UKH Journal of Social Sciences (UKHJSS) is a semi-annual academic journal published by the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr, Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq. UKHJSS publishes original researches in all areas of Social Sciences. UKHJSS is a Peer-Reviewed Open Access journal with CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license. UKHJSS provides immediate, worldwide, barrier-free access to the full text of research articles without requiring a subscription to the journal, and has no article processing charge (APC). UKHJSS Section Policy includes three types of publications: Articles, Review Articles, and Letters. UKHJSS has an e-ISSN: 2520-7806; and a member of Crossref, DOI: 10.25079/issn.2520-7806.

UKHJSS Publisher
University of Kurdistan Hewlêr, Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

UKHJSS Executive Publisher
Mohammed Mochtar, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

UKHJSS Editor-in-Chief
Sherwan Kafoor, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

Technical Editor
Salah I. Yahya, Ph.D., Professor

Executive Editorial Board Members
Alex Danilovich, Ph.D., Professor
Almas Heshmati, Ph.D., Professor
Zana Ibrahim, Ph.D., Lecturer
Nabaz Khayyat, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Adam Mayer, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

UKHJSS Copy Editor
Zana Ibrahim, Ph.D., Lecturer
Thomas Edward Bassett, MFA, Lecturer

UKHJSS Cover Designer
Asuda Darwish, Graphic Designer

UKHJSS Proofreader
Salah I. Yahya, Ph.D., Professor

UKH Journal of Social Sciences (UKHJSS)
University of Kurdistan Hewlêr
30 Meter Avenue,
Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq
Email: ojs.admin@ukh.edu.krd
Tel.: +964(0)-750-857-8811 Ext: 150

URL: https://journals.ukh.edu.krd/index.php/ukhjss

December 2017 | Befranbar 2717
## List of Contents

**Editorial Foreword**  ......................................................................................................................... iii

**George O. Tasie**  ................................................................................................................................. 1

Correlating Diversity of Cultures and Organization Performance in Kurdistan Region of Iraq: An Empirical Study

**Almas Heshmati and Yunhee Kim**  ...................................................................................................... 9

Analysis of Pay Inequality and its Impacts on Growth and Performance in the Korean Manufacturing Industry Post Asian Financial Crisis

**Vahid Nick Pay**  ............................................................................................................................... 22

Beneath the Surface of the Kurdistan Independence Referendum

**Zana Ibrahim**  ................................................................................................................................... 24

Parameters Inducing Motivational Surges in Second Language Learning

**Vahid Nick Pay**  ............................................................................................................................... 34

Constitutional Rights and Liberties in the Islamic Republic: A Critical Review

**Michael Gunter**  ............................................................................................................................... 46

The United Nations and the Kurds

**Alex Danilovich and Huda S. Abdulrahman**  .................................................................................. 48

Aiming at Secession: The KRG’s Activism in the International Arena
We are pleased to announce that the very first issue of the UKH Journal of Social Sciences (UKHJSS) is now out in print. As the Editorial Board of the journal, we are honoured to be part of this achievement and have devoted a great deal of time and effort to ensuring that the journal follow the highest standards and international best practices. Rather than simply add its name to the list of periodicals out there, UKHJSS will make an impact within the scientific community both locally and internationally. We aspire to become a globally recognised academic journal that makes valuable contributions to science and scholarship.

The UKH Journal of Social Sciences is a semi-annual journal published by the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr, Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq. Its e-ISSN number is 2520-7806, and its Crossref DOI is 10.25079/issn.2520-7806. UKHJSS publishes a variety of research and review articles, letters, and original studies in many areas of social sciences. It is a peer-reviewed open access journal with a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). As such, the journal offers immediate, worldwide barrier-free access to all its published manuscripts without requiring a subscription or article processing charge (APC). By so doing, we intend to make available our authors’ contributions to science while adhering to the highest standards of rigorous scrutiny and academic research.

UKHJSS is intended to be a stimulating platform for all serious researchers and scholars in Kurdistan and abroad. We invite them to contribute to our journal by submitting their innovations, insights, and research findings. While original research is particularly cherished, we also value reviews and the scientifically reasoned opinions of experts, and scholars in a wide range of academic disciplines. We apply a uniform approach to all contributions: Research that is scientifically valid and technically sound deserves to be published and made accessible to the research and academic community. By publishing with us, your research will get the coverage and attention it deserves. As we follow an open access and continuous online publication practice, your work will be published swiftly and easily accessed by anyone, anywhere, and at any time. Moreover, Article Level Metrics allows you to continuously check the progress of your submitted work.

Finally, the Editorial Board of the UKH Journal of Social Sciences would like to extend its appreciation and gratitude to the 14 reviewers from different parts of the world who supported the journal by anonymously reviewing and assessing the submitted papers for the journal’s first issue. We also greatly value the distinguished researchers and authors who showed their interest by publishing the results of their hard work in our journal.

**UKHJSS Executive Publisher**
Dr. Mohammed Mochtar

**UKHJSS Editorial Board:**
Dr. Sherwan Kafoor, Prof. Alex Danilovich, Prof. Almas Heshmati, Dr. Zana Ibrahim, Dr. Nabaz Khayyat, and Dr. Adam Mayer.
Correlating Diversity of Cultures and Organization Performance in Kurdistan Region of Iraq: An Empirical Study

George O. Tasie*
Department of Business and Management, Kurdistan Business School, University of Kurdistan Hewler, Erbil, Kurdistan Region - F.R. Iraq

*Corresponding author’s email: g.tasie@ukh.edu.krd

ABSTRACT

The increase in globalization has made it essential for organizations in general to deal with a cultural diverse workforce. Undoubtedly, these increases are forcing both small and large companies to recognize the importance of dealing with cultural diversity (CD) by developing new procedures and policies to guide employees. Recently, increasing workplace CD has become a significant issue for many managers of a good number of organizations in Kurdistan due to a proliferation of the presence of international businesses. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to examine the issue that borders on the diversity of cultures since research in this area is almost non-existent in Kurdistan. The paper analyses the effects of CD on performance through some randomly selected organizations in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The data from our findings show that there is a positive correlation between CD and organizational performance.

Keywords: Correlation, Culture, Diversity, Kurdistan, Performance

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary organizations play a significant role in the everyday lives of employees by contributing to the progress of the society and its economy. Within this overriding perspective, it has become essential for managers to take appropriate steps to ensure that his/her organizations are achieving high performance to increase productivity and remain afloat in ever rapidly increasing competitive world. Organizational performance (OP) has been defined in different ways and from several perspectives. Shahzad et al. (2012, p. 979) opined that OP refers to the capability of organizations to achieve goals by allocating and using resources efficiently and effectively. Corporations should maintain the right resources and use them in the right to achieve the stated organizational goals and objectives since performance is the most significant standard for assessing organization’s actions, activities, and environment (Pierre et al., 2009). It is also important at this juncture to state the extent in which the organization is competitive in the marketplace and how effectively and efficiently it serves society. Poor OP is one of the most crucial subjects that are of concern to managers, supervisors, and employees due mainly to the degree in which the aims and goals are being attained. Given the aforementioned reason, poor performance indicators should be addressed despite controversies surrounding the issue. The bitter truth is that many organizations are devoid of excellent performance because they fail to deal with the issue of managing diversity.

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq is one the places that are suffering from poor OP. According to a Kurdistan Region Reform Commission Report (2012), the government of Kurdistan Region is still suffering from poor governing performance in different fields including civil service, due to...
corruption, dependability on government’s institutions, and poor plans for evolving its nation. To recapitulate our earlier submission, organizations contribute to the well-being of the society in terms of economic development. If an organization experiences poor performance, it will impact negatively on the whole society particularly the political and economic situation of the region. For example, Ali (2014) stated that in Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the organizations and specifically the parliament of Kurdistan is suffering from the poor OP. Added to the above is the economic crisis and security challenge leading to a high degree of instability and lack of security.

Several influential factors such as organizational structure, leadership style, employees’ satisfaction, intelligence, emotions, and even more can affect, to a significant extent, and OP. Top among these is cultural diversity (CD). Iraqi Arabs in Kurdistan Region focus on low uncertainty avoidance and masculinity whereas the Kurdish culture emphasizes more on feminisms and high uncertainty avoidance and these cultural dimensions have a huge impact on the economy, businesses, and political stability (Rarick et al., 2014). Following on the foregoing arguments, recently, many foreign companies and workers from different cultures and countries have moved to the Kurdistan Region. This movement has resulted in an influential change in the country’s workforce composition which, in turn, leads to conflicts of high magnitude among them. For example, my contact with one foreign employee who works for a Kurdish company complained that his relationship with his employer has not been cordial. He went on to say that his boss failed to give him permission to visit his mother when she was sick. In some circumstances, people from different cultures cannot tolerate and accept each other. This mistreatment among employees leads to major organizational problems and demotivation which apparently has led to poor organizational performances. This paper will seek to provide answers to the extent in which CD affect OP in Kurdistan.

This research paper is necessary because organization performance is a significant concern for both non-profit and commercial organizations. Poor OP has a strong and negative impact on the outcomes and process of businesses. As the world is becoming smaller due to globalization, the Kurdistan Region is witnessing a substantial growth in multicultural organizations. It is for this reason that acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills have become imperative in dealing with diverse cultures to avoid complications in communicating with workers of different cultural background. The anticipation is that the paper will contribute to a better understanding of CD and its impact on the OP with solutions and recommendations for Kurdistan.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures, and work with varying cultural beliefs and schedules. While there are myriad cultural variations, here are some essential to the workplace:

1. Communication: Providing information accurately and promptly is critical to effective work and team performance. This is particularly important when a project is troubled and needs immediate corrective actions. However, people from different cultures vary in how, for example, they relate to bad news. People from some Asian cultures are reluctant to give supervisors bad news, while those from other cultures may exaggerate it.

2. Team building: Some cultures - like the United States - are individualistic, and people want to go it alone. Other cultures value cooperation within or among other teams. Team building issues can become more problematic as teams are comprised people from a mix of these cultural types. Effective cross-cultural team building is essential to benefiting from the potential advantages of CD in the workplace.

3. Time: Cultures differ in how they view time. For example, they differ in the balance between work and family life, and the workplace mix between work and social behavior. Other differences include the perception of overtime or even the exact meaning of a deadline. Different perceptions of time can cause a great misunderstanding and mishap in the workplace, especially with scheduling and deadlines. Perceptions of time underscore the importance of CD in the workplace and how it can impact everyday work.

2.1. Calendars
The business world generally runs on the western secular year, beginning January 1 and ending December 31. However, many cultures use other calendars to determine holidays such as New Years or specific holy days. For example, Eastern Orthodox Christians celebrate Christmas on a different day from western Christians. For Muslims, Friday is a day for prayer. Jews observe holidays ranging from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur. These variations affect the workplace as people require time off to observe their holidays.

2.2. The Need for OP
An organization is a collection of people who work together to achieve a wide variety of goals (George and Jones, 2005. p. 3). Organizations are substantial pieces of society such as education institutions, hospitals, banks, and many other
institutions that contribute to the well-being of the society and economy. In consideration of the aforementioned claim, it is essential for organizations to perform effectively and efficiently to achieve high productivity and serve the society in the most appropriate and beneficial manner. Performance is the extent to which organizations achieve the main objective and subjective goals related to its mission (Albrecht, 2011). In other words, performance refers to the approach in which an organization functions with the attainment of its results. According to Maduenyi et al. (2015. p. 355) OP refers to evaluating organization’s capability of achieving its goals in an appropriate manner. Although the concept is difficult to define due to its connotative interpretations, Maduenyi et al., (2015. p. 355) claimed that the term OP sometimes is confused with the concept of productivity, productivity is synonymous with OP. When it comes to OP, the number of employees and size of the organization do not matter. OP as an important aspect of any business should be taken into consideration by all types of corporations including small, medium, and large ones. In addition, OP should be valued and serve as a guide that measures organizational goal recognition (Jani and Soltanpanah, 2015, p.1095, cited in Hou, 2008).

2.3. Importance of OP
OP begs the question “to what extent an organization is doing well to accomplish its vision, mission, and goals (Ketchen & Short, 2012). In addition, measurement of OP is important to determine the performance level of an organization. In this context, therefore, the managers of every organization should be required to recognize the main factors that drive OP. There are several ways to measure OP, and one of the most used ones is Balance Scorecard. Evans and Lindsay (2008) defined balance scorecard as a framework that contains four main dimensions - financial, customer, internal business processes, organizational learning, and growth - to measure the results and performance of an organization. In other words, the Balance Scorecard refers to a set of measures that provide top managers with a fast and complete understanding about the organization. It explains how results are accomplished. The data used for measuring performance give a comprehensive understanding and evidence that describe how effective an organization is functioning at the current moment and what will happen in future when modifications are applied. Today, performance accountability is becoming a critical issue in most organizations, as many managers are beginning to evaluate OP through balance scorecard to get a better understanding about how efficient their organizations are competing in the marketplace. Several factors which may impact OP include inter alia, turnover, and absenteeism. As demonstrated by Adegboyega et al. (2015), there is a strong relationship between absenteeism and OP. High rates of absenteeism lead to low OP, and a negative relation does exist between OP and turnover as well as absenteeism rate. These authors go on to suggest that to improve OP labor turnover and absenteeism should be reduced.

2.4. Factors that Contribute to Poor OP
Organizational structure provides a roadmap for the division of tasks among the members of organization and direction of their activities, so staffs are guided toward the goals and objectives of the institution. The purpose of this kind of arrangement is to enable the organization to be successful as the chain of command is made clearer. Hence, there is a strong correlation between organizational structure and OP. The nature of tasks and responsibilities for a division, layers of authority, and communication pattern can have a powerful impact on OP. Lack of structure can obviously impede or improve performance by relying on the extent in which the managerial relationships, formalization of authorities, hierarchy, and workflow affect productivity. Having an effective and secure organizational structure means having a cooperative environment and clear communication pattern that lead to employees’ satisfaction, which may subsequently lead to high performance. The statement by Salamzadeh and Sarlak (2014) is valid here when they state that “due to globalization,” businesses are becoming more competitive than previously, concentrating on having an ideal organizational structure might lead businesses to competitive advantage.

2.5. Employees’ Job Satisfaction
Job satisfaction of employees plays a significant role on the OP; therefore, it is vital for employees to be satisfied with their jobs as well as motivated to accomplish greater results (Latif et al., 2013). High employees’ satisfaction results in a positive and congenial work environment, leading to an effective and efficient OP. Today, managers concentrate on keeping employees motivated and satisfied so they can be pleased with their jobs and perform in a better way. Once employees are satisfied, they present greater performance and achieve amazing results, which impacts positively on performance and productivity. According to Ojo (2009, as cited in Jerome, 2013, p. 40) employees’ satisfaction has become increasingly a concern within an organization due to its significance, since every single organization wants to attain higher performance. Certain management theorists such as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, Aristotle’s seven causes (chance, nature, compulsion, habit, reasoning, anger, or appetite), and Herzberg’s two-factor model demonstrate that some needs should be met to satisfy employees. For
example, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs consists of different levels of needs that are physiological needs, safety, need for love, affection and belongingness, need for esteem, and need for self-actualization. This theory posits that people cannot feel safe if their physiological demands have not been satisfied, and they cannot feel the love and belongings if their demand for safety has not been satisfied and so on (Jerome, 2013). In other words, people cannot feel loved if they do not feel safe. Some research has supported the idea that Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is important for employees’ satisfaction and performance while others claimed it cannot work in all situations. Jerome went further to argue that the hierarchy of needs theory suggest and show how managers and supervisors can drive their employees to develop self-actualization. Second, Herzberg’s motivational and hygiene model posits that motivation of employees can be achieved when workers are faced with challenging but satisfying and enjoyable job where there is a space to grow and show development and responsibility within the organization (Amoako and Baah, 2011). Consequently, workers can have a challenging work that is entertaining simultaneously. Following on this argument, Hong and Waheed (2011) believe that in Herzberg’s theory employees can achieve high performance if they are satisfied with both factors such as hygiene and motivation, whereas those who are not satisfied would achieve lower performance. Apparently, this pronouncement shows the existence of a strong relationship between employee’s satisfaction and OP.

2.6. Leadership

The crux of every management job lies in the job holder’s capacity to obtain the commitment of people to the objectives of the organization, which is another way of saying “to exercise appropriate leadership.” Leadership is a concept which has fascinated humankind for centuries, but only in recent years has any kind of theory of leadership emerged. According to Yukl (2006. p. 1), leadership is the process of showing others what should be done and how it ought to be done as well as enabling them to achieve the common and mutual objectives of the organization. It can also be referred to as the exercise of influence by one member of a group or organization over other members to help the group or organization to achieve its goals (George and Jones, 2005. p. 375). Management, on the other hand, refers to overseeing the tasks and activities of others or getting the work done through others (Carpenter et al., 2009). Leadership plays a very significant role in OP. There are several types of leadership including charismatic, transactional, and transformational, and each type impacts on OP in a different way. For example, charismatic leadership will provide a very demotivated and negative working environment, which will lead to poor OP (Robbins and Judge, 2013). On the other hand, transformational leadership encourages followers to be innovative and creative, and it provides a motivated and positive working atmosphere (Robbins and Judge, 2013). Transformational leaders encourage and motivate their employees to override their self-interest for the well-being of the organization and are able to impact strongly on their followers by paying attention to their anxieties and needs as well as helping them in solving problems in different ways. This leads to high and effective OP and results. It is, therefore, essential for organizations to have a powerful leadership so that a vision of future can be created with inspiration and encouragement of organization members to achieve the vision. Transformational leaders, on the one hand, improve OP by helping their followers to be creative and building harmony among team members. Transactional leaders, on the other hand, are those who simplify roles and job requirements to direct their employees toward organizational goals. Ipso facto, every organization should have an appropriate leadership style to guide employees toward achieving high OP.

2.7. CD

Diversity can be defined as acknowledging, understanding, accepting, and valuing differences among people with respect to age, class, race, ethnicity, gender, disabilities, etc. (Esty et al., 1995). According to, there are four dimensions for clarifying differences between cultures. The first is individualism or collectivism; this refers to the degree to which a society focuses on individualism as opposed to the group. The second dimension is power distance, which is concerned with the extent to which society tolerates the fact that everyone is equal physically and in intellectual capabilities. The third dimension is uncertainty avoidance: The degree to which the members of different cultures accept ambiguous and uncertain situations. Finally, the masculinity versus femininity dimension refers to observing the relationship between work roles and genders (quoted in Hill, 2005).

In some countries such as Sweden, CD is defined as “a societal fact,” which refers to a country composed of residents from diverse cultural backgrounds. CD refers to a group of people who have diverse cultures, languages, behaviors, and religions backgrounds (Holmgren and Jonsson, 2013. p. 6). As can be seen from Table 1, the Kurdistan Region is ethnically diverse in terms of cultures, religion, languages and race.

The phenomenon of CD has been incredibly increased in the 21st century due to globalization, international trade, international migration, and diversity across borders. Due
to the free market policy (Jabary, 2010), there has been an increasing presence of different types of international businesses including exporting, importing, foreign direct investment, and management contract that contribute to the global marketplace (Simons and Rowland, 2011). The global marketplace carries with it a cornucopia of cultures and backgrounds. Free trade is, therefore, a major aspect that drives companies to function internationally. Citizens can buy products or services from other countries or sell to other countries without many restrictions, and all of these factors drive the world to be more interrelated and integrated in a way that people from different cultures and countries are interacting and communicating.

2.8. The Influence of CD on the OP

Ozman and Erdil (2013, p. 2) have opined that CD is a “double-edged sword” that can influence positively and negatively on innovation and OP. Our belief here is that positive effects are associated with increased cooperation among people from different cultures and background to achieve innovation and creativity; however, negative effects are correlated mostly to communication difficulties and conflicts among teams of an organization. Effective communication process by every organization will help to reduce ambiguity and facilitate clarity and understanding among employees of diverse cultural background. To paraphrase Mazur (2010, p. 8) the nature of employees’ relationship in creating a stressful and negative working environment will change.

Furthermore, in his argument Gupta (2014, p. 37) claims that diversity of the workforce can bring competitive advantage for the organization even though diversity has both negative and positive impacts on OP. In terms of ethnic diversity such as religion, culture, language, and race, organizations are concentrating on bringing multicultural workforce to attain greater participation, higher performance, higher employees’ satisfaction, and innovation. Based on the above arguments, we can conveniently claim ethnic diversity might be beneficial for teams where people with different knowledge and skills interact with each other in collegial and professional manners. Multiculturalism, in this context, could contribute to improving employees’ and organizational productivity. The hypothesis is that failure to create harmony among employees of diverse cultures will lead to poor performance within an organization.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research made use of secondary data, oral interview and content analysis. The oral interview schedule involved six open-ended questions in which the respondents were asked whether workforce diversity or an aspect of it has an effect on organizational performance. The population was made up of all the staff of randomly selected companies presented by means of tables and a figure. The data analysis made use of theoretical analysis and percentages. Test, retest reliability was done, using a Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient and, a coefficient of reliability (r) 0.95 was obtained indicating item consistency. A systematic sampling technique was used to obtain the sample size of 34, thus giving the measured content validity.

The participants are senior managers, middle managers, and other employees who work in business organizations in Erbil city in Kurdistan Region. Three managers were selected for in-depth interview whereas 31 respondents participated in surveys. All the participants were selected from four different organizations operating in Erbil. Of this, 70% of the respondents were from Iraq (24). Only one of them was from Iran (0.3%). One of the respondents was from Saudi Arabia (0.3%), two were from Turkey (0.6%), and two were from Egypt (0.6%), whereas one is a Pakistani citizen. Regarding the gender, 27% of the respondents were female, and 73% were male. The average work experience of the respondents was 5–7 years with 85% of the participants between 21 and 39 years old while 14% were aged 40–50. Table 2 exhibits an epitome of participants’ characteristics.

### Table 1: The ethnic composition of Kurdistan Region of Iraq

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kurdistan ethnic groups</th>
<th>Language (accent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kurds</td>
<td>Zibari (Badini), Kurmanji, Sorani, Zazaki,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hawrami (spoken in Northeastern Iraq)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmens</td>
<td>Bawari (Badini)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assyrians</td>
<td>Chaldean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabs</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yazidis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kakay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s interactions with the people of the Region from 2014 to 2017

3.1. Data Analysis

Data analysis for this paper applied the quantitative data through IBM SPSS Statistics with 20 being used. For the reliability and consistency of the survey’s results, Cronbach alpha was calculated for all the questions in the survey on variable CD and OP. In the end, Pearson’s coefficient was used to show the relationship between the two variables.
4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The respondents were asked whether diversity of cultures in organizations had a positive effect on performance, and the majority gave answers in the affirmative. Another question asked was whether CD had a positive impact on the effectiveness of OP, and the answer was also in the affirmative. The results of the surveys conducted with the employees indicated that failure of harmony in CD led to poor OP. Of the total number of 34 employees interviewed, 30.6% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement “I should stay far from the workers who are uncooperative and mentally unstable because their behaviors may be incompatible with the organization’s objectives”, while 35.2% disagreed and 19.4% neither agreed nor disagreed. This result suggests that there is a high proportion of workforce in Kurdistan’s organizations that discriminate against people in the workplace on the basis of being physically challenged. Furthermore, the results also show that 20.7% of the respondents do not tolerate people from different cultures and backgrounds. This trend can impact negatively on OP, especially when it has to do with team performance. Once employees do not accept and respect each other’s opinion due to different cultures or religions, several serious encounters may ensue, thereby obviating the achievement of high level of performance. The overall results show that a large proportion of employees working in Kurdistan Region have little understanding of how to deal with CD, with less tolerance to people who differ from them culturally [Table 3].

In terms of OP, we designed a survey based on four indicators: Job satisfaction, employee engagement, absenteeism rate, and turnover rate. Table 4 summarizes that 44.1% of the participants disagreed with the fifth question on agreement and disagreement with employees. As a result of these conflicts, employees do not tend to support each other. This can be the main factor that decreases employees’ satisfaction and increases turnover and absenteeism rate. About 40.6% of participants disagreed with the question of “When something unexpected happens in my work, I usually know who to ask for support and help,” suggesting that a great percentage of employees who work in Kurdistan’s organizations do not know who to ask certain questions of when they need assistance. Dissatisfaction and low engagement could be attributed to the reason why OP is very low among the employees.

Correlation coefficient analysis is used here to distinguish between two fundamental variables – CD and OP to establish the extent to which they are associated. The value range of the correlation is from −1.0 to 1.0. If the calculation is >0.5 then there is a positive relation between the two variables, and if the correlation is <0.5 it is considered as a weak relation. Table 5 summarizes that there is a positive relationship between the two variables CD and OP, signifying that an increase in harmonizing CD exacerbates OP, whereas a decrease in harmonizing CD would lead to poor OP. The correlation, in this perspective, is significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid percent</th>
<th>Cumulative percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Characteristics of respondents, n=34

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25 (73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–20</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–39</td>
<td>29 (85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40–50</td>
<td>5 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraqi</td>
<td>24 (70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iranian</td>
<td>1 (0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordanian</td>
<td>3 (0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi</td>
<td>1 (0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>1 (0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>2 (0.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>2 (0.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erbil</td>
<td>31 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current position in the company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>1 (0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehouse keeper</td>
<td>6 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchaser</td>
<td>3 (0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salesperson</td>
<td>7 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>2 (0.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab specialist</td>
<td>1 (0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td>13 (44)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
at the level of 0.01, and positive at the level 0.514. Table 5 summarizes the descriptive statistics to measure the relation between both mean and standard deviation. Mean range indicates great consistency, reliability, and significance in the results of surveys while standard deviation represents dispersal and deviation among the participants’ results. According to Table 5, mean range of harmony of CD is 34.62, and the standard deviation is 3.985. The mean range of OP is 57.88, and standard deviation is 7.555. For more clarification, Graph 1 shows the way two variables CD and OP are correlated, where line CD indicates CD, and line Y indicates OP. The results of this study support and proved the research hypotheses discussed under the theoretical framework [Table 6].

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Our intention throughout this paper has been to analyze the correlation between diversity of cultures and OP in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq through empirical study. We set out to do this by presenting comprehensive literature on the subject of diversity with some associated factors. From reviewing the literature, we found that organizational performance can be strongly affected by CD. In other words, there can be both positive relationship between CD and OP.

The world’s increasing globalization requires more interaction among people from diverse backgrounds. People no longer live and work in an insular environment; they are now part of a worldwide economy competing within a global framework. For this reason, profit and non-profit organizations need to become more diversified to remain competitive. Maximizing and capitalizing on workplace diversity is an important issue for management. Supervisors and managers need to recognize the ways in which the workplace is changing and evolving. Managing diversity is a significant organizational challenge, so managerial skills must adapt to accommodate a multicultural work environment.

Our findings from the data demonstrate a positive correlation between the two variables that represent the significance of harmonizing CD in the workplace to achieve higher level of OP. The managers of every organization in Kurdistan Region of Iraq should pay more attention to diversity by creating an awareness within their respective organizations on how to deal appropriately with multiculturalism. Training programs for the employees on diversity management should be provided to learn how to be conversant with people of different cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. In addition, managers should endeavor to create a comfortable working environment for their employees and instill in them trust and confidence.
REFERENCES


1. INTRODUCTION

Since Kuznets posited his now famous inequality curve in 1955, the issue of the relationship between inequality and economic growth has troubled economists and social scientists. Normative questions regarding social equity aside, whether or not inequality and growth are correlated and in which direction, if any, causation flows have far-reaching implications for economic and social policy that cannot be ignored. Especially Kuznets’s hypothesis is about inverted-U relationship between two variables, which means using square of the explanatory variable and checking the sign and significance of it. Hence, in this study, we look at the relationship between economic growth and inequality to find answers to these questions. Is inequality an unfortunate but necessary ingredient for growth, or is it possible that equality and growth be compatible or, perhaps, even complementary? Such questions are symptomatic of a broader debate regarding the existence of a trade-off between innovation and equality in general (Okun, 1975).

Simon Kuznets hypothesized that the relationship between growth and pay inequality changes on the basis of the level of development of a country or the degree of industrialization. In the initial phase of development, income diverges as the rural population migrates to the more unequal, higher-wage urban industrial centers. However, as the urban proletariat matures, political institutions that increase the income shares of lower-wage workers are created, and inequality decreases as industrialization deepens (Kuznets, 1955). Therefore, for a given level of income (or industrialization), the relationship among other factors causing decreased inequality, continuous urbanization and increased coverage of equality-enhancing social welfare programs may also be responsible.
between growth and pay inequality is assumed to be stable–negative for most countries currently on the downward-sloping portion of the curve.

Although Kuznets hypothesized the effect of growth (or development) on inequality, subsequent literature reversed this causal relationship. Empirical work seeking to confirm or reject the hypothesis put forward by Kuznets has proliferated in recent years, using both pooled and panel data in an attempt to shed light on the relationship across countries and time. Surveying 23 different studies, Bénabou (1996) concluded that initial inequality is detrimental to long-run growth.

Recent work has found that a few rich countries specializing in high-wage, advanced capital goods have experienced a post-Kuznets rise in inequality. While most developing and industrialized countries are found on the downward portion of Kuznets’ inverted U-shaped curve, inequality has been raising with increased income levels in high-income countries such as Japan, United States, and United Kingdom. Conceição and Galbraith (2001) postulate that the original formulation of Kuznets may apply only as long as countries principally produce consumer goods, and may break down as industrial activity shifts to monopolistic, advanced technology goods for the world market. In that case, the richest and most advanced industrial economies producing capital goods for export would be found on an “augmented” Kuznets Curve with an upward-sloping tail for such countries, as shown in Figure 1. However, away from the peak and trough of the augmented curve, the relationship between growth and inequality is presumed to be more or less a stable function of income level.

This study examines the relationship between pay inequality, economic growth, and performance in Korea. Pay inequality is estimated using Theil’s index to identify the factors determining the level of pay inequality and establish its relationship with economic growth and performance. The empirical results are based on panel data of Korean manufacturing sector for the period 199–2003. First, we review changes in industrial trend, production, and investment patterns over the period and the manner in which these changes led to the creation of a relative pay inequality among and within regions and sectors. Thereafter, we compare the annual changes in pay inequality in different sectors and annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth, finding that the previously stable and negative relationship predicted by Kuznets broke down at the height of the period of structural reform in Korea, giving way to a positive relationship after 1998. After a brief review of the reforms undertaken during the financial crisis, we will examine the evidence for this change and mechanisms by which it may have taken place. Finally, we conclude with implications and avenues for further research on the topic.

On the basis of Theil’s T-statistics, results indicate a positive relationship between pay inequality and size of a firm, location, R&D, export and industry sectors. The relation holds even when we control for an individual firm, time period, and firm characteristics. The decomposability property of Theil’s index enables us to show that pay inequality in the Korean manufacturing industry has increased both across sectors and regions, although more strongly across industrial sectors. Despite controlling for changes in the level of real per capita income, the rise in inequality accelerates in the period following the introduction of reforms.

The questions raised above are also addressed by examining the relationship between inequality and growth in Korea, and the manner in which this relationship has possibly been affected by the Asian financial crisis. However, space and data limitations allow only for partial inference on to what extent and how it affected pay inequality. It appears that a large portion of rising pay inequality can be attributed to rising relative pay among the small-sized firms, outside the capital city area and in the ICT sectors which were affected by the economic structural reform since 1997. The findings support the hypothesis of an “augmented” Kuznets Curve, according to which certain developed countries are found on an upward-sloping addendum to the original formulation of Kuznets.

This study adds a new dimension to research in this field by showing that the relationship between growth and inequality may change, as it does in the case of Korea, for example, as a result of structural reform. Although the income level in Korea does not change appreciably during the final decades of the 20th century, data on pay inequality in the
manufacturing industry indicate that the stable, negative relationship between growth and inequality predicted by Kuznets reverses at the peak of the reform period. The reversed effect implies thrusting Korea into a small group of otherwise wealthy and highly industrialized countries for whom inequality increases with economic growth.

This paper is organized in the following manner. Section II provides a brief introduction on the background of pay inequality and the Korean economy. Section III presents a review of previous studies to understand pay inequality and the Korean industry. Section IV explains and critiques the methodology of Theil’s T-statistic. Section V presents a description of the data pertaining to the Korean manufacturing industry and variable definition. Section VI presents the results and Section VII presents conclusions with suggestions for policy implications.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE KOREAN ECONOMY

As is well-known, in recent decades Korea has experienced dramatic economic development. From being one of the poorest countries of the world in the 1960s, it became a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in 1996. The economy has made remarkable progress since the early 1960s, with GNP growth averaging 7.8% per annum between 1961 and 2000. In a relatively short time period, the country was transformed swiftly from a poor traditional agricultural society to a modern industrial country. Comprehensive investment programs in technology and human capital made the manufacturing industry the engine of its economic growth driven by an outward-looking, government-led development strategy pursued from the early 1960s onward. During this process of growth and development, the national government intervened extensively in resource allocation, targeting industries that were to be promoted and provided necessary incentives at different levels for development and progress.

Numerous researchers, including Amsden (1989) and World Bank (1993), chose to study the Korean case as one that could serve as a model for the development of other developing countries; moreover, the Korean economy was believed to be strong. However, the value of the Korean won dropped by 50% between the end of December 1996 and the end of December 1997 when Korea experienced a financial crisis in 1997. The economic crisis of 1997–1998, after three decades of unprecedented economic growth, was evident. The outstanding external debt reached US$159 billion in December 1997, real GDP growth rate declined by 7%, and unemployment rate exceeded 8% in early 1998 from being <3% in the early to mid-1990s. The request by the Korean government for a 3-year stand-by credit from the IMF amounting to approximately $21 billion was approved on December 5, 1997.

Figure 2 indicates the remarkable economic growth despite the economic crisis of Korea during the period (1993–2003), the period under consideration in this paper. Per capita income increased from $8,177 in 1993 to $12,720 in 2003. This period of rapid change provides an extraordinary opportunity for examining the relationship between economic growth and income distribution and mobility in Korea.

Although the Korean economy suffered severely from the Asian financial crisis, it was known for its rapid recovery from the crisis (Yoshitomi, 2003; Koo and Kiser, 2001; Fischer, 1998). However, it can be expected that the impact of the crisis on firms would differ in accordance with the characteristics of various firms. The industrial policies for firms with different-sized classes underwent a dramatic transformation in the post-crisis period. As a result of the recovery policy, large-scale enterprises (LSEs) succeeded in necessary downsizing in the immediate aftermath of the financial crisis and grew rapidly in the post-crisis period, particularly in the export market. On the other hand, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) continued to suffer from the effects of the recession and, in particular, in the domestic market (Oh et al., 2008). Consequently, pay inequality increased over the entire industry, and differences with respect to locations and industries were distinguished.

The heterogeneous impact of the financial crisis in the form of increased pay inequality on firms according to their size and location was the motivation for addressing the relationship between inequality and industry growth in the current study. Therefore, this paper examines pay

![Figure 2. Gross domestic product per capita of Korea, 1993–2003 (in 2000 prices)](image-url)
structure and pay inequality between 1993 and 2003 in the Korean manufacturing industry using Theil’s T-statistic. As indicated in Table 1, the manufacturing industry accounts for one of the largest shares of the Korean industry. The dataset is derived from the Annual Report on Mining and Manufacturing Survey in Korea. It includes firms with five or more employees in 580 manufacturing industries classified by the Korean Standard Industrial Classification (KSIC) at the 5-digit level.

Pay inequality can be investigated in terms of the location, size, R&D investment, and export activity and industry sectors of the firm. Further, we evaluate the manner in which the Asian financial crisis and policies for recovery impacted pay inequality. This paper studies the change in pay structure and inequality from a comparative perspective. First, the tendency of a relationship between pay inequality and economic growth between 1993 and 2003 is examined. Second, firms are categorized in terms of industry sectors, locations, and size, and the differences and characteristics are identified. Finally, a comparison is made between the analyzed inequality distribution and economic growth, the position of Korea according to Kuznet’s theory is identified, and the associated implication is obtained.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Although Kuznets hypothesized the effect of growth (or development) on inequality, subsequent literature reversed this causal relationship. Empirical work seeking to confirm or reject the hypothesis put forward by Kuznets has proliferated in recent years, using both pooled and panel data in an attempt to highlight the relationship across countries and over time. The majority of this empirical work found a consistently negative relationship between inequality and growth, typically based on multivariate cross-country regression models in which inequality is one variable determining economic growth. For example, Birdsall et al. (1995) found that egalitarianism was a key ingredient in the recipe for rapid growth in East Asia. Surveying 23 different studies, Bénabou (1996) concluded that initial inequality is detrimental to long-run growth.

In 1998, Deininger and Squire disrupted the emerging consensus with a study based on their ambitious new global inequality dataset compiled for the World Bank from disparate household surveys of 108 countries since 1950. Based on the new data, Deininger and Squire (1998) found no evidence for the inverted U-shaped curve given by Kuznets.

Using the same data and panel specification, Forbes (2000) found that initial inequality leads to higher subsequent rates of growth. However, several authors indicated severe problems with the new data, thereby casting a shadow over conclusions drawn from it. Galbraith and Kum (2002) reveal the manner in which problems with the Deininger and Squire data lead to multiple and contradictory conclusions regarding the relationship between inequality and growth (ranging from an upright to inverted U-shaped curve to positive and negative linear ones). It must be mentioned that the focus in the above-mentioned studies is yet on a unidirectional causal relationship between growth and inequality. For a majority of the countries, the negative relationship appears to remain intact despite questions regarding causality and endogeneity.

There are a number of competing theories that explain the between firm wage dispersion. The efficiency wage theory argues that paying a wage premium may be profitable for firms because high wages can reduce monitoring costs, discourage turnover, attract a higher quality pool of applicants, and foster employee loyalty. Hence, wage dispersion across firms is observed when firms differ in their ability to monitor or motivate their workers, bear the cost of turnover, or measure labor quality. The theory of insider controls provides another institutional explanation for demand-related wage variation. If firms possess product market power and their workers are able to bargain for a share of the rents, cross-firm differences in rents or in the ability of workers to extract rents generate wage differentials among firms.

Although efficiency wage and insider theories explain why wages may be set above their market-clearing levels, their predictions for the impact of a wage premium on firm performance differ. Efficiency wages are compatible with profit maximization because they are intended to increase labor productivity. However, rent-seeking activities of insiders undermine the financial performance of the enterprise because these activities have no effect on worker performance. These competing theories of between firm wage dispersion have been tested empirically; however, the extent to which wage dispersion is attributable to competitive versus noncompetitive factors remains unresolved. In this paper, merely examining the tendency of pay inequality in Korea between 1993 and 2003 and then comparing with sectors and regions provides numerous implications for the industrial policy of Korea.

Due to the space constraint, issues of efficiency wage policy will be discussed in a future study.
There has been a large volume of studies on pay distribution in Korea since the late 1970s. Although estimates of pay inequality differ slightly depending on the data used, a majority of these studies agree that pay inequality increased in the 1990s, particularly since after the financial crisis wealth is far less equally distributed than pay (Lee and Hwang, 1998; Lee, 2000). There is no consensus on the direction of pay inequality over the path of economic growth. The results suggest among others rising inequality (Kim and Ahn, 1987), inverse-U type curve (Choo, 1993), and falling inequality (Kim and Topel, 1995; Fields and Yoo, 2000; Kang and Yun, 2008). Karacaogullari and Tabakis (2017) discuss wage inequality dynamics. Several recent studies like Lee (2017) investigate the international trade and within-sector inequality, while Mohseni-Cheraghlou (2016) analyzes the human and social well-being in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis.

Kim and Topel (1995) study the evolution of labor markets in Korea during 1971–1986 when Korea experienced rapid economic growth and structural change. The authors are interested to know how labor market adjusted to structural change and how wage and income inequality change during economic development. The findings are: (i) Advancing productivity drove the transformation, (ii) sectoral neutrality of wage growth and employment, (iii) high sectoral mobility of worker, (iv) high inter-firm mobility, and (v) weak evidence of increased inequality during initial stage of industrialization. In sum, the result here is not supporting Kuznets’s conjecture due to purposeful industrial policy. In a similar study but based on more recent data, Fields and Yoo (2000) show that Korea’s exceptional economic growth was coupled with an even more exceptional fall in labor income inequality. The authors quantify the importance of factors contributing to the fall of labor income inequality. They find that job tenure, gender, years of education and occupation explain the level of income inequality, while years of education, industry, occupation, and experience explain the change in income inequality.

Since in the situation of a financial crisis, certain institutions express interest in enterprises such as the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI) that solicits further flexibility of the labor market (FKI, 2000). It is doubtful whether this argument would be appropriate for the Korean economy, where job mobility has been rather restricted as compared with a majority of the developed economies. With regard to pay inequalities, Stiglitz (1999) admits that pay inequality tends to rise in periods of economic crises, structural adjustment, and output contractions. The increase in pay inequality might be stronger when the labor market is subject to restricted mobility.

Although all available measures indicate widened pay inequalities in Korea during 1997–1999 (Yoo and Kim, 2002) due to the increase in the number of the irregular workers and unemployment rate, interpretations of the situation of pay inequalities since 2000 appear to depend on the survey methods that were utilized. For example, a measure such as the Gini coefficient based on the households of urban workers indicates that the Gini coefficient increased from 0.307 in 1996 and 0.296 in 1997 to 0.311 in 1999; however, it decreased to 0.301–0.303 in 2000 and 2001. This decline is presumably due to increased public transfer and decreased unemployment rate; meanwhile, a majority of other measures indicate that the Gini coefficient has been more or less stable since 1999 (Park et al., 2002; Yoo and Kim, 2002).

However, a majority of previous researchers mainly focus on pay inequality at a point of time measured by certain inequality indices. Although this snapshot view of pay inequality receives attention from the public, it provides little information regarding the nature and direction of pay inequality. Different from previous studies, this paper attempts to analyze pay inequality using Theil’s T-statistic through a comparison with several between and within units. First, this paper examines the tendency of pay inequality with economic growth between 1993 and 2003. This period includes both pre- and post-crisis periods. Second, we divide the data on the basis of industry sectors, firms’ location and size, etc., and then determine pay inequality differences and characteristics. Finally, the effects of firm dynamics on pay inequality will be analyzed in greater detail.

### Table 1: The development of labor force in Korea and its distribution (in 1000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total labor force</th>
<th>Manufacturing (in 1000 (%))</th>
<th>Mining (in 1000 (%))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>12,245</td>
<td>(31.7)</td>
<td>(1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>12,583</td>
<td>(29.4)</td>
<td>(1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>13,634</td>
<td>(27.2)</td>
<td>(1.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>14,006</td>
<td>(26.8)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>13,470</td>
<td>(24.6)</td>
<td>(0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>13,216</td>
<td>(24.1)</td>
<td>(0.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>13,170</td>
<td>(24.5)</td>
<td>(0.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>13,604</td>
<td>(24.2)</td>
<td>(0.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>14,109</td>
<td>(23.2)</td>
<td>(0.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>14,608</td>
<td>(23.2)</td>
<td>(0.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>14,729</td>
<td>(23.2)</td>
<td>(0.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It should be noted that previous studies have pointed that the cause of rising pay inequality are: (i) Skill-biased technical change in the production methods as a result of gross job creation and destruction, employment reallocation, and shift in the structure of labor demand (Davis and Haltiwanger, 1991; Bound and Johnson, 1992); (ii) acceleration of international trade among countries from the supply response to the increased demand that produces increasing wage inequality which ultimately produces increasing equality (Murphy and Welch, 1991) (iii) decline in unionization that lowered earnings differentials across industries and gender (Freeman, 1991). Acemoglu (2002) found that the faster increase in the supply of skills in Europe, the role of Europe’s labor market institutions and investment in education and technologies reduce skill-biased technical change preventing wage inequality from increasing. These are the three most popular explanations for the different inequality trends in the US and UK. Gottschalk and Smeeding (1997) found wage inequality increasing over time and the trend to be different across countries. Countries with centralized wage bargaining are more equal. It is affected by demand for skill, returns to education, and institutional constraints on wage. One possible direction of research in this area would be to assess the observed rising pay inequality according to these potential sources. We elaborate with these potential sources, yet detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this study, and it needs to be treated separately.

As mentioned above, the empirical relationship between economic growth and distribution of inequality hypothesized by Kuznets is unclear, and it follows a country-specific path. Korea is a country that could successfully couple economic growth and pays equality in the period of its industrialization. This is opposed to what Kuznets’s hypothesis predicts; nonetheless, it is believed that factors such as education, industry, occupation, and experience are important in determining the level of inequality over time. Despite this discrepancy between Kuznets and empirical results and the controversy over the direction of pay inequality, we try to locate Korea’s position according to the Kuznets’s curve to establish such a relation. This is justified by the widening pay inequality in recent years and the availability of updated data.

4. METHODOLOGY

Theil’s T-statistic is one of the several frequently used indices of inequality that provides a useful alternative approach to measuring the change in earnings inequality within a single country and to comparing degrees of change across countries. The method has been intensively used in the analysis of the income distribution of households and individuals. Theil’s T-statistic does not rely on surveys but on the regularly-gathered official measures or register data of income by region and sector. This method is used to compute the between group component of Theil’s T-statistic across province sector cells for both locations and industry sectors. Theil’s T-statistic is a rather simple measure of inequality, relying on only two pieces of information regarding each cell: Its weight in total population (or employment), and the ratio of average income within the cell to average income in the country as a whole.

The following formulae provide the algebraic computation behind Theil’s T-statistic. While these particular equations use income as the variable of interest, Theil’s T-statistic can address any number of quantifiable phenomena. When household data are available, Theil’s T-statistic is written as:

$$T = \sum_{p=1}^{n} \left( \frac{1}{n} \right) \left( \frac{y_p}{\mu_p} \right) \ln \left( \frac{y_p}{\mu_p} \right)$$  

(1)

Where, $n$ is the number of individuals in the population, $y_p$ is the income of the person indexed by $p$, and $\mu_p$ is the average income of the population. If every individual has exactly the same income, $T$ will be zero; this represents perfect equality and is the minimum value of Theil’s T-statistic. If one individual has all the income, $T$ will equal $\ln(n)$ this represents utmost inequality and is the maximum value of Theil’s T-statistic. Thus, unlike the Gini coefficient, Theil’s T-statistic is not limited to values within the 0–1 interval.

If members of a population can be classified into mutually exclusive and completely exhaustive groups, then the Theil’s T-statistic comprises two components the between group component ($T'_g$) and the within-group component ($T^w$) that can be expressed in the following manner:

$$T = T'_g + T^w$$  

(2)

When aggregate data are available instead of individual data, $T'_g$ can be used as a lower bound for the value of Theil’s

---

3 For a recent review of inequalities and their measurement (Heshmati, 2004).

4 Equation (1), Equation (2), and Equation (3) closely follow Conceição, P., Galbraith, J. K., Bradford, P. (2001). The theil index in sequences of nested and hierarchic grouping structures: Implications for the measurement of inequality through time, with data aggregated at different levels of industrial classification. Eastern Economic Journal, 27(4), 491-514.
T-statistic for the population. The between group element of Theil’s T can be written as:

\[
T'_{g} = \sum_{i=1}^{m} \left\{ \frac{p_{i}}{P} \left( \frac{\bar{y}_{i}}{\mu} \right) \ln \left( \frac{\bar{y}_{i}}{\mu} \right) \right\},
\]

(3)

Where \( i \) indexes the groups, \( p_{i} \) is the population of group \( i \), \( P \) is the total population, \( \bar{y}_{i} \) is the average income in group \( i \) and \( \mu \) is the average income across the entire population.

\( T'_{g} \) is bounded above by \( \ln(P/p_{\text{min}}) \), the natural logarithm of the total population divided by the size of the smallest group. This value is attained when the smallest group possesses all the resources. When data are hierarchically nested (i.e., every municipality is in a province, and each province is in a country), Theil’s T-statistic must increase or remain the same as the level of aggregation (i.e., \( T_{\text{population}} \geq T_{g(i\text{district})} \geq T_{g(\text{county})} \)). Theil’s T-statistic for population equals the limit of the between group Theil component as the number of groups approaches the size of the population.

Theil’s T-statistic has properties that make it attractive for the type of calculation described above; in particular, it is possible to add row and column elements to arrive at cross-sector and cross-province measures of inequality. It is also possible to look directly at the contribution to overall inequality of each cell, sector or province, and to gauge the yearly change in that contribution. Of course, the general comparison of the Theil index methodology is made by estimating pay inequality for individual persons among countries or regions. However, in this study, we compare pay inequality using firm-level data. Dong (2005) analyzed wage inequality and between-firm age in the 1990s by employing the Theil methodology, in which data of rural and urban firms were used. Galbraith et al. (2004) evaluated pay inequality in 1979–1998 in the Indian manufacturing sector.

5. DATA

In this study, we examine the pay inequality in the Korean manufacturing industry according to the classifications of the sector, region, and firm size from 1993 to 2003. The data used in this study were the unpublished plant-level data compiled from the Annual Report on Mining and Manufacturing Survey in Korea. The data encompasses all manufacturing plants with five or more employees in 580 manufacturing industries at the KSIC 5-digit level. It was an unbalanced panel data with approximately 76,341–103,126 observations for each year.

In the survey data, the entry and exit of manufacturing plants were identified based on their appearance and disappearance over time. Entry and exit of plant due to spin-off, split, merger, and acquisition could not be identified from the available manufacturing plant level database. A total of 300,916 distinct manufacturing plants were observed during the analysis period. As such, the data pertains to entering, exiting, and surviving plants. The data are available at the 5-digit industrial classification level for the entire Korean manufacturing industry.

The total number of observations was 1,030,643. Manufacturing plants that had over 300 employees were denoted as firm size Class 5; when the number of employees was between 300 and 100, the plants were classified as firm size Class 4; when the number of employees was between 50 and 100, plants were classified as firm size Class 3; when the number of employees was <50 and over 20, plants were classified as firm size Class 2; and when the number of employees was between 5 and 20, plants were classified as firm size Class 1. The annual changes in the number of firms, the aggregated firm characteristics, and the number of employees for each group were also described.

The descriptive statistics of the data for each year of observation are reported in Table 2. In addition to the number of observations in each year, the distribution of each variable including the number of workers, cost, and incomes is presented. The number of observations increases over time, while the number of workers declines. The cost and its dispersion display an increasing trend; the same applies to income variables.

6. RESULTS

First, we examine the relationship of pay inequality with economic growth between 1993 and 2003. We begin by examining the information provided by KSIC data at the 5-digit classification level for Korea as a whole. Figure 3 presents Theil’s T-statistic values resulting from this exercise.

It was found that the inequality trend measured by Theil’s T-statistic remained stable and consistent in the early 1990s and that it was declining slightly. However, we observe that the graph upsurgings sharply in the years 1993–2003 remains fairly steady in 1993–1996, then increases rapidly in 1996–1998. Thereafter, pay inequality in the manufacturing industry remained steady until the years 1999–2003, after which it began creeping upward. This is definitely different...
from the “augmented” Kuznets’s Curve that indicates that inequality increases with an increase in economic growth levels, as found in the United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom. The Korean economy did not attain the economic level of developed countries; the economy was merely reformed and maintained. If the economy had been stabilized and reformed in a proper manner, the inequality should have become similar to that before the crisis or decreased steadily. However, as seen in Figure 3, the inequality increases drastically since the financial crisis. The rather short period of radical economic reform does not result in concurrence of economic growth and inequality but a greater increase in inequality than economic growth. Comparing with 0.005 increasing of the U.S. and 0.01 increasing of the EU 22 countries, a 0.044 increasing in pay inequality in Korea is a quite significant amount between 1996 and 1998. Therefore, certain difficulties, as stated above, can be expected from such a reform and, based on political consideration of these facts, wage distribution and economic development plans must be considered carefully.

To further examine whether inequality in Korea is primarily a geographic or location issue, we aggregate the location sector elements into two distinct categories—locations and sectors. The 2-digit industrial classification available at the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean±SD</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>85731</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>31.78±208.75</td>
<td>2724481</td>
<td>85731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>379.25±4220.84</td>
<td>32513354</td>
<td>85731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>6.83±3.59</td>
<td>739980</td>
<td>85731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>88328</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>31.31±219.12</td>
<td>2765299</td>
<td>88328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>423.51±5402.72</td>
<td>37407943</td>
<td>88328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>9.69±3.99</td>
<td>855686</td>
<td>88328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>93267</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>30.19±220.48</td>
<td>2815581</td>
<td>93267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>466.23±5763.59</td>
<td>43483779</td>
<td>93267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>10.99±4.71</td>
<td>1024909</td>
<td>93267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>94030</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>29.39±231.49</td>
<td>2763178</td>
<td>94030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>502.28±6389.42</td>
<td>47229078</td>
<td>94030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>12.26±5.20</td>
<td>1153255</td>
<td>94030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>88996</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>27.67±207.74</td>
<td>2462853</td>
<td>88996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>519.29±6006.66</td>
<td>46214575</td>
<td>88996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>13.20±5.98</td>
<td>1175073</td>
<td>88996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>76341</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>27.79±191.08</td>
<td>2121474</td>
<td>76341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>511.08±6203.56</td>
<td>39016613</td>
<td>76341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>12.74±6.17</td>
<td>972350</td>
<td>76341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>88140</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>26.65±181.81</td>
<td>2349268</td>
<td>88140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>506.89±6325.64</td>
<td>44677291</td>
<td>88140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>13.24±6.26</td>
<td>1167058</td>
<td>88140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>95341</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>26.36±182.19</td>
<td>2513212</td>
<td>95341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>554.16±6956.60</td>
<td>52834699</td>
<td>95341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>14.47±6.90</td>
<td>1379405</td>
<td>95341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>103126</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>24.27±150.81</td>
<td>2502568</td>
<td>103126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>549.81±6609.62</td>
<td>56699977</td>
<td>103126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>15.83±7.59</td>
<td>1639922</td>
<td>103126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>107459</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>23.64±142.69</td>
<td>2540690</td>
<td>107459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>585.83±6835.44</td>
<td>62952772</td>
<td>107459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>17.41±8.47</td>
<td>1871169</td>
<td>107459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>109884</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>23.55±146.99</td>
<td>2587851</td>
<td>109884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>618.99±7598.76</td>
<td>68017011</td>
<td>109884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>18.46±9.10</td>
<td>2028859</td>
<td>109884</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SD: Standard deviation

Heshmati and Kim: Analysis of Pay Inequality
location level is similar to the 3-digit classification available at the national level. The plants level data are available for 16 categories across five major states for this period of study. The location of plants can help in explaining the rising pay inequality through several channels such as differences in education, skill, labor productivity, demand and supply of labor, export activity of the firms and differences in the development of consumer and producer prices, as well as differences in tax rates.

As explained above, there exists (i) inequality across sectors within states, (ii) inequality across locations, (iii) inequality across locations within sectors, and (iv) inequality across sectors. Through this trend of Theil values, we find that in this data, inequality has been steadily increasing after 1997 when the Korean economy faced financial crises; moreover, in the 2000s, pay inequality continued to increase, taking a sharp jump in the final year of observation to levels much higher than in the early 1990s. Thus, a temporary law for fostering venture business was enacted in 1997, and the government intervened strongly in the entire process of certification and support for specific sectors. As a result, the pattern suggests that the regional element of inequality in Korea began to rise before the purely sectoral increases became pronounced and also before major economic reforms occurred. The next issue that is examined is which of the specific firm sizes, regions, and sectors have contributed the most to rising inequality. We first examine the contribution of individual states to the Theil index. Figures 4-6 below present this information.

Figure 4 presents the contribution of firm size to pay inequality in Korea firm sizes divided by the number of employees. There are a total of five defined firm sizes, and the categories of the number of employees of the firms are 5–20, 20–50, 50–100, 100–300, and over 300. Firm sizes whose pay rates exceed the average constitute elements above the zero line, while states with pay rates below the national average constitute elements below the zero line. The size of the component attributable to each region and firm size represents the combined influence of labor force and relative income, and it is the change in these influences that is highlighted in the figure. The firms are ranked by the size of their contribution to interstate inequality in the first year under observation.

It is evident from the above figure that the pay inequality of small-sized firms has increased rapidly since 1998. This result, which is related to the industrial policies for firms with different-sized classes, changed dramatically in the post-crisis period. As a result of the recovery policy, LSEs succeeded in the necessary downsizing during the immediate aftermath of the fiscal crisis and grew rapidly in the post-crisis period, particularly those firms that specialized in the export market. In the case of LSEs, their contribution did not change even with the increase in overall equality. On the other hand, the contribution of SMEs increases with an increase in the entire inequality. It is indicated that SMEs account for a considerable amount of the position. Nevertheless, the fact that their contribution has increased since 1997 indicates that SMEs were continuing to suffer from the effects of the recession, particularly in the domestic market. The impact of the economic crisis on SMEs was of greater severity. As an indication of this problem, the number of SME bankruptcies in 1998 reached 22,800, while it was 11,600 in 1996 (Gregory et al., 2002). The short-term debt in foreign currencies, which was a major factor in causing bankruptcies in certain industries, resulted in a series of bankruptcies over the entire economy.

Figure 5 presents the contribution of regions to pay inequality in Korea. Location is divided into five areas: (1) Seoul areas, (2) Chungcheong, (3) Gyeongsang, (4) Jeolla, and (5) the others.
are rather small and belong to traditional sectors like food processing.

Finally, a majority of the smaller states make either no contribution or make a small negative contribution to the Theil index. The smallness of their contribution in absolute value is indicative of their low weight age in the overall employment in the Korean manufacturing industry. The increase in Theil index from 1997 is primarily attributed to an increase in the Theil element for generation of electrical energy, distribution of electrical energy, manufacture of computers and computer-based systems, manufacture of general purpose non-electrical machinery, and manufacture of motorcars. These sectors are specialized in both the domestic and export markets.

All the sector areas obtained a boost after the liberalization of policies regarding production capacities and industrial licensing. It can be inferred from this evidence that one effect of the reforms was to strengthen the market position of those sectors that were already comparatively strong but heterogeneously so; thus, this increased the dispersion of pay in the manufacturing industry across Korea as a whole since the Asia Crisis. Figure 6a and b indicate, in aggregate and disaggregate forms, respectively, the distribution of 2-digit enterprises such as basic metal industries, rubber, plastic, petroleum and coal, and electricity generation and distribution, as well as the large-scale modern enterprises such as chemicals, transport equipment, and machinery, and equipment. These are the major winners and contributors to the income inequality in the manufacturing industry. Manufacturing sectors such as 29–33 and 20–26 are the long-standing losers. Of particular interest is the increasing contribution of the Theil element in the electricity sector over the years, particularly as the sector has become deregulated and increasingly able to assert its monopoly power. Undoubtedly, the increase in the strength of the power sector is the single largest and perhaps the only significant contributor to the increase in inter-sectoral inequality in the Korean manufacturing industry under economic reform.

As seen in Figures 7 and 8, the inequality of firms evolved over time depending on the aggregate R&D and export activities of firms.

After reforming the structure of the economy, the inequality shares of the exporting group of firms have increased slightly. However, the increase in inequality for the export-oriented group led the fostering policy of the economy to concentrate on the recovery of financial deprivation through trade.
Figure 8 reveals that the increase in the pay inequality influenced the R&D investment of firms. In particular, the inequalities of R&D-intensive firms have increased since the financial crisis of Korea due to the SME-fostering policies of the Korean government, in the post-crisis period, supported and financed venture businesses. On the other hand, the inequality rates of firms not conducting R&D show no variation before and after the crisis period. Instead, their inequality has increased more since the economy became stable.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Since the financial crisis of 1997, there has been an increase in structural reform in Korea. A higher pay inequality is attributed to relatively large-sized firms, capital region, R&D–oriented firms as well as those in high technology manufacturing industries. These firms products were increasingly oriented toward the external market underwent a transformation. Using datasets pertaining to 1993–2003, these paper analyzes pay inequality in the Korean manufacturing industry according to the firms’ location, size, R&D investment, export activity, and industry sector. In addition, we evaluate the manner in which the Asian financial crisis and policies for recovery impacted pay inequality.

First, this paper examined the relationship of pay inequality with economic growth between 1993 and 2003. Using Theil’s T-statistic, it is shown that the overall pay inequality increased and the persistent component of economic growth dominantly shapes the overall pay inequality. We can safely conclude that inequality in the wages of the Korean manufacturing industry has increased since 1996: Both aggregate measures for Korea and different locations agree on this aspect. However, the Korean manufacturing industry retains a large number of the characteristics of a planned and dual economy, with a strong influence of the firm structure on relative wages and their distribution.

Second, industry sectors, firms’ size, and location were identified, and then their differences and specific characteristics were established. The result indicates certain patterns of pay inequality among industrial sectors, locations, and firm size classes. We found a positive and significant relationship between pay inequality and firm size, regional location, R&D investment, export activity, and industry sectors. This holds even when we control for unobservable and observable individual firms, time periods, and firm characteristics. The decomposability property of the Theil index enables us to reveal that pay inequality in the Korean manufacturing industry has increased across sectors, size classes and regions, although more strongly across industrial sectors and size classes.

Finally, we compared the inequality distribution with economic growth and located the position of Korea according to Kuznets’s theory and obtained the related implication. It was indicated that the increase in inequality accelerated in the period following the introduction of economic reforms, after controlling for changes in the level of real per capita income. It appears that a large portion of rising pay inequality in the manufacturing industry in the post-reform period can be attributed to rising relative pay in the large high-technology industry sectors located in the capital city areas. The findings support the hypothesis of an “augmented” Kuznets Curve, according to which certain developed countries are found on an upward-sloping addendum to the original curve. Inequality is indispensable to economic growth, yet Korea experienced an extremely rapid change in the inequality and industrial structure. While a majority of the developing and industrialized countries are found on the downward portion of Kuznets’s inverted U-shaped curve, inequality has been raising with increased income levels. This phenomenon is
observed in high-income countries such as Japan, the United States, and the United Kingdom. However, since Korea is not such a high-income country, the share and rate of change in inequality must be monitored to keep it at a low and stable level. The policies must be designed such that their implications are sought and desired.

From the viewpoint of the size of firms, the inequality in firms with 5–20 employees increased rapidly, considering the total share of the inequality. As compared with that before 1996, pay inequality in small-sized companies relatively worsened, which gave rise to lowering the activities of companies and an increase in their risk. Therefore, a Fair Standard Act Policy like the minimum wage system, which can preserve the initial satisfaction of labor supplements, is required to enable resolving the issue of pay inequality. However, the effects of minimum wage will depend on to what extent workers are affected. The effect will be stronger if a substantial portion of the workers is earning around the minimum wage level in the data. In order for corporate tax policies targeting SMEs to be effective in the direction of decreasing pay inequality, they must be accompanied by a necessary mechanism to ensure such effects.

From the geographical perspective, the pay inequality in the Seoul areas and Gyeongsang continued to contribute a large portion to the total inequality, and, in particular, that of Seoul has considerably risen since 1997. Thus, firm-aiding policies, including tax reform and subsidy policies might be required to reduce the inequality gap among different areas. In addition, overall inequality of fabricated metal, chemicals, electrical machinery, and communication industry was found to rise. This indicates the fact that support policies in accordance with the features of each industry are required to reduce and finally eliminate pay inequality.

In summary, this paper presented various aspects on the recent rising pay inequality in Korea. Although pay inequality has been increasing in the manufacturing industry since 1997, particularly following the formal initiation of reforms, this increase cannot be accounted for strictly by increasing average incomes. The rise in inequality persists even when changes in average income among regions is fully controlled for. The crisis moved the Korean economy from domestically oriented to an internationally oriented economy. Thus, the rising pay inequality may be attributed to international trade and globalization. Since globalization affects industries with different degrees, the between industry pay inequality becomes more dominating than within industry pay inequality. Differences in industries’ exposure to international market allow to statistically test the strength in the correlation between pay dispersion and quantitative measure of globalization. In a separate study, we will investigate the relationship between firm dynamics and pay inequality in the same period. This will allow for estimating the effects of the characteristics of firms in terms of entry, exit, and organization structure on the level and development of inequality in pay. In addition, we will also analyze the causes and consequences of pay inequality in a more systematic and economic way, and then we will be able to suggest policy implications more precisely.

REFERENCES


1. INTRODUCTION

Following recent events in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, most observers have opted for a reductionist interpretation of Kurdistan’s consultative independence referendum last October. These largely fall into two categories of those criticizing the referendum on the grounds of timing, and others seeing more sinister footprints of political opportunism by the leaders of the Kurdistan Region. Here are some reasons why such analysis is flawed due to their failure to appreciate several closely related socio-political elements.

2. THE KURDISTAN REGION’S ACHIEVEMENTS

The Kurdistan Region has come a long way since it was a beleaguered province of Iraq subject to regular military violence and systematic ethnic discrimination. Now, it enjoys relative economic prosperity, resilient state institutions, and, most importantly, a vibrant civil society. Yet, paradoxically, all these achievements pose new challenges to the primeval aspirations of independence and statehood. Such achievements have risen the stakes for Kurds and given them much more to lose. Today, Kurds are on a totally different page of their history, and the principles of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, while celebrated, have paradoxically handicapped them. In a region where all other forces still actively embrace violence by promoting martyrdom and glory in the afterlife, treasuring life on Earth proves to be an ineffective strategy.

Hence, in such a social and political climate, it is not difficult to appreciate the rationale behind the move to hold the referendum despite the international community’s lack of support. In the minds of the leaders of the Kurdistan Region, the referendum might well have appeared a long overdue process whose midnight trains were about to leave the last platforms of history.

Such a radical alteration of mindset has had tangible consequences, as seen in the cautious declarations of the Kurdish leadership in the run-up to the September referendum. Up to the very last moment, all doors to negotiation were kept open, and there were persistent calls by a considerable
faction of the Kurdistan leadership to accept any meaningful offers and suspend or postpone the referendum. Subsequently following the offer to “freeze” the effects of the independence referendum, the Kurdistan Regional Government announced on November the 15th that it respects the Iraqi Constitutional Court’s verdict on the unconstitutionality of the referendum, which is yet more evidence of a prevailing climate of political pragmatism stemming from this radical socio-political atmosphere; all this despite the central government’s persistent rejection of dialog and insistence on a series of relentless collective punitive measures.

Hence, the central government’s long track record of violating minority rights each time it had means for doing so, would have undoubtedly added to the sense of urgency by the KRG leader to push through the referendum while the war on Islamic State was not yet over.

3. TIMING OF THE REFERENDUM

After the fall of Saddam, the Kurdistan Region had full-heartedly committed to the Iraqi project of rebuilding a devastated nation with no political infrastructure. Without the Kurds’ contributions, the Iraqi state as we know it would not exist. These contributions included developing a theoretical constitutional pluralism and the potential for democratization, which resulted primarily from Kurdish MPs’ influence. Furthermore, their physical contributions toward protecting the Iraqi political entity in the war against the Islamic State do not need further illustrations.

In addition to this, the Kurdistan Regional Government also made a concerted effort to achieve the best possible relations with its neighbors, in particular, Turkey and Iran, which was indeed unprecedented in the history of the nation. Yet again, the more liberal assumptions of the Kurdistan Regional Government regarding the mutual economic interdependence that should have prevailed over other geopolitical considerations proved to be in total discordance with the rudimentary political realism of the region.

The question becomes, if, in such a climate of deep economic interdependence and positive relationships with neighbors, all of them still reacted violently to even a basic non-binding popular consultation in Kurdistan, why would they be more lenient in the event of an actual process of independence at any other historical juncture?

4. QUESTIONS OF OIL

One more important aspect needs further elaboration, and that is the question of oil. The financial prospects of losing Kirkuk’s vast oil reserves to the Iraqi federal government have dominated political analysis around the world. Nonetheless, this major economic and sentimental loss for the Kurdistan Regional Government has other fundamental implications for the democratization processes in the Kurdistan Region. On a global level, one will struggle to identify a single democratic country whose state relies primarily on natural resources. As governments come to rely on their primary economic sectors rather than taxes and public contributions, the political machinery inches toward turning into a rentier state increasingly likely to waive principles of transparency, accountability, and distributive justice.

In light of all this, on purely speculative grounds, it will be uncontroversial to claim that the painful loss of control over oil reserves in Kirkuk might also have some unexpected positive outcomes. It might well prove to be a driving engine for launching wide-ranging democratization throughout the Region by building on important achievements of recent years. This could prove essential in forcefully demonstrating that the only way forward for the Kurdistan Region is to deepen its much-treasured values of openness, tolerance and genuine grassroots democracy, which are indeed a rare breed in the Middle East. Hence, despite the prevailing pessimism, Kurds could easily have the last laugh if important lessons of the recent course of events are learned.

In addition, this new episode of having been once more callously betrayed by their international partners, in particular, the USA and France, might prove to be yet another painful reminder that the most enduring and unwavering political systems are those looking inward for democratic consensus rather than those looking outward for support and legitimacy. This has indeed been the most fundamental lesson of the entire tradition of political philosophy throughout history.

REFERENCES


1. INTRODUCTION

Motivation is one of the most prominent individual difference variables (Dörnyei, 2006), and as such a significant predictor of behavior and academic achievement (Abouserie, 1995; Pintrich, 1999; Wigfield and Eccles, 2000) including learning another language (Dörnyei, 1994; 2001; Noels et al., 2000; Skehan, 1991). Language teachers are intuitively familiar with such belief inasmuch as they use the “motivated” and “successful” adjectives synonymously for good language learners since for learning a second language (L2), which is a lengthy and mostly tedious process, “the learner’s enthusiasm, commitment and persistence are key determinants of success or failure” (Dörnyei, 2010. p. 74).

ABSTRACT

Motivational surges in language learning occur when a number of personal and contextual parameters come together to induce intense and long-term motivational experiences. In the second language learning literature, this phenomenon is known as the directed motivational current (DMC) (Dörnyei et al., 2014). As a novel concept in the field, little is known about what might induce this extraordinary motivational surge. The current study empirically examined the parameters of nine participants who provided accounts of the conditions around the initial stages of their motivational currents. The qualitative analysis found that five factors triggered the motivational currents in the participants: Emergent opportunities, negative emotion, moments of realization/awakening, new information, and meeting others who shared the goal. The study also revealed two main conditions necessary for a DMC to begin: Goal/ambitions and perceived feasibility. The final section of this paper presents practical implications of the current findings in relation to how second language teachers and educators might benefit from the findings to help incite motivational surges in their language learners.

Keywords: Directed Motivational Currents, Second Language Acquisition, Second Language Motivation

Parameters Inducing Motivational Surges in Second Language Learning

Zana Ibrahim*

Department of English Language, School of Social Sciences, University of Kurdistan Hewlêr, Kurdistan Region – F.R. Iraq

*Corresponding author’s email: zana.ibrahim@ukh.edu.krd

Received: 01 December 2017 Accepted: 20 December 2017 Available online: 28 December 2017

Since the birth of the L2 motivation field in 1959 by Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert, there have been numerous validations and studies of the role of motivation in L2 learning. Moreover, the field has witnessed a number of stages characterized by different theoretical models and in response to both needs of the field and developments in the wider educational psychology (for a review see Al-Hoorie, 2017). While classical approaches had tackled the issue in the form of investigating possible motives, the newest conceptualization sees motivation as a complex, dynamic process, difficult to predict and hard to study in isolation (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2013). In light of this latest trend, limiting motivation research into static and universal motives is incomplete regardless of how expanded the list of motives might be or the level of scrutiny the research goes under. Nonetheless, with the lack of predictability, researching motivation as a dynamic system is almost impossible. As such, investigating motivation in the form of motivational phenomena might be a better way to understand the possible parameters of motivational intensity while acknowledging the complexity of motivation. Furthermore, studying
motivational phenomena ensures that the temporal and contextual aspects of motivation are taken into account (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998). Directed motivational current (DMC) is the latest concept in the field which represents a motivational phenomenon characterized by intensity and sustainability.

The term “DMC” refers to a motivational experience in which one is engaged in intense activities triggered by and in pursuit of a personally meaningful and valuable goal for which a salient, facilitative pathway is utilized. A DMC can also be described as “an intense motivational drive which is capable of stimulating and supporting long-term behaviour, such as learning a foreign/second language” (Dörnyei et al., 2014. p. 9) and “a prolonged process of engagement in a series of tasks which are rewarding primarily because they transport the individual toward a highly valued end” (Dörnyei et al., 2015. p. 98).

The notion of DMC first originated from the personal experiences of the three authors behind the theory, Dörnyei et al., who had also identified similar observations in other people around them. They then coined the term that, to them, best described the novel phenomenon; “directed” signifies the first component of DMCs, namely, that engagement is always directed toward a specific goal; “motivational” depicts the intense motivational feature of the experience; and “current” is a metaphor suggesting the similarities that exist between the sustained phenomenon and a strong current, such as the Gulf Stream (Dörnyei et al., 2014).

DMCs are believed to be a specific period of time distinguished from other periods by extraordinary motivational intensity. Individuals experiencing a DMC and often people around them are usually aware of the uniqueness of their experiences. Dörnyei et al. postulate that a DMC occurs when a number of personal and contextual factors come together to create a powerful surge of motivational force, known as the DMC launch.

A DMC’s launch is also similar to an oceanic current’s geographical starting point which “transports the various marine life-forms caught up in its flow along its predefined pathways” (Dörnyei et al., 2016. p. 58). That is, the launch can determine not only the intensity of the DMC experience but also and more importantly, the subsequent pathway for the entire DMC behavior. For that reason, “the successful launch of a DMC arguably constitutes half the battle in the experience of such motivational currents” (p. 58). A powerful and elaborate DMC launch is central not only to setting up the initial motivational surge but also more importantly to the continuation in the subsequent stages of the process, a mechanism which Dörnyei et al. (2014) dubbed “motivational autopilot,” through which “the initial momentum rules out the necessity for a motivational intervention each and every time a new step within the sequence is to be carried out” (p. 14). Hence, understanding the initial conditions including the launch of a DMC is vital for understanding not only how a DMC might come to being but also how educators might engineer DMC or DMC-like experiences in second language learners. This study is, therefore, aimed at addressing these two areas of DMCs.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main research question of this empirical investigation was: What are the parameters that lead to the occurrence of DMC? To answer this question, this study collected data about the initial conditions before the emergence of the subjects’ motivational surges. As DMCs are not expected to appear suddenly or drift into being, understanding the general initial circumstances around the time of a DMC launch is necessary to learn about the possible parameters that lead to contribute to a DMC journey.

2.1. Data Collection

The recruitment aimed at capturing cases of DMCs among individuals who had experienced at least one DMC while engaged in learning a second language. Yet, the challenge, as is the case with investigating a new phenomenon, was to identify DMC cases in participants who would not have knowledge of the concept. The initial stages of data collection started with distributing a call for participation flyer among colleagues and social media outlets. The flyer wondered if one has experienced a period of intense motivation while engaged in L2 learning. This process was conducted in the UK and Iraqi Kurdistan as part of a larger empirical project on the DMCs (Ibrahim, 2016b).

On receiving responses about the occurrence of such intense periods of engagement, over 35 participants came forward. A thorough screening procedure was carried out to determine whether the cases collected were indeed DMC, DMC-like, or simply regular motivational experiences. The criteria used to do so were based on the theoretical foundations outlined by Dörnyei et al. (2014; 2015): (a) Experiences stand out by motivational intensity beyond normal, everyday motivational levels, (b) goal-orientedness, (c) positive emotionality, and (d) the use of a unique and distinguishable structure for learning.
As such, out of 17 DMC cases, structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain more information about the cases. A number of participants provided their answers electronically in the form of written accounts. The interviews and written accounts were in either English or Kurdish. A number of further cases were left out due to insufficient data about the experiences or when contact for further rounds of interviews was not possible. In the current study, 9 cases of DMCs are presented about which sufficient data were available about the initial conditions of the experiences to conduct a meaningful process of analysis.

### 2.2. Data Analysis

All the interviews were transcribed verbatim. The interviews conducted and the written accounts obtained in Kurdish were then translated into English by the researcher paying special attention to the accuracy of the English versions against the original recordings and texts. Although a holistic approach was used in the analysis of the entire dataset, the current study presents only the results of the analysis of the initial conditions of the participants’ DMC experiences.

A phenomenological approach was used for the analysis of the data to capture the “universal essence” and meaning of the phenomenon in question as lived and experienced by the participants (Creswell, 2007, p. 58). This method was believed to be particularly useful in investigating a new phenomenon such as DMCs to gain a thorough understanding of what the participants experienced and how and why they experienced them (Moustakas, 1994). A modified (a combination of descriptive and hermeneutic interpretive) approach as described by Colaizzi (1978) and Moustakas (1994) was used as below:

1. The dataset was all merged together and read several times to obtain a general feel for it. Manual coding was used at this stage leading to an initial codes manual.
2. Afterward, the researcher went through the entire dataset and extracted a non-overlapping list of the significant phrases and statements, treating them as of equal worth. The criteria used for selecting these statements were: A statement needed to be around a DMC experience (e.g., not giving a general opinion on how to best learn an L2); and it had to provide a new - not repeated - piece of information. However, all the similar codes with variations, slight or prominent, were fully considered.
3. Formulated meanings, that is, interpretive meanings, were produced for each statement.
4. Clusters of themes (Colaizzi, 1978) were developed from the combination of similar formulated meanings. In developing a cluster of themes, the researcher made efforts to “stay as true to the phenomenon as possible” and to “bracket” his presuppositions about the phenomenon (Hycner, 1985, p. 287).
5. Independent themes were produced from similar theme clusters (Sanders, 2003). All the initial manual codes developed earlier were categorized under each theme to measure their frequency and account for variations.
6. In parallel to this process of developing the raw data into common patterns and themes, a descriptive account was produced for each participant’s narrative reflecting “what” happened (i.e., textual description) and “how” the experience happened (i.e., structural description). Both of these descriptions were combined in a single composite description reflecting the “essence” of the experience (Creswell, 2007, p. 159).

The entire data analysis was bottom-up, and iterative process and analysis were initiated at the early stages of data collection. In the analysis, the theme clusters and themes were worked through and re-examined numerous times to achieve scrutiny and scientific rigor (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2008; Finlay, 2012). Therefore, close attention was paid to ensure that the final themes represent what was dominant in the data, so the final presentation describes the bulk of the data rather than deliberately selecting extracts to support specific claims (Joffe, 2012).

### 3. RESULTS

The phenomenological analysis generated three themes in relation to the initial circumstances around the DMC experiences. As a result of utilizing an inductive approach to analysis, these themes are thought to represent the most significant aspects of the dataset in regard to what contributed to the launch of the participants’ DMCs and the possible conditions. In presenting the findings, emphasis (underlining) has been added by the researcher, and quotations of the participants (which are reproduced verbatim and essentially uncorrected) are numbered (e.g., Suzan, Q1) for ease of cross referencing.

#### 3.1. Theme 1: Clear Starting Point

All the nine participants clearly remembered when their intense motivational experiences started. They were asked the question (What made your experience start?), and all of them provided an answer not only about the time but also the detailed circumstances before, and around the time, their experiences started. The starting points were described in relation to specific events or occasions. Table 1 summarizes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Starting Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suzan</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan</td>
<td>Q2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>Q3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samir</td>
<td>Q4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatma</td>
<td>Q5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehdi</td>
<td>Q6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nour</td>
<td>Q7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayman</td>
<td>Q8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rana</td>
<td>Q9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the exact occasions marking each of the participants’ starting points.

3.2. Theme 2: The DMC Trigger

As well as a clear starting point, all the participants discussed a specific event in reference to what made their experience start. None of the participants’ experiences were drifted into being from a sudden decision but were - or perceived by the participants to be - caused by a particular incident or as a consequence of a specific triggering stimulus. These triggers were one or more of the following.

3.2.1. Emergent opportunity

Four participants referred to a newly arising opportunity which played the main role in setting up their DMC experiences. Shortly after graduation from university, Omed, for example, was appointed as a new branch manager for which he needed to develop his communication skills in the L2. To him, this was a valuable opportunity after he had secured and successfully completed a competitive internship.

```
Learning and improving English was my biggest objective, even more important that obtaining the MSc… It was a dream come
```

true, because earlier I would see studying in the UK as almost impossible due to difficulty in obtaining a visa, high tuition fees, travelling and other factors. However, this opportunity suddenly became available. (Shirin, Q 1)

3.2.2. Negative emotion

Two of the DMC cases were triggered by negative emotionality stemming from a failure or a negative statement. Ali’s DMC was triggered immediately after he attended a job interview in which he was unable to answer the questions in English. As a result, Ali came out from the interview “shocked” and humiliated, feelings that made him realize his poor L2 skills and the need for improvement and positive change, as he recalls:

```
Ali: … After hello, they started speaking in English, which I never thought would be the case. I was getting dizzy as they were speaking. I used my broken English and said a few words like, ‘wait, I am not good’, I can do it in Kurdish only… They looked at each other, apparently saying it was not possible, and I got it.
```

```
Interviewer: So the interview ended?
```

```
Ali: It ended right there… I still remember this very well, and think it happened yesterday. I came out from the building, shocked, and couldn’t even focus on what the person at the reception, whom I knew, said to me. I was in a weird situation…. (Ali, Q 1)
```

The effect of this event was dramatic. He further recalls his reactions and thoughts immediately after the failed interview and while in his car going home:

```
The impact was huge… When I put my hands on the steering wheel, I said to myself, “Ali, you have to move just like this car”, and “you can’t stop where you are”… This is different than before; I was not really into English before and I didn’t care much about it. So this was my turning point. (Ali, Q 2)
```

As can be concluded, Ali was most affected by his affective reactions to his inability to use the L2 and what interviewers told him rather than the event itself. In that respect, the failed interview served as an opportunity for him to reflect and realize his inadequacy.

Suzan’s experience was also triggered by a negative emotional reaction to a statement by her brother and uncle. Although she was younger in age (a teenager at the time), she found their statement about her L2 understanding skills to be humiliating and demeaning, which aroused a sense of anger:

```
Table 1: Participants’ DMC starting points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>When their DMCs started</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>On the same day when he attended and failed in a job interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omed</td>
<td>When he was assigned to be the branch manager in his home city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan</td>
<td>When he went to the German embassy in Syria and was told about the new German proficiency requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kardo</td>
<td>When he started his college studies in English and found himself less proficient than his classmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kawa</td>
<td>The moment he read a piece of writing in English and realized he was able to understand the content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahar</td>
<td>When she started university and met a number of friends who were interested in Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzan</td>
<td>The moment she heard her brother and uncle speak English but refused to translate what they were talking about, and said “who doesn’t know, doesn’t deserve to know”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirin</td>
<td>When she received the news of obtaining a study abroad scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>When she realized, she could study for a PhD that involved the old Norse language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DMC: Directed motivational current

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>When their DMCs started</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>On the same day when he attended and failed in a job interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omed</td>
<td>When he was assigned to be the branch manager in his home city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan</td>
<td>When he went to the German embassy in Syria and was told about the new German proficiency requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kardo</td>
<td>When he started his college studies in English and found himself less proficient than his classmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kawa</td>
<td>The moment he read a piece of writing in English and realized he was able to understand the content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahar</td>
<td>When she started university and met a number of friends who were interested in Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzan</td>
<td>The moment she heard her brother and uncle speak English but refused to translate what they were talking about, and said “who doesn’t know, doesn’t deserve to know”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirin</td>
<td>When she received the news of obtaining a study abroad scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>When she realized, she could study for a PhD that involved the old Norse language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DMC: Directed motivational current
We were a family group, where my uncles and my brother speak in English so no one can understand them. I asked them to translate, and they said “the one who doesn’t understand, he doesn’t deserve to know what we are talking about”… I became very angry and I had to do something about it. (Suzan, Q 1)

3.2.3. Moments of realization/awakening
In addition to experiencing negative emotionality, both Ali and Suzan also experienced a sense of realization and awakening. They both discussed their feelings after the events and also the statements made about their inadequacy. In turn, they thought about and considered the directions they needed to take and the consequences of not taking action. When Ali was unable to proceed with the job interview in English, he was asked to leave, and despite the feeling of failure, the event made him contemplate why this happened and what went wrong:

I remember it very well, he [Ahmed, one of the interviewers] put his hand over my shoulder, and said to me, “I know you, and that you have good experience and skills. Improve your English to have more opportunities”… I went into my car and waited, thinking of Ahmed’s speech… Ali, you can’t go any further if you don’t improve your English. I realised I would remain in the same circle without English…. (Ali, Q 3)

A similar trigger was identified with Kardo when he realized he was less proficient in English than his classmates on being admitted to a university that instructed in English:

I got accepted anyway [to the university]. I was feeling very shy and nervous during my class times. I saw most of the students speaking in English, I figured out, later, is very weak English, but for me it was native English. (Kardo, Q 1)

Kardo felt insecure in his new environment mainly due to the perception that his classmates were proficient English speakers. Given that this event occurred in the early days of his 4-year-long university life, Kardo felt a sense of awakening about his L2 status and a strong need for improving his English. Later, Kardo discussed how he mainly focused on developing his speaking abilities, among other skills, as his intense experience was triggered by becoming conscious of his lack of communication skills in the L2.

3.2.4. New information
One participant’s DMC was in large part triggered by receiving a piece of information which made him enroll in an L2 learning course. On his marriage to his German wife who was visiting Kurdistan where Alan was from, Alan later went to Syria to apply for a visa to join his wife. He was, however, advised of a new regulation “that required sponsorship applicants to know German before granting them a visa.” Although unexpected and even “shocking,” it did not take long for Alan to make a resolution to stay in Syria and study toward a German A-Level certificate required for the visa.

3.2.5. Meeting friends who shared passion
Although Sahar had long had an interest in learning Japanese so she could understand Japanese anime as she was not satisfied with the dubbed versions, her intense learning experience was only triggered when she entered the university and met a few friends who shared a similar passion for Japanese culture and movies:

So I met a few people who were really interested in Japanese animation and movies, drama and everything that was to do with Japan. So because of my friends, then I was kind of drawn into it as well. And we started making our own group. We took on Japanese names; we started trying to learn the language; we watched Japanese films together, watched Japanese animations together…. (Sahar, Q 1)

As a native of Saudi Arabia where making contact with Japanese speakers was almost impossible, Sahar found the environment in which she met people with whom she used Japanese which now seemed to be a living language. The above extract also suggests that the generation of Sahar’s DMC had a social component in that Sahar and her friends formed a friendship circle centered on learning and using Japanese insofar as they adopted Japanese names and engaged in learning activities together.

3.3. Theme 3: DMC Conditions
Despite that all the DMC cases were triggered by specific events and triggering stimuli, the analysis identified a number of conditions that seemed to be necessary before the DMCs in order for the above-mentioned triggers to be effective. Below I discuss these conditions and the interplay between the DMC conditions and triggers.

3.3.1. Goals/ambitions
Before their DMCs, all the participants had some kind of goals or future wishes they hoped to reach, related to their potential DMCs and which had important implications for making them prepared for their DMCs. Although many of them had a pre-interest in learning/improving their DMC-L2s, the pre-DMC goals were mainly ambitions for personal and developmental growth rather than learning an L2 in its own right. As such, these goals were mostly general dreams
and desires for a better future state such as being successful at one’s career or being able to do something in life which one always wanted to. Table 2 summarizes the participants’ goals/ambitions before their DMCs. As seen, these goals were not in regard to acquiring a certain level of L2 proficiency for its own sake; most of the participants wished to achieve goals for which learning an L2 was perceived as necessary.

All the participants had goals that not only did they consider valuable and significant but also their attainment seemed to have great influence on their personal lives. However, despite the fact that all the participants had a goal-oriented background, simply having a goal did not lead any of them to experience a DMC or a DMC-like motivational surge. That only happened once a triggering stimulus became available which set up their DMCs. Evidence backing the claim that goals did not lead to motivated behavior is apparent from all the DMC cases in which the participants had had the general goals for a relatively long period before their DMCs started.

However, when the participants encountered a triggering stimulus, their goals changed from general to specific, from non-L2 to L2-related, and from abstract to tangible [Table 3]. This shift seemed to be necessary so that they could direct their energy toward a clearly defined endpoint. Furthermore, having a specific goal helped some of the participants to form a sensory reconstruction of their goals, i.e., changing a goal into vision.

### 3.3.2. Perceived control/feasibility

The second condition that was identified in the analysis was the perception that one had the capacity to participate in and complete all the activities leading to the accomplishment of the DMC goal, and that the challenge posed by the goal was reasonably compatible with one’s perceived abilities. This condition was pinpointed when a few participants discussed their pre-DMC disbelief they held about the goal feasibility. Shirin, for example, had previously wanted and made attempts to improve her English skills, but had not been successful, mainly because she had the perception that her home country was not an appropriate environment for learning:

> In fact, I for long wanted to improve my language skills, but was unable to do so… Previously, even though I wanted to learn English, I didn’t know how or didn’t believe that making an effort on my own would be useful. (Shirin, Q 2)

Therefore, a main objective behind applying for a government scholarship to study abroad was to find the mechanism through which she could improve her English skills: “*When I applied to this scholarship, it was very important to me to go to an English-speaking country especially the UK…*” (Shirin, Q 3)

In addition to ensuring that one believed in one’s own abilities to engage in and successfully overcome the challenges of the goal, the analysis also identified the need for the perception that the tasks leading to goal attainment were reasonably accomplishable. For example, although he previously felt the significance of learning English, Kawa was avoiding it mainly due to his perceived fears in the language. However, once he realized English was not “too difficult” or “that complicated,” his 2 years old DMC started and a random event leading to this realization functioned as a triggering stimulus:

> … So, what happened was I came across some written material in English, a story, and once I read a bit of it, I realised it was applicable.
Ibrahim: Parameters Inducing Motivational Surges in Second Language Learning

In both of the cases mentioned above, the lack of confidence in one’s own abilities and perception of goal/task feasibility were overcome only when a strong triggering stimulus became available. As such, the pre-existing fear and reluctance immediately disappeared as the triggers functioned to alter the perception of inability.

Despite that a sense of control was only acquired after a DMC trigger, the data suggested that the pre-DMC fear and sense of inability were largely perceived and not real. Although Shirin had previously held the belief of inappropriateness of her home country environment, she indeed started her intense learning while still in Kurdistan—this is, before making the trip to the UK. Similarly, the story that changed Kawa’s perception and triggered his DMC was written in a simple enough language for him to understand; this indicates that he was previously unfamiliar with the degrees of the L2 difficulty to make an informed assessment of both his ability and the challenge of the L2.

It is important to mention that none of the participants, including those who suddenly acquired a sense of control/feasibility, perceived the DMC goal/tasks to be too easy, but reasonably challenging. For example, when Alan was advised of the new German proficiency requirement, he found it “shocking” and even “sad news,” and as a native and resident of Iraqi Kurdistan, he was not initially ready for this and had second thoughts about taking a preparatory course in Syria. However, when he gained the confidence that achieving the required L2 score was “difficult but feasible,” he decided to stay in Syria and thus his intense experience started, although he still had doubts if he was up to the challenge:

At the beginning, I found it difficult and challenging. However, for any goal, if you know the duration and when it ends, it would be easier and you try harder for it… When we first started, it was very difficult because the language was entirely new to me. But the teachers’ method of explaining was rather comforting.

(Alan, Q 1)

A closer look at this excerpt reveals that even when Alan was enrolled in the course, he still did not see a balance between his capacities and the new language. Yet, the perception that the duration required to study German and pass a proficiency test is only a few months and the comfort provided by his teacher’s method created a sense of feasibility.

4. DISCUSSION

The main question of this study was what might lead individuals to experience periods of intense motivational engagement, a newly-conceptualized phenomenon called DMCs. The potential for this unique experience is highly appealing to increase motivation especially for L2 learning which is characterized by a constant cycle of fluctuations. Once in a DMC, people exert the optimal level of effort for an extended period of time. Language learners particularly can benefit from this experience to learn and improve their L2 skills substantially.

All the DMC cases studied and presented in this study had clear starting points standing out as the beginning of a different motivational experience. This may partially validate the occurrence of an intense and sustainable motivational experience as an independent and valid psychological phenomenon. All the participants associated the birth of their DMCs with certain personal circumstances and even more so with a specific event supporting the notion that a “DMC never simply drifts into being but rather is triggered by something specific” (Dörnyei et al., 2014, p. 14). The data contained examples of inducing triggers, such as receiving new information and opportunities, negative emotions resulting from unpleasant situations or events leading to a sense of awakening, or meeting friends sharing an L2 learning goal. Nevertheless, the findings suggested that the power of a trigger remains dependent on a set of pre-existing conditions which, although not sufficient to give rise to a DMC, pave the ground for a potential trigger to be effective. These conditions were having a general goal or personal aspirations, the perception of goal feasibility and one’s own control over the tasks needed to reach that goal. Despite that Dörnyei et al’s (2016) book on DMCs, to which the data from this study have contributed, list an additional requirement, “openness to the DMC experience” in terms of a number of personality trait conditions, the current findings did not support this hypothesis. This, in turn, can be positive for DMC-generating programmes as the exclusion of these personality trait conditions means that almost any learner can experience a DMC, regardless of inherent personality attributes.

The findings suggested that once a powerful trigger comes into effect, there occurs an almost dramatic unison between the availability of the right trigger and the fulfillment of all the DMC conditions. It was apparent that in most of the cases, the individuals had a general goal for a relatively long period before their DMCs started; however, simply having a goal...
The challenge in the notion of inducing a DMC might as strenuous effort to achieve this goal. Most of the participants of this study had the goal of improving their L2 skills for a long time without making a goal (Locke and Latham, 2005) in an L2 learner might emerge of a DMC. For example, creating and setting a goal plays a central role in maturing a general aspiration into a linguistically-specified endpoint. The underlying mechanism behind this necessary change seems to be through providing an individual with the ability to reconstruct their goal and turn it into a vision (Dörnyei and Kubanyiova, 2014) so that an individual could direct his/her energy toward a clearly-envisioned endpoint.

On the other hand, in order for an individual to experience a DMC, s/he needs to hold the belief that s/he has the capacity to participate in and complete all the activities leading to the goal accomplishment. Acquiring the perception of a challenge-skill balance was found to be necessary, as an imbalance leads to the appraisal of the goal as either too easy or too challenging; whereas the former leads to boredom and loss of interest, the latter obstructs a sense of perceived control and progress (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). Maintaining this balance has also been proven to have a positive effect on the quality of experience (Moneta and Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

5. CAN DMCS BE INDUCED?

The notion that DMCS are unique experiences, and as we saw that their emergence requires unique combinations of a variety of factors might not sound as good news for educators who aspire to implement DMCS in their L2 learners. Nevertheless, this research can provide us with important insight on how we might discover the individual factors that led to these DMC cases and then combine them together for optimal potential results. As the data suggested, the moment when a person is ready to proceed into a DMC is determined by a host of contextual factors; however, the presence of these factors might not necessarily lead to the emergence of a DMC. For example, creating and setting a goal (Locke and Latham, 2005) in an L2 learner might be useful, but not always effective or a sufficient element. Most of the participants of this study had had the goal of improving their L2 skills for a long time without making a strenuous effort to achieve this goal.

The challenge in the notion of inducing a DMC might as well be in the fact that a DMC is mostly a matter of personal contingency, and therefore, knowledge on one’s internal values, goals and ambitions as well as fears and frustrations might be necessary to possibly predict the effectiveness of any single stimulant. Some participants had a history with attempts to improve their L2 but were not successful because of how they perceived their likelihood of success, their actual belief of the real necessity of the L2 acquisition, or a lack of right external incentives and circumstances. Therefore, it seems that individual treatments are required for individual learners taking their personalities and internal, and the entire psychological process into account.

With these limitations in mind, I believe that there is still room for work around how we might generate a motivational current, and this very research has informed us just that. In the end, we may never be able to control the entire personal and psychological processes one is going through at any given time; therefore, we might be better off, at least at the initial stages, aiming for generating not only what we have called the DMC trigger but also moments of realization. One such a technique might be selecting verbal provocations, such as a strong single statement that might not only awaken an individual of the value and significance of L2 learning but also and perhaps more importantly, ignite a deep process of self-talk in which one reflects on what could happen if they maintain his/her status of inaction. This is in line with the latest theorization of motivation in the form of the L2 self system (Dörnyei, 2009) which, based in part on the Markus and Nurius (1986) concept of possible selves, assumes that individuals might be motivated toward action once they perceive a negative self-image in the future. As these negative emotions arouse a deep, and mostly overwhelming sense of urgency to reduce discrepancies between one’s current and desired future selves, a DMC experience maintains its strength in large part through a constant sense of improvement, transformation and progress not only in one’s L2 skills but also in one’s entire identity, self-image and personal growth (Ibrahim, 2016a; Waterman, 1993).

6. CONCLUSION

DMCs are periods of exceptional motivational intensity in goal-directed behavior. Once applied in second language learning contexts, a DMC enables learners to function at an optimal level of engagement and productivity. As DMCs are not thought to be everyday experiences, unique personal and contextual factors, play a role in inducing them. Understanding these factors is crucial for L2 teachers, so they prepare the ground for any DMC-generating programmes.
This qualitative study is an attempt to investigate these factors and the overall initial conditions preceding the birth of a number of DMC cases.

The results provide significant insight into the conditions and specific triggers contributing to a DMC birth. Importantly, in almost all the cases, one particular experience of frustration, awakening, realization, or perceiving an opportunity through new information or meeting others with the same passion led to the launch of the participants’ DMCs. The findings also point to the importance of the ability of an individual to link L2 learning goals to a broader vision of personal growth and development for which learning or improving an L2 is necessary. Yet, once in a DMC, the goal needs to be specific, linguistically defined and viewed as feasible. As such and on a practical level, teachers might need to do more than indicating the importance of learning and improving the L2 as acknowledging this fact remains insufficient to trigger a long-term motivational burst; learners need to envision a better life, and themselves as more proficient individuals in the future for which learning the L2 is perceived as determining.

REFERENCES


Research, 31(6), 459-470.


1. INTRODUCTION

The term “constitution” has different connotations in domains of political theory and public law studies. As the term is employed in expressions such as “mixed constitutions” and “constitutional division of power” the area of inquiry edges toward an analysis of the layout of political power of the state rather than legal studies of a normative locus of basic principles of sovereignty, individual rights, liberties, and other relevant concepts. On these grounds, several distinctions have been made between various types of the constitution including parliamentary, presidential, and flexible and inflexible constitutions (Parpworth, 2012. p. 6–7). In spite of these traditional patterns of state structure, it is evident that a significant proportion of the same socio-political principles and forms are reflected in a specific written formal document. These manuals then serve as the cornerstones of the diversified modern-day political systems and are the locus where not only the doctrines of sovereignty and rights are defined but also where the actual form of the various parts of government and their relations to the people are laid out (Ibid, 3). Hence, a closer study of each country’s constitution could provide a better understanding of the state’s doctrinal convictions on the modality of the arrangement of power and the safeguards to guarantee the survival and continuity of certain repositories of authority and legitimacy. The importance and centrality of such legal provisions have been one of the main themes of political narratives since ancient times and have given rise to fundamentally or partially opposing schools of political philosophy. As regards the sources of legitimacy

ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at analyzing aspects of individual rights and liberties in theocratic systems by examining the Iranian Constitution as a case study. As it will be shown the current constitution (1979) appears to be riddled with several formal and epistemological inconsistencies, arising from its fundamental ideological underpinnings. Surprisingly these have rarely been subject to systematic analysis capable of addressing both the form and content of the Fundamental Law. My previous manuscript in 2014 provided the basis for such an analysis in an academic format. Nonetheless, in the light of recent updates to Iranian normative system, in particular, the prevailing Islamic Penal Code, this requires a thorough revision and reinterpretation. In this pursuit, various linguistic, legal, procedural, and conceptual tools have been deployed to highlight inadequacies and incoherencies in support of the claim that the country, currently, lacks clear normative frameworks for guaranteeing basic rights and freedoms, which should be the raison d'être of all fundamental loci of rights. In addition, as it is argued below, serious conceptual flaws in the constitution of the Islamic Republic itself could be regarded as the prime suspect for the systematic violation of basic principles of rights and liberties, rather than an alleged failure to adhere to the constitution as it is often claimed.

Keywords: Constitution, Constitutionalism, Iran, Islamic Constitution, Public Law
and sovereignty, the rational humanist school was said to accord the ultimate source of power and authority to the people. On the other hand, certain politicized schools of theology promote notions of divine sovereignty. Hence, it is not surprising that in modern-day societies the extent and the legitimacy of political power have been at the heart of both secular and divine narratives of sovereignty. Regardless of this, the very existence of an inclusive constitution in any society could be regarded as an important step toward the rationalization of authority through such provisions as the separation of power, equality before the law and in general the protection of the citizen’s rights and liberties.

Thus, it is evident that, for a government to be capable of advancing any claims to secular legitimacy there should be an entrenched normative system of rights. Hence, the building block of every country’s political arrangement is its universal embodiment of such an outline of the structure of power and rights, as reflected in its national constitution. This is usually where the basic guidelines are drawn to lay down the foundations of various organizations and structures to preserve and promote certain values and convictions deemed to be central to the worldview underlying a certain political ideology.

Evidently, in some cases, this might well be an unwritten document based on established traditions and customs, as is the case with countries such as the United Kingdom (Parpworth, 2012. p. 11). Otherwise, in the majority of cases, it is a well-defined body of guidelines, which ought to be resilient enough over time to serve as the basis for all subsequent developments of the society. Nevertheless, it is possible to find a great variety of constitutional formats with different degrees of flexibility. For example, the North Korean constitution appears to be easier to amend and modify than many others, but is nonetheless proclaimed to be the bedrock of its relative political system1. In any case there are universal functions which one could observe in a great majority of the world’s constitutions today, such as being general by not entering into details, or being enforceable, clear, free of internal contradictions and - most importantly - being superior and acting as the meta-law for all other legal provisions and directives in the country (Madani, 1997. p. 39). To safeguard these basic purposes of a national constitution, various provisions and institutions need to be tirelessly at work to interpret any potential obscurities and make sure the entire political system is compliant with such provisions and, if need be, provide for the possibility of amending the constitution in certain exceptional situations that might arise out of unforeseen circumstances.

For the sake of simplicity, one could claim that the main role of any constitution is, on the one hand, to define the structure of power in a society and on the other to protect and promote individuals’ rights which will constitute the subject of the current study.

1.1. Background
Throughout Iran’s history there have been various royal acts and directives aimed at designing a socio-political order deemed essential to the correct functioning of various social structures, but it was not until the early years of the 20th century that the country adopted what one could unequivocally define as a modern constitution (Deraxše, 2012. p. 71-75). However, closer scrutiny of various discourses, correspondences and public articles by different proponents of the first Iranian constitution reveals that each contributing source had a fundamentally different understanding of the epistemological nature of the concept of constitutionalism. Nevertheless, these trends resulted in the drafting of the first Iranian constitution in 1906. The final result was a five-chapter constitution with 51 articles, together with a detailed preamble in 107 sections which was signed by the King in December 1906.

A closer examination of the first Iranian constitution, which was predominantly based on Western legal sources, particularly the French and Belgian constitutions, on the one hand, and on certain Islamic Shari’a principles on the other (Rahimi, 1978. p. 94), shows that this by itself was a ground-breaking achievement. The ambitious objective was to engender a system based on the rule of law and a relatively restrained system of political sovereignty in which the monarchy was forced to make significant concessions with respect to the basic rights of the citizens. Indeed, it is argued that through this arrangement for the 1st time in Iran’s entire history the people of the country acquired the actual legal status of citizens and significant restrictions were imposed on the scope and extent of the king’s hitherto unlimited power (Deraxše, 2012. p. 71-75).

In spite of this substantial achievement, one could readily notice various shortcomings in this elementary document of the early 20th century. First and foremost, one would struggle to find a coherent order in the drawing of various sections of the constitution and a large part of the content seems to have been dedicated to instructions on the actual

---

1 See the Constitution of North Korea, in particular the ‘Supreme People’s Assembly’ Chapter VI, especially Article 91.
running of the parliament. Most importantly, various articles seem to be in clear contradiction to each other; for example, Article 26 on national sovereignty seems to be at odds with Articles 35–55 in which the rights of the monarchy are laid out due to the incompatibilities in the extent and the scope of their authorities. It is also not possible to identify any clear guidelines regarding basic constitutional notions such as the separation of powers and independence of these sources of authority. In Article 27, for example, both legislative and executive powers are subjected to the king, whereas Article 28 emphasizes the need for a clear separation of powers. Furthermore, there seems to be some confusion regarding the roles and scope of the authority of both the national Parliament and the Senate. For instance, Articles 15–21 state that the legislation in “all matters” falls under the jurisdiction of the national parliament whereas Articles 23–25 entrust certain legislative powers, such as the right to make national concessions and agreements or foreign borrowings and even the establishing of companies, exclusively to the Senate.

In any case the Iranian constitutional monarchy witnessed numerous changes and amendments to the text of the constitution particularly during the Mohammad Reza Pahlavi era (1941–1979), which were mainly aimed at including more secular notions, such as the new provisions on the choice and place of work of the court judges in Articles 81 and 82, and conversely to pave the way for the succession within the Pahlavi dynasty (Esfad and Mohseni, 2000. p. 9). In addition, this period witnessed the institution of modern government structures based on the European patterns and in particular fundamental transformation of the judicial system, traditionally under the strict control of the clergy and tribal leaders, into secular national judiciary institutions (Amin, 2003. p. 31).

Following the Iranian Revolution in 1979, a new constitution was drafted to embody the doctrinal convictions of the new religious elites. The initial text was prepared over 5 months and put to a popular vote; although this timescale does not reflect the considerable amount of time Ayatollah Khomeini had previously dedicated to the formulation of his personal theory of the nature of an Islamic state. In fact, various elements of the Iranian constitution could easily be traced back to Khomeini’s original treatise on Islamic Government. A brief reflection on both texts reveals that Khomeini had been very consistent, although often elusive, in his fundamental convictions on Islamic government. In spite of being a rudimentary article, “Islamic Government” - originally a collection of 19 lectures, was an attempt to elucidate his exclusive concepts of the government entirely legitimized through a spiritual and religious qualification reserved for prophets, Imams and by extension the clergy (Ibid, 42). Therefore, the limited circle of the clerical class was regarded as the only true guardian of the “Islamic order” who could prevent any “innovation” in Shari’a law, “keep the people on the righteous path of Islam,” “fight against the oppressors and protect the oppressed throughout the world,” “establish social justice” and “eliminate the western encroachment and influence on Islamic land” (Ibid, 54). Moreover, the unquestionable capacity of Shari’a to address all human societies’ modern-day needs is eloquently proclaimed by Khomeini as follows:

A complete guideline for government and administration, together with necessary laws, lies ready before you. If the administration of the country calls for taxes, Islam has made the necessary provision; and if laws are needed, Islam has established them all…. Everything is ready and waiting … The Islamic Laws were laid down for the purpose of creating a state and administering the political, economic and cultural affairs of society (Ibid, 43).

Thus, it comes as no surprise that the Iranian constitution closely reflects Khomeini’s ideas on the necessity of establishing a government firmly rooted in the Islamic Shari’a, which would, in turn, be placed under the direct control and supervision of the Valiye Faqih (Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist). This stemmed from the conviction that all non-Islamic systems of government were instances of kofr (disbelief) and taqut (tyranny), and it is ‘our duty to remove … from the lives of Muslim society (all traces of kofr) and destroy them’ (Ibid, 48). In short, as Hamid Algar expounds, the main themes of Khomeini’s essay on “Islamic Government” is to subordinate political power to Islamic goals and precepts, and to define the duty of the religious scholars to establish such a government and to assume the legislative, executive and judicial powers within it (Ibid, 25). Khomeini appears to go even further than that by actually denying the very necessity for a legislative power by underlining that “in Islam the legislative power and the competence to establish laws exclusively belongs to God almighty” (Ibid, 55). Thus, he concludes that in an Islamic government “a simple planning body should take the place of the legislative assembly … who draws up programs for different ministers in the light of the ordinances of Islami” (Ibid, 56).

As will be demonstrated below, most of these radical views were incorporated into the Islamic Republic of Iran’s constitution with profound implications not only
on a political level but also at all levels of the cultural and social life of the nation and beyond. Surprisingly, a few recent authors have questioned the existence of an actual prior political agenda by Khomeini and underlined the fact that the initial drafts of the constitution did not include any notions of the Guardianship of the Jurist central to Khomeini’s initial treatises (Rahnema, in Adib-Moghaddam, 2014, Chapter 4). It is not within the scope of this study to analyze the truthfulness and coherence of the social, psychological, and personal underpinnings of Khomeini’s dexterous maneuvering of public sentiments in the months building up to the public vote on the constitution. Although motivations matter, the political actions and the actual on-the-ground manifestations of personal convictions of the policy-makers are more interesting subjects for political scientists. This indeed constitutes the central distinctive feature of the field of political science as compared to other domains of the human sciences such as sociology, philosophy, or psychology. Hence, despite numerous constitutional notions introduced both because of the influence of the secular elements within the revolutionary forces and also as an inevitable result of moderate ideological elements within the Shi’a school of political theology (Axworthy, 2013. p. 161–162), the ideology that eventually prevailed throughout the constitution proved to be the original narrow and exclusive Najaf arguments of Khomeini regarding the mandate of the jurists and the constitutional role and rights of the people in the Islamic Republic, which might indeed have been an unintended result of pure chance, ideological reorientation or a combination of various concomitant forces.

The electoral law was thus drafted by a restricted group of predominantly religious scholars that was to be called the “Assembly of Experts” during June and July of 1979. Elections were also held at the same time to choose 73 members of parliament to represent different regions and religious minorities of the country (Madani, 1991. p. 39). This eventually led to the formulation of the Iranian constitution in 12 chapters and 175 articles which were put to a public vote in December 1979. With the notable exception of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan and a few other smaller groups who boycotted the referendum as a sham, the constitution was unsurprisingly approved by an overwhelming majority of Iranians. It has since been amended once, in April 1989, following a formal request by Ayatollah Khomeini detailing the sections to be revised by a reviewing committee who were to carry out the amendments (Hašemi, 1994. p. 31).

2. THE CONSTITUTION

One could safely claim that the main function of any national constitution is to resource, protect and promote the basic rights and liberties of its citizens. The endorsement of such principles could be observed even in the first constitution of Iran adopted in 1906, in which Articles 8–25 were directly dedicated to this issue and covered a significant part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As far as the current argument is concerned, it is interesting to note that certain articles such as Articles 18, 20, and 21 still set out the limits of education, public communication, publication, assemblies, and public gatherings to not being harmful to the principles of Islam or explicitly banned by the Shari’a.

This initial constitution was subject to various modifications and revisions until the Islamic Revolution of 1979 embarked on the task of drafting an entirely new document based directly on the proclaimed principles of Islam as interpreted by the founders of the Islamic Republic. Here again the citizen’s rights have been endorsed in various articles; in particular Articles 19–42 are entirely dedicated to the individual’s liberties under the title “Rights of the People.” Before this part the initial section on “General Principles” also addresses this subject, in particular, Article 2, section 6 stresses the “dignity and value of man and his freedom coupled with responsibility before God.” Furthermore, in the same article in section C, it is declared: (the Islamic Republic is a system based on) “the negation of all forms of oppression, both the infliction and submission to it, and of dominance, both its imposition and its acceptance.”

3. PLACE OF MEDIA IN THE CONSTITUTION

The 3rd Article of the Iranian constitution is very broad and addresses various issues which are developed throughout the following chapters of the constitution. These highlighted principles of individual liberties constitute a practical outline which could be used as a point of departure to trace and analyze all relevant articles throughout the constitution and attempt to elucidate how these have been passed down in the form of legal provisions and public laws within the Iranian legislative system.

Section 2 of Article 3 declares that one of the functions of the Islamic Republic is to “raise the level of public awareness in all areas, through the proper use of the press, mass media,

2 See supplement I on the Iranian constitution of 1906.
3 The Iranian constitution with modification of 1989, Islamic Republic Official Gazette.
and other means.” This section is fully developed in Article 24 of the constitution which reads: “Publications and the press have freedom of expression except when it is detrimental to the fundamental principles of Islam or the rights of the public. The details of this exception will be specified by law.”

A brief survey of the relevant legal provisions reveals interesting aspects of these normative formulations within the Islamic republican system. The Press Law dated March 1986 with the additional April 2000 supplement clearly sets out the guidelines regulating the press’ activity in Iran. The mission of the authorized press as stated here includes such official tasks as: “To increase the public awareness, fight against the imperialist cultures of waste, luxury and lust and emphasize the culture of no to west and no to east.” Prescriptive instructions foresee that “all newspapers need to participate in the realization of at least one of the above objectives and not be in contradiction with others.” In particular, the supplement of April 2000 more clearly delineates the boundaries of the activities of the press, with unambiguous emphasis on the fact that it should strictly avoid publishing material which is:

Detrimental to the principles of Islam and against Islamic laws, and public morality … should refrain from incitement to take action against the interests of the Islamic Republic … should strictly avoid leveling false accusations against the leader … the personalities, organizations and institutions of the Islamic Republic … or offending the religious authorities even though this might be in the form of publishing their portraits or their caricatures.

These and numerous other legal provisions set out detailed guidelines by the legislators of Iran to safeguard the principal convictions of the Islamic Republic. The foreseen punishment for such violations as “to insult Islam and its sacred principles” is actually the same capital punishment as that reserved for heresy and the negation of religious fundamentals.

Therefore, it is easy to recognize various pitfalls in the Iranian constitution and the related legislation regarding freedom of the press and public means of communication. Undoubtedly, as shown above, interesting potentials for the safeguarding of the principle of the freedom of expression within the Iranian constitution could be identified. There are sections of the constitution which clearly endorse such basic individual rights and seemingly put all members of the public on an equal footing of common standing. Nonetheless, closer scrutiny reveals that these provisions are all subjected to various restrictions and supervising organs which are endowed with effective means to suppress or severely restrict ad arbitrium various modalities of free expression of thought within the Islamic Republic.

Furthermore, all relevant articles seem to have been very broadly drafted and vaguely worded to the point that they could easily be employed to waived even the most basic public rights in this domain. The concept of insult or “false accusation” is so broad and the punishments so severe that undoubtedly this would lead to significant amounts of auto-censorship or the “anticipated sanctions” to avoid the potentially violent consequences of publicly denouncing anything. If the criticism or public denunciation of a perceived shortcoming of any “personalities, organizations, and public institutions” could constitute a potential for false claims, such “criticism” could be severely burdened with several heavy punishments laid out by these regulations, not least because free access to information and source verification is never guaranteed in the relevant legal frameworks. In addition, the restrictions on publishing any material deemed harmful to the “interests of the Islamic Republic” would leave very little room for any act of public expression at all, let alone the basic exercise of democratic rights of contestation and invigilation.

4. CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS ON EDUCATION

Returning to Article 3 of the constitution, sections 3 and 4 endorse the necessity for providing free education and physical training to all members of the society. These sections are further developed in Article 30 with similar guidelines instructing the government to provide everyone with free

---

4 This has been one of the main slogans of the Islamic Republic which, in an attempt to differentiate its ideology from the Western ideologies and the Eastern Bloc doctrines, adopted the slogan of “no to East and no to West.


6 Ibid.

7 Article 26 for the press law refers to such crimes as ertedad (heresy) deserving capital punishment. It goes on to add that in cases in which the crime of heresy is not applicable other commensurate punishments based on the Islamic Penal Code will be administered.

8 Articles 19 and 20 for instance.

9 All newspapers and other mass communication material, along with all media and public entertainment creations, need to be verified and authorised by the Islamic Republic’s Islamic Culture and Guidance ministry.
elementary and higher education to “the point of national self-sufficiency.”

It must be recognized that the Islamic Republic has dedicated a significant amount of resources to realizing the objectives of these articles. Nevertheless, there is still a lot of work to be done, in particular concerning the content of the educational material which could not be treated in this space but as far as the constitutional provisions and their direct outcomes on the state’s normative policies and regulations are concerned, several aspects of these fundamental guidelines should be highlighted. It appears that considerable effort has been made to give the educational system a specific direction, for example, by limiting the study of natural sciences. This direction is particularly apparent when teachings are deemed contrary to the principles of Islam. There has been direct manipulation of teaching curricula at primary, secondary, and higher education level to censor material considered hostile to the principles upheld by the Islamic regime. It is said that, currently, there are 12 separate working groups within the Islamic Culture and Islamic Guidance ministry implementing a pervasive mechanism of censorship on all published material in Iran. This process was initiated immediately following the Islamic Revolution, particularly through the so-called “Cultural Revolution” of 1980–1983, during which time a complete revision and purging of teaching material and academic staff took place in an attempt to introduce new syllabi and educational curricula based on the newly constitutionalized precepts of the Islamic Shari’a. A recent example of this would be the suppression of teaching material on the scientific basis of evolutionary biology or the teaching ban on Western philosophers such as Jürgen Habermas or even the former authorities of the Islamic Republic such as the late presidents Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjāni or Mohammad Khatami, whose books and articles are severely restricted from circulation. These include books which have previously been authorized for publication but have later been blacklisted in light of new political developments.

To better manage the flow of information, and to filter and channel the sources of public education and information, the Islamic Republic has instated a dedicated ministry called the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance which effectively regulates any material destined for mass publication and the national educational system. Unsurprisingly, such meticulous control, selection, filtering, and eventual punishments have resulted in arbitrary invigilation, direct interference and even self-censorship by all actors in the socio-cultural sectors.

Thus, although the constitutional article and legal provisions relating to education have endorsed the necessity of providing an inclusive system of free national education, various forms of manipulation, censorship, filtering, and the threat of possible punishment have ipso facto reduced the scope and usefulness of this important constitutional repository of rights and liberties. Accordingly, the educational system appears to have degenerated into a strictly guided formative vehicle for providing a restricted kind of information and learning closely reflecting the totalitarian patterns of the prevailing cultural hegemony.

5. PERSONAL LIBERTIES

Moving onto sections 6 and 7 of Article 3 of the Iranian constitution one encounters important provisions regarding the necessity of “eliminating all forms of despotism and tyranny and all attempts to monopolize power” and also of “guaranteeing the political and social freedom within the framework of the law.”

These two sections, together with other relevant articles, constitute the main normative repository for the protection of the citizen’s basic rights. An in-depth survey of the constitution demonstrates that these concepts are further developed directly in 9 Articles throughout the constitution with numerous other articles indirectly related to these themes. The 1st Article directly treating these principles is Article 19 of Chapter 3 under the title: “Rights of the People.” This article upholds the conviction that “all people of Iran, whatever their ethnic group or tribe, enjoy equal rights; and color and race and language do not bestow any privilege.” It is worth mentioning that Iran is also a signatory of various international covenants and treaties upholding these principles, which effectively makes the country a proactive member of international charters on non-discrimination.

---

10 See for instance a report on this mechanism here.
12 A sample list of some of the forbidden books by the Islamic Republic can be found here.
13 Detailed analysis of various mechanisms of Cultural Hegemony can be found in Antonio Gramsci’s seminal work Prison Notebooks (1992)
and the fight against racism and apartheid. The same notion had also been underlined in Article 8 of the first Iranian constitution of 1906. On a side note, it should be reiterated that there are far-reaching injunctions on this principle in Iranian history dating back to the 6th century bc in the form of the cuneiform cylinder made by order of the Persian King Cyrus. Therein it is believed the king explicitly forbade slavery and servitude, a mandatory provision in an empire composed of numerous ethnicities, cultures, and religions.

Notwithstanding this, both before and after the Islamic Revolution, it is still possible to observe many shortcomings and in some cases discrimination and deprivation which could at least partially be interpreted on the grounds of ethnic and religious idiosyncrasies. Foreign observers and human rights organizations have repeatedly accused the Islamic Republic of widespread discriminatory laws and practices on ethnic, religious, gender, or other distinctive grounds, to which the Iranian government has not appeared to be very responsive.

The second constitutional article directly related to sections 6 and 7 of Article 3 is the very comprehensive Article 20 of the Iranian constitution. It reads: “All citizens of the country, both men and women, equally enjoy the protection of the law and enjoy all human, political, economic, social and cultural rights in conformity with the Islamic injunctions.” This is further detailed in:

- Article 21 on women’s rights;
- Article 23 on individuals’ beliefs;
- Article 25 on the prohibition of inspection in private communications;
- Article 26 on the freedom of political and professional associations;
- Article 27 on the right to hold public gatherings and marches;
- Article 32 on the prohibition of illegal arrests and detainments; and other articles related to the freedom of occupations, residence, and so on.

All these fundamental articles provide a significant number of constitutional guarantees to uphold various principles of individual liberties. A closer analysis of each of these articles and their actual enactment within the relative normative frameworks is needed here to see how these constitutional guidelines have been reflected in the ordinary laws of the Islamic Republic.

As regards the general provisions on the protection of private space, Article 22 states that “the dignity, life, property, rights, residence, and occupation of individuals are protected from violation, except in cases sanctioned by law.” Thereafter, Article 23 guarantees the right to hold personal beliefs by clearly stating that: “The investigation of individuals’ beliefs is forbidden; no one may be molested or questioned for holding a certain belief.” These articles are clear reflections of the relevant principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Unsurprisingly, the limits of these freedoms are declared to be set by relevant legal provisions. A brief consideration of a selection of these provisions is instructive here. Property rights have been endorsed in many pieces of legislation which seem to be relatively compliant with the international laws and conventions. Other provisions such as Articles 24 and 34 of Iran’s Code of Criminal Procedure, which states that “the police cannot detain suspects for more

---

14 These include: The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. This has been adopted, opened for signature and ratification by General Assembly resolution 2106, 21 December 1965 and the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, New York, 30 November 1973.

15 There is some disagreement concerning the interpretations of the actual content of the Cyrus Cylinder; nevertheless numerous sources and historic records, including religious texts such as the Old Testament, attest to a high level of social tolerance and openness by the Persian monarch towards the different ethnic groups, religions and cultures enabling one to seamlessly highlight the uniqueness of such policies throughout the ancient world. See for instance Masroori, C. (1999) ‘Cyrus II and the Political Utility of Religious Toleration’, in Laursen, J. C. (ed.), Religious toleration: the variety of rites from Cyrus to Defoe, New York, St. Martin’s Press.

16 It is interesting to notice that the practice of slavery was formally outlawed more than 2000 years later in the Western political tradition.

17 See the latest United Nations Human Rights reports on Iran here.

18 See Articles 3, 5, 6, 9 and 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 6, 9 and 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights accessible on the United Nations’ website here.

19 See for instance Articles 30, 132, 301, 311, 329 and 331 of the Islamic Republic’s Civil Code.
than 24 h and have to immediately refer the case to the appropriate juridical sources” also satisfies the minimum requirements for the protection of individual’s rights in such specific circumstances. Nevertheless, several instances of incompatibility and in some cases outright contradictions in the existing legal framework should be underlined.

As explained above, the Article 23 guarantees the individual’s right to hold any belief but makes no reference to the actual “expression” of those beliefs. In fact, it is not possible to identify any articles that explicitly and unambiguously guaranteed the freedom of expression for individuals. The provisions reserved for the means of mass communication were discussed previously; it is interesting to observe that these could not be automatically extended to the expression of personal beliefs and convictions at the individual level. Individual beliefs could include all intellectual convictions in the domains of religion, culture, politics, and so on which in theory should be protected by this article. It goes without saying that the ideas should be expressed to come to be recognized as such in the public domain, but there are various means of expression which go beyond oral and written acknowledgement of convictions. Practical example of such expressions of belief could include wearing a cross around your neck, for instance, or a symbol denoting atheism or any known organization or association - as long as this does not directly offend another member of society.

Thus, it would appear that this major omission concerning the freedom of expression in the text of the constitutional article would cause a significant vacuum which could potentially give rise to various arbitrary suppressions of individual liberties in the absence of any unambiguous normative guarantee in this matter. Various authors have tried, on the one hand, to interpret the article to cover actual expressions of personal beliefs by logical extension and, on the other hand, to affirm that it only guarantees the holding of personal beliefs and not the actual act of expression, which demonstrates the great ambiguity and potential for misinterpretation that exists in this article. A brief comparison with the relevant articles of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would elucidate this point. Article 19 of the International Covenant reads in part:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. Only such an unambiguous declaration could stand a chance of protecting the basic rights of individuals, which would otherwise be trampled on and waived due to potentially ad arbitrium interpretations.

One final observation involves the protection of religious beliefs in the Iranian constitution. Article 13 acknowledges that Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity are the only recognized minority religions. Therefore, there are no guarantees of freedom for followers of any other faiths to practise their religion or to include their religious, or non-religious for that matter, convictions in any official social contexts and forms. This is not only in contrast with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 2 in particular) but also in clear contradiction to the affirmation of “all people of Iran” in Article 19 of the same constitution which declares “equal rights” for all.

6. WOMEN’S RIGHTS

This is a very problematic area for any legislation founded on the doctrinal convictions of the so-called “Western religions,” including the Islamic Shari’a. Certain modernist states in the Islamic world such as Turkey and Tunisia have

20 See for instance Articles 22 to 25 and 96 to 104 of the Iranian Code of Criminal Procedure here.
21 For a detailed discussion of this argument see Izanloo, 2003, and Katouzian, 1998.
opted for a modern interpretation of religious prescriptions in this matter to be able to endorse a certain level of gender equality and parity of the sexes. Conversely, the Iranian legal framework with its salient religious proclamations could not fully accommodate the provision of its own constitution throughout its legislative arrangements. A brief survey of Iranian legislation in this regard reveals a significant body of discriminatory laws aimed at extending male domination in various sociocultural and private domains. Article 1133 of the Civil Code, for instance, reserves the right to divorce for men only and provides further simplification in cases where the wife suffers from certain types of illnesses; whereas the wife does not enjoy equivalent rights even in the case of certain serious ailments of the husband. Article 1130 of the same Code defines the rare cases where the wife could actually file for divorce, including such instances as when she can prove to have been subject to “continuous and unbearable physical mistreatment.” Thus, it is unambiguously implied that when the physical mistreatment could be said to be “tolerable,” there will be no grounds for a wife-initiated request for the legal dissolution of the marriage. Even in such specific case, the wife is usually required to waive all her legal and financial rights sanctioned by law or specified in the matrimonial deed. Another blatant example based on the Islamic Shari’a is that monetary compensation paid in the event of unintentional manslaughter would be half as much in the case of women compared to men. Numerous other examples could be cited which highlight a systematic and prevailing legal discrimination on gender grounds throughout the Islamic Republic normative injunctions.

On the other hand, it is also possible to identify certain examples of the actual protection of women’s rights, particularly regarding their rights to maintenance, protection from certain types of physical violence, legislation against physical abuse and prostitution together with some provisions for work environment entitlements and various provisions for social and economic assistance. Despite this, the majority of these laws, in particular Article 21 of the Constitution - which in theory should serve as the basis for the protection and promotion of basic women’s rights- seem to have adopted a protectionist approach toward the safeguarding of the already underprivileged position of women, rather than actually empowering them to gain equal social rights. Indeed it appears that the emphasis seems to have shifted toward the protection of the family and motherhood with significant consequences for women’s individual rights. Such assertions of rights do not seem to stem from women’s entitlement to basic elements of right as individuals independent from the role they ought to play in a religious, family-oriented society.

All these discriminatory legal frameworks point to the conclusion that the Islamic Republic does not appear to have been successful in enacting various international charters or even some of its own constitutional provisions. Hence, it appears that very little has been done to empower women in the Islamic Republic, who seem to be shackled by centuries of discriminating sociocultural traditions and beliefs. On the contrary, all evidence indicates that in practice they have actively been restricted and discriminated against in a system where the only “dignifying” role for women seems to be in the capacity of motherhood. Several repercussions of such a prevailing religious ideology can be identified, such as a significant number of juvenile marriages of underage women, which underscore a considerable amount of actual domination in private spheres. To mention yet another instance of such a prevailing domination, Article 1041 of the civil code could be cited which acknowledges that while the legal marriage age for girls is set at 13 years, the marriage of girls below this age would still be permitted if the father or the grandfather of such an underage individual gets permission from a civil judge.

It is interesting to note that one specific recurrent expression in the Iranian Civil Code on family laws, based on the Islamic religious exegeses, is the term tamkin (obedience), which provides significant grounds for the subjugation of women in all private spheres. The term is regularly referred to in

23 This is indeed the case due to numerous religious guidelines, in particular explicit instructions in the Quran such as those in the Surah Al-Nisa requiring total obedience and subordination of women to men in all life matters; see for instance Quran, Al-Nisa: 34
24 See for instance Article 382 of the Islamic Penal Code of Iran.
25 See for instance Articles 1085 of the Civil Code and Article 76 of the Labour Law.
26 In sections 2 and 3 of Article 21 dedicated to the protection of women’s rights we read: ‘the government must ensure the protection of mothers, particularly during pregnancy and childbearing and to … establish competent courts to protect and preserve family’.
27 See for instance the United Nations’ recent special report here.
28 See for instance the UN’s stand on this matter as reflected in an article here.
29 Article 1041 of the Iranian Civil Code.
civil laws and Islamic Penal Code when describing women's conjugal duties. Hence, unsurprisingly, the ordinary laws of the Islamic Republic derived from these domanitory constitutional and legal provisions prove to provide significant grounds for the encroachment of individual liberties and independence.

7. POLITICAL PARTIES

Other arguments dealt within Article 3 of the constitution, which has so far been utilized as a basic point of departure for the analysis of fundamental individual rights in the Iranian constitution, are the guarantees for the protection of individual rights to participate in or form political and social parties and associations. Articles 26 and 27 further develop these principles and delineate the framework of these liberties in society. Article 26 in particular declares:

The formation of parties, societies, political, or professional associations, as well as religious societies, whether Islamic or pertaining to one of the recognized religious minorities is permitted provided that they do not violate the principles of independence, freedom, national unity, the criteria of Islam, or the foundations of the Islamic Republic.

Various aspects of this article deserve further analysis. First of all, it is noteworthy that in terms of religious parties and associations, only the officially recognized religions are authorized to have their own associations, which as discussed previously, proves to be extremely discriminatory to the followers of other convictions and faiths. Second, and most importantly, the clear “red line” set out here for the activities of political parties is declared to be the fact that they should not violate the basic principles of the Islamic Republic. This becomes clearer in Article 27, where the freedom of peaceful public gathering and marches is guaranteed provided that they are not “detrimental to the principles of Islam.” This is a recurrent limit set for most articles concerning the basic principles of individual liberties and all their social and political means and modes of public manifestations. As seen previously, this is a very broad principle that could be interpreted in various ways. Most strikingly the Council of the Guardians of the Islamic Republic - which is constitutionally the only authorized body for providing interpretation and clarification of the ambiguities in the constitution - refrained on at least one occasion from providing any clarification to this phrase following official enquiries from the government authorities. Unsurprisingly, the ordinary laws of the Islamic Republic dominated by conservative legislative elements have interpreted this to implement restrictive provisions both on the formation of political parties and even on peaceful public gatherings and associations, to the point where, with the exception of the so-called “loyal opposition,” currently, there is no single fully independent political party in the Islamic Republic.

Regarding the ordinary laws derived from such constitutional injunctions, Article 6 of the law on activities of the political parties, ratified in August 1981, could be cited. This law sets out numerous exceptions to the freedom of activity of various political, social and professional parties and associations including: “Violating the principles of national independence, contact with foreign embassies, receiving money from foreign countries, violating Islamic principles and the basic foundations of the Islamic Republic (with) anti-Islamic propaganda.” Furthermore, various articles of Iran's Islamic Penal Code are dedicated to punishments foreseen by law not only for those who perform activities against national security (ex. Articles 71, 109) but also those who are involved in propaganda against the system or promotion of groups and organizations which are against the Islamic Republic (Article 286).

Once again, as with other articles of the Islamic Republic's constitution cited above, it is impossible to overlook interesting attempts to include various principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 20) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 21). Despite this, numerous restrictions and provisions and, most importantly, inherent ambiguities, have rendered these articles incapable of resourcing and protecting the most basic principles of civil liberty.

In addition, various levels of inconsistency can be highlighted which seem to have been caused primarily by a profound underlying ambiguity in the interpretation of the locus of legitimacy and sovereignty within the Iranian constitution. As shown above, there is an explicit acknowledgement of the role of the people in administering all “affairs of the

30 Collections of the Opinions of the Council of the Guardian. Research Centre of the Council of the Guardians pub. 2002, p.373, hence the expression “detrimental to the principles of Islam” remains be extremely vague and flexible with notorious consequences.

31 See for instance the research published on the only existing Iranian parties here.
country” (Article 6). Nonetheless, numerous limitations and boundaries imposed on this exercise of authority seem to directly contradict the explicitly highlighted rights and prerogatives of the people. The existence of these numerous ambiguities and in some cases even contradictions within the Iranian Fundamental Law, inevitably raise the question of what sources of clarification have been foreseen within the constitution itself to deal with the numerous potentials for misinterpretation. Yet another example of such complications can be pointed out in Article 14 of the constitution, which claims that: “The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and all Muslims are bound to treat non-Muslims in conformity with ethical norms and the principles of the Islamic justice and equity and to respect their human rights.” As discussed previously, only three religions are officially recognized by the Islamic Republic in Article 13 of the constitution. Thus, it is unclear how the Islamic Republic could guarantee the “human rights” of all non-Muslims while not recognizing the basic rights to religious organizations for the non officially recognized congregations of faith. It goes without saying that the individual rights of those with no religious convictions are not even mentioned therein.

Hence as highlighted above the only envisaged authoritative source for clarifying constitutional omissions, ambiguities and contradictions, remains to be the same Council of Guardians whose members are half appointed by the Leader of the Islamic Republic and the other half proposed by the head of the judiciary system, himself directly appointed by the Leader. Thus, the Office of the Leader directly or indirectly hand-picks all members of the Council of Guardians which could raise serious concerns regarding the nonalignment and impartiality of the council as the sole interpreter of the Islamic Republic’s Constitution.

8. CONCLUSION

This study attempted to show that the constitution of the Islamic Republic fails to provide solid unambiguous foundations for promoting, protecting and sanctioning adequate guarantees for the protection of elementary individual rights on several levels. It was empirically demonstrated by referring the constitutional injunctions to the actual sanctions of the ordinary laws of Iran, that a significant pitfall has been created for systematic violation of rights which not only concerns minorities and women but also the entire Iranian population. In addition to all this, a fundamental void could be felt regarding the existence of an overriding impartial constitutional court capable of enforcing the very same principles of the Iranian constitution. As it was shown, the Council of the Guardians, which is constitutionally defined as the authority for interpreting ambiguities and addressing potential claims, proves to be a mere legal tool in the hands of the same dominant religious ideology for doctrinal imposition of values which at times has even acted as a powerful contravening body against the prerogatives of the legislative system. Unsurprisingly, due to such fundamental constitutional flaws the contemporary history of Iran abounds with instances where questionable verdicts have been delivered, political leaders, activists and members of public have been silenced, or other contraventions against the basic principles of human rights have taken place.

This indeed raises the question of the centrality or even the relevance of a corpus of Fundamental Law in a country where the centers of loyalty and allegiance prove to be above and beyond formally agreed on loci of rights and authority.

All evidence examined, it will be uncontroversial to claim that as things stand, not only do we fail to identify significant constitutional guarantees for upholding individual rights in several domains but also that the same body of laws and normativity appear to be the prime suspect for institutionalizing the systematic violation of the basic principles of human rights. In recent years reformist presidents such as Khatami and Rouhani have repeatedly called for a full implementation of the Iranian constitution as a means to promote basic individual liberties. Yet as it was demonstrated here the actual source of domination in the Iranian political layout appears to be the very normative repositories that are theoretically destined for diametrically opposing ends. Hence, all the data examined points to the conclusion that the buoni leggi (good laws) as the first cornerstone of any political edifice claiming to be upholding principles of right and liberty, appear to be fundamentally lacking in the system under analysis32. In such a layout of public law, any assertions of principles of individual rights appear to have been fundamentally waived by means of the alleged claims of raison de foi which, as shown, has systematically permeated the entire normative apparatus of the Islamic Republic.

REFERENCES


32 See Machiavelli’s Discourses for instance
Sir,

Given possible Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) independence, it would be useful to briefly analyze Kurdish relations with the United Nations. The United Nations is an international organization that was established at the end of World War II to, according to UN Charter Article 1, “maintain international peace and security.” Since it is an international organization made up of sovereign independent states, however, the Kurds have no legal standing as members. Indeed the states in which the Kurds live (Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria) have a vested interest in keeping the Kurdish question out of the United Nations to preserve their own respective territorial integrities. This they and others who have similar interests in keeping the lid on their own minority problems have largely done. Until the end of the first Gulf War in 1991, therefore, the United Nations had had almost nothing to do with the Kurdish question. Ironically, however, more than half the members of the United Nations who by definition have legal standing in the world organization also have populations less than that of the Kurds.

However, those who would seek an entry for the Kurdish issue onto the UN agenda might point out that UN Charter Article 1 also lists as its purposes “to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples” and “to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.” In addition, UN Charter Article 14 declares that “the general assembly may recommend measures for the peaceful adjustment of any situation, regardless of origin, which it deems likely to impair the general welfare or friendly relations among nations.”

Historically, one of very few early attempts to bring the Kurdish question to the United Nations occurred in January 1946, when Rizgari Kurd, an Iraqi Kurdish predecessor of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, unsuccessfully made a formal appeal to the world body for Kurdish self-determination and sovereignty. Following Iraq’s use of chemical warfare during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) and against the Iraqi Kurds in Halabja in March 1988, UN Security Council Resolution 620, of August 26, 1988, finally condemned the Iraqi use of such weapons. At the same time, Masoud Barzani appealed to the United Nations to stop Iraq’s Anfal campaign with its use of chemical weapons against the Kurds. The overall international response, however, was largely one of deafening silence, as few wanted to offend Saddam Hussein and Iraq in those days.

The first Gulf War in 1991 partially changed this neglect. UN Security Council Resolution 688, of April 5, 1991, condemned “the repression of the Iraqi civilian population. In Kurdish populated areas” and demanded “that Iraq. Immediately end this repression.” This was by far the most important specific recognition of the Kurds that the United Nations had ever made. In the succeeding years, the United States used this Security Council Resolution to justify first its temporary creation of a safe haven for the Kurds in northern Iraq and then its enforcement of a no-fly zone over the area. Under this protection, the KRG developed after 1992 until it was recognized by the new Iraqi constitution adopted in October 2005 as a federal state within Iraq. The United Nations has also maintained a number of humanitarian programs in the region.

UN Security Council Resolution 986, of April 14, 1995, authorized Iraq to sell a limited amount of oil for food and other humanitarian needs, thus partially lifting the economic sanctions that had been imposed since the first Gulf War. After a great deal of haggling, UN Security Council Resolution 1153, of February 20, 1998, dramatically increased the permitted amount of oil sales to $5.256 billion every 6 months. The Iraqi Kurdistan region received 13% of the funds from the sale of this oil. These oil funds from the United Nations helped immensely to develop economically the Kurdish area in northern Iraq to the point that the region
started to become a model for the entire Middle East. Many administrative problems regarding UN projects remained, however, since the United Nations continued to take the position that it was acting on behalf of the Iraqi government when it administered its programs in the Kurdish region.

The UN Security Council did not endorse the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003. After the government of Saddam Hussein was overthrown in the second Gulf War of 2003, the United Nations played only a limited role regarding Iraq and the Kurds because the United States preferred to act unilaterally. However, UN Security Council Resolution 1500 of August 14, 2003, implemented the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and established a Special Representative of the Secretary-General to assist the Iraqi people and government. To help accomplish this mission, the UNAMI coordinates 20 separate UN agencies and programs and has continued to operate as of 2017. However, Sergio Vieira de Mello, the highly respected UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary-General’s Special Representative in Iraq, was killed along with 20 other members of his staff in a bombing in Baghdad on August 19, 2003. This assassination discouraged further UN involvement in the area.

However, UN Security Council Resolution 1546 of June 8, 2004, did interject the world organization partially back into the equation by endorsing the formation of a sovereign interim Iraqi government and the continuing presence of U.S. troops during the transition. The Kurds, however, saw this UN resolution as being biased against their interests because it did not specifically mention the transitional administrative law that guaranteed the newly-won Kurdish rights regarding federalism.

In April 2009, the United Nations issued a lengthy study in which it urged the Iraqi Kurds not to push for a referendum on whether or not Kirkuk should become part of the KRG. This recommendation opposed the Kurdish desire to implement Article 140 of the permanent constitution of Iraq, which called for just such a referendum and was strongly criticized by KRG president Masoud Barzani. Subsequently, however, the KRG occupied most of the contested Kirkuk area when the Iraqi armies collapsed before the onslaught of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) during the summer of 2014.

The United Nations held an international conference on 18 March 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland on the legal recognition of the crimes of genocide committed against the Kurds in Iraq. A subsequent report by the United Nations concluded that the resulting murder, sexual slavery, rape, and torture ISIS perpetrated against the Yezidis constituted genocide under the terms of the Genocide Convention of 1948. Various UN agencies have been helping with the refugee and internally displaced persons problems caused by these ISIS attacks. In 2016, Rafael Ramirez, the president of the UN Security Council, said that the KRG plans for an independence referendum were a domestic Iraqi issue, but the United Nations’ own principle was to respect the territorial integrity of all states. Nevertheless, the United Nations would take a neutral position on a KRG referendum for independence. However, immediate KRG membership in the United Nations might be temporarily blocked by some neighboring state such as Turkey, Iran, or Iraq that opposed KRG independence as happened earlier with Bangladesh and Vietnam, among others, when their initial membership applications to the United Nations were made. However, since the days of the Cold War compromise back in 1955 that allowed 16 states whose membership had been blocked by the United States and Soviet Union to finally join the world organization, such rejections have been rare and only very temporary.

Michael Gunter*

Department of Sociology and Political Science, College of Arts and Sciences, Tennessee Technological University, 1 William L Jones Dr, Cookeville, TN 38505, USA

*Corresponding author’s email: MGunter@tntech.edu

Received: 01 November 2017
Accepted: 07 December 2017
Available online: 28 December 2017
Aiming at Secession: The KRG’s Activism in the International Arena

Alex Danilovich* and Huda S. Abdulrahman

Department of Politics and International Relations, School of Social Sciences, University of Kurdistan Hewler, Kurdistan Region – F.R. Iraq

*Corresponding author’s email: alexd@ukh.edu.krd

Received: 02 November 2017 Accepted: 06 December 2017 Available online: 29 December 2017

ABSTRACT

This study addresses the issue of subnational units’ activism in the international arena, using the case of the Iraqi Kurdistan federal region. The prevailing view in the literature is that the increasing involvement of sub-state entities in international relations is caused by globalization and growing economic interdependence. We argue that the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has been extremely active in the international arena to, primarily, secure a favorable international image and gain support for recognition in pursuit of a secessionist agenda. To prove our argument, we generated data through interviews with KRG officials, politicians and Kurdish intellectuals as well as through examination of secondary data, such as official documents, newspaper reports, statistics, and public speeches. Our findings suggest that the KRG has methodically acted to garner international support for its secessionist plans. This conclusion may add to the theory of federalism and paradiplomacy by suggesting that strong political motives may also be an underlying cause of sub-state units’ engagement in international relations, not only globalization and economic interdependence.

Keywords: Federalism, International Relations, Iraqi Kurdistan, Paradiplomacy, Referendum of Independence

1. INTRODUCTION

This study addresses an interesting issue related to federalism - regions’ activism in the international arena. The phenomenon is often called “paradiplomacy” and is quite well researched, as recently many subnational units have kept a high profile and played an important role in transnational relations, mainly economic and cultural. We use the case of Iraqi Kurdistan (IK), which is a federal region within the newly created Iraqi federation. This study is an attempt to add to the literature on federalism, secession and subnational units’ involvement in global politics using an interesting empirical case.

1.1. The Problem and Rationale

The concept of paradiplomacy has appeared in literature quite recently because scholars were more interested in sovereign states’ foreign policy, while the international activities of federal regions and other sub-state units have been of lesser interest to scholars and practitioners. This study focuses mainly on paradiplomacy and the main motivations behind practicing it, taking cues from Keating’s conceptual framework of the economic, social, and political motivations of such activities.

One of the continuous problems in the Middle East is the unresolved Kurdish question and the Kurds’ dissatisfaction with their status of being a stateless nation. In the past three decades, particular scholarly attention has been paid to IK, which already enjoys significant autonomy within Iraq’s loose federation. The Iraqi Kurds’ determinations to gain recognition and respect from the international community, which they believe they deserve, are one of the self-assumed missions of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).
The KRG has purposefully worked on this matter since the fall of the Baath regime in 2003. The Kurdish authorities and the representatives of the regional government abroad have played an important role in reaching out to the outside world and gaining a measure of international recognition. In August 2014 with the attacks by ISIS on Kurdistan and an ensuing successful fight against the militants by the Peshmerga (Kurdish armed forces), the Kurds gained even more international sympathy and appreciation. Today the question is no longer about the international community’s awareness of the existence of the Kurds as the world’s largest stateless nation, but about gaining support for their would-be sovereign state.

Hence, the broad theoretical problem this study addresses is the breakup of federations and secessionist movements facilitated by paradiplomacy. This paper focuses on KRG activism in the international arena as a strategy to achieve international recognition of a would-be independent Kurdistan.

1.2. Our Argument

Although various scholars entertain different views on paradiplomacy’s causes and effects, there is no study, to the best of our knowledge, dedicated to paradiplomacy used as a tool for achieving independence. We argue that paradiplomacy has been used by the KRG as an effective tool to facilitate secession from the Iraqi federation.

To test our argument, we generated primary data through in-depth interviews with KRG officials, Kurdish politicians and intellectuals and relied on secondary data, such as official documents, websites, newspaper reports, statistics, and public speeches.

The study has some limitations due to the sensitivity of the subject and the time constraints; plus, only a small number of participants were available for interviews. The timeframe of this study is limited to the period starting from 2005, when the federal system was introduced in Iraq, to the independence referendum of September 2017.

2. THEORETICAL-EXPLANATORY FRAMEWORK

In 1945 when the United Nations was created, there were only 51 members. Eventually, this number increased over the time to reach 193. Many, currently, sovereign states were colonies or parts of larger countries. The Post-Cold War International System has undergone further serious transformations. The USSR split into many states. The latest independent state, South Sudan was admitted to the United Nations on July 9, 2011.

Scholars argue that changes in international politics, globalization and the end of Cold War created circumstances conducive to self-determination and state building (Hehir and Robinson, 2017), but independence still needs the international community’s approval. To become sovereign, an aspirant must be recognized by the international community and therefore accepted in the club of sovereign states (Griffith, 2017). Many ethnic minorities within larger countries aspire to achieving independence; over 10 of them have become sovereign states during the past 20 years (Feniman, 2013). There are four elements necessary for statehood: Population, territory, government, and sovereignty (Chanhchom, 2010). The Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR) has already some attributes of statehood, such as territory, common history and culture, language and a sense of community. What missing is sovereignty, and that is exactly what the IKR aims to gain (Croatia, 2007).

Seeking independence becomes an option for various groups of people who are different from the titular nation ethnically, religiously, and ideologically. This might lead to conflict and the use of force (Goldesten and Pevehouse, 2012). There are a few important factors that typically speed up the process of acceptance into the club of sovereign states - suppression of the national identity and economic exploitation, as well as an abundance of natural resources and a high profile in the international arena. Paul emphasizes the importance of having a sort of diplomatic relations in order for a breakaway entity to become independent. He says, “diplomatic recognition confirms legitimacy on a new state, but sometimes there is divided consensus within the international community” (Paul, 1996. p. 8).

As there is no readily available theoretical framework that could help us to adequately understand a substate’s behavior in this respect, we will significantly draw on the writings of Keating, who argues that paradiplomacy is used for three distinct reasons by actors at the sub state level: Economic, social, and political. We also use Andre Lecour’s insights into the aims of paradiplomacy: To create an “international personality” that can serve various purposes.

For many, the concept of paradiplomacy is new and derives from the concept of diplomacy. With some similarity, the two terms have different meanings. Each refers to a different type of relationship in the international relation. Satow defines diplomacy as:
The application of the intelligence and the tact to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent states, or more briefly the conduct of business between states by peaceful means (Satow, 2009).

He argues that only the central government of a sovereign state can use diplomacy and have diplomatic relations with other states. The term “paradiplomacy” was first used in the 1980s in Canada and the USA. The scholar who coined the name was Soldatos who reduced the phrase “parallel diplomacy” to paradiplomacy (Soldatos, 1990). For Aldecoa and Keating paradiplomacy is “the foreign policy of non-central governments” (Aldecoa and Keating, 2000), while Berridge defined it as:

In general, activity analogous to diplomacy conducted by anyone without diplomatic status, in particular, a member of a nongovernmental organization or private individual acting independently, specifically international activity by regional governments such as the Canadian province of Quebec and the stateless nations such as the Kurds (Berridge and Alan, 2003).

Some scholars refer to the term as “a direct international activity by subnational actors, supporting, complementing, correcting, duplicating, or challenging the nation state’s diplomacy.” (Bursens and Jana, 2010) Duchacek suggested using “microdiplomacy” instead (Duchacek, 1990). In this study, by paradiplomacy we mean a direct interaction and political activities of sub-states units in the international arena, quite in line with Wolff’s definition:

The capacity of sub-state entities’ participation independent of their metropolitan state in the international arena in the pursuit of their own specific international interests.”

In other words, paradiplomacy is the involvement of substates or regions in international relations with specific agendas that serve their interests (Wolf, 2007).

Practicing paradiplomacy by sub-states has various reason and motivations, which can be summarized as economic, cultural, and political (Keating, 2000). Lecours calls them “layers.” The first layer relates to economic issues; regions or substates work for an international presence to attract external investments and promote trade. The second layer is social, cultural, educational, scientific, and technical cooperation. While the third layer, political considerations, where the substate works to assert its national character and achieve political autonomy (Lecours, 2008. p. 5). Wolff, justifying sub-states interests in international relations, claims that regions and sub-states practice paradiplomacy to solve conflict relating to self-determination:… should be embraced as a necessity and opportunity in the process of managing and ultimately resolving what might otherwise be protracted conflicts” (Wolf, 2007).

In Paradiplomacy and Stateless Nations, André Lecours and Luis Moreno claim that “paradiplomacy serves as a means for identity and nation-building; that it sustains and promotes specific interest definitions such as cultural preservation; and that the intergovernment conflicts it involves provide opportunities for political-territorial mobilization (Lecours and Moreno, 2001).

Keating argues that most of the regions and substates with national aspirations use paradiplomacy to pursue their political goals and fulfill their nationalistic dreams of statehood and sovereignty. Quite often, it is indeed used as a strategy to achieve recognition beyond the status of a minority region without raising suspicions of separatism (Keating, 2000).

Paradiplomacy is also used outright to gain independence, to prepare the international opinion and have support from countries that might grant recognition when independence is actually declared. Catalonia is one of the most active regions that promote itself internationally with a view to gaining independence from Spain. In 1992 and during the Olympic Games, the government of Catalonia used a smart strategy to promote the region by placing an ad in English asking
“Where is Barcelona?” driving the reader to rethink about the answer they know, and clarifying that it is in Catalonia, not Spain. Keating strongly believes that nationalism is one of the strongest motivators of sub-states paradiplomacy, while Lecours adds that those substates aim at creating an “international personality,” to maintain a high profile in the global arena.

Scholars agree that substates are active in the international arena in pursuit of specific interests although they are expected to operate in collaboration with the central or federal government (Keating, 2000). Quite often, they pursue pure political goals that might defy the central government: Creating “international personality,” asserting their distinct ethnic identity and seeking recognition (Wolf, 2007). Paquin and Lachapelle claim that when regions are deprived of their rights and unable to pursue their interests due to the absence of sovereignty, they tend to walk away out from under the central government’s umbrella (Stephane and Guy, 2005).

Sub-states that are active in the international arena quite often entertain long-term plans of secession. Baalthazar suggests distinguishing protodiplomacy, which is harmful to the federal relationship, from paradiplomacy, regional international activism in line with the federal government foreign policy and is not aimed at secession. Baalthazar argues that protodiplomacy means the diplomatic efforts of representatives of sub-state entities that seek recognition for an eventual sovereign state (Balthazar, 1999. p. 162). In this study, we embrace Keating’s conceptual framework and use the term “paradiplomacy” that encompasses all international activities by subnational units, be they economic, sociocultural or political steps aimed outright at secession.

2.1. IK, a Brief Background Note

After the collapse of the Ottoman and Persian Empires, the Western powers fractured them, and the current Middle East is essentially the result of this partition. In the beginning of the 20th century, the Kurds were promised an independent state, but their hopes were dashed in 1923 when the Treaty of Lausanne was signed. The Kurds became the victim of this division separated in four countries - Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria (Nezan, 2017). Despite this division, the Kurds have preserved their unique culture, language, and identity.

The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 offered an exceptional opportunity for the Kurds who perceived it as it as more of “liberation” than “invasion.” They welcomed the US troops and proved their trustworthy allies (Cockburn, 2013). After the collapse of the Baath regime, the new central government was busy rebuilding Iraq, while the Kurds were a decade ahead in state-building, as they had developed their governmental institutions since the introduction of the no-fly security zone in 1991. At the same time, they actively participated in drafting the Transitional Administrative Law and the 2005 constitution and decided to stay within a new federal Iraq (Phillips, 2015).

3. KURDISTAN’S PARADIPLOMACY: EMPIRICAL OBSERVATIONS

Only a few solid scholarly works are dedicated to Kurdish paradiplomacy. Stefan Wolf argues that the Iraqi constitution has various gaps concerning the federal relationship as well as the region’s rights to engage in foreign relations (Wolf, 2010). Hence, based on the provided literature, there are different views on paradiplomacy, its aims, goals and its effectiveness. On the other hand, Danilovich argues that the regional paradiplomatic activities of Kurdistan “desire to assert national identity at home and abroad, not to secede.” He believes that the region has decided to live under the Iraqi flag. However, it practices its diplomatic activities only to gain recognition from outside, not to demand independence. Furthermore, he adds that the Iraqi constitution does not grant the right to secession from the federation (Danilovich, 2014).

Only after the enactment of the Iraqi constitution in 2005, the KRG practically became a federal region. It started working out some important aspects of domestic policy and eyeing the international arena as well. In 2006, the KRG established a Department of Foreign Relations headed by an official at a ministerial rank. In order not to irritate the federal government, a more indirect title such as head of the department has been used (Bengio, 2012. p. 299-308).

The Department's mission is to conduct relations with the outside world. It is considered an essential unit of the KRG cabinet. The DFR is responsible for building relations with the international community, promoting trade, attracting investment, tourism, and maintain institutional ties with foreign countries. The DFR supervises the IKR's representations abroad and also coordinates relations between the KRG and the central government in Baghdad and has its representation in Baghdad (Bengio, 2012). On the other hand, there are over 40 international representations in the Region, such as consulates, embassy branches, international organizations, and trade offices.
3.1. Department of Foreign Relations: KRG Instrument of Paradiplomacy

Since the establishment of the Department of Foreign Relations in 2006, Falah Mustafa has been its permanent head. However, only in 2012, he was invited to attend cabinet meetings (Mustafa and Huda, 2017). Minister Mustafa described the mission of his department as follows:

No friends, but the mountains proverb pretty much had shaped our policies in the past; we were isolated and we needed to break that isolation. We faced animosity and confrontation and we needed to turn them into cooperation (interview).

Interestingly, both Falah Mustafa, head of the DFR and Aladdin, Director of the Middle Eastern Research Institute, stated that what the KRG practices is not “paradiplomacy,” but real diplomacy. Mustafa stated “We may have started with paradiplomacy or public diplomacy, but now we are acting and functioning as a part of the government. We are not lesser than any other ministry” (Mustafa and Huda, 2017).

Originally, the DFR was established to be a bridge between the region and Baghdad. Then its role expanded to social, commercial, and cultural cooperation with the international community. It is important to mention that the DFR was not formed immediately after the adoption of the Iraqi constitution in 2005; the KRG realized that it was important to have a department to promote the region’s interests within Iraq and abroad. The DFR has significantly expanded its relations with various countries around the world both by establishing its representations abroad and receiving foreign representations in the region.

The DFR has three main objectives. First, to promote and protect the interests of the IKR in the world. Second, to develop and encourage important political and economic relations with the international community, particularly with neighboring countries. Furthermore, the DFR provides effective legal and consular services to foreign citizens in the region (Mustafa and Huda, 2017). The DFR has the following stated functions:

- Strengthening relations with the international community,
- Promoting trade, investment, tourism, and institutional ties,
- Supervising the KRG’s offices overseas,
- Liaising with the diplomatic community in the Kurdistan region,
- Organizing visits of political and economic delegations to the Kurdistan Region, coordinating, and organizing KRG relations with the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Iraqi embassies abroad,
- Conducting and supporting activities that enhance the image of the Kurdistan region abroad,
- Providing legal and authentication services to the people of the region and its citizens abroad (DFR Official Website, 2017).

The DFR has seven offices, each in charge of one specific task: (1) The Office of International Relations facilitates activities of foreign diplomatic representations in the IKR, organizes visits of foreign delegations, as well as promotes the KRG’s relations with their respective countries. (2) An office that deals with the KRG representations abroad. (3) The third is the Protocol Office. It also liaises with the federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Baghdad and federal bureaus in the region. (4) The fourth is the Office of International Organizations, such as United Nations agencies and international NGOs operating in the Region. (5) The fifth is the Legal Office, which certifies and validates documents relating to foreign consulates in the IKR. (6) The sixth is the Media and Communication Office, responsible for dissemination of the KRG’s messages; it works closely with the foreign press in the region and maintains the DFR official website. (7) The last unit is the Office of Human Resources and Finances (KRG-DFR Official Website, 2017).

3.2. Hosting Foreign Representations

Since its establishment, the KRG has started building bridges with the outside world. The Russian consulate was the first to open in Erbil. To date, there are 35 countries that have their representations in the IKR at the level of consulates, embassy branches, and honorary consuls. This also includes commercial representations of many countries, Iran, Russia, Germany, France, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, Jordan, Egypt, the Czech Republic, Hungary, China, Italy, India, Saudi Arabia, Netherlands, Kuwait, Sudan, and Korea. In addition, there are six honorary consuls - Spain, Japan, Denmark, Belarus, Slovakia, and Brazil. The EU has a liaison office. International organizations, such as Japan’s International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Korea International Cooperation Agency, UNAMI regional representation office, the International Committee for Red Cross, and United Nations Mission to Iraq have their representatives in the region (DFR Official Website and Mustafa, 2017).

Opening consulates in Erbil were the start of significant developments in Kurdistan’s relations with the outside world. Turkey, one of the IKR’s most significant neighbors,
established its consulate in 2010. Obviously, foreign countries establish their diplomatic representations in the IKR as part of bilateral agreements with the Republic of Iraq and with Baghdad’s consent, but their interest in having a foot in the Region stands as proof of Kurdistan’s rising international profile.

3.3. Reaching out to the World: KRG Representations Abroad

The KRG has 14 representative offices in following countries: Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, and the USA, in addition to an office in the European Union. The KRG’s representations abroad constitute the main tool of its paradiplomatic activities (DFR, 2017).

It is fair to mention that the Kurdistan Region had its representatives in the UK and the USA even before the establishment of federal Iraq; however, they represented two main political parties - the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Since 2006, things have changed, and these party offices merged and work under the aegis of the DFR. Hence, it can be said that only after the establishment of the DFR, the KRG had a unified presence in the UK and the USA. The DFR took the lead in centralizing and regulating their activities and making sure that the representatives had a decent reputation and that the host countries knew that they represented the region, not political parties.

To further centralize the operations of these offices and to well articulate the message to be carried to the outside world, the DFR organized in 2011 a series of workshops attended by all KRG representatives. A political framework was worked out, the aims and responsibilities of the representative offices were articulated and agreed on (KRG Official Website, 2017).

3.4. Diplomatic Marathon

One of the main paradiplomatic efforts with significant political overtones is deployed through visits of KRG top officials to foreign countries and foreign dignitaries, to the region.

In 2008, the KRG’s prime minister made few visits to Iran and Korea for political and economic purposes. Later in 2009, president Barzani visited Austria, Belgium and the institutions of the European Union in his European tour. The main goal of these visits was to build relations and ask for assistance in strengthening the Kurdistan Region’s judicial, health and educational systems. “We ask for your help in how we can build our institutions, good healthcare and education systems, create an independent judiciary and improve governance” (KRG Website, 2009). Same year, the KRG witnessed many historical visits from the Turkish Foreign Affairs minister, US Senator John McCain, US UN Ambassador Susan Rice, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, and US Vice President Joe Biden.

In 2012 Nechirvan Barzani, the KRG Prime Minister accompanied by a delegation attended the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Istanbul where he privately met with the Turkish prime ministers along with the foreign minister Davout Oğlu. In 2013, President Barzani was invited to participate in WEF and he had various meeting with the Dutch prime minister Mrk Rutte, the Lebanese Prime Minister Miqati, a US congressional delegation headed by then - Majority Leader Eric Cantor, Switzerland’s State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Yves Rossier and President of the International Red Cross Peter Maurer to deliver a message of Kurdish existence and struggle to stand on its feet. Barzani was praised for his economic policy and overall development of the region (KRG, 2013). Furthermore, Barzani was invited for the second time to attend the WEF in 2014 in Switzerland. Fuad Hussain the KRG chief of staff stated that the invitation underscored “the significance of the Kurdish region in world affairs” and he added, “This shows the political and economic development of the Kurdistan Region, which has attracted the attention of international centers at different levels” (Rudaw, 2014). Hence, this shows how far the KRG has come in practicing paradiplomacy to promote itself and its economic success showing itself as an investment hub.

The region paid serious attention to building relations with Arab countries; in 2010, the KRG received royalties from the UAE, Crown Prince and Ras al-Khaimah, as well as the Egyptian foreign minister. The biggest event in KRG’s Paradiplomatic activities in 2010 was President Barzani’s visit to the White House where he was welcomed by President Obama (KRG-DFR Website, 2017). Barzani’s visit can be considered historic because as the chairman of the Kurdish Democratic Party, the ruling party in KRI, but still on the USA terrorist groups list. Furthermore, in February 2014 Barzani refused to meet with President Obama again until his party alongside with the PUK was removed from the USA blacklist. On December 2014, US Congress officially decided to take both Kurdish parties off the blacklist (Daily Sabah, 2014) Data show that only in 2010 the President, prime minister, senior officials effected more than 28 visits abroad. President Barzani alone made 14 visits and mission
same year to the US, Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and the Arab League countries (El-Dessouki, 2010). Regionally, the KRG continued to strengthen its relations with the neighboring countries.

In 2011, the Turkish PM visited the capital of Kurdistan to participate in the opening of Erbil international airport as well as the Turkish consulate. When President Barzani visited Turkey and the city of Diyarbakir, he was warmly welcomed; what is more, the hosts hoisted the Kurdish flag for the first time to emphasize the significance of the visit and cooperation between both governments (Uras, 2013). In 2013, more than 175 international dignitaries, including high officials, ambassadors, ministers, and high ranking executives from various international organizations paid visits to Kurdistan. Through these visits the KRG marketed the region to the world as a model for the rest of the Middle East and showed that the region successfully builds democracy, purposefully act to achieve stability, prosperity, promotes women’s rights, tolerance, civil society, and businesses (Mansour, 2015).

In 2015, Barzani visited Ankara to discuss cooperation with Turkey in fighting ISIS. It was the first time the Turkish PM received the KRG’s officials under the Kurdish flag (Abdulrazaq, 2011). This important symbolic gesture was made again in 2017 when President Barzani visited Turkey - the Kurdish flag was raised in Ataturk airport when welcomed by President Erdogan (Dolamari, 2014).

In 2015, President Barzani visited the White House for the second time and met with President Obama to discuss various issues related to the war on terrorism and improving communication with Baghdad and achieving stability in the country (Saeed, 2015). However, President Barzani and Kurdistan Prime Minister Nercirwan Barzani repeatedly stated that they would not let Kurdistan to continue being dragged into Iraq’s endless problems and sectarian conflict. After recovering from the ISIS attack, Kurdish officials became inclined to think that Iraq today is not the Iraq of 2003 when the Kurds were eager to help to build a new country. Now the country’s situation is deteriorating, and the federal government’s policies have been self-destructive.

4. MOTIVATIONS BEHIND KRG PARADIPLOMACY: ANALYSIS

In our interpretation of the KRG’s paradiplomacy, we draw on Keating’s insights into the motivations behind sub-state activism in the international arena by focusing on the three main motivations that drive regions’ paradiplomacy - economy, culture, and politics. We complement Keating’s framework by Lecour’s idea that regions attempt to create an international personality and thereby have a high international profile when the time comes for secession.

4.1. Economic Motivations

After the fall of the Baath regime, Iraqi Kurds wanted to carve a wider niche in the new federation and become an important national player. At the same time, globalization has opened new horizons for federal regions, in particular, those with lavish natural resources. The KRG has opened up to foreign trade and welcomed businesses and investment by enacting liberal, business-friendly legislation. This has attracted foreign investors, in particular from the energy sector.

It is very beneficial for the developing sub-states and regions that are going through a political and economic transition to have connections and practice paradiplomacy with advanced industrialized states. This can provide them with different experiences in various aspects and create bridges for exchanging educational and investment opportunities, developing cultural programs (Lecour, 2008). Keating agrees with Lecours and affirms that in recent years economic factors became one of the most important motivations of paradiplomacy. Due to economic transformations, regions are more involved in the international arena and enter the competition in the global market for broader investment opportunities (Keating, 2000).

One of the most significant acts that opened the door to foreign investment was the enactment in 2006 of the investment law and its massive advertisement through KRG representation abroad. This made a significant difference in the economy of the region (Invest in Group Website, 2013). In 2006, the number of British companies’ visits to the region was 5–7, but it dramatically increased by 2011 and reached 70 visits by British companies’ representatives (KRG-UK). In November 2013, for example, an important delegation of British businesspeople that included 50 companies in construction, oil and gas, healthcare and 13 universities paid a visit to Erbil (KRG-UK).

The KRG started to reach out to countries and attract their attention through available means, such as oil and gas. Barham Salih, former KRG PM, emphasized the importance of the region’s natural resources to attract international investors and companies. Before 2003, the KRG had very little experience
in extracting oil and gas (KRG, 2010). Mustafa pointed out that the region started with its neighbors and among the first countries to deal with it was Turkey. Mustafa stated, “We have energy, and they need it” (Mustafa and Huda, 2017). In 2009, the Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu visited the IKR with a delegation of businessmen and officials to announce Turkey’s decision to open a consulate in Erbil (Morelli and Pischedda, 2014). Later, in October 2010 the Turkish Republic opened a consulate general in Erbil. “We changed confrontation to cooperation,” said Mustafa (Mustafa and Huda, 2017). Due to the openness of the region to trade and investment on one side and promoting attractive energy investment, many international oil companies found their way to the IKR. At present, there are 27 oil companies from 13 different countries that operate in Kurdistan. This includes energy giants, such as Exxon Mobil, Chevron, Gazprom, and Rosneft. Crude oil is exported through a pipeline from the region to Turkey’s Cihan port (Anadolu, 2014).

When companies, such as Exxon Mobil, sign contracts with a region, like Kurdistan, it is “seen as a vote of confidence” (Pfeifer, 2011). Foreign investments in the energy sector opened new opportunities for the KRI’s broader engagement with the international community.

The KRG uses its economic attractiveness to create a solid basis for establishing ties with foreign countries. In other words, the KRG uses its natural resources and business opportunities not only to build a strong economy but also to engage in political interaction with a view to gaining international support for possible secession.

4.2. Social and Cultural Motivations

One of the highest aspirations any ethnic group entertains is the appreciation and recognition of its identity, language, and culture. In an interview for the purpose of this study, Falah Mustafa, the head of the DFR, stated:

The paradiplomacy of the KRG has many purposes and among these purposes is sharing our culture, our history and gain … empathy and support abroad. We want to make sure through our representatives abroad that crimes committed against the Kurds … we want to tell the world who the Kurds are (Mustafa and Huda, 2017).

He also added that the region wants to show the world how far it has come and how much it has achieved, and in order for Kurdistan to achieve more, it needs support from the international community.

We reached them out, we knocked on their doors, and we broke our isolation by taking part in different events and international festivals (Mustafa and Huda, 2017).

Hence, the KRG is trying to reach out to the international community for recognition through its culture, language, food, and identity. Keating points out that regions and large ethnic groups also seek recognition by taking part in international organizations, for example, UNESCO (Keating, 1999). Therefore, Kurdistan started to renovate the Citadel, the vestige of the most ancient history of the region. After significant efforts deployed by the KRG, in 2014, the Citadel was formally added UNESCO’s list of World Heritage sites (Neurink, 2016).

While promoting culture through paradiplomacy, the Kurds want to present themselves to the world as a modernized and developing nation. Despite all the challenges the KRG faces, it offers shelter to thousands of refugees and IDPs. That is also a very strong message to the outside world. The KRG makes sure to show to the world that the Kurds are peaceful, tolerant, diverse, and hospitable. A significant number of KRG officials use also social media to reach out to the world and share the Kurdish culture.

In other words, the KRG uses various methods and tools to promote its culture and assert its identity internationally.

4.3. Political Motivations

The economic and socio-cultural drives seem secondary and are part the KRG’s main goal to engage with the international community. Minister Mustafa unambiguously said that through economy and culture the KRG provides a basis for its political engagement with other countries: “Today when foreign dignitaries, high-ranking officials or politicians come to visit Iraq they have two places to go - first, Baghdad, second, Erbil” (Neurink, 2016).

As the Kurdistan Region decided on its own volition to stay with Iraq after 2003, it expected to be more involved in international affairs but did not have secession plans. After 2005, however, Baghdad was dragged into sectarian conflicts; the Shia-Sunni civil war has reached its highest level in 2014–2016 and even now does not seem to fully subside. Meanwhile, the Kurds stayed away from the sectarian hostilities, busied themselves building their nation and eyed the international community (Cockhurun, 2010).

After 2014 paradiplomacy activities intensified as a result of ISIS’s threat. In a sense, the advent of ISIS brought
the Kurdistan Region back into the spotlight of the global media (Aladd in and Huda, 2017). Since ISIS posed a significant threat not only to the Middle East but also to global order, various countries showed support for the Region and the Peshmerga, its armed forces. ISIS’s direct confrontations with the Peshmerga presented an excellent opportunity to attract the international community’s attention to the Kurdistan question and the idea of self-determination came up naturally, as the Iraqi army failed to defend the Kurdish territory. It is interesting to note that ISIS invasion of several other Iraqi provinces did not cause much of the international community’s outcry. However, when the militants approached the Kurdistan region, the international reaction was well pronounced. The KRG estimated that the international community showed its particular interest in Kurdistan and its protection. Paradiplomacy seems to have paid a significant role in achieving this change of attitude.

In 2014 the Peshmerga were the only forces on the ground fighting ISIS in the region; in addition, the KRG was engaged in an enormous humanitarian assistance campaign, hosting refugees from Syria and cities of Iraq who fled to Kurdistan after ISIS captured their homes. As a result, various foreign governments dispatched delegations to the region. Even UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon paid a visit to the region; others followed suit - the foreign ministers of Canada visited twice the region during that year, as well as the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Germany, Italy, Czech Republic, UK, and France. French President François Hollande also visited the region in September 2014. This diplomatic marathon continued in 2015 (DFR Website, 2017). This is something that had never happened before in the Kurdistan region’s history. The KRG perceived it as a clear sign of how successful the KRG was to build good relations with the outside world (Mustafa and Huda, 2017).

In June 2014, the Peshmarga forces liberated Kirkuk city from ISIS occupation and established control over a significant part of the oil-rich Kirkuk province, one of the disputed territories claimed by both Erbil and Baghdad. In a joint news conference in Erbil with William Hague, the British foreign secretary, Barzani plainly announced that “Kirkuk is Kurdistan.” He went on, “We waited for 10 years for Baghdad to solve Article 140,” referring to the constitutional provision on the resolution of disputed territories. “Now it is done because the Iraqi army pulled out and our Peshmerga forces had to step in. Hence, now, the problem is solved. There will be more no more conversation about it” (Abdel-Hamid, 2014).

In its attempt to capitalize on obvious successes in the international arena, the KRG, led by President Barzani, launched a referendum of independence in the region, including in the disputed territories liberated by the Peshmerga. In early April 2017, a joint high-level meeting of the two main parties, KDP and PUK, took place. The meeting was presided by President Masoud Barzani with the goal of holding a referendum this year. They discussed forming a joint committee to prepare for the referendum. During his meeting with the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, President Barzani stated that “Kurdistan Region will soon hold a referendum on independence to show the will of the people to the world” (Bas News Website, 2017). This is well in line with Keating’s view that one of the main political motivations for a region of a sub-state entity to practice paradiplomacy is their aspiration toward statehood through preparing international opinion and seeking friends who might be potential supporters at an early stage (Keating, 1999).

After the decision to hold a referendum on independence was made, the DFR instructed its representatives abroad to publicize the idea of Kurdish self-determination and to prepare the hosting countries for Kurdish independence: “We do not want to surprise them, said, Minister Mustafa, they must be prepared” (Mustafa and Huda, 2017).

While various scholars and analysts do not consider the KRG’s paradiplomacy as aiming at secession, our findings challenge this view and demonstrate that one of the main underlying motives of the KRG paradiplomacy is the political plan to break away from the Iraqi federation.

5. CONCLUSION

In this study, we attempted to explain how the activism in the international arena of subnational units may be driven by secessionist intentions. The literature review helped us develop a theoretical explanatory framework that drew extensively on Keating’s and Lecours ideas which significantly guided us in this project.

We examined the motivations behind the KRG’s activism in the international arena and looked at its economic, social, and cultural, as well as political aspects. The KRG employs various tools for paradiplomacy: (1) The Department of Foreign Relations, (2) the KRG representative offices abroad, and (3) the foreign diplomatic missions in Erbil.

We argued that the KRG is driven in its international activism not so much by economic considerations and factors of
economic interdependence, but mostly by political motivations - preparing grounds for independence, making sure that the international community will be supportive when it happens.

Our findings show that the KRG does use paradiplomatic actions to pave the road for an independent Kurdish state. That is particularly evident from our analysis of the DFR’s activities. Even when developing economic links, using natural resources, the KRG pursue its political agenda. Our findings also suggest that the KRG has significantly succeeded in its efforts in the international arena, as its officials are well respected by the international community and maintain good relations with the leaders with the world’s powerful countries, such as the US, UK, Turkey, and France.

Finally, our findings suggest that the direct statements on secession and self-determination of Kurdistan and seceding from Iraq by the KRG President, Prime minister and the Head of DFR, as well as many other officials is a clear sign of the plans behind its paradiplomatic activities. Our observations stand as proof that the economic, social and cultural as well as political activities of the KRG - all aimed at secession and securing international support. If a subnational unit is extremely active in international relations, it most likely has secession in its plans. We hope that these findings are generalizable and thereby add to the literature and theory of federalism and secession.

REFERENCES


Available from: https://www.ft.com/content/4e4f860-0bda-11e1-9861-00144feabdc0.


en/news/8a7efc5f-084e-413b-ba06-c4231b560f81/Peshmerga-to-receive-weapons-from-France. [Last accessed on 2017 Apr 07].


Author Guidelines

I. MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

Preliminary submission:
The manuscript needs to be prepared electronically in a Word (.doc, .docx, .rtf), then sent via the online submission system after registration. The Word (.doc, .docx, .rtf) file format is of one column double-spaced page, Times New Roman font type, and 12 p font size. The main title font size is 24 p. The submission should be in the English language. Referencing and Citation must be according to APA style. Do not type authors names and affiliations for the sake of blind peer review. The authors names and affiliations should be submitted completely during the paper submission and they cannot be changed after paper acceptance.

Final Submission:
After the manuscript acceptance, the production team at the UKHJSS will format the manuscript according to the journal final-stage template (camera-ready paper).

Units of Measurement:
Units of measurement should be presented simply and concisely using System International (SI) units.

Abstract:
The manuscript should contain an abstract. The abstract should be self-contained and citation-free and should not exceed 200 words.

Introduction:
This section should be succinct, with no subheadings.

Materials and Methods:
This part should contain sufficient detail so that all procedures can be repeated. It can be divided into subsections if several methods are described.

Results and Discussion:
This section may each be divided by subheadings or may be combined.

Conclusions:
This should clearly explain the main conclusions of the work highlighting its importance and relevance.

Acknowledgements:
All acknowledgments (if any) should be included at the very end of the paper before the references and may include supporting grants, presentations, and so forth.

References:
References must be included in the manuscript and authors are responsible for the accuracy of references. Manuscripts without them will be returned. UKHJSS is following APA System of Referencing.

Preparation of Figures:
Upon submission of an article, authors are supposed to include all figures and tables in the file of the manuscript. Figures should be supplied as a bitmap format (TIF, GIF, JPEG, etc.). Bitmap images should be of 300 dpi resolution at least unless the resolution is intentionally set to a lower level for scientific reasons. If a bitmap image has labels, the image and labels should be embedded in separate layers.
Preparation of Tables:
Tables should be cited consecutively in the text. Every table must have a descriptive title and if numerical measurements are given, the units should be included in the column heading. Vertical rules should not be used.

Equations:
Equations should be numbered consecutively. An Equation should be cited in the text by the word Equation and its number only [e.g., "see Equation (1)"] If referring to two or more equations in the same sentence, each should be named separately. For example, use "see Equation (1), Equation (2), and Equation (3)," instead of "see Equation (1) through (3)."

English Grammar:
To save the time of our reviewers, authors are encouraged to use grammar check software or find the help of a native speaker to proofread the manuscript before submission.

Original Contribution:
The originality of the scientific contribution should be clearly stated in the manuscript.

Plagiarism:
We use plagiarism detection. According to Oxford on-line dictionary, Plagiarism means: The practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’s own. The Editorial Board of UKHJS journal will check any case of plagiarism on its own merits. If the plagiarism is detected, either by the editor or peer reviewer at any stage before publication of the manuscript - before or after acceptance, during editing or at page proof stage, we will alert the author(s), asking him/her to either rewrite the text or quote the text exactly and to cite the original text. If at least 15% of the original submission is plagiarised, UKHJS has the right to reject the manuscript.

Effective Writing:
Effective writing is readable — that is, clear, accurate, and concise. When you are writing a paper, try to get your ideas across in such a way that the audience will understand them effortlessly, unambiguously, and rapidly. To this end, strive to write in a straightforward way. There is no need to write about science in unusual, complicated, or overly formal ways in an effort to "sound scientific" or to impress your audience. If you can tell a friend about your work, you are off to a good start. (see more on this topic at nature.com).

II. JOURNAL SECTIONS
Articles section is for original research articles present a scientific advance. These manuscripts should present well-rounded studies reporting innovative advances that further knowledge about a topic of importance to the fields of Social Sciences. The conclusions of the Original Research Article should clearly be supported by the results. These can be submitted as a full-length article (no more than 6000 words, 8 figures, 6 tables) with Abstract should not exceed 200 words. Original Research Articles contain at least five sections:

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Materials and Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion

Review Articles:
provide a reasoned survey and examination of a particular subject of research in the fields of Social Sciences. These can be submitted a long review (no more than 6,000 words, 8 figures, and 6 tables). They should include a critical assessment of the works cited, explanations of conflicts in the literature, and analysis of the field. The conclusion
must discuss in detail the limitations of current knowledge, future directions to be pursued in research, and the overall importance of the topic in Social Sciences. The Abstract should not exceed 200 words. Reviews contain four sections:

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Topics (with headings and subheadings)
- Conclusions and Outlook

Letters:
Letters are original research articles present scientific advance. These manuscripts should present well-rounded studies reporting innovative advances that further knowledge about a topic of importance to the fields of Social Sciences. The Letter can be submitted as a Brief Communication (no more than 2,500 words, 3 figures, 2 tables). The Abstract should not exceed 150 words. Letters contain five sections:

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Materials and Methods
- Results
- Discussion

III. COPYRIGHT NOTICE
Authors who publish with this journal agree to the following terms:

1. Authors retain copyright and grant the journal right of first publication with the work simultaneously licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution License [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0] that allows others to share the work with an acknowledgment of the work's authorship and initial publication in this journal.

2. Authors are able to enter into separate, additional contractual arrangements for the non-exclusive distribution of the journal's published version of the work (e.g., post it to an institutional repository or publish it in a book), with an acknowledgment of its initial publication in this journal.

3. Authors are permitted and encouraged to post their work online (e.g., in institutional repositories or on their website) after publication, as it can lead to productive exchanges, as well as greater citation of published work.

§ § §
Indexing
The UKH Journal of Social Sciences (UKHJSS) is a biannual, peer reviewed, and open access journal published by the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr in Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq. As a member of ROAD (e-ISSN: 2520-7806) and CrossRef agency (DOI: 10.25079/issn.2520-7806) with LOCKSS and CLOCKSS archiving policies, UKHJSS provides a scientific podium for communicating original research and significant theoretical and methodological contributions in relevant fields of humanities and social science. In so doing, the journal commits to the highest standards and follows best international practices in the registration, reviewing, editing, production, and publishing stages of all submitted manuscripts. The journal accepts scholarly contributions in the form of articles, review articles, and letters. No article processing charge (APC) is required. We invite interested researchers to submit their works to https://journals.ukh.edu.krd/index.php/ukhjss to benefit from the open access and continuous online publication within the Creative Commons platform (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).

**Issue Highlights**

* Correlating Diversity of Cultures and Organisation Performance in Kurdistan Region of Iraq: An Empirical Study
  George O. Tasie

* Analysis of Pay Inequality and its Impacts on Growth and Performance in the Korean Manufacturing Industry Post Asian Financial Crisis
  Almas Heshmati, Yunhee Kim

* Beneath the Surface of the Kurdistan Independence Referendum
  Vahid Nick Pay

* Parameters Inducing Motivational Surges in Second Language Learning
  Zana Ibrahim

* Constitutional Rights and Liberties in the Islamic Republic
  Vahid Nick Pay

* The United Nations and the Kurds
  Michael M. Gunter

* Aiming at Secession
  Alex Danilovich, Huda S. Abdulrahaman

www.ukh.edu.krd