PATTERNS OF SUPPORT OF ETHNIC VIOLENT GROUPS BY CO-ETHNIC GROUPS

by

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Under the direction of Dr. Michael Herb

ABSTRACT

Most studies examine how homeland policies influence the host state and what role the homeland plays for diaspora. In this paper, I will examine the reasons and conditions for why ethnic groups do or do not support *violent* ethnic groups. This study tests how external threats impact the level of support within the same ethnic groups. I will examine the causal relationship between external pressure and non-cooperation through a structured, comparative study of Kurdish ethnic groups.

INDEX WORDS: Cooperation, Group cooperation, Ethnic war, Ethnic secessionist movements, Separatist movements, Kurds, Violent Kurdish groups, External threat, and External pressure

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DEDICATION

For my family who never held me back and encouraged me to see the world as much as possible.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party [Iraq]) The Iraqi Kurdish Party headed by Massoud Barzani

PJAK (Kurdistan Free Life Party) An Iranian Kurdish pro-PKK party

PKK (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan [Turkey]) Kurdistan Workers' Party, founded by Abdullah Ocalan

PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [Iraq]) The political party founded by Jalal Talabani

1. INTRODUCTION

There has been much research conducted in an attempt to identify and explain why ethnic-secessionist movements start, how they can divide countries, how transnational ethnic ties impact the relationship between states and diaspora, and why states and ethnic groups support violent groups. Most studies primarily focus on the homeland state and diaspora relationship (Wayland 2004, Sheffer 1986, King and Melvin 1999-2000, Sorrentino 2003). They examine how homeland policies influence the host state and what role the homeland plays for diaspora. In this paper, I am interested in co-ethnic groups that do not have a homeland or a state to protect their economic or political interest. How do these ethnic groups react or respond when a member of the same ethnic group has an armed conflict in a neighboring country?[1] Moreover, under which circumstances do they reject or support co-ethnic violent groups?

In general, I am examining the reasons and conditions for why ethnic groups do or do not support *violent* ethnic groups. There are many possible explanations for my question. However, it is obvious that ethnic ties play a key role for co-ethnic groups' respective support of the violent group. Existing literature suggests that external threat or interstate rivalries influence states' decisions to support violent groups. It has been argued that states believe that the benefit of supporting a violent group is higher than the cost. The primary argument for co-ethnic groups claims that ethnic ties or a sense of common identity forms the key motivation for the groups' support of one another. Existing studies neither acknowledge nor consider the presence of either direct military or economical threat, or both, to a country. This is crucial as such threats often lead to a state's withdrawal and relinquishment of its support in light of the possible great loss

[1] My definition of "armed conflict" drawn from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) which defines "an armed conflict as a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory over which the use of armed force between the military forces of two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, has resulted in at least 25 battle-related deaths each year."

incurred should the state involve itself in a direct confrontation. Therefore, I believe ethnic groups' perceptions of threat hold import and thus necessitate clarification as to how a threat convinces a group to support or reject support for violent co-ethnic groups.

I examine the causal relationship between external threat and non-support through a structured comparative study of Kurdish ethnic groups, which include the Kurdistan Workers Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, the PKK) from Turkey, the Kurdish Autonomous region in Iraq, Kurds from Syria, and KDPI, Komala and PJAK from Iran. The time period I primarily focus on is the mid 1980's, when the PKK , the PUK, the KDP, KDPI, and Komala were already established and militarily active; and after 1999, when PJAK was established and Syria shut down the PKK camps and established their camps in Northern Iraq (Hooper 2007). I explore why some Kurdish groups have established cooperation (PKK, PJAK and Syrian Kurds) but why the Kurdish Autonomous region (the PUK and the KDP) in Iraq failed to cooperate with the PKK and PJAK. Moreover, I determine whether external pressures or threat had any influence on their cooperation or non-cooperation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Rational Choice Theory and Group Favoritism

Some authors explain cooperation and non-cooperation within groups through the lens of rational choice theory. As it is understood, rational choice theory seeks to explain normal human behavior, for which there is a certain level of rationality when engaging in a specific behavior. Rational choice theory states that "individuals have given goals, wants, tastes or utilities"

(Hechter, Friedman, and Appelbaum 1982, 415). As we know, it is impossible to achieve or recognize all goals, due to scarcity. Therefore individuals will decide between alternative choices to maximize their self-interest. These give us two different paths. One is to set a course of action that diminishes the small separate possible actions. The second involves the actors deciding on which path to take for action. As a result, people choose the one that will manifest the most desired goal. People decide to join in a collective action based on whether the utility benefits of their participation exceed the costs. These actors see cooperation or participation as a net benefit. The more a group achieves from collective action, the greater the strength of possible collective action that will follow (Hechter, Friedman, and Appelbaum 1982). By conducting a lengthy cost and benefit analysis of the situation, rational choice theory examines whether or not groups or individuals act rationally. This approach identifies a causal mechanism, which – even when applied to relatively obvious cases – can still reveal novel findings. It also demonstrates the results of interaction between actors and groups and between both actors and groups together (aggregation), along with the logic behind their decision to not cooperate. Groups make decisions or choose their strategies based on the cost and benefits analysis. Individuals and groups try to pursue a goal or goals that best fulfill(s) their objective and while they are accomplishing their ideal goal they aim for utility maximization (Geddes 2010). However, some studies cast doubt on the rational choice theory argument. Group favoritism might explain why a certain group would tend to support their members even though the cost exceeds the benefit.

Axelrod and Hammond (2003) emphasized the importance of ethnocentrism in cooperation. This behavior involves cooperation between group members, however not with those outside of the group. Therefore, "ethnocentrism can be in-group favoritism or out-group hostility" (3). This attitude creates noncooperation with other groups or members. One reason for

the development of ethnocentrism is competition between groups or individuals. Groups and members tend to interact very often with members of their group, resulting in more strained interaction with other groups. The idea is that when people see themselves as members of a group they are more likely to contribute, even if the cost exceeds the benefit. Group members tend to favor in-groups even if their self-interest does not apply (Axelrod and Hammond 2003). Even though individuals may not gain much from the action, they can still gain in the long term, which suggests that members' decisions to favor the in-group are still rational. For example, Manzano and Sanchez evaluate co-ethnic preferences toward co-ethnic candidates. They find that Latinos with strong ethnic attachments remain inclined to prefer a co-ethnic group even when less qualified than a non-Latino candidate**.** Latinos with higher levels of Latino group identification are also most likely to support a Latino candidate. Latino preferences for co-ethnic candidates vary even though their decision upon an individual is most influenced by their level of ethnic identification and the type of Latino candidate choice at hand (Soto and Maria 2007). Group favoritism and out of group hostility increase in a competitive situation and in the presence of an external threat (Axelrod and Hammond 2003). Manzano and Sanchez's (2010) study demonstrates that ethnic identities are important for individual preferences and co-ethnic support. It also illustrates that competitive situations between groups increase group favoritism, even though it is in neither the members' nor the individuals' best interest to vote for a Latino candidate. However, Manzano and Sanchez's study still does not explain how ethnic ties impact separatist movements nor explains how these ethnic ties impact transnational ethnic networks. Rational choice theory gives us some understanding of group cooperation and how individuals makes their choices. However, to have a better understanding why an ethnic group seeks a

separatist or secessionist movement may help us to understand why ethnic group cooperation is essential for such movements.

2.2 Ethnic Secessionist/Separatist Movements

Horowitz (1981) defines separatism as an idea that demands "'political self-expression' - usually on a territorial basis – and is 'a necessary concomitant of group distinctiveness'" (166). Tir (2005) declares that secession is an effort to settle an internal territorial dispute through the division of a country into new, secessionist (Southern Sudan), and rump (Northern Sudan) states. This means separatist or secessionist movements usually demand for the creation of a separate state or regional autonomy within the existing state. Separatist movements generally seek to achieve statehood by way of armed conflict. Ethnic secessionist movements are neither recent nor purely ethnic phenomena. Sweden and Norway split up their union in 1905 and China and Taiwan divided for ideological, as well as economic reasons (Tir, 2005).

International politics, via the balance of interests and forces that extend beyond the state, largely determine if a secessionist movement will accomplish its goal (Horowitz (1981, 167). The international community also holds the power of recognition, which can be utilized for leverage against the state (by threatening to give recognition) and against the separatists (by refusing to give recognition). If the international community forces the government to solve the problems peacefully, the separatists may possibly drop the demands (Tir 2005). Nevertheless, this does not guarantee peaceful resolution. Moreover, territorial disputes after separation can also be problematic.

Tir also examines peaceful and violent secessionist movements. Some disputes are not solved peacefully, in which case leaders of the rump states attempt to retake the lost land,

whereas secessionist states try to acquire more land from rump states or another secessionist state, as seen in the dispute between Pakistan and India over Kashmir. Therefore peaceful versus violent secession can also affect a movement's future desire. Most ethnically-based secessions tend to play an important part in a conflict's onset (Tir 2005). Sometimes a secessionist state still does not create ethnically homogeneous states. The treatment of minority groups creates tension between the states and each state tries to protect their "ethnic brethren who have been 'left' in the other state (719). This creates a complicated relationship between "the states in which they live (host states), and the actions of governments that might make some historical or cultural claim to represent them (kin states)" (King and Melvin 1999-2000, 108). Nevertheless, separatist ideas can be a great threat to some countries. For instance, most African states face severe "racial, religious, tribal, and linguistic divisions" (Saideman 1997, 723). States fear that should some group successfully question artificial African boundaries then all the boundaries will be challenged, thus undermining the entire system (Saideman 1997 and Herbst 1986). Therefore "… all parties know that once African boundaries begin to change there would be an indefinite period of chaos... the grave danger of not cooperating is clear to all" (Herbst 1989, 690). Woodward (1995) argues that western countries wanted to protect Yugoslavia's territorial integrity because they thought such an action would create an example for the Soviet Union. However, mutual vulnerability still fails to explain how leaders deal with critical situations because not all states follow the same solutions to common problems. Vulnerability can be perceived differently with diverse interests (Miller 1995 and Morgan and Bickers 1992).

Saideman (1997) argues that politicians make decisions depending upon constituents' ethnic ties. If politicians' constituents possess ethnic ties to secessionist groups then states tend to support the secessionist groups. If they have ties with host states then the states side

accordingly. This suggests that cooperation must promote political benefits, otherwise, cooperation is unlikely. Most African countries cooperated during the Congo Crisis and Nigerian Civil War due to their domestic political motivations (Saideman 1997). Nevertheless, Saideman's study fails to provide much information in regards to the relationship between kin and host states; therefore, an examination of the ethnic-nationalist network will provide us with knowledge of ethnic group cooperation.

2.3 Ethno-Nationalist Networks

According to Wayland (2004), the relationship between host and kin states is called an ethno-nationalist networks. The term 'transnationalism' first appeared in the 1970s. It brought forth and emphasized "the role of non-state actors". The term mostly correlates with economic affairs such as the role of international organizations and companies in international affairs (Wayland 2004, 407). Increases in transnational non-governmental organizations (NGO) draw scholar's attention to examine these organizations and their activities. Wayland refers to transnationalism as "identities and intra-ethnic relations that transcend state borders" (p. 48). Transnational ethnic networks are established between co-ethnic groups and among several states as well as between diaspora communities and co-ethnics in the homeland **(**Wayland 2004). Diasporas are ethnic groups of migrant origins living in host countries that still have strong ties and economic links to their countries of origin, also known as their homeland (Sheffer 1986). These networks may interact directly with homeland politics and also lobby their "host" states to change their policies toward the homeland. Basically, transnational ethnic networks help and broaden support for their homeland. In the case of Tamil diaspora living abroad, they have established political offices overseas and have financially supported the Tamil insurgencies to

maintain an independent homeland (Wayland 2004). However, not all ethnic groups aim for an independent state.

Sorrentino's (2003) definition gives us a better understanding. He defines ethnic nationalism as "…a group with members that may or may not exist within the boundaries of a single state, yet whose members can be categorized as a group of individuals that share a common ethnic nationalist identity" (10). These groups may share an interest in the welfare of their transnational community as a whole; however, this does not mean that the existence of a sovereign homeland is the *primary* interest of all members of the community. The ethnic ties are also influenced by state identity as well as a diffuse ethnic population which plays an important role in interstate relations. If the connection and relationship is strong between kin state and diaspora then it may cause the kin state to feel pressured and responsible when ethnic diaspora is seriously threatened (King and Melvin 1999-2000). Transborder ethnic ties and networks can also possibly increase the insecurity of host states and affect the incorporation of diaspora into political and economic domestic affairs in host states (Sorrentino 2003).

Homelands are more likely to help and interact with their diaspora when there is threat to their diaspora from other international players (Sorrentino 2003). Hungary and Ukraine support their diaspora in neighboring countries. The constitutional duties of the Ukrainian president include "securing the national-cultural, spiritual, and linguistic needs of Ukrainians abroad" (King and Melvin 1999-2000, 125). Hungary and Ukrainian laws give special entitlements to their diaspora when they visit the country. The law protects co-ethnic interest and maintains awareness of their national identity, while still encouraging living in a host state. This is called "a 'transnational' or a cross border form of 'citizenship'" (Steward 2009, 3). However, the Status Law (Steward 2003) negatively affected some states such as Slovakia and Slovenia. Still,

support from the homeland may create more problems for diaspora. For example, China's "nationality' law has been supported by adoptive states to minimize the participation of diaspora in their own domestic affairs. The Chinese diaspora depends heavily on China for support, which gives an opportunity to the adoptive states to minimize the incorporation of diaspora in their domestic affairs (Sorrentino 2003).

The strong ties between a homeland and diaspora may even result in a conflict with the host state. The politics of the kin state are more essential than the politics of the host state because kin states are able to influence a diaspora's actions with their policies**.** However, ethnic linkages do not ensure that kin states will act as a protector or provide economic resources for the ethnic war in the host state. In fact, most kin states in Eastern European countries ignored the interest of co-ethnic groups in 1991 (King and Melvin 1999-2000). This means interaction between all homelands and diaspora is not always consistent (King and Melvin 1999-2000 and Sorrentino 2003). Sorrentino claims that cultural similarities and power impact the relationship of a homeland/diaspora and their cooperation. However, the authors do not explain what happens in a situation in which ethnic groups do not have a homeland state to protect their interest in host state. What role does the dynamic of ethnic groups play for states' behavior and decision-making?

Davis and Moore (1997) point out the importance of the status of co-ethnic groups in these countries. If members of an ethnic group hold higher policy positions or are more politically active and organized in one state than members of the same group in a different state, does this affect the states' relationship? The group that is incorporated into the power structure of a state will force or demand both their state and the other state to modify their policies and correct the status differential. The authors claim that the foreign policy of both countries would

be more conflicted, less collaborative, and hold a generally negative attitude (Davis and Moore (1997). This argument assumes that the relatively powerful ethnic group will protect the interests of their co-ethnic groups. Even though these groups are co-ethnic, we cannot assume that all ethnic groups will help or cooperate when another group is having an ongoing ethnic conflict. One reason for their non-cooperation could be that diaspora is limited in capabilities.

Wayland points out that while the Sri Lankan conflict was supported by diaspora, that support was outweighed by the pressure from Norway, Japan, Canada and international organizations such as the World Bank and the European Commission, who were pushing for reconstruction and involved in the Sri Lankan peace process. This example demonstrates that transnational ethnic networks are not alone in impacting and influencing conflict (Wayland 2004). Nevertheless, not all rebels receive support from the international community. When and under which circumstances do ethnic conflicts receive external support?

2.4 Why States and Ethnic Groups do or do not Support Violent Ethnic Groups

There are varying reasons for states' support of violent groups. States will react and respond more strongly to an enemy closer in proximity than one located further away. This means that states are more sensitive to regional crises in neighboring countries. This translates to a higher likelihood of state support of violent groups within neighboring countries that they perceive as a potential threat (Saideman 2001). Pakistan has supported both the ATTF and the BLTF against India because it perceives India as a potential threat (Salehyan, Gleditsch, Cunningham (2011).

Salehyan, Gleditsch, Cunningham (2011) argue that strong and very weak rebel groups tend to get less external support. Strong rebel groups gather resources from domestic sources.

Even though they can gain more resources they will less likely accept external support because they do not want to be constrained or imposed upon by external actors. The very weak rebels would rather gain international attention and support but because they are too weak, external actors tend to not invest too much.

Ethnic or religious ties also play an important role in ethnic mobilizations and support. If a violent group has a large transnational constituency of support then states are more likely to support the group. For instance, the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) in Turkey and violent Palestinian groups receive wide support from co-ethnic groups and diaspora due to their religious and ideological commitments. Moreover, group sympathizers, especially in neighboring countries, force their states to support or defend their group during the conflict. Tamil Nadu in India demanded India's government to support the Sri Lankan Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka's conflict (Jenne 2007, Saideman 1997, Salehyan, Gleditsch, Cunningham 2011). This suggests that states may support violent groups to satisfy their constituencies or to control their minorities. Nevertheless, states sometimes support violent groups due to their political interests.

Transnational linkages and interstate rivalries are very important for support for rebel groups, and those conflicts in which the government side has external support are much more likely to also result in support for the rebels (Salehyan, Gleditsch, Cunningham 2011, 32). States that have interstate rivalries tend to support violent groups instead of invading a country. In this way states avoid potential costs such as military economic costs, casualties, risk of invasion, and political and economical sanctions (Salehyan, Gleditsch, Cunningham 2011, Gartner and Seguta 1998). Supporting violent ethnic groups against the targeted state also functions as a tool to destabilize the targeted country (Salehyan, Gleditsch, Cunningham 2011). Sudan supported the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which has been involved in military conflict with Uganda.

Uganda also supported the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) against Sudan. Both countries used these violent groups against each other to weaken and destabilize their enemy (Prunier 2004). However, it is not always in the states' or groups' best interest to support violent groups.

If violent ethnic groups are either militarily weak or fractured then states tend to not support these groups. States or groups may perceive these violent groups as incapable of challenging their host state. Furthermore, violent groups possessing strong central leadership and coordination capabilities have more potential to attract the support of states and their co-ethnic groups (Salehyan, Gleditsch, Cunningham 2011). Equally important are shared goals and preferences between violent groups and both ethnic groups and states. If group preferences or goals do not match with those of the state or co-ethnic groups, they typically do not support the violent group. However, ethnic and religious ties to violent groups may decrease and diverge preferences, "since a common worldview and shared cultural understandings often indicate similar preferences" (Salehyan, Gleditsch, Cunningham 2011, 715, Davis, Moore 1997, Saideman 2001). In this case, co-ethnic groups may still support violent groups due to their ethnic ties. Nevertheless, states may not support groups if they do not have either religious or ethnic ties.

Another big reason for states' willingness to support violent groups is that states may lose some or partial autonomy over the goal they perceive. In another word, a state may grant permission to a group to conduct and use its territory, which increase a state's risk of losing "agency and autonomy over the objectives" (Saleyhan 2010 and Salehyan, Gleditsch, Cunningham 2011, 716). However, if a state's benefit of supporting violent ethnic group exceeds the cost (loss of some autonomy, etc.), then states may be convinced to support the group.

3. THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS

The main question driving this inquiry is why and when the same ethnic national groups support or do not support co-ethnic violent groups? If so, how and under what conditions do they support or reject support? Does external pressure or threat have any effect on a group reluctance to provide support? In order to approach these questions with greater specificity this section will delineate the variables used in this paper, as well as present explanations for their use. Following this organization, possible problems with the theory will be examined in light of former studies and a set of hypotheses will be introduced for future testing.

I will examine the reasons why and under what conditions ethnic groups support violent ethnic groups. It is clear that there are many possible explanations for my question. However, it is obvious ethnic ties or a sense of common identity is the key factor for groups to support one another; however that does not necessarily presuppose a common goal. The authors (Manzano and Sanchez, Salehyan, Gleditsch, Cunningham 2011, Davis, Moore 1997, and Saideman 2001) argue that ethnic and religious ties to violent groups may decrease and divert preferences and differences, allowing groups to support one another. For states, cost benefit analysis plays a central role for their decision to support or not support a violent group. These analyses also suggest that mutual interest is not always necessary for a state or group to support their co-ethnic groups. Nevertheless, we cannot assure that all ethnic groups will help and support when another group is having an ongoing ethnic conflict. Existing literature give some explanation for non-cooperation among co-ethnic groups such as weak and fracture groups may not seen as capable of doing or changing anything or no clear leadership may discourage groups to not support.

Existing literature also reveals that external threat or interstate rivalries influence a state's decision to support violent groups (Salehyan, Gleditsch, Cunningham 2011, Gartner and Seguta

1998, Saideman 2001). States believe that the benefit of supporting a violent group is higher than the cost. This is crucial as such threats often lead to a state's withdrawal and relinquishment of its support in light of the possible great loss incurred should the state involve itself in a direct confrontation. Does threat perception apply to non-cooperation among co-ethnic groups? In other words, if there is external pressure or a direct threat due to a group's cooperation with their co-ethnic violent groups, how do those co-ethnic violent groups react? Do they still support their co-ethnic groups if the cost of continued support of a violent group is higher than before?

My analyses demonstrate that ethnic group perception of threat can be important, thus requiring clarification as to how threat convinces a co-ethnic group to support or not support violent groups. In determining when groups decide to support and not support, I am using the theory that group cooperation based on utility is a key component for a group decision, which measures whether the benefits of their participation exceed the cost **(**Hechter, Friedman, and Appelbaum 1982). I believe that previous studies that employed this model did not appropriately account for the effects of external forces on group or state decisions. The expectation that utility benefit would be an important factor for a group's willingness or unwillingness to support is understandable, but the former assertion is not as clear-cut as Hechter, Friedman, and Appelbaum (1982) contend. This theory is largely based on rational choice theory, which states that all groups / states and leaders act rationally because maximizing their interest is the most important factor in their decision. States and co-ethnic groups may be forced to act in certain way because external actors (this can be either the host state that have the ethnic war or hegemonic or strong-influential state/s or the other neighboring host countries that accommodate co- ethnic groups) may threaten groups for a great loss. For instance, should external actors be involved, ethnic groups may face greater losses than gains while supporting their ethnic groups,

since groups are limited in capabilities.[2] These losses may be territorial, economic, political, or some other form. Therefore, group still make decisions rationally by conducting cost and benefit analysis of the situation however their decision is influenced largely based on external pressures and threats.

The *type or level* of support and the *method* in response to external pressure possessed by the same ethnic groups will be defined as dependent variables. Examples of the type of support to be examined include the following: (1) when one group is under armed attack the other group does not help or when groups are equally threatened, they do not act together. *Help* is hereby defined as financial aid (money or other means); actively fighting against the enemy; supporting group members and leaders; military and economic agreements; helping them to gather weapons; supporting them in the international; (2) Support also includes meetings between state or group leaders and oral statements of support (some of these measures are adopted from Davis and Moore 1997). For states, they may ask a group to leave their territory or cut military or financial aid to the violent group.

The independent variable examined in this analysis will be the existence of external threat or pressure on ethnic groups. The type of external threat or pressure is divided into the following different factors: (1) threats of military intervention or minor verbal conflict and threats by the host state, including loss of jobs or prison sentences; (2) threats of discontinued economic support between the state and group or between state and state, including canceling economic agreements and ending economic activities (which itself can include ceasing the provision of arms and weapons or direct financial aid); (3) threats of international pressure such

[2] I treat and view groups as a single unitary actor engaged in the decision-making process. This definition was drawn from rational choice theory, which defines states as unitary actors (Doyle 1997). Realists argue that unitary actors act to maximize gains and minimize losses (Morgenthau 1967). Therefore, the group decision can be made by a person or small group by choosing the set of alternatives that most maximizes utility.

as diplomatic, political, and economic sanctions. These measures of direct interaction can collectively lead to either support or conflict (some of these measures are adopted from Davis and Moore 1997). The form of *external actors* will be divided into two broad categories; one is state actors and second is non-state actors. Non-state actors are defined as group leaders and influential and powerful group members. Group leaders have a significant impact on state and groups' decisions to support or not.

3.1 From these frameworks, the following hypotheses can be extrapolated for testing:

1. *Groups that have strong ethnic ties will likely support each other.*

According to studies conducted by Jenne (2007), Saideman (1997), Salehyan, Gleditsch, Cunningham (2011), Manzano and Sanchez, Wayland (2004), King and Melvin (1999) and many others, ethnic ties play an important role in ethnic mobilization and support. I will test this argument to see if ethnic ties always convince groups to cooperate.

2. *A host state's relationship with a violent ethnic group impacts the level of cooperation among co-ethnic groups.*

For example; strong ties with either a neighboring country or a country supportive to a certain violent group will likely influence cooperation among co-ethnic group. The opposite can also be true. Moreover, if groups receive greater internal threats from their host state (due to their support for co-ethnic violent groups) there will likely be non-cooperation among co-ethnic groups.

3. *The level of external pressure or threat (from low to high)*[3] *from a neighboring will decrease the level of cooperation among co-ethnic groups.*

[3] The type of external threat or pressure is divided into the following different factors: (1) threats of military intervention or slight verbal conflict and threat; (2) threats of discontinued economic support between the state and group or between state and state, including canceling economic agreements and ending economic activities (which itself can include ceasing the provision of

The foundational hypothesis for this study is summarized in the above statement. There is a significant foundation to my theory that claims external pressure creates the initial foundation for a lack of cooperation within groups. This hypothesis is based in part on the claims of Axelrod and Hammond (2003), which conclude that out-group hostility increases in a competitive situation and when there is an external threat. My assumption tests whether external pressure will provide reason for groups and states to not support a violent group.

4. *Past experiences of conflict or cooperation between co-ethnic groups will likely influence future cooperation and non-cooperation.*

This hypothesis largely drew from Saideman (2001). Moreover, these hypothesizes are also one part of Larson's (1997) argument. Larson argues that the negative perception and security dilemma causes groups to see each other as "us" and "them". Once this logic takes root in a group it becomes very difficult to collaborate together. This logic can also be applied to past interactions. If the groups previously cooperated for a greater gain and left with a good impression then we can expect them to cooperate again or at least not act against one another. However, if the groups or states fought against one another in the past, again for a greater gain, there might exist negative feelings between the two groups and states, making it difficult to cooperate. The root of the problem is still a cost benefit analysis that impacts groups and states' decisions and remains influenced by external actors. Therefore, I expect to find correlation between external pressure or threat and cooperation, regardless of whether pressure is for or against cooperation. I will also examine whether past cooperation or non-cooperation among groups and states in the past has had and/or will have positive or negative impacts for future cooperation.

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arms and weapons or direct financial aid); (3) threats of international pressure such as diplomatic, political, and economic sanctions.

5. *Competition or struggle for group leadership or for political and economical power (if there is more than one group) will likely cause non-cooperation among the same co-ethnic groups.*

This hypothesis has adopted from Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham's (2011) argument, which suggests that groups possessing strong central leadership and coordination capabilities have more potential to attract the support of states and their co-ethnic groups. I argue that competition between groups for leadership, economic, political power, or any combination of these, will decrease the likelihood of group cooperation.

6. *Different dialects between the same ethnic groups will likely decrease the level of cooperation.*

7. *Religious differences within the same ethnic groups will likely decrease the level of cooperation.*

Hypothesis 6 and 7 implemented from multiple authors (Manzano and Sanchez, Salehyan, Gleditsch, Cunningham 2011, Davis, Moore 1997, and Saideman 2001) who argue that ethnic and religious ties to violent groups may decrease and divert preferences and differences, allowing groups to support one another. This argument was adopted because religious and linguistic differences may cause groups to not cooperate[4].

8. *The level of similar ideologies (from low to high) will increase the level of cooperation between co-ethnic groups.*

[4] Majority of Kurds are Sunni however one third of are Shia Kurds in Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran (Turkey: a country study 1995, Al-Khoei 2009). However, the Shia Kurds emphasize their ethnic identities more than religious identities. Moreover, "the Kurds in Syria, Turkey, Iran and Iran- make comparatively less of a distinction between themselves regardless of religion or sect" (Al-Khoei 2009). There are also linguistic divisions among Kurdish groups. Kurmanji is spoken in Turkey, Syria and northern Iraq. Sorani dialect is more in central Iraq and Iran. Zazaki is spoken in eastern Turkey and Gorani dialect in northeastern Iraq. Majority of Kurds speak Kurmanci (Kaya 2011, Berberoglu 2004). In my examination, I did not find any significant result show that Kurdish ethnic groups do not cooperate due to their religious identities and linguistic differences.

Hypothesis 8 was adopted from Jenne 2007, Saideman 1997, Salehyan, Gleditsch, Cunningham 2011. They argue that violent groups receive wide support from co-ethnic groups and diaspora due to their ideological commitments. I will test whether or not differences in ideologies influence group cooperation. My definition of ideologies will be political, covering both conservative and liberal (leftist and rightist) ideologies.

9. *Great powers can cause or prevent co-ethnic groups to cooperate.*

Hypothesis 9 has drawn from Wayland's (2004) argument. The author argues that diaspora is limited in capabilities and international organizations and powerful countries help diaspora during peace processes. I believe that the international community can also influence the relationship of co-ethnic groups. Great powers such as the US, USSR or Soviet Union, and China can solve the dispute between co-ethnic groups, which may cause cooperation. Or they can pressure groups to not cooperate or help.

For this paper, I will mainly focus on examining hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 4, and 9. I will only be able to highlight and address the other hypotheses, however, due to space constraints.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

Table 1 Violent Kurdish Groups

Country	**Violent Kurdish Groups**	**Year that Established**
Turkey	PKK	1974
Iraq	KDP PUK	1946 1975
Iran	KDPI	1945

	KOMALA PJAK	1967-68 1997
Syria	KDPS	1957

I will examine the causal relationship between external pressure and non cooperation through a structured comparative study of Kurdish ethnic groups, which are Kurdistan Workers Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, the PKK) from Turkey, the Kurdish Autonomous region in Iraq, PJAK (the Militant Party for Free of Kurdistan) from Iran, and Kurds from Syria. Syrian Kurds and Iranian Kurds are helping the PKK in their goal of independence. Nonetheless, the PUK and the KDP have supported the PKK, though they eventually withdrew support (McKeirnan 2006). In fact, violence has occurred between the PUK-KDP coalitions and the PKK because Turkey threatens and forces these groups to not just cooperate, but also to act violently against the PKK (McKeirnan 2006**).** There is variation in group cooperation; therefore it is essential to examine the reasons.

The time period from my examination stretches from 1923 to 2012, however, I will primarily focus on two periods of cooperation among Kurdish groups: the mid 1980s, when the PKK was established in Syria; and after 1999, when Syria shut down the PKK camps and established their camps in Northern Iraq (Hooper 2007). Moreover, PJAK was also established late 90s. The reason for my time selection is that most violent Kurdish groups established themselves and became active after the 1980s. After 1999, the PKK's relocation from Syria to Iraq will allow me to examine group cooperation within those states. I will also primarily focus on cooperation or non-cooperation among violent ethnic groups' such as the PKK, PUK, KDP (now known as the Kurdish Autonomous region), and PJAK, because I am more interested in the

dynamic and relationship between violent ethnic groups. My study will not examine cooperation or non-cooperation between Iranian and Syrian Kurds due to geographical restriction which may restrain their ability to cooperate. Furthermore, it is difficult to examine Syrian group cooperation with other Kurdish groups due to many fractions and small groups. Therefore, my examination of Syrian Kurdish cooperation with co-ethnic violent Kurdish groups in neighboring countries will be based on general reactions to and support of Syrian Kurds from these groups.

I will use qualitative research design methods to develop my argument. Possible methodological arguments regarding this project might include the difficulty of proving whether groups support or not, based on external threat or pressure. In order to combat this ambiguity, I will examine most similar-cases (the Kurdish groups that cooperate and do not cooperate), which allows me to control many variables, such as history, culture, and religion. These control variables are important because by controlling them I can avoid analyzing groups that do not cooperate based on these factors. Comparing the most similar groups will allow us to see if group decisions towards non-cooperation are truly made based on external pressure.

The PKK is generally considered a strong violent group with clear leadership and no past experience of fragmentation. Examining the PKK will allow me to control for groups' inability to gain state or co-ethnic group support based on their fragmentation, weaknesses, or lack of clear leadership. Moreover, Kurds in Syria, Turkey, Iran, and Iraq all have identity issues. They all struggle to gain their ethnic rights and freedoms which will permit me to control groups that do not share a common identity or goals. Furthermore, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Turkey all have Kurdish population in their territory and have all been challenged by their Kurdish diaspora. This will allow me to control for states that do not have ethnic problems, which may allow them to act more freely.

4.1 Way to Measure My Hypothesis

I will examine past experiences of support and non-support among groups and states toward violent groups in my empirical analysis. I will research this through process tracing and I will gather information from multiple political, historical, and scholarly works.

My first measure is to define the role of the U.S. in Kurdish case. I will examine the relationship between the U.S. and Kurds in different region. For example: how does Turkey's relationship with the U.S influence Iraqi Kurds decision-making toward the PKK? I will look into present and historical records to examine importance of the U.S in the Kurdish problem. I will also explore all meetings, statements and agreements between the U.S. and countries that are mentioned above and those between the U.S. and Kurds in regards to the Kurdish issue. This examination will demonstrate the level of external pressure and the external actors' roles in co-ethnic behavior and decision-making.

I will also examine the number of military interventions against these violent groups (the PKK, KDP, PUK, and PJAK) to stop their activities (e.g. the number of Turkish military interventions against the PKK in Syria and Northern Iraq). This is one of the most appropriate measures for my study, which predicts that an external pressure exists. If the number of interventions is high, then that would suggest that Turkey or other countries represent a constant external threat to Kurdish cooperation because - due to violent behavior of neighboring countries or external actors - Kurdish groups and states would be afraid to support the PKK. This study could potentially reveal that groups may support a government that intervenes to prevent military interventions in their region. To explore this, I will collect information from historical records and newspapers.

Natali's (2010) book *The Kurdish Quasi-state,* Fielding-Smith's (2010) and Bhadrakumar's (2007) articles, the Middle East Reports, and other economic news provide us with information about the role of neighboring governments and companies in influencing the level of support. Higher levels of economic involvement will demonstrate that these countries have more leverage or potential to influence group cooperation. For instance, the economic agreement between Turkish companies in Northern Iraq and Iraqi Kurdish groups will illustrate that Turkey has the capability to influence and pressure the Kurdish government and/or groups in Northern Iraq.

I will examine the number of meetings between ethnic groups and neighboring countries that have a large population of the same ethnic groups (e.g. the meetings that have occurred between leaders of the Turkish government and Iraqi Kurdish groups from 2000 to 2011) and the number of meetings between state leaders and the PKK and explore the reasons for each visit. If the number of visits is high we can determine that there is a high level of interaction between these governments and groups. It will also determine the foundation of their relationship. I will collect the number of visits and information about the motivations behind the visits from historical records and newspapers.

I will also examine the language and attitude of leaders toward other governments or groups to specify their relationship and the level of pressure they experience to act against or stop supporting the PKK (e.g. the language of Turkish leaders toward Iraqi government or the Kurdish Regional Government). I will collect the information from a variety of newspapers, including international, regional, and local newspapers, and from Kurdish web sites. Some of these newspapers include *Hurriyet, Zaman, Sabah, Radical, the New York Times*, the

Washington Post, and web sites such as KurdishMedia.com, KurdMedia.com, Kurds.com, and the Kurdish Regional Government home page.

5. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Kurdish nationalism started in the late Ottoman period. Nationalist movements were "neither unified nor linear" (Klein, 2007, 137). Kurdish nationalism was fragmented due to the long disputes of notable families and was also limited by Naqshbandi shaykhs (Ozoglu 2001). There were several movements started by different actors who had different views about the situation. Influenced by European nationalism sentiment, they created Kurdish clubs. The goal of these clubs was "to protect the rights of Kurds," however these rights were intended to protect the privileges of the Kurdish tribal chiefs. After the Young Turk revolution in 1908 the goal had changed to autonomy or cultural protection of Kurds. These clubs emphasized that "the education, modernization and protection of the freedoms of the Kurdish people was important not just for Kurdish society, but for the good of the empire overall" (Klein 2007, 139). This demonstrates that clubs did not have separatist views. Most of these Kurdish nationalists were Ottomanists until after WWI (Klein 2007).

These clubs did not begin to make political and national claims until 1918. Following the formation of the Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan (SAK), the club's leaders desired independence and/or autonomy. However, two years after its establishment, SAK split due to ideological reasons among members (Ozoglu 2001). Ozoglu's study demonstrates that "pre-existing feuds between these families contributed greatly to this ideological split" (387), which caused them to not cooperate.

When the Ottoman Empire defeated by the Allied Powers and the treaty of Sevres signed that promised the Kurds an independent homeland of their own. Nevertheless, the rise of Mustafa Kemal in Turkey and British economic interest in Iraq did not let Kurdish people have their own state (Entessar 1989).

5.1 Kurds from Turkey

Twenty percent of the Kurdish population lives in Turkey (Gunter 2000) and when Ataturk and Ismet Inonu built the new nation, neither of them considered minorities. They formed radical reforms such as having one official Turkish language and teaching Turkish history exclusively. They denied the existence of minorities (Yavuz 2001). By doing this, they ignored the existence of distinct ethnic groups like Kurds and other small groups. The Turkish government even declared that Kurds were "mountain Turks who have forgotten their native tongue and now returning to their Turkish origins" (Entessar 1989, 12-13).

The result of transforming a multi-ethnic empire to a nation-state created socio-political problems in Turkey and the consequences of the transformation have seen within Kurdish tribes and leaders. The state still ignored the Kurdish ethnicity. They preferred to portray them as been backward and reactionary people who were a threat to the Turkish state (Yavuz and Gunter 2001). These prompted Turkey to start assimilation policies toward the Kurdish population. The Turkish and Kurdish conflict started mid 1980s and has claimed at least 44,000 lives lost (Shaoul 2011).

Kurdish university students in Ankara and Kurdish intellectuals created the PKK and the SPTK (the Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan) in 1974, respectively. Abdullah Ocalan became the first and only leader for the PKK. The SPTK supported a federal state that would include

equal rights for both Kurds and Turks. On the other side, the PKK was a still is the most radical Kurdish movement demanding for Kurdish autonomy and they achieved mass mobilization in Southeast Anatolia. The organization had a large amount of workers and peasants due to social ideas it contains (Entessar 1989). At first, the PKK began to demand for the Kurdish rights. It also helped the Kurdish population acknowledge their Kurdish identity. The government did not recognize the demand and arrested or killed whoever disagreed with the regulations of the country. A coup in 1980 used violence and coercion against Kurdish people. These negative actions strengthened and politicized Kurdish nationalism and identity (Yavuz 2001). Prior to the military coup during the 1980s, the PKK left Turkey and fled to Syria where the training camps were established by the PKK. After the 1980 coup, the PKK started the first attack against the Turkish military in 1984 (Hassanpour 1994). The guerrilla success in the 1980s was due to government repression, which leads to the mobilization and politicization of large masses into a national movement.

Sadly, violence became the most prevalent problem in Turkey. The war worsened between 1984 and 1991 and, "according to state statistics, since 1984, as many as 4,302 civil servants, 5,018 soldiers, 4,400 civilians, and 23,279 the PKK terrorists were killed in the region, and thousands wounded" (Yavuz 2001). The civil war destroyed 3,000 villages, leaving more than 3,000,000 people displaced (Gunter 2000). The PKK was supported by foreign countries such as Russia, Syria, and Greece. To the extreme, Syria became a military base for the PKK (Yavuz and Gunter 2001). In 1998, in order to end Kurdish violence, the Turkish state threatened to go to war with Syria if they did not expel the leader of the Kurdish movement, Ocalan, from the country (Yavuz 2001).Ocalan was arrested in 1999 (Marcus 2007).

5.2 Kurds from Syria

Syrian Kurds number about two-million people, making up ten percent of the population (Sinclair and Kajjo. 2011**).** It is the largest ethnic population in Syria. Syrian Kurds speaks Kurmanci which is the largest Kurdish dialect. Moreover, the majority of Syrian Kurds are Sunnis. Syrian Kurds live mostly along the border of Turkey and Iraq where their fellow Kurds live. This has had great influence on Syrian Kurds (Ahmed and Gunter 2007). Since, Syrian Kurds do not have any border with Iranian Kurds, which suggest that they have less interaction with Iranian Kurds[5]. In Syria, Kurds did not have any internal problems, as a result of "benign rule of the French mandatory authorities". However, tribal elements were seen along the Turkish border. Syrian Kurds were sympathetic to the Kurdish raids in Ararat and Dersim (1937) in Turkey. This alarmed the Turkish government and led it to replace some of the chiefs from the border region. In 1946 the French withdrew from Syria.

In 1957, the Partiya Democrat a Kurdistan Suriye (KDPI) was established. Kurds still were able to adapt to new changes in their political and living conditions until the establishment of pan-Arabism in the 1960, which threatened and persecuted the members of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (DPKS). This party demanded for Kurdish representation, linguistic, and cultural independence in Syria (Edmonds 1971; Ahmed and Gunter 2007). The Syrian government banned Kurdish culture, language, music. Moreover, the public attacked the Kurds. Nevertheless, Syrian Kurds' nationalism was the weakest compared to Kurdish nationalism in other countries. Some argue that Arab nationalism was important reason for weak Syrian Kurdish nationalism, which attacked Kurdish nationalism (Ahmed and Gunter 2007).

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[5] My study will not examine cooperation or non-cooperation between Iranian and Syrian Kurds due to geographical restriction which may restrain their ability to cooperate.

Under the Assad regime, the government banned Kurds from using their languages for publication or education. The regime also banned Kurdish political parties. Some Syrian Kurds were even denied, or in some cases stripped, of their citizenship. These policies left Kurds to live in a country in which they cannot own a home or a car, and face significant professional obstacles (Marcus 2007). The Kurdish issue was not arguable (Ahmed and Gunter 2007). In the 1960s, the KDPS decided to use revolutionary means to gain freedom, however a small number of Kurds joined. Members of KDPS were arrested, including leader Hamid Haj Darwish, released ten months later. Many believed that Darwish collaborated with the Syrian government that led the first split in 1965 within KDPS (Ahmed and Gunter 2007).

Osman Sabri created Partiya Demokrat a Kurdi li Suriye and Darwish established the Partiya Demokrata Pesveru a Kurdi li Suriye. Sabri wanted to use revolutionary techniques however Darwish was willing to use softer tactics to achieve Kurdish rights. Darwish also cooperated with Talabani whereas Sabri supported Barzani. Nevertheless, there were more splits within these organizations; again, organizations influenced by Iraqi Kurdish groups. Barzani tried to unite and mediate between the parties, but unity was not possible. The reason for disunity was tribal ties with political and ethnic connection and as well as ideological differences which heightened it. The new party, the Kurdish Democratic Party of Syria, was established by Daham Miro in 1972 which had strong ties with KDP. However, in 1972, many arrested and attacked against Syrian Kurds, which scared the Syrian Kurdish movement. During this time, only a small group favored use of violence. The KDPS split more by each decades during the 1970s, 80s and 90s. There are many small illegal Kurdish parties and there have not been many Kurdish groups to openly ask for independence (Ahmed and Gunter 2007). For my study, it is difficult to examine Syrian group cooperation with other Kurdish groups due to many fractions and small

groups. Therefore, my examination of Syrian Kurdish cooperation with co-ethnic violent Kurdish groups in neighboring countries will be based on general reactions to and support of Syrian Kurds from these groups.

5.3 Kurds from Iraq

Approximately 3.7 million Iraqi Kurds live in Northern Iraq and one to two million Kurds live in other part of Iraq (O'Leary 2002). After WWI, Iraq became a British mandate. The League of Nations gave some flexibility to minorities and guaranteed the respect of Kurds in Iraq (Edmonds 1971, 92). However, Britain forced its mandate and in order to stop resistance the British army did not hesitate to use violence. In 1930, British troops killed dozens in the city of Sulaimaniah to quell Kurdish protests. In the 1940s, the establishment of an autonomous Kurdish state was supported by Soviets. However, the Soviets withdrew after nine months in exchange for access to Iranian oil. This event temporarily ceased Kurdish movements in Iraq (McKiernan 2006).

In 1946, Iraqi Kurds formed the Kurdish Democratic Parties (KDP) by a tribal and leftist nationalist leader called Mustafa Barzani. He was a military leader in 1946 for the Kurdish Republic in Iran. KDP's framework spread to Syria and Turkey shortly thereafter. Each aimed for autonomy and democracy for its respective part of country (Hassanpour 1994). Suppression and display of force lead to a war in 1961. The brutality of the Iraqi government's operations led to unification and solidarity among Kurdish people, causing a national uprising. The war continued until 1970. In 1974, the KDP declared a Kurdish autonomous region and started the war with the Iraqi Government. However, in 1975 Iran and the U.S ceased their support of the KDP, which lead Barzani (leader of the KDP) to declare the end of the armed struggle. Many

peshmergas (around 100,000 to 200,000) then fled to Iran. The leftists and the KTL claimed that the KDP was unable to establish a successful movement. Leftist and Marxist ideologies also influence the group to create the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in 1975 (Stansfield 2003 and Hassanpour 1994) and Talabani became the most influential and dominant leader for the PUK. These two groups also different linguistically. PUK members largely speak Sorani whereas KDP members speak Kurmanci (Gunter 1998). The KDP controlled the Dohuk region whereas the PUK controlled Erbil, Kirkuk and Sulaimaniyya, which together comprises about 75 percent of the Iraqi Kurdish population (Hassanpour 1994).

After 1975, there was a great oppression against the Kurds. During the Iraq-Iran war, both countries tried to use the Kurdish populations of both countries in their favor against the opponent (McKeirnan 2006 and Hassanpour 1994). The ideological and political outlook caused conflict between the PUK and the KDP (Natali 2010 and Hassanpour 1994). Iran was able to push both parties to establish the Kurdistan Front in 1987 just before the Anfal genocide. Both parties acted together against the Iraqi government. Later, Western countries got involved and created a “safe haven” which transformed the Kurdish Regional Government. After the civil war in 1994-98 between the PUK and the KDP, they started to run the joint government together (Hassanpour 1994).

5.4 Kurds from Iran

In Iran Kurds are considered “a branch of the Iranian race”. Since Iran has a multiracial mosaic they believe Kurds are part of Iran, therefore there is no Kurdish problem (Edmonds 1971, 99). Iranian Kurds number about seven percent of 68 million people (Marcus 2007). In Iran all languages, including Kurdish, are allowed to be used. In spite of these open conditions,

events between 1918-22 and 1941-46 suggest that Kurds have faced persecution and imprisonment for certain activities (Edmonds 1971, 99). Furthermore, the majority of Iranian Kurds are Sunni Muslims and they have been discriminated by the Shi'a population in Iran (Gunter 2003). Iranian Kurds established a Kurdish state in the city of Mahabad in 1946 with the help of the Soviet Union. Many Iraqi Kurds also played an active role in governing and in the military; Mustafa Barzani became the military leader in the Kurdish state (Nassanpour 1994). The Kurdish state ended less than a year after the Soviet Union's withdrawal (Iranian Kurdistan 2008).

The Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) was established in 1945. The party aimed for autonomy for Iranian Kurds and the use of the Kurdish language in school and administration. However, Kurdish rebels were crushed in 1966 and 1967. The reestablishment of the party did not occur until 1973 (The Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) 2000-2012 and Gunter 2003). The Komala established itself during the Kurdish uprising between 1967-68. The Komala had leftist and Marxist ideologies and remained informal until the 1980s. The Komala's ideas were far more ambitious than the ideas of the KDPI. The Komala's actions increased due to the Iranian government capture of rebel areas in 1986 (Entessar 1992). The leader of the KDPI, Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, was assassinated (Ahmed and Gunter 2007). Iranian Kurds (KDPI and Komala) supported the Iranian Revolution because they were suppressed and discriminated during the shah regime. Kurds were hoping that revolution would provide them a Kurdish autonomous rule. Nevertheless, Khomenini saw these claims as a threat to his newly established government (Gunter 2003).

Iran and Turkey claimed that the PJAK, a "moderate wing of the PKK", was established and based in the Qandil Mountains in Northern Iraq (Gunter 2007 and Marcus 2007). The PJAK

states that the organization was founded in 1997 by students who aim for peaceful solutions. PJAK influenced by socialist revolutions of Russia and they were motivated by both the KRG and the PKK nationalist movement. They tried to build a Kurdish national identity in Iran, however the Iranian government harassed the group considerably, causing the group's leaders and members to move to Northern Iraq in 1999. The area that the PJAK settled is the PKK slopes of Mount Qandil (Brandon 2006). PJAK signed a seize fire with the Iranian government since September 2011 (Iran/Turkey: Recent Attacks on Civilians in Iraqi Kurdistan 2011).

6. COOPERATION AMONG KURDISH CO-ETHNIC GROUPS

6.1 Syrian Kurds

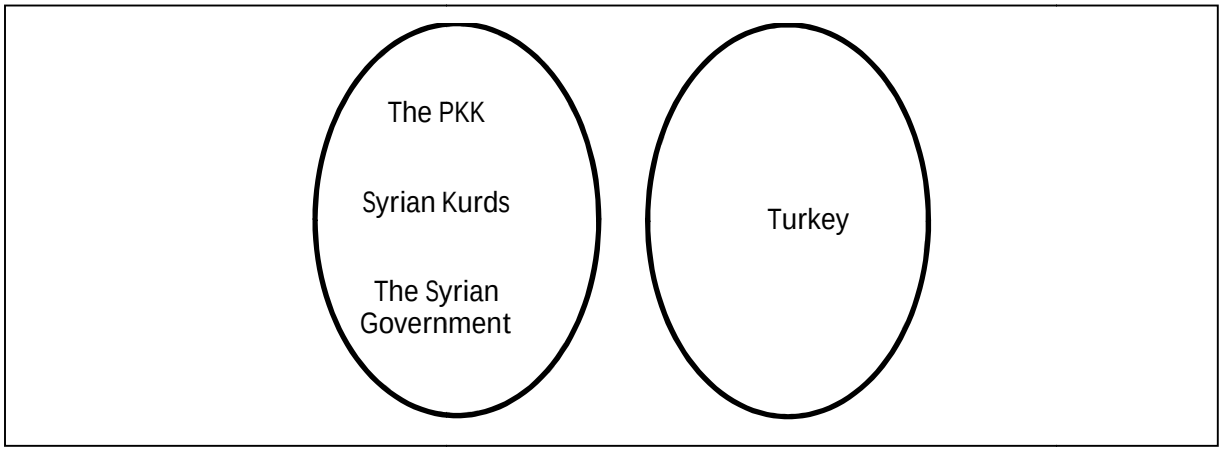

Figure 1 The Cooperation between the PKK, Syrian Kurds and Syrian Government against Turkey (1984-1999)

The PKK was supported by foreign countries such as Russia, Syria, and Greece. To the extreme that Syria became a military base for the PKK (Yavuz and Gunter 2001). Both the Syrian Kurds and the Syrian government significantly helped the PKK. Some Syrian Kurds might not fight on the side of the PKK, but they have long offered both material and ideological

sympathy and support. Some Syrian Kurds would fight with the PKK and profess "'Ocalanism', the ideology of the PKK chief" (McKeirnan 2006, 149). In the 1990s, Turkish intelligence estimated that 25 percent of PKK members were Syrian Kurds and that around 7,000 to 10,000 Syrian Kurds joined the PKK and did not come back to Syria (Ahmed and Gunter 2007).

The Syrian government encouraged Syrian Kurds to join the PKK, which caused the group leader, Abdullah Ocalan, to condemn Syrian Kurds for their national struggle and even accept the Syrian government's claim that "most Kurds originated outside Syria (Ahmed and Gunter 2007, 302). The PKK travelled inside Syria and collected money. The Kurdish Syrian students were very excited by the PKK and the idea of an independent Kurdish state. Kurds in Syria were not politically active and state policies made it difficult for them to act against the Syrian government. Moreover, some Syrian Kurds have relatives across the border in Turkey, which also motivates them to help the PKK. Syrian Kurdish support for the PKK was and is "more tacit than overt" (Marcus 2007, 59). Even Syrian leaders sent their troops to fight against Kurdish uprising in Iraq. In fact, some Syrian-Kurdish families would send their sons to fight in Iraq and Iran (McKiernan 2006). Moreover, the Syrian government discriminated Kurds in every branch of government (Edmonds 1971).

The reason for the Syrian Kurds lack of military involvement in Syria in the battle for their rights has two explanations. Some believe "we have no mountains, so we cannot fight here" (McKeirnan 2006, 147-151). Some state that "no one wanted trouble with the [Syrian] government" (McKeirnan 2006, 147). One PKK militant reports, "it was always clear we (the PKK) wouldn't take any action that was against Syria. There was no decision. We just knew that we couldn't do anything proper… that's it" (Marcus 2007, 59). Moreover, even though, Iraqi Kurds have strong ties with Syria, the PUK and KDP have neither supported nor pressured the

Syrian government to improve rights for Syrian Kurds because the Syrian government supported the PUK (Gunter 2000). This position stems from the groups' desire to avoid harming their relationship with Syria.

In 1998, in order to end Kurdish violence, the Turkish state threatened to go to war with Syria if they did not expel the leader of the Kurdish movement, Ocalan, from the country (Yavuz 2001). Also during this time, the U.S. helped Turkey against the PKK. The U.S. and Turkey pressured Syria to expel the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan (Gillis 2004). Egypt warned Syria that Turkey is not bluffing. Syria told Ocalan to leave the country and he complied in 1998. He was captured in 1999 with the help of CIA (Marcus 2007).Yet, the U.S. insisted that Turkey improve Kurdish citizens' well being and peacefully solve the Kurdish problem (Gillis 2004). Nevertheless, the PKK still have strong ties with two of the parties and presently maintain some presence in northern Syria and some Syrian Kurds still fight with the PKK. After Ocalan's arrest, the Syrian Government signed the Adana agreement. With this agreement, both countries decided to have common security politics. Syria banned the activities of the PKK and PYD (the Syrian Kurdish political party). The Syrian Government acknowledged that the PKK is a terrorist organization, arresting and returning its members to Turkey (Pacal 2012).

Bashar Assad came to power in 2001 he also improved the political and economic dialogue with Turkey. They signed many economic and security agreements, including one "to jointly combat crime and terrorism" (Eligur 2006, 2). Between 2002 and 2003, "Turkey's exports to Syria increased by 37 percent and trade between the two countries [grew] considerably, exceeding $800 million" (Eligur 2006, 2-3) In 2003, the Syrian government carried out military operations against the PKK along the Turkish border and turned captured PKK members over to

the Turkish government. Both countries also supported the territorial integrity of Iraq and shared the fear of an autonomous Kurdish state in Iraq (Eligur 2006).

It is clear that the host state's relation with the violent group was the main hypothesis as it explains the cooperation between Syrian Kurds and the PKK. The Syrian government had a good relationship with the PKK. Since Assad supported Kurdish rights in Turkey and had been helping the PKK, neither the PKK and Iraqi Kurds, nor Syrian Kurds wanted to upset the Syrian government. Moreover, Syrian Kurds were not punished or prosecuted if they helped the PKK. This absence of fear or pressure has allowed Syrian Kurds to help fellow Kurds (the PKK) in their fight for independence. Furthermore, the close ethnic ties between Syrian and Turkish Kurds also played an important role in facilitating co-ethnic group cooperation. My analysis demonstrates that Turkey can pose considerable threat to any group or country if they help the PKK. Further, it also reveals that relationships can be reversed if any country or group cooperates with or helps the PKK. These incidents clarify that the Syrian state's attitude towards the PKK or Iraqi violent ethnic groups impacts the level of cooperation among Kurdish group. Furthermore, the PKK and Iraqi Kurdish groups try to avoid upsetting their relationship with Syria due to the support they receive for their activities, even if that means not supporting – and in some cases, discouraging - Syrian Kurds' demand for autonomy and any activities carried out by Syrian Kurds against the Syrian government.

6.2 Iraqi Kurds

Table 2 Timeline for Iraqi Kurdish Groups' Activities

Years	**Groups' Activities**	**Neighboring States**
1946	1946 The KDP Established in Iraq	
1975	The PUK created by Talabani in Iraq	
1983-88	The PKK and KDP signed Principles of Solidarity The treaty of Principles of Solidarity Ended (1988)	
1989	The PUK and PKK signed Protocol of Understanding (ended within a year)	
1988 -93	The KDP and PUK Cooperated against Saddam	
1994 -98	Civil War between the PUK and KDP The PUK and KDP Signed a Peace Treaty (1998)	The PUK and Iran cooperated against the KDP (1996) The KDP cooperated with Saddam Hussein against PUK (1996) Turkish Forces and the KDP against PUK and PKK (1995-97)

2005	The PUK and KDP signed the Strategic Agreement	

Note: The information gathered from MAR (2010), Olson (1996), Emin (2012).

6.2.1 Iraqi Kurds and Turkish Kurds (1983-1989)

6.2.1.1 Principles of Solidarity and Protocol of Understanding

Table 3 Cooperation between the PKK and Iraqi Kurds (the KDP and PUK) (1983-89)

Turkish and Iraqi Kurdish Groups	**The Agreement**	**Years**
The KDP / PKK	Principles of Solidarity	1983-87
The PUK / PKK	Protocol of Understanding	1988-88

In 1983, the PKK and the KDP signed an agreement called the "Principles of Solidarity". These two groups agreed to commit themselves to protecting against all forms of imperialism. They also decided to cooperate with "other revolutionary forces in the region and [to create] new alliances" (Olson 1996, 51). The principles also: prohibit interference in internal affairs; express the PKK and KDP's commitment to nonviolent interaction with one another; and declare that if one makes a mistake implementing its alliance and ignores a warning then the alliance will cease to exist. This agreement was honored for some time and the PKK began to move towards and establish their presence in northern Iraq, moving around easily (Olson 1996).

The Principles of Solidarity agreement was essential for the PKK to launch an attack against Turkey. Moreover, the PKK used Barzani's relation with the Iranian government to travel Iran. However, the relationship started to change in 1985 (Marcus 2007. In response, Turkey deployed military operations in Northern Iraq. In 1983, the Turkish and Iraq governments signed a "Frontier Security and Cooperation Agreement" which allowed Turkey to enter 10 km to the Iraqi Territory with military operations (Yirmi Altinci Operasyon 2011, Turkey and Iraqi Kurds: Conflict or Cooperations? 2008). The *first operation* took place in 1983, in which seven-thousand Turkish soldiers entered up to 5 km into Iraq. The *second operation* occurred in October 1984 and targeted the PKK camps (Yirmi Altinci Operasyon 2011). The Turkish military interventions in Northern Iraq against the PKK also destroyed Barzani's bases and killed Iraqi Kurds. The KDP demanded the PKK to change their bases, however the PKK refused, later deciding to make some changes. This did not satisfy the Turkish government (Marcus 2007). The *third operation* occurred in August 1986 and Turkish troops killed 100 Iraqi Kurds and KDP members. In the *fourth operation,* in March 1987, 30 Turkish fighter jets bombed PKK camps, killed many Iraqi Kurds, and destroyed many homes (Yirmi Altinci Operasyon 2011, Marcus 2007). After two months, Barzani dismissed the agreement and argued, "after all that has happened, it is absolutely impossible for the PKK to stay in the areas under our control" (Marcus 2007, 105). Moreover, the PKK committed violent actions against the Iraqi Communist Party, which supports the KDP. Barzani interpreted this as an attack on his party (Marcus 2007). The violent PKK behavior against women and children and pressure from Turkey played an important role in ending the PKK and KDP alliance in 1987. Meanwhile, one year later, the PKK signed an agreement, called a "Protocol of Understanding", with the PUK. It aimed for unity, cooperation and joint actions; however the leader of the PUK feared supporting

the PKK due to Turkey's prior repeated military actions in Northern Iraq the PKK. This agreement also ended within one year (Olson 1996). There were no Turkish operations in Northern Iraq between 1988 to 1991 (Yirmi Altinci Operasyon 2011).

These events illustrate that Kurds established cooperation because of sense of Kurdish identity. Ethnicity obviously was the biggest reason for their cooperation. However, later, Iraqi Kurdish groups withdrew from their agreements with the PKK due to a number of Turkish military interventions in the Kurdish region of Iraq. Military threat becomes a big issue for groups. Turkey becomes a great threat to Kurdish cooperation. The Turkish government constantly bombed PKK camps and intervened militarily in Northern Iraq, causing Barzani and Talabani, both set up in the region with their respective groups, to not cooperate with the PKK, out of fear of facing the same Turkish military action. Although Turkish forces were bombing the PKK camps, Iraqi Kurds also lost their lives and homes. Both the PUK and the KDP have also been targeted due to their cooperation with the PKK. During the groups' cooperation, there were four Turkish military interventions in the Kurdish region between 1983 and 1987. Following the Iraqi Kurdish groups' withdrawal from cooperation with the PKK, Turkey ended its military operations in the Kurdish region of Iraq. This demonstrates that when the level of threat increases groups retract their assistance to other group(s).

6.2.1.2 Safe Haven the Civil War between the PUK and KDP (1991-1997)

During the Iran-Iraq war, the Islamic Republics of Iran and Iraq used Kurds as a tool to revolt against each other. As a result, the Iraqi government destroyed more than 4,000 Kurdish villages (McKeirnan 2006). Some even argue, "one-third of the population of Iraqi Kurdistan had been depopulated" (Olson 1992, 477). At the end of the war, the Iraqi government used its

own force, including the use of chemical weapons, against Iraqi Kurds. Some state that more than 100,000 Kurds were killed in the 1980s when the U.S. was still aiding the Iraqi government (Olson 1992 and McKeirnan 2006). In 1988, immediately after the Iraq-Iran war, the Iraqi government began the Anfal campaign, which was carried out genocide against Kurdish people. In spite of their different tactics and political ideas, the PUK and KDP worked together to control the Kurdish areas, which demonstrates that ideological differences can be overcome when there is a greater threat to both groups. However, Iraqi forces regained the territory back and many Kurds fled to the mountains of Turkey and Iran. A few U.S. senators suggested trade sanctions against Iraq, but were refused by the Reagan and Bush administrations. Bush even gave away secret aid, close to $1 billion, to Iraq. Meanwhile, Kurds were not even able to have a meeting with "a lower U.S. official" (McKeirnan 2006, 49).

The Gulf war changed the destiny of Iraqi Kurds. Security issues play an important for U.S.-Turkish relations. During the Cold War, the U.S. and Turkey had a strong bilateral relationship against the Soviet Union (Gillis 2004). The U.S. –Turkish relationship caused the U.S. to overlook Kurdish problems and suffering in Turkey. The U.S. government supported the military apparatus, which is seen as a "guardian of the state's Turkish and secularist identity" (Charountaki 2011, 133). During the Gulf War, Turkey significantly helped the U.S. The U.S. was able to use Incirlik air base. Incirlik was essential to the U.S. mission. For that reason, the U.S. Military Command Center (MCC) and F-15 pilots from Incirlik were and are sharing information about PKK movements to Turkish intelligence, an interaction which forms a part of the MCC agreement. Turkey constantly warned the U.S. to keep Iraqi Kurds in line and encourage them to fight against the PKK. It is clear that the U.S. needed Turkish territory for the mission and Turkey used this as an opportunity to weaken the PKK (McKeirnan 2006). Iraqi

Kurds knew that the U.S. was the only country to protect them against Saddam therefore they had to obey all supposed obligations. There would have been a greater loss (risk of being dismantled by Saddam Hussein) had Iraqi Kurds decided to cooperate with the PKK. In that case, neither the U.S. nor Turkey would have protected them against Saddam. Cooperating with the PKK would have not secured their lives because the PKK lacked the power and capabilities to protect their fellow Kurds.

The Gulf war also resulted in creation by the U.S. and UN of the "Safe Haven", located along the 36th parallel. The KDP and the PUK governed this safe haven zone together (Hassanpour 1994 and Freedom House 2002). Iran did not support a de facto autonomous Kurdistan in Northern Iraq, however Turkey was more eager due to the massive Kurdish population from Iraq. In turn, Turkey developed policies to have more influence on the KDP and PUK against the PKK (Olson 1992, Park 2003). During the 1990s, Turkey has used both military interventions and economical dependency of Iraqi Kurds to pressure them to fight against the PKK (McKeirnan 2006).

After establishment of the safe haven, Turkey started to play an important role for Iraqi Kurds. After the first Gulf war**,** the UN placed sanctions against the Iraqi government. Yet concurrently, the UN humanitarian program and U.S. humanitarian aid were established to help Iraqi people. Turkey played a key role in its establishment because Turkey was the only country that had control over the only open border-crossing point (Habur)[6] into Iraqi Kurdistan passable to humanitarian aid operations. Both governments renewed this relationship every six months and the Turkish government's approval was crucial (Natali 2010). Turkey pressured Western countries not to support or recognize Iraqi Kurdistan otherwise they would block humanitarian

[6] The Habur was the only place where Iraqi Kurds could trade, averaging about $ 150,000 per day (Olson 1996).

aid. Sometimes, they did not hesitate to close the border for humanitarian aid, causing food shortages and price increases. Illicit trading at the Iraqi Kurdish-Turkish border provided 85 percent of the KRG's revenues. The KRG also made around US $750 million from taxation at the Iraqi-Kurdish-Turkish border (Natali 2010). Therefore, the survival of Iraqi people and Kurds depended both upon the aid that was provided by western countries and the profits generated from illicit trading. Therefore, it was unthinkable for Iraqi Kurds to cooperate with the PKK. Doing so would have lead Turkey to close its border, effectively ceasing both the humanitarian aid and illicit trading. For that reason, to maintain an open border, the KRG had a security agreement with Turkey, which incorporated searches for PKK activities and members along the border area (Natali 2010).

The Turkish military operation (*fifth operation)* occurred in April 1991. On September 11 October 25, 1991 Turkey had two *(six and seven*) operations. During these two operations the KDP and YNK (Kurdish parties) helped Turkish forces (Yirmi Altinci Operasyon 2011). Iraqi Kurds had a difficult time establishing their government due to Turkish military interventions. During these operations, Iraqi Kurdish homes and people also would get hit by air strikes. Iraqi Kurds interpreted these actions as a warning sign from Turkey to force the PKK to leave Northern Iraq. Otherwise they would be in danger (Marcus 2007). Military operations convinced Iraqi Kurds to help Turkey during the military procedures. In 1992, the PKK attacked the Turkish military, killing 23 soldiers and five village guards. Turkey – with support from Iraqi Kurdish fighters - responded by attacking the PKK. After two weeks, Talabani started to negotiate with the PKK, but Barzani wanted to force the PKK out of the Northern Iraqi border (Marcus 2007). In spring 1992, Turkish forces held their *eighth operation*. In October 1992, Turkey deployed its *ninth operation,* involving with 15 thousand soldiers, tanks, helicopters, and

air force support. In April 1994, the Turkish government performed its *10th operation*, this time with five-thousand soldiers. This time Turkey entered 15 km into Iraq. Turkey's *11th operation* occurred in March 1995, utilizing 35 thousand soldiers, making it one of the largest military interventions in Northern Iraq (Yirmi Altinci Operasyon 2011).

During the civil war and operations with Turkey, KDP members would try to capture a female PKK member alive because they believed that women ought to be at home instead of in the field of battle. Moreover, some Kurdish Northern Iraqi ministers "resigned from local parliament to protest Iraqi Kurds aiding Turkey against their 'brother Kurds'" (McKiernan 2006, 74). This shows that fighting against the PKK was a big issue. Even though, Iraqi Kurds might not have wanted to help the PKK, they did not want to fight against their fellow Kurds either. This demonstrates that ethnic identities and ties play an important role in group attitudes and positions even if the groups fight against one another.

During this time, the relationship between the Turkish government and Iraqi Kurds improved drastically (Olson 1996). Barzani stated "we consider relations with Turkey to be extremely vital" (Marcus 2007, 201). Talabani claimed that the PKK should reply optimistically to Ozal's statement on Kurdish rights and stop armed violence and instead solve problems through dialogue. Talabani even stated "the Iraqi Kurds might want to be annexed by Turkey" (Olson 1996, 52). Ocalan claimed that Barzani and Talabani betrayed the PKK by cooperating with the Turkish government (Olson 1996). The Turkish government also tried to build a good relationship with Iraqi Kurds it would allow Turkey greater influence in Northern Iraq. Turkey forced both leaders to act against the PKK (Marcus 2007). Iraqi Kurds also understood that the benefit of helping or taking sides with Turkey was greater than cooperating with the PKK. Nevertheless, Iraqi Kurdish leaders tried to convince Turkey to solve the dispute through

dialogue which reveals that Iraqi Kurds were unwilling to use violence against the PKK and nor did they want Turkey to use violence against their fellow Kurds.

Later, the PKK had to relocate their camps. Turkey wanted to establish a buffer zone, however Iraqi Kurds refused. They did not desire to arrange and provide a full-time border patrol to keep out the PKK along the Iraqi/Turkish border. After a short time, the PKK returned to their camps in Iraq. Iraqi Kurds ignored the action because they did not want to have another war with the PKK. They also believed that this would turn Turkey's attention to solely focus on the PKK, removing their chance to undermine the Kurdish Regional Government. Furthermore, the KDP and PUK also had internal problems that demanded their attention (Marcus 2007).

These drastic changes in circumstances, especially after the establishment of a safe haven and the Iraqi Kurds' newfound economic dependence on Turkey, seem to have played an important role in chancing the attitude and relationship between Turkey and Iraqi Kurds. Turkey tried to use the economic dependence of Iraqi Kurds as leverage to force them to act against the PKK. Military interventions, which were not just harming the PKK but also Iraqi Kurds, were another important reason for Iraqi Kurds to act against the PKK and force the PKK to relocate their camps. Nevertheless, the sense of ethnic ties made it difficult for some Iraqi Kurds to act against fellow Kurds. Even though fear may have been the cause for Iraqi Kurds to avoid helping the PKK, they did not want to fight against their fellow Kurds either.

6.2.1.3 The Civil War between the PUK and KDP (1991-1997)

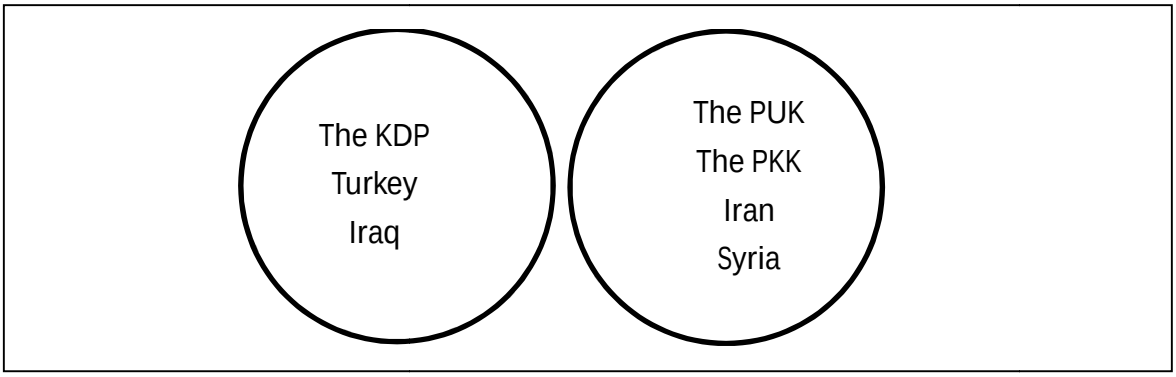

Figure 2 Alliances for the KDP and PUK and the Kurdish Civil War (1994-98)

In the 1990s, the KDP and PUK worked together. However, a civil war broke out between these groups in 1994 due to land dispute and tax collection (MAR 2010 and Abdulla 2011). This allowed the PKK to use Iraq as a sanctuary from the Turkish army. The PKK used the territory that was mostly controlled by the KDP, which the PUK saw as a second stronghold from which to fend off the KDP. The PKK and the PUK started to work together against KDP members (Olson 1996 and McKeirnan 2006**)**. The war between the PKK and the KDP ended in 1995 via a ceasefire agreement. This displeased Turkey, who claimed that the PKK had committed betrayal. Nevertheless, Barzani ignored the claims because he needed to focus on the war with Talabani (Marcus 2007). These events show that groups sometimes act together against another group if they perceive cooperation as more beneficial for them against a greater threat. The PKK wanted to use a territory controlled by the KDP while the PUK sought to ally itself with the PKK in order to have gain more leverage against the KDP, which it viewed as an enemy and a threat to its existence. The peace agreement between the PKK and the KDP was also established because the KDP perceived the PUK as a greater threat to its survival than the PKK. Clearly threat perception played an important role in group alliance and enemy formation.

The US feared instability of region and shift the balance of powers. As a result, in 1995, it organized a meeting however, it could not solve the dispute. Later, The KDP also allied itself with the Turkish army and Iraqi government against the PKK and the PUK (Olson 1996 and McKeirnan 2006**).** The PUK got help from Iran. In return, the PUK allowed Iran to attack Iranian Kurds sheltering within its territory (Abdulla 2011). To strengthen its position and to retake Irbil from PUK, Barzani cooperated with Saddam. Barzani defended his act referring to the PUK agreement with Iran. Kurdish fronts were being both militarily and politically self-destructive (Olson 1996, Gunter 1998 and McKeirnan 2006).

The civil war between the KDP and PUK illustrates that economical interest and gains can be extremely important reasons to act against each other. During the conflict, group interest motivated groups to ally themselves with any government (such as the Iraqi government) to have leverage against other group. Cooperation between the PKK and PUK was also motivated by groups' gains and threat. The PUK allied itself with the PKK to have an advantage over the KDP. The KDP agreed to a ceasefire with the PKK, in order to be able to move effectively against the PUK. These events show that group cooperation is about group interest and gains.

6.2.1.4 The Washington Agreement and Strategic Agreement

The large Turkish military intervention against the PKK in 1997 showed that the Iraqi Kurdish conflict would destroy the Kurdish regional government. Moreover, the US's effort was also important in solving the groups' dispute (Marcus 2007). The PUK and KDP signed the Washington Agreement in 1998. Both parties agreed to share power within Northern Iraq (Abdulrahman 2012). This agreement includes equal distribution of revenues from cross trading with Turkey and other countries and declares the removal of checkpoints, which allow Kurds to

move freely throughout the region. Nevertheless, the disagreement "over the composition of a regional government" continued until 2001. They were able to improve and cooperate on issues such as "security, demilitarization, the return of displaced people, and other issues" (Freedom House 2002).

The Washington agreement, Drogheda, guaranteed the security of Turkey, with the KDP policing the borders, and also constrained the PKK's ability to mobilize themselves within Turkish-Iraqi borders. The U.S. government's involvement is also essential in this agreement (Olson 1996). With the agreement, the U.S. tried to protect Turkey. It gives us a clear indication that the PUK and KDP had to take a side with the U.S. in order to establish the Kurdish regional government (the KRG). Later developments show that KDP members tried to align themselves with Turkey against the PKK. In 1995, some of them even, for the first time, referred to the PKK as a terrorist organization on Turkish television. However, some KDP members felt guilty for fighting against the PKK and their close relationship and collaboration with Turkey has also been seen as a betrayal of Kurds in Turkey (Olson 1996). The PKK and the KDP decided to sign a ceasefire in 1995 (Kirisci and Winrow 1997).

The US's role was essential to establish peace between the PUK and KDP. Moreover, Iraqi Kurdish interest, which is the survival of the KRG, motivated both groups to sign the Washington agreement and later the strategic alliance agreement. The US invasion of Iraq also stopped neighboring countries (Turkey and Iran) from military intervention in Northern Iraq against the PKK and PJAK. The absence of fear from neighboring countries resulted in a neutral relationship between Iraqi Kurds and the PKK and PJAK. One reason for the non-cooperation between Iraqi Kurds and the PKK might be US's disallowance of cooperation. The US would not want to upset its relationship with Turkey.

The Washington agreement created a two-headed government. Sulaymaniyah governed by the PUK and Erbil and Dohuk ruled by the KDP. However, after the invasion of Iraq, Kurdish groups decided to transform themselves into a "strategic alliance" in 2005 due to the change in balance of power in Iraq and in the region[7]. The competition and conflict between two groups could have harmed Iraqi Kurds' interest, which may even result in the risk of losing Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah. The Strategic Alliance was about power sharing in Northern Iraq that established a one-headed government. The agreement had many great advantages for both groups such as solving the leadership dispute between Talabani and Barzani, carrying out Kurdish demands, and increasing the regional activities (Semin 2012). The cooperation between the PUK and KDP began when both groups perceived the benefit of collaboration to the future of Iraqi Kurds. However, they also feared that if they did not cooperate, they would risk losing regional independence. Therefore, both groups saw the opportunity to benefit from cooperation and feared losing their territorial control, a perceived benefit and fear that formed the foundations for group cooperation.

When the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, was captured in 1999, many PKK fighters established their presence in Northern Iraq. Turkey used military intervention in order to capture PKK members during 2001. Both the PUK and KDP established a unified policy to expel the PKK members from Northern Iraq (Freedom House 2002). Military interventions likely

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[7] The principles of the strategic alliance:

"1. Both of the parties will participate in the elections with a unified list, either nationally or provincially.

2. As part of the agreement, the assignment of duties in the KRG will be shared by the two parties (KDP-PUK) and both parties will support each others' members in not only Erbil but also Baghdad. Moreover, the PUK and KDP parties will share power in the cabinet for four years, with each party holding the prime ministerial position and controlling the cabinet for two years each. Under exceptional circumstances, this two-year period can be extended to four years only if the two parties agree on an extension. For instance, northern Iraq's President Nechirvan Barzani continued governing after his term ended upon the request of PUK leader Jelal Talabani"(Semin 2012).

convinced Iraqi Kurds to act together against the PKK to avoid military interventions in their region.

6.2.1.5 Relationship between Kurdish Groups after Invasion of Iraq

Table 4 Relationship between Turkey, the U.S. and the PKK, KDP, and PUK

(2003-2007)	**TURKEY**	**The U.S.**
The PKK	Unhappy	Neutral
The KDP	Unhappy	Happy
The PUK	Unhappy	Happy

The U.S. invasion of Iraq changed the lives of Iraqi Kurds. At first, Iraqi Kurds were very nervous about the U.S. invasion of Iraq because they worried that their autonomy might be at risk and feared that the U.S. would abandon them. On the other hand, the U.S. needed both Turkey and Iraqi Kurds on their side. Nevertheless, Kurdish and Turkish interests remained in conflict. Iraqi Kurds did not want the Turkish army in Northern Iraq and they stated that they would resist if should the Turks invade the territory. The U.S. also needed to reassure Turkey of a unified Iraq. However, the U.S. failed in this endeavor, which led the Turkish government to reject U.S. military use of Turkish territory for operations during the Iraq war (Park 2003). In 2003, the relationship between the two countries deteriorated when the U.S. arrested 11 Turkish military personnel while operating in Northern Iraq. Turkish people viewed this as a source of humiliation (Gillis 2004). The relationship has taken different shape since 2006.

In 2006, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul signed a Shared Vision Statement to highlight the common values and goals between the two countries

(U.S. Department of State 2011). In 2007, Turkish forces moved to the northern Iraqi border, which alarmed Barzani, who warned that Iraqi Kurds would also carry out attacks in Turkey[8]. The Turkish government instigated a major incursion into the Kurdish region of northern Iraq. The U.S. government stepped in and agreed to establish a location to share intelligence on the PKK's whereabouts. Turkey agreed "to limit its intervention to air strikes and brief incursions" (Katzman 2009, 10). In June 2007, Turkey shelling against the PKK demolished some villages in the Governorate of Erbil (Governorate Assessment Report Erbil Governorate 2007). Turkey continued bombing the border areas between 2008 and 2009 **(**UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Iraqi Asylum-Seekers 2009). This demonstrates that Turkey's interventions into the Kurdish region have been a great threat to Iraqi Kurds. The U.S. plays an important role, which tries to find a balance between the two without harming U.S. interest in Iraq and without upsetting Iraqi Kurds and their relationship with Turkey.

During and after invasion of Iraq, Iraqi Kurds significantly helped the U.S. The U.S. government used Kurdish military and political forces to stabilize Iraq. In return, the U.S. removed UN sanctions and any internal or external embargo against the Kurdish region. In 2005, the Iraqi constitution gave "the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) recognition, rights, and revenues as a distinct political entity" (Natali 2010, 80). The U.S has supported the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) due to the need for Iraqi Kurds to stabilize Iraq, however their policies have been influenced by the Turkish fear of an increase in PKK insurgencies within Turkey. The KRG needs U.S. support for its survival; therefore, they try to avoid any action against U.S. interest in the region.

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[8] Before invasion of Iraq, In August of 2000, Turkish air forces bombed the region between Lolan and Xakurk the primary location of PKK camps (Yirmi Altinci Operasyon 2011). Nevertheless, after the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the military interventions stopped (until 2007) because Turkey was forcing the KRG to take action against the PKK and persuade the U.S. to defeat the PKK.

In 2007, the Prime Minister of Turkey, Erdogan, visited U.S. President George W. Bush in the white house. Bush agreed to help Turkey against the PKK, which he viewed as a "common enemy" of Turkey, the U.S., and Iraq. Both countries agreed to act together against the PKK. In the proposed relationship, the U.S. would share operational intelligence as well as help Turkey to capture PKK leaders, research the PKK camps, and cease its logistic support to the PKK (Turkey and Iraqi Kurds: Conflict or Cooperations? 2008). Bush restated his commitment during Turkish President Gul's visit in 2008. Since then Turkey has allowed the U.S. to use Incirlik Air base for the transport of non-lethal cargo to Iraq (U.S. Department of State 2011). Their differences over the Iraq war brought relations between Turkey and the U.S to one of the lowest points in decades (Gillis 2004). President Barack Obama's historical visit to Turkey in 2009 was the first bilateral visit of his presidency. He highlighted that the U.S.-Turkish relationship is based on mutual interests and mutual respect. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has also prioritized the U.S.-Turkey relationship, and included a stop in Turkey on her first European trip (U.S. Department of State 2011). In 2009, the Turkish President Abdullah Gul visited Iraq to form a positive relation with the Iraqi government and the KRG. He insisted that the KRG "take a clear position" against the PKK. The Prime Minister of the KRG, Nechirvan Barzani, restated that they would not permit the PKK to use their territory and added that the Turkish Government should provide general amnesty for PKK members (UNHCR Eligibility Guideliness for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Iraqi Asylum-Seekers 2009, 94). The recent visit to Turkey, in December 2011, of U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, gives us better understanding of the U.S. Turkish relationship. In their meeting, President Gul told Biden that if the PKK does not stop its attacks then Turkey will have large intervention to Northern Iraq. In so declaring, Gul clearly threatens not just the PKK but also the Kurdish Regional Government if they don't block or

narrow the field of activities of the PKK in Northern Iraq. Biden also agreed to increase controls on various measures in Northern Iraq to stop PKK activities (Kemal 2011). These affairs clarify that both the US and Turkey have been forcing the KRG to against the PKK. If Iraqi Kurds do not stop the PKK attacks then Turkey seems to suggest that they will use military intervention, effectively undermining the KRG government.

Turkey did not use military interventions against the PKK until 2008 because interventions could have caused instability in Iraq, which would anger the US. Moreover, the PUK and KDP did not act against the PKK because they were helping the US troops fight against insurgencies in Iraq. These events demonstrate that the Iraqi invasion led the PKK to have more territorial independence, which caused Turkey to restrain actions against the PKK **(**Shifrinso 2006). Nevertheless, after the relationship between the US and Turkey improved, both parties agreed to act together against the PKK. In order to pressure the KRG to act on Turkey's behalf against the PKK, in January 2008, Turkey used four more air strikes against them (Turkey and Iraqi Kurds: Conflict or Cooperations? 2008). One month later, Turkey carried out its *25th operation* in Northern Iraq, deploying 3 thousand Turkish commandos along with other military backing. However, the U.S. reaction led Turkish forces to withdraw from Northern Iraq (Yirmi Altinci Operasyon 2011). In August 2011**,** Turkish planes killed seven Iraqi civilians, however they denied the accusation (Iran/Turkey: Recent Attacks on Civilians in Iraqi Kurdistan 2011). In October 2011, Turkey performed its *26th operation*. 10 thousand soldiers and air forces operated in five different places in Northern Iraq: Avasin- Basyan (8 km further from Turkish territory), Zap (13 km) and Xakurk (17 km) (Yirmi Altinci Operasyon 2011). In November 2011, the U.S. installed Predator drones from Iraqi to Turkey in order to support anti-PKK actions. The U.S. government also decided to sell three AH-1 Super Cobra helicopters to Turkey (Iran/Turkey:

Recent Attacks on Civilians in Iraqi Kurdistan 2011). Iraqi Kurds still do not have much choice but to cooperate with the Turkish government in order to stop Turkish military interventions in their region.

Since the invasion of Iraq, Turkey has increased trading with the KRG. The average trade volume is about $ 5 billion per year. Around $ 1.5 billion to $ 2.6 billion of trade is on construction and contracting services (Turkey and Iraqi Kurds: Conflict or Cooperations? 2008, Bhadrakumar 2007, Natali 2010). Energy cooperation with Northern Iraq also is growing. Iraqi government allowed the KRD to administer its oil wealth. Business interests in Northern Iraq have also increased with this new change. Turkish businessmen have been forcing Prime Minister Erdogan to have direct talks with the KRG. Turkish businesses are making an investment close to $15 billion in the next period (Bhadrakumar 2007). About 80 percent of goods sold in Northern Iraq that has bought from Turkey, which reveals that Iraq mostly imports from Turkey. Some argue that around 55% of the foreign companies in the KRG are from Turkey, primarily comprising road construction, two airports, a policy department, and general construction works. The military incursion in 2007 decreased the number of Turkish companies in northern Iraq from 142 to 52 in 2008 (Fielding-Smith 2010). Nevertheless, this did not stop future investment in the region. Indeed, in 2009, around 250 Turkish companies were active in Erbil. In Sulaymaniyah, 500 current companies are Turkish and Iranian. Turkish companies have the largest investment in the construction market, controlling almost 95 percent. Turkey also imports the majority of food and consumer items. The KRG also depended on Turkey's help for additional electricity demands (Natali 2010).

Table 5 Turkey's Exports to Iraq by Sectors (2010)

Turkey's Exports to Iraq	**2010**	**USD %**
Iron and Steel	712,130,03211	.8%
Electrical Mach. Appar.	508,474,5308.	4%
Cereals, Cereal Preprtns.	501,278,2498.	3%
Non-Metal. Mineral Manfct.	425,350,2897.	0%
Metals Manufactures	370,272,8676.	1%
Vegetables and Fruit	337,005,6995.	6%
Miscalenaus manufactured products	248,618,2304.	1%
Furniture, Bedding, etc.	206,854,6983.	4%
General Industl. Mach.	183,189,6853.	0%
Paper, Paperboard, etc.	173,884,4352.	9%
Clothing and Accessories	173,362,3582.	9%
Textile Yarn, Fabric, etc.	173,206,2492.	9%
Dairy Products, Bird Eggs	155,568,1802.	6%
Essentl. Oils, Perfume, etc.	145,175,8072.	4%
Plastic, Non-Primary Form	135,355,2122.	2%
Meat and Meat Preparation	135,153,6022.	2%
Road Vehicles	121,546,1132.	0%
Petroleum, Petr. Products	128,782,0782.	1%
Special. Indust. Machinery	114,807,2611.	9%
Electricity	99,724,0361.	7%
TOTAL (2010)	**6,042,549,876**	

Note: Adopted from Tepav (Turkiye Economi Politikalari Arastirma Vakfi) 2011.

From the table we can see that trading with Turkey has played an important role in the socioeconomic life of the KRG. This rapid development and change will likely continue in the future (Kalkan 2011).

Since Turkey has been seen as a rising power and influential country in the region it is becoming a more important ally for the U.S. Making it therefore vital for the U.S. to strengthen the relationship (Gillis 2004). The high number of interventions in Northern Iraq suggests that Turkey is a constant external threat to Kurdish cooperation because the Northern Iraqi government is afraid to cooperate and support the PKK out of fear of Turkey's violent behavior. In some operations Iraqi Kurds have even cooperated with the Turkish government to stop Turkish interventions in their region**.** For that reason, the U.S. and Iraqi Kurds are providing all possible help and support to Turkey against the PKK. Moreover, the KRG developed multi-million dollar cross-regional trading with neighboring countries, especially with Turkey, resulting in interdependence between these countries. Turkey and Iran also are also extremely important for the landlocked Kurdish region. Either closing these borders or involving itself in cross-border military intervention can cause large financial losses to the KRG. Therefore, the KRG has changed its policies toward the PKK and PJAK and - to maintain a good relationship with Turkey and Iran - they may do more in the future to also guarantee a possible trade zone for international businesses, export and import goods, and gain from possible pipeline revenues (Natali 2010, Turkey and Iraqi Kurds: Conflict or Cooperations? 2008).

6.2.1.6 Relationship between Turkish Government and the KRG

After the invasion of Iraq, Turkey believed that aggressive policies toward the KRG would prevent them from protecting the PKK. In order to ensure that ability, they isolated the KRG diplomatically and economically, effectively maintaining a weak KRG. However, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) employed a different approach during their still-existing 10 years of governance. They believe that in order to prevent the PKK attacks they should persuade the KRG to ensure that Turkey has stronger political, diplomatic and economical ties with the KRG. In 2007 and 2008, Turkey used "a carrot and stick" approach to force the KRG to work against the PKK. Turkey threatened the KRG with an economic embargo and military intervention in Northern Iraq if they continued protecting and sheltering the PKK. In contrast, Turkey has promised the KRG diplomatic, political and economical relations if they cooperate in the counter-PKK operation (Turkey and Iraqi Kurds: Conflict or Cooperations? 2008).

In 2008, the withdrawal of Turkish troops warmed the relationship. Nechirvan Barzani, the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), endorsed the Turkish action. He stated that military actions block the dialogue between the PKK and Turkey. He emphasized diplomatic solutions. The Prime Minister of Iraq, Barzani, also stated that before the Turkish intervention, both the Iraqi government and the KRG tried different methods to constrain PKK actions (Prime Minister Barzani commends Turkey's troop withdrawal 2008).

The first high-level talks with Turkey did not start until May 2008. The talk was between the KRG Prime Minister, Nechirvan Barzani, "…and senior advisor to Turkish Prime Minister, Murat Özçelik, the Special Coordinator for Iraqi Affairs at the Turkish Foreign Ministry; and Derya Kanbay, Turkey's Ambassador in Baghdad" (KRG Statement on first High-level Talks

with Turkey 2008, 1). The meeting was about security, and political and economical issues between the Turkish Government, and the KRG. Nechirvan Barzani highlights that the KRG understands Turkey's concerns and states that the problems can be solved through political dialogue (KRG Statement on first High-level Talks with Turkey 2008).

In April 2008, Foreign Minister of Turkey stated that they are ready to have a dialogue with the KRG, which had called for talks for some time. The KRG's Head of Foreign Relations declared their satisfaction that Turkey desires to cooperate and talk with the KRG. This dialogue will solve the concerns that military action is not the solution to create a stable border (KRG welcomes talks with Turkey 2008). In 2009, Barzani also praised Turkey's attempts to have a dialogue with Kurds in his interview with CNN. He also emphasized that the KRG never supported violent actions and that dialogue is the only option. Furthermore, Barzani stated that the relationship between the KRG and Turkey should not be bound to the PKK's violence. Iraqi Kurds are not responsible for the violent actions of the group. He lastly stated that a solution to the problem would be a positive outcome (President Barzani praises Turkey's Efforts to engage with Kurds 2009). This indicates that the KRG and Kurdish leaders wanted to reach a peaceful solution and that they both stressed that military interventions are not a viable option. Both the KRG and Kurdish leaders also highlight that they do not support or help the PKK's violent actions. Moreover, these statements reveal that the KRG is eager to develop a close relationship with Turkey.

When the PKK extended the ceasefire with Turkey, the Prime Minister of the KRG was pleased and believed that the ceasefire would bring stability and peace to the region (Prime Minister Barzani welcomes Extension of PKK Ceasefire 2009). The first historical visit comes with the Turkish foreign minister's visit to the KRG on October 2009. President Barzani

declared that Turkey is an important country for Iraq's development. Later, Turkey announced that they will open a Consulate General in Erbil, the KRG capitol. During the visit, Turkey signed 48 agreements of cooperation with the Iraqi government. The Turkish foreign minister stated that these agreements also pertain to the KRG (President Barzani, Turkey's Foreign Minister Davutoğlu hold historic meetings, announce plans to open consulate 2009). This is an important development for the KRG because Turkey's decision to open a Turkish Consulate General demonstrates that is Turkey willing to have a closer relationship with the KRG. Moreover, Turkey is aware of the potential of Northern Iraq to "…serve as a gateway to Iraq" and Iraq and Iraqi Kurds concurrently see Turkey as a gateway to west. However, some started to wonder if Turkey would continue referring the KRG as "northern Iraq" or if they would formally recognize the KRG. The KRG's head of foreign relations stated "the KRG do not make the issue of the name 'Kurdistan' a problem. The essence is more important than the name. The opening of the consulate shows how far we have come" (Al-Masry Al-Youm 2010, 1). Obviously, the KRG is trying to develop a close relationship with Turkey and Kurdish officials believe that Turkey will eventually officially accept the KRG.

Another historical event came in the form of president Barzani's visit with Prime Minister Erdogan, the Foreign Minister, and the Minister of the Interior of Turkey. All of the officials were pleased with the visit, believing that it will build broader relations for the coming years. During the meeting, economic issues and democratic opening of Turkey were discussed (President Barzani Wraps up Historic Trip to Turkey 2010). A further achievement was a Turkey-Kurdistan Region Economic Forum. The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Trade and over two-hundred Turkish business agents also attended. Both governments agreed to begin a free trade zone, opening Turkish banks and permitting Turkish airlines to fly to KRG's capitol, Erbil

(Turkey's Foreign Trade Minister participates in Erbil Economic Forum 2010). These are also huge steps for KRG economical development.

Other small meetings involved the Turkish Interior Minister in 2010 and the Undersecretary of Foreign Ministry of Turkey in 2011. The first meeting focused on security conditions along the border areas. The second meeting revolved around economical and political issues (Turkey's Interior Minister discusses security with President and Prime Minister in Erbil 2010 and Turkish Foreign Ministry Undersecretary meets President Barzani and PM Salih 2011). These and other meetings demonstrate that economical and security issues are the two important factors determining the relationship between Turkey and the KRG.

But the most important visit happened in 2011 when Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited the Kurdish Region. He is the first Turkish premier to visit the KRG. During his visit he opened the Erbil International Airport and the Turkish Consulate in Erbil. These are also two essential steps for the economical and political relationship. The KRG's Head of Foreign Relations stated "With this historic visit, we are entering a new phase in our relations with Turkey. We are optimistic because it paves the way for greater cooperation between Turkey and the Kurdistan Region as well as all of Iraq" (President Barzani and Prime Minister Erdogan open Erbil International Airport and Turkish Consulate 2011). These statements summarize how the relationship and cooperation between governments is becoming very significant.

After the PKK attack in October 2011, which killed 24 Turkish soldiers, Barzani condemned the attack and stated "this action is first and foremost against the interests of the people of Kurdistan" and claimed that it targets the Turkish-Kurdish brotherhood (Hedefi Türk-Kürt Kardeşliği 2011 and Kurdistan Region Presidency Strongly Condemns Violent Attack in

Turkey 2011). After the attack, the KRG decided to evacuate the villages near the border to avoid civilian harm (Hedefi Türk-Kürt Kardeşliği 2011). In November 2011, Barzani visited Turkey. The reason for the visit was security. Barzani declared that Turkish and KRG security depend upon one another. During the meeting, they discussed the status of the Turkish troops stationed in Iraq since 1996. Barzani agreed to allow the Turkish government to stay in Northern Iraq for six years more. With the strategic locations of the PKK, the Hakurk, Zap, and Qandil Mountain, Turkey wanted to establish a new base in order to prevent attacks. Barzani seems to have agreed that Turkey could open a new base. Nevertheless, Barzani emphasized that the military operations are not solutions and he offered the Turkish officials help to resume the negotiation dialogues between the PKK and the government (Asker Alti Yil daha Kuzey Iraq'ta 2011).

Turkish side was not satisfied with the Northern Iraqi government's response. Prime Minister Erdogan stated that if Northern Iraq does not take actions against the PKK that Turkish armed forces will take action against the PKK. This is an open warning to Northern Iraq. However, the KRG do not want to fight against their follow Kurds. Barzani also believes in applying political instead of military pressure on the PKK to reach a solution (Bayram sonrasi: Sinir otesi mi Ateskes mi? 2011). Turkey seems to be pressuring the KRG to fight against the PKK. However, Barzani and the KRG also explicitly refuse military actions against the PKK. Recently, Barzani claims that they are forcing the PKK to cease its military actions and solve the problems through democratic means (Askin 2011). Talabani also declares that they persuaded the PKK but that the Turkish side only half-agreed with the terms that the PKK has been demanding (Silah Birakmasi icin PKK'yi ikna ettik 2011). It seems that Kurdish officials are playing the role of mediator between the PKK and the Turkish Government.

Barzani's visit to the White House and Turkey in April 2012 proved pivotal. Politicians in both meetings welcomed Barzani as a state leader. He stated that Iraqi Kurds seek peaceful solutions to the issues between the Turkish government and the PKK, reinforcing that violent means were useless and dangerous. If both sides arrive at peaceful methods then the KRG will help the process in any means. If the PKK insist on using guns then they (the PKK) will face the consequences. Barzani's most important remark was that the KRG will not allow the PKK to obtain their presence and use the KRG to attack Turkey. In so doing, Barzani for the first time indicated that they would not tolerate the PKK's presence in their territory. He added that they still would not support or join any military operations against the PKK because he believes that military operations will not end the PKK (Ertan 2012, Yetkin 2012). Following both meetings, he revealed further insight into the fact that these issues were the focus of both meetings held in Ankara and Washington (Yetkin 2012). These events and remarks illustrate that Barzani is taking a harder stance against the PKK. One reason for his tougher position is the U.S. government. Iraqi Kurds are willing to obtain their independence and they are aware that the U.S.'s role is crucial for their goal. In order to earn U.S. support, they support the U.S. foreign position against the PKK and Turkey. Thus, great powers can convince groups to either cooperate or not cooperate with their co-ethnic groups. Moreover, Iraqi Kurdish groups' gains are greater if they obtain international support for their survival or group(s) goals.

Journalist Hasan Cemal's interviews with Barzani and Talabani in the 1990s reveal that Iraqi Kurdish position is not new. He states that from the 1990s through 2000, both Barzani and Talabani slammed the PKK and Turkey. However, they stated privately that there are limits to what can be done against the PKK and they added that Turkey needs to apply democratic reforms (Cemal 2012). As we see, the Iraqi Kurdish position did not change after the U.S.

invasion of Iraq. Turkey used aggressive policies toward the KRG, which will force them to cease protection of the PKK. Nevertheless, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) decided to take a different approach. They believe in order to prevent the PKK attacks they should persuade the KRG to ensure that Turkey should have stronger political, diplomatic and economical ties with the KRG. Turkey threatened the KRG with economic embargo and military intervention in Northern Iraq if they continue protecting and sheltering the PKK. The KRG supports Turkey in order to establish diplomatic, political and economical relations with Turkey. However, Iraqi officials and the KRG clearly refuse military actions against the PKK, instead forcing the PKK to stop its military actions and solve problems through democratic means. One reason for their refusal is that in the 1990s fighting against their Kurdish brother had left a sour taste; therefore, they do not want to repeat the same mistake. It seems that Kurdish officials are playing the role of mediator between the PKK and the Turkish Government. This reveals that past experiences, in this case negative, resulted in a positive outcome for the groups' relationships. Co-ethnic groups do not wish to repeat the same mistake twice. Examination of Iranian Kurdish interaction with other Kurdish groups also reveals some variation, which leads to my last analysis.

6.3 Iranian Kurds

6.3.1 The KDPI and PJAK

Table 6 The KDPI and PJAK relationship with Iraqi Kurds and the PKK

	The KDP	***The PUK***	***The PKK***
The KDPI	*Bad (1980-1999)*	*Good (1980-1999)*	*Neutral (1980-1999)*
The PJAK	*Bad (2005-2012)*	*Bad (2005-2012)*	*Good (1999-2012)*

The KDPI was the largest Iranian Kurdish opposition group demanding autonomy for Iranian Kurds. The KDPI also used the Iraqi territory to launch attacks against the Islamic government (Gunter 2003). Iraq's invasion of Iran in 1980 gave leverage to Iraqi Kurds (especially the KDP) to form a good relationship with the Iranian government. Nevertheless, The PUK allied itself with the Iranian Kurdish KDPI, as they shared leftist ideologies (Marcus 2007). The armed struggle in Iraq also influenced and helped the resurgence of the KDPI in Iran. The Iranian government used Barzani's influence over the KDPI which led Barzani to claim that Kurds in Iran should wait until the Iraqi KDP achieved its own autonomy. Tehran's support of Barzani led him to discourage the Kurdish push to end anti-Iranian activism in Iran. Some listened to Barzani while others continued armed struggle. However, Iranian armed forces defeated the KDPI's struggle with the help of Barzani, who closed the borders and led many Iranian Kurds to die (Hassanpour, 1994). There were minor conflicts between the KDP and KDPI. In one, Barzani helped Iran drive out KDPI members from strategic positions (Bruinessen 1986). Barzani even returned KDPI members to the Iranian government (Gunter 2003). Some KDPI members stayed in Europe and Iraq until the end of the Pahlavi monarchy. Barzani did not

help Iranian Kurds due to financial support from the Iranian government (Hassanpour, 1994). This demonstrates that Barzani performed a cost benefit analysis influenced by the Iranian government, which impacted his decision. He therefore decided to align his organization (the KDP) with Iran due to financial support from Iran (Ahmed and Gunter 2007).

There were also conflicts between the KDPI and Komala due to disagreement over control of certain districts in 1984 (Bruinessen 1986). For a few years, both sides lost significant power. The KDPI disbanded and weakened after the assignation of two leaders. The Komala basically became the only alternative to the KDPI. Nevertheless, the Komala also failed because it could not devote itself to either the national struggle or to the revolution. Both the KDPI and Komala established their political parties in Iran, demanding the independence of Iranian Kurds (Hassanpour 1994). The representative of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) in Britain, Loghman Ahmedi, states that the KDPI does not completely refuse violent actions unless it is in the interest of Iranian Kurds. Nevertheless, he adds that there are different methods and strategies available that will not result in the loss of human lives. He also states that one reason for their peaceful political struggle is that they do not want Iran to attack the KRG. The KRG's security is extremely important for the KDPI. Ahmedi claims that the KDPI try to maintain a positive relationship with all Kurdish organizations, including the PKK. Nevertheless, they do not want any Kurdish party to dictate what action they must take. He states that they regularly meet with "Komala and other Kurdish Parties, however [they] do not have any relationship with PJAK" (Wilgenburg 2009). They try to distinguish and detach their party from PJAK because they want to avoid angering the Iranian government, thereby avoiding military actions against their party too.

The relationship between Iraqi Kurds and Iranian Kurds was influenced by group economic interest. Barzani did not want to damage the relationship with the Iranian government and did not want to lose Tehran's financial support for its struggle. Fears of economic losses motivated Barzani to act against the KDPI. However, it seems the relationship has changed between Iraqi Kurds and the KDPI since the KDPI transformed itself into a political party. One of the KDPI's objectives is to protect the KRG from military attacks. This demonstrates that ethnic ties play an important role for groups to avoid any action that would harm their co-ethnic groups. Nevertheless, the KDPI or other Iranian Kurdish political parties do not want to have any association with PJAK because they all fear the Iranian government. In this case, the threat from the host state (Iran) is the essential cause preventing Iranian Kurdish groups' cooperation.

6.3.2 The PJAK and Cooperation with Other Co-ethnic Kurdish Groups

The PKK also did not want to involve itself with Iranian Kurds because of Iranian support to the PKK. Nevertheless, when Ocalan was captured in 1999 Iran ceased its financial aid. This changed the relationship between the PKK and Iranian Kurds. The PKK tried to earn Iranian Kurdish support and they succeeded in gaining the attention of some Iranian Kurds who were fed up with the Iranian regime (Marcus 2007). Iran and Turkey claimed that the PJAK, a "moderate wing of the PKK", was established and based in the Qandil Mountains in Northern Iraq (Ahmed and Gunter 2007, and Marcus 2007). However, PJAK and the PKK use different sides of Qandil because of different military strategies (Timmerman 2007). Since 2005, PJAK has settled the PKK-based slopes of Mount Qandil. For that reason, they are controlled by the PKK. PJAK member, Rahman Ahmedi, states "the PKK does not need us. They have tens of thousands of fighters, and hundreds of thousands of sympathizers". He admits "the PKK and PJAK cooperate to a certain degree if only to prevent clashes between their own fighters"

(Timmerman 2007). Ahmedi wants to distance PJAK from the PKK because Turkey forced the U.S. to admit that PJAK was allied with the PKK. Association with the PKK decreases PJAK's credibility. Nevertheless, PJAK is thusly influenced by the PKK's ideologies and Ocalan's military strategies. This demonstrates that both Turkish and Iranian Kurds have close ties and that their relationship is cooperative. However, PJAK does not demand for an independent Kurdish state, but instead seek to replace the Iranian regime with a democratic rule. They also support the idea of self-rule for all groups in Iran (Brandon 2006). PJAK and the PKK have a close relationship compared to other Iraqi or Irani Kurdish groups, a relationship founded upon their similar ideologies and military strategies. However, the biggest reason for the PKK to allow and help PJAK against Iran is the PKK's lack of fear of losing economic gains from Iran. Cooperating with PJAK allowed the PKK to use, direct, and control PJAK members for certain ends. In this case, cooperation is more advantageous than non-cooperation.

The PKK's activities and Iranian and Turkish government use of military interventions in Northern Iraq in order to stop PJAK and has been a great concern for Iraqi Kurds. The KRG did not want to damage the relationship with these countries because with them they have close economical ties. The KRG constantly ask both groups to lay down the arms struggle and to peacefully resolve their issues. (Marcus 2007). In 2008, the PKK and PJAK (Iranian violent Kurdish group) increased violent activity, causing the short-term closing of the Turkish and Iranian border and airspace. This event severely impacted the KRG's economy, costing the Kurdish government around US $1 billion daily. The KRG countered and began closing PKK offices in the cities, blocking the routes to the Qandil Mountains (the base for the PKK camps), and campaigning against PKK actions. Sulaymaniyah officials also promised the Iranian government to take necessary actions against PJAK if they opened the borders again (Natali

2010). According to Natali (2010), in Sulaymaniyah, where Iran and the KRG "share three official and two unofficial border points…", "…over half of 500 foreign companies… are Turkish and Iranian" (93-94). The KRG established a free-trade-zone with Iran, from whom they receive most of their electricity. In 2007, 60 percent of trade merchants in Sulaymaniyah received $1 billion worth of goods from Iran. More than 120 Iranian companies are established in the KRG and about 80 percent of these companies work in trading, food and housing in Sulaymaniyah. Iranian service providers built the Azman Tunnel in Sulaymaniyah, which aids Iran in the exportation of many construction materials, such as plastic, cement, and polyvinyl chloride, into Sulaymaniyah, (Natali 2010). This convinced the KRG to strategically cooperate with neighboring countries to guarantee "international recognition and open borders" (122). This shows that Turkey and Iran use the economical dependency of the KRG as leverage and, in some cases, as a threat to pressure Iraqi Kurds to act against the PKK and PJAK. The KRG will lose a great deal if they help their fellow Kurds. They find themselves in a position in which they do not want to bear the cost because there is only minimal gain (by helping co-ethnic groups) in return. The government of Sulaymaniyah guaranteed the Iranian government control of PJAK activities if they reopen borders (Natali 2010). In January 2011, the Prime Minister of the KRG, Barham Salih, visited Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, the Speaker of the Parliament, the Industry Minister, the Head of the National Security Council, and the foreign minister of Iran. The reason for his visit was to improve commercial relations and to increase growth in Sulaymaniyah (Prime Minister Salih meets Iran's President in official visit to Tehran 2011). This incident reveals that Iraqi Kurds economical development is essential to Iraqi Kurds and that neighboring countries play an important part. Therefore, they encourage the Iranian government to invest more to their region.

The biggest fear and most damaging development for Iraqi Kurds have been military attacks in their region. In 2006, the Iranian government oppressed Kurds, causing Kurdish counterattacks. The killing of 10 Kurdish demonstrators led PJAK to respond with “three attacks against two Iranian bases”. Iran also responded with military operations near Mount Qandil, by crossing five kilometers into Iraq. They also bombed PKK locations. The director of the joint operation center at the Iraqi Ministry of Defense claimed that it was a mistake to have attacked the PKK instead of PJAK. Since then, the European Union and the US has recognized the PKK as a “terrorist organization”. The close ties between PJAK and the PKK prevented the US and the KRG from stopping Iranian military interventions into their territory (Brandon 2006).

In August and September 2007, Iran used shelling against the PJAK, demolishing homes, villages and livestock in the Governorate of Erbil. Due to the heavy shelling, in September, 850 families had to leave the areas (Governorate Assessment Report Erbil Governorate 2007). In 2009, Iran bombed Northern Iraq, an action strongly condemned by the KRG government (Statement: KRG strongly condemns bombardment of border areas by Islamic Republic of Iran 2009). In July 2011, Iran attacked PJAK. Turkey also used intense air fire and prepared for military intervention, which suggests that Iran and Turkey are cooperating to stop PKK and PJAK activities (Cavdar 2011). On July 13, 2011, reportedly 10,000 Iranian forces crossed the border and forced Iraqi Kurds to leave their homes and villages (Iraqi Kurds accuse Iran of illegal border crossing, 10,000 revolutionary guards cross the Iraqi border: Al-Rafedain TV 2011). In the beginning of July, Barzani condemned the attacks against Iran and stated that the attacks do not justify Iranian military attacks against the KRG, which impacts Irani and KRG relations. He states that the recent bombing of Iran was 76 km from the capital of Erbil and adds "instead of instilling fear, they (the Iranians) would do better to try to resolve the issue through

dialogue and find workable solutions" (Iraqi Kurdistan president Massoud Barzani warns Iran over shelling 2011, 1). Barzani's statement proves that Iran clearly threatens Iraqi Kurds and forces them to take actions against PJAK.

On July 27, 2011, the KRG decided to position 12,000 peshmarga along the Iranian border, where Iran launched heavy attacks against PJAK and Iraqi Kurdish civilians. Salah Dilmani, a high-ranking Peshmarga officer stated, "we will confront any forces that may attempt to cross the borders of Kurdistan" (Iraqi Kurdistan deploys 12,000 Kurdish troops along the Iran border 2011). However, there have not been any clashes between Iraqi Kurds and any other Kurdish groups. Dilmani adds that Ansar al-Islam fighters (a militant Islamic Kurdish group) support and help Iranian forces (Iraqi Kurdistan deploys 12,000 Kurdish troops along the Iran border 2011). During this time, the British, U.S., and Iraqi governments ordered Iran and Turkey to end military actions against the KRG and respect Iraqi territorial sovereignty. They also advised the KRG to solve the dispute through dialogue (British parliamentarians voice concern about Iranian and Turkish bombardment of Kurdistan border 2011, Iraq says Iran's shelling of Kurdish PJAK rebels damages ties 2011, and Iraqi Kurdistan deploys 12,000 Kurdish troops along the Iran border 2011). It is obvious that the international community is unhappy with military interventions, nonetheless they do not take actions to stop it. Moreover, ideological similarities (the case of Ansar al-Islam) play an important role in a group's difficult decision to ally itself with a host state hostile to their co-ethnic groups. In other words, ideological similarities can be, sometimes, more important than ethnic ties for ethnic groups. Furthermore, military threat from neighboring countries forces groups to take protective actions to stop it. Nevertheless, this might be used strategically to prevent military interventions in their region because Iraqi Kurds did not stop nor fight with any group or country. This illustrates that greater

military threat sometimes motivates groups to avoid military intervention not just through dialogue, but also through demonstrations of military strength.

Between July and November 2011, 1,350 families (8,000 individuals) had to relocate, dozens of homes were damaged, and ten villages were either fully or partially destroyed due to military attracts and shelling from Iran and Turkey. Mula Issa, a displaced resident, affirmed, "The PKK fighters do not use our villages. We thought before that Turkey was trying to make us all leave so they can have their war with the PKK anywhere they want. But after the most recent bombings [since early October], which have actually hit our houses, we feel they are now attacking us" (Iran/Turkey: Recent Attacks on Civilians in Iraqi Kurdistan 2011, 1). Iranian soldiers would also attack farmers and kill their livestock, as observed and reported by Human Rights Watch in 2010-2011(Iraqi Kurdistan: Cross-Border Attacks Should Spare Iraqi Civilians 2011). In July 2011, Iraq's Foreign Minister Hoshyar stated that Iran has been shelling Northern Iraq for over five years (Iraq says Iran shelling of Kurdish PJAK rebels damages ties 2011). According to the Middle East director of Human Rights Watch, Sarah Leah Whitson, "Iran may say it is responding to armed attacks from Iraqi Kurdistan, but its own attacks, including indiscriminate use of rockets near civilian villages, are causing grave harm to civilians" (Iran/Turkey: Recent Attacks on Civilians in Iraqi Kurdistan 2011, 1). Since September 2011, a ceasefire between Iran and PJAK has decreased Iranian attacks against the KRG (Iran/Turkey: Recent Attacks on Civilians in Iraqi Kurdistan 2011). All these events show that the military threat is immense. Iraqi Kurds have already been harmed by military operations, therefore it is unthinkable for Iraqi Kurds to help their co-ethnic groups. They are aware that that would only increase the military threat and that this time they would face a military confrontation with neighboring countries.

Iraqi Kurds use dialogue and political means to solve issues with Iran and Turkey. In September 2011, Barzani stated that they are in a difficult position because Iran and Turkey are calling them to control the borders in order to avoid any problem. Nevertheless, “we are afraid to send forces to the borders for fear of a Kurdish-Kurdish war" and he adds “the PKK and the PJAK are not taking the situation in the Kurdish region into consideration… I call on the two sides to abandon the idea of achieving their rights via military means.” (Barzani calls on PKK, PJAK to end attacks from Iraqi soil, 2011, 1). Ethnic ties between Kurdish groups discourage Iraqi Kurds to fight against their fellow Kurds from other regions. Moreover, the past experience of Kurdish civil war between the PKK and Iraqi Kurds left both parties sour. They wish to avoid any further confrontation with other Kurdish groups. However, they are under constant military threat from neighboring countries, which persuade against supporting the PKK and PJAK, instead they seek to convince Kurdish groups to give up their arm struggle.

Iran and the KRG government have attempted to improve their relationship. In October 2011, Barzani had an official visit with Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khomeini, President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, and Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi, to discuss PJAK activities in Northern Iraq. The Iranian government therefore also began to display an increased focus on cooperation on not just security issues, but also on trade and cultural issues (Tol 2012). Salehi stated “there is a potential for increasing this volume ($ 4 billion) and we hope to be able to increase the level of exchanges through mutual cooperation” (FM for Further KRG Trade 2011, 1 and President Barzani meets Supreme Leader Khomeini and President Ahmedinejad in Tehran 2011). The KRG is aware of the importance of a strong economic and military relationship with Iran.

My analysis shows that military threat was the main hypothesis explaining the non-cooperation between Iraqi Kurds and the PKK and PJAK. As Barzani states, the KRG is in a difficult situation. Iran and Turkey use military power to overcome their ethnic problems and have no concern for the lives of Iraqi Kurdish civilians. One reason for their careless actions is to pressure Iraqi Kurds to avoid any affiliation with the PKK and PJAK. Iranian Kurdish groups (Komala and KDPI) have also tried to distance themselves from PJAK, so as to avoid punishment under Iranian law. Secondly, by military interventions to Northern Iraq, they force the KRG to take military actions against both Kurdish groups.

Economical threat or pressure is the second hypothesis illustrating that the KRG needs its neighboring countries for its survival. Having a landlocked region enables Iraqi Kurds to act freely. The cooperation between the PKK and PJAK can be explained through cost and benefit analysis. The relationship between the two groups improved when Iran withdrew financial support to the PKK in 1999. Cooperation helped the PKK to hold influence over Iranian Kurds, which further increased their military advantage. Ideological similarities and ethnic ties between these two groups also played a crucial role in their cooperation.

7. IN CONCLUSION

In this paper, I tried to address how co-ethnic groups react or respond when a member of the same ethnic group has an on-going ethnic conflict in a neighboring country. Under which circumstances do they or do they not cooperate? I examined the causal relationship between external pressure and non-cooperation through a structured comparative study of Kurdish ethnic groups, which include the Kurdistan Workers Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, the PKK) from

Turkey, the Kurdish Autonomous region in Iraq, PJAK (the Militant Party for Free of Kurdistan) from Iran, and Kurds from Syria between 1980-2012.

My first hypothesis stated that groups will cooperate due to their ethnic ties, a hypothesis that revealed itself to be not as clear-cut as expected. It is generally believed that strong nationalism and ethnic ties would lead groups to cooperate. There are some examples of cooperation among Kurds due to their ethnic ties. For example, Syrian and Iranian Kurds were and are cooperating with the PKK. The cooperation between Iraqi Kurds and their co-ethnic groups (the PKK, PJAK, the KDPI, and Komala) is also not constant. In the early period, cooperation between Iraqi Kurds and the PKK was present due to ethnic ties. However my study shows that groups withdraw their support due to external factors. Groups decide to help their co-ethnic groups if the cost of cooperation is lower, otherwise they will withdraw or tend to not cooperate in the first place. This suggests that ethnic identities have a great impact on co-ethnic group cooperation, while also suggesting that ethnic ties do not always guarantee cooperation.

My second hypothesis, that a host state's relationship with a violent ethnic group impacts the level of cooperation among co-ethnic groups, revealed some empirical results. The good relationship between the PKK and the Syrian government convinces or makes it easy for Syrian Kurds to freely aid and join the PKK. However, when the nature of the relationship changes between two groups, so does their level of cooperation. In accordance, Syrian Kurds began receiving greater internal threats (punished under the law) from the Syrian government (due to their support for their co-ethnic violent group). This means that if a host state supports an ethnic violent group, then this will likely increase the level of cooperation among the same co-ethnic groups and ethnic violent group residing in the host state.

Empirical analysis demonstrates that external threat, especially military threat, is the key hypothesis explaining non-cooperation among co-ethnic groups. For Syrian Kurds, they did not have any external or internal threat demanding their non-cooperation with the PKK until 1999. In fact, they were even encouraged to cooperate by the Syrian government. However, later, military threat from Turkey forced Syria to take a different position. Syrian Kurds were punished if they aided the PKK, which decreased the level of cooperation between co-ethnic groups.

The cooperation between Iraqi Kurds and their co-ethnic groups was and is greatly influenced by external threat. In the early period, cooperation between Iraqi Kurds and the PKK was present due to ethnic ties. However tactical differences and Turkish military interventions to Northern Iraq led the groups to dismiss agreements already in place. My study reveals the high number of interventions (29) in Northern Iraq, suggesting that Turkey is a constant external threat to Kurdish cooperation, naturally, as the Northern Iraqi government finds itself afraid to cooperate and support the PKK due to Turkey's violent behavior. In some operations, Iraqi Kurds have even cooperated with the Turkish government to stop Turkish interventions in their region. The Iranian government also constantly bombed PJAK camps and intervened militarily in Northern Iraq, destroying, either fully or partially, more than ten Kurdish Iraqi villages. Barzani and Talabani feared non-cooperation with the PKK and PJAK, which would have increased the military threat and may have even led to a direct military confrontation with Turkey and Iran.

Economical pressure or threat from neighboring countries also was and is an important component for non-group cooperation between co-ethnic groups. Iraqi Kurds have depended economically on neighboring countries (Iran and Turkey) for some time. Cross-border trading is essential for these groups because they are landlocked. Their survival depends on neighboring

countries. Due to their geographical isolation, groups strive to avoid conflict with their neighboring countries, even if it means not supporting their co-ethnic groups during armed conflict. In this scenario, an ethnic group performs a cost and benefit analysis. If they trade for great gain then they would prefer to cooperate with these countries rather than supporting violent ethnic groups. If they support violent ethnic groups, neighboring countries in the midst of an ongoing armed conflict can use economic dependence as leverage against state and the same ethnic groups in neighboring countries. The KRG developed multi-million dollar cross-regional trading with neighboring countries, especially Turkey, which has created interdependency between the two countries. Either closing these borders or involving itself with cross-border military intervention can cause large financial losses to the KRG. Turkey and Iran has used closing borders in the past to pressure the KRG to act against the PKK and PJAK. In order to maintain a good relationship with Turkey and Iran, the KRD may do more in the future to guarantee a possible trade zone for international businesses, export and import goods, and gain from possible pipeline revenues.

Another crucial hypothesis that explains groups' cooperation is the role of the great powers. The U.S. was the important external actor influencing cooperation among Kurds and was the key actor in peace negotiations between the KDP and the PUK in 1998. Nevertheless, the U.S. has discouraged Iraqi Kurds to cooperate with the PKK because Turkey plays a crucial role in U.S. policy. Bush and Obama agreed to help Turkey against the PKK, which they viewed as a "common enemy" of Turkey, the U.S. and Iraq. Both countries agreed to act together against the PKK. After the creation of a "safe haven" and the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the KRG has required U.S. support for its survival. Therefore, they try to not act against U.S. interest in the region. Other Kurdish groups, such as PJAK and PKK seem to be less influenced by the U.S.

government than the KDP and PUK. Nevertheless, in the case of PJAK my study shows that the leaders and members of PJAK try to distance itself from the PKK to gain legitimacy and increased support from other countries. This shows that support of a great power is essential for a group struggle, leading group(s) to collaborate and avoid disturbing their state interest even if that means non-cooperation with co-ethnic group(s).

The study demonstrates that ideological outlooks have little impact on non-cooperation among Kurdish groups. Groups do not fight over ideological differences, but similar ideologies make it easy for groups to cooperate and build good relationships. Ideological similarities helped Kurdish groups to establish close ties. For example, one reason for a good relationship between PJAK and the PKK, and the PKK and Syrian Kurds, is similarities in ideology. Syrian and Iranian Kurds both share or adopted the ideas of Ocalan. This also reveals that when groups work too closely with a larger and more established group they are more likely to adopt those ideas, helping to build a strong relation.

Moreover, past experiences between ethnic groups have an impact, be it positive or negative, and influence ethnic groups' perceptions of each other. Iraqi Kurds clearly refuse military actions against the PKK and PJAK, instead forcing them to stop their military actions and solve problems through democratic means. One reason for their refusal is that in the 1990's fighting against their Kurdish brothers left a sour taste; therefore, they do not want to repeat the same mistake. It seems that Kurdish officials are playing the role of mediator between violent Kurdish groups and neighboring host countries, Turkey and Iran. The case study shows that negative past experiences had a positive impact on groups' attitude for other groups. Nevertheless, it is hard to claim that this will be the case for all cases.

Furthermore, my hypothesis, the competition for group leadership or for political and economical power (if there is more than one group) has also played a role in co-ethnic group cooperation. The civil war between the PUK and the KDP from 1994-1998 was fought over economic competition between the groups. Iraqi Kurdish groups seem to have more competition for resources. Both Iraqi Kurdish groups, the PKK and PJAK, have a clear leadership, which suggests that there is no real competition for group leadership. Iraqi Kurds were divided into two groups and these two groups were controlling certain areas of Northern Iraq where they held a majority. However, the KDP and the PUK have long been competitive for resources. Nevertheless, since 2005, they have overcome this problem and have agreed to share resources and political power within the KRG. There are a few reasons for their decision. The first is that the U.S. government encouraged both groups to cooperate during the Iraqi invasion to gain more leverage against insurgencies within the Iraqi Government. Secondly, both groups realized that the cost of not cooperating could diminish likelihood of the KRG's survival. Clearly then, the groups considered cooperation more beneficial than detrimental, leading them to cooperate. This analysis suggests that competition for resources decreases group cooperation. However, once groups decide how to share resources, cooperation becomes easy.

My hypothesis can also be implemented in the case of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (the LTTE) in Sri Lanka and the Tamils in India. Tamils are another ethnic group that lacks a homeland. They (both groups) live on different sides of the Palk Strait, allowing them to travel across the sea much more easily (Palanithurai and Mohanasundaram 1993). Tamils in India have more political and economical freedoms compared to Sri Lankan Tamils. Since 1983, Tamils in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu secretly supported the struggle of the LTTE. They gave moral support and provided them "facilities for training, arms, ammunition and communication

equipments" (Other Report on Japan and Korea; Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry Condemns Tamil Nadu Aid for Jaffna Tamils 1987). According to some sources, the LTTE has wide support from Tamil Nadu politicians, judges, police, and influential Tamil Nadu newspapers (Burns 1995). Obviously, ethnic ties represent vital hypotheses that explain group cooperation among Tamils. Tamil Nadu has a great sympathy toward their co-ethnic group struggle in Sri-Lanka and supports them through various means.

At first, the Indian government was silent regarding the activities of Tamils in Tamil Nadu and was supportive of the LTTE to gain political support in Tamil Nadu. Nevertheless, the Indian government withdrew its help to the LTTE when Indian military forces entered Sri Lanka to urge peace between the two. Instead they fought against the LTTE and left after three years (Burns 1995). Rajiv Gandhi, prime minister of India, also possessed an unfriendly attitude toward militants Tamils in Tamil Nadu. He arrested 1,000 militants based in Tamil Nadu, taking their weapons and telecommunication equipment as well (Shelia 1987). When Tamil militants killed the former prime minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi, in 1991, Indian Tamils felt less compassionate toward the struggle of the LTTE (Indian lose sympathy for refugees, 1991). One reason for their lack of compassion might be that after the assassination of Gandhi "police have unearthed arms and explosives caches, closed illicit weapons factories, unraveled smuggling rings and destroyed the Tiger's communications network in Tamil Nadu" (Chronology for Sri Lankan Tamils in Sri Lanka 2004). These incidents might have caused fear among the Tamils in India to take side with the LTTE due to the consequences of being punished. The host state's (in this case India) attitude played a crucial role for Tamil Nadu's support of the LTTE. First, they were quiet, which suggests that they did not exercise any internal restraint of the activities. This allowed Tamil Nadu to more readily and freely support LTTE activities. Nevertheless, later

activities show that India has taken a different stance on the issue due to assassination of Gandhi. This hinders the support of Tamils in Tamil Nadu to help the LTTE.

Since 1991, the Indian government has accepted the LTTE as a terrorist organization and has used military force against the organization, not just because of the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, but also because they perceive the LTTE as a threat to increase the power and momentum of secessionist sentiment in Tamil Nadu. For that reason, the Sri Lankan government has resolved to find a political solution to the issue (India analyst criticizes southern leaders' support for Sri Lanka Tamil Tigers 2008). In the mid-1990s, with the help of pro-LTTE parties in the ruling coalition in India, the LTTE reestablished its network in Tamil Nadu. Even a top Sri Lankan army official acknowledged that "the LTTE is able to ferry some of its injured cadres to Tamil Nadu for treatment. There are also unconfirmed reports that some "outside" doctors (presumably from Tamil Nadu) are working in the LTTE based hospitals in the Wanni" (Balachanddran 1998). According to Pathmanathan, who holds position of the LTTE plenipotentiary for international relations, "We are grateful that the people of Tamil Nadu have expressed so much solidarity with Eelam Tamils. These are true feelings of the people without any political or vested interests. It gives us solace to know that our brethren across the sea are one with us in our time of grief and sorrow. The sentiments and emotions poured out by the people of Tamil Nadu, and the cries of the Tamils in the island, are bound to reach the hearts of the Government of India" (Negotiator says Tamil Tigers believe in "political solution" 2009). This study reveals that the Indian political attitude was such that it allowed or overlooked the activities of the LTTE. It is clear that the Indian government has sought to avoid upsetting Tamil diaspora in its territory, which decreases the level of internal threat to Tamil citizens in India. This allowed a greater level of cooperation between the groups. For its support to the LTTE,

Tamils in India faced no external threat from either the Sri Lankan government or other countries, which allowed for cooperation between the co-ethnic groups.

In conclusion, both examples confirm that ethnic ties are extremely important factors in ethnic group cooperation. Nevertheless, ethnic group cooperation was greatly influenced by external or internal threat or pressure. If groups receive a greater internal or external threat, it decreases the level of cooperation. In this regard, if a host state supports an ethnic violent group, then this will likely increase the level of cooperation among the same co-ethnic groups and ethnic violent group residing in the host state, such as the Indian and Syrian Governments**.** Moreover, great power(s) may influence groups' cooperation positively or negatively, depending upon states' interest, as seen especially in the Kurdish case. Nevertheless, in the case of Tamils, there is little if any involvement. However, further studies must be conducted in order to extrapolate whether my hypothesis also explains non-cooperation among the same ethnic groups in other cases.

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