral frameworks within the context of social identity suggests that individuals find meaning in social identities not just because they find *belonging* through similarity and *esteem* through distinctiveness but also *purpose* through a

framework for how to "do well while doing good," as the saying goes. This discussion of purpose will be revisited in Chapter 3.

Types of Identity: Ethnic, Religious, and National

Before advancing to a discussion of social identity and conflict dynamics, it is important to understand three types of social identities in particular—ethnic, religious, and national—as these three identities are the most easily observable core of the Turkish–Kurdish conflict as seen from a social identity perspective, which will become apparent in Chapter 5. While elements of these three identities overlap, there are features distinct enough in relation to all three to allow for some conceptual differentiation.

One way of distinguishing between these three types is to consider the ways in which they draw on different building blocks of social identification. Ethnic identities, for example, are often distinguished as being predicated upon a sense of shared kinship and ancestry (both rooted in traceable reality and constructed), while religious identities draw more heavily on shared beliefs, values, and practices indicative of a more general 'cultural sameness' (Thornton, 2007a, p. 3). This isn't to say that ethnic identities can't incorporate norms and practices (which Erisken [2001] identifies as also being signifiers of culture), nor that religious identities can't incorporate elements of kinship and ancestry (as Inman and Peacock [2007] note with relation to Jewish identity). What's more, elements that might initially seem to signify one type of identity can become the building blocks of another, as Brown (2007) argues with regard to ethnicity's potential incorporation of religion as one of the attributes that serve "as symbolic markers for bounded communities of assumed common ancestry" that carry "moral significance" (p.

17). This demonstrates the complexity of social identity boundaries in lived experience and performance. It is reductive to assume that the aspects of social identity that an individual ascribes meaning to can always be neatly parsed out into different bounded categories. Human life is dynamic, and as such, so too is the human experience of identity.

Nevertheless, much as an individual will have identities that loom larger for them than others, certain types of social identity can be argued to have features that make them more likely to carry considerable influence within society. For Inman and Peacock (2007), an ethnic identity is nonhegemonic. Once hegemonic, it becomes a nation. Religious identities, however, *are* hegemonic, because they denote sects that have been "successful" (p. 205).[9] The concept of hegemony, in this case, implies a sense that such identities become so commonsensical to their members, so widespread and institutionalized, that they allow their members to see themselves less in terms of "ethnic" and "sectarian" identity, which are regarded as more marginal and less legitimate, even in the academic literature, which Inman and Peacock (2007) argue can sometimes approach ethnic and sectarian identities with a pejorative tone.

A feature of hegemony in the context of social identity is the ability to impose identities on individuals and groups regardless of whether they would elect to attach themselves to such identities. Such hegemony is part and parcel of the nation-state of Westphalian origin, allowing it to delineate the boundaries of national identity regardless

[9] Though Inman and Peacock do not explicitly define what they mean by an identity being "successful," this characterization could be taken to mean that such hegemonic identities have gained the power and influence by which they can be considered as being able to define both their own group's identities and the identities of others with widely perceived legitimacy.

of the lived experiences, values, and wishes of its citizens. Korostelina (2007) identifies three permutations of national identity: ethnic, in which the nation "is built around a core ethnic community into which ethnic minorities should assimilate" (p. 186); multicultural, in which the nation grants "equal rights for all ethnic groups" while providing "elements of autonomy and self-governance" (p. 186); and civic, in which "citizenship" is seen "as a contract between the people and the state concerning both rights and obligations," with citizens living within a "distinctive nonethnic civic culture" (pp. 186–187). Brown (2007) replaces the ethnic concept with "ethnocultural" and underlines that such categories "denote differing ideals of national identity rather than different types of nation-state" (p. 18).

While national identities might be hegemonic, they oscillate into, through, and out of political power, and thus, within a nation-state there are any number of identity proposals at play (Hintz, 2018). These proposals jostle for primacy in both the political and social spheres, sometimes taking the fight to the international stage (through diplomacy, media, cultural production, and coalition-building) to vie for the right "to define identity for a particular social group" (p. 18) within the bounds of the nation.

In striving to understand national identity, it is important to note that citizens and residents of a nation can hold different understandings of national identity and orient these understandings toward different purposes, drawing on ethnic, multicultural, or civic approaches to specific policy arenas (Brown, 2007). This point underlines a common note of caution when dealing with social identity of all types, including ethnic, religious, and national: it is tempting to conceive of identities as neatly contained within their

boundaries. However, as has already been discussed, individuals hold multiple social identities at once—and sometimes, multiple *salient* social identities at once (Korostelina, 2007)—and this fact rarely makes the embodied experience of social identity as neat and demarcated as it might occasionally look when relationships and conflicts dynamics are described in terms of discreet, bounded identities.

A further discussion of hegemony, particularly in the context of national identity, allows for the introduction of an element that has not yet been explicitly mentioned, but which is central to the dynamics of social identity: power. As has already been discussed, nation-states—and more specifically, those groups within nation states that hold political and representational power at any given point—occupy a unique position to define outgroups in their own terms and have those definitions carry weight. To illustrate, Thornton (2007a) observed that ethnic and sectarian identities emerge primarily as a function of "elective systems of personal affiliation," but can also be bounded by "highly politicized stereotypes or labels" that are "coercively imposed on individuals and groups who might [seek] to define themselves rather differently, if given the power to do so" (p. 4). Social groups defined in such a way often push back against such boundaries, engaging in expressions and practices (as allowed by the policies and structure of the nation-state, or even at the risk of incurring punishment from the nation-state) in order to reassert their own conceptualizations of themselves, as Peacock and Soh (2007) found in their study of Singapore's bounded approach to ethnicity and religion, and in particular, to Muslim and Malay identities.

An understanding of power in this context is central to the debate over the importance of resisting the marginalization of social identity—and ethnic and sectarian identity in particular—by arguing that it is rooted in irrationality (Inman & Peacock, 2007). Such marginalization and denigration often reifies the power of hegemonic identities, not just national and religious identities but also those identities that have generally been afforded greater legitimacy in the academy, identities that are often constructed around Western, Anglo-Saxon, Christian, and cishet experiences and traditions (Atay, 2018). It is important to remember that while the nation-state can be positioned as "the unfortunate target of divisive and secessionist ethnic and sectarian conflict," nation-states, in their ability to impose identities on some and circumscribe the expression of others, cannot be absolved of their responsibility for fomenting conflict and social violence (Thornton, 2007b, p. 185).

The hegemonic wielding of identity can lead not just to physical violence, but to inequality, and in particular, what Tilly (2005) dubs "durable inequality"—inequalities "that last from one social interaction to the next, with special attention to those that persist over whole careers, lifetimes, and organizational histories" (p. 71). These inequalities result when "people who hold power in reward- and punishment-allocating organizations solve pressing organizational problems by means of categorical distinctions" (p. 72). The result is a system that institutionalizes social boundaries that include and exclude others in ways that result in unequal experiences and outcomes for individuals based on social categorization. These systems become difficult to dismantle because different parties, some of which can themselves be "victims of exploitation,"

acquire “stakes” in their maintenance (p. 72). When envisioning examples of such systems, it is easy to bring to mind discrimination rooted in anti-Black racism or the criminalization of a language that places different ethnic or cultural groups at economic or educational disadvantage; however, systems that exclude or denigrate individuals on the basis of gender expression, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or disability also apply here.

What Tilly’s (2005) treatment of durable inequality does, beyond elucidating the dynamics of relationship and boundary, is to return an element of agency to the discussion of systems. When approaching issues of systemic conflict, of which durable inequality is one type, it can be easy to lose sight of the people within the abstraction of the system. While elaboration of the systemic features of conflict allows analysts and practitioners alike to pay due attention to the complexities of conflicts and the fact that there are rarely easily achievable answers to their resolution, one can imagine such approaches also being used to minimize the roles that individuals play in conflict and conflict transformation—or even absolve individuals of responsibility entirely. Tilly’s analysis of durable inequality allows for an understanding of the complexities of the system without failing to ascribe agency to individuals within the system—and in particular, individuals with power—and hold them accountable for their role in developing and maintaining the system.

Social identity theory as a whole has elements of this understanding at its core. It posits social identity as a function of a complex web of relations that operate within a system of identification to allow individuals to consciously or subconsciously develop

attachments to specific social groups. Through one reading of this systemic approach to social identity, it can be tempting to see identity as a composite of material and immaterial objects—characteristics, cultural expressions, beliefs, values, practices, norms. But in fact, a social identity is a composite of the people who ascribe meaning to it, drawing on any number of reasons, relationships, and experiences to do so. Placing the individual back at the center of social identity while maintaining a careful consideration of the ways that systems of identification work on and through individuals opens up greater possibilities for understanding how social identity is interrelated with conflict—and how it is an essential component of conflict transformation.

Social Identity and Conflict

While Thornton (2007a) argues that "there is no single, simple, modular connection between identity and violence" (p. 10), there are a number of ways of approaching the relationship between social identity and conflict that can begin to illuminate patterns in the role that identity plays not just in conflict but also in its constructive transformation. Within social identity approaches to conflict transformation, the content of identities—the matter from which identities are made, such as traditions, history, values, beliefs, norms, etc.—are secondary to the nuances of the process of identification and how individuals use the content of social identity to understand their self-concept and relate to each other.

Social identity theorists of conflict and conflict transformation are careful to underline that social identities do not cause conflict but rather serve as a medium through which individuals make sense of and carry out interest-based and instrumental conflicts

(Ross, 2007; Korostelina, 2007). A corollary to this attribute of social identity's relationship to conflict is understanding that attending to social identity in and of itself cannot resolve conflict without addressing the interest-based and instrumental drivers of conflict. Nevertheless, social identity is often a crucial component of such conflicts, impacting "the nature of political or economic conflict in particular ways" and "making [conflict] protracted and deep-rooted" (Korostelina, 2007, p. 147), meaning that effective conflict transformation approaches must take social identity into account.

Social identity-related conflicts are often described as 'us-vs.-them,' but there are a number of things that need to happen for intergroup dynamics to become conflictual to a degree that engenders destructive conflict. The concepts of salience, actuality, and valence become central to understanding this dynamic. Actuality is often activated in comparison to a group that is in some way characterized as fundamentally different. Korostelina (2007) provides the example of an individual's ethnic identity being activated when interacting with individuals from a different ethnic group. In certain cases, the group that an individual identifies with—the ingroup—may have positive valence for that individual, and the contrasting group—the outgroup—may have negative valence. This feeds into an 'us-vs.-them' lens that can lead to feelings of enmity, distrust, and superiority. The actuality of the identities of individuals who find themselves in conflict then becomes stronger.

Thus, an 'us-vs.-them' experience of social identity requires an element of comparison—according to social identity theories, ingroups cannot enter into conflict with outgroups without carrying out some sort of evaluation that measures their

attributes, beliefs, practices, etc., against those of the outgroup. As has already been discussed, Brewer (2001) argues an ingroup's conception and evaluation of its own identity does not require comparison with the outgroup. Yet, even without such comparison, ingroups often fail to extend their positive evaluation across boundaries to outgroups, treating them instead with a "differential indifference"—rather than "positive regard, empathy, and cooperation"—thats itself can eventually become ground for "ingroup discrimination" (p. 22–23).

Yet, even so, ingroup love, according to Brewer, does not necessitate outgroup hate. Along the same vein, according to Korostelina (2007), **comparison** does not necessarily lead to an 'us-vs.-them' paradigm, but rather initiates a 'We–They' perception that evolves into a more conflictual pairing only once a dynamic of competition is introduced to the relationship. Perceived conflicts of interest between communities can serve as fertile ground for **competition** to emerge and fester in potentially destructive ways. When identities take on ideological dimensions in relation to those interests, competition becomes **confrontation**. Ingroup valorization and perceptions of the outgroup take on increasingly binary language of good and evil, sacred and profane. Confrontation readies the field for **counteraction rooted in collective axiology and moral dimensions,** leaving open possibilities for discrimination, violence, and genocide (p. 147).

Korostelina's Four C Model provides a neat continuum upon which to visualize the development of identity-related conflicts. Understanding how ingroups and outgroups progress along this model requires understanding not just the content of the identities in

question, though such particulars are informative, but also the various constellations of meaning that members of social groups ascribe to their shared identities. According to Korostelina (2007, pp. 74–75), these meanings concern both the content of social identity and the character of intergroup relations, and she identifies eight categories of meaning that help illuminate how groups move into and through conflict. According to this model, social groups can draw meaning from: (1) ingroup traditions and values (understood here as signifying group culture); (2) ingroup language; (3) characteristics of ingroup members; (4) ingroup history; (5) ingroup ideology; (6) interrelations with outgroups; (7) reverberated identity (elements of ingroup identity that are understood in comparison with outgroups); and (8) outgroup image (evaluations of the outgroup's identity, often considered in terms of attitudes, characteristics, behaviors, practices, values, and beliefs).

While social groups usually ascribe meaning to all eight of the above categories—connoting a "multimodal" approach to meaning—Korostelina argues that social groups will also naturally privilege some areas over others. Certain combinations of privileged areas indicate that a social group can occupy various modes of meaning. She identifies four modes that carry the distinction of being multimodal: (1) *depictive*, in which ingroup traditions and values, characteristics of ingroup members, and reverberated identity are prevalent; (2) *ideological*, in which ingroup ideology and interrelations with outgroups are prevalent; (3) *historical*, in which ingroup history and interrelations with outgroups are prevalent; and (4) *relative*, in which reverberated identity, outgroup image, and interrelations with outgroups are prevalent (Korostelina, 2007, p. 75).

There is a fifth mode of meaning, *dominant*, that indicates that a social group has entered into a state of singular meaning, one in which threat narratives with relation to the outgroup become the defining carrier of meaning (Korostelina, 2007, p. 76). In such a mode, which can be triggered by conflict and violence and in turn engender further destructive beliefs and behaviors, individuals' other salient and actual identities will become subsumed by the dominant identity, to the extent that individual self-concept can be weakened or obscured within the boundaries of the ingroup. Korostelina (2007) refers to this latter aspect as a function of ingroup primacy, in which the goals, interests, and values of the ingroup completely overtake those of its individual members, thus lowering the barriers of individual members to active participation in conflict. Such dominant identities, which draw primarily on interrelations with outgroups and negative outgroup images, are considered to be mobilized, meaning that they can become the reasoning through which individuals engage in conflict with outgroups that are perceived to pose a threat (Korostelina, 2007).

Kelman (2001) also addresses this aspect of social identification in relation to conflict, arguing that "[i]dentities that rest on negation of the other also take on a *monolithic* character; that is, all dimensions of the group's identity—such as ethnicity, religion, and language—tend to be viewed as highly correlated" (p. 193, italics his). When such monolithic identities are at play—as opposed to "more multimodal lines of thinking" (p. 193)—the content and boundaries that make up the identity of a social group are perceived to be exceptionally rigid and clear-cut, with little room for cross-

cutting identities and multiple permutations of what it means to embody the monolithic identity in question.

It is important to note that multimodal approaches to identity—accounting for when an individual ascribes different meanings to specific social identities while possessing multiple social identities of relatively similar importance—do not preclude participation in conflictual intergroup dynamics. However, it is the presence of a dominant, monolithic identity that signifies the potential for particularly disruptive conflict. One way of understanding that a dominant, monolithic social identity is at play is through the presence of perceptions of threat from the outgroup and the interweaving of such perceptions not just into the behavior of the ingroup's members but also into the very fabric of its identity.

Dynamics of Threat in Intergroup Relations

Threats are different from danger in that, while both signify occurring or impending harm, a threat implies that there is intention behind the impending harm—and thus, an agentic source of that harm (Korostelina, 2007). According to Ashmore et al. (2001), when faced with a perceived threat, members of a social group will appraise whether such threat is emanating from an outgroup (and from *which* outgroup). If a sufficiently threatening outgroup is found, the ingroup "may cope with the appraised threat destructively by harming that group and its members" (Ashmore et al., p. 229). Violence is not the logical conclusion of a perceived threat, though presence of a perception of threat should serve as an indicator that more destructive or protracted forms of conflict are possible between ingroup and outgroup.

Perceived threats can be physical or psychological in nature, and they are "often subjective and symbolic" (Brewer, 2001, p. 28). The physical and symbolic nature of threats of harm mean that the fear that arises within the group that perceives itself as threatened can be as much about loss of a way of life as it is about physical harm to self and kin. In fact, Brewer (2001) notes that actions perceived as precipitating a "loss of distinctiveness" (p. 33) can themselves constitute a threat, especially for "individuals who are exclusively vested in a single group identity" (p. 34). Threats can be verbal or non-verbal (Harré, 2006), but regardless of the form they take, they can become mobilizing for the threatened party when the ingroup is able to ascribe hostility to the outgroup from which the threat is perceived to emanate.

Intention is a solid word, and it may seem easy to ascertain, but it is precisely at this level of threat that ingroup–outgroup dynamics become particularly complicated, with potentially disastrous implications for the groups entangled in conflict. According to Korostelina (2007), when an ingroup and outgroup are in circumstances of perceived competition, "all actions of an outgroup are interpreted in terms of their harmful and aggressive motivation and goals, and possible threat to an ingroup" (p. 139). Thus, while there are certainly circumstances in which the threat a group faces *is* actual and tangible, hostility and intention to harm can all be perceived by an ingroup merely because of the existence of a particular outgroup.

Thus, the existence of outgroup threat—real or perceived—further strengthens the actuality of the ingroup's identity, paving the way for the identity to take on a salience that, should negative valence continue to be ascribed to the outgroup, could further

entrench the conflict. For Rothbart and Korostelina (2006b), threat narratives in particular shape identities and intergroup relations in a way that can lead to violent conflict. Specifically, these narratives allow those within an ingroup to target an outgroup with which it is in conflict for "collective denigration," allowing the identity of said outgroup to be essentialized as the "enemy" (pp. 29–30).

These threat narratives allow instances of violence to be taken from the individual to the local, and from the local to the national and global. Among survivors and victims of this kind of mass violence, often found in protracted conflicts, a story is formed "about the Other that conveys the threat from private episodes confronting individuals to a shared danger. The evolving public discourse makes sense of the violence by conveying the 'truth' about the perpetrators" (Rothbart and Korostelina, 2006b, p. 32). These stories then allow parties to a conflict to "legitimize their struggle through stories of 'real' differences among nations, ethnic groups, or races" (p. 46).

Thus, while understanding the relationship of specific social identities to specific conflicts certainly requires an understanding of the particulars of the groups and contexts in question, as both Thornton (2007a) and Inman and Peacock (2007) argue, there are a number of generalizations to be drawn about how social groups become ingroups and outgroups locked in conflict. A dynamic of comparison across group boundary is required, specifically in such a way that the ingroup is valorized as superior to the outgroup. The sharper the distinction from the outgroup and the more negative the evaluation of the outgroup, the stronger the relationship with destructive and potentially violent and protracted conflict. As monolithic understandings of intergroup relations

come to dominate, so too do monolithic understandings of the shape of the identity within the groups, closing off space for multimodal expressions of identity among group members.

To enable an evaluation of social identity and its relation to the Turkish–Kurdish conflict in my song samples, I have incorporated a framework of outgroup threat with an analysis using two other social identity frameworks, collective axiology and relative deprivation, to inform my analysis. These frameworks will allow me to better focus my analysis in such a way as to pull at threads of insight with relation to social identity and conflict.

Collective Axiology

Rothbart and Korostelina (2006b) have developed a model of axiological difference to provide an understanding of the collective axiology of social groups and its relationship with destructive and violent conflict. They define collective axiology as "a system of value-commitments that offers moral guidance in relations with those within, and outside of, the group" (p. 49). Each group's collective axiology—made up of its collective generality, or how it characterizes the Other, and its axiological balance, or how it attributes virtues and vices to groups—"provides a sense of life and world, serves as criteria for understanding actions and events, and regulates in-group behaviors" (p. 49). The model is represented in four quadrants—(1) "[axiologically] Unbalanced/High [collective] Generality; (2) "Unbalanced/Low Generality"; (3) "Balanced/High Generality; and (4) Balanced/Low Generality" (p. 48)—with each quadrant representing varying degrees of an ingroup's moral denigration of an outgroup, combined with

salience of ingroup identity. An axiologically unbalanced group is one that ascribes virtues to the ingroup and vices to the outgroup, while an axiologically balanced group ascribes virtues and vices to both, depending on the situation. A group with high collective generality will see the outgroup as "homogenous, exhibiting unchanging behaviors, committed to long-term fixed beliefs and values, and projecting a wide-ranging, possibly global, scope," whereas a group with low collective generality will see an outgroup "as differentiated, subject to change, manifesting various kinds of behaviors, and relatively limited in scope" (p. 47).

Table 1. Defining Collective Generality and Axiological Balance[10]

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Collective Generality</th><th colspan="2">Axiological Balance</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">How the ingroup categorizes the outgroup</td><td colspan="2">How virtues and vices are attributed to groups</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">HIGH GENERALITY</td><td>homogenous</td><td rowspan="4">UNBALANCED</td><td rowspan="2">monolithic characterization of outgroup identity (focus on vices)</td></tr>
<tr><td>exhibiting unchanging behaviors</td></tr>
<tr><td>committed to long-term fixed beliefs and values</td><td rowspan="2">monolithic characterization of ingroup identity (focus on virtues)</td></tr>
<tr><td>projecting a wide-ranging/global scope</td></tr>
<tr><td>LOW GENERALITY</td><td>differentiated</td><td>BALANCED</td><td>positive characterizations of outgroup</td></tr>
</table>

[10] Source: Rothbart & Korostelina (2006b), pp. 46–49.

	subject to change		negative characterizations of outgroup
	manifesting various kinds of behaviors		positive characterizations of ingroup
	limited in scope		negative characterizations of ingroup

According to this model, protracted conflict is generally indicated in the following permutations of collective axiology: (1) situations of *low* axiological balance and *high* collective generality; and (2) situations of *low* axiological balance and *low* collective generality (Korostelina, 2007). As such, the primary indicator of potential conflict rests fundamentally on whether ingroups have balanced understandings of the virtues and vices they ascribe to themselves and to outgroups. Figure 1 offers a visual representation of the four different permutatios of collective generality and axiological balance, with each permutation amounting to a different type of axiological difference.

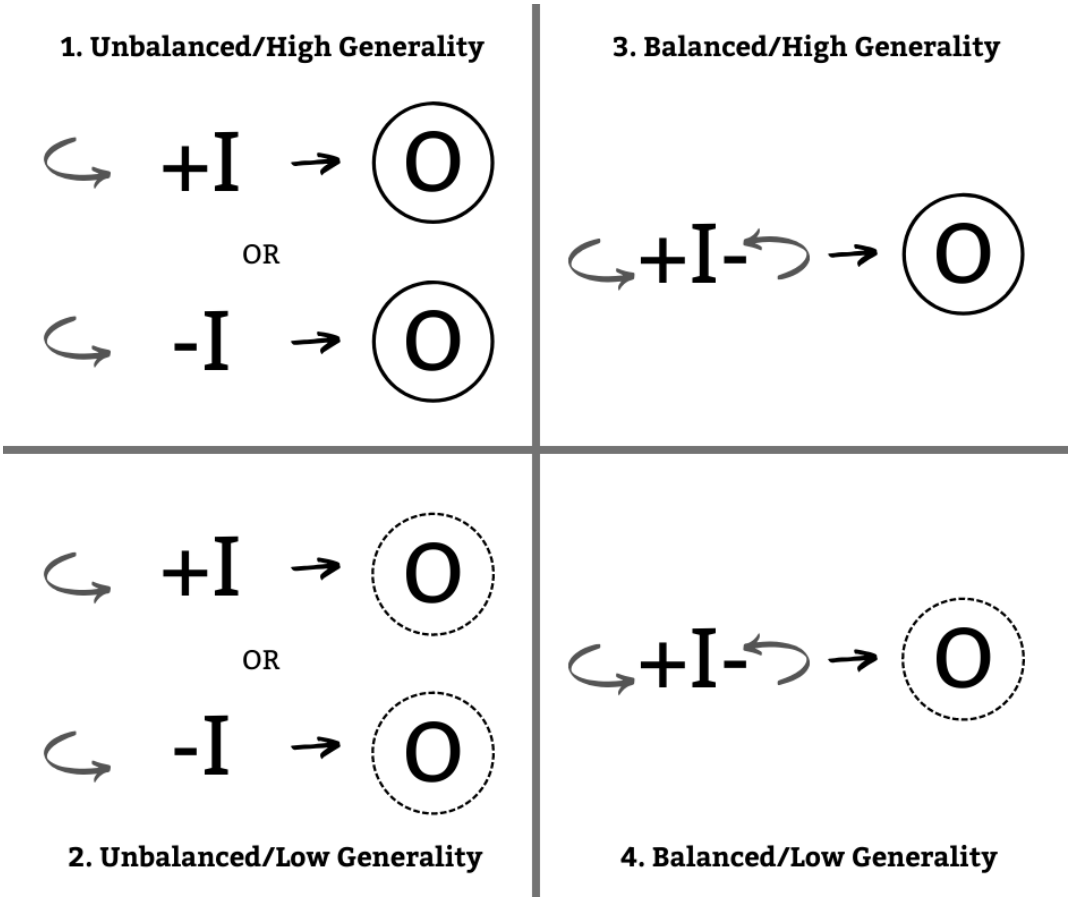

Figure 1. Four Types of Axiological Difference[11]

Analyzing a group's collective axiology can be done primarily through paying attention to three dynamics of axiological difference: mythic narrative, which encompasses narratives containing "shocking images, harrowing anecdotes, and accounts of violence" that demonize the Other while valorizing the ingroup (Rothbart &

[11] +I represents positive group identity, while -I represents negative group identity. The symbol → signifies a projection of characteristics to O, the outgroup. A circle with a solid line refers to a high degree of generality, while a circle with a dotted line refers to low degree of generality. Source: Rothbart & Korostelina (2006b), p. 48.

Korostelina, 2006b, pp. 37–38); iconic order, encompassing the veneration and sanctification of story elements, such as events, sites of confrontation or sacrifice, actions of valor, or the heroes themselves (Rothbart & Korostelina, 2006b, p. 39); and normative order, encompassing the setting of models of past and present action and conceptualization of identity to guide future generations of storytellers (group members) "in ways of speaking and thinking about subsequent encounters" (Rothbart & Korostelina, 2006b, pp. 39–40).

A theme of sanctity and inviolability runs throughout the above three dynamics. As such, it is important here to note that sacredness is seen not as holiness, but as something referring "more broadly to anything held as exemplary and mythologically true by the devotees, a thing whose unassailable 'rightness' is essential to that devotee's sense of identity" (Alpher & Rothbart, 2006, p. 256).

Outgroup Threat

If the framework of collective axiology helps to identify when intergroup antagonism is present and elucidate its character, then one needs to obtain a better understanding of how intergroup antagonism is sparked and maintained. Frameworks of outgroup threat and relative deprivation are useful guides here, as they are both rooted in elements of mistrust and negative emotion, which Brewer (2001) argues are necessary for ingroup love to become outgroup hate.

As already discussed, an important feature of outgroup threat to remember when evaluating intergroup dynamics is that the salience of outgroup threat lies in the *perception* of threat. In situations of protracted conflict in particular, the mere existence

or expression of the outgroup can be perceived as a threat to the ingroup. Thus, an outgroup can be perceived as a threat due to experiences of past violence, abuse, or domination and fears of future manifestations of destrictive conflict, but it must be understood that in ingroup–outgroup dynamics, even expressions of different ways of life—language, holidays and celebrations, religious beliefs, etc.—can also be perceived as threatening. Perceptions of outgroup threat also relate cyclically with the furthering of conflict. Outgroup threat can heighten intergoup prejudice, which tills the soil of intergroup mistrust and can in turn facilitate greater opportunities for ingroup attribution of ill intent to outgroups, which serves as the basis for perceptions of outgroup threat.

A crucial insight from the wider study of this threat dynamic is that perceived threats and the hostility they engender can thrive in contexts where groups are in close proximity and contact, as such situations can either lead to competition, or bring it into sharper focus. This feature of intergroup threat dynamics suggests that simply increasing opportunities for different social groups to be in contact or community with each other does not necessarily facilitate constructive intergroup relations on its own (Korostelina, 2007).

In a review of the literature, Korostelina (2007, p. 140) identified a number of contexts in which ingroups may perceive a threat from an outgroup. In all of these contexts, negative intentions and goals are attributed to an outgroup that is perceived to be the source of the threat. These contexts encompass the following:

- differences in citizenship in comparison within the outgroup
- memories of former domination of the outgroup over the ingroup, linked with an

attribution to the outgroup of a desire for revival of domination

- perception of weakness in position when compared with that of the outgroup
- limitation of the socioeconomic opportunities of the ingroup by the outgroup
- existence of political extremism, violence, and nationalism among the outgroup
- change in intergroup relations triggered by such factors as demographic change, economic competition, new territorial claims, the imposition of new barriers to the economic and educational well-being of the ingroup, and intentions to change intergroup positions.

In my song sample, I have drawn on the above categories to identify the existence of potential, perceived outgroup threats, the results of which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Table 2. Contexts of Outgroup Threat

Outgroup Threat (Korostelina, 2007, p. 140) Ingroup perceptions of threat from the outgroup occur in the following contexts:	unequal economic, cultural or political positions in comparison with the outgroup
	differences in citizenship in comparison within the outgroup
	memories of former domination of the outgroup over the ingroup, linked with an attribution to the outgroup of a desire for revival of domination
	perception of weakness in position when compared with that of the outgroup
	limitation of the socioeconomic opportunities of the ingroup by the outgroup
	existence of political extremism, violence, and nationalism among the outgroup

	change in intergroup relations triggered by such factors as demographic change, economic competition, new territorial claims, the imposition of new barriers to the economic and educational well-being of the ingroup, and intentions to change intergroup positions

Relative Deprivation

Elements of proximity, comparison, competition, and negative emotion also tie in closely with the concept of relative deprivation, which Gurr (1971) describes as indicating "actors' perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities" (p. 24). According to Gurr, violent conflict ensues when individuals or groups perceive their desired attainment of select values—from economic and physical well-being to power, status, and respect—as being beyond the reach of their capability to achieve. The 'relative' aspect of this concept derives from the fact that such individuals or groups also assign other individuals or groups with the responsibility for their inability to achieve these values.

In the intergroup context, Korostelina (2007) argues that relative deprivation is more likely to be felt, and to a stronger degree, in relation to an individual's salient social identities. In particular, the presence of feelings of relative deprivation suggests that individuals of the social group who are experiencing this dynamic derive their group identity from an external locus of self-esteem—that is, from comparison with the outgroup—rather than from an internal locus of self-esteem, a dynamic she identifies as

increasing the potential for destructive conflict. She also identifies relative deprivation as one of the vehicles through which social identities gain greater salience by way of increased group solidarity. Thus, the relative is also relational, in that relative deprivation can increase ingroup bonds predicated on negative evaluations of the goals and intent of an outgroup. In more extreme cases, a sense of relative deprivation at the level of competition could lead to confrontation and counteraction, bringing groups squarely into potentially violent conflict.

Just as outgroup threat plays out in different categories of context, relative deprivation can be organized into different experiences of grievance. Through his review of the literature on values, needs, and inequalities, Gurr (1971) identified three broad categories of values that individuals hold and that can lead to a sense of relative deprivation if actual and prospective opportunities for attending to these values are frustrated or blocked. *Power values* encompass **participation values**, which relate to political representation and freedom from barriers to self-determination, and **security values**, which relate to experiences of stability and protection within society. *Welfare values* encompass **economic values**, which refer to economic class and related manifestations of physical well-being, and **self-actualization values**, which relate to the ability to attain skills and levels of enlightenment that improve overall well-being. Finally, *interpersonal values* encompass three sets of values: (1) **status values**, referring to the ability to embody a role by which one is afforded "some level of prestige" (Gurr, 1971, p. 26); (2) **communality values**, relating to the desire for stable and fulfilling relationships and associations with other individuals and groups; and (3) **ideational**

coherence values, referring to "the sense of certainty that derives from shared adherence to beliefs about the nature of society and one's place within it" (p. 26).

Table 3. Categories of Ingroup–Outgroup Relative Deprivation

Relative Deprivation (Gurr, 1971, p. 24–26) Relative deprivation (RD) results when individuals or groups perceive a discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities. These discrepancies are perceived through comparison of the group's or individual's value position(s) across time relative to that of other individuals/groups, and relative to the expectations that an individual/group has for attainment of a value position.	**Welfare Values**	economic values
		self-actualization values
	Power Values	participation values
		security values
	Interpersonal Values	status values
		communality values
		ideational coherence values

While Gurr (1971) does not identify social identity as explicitly falling along the matrix of welfare values, power values, and interpersonal values, it can be argued that many of the values he does explicitly mention—including feelings of belonging, self-esteem, respect, rectitude, power, and status (p. 26)—correspond to the need of individuals and groups to be able to assert salient identities. Using this framework in my

analysis of my song sample, I further illuminate the relationship between relative deprivation and social identity in Chapter 6.

A Social Identity Approach to Conflict Transformation

While social identities are never the cause for a conflict, they are intimately related with how conflicts evolve and become protracted. Social identities are often the vehicles through which individuals ascribe meaning to their positions, interests, and stakes within conflict. Thus, conflict transformation approaches in situations where social identities are mobilized and salient cannot expect to be successful and effective without attending to the deep-seated social identities of the parties within the conflict.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the relationship of social identity to intergroup conflict rests on the interplay of identities that individuals hold and the meanings that they ascribe to them. To briefly remind, Kelman (2001) and Korostelina (2007) both have argued that conflict, particularly of a destructive and protracted nature, is most likely when a social identity becomes dominant (that is, salient above, and often to the detriment of, all other identities) and monolithic (that is, unimodal in meaning, in which the various components of what might otherwise be seen as different identities cohere entirely within one, overbearing identity). Thornton (2007a) identifies this dynamic as the key insight upon which social identity approaches to conflict transformation rest, arguing that "particularly intense conflicts of interest" become protracted because they "pressure individuals with diverse, fluid identities to valorize their loyalty to one interactive community over another," and thus, such conflicts—interest-based and instrumentalized though they may be—cannot be resolved by

“elaborately crafted power-sharing arrangements” unless dominant and monolithic identities become successfully depolarized and re-intertwined (p. 4).

Scholars of social identity offer a number of ideas as to how to carry out this process of depolarization and re-intertwining. Korostelina (2007) argues that one method of de-escalation would be to “form a common, overarching identity” with a view to reducing hostility between groups and shifting focus away from intergroup differences. The content of such an identity will be highly context-specific, but the way to elaborating its particulars lies in “asking questions about the present and future positive developments and the possibilities of collaboration with others” (p. 237). Such work of creating a common identity is neither easy nor simple, and it must be carried out with care. According to Korostelina (2007), for example, such an identity cannot be successful in reducing conflict if ingroup members perceive “danger or threat to their primary identity” from the new, overarching identity. Thus, she emphasizes that such a process of guided identification must rest on “narratives of existing collaboration and situations of successful teamwork” (p. 238).

Such a “common identity” approach to conflict transformation shares many of the same potential pitfalls as much of the conflict studies canon, which is rooted particularly in the tension between so-called ‘interveners’—often assumed to be, though not necessarily, third parties to a conflict—and the core conflict parties. This tension contains within it the delicate considerations that must come into play when navigating a conflict in which one is perceived to be an outsider. Such a position is considered by some to be sufficiently objective as to provide a supposedly ‘neutral’—and, though it often goes

unsaid, 'legitimate'—solution to a conflict, though there are voices within the field that have pushed back against this assumption of outsider 'neutrality,' arguing that so-called outside parties to a conflict[12] bring stakes and perceptions with them that are informed by their own personal experiences, positionality, and identities (Laue, 1987; Inman & Peacock, 2007; Toivanen & Baser, 2019). However, even if neutrality—or at the least, objectivity—can be assumed in a third party's role, there still remains the potential perception that a solution negotiated through the involvement of outside parties is being imposed on the inside parties.

Thus, in "common identity" approaches to conflict transformation, there will always be the risk that an identity will be perceived as imposed, whether the perceiving is done by the parties at the table or by the relevant communities writ large. As the discussion of imposed identities earlier in the chapter showed, imposed identities can themselves foment further social identity-related conflict.

This note of caution allows for a broader discussion of the various dynamics at work in identity-related conflict transformation approaches, namely, the fact that processes of identification among groups are unending; and the fact that, because social identity is itself relational, social identity-related conflict transformation processes must pay careful attention to relational dynamics in order to be effective.

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[12] In the edited volume *Methodological Approaches in Kurdish Studies: Theoretical and Practical Insights from the Field* (Baser, Toivanen, Zorlu, & Duman, 2019), scholars from different disciplines within the broader field of Kurdish studies problematize the concepts of 'outsider' and 'insider' with regard to field research, arguing that neither is a fixed position but rather one that changes relationally based on the different values, identities, beliefs, and historical ties that research participants and researchers perceive as having in common with each other. Much the same could be said for the insider–outsider discourse in conflict resolution.

According to Inman and Peacock (2007), "[t]he promise of a universalistic identity may be that it permits confusion, that it allows those whose moral frameworks are logically incompatible to nonetheless see connections or compatibilities" (p. 222). However, such an approach is unlikely to be effective if it is assumed that a common or universalistic identity will stop the clock on identification processes and the conflicts that can arise from them. Time, according to Inman and Peacock, can simultaneously heal wounds, allowing "ingroup friendships" to form, *and* provide the space for social identities to re-emerge in different ways that could once again bring groups into conflict (p. 222).

In one way, we could view this from the lens of the passage of time allowing space for various permutations of social identity to rise and fall, but what it really suggests is the allowance of space for the evolution of relationships between people and groups. In this view, conflict transformation more generally, but particularly as regards social identities, must be carried out not at the level of consensus around content of a narrative or agreement around overarching shared identity, but rather at the level of commitment by various parties to doing the sometimes difficult, sometimes exhilarating work of being in constructive and dignified relationship with each other (Ross, 2007). Such parties must also have the courage to incorporate this commitment into their social identities in such a way that it can be drawn upon in future instances (years or generations down the line) when intergroup conflict once again rears its head.

Viewed in this way, conflict transformation becomes not about getting outside of identity, or even *above* certain identities, but rather about balancing two of the reasons

people identify with groups in the first place—the need for inclusion and the need for differentiation—in such a way as to build patterns of constructive rather than destructive relationship-building (Ross, 2007) while enshrining those patterns into group identity. Imagine, for example, ethnic identities for whom the boundary between them is drawn on the basis of respecting and dignifying each other's differentiating or distinguishing features while protecting against the use of that differentiation/distinction as the basis for denigration. Such a boundary would perhaps—precious though it may sound—be the difference between a "KEEP OUT" sign and the conversation of two neighbors on a sunny afternoon over an unimposing wooden fence. The end result of such an approach derives from a process of braiding identities in such a way that points of common practices, beliefs, and visions for the future can be found without erasing, abrogating, or otherwise denigrating the core identities of conflict parties.[13]

One way to anchor this process is by helping conflict parties to better understand the role of identity in conflict and conflict transformation alike by enabling them to better understand the functions and features of social identification processes (Korostelina, 2007). While social identities might not be immovable, biological facts, they are social facts, and individuals are prone to ascribe meaning to their identities through the perception of them as being inherent within themselves and their communities—especially when those identities are perceived as being threatened. By helping parties to understand identities less in terms of fixed content but more in terms of robust and

[13] See Kelman (2001) for a discussion of how such processes can play out through a case study of identity-based problem-solving workshops around the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

shifting relationships, and in terms of meeting cognitive, social, physical, and affective needs, individuals gain the ability to strengthen reflexive understandings of their own identities. This does not mean aiming to convince individuals that their social identities, because they are constructed, do not have a real impact on their lives and can be done away with, minimized, or changed on a whim. However, it equips them with the space to approach their social identities and those of others with curiosity and creativity.

This element of curiosity and creativity hews closely with Kelman's (2001) assertion, based on sustained work with Israeli and Palestinian communities around the process of identity negotiation, that approaches that lead to constructive "redefined identities" must incorporate elements of "informal, unofficial process in which members of the conflicting parties explore and invent ways of accommodating their group identities to one another" (p. 197). The end result of such processes is not necessarily a political agreement, but rather the nurturing of an environment of relationship that "can help pave the road to political agreements at the official level" (p. 197).

This type of creativity and curiosity links with an aspect of social identification that was identified earlier in this chapter as being less explored in social identity studies: the need for purpose. To better understand this little engaged function of social identitification and its potential for supporting effective conflict transformation requires engagement with the concept of generativity and its relationship to the act (not the object) of narrative.

CHAPTER THREE: NARRATIVE AND GENERATIVITY IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Come now, wear your dress, dear elder
Grandmother, tell us tales
of our homeland and of foreign lands
– "Kerwanê," Kardeş Türküler

There are few of us who don't love a good story. We may differ in our tastes—in our favorite tropes, our go-to genres, and our preferred vehicles for telling and consuming that all too enticing mix of conflict, character, and plot. However, nearly every person will know when they are in the presence of a good story. These are the stories that make our hearts race and our bodies tense, or perhaps our eyes tear and our stomachs drop. The stories that make us contemplate a shift, entice us to action, or show us a path we hadn't seen before. The stories that follow us around even when we think we are done with them—tugging at the corners of our minds as we live our lives, asking us to consider things anew or slip into the comfort of what is familiar.

As touched on briefly in the previous chapter, stories are a crucial feature of our identities, not just our personal identities (Nelson, 2001; Cobb, 2013a), but also our social identities (Ashmore et al., 2001; Kelman, 2001; Tilly, 2005; Ross, 2007; Korostelina, 2007). The narrator of "Kerwanê" by Kardeş Türküler knows this all too well. "Grandmother, tell us tales / of our homelands and of foreign lands," he sings while his family is on the road. The listener is made to understand that his family and his

community have been forced from their homes by an unspecified calamity at the hands of someone, or some group, that goes unnamed. As it is for children across every culture, the stories of the narrator's elders help him to understand who he is through understanding the contours of his community, a point made even more poignant given that there has been a traumatic, physical break from the land that tethers his family's identity. "Oh, I can see it before my eyes," the narrator's grandmother responds, wistfully and sorrowfully, "My childhood / my friends / the starry night."

The relationship of stories to social identity—of narratives, which have specific storytelling features that anchor their push and pull on us as individuals and groups—is not necessarily about content, but rather about the process of creating the sense of belonging. Identification processes are inherently narrative processes, providing the communicative and reflexive link between the 'stuff' of social identity—objects, historical events and sites, values and beliefs, practices and traditions—and the meaning that humans attach to it and make from it. For literary theorist Mieke Bal (2017), it is important to approach arts like literature "not as a fixed collection of enshrined objects, but as an ongoing, live process. For some, even life-saving; for others, just enlivening; for us all, part of life" (p. 57). The same is true of that which underlies both social identity and art: narrative.

To understand an individual's relationship to social identity—and from that, the role of social identity in conflict—one must understand how individuals attach meaning to social identity. Such cannot be done without a study of narrative, which Simmons

(2020) describes as "the only concept that works both at the level of reason and emotional intuition, values and interests, concurrently" (p. 3).

As discussed in the previous chapter, individuals don't cognitively reason their way into or out of identity, nor do they cognitively reason themselves into or out of conflict. As Smith (2005) reminds us, "[n]o matter how perfect our reason, bits and pieces of information do not speak for themselves" (p. 211). In order for these bits of information to 'speak,' they need a vehicle—and that vehicle is narrative.

Generally speaking, people subconsciously understand the role of narrative in shaping their lives, though they might not always be able to name it. That's the trickiness of narrative—spun artfully and compellingly enough, it disappears into the background of life, making individuals see links to the past and visions of the future as so commonsensical, so natural, that there is a sense that they cannot possibly be shifted, not just because to do so would be difficult, but because the narrative has become sacrosanct.[14] Yet, place a story in front of a person that seems off to them in some way—perhaps the plot seems wrong, or the way the story is told is abrasive or off-putting—and the person will likely begin to understand that there is something at work in the very bones of the story that doesn't sit quite right.

Here lies what seems in the present to be the near ubiquitous discussion around "shifting the narrative." Twenty years into the new millennium, the general public is

[14] This dynamic is particularly apparent in political rhetoric. Ross (2007) writes: "Political leaders know intuitively that building consensus around the key elements of a narrative can be crucial to mustering support for their actions, which are presented as 'naturally' following from shared understandings. In short, building active public consensus around a narrative is a form of public opinion formation that both provides a strategy on the part of leaders to mobilize public support and helps individuals reduce their own anxiety" (pp. 38–39).

relatively aware that narrative has a place in conflict—is a thing that needs "shifting" when it feels off to one's particular group or community. And narrative is indeed fundamentally changeable. Stories may be contained in discreet texts—in bounded narrations—but the process of narrative is itself iterative and ever-moving. A story told once is never told in quite the same way again—and what's more, it need not be told in the same way, as movie franchise reboots and fairy tale retellings make clear. Equally important is the fact that no story, however it is told, will mean the same thing for all members of its audience; how the members relate to it emotionally, attach meaning to it, and then incorporate that meaning into their lifeworlds will change from person to person. This feature of narrative requires care, for once you let a story out, it is no longer exclusively yours—certainly, the telling belongs to the teller, but its meanings belong in many ways to the audience as well (Shuman, 2005; Frank, 2020).

These features and functions of narrative are central in circumstances of conflict escalation. but they are also equally important for conflict de-escalation and resolution (Ross, 2007). This chapter will engage with the narrative core of the social identification process by drawing on a narratological approach. Such an approach takes as its object of analysis what Hardy (2008) identifies as the "process," not just the "content," of the telling of narrative (p. 249). Understanding the interplay of elements that drive and define narrative, and their relationship with the escalation and de-escalation of conflict, is crucial for understanding how to approach social identity-related conflicts in such a way as to move them toward constructive transformation. The key feature of narrative is that, through a mixing of elements, a shifting of content, and an attention to style and mode,

the stories that define us—that *make us who we are*—can always be told in such a way as to open up different possibilities for our relationships with each other.

However, as Ross (2007) observes, narratives do not necessarily change "when they are directly confronted" (p. 46). To do so becomes an attack on social identity, which, constructed though it may be, is tethered to individuals through deep emotional ties enabled by narrative. As he writes, "[s]imply telling people that their version of events is wrong is rarely successful, because there is often great emotional attachment to an account, which is defended from such frontal assaults. It is the images and organization of narratives, not the facts alone, that give narratives their power" (Ross, 2007, p. 46).

While understanding the meaning that individuals draw from, and attach to, their identities through the vehicle of narrative is key, such cannot be effectively done without attending to the "poetological, rhetorical, prosodic, and narratological features, techniques, and devices that mediate and complicate interpretation" of the story elements that serve as the basis for social identity (Dwivedi, Nielsen, & Walsh, 2018, p. 14). It is a narratological approach to the texts of social identity that can allow for insights to be drawn on how the very construction of narrative informs the social identification process and guides social identity and conflict in relationship to each other.

The rest of this chapter will elucidate the elements of narrative from a narratological lens, and will elaborate the relationship of social identity with conflict through a close study of the role of narrative—and particularly, the element of genre—in

providing an opening for a generative approach to social identity-related conflict transformation.

Narrative's Role in Social Identity-Related Conflict

According to Dwivedi, Nielsen, and Walsh (2018), narratology "alerts us to the poetics of narrative; it requires attentiveness to the relation between poetics and the cultural, and so to the ideological as it forms and is undone or contested" (p. 17). Such an approach requires engaging the narrative not just at the level of its content—its characters, plot, action, setting, and conflict—but also at the level of its construction. In brief, a narratological approach does not simply describe the dynamics at work within a story but analyzes them in such a way as to elaborate an understanding of how the narrative form works to arouse feeling in and provide meaning for its audience. This type of approach enables a study of "narratives, narrative texts, images, spectacles, events – of cultural artefacts that tell a story" (Bal, 2017, p. 3). Its aim is "not to account for the process of [narration], but for the conditions of the process of reception" (Bal, 2017, p. 65).

In considering this function of the narratological approach, it is important to understand that the narratological analyst in question is not meant to serve as a representative of any and all possible audiences of a particular narrative work. Again, the meanings that individuals ascribe to different narrative texts will vary from person to person. However, through a careful attention to the structure of narratives and their interplay with the broader cultural context, a specific interpretation becomes

"arguable"—a proposal rooted in a precise accounting of the dynamics of the process being studied (Bal, 2017, p. 10).

In order to embark upon a narratological study of identity and conflict, it is important to be clear about the elements of the object of study. The word '*narrative'* points to the systematic, structural process of narration of a story—a narration often identifiable as having a beginning, a middle, and an end. The *text* is the discreet object—the "finite, structural whole composed of signs" (Bal, 2017, p. 5)—that contains the story. The text is the actual telling, while the *story* is the content that "produces a particular manifestation, inflection, and 'colouring' of a fabula" (Bal, 2017, p. 5). The *fabula* is "series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors" (Bal, 2017, p. 5). Think of the fabula as the well-spring of the story; it is the place from which specific characters, tropes, events, actors, settings, and plots points are drawn, but the story is the unique way of mixing these elements together in such a way as to be recognizable as relating to the specific fabula in question while also being its own particular version of narration.

To better understand the distinction between story and fabula, think of a well-known fairy tale. You know the characters and the events that befall them; the shape of the conflict that creates stakes through tension; the way that the characters hurdle toward the conflict's—or at least the plot's—resolution. Now think of the ways that you have come into contact with this fabula. If it is the European telling of the story of Cinderella, for example, perhaps you heard it first from a children's book, only then to see it in a movie. Perhaps you go on to encounter it more generally in broader cultural discourse.

When you hear the phrase 'Cinderalla story,' for example, you might know that it is using the set fabula—of a girl who perseveres against abuse and mistreatment to eventually achieve a 'happily ever after'—to communicate what elements and outcomes you might be able to expect in the story (fiction or non-fiction) for which this fabula is being used. As you age, you might encounter many different versions of this fabula, each vaguely familiar yet somewhat different, each itself influencing your understanding of the fabula. For fabula are not static—each new telling of a story that draws on the fabula then influences the fabula, because the fabula results from "the mental activity of reading; it is the interpretation by the reader, influenced both by the initial encounter with the text and by the manipulations of the story. The fabula is a memory trace that remains after the reading is completed" (Bal, 2017, p. 9).[15]

A narratological study will take a narrative text as its object of analysis, paying close attention to the interplay of its elements not just at the level of content—its characters (protagonists, antagonists); its events and plot; its conflict and stakes—but in terms of the way the story is told—the way its protagonists and antagonists are characterized; the pacing of its plot within time; the shape and elaboration of its conflict—to better understand how the story might be received vis-à-vis its cultural context. It will undertake this analysis by being attentive to the story in the narrative text and its broader relationship to the fabula elements that influence the story or even serve as its core. Where narrative's role in social identity and conflict is concerned, a

[15] "Reading" can also be substituted with "watching," "listening," etc.—in short, the consumming of stories.

narratological analysis will also pay close attention to the story elements and their function as they relate to the propensity for conflict escalation and de-escalation.

As stated before, narratives provide the link between emotions, values, and interests, which are all elements of the process through which individuals attach meaning, and thus ascribe, to social identities. It is narrative that allows individuals to make sense of their identities through talk of interests, values, and emotions; it is narrative that, on the basis of this sense-making, constrains the decision-making of individuals, precluding them from some actions while priming them for others (Smith, 2005; Ross, 2007). The images of narratives—related to both content and style of narration—are what enable the "almost automatic affective connections people make between symbolic expressions and the within-group bonds they strengthen" (Ross, 2007, p. 63). The choice of a camera angle in a movie, a series of words in a novel, or a specific melody or harmony in a song can make a difference not only for an individual's cognitive understandings of the content of a narrative but also the emotional ties they attach to that content.

While the role of emotions in conflict transformation is understudied as compared with interests, reason, and rationality, it is the affective implications of narrative and its connection to value as a normative prescription that make it particularly impactful with regard to conflict escalation and de-escalation. As with social identity, narratives are not themselves the instigators or even the reasons for conflict, but they are crucial to its escalation or de-escalation because "they are surface manifestations" of the "deepest feelings and fears of the parties on the deeper issues" of the conflict in question (Ross, 2007, p. 87). Narrative "does not transcend but emerges out of contexts: it is situated

socially in a context of communication, situated environmentally in a context of intelligible action, and situated biologically in a context of human embodiment" (Dwivedi, Nielsen, & Walsh, 2018, p. 5). Narratives emerge to make sense of the objects, events, people, and dynamics at play in our lifeworlds. In their telling, they then feed back into our lifeworlds, adjusting them in discreet and sometimes considerable ways that go on to feed back into the evolution of the stories we tell about ourselves.[16] In short, we tell stories, but in many ways, they tell us as well.

According to Dwivedi, Nielsen, and Walsh (2018), it is narrative's "endowment with a distinctive and powerful capacity for meaning and affective force" that gives it its power to shape the world around us, and yet it is this very link to "[real] social and political conditions, to the complexity of the communicative contexts and the purposes it engages" that constitute a potential problem that must be treated with care (p. 7). Narrative approaches to conflict transformation seek to understand the power of narrative as a remedy to its problem. Ross (2007) identifies four reasons for why narratives matter in the study of conflict: (1) they contain metaphors and images that illuminate how individuals and groups make sense of their "social and political worlds" and "explain the conflicts in which they are involved" (p. 30); (2) in their telling, they can "reveal deep fears, perceived threats, and past grievances" through which groups relate to the conflict in which they are engaged (p. 30); (3) they draw boundaries around the possibilities for

[16] I came to better understand this conceptualization of narrative as both stemming from lived experience and constructing lived experience in a cyclical manner during Solon Simmons's Spring 2019 CONF 705:001 "Discourse Analysis and Conflict Resolution" course at the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution (then the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution) at George Mason University in Arlington, Virginia.

action, thus determining what is immediately possible for parties to do within the conflict; and (4) the very act of narration—of storytelling—"is part of the processes through which communities are structured and strengthened" (pp. 30–31).

Just as social identities meet a variety of needs for individuals (as discussed in Chapter 2), narratives also meet different needs. While individuals generally make sense of their lifeworlds through narrative—through telling stories about who they are in relation to others—Ross (2007) posits that group narratives in particular take on especially strong meaning for individuals "when they are disoriented and struggling to make sense of events in situations of high uncertainty and high stress" (p. 32). In these cases, the "familiar shared images"—and, one could argue, the perception of shared meanings embodied within group narratives—"provide reassurance and relieve anxiety while reinforcing within-group worldviews" (p. 32). Group narratives are not internally consistent, nor are they told or understood the same way among all group members (Ross, 2007), but they provide a comfortable way through which individuals feel bonded with each other (and, echoing social identity theory, they are used in some cases to draw lines between 'us' and 'them').

In his study of cultural contestation in conflict, Ross (2007) directs attention to psychocultural narratives within conflict, identifying a number of features they display and roles they play in constructing and influencing within-group and intergroup dynamics. He argues that these narratives fashion past events within the group's perceived shared history into metaphors and lessons for current and future generations. These narrations of past events can become broader collective memories for the ingroup,

with their elements—and broader narratives, generally—having been carefully selected from the possibilities of history to draw boundaries around group identity. These narratives can take on "in-group conformity and externalization of responsibility" as relates to conflict and intergroup dynamics, even when there are "multiple within-group narratives" circulating. These narratives are not static but ever-evolving, constantly being elaborated during processes of cultural enactment. One direction these narratives can evolve towards is a spirit of ethnocentrism, with stories serving as a vehicle for "moral superiority claims" against the outgroups with which the ingroup is in conflict (Ross, 2007, pp. 31–42).

Understanding the nuances of the above dynamics can help people engaged in conflict, or even narrative-oriented mediators, to identify which functions narratives are playing within the context of the conflict. Ross (2007) identifies four possible roles (which are not mutually exclusive), with narratives potentially serving as the following: (1) as **reflectors**, providing insight into how parties to the conflict understand where the conflict is, where it has been, and where it is going (p. 43); (2) as **exacerbators**, emphasizing differences in a way that supports "continuing hostility and escalation" (p. 43); (3) as **inhibitors**, emphasizing commonalities in a way that supports "moderation and de-escalation"; or (4) as **causes of conflict**—or rather, as structures that limit the repertoire of actions that groups are able to follow and meanings they are able to incorporate during the course of a conflict (p. 44).

There are a number of elements at work within a narrative that make it more or less likely to escalate or de-escalate a conflict. Understanding these elements requires understanding an essential component of narratological analysis: genre.

Conflict Genres: A Question of Simplicity vs. Complexity?

Dwivedi, Nielsen, and Walsh (2018) argue that the particulars of a story only become intelligible within the broader "web of discursive contexts" through their relation to "paradigms of narrative schemata, plot prototypes, and genre" (p. 18). Through her study of the function of narrative within the mediation literature, Hardy (2008) posits that it is the genre that conflict parties use to narrate the conflict that plays a crucial role in whether the conflict will move toward resolution.

According to Hardy, genre is not merely a tool for classifying meaning but in fact helps to generate meaning. She writes that "[g]enre provides the rules and conventions by which narratives constrain narrators to normative meanings. It provides limits on what kinds of stories can be told in certain situations" (p. 250). She argues that this function of genre allows it to "be used to identify the ways in which a conflict narrative demonstrates coherence" (p. 250). Hardy's views on genre hew closely with other approaches to a narratological analysis of conflict, including that of Smith (2005), who views the "genre politics of civil society" as "a practical philosophical activity…a form of engagement in which efforts are made to change history by means of interpretation and dialogue over interpretation" (p. 33).

Studies of the role of genre in conflict seek to develop a better understanding of how these "performed conventions" (Dwivedi, Nielsen, & Walsh, 2018, p. 16) of

storytelling impact the possibilities for escalation and de-escalation within conflict. In her study, Hardy (2008) draws on the Western literary genres of melodrama and tragedy to inform her argument around the role of genre in mediation. She argues that conflicts whose narratives fall within the melodramatic genre—characterized by flat, archetypal characters and clear heroes, villains, and victims—are less likely to move toward resolution. If resolution is to be achieved, Hardy argues, these conflicts must first be re-narrated as tragedies in which the conflict-parties-as-characters become more complex, in that each is characterized as having been negatively impacted by the conflict *and* as having played a role in the conflict.

The importance of a study of genre in conflict lies in the potential for certain types of narration to lead to material impact over the course of conflict. In his study of civil discourses around the War in Iraq, the Gulf War, and the Suez Crisis, Smith (2005) found that "empirical regularities" emerged in the genres of "war-generating discourses" (p. 35). He categorizes these discourses into three genre categories—low mimesis, tragedy/romance, and apocalypse—and argues that the complexity of character and plot moves toward greater simplicity as narratives transition from a low mimetic style of narration to an apocalyptic one; the tone of the discourse also heightens as it moves from low mimesis to the apocalyptic genre. While he is careful not to draw a direct correlation between discourses that lean apocalyptic and the outbreak of war, he finds that low mimetic discourses are associated with periods of de-escalation in conflict, whereas apocalyptic discourses are associated with periods of escalation, as are tragic discourses.

Rothbart and Korostelina's (2006b) discussion of threat narratives and axiological difference contains echoes of this same logic elucidated in Hardy and Smith. Their "normative order," by which threat narratives take on "dualities of sacred/profane, good/evil, or virtuous/vicious" (p. 41), hews with the melodramatic (Hardy, 2008) and apocalyptic (Smith, 2005) genres that have been suggested as driving an escalation of conflict. Another element of threat narratives that they identify is the turn to the "mythic narrative," by which "[s]tories of the threatening Other gain potency through dissemination of shocking images, harrowing anecdotes, and accounts of violence" (Rothbart & Korostelina, 2006b, p. 37). Within their model of collective axiology, high collective generality at its most intense can correspond with narratives of "apocalyptic struggle with the cosmic forces of evil" (p. 47), whereas groups with low collective generality might tend more toward what Smith (2005) calls a low mimetic mode of narration. With regard to axiological balance, Rothbart and Korostelina's (2006b) conception of a balanced group might encompass the kind of character complexity found in Smith's (2005) low mimetic form or Hardy's (2008) conception of tragedy.

Complexity is a key feature of broader narrative approaches to conflict transformation, which argue that if conflicts are primarily characterized by polarized, dualistic, and oversimplified treatments of character and plot, then conflict transformation can only come about through the introduction of nuance. According to Cobb (2013a), successful conflict transformation results from "better-formed stories." These stories have a more complex plot in which the attribute of "time collapse"—indicated by the presence of "timeless images and metaphors" (Ross, 2007, p. 34, drawing on Volkan, 1997)—is

countered by inserting "more events in[to] the plot line" (Cobb, 2013a, p. 221). This lengthens the temporal distance between events in the past and the present, meaning events of centuries before no longer have that mythic quality that reduces the nuances of their origin and their impact in their moment of happening. Better-formed stories also display a "circular rather than linear logic" (Cobb, 2013a, p. 221). This allows space for all conflict parties to be recognized as having contributed to a conflict (thus pushing back against externalization of responsibility). Implicit in this element of complexity as well is the allowance of space for understanding the destructive impact of conflict on *all* parties within the conflict. In brief, all parties are recognized as having suffered to some extent, and all parties are also recognized as having been implicated in each other's suffering.

In addition to adjustments in plot, particularly through attention to temporality, complexity is introduced by enabling characters to become fully formed with rich lifeworlds. They are not heroes beyond reproach, victims without agency, or villains without opportunities for redemption. In better-formed stories, Cobb (2013a) argues, all characters—all conflict parties—have characteristics that render them more legitimate *and* characteristics that "increase delegitimacy" as well (p. 221). An important element of character complexity lies not just in increasing nuance within the depiction of existing characters but also introducing a multiplicity of voices to the narrative, each with the same capacity for legitimacy and delegitimacy as the next. A final aspect of the better-formed story lies in its moral message. According to Cobb (2013a), a better-formed story has a "moral order" that is multimodal rather than binary, indicating that it contains a

diverse array of "moral frameworks that are elaborated by all the parties" to the conflict (p. 221).

Yet, new theorizing from within the cross-section of narrative studies and conflict transformation is beginning to itself encourage greater nuance with regard to the privileging of complexity over simplicity where the narrative approach to conflict transformation is concerned. Simmons (2020) notes that complexity—of plot, of character, of motive, and of outcome—is at the core of both Hardy's (2008) and Smith's (2005) treatment of how genres can de-escalate conflict and move them toward resolution, but his own approach to genre suggests that such complexity is not in and of itself enough to effect that most momentous of changes. He writes that what the tragic genre lacks is a redemptive element that contains the kind of hope that is necessary for conflict transformation. A tragic story about a conflict will display complexity in the breadth and depth of its impact on those ensnared within it, but a tragic story, according to Simmons (2020), does not give the agents within that story a path toward a more peaceful and just future. Hope is critical for conflict transformation. According to Simmons (2020), "[a]t a minimum, conflict resolution practice demands that we introduce a distinction between story types that focus on problems and those that focus on possibilities, between those that develop critical awareness of abusive powers, and those that project a future when those powers have been overcome or redeemed" (p. 201). What narratives need, in other words, is an element of generativity, a concept that will be discussed further in the last section of this chapter.

Drawing on the previous literature, Simmons (2020) identifies four genres of conflict story—romance, melodrama, tragedy, and redemption—and organizes them into a matrix along two spectra: moral clarity vs. moral complexity; and generative vs. critical. Within his matrix, both romance and redemption stories are generative—each of them has an element of hope and future-orientation—whereas melodrama and tragedy are critical. However, romance and melodrama share moral clarity—within both there are undeniable villains abusing power, victims being abused, and heroes in the wings, waiting to save the day. In contrast, stories in the tragic and redemptive modes share moral complexity, which contains those above-mentioned elements of nuanced characters, plot, and outcomes. Simmons posits that for a conflict to make the final move toward resolution, both moral complexity and generativity are required—i.e., the conflict must be narrated in the redemptive mode.

Table 4. Conflict Genres: Moral Clarity vs. Moral Complexity[17]

	Moral Clarity	Moral Complexity
Generative	Romance	Redemption
Critical	Melodrama	Tragedy

[17] Source: Simmons (2020), p. 220.

In my analysis of the narrative genre of my musical sample, I will apply this matrix developed by Simmons (2020), who writes that the genre of a story can be identified by looking at its emotionality, its vividness, its intensity, and its literary elements. These encompass such components of the story as its language, representation of time, representation of relationships between characters, representation of the causal factors of conflict, etc. (p. 218).

Table 5. Genre Analysis Framework[18]

	Narrative Feature	Moral Clarity	Moral Complexity
EMOTIONAL	Their Motivation	Domination	Rational Interests
	Their Powers	Exaggerated	Banal
	Their Character	Malevolent	Human
	Our Past	Innocent	Complicit
	Our Future	Romantic	Realistic
	Our Focus	Retribution	Cost/Benefit
VIVID	Causal Factors	Vivid and Simple	Multiple and Complex
	Causal Direction	Linear	Circular
	Causal Context	Individuated	Structural
INTENSE	Discursive Tendencies	Polarizing	Elaborating
	Relations with Adversary	Treasonous	Generative
	Conflict Scope	Cosmic	Mundane
	Story Language	Poetic	Prosaic

[18] Source: Simmons (2020), p. 218.

LITERARY	Representation of Time	Compressed	Complicated

Simmons's (2020) introduction of the term 'moral clarity' as the contrast to complexity—as opposed to what might seem to be the more natural antonym, 'simplicity'—opens up space for a deeper discussion of how conflict parties can eventually move toward complexity-induced resolution. It introduces a potentially controversial question into the discussion of narrative and conflict transformation: even if complexity is ultimately what is needed to move a conflict toward resolution, should the function of simplicity in narrative be viewed as purely negative or destructive?

The need for moral clarity in the process of conflict transformation—for making moves towards more clear-cut language; for choosing *not* to increase complexity—lies in the fact that conflicts are not always symmetrical, with many—particularly those that are related to ethnic and national identities—containing elements of power imbalance, inequality, marginalization, and oppression (see the discussion of inequality and social identity in Chapter 2). The foundation of a narrative approach to conflict transformation is the argument that "opponents frequently operate from such different frames that they misunderstand each other and fail to see how their own actions might be contributing to the escalatory spiral. As long as each side continues to simply reassert its positions, feelings harden and there is escalation and an attempt to defeat a threatening adversary" (Ross, 2007, pp. 82–83). Yet, as Cobb (2013a) recognizes, not all parties to a conflict

have equal opportunity to assert and reassert their positions in such a way as to be heard, much less to be considered as legitimate speakers.

In fact, in these types of conflict situation, there is such a thing as narrative violence at play. This is a type of violence in which conflict parties in a low-power position become circumscribed through two interrelated mechanisms: the imposition of simplified, often Otherizing narratives about who they are by high-power parties; and their exclusion from the means of producing narratives that will be centered and legitimated rather than shunted to the margins (Cobb, 2013a). Narrative violence is implicitly, if not explicitly, understood by Dwivedi, Nielsen, and Walsh (2018) in their edited volume on narratology and post-coloniality. They write that postcolonialism accounts for the fact that "colonizers produced the colonized as their 'other' not through a simple form of exclusion, but through inclusion of the figure of the colonized in their discourses as a different entity than the self" (p. 10). For Smith (2005), a study of the discourses at work in the lead-up to a variety of 20th- and 21st-century interstate wars made clear the fact that "the means of symbolic production are themselves unevenly distributed" (p. 210). Symbolic production is carried out across the media, among party leadership, within government institutions, and at the level of networked communities, and when individuals and groups are excluded from these levels of social organization, their narratives are also excluded—meaning that not only are their own stories of themselves less likely to be heard and legitimated, those that hold power and centrality in these contexts are able to impose meanings and identities onto these individuals and groups through the vehicle of narrative.

This fact requires problematizing the move toward complexity and introduces an understanding that moves to complexity must, in cases of power imbalance, inequality, and marginalization, be made *through* (rather than instead of) simplicity—or rather, moral clarity. Coming back to Ross's (2007) note about the futility of asserting and reasserting positions, it must be understood that it is rather different for a high-power party that has access to greater resources for legitimated meaning-making—and perhaps even a monopoly over legitimated meaning-making, as is sometimes the case with nation-states—to assert and reassert its (morally clear) positions as compared to a low-power party that is consistently the subject of narrative violence, which cuts off any possibility to have their own morally clear story heard. In effect, while moral clarity will indeed escalate a conflict, perhaps in such circumstances a conflict *needs* to be escalated (albeit in a way that avoids violence and dehumanization of the outgroup) in order to move toward a de-escalation that will enable justice. As Simmons (2020) writes:

> [I]f you truly believe that you are in a situation in which power is being abused and the people who wield power are bad actors, it makes good sense to find a way to intervene in the narrative context to promote and augment stories that illustrate moral clarity. Not only will this tend to increased indignation, but it will also serve to promote action in response to the perceived abuse. (p. 218)

This dynamic between moral clarity and moral complexity requires greater understanding in order to better understand such concepts as narrative sequencing and draw insights

regarding whether it truly *is* possible to embody moral clarity without dehumanization of the other (in other words, to approach clarity with a further conflict transformation goal in mind). While it is not the purpose of this study to draw firm conclusions as to when moral clarity is the right move as opposed to moral complexity, by studying the song sample using this genre approach, it is my hope to better elaborate what such an interplay looks like in practice, and how these narrative elements of clarity and complexity relate to what is known about social identity-related conflict.

Generativity and Narrative in Conflict Transformation

The process of narrative—the act of narration, of storytelling—is inherently creative. It is this nature that links with the need to understand the study of narrative as foundational to the study of social identity, because the latter cannot come about without the creativity of the former. If social identity is a construction (however real and long-lasting its impact), then it must come about through an act of creation, and narrative is one such act of creation.

Thus, accounting for the creative process of narrative is essential to any approach that seeks to address social identity-based conflict by addressing the functions that social identity plays for individuals, whether the provision of esteem, distinctiveness, belonging, or protection. However, perhaps one of the best ways to elaborate the power of narrative in the context of social identification and conflict transformation is through a discussion of one of the more understudied functions of social identity—the need for purpose—and its relation to the concept of generativity.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Inman and Peacock (2007) found that an evaluation of social identity-related conflict, and ethnic and sectarian conflict in particular, requires understanding that individuals ascribe meaning to their identities in part by seeing them as vehicles for broader moral frameworks. If social identities are not morally neutral—in other words, if the boundaries of social identities are drawn at least in part by individuals' desires to ascribe to specific perceptions of what it means to do well while doing good—then it can be argued that "[g]roup narratives are [also] not morally neutral" (Ross, 2007, p. 42). Stakes are a crucial component of compelling stories, and as such, the narrative process requires constructing stories in such a way as to communicate a message of dominance, conflict, tension, and potential triumph. In the context of group narratives, such processes "portray a group's experiences in a favorable light emphasizing moral qualities the group has displayed in overcoming enemies and threats to its existence over time. In recounting challenges and triumphs, groups invariably emphasize moral qualities as the most crucial resources to explain their survival" (Ross, 2007, p. 42).

An important aspect of this dynamic is that such group narratives function not simply as a communication of what it means to do good and do well but also as a guide for the members of the social group seeking to embody such approaches—in short, the cultures that both result from and feed back into narrative process serve as "a moral toolkit not a moral foundation" (Simmons, 2020, p. 11). In this way, narrative processes draw on the symbolic material that individuals and groups have available to them to communicate the meaning that they seek to make around their identities. In

understanding this process, it is important to remember (as was discussed in Chapter 2) that the capacity for change that social identities hold does not mean that they are *easily* or *arbitrarily* changeable. If a narrative of a social group is to be salient to its membership, it must be woven in a way that is compelling and comprehensible by drawing on the symbols, patterns of relationship, and even fabula that will make the most sense not just in the internal logic of the narrative but also within the lived experience of that social group. This is the iterative aspect of both narrative and social identification, the aspect that makes it both possible but also no easy feat to cross or shift the boundaries of social identity.

Understanding narrative and social identity in this vein introduces the opportunity to more deeply engage with the need for purpose as an essential component of the social identification process. One approach to such an engagement would be to turn attention to the theory of generativity, which Simmons (2008) notes was developed by Erik Erikson (1963) in his study of the identification process from birth to death. Generativity pertains to the quality of individuals creating something bigger than themselves, often in relation to, and to the benefit of, their immediate communities, thus allowing an element of their legacies to live on once they have passed. Erikson (1963), according to Simmons (2008), addressed generativity as "the major turning point of adulthood that builds on and adds to the fruits of identity integration established earlier in life" (p. 117). In their study of the concept of generativity in relation to the meaning-making of older Americans, Rubinstein, Girling, de Mederios, Brazda, and Hannum (2015) noted that while Erikson initially addressed generativity in relation to the biological bearing and rearing of the next

generation, he later elaborated that this need is also met through other sociocultural outlets, for example, by teaching the next generation, or by creating works of labor (artistic, material, intellectual, etc.) that give individuals a sense of leaving something behind.

Rubinstein et al. (2015) find that generativity has an inherently relational element, as it is "one orientation in which people closely connect to others through time" (p. 549). An essential component of this element is the concept of "dividuality," a term that Rubinstein et al. borrow from the field of anthropology to conceptualize "the placing of something of the self with others" (p. 549). In order to meet the need for generativity, they found that people engage with different objects of generativity ("people, groups, things, and activities") through a variety of forms of generativity ("individual, historical, family, and relational") (p. 550).

Ultimately, inherent within the concept of generativity is the need to achieve a purpose in life through the creation of something—whether material or immaterial—that an individual believes will better serve their own communities and the generations that follow. Simmons (2008) argues that this concept is not well understood within the context of conflict transformation and particularly within social identity approaches to conflict transformation, even arguing that it might not be easily integrated into social identity theory in the first place. He argues that social identity theory, in its focus on ingroups and outgroups of the 'us-vs.-them' variety, does not adequately explain "conflicts based on principled political action toward a cause greater than the self or the reference group" (p. 116). In Simmons's estimation, social identity theory, "for all of its

accomplishments, is not well suited to this task even when it can force the square peg of conflict based on values and principles through its round hole of cultural difference and group affiliation" (p. 116). He recognizes that there are elements of synergy between generativity theory and identity theory, particularly the sense that "a sound understanding of both individual development and cultural variability must be the starting point of conflict analysis" (p. 116). However, in his view, it was less common at the time of the article's writing "than it was a generation ago to publicly and confidently suggest that people engage in conflicts because they cleave to rival visions of the common good" (Simmons, 2008, p. 116).

However, elsewhere in the literature, Inman and Peacock's (2007) introduction of moral frameworks into the analysis of social identity has introduced a potential opening through which social identity theory and the concept of generativity theory find synergy. Inman and Peacock's argument suggests that there are specific moral ways of doing things that are perceived as distinctive precisely because they are seen as a specific social group's unique, distinct, or otherwise defining way of doing things. The reality of the actual uniqueness or distinctiveness of such ways of doing things is as constructed as the boundaries between social groups, and yet the perception of these ways of doing things as being somehow special to, or defining of, a social group still informs the meaning that individuals ascribe to and draw from their lifeworlds.

What this synergy between moral frameworks and generativity suggests is that studies drawing on social identity theory in relation to conflict would be well served by understanding that individuals are motivated by the desire to leave something behind that

is of benefit to their greater society. As Simmons (2008) argues, one conclusion that can be drawn from this understanding is that, when presented with barriers to the ability to engage in the generative act, individuals will be "rightly drawn to confrontation and causes for social change" (p. 121), something he calls a "generativity crisis." What Inman and Peacock's (2007) thesis regarding moral frameworks further suggests is that understanding the actions, beliefs, values, etc., that give a sense of greater purpose to individuals requires understanding how individuals make sense of that greater purpose within the context of their social identity. A generativity crisis, for example, might flow out of not just being prevented from the generative act itself (for example, educating one's children) but being prevented from a very specific way of carrying out the generative act that is tied to one's social identity (for example, educating one's children in their mother tongue).

In other words, if an individual finds purpose through educating the next generation (for example), the meaning they ascribe to that act cannot be divorced from the ways that characterize how educating the next generation relates to their individual and social identities. One can imagine that an individual, when asked about how they would like to educate the next generation, might discuss a specific Christian mode or Muslim mode, a specific Turkish mode or Kurdish mode, or other modes tied to their salient social identities. This isn't to say that *all* generative acts must be framed through social identity. As discussed in Chapter 2, while individuals cannot escape webs of social identity, their own social identities are not necessarily always salient. However, it is important to be able to identify the ways in which generative acts are tied to social

identity—and particular, to *specific* social identities, which will be different for every single individual.

The tension between the above two theses lies in the question of whether a generativity approach must always be distinct from a social identity approach, or whether the search for generativity—the search for meaning through agentic and communal purpose—can be seen as a way of doing, representing, building, and embodying a social identity. The fact that social identities, as has been elaborated by Tilly (2005), are constructed through webs of relation, and the fact that such webs are themselves foundational to the generative act, as shown by Rubinstein et al. (2015), both suggest that the full implications of generative approaches to conflict transformation must seriously consider the implications that social identity has for preventing or supporting individuals in building shared visions of the future and shared moral frameworks across social boundaries.

This view of the potential for synergy between social identity theory and generativity theory has important implications for the transformation of social identity-related conflicts. Recall the discussion in Chapter 2 regarding the formation of new identities through the braiding of the core elements of existing social identities. Much of the social identity literature indicates that the redefinition of identity in such a way as to maintain the distinctiveness that individuals need while lowering ingroup–outgroup denigration and dehumanization (Kelman, 2001; Ross, 2007) requires building visions of a share future based on the identification of commonalities in collaboration and teamwork (Korostelina, 2007).

Understanding this type of effort in terms of generativity, as follows from Simmons's (2008; 2020) arguments, suggests that these social identities can be braided based on discussions of shared purpose. In other words, if generativity is a need for individuals[19], then one way to braid distinct social identities might be to encourage individuals to see peacemaking as a more valued generative outcome than continued destructive intergroup conflict. The identity braiding element arises from the potential to enable a braided purpose of peace through the exploration and incorporation of peacemaking traditions and visions of peace that draw from individuals' own social identities in such a way as to ensure that the various voices and traditions of the conflict parties are appropriately and sufficiently heard and legitimized (Ross, 2007; Cobb, 2013b). As Ross (2007) notes, "[a]ll cultures have images of peace and peacemaking and drawing on these can help opponents see each other in a new light, and to explore shared concerns and mutually beneficial arrangements" (p. 317).

In this process, the role of narrative is crucial and illuminating in a variety of ways. Firstly, just as social identity and conflict are made more salient through narrative processes, social identity-related conflict transformation must approach narrative with an appreciation for both its promise and its problem, as stated earlier in this chapter. Thus, in order to move parties toward a peace based on a sense of shared vision and purpose, the narrative process must contain "emotionally evocative" elements through the incorporation of "images and rituals with more inclusive narratives which, at the same

[19] Rubinstein et al. (2015) found that only 5 people out of a 200-person sample expressed a nongenerative approach to their lives.

time, define interests in less absolute, strident terms" (Ross, 2007, p. 317). In addition, this process must provide the conflict parties with new "frames of reference" from which to allow their narratives to continue evolving away from conflict and toward peace in an iterative way (Ross, 2007, p. 317).

In other words, the narratives that will allow for conflict transformation are those that are narrated in the redemptive genre, which brings us to the second reason that narrative connects well with generativity. Recall Simmons's (2020) use of the word "generative" to describe two of the conflict genres he identifies, "romance" and "redemption." Here, generativity contains a key element of hope that is required to spur individuals to action. It is difficult to be motivated to build a shared future if one is pessimistic about it being better than the present because of how much destruction the present has wrought for so many people. Yet, a shared future is also unlikely to bring a conflict to its peaceful, just resolution unless it truly *is* shared—which means attending to the incorporation of moral complexity. Thus, while the romantic genre might also seem to be a good bet because it is generative, and while it might certainly be needed to move a conflict along to a place where power imbalances and injustices can be addressed in such a way as to facilitate de-escalation, it runs the risk of hardening the boundaries between conflict parties. Thus, it is the redemptive mode that brings in hope while also allowing for nuance and complexity.

What hope does, ultimately, is to enable the space for a second element of generativity to emerge: creativity. The generative act requires the creation of something that brings hope. The act of creating something new is very rarely comfortable or familiar

(Lederach, 2005). Thus, it requires curiosity. It requires risk. And it requires imagination. By introducing conflict parties to narrative as the process through which their identities, and thus, their identity-related conflicts, are constructed, narrative-minded conflict resolvers can also engage parties in an inherently creative act that, as discussed in Chapter 2, strengthens bonds and enables the evolution of relationships toward a more hopeful mode.

Ross (2007) argues that "[t]o develop inclusive narratives as part of the peace process, former foes need to incorporate new experiences and emotional connections that alter the salience of elements in the existing exclusive narratives and invite new and/or revised linkages among their key elements" (p. 46). An intentional, purposeful approach to narrative from a generative lens might open up the possibilities for the power of creativity and curiosity to help conflict parties imagine and begin to lay the groundwork for a shared vision of doing well while doing good that still respects the distinctiveness of different social groups' traditions and approaches.

To do this in a way that enables sustained change requires telling compelling narratives—ones with "richly powerful images" that "enact and reinforce" the most constructive parts of the parties' distinct psychocultural narratives (Ross, 2007, p. 41). To construct such narratives requires opening the space for creativity and for emotional connection, for the familiar and for the new, and for understanding oneself and others in equal measure. Here is the place where music, heretofore waiting in the wings, can take center stage.

CHAPTER FOUR: MUSICKING CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION AND RECONCILIATION

The water of my heart is boiling
The night of my heart is longing
The grapes are sour, they're next to water
I'm curious about you
– "Kara Üzüm Habbesi," Kardeş Türküler

Why music? In protracted conflicts—ones so entrenched that they not only are expressed through but feed into the construction of the parties' identities; ones that rip apart the lifeworlds of hundreds of thousands through dehumanization, violence, and trauma spanning generations—what good could music possibly do?

As this chapter will show, music has a powerful role to play in conflict, one that should not be underestimated for its potential, even as it should equally not be assumed to be the linchpin for the complicated, whole-of-society process that is needed to prevent violence and dehumanization, address grievances, heal trauma, and rebuild and strengthen relationships. Music's power in conflict lies in its ability to both further it and transform it. Music can play a role in escalating conflict or de-escalating it (Sandoval, 2016); can foment violence or foster conditions for reconciliation and healing (Lederach, 2005; Urbain, 2008; Bergh & Sloboda, 2010; Sandoval, 2016); can cause pain and humiliation (Cusick, 2013; Sandoval, 2016) or alleviate it (Bergh & Sloboda, 2010); can generate tension (Urbain, 2008) or lift it (Palieri, 2008); can create the space for meaning

(García Quiñones, 2018) or even prevent that space from forming at all (Cusick, 2013); and can be used to close off opportunities for relationship (Cusick, 2013) or spark moments of curiosity and creativity that lead to new or renewed bonds (McDonald, 2008; Lederach, 2005).

The propensity to make harmonies, melodies, and rhythms is arguably a universal attribute of human culture, and thus, music has without doubt played a complicated role in a key aspect of human life—conflict—as long as humans have made music. In such a way, music, with its consonance and its dissonance, becomes not just a site of or tool for conflict and its resolution, but also a metaphor for conflict itself (O'Connell, 2010). Harmony easily becomes a stand-in for peace, cacophony for destructive conflict, and yet the interplay of consonance and dissonance also opens up space for curiosity. The former—its sounds pleasing to the ear—can represent peace, but it can also represent the familiar status quo, the lulling of a society to accept what should not be accepted, while a dissonant note or chord might, for all that it is unexpected, and perhaps even a little unpleasant at first sounding, rouse its listeners to consider a different possibility, shifting the rhythm of their worlds toward something new.

The academic literature in the field of peace and conflict studies—and in other fields as well, including anthropology, sociology, and ethnomusicology—has started to pay closer attention to the role of music in conflict and its management, transformation, and resolution. Such studies are gradually beginning to turn away from uncritical, if hopeful, ruminations on the positive aesthetic power of music towards a more nuanced understanding of the functions of music in conflict, the impact of specific musical

techniques, repertoires, and technologies on conflict dynamics, and the ways in which the musicking process, from production to consumption, intersect with, represent, and challenge concepts that are central to conflict, such as power, (in)equality, identity, and intergroup relations (Urbain, 2008; O'Connell, 2020; Bergh & Sloboda, 2010; Sandoval, 2016).

This chapter will focus specifically on situating the existing literature on music and conflict within a discussion of conflict transformation and reconciliation, elucidating what it might mean to approach reconciliation as a sonic metaphor (Lederach & Lederach, 2010), and engaging with various properties of music and its relationship to conflict transformation to inform an analysis of Kurdish identity construction and narrative genre within the music of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar in later chapters.

Conceptualizing Conflict Transformation

While music plays a role in many different conflict dynamics, the goal of my study is to illuminate music's role in conflict transformation, with a particular focus on reconciliation. *Conflict transformation* gained ground as a concept in the field of peace and conflict studies in the late 20th century in response to the perceived limitations and corruption of the term *conflict resolution*, according to Mitchell (2002). The latter had come to be misused to represent a rather cynical view of the end of conflict as being the result of violent interventions by outside actors or coercive and manipulative strategies of sanctions and settlement. Mitchell (2002) is keen to underline that conflict resolution as a concept *should not* be reduced to such cynical views, and he questions whether the appropriate response to conflict resolution's corruption should be to elaborate an entirely

new concept (conflict transformation) or whether it isn't better to return resolution back to elements obscured by such a cynical take, namely, a "commitment to social change and reform," particularly on the structural and relational levels (p. 2). Nevertheless, Mitchell (2002) argues that it is worth further investigating any appreciable differences in these two concepts and how they shape understandings of how conflict can and should be addressed.

A review of the literature shows that there are elements of conflict resolution and conflict transformation that lend themselves less to competing understandings and rather to a more comprehensive and coherent understanding of conflict dynamics and processes (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2011). Lederach (2003) finds that conflict resolution is generally oriented toward resolving crises in the immediate term, "negotiating answers to presenting problems" (p. 31) in the most immediate relationships within the process, whereas conflict transformation is concerned with seeing "the presenting problem as an opportunity to engage a broader context" (p. 30). The goal, as observed by Mitchell (2002), seems to be to take conflict "beyond" its resolution to a more whole-of-society transformation of how individuals and institutions within society engage with conflict. Central to the conflict transformation concept is the impossibility of escaping conflict, as it is a fundamental feature of human life; thus, there is a need to enable societies to engage in conflict constructively rather than destructively (Urbain, 2008; Goetschel, 2009). With regard to discreet conflicts (insofar as conflicts can be bounded discreetly), a conflict transformation approach will aim to transform the

dynamics within the conflict itself while also transforming relevant aspects of the surrounding sociopolitical system. According to Mitchell (2002):

> one way of dealing with questions about the basic nature of transformation would be to assume that it refers to the reversal of the all negative forms of change that occur within the conflict system itself and to the social system in which the conflict is embedded. Thus, transformation involves, for example, changes such as an increase in empathy on the part of adversaries, with stereotyping, dehumanization and demonization of the other side becoming less common; a decrease in the levels of social and geographical separation of the parties; and major changes in the nature and homogeneity of communications aimed at the others. (p. 8).

Yet, as Mitchell argues, conflict transformation goes beyond the above to address the root causes and impacts of conflict, as well as to imagine and guide them toward more constructive trajectories. In his review of the literature, Mitchell (2002, pp. 9–10) identified a number of elements that members of what he calls the "transformation school" seem to agree an effective conflict transformation approach requires, including: (1) whole-of-society participation in the process, from policymakers to community leaders to grassroots constituents; (2) empowerment of low-power parties to rectify inequalities in the conflict; (3) ensuring that parties are full stakeholders in the process by empowering them to be in control of its trajectory and enabling buy-in from participants

and constituents; (4) addressing both immediate concerns within the conflict as well as long-term grievances, wrongs, and traumas; (5) involvement of "appropriate intermediaries" with a deep level of contextual understanding of the conflict's constituent cultural and structural foundations; (6) the collaborative creation among parties of a shared (or, following discussions in earlier chapters, braided) understanding of the conflict's origins and its impact; (7) support of formal procedures to "maintain and continue the changes" that are undertaken during the transformation processes so as to avoid future devolutions into protracted and destructive conflict; and (8) shared education of parties regarding not just the structural context in which the conflict arose and took shape but also through provision of training and skills to address future conflicts.

To undertake a process that encompasses the above means to endeavor to address conflict through personal changes, structural changes, and relationship changes (Mitchell, 2002). Goetschel (2009) takes a slightly different tack, arguing that relational elements of conflict are part of the larger structures that must be shifted in conflict dynamics. It is important here to distinguish between different levels of relation, from those relationships between decisionmakers to those between "social intermediaries" (community-based leaders and authorities) and actors at the grassroots level (Goetschel, 2009, p. 95). Within the relational component of conflict transformation, Paffenholz (2009) focuses on two process as being especially important: socialization, which strengthens the bonds and ties *within* groups; and social cohesion, which is the building and strengthening of ties *between* social groups—and in particular, social groups engaged in conflict—toward the aim of realizing "'good' social capital" (pp. 66–67).

Another important reason to approach a study of music in relation to social identity and narrative genre from the view of conflict transformation, as opposed to resolution, concerns the dynamics of escalation and de-escalation. Lederach (2003) notes that conflict transformation processes focus more broadly on alternating waves of escalation and de-escalation, as compared to resolution. From the lens of conflict transformation, escalation is sometimes necessary to bring about "constructive change" (p. 31). Such an approach hews closely with the discussion of moral clarity and moral complexity in Chapter 3. As noted there, it is important to remember that escalation is not necessarily violent or dehumanizing in nature. It can also be associated with raising awareness around injustices and addressing inequalities.

Thus, a variety of elements make conflict transformation an attractive concept to apply to a study of musicking initiatives in the context of conflict and reconciliation, including its addressal of the following: the central need for changes in relationship that decrease dehumanization and destructive division and increase collaboration, empathy, and cohesion; the ability to honor the space and role of initiatives at the grassroots and within the broader community, initiatives that are unlikely to play a role in formal conflict resolution processes but that are often doing the day-to-day work of transforming relationships, whether purposefully or not; and the allowance for different waves of dynamics to play out, understanding that conflict rarely progresses in a neat line but rather requires different levels and degrees of progress if it is to be brought to a more constructive outcome.

Yet, there is perhaps one aspect of conflict transformation above all that endears itself in particular to studies of the role of music, which no one can credibly argue is going to singlehandedly change conflict dynamics. This is the fact that whereas the word "resolution" implies some sense of finality, some sense of a before and an after (for all that there is a process inherent in the work of resolution), conflict transformation's 'end' can be argued to be the the process itself. At one conflict's final bow, Mitchell (2002) recognizes, there are other conflicts waiting in the wings, drawing sometimes on elements of the old conflict, other times on new dimensions. Inherent in this understanding of process as an end is also the understanding that peace is a long-game. The whole-of-society changes and reforms that conflict transformation processes aim to undertake will often likely be realized in "a far more limited nature than an all-encompassing notion of peace would suggest" (Goetschel, 2009, p. 98). Conflict transformation contains the space to reckon with this reality, and to continue the sustained work of building iteratively toward more constructive approaches to conflict. It isn't that the concept of conflict resolution does not account for this reality, but rather that conflict transformation takes conflicts *to* and *through* their resolution, accounting in a more comprehensive way with what Lederach and Lederach (2010), in elucidating a sonic metaphor for reconciliation, call the "midst and aftermath" of conflict.

A Sonic Metaphor for Reconciliation

The term "reconciliation" has an almost mythical feel to it within peace and conflict studies and practice, taking on a 'holy grail'-type quality in both its desirability and its elusiveness. Nevertheless, while it can be difficult to grasp as a concept, and even

more difficult to bring about in practice, there are insights from the field that elaborate its parameters and elucidate different approaches for realizing it in the field.

I have chosen to study music in the context of reconciliation not only because it is a critical element in any conflict transformation process but also because both Kardeş Türküler and Bajar see aspects of reconciliation as central to their missions. In his study of Kardeş Türküler, Aksoy (2014), who has himself been a member of the group, describes the initiative as one that is founded on "the principle of living together in solidarity and taking a firm stand against polarization and conflict." He thus places the group at "the centre of the solidarity and reconciliation activities of musicians in Turkey" (p. 225). Founded in 1993 by students at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul with the aim of producing musical repertoires that incorporate musical traditions and stories from the wide variety of cultures and languages in Turkey and its neighboring geographies, Kardeş Türküler can be said to be oriented toward fostering solidarity and reconciliation across all of Turkey's cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic communities.

Bajar, whose lead singer, Vedat Yıldırım, was a founding member of Kardeş Türküler and continues to be part of its present-day membership, takes a more focused approach to reconciliation in Turkey. It is oriented specifically toward encompassing the stories, experiences, and musics of Kurdish communities, and in particular, those who experienced migration (including force migration) to cities in the western portion of Turkey. Through an engagement of different experiences of Kurdishness, and through a discography that is sung in various dialects of Kurdish as well as in Turkish, Bajar is an

initiative that promotes social cohesion by "explor[ing] the notes of living together without 'assimilation'" ("Biyografi," n.d.).

Thus, since reconciliation is envisioned as a core element of the work of both Kardeş Türküler and Bajar, it is important to gain an understanding of the parameters of reconciliation from the view of peace and conflict studies.

Reconciliation is a notoriously difficult concept to define in part because it is so context-specific. The shape that reconciliation takes may not look the same in any two places or among any two groups involved in a conflict. Like a river, reconciliation as a process can seem tangible and constant, with a topography that is knowable, map-able, follow-able. Yet its contents are ever shifting and changing. What the river brings you today it may not bring you tomorrow. Some years it will flow in abundance; others, it will run dry. Nevertheless, the river's banks give a rough outline of what one might expect, and so too can reconciliation as a concept be outlined, so long as it is remembered that, as a process, reconciliation never flows the same way twice.

As a process, reconciliation is often described in terms of former enemy groups rebuilding relationships, learning to respect and trust each other, and cooperating together towards a shared future (Ross, 2007; Hazan, 2009). Cohen (2008) identifies an appreciation and acknowledgment of interdependence among former conflict parties as an essential component of reconciliation. Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall (2011) write that reconciliation can play out across four dimensions: (1) accepting the status quo; (2) correlating accounts; (3) bridging opposites; and (4) reconstituting relations (p. 247). These dimensions can include such aspects as the cessation of violence; the pursuit of

justice and reparations in the context of crimes and wrongs committed against communities within a conflict; and remembrance, memorialization, and forgiveness (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2011). Korostelina (2018) writes that "the development of friendship, trust, empathy, mutual understanding, common and cross-cutting identities, and magnanimity" can contribute in varying degrees to reconciliation (p. 106.)

As an end state, from a social identity perspective, reconciliation takes the form of improved intergroup relations through the building of trust, the reduction of identity salience, and the rehumanization of groups involved in the conflict (Korostelina, 2018). According to Hazan (2009), in addition to this improvement in relations, reconciliation at the social level seeks "to change beliefs, values and attitudes within a given population" (p. 260).

It is important, however, to remember that reconciliation through the rebuilding of relationships, the envisioning of a shared future, and the changing of beliefs, values, and attitudes does not come about by forgetting past grievances and traumas but by confronting them in such a way as to also weave in mutual acknowledgement of pain (Ross, 2007; Hazan, 2009). Lederach (2005) characterizes this as a process not of "forgive and forget" but instead of "remember and change" (p. 152). He argues that such an approach allows for a recognition of "[h]onesty of experience" (p. 160), without which reconciliation cannot be realized. It could be argued, based on the previous discussions of social identity and narrative, that reconciliation in this vein might also incorporate narratives of collaboration (Korostelina, 2007) and of shared commitment toward

generative purpose (Simmons, 2008) in order to elaborate on the acknowledgement of past wrongs and present pain.

The dynamics of social identity and narrative in relation to conflict can throw up barriers to reconciliation processes. Trust is a crucial element of such processes, but is difficult to build among social groups whose intergroup relationship is founded on mistrust, to the extent that narratives of the outgroup as fundamentally untrustworthy become defining features of the ingroup identity. An additional barrier is raised in situations of asymmetrical conflict, where transformation processes that do not account for inequalities in power between the parties are likely to fail at addressing destructive conflict dynamics and impacts (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2011). In such conflicts, inequalities in power will be present in reconciliation attempts as well, with the low-power party likely to raise concerns around "the willingness of the more powerful to redistribute resources," meaning that, for such parties, reconciliation will be "more intimately connected to questions of inequality than it is for the majority – a reminder of how the needs of different parties are not necessarily reciprocal" (Ross, 2007, p. 321).

While reconciliation processes can be undertaken formally at the highest political levels, as evidenced by South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the focus of this thesis is on the level of the community, and therefore, on social reconciliation, which Hazan (2009) describes as "the establishment of a 'horizontal' trust under which citizens can once again trust one another as citizens" (p. 260). Reconciliation, especially at the social as opposed to political level, is perhaps the most elusive component of the conflict cycle, and yet, it is also its most transformative, serving as "the hallmark of the

integrative power that alone binds disparate groups together into genuine societies" (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, p. 246). While political actors are crucial in that they both model reconciliation and serve as agents with the power to protect groups from further abuses within or following conflict, reconciliation cannot simply be legislated into existence. It must be realized at all levels of society, in ways that incorporate verbal statements, symbolic actions, and changes in intergroup narratives and institutional practices (Ross, 2007).

As both a process and an end state, reconciliation is whole-of-society—and it is messy, often overflowing its banks and taking bends one did not expect. For this reason, while frameworks for reconciliation can be useful in terms of evaluating what dynamics and actions can possibly help to move a society toward reconciliation, the actual act of getting there often requires something more adaptable and constant than a simple linear process. This is where a sonic metaphor for reconciliation can become instructive.

In their study of the sonic properties of healing and reconciliation, Lederach and Lederach (2010) write that "*[r]econciliation emerges as the mix of voices finds its natural frequency*" (p. 205, their italics). A key component of this property of reconciliation is the idea that reconciliation is not a linear process that begins after formal peace agreements have been signed but rather a circular process that takes place in what they call the "*midst and aftermath* of open violence" (p. 11, their italics). It is here, in this "midst and aftermath" conceptualization, that the conflict transformation approach fits perhaps a bit more neatly than the conflict resolution one.

Reminiscent of discussions of conflict transformation more broadly, Lederach and Lederach (2010) argue that reconciliation should be seen not as an end state that is easily delineated or defined—in fact, Hazan (2009) notes that one of the main challenges of defining reconciliation is that it is difficult, if not impossible, to accurately measure—but instead as a seed with generative potential. Like a seed, Lederach and Lederach (2010) argue that reconciliation requires "constant nurturing" (p. 206), for it "must take place in highly dynamic and unpredictable settings whether or not peace agreements have been signed" (p. 45).

In this metaphor, reconciliation is most likely to be possible, effective, and sustainable when it takes place in a "container" that is small enough to allow the process of reconciliation to resound, encompass, and echo in a way that touches all of those within that container. For Lederach and Lederach, the best containers for reconciliation can be found at the community level.

This concept of containers is tied to building the resiliency of communities. According to Lederach and Lederach (2010):

> Resiliency suggests container-like social spaces that encourage and sustain a quality of dialogue-based interaction wherein people feel they can touch, shape and be shaped by accessible and meaningful conversation. In such spaces, people feel a sense of voice that reverberates and creates resonance with events and processes that affect their lives. (p. 71)

Implicit in this conception of reconciliation is the idea that if violence is resilient (as Lederach and Lederach posit), then peace and reconciliation must also be resilient, and they cannot be resilient on a national level if they are not resilient on a community level.

For Lederach and Lederach (2010), resilience becomes identifiable through the metaphor of the social echo:

> Social echo has the power to touch and impact both the micro individual healing and the macro wider context of reconciliation. Sound moves multidirectional. Social echo, based on voice and meaningful conversation, creates impact simultaneously in two directions. On the one hand it has the capacity to touch and be felt by the individual. On the other, it creates waves of ideas, action and impulse that move in and out from the local community. In this sense, voice can be understood as power, inasmuch as it represents the capacity of collective action to touch and move other spaces. This is not power to control process, resource allocation or political positions. Rather, it is power defined as the ability to authentically engage the self, other and social spaces that make possible the very validity of social and political power. (p. 214)

In my thesis, I am guided by this idea of a resonant, nonlinear approach to reconciliation in my analysis of Kurdish identity construction within the music of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar and the potential implications of that construction for reconciliation. I also draw on the above concepts delineated in the process of reconciliation, as

summarized in Table 6, to guide my conclusions as discussed in the final chapter of this thesis.

Table 6. Aspects of Social Reconciliation

Aspects of Social Reconciliation			
Korostelina (2018)	**Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall (2011)**	**Hazan (2009)**	**Ross (2007)**
salience of the social identity in question (i.e., Kurd, Turk) is reduced	trauma is acknowledged and an apology offered on behalf of ingroup toward the outgroup	commitments are made to norms and values that move society toward peace and justice	mutual acknowledgement of the grievances, pain, and traumas of the different parties to conflict
		individuals of different identities are included, not excluded	
perception of the humanity of the outgroup is increased	stories about the conflict and the past are revised and pluralized	recognition of differences is offered	redistribution of power and resources to address pre-existing inequalities and prevent future inequalities
	a shared future is envisioned (formally or informally)	citizen-to-citizen trust has increased	

It is with these understandings of conflict resolution and reconciliation in mind, informed by my previous discussion of social identity and narrative genre, that I now turn

to the role that musicking initiatives like Kardeş Türküler and Bajar can play in transformation of conflict.

The Role of Music in Conflict Transformation

In their reviews of the music and conflict transformation literature, Bergh and Sloboda (2010) and Sandoval (2016) find that music can serve various purposes during conflict. Music can be used by conflict parties to further conflict, including through disseminating ideology, rallying fighters, and being used as a tool for torture and humiliation. It can also be utilized toward resolving or ameliorating the effects of conflict, such as by using music to build relationships between conflict parties or by using it for psychosocial support. Where reconciliation is concerned, Cohen (2008) argues that music can play a vital role, specifically highlighting music's capacity to serve as a space for "appreciating the narratives of the other and mourning losses" (p. 32).

Bergh and Sloboda (2010) note that while research around music and conflict transformation has proliferated, certain gaps and weaknesses in the literature persist. For example, they observe that existing studies are "geared towards claiming success, not exploring what took place and how music may work" (p. 10). The pressures of funding and evaluation often lead to quick claims of success in musicking interventions, leaving little room for "thoroughly understand[ing] any conflict transformation processes that may occur through music" (p. 11). Sandoval (2016) argues that where music is expected to be a tool for conflict resolution or peacebuilding, it "is not enough to just experience music together"; rather, successful incorporation of music into such processes necessitates a more facilitated approach (p. 210).

Musicking initiatives for peace can take many different forms, from the developing of musicking initiatives specifically for the purposes of facilitating conflict transformation and reconciliation (Pettan, 2010), to the incorporation of musicking activities into broader conflict transformation or conflict-adjacent initiatives (Cohen, 2008), to the use of music as a vehicle for inserting curiosity, stress relief, or alternative ways of relationship-building into more formal dialogues or negotiations (McDonald, 2008). When envisioning the variety of ways in which musicking initiatives can interact with conflict transformation and reconciliation, Born's (2013) elucidation of the "planes of social mediation" engendered by music is instructive (p. 32). She argues that music influences sociality across four planes: (1) the "intimate microsocialities" contained within musical performances, ensembles, and sound installations, all of which enable "the social and corporeal interactivities and intersubjectivities" of the performers, participants, and general audience; (2) the animation of communal feeling and boundary-drawing through music's creation of "virtual collectivities or publics based on musical and other identifications"; (3) the broader social relations between groups across which music traverses, including those demarcated by age, sex, class, gender expression, religion, race, and ethnicity; and (4) structures that enable or prohibit the production of music on a communal and societal level, including "market and non-market exchange, elite, religious and state patronage, and late capitalism's multipolar cultural economy" (p. 32). Born argues that the interplay of both the autonomy of and interdependence between these four planes "may be generative of experimentation and emergence in musical and sonic assemblages" (p. 32).

To understand the various attributes, techniques, and meanings of music that allow it to play such a powerful role in conflict transformation requires problematizing notions of music as a so-called 'universal language' (Cohen, 2008; Dave, 2105). Unlike many forms of art that incorporate linguistic elements, such as films, literature, and television, music as an art form can be meaningfully consumed without the need to understand any lyrics that may be included. Certainly, music is a near-universal feature of human culture and social order (Cohen, 2008). Yet, its meanings vary widely from person to person, ranging from differences in personal taste (García Quiñones, 2018) to the need to understand the particulars of different musical traditions to best appreciate the power of a certain musical work in its appropriate context (Cohen, 2008; Dave, 2015). A lack of understanding about particularities and the importance of context can lead to misunderstandings of music's impact on conflict dynamics. Even more critically, it can also lead to more harmful missteps, including: the appropriation of musical traditions, causing harm to communities by "distort[ing] their meanings or violat[ing] their sacredness" (Cohen, 2008, p. 27); a reification of "power asymmetries that inscribe themselves onto musical encounters across differences" (Cohen, 2008, p. 38); or the unintentional legitimization of musical practices that encourage intergroup harm and dehumanization (Urbain, 2008).

The pushback against an understanding of music's power as lying in its supposed (but not actual) universality does not mean that different musics cannot be understood or appreciated by individuals from outside their immediate linguistic and cultural contexts. However, it calls for the analysis of music to be undertaken at the level of the meanings

that are derived from it, which are generated through "the experiences of the composers, performers, and perceivers as they interact with each other and with texts" (Cohen, 2008, p. 28). Each participant in the musicking process—which includes composers, musicians, listeners, dancers, other artists who remix musical works, and even critics and producers—will hold a constellation of "sensibilities, relationships, attitudes, [and] historical resonances" that will influence the meaning they ascribe to the music (p. 28). These sources are, as discussed in the previous chapters, deeply interrelated with how individuals ascribe meaning to their social identities, which is not a process based simply in cognitive thought but one that also takes place on an emotional plane.

One reason music is such an intriguing tool of both conflict escalation and de-escalation is its ability to reach individuals beyond a purely cognitive plane, to allow them to engage emotionally with the music's sounds and stories (Martí & Revilla Gútiez, 2018), and to allow them to translate that affective experience into meaning that informs their understandings of themselves and each other, which in turn impacts the reification, shifting, or even crossing of boundaries between collectivities (Born, 2008).

There are a variety of attributes of music that allow people to engage with it deeply on an emotional level. Like any form of cultural expression, music can draw on histories, fabula, values, beliefs, and traditions to weave together meanings of who individuals and their communities are. As described in Chapter 3, this is done in large part through narrative processes, which provide individuals with the affective, relational, and cognitive tools to make sense of how these various components fit together to create a compelling story of a comprehensive social group. However, as a vehicle for social

identity construction and narrative, music has unique properties that make it a different sort of expression than, say, a novel or a film. These properties have their own repercussions for conflict transformation and reconciliation.

At its heart, music creates public and private experience by bounding or expanding space through sound using varying techniques, such as the increasing or decreasing of intensity; the "spatial relationship" of singer to microphone; the echoing of discreet, linear sound reflections or the reverberation of many sound reflections at once; or left–right balance (in recorded music). All of these techniques and others allow for the creation of a sense of nearness or of distance, which in turn can come to represent feelings such as "intimacy, aggression, secrecy, fear, [or] disengagement" (Clarke, 2013, p. 99). Specific sound profiles can come to be associated with different cultural contexts—"the reverberant sound of Hollywood's version of the uncanny or malevolent; the vocoder voice of the sci-fi cyborg; the close-up sound of the inner voice of fear, doubt or conscience" (Clarke, 2013, p. 110)—thus informing listeners in their effort to derive meaning from music through affective response to its different frequencies, consonances, and dissonances.

These experiences are not purely pleasing or meaning-constitutive. Certain properties of music can be used to break the capacity for meaning, as Cusick (2013) found in her research with detainees of the so-called 'global war on terror.' Her participants described the ways in which authorities at detention camps would use music to prevent relationship building, interrupt meaning-making processes, and focus attention on the pain of being deprived of sleep while bound into stress positions (thus constituting

the use of music as a tool of torture). In the previous two instances, music blared incessantly and at high volumes at detainment camps and prisons prevented detainees not just from being able to speak to each other but also from being able to map the broader worlds beyond their cells through the use of sound cues (for example, the coming-and-going of guards, or the echo of human life off the walls). The use of music and sound in this way was a deliberate element of the experience of detention, a way to "ensure that every body in that space would vibrate sympathetically, every day, to sounds that produced power's presence as a palpable, physical force" (p. 280). Thus, the experience of sound as a collectivity can paradoxically break bonds and mutual intelligibility, creating psychic pain and even increasing physical pain, as in the case of one of Cusick's participants, who recalled how loud music played during his torture by prison authorities had the effect of focusing his attention on his pain rather than distracting from it (p. 283).

In relationship to space within music is the concept of time, which is represented by the use of rhythm—the repetition of sounds at measured intervals—to order the listener's experience of music (Lefebvre, 1992/2013). Rhythm in relationship to space within music can give a sense of direction, delineating a linear progression from beginning to end that gives the listener a bounded experience of a piece of music. It can also guide the listener's affective response; a rhythm sped up quickens the heart, generating excitement or tension; a rhythm slowed down brings on a sense of calm, or perhaps a sense of dread or suspense. In this way, rhythm becomes an essential

component of the experience of story within music, allowing listeners to more intuitively draw meanings and coherence from a song or performance.[20]

For Öztürk, part of music's power lies in its ability to order the lifeworlds of listeners:

> Music has the ability to orient social life. We see this in traditions, in rituals. And in fact, it helps guide what needs to be done [in social life]. For example, I'm talking about henna night music, work songs. There is music to go with specific spaces, occasions, and rituals, and it pairs up with specific feelings. Music has a hand in orienting and even establishing [social] life. It constructs [it]. (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020)

It can be argued that music's capacity for ordering derives principally from its use of rhythm. Yet, even if rhythm represents order in its measured repetition, Lefebvre (1992/2013) observes that "there is no identical, absolute repetition, indefinitely" (p. 16). There will always be a moment when the rhythm shifts, whether suddenly or gradually, taking on new sounds, new beats, new measures, and thus marking difference and introducing opportunities for a change in perspective within a contained experience of sound.

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[20] In our discussion, Küçüktürk noted that when Bajar's members are composing new songs, they pay particular attention to when rhythms need to be fast or slow, asking themselves, "What does slowness contribute? What does quickness contribute?" Here, they are particularly concerned with creating specific feelings and experiences for their audiences. He told me, "For example, there are [different] makam [scales]. Each scale has its own distinct feeling" (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 8, 2020).

In this way, rhythm becomes itself a pretty metaphor for social identities, which contain neat patterns of meaning and narrative that allow for boundaries to be set around groups—until something new is introduced, and the shift occurs toward a different rhythm. One could think of particularly rigid or stable social identities as long strings of uninterrupted rhythm, with few variations in repetition of sound and beat. Yet, the fact that the rhythm cannot, or rather, *will* not, go on forever in the same way reminds of the capacity for social identities to change.

In this metaphor, music becomes one vehicle by which groups can become caught in familiar but rigid rhythms, as different musical traditions can become themselves constitutive of conflictual intergroup boundaries, with the crossing of musical traditions—the variation of societal rhythms—considered to be an affront to the integrity of the different social groups in question. In his study of musical traditions in Northern Ireland, Cooper (2010) found that both Protestant and Nationalist (largely Catholic) communities perceive of certain traditions as belonging centrally with one group or the other; any transgression of these boundaries—for example, the act of a group from one community playing the music perceived as being from the other community—itself becomes both a representation and dimension of the broader conflictual relationship.

Dynamics of boundary making in musicking initiatives thus can prove fertile ground for descent into the 'us-vs.-them,' 'ours-vs.-theirs' thinking so emblematic of social identity-related conflicts. It is here that much the same cautionary notes regarding meeting the needs for group distinctiveness while fostering wider societal inclusion are applicable. As Cooper (2010) observes, the cultivation of forms of music that are

associated with the traditions and identities of certain groups is not inherently conflictual, but there is a danger when such associations evolve into "maintenance of a silo identity" that places firm boundaries between musical traditions—and thus, between social groups. Pettan (2010) also observed that in situations of conflict (in this case, in the Balkans), musical instruments or genres that were shared across different social groups can become associated with different communities; thus, just as music can be the site for building relationship across boundaries, it can be the site where boundaries become further reified.

In her study of musical traditions in Uganda, Cimardi (2018) observed similar uses of music to delineate boundaries between social groups, and specific ethnic groups in particular. She found that specific musical traditions provided opportunities for groups to meaningfully celebrate their shared experiences and understandings of their identity in distinction from other groups that might nevertheless also be part of the local community. She observed that even as these traditions served to bond within-group members together and positively distinguish themselves from other groups while still appreciating those groups' traditions, the strong association of different musical traditions and elements with specific groups—even in cases where traditions seemed to have significant overlap and similarities—led to a "neat classification" and "formal codification of dance and music styles according to fixed paradigms" that ultimately reduced their otherwise dynamic nature (Cimardi, 2018, p. 111).

Thus, taking this metaphor of rhythm and social identity one step further, it can be argued that both of these concepts provide a sense of order that is familiar and comforting in a way that allows the easy attainment of meaning. Yet, even the most stable of rhythms

do not and cannot last forever, and thus, conflict transformation is perhaps a function of allowing many rhythms to resonate—within people, within groups, and within societies—and of allowing rhythms to be heard when they need to be heard and to change when they need to change, thus opening up space for one rhythm to pick up where the another leaves off.

It is that spark of curiosity where the rhythm shifts—that moment where creativity has its chance to move "beyond what exists toward something new and unexpected while rising from and speaking to the everyday" (Lederach, 2005, p. 38)—that drives reconciliation. Creativity is associated often with conflict transformation through its capacity to enable conflict parties to see the past, present, and future of their relationships in different ways (Lederach, 2005; Urbain, 2008), though it can also be "used to manipulate, swindle, or trick people" (Urbain, 2008, p. 4) or to generate the conditions for violent conflict (Pettan, 2010).

Through many of the techniques and attributes discussed above, music becomes a particularly powerful tool to "create and strengthen feelings of affinity and group cohesion" (Cohen, 2008, p. 26). As has been repeatedly underlined, such power can be used to strengthen bonds in such a way as to facilitate conflict transformation—through the socialization and social cohesion discussed by Paffenholz (2009)—or to reify the boundaries of ingroup–outgroup division in a way that furthers dehumanization or violence.

When considering musicking initiatives that seek to facilitate reconciliation, particularly those that incorporate cross-cultural approaches, it is important to keep in

mind that such initiatives can reinforce inequalities in relationship. Cohen (2008) observes that even when musical exchanges such as these are founded upon shared respect and an effort to achieve equality within the musicking space, "the political and social equalities [of the broader context] can insinuate themselves into the process" (p. 37). When such dynamics are not actively recognized and addressed, musicking initiatives can reinforce inequalities and close off opportunities for relationship building toward reconciliation through such manifestations as "cultural appropriation, unequal distribution of resources, and the homogenizing forces of globalization" (p. 37). Cohen (2008) is careful to note that even though the relational bonds as facilitated by music are essential for conflict transformation, it is important that such processes are accompanied by challenges to any "dynamics of oppression" at play within a conflict; otherwise, any gains in social cohesion will quickly dissipate or reverse (p. 26).

One way to better understand music's ability to build bonds between individuals and inform their relationships with each other, particularly in the context of conflict transformation, is to bring in a discussion of ritual. According to Schirch (2005), ritual is an action that relies in particular on the affective and communicative power of symbols to present "a forming or transforming message in a unique social space" (p. 17). Rituals are thus rooted in symbolic acts, which draw on "symbols, senses, and emotions" rather than primarily on "words or rational thought" to convey their message (Schirch, 2005, p. 17). According to Ross (2007), the capacity for rituals to provide meaning for participants must be understood in relation to the social identities the participants hold, which provide

the prism through which what might otherwise be “mundane” symbolic action becomes special and significant (p. 66).

Rituals can be carried out by a wide variety of actors across different levels of society, from state actors carrying out rituals to “enhance their legitimacy and the political loyalty of their citizens” to communal rituals that enact histories and stories of belonging (Cimardi, 2018). Ross (2007) argues that the impact of rituals is particularly effective when individuals are physically present to witness or participate in them, though he acknowledges that advancements in media technology have created opportunities for virtual participation, which carries its own potential for generating meaning. Regardless of the level at which ritual is carried out or the medium through which it is experienced, however, Schirch (2005) emphasizes that it is the sense of the creation of a “unique space set aside from normal life” that distinguishes ritual from other sorts of events or happenings (p. 17).

In the context of understanding the importance of ritual within conflict transformation, it is important to account for the various types of ritual that can be included in transformation processes. Schirch (2005) argues that, more generally, ritual can either maintain the status quo by “forming” and reifying the worldviews of its participants and their existing relationships toward each other, or it can “mark and assist in the process of change” by “transforming” worldviews and relationships toward something new (p. 17). To either form or transform, rituals are carried out across a variety of continua: religious and secular, traditional and improvised, formal and informal, and constructive and destructive (p. 19).

Where ritual is concerned, music can play an important role as one of the methods through which symbolic action is communicated and emotional bonds are forged between participants. Along the lines of what Schirch observed, music in ritual can be used in such a way as to maintain existing social bonds and formations. For example, Cimardi (2018) details how the use of a conical drum called the *mpango* in Bunyoro and Tooro in Uganda is a central feature of the historical and present coronations of new kings. The *mpango* and its associated traditions serve as the cornerstone of an annual ceremony in which "the legitimate succession to the godly ancestry of the present monarchy" is re-enacted, both in private royal functions and amongst the broader public, "thus asserting the glory of the kingdom" (p. 101).

Music in ritual can also work toward transforming relationships. McDonald (2008) describes how, during the formal dialogues, meetings, and trainings organized by the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, different informal spaces for bread-breaking, personal reflection, and conversation were always provided, with the understanding that it was often in these spaces that more organic relationships might be able to flourish. During the farewell dinner at the end of one such dialogue between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot participants, music stood out to McDonald (2008) as having played a particularly powerful role in relationship-building. As he recounts:

> At the end of the dinner, two guitars suddenly appeared, skillfully played by two of the Turkish Cypriot participants. They played folk tunes and sang in the Turkish language. In a few minutes the Greek Cypriot participants started singing

> the same songs in Greek. As children they had all learned the same songs. This went on for half an hour; then the guitars were passed to two talented Greek Cypriot participants, who started playing and singing Greek folk dances. Almost immediately everyone in the room got up and started dancing, arm in arm, around the room. What a sight! The singing and dancing was a manifestation of what had happened internally. It was a demonstration of their bonding, their transformation. (p. 222)

Here, the power of the music is not just in the pleasantness of the melodies or in its propensity to provide space for joy and dancing. It is in the fact that through the specific music played on that night, participants from these two, seemingly opposed conflict parties representing different religious and ethnic social identities were able to appreciate that they actually had shared traditions across their social boundaries. The experience, as McDonald tells it, had a deep impact on those present. He relates that a Greek Cypriot who was visiting the dinner because his mother was part of the formal dialogue said that, "'I would not have believed this if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes. This is not possible'" (p. 222).[21]

It is here where art plays a role that perhaps formalized, structured processes of dialogue or negotiation that are bound by tight rules and rigid, rational understandings of conflict cannot. It provides space for what Lederach (2005) calls the "aesthetic

[21] I am grateful to Christel McDonald for pointing this anecdote out to me and providing me with the name of her late husband's 2008 book, *The Shifting Grounds of Conflict and Peacebuilding*, so that I might be able to learn about this experience through Amb. John W. McDonald's own words.

imagination, a place where suddenly, out of complexity and historic difficulty, the clarity of great insight makes an unexpected appearance in the form of an image or in a way of putting something that can only be described as artistic" (p. 69). It is in these moments where curiosity sparks, giving way to opportunities for creativity and the birth of something new—in particular, something generative of a more peaceful, shared future.

Yet, do these moments only happen during ritual events and encounters? What about the everyday and mundane? Must music be experienced in moments of ritual in order to take on significance and meaning considerable enough to have hope of shifting the contours of conflict? If we limit our understanding of the power of music to spark curiosity to special, ritualized spaces, we lose the opportunity to better appreciate music's power to reach people in every facet of life. We truncate the usefulness of a sonic metaphor for reconciliation, which does not argue that the only containers that matter are ritualized ones.

From the perspective of the sonic metaphor, the aesthetic imagination can be sparked by something as mundane, as everyday, and as easily overlooked as a love song. "I'm curious about you," the members of Kardeş Türküler sing in the song "Kara Üzüm Habbesi" ("The Black Grape's Seed"), which takes its melody from Urfa in the southeast of Turkey and sets it purposefully to both Turkish and Kurdish lyrics (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020; S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020). In so doing, the song becomes not just a love song between two individuals, but also between two (and really, multiple) communities. Öztürk describes it as a song that "portrays Urfa's multiplicity of culture and identity" by "taking the form of halay

[circle dance] and mirroring cultural interaction" (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020). It is this ability to spark curiosity even in the midst of the everyday—this ability to shift one rhythm to another in a way that crosses boundaries—that renders music so powerful.

For the grand majority of people on the grand majority of days, music will be experienced not as part of ritualized and specialized spaces but rather in the moments between the other bits and pieces of life. Even when it is experienced together, it often isn't in spaces of ritual but rather in spaces of more quotidian meeting, what García Quiñones (2018) calls "micro-events so completely embedded in everyday life as to become almost indistinguishable from it" (p. 184). While these meetings do not necessarily imply passive engagement with music—there may be dancing, for example—they are less likely to incorporate focused attention beyond "occasions for simply pointing at sections or particular aspects of a song that we would hardly be able to describe" (p. 184).

These are the types of encounters and engagements perhaps less likely to make it to the pages of journal articles and book chapters—and as Sandoval (2016) argues, these meetings lack the sort of purposeful facilitation that might be necessary for building firm bonds seated in reconciliation. Yet, it is important to remember that this ability of music to bring people together has a reach that the purposeful processes of ritual, dialogue, and negotiation simply do not. It is a reminder that, as Martí and Revilla Gútiez (2018) observe, music stems from sociability—it results from the act of individuals and groups coming together to create, play, or engage with music—and, in turn, it generates

sociability, by providing opportunities for the creation or strengthening of new bonds through the shared experience of music. While for many, the daily experience of music might seem to be one that happens in isolation, García Quiñones (2018) reminds that the meaning that individuals are able to ascribe to their experiences of music cannot be separated from the broader context of social exchange. Even a solitary individual listening to a song on a smartphone or a Walkman or a record player will draw upon their existing webs of interrelation with others to create meaning around the stories and symbols within the music.

Echoing Born (2013), Martí and Revilla Gútiez (2018) note that this musical sociability plays out across spheres—spheres of musicians, spheres of audience, spheres of collectivities bound by musical tradition and practice, even spheres of scholars of music—thus impacting the broader influence of music on society through their interrelation; in other words, their points of consonance, and their points of dissonance. In short, music is not only representative of social life but is also social life itself, with the dynamics of broader society being contained in the microcosm of musical production and experience (Martí and Revilla Gútiez, 2018).

García Quiñones (2018) notes that the shape that this sociability takes in relation to music is influenced not just by the construction and attributes of the musical work itself but also by "geographical conditions, social and political circumstances, and…music (recording and playback) technologies and formats" (p. 176). For the majority of human history, music has not been able to be recorded, leaving live performances the only experience of music. Even as technologies emerged, their

accessibility, portability, and affordability have influenced who gets to listen to music, how often they get to listen to music, what hoops they must jump through to listen to music, and the influence of those barriers on experiencing wide ranges of music, etc. What's more, even when and where music playback technologies have been relatively cheap and easy to use, certain "political, legal and social contexts" can shape listening practices and their consequences, as in cases where certain types of music or songs are forbidden or criminalized (García Quiñones, 2018).

When music is viewed from the lens of Lederach and Lederach's (2010) sonic metaphor for reconciliation, it is important to understand the different containers in which music can find resonance. There are various ways to experience music, some of which include the following: being part of musicking efforts (as musicians, composers, or producers); being an active interpreter of music (as is the case for dancers or other artists, such as filmmakers, who mix music in with their various artistic practices); being part of the audience or crowd at a musical performance, from the intimate dinner party to the massive concert; being an active listener of music with others in a contained setting, as García Quiñones (2018) describes in her study of "listening-with" to recorded music; being an isolated yet still purposeful listener, as when you place your headphones on or turn the radio up for the commute home; or even being a passive consumer of the various musics that surround us in daily life, from commercials jingles to elevator compositions to grocery store playlists.

As previously discussed, Born (2013) has observed that music is constructed and used in such a way as to "cultivate realms of both public and private experience" (p. 3).

As such, all of the circumstances and spaces listed above represent containers of different sizes and shapes in which sound will reverberate and resonate differently, in which different public and private experiences will be facilitated and nurtured. As such, not only is it true that the experiences of music are different in these settings—in some cases, the music can fade into the background; in others, like massive concerts, the sounds can become all-encompassing and even overwhelming—but so too is it true that the impact of the music will resonate differently with regard to conflict transformation and reconciliation. A small performance might impact fewer people and yet allow for deeper connections that are more likely to be carried with participants into their lives beyond the space of the musicking moment. A large concert will reach more people and even affectively impact audience members in a deep way, but it may be a less likely space for providing audience members with opportunities for building relationship beyond a general sense of bonding. Still too, the act of coming together to actively play or discuss music, and thus build meaning through purposeful relation, is very different than the act of listening to the music such a group creates through a recorded track in a setting where one is having an individual listening experience—albeit one that is "very intense and personal" and still "only conceivable as part of the various social and affective networks in which each individual is involved" (García Quiñones, 2018, p. 186).

It might be tempting to think that the experience of live music will have a greater impact than recorded music, and yet as García Quiñones (2018) finds, the act of intentionally "listening-with" among small groups of friends or family to recorded music can still offer ample opportunity for "sharing emotions, interacting physically,

exchanging opinions, and shaping individual taste in dialogue" (p. 172). Discounting the opportunities for connection provided by recorded music cuts off a wide swath of the music-listening public from the conflict transformation process. These are individuals who are far more likely to experience recorded music than to have access to live performances on any given day. They are also individuals who are less likely to have access to purposeful spaces of ritual and dialogue. To discount the musical experiences of individuals outside of specialized spaces establishes a tension between the ritual and the everyday that cuts off opportunities to understand exactly how music constructs and impacts the social worlds and sociability of individuals and their communities.

While it is certainly important to recognize the vital role that formal musicking initiatives play in conflict transformation and reconciliation, and to avoid the temptation of overselling the impact that less purposeful musicking engagements might have on formal peacebuilding processes, it is equally crucial to understand that music resounds in ways that sometimes can't be accounted for in more formalized conflict transformation structures. As Lederach and Lederach (2010) remind, peace and reconciliation can resonate even in small containers.

CHAPTER FIVE: MUSICKING IN THE MIDST OF THE TURKISH–KURDISH CONFLICT

We are sleeping among the stars
Addicted to dreams
With our dear friends, we are happy
How sweet is life!
– "Bahoz," Bajar

Let us set the scene.

It is 1991 in Istanbul, Turkey, at the place where summer and fall meet. For the students of Boğaziçi University, it is orientation time, the last few weeks before classes begin. Seasoned students in their second, third, fourth, and fifth years of study have set up tables to show incoming students the wide range of clubs they can join, from political to artistic to academic. New students from around the country who have earned a spot at this, Turkey's oldest and most prestigious public university, are gearing up for a year of English instruction before they can begin their official courses of study. In the late summer warmth, they peruse the tables set up across the cobblestone walkways of their new university, eager—like all new college and university students are—to learn what might be on offer outside of libraries and lecture halls.

Every year, this scene is repeated across Boğaziçi's old, historic South Campus, which overlooks the Bosphorus Strait. It is this view of its sparkling waters that has given

the university (once known as Robert College[22]) its name. Up the hill where the bourgeoisie Etiler and student-filled Rumelihisarüstü neighborhoods meet, the newer North Campus invites students into the city, sending them onto bus lines and metro trains that will ferry them into the promises and perils of Istanbul. But as students walk down the hill that brings them deeper into the South Campus, the blue of the Bosphorus begins to shimmer between some of the last uninterrupted pockets of trees in the city. Sometimes, it beckons beyond a blanket of fog, or else disappears completely behind a swirl of snow and clouds, knowable only from the sound of ships passing through.

It is a view that defines the city between two continents, and yet it is one that might never be seen by its residents in the suburbs and gecekondu (lit. "built over night") of Istanbul's margins. These are not the elite neighborhoods to which Istanbul's wealthy retreat for a chance for some space from the city's bustle. They are instead the districts where houses hastily built by new residents from across the country lean against the walls of apartment blocks that are no match for the earthquakes that plague the Marmara. These are the neighborhoods where imposing public housing units built by the state's Housing Development Administration (TOKİ) stretch up toward the sky, their stories climbing into multiple digits that will still never be high enough for a glimpse of the Bosphorus so many kilometers away. These are the neighborhoods where basement workshops churn out textiles whose prices will far exceed what their craftspeople were paid to make them, places where alleyways and streets are the stage for the games of children who have no

[22] Today's Robert College is a private high school. To learn more about the history of Boğaziçi University, see: http://www.boun.edu.tr/en_US/Content/About_BU/History

access to parks. These are the neighborhoods fed by the bustle of an informal economy that presents the only chance for a livelihood to residents without enough formal education or the 'right' networks, documents, or language on their tongue to have access to a more formal job market (Şen & Tunç, 2011). It is a place where various communities have come to make a home throughout the nearly 100 years of the Turkish Republic, including Muslim communities forced on the road in the early 20th century's population exchanges (Stokes, 1992), which also stole or disrupted the lives, livelihoods, and lifeworlds of Christian communities, including Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks; Black Sea communities seeking economic opportunity (Stokes, 2010); Kurdish communities pushed out by state and militant violence in the country's southeast (Şen & Tunç, 2011); and communities fleeing localized and globalized conflicts and economic crises across the Middle East, Central Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa (Biehl, 2014). This is a place where life is still vibrant and full—but also removed from the romanticism of the Bosphorus.

It is in this sprawling Istanbul that Kardeş Türküler and Bajar were born. The latter in particular seeks to narrate the experience of the working classes and forced migrants in the suburbs and the gecekondu—Kurdish communities especially—while the former seeks to narrate the story of Turkey through the many languages and musical traditions of the people who have called the country home. The stories of both these bands, however, cannot be separated from that picturesque campus overlooking the Bosphorus, where many of their founding members met and discovered a shared desire to use music to tell stories circulating beneath the surface of state-sanctioned discourse.

In this chapter, I will discuss how Kardeş Türküler was founded in the 1990s in the midst of a decade known both as the "dark" years of the Turkish–Kurdish conflict and the "spring" of a multicultural, multilinguistic movemet of art and expression. I will also describe how Bajar came to be born in the latter half of the first decade of the new millennium, when political changes in Turkey set into motion in the '90s seemed to indicate the potential for progress in Turkish–Kurdish reconciliation. I will elaborate these interconnected stories within the broader context of the Turkish–Kurdish conflict. The following chapter will then present the findings of my analysis of the 20-song Kurdish identity sample from these two groups.

Studying the Turkish–Kurdish Conflict

"Çi xweş e hayat [How sweet is life]!" sing the protagonists of Bajar's song "Bahoz" ("Storm") in the Kurmancî dialect of Kurdish. The song tells the coming-of-age story of a group of Kurdish youth. "The classrooms were narrow to us / the curricula and the books," they sing, this time in Turkish. In these lines, they could be any group of children in any school, grappling with the pressures and expectations inherent in any school child's life. However, it is the lyrics before these words that indicate a different issue at hand. "Obligation was our road," the youth sing. "The corridors were the color of the state." These are the very first lyrics of the song, sung against a backdrop of music that has slowly built into a steady rhythm of instrumentals and vocalizations that add a deeper sense of gravity and constriction to the words. Both lyrically and musically, it becomes clear from the very beginning of the song that these youth are grappling with forces much greater than the already difficult experience of youthful angst.

In 2013, the year this song was released on the album *Hoşgeldin – B'xêr Hatî* ("Welcome"), the Turkish–Kurdish conflict had nearly reached its third decade of on-again/off-again violence between state security forces and the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (Kurdistan Workers' Party), known widely as the PKK. Founded at the end of the 1970s by Abdullah Öcalan as one of many organizations across the Turkish and Kurdish Left, the PKK had been engaged in direct violent conflict with the Turkish state since 1984, first with the expressed aim of creating a separate Kurdish nation (Marcus, 2007), and later with the expressed aim of achieving greater autonomy and rights for Kurdish communities within the boundaries of Turkey (Gunes, 2014). Since then, the direct conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK is considered to have cost at least 30,000 lives, many of them civilians (Şen, 2016; Toivanen & Baser, 2019).

Many studies of the Turkish–Kurdish conflict approach it from this angle, as one of state sovereignty and security (Kaliber & Tocci, 2010; Al & Byrd, 2018; Eccarius-Kelly, 2019). Yet, it is also a story of rights abuses; of state oppression and violence against vulnerable communities; of exploitation of families and villages caught between the state and militant organizations; of rigid economic, social, cultural, educational, and linguistic boundaries intended to constrict self-actualization into neat, Turkish forms; and, ultimately, of contested national, ethnic, and religious identities (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008; Şen & Tunç, 2011; Gunes, 2014; Şen, 2016).

However, it is also a story of ingenuity and resilience, of building lifeworlds within sometimes deadly constraints, of finding ways for sociality and communality and purpose that defy even the most stringent of state and societal controls. "We are sleeping

among the stars / addicted to dreams," sing the Kurdish youth in "Bahoz." The restrictions and expectations of the state—which, as will be made clearer throughout this chapter, have often included restrictions of Kurdishness and expectations of Turkishness—have not completely cut the young protagonists off from their aspirations. It is this place of aspiration—of daring to imagine something better—where groups like Kardeş Türküler and Bajar operate. It is the goal of this study to better understand how music functions in this space, and what prospects this specific medium not just of artistic expression but also of social identity construction holds for Turkish–Kurdish reconciliation. To further elaborate the stories of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar within the context of the Turkish–Kurdish conflict, which are anchored in an analysis of a twenty-song sample and further informed by interviews with members from the two bands, I will first need to discuss the methodology of this study.

Methodology

My research falls within the social constructionist tradition, which sees meaning not as an entity isolated from human experience but rather as an entity constructed by humans (individuals and groups) as they interpret their experiences (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Robson & McCartan, 2016). An essential component of this act of interpretation is that it is carried out in interaction with others: with other individuals, with social groups, and with structures and systems. Robson and McCartan (2016) write that a social constructionist approach "emphasizes the world of experience as it is lived, felt and undergone by people acting in social situations" (p. 24).

As such, the goal of my research is not to find out what Kurdish identity objectively *is*, but rather, how it is being *constructed*, particularly by those who live within a conflict within which the construction of that identity has significant social effects and who are aiming, through music, to promote reconciliation within that conflict. The aim of my study is also, thus, not to determine whether such musical constructions of Kurdish identity are definitively fostering Turkish–Kurdish reconciliation, but rather to understand how social identity and narrative genre approaches to conflict play out within music, and then to draw out some possible implications for Turkish–Kurdish reconciliation.

My research is rooted in the empirical phenomenological tradition, which, as Moustakas (1994) writes, "involves a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience" (p. 13). Specifically, I draw on the transcendental phenomenology of Husserl (1931), who "was concerned with the discovery of meanings and essences of knowledge" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 27). The aim of this type of approach is to ascertain the experience of a certain phenomenon and to draw out the meanings ascribed to that phenomenon (by both researcher and research participant) in order to approximate the essence of said phenomenon.

Lederach and Lederach (2010) discuss phenomenology as being concerned with "how something appears, as in how it arrives in the world" (p. 13) and "how things appear once they are noticed, as in what meaning people attach to things in the social world of intersubjective shared human experience" (pp. 13–14). The "shared human

experience" element is crucial, which is why, in addition to conducting an analysis of songs from Kardeş Türküler and Bajar, I have also conducted interviews with members to better understand how they approach their musicking projects and goals.

An additional, crucial element of the social constructionist approach is that the research process is, itself, an effort at constructing meaning—and thus, reality—around a given research question (Clark, Braun, & Hayfield, 2015). The efforts of the researcher, and the research product itself, do not exist outside of the constructionist frame. Thus, the end product of this research must itself be understood to be a construction of meaning informed by my positionality as a researcher born and raised in the United States who speaks Turkish as a second language and whose connections to Turkey include belonging within a Kurdish family through marriage and having lived in Istanbul (for four months) and Ankara (for nine months) as part of academic exchanges. This meaning has been formed in conversation with the members of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar with whom I conducted interviews.

Husserl called this process of meaning making "ideation" (Kockelmans, 1967, cited in Moustakas, 1994), which Moustakas (1994) describes as "[t]he transformation of individual or empirical experience into essential insights" (p. 27). During this process of ideation, an object being studied as it appears in the consciousness of one studying it will then link with the object as it is in nature, resulting in the creation of meaning and the elaboration of knowledge of that object.

Such an inquiry requires preceding with a type of "intentionality" that allows one to "be present to [oneself] and to things in the world" and to "recognize that self and

world are inseparable components of meaning" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 28). This process of functioning intentionality, which is carried out when one attempts to understand the meaning of an experience, allows one to "uncover the meanings of phenomena, deliver them from the anonymity of the natural attitude, [and] move them toward an inclusive totality of consciousness" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 31).

This aspect of intentionality and of attending to essences rooted in my own experience and meaning-making has allowed me to better engage with the narrative and musical aspects of the works of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar, and to better account for the affective and embodied experience of the musical texts. In analyzing these texts, which consist not just of the written lyrics but also of the musical elements and properties as described in Chapter 4, I have attempted to be present to the different essences of these works, a process that has included listening to each song in my sample countless times over the course of two years both passively (in the course of daily life) as well as purposefully (as part of my work to translate the songs and to analyze narrative and musical patterns in the songs), as well as the coding and analyzing of social identity content and narrative genre in the songs (the results of which will be discussed in Chapter 6). This process has also included being present to the insights shared with me by the musicians I interviwed in order to recognize their experiences of musick-making amidst the Turkish–Kurdish conflict. The time we spent in conversation resulted in robust texts, transcribed from recorded audio, which I then read and categorized thematically in order to carefully incorporate the knowledge they shared into my own understanding of the role of music in reconciliation.

Data Collection

This study undertook an analysis of a song sample of twenty songs (ten songs from Kardeş Türküler and ten songs from Bajar) relating to Kurdish identity construction. This primary data was supplemented by interviews with three members from these two groups: Cansun Küçüktürk, a current member of Bajar who joined the group in 2008 after their first album had been recorded; Vedat Yıldırım, a founding and current member of both Bajar and Kardeş Türküler; and Selda Öztürk, a founding and current member of Kardeş Türküler.

Song Sample

The songs from the sample have been chosen from across the respective discographies of both music groups. In the case of Bajar, the sample represents at least one song from each of its four albums. Kardeş Türküler, as an older music group, has many more stand-alone and collaboration-based albums; the ten songs below have been chosen from seven of these albums.

The below songs have been chosen so as to approximate a representation of each group's approach to Kurdish identity. For Bajar, which creates music exclusively around Kurdish identity, the challenge was to whittle down its discography into representative songs. For Kardeş Türküler, which creates and adapts music in multiple languages and promotes a reconciliation project focused on a broader scope of ethnic identity in Turkey, the challenge was to identify songs that addressed (my understanding of) Kurdish identity in particular, and then to choose among them to develop a sample that would allow me to

parse out both the representation of identity and the function of genre in that representation.

Kurdish identity content was identified in a few different ways. First, I looked at the language of the songs and chose those that, if not sung in Turkish, are sung in either Kurmancî or Zazakî (two dialects that are widely considered to belong to the Kurdish language family). For those songs that include Turkish lyrics, and to decide among the Kurdish-language songs, I then looked to the lyrical content to determine whether it related to prominent fabula related to Kurdish identity in Turkey. These include Newroz, the spring new year festival; Kurdish resistance, as narrated in "Serhildan Jiyane E" ("Rebellion is Life"); place-specific fabula, such as "Munzur Xenekiyêne" ("The Munzur [River] was Drowning") and "Diyarbekir/Amed"; the experience of migration, particularly forced migration (as narrated to varying degrees in "Ogit" ["Advice"], "Koça Dawî" ["Last Migration"], and "Îşportecî" ["Peddler"]); and the Roboskî [Turkish: Uludere] massacre of December 2011, as narrated in "Sî û Çar Heb" (English: "Thirty-Four Souls").

Some of the below songs were chosen based not just on their representation of Kurdish identity content but also based on how they relate to each other across the music groups, or in relation to how they are used by the music groups. For example, two of the songs ("Newroz" and "Mîrkut") are played by both groups, though the interpretations are different. These variations offer an opportunity to better understand how the musical interpretation of the songs does or does not influence the social identity content and narrative genre within the songs.

Two songs, “Îşportecî” and “1-0”, were chosen because they were both written in Kurmancî by Vedat Yıldırım, who is a vocalist and percussionist in both Kardeş Türküler and Bajar, and because they both narrate the experiences of child street peddlers (who can be assumed to be Kurdish). While the lyrics of these songs are not the same, their similarity in content provides an opportunity to understand how each band narrates the experiences of Kurdish child workers.

Another two songs were chosen to provide examples of songs that were created by each band for film soundtracks. “Denize Yakılan Türkü” (“Song Written for the Sea”) was written by Kardeş Türküler for the 2004 film *Vizontele Tuuba* (sequel to 2001’s *Vizontele*, a rearrangement of the Turkish word televizyon, or ‘television’), which was directed by Yılmaz Erdoğan. “Emele” (“Construction Worker”) was written by Bajar for their debut 2009 album *Yaklaş* and later was included in the soundtrack for the film *Babamın Kanatları* (“The Wings of My Father,” dir. Kivanç Secer, 2016). The full film soundtrack was also composed by Bajar. The song was written and is sung in Kurmancî.

Finally, a number of songs were selected due to their status as *türkü*, or folk ballads, that were adapted by Kardeş Türküler and have a relationship to Kurdish identity. “Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim” was chosen due to its incorporation of both traditional Zazakî and Turkish lyrics. “Kara Üzüm Habbesi” (“The Black Grape’s Seed”) is described by Kardeş Türküler as a “Turkish–Kurdish folk song” from Urfa, while “De Bıla Bêto” (“Let It Come”) is a Kurdish traditional song from Hakkâri (“Kardeş Türküler: Doğu,” n.d.). “Halâlê” (English: “Windflower”), which is from Kardeş Türküler’s latest album, *Yol* (“Road”), is from the Botan region of southeast Turkey, also

associated with Hakkâri. This last song was chosen for the sample in part due to the fact that it has an associated music video on YouTube (Kalan Müzik, 2017).

The full sample of songs, including information regarding which songs were adapted by the music groups and which songs were written by/for the music groups, can be found in Table 7.

Table 7. Full Song Sample

Kardeş Türküler ["Ballads of Solidarity"]	**Bajar** ["City"]
"**Newroz**"* (*Bahar*, 2006)	"**Newroz - Nevruz**"* (*Hoş Geldin - B'Xêr Hatî,* 2013)
"**1-0**"* (*Çocuk Haklı*, 2011)	"**Îşportecî - İşportacı** [Peddler]"* (*Nezbe - Yaklaş*, 2009)
"**Mîrkut** [Mallet]" ∞ (*Hemâvâz*, 2002)	"**Mîrkut - Tokmak** [Mallet]" ∞ (*Nezbe - Yaklaş*, 2009)
"**Kara Üzüm Habbesi** [The Black Grape's Seed]" ∞ (*Doğu*, 1999)	"**Serhildan Jiyane E - Yaşamak İsyandır** [Rebellion is Life]" ∞ (*Hoş Geldin - B'Xêr Hatî,* 2013)
"**Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim** [Dem / My Tender Sage with Hazel Eyes]" ∞ (*Kardeş Türküler,* 1997)	"**Ogit - Nasihat** [Advice]"* (*Nezbe - Yaklaş*, 2009)
"**De Bila Bêto (Haydi Gelsin)** [Let It Come]" (*Doğu*, 1999) ∞	"**Sî û Çar Heb - Otuz Dört Adet (requiem)** [Thirty-Four Souls]"* (*Hoş Geldin - B'Xêr Hatî,* 2013)
"**Denize Yakılan Türkü** [Song Written for the Sea]"* (*Vizontele Tuuba Film Müziği*, 2004)	"**Emele - Amele** [Construction Worker]"* (*Babamın Kanatları Orijinal Film Müzikleri*, 2017)

"**Munzur Xenekiyêne** [The Munzur was Drowning]"* (*Bahar*, 2006)	"**Koça Dawî - Son Göç** [Last Migration]"* (*Hoş Geldin - B'Xêr Hatî,* 2013)
"**Halâlê (Dağ Lâlesi)** [Windflower]" ∞ (*Yol*, 2017)	"**Diyarbekir/Amed**"* (*Altüst/Ser û Bin*, 2019)
"**Kerwanê** [Caravan]"* (*Doğu*, 1999)	"**Bahoz - Fırtına** [Storm]"* (*Hoş Geldin - B'Xêr Hatî,* 2013)
* Denotes a song written by or for the music group. ∞ Denotes a song adapted by the music group.	

On occassion, I have used official music or concert videos posted by the group or its representatives and record labels on YouTube to supplement my analysis of the songs in the sample.

To better understand the construction of Kurdish identity in the song sample and draw out implications for Turkish–Kurdish reconciliation, I have carried out three types of analysis: (1) a thematic analysis focused on general themes of Kurdishness, the results of which will be presented in the first part of this chapter; (2) an analysis of social identity content following the collective axiology, relative deprivation, and outgroup threat frameworks presented in Chapter 2; and (3) a narrative genre analysis following the framework presented in Chapter 3.

Following Clark, Braun, and Hayfield (2015), I have used the social identity and narrative genre frameworks in particular to conduct an analysis that is *latent* (i.e. goes beyond surface meaning), and *interpretive* (i.e. aims to reveal the importance of the meanings). In undertaking this analysis, I was informed by the academic literature on

social identity (presented in Chapter 2), on narrative genre (presented in Chapter 3), and on musicking , conflict transformation, and reconciliation (presented in Chapter 4).

To carry out the three types of analysis discussed above, I first had to render the songs into texts that would be code-able. To prepare the data for coding, the original lyrics of the songs (in Turkish, Kurmancî, and/or Zazakî) were compiled into Word documents first using lyrics provided by the groups on their official websites or YouTube videos. When these lyrics were not provided on an official website or YouTube video, the lyrics were instead compiled by cross-referencing a variety of popular lyrics websites, including Lyrics Translate (https://lyricstranslate.com), Genius (https://genius.com), and Musixmatch (https://musixmatch.com).

In all of these cases, even those in which the official lyrics were available, these lyrics were available as a generalized representative of the lyrics included in the song, but not as a discrete accounting of how many times these lyrics appeared in each song, or in what order. Both the frequency of the lyrics and the order in which they are included in the song are characteristics of the song's story that are necessary knowledge for appropriately analyzing the content of the song. Thus, once the lyrics of each song had been compiled, I then followed a process of listening to each song multiple times in order to identify and transcribe the frequency and order of the lyrics.

During this process, I also organized the songs using Western musical terms—e.g., chorus, interlude, etc.—in order to provide a representation of the structure and delivery of the songs. While the musical genre and style of the songs was not systematically analyzed as a separate unit of analysis, these elements supplemented my

interpretation of the text. The inclusion of these textual elements, however, as well as blank space between stanzas, had the effect of creating considerable portions of each document that registered as not being coded. This impacted the representation of the percentages of coded document that will be discussed with relation to collective axiology and narrative genre in Chapter 6. It is important for the reader of this study to understand, then, that these percentages represent *not* the percentage of the actual lyrical text, but rather the percentage of the coded document. While this creates a certain amount of inelegance in the analysis, it also serves as an important reminder that I limited my coding to the lyrics, and did not extend my systematic analysis to the instrumental elements of each text. Thus, the spaces in the coding documents in some ways represent the nonlyrical, instrumental portions of the songs, rather than just blank space.

As I was organizing the song lyrics into their appropriate structure, I became additionally aware that in some songs (for example, "1-0" by Kardeş Türküler and "Îşportecî" by Bajar), there were lyrics in the song (often in Kurdish dialects) that were not included in any of the publicly available online lyric sources. As such, I worked with a native Turkish and Kurmancî[23] speaker to endeavor to identify the missing lyrics in those songs that were incomplete. However, in some cases, especially with regard to differences in Kurdish dialect, missing lyrics were unable to be identified, and thus, some of the song texts remain approximate, but not complete, representations of the song's lyrical content.

[23] I would like to thank my husband, Abdullah Tunç, for his integral support in this effort. These documents would not have been able to be compiled without his contributions.

Once all of the original language lyrics were identified and properly organized, I then translated each of the songs into English. As someone with C1-level Turkish proficiency, this process started with me using my Turkish proficiency, and online dictionaries (Google Translate and Sesli Sözlük) on occassion, to generate translations for the songs originally in Turkish. Some of the songs that were originally in Kurmancî or Zazakî also had official, publicly available translations into Turkish (as was the case for all of the songs from Bajar except "Diyarbekir/Amed"), and so I used these Turkish translations to generate English translations. However, in order to reduce the discrepancies that inevitably occur as the chain of translation increases, I then had the English translations referenced against the original Kurmancî by a native Kurmancî speaker in order to assure their accuracy. I was unable to follow the same process for the Zazakî translations due to not having a connection with a native Zazakî speaker. In these cases, I cross-referenced the translations against other publicly available translations in Turkish, English, and French (in which I also have proficiency) on Lyrics Translate. However, because these English translations were not reviewed by a native Zazakî speaker, they can be assumed to be more limited in accuracy.

However, some of the Kurmancî and Zazakî songs did not include official Turkish-language translations. In these cases, I followed a process that began with me using online dictionaries (Google Translate for Kurmancî–English, as well as the Turkish–Kurdish translation program available at https://www.hakkarim.net/cgi-bin/yenisozluk.cgi/goste#%C3%BCst) to generate first passes at English translations. I then again sat down with a native Kurmancî speaker to ensure accuracy. As with the

previous Zazakî songs, due to not having contact with a native Zazakî speaker, I cross-referenced the translations with publicly available Turkish, English, and French translations on Lyrics Translate.

The coding process was carried out by a single researcher (myself) using NVivo 12 for Mac. Involving additional coders in order to achieve inter-coder reliability would have been ideal to further support the validity of the results. However, due to funding limitations and time constraints, the involvement of multiple researchers in this process was untenable.

The data was coded at the levels of the stanza, line, or phrase. Both the original source text (in Turkish, Kurmancî, or Zazakî) and the English translation text were coded. The stylistic and structural notes were not coded, as already discussed above. The song lyrics were analyzed specifically for social identity content and narrative genre content. The social identity content in the songs was analyzed using the axiological difference model developed by Rothbart and Korostelina (2006b), reproduced in Figure 1, which can be found in Chapter 2 on p. 47. To determine the axiological difference represented in each song, the features of collective generality and axiological balance were gathered into the coding framework provided by Rothbart and Korostelina (2006b), which was compiled into Table 1 found in Chapter 2 on p. 46.

The social identity content represented in this axiological difference model was further elucidated by an outgroup threat framework developed from Korostelina (2007) and a relative deprivation framework developed from Gurr (1971). The outgroup threat

framework can be found in Table 2 on page 51 of this study, and the relative deprivation framework can be found in Table 3 on page 54 of this study.

The narrative genre of the songs was determined using the moral clarity / moral complexity framework developed by Simmons (2020), represented in Table 4 on page 78 of this study and in Table 5 on page 79 of this study. The analysis of the moral clarity / moral complexity content of the song's lyrics then allowed for a determination of which narrative genres were represented within the song: romance and/or melodrama (moral clarity), and tragedy and/or redemption (moral complexity).

In addition to the social identity and narrative genre analysis, I used a variety of other codes to determine the dynamics at play in the songs and to enrich the discussion of the social identity and narrative genre findings. First, I coded the conflict content in each song, which I identified as being present when an ingroup and outgroup were explicitly referenced and the plot of the song included tension between them based on an explicit conflict situation, or when other types of tension were identifiable within the song's plot. Next, I coded the ingroup and outgroup present in each song, and in order to determine the axiological balance, I coded whether the ingroup was portrayed positively or negatively, and whether the outgroup was portrayed positively or negatively.

The use of multiple frameworks in the coding of documents allowed for a comparison of different approaches to the material and the identification of patterns where the codes overlapped. It is important to note that there was also the possibility of overlap in coding *within* the frameworks themselves. For example, within the narrative genre analysis, it was possible for the same lyrics in a song to display characteristics that

fell under moral clarity *and* moral complexity. Similarly, there were some instances in which text displayed both high and low generality (underneath collective generality). These results will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

Interviews

An initial analysis of the song sample, in which social identity and narrative genre content was coded according to the collective axiology, relative deprivation, outgroup threat, and narrative genre frameworks discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, informed my development of interview questions for members of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar. Prior to conducting these interviews, Institutional Board Approval was received from George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. While I had initially planned to conduct these interviews in person in Turkey, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic rendered this an impossibility. As such, these interviews were conducted virtually over Zoom. Precautions were taken to ensure that these discussions were private, such as sharing the link using encrypted messaging platforms. I conducted the interviews in Turkish, a language in which I am fluent, with the rare use of English when comprehension on my part or the part of the interviewee required it.

The shortest interview lasted approximately one-and-a-half hours while the longest interview lasted two-and-a-half hours. Interviewees were presented with a letter of informed consent in Turkish (translated by myself with the help of a native speaker of Turkish).[24] The letter informed interviewees of the purpose of the research, its procedures, and any risks or benefits that the research might pose. Interviewees were

[24] I would like to extend my thanks to my husband, Abdullah Tunç, who helped me with this translation.

invited to indicate three levels of consent: (1) overall consent to participate in the research, (2) consent to have the audio and/or video from the interviews recorded, and (3) preference with regard to how their contributions could be attributed within the research. Due to the technological limitations posed by the pandemic, IRB approval was received to have interviewees indicate their consent through a typed, rather than handwritten, signature. All three interviewees who participated in this study consented to have their audio and video recorded and consented to have their contributions attributed to them by name.

The interviews were semi-structured, based on the schedule of questions found in Appendix A and Appendix B. When possible, these questions were asked one-by-one in the order presented in the schedule. In the case of one interview, time limitations required that some questions be combined. In addition to the set schedule of questions, clarifying questions were posed to the interviewees to expand upon specific themes already mentioned in the course of the interview. While time-limitations within the interview sessions and the research period did not allow for a full discussion of each song within the sample with the interviewees, certain songs were discussed, whether of the interviewees' own accord or following my prompting.

Following the discussions, I transcribed the audio of the interviews and translated those sections that were in Turkish (the grand majority of each text) into English. The Turkish-language transcriptions were shared with interviewees when requested in order to allow them to clarify any themes and correct any issues of incorrect transcription.

These texts were used to draw out themes and insights that informed the primary data of the study, which is the song sample.

Data analysis

I have followed the six steps of thematic analysis as laid out by Clark, Braun, and Hayfield (2015) to the best of my ability, which are: (1) familiarization with the texts by reading them through at least twice; (2) "systematic and rigorous coding" (p. 234); (3) only beginning the search for themes once the coding has been completed; (4) reviewing and consolidating the themes that ensure "an analysis that addresses [the] research question *and* reflects the content of the data" (p. 238); (5) naming the themes and providing coherent definitions for them (in the case of this study, applying the social identity and narrative genre frameworks accurately); and 6) writing up the findings in a way that reflects best practices, including pursuing a "[b]alance between analytic narrative and data extracts" and ensuring that the data represents "a good fit" with the "analytic claims" (p. 242).

Objectivity and Validity

Where social constructionist approaches are concerned, the concept of objectivity is inherently fraught. Social constructionism turns on the making of meaning through intersubjective interaction. Reality is thus constructed, rather than being an isolated, independently observable entity. Objectivity becomes more complicated where qualitative data are concerned, as their analysis often requires interpretation by researchers who are themselves part of the meaning-making occurring in the research project.

Nevertheless, there are steps that a researcher can take to ensure that the findings of the research are valid. With regard to thematic analysis, it is important for the researcher to remember that one is not "finding *the* analysis already evident in the data" but rather "constructing *an* analysis that is plausible and robust" (Clark, Braun, & Hayfield, 2015, p. 236). This understanding of the work of the researcher mirrors Bal's (2017) understanding of narratological analysis. She writes:

> An interpretation is a proposal. If a proposal is to be accepted, it must be well founded. If it is based on a precise description it can be discussed, even if, in practice, the intuitive interpretation preceded the analysis. The theory…is an instrument for making descriptions, and hence interpretations, discussable. That, not objectivity or certainty, 'being right' or 'proving wrong,' is the point. (p. 10)

Limitations

As with all research, it is crucial that the analytic claims do not extend beyond the limits of the data that have been collected and do not rely on an interpretation that is not plausible. Nevertheless, some level of interpretation rooted in the particulars of the data and in the positionality of the analyst is required. With this type of research, there is a temptation to let the music 'speak for itself,' but from a social constructionist lens, such speaking is impossible. Music does not make its own meaning. Those who interact with it, and who interact with each other *around* it and to create it, do. A limitation of the current study is that it does not include s systematic interpretation of a large number of

interviews conducted with current and former members of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar. While the semi-structured discussions I conducted with three current members has allowed for a more robust interpretation of the song sample beyond my own experiences of the music in question, discussions with a wider swath of the current and former membership of each group would have allowed me to draw deeper conclusions regarding their approach to music and understanding of Kurdish identity in Turkey.

An additional limitation of this study lies in the lack of data collected from other listeners of the music of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar. According to Ross (2007), "[u]nderstanding cultural expressions and performances means considering not just the nature and content of the events but also how ingroup and outgroup audiences respond to them" (p. 63). This study was initially designed to allow for a series of focus groups with both Kurdish and non-Kurdish listeners in Turkey during the summer of 2020; however, the COVID-19 pandemic rendered this phase of data collection unsafe and infeasible within the current timeline, resources, access to technology, and political environment in Turkey.

As such, the findings of this study must be understood as being limited in that they do not reflect a broader interpretation of ingroup and outgroup responses, but rather an interpretation of the interrelation between social identity construction, narrative genre, and musical form based on a rigorous application of social identity and narrative frameworks and informed by a discreet set of interviews conducted with musicians who have been working in the reconciliation space in Turkey over the last three decades. As

will be discussed in Chapter 7, further research in this space would do well to incorporate a systematic study of a wide range of listener and participant experiences.

Music and the Turkish–Kurdish Conflict

Themes of conflict and peace are at the core of the repertoires of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar, but their discographies are not textbooks or policy papers. Their songs do not name Turks and Kurds, Laz and Circassians, Alevis and Sunnis, but rather aim to approximate their experiences through story. There are multiple reasons why ethnic and religious identities are not explicitly named in these songs but rather are shown through use of specific languages (Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian, etc.), symbols, and instrumental and vocal techniques.

In the case of Kardeş Türküler, which community's story is being told is usually understood from the language that is being used in the songs's lyrics (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020). According to Öztürk, in addition to the use of specific languages to tell the stories of specific groups, their repertoire also draws on specific musical and storytelling techniques that can be associated with different communities. In the group's work, a mission of gathering, respecting, and also innovating musical traditions and techniques from Turkey's many ethnic, religious, and linguistic communities is paramount:

> Kardeş Türkuler's music is a music that is nurtured by tradition and custom. Knowing and learning traditions is important. If we're talking about musical elements, here we mean the characteristics of makam [scales], rhythmic structure,

> vocal style. But at the same time we are also people who live in the city and each have very different lives. For this reason, we also need to reinterpret and create new lyrics for these musics. We present some songs anew by interpreting them anew, while with other songs, we sometimes compose and add on new sections or even create entirely new works. In each approach, we are nevertheless bringing about a new creation. (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020)

Thus, while respecting tradition is important for Kardeş Türküler, so is allowing innovation and creativity to emerge in their discography. Kardeş Türküler is not an "authenticity project," according to Vedat Yıldırım:

> Authenticism makes cultures a little too crystal clear. With a specific türkü [folk song], it's like someone is saying, 'Yes, you're creating folk songs, but you're distorting them. You're changing them too much. You're wiping out their essence.' But what we're saying is, 'These folk songs have already always been changing.' Culture is already always undergoing change. Folk songs change, their lyrics change. We are part of the present-day process of change. (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020)

However, making sure to tie certain musical traditions and lineages back to their associated communities is important for the group, even if innovation and creativity are also central elements of the work. For example, Öztürk noted that when telling stories of

Kurdish communities, Kardeş Türküler will draw on specific storytelling and musical techniques associated with those communities, such as dengbêj (which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6):

> Kurdish oral culture is rooted in the dengbêj tradition. For example, when we are forming songs in Kurdish, one of the traditions we draw from is dengbêj. In the process of arrangement, this tradition's specific vocal, makam [scale], and rhythmic structures, as well as the uses and feelings of these, are a vast resource for us. In these songs, we adapt and use these melodic motifs, tunes, rhythms, and vocal styles. (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020)

Thus, according to Öztürk, it is these specific musical traditions and styles that construct the character of Kardeş Türküler's songs, whether they are in Kurdish, Armenian, Circassian, or other languages.

For Bajar, the lack of specific reference to different ethnic or religious communities is multifold. The overall purpose of Bajar's discography is to narrate under-told or under-recognized stories from within the Kurdish community, particularly urban Kurdish communities. It seeks to do so without precluding opportunities for recognition of cross-cutting themes of class, education, life events, etc., by its listeners, who are both Kurdish and non-Kurdish (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020). "[Our songs] aren't just about complicating issues of ethnicity but also about simply being human," Yıldırım said. According to Küçüktürk, the way that Bajar elaborates the

experience of being human is by maintaining a sense of poetry in their music. “We want to follow the path of the poets,” he said (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 8, 2020).

According to Öztürk, Küçüktürk, and Yıldırım, fostering peace and reconciliation by platforming the stories of Turkey’s many cultural, linguistic, and religious groups (in the case of Kardeş Türküler) and of Turkey’s many different Kurdish communities (in the case of Bajar) is central to the organizing missions of these two bands. However, the art is as much the purpose as is the goal of peace, reconciliation, and social cohesion. Their dedication to their musical craft, both as individuals and groups, means taking great care to develop an archive of folkloric traditions from across Turkey (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020; S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020); working with their fellow group members, whose own life experiences span different cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic identities, to preserve musical traditions not by rendering them static but instead by innovation through arrangement, composition, and the writing of new lyrics (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020); incorporating different musical traditions, instruments, and inspirations from across the world to be in conversation with a broader global community of musicians (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 8, 2020; V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020); experimenting with different musical techniques, including instrumental and vocal techniques, to achieve a unique sound at the cross-section of cultures, traditions, and even musical genres (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 8, 2020; S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020);

and working with other artists across different forms (including dance, poetry, and film) and from different groups (beyond the memberships of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar) to enable the telling of stories that are able to better represent the lived experiences of Turkey's different communities (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020; S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020).

Since each group's founding, these goals, practices, and commitments have been carried out against a backdrop of intergroup conflict that has touched nearly every community in Turkey in its own way. The fraught founding of Turkey's Republic, which included a nationalization project that suppressed non-Turkish ethnic and linguistic identities, has left the country's many communities still grappling with the repercussions of intergroup division nearly a century later (Şen, 2016). Examining the wide reach of this nationalization project and its impact on all of Turkey's ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic communities goes beyond the scope of this study. However, since it is the purpose of this research to examine Kurdish identity construction in the music of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar and its potential implications for Turkish–Kurdish reconciliation, a better understanding of the dynamics of this nationalization project and its impact on Turkey's broad Kurdish community is required. What the work of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar shows is that these dynamics are forever embedded within the very music they are making to enable peace and reconciliation.

A Brief Overview of the Turkish–Kurdish Conflict

The modern-day Turkish–Kurdish conflict stretches back to the very beginnings of the Republic of Turkey's nationalizing project. In the wake of the Ottoman Empire's

dissolution and the Kurtuluş Savaşı (the Turkish "War of Liberation"), the Republic of Turkey was established in 1923. In this period, the country's founding elites set about the formation of a national identity that, in their view, would prevent the further loss of territory while staving off the colonizing missions of the dominant Western powers, including Britain and France. In the estimation of these elites, what the Republic of Turkey required was a secular, civic national identity that regulated the public practice of religious and ethnic identities to the private sphere.

Here it is important to remember the observation from Inman and Peacock (2007, p. 205) that a "successful" ethnic identity is a nation. While in theory this new, civic notion of Turkish national identity allowed individuals of various cultural, linguistic, and religious communities to be included in the broader notion of the Turkish nation, in practice, such inclusion came only if one was willing to relinquish public practice of any cultural, linguistic, or religious identity that was not deemed as falling under a Turkish (linguistic and historical) and Muslim (religious) umbrella. Rather than what Selda Öztürk observed as always having been a "multicultural, multilingual, multireligious" region (personal communication, October 21, 2020), Turkey became a "one religion, one language" country (Şen, 2016, p. 36).

As discussed in Chapter 2, the issue of social identity contestation is not that identity is static or inherent but that individuals often come into and maintain identities through emotional attachment that makes such identities difficult to see as adaptable or flexible. Turkish national identity, which privileged Turkish ethnic ways of being even as it aimed to be purely civic, required communities to relinquish their emotional attachment

to their other social identities while also structuring society through laws that unsettled ways of life in many parts of the country; for example, by outlawing certain types of dress, closing religious schools and Sufi lodges, and instituting an official language (modern Turkish) that was far from widely spoken or accessible to most of the country's new citizens (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008).

The early years of the Republic thus saw great change—and substantial pushback, particularly from Kurdish communities. A number of localized rebellions through the 1920s and '30s in Kurdish communities in eastern and southeastern Anatolia were met with a harsh and asymmetrical military response, killing and displacing thousands of civilians (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008; Gunes, 2014). Musa Anter a prominent Kurdish writer and intellectual who was assassinated in 1992 by Turkey's Gendarmerie Intelligence Organization (known by its Turkish acronym, JİTEM), observed in a 2016 posthumously published edition of written reflections how striking it was for him as a young man to witness the celebration of Sabiha Gökçen, an adopted daughter of Turkey's first president, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, as Turkey's "Hero Pilot" when she earned that 'distinction' during bombing raids that killed many in Dersim (which the Turkish government calls Tunceli) during the 1937–38 Dersim rebellion (p. 49).

These rebellions and their quick and brutal suppression set the stage for two patterns to become entrenched within Turkey. First, the Turkish state immediately constructed Kurdish communities of any background (religious or linguistic) to be a threat to the integrity of the state (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008). In public, Kurds were constructed as 'Mountain Turks' whose language and customs had become corrupted—and thus,

were in need of correcting (Al & Byrd, 2018). A number of laws and policies were undertaken to weaken the organizing and sociality capacity of Kurdish communities, including the Şark Islahat Planı ("Eastern Reform Plan"), which instituted a policy of demographic change that forcibly resettled Kurdish communities perceived as being rebellious or traitorous to western provinces (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008; Şen, 2016). As Kurds were displaced to the west, other ethnic communities were resettled in the eastern provinces, while non-Kurdish officials were placed into the administration of majority-Kurdish provinces (Şen, 2016). What's more, decades before the conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK began, the Turkish military and gendarmerie were intentionally stationed in Kurdish-majority provinces in Turkey's southeast (Şen, 2016), giving rise to what would become one of the most defining features of life in these provinces: the near ubiquitous presence of checkpoints, convoys, surveillance, and raids.

A more active Kurdish movement to resist the "one religion, one language" civic identity of the Turkish Republic, which also had psychological and material impacts for other non-Turkish communities as well as non-Muslim communities, was not see again until the '60s and '70s. In this period, the rise in Leftist movements served as a site of organization for Kurdish communities as well, who often organized around more cross-cutting socioeconomic concerns. However, even in these arenas, Kurdish communities continuously ran up against boundaries that suppressed Kurdish traditions, expressions, and ways of knowing (Gunes, 2014). It was in this context that the PKK emerged, connecting Leftist ideologies and organizing principles with explicit Kurdish nationalism

and a belief that only armed rebellion would address the Turkish state's denial of rights and recognition to its Kurdish citizens (Marcus, 2007).

The period between 1960 and 1997 was marked by no less than four coups (with 1971 and 1997 being 'bloodless'), but it was the 1980 coup that inarguably sticks most firmly in the memory of today's Turkish citizens due to the trauma it inflicted on the hundreds of thousands of people who were arrested and tortured in its aftermath, in addition to its reification and deepening of Turkish nationalism across the country. For Kurdish communities in particular, the coup and its immediate aftermath would have long-lasting ramifications for legal and social life. Among those arrested were many Kurds who were detained and tortured at Diyarbakir Prison, where they were subjected to torture made all the more brutal for its agenda of Turkification (Gambetti, 2005; Verstraete, 2018). Now closed, it is at the center of a contested debate regarding turning the facility into a museum to salvage the memory and meaning of the suffering of its Kurdish prisoners (Meryem, 2018; Eccarius-Kelly, 2019).

The impact of the 1980 coup was also experienced more broadly across Kurdish society. While barriers to the use of the Kurdish language had existed prior to 1980, the military government put into place an official ban on Kurdish in 1983, which included speaking it in public (Gambetti, 2005). Its impact was made all the more serious for people who had never received formal education in Turkish, especially women, meaning that their Turkish was too limited to carry out official life, and on occasion daily life, outside the home. Back in Diyarbakir Prison, women would visit sons and husbands, fathers and brothers, and these families, already separated by the walls of the prison,

would end up further separated by the language ban, because their only way of communication was in a language that was not allowed to be spoken within those walls (Gambetti, 2005; Verstraete, 2018).

It was in this context that the PKK initiated direct, violent conflict with the Turkish state in 1984 (Marcus, 2007). Prior to this period, to be Kurdish in Turkey had meant to have the very expression of one's communality, history, and language, and the practice of one's traditions and cultural practices, either severely suppressed or outright criminalized. Following 1984, to be Kurdish meant to become further securitized, and—particularly for those Kurds who lived in southeastern provinces where the fight between the military and the PKK was concentrated—to live in an active zone of violent conflict. From the late '80s until 1999 when Abdullah Öcalan was caught by Turkish intelligence in Kenya and imprisoned in Turkey, the Turkish–Kurdish conflict was marked by extrajudicial killings, pressure and violence against civilians by both the Turkish state and PKK militants, the military's burning and destruction of villages perceived as being loyal to the PKK, the forced displacement of anywhere from 275,000 to two million people from their homes in the southeast between 1992 and 1996 alone ("Turkey's failed policy," 1996), and the continued repression of Kurdish identity (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008; Gunes, 2014; Al & Byrd, 2018).

Yet, in the late 1980s and early '90s, a series of policies and moves was put into place by the government of Prime Minister Turgut Özal—who had identified himself has having a grandmother who was Kurdish—that set the stage for an artistic spring to

blossom in the midst of the winter of the military–PKK conflict (Somer, 2005; Gunes, 2014). It was in this context that Kardeş Türküler was founded.

Kardeş Türküler and Bajar in the Midst of Conflict

When Selda Öztürk arrived at Boğaziçi University in 1991, she knew two things. First, she was going to study molecular biology and genetic engineering; second, she was going to take advantage of the extracurricular opportunities her university experience had to offer.

Like many new students who arrive during orientation week—including myself two decades later as an American exchange student—Öztürk was drawn in by the wide variety of clubs that formed a backbone for the university's social life. She and one of her friends, who also became a founding member of Kardeş Türküler[25], decided one day to check out a performance hosted by the folklore club. As Öztürk tells it:

> I went to watch the show with [my friend], who is also in Kardeş Türküler. I was very moved by the performance and said to [her], "We should definitely join this club. Our place is here." On the one hand we were studying, but on the other, we also wanted to socialize. And we both had an interest in music, owing to our families. We wanted to join that musical environment. (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020)

[25] As I have not interviewed this member of Kardeş Türküler or obtained permission to name her in this thesis, I am keeping her anonymous.

In the years that followed, Öztürk, her friend, and other students who would go on to become founding members of Kardeş Türküler, dedicating themselves not just to their schoolwork but to developing the portfolio of the club. When Öztürk first arrived at the university, the club was dedicated to bringing together musical traditions, as well as some theatrical and dance traditions, from different cultures around the world. However, a crucial political opening in the early '90s introduced the possibility for Öztürk and her friends to begin exploring traditions that were much closer to home but that, because of the aforementioned Turkish nationalization project, had remained underground or suppressed.

In 1991, the law that had banned the use of Kurdish was lifted, introducing new opportunities for publication and broadcasting—and for music making. "It can be said that these were abundant years in the history of cultural and artistic production in Turkey," Öztürk said (personal communication, October 21, 2020). According to Öztürk, she and other members of Kardeş Türküler—who began to see their rigorous, if extracurricular, study of music as less of a hobby and more of a potential professional endeavor—had been interested in creating and performing folk repertoires that celebrated what they appreciated as the multicultural, multilinguistic, and multireligious communities of Turkey and its surrounding geography. With the lifting of the Kurdish ban, which also impacted other minority languages that couldn't be legally published or broadcast, just enough space had opened for these musicians to do this work.

This opening was not all encompassing or without its limitations, of course. When the group sought to release its first music video, the Turkish–Kurdish song "Kara Üzüm

Habbesi," they were unable to air the clip on any TV channels in Turkey. According to Vedat Yıldırım, there was a deep-seated prejudice in Turkey, particularly in state institutions such as the Radio and Television High Council (known by its Turkish acronym, RTÜK), that if there was Kurdish in a song or publication, it must mean that "certainly something is there [that shouldn't be]" (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020). The political scene more broadly faced false starts in the '90s as well, with Kurdish politicians and parties gaining more ground than before as part of coalitions only to then have their immunity removed and their parties disbanded (Somer, 2005). Nevertheless, this last decade was also marked by resilience and the beginnings of what Erbay (2012) views as a "Kurdish spring" (p. 12).

In many ways, the work of Kardeş Türküler became—and continues to be—the very opposite of what Turkey's elites sought to do in the early decades of the Republic with regard to recording and archiving folk music. Şen (2016) observes that, drawing from Western European conceptions of the "folk" as the "nation's soul" (p. 36), the elites of the early Turkish Republic identified folk music as one way to build up a new notion of national identity that could compete with Ottoman allegiances (see also Stokes, 1992; Stokes, 2010). At least four "tours" (in 1926, 1938, 1967, and 1976) were taken by state officials to research and record the music of the Turkish folk, with officials representing institutions such as the Ministry of National Education, the Ankara State Conservatory, and even the state's broadcasting agency (the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation, or TRT). These officials visited Turkey's provinces, including its southeastern region, to gather musical traditions and stories (Şen, 2016).

In this effort, especially during the earlier tours, the state officials were guided by Ziya Gökalp's vision of Turkey's most appropriate national music as being a blend of both Western forms and folk traditions, with so-called "Eastern" traditions being perceived as "irrational" and in need of discarding (Stokes, 1992, pp. 33–34). For the folk traditions to become sufficiently Turkish (in terms of the civic national identity), they had to be standardized to fit a certain idea of folk music, with their lyrics translated into Turkish (Şen, 2016). In this way, Turkey's various folk traditions from a wide variety of linguistic, religious, and ethnic communities were narrowed into a set vision of what it mean to be Turkish by defining what properly Turkish folk music sounded like.

Kardeş Türküler as it is described by Öztürk and Yıldırım can be considered as seeking to undo much of the damage done by this period. First, the group does this by researching musical forms, stories, and traditions and returning recognition to the communities from which they come. In their earliest years, Kardeş Türküler, as part of the Boğaziçi University folklore club, built up a repertoire that included songs from different ethnic groups and religious groups, using minority languages that hadn't been allowed to be published or recorded until 1991 (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020). Their most recent album, *Yol*, released in 2017, includes songs in Turkish, Kurdish (Kurmancî and Zazakî), Circassian, Armenian, Arabic, and Pontic Greek.[26] However, the group has also sung in Assyrian, Azeri, Romany, Georgian, and Balkan languages, among others. To build out its repertoire, the group does extensive research—online, in cooperation with cultural organizations, and with other artists and

[26] See the album's online brochure: http://kardesturkuler.com/yool/index.htm

musicians—to identify different musical traditions and potential songs for inclusion on their albums. The group's members also work diligently to master the different inflections required of songs in languages that are not spoken by the vocal artists, which include Yıldırım and Öztürk (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020; S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020).

According to Öztürk, when the group identifies a song that they may want to include in their repertoire, they will first learn as much as they can about its story. They will then begin the work of learning the melody and rhythm of the song—and then, in workshop with each other, build out an adaptation and arrangement of the song that fits both the "sound" they are seeking as a group (for example, specific rhythms, the presence of many voices and instrumental elements building on one another) and the themes that they are hoping to present within the song. As they build out their version of the song, they will constantly keep in mind the question of how they will interpret the music (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020).

Yıldırım notes that for those languages that group members are fluent in (for example, he is able to speak both Turkish and Kurdish), Kardeş Türküler is able to be a bit more creative with the actual narratives at the heart of the songs. While some lyrics are preserved in original songs, other melodies are combined with new lyrics to tell stories that fit themes that Kardeş Türküler seeks to bring to the attention of their audience (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020). Such themes have included women's rights, migration, environmental issues, children's rights, multiplicity

of language, religious faith, opposition to war, and romance (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020; S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020).

An important element of Kardeş Türküler's work lies in seeking to foster themes of living together in peace not just by helping audiences connect with musical traditions and languages that might be unfamiliar to them but also by disrupting the notion that certain melodies, storytelling styles, or ways of understanding the world belong to, or are inherent in, any one group over another. The group does so in particular by pushing back against the "nation-state" construct (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020; S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020). As Öztürk told me:

> We are living in a nation-state construction, and not just in Turkey. When we look at the social structure here, we really see that many different communities have lived here and are living here. From the perspective of language, of culture, and of religious belief, there are many different traditions, many different human communities. Right now, one of the world's biggest crises, alongside ecological, societal, and political crises, is the case of migration and migrants. There are four million Syrians living right now in Turkey because of the war in Syria. Everywhere in the world, polarizing policies have caused discourses of hate and enmity against foreigners to be on the rise. Those coming from Syria have had their houses and places of work destroyed, have been killed. [This construct of the nation-state] hasn't established a social structure that has enabled people to live

> together in peace, to have societal peace. (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020)

Finding ways for different communities to live together is an abiding concern of Kardeş Türküler within the context of its musicking activities. According to Yıldırım, the nation-state construct reifies the idea that certain states belong to certain groups, rather than allowing for respect across differences in identity. For him, respecting such differences and providing space for them to encounter each other naturally are both crucial:

> We do have differences. But at the same time we want to live together, because when we look at our differences, we see that they resemble a mosaic. Actually, not a mosaic, because even then, our differences also flow into each other. Cultures have always been exchanging things with each other and changing as a result. Turkey especially isn't a mosaic. Look at Turkey a little bit, and actually you see that ebru [paper marbling] describes it. You know the art of ebru, how [the colors] flow into each other? Maybe that describes it, how [cultures] flow together, change, encounter each other. But instead, after a while many have become assimilated…And as a result, that assimiltation and policies of replacing [people's identities] have disrupted more natural encounter, more natural change. (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020)

According to Öztürk, a construct that is more likely to bring about a more peaceful social structure would be one that is grounded in polyculturalism. “We need to create a social structure in which everyone is represented equally, can live out their religions, cultures, and beliefs as they like, [and] feel like they belong,” she said (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020).

In their own research, Kardeş Türküler has often found that specific traditions and melodies are shared across ethnic, linguistic, and religious boundaries (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020). Sometimes, Kardeş Türküler intentionally creates and reinforces cross-cultural and cross-identity connections within their music. Sometimes this occurs in the same song, as is the case with “Kara Üzüm Habbesi,” in which Kardeş Türküler has intentionally included Turkish and Kurdish lyrics. These lyrics are not copies of each other; rather, the lyrics in each language tell a love story in different ways. The original Turkish lyrics (which have been sung and adapted by other musicians, including celebrated *arabesk* star İbrahim Tatlises) sing about a dark-haired woman, comparing her to a black grape seed and praising her for her beauty. The Kurdish (Kurmancî) lyrics written by Yıldırım also mention grapes, but in this case they are sour, indicating that slightly pleasurable pain of longing. “I’m curious about you,” the narrators of the song sing in unison, and as discussed already in Chapter 3, this curiosity extends from the realm of romantic love into a broader curiosity between communities that are distinct but do not necessarily need to be unfamiliar to each other.

Cross-cultural connections are also indicated by Kardeş Türküler in the way that they arrange songs both within their albums and across their concert set lists. Their 2017

album *Yol* ("Road") takes a theme of traveling and migration as its core. The symbol of the road is represented in the music, and it also represents the nearly 30-year path that the members of Kardeş Türküler have been traveling since their university days.

These thematic connections are also sometimes made across songs from different albums. For example, during a "Peace Concert" that the group played on September 1, 2018 (organized by the Sarıyer Muicipality of Istanbul), they again take the theme of the "road" within the broader theme of "peace," in part because the concert has followed the release of *Yol* (Sarıyer Belediyesi, 2020). In the middle of the concert, the group—the core members as well as visiting musicians, all intentionally dressed in white[27]—plays "Kayseri Ğogum / Kayseri Yolunda" ("On the Road to Kayseri"), a song in Circassian that recalls that community's experience of forced migration. The recorded song on the album begins and ends with musical elements reminiscent of the steady march of a train towards its destination (and in this case, away from a home that may never be seen again). During the concert, these musical elements—a combination of vocalizations, percussion, and strings—are repeated to create the sonic effect of the train. These elements are played at the end of the song; however, instead of fading to silence, they deftly shift into a truncated version of a different Kardeş Türküler song with forced migration at its core: Kerwanê. The listener is taken from train to caravan, from one family on the road away from home to another in the same position, even if the circumstances and ethnic identity are different. The tie between the two is made—or

[27] Yıldırım noted that the group's musicians intentionally wear white clothing because they seek to be a "group that represents peace" (personal communication, October 9, 2020).

rather, in the boundary between the Circassian experience and Kurdish (Yezidi, in particular, a discussion that will be returned to in Chapter 6) experience, a door has been opened and walked through.

The effectiveness and deftness with which Kardeş Türküler is able to cross these boundaries while respecting their distinctness is aided in part by another core element of their process: their determination to make stories, not only music. While it can be argued that all music ultimately contains storytelling and narrative elements, Kardeş Türküler is intentional about incorporating dramaturgy into its practice (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020), whether by incorporating the contributions of other artists—dancers, theatre professionals, poets—or by creating story through sound, as in the case of the steady, drawn out rhythms of the caravan on the road in "Kerwanê" or the resounding and reverberating vocals and musical notes from wind instruments that create the feeling of being amongst mountains in "De Bıla Bêto."

This desire to create story, almost to the point of being visual within the mind's eye of the listener (if not also occasionally visual on stage), is shared between Kardeş Turküler and Bajar. Yıldırım is the only common member in both groups, and his common membership serves to open up a dialogue between their discographies. They share a number of musical sources; for example, each group has its own version of "Newroz" and of "Mîrkut." Both groups also share a desire to build connections across multiple communities in Turkey by using music as both an affective link to facilitate connections between listeners, especially at concerts, and as a vehicle for narrating stories that have suppressed by the Turkish state's nationalizing project (C. Küçüktürk, personal

communication, October 8, 2020; V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020; S. Öztürk, October 21, 2020).

However, for all their commonalities, the two musical groups are also distinct in important ways. Firstly, Bajar was founded at the end of the first decade of the new millennium. By this point, Kardeş Türküler had been in existence for almost 15 years. For Yıldırım, who is Kurdish and comes from what he describes as an economically privileged family, his experience at Boğaziçi University, and particularly with Kardeş Türküler, helped him grapple with his dual identity as both an ethnic Kurd and a citizen of Turkey.

In our conversation, he discussed how he was born in a "Kurdish village" in Ankara, his ancestors having come to the area three hundred years before from both the Adıyaman and Urfa regions. In his youth, he understood that he had a certain amount of economic privilege, which included being able to study middle school and high school in Ankara. Nevertheless, he related how he was still made to feel not quite 'enough' in Ankara due to the way he spoke Turkish, which was influenced by his Kurdish mother tongue. "I began trying to correct my language," Yıldırım said. He didn't go so far as hiding his Kurdish identity, but he was made to feel that it was always something that distinguished him as other. When people in Ankara would learn he was Kurdish,

> [they] would look at me and say, 'That's alright, you're a sweet kid, a joyful kid, that's alright.' But I'm Kurdish. At the end of it all, it means 'I'm Kurdish.' I only matter up until a certain point, meaning whatever the case, no matter how good of

> a student I am, [being Kurdish] still reflects so many things [to them]. (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020)

In high school in Ankara, he began to learn more about Leftist ideology and culture, which helped him better understand the situation in which he found himself as someone who was Kurdish and was facing discrimination. At Boğaziçi University, and in his work with Kardeş Türküler, this journey continued, and he found that he was better able to lean into the ways he wished to express his Kurdish identity rather than suppress them—for example, by embracing the way he spoke, and wanted to speak, Turkish (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020).

By the time Bajar was founded, Yıldırım was a seasoned artist further along in this journey than he was in 1993. Importantly, just as Yıldırım was in a different period in his own relationship to music by the late '00s, Turkey was also in a different period in relation to the Turkish–Kurdish conflict. The year of 2009, when Bajar's first album was released, also marked the announcement of the ruling Justice and Development Party's (AKP) "Kurdish" opening (which would ultimately fail). From 1999 to 2009, the conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK had wavered between periods of ceasefire and periods of open conflict. However, by 2009, a new political environment was emerging that seemed to be giving way to fertile ground for a more sustainable end to the Turkish–Kurdish conflict.

In the aftermath of Öcalan's imprisonment, Turkey's political scene had been roiling for reasons beyond the Turkish–Kurdish conflict. In the 2000s, the growing

popularity of the AKP marked the success of the first major challenge of an Islam-oriented political party to a Turkish state structure that had, since the Turkish Republic's founding in 1923, been dominated by secularist ideals (Waldman & Caliskan, 2017). Throughout the 2000s, the AKP faced pushback from the Turkish military, as the latter tried to curtail, and then derail, the popularity and political power of the party, which had been winning successive majorities in national elections since 2002. By 2009, the AKP had faced down multiple attempts to dampen its power, including the "e-memorandum" crisis of 2007, during which the Turkish General Staff issued a statement that attempted to prevent the AKP's candidate for the Turkish presidency, Abdullah Gül, from being elected by the Turkish parliament.[28] According to Waldman and Caliskan (2017), the failure of the e-memorandum—Gül was eventually elected to the presidency after the dissolution and re-election of the Turkish parliament—"proved that the days of the military coups were over" (p. 31). In 2009, the controversial Ergenekon and Balyoz trials, which targeted members of the military as well as other members of Turkish society for alleged coup plotting, were still a few years off. However, the AKP had faced down the specter of the Turkish military and prevailed.

According to Hintz (2018), the "Ottoman Islamist" identity proposal touted by the AKP, of which Sunni Muslim identity, rather than Turkish ethnic identity, is the cornerstone, has allowed the party to "make outreach efforts to the Kurds when it is politically expedient to do so" (p. 54). In 2009, with the military's power curtailed for the

[28] 2007 was the last year during which the president of the Turkish Republic was elected by the parliament. In its second term, the AKP was able to pass amendments to the constitution that included a switch to the direct election of the president by the public. See Chapter 2 of Waldman and Caliskan (2017) for more about this period in Turkish politics.

first time since the 1960 coup d'état, and with Turkey in the midst of its EU accession process, it seemed that such outreach was indeed politically expedient. According to Waldman and Caliskan (2017), in the late 2000s, the AKP was gaining momentum and success, but so too was the Kurdish movement. In Turkey's predominantly Kurdish southeastern provinces, elections consistently saw the AKP pitted against the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DPT), from which twenty-one deputies were elected to parliament[29] in the 2007 local elections, even as the majority of the cities in the southeast went to the AKP. If the AKP was to sustain, and even grow, its own electoral successes, winning the support of the Kurds was going to be crucial.

Heralded by some segments of Turkey's society and the broader international community as a positive and hopeful opportunity for the potential resolution of Turkey's nearly century-long oppression of its Kurdish communities, the "Kurdish Opening" was ultimately also received by much of Turkey's society as an affront to the integrity of the nation-state, so much so that the AKP quickly rebranded the initiative as the "Democratic Opening" (Waldman & Caliskan, 2017). The rebranding pulled the initiative away from a more comprehensive de-escalation process with the PKK into a more socially-minded program focused on granting the Kurds "cultural and linguistic" rights (p. 180). While Kurdish reception to the opening was positive, distrust remained, as some Kurds saw these moves as part of the AKP's electoral calculus rather than as a genuine desire to

[29] Due to the ten percent threshold that prevents any party from entering parliament that does not receive ten percent of the vote across the entire country, the DPT fielded its candidates as independents, as pro-Kurdish parties have generally been unable to breach this threshold (Waldman & Caliskan, 2017).

pursue the democratic reforms necessary to address the Turkish Republic's decades of repression of Kurdish identity (Waldman & Caliskan, 2017).

Yıldırım shared caution toward the government's moves to address the various cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic wrongs that had been and were being experienced by Turkey's Kurdish community. "It's positive, but we are not sure about the new policy of the Turkish government or what they really think about. Really we don't know," he said in a March 2009 interview (van Wilgenburg, 2009), adding that the government had not invited him or his other musicking colleagues to participate in the initiative.

Nevertheless, Bajar was not waiting to being invited into formal processes or spaces in order to do the work of helping Turkish and Kurdish communities live together and understand one another beyond the demand for the latter's assimilation. Yıldırım told me that Bajar was founded in part because he had become more involved in rock projects in the preceding years and in part because he was observing that more and more Kurdish communities were moving to large cities across Western Turkey, particularly Istanbul, Izmir, and Mersin—in no small part due to the impact of the active conflict between the Turkish military and the PKK in the southeast and the resulting destruction and "emptying" of villages (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 21, 2020). From his own vantage point in Istanbul, he noticed that Turkish and Kurdish communities had more opportunities than ever to encounter each other in person. "Many Kurds had migrated, and with that migration actually a new sociology was created [in big cities]. And we were living in Istanbul, and so we said 'Let's make the music of this encounter

from an understanding centered in folk rock',” he said (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020).

Through folk rock music with electronic and pop elements, and even influences from hip hop, Bajar's goal is to create music that is meant to allow Kurds—especially those whose lives have been more deeply assimilated into Turkish civic identity, including those who are unable to speak Kurdish—to see themselves in the songs while allowing non-Kurdish listeners to become acquainted with the Kurdish language and the stories of Kurdish communities (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 8, 2020; V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020). This purpose is more narrowly focused than that of Kardeş Türküler. While the latter's discography contains a multitude of languages and dialects, Bajar's repertoire is seated squarely in three languages—Turkish, Kurmancî, and Zazakî.

For Küçüktürk, the fact that Bajar sings in both Turkish and Kurdish is one of the features that most distinguishes its unique style and approach from other bands:

> In Turkey, Kurdish musicians generally prefer to sing only in Kurdish, while Turks prefer to sing only in Turkish. In fact, among Kurds there is a side that is a little more radical, sides that are a little more liberal, sides that are a little more assimilated, meaning Turkified. Because of this, Kurds generally prefer more to sing only in Kurdish to protect their cultures. This doesn't just apply to political [songs]; for example, even for any normal love song, they prefer to sing in Kurdish. Bajar insists on using both languages. This is Bajar's most important

> feature. The reason for singing in both languages is actually to bring the languages together at a place of encounter and facilitate transivity between them. Meaning to create a common language. (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 9, 2020)

While this commitment to multiplicity of language is shared between Kardeş Türkuler and Bajar, the groups carry out this commitment using different musical styles. While one reason Bajar chose the genre of folk rock is because its members enjoy playing this type of music, the genre also fit the stories they were trying to tell of communities that have experienced oppression, violence, and silencing:

> The circumstances in which rock emerged actually are similar, and we can say that the ’68 generation led the way here. Its roots are in the music of Black [communities], in the blues. Their music spoke of similar things, similar troubles. Things like being against war…Really, rock music is a fitting style for Bajar. (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 8, 2020)

As a style, folk rock is rooted in polyphonies that evoke “the strength of human collectives,” according to García Quiñones (2018). Küçüktürk also noted that Bajar is especially concerned with speaking to younger generations, especially those generations of Kurdish youth who have experienced greater assimilation than their parents and grandparents:

> Bajar is actually a group that kind of tracks the [trends in music]. For example, you're making music in Kurdish, but Kurds also listen to rock. Especially the youth…Bajar is endeavoring more to reach younger people. Because among them worries about assimilation—actually, not worries, *realities* of assimilation—are very high. You need to give them an alternative. For example, they are listening to rock. There is rock in Turkish. There is rock in English. You need to also add [opportunities for] Kurdish. (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 8, 2020)

In our interview, Yıldırım was keen to note that while he has respect for rock traditions that have fallen more clearly within the realm of "agitprop," such as Rage Against the Machine, Bajar is more concerned with making "empathetic protest" with its music rather than being "shocking" (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020). Bajar's music also does not fall within the realm of "marş" ("anthem"), which Küçüktürk implied is music that is meant to rouse the attachment of listeners to the nation (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 8, 2020). This is in part because, while the experiences of Kurdish communities are central to Bajar's stories, the group also is seeking to cross the different boundaries of identity experienced in Turkey—and in so doing, tell the story of a broader human experience as well. "Our problem isn't a race issue. It's more of an issue of wanting to be able to express ourselves," Yıldırım said (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020).

Perhaps a good signifier of Bajar's approach to building "empathetic protest"—and thus building bridges while providing Kurds with a space to have their stories heard and respected, particularly by non-Kurds—lies in the story of Cansun Küçüktürk's road to Bajar. Küçüktürk, whose father's descends from Bulgarian immigrants and whose mother's side descends from Türkmen immigrants from the Urfa region, described himself as having grown up in a Republican, Leftist, Kemalist environment in Kırklareli in the Thrace region of Turkey. He recalled that his first memory of encountering Kurdish identity was on the news programs broadcast by the state broadcaster, TRT (the only option for television news at the time), in which Kurdish identity was always connected to "terrorist incidents" (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 8, 2020). As a child, he remembered associating fear with these representations, based on the environment he grew up in.

Another memory he had of encountering Kurdish identity came from his middle school years, when his family was building a new house on the site of his old house. Küçütürk remembered that the initial construction workers who worked to build his family's new home were Kurdish. However, Küçüktürk said his father was not happy with the quality of the work and hired different workers. Küçüktürk could not remember if the work was actually of a low quality or if his father's estimation of it rose from his political and social beliefs, which were "nationalist" (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 8, 2020).

During his university years, Küçüktürk—who plays guitar in Bajar, contributes to musical arrangements, and currently teaches jazz guitar at the university level in

Istanbul—began to follow the news more closely. In 2008, a roommate introduced him to Bajar, which had just finished but not yet released its first album. They were looking for a new guitarist. Küçuktürk has been a part of the group since then. When he first joined the band, he felt cautious, wondering how he would fit into its mission, and wondering if there would be any points of tension. Though his mother's side of the family is from Urfa, he only went to the southeastern region of Turkey for the first time with Bajar, an experience that challenged his prejudices and taught him more about how to approach Bajar's mission as someone who is not Kurdish:

> The very first time I went to the East, the first time I saw the East, and the first time I had the chance to meet the people there, to understand how they lived, was with Bajar. My understanding started from zero. At the beginning, because of the information I got from my family environment, I had a lot of prejudices. But time allowed these to lift. And now in my own identity, I have begun to evaluate [those prejudices], and to be able to talk with people and chat with them in a more impartial way, to be able to communicate in a less prejudiced way. (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 8, 2020)

As he was growing up and throughout his early adulthood in Istanbul, Küçüktürk described himself as being "very far away" from the situation in the southeast, as being "closed off." However, one of Bajar's slogans, "yaklaş," which means "come closer," has defined Küçüktürk's experience within the initiative. "Yaklaşmış oldum o dünyaya," he

said. “I have come closer to that world” (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 9, 2020).

To bring Kurdish communities and non-Kurdish communities, particularly those that identify as Turkish, closer together, Bajar incorporates a number of defining elements into its musicking approach. Unlike Kardeş Türküler, the overwhelming majority of Bajar’s discography consists of original rather than adapted work. Yıldırım describes the group as a “composition project” that is concerned with the everyday issues of urban Kurdish communities in particular (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020). It strives to incorporate literary and storytelling elements into its music. With its songs, Bajar seeks to create a “photograph of city life” out of its music, underlining the desire for its songs to create a clear vision in the mind’s eye of its listeners (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020). In particular, Yıldırım hopes that the shape of this image can be “magical realist” in nature. From the perspective of creativity, Yıldırım noted that one of the most painful and difficult aspects of the modern Kurdish political reality—the dispersal of Kurdish communities across many different countries—actually has ended up being an advantage in some ways for musical production and innovation. He argued that national projects often seek to “institutionalize” music in a way that removes opportunities for movement toward different types of styles and approaches; without a nation-state, as much difficulty as it has caused, the various Kurdish communities around the world have avoided the reification of Kurdish music as being bounded by static, definitive traditions, techniques, and stories (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020).

This situation is especially suited to Bajar's desire to be a project that looks not just to the past, or even to the present, but also to the future. Küçüktürk noted that Bajar is especially concerned with making music that will outlast their own musicking efforts, and that will in particular be able to speak to future generations:

> Of course, one day Bajar will end. We will of course pass away. But we need to leave something behind. We need to not just say, 'We played, we sang, now farewell.' For example, in fifty years, we hope that our music will still be played when people are experiencing similar issues. We also hope that we can continue to play a role in the peace process [in the Turkish–Kurdish conflict] and the work of reconciliation. However much music we can produce will determine how much we can contribute. (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 8, 2020)

Kardeş Türküler shares the same desire to be an intentional part of healing rifts between not just Turkey's Kurdish and Turkish communities, but all its communities. "We are very much in need of societal peace," said Öztürk. "We still haven't learned how to live together, and for that reason, there is a need for Kardeş Türküler. This stands as a longing and a demand" (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020).

As has been discussed earlier in this study, there are a number of features of social identity, narrative, and music that can intertwine to make constructive conflict transformation more likely or less likely. Through an analysis of the song sample from these two reconciliation-oriented bands, Chapter 6 will begin to eludicdate the special

role that social identity and narrative genre can play in musicking Turkish–Kurdish reconciliation.

CHAPTER SIX: MUSICKING KURDISH IDENTITY

Kurdistan is waiting for us
Oh, her eyes are searching for us
– "Serhildan Jiyan E," as interpreted by Bajar[30]

As musicking groups with points of connection and similar core goals of reconciliation and peacemaking in Turkey, but with different approaches to both musical style and different focuses with regard to Kurdish identity, Kardeş Türküler and Bajar are well positioned to offer insights as to how social identity and narrative approaches to conflict transformation and reconciliation intersect.

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings of the three levels of analysis I have conducted with regard to my twenty-song sample from these two groups. I will first discuss how each group narrates the experience of being Kurdish in Turkey by pulling out a number of general themes. I will then address the social identity content in the songs (as analyzed through collective axiology, relative deprivation, and outgroup threat). I will then address the findings from my narrative genre analysis of the songs. To further contextualize the social identity and narrative genre findings, the two sections will be preceded by an analysis of the conflict content in the songs and how it is related with ingroup and outgroup presentations. Finally, I will conclude the chapter with a comparison of the results of the collective axiology and narrative genre analysis.

[30] This song was originally performed by Şivan Perwer, a Kurdish musician who has made most of his music in exile.

Experiences of Kurdishness in Turkey

Each of the twenty songs in the sample from Kardeş Türküler and Bajar was chosen because of their ability to represent different elements of the broader lived experiences of Kurdish communities in Turkey. In my study of the song sample, I have identified seven broad themes and modes through which both Kardeş Türküler and Bajar seek to narrate the experience of being Kurdish: (1) language; (2) place; (3) migration; (4) class / well-being; (5) religion / spirituality; (6) preserving cultural traditions; and (7) self-determination / state oppression.

Table 8. Song Sample: Themes and Fabula

Song	Themes	Fabula
Newroz	language – religion / spirituality – preserving cultural traditions – self-determination / state oppression	Newroz
Mîrkut	class / well-being – religion / spirituality – preserving cultural traditions – self-determination / state oppression	
Halâlê	place – class / well-being – preserving cultural traditions	Dengbêj
Kerwanê	place – migration – preserving cultural traditions	
Denize Yakılan Türkü	place – self-determination / state oppression	
Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim	language – religion / spirituality – preserving cultural traditions – self-determination / state oppression	Ehl-î Beyt (Prophet's Family); Twelve Imams; Khidr; Imam Ali; Sema ceremony
De Bila Bêto	place – migration – preserving cultural traditions	Dengbêj
1-0	language – place – class / well-being – preserving cultural traditions – self-determination / state oppression	
Munzur Xenekiyêne	place – religion / spirituality – preserving cultural traditions – self-determination / state oppression	Sema ceremony; Munzur River; Euphrates River; Imam Ali
Kara Üzüm Habbesi	language – preserving cultural traditions	

Newroz	religion / spirituality – preserving cultural traditions – self-determination / state oppression	Newroz
Mîrkut	class / well-being – religion / spirituality – preserving cultural traditions – self-determination / state oppression	
Serhildan Jiyan E	place – preserving cultural traditions – self-determination / state oppression	Kurdistan
Ogit	language – place – migration – religion / spirituality – preserving cultural traditions – self-determination / state oppression	Munzur River; Prophet Seth
Sî û Çar Heb	language – place – class / well-being – preserving cultural traditions – self-determination / state oppression	Roboskî; Dengbêj; Ağıt (lamentation)
Koça Dawî	place – migration – class / well-being	The crowds of Judgment Day
Îşportecî	language – place – migration – class / well-being – preserving cultural traditions – self-determination / state oppression	Dengbêj; Apê Musa (Musa Anter)
Bahoz	language – preserving cultural traditions – self-determination / state oppression	
Emele	place – migration – class / well-being – preserving cultural traditions – self-determination / state oppression	
Diyarbekir/Amed	language – place – religion / spirituality	Patience stone; Diyarbekir/Amed

Each song within the sample includes various combinations of the above seven themes and modes. In some of these songs, these themes and modes are further elaborated through specific fabula, which I use to denote the existence of a cultural touchstone that carries with it elements of stories that can be ascribed meaning even if stories relating to these fabula are not fully elaborated in the texts. An example from Bajar's "Îşportecî" is a reference to Apê Musa—literally "Uncle Musa," the nickname for Kurdish dissident and writer Musa Anter. In Chapter 5, Anter was mentioned as having been assassinated by JİTEM during the turbulent '90s of the Turkish–Kurdish conflict.

His long, storied life of intellectual resistance within the context of the broader Kurdish movement, and arguably his killing by agents of the Turkish state, have imbued his memory with a mythic quality, one that is enhanced here with the decision to refer to him by a beloved nickname.

Another fabula, dengbêj, is of a different sort. Dengbêj, derived from the Kurmancî words for voice (deng) and for speech (bêj), is a musical storytelling tradition with deep roots in southeastern Turkey (Şen, 2016; Verstraete, 2018). While it is a Kurdish folk tradition, it also has cross-cultural elements. One of the most celebrated recent dengbêj masters, for example, was Karapetê Xaço, an Armenian who was born in a village in today's Batman province. He survived the 1915 Armenian genocide; his mastery of dengbêj continued the tradition while contributing many stories to Kurdish literature, such as *Filitê Quto*.[31]

The denbêj tradition is characterized by a number of important features that distinguishes it from other Kurdish storytelling practices, such as stranbêj (ministrel storytelling) and çîrokbêj (oral storytelling). First and foremost, dengbêj functions as an archive of historical memory, relating stories—often rooted in real events—that have relevance across broad Kurdish communities and/or that are localized to different regions, towns, and villages in historical and modern-day Kurdistan. While both stranbêj and çîrokbêj can be argued to function in a similar way as a repository for the foundation fabula of Kurdish communities, the stories told through the tradition of dengbêj are

[31] I would like to acknowledge my husband, Abdullah Tunç, who first introduced me to the story of *Filitê Quto* and Karapetê Xaço's legacy.

distinguished by the fact that these masters, who have undergone years of rigorous training, are often the creators of original works, rather than only the conduit for more commonly known stories. As Şen (2016) writes, "every dengbêj [master] and the stories they tell are individually and uniquely constructed. Every story reflects a different world of Kurdishness" (p. 46).

Another defining feature of the dengbêj tradition is that each master's unique stories are not just told but sung. However, these sung performances are yet different than other forms of song in that they often vary widely in terms of tempo and rhythm, containing an element of recitation of the "specialized knowledge" of each dengbêj master, according to Wendelmoet Hamelink, who has studied dengbêj in Turkey (Kurdish Political Studies Program, 2020). While instrumentals are used in these recitations, they are incorporated in such a way as to complement, but never drown out or play over, the voice of the dengbêj (Hikmet, 2014). These elements of voice and original storytelling cannot be separated from the dengbêj tradition. As Hikmet (2014) writes:

> even if a person is in possession of a very good repertoire of stories, if they are devoid of a strong voice, they cannot be a *dengbêj*; and even if they have a very good voice, if their repertoire of stories is left wanting, they are again not a *dengbêj*. (pp. 292–293, italics the author's)

With regard to the song sample at the center of this study, dengbêj is classified as a fabula not in reference to any specific repertoire of stories but rather in reference to the general

incorporation of dengbêj storytelling and vocalization practices within the songs in the sample.

Even when the songs share specific themes and fabula, a closer look at each song's content has revealed different subsets of the Kurdish experience within each theme.

Table 9. Song Sample: Thematic Construction of Kurdish Identity

Themes	Subsets of Themes
Language	use of both Kurdish and Turkish languages to symbolize Kurdish identity as multilingual
	use of both Kurdish and Turkish languages to bridge Kurdish-speaking and Turkish-speaking communities
	linguicide
	Turkish language as the presence of the state or oppression
Place	Kurdistan
	cultural homelands as cities or regions, e.g., Diyarbakir or Dersim
	cultural homelands as types of geography, e.g., mountains, Munzur River, Euphrates River
	spiritual homelands / sacred sites
	places of pain, oppression, trauma, foreignness, or exile
	urban environment, occasionally as something unfamiliar
Migration	forced migration from village to city due to state violence
	forced migration due to unspecified sources of violence
	migration tied in with economic concerns
	nomadic migration
	returning
	migration as exile
	migration as loneliness or foreignness
Class / Well-Being	child workers
	work in the informal sector
	representations of exploitative or dangerous work environments

	prosperity
	feudal system
	lack of resources or ability to actualize well-being through resources
	perseverance through labor
Religion / Spirituality	sacred sites
	generalized faith
	Alevi Muslims beliefs and traditions
	traditions with cultural and spiritual elements
Preserving Cultural Traditions	oral storytelling as preservation of family and community memory
	elements of dengbêj
	festivals and holidays
	religious traditions
	ways of social life, e.g., economic life, communal life
	cross-cultural traditions
	preservation of songs attributed to other musicians / storytellers
Self-Determination / State Oppression	protest for rights and recognition
	state violence
	state oppression or suppression of Kurdish identities
	state oppression or suppression of religious identities
	state oppression or suppression of political identities
	triumph over oppressors or enemies
	state criminalization of economic practices
	presence of police

Some of these themes are mentioned explicitly within the songs. For example, Bajar's "Ogit" mentions linguicide directly with a reference to the narrator at the center of the community in the song as having been "rendered deaf and mute without [our] language." Place is often specifically named in songs, as in the case of "Diyabakir/Amed," an ode to the city that is often considered to be the unofficial capital

of Bakur (Northerm Kurdistan, which is situated within the border of modern-day Turkey).

Many themes, however, are understood symbolically. The state oppression of Kardeş Türküler's "Munzur Xenekiyêne," for example, is symbolized through depictions of the Munzur river, located in the Dersim (Tunceli) region of Turkey, as being "imprisoned." Lyrical symbolization is often helped along through musical symbols of sound, instrument, and voice. These symbolizations are occasionally a bit on the nose, as in the case of the use of sounds of babbling water in "Munzur Xenekiyêne," or the use of sounds such as whistles and honking during "1-0," which seeks to create a sense of urban space to tell the story of a child mussel peddler.

Occasionally, however, a more subtle sonic symbolization is used. In "De Bıla Bêto," the story makes explicit references to lonely figures among the mountains, the waving of a handkerchief in the wind symbolizing a sense of migration and loneliness (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020). Yet, the sense of being among mountains and at the mercy of the winds is reinforced sonically throughout the song. At many different points, the same lyrics are sung repetitively by different singers, often not all together but in succession at varying intensities, replicating the feeling of a voice echoing across the mountains. Whereas in another song the many voices might reinforce a sense of togetherness, in this song it represents a sense of loneliness and of disconnect from a full sense of community.

Across the song sample, the theme of migration is often represented sonically through measured percussive elements, as if to replicate the steady progress of the road.

In Kardeş Türkuler's "Kerwanê" and "De Bıla Bêto" alike, this is achieved through more traditional percussive sounds, such as from the arbane, a round, handheld drum that contains metal rings on the inside of its frame. In Bajar's "Emele," however, which includes lyrics at the start of its story that reference a "caravan" on the road, the percussive elements are instead represented through the sounds reminiscent of urban construction.

Thus, through the use of musical style and symbolization, Kardeş Türküler and Bajar not only add depth of meaning to narrations of the Kurdish experience but also indicate their different sonic approaches to understanding that experience. As was discussed in the previous chapter, both groups share a similar goal of fostering reconciliation and social cohesion among their listeners; however, their narrative and musical approaches to this shared goal often differ. Kardeş Türküler's distinct "sound" derives from folk traditions. This means the incorporation of a wider range of traditional instruments, including the arbane, the zurna, and the bağlama, for example, and the use of many voices and instruments in unison, creating the feeling of a collectivity (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020; S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020). While Bajar also makes use of these instruments and traditions, its interpretation through the genre of rock is influenced at least in part by its goal of narrating the urban Kurdish experience in particular, leading to the incorporation of instruments and sounds more reminiscent of urban landscapes.

This difference is perhaps no more apparent than in a comparison of each group's interpretation of "Mîrkut," a song originally sung by famous Kurdish singer Şivan

Perwer. Each version across both bands contains roughly the same lyrics, though Kardeş Türküler's version opens with a stanza that is not included in the Bajar version. Nevertheless, the core words of the two songs are the same and are used to tell the story of hard-working Kurdish men and women who, beset by an oppressive system of class in the broader context of Turkish state oppression, nevertheless persevere to look after their families and preserve their ways of life.

Both songs' explicit references to the threshing of wheat, as well as to an "axa" (lord) and "xatûn" (lady), indicate a rural, agrarian community within the context of a feudal system. Both songs use musical elements—in chief, a steady, repetitive beat to match the measure of the vocals—to represent the hard and unending work of the laborers. For Kardeş Türküler, these musical elements include the *swish* of the laborers threshing wheat, the call and response of voices in the field, the grinding of mortar and pestle and the metallic resounding of pots and pans. The effect of this musical interpretation is to place the listener in a sonic manifestation of this agrarian community.

Given Bajar's avowed purposed of narrating the experiences of urban Kurdish communities, the question arises as to how a song whose lyrics are so squarely rural and agrarian will be interpreted. Surely few would have faulted Bajar from straying from its intended purposes to create its version of this celebrated song. However, through its own specific approach to sound—one that uses the folk rock genre to create a sense of modern, intense city life—Bajar interprets the Kurdish worker of Perwer's Mîrkut not as a person toiling in the fields but instead as an urban construction worker. The steady threshing and grinding of wheat in Kardeş Türküler's version becomes the bang and

clang of hammers on metal in Bajar's version. In interpreting the song in this way without changing its lyrics, Bajar both elaborates a different experience of life as a Kurd in Turkey while underlining similarities (for example, shared experiences of exploitation of labor) and establishing the urban–rural link between Kurdish communities in Turkey, so many of which have experienced migration from villages to cities due either to economic circumstances or the violence of protracted conflict.

There is another song in the sample that is shared across both groups, "Newroz," that helps elaborate differences in the musical and narrative approaches of the groups. Rather than an adaptation, the lyrics were written by Yıldırım, and both Kardeş Türküler and Bajar created their own musical interpretations of these lyrics. The two songs share the same foundational rhythm and melody; however, like with "Mîrkut," Kardeş Türküler's interpretation incorporates more traditional instruments, while Bajar's is easily identifiable as rock. The major difference between these two versions lies not in the different musical styles, but rather in the inclusion and exclusion of certain lyrics. Like "Mîrkut," both versions of "Newroz" contain the same core lyrics and story. However, Kardeş Türküler's version begins with a brief stanza in Turkish that Bajar's version leaves out: "They have risen and come to the square / In the early dawn / Spinning sideways, spinning sideways / Burning and spinning with devotion / Cascading breathlessly." After these lyrics are sung in Turkish, the song shifts to Kurdish (Kurmancît) and a description of crowds gathering and celebrating Newroz.

According to Öztürk, the celebration of Newroz has taken on political undertones that are not inherent in its celebration:

> Newroz celebrations make up a traditional ritual among Kurds that offers the message, 'We want peace.' However, from this it has turned into a political celebration. In the 'Newroz' song that we created, we have underlined a dramaturgy of solidarity between peoples by including both the Kurdish and Turkish language. We have presented a message of peace, living together, and celebrating the spring festival together. (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020)

She said that the inclusion of Turkish lyrics in the Kardeş Türküler version was intentionally meant to foster a shared experience of this holiday and reclaim it from a purely politicized meaning (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020). However, the lack of these Turkish lyrics in Bajar's version indicates that the band is more focused in on a Kurdish experience of this holiday.

Before moving to an analysis of the conflict, social identity, and narrative genre content in this song sample, it is important to note three caveats with regard to these songs. First, these songs from Kardeş Türküler and Bajar should not be interpreted as representing definitive experiences of Kurdish identity. This is because, as discussed in Chapter 2, a constructionist approach to social identity disavows the idea of any such thing as a definitive version of a particular social identity. To do so would mean to slip into notions of identity as static and inherent in individuals, rather than as products of complex processes of identification that are always ongoing.

Second, these songs represent a limited example of the wider discographies of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar, each of which include many additional songs that narrate experiences of Kurdish identity. Those songs may contain themes that are not elaborated in this study. A theme that is particularly missing in the sample, but was identified by Öztürk as important to the work of Kardeş Türküler, is that of women's experiences and women's rights (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020).

Third, it is important to note that representing these songs as hewing closely with Kurdish identity contains its own implications for social identity construction. As someone who does not belong to the Kurdish community or have a lived experience of Kurdishness, by identifying the songs in this sample as related to Kurdishness in one way or another, I run the risk of imposing a construction of Kurdishness from the outside that may not hew with the lived experiences of those who identify themselves as Kurdish. An area where this approach to the song sample has the potential to be particularly fraught is with regard to those songs that include lyrics in Zazakî (also known as Kirmanckî) or that narrate the experiences of communities from the province of Dersim. As Sözen (2019) elaborates in a study of identity contestation at and around the Munzur Culture and Nature Festival, the characterization of Alevi Kimanckî-speaking communities from Dersim as Kurdish is itself deeply contested. While the broader Kurdish movement often sees this community as belonging firmly within the Kurdish ethnic group, some Dersimliler ("people from Dersim") see their identities as linguistically, ethnically, culturally, and/or religiously distinct.

Another song whose inclusion in the study clearly represents this tension between my understandings of Kurdishness and the understandings of Kurdishness by the communities represented in the song is Kardeş Turkuler's "Kerwanê." I included the song in this sample because it is sung in Kurmancî, a language I have previously identified as indicating experiences of Kurdishness. However, Öztürk noted that the song includes a poem by Sarkis Seropyan that "gives place to those Yazidis who have been exposed to repression because of their beliefs throughout every period of history" (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020). The inclusion of Yazidi identity under the broader umbrella of Kurdish identity is itself contested. Ali (2019) elaborates how the boundaries of Yazidi ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity have oscillated (as any social identity is capable of doing) between different poles of Kurdish and Arab identity and across different understandings of Yazidi identity. It is important to note here, then, that discussions of Kerwanê must be understood within this context of contested identity, and that I cannot speak for communities who identify as Kurdish or Yazidi, or both, in relation to this song.

Thus, throughout the rest of this study's discussion of the Kurdish identity construction in the song sample, it is important to keep in mind that while references to "Kurdish identity," "Kurdish experiences," and "Kurdish music" are often made to be semantically clear, these descriptions are not intended to indicate static (or uncontested) characterizations of the lived experience of being Kurdish in Turkey, nor are they intended to constrain the meaning made around social identity by listeners who identify with the characters represented within the song sample.

Conflict Content, Ingroups, and Outgroups within the Song Sample

Of the Kardeş Türküler songs, all but one ("Kara Üzüm Habbesi") was found to have conflict content, albeit to varying degrees. Of these songs with conflict content, all of them have an explicit or implicit outgroup with which the ingroup (the protagonist of the songs) is in conflict. However, in "De Bila Bêto" and "Halâlê" both contain conflict without the presence of an outgroup. In this case, the conflict is represented by tense or dire circumstances that nevertheless are not attributed directly to any other actor. Interestingly, "Kara Üzüm Habbesi" has both an implied ingroup (Kurds) and an implied outgroup (Turks), but no conflict. In fact, the lack of conflict between the two raises questions about the utility of defining one group as an ingroup and another as an outgroup, because the song—a folk song narrated in both Kurdish and Turkish, with both groups as protagonists—incorporates both perspectives equally. Ethnically speaking, the Kurds and the Turks in the song are ingroup–outgroup to each other, but if they are taken as being part of one community—in this case, a more general southeastern community—then those boundaries don't apply with the same salience as in the other songs.

Table 10a. Song Sample: Ingroup, Outgroup, and Conflict Content (Kardeş Türküler)

	Ingroup		Outgroup		Conflict Content	
	Percentage	**Identity**	**Percentage**	**Identity**	**Percentage**	**Conflict Description**
Newroz	37.43%	Kurdish-speaking and Turkish-speaking communities (of all backgrounds)	2.43%	Unspecified forms of oppression symbolized by clouds blocking out the sun (which	5.11%	Sun chasing away the clouds [Kurdishness chasing away oppression]

				symbolizes Kurdishness)		
Mîrkut	32.75%	Kurdish peasants / laborers within the feudal system	2.68%	The Kurdish Axa / Xatûn (feudal lord / lady)	22.02%	Kurdish laborers are being oppressed by the Kurdish feudal system, seeking to reap the rewards of their labor
Halâlê	28.00%	(Rural) Kurds	0%	[no out-group specified or implied]	6.09%	A lovesick Kurdish shepherd boy is unable to improve his lot in life
Kerwanê	33.58%	(Nomadic / Rural) Yazidi community	2.78%	Generalized "foreign lands" *and* an unspecified entity that has targeted the nomadic Yazidis with its "wrath"	30.23%	Yazidi nomads displaced into foreign lands by (unspecified) violence against their homeland
Denize Yakılan Türkü	38.02%	Leftist political ideology (Kurdishness + allyship with Kurdishness is implied)	0.84%	Generalized "foreign lands"	38.02%	An unspecified event has caused the subject of the song (the "you") to find themselves in an unfamiliar land
Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim	30.45%	Alevis (both Kurdish and Turkish)	2.49%	The Bey (other identifying details not included)	5.59%	An Alevi community rises up against the domination of a Bey
De Bila Bêto	41.09%	A Kurdish elder and a Kurdish youth	0.00%	[no out-group specified or implied]	16.67%	A Kurdish elder lives an isolated and destitute life in a place that is not his homeland
1-0	29.44%	A Kurdish child peddler (of mussels) in the big city (implied to be Istanbul)	3.28%	Police officers *and* the city where the child peddler works	11.65%	A Kurdish child peddler is constantly trying to make his living selling mussels (a family business) and thrive in dire economic conditions while maintaining a sense of childhood

Munzur Xenekiyêne	30.03%	Communities from Dersim	4.12%	An unspecified other that is implied as wanting to stop the flowing of the Munzur River	31.24%	The Munzur River (in Dersim) and its surrounding lands are represented as needing to be freed from outsider domination
Kara Üzüm Habbesi	41.35%	Kurdish-speaking and Turkish-speaking communities (from the Southeast)	17.70%	Kurdish-speaking and Turkish-speaking communities (from the Southeast)	0%	[none – shared Turkish–Kurdish love song]

Similar to the Kardeş Türküler sample, the Bajar sample included nine songs with conflict content and one without conflict content (the outlier being "Koça Dawî"). All of the songs with conflict content included implicit or explicit reference to an outgroup, to varying degrees, while "Koça Dawî" made no explicit or implicit reference to an outgroup. It is thus the only song in the sample in which the there is no conflict content and no implicit or explicit outgroup.

Table 10b. Song Sample: Ingroup, Outgroup, and Conflict Content (Bajar)

	Ingroup		Outgroup		Conflict Content	
	Percentage	**Identity**	**Percentage**	**Identity**	**Percentage**	**Conflict Description**
Newroz	35.97%	Kurds (of all backgrounds)	3.36%	Unspecified forms of oppression	7.73%	Sun chasing away the clouds [Kurdishness chasing away oppression]
Sî û Çar Heb	38.98%	Kurdish residents of Roboskî	9.46%	The Turkish state (security	38.98%	The Roboskî massacre of December 28,

				forces and policymakers)		2011, and its aftermath
Serhildan Jiyan E	38.29%	Kurds (of all backgrounds)	0.94%	Generalized “battlefields”	39.07%	Kurds of all backgrounds are depicted as struggling and/or waiting for an empowered Kurdistan
Ogit	44.56%	A family / community from Dersim that has been displaced	6.57%	An unspecified entity that has displaced the song’s protagonists	44.53%	A family/community has been displaced from the Dersim region and is struggling to maintain a link to their historical past in that land
Mîrkut	32.88%	Kurdish peasants / laborers within the feudal system (but with urban undertones)	0.96%	The Kurdish Axa / Xatûn (feudal lord / lady)	26.93%	Kurdish laborers are being oppressed by the Kurdish feudal system, seeking to reap the rewards of their labor
Koça Dawî	37.10%	Kurdish families and neighbors (could also include neighbors of other backgrounds)	0%	[no out-group specified or implied]	0%	[none – a Kurdish community celebrates the return of some among their number to their homeland]
Îşportecî	34.27%	A Kurdish child peddler who has been forced to move with his family from Mardin to Istanbul	8.00%	A police officer (implied as being Turkish because the lyrics pertaining to him are in Turkish)	23.43%	A Kurdish child peddler who sells cigarettes struggles under the weight of his life in Istanbul
Bahoz	43.19%	Kurdish youths who are students	11.60%	The Turkish state education system	33.79%	Kurdish youths hold onto their dreams of a better future amidst the restrictive realities of the Turkish state education system

Emele	36.17%	(Displaced) Kurdish urban construction workers	4.69%	People of two backgrounds: (1) residents of buildings built by Kurdish laborers, and (2) security forces that burned the villages of these laborers	34.50%	Kurdish construction workers (in Istanbul) displaced by state violence (implied) must risk unsafe and oppressive working conditions in order to take care of their families in ghettoized parts of the city
Diyarbekir/Amed	41.70%	Kurds who recognize Diyarbakir as a lodestar of sorts	1.25%	"The enemy of my stone"	9.63%	Diyarbakir is shown as a city that has withstood much tragedy but maintains its beauty and its cultural integrity

The most striking finding from the conflict content analysis is the generally wide discrepancy between the narrative space allotted to ingroups versus outgroups within the songs included in the sample. As can be seen in both sets of findings, lyrics pertaining to the ingroup represented from 29.44% at the lowest ("1-0") to 44.56% at the highest ("Ogit") of the coding documents in question. In sharp contrast, the highest percentage of coding document covered by outgroup content is 17.7% ("Kara Üzüm Habbesi"), which is additionally notable in that there is no discernible conflict between ingroup and outgroup in this song, and in that the outgroup can not be definitively identifiable as Kurdish or Turkish. The lowest percentage of the coding document covered by outgroup content (among songs that *do* have an explicit or implicit outgroup) is 0.84% ("Denize Yakılan Türküsü"), and with the exception of "Bahoz," which has 11.6% outgroup

coverage, the rest of the songs' coverage of outgroup content doesn't reach the double digits.

What this finding suggests is that, when it comes to songs pertaining to Kurdish identity, Kardeş Türküler and Bajar are much more concerned with turning the focus of the songs on the stories and experiences of the ingroup (Kurds) rather than the outgroup. While conflict with the outgroup might be an element of these stories, and perhaps even the spark for the plot of the songs themselves, descriptions of the outgroups—their characteristics, their actions, their thoughts and feelings—are not the main focus of these songs.

Another interesting finding from the conflict content analysis emerges from a review of which types of actors appear as outgroups within the songs. In none of the songs are Kurds or Turks explicitly identified as Kurds or Turks. Instead, the identities of these characters come across through a variety of narrative techniques. The most prominent technique is the use of Turkish for Turkish actors and Kurmancî and Zazakî for Kurdish actors, though it is important to note that given that Turkish is the sole official language in Turkey, as well as the language of instruction, the presence of Turkish lyrics does not guarantee that the actor being referenced in (or assumed to be "narrating") those lyrics is of Turkish ethnicity.

An example of this identification process is clear in "Îşportecî." The song narrates a discrete moment in the life of a Kurdish child from Mardin who is implied to have been forced to move to Istanbul with his family for unknown reasons. In Istanbul, he becomes a cigarette peddler, forced by the need of his family (he is the "head of the house") to

work rather than be a child, as he was in Mardin. During the song, the boy falls asleep on his stall, and he dreams of being a child again in Mardin. Here he is still behind his stall, but instead of peddling cigarettes, he is distributing toys to the other children of the city, accompanied in this by Apê Musa.

At the very end of the song, as the boy sleeps, a municipal police officer ("zabitê") approaches the boy and shakes his shoulder. His mere identification as a "zabitê " already places him in the outgroup as a member of state and local security forces. However, it is when the zabitê speaks that his identification as Turkish is solidified. "Hadi çocuk kalk! Hadi kalk [Come on kid, get up! Come on, get up]!" he whispers firmly. Until this point, the lyrics (even the description of the zabitê's approach) have been in Kurmancî. The sudden transition to Turkish—and specifically, Turkish spoken by a representative of the Turkish state—presents a jarring, discomfiting switch between Kurdishness and Turkishness. What's more, that switch suddenly opens up possibilities for the nature of the conflict in the song. While the reason for the boy's displacement from Mardin to Istanbul—and thus, his displacement from his own childhood—remains unknown, the appearance of a Turkish zabita (the Turkish word for zabitê) at the end of the song introduces violence, oppression, or inequality imposed by the Turkish state on Kurds as the likely story.

While the Turkishness of some of the outgroups in the songs is indicated by use of Turkish language lyrics when Kurmancî and Zazakî were otherwise being used, this identity is also sometimes represented by reference to Turkish state structures. The zabitê example from "Îşportecî" is instructive and similar to the appearance of another zabitê in

“1-0,” who is also positioned in an antagonistic relationship with a Kurdish child peddler. Another, more grim example is that represented by “Sî û Çar Heb.” This song is a lament, somber and dark, for those Kurdish villagers, most of them youth, from Roboskî (known as Uludere in Turkish) who lost their lives when members of the Turkish security forces fired on them from the air on December 28, 2011. The predominant narrative is that the security forces took the youth, who were conducting unregulated trade across the mountainous Turkish–Iraqi border, for PKK militants. Of the 38 people who were part of the group, 34 were killed—28 from the same family. As Green and Karakas (2014) write, “no one [in Roboskî] is exempt from grief.” The song is an example of the use of both Kurmancî and Turkish by Kurdish protagonists (with the Turkish spoken with the accent of a native Kurdish speaker). Instead of the outgroup being symbolized through the use of the Turkish language, it is represented through a reference to the Turkish capital, Ankara.

During the reference in question, the main narrator of the song is lamenting the loss of someone he is close to in the massacre. This person is described as having enjoyed raising birds while he was alive, an activity that also earned him money. Now, the narrator of the song sings, “The 50,000 lira you earned from / raising your birds / is being dropped over Ankara.” This reference points to Ankara as a representative of Turkish national (if not ethnic) identity. It also introduces an element of precision to the reference. The outgroup in question may be Turkish, but it is not made to represent all Turks; rather, the outgroup is the official representation of Turkishness, the Turkish state.

Interestingly, while the outgroup in a number of the songs is tied to Turkish identity of one sort or another, there are instances where the outgroup is more

generalized, often taking the form of "foreign lands" or, in the case of "Serhildan Jiyan E," "battlefields." While it is possible that these generalized entities could be assumed to be related to Turkishness, the lack of an explicit reference lowers the sharpness of these outgroup references, foregrounding instead the qualities of the ingroup. In the case of "Serhildan Jiyan E," the fact that Turkishness is neither explicitly stated nor implied is remarkable. It is the only song in the sample to make reference to Kurdistan, and thus, the only song to even approach the idea of Kurdish autonomy or independence. One reason for the lack of explicit reference to Turkishness is likely the desire to appeal to the broader Kurdish community and diaspora, wherein the "battlefields" could be anywhere where this community has faced state oppression or other versions of violence. However, it remains notable that in this song about Kurdish empowerment, the focus is overwhelmingly on the virtues of the ingroup, without any focus on the actions or characteristics of an outgroup.

Finally, while the majority of the songs in the sample that have an outgroup represent that outgroup as non-Kurdish, there are two songs—both versions of "Mîrkut" from Kardeş Türküler and Bajar—that narrate an intra-Kurdish conflict. This conflict is set squarely in the Kurdish feudal system. The inclusion of this ingroup / outgroup dynamic, in which the dividing point is not ethnic identity but instead class, adds a layer of complexity to these two music groups' conceptions of Kurdish identity.

Through comparing the relative frequency of ingroup / outgroup representations against the frequency of conflict content, and through expanding upon the shape that these conflicts take and the identities and characteristics the conflict parties hold, it

becomes clear that in this song sample from Kardeş Türküler and Bajar, the two groups are concerned less with elaborating stories of blame, hate, or retribution against an outgroup, and instead more concerned with elaborating stories of the ingroup (in this case, the Kurdish community). It is important to be careful not to extrapolate these findings across the broader discographies of Kardeş Türküler. In the case of the former, there should even be some question as to whether firm ingroup / outgroup boundaries can or should be drawn across its discography, as the very purpose of the group is to narrate from multiple ethnic, linguistic, and religious identities. Thus, within the discography, it can be assumed that ingroup / outgroup positionalities are often shifting even when looking at a more narrow focus of ethnic identity, as "Kara Üzüm Habbesi" makes clear. With the music of Bajar, whose focus is more squarely on the relationship between Turkish and Kurdish communities, the former is often more explicitly identified as the outgroup, and the latter more firmly within the position of the ingroup. Nevertheless, relatively limited space is allotted to the description of Turkishness, with Kurdish identity remaining the focus of the majority of the songs in the sample.

One question that the conflict content and ingroup / outgroup analysis raises is whether the absence of an explicit or even implied Turkish outgroup is received by listeners as a move toward conflict de-escalation or as a move toward conflict escalation. Are the narratives of oppression, abuse, and violence at the hands of the Turkish state so embedded into the broader understanding of what it means to be Kurdish that no explicit reference to a specifically Turkish outgroup is needed? Notably, the lack of explicit reference to Turkish outgroups in the song sample also means that there is a lack of

positive representations of a Turkish outgroup. For Turkish listeners, is it possible that such lack of positive representation could be interpreted as erasure or slight, even when explicitly negative representations are few?

Definitive to these questions go beyond the scope of this study. My interviews with Küçüktürk, Yıldırım, and Öztürk suggested that both Kardeş Türküler and Bajar seek to be in a conflict de-escalatory mode, specifically by intentionally elaborating many different experiences of both joy and pain across a variety of communities in Turkey. As was noted in Chapter 5, while Bajar's genre choice (folk rock) as well as its more narrow focus on Kurdish stories open up greater opportunities for narrating very specific experiences of pain and oppression within the Kurdish community in Turkey, the band is not interested in creating "shocking" protest songs and anthems (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 8, 2020; V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020). Across all three interviews with the musicians, it was clear that decisions to represent identity communities symbolically, through uses of language, different fabula and cultural touchstones, and different themes of experience, hews closely with the commitment of the two music groups not just to their core goal of building reconciliation and social cohesion but also to the core goal of most artists: the construction of a compelling, imaginative, and contemplative aesthetic experience.

Social Identity within the Song Sample

The conflict content, ingroup, and outgroup coding laid the groundwork for the social identity content coding based on Rothbart and Korostelina's (2006b) axiological

difference model, as well as based on aspects of relative deprivation elaborated by Gurr (1971) and types of outgroup threat indicated by Korostelina (2007).

To ascertain the approximate axiological difference represented within each song, the lyrics were coded according to whether the outgroup was described with high generality or low generality, and according to the axiological balance, e.g., whether positive or negative traits were attributed to both ingroups and outgroups. For the purposes of this study, given the relatively small amount of outgroup content in the song sample, a song was determined to be axiologically balanced not if it represented equally positive and negative depictions (by way of percentage of document covered) of both ingroup and outgroup but rather if the song displayed both negative and positive depictions of the outgroup in some measure.

Table 11a. Song Sample: Collective Generality and Axiological Balance (Kardeş Türkuler)

	Collective Generality		Ingroup Characterization		Outgroup Characterization		Axiological Balance	
	High Generality	Low Generality	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Unbalanced	Balanced
Newroz	**2.59%**	0%	**1.71%**	0%	0%	**2.59%**	X	
Mîrkut	**2.69%**	**7.10%**	**31.54%**	0%	0%	**2.69%**	X	
Halâlê	0%	0%	**28.00%**	0%	0%	0%	n/a	n/a
Kerwanê	**2.72%**	**0.37%**	**31.52%**	0%	0%	**1.87%**	X	
Denize Yakılan Türkü	0%	0%	**38.02%**	0%	0%	0%	n/a	n/a
Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim	0%	**14.90%**	**21.05%**	0%	**11.89%**	**2.49%**		X

De Bila Bêto	0%	0%	**41.09%**	0%	0%	0%	n/a	n/a
1-0	**1.92%**	**1.92%**	**28.09%**	0%	**9.34%**	**1.79%**		X
Munzur Xenekiyêne	**2.16%**	**3.47%**	**32.67%**	0%	0%	**2.82%**	X	
Kara Üzüm Habbesi	0%	**17.70%**	**41.35%**	0%	**17.70%**	0%		X

Table 11b. Song Sample: Axiological Difference (Kardeş Türkuler)

	Axiological Difference
Newroz	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)
Mîrkut	Unbalanced / Low Generality (-I → O)
Halâlê	n/a (no out-group)
Kerwanê	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)
Denize Yakılan Türkü	n/a (insufficient description of implied out-group)
Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim	Balanced / Low Generality (+I- → O)
De Bila Bêto	n/a (insufficient description of implied out-group)
1-0	Between "Balanced / High Generality" and "Balanced / Low Generality" (+I- → O)
Munzur Xenekiyêne	Unbalanced / Low Generality (-I → O)
Kara Üzüm Habbesi	Balanced / Low Generality (+I → O)

Of the Kardeş Türküler songs, three—“ De Bila Bêto,” “Halâlê,” and “Denize Yakılan Türkü”—do not fit within the axiological difference framework, as they lacked an implicit or explicit outgroup, thus precluding the attribution of characteristics to an outgroup, which is required to determine high generality versus low generality. An analysis of the seven songs to which axiological difference is applicable shows a wide variety in the types of axiological difference represented in the sample. Half of the sample (five songs) fall within an “unbalanced” representation of ingroup versus outgroup, though two of these songs (“Newroz” and “Kerwanê”) display a high

generality, and three of these songs ("Mîrkut," "Munzur Xenekiyêne," and "Kara Üzüm Habbesi") display a low generality. Of these five songs, only "Kara Üzüm Habbesi" represents the outgroup as more positive than negative.

Two of the songs—" Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim" and "1-0"—fall within the balanced category, with the former displaying a low generality. The latter is an interesting case, as there is an even split between the percentage of the document covered by both high generality and low generality characteristics—namely, 1.92%. This identical percentage is the result of an overlap between high and low generality in descriptions of the outgroup—namely, municipal police officers (zabitên) that are depicted as constantly chasing after the song's protagonist, a Kurdish child named Hekim who earns his living by peddling a variety of wares.

In the song's third full stanza, the conflict between Hekim and one zabitê in particular is laid out by the narrator:

Oh, that's Hekim

What a rascal

But the city is surprised

He's the hero of the peddlers

He has the whole bazaar in the palm of his hand

Didn't you see, the police officer's eyes became red again

Ah, run Hekimo, run!

O ho, police officer, run!

Here, the line "Don't you see, the police officer's eyes became red again" is coded as "exhibiting unchanging behaviors" (e.g., a high generality trait), as it is apparent from the narrative that Hekim is constantly running afoul of the officer. However, this line is also coded as "limited in scope" (e.g., a low generality trait), because while the zabitên are obviously representative of one type of Turkish identity, they are not representative of *all* Turkish identity.

Table 12a. Song Sample: Collective Generality and Axiological Balance (Bajar)

	Collective Generality		Ingroup Characterization		Outgroup Characterization		Axiological Balance	
	High Generality	Low Generality	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Unbalanced	Balanced
Newroz	**7.73%**	0%	**2.61%**	0%	0%	**3.89%**	X	
Sî û Çar Heb	**9.71%**	**2.79%**	**38.98%**	0%	0%	**15.29%**	X	
Serhildan Jiyan E	0%	**0.94%**	**39.07%**	0%	0%	0%	n/a	n/a
Ogit	**4.28%**	**1.23%**	**8.44%**	**23.58%**	**1.23%**	**4.28%**		X
Mîrkut	**3.19%**	0%	**31.77%**	0%	0%	**3.19%**	X	
Koça Dawî	0%	0%	**26.72%**	0%	0%	0%	n/a	n/a
Îşportecî	0%	**4.04%**	**34.27%**	0%	**1.68%**	**2.37%**		X
Bahoz	**10.88%**	0%	**33.04%**	0%	0%	**10.88%**	X	
Emele	**4.69%**	0%	**27.87%**	0%	0%	**4.69%**	X	
Diyarbekir/Amed	**1.25%**	0%	**40.45%**	0%	0%	**1.25%**	X	

Table 12b. Song Sample: Axiological Difference (Bajar)

	Axiological Difference
Newroz	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)
Sî û Çar Heb	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)

Serhildan Jiyan E	n/a (insufficient description of implied out-group)
Ogit	Balanced / High Generality (+I- → O)
Mîrkut	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)
Koça Dawî	n/a (no out-group)
Îşportecî	Balanced / Low Generality (+I- → O)
Bahoz	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)
Emele	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)
Diyarbekir/Amed	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)

The Bajar sample displayed slightly less variability than the Kardeş Türküler sample. Two of the Bajar songs—"Serhildan Jiyan E" and "Koça Dawî"—did not fit with the axiological difference model, due to either lacking an outgroup (in the case of "Koça Dawî") or lacking sufficient description of the outgroup (in the case of "Serhildan Jiyan E"). This lack of fit with axiological difference is again particularly interesting in relation to "Serhildan Jiyan E," given, as previously mentioned, that the song is the only one to refer to Kurdistan, and is the only one that, through both narration and function, might approach what Yılrıdırım calls "anthem" songs (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020). The title of the song means "Rebellion is Life." The song begins with a repetition of "Rebellion / Resistance" two times, sung by Yılrıdırım in an elongated manner against measured but intense elements of guitar and percussion overlaid with the more traditional zurna, which ties together this more modern interpretation. For the opening stanza, the instrumentals lower in intensity but are still present, helping to measure the rhythm of the lyrics, which are meant to be rousing:

There's rebellion in the mountains

There's resistance in the prisons

There's rebellion in the mountains

There's resistance in the prisons

The voices of the boys are pleasing to me

The voices of the girls are tender

The voices of the boys are pleasing to me

The voices of the girls are tender

The song then shifts to its chorus. Now, Yıldırım is joined by others in singing, "Rebellion / Resistance / Rebellion is life / Resistance is life," their voices firm and energized. Subsequent stanzas go on to let the listener know that "Halting is not our aim / Our purpose is progress" and that "Kurdistan is waiting for us / Oh, its eyes are searching for us." Where the subject of "we" is concerned, the song does not mince words. The collective voice is that of "the workers in their workplaces," "the students in their schools," "the Peshmerga in the battlefields," and "the martyrs in the cemeteries."

The song's official music video goes further to reinforce this sense of solidarity (Kalan Müzik, 2013b]. It shifts between images of daily life on Istanbul's streets—and in particular, of children and primarily working-class laborers—and images of the band singing the song and seeming to beckon to the collective to join them. At various points throughout the video, both the band's members and the people on the streets are depicted as leaving behind their work and play and running away from the camera. By the end of the song, it becomes clear what everyone is running toward, as the story of the video

shifts from a staged (if rooted in reality) representation of Istanbul street life to real-life footage of Newroz celebrations, rallies, and marches in support of rights for Kurdish communities, with additional images of groups of people dancing (including halay) in both urban environments and against the backdrop of more mountainous, rural scenes. In these images, massive crowds are shown as well as close-ups on individual people celebrating, dancing, or rallying. Various expressions of Kurdishness—from the colors of yellow, red, and green to traditional clothing to footage of a man jumping over the fire of Newroz—are interspersed across the footage to the sound of the lyrics and the instrumental music, which now includes the playing of the arbane. The impact is nothing short of energizing.

The narrative of the song, elaborated by the video, is twofold. The first, perhaps most explicit message is that the Kurdish community is a collective bound by both a shared celebration of different traditions, practices, and histories, and by a shared experience of resisting efforts to suppress these expressions. Yet, there is a more subtle message as well. Both in the video and in the lyrics, by focusing on the different voices and faces of this collective, the song reminds that rebellion and resistance are also a way of life, to be lived even in everyday moments.

Yet, the song does not identify any specific place or group as an enemy, for all that it talks of rebellion and resistance. It can very much be argued that it doesn't need to: the mention of voices in the prisons, for example, implies state oppression, while the mention of voices in the mountains could be interpreted as a more direct and active resistance against state oppression, as "going to the mountains" is often considered both

within the Kurdish community in Turkey and outside of it as a euphemism for joining in armed resistance. The reference to Peshmerga and battlefields is more explicit, though even in this case, no specific outgroup is referenced as the enemy.

However, it is important not to overlook the fact that more explicit references to an enemy are not made, as well as more explicit references to violent resistance. This is especially true in the music video. While Bajar did not create the lyrics to this particular song, the music video is the interpretation of the music group and its partners. The video does not show images of an enemy, nor does it show images of violence. To rebel and resist in this audiovisual world is to celebrate one's identity through various cultural expressions; to join together in both celebration and the demanding of rights; and to engage in purposeful perseverance in daily life, in the "workplaces" and the "schools." During my discussion with Yıldırım, I asked why Bajar chose to adapt this song, which stands out in its discography as leaning more towards the types of "anthem" music that the group generally avoids. According to Yıldırım, it was important for Bajar to present its interpretation of this song because "this, too, is part of life":

> There are many ways of bringing protests and feelings into words. 'Serhildan' is [part of that]. The words are Şivan Perwer's. Yes, it's a protest song. Actually, it's a resistance song. There are of course aspects of that in our lives. We're not the kind of bands that says, 'Oh, that's political, let's not touch that.' We are endeavoring to say something. Whatever there is to say, we will say it. As such, resistance is a part of life. This song explains that. But it isn't a discriminatory or

racist song. We can say that it is a song about defending your rights. (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020)

Given the clear conflict content in the ”Serhildan Jiyan E,” as well as the musical and artistic choices made to tell its story, it is thus interesting that its axiological balance cannot be determined due to insufficient reference to an outgroup. This finding does not suggest, however, that this song does not have implications for conflict dynamics with regard to social identification.

Returning to the broader Bajar sample, of those songs that fit within the axiological difference model, six songs—“Newroz,” “Sî û Çar Heb,” “Mîrkut,” “Bahoz,” “Emele,” and “Diyarbekir/Amed”—displayed an unbalanced representation of the outgroup with a high generality. Notably, all of these songs also ascribed negative characteristics to the outgroups. The two remaining songs—“Ogit” and “Îşportecî”—displayed a more balanced representation of the outgroup as compared with the ingroup, with “Ogit” displaying a high generality, and “Îşportecî” displaying a low generality.

The depiction of the zabitê in Îşportecî is illustrative of how positive representations of the outgroup can exist alongside negative representations (thus indicating the “balance” in the axiological difference model). In the song, the zabitê that awakens the Kurdish boy is first described as shaking the boy’s shoulder. While not an overly violent action, it is firmer and perhaps less sympathetic than tapping the boy on the shoulder would have been. Additionally, the entrance of a zabitê into an otherwise pleasant dream scene is itself foreboding. However, the zabitê’s words, and particularly

the way they are delivered, take away some of that edge. It becomes apparent that the zabitê has some concern for the sleeping boy when he whispers for him to wake up, symbolizing the return of some recognition of the boy being only a child. Contrast this depiction of the zabitê with the depiction in "1-0." While neither is friendly, the zabitê in "1-0" is constantly chasing Hekim in anger. There is no tenderness, it seems; no recognition of his young age and circumstances.

The balance between negative and positive depictions of the outgroup in "Ogit" take on a different form. To start, the outgroup is a generalized other, an unnamed entity that has forced the family at the center of the story to move from their home on the Munzur River to the province of Konya. The narrator of the song sings:

> Forcibly forcibly forcibly, with force
> They tore us from our soil
> They forced us into exile
> All the way to Konya province

This representation of the outgroup—which, in the context of the Dersim Rebellion of 1937–38, can be understood to be the Turkish state—is undoubtedly negative. Yet, later on in the song, a (potentially) Turkish outgroup is implied again with a reference to generalized "neighbors":

> The morning's prayer against the sun

The sudden miracle of fire

The babbling of the Munzur River

These we have never forgotten

With all of our neighbors in peace

We must not forget our way

We have been on that scared land since the time of Seth

There are two possible interpretations of who these "neighbors" could be. The first is that like the narrator of the song and their family, they are people who have been displaced from Dersim to Konya. This is not an unlikely interpretation. However, the fact that they do now live in a different province that is, within the logic of the song, considered to be be a foreign land where different communities live, introduces the possibility that by "neighbors," the narrator means to encompass any possible outgroups as well as the ingroup. The fact that the narrator is calling for their family and their neighbors to live "in peace" also supports a reading that these neighbors include members of the very outgroup that led to the ingroup's displacement.

While this juxtaposition between negative and positive depictions of the outgroup makes Ogit stand out among the sample, it is its attribution of both positive and negative attributes to the ingroup that makes this song exceptional. It is the only song in which the ingroup is represented as negative alongside representations of its positive attributes, and in fact, the negative characterizations exceed the positive characterizations.

This interplay between positive and negative depictions of the ingroup arises from the song's secondary conflict. While the primary conflict within the song is the displacement of the narrator and their family, the secondary conflict is the insinuation that the narrator's children—their sons and daughters—are in danger of forgetting the way of life that they lived in Dersim. The song actually begins with this sub-conflict, as the narrator sings:

> Oh son, oh son, my beautiful son
> Don't rain down fire on my hearth
> Oh daughter, oh daughter, my beautiful daughter
> Don't rain down embers on my heart

This refrain is repeated four more times throughout the song, making its themes of remembrance of culture, tradition, and history an important part of the narrative. The "beautiful son" and "beautiful daughter" could also be seen not as literal children of the narrator but as the next generation, the one born during or after the displacement in question, which would make the narrator a more generalized elder from a generation that more fully experienced not just the displacement but also the way of life in Dersim before the conflict changed forced the family/community out. It is important to note here that the song's lyrics were written by Cemal Taş, who is himself from Dersim and was born in the generation following the rebellion (Alan, 2018). Note that the elder in the song does not call on these youth to take revenge or nurture hatred for the outgroup. Instead, actions

like preserving culture and remembering history—not the displacement, per se, but the way of life before it happened—are more important. As we will see in the discussion section of this study, these types of narrative choices could have implications for Turkish–Kurdish reconciliation.

Understanding the axiological difference of the song sample from each group allows for a better understanding of the possible conflict implications of the songs. Korostelina (2007) has found that certain types of axiological difference indicate different relationships to the maintenance or fostering of conflict. In particular, she notes that "protracted conflict usually rests on a collective axiology with *low* axiological balance and *high* collective generality" (2007, p. 208, italics hers). Three songs from Kardeş Türküler ("Newroz," "Mîrkut," and "Kerwanê") and six songs from Bajar ("Newroz," "Sî û Çar Heb," "Mîrkut," "Bahoz," "Emele," and "Diyarbekir/Amed") exhibit low axiological balance and high generality. Another type of axiological difference—low axiological balance and low generality—is also associated with the potential for conflict, according to Korostelina (2007). Two songs from Kardeş Türküler ("Munzur Xenekiyêne," and "Kara Üzüm Habbesi") fall within this axiological difference, while none from Bajar do.

The other two types of axiological difference, marked by a high axiological balance with either a high or low degree of collective generality, are less likely to generate conflict, according to Korostelina. The Kardeş Türküler sample includes two songs that fall within this characterization ("Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim" and "1-0"), while the Bajar sample also contains two songs in this vein ("Ogit" and "Îşportecî").

It might be initially confusing as to how so many of the Kardeş Türküler and Bajar songs in the above sample have fallen into cpotential conflictual modes of axiological difference when explicit or implicit references to an outgroup, much less a Turkish outgroup, are few and far between. However, both the relative deprivation and outgroup threat content in these songs makes the reason for this result clearer.

Table 13a. Song Sample: Outgroup Threat (Kardeş Türküler)

	Changes in Intergroup Relations	Limitation of Socioeconomic Opportunities	Memories of Former Domination	Unequal Positions	Weakness in Position
	New Territorial Claims			Economic Inequality	
Newroz	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Mîrkut	0.00%	**14.31%**	0.00%	**14.31%**	0.00%
Halâlê	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Kerwanê	**16.61%**	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	**16.06%**
Denize Yakılan Türkü	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim	0.00%	0.00%	**5.59%**	0.00%	0.00%
De Bila Bêto	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
1-0	0.00%	**10.88%**	0.00%	**10.88%**	0.00%
Munzur Xenekiyêne	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	**1.29%**
Kara Üzüm Habbesi	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Table 13b. Song Sample: Outgroup Threat (Bajar)

Bajar (OTa)	Changes in Intergroup Relations			
	Demographic Change	**Intention to Change Intergroup Positions**	**New Barriers to Economic Well-Being**	**New Barriers to Educational Well-Being**

Newroz	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sî û Çar Heb	0.00%	0.00%	**24.04%**	0.00%
Sehildan Jiyan E	0.00%	0.00%	**1.77%**	**1.70%**
Ogit	**9.50%**	**9.50%**	**9.50%**	**9.50%**
Mîrkut	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Koça Dawî	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Îşportecî	0.00%	0.00%	**7.70%**	0.00%
Bahoz	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	**33.79%**
Emele	0.00%	0.00%	**29.61%**	0.00%
Diyarbekir/Amed	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Bajar (OTb)	**Difference in Citizenship**	**Limitation of Socioeconomic Opportunities**	**Memories of Former Domination**
Newroz	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sî û Çar Heb	0.00%	**24.04%**	**37.10%**
Sehildan Jiyan E	**5.78%**	0.00%	**4.44%**
Ogit	**1.53%**	**1.38%**	**9.50%**
Mîrkut	0.00%	**17.65%**	0.00%
Koça Dawî	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Îşportecî	0.00%	**7.70%**	0.00%
Bahoz	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Emele	0.00%	**29.61%**	**4.89%**
Diyarbekir/Amed	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Bajar (OTc)	**Outgroup Beliefs and Behaviors**	**Unequal Positions**		**Weakness in Position**
	Violence (Outgroup)	**Economic Inequality**	**Political Inequality**	
Newroz	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sî û Çar Heb	**8.46%**	**24.04%**	**6.06%**	0.00%
Sehildan Jiyan E	0.00%	0.00%	**20.05%**	0.00%
Ogit	0.00%	**17.65%**	0.00%	**9.50%**
Mîrkut	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Koça Dawî	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Îşportecî	0.00%	**7.70%**	0.00%	0.00%

Bahoz	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Emele	**0.61%**	**29.61%**	0.00%	**27.83%**
Diyarbekir/Amed	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

In songs that have relatively little explicit or implicit mention of an outgroup, for example, there is still the possibility for a more prominent presence of outgroup threat. In Kardeş Türküler's "Kerwanê," for example, only 2.78% of the coded document includes reference to an outgroup, and 1.87% of that reference includes negative depictions. Yet, 16.61% of the coded document represents outgroup threat, specifically relating to implications of territorial claims and weakness in position. In the new territorial claims is interpreted from the song's discussion of a family that has been displaced from their traditional homeland, causing the "cold of foreign lands" to be upon them. The weakness in position is evident in the beginning refrain of the song, in which the narrator asks, "What for, oh father? Whose wrath has befallen us?" Later in the song, a more general narration takes over, describing the scene of the "caravan / caravan / forsaken caravan" fleeing into those cold, foreign lands as both mountains and years pass by.

In Bajar's "Sî û Çar Heb," the outgroup threat is almost ever-present. While 9.46% of the coded document pertains to an explicit or implicit outgroup, the outgroup threat encompasses 37.10% of the document. This is not to be unexpected, given that of all the songs in the sample, "Sî û Çar Heb" is the only one that explicitly names a specific event in the history of the Turkish–Kurdish conflict (the Roboskî Massacre). In addition, this event happened in very recent memory (less than a decade ago).

It is important to note that the presence of outgroup threat does not necessarily indicate that a song in the sample lies in a potentially conflictual mode of axiological differnce. In Bajar's "Ogit," which is characterized by high balance and high generality, the percentage of coded document referring to a specific outgroup is 6.57%, while the percentage referring to outgroup threat is moderately larger (11.97%). While this threat is experienced across many types—barriers to economic and educational well-being, demographic change, differences in citizenship, memories of former domination, etc.—it is again important to remember that there is what might be called an *ingroup* threat as well in this song (the threat of the next generation forgetting their community's history and customs). Thus, the conflict within the song becomes more complicated, the values ascribed to different groups more balanced. This does not mean that the outgroup threat doesn't loom large or isn't taken seriously within the song; however, the multiple conflicts and balanced description of ingroup / outgroup allows for shifting foci that might prevent the reification of solidly us-vs.-them boundaries.

Across the song sample, the relative deprivation content displays a similar pattern, elaborating the axiological difference findings and placing ingroup / outgroup references in context.

Table 14a. Song Sample: Relative Deprivation (Kardeş Türküler)

	Relative Deprivation		
	Interpersonal Values	Welfare Values	Power Values

	Communality	Ideational Coherence	Status	Economic	Self-Actualization	Participation	Security
Newroz	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Mîrkut	**2.11%**	**2.49%**	**1.41%**	**14.31%**	**17.09%**	0.00%	0.00%
Halâlê	**0.84%**	0.00%	0.00%	**3.66%**	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Kerwanê	**12.42%**	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	**28.64%**	0.00%	**6.13%**
Denize Yakılan Türkü	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	**3.91%**	0.00%	0.00%
De Bila Bêto	**12.05%**	0.00%	0.00%	**1.77%**	**1.77%**	0.00%	0.00%
1-0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	**10.88%**	**10.88%**	0.00%	0.00%
Munzur Xenekiyêne	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	**5.41%**	0.00%	0.00%
Kara Üzüm Habbesi	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Table 14b. Song Sample: Relative Deprivation (Bajar)

	Relative Deprivation						
	Interpersonal Values			**Welfare Values**		**Power Values**	
	Communality	Ideational Coherence	Status	Economic	Self-Actualization	Participation	Security
Newroz	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sî u Çar Heb	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	**24.04%**	**25.37%**	0.00%	**8.46%**
Sehildan Jiyan E	**3.09%**	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	**28.38%**	**28.38%**	**4.44%**
Ogit	**2.98%**	0.00%	**1.38%**	0.00%	**1.53%**	0.00%	**9.50%**
Mîrkut	**0.80%**	**2.92%**	**1.67%**	**17.65%**	**21.93%**	0.00%	0.00%
Koça Dawî	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Îşportecî	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	**2.61%**	**14.62%**	0.00%	0.00%

Bahoz	0.00%	**7.83%**	0.00%	0.00%	**33.79%**	0.00%	0.00%
Emele	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	**29.61%**	**5.36%**	0.00%	**4.89%**
Diyarbekir/ Amed	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	**1.25%**

In Bajar's "Emele," a variety of different types of relative deprivation show how multivalent this experience of deprivation can be. The song is about Kurdish construction workers in urban environments who are working to build homes for the middle and upper classes while they lack their own safe living conditions, only 4.69% of the coded document refers to an outgroup. However, relative deprivation content accounts for 38.97% of the coded document. "I am making houses / I'm making houses / I'm making homes for you to come home to," the narrator sings at the beginning of the song. Later in the stanza, he laments, "Between hundreds of floors, I am weaving / No one asks about my own state / Why am I without a home?" Economic deprivation of this sort is the main focus of the song, but other forms of deprivation are also addressed. Deprivation of security appears when the narrator discusses the fact that his village has been destroyed, a reference to the "köy boşaltmaları" ("village emptying") that took place in the southeast in the 1990s. "Never forget, don't ever forget / That day, don't you ever forget / They destroyed our village / Our house returned to ash," the narrators sing, this time as a collective. At another point in the song, the narrator addresses how the hard, dangerous labor of construction work in an exploitative environment has prevented him from being able to enjoy his life with his family:

I am exhausted, so exhausted

My tired eyes pain me

In the place where day meets night

My children gather in my lap

They want to play with me

I am a carpenter, I sleep early

They want to sleep beside me

I am a carpenter, I sleep early

Economic deprivation appears as well in Kardeş Türküler's "1-0," where 3.28% of the coded document represents the ingroup but relative deprivation (both economic and self-actualization) is represented in 11.67% of the coded document. The song tells the story of a young child peddler who can only be described as precocious. And yet for all that the song focuses on the joy that Hekim still embodies, it is an injustice that rather than going to school or living a more pressure-free childhood, Hekim is constantly having to peddle mussels while constantly running from police. "For Hekimo, life is hard and full of trouble," the narrator sings. "The city's gears wind around his feet / Yet he surprises everyone with his joy." According to Yıldırım, who wrote part of the lyrics for the song, its very title highlights the experience of relative deprivation in Turkey:

There are many things that start out on the losing end. You start out 1-0. Let's say this is because of ethnicity. If you're on the losing end of economic status, you start out 2-0. Let's say you've also lost out by being Muslim—by Muslim, I mean

> not Sunni—so now you're 3-0. If you're Jewish, you're now 4-0, because in Turkey, if you're Jewish, you're even worse off than if you were Christian…These zeros really add up! (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020)

With these nuances of relative deprivation and outgroup threat in mind, the representations of axiological difference in the song sample come into clearer focus. Overall, the axiological difference analysis shows two slightly different approaches to the interplay of Kurdish and Turkish identity in the Turkish–Kurdish conflict. The sample from Kardeş Türküler presents a more varied collection of songs across the two axes of unbalanced / balanced depictions and high generality / low generality, as well as with relation to positive versus negative depictions of the outgroup. Such varied results with regard to axiological difference suggest a music group that takes an approach to Kurdish identity in the midst of the Turkish–Kurdish conflict that seeks to mend ties between the two groups while not losing the histories and traits that make the lived experiences of the groups distinct.

In contrast, while Bajar displays some variance along these measures as well, the fact that more than half the sample falls into the "Unbalanced / High Generality" category, with negative depictions of the outgroup, suggests that Bajar is more firmly in a space that reifies the boundaries between experiences of Kurdish identity and experiences of Turkish identity. In this space, Bajar seems to be more focused on narrating the experiences—both celebratory and painful—that have befallen Kurdish communities.

This narration sometime requires the negative characterization of the Turkish outgroup, though, like with the Kardeş Türküler sample, relatively little space is devoted to the outgroup at all, suggesting that Bajar is less oriented toward laying blame and more oriented toward narrating experiences of individuals often left out of the mainstream story in Turkey.

Notably, while the majority of Bajar's sample remains in this "Unbalanced / High Generality" space in which conflictual identities are not likely to be nudged toward reconciliation, the interplay between positive and negative depictions of both ingroup and outgroup indicates that Bajar still very much orients attention toward constructive, rather than destructive, representations of the Turkish–Kurdish conflict.

The axiological difference results must be understood in a context in which the relative lack of outgroup reference is also coupled with negative characterizations that are more restrained in nature than they are vivid portrayals of demonized others. In some cases, these representations are subtle—a police officer's unwelcome waking of the child peddler in "Îşportecî," for example, or the naïve ignorance of the people in "Emele" who are living in houses that so many suffered exploitative conditions to build.

In other cases, the negative characterizations carry more gravity, such as in "Ogit," where the outgroup is described as having forced the protagonists of the song from their land and into exile. Occasionally, the outgroup is characterized as more menacing, using religious or mythic undertones to characterize the outgroup as in violation of norms and the ingroup as persevering against evil. These modes of characterization are present in "Munzur Xenekiyêne," in which the protagonists sing,

“The fallen ones fell under the curse of the sacred lands / Certainly they will pay their dues ”; and in “Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim,” when the protagonists sing that they will “not become prisoners of the Bey” and that a “time of darkness” is dissipating.

Yet, it is important to note that these types of vivid descriptions of the outgroup are few and far between. The songs across the sample, from both Kardeş Türkuler *and* Bajar, are much more likely to devote their energies to narrating the experiences of the ingroup. Explicit and even implicit references to the outgroup as Turkish in particular are not widespread, and when they do pop up, they are often not devoted the same aesthetic vividness as descriptions of the ingroup. As was demonstrated at the beginning of the chapter, the song sample narrates multiple, nuanced understandings of what it means to experience Kurdish identity in Turkey. While elements of outgroup threat, relative deprivation, and outgroup negativity are included within these narrations, it seems less important to these two music groups to narrate the intents or characters of the outgroups and more important to focus in on the rich, complicated lifeworlds of the Kurdish protragonists within these songs.

Nevertheless, the fact that the majority of the songs across both the Kardeş Türküler and Bajar samples fall within the more conflictual modes of axiological difference initially seems to suggest that, despite both groups’ avowed intent to foster reconciliation and social cohesion, these specific songs are more likely to maintain boundaries between Kurdish and Turkish communities in a pattern that could sustain or escalate conflict.

However, this would be too strong a conclusion to draw for multiple reasons. First, the song sample is not fully representative of the group's entire discography. Second, a previously stated limitation of this study is that it does not include research with listeners of the music of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar, and thus cannot account for the actual types of impact each song has. Finally, as will be expanded upon in the final section of this chapter, aspects such as implicit versus explicit references to ingroups and outgroups as well as genre moves within the songs will elaborate the particular flavor of the axiological difference presented in the song sample. In short, it will reinforce the need to study the particulars of narratives of social distinctiveness and difference to understand their potential ramifications in conflict contexts.

Narrative Genre within the Song Sample

Both the axiological difference model and the narrative genre framework provide tools for measuring how the Turkish–Kurdish conflict is narrated in the songs of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar. However, whereas the axiological difference model focuses more closely on the dynamics of social identity within the conflict, the narrative genre analysis allows a deeper understanding of the particular narrative dynamics at play, dynamics that involve sometimes slight stylistic choices in narration that can nevertheless privilege one interpretation over another.

The songs across both the Kardeş Türküler sample and the Bajar sample range from wide gaps between morally clear and morally complex content (e.g., "Newroz" [Kardeş Türküler *and* Bajar versions], "Diyarbekir/Amed") to an even split between the two categories (in the Kardeş Türküler sample, represented by "Halâlê" and "Kara Üzüm

Habbesi"; in the Bajar sample, represented by "Bahoz"). The rest of the songs across the two samples range from modest to slight gaps between the morally clear and morally complex content.

Table 15a. Song Sample: Narrative Genre (Kardeş Türküler)

	Narrative Genre		Predominant Mix
	Moral Clarity	**Moral Complexity**	
Newroz	37.95%	4.86%	Romance
Mîrkut	34.59%	30.26%	Melodrama / Tragedy / Redemption
Halâlê	28.00%	28.00%	Romance / Tragedy
Kerwanê	35.33%	34.04%	Romance / Tragedy / Redemption
Denize Yakılan Türkü	28.82%	38.02%	Tragedy / Redemption
Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim	32.94%	27.35%	Romance / Redemption
De Bila Bêto	41.09%	28.04%	Melodrama / Tragedy / Redemption
1-0	28.68%	29.75%	Romantic / Redemption
Munzur Xenekiyêne	34.83%	26.48%	Melodrama / Tragedy
Kara Üzüm Habbesi	41.35%	41.35%	Romance / Redemption

Table 15b. Song Sample: Narrative Genre (Bajar)

	Narrative Genre		Predominant Mix
	Moral Clarity	**Moral Complexity**	
Newroz	36.32%	7.52%	Romance
Sî u Çar Heb	38.98%	37.10%	Melodrama / Tragedy
Serhildan Jiyan E	39.07%	14.18%	Romance
Ogit	44.56%	42.07%	Melodrama / Tragedy
Mîrkut	33.84%	28.23%	Melodrama / Tragedy / Redemption

Koça Dawî	37.73%	26.74%	Romance / Redemption
Îşportecî	40.05%	38.32%	Romance / Tragedy
Bahoz	43.92%	43.92%	Romance / Tragedy / Redemption
Emele	39.86%	34.97%	Melodrama / Tragedy
Diyarbekir/Amed	41.70%	8.38%	Romance

Like with the axiological difference model, the relatively balanced mix of moral clarity and moral complexity in the song content underlines the dynamic nature of narrative. Before embarking on this study, I would have expected more of the songs to have a clearer—and wider—divide between moral clarity and moral complexity, thus allowing for them to be placed neatly into one of the four genre categories included in Simmons's (2020) model. The reality was far from this result, however. The majority of the songs across the sample alternated between moral clarity and moral complexity, and often, elements of both could be found in the same lines and stanzas of text.

The three songs that exhibit identical moral clarity / moral complexity coverage best help to illustrate the possibility of such overlap. In all three of these cases, the overlap seems to result from a mix of the literary style of the songs—all three of them poetic—with other attributes, such as the use of elaborating (rather than polarizing) language, in the case of "Kara Üzüm Habbesi" and "Halâlê," or the presence of a structural causal context, as is the case with "Bahoz." Take this refrain from "Bahoz" as an example:

Obligation was our road

The corridors were the color of the state

The classrooms were narrow to us

The curricula and the books

Obligation was our road

The corridors were the color of the state

The classrooms were narrow to us

The curricula and the books

The literary style of this stanza can be identified as poetic, understood from the use of repetition and the inversion of the structure of this sentence, "The classrooms were narrow to us / The curricula and the books," which in Turkish reads, "Sınflar bize dar gelirdi / müfredatlar ve kitaplar." Turkish sentences generally follow a subject-object-verb structure. The inclusion of a subject following the verb breaks this structure and introduces poetry into what otherwise would be prose. It is the poetry of this stanza that earns it a spot within the construct of "moral clarity."

However, when it comes to causal context, moral complexity is introduced. The song represents the voices of Kurdish youth who are caught within a suffocating educational environment (one that is "narrow" to them). When it comes to youth, particularly adolescents, one might assume that there is always an element of the suffocating in school life. But this situation is compounded by the fact that the youth are Kurdish in a state education system that prioritizes Turkishness and often renders

Kurdishness invisible, starting with the official language of instruction.[32] The fact that the stanzas relating to the school environment are in Turkish highlights that this state-based restriction of Kurdishness is at the root of the problem. This interpretation is made apparent when contrasted alongside the song's other refrain, which is in Kurdish:

> We are sleeping among the stars
>
> Addicted to dreams
>
> With our dear friends, we are happy
>
> How sweet is life!

The hopeful content of this refrain, and the fact that it is in Kurdish, reinforces the conflict between state-sanctioned Turkishness, in which the youth feel confined and limited, and their Kurdish lived experiences, in which they feel free and dare to dream of a better future. The outgroup here is not a discrete other, or even a person that can be pointed to, but instead a structure, a system that has been designed to cause harm. Thus, the causal context is identified as being structural (rather than individuated)—and this introduces the element of moral complexity.

It is important here to note that it would be easy to assume that song language is inherently poetic, but this study found that this was not the case. While all of the songs except one included some measure of poetic style, three songs— "Denize Yakılan

[32] Think here of Yılmaz from *Vizontele Tuuba*, struggling to put to words the story of the last summer of his childhood for a homework assignment imposed by a state curriculum that represents curtailed opportunities for meaning making. Or think even of Yıldırım's own school experience in Ankara, defined by that feeling of being out of place because of his own manner of expression in Turkish.

Türkü," "1-0," and "Îşportecî"—included prosaic language as well. In the case of "Denize Yakılan Türkü," the prosaic language came in the form of a spoken introduction to the song: "I don't know where it came from into my mind, twenty-four years after everything happened and ended. Probably so that nothing from the past remains unfinished." This is the most obvious example of prosaic language in the entire sample, and for good reason, as it is quoted from the movie for which the song was made, *Vizontele Tuuba* (2004, dir. Yılmaz Erdoğan). The words are spoken by an older version of one of the film's side characters, the son of a mayor, who studies in Ankara and has returned to his town in Hakkâri in southeastern Turkey for the summer. Notably, this introduction is spoken without any music in the background, and once it has finished, the song's instrumentals begin.

In "1-0" and "Îşportecî," the prosaic text is less obvious. In "1-0," it comes in the form of two sections of the song in which the respective singers of each section deliver a spoken (rather than sung) narration of the story, though the words are still delivered against instrumentals, with pauses in the narration filled by background singers. In the first prosaic section, which was already discussed earlier in the chapter, the narrator speaks hurriedly against a steady rhythm in the background, almost as if he is a sportscaster narrating an intense and exciting event:

> Oh, that's Hekim
>
> What a rascal
>
> But the city is surprised

He's the hero of the peddlers

He has the whole bazaar in the palm of his hand

Didn't you see, the police officer's eyes became red again

Ah, run Hekimo, run!

O ho, police officer, run!

The sportscast-like delivery of this section elaborates the scene that the song has created, driving home the idea of being Kurdish in Turkey as a game that is always stacked against you (as previously discussed).

Later in the song, following the repetition of a more poetic refrain, a new narrator (literally, a new singer's voice) narrates another section of prosaic lyrics. In this case, the narrator speaks in Turkish, and what's more, he adopts a style of narration that contains various inflection points synonymous with oral storytelling traditions such as meddahlik (an Ottoman tradition). The inclusion of oral cues to correspond with the content of the story—for example, the sound of a police whistle blowing—solidifies the parallel, serving as visual props to replace the physical props—namely, a cane, and a long shawl—that a traditional Ottoman meddah, or storyteller, might otherwise use to better help the audience visualize the story. In the song, this storyteller relates the following:

Hekim! Hm!

Hekim's eyes are always moving

Oh, and if his work is going well

Officers crouch in wait, he runs from the police

Whatever job he does, it always goes awry

Look, the rice's bottom has burned!

If you say light it up, it won't light

There's no pearl waiting in the mussel

That also didn't pan out

Now he whistles to the seagulls in an unknown language

His eyes plunge into the silver of the fish

Hekim, Hekim!

Your work is very hard, my brother!

Whereas both "Denize Yakılan Türkü" and "1-0" include prosaic elements alongside poetic elements, "Îşportecî" is the only song across the complete sample that is entirely in prosaic form—though this style is not immediately apparent at the start of the song. It begins with the following introductory stanza:

In Istanbul

In Istanbul

Selling cigarettes for a living

In Mardin he was a child

Now here he's the head of the house

In Mardin he was a child

Now here he's the head of the house

The repetition of lines in this stanza might initially be reminiscent of poetic style, as it was in "Bahoz," but it is important to note that repetition does not necessarily signify poetic language in this song sample. Repetition can also be a way of placing emphasis, as well as orienting the listeners within the story and reminding them of the weight of its content. In Burhan Sönmez's *Istanbul Istanbul* (2015), for example, the novel opens with a prisoner telling a story to the other prisoners in his cell. "Aslında uzun hikâye, ama ben kısa analtacağım [It's actually a long story, but I'll make it short]," the prisoner says, and he repeats this phrase occasionally during the story's telling, serving as a concrete anchor for the listener in a sea of detail.

The introductory repetition in "Îşportecî" might not otherwise take on that prosaic tone, however, if not for the lyrics that follow, which are more prosaic in nature as they relate a discrete anecdote from the life of the Kurdish boy at the center of the song:

On that fateful day

He was hanging out in the streets

Wanting to play with the children

But he was under the watch of the house's many eyes

He was wanting to play with the children

But he was under the watch of the house's many eyes

Repetition again makes an appearance at the end of the stanza, but it similarly functions more like an anchor for emphasis than a poem might. The rest of the song displays that same interplay between discrete storytelling and repetition. The prosaic tone of the song is further solidified by the inclusion of lyrics delivered in the style of dengbêj, a Kurdish musical storytelling tradition. Within this tradition, stories are "sung," but maintain their integrity as stories. The inclusion of this dengbêj section at the end of the song suggests that a stylistic link could be drawn between the content of this song and this tradition of "singing" stories.

Overall, the interplay of both moral clarity and moral complexity across the songs in the sample suggest that both Kardeş Türküler and Bajar take an approach to the narrative structuring of songs that privileges dynamism and flexibility. With only three exceptions, each song in the sample contains elements of two or more of the four conflict story genres (melodrama and romance, tragedy and redemption). If moral clarity and moral complexity are understood to be a spectrum wherein the former suggests the escalation of conflict and the latter suggets the de-escalation of conflict, then the narrative genre results from the sample suggest that both bands are situated comfortably at the middle of this spectrum in relation to representation of the Turkish–Kurdish relationship, oscillating between the two points and outcomes with regularity. The implications of these findings will be further addressed in the discussion section.

A Comparison of Axiological Difference and Narrative Genre

As described earlier in this study, the purpose of analyzing the songs of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar using both a social identity framework and a narrative framework

opens up up the possibility for identifying points of connection and divergence between these two approaches to the study of conflict transformation. As previously discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, narrative serves as a building block of identity, both as an object (i.e., fabula) from which to draw the raw material of social identity (e.g., values, characters, historical events, practices, traditions, beliefs, cultural symbols, etc.) and as a process by which these materials are woven together to create the meaning one ascribes to one's identity.

What this study's findings have shown is that the axiological difference model developed by Rothbart and Korostelina (2006b) and the narrative genre model developed by Simmons (2020) are sufficiently different as to elaborate the complexity of conflict while also allowing an interesting dialogue to open up between social identity approaches and narrative approaches.

Prior to conducting my analysis, I was curious to see whether the modes of axiological difference that Korostelina (2007) argues are more likely to generate or sustain conflict hewed closely with the narrative genres that Simmons (2020) argues are more likely to escalate conflict. However, as has already been discussed, the song sample displayed an unexpectedly rich interplay of moral clarity and complexity within the very texts of the songs. These genre mixes themselves are displayed across a wide array modes of axiological difference, preventing any definitive conclusion that one could expect unbalanced axiological modes to line up neatly with moral clarity, as I initially though might be the case. However, when in dialogue with each other, a number of patterns across axiological difference and narrative genre emerge.

Table 16a. Song Sample: Axiological Difference and Narrative Genre (Kardeş Türküler)

	Axiological Difference	Narrative Genre
Newroz	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)	Romance
Mîrkut	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)	Melodrama / Tragedy / Redemption
Halâlê	n/a (no out-group)	Romance / Tragedy
Kerwanê	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)	Romance / Tragedy / Redemption
Denize Yakılan Türkü	n/a (insufficient description of implied out-group)	Tragedy / Redemption
Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim	Balanced / Low Generality (+I- → O)	Romance / Redemption
De Bila Bêto	n/a (insufficient description of implied out-group)	Melodrama / Tragedy / Redemption
1-0	Between "Balanced / High Generality" and "Balanced / Low Generality" (+I- → O)	Romantic / Redemption
Munzur Xenekiyêne	Unbalanced / Low Generality (-I → O)	Melodrama / Tragedy
Kara Üzüm Habbesi	Balanced / Low Generality (+I → O)	Romance / Redemption

Table 16b. Song Sample: Axiological Difference and Narrative Genre (Bajar)

	Axiological Difference	Narrative Genre
Newroz	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)	Romance
Sî u Çar Heb	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)	Melodrama / Tragedy
Serhildan Jiyan E	n/a (insufficient description of implied out-group)	Romance
Ogit	Balanced / High Generality (+I- → O)	Melodrama / Tragedy
Mîrkut	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)	Melodrama / Tragedy / Redemption
Koça Dawî	n/a (no out-group)	Romance / Redemption
Îşportecî	Balanced / Low Generality (+I- → O)	Romance / Tragedy
Bahoz	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)	Romance / Tragedy / Redemption
Emele	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)	Melodrama / Tragedy
Diyarbekir/Amed	Unbalanced / High Generality (-I → O)	Romance

Only four songs across the entire sample— Kardeş Türküler's "Newroz," Bajar's "Newroz," "Serhildan Jiyan E," and "Diyarbekir/Amed"—could be placed firmly within a single predominant narrative. Specifically, all four of these songs are romances, which hews rather well with the fact that all four lack robust mentions of an outgroup. Here, the focus of the songs is squarely on singing the praises of the ingroup. This falls in line rather neatly with the fact that three of these four songs fall within the low axiological balance / high generality mode of axiological difference that Korostelina (2007) argues is the most likely to be associated with protracted conflict. However, other songs in this low axiological balance / high generality mode include a more robust mixed of moral clarity and moral complexity across genres. These include Kardeş Türküler's "Mîrkut" and "Kerwanê," as well as Bajar's "Sî û Çar Heb," "Mîrkut," and "Emele."

The songs in the balanced axiological difference modes that are less likely to escalate conflict also display a mix of narrative genres. One might expect that these types of balanced songs might be more squarely within a mode of moral complexity, but each of the four songs here—Kardeş Türküler's "Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim" and "1-0"; Bajar's "Ogit" and "Îşportecî"—display a fairly even split of both moral clarity and and moral complexity. The only discernible pattern is that each of these songs displays two genres rather than three, though these mixes defy patterns, falling into three types of duality: Romance / Redemption, Melodrama / Tragedy, and Romance / Tragedy. These same dualities also make an appearance in songs with unbalanced axiological difference.

For example, both "Ogit" and "Emele" are a mix of Melodrama and Tragedy. Yet, "Ogit" is in a high balance / high generality mode, while "Emele" is in a low balance /

high generality mode. It is here that the particulars of the song might illuminate the divide, and explain how one song can be more prone to escalating conflict from a social identity view. Both songs mention an explicit or implicit outgroup to a similar degree, with "Ogit" presenting 6.57% outgroup content and Emele presenting 4.69%. An initial assumption of the difference between the two might be in the characterization of the outgroup from the point of view of moral complexity and moral clarity. It might be expected, for example, that in "Emele," the characterization of the outgroup would fall squarely into the mode of moral clarity, while in "Ogit" it would fall into moral complexity.

Table 17a. Song Sample: "Emele" Moral Clarity and Moral Complexity Content

		Moral Clarity		Moral Complexity	
EMOTIONAL	**Their Motivation**	Domination	**4.89%**	Rational Interests	--
	Their Powers	Exaggerated	**4.89%**	Banal	--
	Their Character	Malevolent	**4.89%**	Human	**3.49%**
	Our Past	Innocent	**4.89%**	Complicit	--
	Our Future	Romantic	--	Realistic	**10.28%**
	Our Focus	Retribution	--	Cost/Benefit	--
VIVID	**Causal Factors**	Vivid and Simple	**4.89%**	Multiple and Complex	--
	Causal Direction	Linear	**4.89%**	Circular	--
	Causal Context	Individuated	**4.89%**	Structural	**32.37%**
INTENSE	**Discursive Tendencies**	Polarizing	**4.89%**	Elaborating	**28.32%**
	Relations with Adversary	Treasonous	--	Generative	--
	Conflict Scope	Cosmic	**27.85%**	Mundane	**12.01%**

LITERARY	**Story Language**	Poetic	**39.86%**	Prosaic	--
	Representation of Time	Compressed	**20.22%**	Complicated	--

Table 17b. Song Sample: "Emele" Collective Generality of Outgroup

High Generality		Low Generality	
Committed to long-term fixed beliefs and values	--	Manifesting various kinds of behaviors	--
Exhibiting unchanging behaviors	--	Subject to change	--
Homogenous	--	Differentiated	--
Projecting a wide-ranging or global scope	**4.69%**	Limited in scope	--

Table 18a. Song Sample: "Ogit" Moral Clarity and Moral Complexity Content

		Moral Clarity		Moral Complexity	
EMOTIONAL	**Their Motivation**	Domination	**9.5%**	Rational Interests	--
	Their Powers	Exaggerated	**9.5%**	Banal	--
	Their Character	Malevolent	**9.5%**	Human	**2.29%**
	Our Past	Innocent	**17.95%**	Complicit	--
	Our Future	Romantic	**2.29%**	Realistic	**5.22%**
	Our Focus	Retribution	--	Cost/Benefit	**7.51%**
VIVID	**Causal Factors**	Vivid and Simple	**3.79%**	Multiple and Complex	--
	Causal Direction	Linear	**12.26%**	Circular	--
	Causal Context	Individuated	--	Structural	**3.97%**
INTENSE	**Discursive Tendencies**	Polarizing	**3.79%**	Elaborating	**35.03%**
	Relations with Adversary	Treasonous	**9.5%**	Generative	**2.29%**
	Conflict Scope	Cosmic	**44.53%**	Mundane	--

LITERARY	**Story Language**	Poetic	**44.53%**	Prosaic	--
	Representation of Time	Compressed	**17.95%**	Complicated	--

Table 18b. Song Sample: "Ogit" Collective Generality of Outgroup

High Generality		Low Generality	
Committed to long-term fixed beliefs and values	--	Manifesting various kinds of behaviors	--
Exhibiting unchanging behaviors	--	Subject to change	--
Homogenous	**4.28%**	Differentiated	**1.23%**
Projecting a wide-ranging or global scope	**4.28%**	Limited in scope	--

However, when both songs are compared, it is revealed that this is not the case. Both songs exhibit tendencies of characterizing the outgroup as malevolent in some cases and as human in others. In the case of "Emele," the outgroup is characterized as malevolent when it is described has having destroyed the villages of the song's narrators. Yet, at the beginning of the song, the outgroup is characterized as human when the narrator sings, "Hey visitor, maybe you don't know / I sleep, I wake, I make houses." Here, the narrator is lamenting that perhaps the individuals who will live in the homes he is building don't fully know his state. However, this ignorance is not attributed to anything malevolent. It is instead represented as a sort of naïve ignorance.

In "Ogit," these different representations of the outgroup also occur at different points in the song. There is a strong characterization of the outgroup as malevolent when

the narrator sings, “Forcibly, forcibly, forcibly, with force / They tore us from our soil / They forced us into exile / All the way to Konya province.” Yet, despite this strong characterization, later in the song, the outgroup is mentioned again, this time implied to be the neighbors of these exiled communities. The narrator resolves that “with all of our neighbors in peace / we must not forget our way.”

This characteriztion of the outgroup in “Ogit” at this point in the song is not only humanizing—as the narrative genre framework makes clear, it is also generative. There are only three songs across the entire sample that characterize intergroup relations (taken here to be relationships between Kurdish communities and Turkish communities). All three of these songs—Kardeş Türküler’s “Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim” and “Kara Üzüm Habbesi,” and Bajar’s “Ogit”—also fall within the balanced modes of axiological difference that Korostelina (2007) argues are less likely to engender conflict.

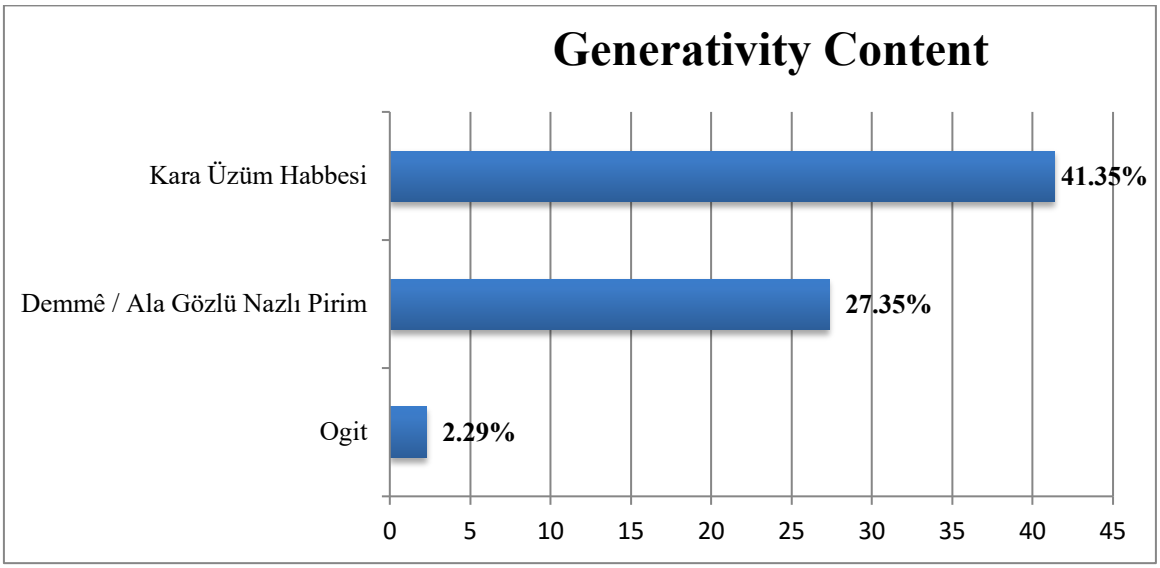

Figure 2. Songs with Generative Representations of Intergroup Relations

Of these three songs, “Ogit” has the least amount of generative content. “Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim” and “Kara Üzüm Habbesi” have considerably more, with nearly the entirety of the latter consisting of generative content. It is important to note that both of these songs include both Kurdish and Turkish lyrics in roughly equal measure. In the former, the outgroup is not identified with a specific ethnic community, while in the latter, as has already been discussed, the two communities—Kurdish and Turkish—are represented in such equal measure that it becomes difficult to talk of a definitive ingroup or outgroup. Both are the ingroup and both are the outgroup from the point of view of this intercultural love story. Notably, in both songs, each community—Kurdish and Turkish—is represented as being in relationship with each other in such a way as to be moving toward a common goal or common way of being. In “Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim,” the Kurdish-speaking community and the Turkish-speaking community are represented as being connected by a shared Alevi identity. Their generative relationship is based on three aspects: (1) their shared traditions, in which a religious sema ceremony is represented and the narrator sings, “Let’s all come together to chant and whirl”; (2) their shared respect for and reverence of the family of the Prophert Muhammad—in the first part of the song, the narrator sings, “The place of our ceremony is that of the Prophet’s family,” while later, the narrator sings, “Ali, my Sultan / Ali, my healer / Ali, my guest / help me, oh Ali”; and (3) their shared perseverance against the unspecified but foreboding enemy identified only as the “Bey” (“We will foster solidarity on the right path / on the right path / We will not become prisoners of the Bey”). This latter site of generative relationship is important to underline, as it is a reminder that shared purpose

can be found in common enemies; while such purpose can foster solidarity in the search for justice, it can also foster further destructive conflict.

In "Kara Üzüm Habbesi," the generative relationship rests on what might be considered a type of narrative that is foundational to the human experience: the love story. There are no conflictual relationships in this song—only mutual experiences of love across boundaries. As has been discussed in earlier sections, the love spoken of in this song is certainly of a romantic nature, but it can also be extrapolated out into a broader communal love. This is a song that might fall into what Stokes (2010) calls "an intimate, as opposed to official, idea of the nation" (p. 16).

The generative potential of this song can even be witnessed in its impact on its listeners. It is a perennial favorite at concerts, during which members of the audience are invited to join in halay, a circle dance, with each other—and many often do (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020). As the audience members link arms together in their own circles, on the stage the members of Kardeş Türküler engage in their own halay, often bringing up children and other members of audience to form a large circle.[33]

Whereas the relatively brief description of generative relationship mentioned in "Ogit" is not enough to place it in the category of a "redemption" story, the more robust descriptions and performances of generative relationship in "Demmê / Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim" and "Kara Üzüm Habbesi" are enough to allow these two songs to be described as redemptive. They both have elements of romance as well—strong poetic style and

[33] An example of this performance and halay can be viewed in a video from one of Kardeş Türküler's concerts in 2011: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVkCVoTMTmU

characterizations of the ingroup as innocent, for example. But these romantic elements do not veer into an unbalanced mode of axiological difference, because they are equally attributed to both ingroup and outgroup.

A comparison of the axiological difference model and the narrative genre model has shown that rather than replicating each other, these two frameworks allow for a deeper understanding of the interplay between social identification processes and narrative processes. The axiological difference model developed by Rothbart and Korostelina (2006b) allows for a focused look at intergroup relationship, allowing for a more precise accounting of the positionality of different conflict parties in relation to each other, which is enriched through an analysis of these positions in relation to relative deprivation and outgroup threat. Simmons's (2020) model of narrative genre allows for a deeper analysis of how the different elements of axiological difference, relative deprivation, and outgroup threat come together to tell the story of a conflict narrative.

What the comparison of the two frameworks through this limited song sample suggests is that there is a complexity involved in the interplay of intergroup dynamics that indicates that, in practice, genre within narrative is not necessarily stable—and it is possible to incorporate elements of moral clarity in ways that do not rely on the dehumanization of outgroups. As the example of "Ogit" suggests, it is possible to use moral clarity to draw attention to injustices and then pivot to moral complexity to prioritize humanization and generativity over hatred or retribution. Similarly, the axiological difference framework suggests that it is possible to maintain distinctiveness in

ingroup identity without dehumanizing or denigrating the outgroup. The implications of these findings will be further discussed in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

With all of our neighbors in peace
We must not forget our way
– "Ogit," Bajar

Peace is often thought of as happening at negotiation tables. It conjures up images of white flags, officials speaking into microphones, and signatures on papers. Peace is often conceived of as a final end state, as elusive as it is desired. It is pictured as the cessation of violence, or the absence of it. These are images that peace can encompass, but they are not all that peace is. As Harold Saunders, who served as the U.S.'s Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs during the 1978 Camp David Accords, has observed, "there's some things only governments can do, such as negotiate peace treaties, but there's some things that only citizens outside government can do, such as make peace" (Carter School, 2016).

A conflict transformation approach to peace allows for a focus not just on the peace treaties of officials but also on the ways that everyday individuals strive to make peace—whether through official dialogues like problem-solving workshops (Kelman, 2007) or through the making, performing, and sharing of music, as Kardeş Türküler and Bajar are each are striving to do. A conflict transformation approach also allows scholars and practitioners to account for the strides that are made in the "midst and aftermath" of violent conflict (Lederach & Lederach, 2010). It accounts for the individuals, groups, and communities who aren't waiting for the white flag to be waved, or the peace treaty to be

signed, or an official announcement of progress to be made, in order to start down the path toward making peace.

As Turkey's citizenry well knows, the path toward peace is hardly a straight line. Since the outbreak of the conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK in particular, a number of promising initiatives have given way to complications and limitations. The combination of the initiatives of Turgut Ozal's government in the early 1990s to ease restrictions on the Kurdish language coupled with further language reforms by the AKP means that groups like Kardeş Türküler and Bajar are able not just to make music in Kurdish but also to have gained a not inconsiderable level of popularity. Nevertheless, use of the Kurdish language, no longer publicly forbidden, remains contested. For example, Kurdish language and literature departments, only newly allowed, remain limited in number. Their operation remains constricted as well. Most recently, in the summer of 2020, it was announced that students in these departments would not be allowed to write their dissertations and theses in Kurdish (Yaşar, 2020).

The damage of the de facto and de jure restrictions on Kurdish language education has been done across generations, negatively impacting the ability of Kurdish communities to actively claim their own history, heritage, and knowledge (Toivanen & Baser, 2019). Baş (2015) notes that the sheer lack of formal education in Kurdish, and the criminalization of and discrimination against its use, meant that when the 1991 law opened the path for Kurdish-language plays, for example, many of the theatrical artists seeking to build up a portfolio of Kurdish plays had to spend years studying Kurdish

more intentionally in order to bring their mastery of the language to a level that allowed for the creation of literature.

During this study, I also ran into the ongoing damage that the Kurdish language restrictions have wrought. Though I worked with a native speaker of Kurdish (Kurmancî) to generate and fine-tune translations of multiple songs in my sample, there were inevitably pieces of songs that neither one of us were able to translate, as he has never been afforded the opportunity to study Kurdish in a formal setting, and there is a lack of reliable, online resources for translation, even between Kurdish and Turkish. Additionally, the option of studying Kurdish in Turkey was not feasible, not only due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but also because many private Kurdish language instruction institutions and programs have been closed, implying a perception that Kurdish language efforts that are not state-sanctioned or supplied continue to be viewed from a securitized lens.

For artists in Turkey, these misperceptions continue to place barriers to their craft and performance, sometimes suddenly and arbitrarily. In a recent example, a play being performed by Teatra Jiyana Nu—a Kurdish theatre ensemble that has been creating, adapting, and performing Kurdish plays since the 1990s—was suddenly banned by Istanbul's provincial government despite the fact that it has been performed regularly over the course of the past three years (Karakas, 2020). For Bajar's group members, there is a keen sense of which songs they can play where due to political concerns. According to Küçüktürk, while the group can play "Serhildan Jiyan E" relatively comfortably in Istanbul, it does not include the song in its set list when the members play concerts in

Kurdish-majority areas in the southeast. In some cases, even the owners and managers of venues where they are playing request that they keep "Serhildan" of their list. The members of Bajar know, for example, that when they play in the southeast, they are likely being recorded. Küçüktürk noted that this decision derives less from any worry that the group itself might be targeted or penalized for playing the song, but rather out of concern for the venues that are hosting them. Their owners, staff, and patrons do not get to pack up and leave for Istanbul once the concert is over (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 8, 2020).

Even Kardeş Türküler has faced a return of restrictions in recent years. For example, Yıldırım noted that after the Gezi protests of 2013, changes to the way that universities are administered in Turkey has meant that Kardeş Türküler is no longer invited to play on campuses. As a band that began on a university campus, this is a particularly difficult turn of events. Additionally, when the band released its latest album, they were not invited to play on any television entertainment shows, because some of their songs are in Kurdish (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020).

Expressions of Kurdish identity have faced additional, serious challenges in recent years, even after initially promising moves. In 2013, a peace process was launched between the Turkish government and the PKK, the first such official effort to bring an end to the multi-decade conflict that has killed tens of thousands and displaced potentially millions of others. Despite promises of democratic reforms to ease restrictions on expressions of Kurdish identity, progress was piecemeal and slow-moving, as only incremental steps were taken towards allowing Kurdish-language instruction, while other

issues, such as electoral rights, representation rights, and the release of jailed activists and journalists, remained unaddressed. Meanwhile, despite a ceasefire declared in conjunction with the peace process, violence continued in relation to the conflict, exacerbated by the civil war in Syria across the border. When the so-called Islamic State of Syria and Iraq (ISIS) laid siege to the predominantly Kurdish canton of Kobanê on the Syrian–Turkish border in 2014, the Turkish government initially withheld any response, even as Syrian Kurdish refugees began fleeing to the Turkish border. Eventually, the Turkish government allowed Kurdish Peshmerga from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) of Iraq to cross Turkish territory into Syria (Waldman & Caliskan, 2017). Turkey's reluctance to act in Kobanê stemmed from the ties between the PKK and the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its militia, the People's Protection Units (YPG). Nevertheless, the Turkish state's response was received with anger by many Kurdish citizens in Turkey; major cities in the southeast, such as Diyarbakir, Siirt, and Batman, saw mass protests between October 6 and 8, 2014, during which at least 40 people were killed (Pope, 2014).

By 2015, the violence of the civil war in Syria was increasingly emerging in Turkey's southeast. Waldman and Caliskan (2017) call 2015 "a year that saw sieges, arrests, airstrikes, curfews, terrorist attacks, roadside bombs, assassinations and a general return to violence reminiscent of the 1980s and '90s" (p. 191). On June 5, 2015, two days before general elections that would see the People's Democratic Party (known by its Turkish initials, the HDP) enter the Turkish parliament as the first pro-Kurdish party to pass the electoral threshold, a bombing at an HDP campaign rally in Diyarbakir claimed

four lives and left hundreds wounded. Then, on July 20, 2015, an ISIS bombing ripped through a gathering of pro-Kurdish youth who had stopped over in the border town of Suruç before planning to travel to Kobanê to participate in reconstruction following the repulsion of the ISIS siege; more than thirty were killed ("Suruc massacre," 2015). Days later, PKK insurgents killed two Turkish police officers in what the group claimed was revenge for the Suruç attack, as the Turkish state was viewed by the group as having facilitated or inadequately addressed the activities of ISIS in the country (Waldman & Caliskan, 2017).

The tenuous ceasefire between the Turkish state and the PKK was now broken, setting the peace process on a downward spiral that would be deepened by a July 2016 coup attempt in Turkey and a subsequent state of emergency that saw a broad crackdown on civil and human rights. Kurdish activists, academics, journalists and political leaders—including Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ, the co-chairs of the HDP—would be imprisoned alongside members of the Gülen movement and a broad swath of civil society who were construed as posing a threat to the security of the Turkish state (Waldman & Caliskan, 2017).

Between July 20, 2015, and this study's final submission in December 2020, at least 5,161 people had lost their lives in the conflict between the Turkish state security forces and the PKK. Of this number, 535 were civilians, 1,265 were members of the state's security forces, and 3,135 were PKK militants. Due to the urban nature of the conflict, 226 could not be identified as either civilian or PKK-affiliated ("Turkey's PKK conflict," 2020). Thousands more have been displaced, with urban centers like Cizre,

Nusaybin, and the Sur district of Diyarbakir being hardest hit by structural damage, displacement, and violence (Armstrong, 2017). The 2016 coup attempt against the AKP-led government only served to tighten political restrictions on the Kurdish movement, ushering in a multi-year state of emergency that targeted not only individuals charged with plotting, aiding, or abetting the coup attempt but also others deemed as acting against the state. This included replacing nearly 100 municipal officials and mayors in predominantly Kurdish regions of Turkey and arresting at least 6,000 to 8,000 members of the HDP (Danforth, 2020).

Prospects for Musicking Turkish–Kurdish Reconciliation

Despite these social and political restrictions and events, Kardeş Türküler and Bajar remain committed to building peace in the midst of conflict. This study of the Kurdish identity construction in a song sample from each band, with special attention to the interplay of social identity and narrative genre frameworks, has elaborated the role that their music is playing in conflict transformation and reconciliation efforts.

Öztürk cautions that understanding the role of music in reconciliation specifically requires accounting for its limitations. From her nearly three-decade career with Kardeş Turküler, she has found that it is difficult to break prejudice only with music. However, it can create the space for "meeting" members of different communities (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020). Sometimes, these meetings happen at concerts; both Küçüktürk (personal communication, October 8, 2020) and Yıldırım (personal communication, October 9, 2020) report that they have witnessed friendships develop among audience members at performances of Bajar and Kardeş Türküler. Yet

this meeting can also happen on a personal level, even when individuals are listening to songs of their own accord. What music does, according to Öztürk, is introduce the right conditions to spark a curiosity that might ferry an individual toward a better understanding of ourselves, our worlds, and each other through the establishment of deep emotional bonds:

> For example, I try to listen to songs from very different languages and from all around the world. And I don't understand the lyrics, but I am listening and am continuing to listen to them. Because I am curious about exploring the feelings they have awoken and are awaking in me, and I really love the things that these songs make me feel. Of course, the words are very important and help us to better understand more of the songs. But even when we don't understand the words, we can be impacted. Music has that power. It can impact our emotions directly and as a result, you can establish a really strong connection. (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020)

For Küçüktürk, it is this nonverbal aspect of music making that Bajar hopes will allow people who might initially not want to listen to music in Kurdish to be invited to the experience:

> Let's say you are listening to rock music, and the rock music starts. Up until the lyrics start, maybe you are saying, 'Oh! How nice! Let me listen, let me see.' A

> little later, you're listening. Kurdish starts up. At least [the music] has gotten you up to this point. For example, perhaps people won't suddenly wake up and turn on a Kurdish radio channel, because they know already that Kurdish music is being played there. But for example, a group like Bajar that plays Turkish and Kurdish music both can open up the path, even just one time. It opens up the path to encounter. For example, there is something called 'pricking up one's ears.' As in, lending your ear to something, thinking, 'What are they saying? Let me see.' It opens up the path to this. It can reach many more people. (C. Küçüktürk, personal communication, October 8, 2020)

This way of sparking curiosity and opening up the path for, if not immediate understanding, then at least finding out what other people are all about, hews closely with Lederach and Lederach's (2010) sonic metaphor of reconciliation. Yet, while Lederach and Lederach maintain that smaller containers offer more impactful opportunities for reconciliation, my discussions with the musicians from Kardeş Türküler and Bajar suggested that music might in fact be one method for expanding the container and creating greater resonance. Öztürk mentioned Bob Marley's impact across the world. "He has become a symbol of resistance, a symbol of joy. He's overflowed the container of music," she said (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020).

According to Öztürk, music helps individuals establish bonds to what they are hearing and experiencing in a variety of ways that can have implications for how individuals make sense of their world and their relationships with each other:

> For example, music reminds you [of things], wakes up and even alerts your memory. When you listen to music, something comes alive in your memory, and something relating to your emotions can happen. It could relate to a place where something happened to you or to people who are around you. At the same time, music can create associations for what comes after. 'What kind of life do I want?' 'What are my dreams?' While listening to music and thinking about these things, you can find yourself. If the music has a direct political message, it can have a strong power for orientation. It can have an impact on people, direct their emotions. Music actually has the capacity to help people hold on. After all, isn't that why people are always listening to resistance songs in order to not give up? (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020)

It is here where music begins to connect with generativity. As was discussed in Chapter 4, music has a function for ordering our lives through rhythm. What Öztürk suggests is that this ordering is not just cognitive but deeply emotional.

However, it is important here to remember that other essential attribute of music in conflict: it's unique attributes and characteristics can both foment conflict as well as resolve it. For example, an additional limitation of music, especially musicking initiatives

that play at the intersection of different languages that many in its audience might not understand, is the potential for misinterpretation of themes and stories. For example, Urbain (2008) recounts an incident in Rwanda when UN officials unwittingly spent hours dancing to music that contained themes of dehumanization against Tutsi communities. A less dire, but still instructive, example of potential for misinterpretation can be seen in recordings of Kardeş Türküler's concerts. During a 2004 live performance of the song "Kerwanê," members of the audience can be seen dancing and smiling (Kalan Müzik, 2013a). The dancing is shown in particular during parts of the song when the intensity of the music has sped up. The rhythm is steady, the music rousing. The urge to dance—rather, to *move*—is understandable, and I have often felt it myself while listening to the song, drawn into reveries of choreographing elaborate dances to its compelling rhythms. However, while dance is not always meant to express joy, in the case of these audience members, the smiles on their faces indicate a sort of cheer or excitement. Yet, the themes of the song are grave and heavy. The video itself makes this clear, as footage of the band on stage and people in the audience is interspersed with footage of communities who are not only 'on the road,' so to speak, but who seem to have been displaced. The shift between images of joy in the audience and images of pain amongst the people who have been displaced is jarring.

It is impossible to say for certain whether the dancing audience members were able to understand the content of the lyrics of the song. The intent of relating this observation is not to fault audience members for dancing. It is meant, rather, to problematize the ways that music can create affective attachments based on

misunderstandings. As someone who doesn't speak Kurdish (either Kurmanc**î** or Zazk**î**), I have also had the experience of being on two sides of understanding with regard to "Kerwanê" and other non-Turkish language songs in the sample I have studied. With regard to "Kerwanê," I must have listened to the song a dozen times before I even looked up the Turkish translation of the song, much less translated them myself into English. While I had long thought that the segments of the first half of the song had sounded slightly mournful, the latter half of the song—during which the audience members at the concert were dancing—had also struck me as cheerful and celebratory. Yet, this is the very section of the song in which the narrator sings the following:

> Caravan, caravan, forsaken caravan
> Tuck your stories into your bosom
> The caravan is on the road
> Our history, our hearts
> My friend, you are not alone
> Our history, our hearts
> My friend, you are not alone

There is solidarity in this stanza, a sense of persevering together and preserving one's story and one's community in the process. Yet, this is not a joyful or celebratory stanza.

However, it is here, again, where curiosity might temper the limitations of misunderstanding. Something misunderstood once can be better understood on the

second go, or the third, or the fourth. I had been listening to "Kerwanê" for multiple years before I had even begun my master's studies at George Mason University. This study is the result of multiple sparks of curiosity. It is the result of my high school curiosity about Istanbul. It is the result of my curiosity about the folklore club at Boğaziçi University. And it is the result of my curiosity about the music of Kardeş Türküler, within which my appreciation of the story told in "Kerwanê," even before I knew what its words meant, constitutes its own spark.

The limitation of music is that it cannot negotiate peace deals, or institute policies, or facilitate ceasefires. The limitation of music is that it cannot, of its own accord, be expected to bridge misunderstandings. But the power of music is that it reaches beyond elites, that relatively miniscule number of people who have the power, privilege, luck, and responsibility to be part of official peace processes and dialogue initiatives. The power of music is that it is now, in the 21st-century, a relatively accessible art form. The power of music is that it can be a vehicle through which hearing people are able to measure the rhythm of their lives and assign meaning to their experiences—and to their identities.

When approached from a social identity and narrative genre framework, music's function in conflict transformation is able to be analyzed in greater detail and with greater precision. The findings of this study's social identity and narrative genre analysis suggest that it is possible to approach identity-related conflicts in way that facilitates constructive, even generative narratives of relationship without requiring that the distinctiveness that is a hallmark of any social identity—ethnic, religious, linguistic, class-based, etc.—be

relinquished. The analysis also further elaborates the interplay of the narrative modes of moral clarity and moral complexity, demonstrating that with regard to narrative approaches to conflict, finding the right genre fit is less of an exact science and more of an art. The comparison of the axiological difference and narrative genre content within the song sample has shown that elements of moral clarity and moral complexity can be present in both unbalanced and balanced conflict representations, suggesting that rather than aiming for exclusively redemptive stories, a mix of genres is possible in constructive intergroup relations—as long as elements of moral clarity do not rely on dehumanization of outgroups, and as long as elements of moral complexity do not obscure injustices.

These findings are limited in a variety of ways. A larger sample from both groups, for example, might elaborate and strengthen existing patterns—or reveal new, contradictory ones. In particular, the findings with regard to the prosodic and poetic elements of narrative genre would benefit from greater study to better illuminate the parameters of these two stylistic forms and their implications for conflict escalation and de-escalation. This study also makes the case for further cross-analyses of the collective axiology and narrative genre frameworks to better triangulate areas of synergy and areas of divergence.

Additionally, elements of this study themselves run the risk of reifying group boundaries between Turkish and Kurdish communities in a way that might not account for the complexity of group identities. During my interviews, both Yıldırım and Öztürk problematized notions of Kurdishness and Turkish–Kurdish reconciliation. When asked whether it was important to him to identify as Kurdish, Yıldırım noted that being born

Kurdish was simply a trick of fate. Any other identity would have done; it just turned out that he was born into a family and community that identified as Kurdish (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020). For Öztürk, when asked about prospects for, or current manifestations of, Turkish–Kurdish reconciliation, she noted that to approach this question, one has to ask an additional question, namely, who is the representative of Turkish or Kurdish identity (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020)? Yıldırım further problematized the phrase "Kurdish music," saying that there is certainly "music in Kurdish" or music made by people who are Kurdish, but noting that attributing specific music to specific ethnic groups is less important in his view (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020). All three of the members I interviewed were clear in that both Bajar and Kardeş Türküler are projects that are not afraid to innovate even as they draw on specific cultural traditions, and that songs sung in the language of one linguistic community often incorporate musical traditions from other communities or geographies. For example, Yıldırım noted that "Kerwanê" includes Armenian influences as well as broader Alevi influences (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020).

Another limitation of this study, already discussed in some detail in Chapter 5, is that it has been limited to a rigorous analysis of the song sample without the opportunity for a similarly rigorous analysis of the perspectives of a wide swath of Kardeş Türküler's and Bajar's members or of the impact of the selected song sample on listeners of the groups' music. Further studies seeking to elaborate the findings of the axiological difference and narrative genre comparison would be benefited by studying in particular

how the social identity constructions within these songs samples as well as the narrative genres of the song samples are experienced by listeners of the songs. Additionally, while effort has been made throughout this study to account for specific musical choices within the song sample and their impact on the social identity and narrative genre content within each song's lyrics, due to the limitations of my own training, I was unable to carry out a systematic study of how musical genre and style impacts the social identity constructions and narrative styles of each song. A study that accounts for musical style would further elaborate how music as a vehicle of narrative might be different from other narrative vehicles, such as novels, films, or even newspaper articles and political speeches—and in particular, would engage more deeply with a study of the affective attachements and meanings generated by music. Such a study is even more important in a time of pandemic, which—as Öztürk lamented in her discussion with me—has cut off opportunities for live concerts and performances, thus encouraging listeners to engage in more individual forms of listening.

Nevertheless, this study has elaborated the growing body of research and practice that shows that artistic forms should be taken seriously in the study of conflict transformation, both for their capacity to escalate conflict and their capacity to de-escalate it. A conflict transformation approach has allowed for a better appreciation for the fact that conflict dynamics often include cycles of escalation and de-escalation, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of how societies can work toward peace while not neglecting serious issues of justice. Incorporating a sonic approach to reconciliation (Lederach & Lederach, 2020) into this study has allowed the music of

Kardeş Türküler and Bajar to be placed in a context where reconciliation is understood not as a solely state-organized effort but rather as a whole-of-society initiative that takes place in formal and informal ways, and that often has its most immediate and intense impact in communities that are small enough and local enough to have that impact resound.

It has gone beyond the capacity of this study to determine definitively whether the music of Kardeş Türküler and Bajar is facilitating reconciliation within Turkey's multicultural, multilinguistic, and multireligious society. Ye,t my interviews with Öztürk, Yıldırım, and Küçüktürk, taken in dialogue with the findings from my analysis of the song sample, suggest that if their music is building space for social cohesion, it is because it has the capacity to spark listeners' curiosity and perhaps set the stage for more generative relationships and understandings to form between communities that, in other spaces, are pushed into tension or conflict. At Kardeş Türküler concerts, Öztürk tells me, there is an atmosphere of "renewal," of the building of trust between the different communities and individuals present in the room or the arena, an atmosphere that has been created in large part thanks to the singing of many languages (S. Öztürk, personal communication, October 21, 2020).

Lederach (2005) observes that when artists are involved in formal conflict resolution and peacemaking efforts, they "are called at celebrations, inaugurations, and victories, or when leaders' decisions need to be blessed, or when group and national ethos need to be solidified and sentiments of loyalty and allegiance are affirmed, or when national grief needs to be expressed" (p. 176). Artists, however, are rarely called by

leaders in the "foremath" to "respond imaginatively from within their disciplines" to the challenging work of addressing conflict and tension or building peace and fostering reconciliation (p. 176).

While the involvement of artists in a more rigorous way in the official work of building peace—not as rubber stamps but as individuals with imaginative capacity and their own lived experiences of the impact of conflict—is certainly crucial, this study has underlined that for conflict transformation, it is not necessary for artists to individually be "called" to the work by leaders who consider themselves to be the arbiters of peace. Artists are already doing the work; their artwork serves as vehicles of meaning through which the boundaries of social identity and the narratives of conflict are already being negotiated and renegotiated, narrated and renarrated. In fact, "official" would-be peacemakers should be careful when seeking to incorporate the craft of artists into official, institutionalized peace processes. As Cimardi (2018) demonstrated, government-led or affiliated efforts to tie specific styles of music tightly to specific ethnic communities can have the effect of diminishing the dynamism of these traditions. Yıldırım echoed this sentiment when he observed that innovation and dynamics in the musical traditions of Kurdish communities have, in some ways, benefited from the fact that there is not, as of yet, a Kurdish nation-state that might otherwise try to standardize Kurdish musical traditions (V. Yıldırım, personal communication, October 9, 2020).

What this study has shown is that for the role of music in conflict transformation to be better understood and appreciated, the *art* of the music must be taken as seriously as its function. It is music's special capacity for weaving compelling stories through deft,

aesthetic decisions that gives it the power to animate the lived experiences of its listeners and ferry them through the web of meaning upon which they rely to navigate their lived experiences. Music will not alone create the whole-of-society effort required for any sustainable transformation of conflict from destructive to constructive. However, music might just be one way to spark the curiosity—the verdant, generative seed of imagination—that can give us the push we need as we navigate through the midst and into the aftermath of conflict.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MEMBERS OF KARDEŞ TÜRKÜLER

Kardeş Türküler-specific questions

1. When and how did you join Kardeş Türküler?

2. How would you describe Kardeş Türküler's mission?

    a. [If they have been involved with the group since its early years]: How has Kardeş Türküler's mission evolved over the years?

3. What role do you play in Kardeş Türküler as a musician? (How are you involved in the song-writing and song-making process in Kardeş Türküler?)

4. Can you describe Kardeş Türküler's song-making process to me?

    a. [If they have been involved with the group since its early years]: How has Kardeş Türküler's song-making process evolved over the years?

Social Identity Questions

5. Is belonging to the Kurdish ethnic group and to the Muslim community important to you, and if so, why?

6. What does it mean to be Kurdish, and how is this meaning reflected in Kardeş Türküler's work?

7. Tell me about your personal experiences with the relationship between Kurds and Turks in Turkey.

8. How is the relationship between Kurds and Turks in Turkey presented in Kardeş Türküler's work?

9. Over the course of listening to Kardeş Türküler's songs, I have noticed that neither Kurds nor Turks are explicitly mentioned. Instead, Kurdishness and

Turkishness are implied through references to cultural, religious, linguistic, or historical symbols. In your view, why does Kardeş Türküler take this approach?

10. I've noticed that the songs in the sample are much more focused on presenting positive depictions of Kurds, rather than negative depictions of Turks. Why is that?

Questions on Reconciliation / Conflict Transformation

11. How do you think Turkish listeners of your music react to the Kurdish linguistic, cultural, and historical references in your songs?

    a. [If they have been involved with the group since its early years]: How has this changed over time?

12. In your view, what would reconciliation between Kurds and Turks look like?

13. Are there any instances where you see this vision of reconciliation already taking place in society in Turkey?

14. What role does music play in bringing about Kurdish-Turkish reconciliation, in your opinion, and what is it specifically about music (as opposed to other art forms) that allows it to play this role?

15. Do you think your work with Kardeş Türküler contributes to this reconciliation process, and how?

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MEMBERS OF BAJAR

Bajar-specific questions

1. When and how did you join Bajar?

2. How would you describe Bajar's mission?

    a. [If they have been involved with the group since its early years]: How has Bajar's mission evolved over the years?

3. What role do you play in Bajar as a musician? (How are you involved in the song-writing and song-making process in Bajar?)

4. Can you describe Bajar's song-making process to me?

    a. [If they have been involved with the group since its early years]: How has Bajar's song-making process evolved over the years?

Social Identity Questions

5. Is belonging to the Kurdish ethnic group and to the Muslim community important to you, and if so, why?

6. What does it mean to be Kurdish, and how is this meaning reflected in Bajar's work?

7. Tell me about your personal experiences with the relationship between Kurds and Turks in Turkey.

8. How is the relationship between Kurds and Turks in Turkey presented in Bajar's work?

9. Over the course of listening to Bajar's songs, I have noticed that neither Kurds nor Turks are explicitly mentioned. Instead, Kurdishness and Turkishness are implied through references to cultural, religious, linguistic, or historical symbols. In your view, why does Bajar take this approach?

10. I've noticed that the songs in the sample are much more focused on presenting positive depictions of Kurds, rather than negative depictions of Turks. Why is that?

Questions on Reconciliation / Conflict Transformation

11. How do you think Turkish listeners of your music react to the Kurdish linguistic, cultural, and historical references in your songs?

    b. [If they have been involved with the group since its early years]: How has this changed over time?

12. In your view, what would reconciliation between Kurds and Turks look like?

13. Are there any instances where you see this vision of reconciliation already taking place in society in Turkey?

14. What role does music play in bringing about Kurdish-Turkish reconciliation, in your opinion, and what is it specifically about music (as opposed to other art forms) that allows it to play this role?

15. Do you think your work with Bajar contributes to this reconciliation process, and how?

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