ISN

Tania Jonaid Saleh

Identity, Belonging and Political Activism

A Study on Young Adults Among the Kurdish Diaspora in Norway

Candidate: 9011
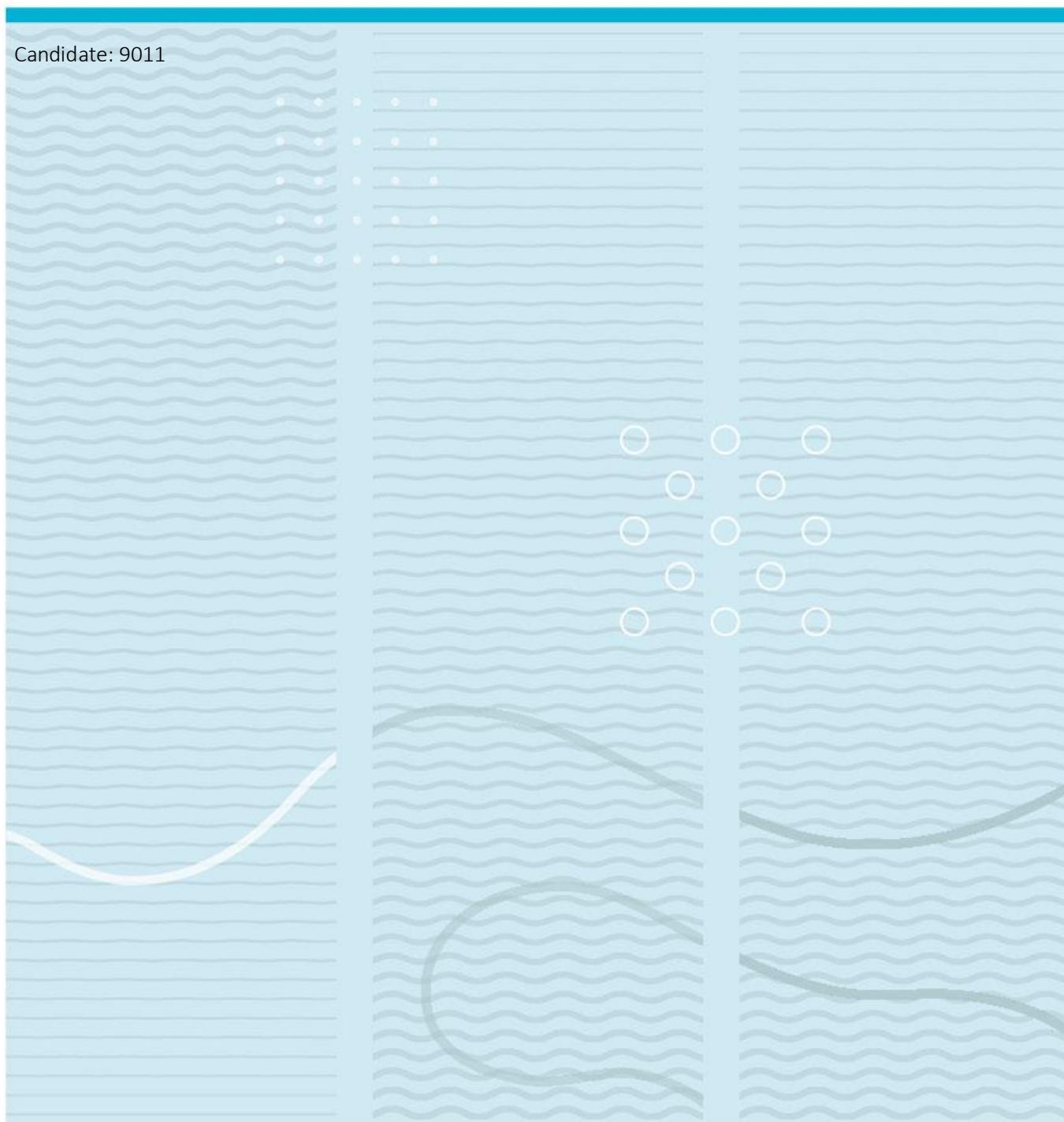
This thesis is worth 45 study points

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the people that supported me in the process of writing this thesis, and it would not have been the same without you.

First of all, I would like to thank my amazing supervisor Dr. Gabriela Mezzanotti from the bottom of my heart for supporting me and guiding me throughout the writing, and for constantly pushing me to strive towards the best of my ability. I could not have done this without her and I will forever be grateful to her.

To all the participants who volunteered to be part of this research, I would like to thank you all for sharing your experiences, feelings and reflections with me which contributed greatly to my work.

Also, a huge thank you to all my friends for always being there for me and supporting me throughout our countless library sessions. We had our difficult times and struggles, but at the same time, so much fun! Truly memories for life.

Last, but not at all least, I would like to thank my family for being so supportive throughout these past two years. I really don't know what I would have done without you.

Tania Jonaid Saleh
University of South-Eastern Norway
May 15, 2023

Abstract

Since the mid-20th century, Kurdish people have emigrated to the west due to political issues, oppression and wars which led to the development of a strong diasporic community outside of their native Kurdistan. This included emigration to Norway where a noticeable diaspora has developed. Many generations of Kurds have now, therefore, been raised outside their ancestral homeland which may have affected their sense of identity, belonging, as well as political activism supporting Kurdistan. The purpose of this study is to understand the conceptions of identity and belonging, as well as potential involvement in transnational political activity towards Kurdistan among young Kurdish adults in the diaspora in Norway. Through theories such as translocational positionality (Anthias), transnationalism (Vertovec), as well as time and migration (Cwerner), the data extracted from individual interviews with young Kurdish adults is analyzed aiming to answer the following research questions: how do young adults of the Kurdish diaspora in Norway perceive the Kurdish issue, and what is the role of political activism among them? How do young Kurdish adults identify themselves and their sense of belonging, and how does the Kurdish issue, and their political activism towards that cause, affect their positionality?

Growing up in Norway, and between two cultures, both enriches their sense of identity and belonging, as well their political engagement, and reshapes everything through the effect of the host country and the ancestral homeland. At the same time, the concepts overlap and affect each other. This study confirms that fluidity in identity and belonging is prevalent, and the majority of the young Kurdish adults that participated in this study do not feel like they identify with one group or belong in one place completely. Yet, their sympathy and identification with Kurds and Kurdistan is still strong which has enhanced political engagement towards the Kurdish issue – mainly through social media and civic action in Norway.

Keywords: Identity, Belonging, Political Activism, Diaspora, Translocational Positionality, Transnationalism, Social Media

Contents

List of Acronyms

PKK – Kurdistan Workers' Party

YPG – People's Protection Unit

KRI – Kurdistan Region of Iraq

US – United States (of America)

IS – Islamic State

HDP – People's Democratic Party

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

EU – European Union

IT – Information Technology

Sikt – Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research

NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data

1 Introduction

Migration across borders has become more and more prevalent in the modern age we live in, and it is not uncommon for people to live outside of their ancestral homelands for various reasons including economy, politics, war, and also out of free will. This has therefore transformed the world and made many people live transnational lifestyles. In addition, it has also changed the way in which individuals and groups across the world, including diasporas, perceive the notion of identity and belonging, as well as how they go about their transnational activities and how they keep in connection with the homeland.

Identity and belonging, as well as transnational political activism, is all shaped through the memories and experiences of the homeland, as well as the host country through new knowledge and new practices. Diaspora communities shape new identities and new senses of belonging through the mix of their commonalities with traits of the host country. Especially the younger generations that are born to parents that immigrated or that emigrated at a younger age are bound to be affected by both the worlds they are exposed to, which in turn can have an effect on how they identify themselves and where they feel like they belong, as well as any activity they do towards their ancestral homeland.

In connection to this, I will explore the conceptions of identity and belonging, as well as their potential involvement in transnational political activity towards Kurdistan among young Kurdish adults in the diaspora in Norway, and the effect of this on their positionality. This will be analyzed through theories such as translocational positionality, transnationalism, as well as time and migration, among others, as well as through the literary works of other scholars in the field that have explored this topic – which will help me see the differences and similarities between my work and theirs, as well as to underline my own findings.

1.1 Background of the Study

The Kurdish diaspora has kept a strong and continuous relation to Kurdistan despite the political circumstances there. This has also made them want to influence politics in the homeland, as well as be active towards it, which has made the Kurdish identity stronger and given them a sense of purpose while out in the world (Wahlbeck, 1999).

Being part of a diaspora in a new homeland or host country, young Kurdish adults have been exposed by the older generation to memories of oppression and war in the homeland,

while, at the same time, also gaining experiences through the daily life of growing up in the Norwegian society. Having one foot in each culture comes with positive and negative connotations, and has an effect on them in many ways, as well as how they express their background. Young Kurdish adults use their diaspora community in Norway to socialize, as well as unite in times of hardship in Kurdistan to create awareness through different methods. They express and strengthen their Kurdish identity and sense of belonging through that, to various extents.

Therefore, in this research, it is important that I express my views and define the positions we take as researchers from a given study which ultimately determine how we conduct research and what results are achieved. As a researcher, of course, I play an important role in all aspects of the research process, but also in the data collection. In my case, the role is even more important because I am a part of the young Kurdish diaspora. As an ethnic Kurd who was born and raised in Norway, I have been able to acknowledge more fully the issues, thoughts and actions of the younger diaspora members. I often find myself having the same questions, experiences and feelings as everyone else who came to Norway at a young age, or born here after their parents arrived. My positionality, therefore, played an essential role in my motivation to conduct this research.

1.2   Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Based on the background of the research, I would like to look at young adults among the diaspora in Norway, their political activism regarding the Kurdish issue and their struggle, and their sense of belonging/identity. Through my thesis I will try to explore and answer two aspects of the chosen topic with the following questions:

1. How do young adults of the Kurdish diaspora in Norway perceive the Kurdish issue, and what is the role of political activism among them?
2. How do young Kurdish adults identify themselves and their sense of belonging, and how does the Kurdish issue, and their political activism towards that cause, affect their positionality?

As apparent from the literature review later on, there is a limited amount of research on this specific topic. The gap is even bigger when it comes to the Kurdish diaspora in Norway. The studies that do exist are mostly about the Kurdish diaspora in either other countries or in Norway, but centered around a different focus point such as women or integration for example.

Therefore, I think it is important to explore the Kurdish diaspora in Norway, and specifically young Kurdish adults and their view on political activism, identity and belonging – and their intersection.

1.3   Research Objectives and Relevance of Study

The first question will try to explore political activism among young Kurdish adults, their transnational engagement and motivation, and the methods they use to shed light on the Kurdish issue. The second question will look more closely at identity and belonging, and how young diaspora adults feel about this personally, as well as how their close or distant relationship with Kurdistan affects their activism and positionality. Many previous scholars have covered the topic of diaspora Kurds (or first-generation Kurds) and their political activism, but not many have explored the younger generation of Kurds outside of Kurdistan, or even in Norway. The reason might be that it is a new area of exploration due to the fact that these generations of young Kurds are now old enough to speak for themselves. The first generation of the diaspora that started arriving in the west from the 1950s and on would promote the Kurdish cause, and their right to self-determination, through other means such as publication of articles, protests and lobbying. The second and third generations are different, and have access to other channels to drive their activism, which I will further explore.

1.4   Historical Background and Context

The Kurds are an ethnic group native to the mountainous region called Kurdistan, divided between Türkiye, Syria, Iraq and Iran. It is said that Kurds are the largest ethnic group in the world without their own state, a reality that has been fought against vigorously since the Treaty of Lausanne was signed in 1923 which set the boundaries of modern-day Türkiye (Republic of Türkiye), and which left the rest of Kurdistan in the hands of newly established countries under British and French mandate (United Nations, 2021). There are also exclaves of Kurds in central Anatolia and in the Caucasus, as well as significant Kurdish communities in Istanbul (the largest Kurdish community outside of Kurdistan), former Soviet states, Israel, as well as in the west. Roughly half of the Kurdish population today live in Türkiye, and the rest is divided between the three other countries, as well as outside of Kurdistan (United Nations, 2021).

When the Republic of Türkiye was established, the Kurds in the east of the country rose up against the state, but their fight for an independent Kurdistan was met with great force and

increased oppression, and until recently, practicing Kurdish culture and speaking Kurdish was banned. Still, even though the situation is currently better, Kurds are still being oppressed. As a consequence, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) was established to fight a guerilla war against the Turkish state, a group that initially fought for independence, but that now claim that their goal is simply more autonomy within the borders of Türkiye (United Nations, 2021).

Kurds in Syria are the biggest minority, and they have been a great force in the ongoing civil-war in the country with the People's Protection Unit (YPG) militia in the front. They've taken control over vast areas in North-Syria that are part of Kurdistan, and they are looked upon by both Syria and Türkiye as a territorial threat. There has, therefore, been invasions by Türkiye into this area called Rojava (meaning "west" in Kurdish) (United Nations, 2021). Historically, they've been oppressed by the Syrian regime and have not enjoyed the same rights as the majority in the country. In 1962, a unique census stripped roughly 120,000 Kurds, which made up about 20 percent of the Kurdish population in Syria at the time, of their Syrian citizenship. They became stateless, and with no right to another citizenship. The reason for this was to expose how many Kurds had illegally crossed the border between the Syrian and Turkish part of Kurdistan. Kurds, therefore, had to prove that they had lived in Syria at least since 1945, or they would lose their Syrian citizenship. This was part of a plan to Arabize the resource-rich northeast of the country, an area which is predominantly Kurdish, but that also incorporate other minorities in smaller numbers (Human Rights Watch , 1996).

In Iraq, the situation was dire as well, especially during the reign of dictator Saddam Hussein. His regime used, among other methods, chemical weapons against the Kurds which led to the death of about 120 000 civilians, and these campaigns have been recognized as genocides by the international community. The violence was especially severe during the first Gulf War (Iran-Iraq war) in the 1980s, as well as during the second Gulf War and the invasion of Kuwait in 1991. However, after Iraq's defeat in the second Gulf War, the United States (US) encouraged the Kurds stand up against Saddam's regime and a no-fly zone was established to cut off the Iraqi Airforce. With that, the Kurds managed to establish their own parliament under an autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) in 1992. The autonomy was later, after the US invasion of Iraq and the toppling of Saddam Hussein in 2003, officially written into the Iraqi constitution. However, in 2014, a new threat emerged when the Islamic State (IS) was established and conquered swaths of Kurdish, Iraqi and Syrian land – a threat also faced by Kurds in Syria which led to a fight against the Islamic group parallel to their fight against the

Syrian regime. Fortunately, they fought back and defeated IS on both sides of the border. In addition, in 2017, the KRI held an independence referendum which the surrounding countries were strongly against, and although it didn't bring about any positive changes in the situation of the Kurds, it showed that the people were clearly in favor of independence (United Nations, 2021).

Kurds in Iran make up about 10 percent over the overall population, and have lived under oppression and occasional attacks from the Iranian state. The Kurds have especially been in opposition to the Islamic regime that has ruled the country since 1979, and more recently, the situation intensified when a young Kurdish woman called (in official Iranian documents) Mahsa Amini, her Kurdish name being Jina, was killed by the morality police in the country. Therefore, the Kurds were partially blamed by the regime for the uprisings that started in the fall of 2022 (United Nations, 2021).

Due to the different and difficult circumstances of the Kurds in all these four states, it has led millions of them to seek refuge beyond the borders, and especially to western countries. Kurds from Türkiye started emigrating to western Europe as labor migrants already in the late 1950s, and in even bigger numbers in the early 1960s. Therefore, because of these early arriving labor migrants, Kurds from Türkiye constitute today the majority of the Kurds in Europe – although many other countries in the west have significant numbers of Kurdish migrants from Iraq, Iran and also Syria. Also, many Kurdish students and academics came as well in the 1960s and onwards from all four parts of Kurdistan, and they have for many decades been a great force in political and cultural activities of the diaspora (Wahlbeck, 2017). The labor migration came to an end in the late 1970s when western European countries stopped recruiting workers, but this didn't mean an end to Kurdish emigration to the continent, and the next wave of Kurds started emigrating in the 1980s. These were mostly refugees and asylum seekers from Iraq, Iran and Syria that came as a consequence of the various political issues going on, as well as wars that were raging in those countries. This new wave of refugees and asylum seekers increased the number of Kurds in the west drastically (Wahlbeck, 2017).

Thousands of Kurds, therefore, live in Norway today, which is where my study is set. Unfortunately, due to the Kurds being classified as Iraqis, Iranians, Turks and Syrians when arriving in Norway and in official documents, there is no real number on how many of them have immigrated to the country. It is also hard to tell when the first Kurds immigrated to Norway, but it is estimated that most of them came before 2000, and that they were mostly

refugees or asylum seekers, but at the same time, also labor migrants (Nomat, 2019). However, Statistics Norway (SSB or Statistisk Sentralbyrå) still recognizes that many of the refugees from Iraq, especially, were Kurds that came due to the wars, prosecution and unrest there (Statistisk Sentralbyrå - SSB, 2016).

The Kurdish diaspora is now most likely the biggest stateless diaspora in the world, and their political activism has created awareness around the Kurdish cause in many countries in Europe, most evidently. The diaspora has organized its political efforts as the product of conflict, and aims at influencing a resolution to the issue. In the increasingly globalized world we live in, it has become much easier to influence and lobby policy-makers and institutions from afar – as what diaspora communities aim at doing (Baser B. , 2022). Kurds have faced challenges for the past 100 years, and they are continuous today although dynamics have changed based on the circumstances. Throughout these decades, the Kurdish question has mostly been treated as a domestic issue and a security problem in the four countries they reside. Therefore, the Kurds found themselves separated from each other socially, economically and culturally, and their identities were reshaped based on that. Even the national movements that arose were a result of this fragmentation. However, after the establishment of the autonomous KRI in 1992, and Kurdish rule in Rojava in Syria, the situation took a different turn and it triggered cross-border mobilization. The main elements in this have been migration, armed struggle, border trade and business, and the media – this last element allowed the Kurds across the four states, and internationally, to communicate with each other even more. The emergence of IS and the role that the Kurds played in the struggle against them also allowed for an opportunity for Kurdish political actors to act on the political scene on behalf of the Kurdish people, with political and military support from the US, in addition to European states (Yilmaz, 2018).

Still, however, there have been setbacks recently in all four parts of Kurdistan. The independence referendum held in the KRI in 2017 also aimed at expanding control to disputed territory between them and the Iraqi central government in Baghdad. Instead, the Peshmerga military forces of the KRI lost 40 percent of the disputed territory they were already controlling which was a great setback for the region. In addition, it seems as though international support for Kurds in Iraq has been limited to them being good fighters, but nothing more than that. In Syria, the process of establishing an autonomous Kurdish region (Rojava), similar to the KRI, is in ruins, and they are suffering due to the Turkish military invasion. The revolution in Rojava did not meet the hopes and expectations of the Kurds even after so many years of war and

countless killed. In Türkiye, the peace process between the government and the PKK in 2013 collapsed leading to an armed conflict that displaced about 500 000 people. In addition, the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) was forced out of politics through the imprisonment of thousands of its members and mayors, including its co-chairs and members of parliament. In Iran, the Kurds had been relatively quiet since the mid-1990s and the Kurdish political movements could only operate in exile, mainly in the KRI. However, in 2015, they decided to return to an armed struggle with the Iranian regime, and this in turn increased repression and death sentences more than ever (Yilmaz, 2018). The issues are continuous now after the recent uprisings in the country due to Mahsa (Jina) Amini's death (United Nations, 2021).

A peaceful solution to the Kurdish question is seemingly not an achievable goal in the nearest future, and the states occupying Kurdistan are far away from turning into democracies. The Iranian regime is still standing despite the recent uprisings, Iraq is not progressing to the desired level, the Assad regime seems to be surviving, and even Türkiye, although a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) member and potential European Union (EU) member candidate, is becoming more of an autocracy (Yilmaz, 2018). These struggles make it even more clear why the Kurdish diaspora exists in Norway and elsewhere, and why they maintain political activity transnationally, and also how important it is that they do so – and this is, therefore, the backdrop of my study.

2 Literature Review and Context

In this chapter, I will explore previous literature that addresses the Kurdish diaspora and other topics that are closely related to this study, such as historical migration and its context, diaspora, young adults, and political activism in the era of social media. In that way, I intend to shed light on the literature produced on such topics, what kind of research seems to be missing, as well as compare the existing literature. Through this chapter, I intend to show how I can contribute to this field of study.

2.1 Historical Migration from All Four Parts of Kurdistan

Context is important in this study to understand the findings, including the reasons behind the ways young Kurdish adults feel and act in Norway as part of the diaspora, and therefore, it is important to explore texts that explain the migration history and patterns of the Kurds to the west. However, Kurdish migration cannot be put under one umbrella, and since Kurdistan is divided into four parts, the patterns of all four groups need to be explained through previous literature. As Kurds have been forcefully incorporated into four very different countries, their circumstances can also differ a lot based on that.

Kurds from the Iraqi incorporated part of Kurdistan started emigrating already in the 1970s as Erlend Paasche (2020) explains, and most people that did during that time were political and military elites that were fleeing prosecution in an Iraq that was under heavy dictatorship. This era of dictatorship lasted, for the Kurds, between 1974 and 1991 under various leaders. There was conflict in the Kurdish areas already in the 1960s when the Peshmerga (former Kurdish guerrilla, now official army of the KRI) began its war against the Iraqi government and the Arab south, but the civil war ended in 1974 when they were defeated by the Iraqis which lead to a mass exodus of elite families and politically active families, mostly to Iran. This emigration remained an elite phenomenon until the 1990s (Paasche, 2020).

The second wave of emigration started in 1992 after the second Gulf war, and this era included people from all social and economic backgrounds due to the economic crisis that hit the KRI. After Iraqi troops withdrew from the region, Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein cut the Kurds off from receiving their salaries and imposed a blockade on the KRI, which ultimately lead to the economic crisis which pushed thousands of Kurds towards the west (Paasche, 2020).

The third wave of emigration was between 1999-2014 where there were still high numbers of asylum seekers to the west, despite the fact that the economy was going in the right direction in the KRI, and despite the chances of getting the asylum application rejected. The chances of this in Norway, as well, was high (Paasche, 2020). A sudden restrictive approach against Iraqi Kurds was even described by Norway's Minister of Justice in 1999 as "a powerful message to those wishing to exploit the asylum institution" (Paasche, 2020, p. 199). It seemed as though the reason was mostly that not following the example of established migrants from the 1990s and earlier was seen as missing out, and migratory behavior had spread to the Kurds at the lower end of the socioeconomic hierarchy (Paasche, 2020).

Kurds from Türkiye started emigrating to western Europe when there was an increased demand for labor from the 1950s and onwards, but that gradually stopped in the 1970s. However, it did not stop Kurdish emigration, and in the 1980s, there was a coup d'état in Türkiye that caused political turmoil that ultimately led more people to seek a new life abroad, many of them journalists and independent writers. In fact, Kurdish intellectuals had been fleeing Türkiye since the 1970s. In the 1990s, Türkiye did a similar counter-insurgency against its Kurdish population as Iraq had previously done, when they destroyed thousands of villages due to the fight with the PKK. Death squads killed thousands of Kurdish intellectuals that included politicians, lawyers, journalists and important community leaders. Millions were displaced, and many left their villages for bigger cities in western Türkiye, as well as thousands of them seeking political asylum in western Europe as well (Bruinessen, 2000).

From Syria, Kurdish students began arriving in the west in the 1960s alongside Kurds from the three other parts of Kurdistan, though in smaller numbers as they constitute a smaller, yet significant, part of Syria's total population. Smaller numbers of them emigrated later on as well, but not comparable to the significant numbers that came about after the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011 (Wahlbeck, 2017). From Iran, the numbers are, again, not as significant as the Kurdish diaspora from Türkiye and Iraq, but still, however, there has been a flow of emigrants from there due to the Islamic revolution in 1979 that caused political turmoil, and the regime which is still in place today (Wahlbeck, 2017).

These waves of migration to Europe, especially, apply very much to Norway as well as the country has been one of the top destinations for Kurdish asylum seekers and migrants alongside the UK, Netherlands, Germany and Sweden (Paasche, 2020). As mentioned earlier, however, there is unfortunately little to no statistics on how many Kurds live in Norway, when

they first arrived, or any other migration patterns to Norway due to them being included under other nationalities, and not registered based on ethnicity (Nomat, 2019). That makes the mapping of the Kurdish diaspora in Norway a bit complicated.

2.2   The Concept of Diaspora

Now that the historical context of Kurdish migration has been explained, it is important to look at how immigrant groups organize themselves outside their homeland in order to understand the dynamics of the young Kurdish adults in Norway. Diaspora is a term widely used to describe a group of people from the same ethnic and/or religious background that hail from the same place, but that are dispersed across different corners of the world for various reasons – some being forced away from their homeland because of prosecution, and some for no brutal reasons at all (Cohen, 1997). Brubaker (2005) explains that there are three core elements that are key in the concept of diaspora: dispersion – being scattered by force or because of traumatic reasons, homeland orientation – a homeland that is the source of loyalty and identity, and boundary maintenance – preserving identity and keeping a line between the diaspora and other ethnic and religious groups (Brubaker, 2005).

The term diaspora was initially coined only referring to the Jewish people and their experience outside of their homeland, and it was mainly used in singular form and not how it is used today (diaspora – diasporas) (Cohen, 2008). On the other hand, Gabriel Sheffer (1986) argues that it is wrong to assume or claim that the term diaspora is only valid for the Jewish people when there have been other ethnic and/or religious groups that were scattered before them, such as the Assyrians in the Middle East or the Phoenicians around the Mediterranean. He also differentiates between two groups within the diaspora – stateless diasporas and state-based diasporas – Kurds being one of the prime examples of stateless diasporas. In the 1960s and 1970s, the term started including Africans, Armenians and the Irish – groups that were scattered across the world due to catastrophic events that traumatized them collectively, and that made the "victim in the hands of the oppressor" experience central to the term (Cohen, 2008).

In addition to Cohen, Michel Bruneau (2010) also explores diaspora, and he proposes three significant, yet different, types of diasporic organization: the entrepreneurial diaspora is where someone emigrates for the development of their business, as many Chinese and Japanese migrants did. The religious diaspora, on the other hand, is diaspora that mainly consists of

immigrants who emigrate for religious purposes such as the Jewish people and Assyrians. Forced migration is very common in this type of diaspora movement as some might be victims of persecution. Similar to that of religious or forced migration is the political diaspora - as the name indicates, and the reason for the emigration of this group of people is normally political, such as the Kurdish diaspora.

At the same time, Cohen (2008) also classified diasporas based on their reason for emigrating, which to some level is similar to what Bruneau has done. The labor diaspora were people who were forced (forced migration) to migrate as slaves and servants to specific countries to work in their plantations, such as Africans and Indians. On the other hand, you had imperial diaspora which referred to the people who emigrated (voluntarily) to other countries and continents to colonize them, such as what the British and Portuguese did. Another classification is the trade diaspora, which is very similar to Bruneau's "the entrepreneurial diaspora", where people emigrate to develop their trade and expand their business. In contrast, you have the cultural diaspora which is more permanent. This diaspora highlights the cultural transformation or acculturation of the immigrants, and the biggest problem that immigrants face in their new homeland or host country is cultural shock. They cannot adapt to or assimilate into the new culture immediately, and it takes a few days, months or even years to settle in.

On the other hand, Alinia and Eliassi (2014) specifically address the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden. They refer to two different generations of Kurds (the first and second generation), and how the older generation tends to stick to their Kurdish identity more with fond memories of oppression in the homeland, while the younger generation tends to be more flexible and have their Kurdish identity parallel to the Swedish. Also, they argue that the political, cultural and economic situation of the diaspora also has a lot to say for their identity and belonging in Sweden. This is very relevant, and a good generational comparison, in regards to my topic and its framework. Kurds are very organized and researched on as a community in Sweden due to the early emigration to the country and the sheer number of them, and in that way, Norway and the young Kurds there might have a different outlook which needs to be explored in this research.

Wahlbeck (2002), in addition, discusses diaspora as an analytical tool in the study of refugee communities, such as the Kurdish diaspora. The Kurdish diaspora community is largely a continuation of patterns in the homeland, even though they are affected by, and transformed, in the host country. Political loyalties in the homeland are important to refugees, and strong

political alignment with the ancestral homeland is different from relations other immigrants have with their homelands. He explains four different ways of using the concept of diaspora to describe refugees' transnational social relations. First of all, the concept has been looked upon as useful in explaining deterritorialization of identities, as well as displacement geographically – which also relates to Vertovec (1999) and diasporic consciousness as I will explain later in the theoretical chapter. Secondly, the meaning of diaspora is seen as a mode of cultural production (Vertovec, 1997). The third point is that the concept of diaspora has also been utilized to highlight the political aspect of modern diasporas (Shain 1999; Shain and Sherman 1998; Sheffer 1986, 1995). Fourthly, diaspora is seen as a form of social organization, and can be regarded as a unique transnational community (Cohen 1995, 1997; Faist 2000; Van Hear 1998; Wahlbeck 1999). He explains that "the concept of diaspora can relate both to the homeland and the host society, and can bridge the gap between the periods before and after migration. Thus, the concept, with its connection both to the society of origin and the society of settlement, is useful for understanding the complexity of the social relations of refugee communities" (Wahlbeck, 2002, p. 234).

The term diaspora is important to this study as it explains the reasons why the Kurdish community in Norway, and elsewhere, exists, and their reasons for emigrating. Kurds would, therefore, mostly fall into the category of political diaspora as the overwhelming reason for the existence of their diaspora community is due to political reasons back in Kurdistan, as well as cultural diaspora as it takes a while for any new group in a host country to adapt. This is useful in comprehending the dynamics of young Kurdish adults in the diaspora in Norway in light of identity, belonging and political activism.

2.2.1 Ethnocultural Identity and Belonging

Ethnocultural identity is often times debated within this topic, and was looked upon by Henri Tajfel (2020). Social identity theory, which he developed, is the study of the interaction between personal and social identities. The goal of social identity theory is to specify and foresee the conditions under which individuals think of themselves as individuals or as belonging to a group, for example a diaspora or ethnic group, which is relevant in exploring identity and belonging among young Kurdish adults in Norway. It also reflects on the consequences of personal and social identities for individual observations and group behavior. According to Tajfel's theory, three psychological processes are the center point: social categorization, social comparison, and social identification. Social categorization reflects on the tendency of people

to observe themselves and others in the light of particular social categories – as, for instance, replaceable group members instead of separate and unique individuals. Social comparison is the method where people determine the value or social standing of a specific group and its members. The third one, social identification or actual social identity, reflects more on the idea that individuals generally do not observe social situations as disconnected viewers. On the contrary, their own sense of who they are and how they relate to others is usually implied in the way they view other individuals and groups surrounding them, as Tajfel (2020) explains.

Someone's social identity is, therefore, seen as the result of those three processes described above. Social identity can be defined as an individual's knowledge of belonging to specific social groupings, in addition to some emotional and valuational significance of membership to that group. Hence, while one's personal identity denotes self-knowledge related to unique individual qualities, people's social identity designates who they are in terms of the groups in which they belong to. Ethnocultural identity and everything linked to it, including national, ethnic and cultural roots, go as the most significant values and meanings of an individual. However, they serve as a way of support, and not a limitation. They are also not automatic, self-actuating mechanisms, and their effect on human life is understood only through the autonomy of the subject in relation to them, through the awareness and choice of the person oneself, as Tajfel explains (2020).

Identity, for instance, is a very contested concept, according to Anthias (2008) and it can cover on one hand "core self", and on the other hand, how people are identified by objective measures such as country of birth or mother tongue. This notion also includes identification processes with "others" or "groups", as in Tajfel's (2020) social identity, and is connected to the construction of collectivities and identity politics, both which put the political into the field of identity formation. Again, identity and belonging need to be separated as well, although they are connected on many levels. Many people, especially the ones that have emigrated or children of immigrants, often ask themselves the question of where they belong. It is also a question that comes through others, including institutions and other public spheres, where the purpose is to sort the population in regards to regulation and control. It is represented through the question so many noticeable "outsiders" (skin color, language spoken, accent or even name) get about "where are you really from?" and "where do you really belong?" The issue of belonging, in this way, comes to light through relational ways – the construction of "we" and the construction of "others" – meaning those that cannot stand as selves, or where we are not able to enter the

borderline of the "other" regardless of how much we identify with them. This is one of the clear issues and differences between identity and belonging, and their notions.

Nikielska-Sekula (2016) discusses the importance of cultural heritage among Norwegians of Turkish descent when it comes to their belonging and the concept of home. She did so through the use of the framework of the concept of ethnicity and ethnic boundaries. She defined the concept of belonging as "a lifelong process that has more in common with the concept of identification with groups and places than with an essentialist and rather stable notion of identity", and the concept of home as "a splitting of home as place of origin and home as the sensory world of everyday experience" (Nikielska-Sekula, 2016, p. 97). Through that, she concluded that there is a difference between Alevi Turks (religious minority in Türkiye) and Sunni Turks when it comes to their sense of belonging and identity. Alevi Turks, as they were subjected to discrimination in the homeland, seem to have stronger ties to Norway than Sunni Turks, and they referred to themselves more as members of Norwegian society. In addition, both religious groups have formed their own new cultural patterns through a mix of Turkish and Norwegian influences, where they are not common in neither of the societies, which makes them feel a sense of belonging to a "third place" – an informal community where these patterns are mutually understood. This third space is in Norway and this is where most of them feel like they belong. This understanding of ethnocultural identity, as well as belonging, will be very interesting in regards to the younger generation, where there might be similarities, as well as differences based on historical and political circumstances.

2.3   Kurdish Diaspora Activism in Norway and in the West

As mentioned earlier in this research, the numbers of academic articles and research regarding my specific topic are not many, specifically on Kurds in Norway, but there are still relevant articles and reports to address. In this part, as the concept of diaspora has been explained, I will take a look at the literature regarding political activism, as well as other relevant literature.

Weiss (2018) explores moral outrage in regards to pro-Kurdish activist with the use of an illegal pro-Kurdistan/anti-Türkiye demonstration at Oslo Central Station in Norway as an example, and through in-depth interviews, she argues that moral outrage, frustration, anger and similar outpourings of emotions are central in Kurdish activism among the diaspora in Norway. Weiss also argues that moral outrage is either the trigger emotion to violent protests, or the consequence of making an issue like the mistreatment of Kurds in Türkiye something simple

and unimportant by Norwegian authorities, or any other state (Weiss, 2018). Although this research focuses on the Kurdish diaspora in Norway and their activism, which is relevant to my focus point, it does not specifically focus on the younger generations, but gives a more general overview. Still, however, it is relevant in understanding the behavior and reactions of the Kurds in Norway, and the reasons that trigger reactions from them.

There is more literature on diaspora Kurds and political activism in other countries in the west, and many scholars have covered this topic. Vera Eccarius-Kelly (2002) focuses more on Kurdish rights in Türkiye and activism towards that in the Kurdish diaspora in Europe – while arguing that Kurds have left the idea of self-determination and that they focus more on human rights. She argues that they have succeeded in organizing themselves through the use of Kurdish intellectuals and by political lines, and also through winning at the creation of friction between Türkiye and the EU – as Türkiye is aiming at joining the union, but where human rights abuses and the Kurdish issue are some of the main obstacles. Eccarius-Kelly (2002) focuses more on lobbying and activism along official political lines, rather than Weiss (2018), who focuses more on protests, spontaneous activities, and overall, less organized activism (Eccarius-Kelly, 2002). Her research focuses on an older generation with tactics that I believe differ from what the younger generation are using today in order to support their cause. However, I will need to explore that more in this study to see if it resonates with my data.

Diaspora activism among Kurds in North-America, or Canada more specifically, centers more around community events and are conducted through lobbying, protesting and social events. They do that as to change the narrative of the Kurdish issue which has mostly been framed by the four states Kurdistan has been split into (Tasdemir, 2019). Community centers are used to create a tight-knit diaspora community, but also to share Kurdish history, news and experiences to strengthen Kurdish identity. It was also concluded that Kurds who have first-hand experience of oppression from the homeland tend to have a more politicized Kurdish identity which makes them more politically active and which they then pass on to others in the diaspora. Also, the research showed that knowing the Kurdish language ultimately led to a stronger Kurdish identity, as many in Türkiye, especially, are victims of assimilation policies which has drawn them further away from everything about Kurdistan. This showed that political activism, language and identity are intertwined (Tasdemir, 2019).

Wahlbeck (2002) also discusses the Kurdish diaspora and political activism. He explains that the political situation of the Kurds is quite different in the four parts of Kurdistan

due to the countries that encompass it, and that differences also effect political activities among the diaspora and exiled Kurds. Due to the political disagreement and violence between different Kurdish parties in Iran and Iraq, for instance, many Kurdish refugees in the diaspora feel distanced with Kurdish politics. He describes the Kurdish community as very politicized due to these political divisions, but that they still wish to work actively for the Kurdish cause even living away from the homeland. Political activism has also helped reinforcing identity and a sense of purpose to the Kurdish refugees (Wahlbeck, 1999).

These findings will be relevant in comparison to findings in this study and to see if they resonate to young Norwegian-Kurds in the same way.

2.4 Young Adults and Political Activism

In regards to answering the research questions properly, it is important to explore the relations between young adults and political activism, especially in regards to previous literature that may help situate the study of young Norwegian-Kurds and their positionality. It is understood, and agreed on by many scholars, that youth and young adults are the key in the rise of social movements and organizations, and that early engagement with activism is incredibly important on courses of engagement throughout life, making young people's engagement important to the long-term rise and fall of political movements (Earl, Maher, & Elliott, 2017). Still, there was an increasingly worrying sentiment among scholars that youth and young adults were becoming less politically active, less interested in news and less likely to be members of advocacy groups. However, others have argued that instead, there is a shift in form and that they do no act in the way that previous generations did in the past, and that they incorporate politics into their everyday lives (Earl, Maher, & Elliott, 2017). Also, they engage more in participatory politics, where political news and opinions are expressed, consumed, and reproduced through online social networks (Earl, Maher, & Elliott, 2017). The way they incorporate politics into everyday life and how it is more about participatory politics through online networks should very much be applicable to young Kurdish adults in Norway as well, as they are part of the younger generation that is generally more active on social media.

In addition, it is shown that family, friends, and school systems are neither necessary nor sufficient for political socialization, but, nevertheless, offer raw materials that youth use to advance the knowledge, skills, and confidence to be politically engaged (Earl, Maher, & Elliott, 2017). A different way to look at it is that social networks, friends, and family provide

engagement opportunities, which are raw materials for youth and young adults' own socialization. They can also play indirect, though important, parts in the political socialization progression by facilitating how young people engage with and absorb political information. It also shows that social media and Internet usage can influence this - usage can provide political socialization by presenting another area of influence for friends, family, and schools, or by offering separate opportunities for youth to discuss political issues. Nevertheless, social media and Internet usage are now a crucial way for young people to engage with their family and social networks about activism and political issues – such as the Kurdish issue in this case (Earl, Maher, & Elliott, 2017).

Sevasti-Melissa Nolas, Christos Varvantakis & Vinnarasan Aruldos (2017) also discuss political activism which resonates with the findings of Earl, Maher and Elliott (2017). Political activity is not something that stays static over time, and events that occur over the course of decades can change the dynamics of it. It is clear that "cause oriented activism" has increased significantly in many places around the world, and also transnationally, with new social movements becoming an important area for political mobilization. They also mention value-based approaches that try to understand political activism as people's relationship to the world, and as it being about things that matter to them, and activism here can be understood as challenging social norms. This presents a broader definition of political participation as a response to what suppresses identities and practices which do not comply.

They also look at the "the edges of age", which refers to childhood and older age, in regards to activism, which reframes political socialization as a process throughout life with inter-generational connections. A focus on age, life course and generation, however, introduces new areas of activism. "Engaging with people's relationships to and experiences of time forces us to look for and locate activism in diverse sites challenging and expanding commonly held beliefs about political participation. Communities, schools and colleges, home and family life, and the Internet all emerge as resonant sites of activism" (Nolas, Varvantakis, & Aruldos, 2017, p. 6) they explain. It can be more reasonable to think about political activism as dynamic and fluid practices that span across public and private, and personal and political, with the acceleration of digital technology (Nolas, Varvantakis, & Aruldos, 2017).

Roger Soler-i-Martí (2014) also agrees that there has been a huge change in the methods of political participation and young people's relationship to politics. "Young people vote less and protest more" (Soler-i-Martí, 2014, p. 396) he explains. He also continues on the point

about the acceleration of digital technology (Nolas, Varvantakis, & Aruldos, 2017) where he explains how the general media plays a significant part in linking individuals with politics. More specifically, it is the elevated role of the Internet which offers different ways to access political information. "People can now choose the content and ideological perspectives of their political information from a very long catalogue. Young people are more able to establish a direct relationship with political causes of their interest and have less need for intermediary organizations, parties or institutions due to a greater cognitive mobilization than previous generations" Soler-i-Martí (2014, p. 401) adds.

Curtis (2005), in relation to this, discusses long-distance nationalism, and how nation-building tactics have forced Kurds into exile throughout the past century. Curtis claims that second-generation Kurds in the diaspora tend to be more interested in Kurdistan, Kurdish politics and Kurdish identity than their parents are, and he gives three reasons for that: first, a second-generation Kurd would want an independent homeland for the Kurds and is fully aware of the discrimination their parents have suffered in both the homeland and in the host country – where in both they will always be "the other". Also, children of diaspora Kurds are very often exposed to news from Kurdistan, and become much more aware of their ethnicity and become more nationalistic. The second reason is collective memory of good times back in the homeland, religious believes and the ancestral homeland – all passed down to the second generation which, in turn, effects their identity. The third reason, and one of the most important reasons, is technology and the use of it. Technology has brough the diaspora and their ancestral homeland closer together, and the younger generation are exposed to information that helps increase their interest in their heritage. It also helps them be more active regarding the Kurdish cause and gives them the opportunity to create transnational-interactive communities, as discussed earlier, which leads me over to the next part of the chapter which addresses social media in political activism more specifically, as well as transnationalism.

2.5 Young Adults and Social Media

Activism in the Kurdish diaspora spans transnationally, and with the rise of the use of social media by young adults, it has become even more organized, and the network has become even bigger. At the same time, it has seemingly affected the feeling of identity and belonging among them, as many previous authors have explored, as well as given them a transnational platform for political activity. Toivanen (2016) discusses young Kurds in Finland and political transnationalism as a matter of belonging. Mainly she looks at attachments and various forms

of belonging through transnational political activities, which include self-identification through those actions (ways of belonging), where the imagined homeland of Kurdistan has to do with one's own sense of Kurdishness, as well as young Kurds making their own Kurdishness by belonging to their local Kurdish community and through their activities. She argues that the Kurdish community in Finland is very politicized, which Wahlbeck (2002) also argues, and this has created many diaspora organizations and associations. Toivanen uses three specific themes to explain the case study: diasporic consciousness, cultural preservation/continuation, and boundaries. With diasporic consciousness, she refers to the young diaspora Kurds' sense of obligation to do something for the Kurdish cause and to stand firmly against the historical injustice directed towards Kurdistan. In regards to cultural consciousness/preservation, Kurds wanted to join associations and organizations to learn more about their Kurdish roots and to create a greater sense of Kurdishness. In the last theme about boundaries, she addresses entitlements and statuses as means of political activism among Kurds in Finland (Toivanen, 2016). Since Toivanen is describing and analyzing young Kurds in Finland, which is also a Nordic country like Norway, her findings are very relevant to my topic, but again, there might be differences between the diasporas, and especially young Kurdish adults, in those two countries.

On the other side, you have transnationalism and transnational political engagement among Kurds in Germany, and the political impact of this by the immigrants and refugees on a national and international level. Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) states that Kurds and Turks in Germany engage in all kinds of transnational, homeland, migrant political and immigrant political activities, but there is a profound difference between what their political activities are focused on. While Kurdish activities are more engaged in homeland politics and transnational networks, just as what the Kurds in Finland are focused on, Turkish activities are more towards immigrant political concerns. Kurds challenge minority rights in the homeland and demand ethnic equality for example, and it seems as though the experience as a refugee is a strong motivation to work for democratization in Türkiye. I think similar findings will come up in my research as well in terms of transnational political activity, although my focus is solely on the young Kurdish adults.

Kurdish diaspora activism, and how there is a connection between social movements and diasporas – and their respective studies has also been explored. Baser and Swain (2010) use Sri Lankan Tamils and Kurds as examples to highlight the important points, such as long-distance nationalism, as Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) also discusses through homeland politics

and transnational networks. Diasporas are dependent on the situation and opportunities in their host countries, and they mobilize and lobby to gain the attention of local policy makers as well to shed light on the Kurdish cause and the homeland. Their activities depend also on the situation in the homeland, but is still limited to hunger strikes, protest, campaigns and riots, and sometimes, because of that, there are even rivalries between the Kurds themselves. The part about opportunities in the host country to mobilize politically is a very interesting point that is seemingly overlooked in many of the previous studies and books in this list, and that is certainly a point that can be explored further.

Another element is the use of digital networking in the form of social media as a mean to reach further and wider out, and the Kurdish diaspora seems to be no stranger to the use of it. Menderes Candan and Uwe Hunger (2008) discuss this through nation-building online with a focus on the Kurdish diaspora in Germany. Internet has taken over the role of print media, and through the speed of communication, nation-building is made easier and the maintenance of a "historical home" in Kurdistan is kept alive, as well as creating a broader reach of political ideas. The Kurdish diaspora, through collectively organized political campaigns online, have managed to influence the international political scene. Still, however, there is great activity in the offline world as well where, for example, demonstrations and other political activities are still organized which shows the connection between the diaspora both online and offline. Overall, the diaspora's use of the Internet and social media connects them to the daily politics of the homeland (regardless of which of the four parts of Kurdistan).

Hossein Aghapouri's (2018, p. 5) findings are similar to those of Candan and Hunger, and he discusses how social media has influenced Kurdish nationalism and the nationhood process. He tries to understand "not only how social media have influenced the discourse of Kurdish nationalism in the diaspora, but also how the totality of the notion of Kurdayeti [Kurdish national identity or Kurdishness] has been affected by the growth of Kurdish social media".

The Kurdish diaspora, and their use of social media, has helped maintain and build national awareness beyond mainstream media outlets, and the use of social media and the Internet in general has provided space for more Kurds to be involved and given them a place to address their statehood aspiration. Through the online community, many Kurds have disregarded the artificial borders that have divided Kurdistan and instead created a discourse about a Kurdish state. Another group that is also similar to the Kurds, and whom tend to use

social media for similar purposes, are the Basque people of Spain. They also use the Internet and social media as a tool for their political activism and activities as Raphael Tsavkko Garcia (2018) discusses. He uses the Kurdish diaspora's social media activity and political activism as a comparison, and what he highlights with the Kurdish case is how they use the Internet to maintain their ethnic identity and form political groups to facilitate political action and communication, as well as creating a sense of belonging to a group for Kurdish individuals in the diaspora.

Diaspora, transnationalism and the various communication technologies are linked and they've created new identity forms which divert from the traditional forms that are confined to one place. Mahmod (2019) addresses this connection, and she states that Kurds in the diaspora have developed a new form of consciousness about themselves which transcends borders. They are more aware not only of the differences in identity between the diaspora and the homeland, but between the different diasporas outside of Kurdistan as well. Diasporas are more mobile and differ from populations that are rooted in one nation, and that shows through the Kurds in the west as well that have identities affected by both Kurdishness, but also by the values of the surrounding ethnic or national groups in their host countries. Similar findings might come up in this study as well as people differ and are affected by different aspects of their surroundings, even living in the same country.

The diaspora's use of media and social media is addressed more specifically in further literature as well under the term "digital diaspora". Laguerre (2010) argues that "digital diaspora is an immigrant group or descendants of an immigrant population that uses IT connectivity to participate in virtual networks for contacts for a variety of political, economic, social, religious, and communicational purposes that, for the most part, may concern either the homeland, the host land, or both, including its own trajectory abroad" (Laguerre, 2010, p. 50). As their virtual activity might involve more than just the ancestral homeland or any other specific place, he argues that it is important to highlight what is included under the term "digital diaspora" with three points: first, the term includes immigrants and immigration information technology (IT), as well as networking. Digital diaspora cannot exist without immigration and migration is the only thing that can make a group diasporic. However, the exception is when national borders are redrawn, as in the case of Kurdistan for example. The second point is IT connectivity which is necessary in order for the diaspora to express its digital identity, as well as uphold contact with local and distant contacts. Third, networking is also crucial where you maintain contact with others online in order to function as a virtual community, as well as be

operational. In short words, Laguerre conceives the digital diaspora as the intertwining of the virtual and the reality in the hybrid production of the daily life of an immigrant community (Laguerre, 2010).

"Diasporas may actively promote and recreate homeland identities, and these efforts may be more acute in the absence of a physical homeland" (Brinkerhoff, 2009, p. 151). The Kurdish diaspora in London in the 1990s would broadcast television in the Kurdish language across Europe, as well as into Türkiye at a time where the Kurdish language was banned from television there. In terms of the newer age, and the use of the Internet, she explains through the words of Cristopher Helland (2007) that:

"The internet may be an essential repository of information about the homeland, providing opportunities to continuously educate subsequent diaspora generations, as well as more general publics. Beyond the one-way transmission of information, it also provides an opportunity for diasporans to engage and ask each other questions, clarifying historical points and issues surrounding religious practice, and/or seeking advice for how to reconcile perceived clashes between the homeland culture and the host society. Even further, through the internet, diasporans can put their identities into practice, for example, engaging in online religious ceremonies" (Brinkerhoff, 2009, p. 57).

Mainsah (2011) also addresses identity and the construction of it, but among minority youth in general in Norway. Also here, social media is used as the context and to examine this topic, and to look at how minority youth express themselves and present themselves. Social media gives minority youth a space to express a more multifaceted identity and challenge the mainstream view on migrants through imagery and other methods. However, it is still a challenge to express identity online and there are still restrictions as they are still not seen as belonging to the imagined community of the Norwegian nation. It challenges the postmodern definition that identity is fluid and sees it more as a mask that can be taken on and off. Therefore, she concludes that "the web is not necessarily a terrain of resistance" (Mainsah, 2011, p. 190) and that migrant youth cannot freely pick their identity.

Through the (digital) diaspora communities and their use of, among other methods, social media, transnational political activism can be achieved, and activity maintained, by staying in contact with each other, as well as with relatives and people in their homeland. This form of virtual communication has made network ties and reinforced community relationships,

despite the fact that the people involved are located in various places in the world. With new achievements and developments in Internet and technology, the same people and the same diaspora communities are also increasingly taking advantage of the online world to stay in touch with the ancestral homeland itself, which in turn can increase one's sense of identity and belonging to the Kurdish community and Kurdistan. It "shrinks distances and allows for a level of interactivity and accessibility that has not been available in the past" (Helland, 2007, p. 974).

2.6 Kurdish Diaspora Activism post-2010

Transnationalism and social media have seemingly been somewhat driving forces in activism in the past decade, and it is shown through the increased activity among Kurdish youth and young adults in the diaspora. What is shown recently, is also how certain events especially – the siege of the Kurdish city of Kobane in Rojava in 2014 and the Kurdish victory over IS - made young Kurds in the diaspora more united than ever and more motivated to stand up for the Kurdish cause as Toivanen (2021) explained. "It was a moment of pride, of unity" (Toivanen, 2021, p. 163) as one of her participants stated, and young diaspora mobilization in Paris during the course of many crucial times such as the siege of Kobane, the assassination of three Kurdish activists in Paris and the war with IS was very prominent. Toivanen found that many had already been active for the Kurdish cause, but that the matter with Kobane, specifically, made their activism a matter of urgency and it speeded up the process. She explained that Kurdish youth mostly engaged in translocal activism where it was locally bound in terms of organization and target groups (through awareness-raising, for example) and, at the same time, connected to the political situation in Kurdistan and transnational, which might be the case for other Kurdish diaspora communities in the west as well. In addition, the way that the younger generation engages in civic and political activity has changed, and they use social media more frequently and systematically in organizing political activity, as well as contributing to their diasporic consciousness towards the homeland.

Vera Eccarius-Kelly (2017) also supports these findings through addressing Kurdish diaspora activism in Europe, more specifically, from 2014 and on during the same event. Kurds showed unity like never before, and Kurdish leaders were calling on the diaspora to focus on civic-awareness raising through large-scale publicity events, collection of funds to help the victims of violence, as well as lobbying efforts with the governments of the host countries. It was one of the most symbolic moments for the diaspora, and it was a way to increase demands for the recognition of Kurdish identity, culture, and the right to self-determination. "In the

struggle for Kurdish cultural identity, human rights, and self-determination, few comparable moments existed that produced such levels of pan-Kurdish unity as the desire to liberate Kobane from the control of IS. Once Kurdish-controlled media framed the battle for Kobane as the ultimate stand for Kurdish physical and cultural survival, diaspora Kurds with very diverse political affiliations, ideological commitments, and geographic and socio-cultural backgrounds united" as Eccarius-Kelly (2017, p. 39) further explains.

These are interesting findings among the general and younger generation of the Kurdish diaspora in France and all of Europe as well, and it will be even more interesting to see if any of it will resonate with the young Kurdish adults in Norway as I will address the same question. The previous literature all have very much in common where they all discuss identity and belonging, and where many also merge political activism into the same context to try to see how it is all connected. They also include different factors that affect these three themes, as well as generational differences that might be visible through research. Some of the previous literature was centered around Kurds, while others focused on other ethnic groups such as the Sri Lankan Tamils or the Basque people of Spain. Other studies would compare Kurds to other groups or use Kurds as part of a greater study on ethnic diasporas in the west. These findings and studies are all relevant to this topic and they will help underline and prove my own findings and conclusion.

3 Theoretical Framework and Concepts

After exploring the relevant literature on this topic, I will now dive into the theories that will help me analyze the findings, as well as answer the two research questions. Identity and belonging, through a transnational outlook, as well as political activism related to it, will be explored more in this chapter. Theories on identity, belonging and transnationalism, and how they are interrelated, will be at the center with the works of Floya Anthias and Steven Vertovec, as well as time and migration by Saulo B. Cwerner. I will look at identity and belonging first, and gradually move to translocational positionality, and then transnationalism, as well as transnational belonging, time and migration, and diasporic consciousness at the very end.

3.1 Identity, Belonging and Translocational Positionality

According to Floya Anthias (2008), identity is the key in understanding migration and the discussions around it, however, it is a fluid concept that needs to be separated from the concept of belonging. The two are often seen as interconnected and not separate concepts, as they are both questions that arise during migration. You can identify as something or with a certain group, but feel a sense of belonging somewhere else. The old definition of migration which included people leaving their country in search of better economic opportunities, travelers wanting to explore other lands or bargain from other empires may no longer be useful nowadays. The spectrum of populations involved in cross-border movements include many more: refugees and asylum seekers, professional and skilled workers, seasonal workers and undocumented migrants, for example.

The two terms identity and belonging are connected, but at the same time, weigh of different issues. The differences can be summed up in this way: identity includes individual and shared narratives of self and other, presentation and classification, myths of origin and myths regarding destiny with associated strategies and identifications. Belonging, in contrast, put more of an emphasis on experiences of being part of a social fabric, and the methods in which social ties are established in practices, experiences and feelings of inclusion (Anthias, 2008).

This has therefore presented the world with a complex shift in how we perceive identity and belonging, and it needs to be looked upon through a translocational frame, as proposed by Anthias.

3.1.1 Translocational Identity

Floya Anthias (2009) addresses identity and belonging within the framework of transnational migration. She looks at this issue through different concepts such as social relations and the environment or location they live in, instead of more classical concepts of identity and belonging, and Anthias also concludes that there is both an inter-generational and intra-generational difference between the first generation and the second generation of diasporas because of these factors. Anthias brings a different and more nuanced view on young people in different diasporas and their sense of belonging and identity, through factors that come up when people live in non-native places.

Migrants and their children live their lives across borders, and it includes a variety of experiences of people, religions, practices and participation. They live lives which are affected not only by their own countries, or the place their parents originate from, but also by those of their friends who have also emigrated to other countries, as well as the transnational connections and images found within their host country. Therefore, it is important to highlight that the second-generation or the younger generation of the diaspora is not a separate or single category, and is divided by social differences such as gender, class and racialization, as well as different opportunities and exclusions which relate to international, national and local policies and institutions. They are impacted through transnational and translocational contexts, often times in ways that contradict. Gender values will, for example, differ in terms of what is expected and rewarded, and what is criticized and forbidden in different contexts. There can be differences between the expectations and norms of the culture of the parents and the ancestral homeland, and the host country. Migrants and their children, in different ways, continue to have connections with the ancestral homeland through, for example, marriage, involvement in political organizations, and communicating through the use of ethnic media, phones, and the Internet, as well as travel. She also explains that many scholars have used fluency in mother tongue or retaining beliefs and values as crucial in keeping a connection to one's ethnic background, but that in reality, the younger generation of the diaspora can continue feeling connected even if they fail any of the criteria listed through marriage and having children, for instance (Anthias, 2009).

She recognizes identity as being a contested concept, and that it sometimes incorporates too little, as well as too much where it includes different elements that should not necessarily be there. This also covers identification processes with others or groups, and is connected to

the construction of collectivities and identity politics. Anthias (2009) argues that often times, the younger generation of the diaspora tends to be looked upon as having an identity crisis through a "between two cultures" lens. It is assumed that young people require a certain singular identity along ethnic or national lines, and if they are translocated, they find themselves in a place where the culture of their parents and ancestral homeland, and that of the host country, are not alike, leading to issues. Yet, Anthias (2009) argues that these are groundless assumptions. The first is the need for a clear ethnic identity, and the other is the focus on conflicting cultures, both which are exaggerated, because there are as many similarities between cultures as there are differences, and the differences might not be so noteworthy regardless. In addition, it is the assimilationist debate that can try to force only one identity on the young members of the diaspora. Therefore, context is important.

Identity is a process and struggle in relation to strategies of power, recognition, representation and redistribution. Additionally, the way people identify themselves does not necessarily expose anything about their practices. For example, as Anthias (2009, p. 10) explains: "I may say I do not label myself as Cypriot but spend most of my time with other Cypriots. Or alternatively, I may say that I am Cypriot but have little connection to other Cypriots". Different identities can co-exist within one person, and it can relate to both ethnicity (and not exclusively that), but also other factors such as gender, social participation and action, religion, and political values. As mentioned above, Anthias (2009) explains identity as a process. We obtain positions depending on the context, which relates to interests, values and goals. Identity and belonging are all about boundaries, but also about hierarchies within and across boundaries. However, boundaries are never static, but forms of political practice and creations of ethnic differences do not regard differences of class, gender, age, political opinion, and religion. Such identities intersect, and one can have different identities at the same time, and belong to different categories dependent on context. It is crucial that belonging, in regards to one's positioning, is seen as a multiplied experience, such as in having multiple identities. It is, therefore, difficult to construct individuals in a single way in relation to different aspects social inclusion and belonging. We also need to see intersectionality as a process and not based on people's group identities. It is a social process related to practices and arrangements, paving the way for certain forms of positionality for social actors. This is where translocational positionality enters the frame, which I will present further into the chapter.

I rely on Anthias' theory and will use Kurds as the focal point to analyze the findings later on in chapter 5.

3.1.2 Transnational Diasporic Belonging

Even though transnational identities are partly the produce of the ancestral homeland, they might be affected by the host country in the same way and to the same extent. That is why we are trying to study identities and transnationalism in relation to one another. Identities in transnationalism are very important because, as Vertovec (2001, p. 578) puts it, "these identities play out and position individuals in the course of their everyday lives within and across each of their places of attachment or perceived belonging".

The importance of the transnational social field in the construction of identities, and where young members of the diaspora feel a sense of belonging, is presented by Kara Somerville (2008) in a three-stage theory through looking at the Indian diaspora in Canada as the sample group: First, at the stage of emotions - they feel very much Indian, but at the same time, also very Canadian through how they identify and with what they identify, as well as where they feel like they belong. Secondly, at the stage of appearance - they express their transnational belonging through their choices in fashion styles and clothing, which can be traditional clothing from their ancestral homeland, for example. Lastly, at the stage of loyalty or allegiance - they feel a sense of loyalty to India, yet, they feel a sense of loyalty to Canada in the same way as they both sympathize with the country they grew up in, as well as the country of their roots. The consequence is that the second generation or young diaspora discuss identities within a social sphere that comprises of affect and movement from their parents' ancestral homeland, and the host country. Somerville explains it like this:

"Second generation migrants keep in touch transnationally; they travel as visitors, phone friends and relatives, and discuss their daily lives through communication in Canada and India. These flows are multidirectional in the sense that the people, information, and ideas that flow through them are initiated and received in each of the sending and receiving societies. It is through these personal, cross-border networks that the second generation is able to mobilize the resources which allow them to express feelings of multiple attachments and multi-belonging" (Somerville, 2008, p. 26).

I think these theories and concepts can be relevant to my study, as well as great in analyzing the data findings, as it seems highly likely that many of the participants, because they grew up in Norway, but have roots in Kurdistan, will express the same feelings as the Indian diaspora in Canada where they have one foot in both countries, or a sense of multiple

attachments and multiple-belongings, as Somerville (2008) explains above. In addition, this transnationalism and the multiple belongings can affect one's sense of belonging and shape it more uniquely, as Vertovec (2001) adds.

The theories of Nira Yuval-Davis (2006, p. 199) also explain belonging and that "belonging can be an act of self-identification or identification by others, in a stable, contested or transient way". Through looking at the concept by differentiating three major analytical levels it is constructed upon, she describes belonging like this: The first level addresses social locations – meaning social and economic locations that refer to man or a woman, working-class or middle-class, a particular ethnic group or race, as well as how they are positioned in terms of power. Positionalities like this, on the contrary, are usually different in different historical contexts and are often dynamic and disputed. The second level explains the individuals' identifications and emotional connections to different groupings - they can be reproduced from generation to generation, but be reproduced in a selective way. The identity narratives can change, as well as be multiple. "They can relate to the past, to a myth of origin; they can be aimed at explaining the present and, probably above all, they function as a projection of a future trajectory" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202). Identity construction can, though, in specific historical contexts, be enforced on people as well, as it often times has been with Kurdish people for example. The third level refers to ethical and political value systems, and how individuals, with that, judge their own and other peoples' sense of belonging or belongings – therefore, belonging is not merely about social locations and constructions of own and collective identity, but in addition, also about how they are looked upon, valued and judged by others. These diverse levels are interconnected, but cannot reduce one another.

Multi-sited embeddedness or felling a sense of belonging to or engaging in various communities is seemingly very common, as Horst (2018) uses the Somali diaspora in Norway to explain this. She explores how their civic engagement is shaped and where they engage in activities, as well as how their multi-sited identities affect their political engagements in several places and, in turn, how it affects their identity and belonging. It is concluded that feelings of belonging somewhere and engaging in communities are very much linked to one another, and she puts it more clear by saying that "we act because we belong, and we belong because we act" (Horst, 2018, p. 1353). At the same time, young members of the diaspora don't always "belong" in every context, and the feeling of multi-sited embeddedness can often lead to a

feeling of not belonging anywhere due to it depending on the setting or the social group they are around at a specific time.

Diasporas can act both inwards and outwards (Khayati & Dahlstedt, 2014), and by that they mean towards the homeland, and from the homeland to the host country. They are shaped through political and social activities, both in the real world and in the virtual world towards the society they live in, but also towards Kurdistan. Khayati and Dahlstedt address how these activities in both directions was previously looked upon as problematic for a diaspora group, and that it would prevent them from participating properly in the host society. However, as this text and many of the previous studies mentioned here conclude, we no longer live in a world where we just belong to "one" specific place and we have become more flexible or fluid in many ways.

These studies all highlight how belonging, as well as identity can be fluid depending on the circumstances, and they are very relevant to what I am researching, although they focus on other diasporas instead. With my own study, I will be able to see if there are any differences between these communities and young Kurdish adults in Norway.

3.1.3 Translocational Positionality

Within the theories and concepts of translocational positionality, as I already mentioned earlier in the chapter, Anthias (2009) argues that using the concept of identity as an empirical device fails to make sense of the aspects of belonging and feeling "otherness", and that it is more useful to use narratives of location and positionality to address the many issues regarding that.

Translocational positionality is a more beneficial concept for examining processes and results of collective identification – that is, the claims and attributions that people make about their position in the social order, their opinion of where they belong to and to what they belong, as well as where they don't belong, and also their understanding of the wider social relations that make up and are made up in this process. The concept aims at capturing many aspects of the modern world as opposed to the idea that identity is a hybrid concept. The term can be divided into two where "translocational" refers to the multifaceted nature of positionality confronted by those who are interacting with many different locations and dislocations in regards to gender, ethnicity, national belonging, class and race. Positionality is about more than identification as it is also about the practices in which identifications are made, as well as the intersubjective, organizational and representational conditions for their existence (Anthias,

2009). The emphasis on location, as well as translocation, recognizes the importance of setting, the positioned nature of claims and ascriptions, and their production in complicated and everchanging locales. It also acknowledges inconsistency with some processes which leads to some more complicated, contradicting and at times dialogical positionalities – and this is what is meant by the term "translocational" (Anthias, 2002). Anthias (2008) argues that using the conceptual framework of translocational positionality may help shift the discussion of identity and belonging forward in numerous ways to solve some of the stalemates with the idea of having multiple identities, as well as the intersections of identities. The framework is possibly able to do this in three different, yet interconnected ways:

"First, difference and identity are conceptualized as a set of processes, and not possessive characteristics of individuals, and as both material and cultural. Moreover, people produce identity in interplay with regulatory regimes, via hegemonic and agonistic narratives and practices and as resources for social action of different types, either exclusionary or usurpationary. This also enables looking outside the sphere of human experience and interrogating discourses, practices, and structures at the more 'macro' level of analysis" … Moreover, it flags much more some of the potentially contradictory social locations that are brought to play than either hybridity or intersectional frameworks have done so far" (Anthias, 2008, p. 16).

To conclude, the idea of translocational positionality not only highlights the intersecting of different social locations, but also refers to the changing locations of people's lives in terms of movements. It refers to the importance of context, meaning and time in the construction of positionalities. "Positionalities themselves are socially produced through the interplay of processes and outcomes of social relations. This turns our attention to experiential, representational and organizational features of social life as opposed to groupings of people around gender, ethnicity and class" (Anthias, 2008, p. 17).

3.2 Transnationalism and Political Activism

The term transnationalism has become, over the course of the last few decades, something that we use more often with the increased globalization of the world. With globalization came the free flow of goods, services, people and capital, as well as technology, information and culture. Therefore, being transnational and crossing borders even without physically crossing them is more common than ever. Transnationalism addresses different forms of cross-border

connections and transfers, and it is often connected with migration, as well as organizations and any other activities beyond the borders of countries (Vertovec, 2001), which is very relevant to the Kurdish diaspora not only in Norway, but across the globe. Steven Vertovec (2009) explains that transnationalism is based on six different premises: Social morphology – which refers to social networks across borders; Type of consciousness – which is the thought of having multiple identities and multiple senses of belonging; Mode of cultural reproduction – which he explains as the crossing of different social phenomena; Avenue of capital – meaning the activities of transnational corporations/companies; Site of political engagement – referring to transnational public participation and political organization through activity with the use of technology; and construction of place – meaning the creation or recreation of new social spaces beyond the borders of countries.

"Transnational connections have considerable economic, socio-cultural and political impacts on migrants, their families and collective groups, and the dual (or more!) localities in which they variably dwell" (Vertovec, 2001, p. 575). For many people in transnational networks and that live transnationally, Vertovec (2009, p. 980) discusses through the words of Kastoryano (2002) that "the country of origin becomes a source of identity and the country of residence a source of right…the result is a confusion between rights and identity, culture and politics, states and nations". Vertovec (2009) also explains how transnational political activity and homeland politics (or long-distance nationalism) has increased in the modern age as technology has advanced, transportation has become affordable and dual citizenship has become more common. These homeland politics can take various forms, including diasporic politics which refer to ethnic communities that have never lived in the homeland, as well as mass protests and consciousness raising to awaken global interest and attention to a cause. The type and level of participation in homeland politics can of course differ as there are differences in the countries of origin and the (political) state that they are in, which in turn has an effect on the diaspora. In total, however, homeland political allegiance and engagement relies on the reshaping of identities-borders-orders, such that progressively people from one specific place look upon themselves as legitimate members of the collective identity and social order of that specific place even though they are situated elsewhere.

Anthias (2009) also explains that transnational connections help comprehend that at different times, as well as in various contexts, people engage and organize in different ways, and their goals and strategies will be different. This is very important in terms of recognizing that highlighting ethnicity, and making it the priority, in itself is problematic. People connect

not only through ethnicity, but through other social categories and relations as well, for instance gender, age, place in life-cycle and political beliefs. This also underlines Vertovec's (2000, p. 12) point that "all transnational communities comprise diasporas, but not all diasporas develop transnationalism".

Thomas Faist (2010) also explains transnationalism, and its relation to, and difference between, diaspora. Thomas Faist, and his co-writer Rainer Baubök also describe it as "deterritorialized" politics, economics and culture. Faist (2010), more specifically, believes that transnationalism includes more, such as the understanding of political activism among the diaspora, not just in their host countries, but also in their homelands. Also, it can include other aspects such as the transfer of culture and customs across borders. Overall, it encompasses more than diaspora does, although they overlap at many points.

In addition to what transnationalism encompasses, there are also, according to Miriam Tedeschi, Ekaterina Vorobeva and Jussi S. Jauhiainen (2020) several types of transnationalism which they have organized through exploring different authors and scholars. First of all, you have transnationalism "from above" and "from below", where the above addresses host country politics or policies that motivate transnational activities of immigrants towards their homeland, and the below refers to practices or activities of migrants that relate to, and are affected by, their homelands in terms of politics, culture and economy (Hourani, 2012). There is also broad transnationalism and narrow transnationalism explained (Itzigsohn, 1999), where broad refers to people's engagement between two countries sporadically or just occasional involvement on a personal level, and narrow refers to a regular movement across borders involving economy, politics, culture or social practices. There is also reactive transnationalism where identification with the homeland is a reaction to the racism and discrimination experienced in the host country (Beauchemin & Safi, 2020), and reverse transnationalism where the second-generation or the younger generation of the diaspora return to their ancestral homeland (Reynolds, 2011). These forms of transnational activities and movements will most likely come to light through the participants in this research, especially in regards to how politics and events in the ancestral homeland effect the diaspora and their political activity, as well as how sense of identity and belonging can be affected by those activities.

3.3   Time and Migration

Another concept that has not been discussed much in relation to this specific topic is the role of time in migration. According to Saulo B. Cwerner (2001), the relationship between time and migration has been left out by many researchers. He claims that time migrates with people, with the perspectives and symbols that are included, and that it influences the outlook and the difficulties the person has towards the country they emigrate to. Cwerner also covers this concept in regards to diasporas. The concept of time traveling with the migrant is a very good example to use when explaining the diaspora. Time can be rhythms, routines, habits, holidays and such, and when a diaspora community is formed in the new country, times are brought into the community and is used to keep the diaspora together under one umbrella. In a sense, they recreate the social life and the pulse of the homeland in the host city or country, and they celebrate holidays and gather together just as in the homeland, and with the same traditional time, duration and sequences.

The social theory of time is considered by an array of perspectives and themes, and they tend to overlap as well (Cwerner, 2001). Times are everywhere. Time does not belong to specific social processes only. Human life is lived in, and through, different times, and it is comprised of limited and developing organic processes known as both pre-programmed and learned rhythms. Humans and groups of humans have also learned to connect the various natural rhythms they experience and collect around them through technology and social organization. In addition, there are different sets of times as well, such as asynchronous times, remembered times, collage times and diasporic times.

Asynchronous times are described through one of the basic issues facing immigrants – which is how to extend the space of the "imagined community" of their nation to the host country. Only recently, with the development of technology and communication systems, has it been a possibility for diaspora communities to extend the temporality of the nation to their communities abroad through contact with people in the homeland. The stream of communal life in the host country through festivals and other national holidays also helps to preserve the sense of belonging to the homeland for even younger generations – and synchronize with them (Cwerner, 2001). As with the nation, diaspora communities often use the past, as well as nostalgia, to generate group identities. The substantial role of memory in this is connected to both the individual migrants, and the collectives. More examples of this are comprised of diasporas using events of war remembrances and historical processions to re-create minority

identities, as well as acts of funeral rites to take place in exile and create transnational bonds (Griffiths, Rogers, & Anderson, 2013).

Remembered times describe the memories of the diaspora communities and the immigrants that came to the new country, and these memories are the major connection between the host country and the ancestral homeland. They are, however, under constant pressure through the passing of time and how they are prone to be forgotten, as well as through a new outlook on life and on the homeland, and therefore, photographs, traditional music and food, as well as national dances are displayed and enjoyed in small diasporic gatherings to keep the memories alive, and to pass them down to younger generations (Cwerner, 2001).

Collage times is another set of times explained by Cwerner (2001). Memories and images of the homeland are challenged by the host country, and at the same time, they are challenged through alternative representation of their homeland. The diaspora community is exposed to broken-down images and ideas about their identity through TV and media that presents a dismembered stereotypical image that is generalized throughout the population, which they might not be used to, and that might even anger them. Most importantly, those images and ideas circulate in a specific time period of their own - they consist of a fragmentary reconstruction of life in the homeland on the basis of some pre-selected topics, usually following a rhythm known through a few days of exposure (natural disaster, terrorist attack, war), and then longer periods of complete absence from the media.

A fourth relevant set of times discussed is diasporic times. Diasporas, such as the Kurdish diaspora in Norway, can only thrive through recreating the rhythms of social life of the ancestral homeland in the center of the host country in ways including, for example, the celebration of national and religious holidays, and the formation of meeting places where social life can continue in its accustomed paces, timings, sequences and durations. The diaspora, and all generations it includes is, in many ways, the representation of the homeland for the world to see, as well as the representation of the world to the homeland through recreation.

Under the lens of time, it is also possible to explore political activism. However, in relation to this, people's personal and social relationships to time have received very little attention. A major social category and living experience, which plays a crucial role in policy results as much as the participation in politics, is relationship to time. The concepts of age, life course and generation bring in aspects of time to the exploration of political activism, and the

idea that only young people or young adults are politically active is defied as political participation from as young as the age of four to as old as 92 exists. This will make us rethink our ideas of who could be a citizen, and at the same time, force us to think about citizenship relationally when it comes to family life and friendship groups. People of any age are dependent on one another, but these interdependences can be found mostly at an old age (Nolas, Varvantakis, & Aruldos, 2017). "Thinking about activism through the prism of age forces us to engage with the times and places in which those inter-dependencies unfold as people make sense of their living and dining arrangements, as they play and talk, go to school and go online" Nolas, Varvantakis and Aruldos (2017, p. 9) explain.

Although Cwerner (2001) uses the Brazilian diaspora in the UK as an example, these concepts are very much relevant for the Kurdish issue that is going to be covered here as well, and the link the Kurdish diaspora (young adults) has to the homeland Kurdistan through their parents, and everything they brought with them from there, that they have passed down to the younger generation.

3.4 Diasporic Consciousness

Diasporic (diaspora) consciousness is also an integral part in understanding the younger Kurdish generation, alongside the theories of Anthias, among others. In the works surrounding diasporas around the world there is a huge discussion concerning diasporic consciousness in light of having dual or multiple identities, as Vertovec (1999) addresses. Although most individuals with migrant backgrounds identify with one society more than the other, most of them still seem to have multiple identities that link them to more than one place or society. There is a mutual consciousness or certain experiences that connect people into social networks. The consciousness of multi-locality enhances the will to connect oneself with others, both in the host country and the ancestral homeland with people who share the same roots. Another aspect of diasporic consciousness which is discussed is how diasporas always leave a trace of collective memory about a different place and time, which connects this theory to Cwerner (Cwerner, 2001), and create a new desire and attachment. Still, these are most of the time collective memories that are fractured, and through multi-locality, the fractured memories of diaspora consciousness produce an array of histories, communities and selves (Vertovec, 1999).

As Cohen (2008) argues, alongside Vertovec, a very strong and renewed connection to the past must exist in order for diasporic consciousness to thrive and for them to mobilize as a

group or community. If it is only a small group of people that migrate and are willing to assimilate into the host community then diasporic consciousness might not develop, and there are certain characteristics of a diaspora community that have to be in place in order for any consciousness to grow – especially among the younger generation which is explored here:

First, there needs to be a collective memory or myth about the homeland, and an idea of a shared place of origin is the glue of the community, and in a way also a distancing from other diasporic communities. Secondly, there also needs to be an idealization of the ancestral homeland to make it more appealing and interesting. The third point is a return movement or reoccurring visits to the homeland, which in our modern times now means that intermittent visits are possible rather than permanent return movements. Fourth, there needs to be a strong ethnic group consciousness maintained over a long period of time to become a proper diaspora and to develop a diasporic consciousness. The fifth characteristic is that the group needs to have a troubled relationship with the host society where they, for example, experience discrimination and racism, or are not accepted fully as members of society. The sixth is that there needs to be a sense of co-responsibility in members of the ethnic community in other countries as well, in terms of political mobilization transnationally, for example. The final characteristic in developing diasporic consciousness is the opportunity of a creative, enriching life in tolerant host countries, and in that way, growing and contributing as a diaspora community, and for the younger generation to be aware as well (Cohen, 2008).

Mari Toivanen (2016, p. 103) concludes this concept of diasporic consciousness by explaining that it "entails a sense of obligation to contribute to the Kurdish cause and a motivation to work against human rights violations either through direct political participation (petitioning, demonstrating, lobbying) or indirect involvement (maintaining Kurdish blogs, raising awareness of the Kurdish cause, producing material in various Kurdish dialects). Both activities were mostly justified through a sense of historical injustice against the Kurdish people", which was mentioned earlier in the literature review.

Diasporic consciousness is crucial in maintaining a diaspora outside the ancestral homeland, and even more important to create awareness and interest among the younger generations that did not grow up in Kurdistan. This can help shape their sense of identity and belonging, as well as their level of political consciousness and activity in regards to the Kurdish issue, and how they potentially overlap. Through my research questions, and study, I will try to explore what effects this consciousness, and how it in turn affects their positionality. In

addition, I will use the theories presented throughout the chapter to explain my findings and make sense of the views of the participants in regards to the topic, as well as answer the research questions.

4 Methodology

In this chapter, I will present the methods that were used in conducting the research for this thesis. Based on my topic of choice, I find it most logical to use qualitative research method to explore it further. It is important to collect opinions, views and perceptions on this among young Kurdish adults in the country, and through an analysis of their words get an understanding of how their situation is now, which will also be discussed in this chapter. Additionally, I will also dive into the process of transcription, as well as the thematic content analysis of the data collected from the interviews. Simultaneously, I will also look at the positionality, ethical considerations, purpose and significance of the study, limitations, and the connection of this study to human rights and multiculturalism.

4.1 Qualitative Research and Its Relevance

Qualitative research is a way of conducting research through the focus on images, words and objects when collecting data, as well as while analyzing it. It aims at diving deep into a particular topic, group of people, organization, community or such (Bryman, 2021).

Qualitative research tends to be inductive in the sense that theory is generated through research, and interpretivist in a way that it attempts to understand the social world through the eyes of the participants – in this case the interviewed participants. Researchers who use qualitative method tend to develop theories and concepts by analyzing the data that is collected. People can add meaning to events and environments they are in. This form of research also emphasizes two main principles: face-to-face interaction in order to participate in the mind of that person, and participating in the mind of another person to obtain social knowledge. As a researcher, one might find that the people they are studying view things differently from what one would think or expected prior. It is also seen as constructionist, where social properties are seen as a product of interactions between individuals instead of being a phenomenon that's separate from the people that constructed it (Bryman, 2021, pp. 250-351).

Based on the chosen approach, and the ways in which the research was conducted, thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected – which is a framework widely used in the world of social research and qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2021, p. 537). Thematic analysis is mostly used when conducting interviews, which is the case here in this study as well, and this form of analytical method makes the researchers become more active and engaged

analysts. This method is used in "systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insights into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). There is a six-step approach to thematic analysis in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2012, pp. 60-69):

The first point is familiarizing yourself with the data and this phase focuses on transcribing interviews, reading over documents and in general, becoming more familiar and aware of the data we have collected. From there on, in the second point, initial codes are generated, and in this phase, systematic analysis of the data begins through a coding process. Here, it is important to read over the transcriptions and give specific labels/codes to important parts of the data, which in turn will be transformed into themes for analysis. The third point, after generating codes from the transcriptions, is searching for themes. Here, the researcher needs to compare all the codes generated from the data collected with previous codes, as well as any theories of interest. Through this, themes can be identified and interconnected. A theme "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). The fourth point is reviewing potential themes, and here, the researcher then has to review the themes by combining them, and further developing them into sub-themes that can be more specific, as I presented in the figure below.
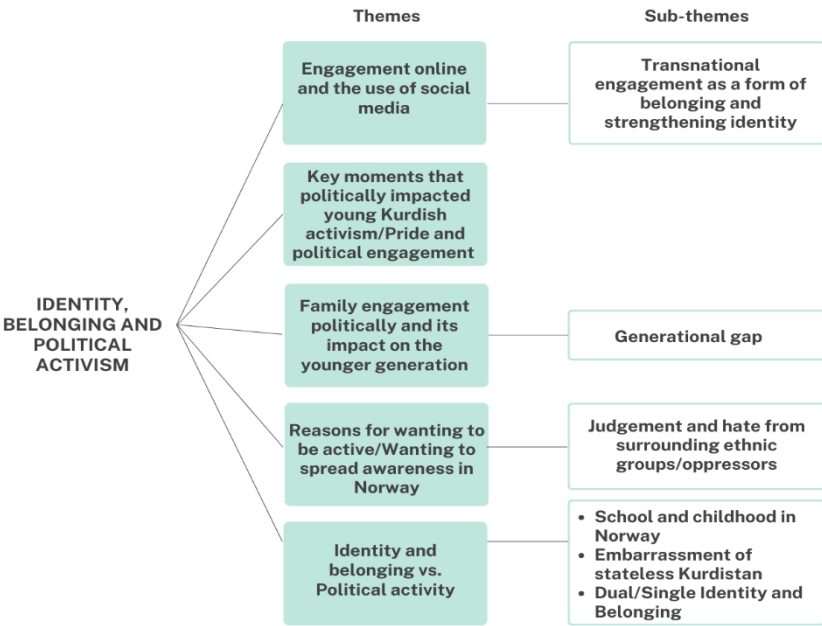

Figure 1 *– Initial thematic map*

The fifth point, which is a continuing process of the two points above, is defining and naming themes, and in this phase of analysis, the researcher has to find definitions for the themes and their properties to display how they are related – or not related. After much consideration, I defined the themes yet again as seen in the figure below, but this time using quotes as well to name them, and where I also made my sub-themes or the content of the themes clearer.
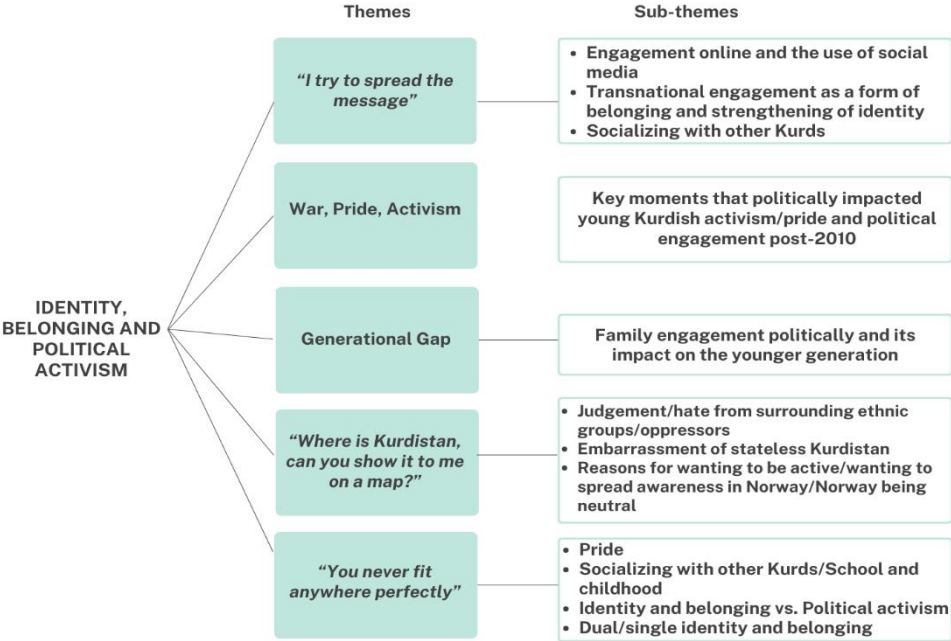

Figure 2 – Development and final thematic map

The sixth, and last point, is producing the report, but it is, however, not a process that begins in the end. It is, in contrary, a process that is continuous and intertwined with the analysis of data. We tend to write informal notes while we analyze which in the end are used in the process of producing the final report. This means that, in contrast to quantitative research, we don't leave the writing to the very end after our analysis is done. It is also recommended that the analytical process begins while collecting the data which will help identify the needs of the field and the theoretical direction, as explained in the last of the six phases above (Bryman, 2021, p. 538).

In line with the descriptions and explanations of qualitative research and thematic analysis, I entered the field without any pre-conceptions other than my own personal experiences that might have been similar to the experiences of the interview participants, but there has not really been any distinct research done in this field in Norway so I decided to study

the topic of identity, belonging and political activism further based on that. For this, I therefore conducted semi-structured interviews with young Kurdish adults in Norway and the data collected was seen under the lens of thematic analysis. In addition to that, and to analyze the data findings, I mostly focused on the theories of Anthias on identity, belonging and translocational positionality, as well as other scholars such as Vertovec and Cwerner, among others. Those theories were used as they were the most relevant to this study, and that made more sense to the analysis with the answers given by the participants. At the same time, they were used as middle-range theories that would merge empirical research with theory through empirical phenomena that could create statements verified by data (Merton, 1968).

4.2   Sampling (Sample)

Due to the nature of this study, I found it most natural to use purposive sampling to reach out to potential participants. There are three common forms of purposive sampling: theoretical sampling – where the data collection is guided by the emerging theory, generic purposive sampling – where the samples are chosen based on the research questions and determined in advance, and lastly, snowball sampling – where the researcher samples a small, but relevant group to begin with and then uses these participants to recommend other potential participants with similar characteristics (Bryman, 2021, pp. 380-384). I chose snowball sampling as I thought it would best suit my study and make it easier for me to reach out to more people beyond my social circle in Norway. I conducted interviews with young Kurdish adults across Norway, with the aim of reaching out to members of the community from both genders to get more varied answers to analyze and work with.

At first, I tried to explore social media through Instagram and Facebook to try to find young Norwegian-Kurds between the ages of 18-35. I found that this would facilitate my access to participants, as I don't know many Kurds in Norway as I grew up in a community with mostly ethnic Norwegians and not many immigrant families such as Kurds. I wrote a Facebook post explaining my situation and my study in order to reach out to many people at once, as most people are on Facebook regardless of their use of it. I wrote a post in a Facebook group for Kurdish women in Norway where I explained my research topic and the sample I was looking for. Many people wanted to participate in the interviews or knew other potential participants, including young Kurdish men, which luckily worked out as many of them have large social circles. I was able to reach out to more people than I would initially have been able to, ultimately

leading me to get a more diverse sampling to use. After gathering participants through social media and snowball sampling I was able to start conducting in-depth interviews.

4.3   In-depth Interviews

In this case, as I conducted qualitative research, the participants' point of view and opinions are the most important, and that is why the questions were also more open-ended and flexible as in a semi-structured or unstructured interview (Bryman, 2021, pp. 425-426).

I chose this style of interviewing because I began my research process with a fairly clear view on what area I was going to focus on and it allowed me to be more specific in issues and address the relevant topics. The interview guide was prepared through several brainstorming sessions where I used the research questions and objectives to generate 16 interview questions that also included some follow-up questions. The questions were divided into two sections – part 1 about political activism and part 2 about identity and belonging – both of them being the main two topics or objectives of this research.

The first part included questions about their membership in political or other groups, use of social media, methods used in political activism, reasons for political participation and activism, Norway's stance on the Kurdish issue, as well as events that have occurred since 2010 and its effect on young Kurdish adults and their positionality. The second part included questions about how they identify in Norway and where they feel like they belong, how political activism has had an impact on their identity and belonging, and vice versa, as well as family's role in political activity, and challenges regarding Kurdish background and political activity.

My initial plan was to conduct the interviews in-person, but since most of the participants lived in other parts of Norway, Zoom/Skype interviews compensated for in-person meetings. During the interview, I had the interview guide to follow, and I asked all the questions regardless of how the interview was going as I wanted to hear their opinions and thoughts on everything.

In addition to, and prior to the interview guide, I created a consent form based on the standard guidelines put down by Sikt (Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research), formerly known as NSD (Norwegian Centre for Research Data). In the form, I explained my research aim and the sample choice, as well as the rights of the participants prior, during and after the interview. This consent form was sent to the participants prior to the

interviews for them to read over and sign so that they had no doubts about me as a researcher, nor the process.

The interviews lasted 45-80 minutes depending on the participant, and audio recordings were made using the Nettskjema app recommended by the university. Out of convenience for the participants, they were allowed to answer in Norwegian instead of English. I asked the questions chronologically based on the interview guide, but also asked follow-up questions in case I felt like I wanted to know more or where I felt like the participant had gone off-topic or understood the question wrong. However, I let them answer as much as they wanted even if they weren't really responding to the question so that I could get additional relevant information from them.

4.4   Data Analysis

After conducting all the interviews and collecting all the data, I then started analyzing the content to see how it would help me in answering my research questions. In the review of the data, a thematic analysis was used to see if there was anything reoccurring in the answers given, and at the same time, to spot the main differences (Bryman, 2012, p. 578).

After conducting the interviews with the participants, I started transcribing the interviews one at a time through carefully listening to the recordings while simultaneously writing down their answers. In addition, I would add in brackets the issues or names of things/places they were addressing in order for me to not lose context when reading over the transcriptions.

The next step was coding. After I transcribed all 9 interviews, I read over them to familiarize myself with the data and to see if there were any similarities or differences between the interviews overall. While doing that, I also highlighted the parts that I felt would best answer my research questions. This then led to the initial coding process. This process involved naming or labeling parts of the answers in the margin alongside the data collected, turning them into codes which helped develop an easier and more organized understanding of the content (Bryman, 2021, pp. 533-534). Many of the codes or labels would repeat themselves through the coding process of all the interviews, and it made it easier to see similarities in opinions and personal experiences. In the end, I had over one hundred codes that I entered into an excel sheet for better organizing, and which I then narrowed down to just a handful of initial themes or topics, and a few more sub-themes or sub-topics bearing in mind the research questions.

A theme is a category of interest developed by the researcher and it relates to the research question, as well as provides the researcher with the ground for a theoretical understanding of the topic (Bryman, 2021, p. 537). These themes and sub-themes were then reviewed again, and I also created mind maps around them to connect the different codes to the different themes/sub-themes, as well as changing and rearranging them which ultimately led to a definition of all (see figures in 4.1).

4.5 Positionality

It is important to articulate my positionality in this thesis, and positionality addresses the position we decide to take as researchers in a given study, which ultimately influences how we conduct the research and the results of it (Holmes, 2020). Throughout the research process, the researcher has a significant role, of course in the entire writing, but also in the data collection and analysis. The role is even more significant in my position, as I am part of the young Kurdish diaspora in Norway and Europe. That can, of course, be both negative and positive in this context, as I was able to understand more in depth the issues, thoughts and actions of my fellow young diaspora Kurds. Often times I have the same issues, experiences and thoughts as the participants as we all either came here young or were born here after our parents came. In addition to that, communication was a lot easier because we have/had similarities that can make two people have a better and more flexible dialogue.

However, on the other end, it might be hard to avoid bias in this research, considering that the topic is very close to my heart, and as I am extremely engaged in, and can relate to it. I took several measures to be self-aware of my position, such as realizing my own position, opinions and feelings towards my own study and my own questions, and acknowledging my own limitations. That happened during the interviews where I would get so engaged in the answers and even sometimes put personal opinions in that I would forget the next question. I might have become too engaged with the people that I interviewed, but in contrast, I did not feel like it was hard for people to have a conversation with me as they didn't know me prior to the interviews. It might have been good that we could have an engaging dialogue as it sometimes makes people more comfortable and open to address issues that they might not normally do. I tried my utmost to be aware of my own bias in every phase of this research, and stick to the topic as explained in order to get the best results to analyze in the end, and I felt the interviews were very fruitful.

4.6   Ethical Considerations

Before anything in a research process, ethics need to be taken into consideration. A research project that might inflict harm on participants is usually seen as unacceptable, and it can include loss of self-esteem, harm to the personal development of the participant, excessive stress, as well as pushing the participant to perform inexcusable acts. A way of avoiding this, and protecting the participant, is to maintain their anonymity and the confidentiality of the study, as well as all records and documents (Bryman, 2021, pp. 113-115).

I did this through ensuring and reassuring participants that their participation and answers would be anonymous and protected through identifying them with numbers/codes instead. The second issue is lack of consent which is highly debated in the field of research as not all methods of data collection include this. There should be enough information presented to the potential participant from the researcher's side in order to ensure that participation is agreed with a conscious mind, and they shall be given every right to withdraw from the whole process at any given time (Bryman, 2021, pp. 117-120). The third issue is with invasion of privacy, and not stepping beyond a set boundary as a researcher. It is very much linked to the principle of informed consent, because of the information we give to the participant in order for them to know what they are getting involved in and what is expected from them. At the same time, it is linked to anonymity and confidentiality which are crucial in protecting the privacy and private space of the participant (Bryman, 2021, pp. 120-124). Lastly, but not at all less important than the other issues, is deception. The researcher needs to make it very clear to the potential participant what their research is about and what it will expect from whoever participates. If not, then the potential participant might agree to a project, or process, they might not want to be a part of, and it might cause all of the above issues presented as they are all interconnected (Bryman, 2021, pp. 125-126).

To obtain permission to conduct the planned research, and also in an attempt to keep my research process and work up to ethical standards set above, I had to have my proposal with research questions and objectives, as well as the interview guide with all questions and the consent form ready for Sikt. I followed their guidelines in conducting my interviews and research, alongside the rules and regulations of the University of South-Eastern Norway.

4.7 Purpose, Significance and Limitations of the Study, and its Connection to Human Rights and Multiculturalism

My thesis topic is both connected to multiculturalism, and human rights as well. Through addressing a diaspora community, and the dynamics of the Kurdish diaspora in Norway more specifically, we are also addressing multicultural communities in which diasporas are an integral part of. Another part of multicultural societies are the questions of identity and belonging, especially among diaspora youth and young adults, which I have attempted to cover in my research. There is often a big questions surrounding how young people identify themselves in the host country that many of them were born in, as well as where they feel like they belong, or don't belong for that matter. Also, I explored political activism among young Kurdish adults in Norway regarding the Kurdish issue and self-determination, which falls under the category of both human rights and international law – which is most likely affected by the situation of human rights in Kurdistan and their lack of self-determination, and how it is related to identity and belonging. It is important to look at these three topics in relation to one another to see how they are related and affected by each other, but at the same time, how they are separate.

However, I think there might be some limitations to the study too. The Kurdish community in Norway is not as great in size as in countries like Sweden and Germany, and not as organized as a diaspora community as they are widely spread around in the country. Therefore, the challenge was finding young Kurds to participate in the study, as well as to reach out to enough of them in the diaspora in Norway. Regardless, I tried my very best to work past this possible limitation and tried producing something that could enlighten and benefit others in the future.

Ultimately, there is also the issue of reliability and validity. Reliability is "the consistency of the analytical procedures, including accounting for personal and research method biases that may have influenced the findings", while validity is "the precision in which the findings accurately reflect the data" (Noble & Smith, 2015, p. 34). Considering the qualitative approach of this research, trustworthiness is of utmost importance. There are many points that need to be reflected on in a research process such as this, and they included the following. In the data finding process, as well as in sampling and analysis, I needed to account for any personal biases that might have affected the material collected from the participants. At the same time, I also needed to make sure that my analysis was clear, consistent and transparent,

while also making sure that different perspectives were represented across the themes through detailed descriptions of the answers, as well as quotes from the participants to support the findings in my study.

5   Data Findings and Analysis

In this chapter, the focus will be on the data findings from the nine interviews conducted during the data collection process. These findings will be analyzed and discussed based on the relevant theories from the theoretical chapter by scholars including Anthias, Vertovec and Cwerner, as well as through a comparison with previous literature regarding similar studies to try to answer the two research questions. The chapter is divided into five themes that were developed through the coding process of the interviews, and which cover different findings that will answer different parts my research questions, and that aim to reach the objectives of this research.

5.1   *"I try to spread the message"*

Thomas Faist and Rainer Baubök (2010) use the phrase "deterritorialized" politics, economy, and culture to characterize diaspora and transnationalism. More specifically, Faist (2010) holds that transnationalism encompasses more than that, such as the notion of political activism among the diaspora in both their host countries and their ancestral homelands. Additionally, it may cover other facets like the cross-border transmission of culture and customs, as well as transnational public participation, social networks and political organization with the use of technology, as Vertovec (2009) explains. It simply encompasses more than diaspora does, but at the same time, overlap often.

This overlap and transnationalism can clearly be seen among young Kurdish adults and the Kurdish diaspora they belong to in Norway through their outlook on the Kurdish cause and their activism towards it, and these findings will help me explore the research questions on how young adults of the Kurdish diaspora in Norway perceive the Kurdish issue, and what the role of political activism is among them, as well as the question on how young Kurdish adults identify themselves and their sense of belonging, and how the Kurdish issue, and their political activism towards that cause, affects their positionality?

Many of the participants mentioned how they are, or were, members of Kurdish student unions dedicated to everything related to Kurdistan. One of the student organizations mentioned would arrange rallies for Kurdistan and political issues related to it, as well as seminars with scholars and notable people to shed light on the cause. At the same time, they would also organize activities to highlight Kurdish history, culture, language, religions and traditional attire. They would, for example, hold genocide remembrance events such as for the Halabja

chemical attack by Saddam Hussein in Iraqi Kurdistan, as well as events to celebrate Kurdish new year in March or dance classes. Diaspora communities often use the past to generate group identities and create transnational bonds, which is what young Kurdish adults in Norway are attempting at here (Griffiths, Rogers, & Anderson, 2013). In a sense, as Cwerner (2001) explains, all generations that are within a diaspora are the representation of the homeland for the world to see.

Participant 3 addressed how, for her, it was important to become a member of a student union to "do something for the Kurdish student community and get to know others, and make others familiar with Kurdish culture" and to be able to "…show our identity". At the same time, she also expressed how getting the question of Kurdistan's geographical location would trigger her and lead her to become "more engaged like this is the place I'm from and show it to my fellow students" through the student union. "It was a combination of political activism and culture, to make it short" she added.

The young diaspora transnationalism and transnational activism is mainly possible through the use of social media, which the majority of the participants highlighted in the interviews. Social media has, in a way, helped build a bridge between the new homeland or host country, and the ancestral homeland which in this case is Kurdistan. All the participants mentioned that they use the social media platform Instagram, and eight out of nine participants stated that they also use Facebook. Participant 1 explained that she uses "social media to spread knowledge about what goes on in Kurdistan also, both politically and culturally", in addition to keeping in touch with family and friends both in Norway, in Kurdistan, and in other places as well as many of the participants mentioned. "I both post and re-post on social media…mostly in English since I have non-Kurdish friends. The point is that they also understand" she also added. Another participant mentioned an important point about the use of social media for the purpose of political activism nationally/transnationally and spreading awareness. Participant 7 stated that "what is very nice with social media to a certain degree is that they cover very much that is society-based that media or newspapers don't cover, among others the things that are happening in Kurdistan that like Dagbladet [Norwegian newspaper] doesn't catch". She also added that "…spreading it [the message about everything happening to Kurds and Kurdistan] is important to me, because I know it starts with social media and the power social media has, so it's important to spread the message when Norwegian media doesn't cover it". As Hellan (2007) states, through their use of social media, transnational activism and political activity is easier accomplished, as well as communication with relatives and people in their homeland –

which shrinks distance. Social media has made tightknit networks and strengthened community relationships, although people involved are located in various places in the world. With new developments in technology, the same diaspora communities are also, more than ever, taking advantage of the online world to stay in touch with the ancestral homeland itself. Additionally, through these cross-border networks and contact with relatives in the homeland, Somerville (2008) explains that the second generation is able to assemble the resources which allow them to express senses of many attachments and multi-belongings. Vertovec (2009) also agrees that transnational political activity and homeland politics has increased as technology has advanced rapidly, and he explains that these homeland politics, which include mass protests and consciousness raising, awakens global interest and attention to a cause.

It is clear, by the participants and their use of social media, that it is a key aspect of their activism and their way of spreading awareness transnationally, as well as a way to organize group activities to promote Kurdistan. As Laguerre (2010) explains, he conceives the digital diaspora as the intertwining of the virtual and the reality in the hybrid production of the daily life of an immigrant community. In addition, Andy Curtis (2005) concludes that technology has definitely brough the younger generation of the diaspora and their ancestral homeland closer together, and that they are exposed to information that helps increase their interest in their roots. It also increases their activity regarding the Kurdish cause and gives them the opportunity to create transnational-interactive communities, which in turn help create more awareness about Kurdistan beyond the Kurdish community in itself. Raphael Tsavkko Garcia (2018) also addresses this in his article, and he highlights, with the Kurdish case in mind, how they use the Internet to maintain their ethnic identity and form political groups to facilitate political action and communication, as well as create a sense of belonging to a group for Kurdish individuals. These findings in previous literature resonate with the current findings and theories in this study, and it shows how young Kurds in Norway are no different than the Kurdish diaspora in the west, and in general young people, in terms of methods and reasons for being active politically.

The reason for organizing in student unions and other groups promoting Kurdistan, as well as their activity and activism on social media, is for many of the participants in the interviews a way of identifying themselves among other groups and highlighting their ethnic background, as addressed in the research question on identity and belonging, and the effect of political activism on their positionality. Mari Toivanen (2016) discusses diasporic consciousness where she refers to the young diaspora Kurds' sense of obligation to do

something for the Kurdish cause and to stand against all kinds of injustice directed towards Kurdistan. In regards to cultural consciousness and preservation, in addition, Toivanen explains how Kurds want to join groups and organizations to learn more about their Kurdish heritage and to create a greater sense of Kurdishness. Through the way young adults in the Kurdish diaspora are organizing themselves in student unions and other groups, and with their purpose of spreading awareness about everything negative happening in Kurdistan, as well as spreading Kurdish culture, it shows that the participants in this study agree with Toivanen's analysis and explanation of the young diaspora. At the same time, the findings in this study resonate with her findings from Finland about how young diaspora Kurds feel a sense of "duty" or obligation to act and speak up for the homeland their parents emigrated from, and that sympathy for the cause almost comes by nature. Vertovec (1999) highlights the same points by explaining that the consciousness and feeling of multi-locality increases the desire to connect oneself with others or a group, both in the host country and the ancestral homeland with the ones who share the same ancestry. Diasporas always leave behind a hint of collective memory about a different place and time, which connects this theory to Cwerner (Cwerner, 2001), and create a new connection. However, most of the time, collective memories are scattered, and through multi-locality, these scattered memories of diaspora consciousness produce a collection of histories, communities and selves (Vertovec, 1999).

Participant 9 explained that "the Kurdish question [cause] is the foundation of how I identify myself and my activism" and that she sees it as her "duty as a Kurd to do something to change the current situation". For others, they have more of a political belonging to Kurdistan, and they are more affected by negative situations occurring in the homeland than non-Kurds would be even though they grew up in Norway. During the questions of whether the Kurdish issue, and political activism towards that, has any effect on their sense of identity and belonging, participant 8 responded "yes, of course it affects me more let's say that something happens in Kurdistan it hurts me, and I immediately become more Kurdish. Immediately when I see unfairness against Kurds, I become more engaged" and "…, I'm also focused on having a Kurdish focus on things. It makes me feel an even stronger sense of belonging to Kurdistan". Other participants also found that being politically active and seeing harm directed towards Kurdish people made their sense of belonging to Kurdistan and identification with the Kurdish community as a whole even stronger. Participant 6 stated that "yes, it strengthens my identity in a way, and it makes me even more proud and aware of who I am and where I come from,

and the history, in a positive way, not negative. I have gotten a stronger sense of belonging to Kurdistan". In addition, it clearly helps being around other Kurds as participant 7 stated:

"It [belonging] sits even deeper when you are among so many Kurds [during protests] and I think to protest for a cause awakes or enhances sense of belonging, and it comes with age that you get a whole other perspective of Kurdistan, and when situations occur you sympathize even more and want to do more for the cause. So yes, I think being active really strengthens my belonging [to Kurdistan] even more".

However, in many of the previous studies, and as shown in the answers of the participants regarding identity, belonging and political activism, it is concluded that we no longer live in a world where we just belong to "one" specific place, and with our identity and belonging we have become more fluid in many ways, as, for example, Anthias (2008) points out. Identity, which is a set of material and cultural processes, in itself is also not enough to explain belonging, and that is where location, or translocational positionality, enters the picture (Anthias, 2008). The importance of setting, the position of claims and ascriptions and their production in complex and constantly changing locations is recognized in the emphasis on location and relocation. It also acknowledges the lack of steadiness in certain processes which lead to some more complicated, opposing and, at times, dialogical positionalities (Anthias, 2002).

On the contrary, for another participant, being active came with certain negative connotations, and it affected his sense of belonging in a different way. Participant 2 explained that "what happens down there [in Kurdistan] affects me all the way, it does. I'm so caught up in Kurdish politics and what happens down there that I don't take part in Norwegian society. You are left out a bit and fall out of everything Norwegian". It might for many be so important to follow everything Kurdish, identify as Kurdish and to be active for the Kurdish cause that they might find themselves missing out on Norwegian society and everything going on within it. In addition, they might identify as less Norwegian or not Norwegian at all, which can lead to segregation from the society they spend most of their time in, and less sense of belonging to Norway. Diasporas can act both inwards and outwards, as Khalid Khayati and Magnus Dahlstedt (2014) discuss, and they address how these activities in both directions was previously looked upon as negative for a diaspora group, and that it would prevent them from participating properly in the host society – a worry that participant 2 expresses. However, multiple belongings in their transnational lifestyles can affect their sense of belonging, and also

shape it more uniquely, as Vertovec (2001) adds, seemingly both in a negative and positive way as seen from the answers.

In this theme, I got to explore both research questions, and it is clear from the answers of the participants that it is important for the young Kurdish adults in the diaspora in Norway to express their Kurdishness and showcase Kurdistan – both in terms of culture and politics, and through student unions and social media – to create awareness around the issues in the homeland, as well as to highlight their own identity. At the same time, having background in two locations creates a consciousness and increases the desire to connect to the ones who share the same ancestry, and young Kurds are doing that through their collectives. In addition, being politically active for the Kurdish cause made their sense of belonging to Kurdistan and identification with the Kurdish diaspora and nation as a whole even stronger, which highlights Anthias' (2009) argument that being between two cultures or translocated does not lead to a crisis in identity – something that is often times exaggerated and that none of the participants found negative.

5.2 War, Pride and Activism

"After the war with IS there was a lot of pride among the younger generation, and fighting against IS that was a threat to the world and the win brought a sense of pride in being a Kurd" according to participant 1. Addressing the research question on how young adults of the Kurdish diaspora in Norway perceive the Kurdish issue, and what the role of political activism is among them, it seemingly shows that many Norwegian-Kurds that are now young adults seem to have experienced a form of awakening or a sense of diasporic consciousness in the time post-2010. It was expressed through the answers of many of the participants, and through expressing their activism and methods in 5.1. Participant 3 made sense of that by explaining that "With Kurds, and people not knowing about them, it has made them want to cover themselves and not show themselves for various reasons. But after media and social media showed the Kurdish cause, young people have become more engaged. I have myself become more engaged after that time [post-2010 and the war with IS]".

Miriam Tedeschi, Ekaterina Vorobeva and Jussi S. Jauhiainen (2020) explain several types of transnationalism, including transnationalism "from below" where they address how the diaspora is motivated into transnational activities in their host countries through the effect of events in the ancestral homeland. After 2010, there have been many critical events in Kurdish

history including the fight against IS, the Turkish invasion of Kobane and Rojava (Toivanen, 2021) and the independence referendum in the KRI (Esposti, 2021). These events garnered more media and social media attention than Kurds had ever received before, and that has seemingly affected the younger generation of the Kurdish diaspora in Norway according to the findings, and in a sense, created more interest in doing something for the ancestral homeland among them.

The battle for Kobane was highlighted by Kurdish media as the ultimate fight for Kurdish survival both physically and culturally, and that Kurds with diverse backgrounds and opinions united like never before (Eccarius-Kelly, 2017). When asked if they follow news about Kurdistan on TV or social media, many of the participants expressed that they do and that "when we watch the news it makes us do more for the cause" (participant 2). The access to information and knowledge about the situation in Kurdistan through mainstream news outlets and social media has made the young diaspora more aware of their background and the Kurdish political situation, and has made them do more to spread awareness and push for positive change. It also made some of the participants feel a stronger sense of belonging to Kurdistan and their Kurdish background, and even more prideful – "especially with IS and when the Peshmerga defeated them it was something completely different and a completely different sense of pride, and a different sense of belonging. I said Kurdistan before I even said my name! So it strengthens belonging 100 percent" (participant 7). This explains transnationalism "from below" and how events in the homeland stimulates the young Kurdish diaspora in Norway into activity, as well as how it strengthens identity and belonging to Kurdistan. As participant 7 explained: "it is that when something happens in your homeland it is sad, but something has to happen for you to be politically active".

The key events discussed above made many young adults in the diaspora in Norway more active than ever, and it can surely be connected to their sense of belonging as well. Anthias (2008) explains that belonging has to do with experiences of being part of a social fabric, and the methods in which social ties are established in practices, experiences and feelings of inclusion. The feeling of pride and the sense of urge to do something for the Kurdish cause was enhanced even more through, for example, demonstrations where Kurds would gather to rally for change or to create awareness, and as participant 7 explained "it sits deeper when you're among so many Kurds [during demonstrations] and I think protesting for a cause awakens or strengthens belonging…So yes, I think it strengthens belonging even more and being active…enhances my belonging 100 percent". Being part of a movement or a social group

seems to enhance the feeling of community and belonging when Kurds in Norway are gathered for a purpose, and it resonates with Anthias (2008) and her theory. In terms of pride, it is also connected to identity and belonging, or more specifically, ethnocultural identity. It has to do with national, ethnic and cultural roots, which are usually very significant values and meanings of an individual, but more as a support (Zakiryanova & Redkina, 2020). Anthias (2009) also explains that highlighting ethnicity, and making it the priority, is a huge issue. People bond not only through ethnicity, but through for instance gender, age, place in life-cycle and political beliefs – which is the point of connection here.

Many of the participants have this connection to their ancestral homeland regardless of how significant it is to their identity, and it is only enhanced and turned into pride when in contact with others in the Kurdish diaspora in Norway or in situations when collective effort is needed to create awareness during an event. "I can say that both the fight with IS and the [independence] referendum in 2017 made Kurds seek more information about Kurdistan, and I think it also awakened a feeling of pride among young Norwegian-Kurds…and that Kurdish women were in the fight [against IS] made many Kurdish women proud. And it awakened interest among many young people I know also whom were never part of anything that all of a sudden became interested in regards to the fight against IS especially" participant 8 explained. His answer shows even better how events, whether they be positive events or tragedies, creates unity among the younger generation, a sense of obligation to act, and an even greater sense of pride in their background and ancestral homeland. Young Norwegian-Kurds that were raised here often times seem to have a wave-like relationship or interest in the Kurdish cause where they seek information more and act during the times of politically significant events rather than on a regular basis, which the quote above also underlines. Political activity does not stay static over time, and different events can change the course and dynamics of it, and cause oriented activism has become more significant in the recent years (Nolas, Varvantakis, & Aruldos, 2017). Many of them don't travel to Kurdistan often and are physically distant from the land, which can create this occasional interest and attention to the homeland. Anthias (2009) also explains that at different times, as well as in various contexts, people engage and organize in different ways, and their goals and strategies differ transnationally – putting an emphasis on setting and time. Backing up this is Vertovec's (2000) point that "all transnational communities comprise diasporas, but not all diasporas develop transnationalism", especially in terms of political activism.

The spread and invasion of IS into Kurdistan is a key event for almost all of the participants in the interviews, and it is mentioned several times during the answers of many of the questions. This highlights even more how interest is shown and kept alive among the younger generation. Cwerner (2001) explains it through his theory on time and migration. He explains how time creates a link to the ancestral homeland. Memories are a part of time and something the parents of the young Norwegian-Kurds bring with them from the homeland to keep the link, but it is under constant pressure from the host country (which in this case would be Norway) and new memories there, as well as a new outlook on life and on the homeland which the younger generation experience. In that way, there is a vital need for pictures and other items around that help keep the homeland memories alive, as well as community gatherings to keep the link intact, and that can be in the form of TV/social media news, pictures, demonstrations, as well as other purposeful social gatherings.

It is clear from the answers of the participants and the way they are involved in political activism for the Kurdish cause that transnationalism and diaspora overlap, and that this form of transnational activism is very much connected to identity and belonging – while also affecting each other. Young Kurds in Norway unite in times of dire need to shed light on the Kurdish cause due to their background, which in turn has an effect on their sense of identification with, and belonging to, Kurdistan stronger based to what the participants expressed.

5.3 Generational Gap

When addressing Cwerner's theory (2001), we get into the aspect of keeping memories of the ancestral homeland alive, and that they are brought to the host country to be maintained and passed on to the younger generation there. Yuval-Davis (2006) incorporates belonging into this by explaining that the individuals' identification and connection to a certain, or several, group(s) can be reproduced from one generation to another, and that they can relate to the past and myths about the homeland, explain the present or even project the future. Again, we address here the question on how young Kurdish adults perceive the Kurdish issue, and the role of political activism, which can be affected by the older generation. Young Kurdish adults in Norway have definitely been affected by the older generation that themselves immigrated to Norway from the different parts of Kurdistan, and surely, they brough with them their experiences, culture, traditions and memories of the homeland that they passed on, and this also includes political opinion and level of engagement. This also highlights the idea of translocational positionality, where time and context are important in the construction of

positionalities (Anthias, 2008). This has helped make the younger generation more aware of their Kurdish background and also made them feel more pride in their heritage. At the same time, these are two different generations that grew up in different places, during different times and under different circumstances, which can lead to disagreements between the generations or a generational gap. This has been proven through some of the answers of the participants.

"Yes, we have different opinions. We have different views and different opinions. It's not a big difference, but some things they want like this and other things I want like that…I think they have tunnel vision and I believe they should think wider [about the Kurdish issue]…They are a bit more old fashioned" participant 2 explains. "We don't have the exact same opinions, because there are always disagreements, but like my father thinks like Kurds and Kurdistan soon having their own country, but for us [young adult Norwegian-Kurds] it is more like no we have to build ourselves up gradually. So, we have agreed and disagreed, but they [parents] have been very supportive in me participating in and getting to know my [Kurdish] culture, and not forgetting where we're from which was the main goal. Older people are more hopeful, while we [young Norwegian-Kurdish adults] are more realistic" participant 3 adds, which shows there are similarities in the experiences of the younger generation that grew up in Norway, and their political opinions, versus the older generation.

As Cwerner (2001) explains, as well as Yuval-Davis (2006), memories, opinions and experiences are brought with the older generation, and then, passed on to the younger generation. However, everything passed down is still affected by the host country, and young Norwegian-Kurds get a new outlook on life and on the ancestral homeland which they mix with memories from their parents. However, Cwerner (2001) explains different sets of times and one of them is remembered times. In this he explains how the memories of the diaspora community, and especially individual immigrants, are under constant pressure through the passing of time and external factors in the host country that create new outlooks on life. These memories under pressure, and that become dynamic, are passed down to the younger generation, and this in turn creates new opinions and views on politics and the Kurdish issue, as well as new solutions, which they might not share with the older generation which, in a sense, turns into a generational gap.

Cohen (2008), alongside Toivanen (2016), mentions diasporic consciousness as a mean for a diaspora to thrive and for them to mobilize as a community, and there needs to be a collective memory of the ancestral homeland, as well as a strong ethnic group consciousness

maintained over a period of time to be successful, and for this to happen, there needs to be a strong bond between the generations where the parents that immigrated pass down everything they know and experienced to the younger generation to create interest in the Kurdish cause. It is, however, important to state that the second-generation or the young adults of the diaspora are not a separate category, and are divided by social differences, as well as different opportunities, as Anthias (2009) explains. They are impacted through transnational and translocational contexts, and immigrants and their children, in various ways, have connections with the ancestral homeland through political organizations, and communication through the use of, for example, the Internet, as well as travel. She also explains that many scholars have stated that retaining beliefs and values are important in maintaining a good connection to one's roots, but in reality, the younger generation can continue feeling connected even if they don't keep up with values and other criteria of their ethnic background (Anthias, 2009).

Although there seemingly is, through the answers of the participant, a generational gap and disagreements, there are also signs that the older generation have done their share in creating interest and promoting activism among young Kurdish adults in Norway, and in addition, not letting them forget about their Kurdish heritage and putting a sense of duty on them to act. Participant 2 explained in short that "I was raised with politics around me all the time, and it was the only thing we listened to". Participant 7 expressed that "you hear how they [parents] also came from war where they were pushed to their limits and had no choice but to move to a country like this [Norway], and how they were a minority and didn't have voice. So it is important when you first get the chance to speak on their behalf…to speak on behalf of a minority…but on the world stage it's important to talk about it and be active because nobody was there for them so", and here you can tell what a strong influence even stories passed down from one generation to another can have on young Kurdish adults in Norway and their political activism, as well as awareness about their own background and identity. Participant 3 expressed how she was inspired and pushed into being active for the Kurdish cause by the older generation: "He [father] is very active and he pushed me to be active for the Kurdish cause for me to be aware of what's going on with my people… So we have agreed and disagreed, but they have been very supportive in me participating in and getting to know my [Kurdish] culture, and to not forget where we come from which was the main goal".

Agreeing and disagreeing would be normal in any instances of interaction between two generations, but for some of them, it is possible to meet half way, as participant 4 stated: "no, in my family there are many that have different opinions, but everyone agrees on Kurdistan.

Maybe some of my family members are members of Kurdish political parties, but we as a family have one goal and that is Kurdistan and we all agree". In the case of others, their political activism towards the Kurdish issue hasn't always been looked upon in a positive manner by their parents, and in a sense, there was a reverse convincing from the younger to the older generation:

"In the start they were a little bit against me being politically active and such, and they wanted me to focus on other things as most Kurdish parents want. But with time my job has been to convince people and political parties, and I have managed to convince my parents that what I do is good and important, and they agree with me now – they weren't in the start…Not that I brainwashed them, but I managed to convince them…The reason they're like this comes from trauma and difficulties politically throughout the years, so we shouldn't look down completely on the things they say either, because they've been through a lot and want the best for us at the end of the day" (participant 8).

Curtis (2005) explained, therefore, that second-generation Kurds in the diaspora tend to be more interested in Kurdish identity and Kurdistan in general than their parents are, firstly because a second-generation Kurd is fully aware of the discrimination his/her parents have suffered in both the homeland and in the host country, and through the exposure to news from Kurdistan, they become much more aware of their ethnicity. The second reason is collective memory of the ancestral homeland – all passed down to the second generation which in turn effects their identity. Thirdly, technology has brough the diaspora and their ancestral homeland closer together, and the younger generation are exposed to information that helps increase their interest in their background. It also helps them be more active regarding the Kurdish cause and gives them the opportunity to create transnational-interactive communities, as discussed earlier in this chapter as well.

In regards to the first research question on how young Kurdish adults perceive the Kurdish issue and the role political activism has, based on the answers of the participants in regards to the generational gap, and compared to theory, it is safe to say that the older generation has had a great impact on the younger generation and their political activism. It shows how important it is for the older generation to pass down memories of the ancestral homeland to the younger generation of the diaspora, whether they be positive or negative, to keep the Kurdish spirit alive and to continue the battle on a transnational level. At the same time, it has helped shape the identity of the young adults through their identification with the Kurdish cause and

through participation in activities with the diaspora that has helped them gain knowledge about their culture, traditions and history. However, it is clear through the disagreements between the generations that the young Kurdish adults and their upbringing in Norway has impacted how they perceive the Kurdish issue, as well as their methods of tackling it, and that growing up in two different places really can have a profound effect. This also underlines Earl, Maher and Elliot's (2017) explanation on how family is neither necessary, nor sufficient, for political socialization, but that they offer the raw materials that young people use to advance the knowledge, skills, and confidence to be politically engaged, as well as engagement opportunities and facilitation in how they absorb political information. It can be summed up through the view that "elderly are more hopeful, while we [young Kurdish adults] perhaps are more realistic" as participant 3 explained. Anthias (2009) also concludes that factors such as social relations and the environment young Kurds live in adds up to the inter-generational and intra-generational differences between the first generation and the second generation of diasporas.

5.4 *"Where is Kurdistan, can you show it to me on a map?"*

Besides inspiration and encouragement from the older generation, young adults in the Kurdish diaspora have also been affected by other means, both in terms of their identity and belonging, as well as their political activism in Norway – addressing how young Kurdish adults identify themselves and their sense of belonging, and how the Kurdish issue, and their political activism towards that cause, affects their positionality. As Anthias (2008) explains, many children of immigrants often ask themselves the question of where they belong, and it is also something that they face through institutions and in public through the question "where are you really from?" At the same time, as Yuval-Davis (2006) puts it, identity can also be enforced on people, and that belonging is not merely about social location and own construction of collective identity, but moreover, about how they are looked upon and judged by others.

Especially for young Kurds in Norway, the question of where they are from has often been extra sensitive and, to some extent, also been a question with offensive intentions and prejudice. Even terms and names that are misused or denied causes anger among them. Many of the participants expressed the sheer awkwardness in being asked the question by people in Norway simply because Kurdistan isn't a country with official borders nor visible on a map. Participant 3 explained that "…us Kurds, especially young people, have been a bit embarrassed to be from Kurdistan, because it's not a country, or being asked where Kurdistan is, and have

wanted to avoid all that and answering all the questions". Participant 9 expressed her feeling of being asked the question of where she was from at public offices in Norway as "sheer torture, like knife stabbing into my body while I unwillingly identified with the occupying powers" as she had to state that she was born in Iraq in official documents – which goes back to Yuval-Davis's (2006) point about how identity can be forced on people, and how it is about how we are looked upon by others.

Seemingly, in regards to the question of geographical location, there has also been a fair share of judgement, bullying, racism, hate and even threats from people, especially with backgrounds from the four countries Kurdistan has been split into, as well as from other groups – and apparently not from ethnic Norwegians. "…They weren't [ethnic] Norwegians, they were immigrants, Arabs, Somalis, in elementary school…Somalis would maybe bully because they had Arab friends that effected their thoughts and views [on the Kurdish issue]" (participant 1). Another participant mentioned Muslims and Arabs, or more specifically Palestinians that "…think that Kurdistan doesn't exist and that Kurds want to steal the land of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Türkiye, and that Kurds are minorities in these states. My answer to them is that if they accept Palestine as a part of Israel, then I might think, but not accept, the alternative [explanation] they present" (participant 9). In addition, the same participant mentioned that she had been threatened by Arabs, Turks and Persians online many times in the past for speaking up for the Kurdish cause. Prejudice and historical inaccuracy are also part in this kind of behavior, as participant 6 added, and she stated that comments such as "you Kurds like Jews and Israel" and "oh, Kurds are with Israel so we don't like them" have come up, and that "you have to fight the prejudice coming from the Muslim world". These answers from the participants back up the concepts of Cohen (2008) and theories of Cwerner (2001) where the former explains how diasporas thrive and become active because of troubles and racism they face in the host country, and where the latter explains how images of the ancestral homeland are challenged by alternative and stereotypical representations of it that are generalized, which might anger the diaspora – and in this case, more specifically, young Kurdish adults.

In addition to how it can trigger them, in other instances, receiving that question or other comments has been a way of fighting back and educating people on Kurdistan and issues relating to the nation, as well as defending their identity through activism. Participant 9 added to this issue by saying that "When I first identified with Kurdistan in class one Iranian would laugh and say 'where is Kurdistan, can you show it to me on a map?' I would then take out the map and mark the large territory of Kurdistan and say 'here is the Kurdistan that the occupying

powers of Iran, Syria, Türkiye and Iraq took over by power and that gave false identities to Kurds'". Another participant found that the question would make her want to become more engaged and motivated to educate fellow student about Kurdistan – "I say I'm from Kurdistan, but often I get asked 'well, Kurdistan isn't a country, where are you from?' so I was forced to say Iraqi Kurdistan. That made me more engaged and like this is where I'm from, and showing it to my fellow students" (participant 3). In additional cases, being looked down upon and experiencing racism has made some more motivated to be politically active and stand up for Kurdistan as it becomes personal and a matter of identity. "Things like this [racism] makes me more engaged in Kurdish issues and it shows why I shouldn't give up. They think they stomp us down, but they don't know we get out of it stronger. It makes me even more Kurdish" (participant 6). These kinds of reactions are defined by Beauchemin and Safi (2020) as reactive transnationalism where the young Kurdish adults in Norway identify and feel a sense of belonging to their ancestral homeland, as well as an urge and sense of duty to speak up for Kurdistan, as a counter mechanism to racism experienced in the host country, which is proved through the actions, reactions and answers of the participants.

Weiss (2018) argues that moral outrage, frustration and anger are central in Kurdish activism among the diaspora in Norway, and that moral outrage is either what triggers protests or the consequence of making a Kurdish issue something simple and unimportant by Norwegian authorities. There are, of course, many reasons why young Kurdish adults become active in regards to the Kurdish cause, besides the problematic aspect of questions regarding geographical location, racism, as well as inspiration from the older generation, but through Norway's stance on the Kurdish issue as well. One reason that came up several times was that "if we as Kurds don't do something, who will do it then?" (participant 6). In addition, participant 8 summed it up in just a few words by saying that "whenever I see unfairness against the Kurds, I become more engaged".

They seemingly identify with Kurdistan and feel a sense of belonging there as it is the ancestral homeland, but at the same time, it creates frustration among young Kurds in Norway when they see their second homeland's stance on the issue – and that triggers activism in turn. Participant 4 expressed that

"Norway for me is home…so when I see that they [Norwegian government] don't care about the Kurds I get affected and sad, but I know many Norwegians care about Kurds and

Kurdistan so that makes me happy. We Kurds must perhaps do something to attract the attention of Norwegian authorities about the Kurdish situation and try to create awareness".

Other instances where young Kurds have felt neglected by Norway, as well as Norwegian media, has also triggered both lobbying and reactions from many, and that shows how diasporas are also dependent on the opportunities in their host countries to influence local policy makers and shed light on the issue (Baser & Swain, 2010). Although "Norway does not have a Kurdistan policy at all as a government and have no opinion whether Kurdistan should be an independent state or not, they agree that Kurds are entitled to their [human] rights" participant 8 explains, and he expressed the importance of lobbying among politicians in Norway to influence them and get certain cases discussed within the parliament, such as Norwegian weapon material sales to Türkiye which were halted with the help of young Kurdish activist. In terms of Norwegian media, many of the participants expressed their frustration with how Kurds are portrayed, or on the contrary, not even mentioned in certain instances. For example, after a 22-year-old Kurdish woman was killed by the Iranian morality police in 2022, Norwegian media would still use her official Persian name Mahsa Amini instead of her Kurdish name Jina, and "that has provoked me a lot" participant 1 expressed, and that "…they don't mention the Kurds, but rather just talk about people in Iran in general. That made it important to do something about it, and they need to be aware that they're wrong" as she added in regards to the recent anti-government protests in Iran (Skjeseth, 2022).

For others, they blame the lack of support from Norway on the disunity of Kurds both within the country and throughout the diaspora as well, a disunity that Baser and Swain (2010) also highlight. "We have to be better at just uniting us for the Kurdish cause in general, both in Norway and in Kurdistan" participant 3 expressed, and she explained that it would be difficult to gain momentum among Norwegians when they see that the Kurds can't even unite under one flag and be party neutral during demonstrations across Norway. In the end, as participant 5 stated – "Is Norway neutral at the moment? Yes, definitely. Does it make me want to do something more? Yes, definitely".

To answer how young Kurdish adults feel in terms of identity and belonging, and how the Kurdish issue and political activism has affected their positionality, it is safe to state that they are affected by racism and hate from other minority groups in Norway, as well as the questioning regarding the geographical location of Kurdistan and the lack of attention from Norwegian authorities, and that it has had a profound and positive impact on their identity

especially. It has strengthened their identity, and become a matter of it, and made them want to do more to correct other peoples' stereotypical imagery of Kurds and other prejudice, due to anger and irritation stemming from that, through political activism and spreading awareness – even in a simple manner as word-of-mouth.

5.5 *"You never fit anywhere perfectly"*

Throughout the themes I have discussed in this chapter, it is clear that there is a connection between identity, belonging and political activism, and that they somehow rely on one another, but yet, are separate at the same time – as addressed in the research questions on how young Kurdish adults identify themselves and their sense of belonging, and how the Kurdish issue, and their political activism towards that cause affects their positionality. As Anthias (2008) explains, you can identify with a group, but find belonging elsewhere, and that it has to do with what we identify with in terms of belonging. She also discusses how identity can be connected to, for example, mother tongue or just one's core self. At the same time, belonging can be separated through the way in which we are not always able to enter the borders of the "other" no matter how much we identify with them. She sums up, in short terms, that identity is made up of narratives of self and other, as well as myths of origin, meaning Kurdistan in this instance, while belonging emphasizes the inclusion in social fabric and how social ties are established.

Throughout the interviews conducted, it was clear that most of the participants socialized with the Kurdish community in Norway, whether through parents and family, or through friends, school and university. Socializing with people with the same background can have a profound effect on identity and belonging, as well as their level of participation in political activism, through being part of a social fabric, as Anthias (2008) explains. In addition, Tajfel (2020) addresses how national, ethnic and cultural roots (ethnocultural identity) are some of the most important values of an individual, but serve more as support, as mentioned earlier. Participant 9 explained that "socializing with other Kurds in Norway gives a sense of unity", and participant 7 described her experience socializing with other Kurds in Norway as "…something that affects me in a positive way. I think we can relate a lot to each other when it comes to problems with identity and just problems in general, letting out frustration, and just speaking Kurdish with another friend just hits differently, and is a different kind of closeness". Previous research has shown that knowing the Kurdish language leads to a stronger Kurdish identity, which resonates with this statement (Tasdemir, 2019).

In addition to feeling a sense of belonging with a group, and how it can help shape the identity of young people, many participants feel that it makes them more engaged in the political issues related to Kurdistan – "When I'm with Kurds we talk mostly about political issues, unfortunately, but really not, unfortunately, because we have a problem down there [in Kurdistan] so we have to talk about it, and an independent Kurdistan and freedom for our people. It makes me become more politically active" participant 2 expressed.

Political participation and activism can, in turn, also have a significant impact on identity and belonging. When asked how political participation has affected them in this way, most of the participants were positive in their answers, although many have experienced negative reactions that have made them stronger. Participant 7 described her experience of being active by explaining that "it affects me to a certain degree, but I've been lucky that I haven't been threatened [through activism], because I know many that have. So all of this has anyways had a positive effect on me and my identity, and it has strengthened my belonging [to the Kurdish community and Kurdistan]". Other participants would be praised for their activism and they felt it made a positive impact on their identity, while others experienced racism and hate, as I discussed earlier in the chapter which, in turn, also had a positive impact on their identity and made them even more proud of their background, as well as made their urge to act for the Kurdish cause even stronger – "in general it had a positive impact on me. I got to know Kurds and Kurdistan even more [through activism], and I was threatened by Arabs and Turks on Facebook, but I didn't care, and it made me even more interested and connected to my Kurdish identity, and even more proud" participant 4 explained. Seeing Kurds suffer and be killed through political unrest and invasions has also made some of the participants grow closer to their Kurdish identity and feel more belonging to Kurdistan parallel to their Norwegian side. As expressed by participant 9, and as mentioned earlier in the chapter, "the Kurdish cause is the backbone of how I identify myself and my activism" (participant 9).

Again, it is clear through all the positive answers that being ethnically Kurdish, although growing up and living in Norway, still has an impact on them and they still identify with the group, feel a sense of belonging with them and feel the urge to act in cases where they see that unfairness is committed against Kurdish people or Kurdistan, no matter how much they integrate into Norwegian society. The older generation tends to stick to their Kurdish identity more with memories of oppression in the homeland, while the younger generation is more flexible and keep their Kurdish identity parallel to the one of the host country – in this case, Norway (Alinia & Eliassi, 2014). The individuals' identifications and connections to different

groups can be reproduced from one generation to the other, but in a selective way (Yuval-Davis, 2006). As Vertovec (2001) explains through his theory, transnational identities are the produce of the homeland of the parents of these young Kurdish adults, but at the same time, might be affected by Norwegian society. Somerville (2008) adds to that by explaining that they can feel Kurdish, but at the same time, also feel very Norwegian. Also, they can express their transnational identity and belonging through appearance by for example wearing Kurdish clothes in different occasions, as some of the participants expressed. In addition, in terms of political activism especially, they can feel loyalty to both Norway and Kurdistan at the same time. He further explains that this all comes from transnational interaction, where cross-border networks, such as social media in the case of young Kurdish adults, enables them to mobilize politically, and makes them able to express multiple-belongings. Vertovec (1999) backs up this theory by highlighting diasporic consciousness again through explaining that people with minority or immigrant backgrounds usually identify more with one group over the other, but that they still keep multiple identities that connect them to different groups and places.

When asked about how they identify themselves in Norway and where they feel like they belong, the answers were very similar, more or less, and the majority feel a sense of multiple identities and belongings, or that circumstances have made them lean towards one more than the other. Of course, as Anthias (2009) states, there will always be intra-generational differences as well since feelings and experiences are very individual, which also has an effect on identity and belonging, and Mahmod (2019) explains that identities are affected by both Kurdishness, but also the ethnic groups surrounding them in the host country.

"I do say I was born and raised in Norway so definitely of course a big part of me is Norwegian, but I definitely feel more Kurdish than Norwegian…when I'm in Kurdistan I definitely feel like a foreigner…but also when I'm in Norway I also don't feel like I belong here…I'm never going to be seen as an original [ethnic] Norwegian person" participant 5 expressed.

Others expressed how they balance the two identities, cultures and where they feel like they belong. "I identify as a Norwegian-Kurd first of all…and I think we've done a good job in balancing it, both the Norwegian and the Kurdish culture…I've taken the best of both the Kurdish and the Norwegian culture" participant 8 explained. Participant 7 added that "I've never said 'yes, I'm Norwegian', because often when people ask, they are curious about your roots so it has always been that I'm Kurdish, and I think that with age you become prouder…so

identity has come with age…but at the same time you're born and raised in Norway so you feel foreign on both sides. I would say that in terms of belonging…home is Norway".

For others, their feelings and answers were straightforward. "I feel like I belong to both places, and I say that I'm a Norwegian-Kurd. When someone asks me where I'm from I say Kurdistan, but that I was born in Norway…When I go to Kurdistan now, they say I'm Norwegian and look at me as a foreigner…I don't have a Norwegian name and might not look Norwegian so in a way you feel left out anyways so you just have to own both sides" participant 6 explains. One of the other participants just expressed it simply: "[I identify and feel a sense of belonging] in both [places] actually. Yes, 50/50" (participant 1).

Multi-sited embeddedness, or feeling a sense of belonging to or engaging in various communities, is seemingly very common, and Horst (2018) concludes that feelings of belonging somewhere and engaging in communities are very much linked, and she emphasizes it more explaining that "we act because we belong, and we belong because we act". In addition, young members of the diaspora don't always "belong" in every context, and the feeling of multi-sited embeddedness can often lead to a feeling of not belonging anywhere or simply being in the air where it depends on the setting, or the social groups they are around at that specific time, as participant 5 expressed above. Anthias (2002) brings translocational positionality into the discussion through explaining translocational as those who are interacting with many different locations and dislocations in terms of, for example, ethnicity and nationality, and positionality being the practices in which identification is made. Identity is conceptualized as a set of processes and not possessive characteristics. She further explains that positionalities are socially produced and outcomes of social relations, which this sub-chapter proofs further through the answers of the participants where they explain the fluidity in their identity and belonging, and where practices such as social gatherings and political activism are both a produce of that, while having an effect on it as well.

When asked when they feel the most Norwegian and when they feel the most Kurdish, the answers highlighted more clearly the points of the theories above. "When you're in Norway you are Kurdish, and when you're in Kurdistan you are Norwegian" participant 2 explained, underlining the importance of setting. Another point of setting that was highlighted is that identity and belonging can even vary from being inside the house and within the Kurdish community, to when they were outside studying or working, as participant 1 expressed – "more Kurdish at home, and more Norwegian outside", and "more Norwegian at school and such, and

more Kurdish among Kurds and with family" as participant 4 added, which many other participants also expressed. In addition, participant 8 added that he "feels more Norwegian on 17 May [Norwegian constitution day]…, and most Kurdish during Nawroz [Kurdish new year]", and "I feel the most Kurdish when it's about Kurds and Kurdistan, and I show my Kurdish identity…and when it's about Norwegian society I show my Norwegian identity" participant 4 added to that statement. In terms of political activism, and how it is connected to setting, as well as identity and belonging, participant 7 explained that "I think to protest for a [Kurdish] cause awakes or enhances sense of belonging", a quote that was mentioned earlier in the chapter as well.

To answer the second research question, the answers of the participants, alongside the theories explained, just show how fluid the concepts of identity, belonging, as well as connection to political activism are, and that they are connected or affected by each other though means such as setting and transnational engagement – which leads me back to Anthias and her emphasis on location or translocation. At the same time, the answers also indicate that most of the participants do not feel like they belong anywhere perfectly, also underlying how fluid the concepts are. Feelings of dual-identity and dual-belonging seem more prevalent from the interviews, more or less, but at the same time, the feeling of Kurdishness seems stronger and their sense of duty to act for the Kurdish cause is very much present based on that.

6 Concluding Remarks

The aim of my study was to explore young Kurdish adults in the Kurdish diaspora in Norway, their political activism regarding the Kurdish issue, and their sense of identity and belonging in regards to their activities. I tried to answer both aspects of the chosen topic and asked the following questions: "How do young adults of the Kurdish diaspora in Norway perceive the Kurdish issue, and what is the role of political activism among them?" and "How do young Kurdish adults identify themselves and their sense of belonging, and how does the Kurdish issue, and their political activism towards that cause, affect their positionality?" Through utilizing theory, as well as with the exploration of, and support from previous literature, I managed to answer both research questions. This was possible though the division of the topic into five main themes with different sub-themes referred to below.

In chapter 5, I explored the data and findings that were made possible through the nine interviews conducted, and they helped me answer the first research question related to political activism. It is clear that there is a shared sense of duty or obligation among the young Kurdish adults in Norway to act in times of political injustice against Kurds and all of Kurdistan. They organize themselves in student groups and organizations, as well as other unions with Kurdish focus to learn more about everything related to Kurdistan and to create a greater sense of Kurdishness. At the same time, they organize protests and rallies, as well as spread information through social media – a method that is widespread among young Kurdish adults which is different from their parents and grandparents' generations, which has also made activism for, and communication with the homeland, more efficient. It seems as though this connection to the ancestral homeland, as well as their action towards it, comes very naturally, regardless of how they grew up, their communication with Kurdistan and how active their families are or were in the past, mainly due to the political circumstances and troubles there that they are exposed to through media and social media. In addition, certain political events have made the younger generations of the Kurdish diaspora in Norway more aware of their Kurdish background, more prideful of their ethnicity, as well as made them truly unite and act to highlight the troubles in the homeland, with the siege of Kobane, the war with IS, as well the independence referendum in the KRI as highlights. At the same time, Norway has had an effect on their activism and urgency to act as well, as many participants expressed that they had experienced racism, hate and judgement from non-ethnic Norwegians (such as from the nationalities surrounding Kurdistan geographically), as well as seen lack of interest in Kurdistan

from Norwegian authorities. Many of them were angered and felt they had to defend Kurdistan, whether through social media, or even through just speaking up directly to change the opinions and misconceptions of these people – which highlights even more how their Kurdish background matters even though they live in Norway. Going back to the point about family, it seems the older generation – the generation of Kurds that migrated to Norway – has had a profound effect on the younger generation, making them aware of the hardship they experienced in Kurdistan, as well as pushing their children to be active for the Kurdish cause and be proud of their background.

Through the findings in chapter 5, I also answered the second research question that aimed at exploring identity and belonging in relation to political activism. It is safe to state that young Kurdish adults are affected by racism and hate from other minority groups in Norway, the lack of attention from Norwegian authorities on the Kurdish cause, and also the political events in the homeland. However, that effect has had a profoundly positive impact on their Kurdish identity. It has made their Kurdish identity stronger, and it has made them speak up against peoples' stereotypical imagery of, and prejudice against Kurds, as well as made their will to act for the Kurdish cause even greater. The answers of the participants also show that most of them do not feel like they belong anywhere perfectly, also underlying how fluid the concepts of identity and belonging are, and how they also need to be separated (Anthias, 2008). Feeling dual-identity and dual-belonging is repeated throughout the findings, however, at the same time, all of the participants lean more towards their Kurdish identity, and their sense of duty to act for the Kurdish cause is very much present based on that. They feel very much Norwegian through their freedom and values that they've picked up growing up, and usually more outside in public spaces, but at the same time, very Kurdish due to their ethnic and cultural background, and the effect of their parents and the Kurdish cause. In addition, in terms of belonging, there is a strong feeling of belonging to Kurdistan through, again, their ethnic and cultural background, as well as through activism for the Kurdish cause and socializing with other Kurds that seem to awaken Kurdishness amongst them. However, a majority of them also feel a strong sense of belonging to Norway due to the fact that they grew up in the country and have well-established lives there that keep them connected. It is, of course, always very individual how young people feel in terms of identity and belonging, and what can trigger the dynamics of it, but since the participants in this study were all young Kurdish adults in Norway, they seemingly had similar grounds and experiences that triggered similar feelings, and as the title of the last theme in chapter 5 sums up, they don't really feel like they fit anywhere perfectly,

neither in Norway, nor Kurdistan. They feel more strongly about their Kurdish identity, but don't feel like they belong as strongly to Kurdistan, which again highlights Anthias' (2008) theories on the separation and fluidity of identity and belonging. This fluidity, however, was not seen as anything negative among the participants, and there does not seem to be an identity-crisis among them, which also supports Anthias' (2009) claim that young people growing up between two cultures are not necessarily having issues with their identity.

The participants presented new insight into their own minds and their experiences growing up in Norway between two cultures, as well as how this has had an effect on their positionality. At the same time, they also gave me insight into the methods they use to express their identity and belonging, as well as how they conduct their activism – where social media is prevalent in all cases as we live in a technological age that has made the world smaller, but the outreach bigger. At the end of the day, there is more space for fluid identities and belongings in the globalized world we live in today, and more opportunities in a liberal country like Norway to express political opinions and act in the name of the ancestral homeland Kurdistan – and more space for these three to overlap and affect each other. In the end, as Anthias' (2008) explained, positionalities are a social produce that are the outcome of social relations and interaction of processes.

7 Bibliography

Aghapouri, H. (2018). *Nationalism and Diaspora in Cyberspace: The case of the Kurdish diaspora on social media* . Auckland: The University of Auckland.

Alinia, M. D., & Eliassi, B. (2014, February 11). Temporal and Generational Impact on Identity, Home(land) and Politics of Belonging Among the Kurdish Diaspora . *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*.

Anthias, F. (2002). *Where do I belong? Narrating collective identity and translocational positionality.* London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: SAGE Publications.

Anthias, F. (2008). *Thinking through the lens of translocational positionality: an intersectionality frame for understanding identity and belonging.* Nordic Journal of Migration Research.

Anthias, F. (2009). Translocational Belonging, Identity and Generation: Questions and Problems in Migration and Ethnic Studies. *Finnish Journal of Ethnicity and Migration*.

Baser, B. (2022). *Kurdish Diaspora Political Activism in Europe with a Particular Focus on Great Britain.* Centre for Just Peace and Democracy.

Baser, B. D., & Swain, A. (2010). *Stateless Diaspora Groups and their Repertoires of Nationalist Activism in Host Countries* . The Journal of International Relations.

Beauchemin, C. D., & Safi, M. (2020). *'Migrants' connections within and beyond borders: insights from the comparison of three categories of migrants in France.* Ethnic and Racial Studies.

Braun, V. D., & Clarke, V. (2006). *Qualitative Research in Psychology.* Routhledge.

Braun, V. D., & Clarke, V. (2012). *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology.* American Psychological Association.

Brinkerhoff, J. M. (2009). *Digital Diasporas: Identity and Transnational Engagement.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brubaker, R. (2005). *The 'Diaspora' Diaspora.* Routledge.

Bruinessen, M. V. (2000). *Transnational Aspects of the Kurdish Question.* European University Institute.

Bruneau, M. (2010). *Diasporas, Transnational Spaces and Communities.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Bryman, A. (2012). Snowball Sampling. In A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods (4th edition)* (p. 424). New York: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. (2021). *Bryman's Social Research Methods.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Candan, M. D., & Hunger, U. (2008). *Nation Building Online: A Case Study of Kurdish Migrants in Germany.* German Policy Studies.

Cohen, R. (1995). Rethinking "Babylon": iconoclastic conceptions of the diasporic experience. In *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.*

Cohen, R. (1997). *Global Diasporas - An Introduction.* Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Cohen, R. (2008). *Global Diasporas (2nd Edition).* Abingdon and New York: Routhledge.

Curtis, A. (2005). *Nationalism in the Diaspora: A Study of the Kurdish Movement.* Utrecht: University of Utrecht.

Cwerner, S. B. (2001, January). The Times of Migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies Vol. 27.*

Earl, J. D., Maher, T. V., & Elliott, T. (2017). *Youth, activism, and social movements.* USA: Wiley.

Eccarius-Kelly, V. (2002). *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs - Political Movements and Leverage Points: Kurdish Activism in the European Diaspora.* Ruthledge .

Eccarius-Kelly, V. (2017). The Kurdish Diaspora and Europe's Gatekeeping after Kobane. In O. T. Tabak, *Domestic and Regional Uncertainties in the New Turkey* (p. Ch 4). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Esposti, N. D. (2021). *The 2017 independence referendum and the political economy of Kurdish nationalism in Iraq.* London: Routledge - Third World QuarTerly.

Faist, T. (2000). *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Faist, T. (2010). Ch 1 - Diaspora and transnationalism: What kind of dance partners? In R. D. Bauböck, & T. Faist, *Diaspora and Transnationalism.* Amsterdam Univeristy Press.

Faist, T. D., & Baubök, R. (2010). *Diaspora and Transnationalism - Concepts, Theories and Methods.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Garcia, R. T. (2018). *Diasporas and the role of social media on militant/political activities: The Basque diaspora in Argentina in the Spotlight.* Deusto: Intellect Ltd - University of Deusto.

Griffiths, M. D., Rogers, A. D., & Anderson, B. (2013). *Migration, Time and Temporalities: Review and Prospect.* COMPAS - Center on Migration Policy and Society .

Hear, N. V. (1998). *New Diasporas: The Mass Exodus, Dispersal and Regrouping of Migrant Communities.* London: UCL Press.

Helland, C. (2007). *Diaspora on the Electronic Frontier: Developing Virtual Connections with Sacred Homelands.* Dalhouise: Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication.

Holmes, A. G. (2020). Researcher Positionality - A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research - A New Researcher Guide. In *Shanlax International Journal of Education .* Shanlax.

Horst, C. (2018). *Making a difference in Mogadishu? Experiences of multi-sited embeddedness among diaspora youth.* Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies (Routhledge).

Hourani, G. (2012). *Transnationalism from above: Homeland political parties of Lebanon and the Lebanese diaspora.*

Human Rights Watch . (1996, October). *HRW Publications - The Silenced Kurds.* Retrieved from Human Rights Watch: https://www.hrw.org/legacy/summaries/s.syria9610.html

Itzigsohn, J. (1999). *Mapping Dominican Transnationalism: Narrow and Broad Transnational Practices .* Ethnic and Racial Studies.

Kastoryano, R. (2002). In S. Vertovec, *Transnationalism* (p. 88). Rutledge.

Khayati, K. D., & Dahlstedt, M. (2014). *Diaspora Formation Among Kurds in Sweden: Transborder citizenship and politics of belonging.* Linköping: Nordic Journal of Migration Research.

Laguerre, M. S. (2010). *Diasporas in the new media age: Identity, politics, and community.* Nevada: University of Nevada Press.

Mahmod, J. (2019). *New Online Communities and New Identity Making: The Curious Case of the Kurdish Diaspora.* Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies.

Mainsah, H. (2011). *'I could well have said I was Norwegian but nobody would believe me': Ethnic minority youths' self-representation on social network sites.* Oslo: European Journal of Cultural Studies (SAGE).

Merton, R. K. (1968). *Social Theory and Social Structure.* New York: The Free Press.

Nikielska-Sekula, K. (2016). The Role of Cultural Heritage in the Creation of a Sense of Belonging Among Young Norwegian Turks: Boundary Making and Crossing. *The Age of Human Rights Journal*, pp. 96-119.

Noble, H. D., & Smith, J. (2015). *Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research.* Evidence-based nursing.

Nolas, S.-M. D., Varvantakis, C. D., & Aruldos, V. (2017). *Political activism across the life course.* Brighton, UK: Routledge.

Nomat, D. (2019). *Positive holdninger til integrasjon medierer relasjonen mellom etnisk kurdisk identitet og kurdisk språkkompetanse - en kvantitativ casestudie av kurdere i Norge.* Oslo: University of Oslo.

Paasche, E. (2020). *Elites and emulators: The evolution of Iraqi Kurdish asylum migration to Europe.* Migration Studies - Oxford University Press.

Reynolds, T. (2011). *Caribbean second generation return migration: Identities, transnational family relationships and 'left behind' kin in Britain.* Mobilities.

Shain, Y. (1999). *Marketing the American Creed Abroad: Diasporas in US and their Homelands.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shain, Y. D., & Sherman, M. (1998). Dynamics of disintegration: diaspora, secession and the paradox and the paradox of nation-states. In *Nations and Nationalism.* Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Sheffer, G. (1986). *Modern Diasporas in International Politics.* New York: American Political Science Review.

Sheffer, G. (1995). The emergence of new ethno-national diasporas. In *Migration.*

Skjeseth, H. T. (2022, September 22). – De brenner symbolet på den iranske republikken. *NRK*.

Soler-i-Martí, R. (2014). *Youth political involvement update: measuring the role of cause-oriented political interest in young people's activism.* Journal of Youth Studies - Routledge.

Somerville, K. (2008). *Transnational Belonging among Second Generation Youth: Identity in a Globalized World.* Journal of Social Sciences.

Statistisk Sentralbyrå - SSB. (2016, December 14). *Irakere i Norge – et demografisk portrett.* Retrieved from Statistisk Sentralbyrå: https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/irakere-i-norge-et-demografisk-portrett

Tasdemir, E. (2019). *The Kurdish Diaspora in Canada: A Study of Political Activism and The Uses of The Kurdish Language.* Ottawa: University of Ottawa.

Tedeschi, M. D., Vorobeva, E. D., & Jauhiainen, J. S. (2020). *Transnationalism: current debates and new perspectives.* Turku: Department of Geography and Geology - University of Turku, Finland.

Toivanen, M. (2016). Chapter 6: Political Transnationalism as a Matter of Belonging: Young Kurds in Finland. In P. D. Ahponen, P. D. Harinen, & V.-S. Haverinen, *Dislocations of Civic Cultural Borderlines: Methodological Nationalism, Transnational Reality and Cosmopolitan Dreams* (pp. 87-106). New York: Springer Publishing.

Toivanen, M. (2021). *The Kobane Generation: Kurdish Diaspora Mobilising in France.* Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.

United Nations. (2021, October 19). *fn.no*. Retrieved from Kurdistan: https://www.fn.no/Konflikter/kurdistan

Vertovec, S. (1997). *Three meanings of "diaspora" , exemplified among South Asian religions.* Diaspora.

Vertovec, S. (1999). *Conceiving and researching transnationalism.* Routledge.

Vertovec, S. (2000). *Religion and Diaspora.* University of Oxford.

Vertovec, S. (2001). *Transnationalism and identity.* Routledge - Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.

Vertovec, S. (2009). *Transnationalism.* London: Routhledge.

Wahlbeck, Ö. (1999). *Kurdish Diasporas: A Comparative Study of Kurdish Refugee Communities.* London: Macmillian.

Wahlbeck, Ö. (2002). *The concept of diaspora as an analytical tool in the study of refugee communities.* Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.

Wahlbeck, Ö. (2017, May 28). *Routledge Handbook on the Kurds.* Retrieved from Contribution to Routledge Handbook on the Kurds: https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/308742/Future_of_the_Kurdish_Diaspora_28052017_Wahlbeck_2017_Handbook.pdf?sequence=1

Weiss, N. (2018). *The Many Layers of Moral Outrage: Kurdish Activist and Diaspora Politics.* Berghahn Journals.

Yilmaz, A. (2018). *The Changing Dynamics of the Kurdish Question.* German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). *Patterns of Prejudice, Vol. 40: Belonging and the politics of belonging.* Routledge - Taylor & Francis Group.

Zakiryanova, I. D., & Redkina, L. (2020). *Research on ethnocultural identity in H. Tajfel's social identity theory and J.C. Turner's self-categorization theory.* SHS Web of Conferences .

Østergaard-Nielsen, E. (2003). *Transnational Politics: Turks and Kurds in Germany.* London and New York: Routhledge .

List of Figures

Annexes

Annex 1 – Letter of Consent

<div align="center">

Are you interested in taking part in the research project;

Identity, Belonging and Political Activism

A study on young adults among the Kurdish Diaspora in Norway

</div>

Purpose of the project

You are invited to participate in a research project where the main purpose is to:
Look at the diaspora youth in Norway, their political activism regarding the Kurdish issue, and the youth's sense of belonging/identity. Through my thesis I will try to explore and answer two aspects of the chosen topic with the following questions:

1. How do the youth of the Kurdish diaspora in Norway perceive the Kurdish issue, and what is the role of political activism among them?
2. How do Kurdish youth identify themselves and their sense of belonging, and how does the Kurdish issue, their fight for self-determination, and their political activism, affect their positionality?

The research that I will conduct is a two-year master's thesis for an MSc in Human Rights and Multiculturalism (in English).

Which institution is responsible for the research project?

The University of South-Eastern Norway (Universitetet i Sør-Øst Norge or USN) is responsible for the project (data controller).

Why are you being asked to participate?

I will conduct interviews with young diaspora members across Norway, hopefully reaching out to members of the community that are from both genders, but also with origin in all four parts of Kurdistan – which hopefully will give me more varied answers to analyze and work with. The aim is to conduct interviews with young diaspora Kurds between the ages of 18-35, whom are usually part of the first or second generation, and this is why you have been asked to participate.

What does participation involve for you?

Since my thesis will discuss Kurdish youth, their sense of belonging/identity, and political activism in regards to Kurdistan in Norway, I find it most logical to use qualitative research method to explore this topic further. It is important to collect opinions, views and perceptions on this among the Kurdish youth through an analysis of their words. If you chose to take part in the project, the interviews will be in-depth, but semi-structured, and they will be conducted either online or in-person, according to your preference. It will take approximately 45 minutes and everything will be recorded through the Nettskjema-Diktafon sound recording app, which has been approved by USN to safely store personal data such as this.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made

anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data
We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified here and we will process your personal data in accordance with data protection legislation (the GDPR).

Beside the researcher (me), only the thesis supervisor Gabriela Mezzanotti will have access to your personal data in the form of interview answers and contact information related to you.
I will replace your name and contact details with a code, and the list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data, and everything will be stored safely in the USN data server.
In the research paper itself your name will be replaced with a code, and your identity will not be exposed to the public in any way. Only age, part of Kurdistan you originate from and gender will be exposed since it is relevant to the research topic.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?
The planned end date of the project is May 2023. The personal data collected through the interviews will be anonymised in a safe manner after the thesis has been completed and handed inn.

Your rights
So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:
- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?
We will process your personal data based on your consent.
Based on an agreement with The University of South-Eastern Norway (USN), Data Protection Services has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project meets requirements in data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?
If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:
- **The University of South-Eastern Norway** via **Gabriela Mezzanotti** through email: gabrielamezzanotti@usn.no
- **Our Data Protection Service at USN**: forskningsdata@usn.no
- Researcher of this thesis project (student): **Tania Jonaid Saleh** via taniasaleh95@gmail.com or call 93849393

If you have questions about how data protection has been assessed in this project, contact:
- Data Protection Services, by email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Project Supervisor   **Student (Researcher)**
Gabriela Mezzanotti   Tania Jonaid Saleh

Consent Form

I have received and understood information about the project **Diaspora Kurds & Political Activism** and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- ☐ to participate in an interview
- ☐ for Tania Jonaid Saleh to give information about me to this project
- ☐ for information about me to be published in a way that I can't be recognised
- ☐ for my personal data to be stored until the end of the project

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end of the project.

(Signed by participant, date)

Annex 2 – Interview Guide

Part 1: Political Activism

1. Gender, age, part of Kurdistan your parents originate from, spoken languages (both personal and at home), education level.
2. Do you have any political engagements? (Member of student organizations, political parties, religious groups, etc.?) Internships?
3. Do you use social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), and if yes, for what purpose?
4. Do you follow news about Kurds/Kurdistan on TV/social media, and in that case, how does that effect your perception on their situation?
5. Are you, or have you been, engaged in political activism towards the Kurdish cause, and if so, how did you take part in it and what made you do it?

    5.1 What made you start caring about the Kurdish cause?

    5.2 Are you part of any specific movement or political group, and if yes, what is your role in it and what do they stand for specifically?
6. What kind of methods do you use/did you use to drive your political activism and support towards the Kurdish issue?
7. Does Norway's stance on the Kurdish issue affect your own perception and activism, and if so, in what way?
8. Do you think that the events that have occurred since the early 2010s (Kurdish fight with IS, Turkish invasion of Rojava – Northern Syria, independence referendum in Iraqi Kurdistan) has sparked political interest or created an awakening among the young diaspora Kurds?
9. How do you feel about the current situation with NATO, Türkiye and the Kurds, and have you done anything to try to create awareness around or affect the situation?

Part 2: Identity and Belonging

10. How do you identify yourself in Norway, and where do you feel you belong?
11. Do you socialize or engage with the Kurdish diaspora community in Norway, and if yes, in what way, and also, does it have an effect on you in any way?
12. Does the Kurdish issue (and your political activism) have any effect on your sense of identity and belonging, and how?
13. Have you faced any challenges with your Kurdish background in Norway, such as discrimination, bullying, exclusion etc., and if so, how did it happen and has it had any profound effect on your sense of identity and belonging?
14. Do you feel like being a young diaspora Kurd brings about any personal challenges in your daily life and family life, and if so, how?

    14.1. What is your family's role in your political engagement (Are your views on the Kurdish cause/diaspora different from your parents' view?) How? Please give examples.

    14.2 Can you recall key moments in your life that have influenced your political engagement?
15. Has your engagement with the Kurdish cause had any negative/positive effect on your identity and belonging, and also, your everyday life (discrimination, threats, praise etc.)?
16. When do you feel the most Norwegian and when do you feel the most Kurdish?