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## **Remembering the Past in Diasporic Spaces:**

### **Kurdish Reflections on Genocide Memorialization for Anfal**

**Bahar Baser (Coventry University) & Mari Toivanen (University of Helsinki)**

#### **Abstract**

Diasporas engage in a variety of practices and activities to commemorate past massacres and genocides that might have led to the formation of the diaspora in the first place. In this process, certain massacres can become constructed as the “chosen trauma” and consequently a central element in commemoration practices and identity formation. In this paper, we discuss genocide memorialisation in the context of the Iraqi Kurdish diaspora in Europe. We specifically focus on genocide memorialisation of the Anfal Campaign (1986-1989) that were orchestrated by Saddam Hussein’s regime against the Kurdish population in Northern Iraq. We examine how collective remembering for Anfal takes place in the diasporic space, what diasporic articulations and representations of Anfal as the “chosen trauma” are produced in commemoration practices and how these genocide memorialisation processes differ from those in the homeland context. How are commemoration practices by the Kurdish diaspora communities in Europe organised and narrated upon? How do they relate to collective memory and identity? What spatial and generational dynamics are at play in these processes?

**Keywords:** Genocide, memory, diaspora, identity, Anfal, Kurdish

#### **Introduction**

In this paper, we focus on genocide memorialisation in the context of the Iraqi Kurdish diaspora in Europe. We examine commemoration practices undertaken by diaspora Kurds to commemorate the Anfal Campaign<sup>i</sup> (1986-1989) and Halabja chemical attack (1988) which were orchestrated by Saddam Hussein's regime against the Kurdish population in Northern Iraq. So far, some studies have discussed these atrocities from the perspective of the victims and survivors<sup>ii</sup>, while others have focused on their impact on the national narratives and nation-state building processes in the Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI)<sup>iii</sup> or on acts of remembrance in the region.<sup>iv</sup> However, to our knowledge, in the field of Kurdish studies no systematic study has focused on how Anfal is commemorated in the diaspora, not only by survivors but also more generally by first and second-generation diaspora Kurds themselves, and how the commemorations differ from those in the homeland. By examining the spatial and generational dynamics of genocide memorialisation, this paper offers a better understanding of how the politics of memory and identity play out in the diasporic context.

Previous literature suggests that a shared memory has been one of the defining features of diasporas that “retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland – its physical location, history, and achievements”.<sup>v</sup> Although the centrality of homeland in such classical understandings of diasporas have been revised in recent years, the relationship between diaspora and collective memory has received little interest from scholars so far except a few studies which suggest that memory rather than territory can emerge as a competing element for diasporic identity.<sup>vi</sup> This relationship can be particularly salient in cases where the diaspora has emerged as a result of a conflict or an existential threat to the community in the homeland, such as a genocide. For instance, Mlodoch argues that “traumatic experiences have an especially strong impact on memory” and if the experience of violence is shared by a group of people, it can become a “collective trauma”.<sup>vii</sup> Collective traumas, such as genocides, can also become “chosen traumas”<sup>viii</sup>, as many communities in the world subjected to high degrees

of violence organise commemoration practices that selectively reference certain past acts of violence and possibly omit others. Indeed, the commemoration practices for past massacres have been said to turn the diaspora space into a “multidirectional landscape of memory”.<sup>ix</sup>

In terms of politics of memory, this not only means that some massacres or a genocide can become a “chosen trauma” in diasporic articulations and representations on genocide, but they can also be referenced upon by different actors for a variety of political or other ends. Diasporas originating from conflict-induced migration rarely cut their ties to the ‘homeland’ after traumatic experiences such as genocides. Instead they can mobilize around the traumatic events, formulate solidarity networks to commemorate, and to act against forgetting the past experiences by transmitting the memory to subsequent generations. In the long run, the “chosen trauma” can turn into a central component of national narratives adopted by the state elites or employed by political actors, many among whom can be diaspora returnees themselves, to mobilise diasporas for political or other ends.<sup>x</sup> Commemoration practices concerning genocide memorialisation and the potential tensions surrounding them can also play out differently in the diasporic space and in the homeland.

In the diasporic context, memories of displacement and of exile can become intertwined with memories of the “chosen trauma” and genocide memorialisation can provide a sense of belonging to a diaspora community through sharing the traumatic past. This is the case with the Armenian diaspora for whom *genocidal memory* has become significant in providing a cohesive group ideology within the diaspora.<sup>xi</sup> Commemoration practices not only draw from the memory of past events (and selectively so), but they can become a way to communicate a sense of identity to the subsequent generations. However, born and raised in their parents’ host societies, the next generation has not experienced the traumatic experiences themselves, and therefore their relationship to the “chosen trauma” can differ from that of their parents’ generation.

Building on the previous work on Anfal as the “chosen trauma”<sup>xii</sup>, we ask: How are the commemoration practices by the Iraqi Kurdish diaspora in Europe organised? What diasporic articulations and representations of Anfal do they entail, and how do they relate to collective memory and identity? What spatial and generational dynamics are at play in these processes? Commemorations of Anfal have become central to the Kurdish nation-building project in the KRI and a touchstone in Kurdish collective memory: they lie at the heart of the current official Kurdish national identity that is put forward by the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG).<sup>xiii</sup> Our analysis suggests that the Anfal Campaign also constitutes a “chosen trauma” for the Iraqi Kurdish diaspora. However, the tensions stemming from local versus state-led genocide memorialisation in the KRI are not fully diffused to the diaspora. Instead diasporic commemoration practices usually revolve around recognition and performances of cohesion, unity and acts of solidarity: Anfal as the “chosen trauma” has become an element of diasporic identity construction. The exile resulting from the campaign lies at the heart of the foundation of the Iraqi Kurdish diaspora in Europe, and Anfal has become associated to the diasporic condition and the narrative of victimhood, but increasingly so also to narratives of resilience and resistance. Whereas for the first-generation members’ articulations of Anfal draw from the lived experience of exile, victimhood and oppression, for the second generation Anfal has become a part of transmitted knowledge, a postmemory. Based on these empirical observations, we argue that an analysis on the spatial and generational dynamics of genocide memorialisation surrounding “chosen traumas” provides a better understanding on how the politics of memory and identity play out in the diasporic space.

### **Methods and Data Collection**

The paper draws from a qualitative dataset that consists of semi-structured interviews with more than one hundred first and second-generation diaspora members and stakeholders that

have engaged in genocide commemoration practices in Germany, Sweden, Finland, France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands between 2008 and 2018. Both authors have conducted these interviews in the realm of their individual research projects during the last ten years which has allowed them to observe the trajectories of Iraqi Kurdish diaspora mobilisation over the recognition of Anfal as genocide and how that relates to articulations of the Kurdish diasporic identity.<sup>xiv</sup> Interviewees included diaspora organisation leaders, ordinary members, public intellectuals, representatives of Iraqi Kurdish political parties abroad, Iraqi Kurdish politicians based in the homeland as well as representatives of official KRG representations in Europe.<sup>xv</sup> Their educational backgrounds varied as both researchers aimed to capture general trends rather than elite behaviour towards genocide commemoration in the diaspora. Interviewees were, therefore, selected from all walks of life and their ages varied between 18 and 75.

The interviews have been conducted by following the ethical guidelines and respecting anonymity of the interviewees. Voice recordings and transcripts of interviews have been anonymised and the names of interviewees have not been mentioned unless they specifically asked to be named in this research. Most participants or their parents had originally migrated from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and particularly since the late 1980s onward. Both researchers included participants who arrived in Europe with different conflict-induced migration waves before and after the Anfal Campaign. It is also essential to remember that the Kurdish diaspora is highly heterogeneous, and not the least due to the division of Kurdish lands and populations across Iraq, Iraq, Turkey and Syria. In this paper, we will focus on the Iraqi Kurdish diaspora, although some commemoration events also attracted diaspora Kurds from outside Iraqi Kurdistan. Additional dataset includes (online) visual and textual material collected in diaspora events and social media platforms and observation notes on Anfal-related commemoration events, diaspora meetings and demonstrations that were organised in the countries of settlement. The collected data was analysed with content analysis.

## **On Remembering and Identity across Diasporic Spaces and Generations**

An increasing body of empirical literature has focused on genocide memorialisation and how the related commemorative practices have become powerful tools for transitional justice, reconciliation and political claims-making.<sup>xvi</sup> However, remembering past atrocities have not always been adapted as a strategy to overcome the traumas of the past. Various empirical case studies have also shown that communities can opt to “forget” in order to “heal” from the traumas they have experienced in inter-communal conflicts. For instance, authors such as Susanne Buckley-Zistel argue that in the Rwandan case “chosen amnesia” was adopted as a strategy for local co-existence in a post-conflict environment.<sup>xvii</sup> Therefore, whether these atrocities become part of collective memory and have an impact on national identity formation led by homeland actors varies from one case to another. Moreover, several groups might choose different strategies either to forget or remember past atrocities. Therefore, commemoration processes are never straightforward, and politics of memory is usually at play as a result of competition between different elites or between state-led and grassroots initiatives that might have differing political aims.

Genocide memorialisation is closely related to the question of recognition. Different diaspora groups across the globe have mobilised and taken part in political and other activities that aim to the acknowledgement of a particular massacre or a set of massacres as genocide<sup>xviii</sup>. Such initiatives have consisted of diaspora actors doing advocacy work and lobbying host society policy-makers, but also organising commemorations events in the host society targeting both diaspora and non-diaspora audiences. Whether the massacres have been recognised as genocide

influences what shape and purpose the commemoration practices take on. In the case of Rwandan or Bosnian diasporas, the acts of violence against a community have been recognized as genocide by the international community, and therefore the commemoration acts usually consist of keeping the community together and “sending solidarity messages to the compatriots” back in the homeland<sup>xix</sup>. In contrast, in the case of the Tamil<sup>xx</sup> or yet with Kurdish<sup>xxi</sup> diasporas, where the acts of violence have not received a full recognition either by the perpetrators or by the larger international community (with the exception of few states), diasporic efforts have turned into mobilizing around advocacy and lobbying for recognition and to raising awareness in the host society about the committed massacres, thus showing how justice-seeking activities transcend borders and continue domestic struggles for justice abroad.<sup>xxii</sup>

How diaspora communities remember and commemorate traumatic events may also differ considerably from the commemoration acts of the locals in the homeland. Transnational movements and the formation of diasporic communities across the globe means that also memories have become deterritorialised. For instance, Radstone has suggested that we need to pay attention to the locatedness of such memories, claiming that memories, although travelling, are still “instantiated locally, in a specific place and at a particular time”.<sup>xxiii</sup> In other words, diasporic memory is “place based”, but not necessarily “place bound”<sup>xxiv</sup>. This means that analyses on genocide memorialization need to be more sensitive to spatial dynamics and what shape memorialization processes take, for instance, in the diasporic space and why.<sup>xxv</sup>

It is possible that the diasporic articulations on genocide and its memorialization reflect the dominant homeland narratives, but they can also become autonomised and take different forms according to the host country context<sup>xxvi</sup> or even between different diaspora segments. For instance, Giorgio Shiani shows how the storming of the Golden Temple complex in 1984 has been considered as a “critical event” by the Sikh community both at home and abroad, and how



it has become central to the imagination of both a Sikh nation and a Sikh diaspora in exile. Sikhs in the diaspora have then used this narrative and played upon a “politics of victimhood” to justify their dispersion outside their homeland. As Shiani states: “Central to the construction of a discourse of ‘victimhood’ is the selective use of *memory* by nationalists: how Sikhs in the diaspora “remember” ‘Operation Blue Star’ and what, more importantly, the Sikhs in the Punjab, choose to “forget”. The local Sikhs’ strategy of “chosen amnesia” to cope with living in their homeland has greatly differed from that of diaspora Sikhs to assert their own identity as Sikhs.<sup>xxvii</sup>

In other words, genocide memorialisation can move across the world, in both time and space<sup>xxviii</sup> and may take different shapes and forms in the transnational diaspora space. The transnational space can, in a sense, provide means for “long-distance mourning”<sup>xxix</sup> that takes both material and immaterial forms through cultural production, arts, memorials, museums and so forth. For instance, as Elisa Sandri shows in the case of Cambodia: “Artistic reflections on memory from afar may be important elements for the past and future of Cambodia, engendering alternative modes and practices of justice.”<sup>xxx</sup> Also Halilovich notes in his study on the Srebrenica genocide how acts of commemoration in diaspora include artistic and religious practices that not only “bring the members of the Bosnian diaspora together through fostering communal solidarity among themselves” but also creates a “safe” space for long-distance mourning and potential healing by sharing traumatic experiences.<sup>xxxi</sup> He also argues that remembering the Srebrenica massacre has turned into a cohesive narrative and memory via the collective actions of the Bosnian diaspora all around the world.

Building on this previous literature, our approach in this paper is on the *processual* nature of remembering and memory-making processes instead of taking (collective) memory as something that exists by itself. We will examine how collective remembering takes place, what diasporic articulations and representations of genocide are produced and how references to

genocide through this remembering are employed to enact networks and narratives of communities to which individuals belong to.<sup>xxxii</sup> In this sense, we feel that Volkan's theory of *chosen trauma* can provide insights into how particular massacres become selected as the one(s) to be commemorated. By "chosen trauma", he refers to "a shared mental representation of a traumatic past event during which the large group suffered loss and/or experienced helplessness, shame and humiliation in a conflict with another group".<sup>xxxiii</sup> In his words, "chosen traumas are recalled during the anniversary of the original event, and the ritualistic commemoration helps to bind the members of the large group together. Although his approach to "chosen traumas" does not specifically discuss commemoration in the diasporic space, we argue that it provides a useful tool to examining how "chosen traumas" can become a significant group marker of ethnic identity and cohesion. For instance, state elites and both homeland and diaspora political actors can instrumentalise such "chosen traumas" for political purposes and use them in nation-building processes to reactivate and reconfirm such identity through references to a shared traumatic past.

Moreover, we also argue that "chosen traumas" can become narrated in relation to the exiled condition and contribute to collective identity constructions in diaspora. In fact, the early definitions of diaspora included exile and traumatic dispersal as a criterion for transnational communities to be defined as a diaspora.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Similarly, more classical approaches have also taken the existence of collective memory as a *sine qua non* for diaspora mobilisation and sense of identity.<sup>xxxv</sup> Indeed, the sense of victimhood and shared solidarity among community members as a result of displacement have been considered as some of the most fundamental constituents for diasporic identity. Lately, however, scholars have pointed out that modern diasporas are transforming themselves into non-state actors by defying their victimhood discourse and replacing it with their agency and leverage which may bring positive developments to their war-thorn home country.<sup>xxxvi</sup> This means that diasporic articulations and

representations of genocide and “chosen traumas” can take upon the politics of victimhood and reference the exiled condition, but also simultaneously contrast it with diaspora’s agency, the community’s survival and successes in the host society.

In this sense, we feel that it is important to examine the generational dynamics of genocide memorialization. According to Volkan<sup>xxxvii</sup>, the “chosen trauma” changes function and becomes more than a memory over generations. Commemoration practices can actually aim to sustain the transmission of knowledge of the community’s traumatic past to subsequent generations. Sossie Kasbarian has demonstrated that the memory of the genocide has been an essential component of Armenian diasporic identity, to the extent that “generations have grown up with their parents’, grandparents’, and great grandparents’ personal accounts of loss, displacement, and of starting over - the memory of the genocide is transmitted intergenerationally.”<sup>xxxviii</sup> Similarly, Bahar Baser has shown that second-generation Kurds in Germany and Sweden inherited conflict dynamics and traumas from their parents and their diasporic identity has been shaped by what their parents experienced in Turkey.<sup>xxxix</sup>

Indeed, as suggested by Thomas Lacroix and Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, the issue of memory circulation needs to be addressed not only across diasporic spaces, but also across generations. However, as they further note, “the diverse ways in which children and youth ‘inherit’, contest, negotiate, transmit and mobilise specific memories have, nonetheless, infrequently been examined in diaspora studies”.<sup>xl</sup> This means that the second and subsequent generations in the diaspora can view, act upon and attach meanings to the “chosen trauma” different from their parents’ generation. As mentioned earlier, the forced displacement and exile that first generation has experienced personally can become conflated with the “chosen trauma”. However, the second-generation members’ articulations of the “chosen trauma” might differ as for them it is a form of “transmitted trauma” that they haven’t experienced themselves. The second generation may, for instance, detach themselves from the political fragmentations of

the previous generations and focus on other means of making their voice heard, be it through artistic or other forms of cultural production. For instance, Sandri notes in her study on 1.5. generation Cambodian Americans, that the transnational memory of the genocide is being “reconstructed through music, film and Khmer traditional arts, as well as other kinds of artistic productions”. She further continues: “These artists use their creativity to position themselves within discourses of genocidal justice across different artistic platforms, combining American and Cambodian aesthetics to produce ‘memorials’ and to create an imagined space of justice and reconciliation.”<sup>xli</sup>

## **The Kurdish Case**

### ***History of Forced Displacement and the Anfal Campaign***

In addition to significant labour migration<sup>xlii</sup>, the unstable political situation in the region of Kurdistan has led to the formation of Kurdish diaspora communities across Europe and North America. Indeed, armed conflicts that have occasionally involved international forces have been a frequent characteristic of the interethnic relations in Iraq (1961–2003), Iran (1967 to 1968 and 1979 to today), and Turkey (1984 to the present).<sup>xliii</sup> Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria have targeted the Kurdish populations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with various state-led measures ranging from assimilation policies to genocidal measures. These events together have led to internal and international displacement of Kurds and to the formation of Kurdish diaspora communities around the globe that have been estimated to be more than one million<sup>xliv</sup>, out of the total Kurdish population estimated between 25-40 million that is divided between Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Iran.<sup>xlv</sup>

The forced displacement of Iraqi Kurds can be traced back to the late 1980s. During the Iran-Iraq war, the Iraqi regime launched a brutal campaign against Kurdish rebels that lasted from

1986 to 1988. Al-Anfal Campaign<sup>xlvi</sup> consisted of eight military offensives that annihilated Kurdish rural life between February and September 1988<sup>xlvii</sup> and that also included the usage of chemical weapons. Between those years, Hassan al-Majid (Saddam Hussein's cousin, also known as 'Chemical Ali') organized forced deportations as well as systematic chemical attacks on Kurdish villages located in Northern Iraq, under the commands of Saddam. By the end of the campaigns, some 1.5 million Kurds had been "resettled". Altogether, the eight military offensives physically destroyed 3,000 villages, killing approximately 150,000–180,000 people and leaving more than 180,000 missing.<sup>xlviii</sup>

One particular attack stands out, as it featured the single most horrific event during the Anfal Campaign. In March 1988, the Iraqi regime organized an attack on the town Halabja. More than 5000 people died while the Iraqi warplanes dropped mustard gas and other chemical weapons to destroy Kurdish life in Halabja and its surroundings.<sup>xlix</sup> As Six-Hohenbalken accounts, more than 10 000 people were also injured as the poison gas sank quickly and affected even others who were hiding in underground places. The victims suffered loss of sight, acid burns in their eyes, burned skin, and damage to respiratory organs<sup>l</sup>, some victims continue to suffer from the consequences of the chemical attacks to this day.<sup>li</sup>

Halabja has become very much emblematic in the collective memory of Kurds.<sup>lii</sup> For instance, besides war crimes, Saddam was additionally charged for genocide against Kurds, specifically referencing Halabja. The prosecution had only presented half of the case at the moment Saddam Hussein was executed. His cousin was equally condemned to death in 2006 after he was found guilty of having orchestrated the Halabja bombing. Hence, the two were never officially found guilty of genocide charges by Iraqi High Tribunal.<sup>liii</sup> Moreover, there are no institutional steps for dealing with the past atrocities with the exception of commemoration events.<sup>liv</sup>

### *Contested Memories over the Anfal Campaign and Halabja in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq*

Especially in cases of genocide, states have drawn from their traumatic past to put forth a particular narrative for political purposes<sup>lv</sup> that, as in many other similar cases, is not free from political contestations.<sup>lvi</sup> The experience of the Anfal Campaign has created a victimhood narrative that has become a part of Kurdish collective memory and of nation-building processes in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.<sup>lvii</sup> After 1992 when the Kurdistan Region of Iraq gained its autonomy from the central government, political actors have created a victim narrative where Kurds were subjected to systematic genocide since the foundation of Iraq.<sup>lviii</sup> Anfal, in particular, was used as a political reference to create a historical memory about the Kurdish nation and has later become instrumentalised by the political actors in Iraqi Kurdistan.<sup>lix</sup> After the US-led invasion of Iraq and the fall of Saddam regime in 2003, this narrative became central in KRG's nation-building efforts. The Monument of Halabja Martyrs was built in the city the same year and has been frequently visited by both local residents as well as diaspora Kurds. In 2006, the Ministry of Martyrs and Anfal Affairs (MMAA) was established as part of Kurdish Regional Government in the de facto autonomous Kurdish region of Northern Iraq.<sup>lx</sup> In Moradi's words "the MMAA embarked on turning the memory of Al-Anfal into a dominant form of national and individual self-identification as they produced it as memory of both the Kurdish nation and the homeland."<sup>lxi</sup> As he further argues:

"The Ministry sought not only to have al-Anfal internationally recognized as genocide but also to produce a national narrative/memory/identity at the same time. To replace al-Anfal with such a legal name (genocide) was hoped to add the Kurdish people to the list of other peoples with a history of genocide, which in turn was to help to lay foundations for a future of a Kurdish nation-state"<sup>lxii</sup>

As Moradi lists, the remembrance of genocide takes place in certain villages, towns or Anfal prison camps located in the region. Symbolic cemeteries have been built near memorial sites,

and between March and August commemoration events are organized with the participation of the MMAA and the international guests invited from all around the world to share the suffering of the Kurds.<sup>lxxiii</sup> Moradi, drawing from Derrida<sup>lxxiv</sup>, calls these as demonstrations of “a universal urgency of memory”.<sup>lxxv</sup> Especially during commemoration events in the KRI, Moradi says that TV stations “hunt” survivors who are sympathizers of dominant political parties and who give testimonies that are not critical of the Kurdish government.<sup>lxxvi</sup>

The KRG wishes to exert control over local memorialisation practices in order to sustain its hegemonic position. This is showcased, for instance, in the way images of the Anfal are used during election campaigns<sup>lxxvii</sup> illustrating what is chosen to be remembered and how, and what sort of narrative of the shared traumatic experience is displayed for purposes of the Kurdish nation-building project.<sup>lxxviii</sup> Indeed, Moradi calls these acts as “political translations of Anfal”, and as staged acts of remembrance.<sup>lxxix</sup> Rather than aiming at a “symbolic closure” for the victims to come to terms with the past and to reintegrate into their future lives<sup>lxxx</sup>, the KRG-led commemoration events aim at performing to an audience that is beyond – and sometimes at the expense – of victims. For instance, disputes surfaced in Halabja, when the monument of Halabja martyrs was established in 2003.<sup>lxxxi</sup> It was faced with fierce criticism from the local population and ended up being destroyed by a group of citizens, who criticized the KRG for having made political hay out of the memory of the massacre, while declining to provide meaningful support to the local population.<sup>lxxxii</sup>

Furthermore, it has been suggested that the dominant narratives of Anfal should be questioned and expanded in order to include women’s experiences,<sup>lxxxiii</sup> and that the victims in general have been neglected by the hegemonic political discourse of “national suffering”.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> Anfal survivors have expressed disappointment with the KRG government for not pushing the central government to bring justice to the victims.<sup>lxxxv</sup> Also, certain aspects of the massacre, including the knowledge of the Kurdish groups that collaborated with the Iraqi Army are

“disremembered” in state narratives.<sup>lxxvi</sup> This is not unique to the Kurdish case. Indeed, memorialisation is a tricky terrain where different actors can stake their claims with a particular political agenda. As Jinks<sup>lxxvii</sup> states “memorialization can be seen as an *intervention* into memory”; it is a performance which involves statements about what should be remembered and what should be forgotten. Indeed, to some extent invisible to the international community, there are competing and conflicting memories and narratives with regards to commemorating Anfal within the KRI<sup>lxxviii</sup> - contrary to those in the diaspora.

### **Genocide Memorialization in the Diaspora**

As a consequence of the transnationally dispersed and organised Kurdish diaspora, the ‘Kurdish issue’ has become both internationalized and de-territorialised. Kurdish diaspora is considered to be politically highly organised<sup>lxxix</sup>, not the least due to the ethno-national struggle of the Kurdish minorities in the sending states and the long-standing political oppression that the Kurdish populations have encountered to differing degrees in different historical periods. On the other hand, the receiving state’s political spheres and opportunity structures have to some extent provided means to organize politically as well as to have more liberties for cultural expressions – including commemoration practices. The emergence of the transnationally organized Kurdish diaspora has provided a platform for vibrant organization around commemoration practices in host societies, including in France, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden and Finland among others.

Our study shows that commemorations surrounding Anfal Campaign seem to have taken two forms in the Iraqi Kurdish diaspora. The first one is the KRG-driven initiatives in the transnational space that are part of a larger political project, namely that of the Kurdish state-building project and to some extent a reflection of the genocide memorialisation processes in



the KRI. The second tendency has been more grassroots-level and diaspora-driven memorialization that has aimed at creating solidarity among Iraqi Kurdish diaspora members as well as between diasporans and the locals in the homeland. They are similar in the way that both target an inward and outward audience, meaning they both include home and host country related elements. However, the driving forces behind the two may vary in each host country context depending on the profile of the diaspora members, the leverage of the diaspora elites to mobilise people around such activities as well as of the openness of the host country for such events.

Concerning the first, the KRG has been quite active in lobbying for the recognition of Anfal and Halabja as genocide via its representations in European countries.<sup>lxxx</sup> To some extent in close cooperation with the Kurdish Regional Government, diaspora Kurds have mobilized in different host countries to lobby for the recognition of Anfal as genocide. Simultaneously, there has been active *grass-root level* mobilisation towards commemorating Anfal and advocating for recognition of the Anfal Campaign as genocide in diaspora. Formal recognitions of Anfal as genocide have been increasing in last years, mostly due to this sustained lobbying mechanism.

However, the interviewee accounts reveal that this has not always been the case. At the end of the 1980s, even before the Kurds gained larger autonomy within Iraq, diaspora Kurds who had already left the region organized sit-ins, petitions and protests to raise awareness of the potentiality of such massacres. They mobilized against the Saddam regime and urged European governments to act against the persecution of Kurds. For instance, a high-ranking politician who lived in exile in the Netherlands for many years stated that in the 1980s it was very hard to reach politicians and media, and lobbying them to show attention to the Kurdish case was almost impossible.<sup>lxxxii</sup> He says;

“We became kind of lobbyists [...] In some countries we were more organized, in some countries less. Lobbying was just about informing people because nobody knew anything about the Kurds. Especially on the situation of human rights. We tried to have an effect on media.”

His narrative is particularly important because he has been a well-known figure in the Kurdish movement and has been very active in diaspora circles before returning to the KRI to take up a political post. He belonged to the wave of asylum-seekers from Iraqi Kurdistan who arrived before the Anfal Campaign and Halabja. He talks about the impact on Anfal on the diaspora community in the following way:

“When it reached Anfal, it affected many people emotionally. They saw European TV channels talking about the Kurds. People in Halabja have been massacred. In Holland, we organized a big demonstration. I met the Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time.”

In his accounts, the diaspora had been extremely affected by seeing their loved ones subjected to genocidal measures under the Saddam Hussein regime. Defining this as a turning-point in Kurdish diasporic identity, he confirms that lobbying for the recognition of Kurdish plight took a more systematic form. However, the desired attention came much later. He also says that the international community only showed attention when they wanted to depict Saddam as the “bad guy” in the Middle East:

“Halabja showed a reality for many people. What we talked about many years... When Halabja happened people started to listen to us. But it was also for a short time. The change came when Saddam Hussain occupied Kuwait... Halabja became a material for them to convince their people to attack Saddam as a bad person. Then we were always on TV. We started to tell the story in a different way

and people started listening to us. We could go everywhere, talk, give lectures, radio, newspapers... many of us, we were everywhere. We knocked every door before but now they were knocking our doors.”

Another diasporan, Dlawer Ala’Aldeen, who recently returned to Kurdistan explains his experiences in lobbying during that time:

“Our lobbying campaign faced stiff opposition from both the East and West. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative Government in the UK and Mr. Ronald Reagan’s administration in the USA were simply not interested in news of the genocide, and at times even hindered our efforts. In the British Parliament not one of the 376 Tory MPs was prepared to communicate the plight of the Kurds.”<sup>lxxxii</sup>

As these testimonies show, the diaspora activists had a hard time to gather support for their cause until the host countries perceived advocacy on these issues for their interest. Only then the diasporans managed to use this new wave of interest in their favour and increased their lobbying efforts this time for documenting what had happened under the Iraqi regime in the 1990s. For instance, when another Kurdish activist went into exile in 1996 to the Netherlands, he then managed to institutionalize these efforts and formed an organization to document the chemical attack and its consequences as well as established initiatives to follow perpetrators who fled to Europe. The idea was to bring them in front of justice by pressuring the host countries to capture those individuals.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Dlawer Ala’Aldeen, who returned from the UK to the KRI and who is now leading a think-tank in Erbil, explains the importance of diaspora activities in this regard:

“Considering the circumstances, the Kurds in the diaspora community were collectively incredibly successful in obtaining robust data and solid evidence

confirming the use of CWs. These data were later used by the UK and US Governments to justify the subsequent wars that liberated Kuwait (1991) and removed Saddam (2003). For example, Tony Blair's dossier (Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction) of 2002 made extensive use of the literature that the Kurds had provided in the late 1980s. Similarly, former US Secretary of State Colin Powell, emphasised in his United Nations speech on 5 February 2003 Saddam's use of CWs against the Kurds in 1988, and mentioned Iraq's campaign of "ethnic cleansing and the destruction of some 2,000 Kurdish villages".<sup>lxxxiv</sup>

These grassroots initiatives gradually turned into larger movements, at times supported by the homeland political actors and at times independently from them. For instance, the non-profit Center of Halabja against Genocide and Anfalization of the Kurds (*CHAK*<sup>lxxxv</sup>) was initiated by a number of diaspora Kurds in 2001. The center had affiliations in Kurdistan, Canada, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Finland and Germany, and operated very much on a transnational basis. One of the founders of CHAK told that the organization aimed to draw international attention to Anfal Campaign through awareness raising campaigns and commemoration activities.<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Furthermore, besides pressuring the national governments, diaspora actors have also organised commemoration events at the European Parliament.

Therefore, it can be said that through time, similar to other cases such as Srebrenica commemorations, low-key diaspora gatherings turned into larger commemoration events which attract a high spectrum of people including politicians and activists from the host society.<sup>lxxxvii</sup> For instance, the KRG Representation in London organized a conference to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Anfal genocide operation and the chemical attack on Halabja and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Barzani killings on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January in 2013. The event was supported by the Minister for the Middle East Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the UK<sup>lxxxviii</sup> and endorsed by other European politicians such as Fredrik Malm, Chair of the

Sweden-Kurdistan Network of the Swedish Parliament. Another one was organized in 2014 called “Justice for Halabja” marking the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the chemical bombing of Halabja on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March in the UK Parliament where high-ranking politicians and important political figures were present. Among them, there were Tom Hardie-Forsyth who is a former senior advisor to the Prime Minister of the KRG and a former NATO Senior Committee Chairman and Professor Michael Bohlander who is a chair in Comparative and International Criminal Law at Durham University. In Sweden, commemorations usually take place in Adolf Fredrik Church and brings together Kurds from four parts of Kurdistan as well as Swedish politicians, civil society and journalists.

Image 1 – A picture of the Swedish and Kurdish flags at the commemoration of Anfal and Halabja at the Adolf Fredrik Church in Stockholm

Image 2 – Leaflet for the international conference, ‘The Untold Story: The Kurdish Genocide in Iraq’ organised in London in 2013

Indeed, the KRG-driven genocide commemoration events have provided the KRG political actors a greater space for lobbying and transnational advocacy networking.<sup>lxxxix</sup> This also resonates Lacroix and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh’s observation on how “...simultaneous processes of remembering and forgetting and memorializing and marginalizing are often highly political in nature, at times mobilized by the diaspora to improve their access to rights in their hosting context or in their place of origin”.<sup>xc</sup> By seeking justice and recognition for their past from host country actors, it can be said that diasporas are also trying to unite their past to their present. Recognition of their plight will not only legitimize their reasons for escape in the eyes of the host society but will also inform them about who the Kurds really are.

A considerable number of participants of this study mentioned that a positive approach from their host societies was a clear sign that the KRG has these countries' support and they feel well-understood with regards to their suffering and the reasons for Kurds' exiled condition. Some participants lamented that it was usually the leftist parties which showed attention to their cause despite the fact that this is not an atrocity that solely concerns the Kurds, but all humanity.<sup>xci</sup> The relationship between a host country's official recognition of a diaspora's suffering and diaspora's feeling of belonging to the host country in return is not unique to the Kurdish case. For instance, in 2012, the Parliament of Australia adopted a special motion, acknowledging the events of the genocide at Srebrenica in 1995. According to Halilovich, this has created a special bond between the Australian host state and the Bosnian diaspora.<sup>xcii</sup> However, the issue of Anfal recognition is highly complex and politically sensitive to some of the host countries. Diaspora Kurds have presented criticism towards the involvement and responsibility of their host countries (and companies operating within such countries).<sup>xciii</sup> Such voices were also visible in our study. For instance, a diaspora member who resides in Washington DC said the following:

“We demand compensation for the families of the victims. The KRG has started this initiative. It is very important for us to get that recognition. Because it happened to us. But it is not only about Kurds. This genocide has happened to Kurds but we want to make sure that genocides never happen again. Everywhere, not only in Kurdistan. It [*recognition*] will bring closure to the families of the victims. The perpetrators have not yet been prosecuted. I personally very much appreciate if ICC (*International Criminal Court*) gets involved. Not only on Halabja, about Anfal and other massacres. It is very important. Yes, the crimes have been committed by the regime but the regime was supported by the international community. Chemicals that were used against Halabja were received

from companies in Holland and elsewhere. So, we want compensation for that. They need to be held accountable and they need to officially apologize to the Kurds. Maybe they did not know that Saddam would use this against Kurds but they should acknowledge that they should not have provided him with chemicals, especially when he was in war with Iran.<sup>xciv</sup>

In line with the demands that were mentioned by many other diaspora members in Europe, he further continues:

“Some perpetrators are living abroad. If the international community acknowledged this as genocide or crime against humanity, then they have the duty to arrest this kind of criminals and extradite them to the Iraqis or to the Kurds. The diaspora can play a huge role in this.”<sup>xcv</sup>

Indeed, Lacroix and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh discuss the “syncretic” character of memory-making processes. They argue that the memories of diaspora are not only about what the community is willing to remember, but also what the others are willing to acknowledge.<sup>xcvi</sup> This observation fits particularly well to the topic of genocide memorialisation and the related recognition initiatives directed to host societies, for instance in form of lobbying and petitions.<sup>xcvii</sup> Lack of knowledge on the Kurdish plight also came out as one of the most common points raised by the interviewees. They felt like they firstly needed to start from the basics and this would be followed by the acknowledgement of Kurdish suffering at a later stage. As one interviewee mentions: “The diaspora can increase awareness about Kurdish history. Even in the US, my classmates who study international relations did not know about Kurdistan.”<sup>xcviii</sup> Another participant also mentioned this but asserted that the main reason for the lack of knowledge on Kurds is due to the lack of a strong Kurdish lobby. With regards to Anfal, he said: “This is not

a political issue. This is a human issue. I believe we should unite as Kurdish people and start a lobby. We do not have a lobby like Jewish people.”<sup>xcix</sup> Although there is a grassroots demand for recognition, the lack of a monolithic Kurdish diaspora with same agenda and vision hinders further progress in certain cases. This might mean that lobbying might be successful only if it is strongly supported and pushed forward by the homeland political actors or if diaspora entrepreneurs manage to unite fragmented diaspora groups for episodic mobilizations for specific events.

As discussed earlier, commemoration of the Anfal Campaign and Halabja in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq is an example of how state-driven memorialization sometimes clashes with grass-root level memorialization of past massacres. However, what seems to be common for the commemoration practices in diaspora, both by KRG-related or more grass-root level practices, is that they do not generate political contestations over memorialisation similar to the ones in the KRI. This is not to say that diaspora narratives on Anfal are homogeneous and without any contestation. Even in diaspora narratives, there are discrepancies between individual experiences of genocide and Anfal Campaign as a touchstone of collective memory.<sup>c</sup>

Yet, no disputes similar to the ones in the KRI have occurred over the interpretation of the past events and the “instrumentalisation” of Anfal between different diaspora actors<sup>ci</sup>, nor between the diaspora actors and the KRG. In contrast, the commemoration practices have served to strengthen the bonds between diaspora members as well as between the host country actors and diasporans. In the latter case, they have also helped to keep the homeland ties alive and intact<sup>cii</sup>, whereas in the former case, they have helped to create a cohesive narrative that references Anfal as the “chosen trauma” and that is maintained through the collective actions of remembrance in the transnational diasporic space. In this sense, we can conclude that regardless of the connections between the two, the genocide memorialisation processes for the Anfal Campaign in the diaspora are not identical with those in the homeland. They are not only aimed



to different audiences, but they also stem from differing political interests and driving forces. In the case of the diaspora, the collective remembering for Anfal as the “chosen trauma” has contributed to a greater sense of social cohesion and of belonging to the Iraqi Kurdish diaspora community. Indeed, diasporic living involves intimate and multiple attachments that are in many ways negotiated through the experiences of war and trauma.

### **From the Politics of Victimhood to Resistance and Resilience**

Khayati observes that the ‘dominant discourse of victim diaspora’ can be found in “all Kurdish political organizations and socio-cultural institutions and networks in Western societies”. He suggests that the mainstream diaspora discourse “portrays the ‘homeland orientation’ among diasporan Kurds most often in negative terms such as *azar* (trauma), *sitam* (oppression) and *qurbani* (victim).<sup>ciii</sup> Vali also notes that oppression and denial are the discursive foundation of Kurdish nationalism.<sup>civ</sup> That denial and oppression are central narratives of Kurdish collective identity/ies and belonging is not surprising as such considering the history: states’ minority relations in the Kurdish-speaking regions have varied from diverse assimilation policies to genocidal measures.

The narratives of “chosen trauma”, namely of Anfal and Halabja, have become an integral component of how Iraqi Kurdish actors formulate collective identity narratives not only in the KRI but also in the diasporic space. Commemoration practices showcase how certain “chosen traumas” become referenced upon and employed as part of identity narratives. The social practices such as commemoration events but also material artefacts such as museums and monuments make explicit reference to this link between identity and collective remembering. For instance, scholars have shown that genocide memorialisation often plays out in the physical spaces of formal memorials, monuments, museums and ceremonies<sup>cv</sup> that seek to reference and

raise visibility for past massacres. One example of this is the memorial dedicated to the victims of Halabja opened in Hague in 2014. It contains a statue based on the infamous photograph named “Silent witness”, taken by a Turkish photo journalist, Ramazan Özturk, right after the attack. Halabja, similarly to homeland context, has come to occupy a central place in the collective memory of the Iraqi Kurdish diaspora. This is also visible in the commemoration practices surrounding the Anfal Campaign. For instance, in 2012, several diaspora organisations (The Confederation of Kurdish Association in Europe - KONKURD, CHAK, Kurdocide Watch and Kurdistan National Congress) organised a conference named “The Halabja Genocide and Anfal Campaigns”.<sup>cvii</sup> Another example is the three-day photograph exhibition focusing on the Halabja massacre that was opened in the European Parliament in 2013.<sup>cviii</sup> We can say that whereas the Anfal Campaign has become the “chosen trauma” for the Iraqi Kurdish diaspora, referencing Halabja that stands out as the single most horrific event of this campaign serves as an emblematic event and as primary reference in both material and immaterial forms of genocide memorialization concerning the Anfal Campaign.

Images 3 and 4 - Booklets prepared by CHAK (From XX’s personal archive gathered during fieldwork)

Image 5 – Booklet prepared by a Kurdish Diaspora Organization in Sweden (From XX’s personal archive gathered during fieldwork)

In some cases, it can be even so that the “chosen traumas” that form the focal point of genocide commemoration practices may have led to mass migration from the sending region and to the formation of an exiled community in diaspora. The members of the diaspora community can have first-hand experience of not only of the “chosen trauma” itself, but of its consequences in form of a more or less permanent exile and spatial displacement. The “chosen trauma” can become narrated in relation to the exiled condition and provide legitimization for leaving the

‘homeland’<sup>cviii</sup>: The Kurdish case, based on our material, also bears resemblance to Anderson Paul’s observations on the Armenian-America diaspora. He suggests that *genocidal memory* provides a cohesive group ideology and identity for Armenians in the diaspora.<sup>cxix</sup> Such collective experiences of trauma and the exile become essential components in collective identity narratives in the diasporic space. For instance, Catic observes in her study on Circassian genocide that “the genocide recognition initiative is an identity-driven project, resulting from a fear of extinction that grows out of the experience of being a vulnerable ethno-national group, living with memories of deportations, exile and fragmentation.”<sup>cx</sup> This is also the case with the genocide memorialisation concerning the Anfal Campaign. The genocide memorialization processes for Anfal as the “chosen trauma” provides a platform to construct and circulate identity narratives that are rooted in feelings of denial, injustice and victimhood. However, these diasporic articulations of identity and of Anfal do not merely reference the politics of victimhood, but also include the narratives of resistance and resilience, as is illustrated by one interviewee in his account on Kurds:

Kurds in diaspora and people who are exiled, they succeed in life. It becomes a self-defence mechanism. Kurds in the beginning of their history, have never been displaced. Then the invaders became neighbours, took our lands... We have been massacred several times, in the Gulf war, during Anfal, but don’t think that we are miserabilist in these situations. There’s a form of resistance that is a form of existence for us. It is in our blood, since we are young we have fought for our homeland, never left to invade others. That resistance is a form of existence, a political claim, and a cultural one too.<sup>cxix</sup>

This narrative of resistance and agency present in the interview material is also visible in the cultural production that touches on the Anfal. Cultural production has been one way to create visibility for Anfal,<sup>cxii</sup> although Dundar notes that the Anfal Campaign has not been of great

interest to Western and Middle Eastern film producers, and that they have “not found their due place in literary and cultural history”.<sup>cxiii</sup> It also needs to be acknowledged that there is a rich literature regarding the Anfal and Halabja in Kurdish-language poetry and narrative discourse.<sup>cxiv</sup> Indeed, films produced and directed on Anfal have been by diaspora Kurds, and are examples of raising awareness of the past massacres and raising questions of representation, but also offering means for memorialisation. It can also be argued that not only diaspora Kurds from Iraq but Kurds from different parts of the Kurdistan region showed interest in cultural and artistic productions on this issue, which is a significant indicator of how Anfal and Halabja are emblematic events also for Kurds outside Iraq. For instance, the films by the Iraqi-born director Shawkat Amin Korki, *Memories on Stone* and by the Iranian-born director Bahman Ghobadi, *Turtles Can Fly*, document and communicate what happened during the Anfal Campaign to a larger, including non-diaspora, audiences.<sup>cxv</sup> Both directors, as well as the producer of the latter movie, Turkish-born Mehmet Aktas, are diaspora Kurds living in exile. Hewitt also analyses the famous Kurdish director, Ghobadi’s *Turtles Can Fly*, and suggests that Ghobadi “makes an ethical call to his viewers to bear witness to the Kurdish Genocide and invites them to reverse their expectations of an image of a victimized child”. He suggests that Ghobadi’s production provides an alternative narrative to the one that presents Kurds as mere victims of genocide. Instead, the cultural representations of Anfal include a transforming narrative away from the experienced victimhood and towards resilience and resistance. This is also congruent with the findings of our study: the diaspora victimhood narrative is – if not being replaced – then complemented with the narrative of resistance and resilience, visible in diasporic articulations on Anfal. The victims of the “chosen trauma” have become the survivors of it.

### **From Exilic to Diasporic Memory**

During and immediately after the Anfal Campaign, many Kurds who were already in the

diaspora communities in Europe organized protests including marches, petitions, hunger strikes and occupation of embassies. Although the participation in commemoration practices is mainly undertaken by members of the so-called first generation, i.e. migrants, who have arrived to the receiving state in adult age, the subsequent generations can also play a role in genocide memorialisation. Several diaspora Kurds from the first generation have dedicated their lives to this cause and brought up their children with the memory of Anfal. Indeed, the second-generation interviewees born and raised in Europe talked about their wish to pass on the memory of Anfal and the traumatic past of the Kurdish nation to the subsequent generations. This is illustrated in the account of a Kurdish interviewee, who was in early childhood when she left the KRI with her parents in the early 1990s:

“I really want my children to know what I have experienced and what my parents and grand-parents have experienced, and how our nation has suffered. And that they should appreciate that after so many different stages we are in this situation in diaspora while thousands of Kurds have been killed for nothing.”<sup>cxvi</sup>

Lyons suggests that “the trauma of violent displacement is vivid in the first generations’ minds and is often kept alive in subsequent generations through commemoration and symbols. In fact, one function of conflict-generated diaspora network is to make sure that the displacement’s original cause is remembered and the grievance passed on to the next generation.”<sup>cxvii</sup> Diaspora communities attempt to ensure the transmission of cultural and religious codes, language, and a sense of belonging to the subsequent generations, which can be further accentuated due to the continued state of exile. Such initiatives focus mostly on identity formation and the transmission of knowledge on past events that have led to the exiled condition to future generations. However, in some cases these diasporic synergies might be used to create advocacy for transnational genocidal justice-seeking efforts.

For instance, second-generation Kurds in Finland organised a biking trip from Turku to Helsinki some years ago, in order to submit a petition to Parliament House demanding that Anfal bombings be declared genocide:

“We had this commemoration event in March, for the genocide of Kurds committed by Saddam. We rode from Turku to Helsinki with bikes and gave a petition to the representative of human rights at the Parliament house. They came to the stairs to talk with us about it. So you can use different ways to raise awareness. We actually made a biking association out of it to encourage young people to ride bikes instead of driving cars. It’s good for the climate too.”

Later on, the members of the association organised a similar trip in Iraqi Kurdistan and visited the memorial site of Halabja by bicycle.<sup>cxviii</sup> Another example including second-generation members is the photography exhibition organised by KRG Representation in Paris. The bureau created a brochure to commemorate Anfal and Halabja. It showcases first and second-generation members who live in France. The second-generation were wearing their uniforms of their new jobs in France with the aim of showing that they survived, and they are now part of the French society after a successful integration period. During the interview, Akil Marceau, the former director of the Paris bureau<sup>cxix</sup>, mentioned that as the KRG Representation, they do not want to solely focus on victimhood, but they want to show how Kurds survived a genocide and continue to become successful in their new lives in their host countries.

Image 6 – Brochure on an exhibition organised by the KRG Representation Bureau in Paris

The subsequent generations do not necessarily have a similar take on the “chosen traumas” compared to their parents. The second-generation members, often in contrast to their parents, have no first-hand experience of massacres that are at heart of genocide memorialisation: the second generation lacks the concrete experiences of their homeland’s decisive past events. In

this sense, Marianne Hirsch's work on *postmemory* can help to understand the relationship the second generation has to first generation's "chosen trauma" in diaspora communities. She defines postmemory as "a *structure* of inter- and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience".<sup>cxx</sup> In other words, it is the relationship of those, who have not experienced the traumatic experience themselves, to the events that have been transmitted to them and that have become to constitute memories in their own right. This means that the memory of massacres is not only being transmitted, but also **reconstructed** and **reinterpreted** by subsequent generations in the diasporic space.

Jowan Mahmud takes up the concept of postmemory when discussing genocide memorialisation in her study on Kurdish diaspora communities online. She states that "it shows the production of a history through memories that are mediated through different means and which have proved to be an important subject in retaining the Kurdish identity and also in spreading the knowledge in the country and worldwide".<sup>cxxi</sup> This production of history through memories is perhaps most visible in ways it is imaginative. Hirsch aptly observes that without the lived experience, the connection to the past among the second generation is "imaginative investment, projection, and creation".<sup>cxxii</sup> Our material shows that second-generation members resorted to creative ways of attracting attention in the host societies. For instance, the Kurdish Youth Association of Canada (KYAC) organized a concert to commemorate the atrocities in Ottawa in 2015<sup>cxxiii</sup>. In the UK, Kurdish diaspora artists commemorated by using theatrical performance, while in Sweden diaspora youth distributed apples to people passing by explaining them what this fruit actually symbolizes for the Kurds.<sup>cxxiv</sup>

Based on this study's findings, we suggest that Anfal constitutes a "chosen trauma" for both the first and the second generation of the Iraqi Kurdish diaspora, but it functions to some extent differently in terms of memory. The frame of reference for first-generation's genocide memorialisation in the Kurdish diaspora mainly draws from the lived experiences of

displacement and exile from the homeland and the narratives of victimhood, although gradually transforming towards narratives of resistance and resilience. In this sense, their *raison d'être* is rooted to events prior to the exile and, to what Lacroix and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh call, the *exilic memory*, which is then employed to maintain a cohesive sense of belonging in the diaspora. The second generation's approach to genocide memorialisation draws from, what Lacroix and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh name, *diasporic memory*. It is diasporic in the sense that it is "not structured by a narration of the point of origin per se", but rather "supportive of a sense of distinctiveness towards both host and sending societies".<sup>xxxv</sup> In other words, the second generation seems to be turning "chosen traumas" into a different kind of identity project with more artistic, creative and at times even politically more neutral forms that do not center around the narrative of victimhood and the exiled condition. Instead, the "chosen traumas" have become a postmemory for them.

## **Conclusion**

Examining how diaspora communities engage in genocide memorialisation processes can shed light into how the politics of memories and identity play out in the diasporic context. Certain massacres and genocides can become constructed as the "chosen trauma" and occupy a central role in commemoration practices, as has been shown to be the case for the Armenian and Jewish diasporas. Furthermore, genocide memorialisation can take on different forms and meanings in the homeland and in the diaspora. The lived experience of forced displacement following the existential threat to a community can provide diaspora members a sense of belonging through the sharing of particular trauma and its immediate consequence – the exile. In the process, it can become a component of collective identity narrative. Furthermore, memories of such "chosen traumas" are transmitted to the subsequent generations, but without having first-



hand experiences of homeland's decisive past events, the massacres become to constitute memories in their own right. This means that the memory of massacres is not only being transmitted but that it can also be reconstructed and reinterpreted by subsequent generations in diasporic space differently from their parents.

In this paper, we have argued that an analysis on the spatial and generational dynamics of genocide memorialisation surrounding "chosen traumas" provides a better understanding on how the politics of memories and identity play out in the diasporic context. To this effect, we have discussed genocide memorialisation in the context of the Kurdish diaspora in Europe. We specifically focused on genocide memorialisation of the Anfal Campaign (1986-1989) that were orchestrated by Saddam Hussein's regime against the Kurdish population in Northern Iraq. Commemorations of Anfal have become central to the Kurdish nation-building project in the KRI and a touchstone in Kurdish collective memory. Examining how collective remembering for Anfal has taken place in the diasporic space and what diasporic articulations and representations of Anfal as the "chosen trauma" have been produced in commemoration practices has enabled us to discern how genocide memorialisation processes in the diaspora differ from those in the homeland context.

Our study shows that Anfal as the "chosen trauma" has also become central to the Iraqi Kurdish identity in diaspora, but that the tensions surrounding genocide memorialisation in the KRI are not fully diffused to the diaspora. Instead diasporic commemoration practices usually revolve around recognition and performances of cohesion, unity and acts of solidarity in the face of experienced victimhood and injustice. Furthermore, the exile resulting from these campaigns has lied at the heart of the foundation of the Iraqi Kurdish diaspora in Europe and has become associated to the exiled condition and the narrative of victimhood. With time, however, the central narrative on Anfal is gradually, if not replaced, then complemented by that of resistance and resilience: the victims of the "chosen trauma" have become the survivors of it. Also,

whereas for the first-generation members articulations of Anfal draw from the lived experience of exile, victimhood and oppression, for the second generation the related narrations show that the “chosen trauma” has become a postmemory. In other words, there is a shift from exilic memory to diasporic memory, visible in diaspora members’ articulations on Anfal. This opens the question on the *longue durée* evolution, existence and identity of diasporas, and to what extent they are predicated on memory over territory.

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> Anfal refers to “the spoils of war” and has its origin in one of the suras.

<sup>ii</sup> Choman Hardi, *Gendered Experiences of Genocide: Anfal Survivors in Kurdistan-Iraq* (London: Routledge, 2016); Karin Mlodoch, “Fragmented Memory, Competing Narratives: The Perspective of Women Survivors of the Anfal Operations in Iraqi Kurdistan”, in *Writing the Modern History of Iraq: Historiographical and Political Challenges*, ed. Jordi Tejel, Peter Sluglett, Riccardo Bocco, and Hamit Bozarslan (London: World Scientific Publishing, 2012) 207-208.

<sup>iii</sup> Jordi Tejel, “The Potential of History Textbooks and Curriculum Reform in Iraqi Kurdistan within a Conflict Transformation Frame: Dealing with the Past from a Processual and Dynamic Perspective”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38, no. 14 (2015): 2569-2583. See also: Andrea Fischer-Tahir, “Gendered Memories and Masculinities: Kurdish Peshmerga on the Anfal Campaign in Iraq”, *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies* 8, no. 1 (2012): 92-114. Andrea Fischer-Tahir, “Searching for Sense: The Concept of Genocide as Part of Knowledge Production in Iraqi Kurdistan” in *Writing the Modern History of Iraq: Historiographical and Political Challenges*, ed. Jordi Tejel, Peter Sluglett, Riccardo Bocco, and Hamit Bozarslan (London: World Scientific Publishing, 2012) 227-243.

<sup>iv</sup> Fazil Moradi, “Genocide in Translation: On Memory, Remembrance, and Politics of the Future”, in *Memory and Genocide: On What Remains and the Possibility of Representation*, ed. Fazil Moradi, Ralph Buchenhorst, and Maria Six-Hohenbalken (New York: Routledge, 2017) 57-74.

<sup>v</sup> Citation from William Safran, “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return”, *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1, no. 1 (1991): 83-99. See also Thomas Lacroix and Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, “Refugee and Diaspora Memories: The Politics of Remembering and Forgetting”, *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 24, no. 6 (2013): 684-696; Marie-Aude Baronian, Stephan Besser, and Yolande Jansen, *Diaspora and Memory. Figures of Displacement in Contemporary Literature, Arts and Politics*. (Trodopi: Brill, 2016).

<sup>vi</sup> Anne-Marie Fortier, *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space and Identity*, (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2000); Baronian, Besser, and Jansen, *Diaspora and Memory*.

<sup>vii</sup> Mlodoch, “Fragmented Memory”, 207-208.

<sup>viii</sup> Vamik D. Volkan, “Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large Group Identity”, *Group Analysis* 34, no. 1 (2001): 87.

<sup>ix</sup> Alejandra Serpente, “Diasporic Constellations: The Chilean Exile Diaspora Space as a Multidirectional Landscape of Memory” *Memory Studies* 8, no. 1 (2015); 49-61.

<sup>x</sup> The motivations to return and what significance, for instance, the citizenship in an EU country has for diaspora returnees is discussed in detail by Baser and Toivanen (2018). Bahar Baser and Mari Toivanen, “Diasporic Homecomings to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: Pre- and Post-Return Experiences Shaping Motivations to Re-Return”, *Ethnicities*, in Onlinefirst (2018). See also: Hazel Smith and Paul Stares, ed., *Diasporas in Conflict: Peace-Makers or Peace-Wreckers?* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2007); Jeffrey T. Checkel, ed., *Transnational Dynamics of Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

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- <sup>xi</sup> Paul, R. Anderson, "Grassroots Mobilization and Diaspora Politics: Armenian Interest Groups and the Role of Collective memory," *Nationalism & Ethnic Politics* 6, no. 1 (2000): 24-47.
- <sup>xii</sup> Bahar Baser, and Mari Toivanen, "The Politics of Genocide Recognition: Kurdish Nation-Building and Commemoration in the Post-Saddam Era" *Journal of Genocide Research* 19, no. 3 (2017): 1-23.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Mlodoch, "Fragmented Memory", 219.
- <sup>xiv</sup> The second author's research has been funded by the following institutions: European Research Council (Grant number 284198) between 2012 and 2014, The Swedish Institute in 2015 and Coventry University in 2016. The first author's research has been funded by the Academy of Finland.
- <sup>xv</sup> The distinction between the homeland elite and diaspora is not clear-cut: the homeland elite includes diaspora returnees, and homeland political actors operate in the diaspora as well, for instance through KRG Bureaus of Representation.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Duygu Gül Kaya, "Memory and Citizenship in Diaspora: Remembering the Armenian Genocide in Canada," *Citizenship Studies* 22, no. 4 (2018): 401-418.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Susanne Buckley-Zistel, "Remembering to Forget: Chosen Amnesia as a Strategy for Local Coexistence in Post-Genocide Rwanda," *Africa* 76, no. 2 (2006): 131-150.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Francois Adriaan Wolvaardt, "Genocide, Diasporic Identity and Activism: The Narratives, Identity and Activism of Armenian-Australians and Turkish-Australians Regarding the Recognition of the Deaths of Armenians during the First World War as Genocide", (PhD diss., University of Western Australia, 2013); Khalid Khayati, "From Victim Diaspora to Transborder Citizenship. Diaspora Formation and Transnational Relations among Kurds in France and Sweden", (PhD diss. Linköping University, 2008); Bahar Baser, "La diaspora kurde d'Irak au Royaume-Uni," *Hommes et migrations* 1307 (2014): 140-143; Maja Catic, "Circassians and the Politics of Genocide Recognition," *Europe-Asia Studies* 67, no. 10, (2015): 1685-1708; Paul, R. Anderson, "Grassroots Mobilization and Diaspora Politics: Armenian Interest Groups and the Role of Collective memory," *Nationalism & Ethnic Politics* 6, no. 1 (2000): 24-47.
- <sup>xix</sup> Hariz Halilovich, "Long-Distance Mourning and Synchronised Memories in a Global Context: Commemorating Srebrenica in Diaspora," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 35, no. 3 (2015): 410-422.
- <sup>xx</sup> Camilla Orjuela, Camilla, "Mobilising Diasporas for Justice. Opportunity Structures and the Presenting of a Violent Past," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44, no. 8 (2018): 1357.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Baser and Toivanen, "The Politics of Genocide Recognition". Contrary to the Armenian case, for instance. Gül Kaya, "Memory and Citizenship", 1-18.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Orjuela, "Mobilising Diasporas for Justice", 1357-1373.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Susannah Radstone, "What Place Is This? Transcultural Memory and the Locations of Memory Studies," *Parallax* 17, no. 4 (2011): 117.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Fortier, *Migrant Belongings*.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Lacroix and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, "Refugee and Diaspora Memories".
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Élise Féron, "Transporting and Re-inventing Conflicts: Conflict-Generated Diasporas and Conflict Autonomisation," *Cooperation and Conflict* 52, no. 3 (2017): 360-376.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Giorgio Shani, "The Memorialization of Ghallughara: Trauma, Nation and Diaspora," *Sikh Formations* 6, no. 2 (2010): 177.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Halilovich, "Long-Distance Mourning", 412.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Halilovich, "Long-Distance Mourning", 410-422.
- <sup>xxx</sup> Elisa Sandri, "Remembering Genocide in the Cambodian Diaspora", *A Sussex University Anthropology Blog*, November 7, 2016.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Halilovich, "Long-Distance Mourning".
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Leichter develops an account of collective memory based on Paul Ricoeur's conception of narrative identity. He suggests an approach that mediates between the opposing views that, on the one hand, collective memory is merely an aggregate of individual's memories, and, on the other hand, that it consists merely of collective representations operating distinct of individuals. Instead, he argues that "while memory properly understood belongs to, in each case, to individuals, his or her memory occurs as a dialogue with others to make sense of a

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shared past” (p. 114). David J. Leichter, “Collective Identity and Collective Memory in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur”, *Ricoeur Studies* 3, no. 1 (2012): 114-131.

xxxiii Volkan, “Transgenerational Transmissions”, 87.

xxxiv Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora politics: At home abroad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

xxxv Safran, “Diasporas in Modern Societies”, 83-99.

xxxvi Nicholas Van Hear, and Robin Cohen, “Diasporas and Conflict: Distance, Contiguity and Spheres of Engagement,” *Oxford Development Studies* 45, no. 2 (2017): 171-184. This multilocality of justice-seeking efforts shows that transitional justice efforts in post-conflict societies have become globalized and deterritorialized via migration flows. See Orjuela “Mobilising Diasporas for Justice”, 2.

xxxvii Volkan, “Transgenerational Transmissions”, 88.

xxxviii Sossie Kasbarian, “The Politics of Memory and Commemoration: Armenian Diasporic Reflections on 2015,” *Nationalities Papers* 46, no. 1 (2018): 126.

xxxix Bahar Baser, *Diasporas and Homeland Conflicts: A Comparative Perspective* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2015).

xl Lacroix, and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, “Refugee and Diaspora Memories”, 691.

xli Sandri, “Remembering Genocide”.

xlii This was namely from Turkey to Germany, but also to other host societies.

xliii Amir Hassanpour and Shahrzad Mojab, “Kurdish Diaspora”, in *Encyclopedia of Diasporas. Part I. Immigrant and Refugee Cultures around the World*, ed. Melvin Ember, Carol R. Ember, and Ian Skoggard (Springer, 2005), 214-224.

xliv Estimates of the Kurdish population in Europe variously place the number of Kurdish-speakers between roughly 850,000 and 1.3 million, with the great majority of Kurds being from Turkey and residing in Germany (Institut kurde de Paris).

xlv Hassanpour and Mojab, “Kurdish Diaspora”, 214-224.

xlvi See the official definition by the Kurdistan Regional Government: “The term al-Anfal is the name given to a succession of attacks against the Kurdish population in Iraq during a specific period. These attacks were named “al-Anfal” by Saddam Hussein and his cousin Ali Hassan al-Majid (known as ‘Chemical Ali’), who used this term to describe the carefully planned and orchestrated eight-staged genocidal campaign between February 23rd and September 6th 1988. In Kurdish society, the word Anfal has come to represent the entire genocide over decades.” <https://us.gov.krd/en/issues/anfal-campaign-and-kurdish-genocide/>.

xlvii Hardi, *Gendered Experiences of Genocide*, 13.

xlviii Middle East Watch, *Genocide in Iraq. The Anfal Campaign against the Kurds* (USA: Middle East Watch, 1993). David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurd* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1996) 359.

lix Tejel, “The Potential of History Textbooks”, 2574.

<sup>1</sup> Maria Six-Hohenbalken, “Remembering the Poison Gas Attack on Halabja: Questions of Representations in the Emergence of Memory on Genocide” in *Memory and Genocide: On What Remains and the Possibility of Representation*, ed. Fazil Moradi, Ralph Buchenhorst, and Maria Six-Hohenbalken (New York: Routledge, 2017), 76.

<sup>li</sup> Michael Kelly, *Ghosts of Halabja: Saddam Hussein and the Kurdish Genocide*, (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2008).

<sup>lii</sup> See Martin van Bruinessen’s discussion on genocide commemoration concerning Dersim massacres (1937-1938). Martin van Bruinessen, “Genocide in Kurdistan? The suppression of the Dersim rebellion in Turkey (1937-38) and the chemical war against the Iraqi Kurds (1988)”, in *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions* ed. George J. Andreopoulos (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 141-170.

<sup>liii</sup> See the details of the trial here: “Timeline: Anfal Trial”, BBC News, last modified June 24, 2007, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/5272224.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/5272224.stm)

<sup>liv</sup> Mlodoch, “Fragmented Memory”, 206.

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<sup>lv</sup> Rebecca Jinks, “Thinking Comparatively about Genocide Memorialization”, *Journal of Genocide Research* 16, no. 4 (2014): 423-440.

<sup>lvi</sup> As Brants and Klep put it: “They [history-telling and the formation of collective memory] are dynamic processes grounded in social, cultural and power relations in (international) society at any given time; they are coloured by the moment at which the past is considered, and by how a preferred narrative is promoted.” Chrisje Brants, and Katrien Klep, “Transitional Justice: History-Telling, Collective Memory, and the Victim-Witness,” *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 7, no. 1 (2013): 38.

<sup>lvii</sup> Tejel, “The Potential of History Textbooks”.

<sup>lviii</sup> Tejel, “The Potential of History Textbooks”, 2577.

<sup>lix</sup> Baser and Toivanen (2017) discuss more in detail the genocide recognition politics concerning the Anfal Campaign in relation to secession, nation-building and commemoration in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The authors also briefly discuss the internationalization and instrumentalisation of such politics via Kurdish diaspora in Europe.

<sup>lx</sup> <http://www.uk.gov.krd/articles/print.aspx?anr=36930&lngnr=12>

<sup>lxi</sup> Moradi, “Genocide in Translation”, 59.

<sup>lxii</sup> Moradi, “Genocide in Translation”, 60.

<sup>lxiii</sup> Anniversary dates listed by the Kurdistan Regional Government are the following: 16<sup>th</sup> March: Halabja Day, commemoration of the chemical bombing of the town of Halabja in 1988, 14th April: Commemoration of Anfal genocide against the Kurds in 1988, 10 July: Commemoration of the 40,000 displaced civilians from Kirkuk and the Kirkuk districts in 1962, 31 July: Remembrance of the Barzani disappearance in 1983, 18 August: Remembrance of the mass killing in Surria village in 1969 and 4 September: Remembrance of the mass killing of Fayli Kurds in 1980. For a more extended list of dates concerning other chemical bombardment of towns and villages which took place across Kurdistan in hundreds of communities, in 1984, 1987 and 1988, see the official KRG website: “Anfal Campaign and Kurdish Genocide”, Kurdistan Regional Government – Representation in the United States, 2018, <https://us.gov.krd/en/issues/anfal-campaign-and-kurdish-genocide/>.

<sup>lxiv</sup> Jacques Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 28.

<sup>lxv</sup> Moradi, “Genocide in Translation”, 57.

<sup>lxvi</sup> Ibid. Or as Six-Hohenbalken puts it: “those who dare to raise questions are accused of harming the Kurdish cause”. Six-Hohenbalken, “Remembering the Poison Gas Attack on Halabja”, 83.

<sup>lxvii</sup> Choman Hardi, *Gendered Experiences of Genocide. Anfal Survivors in Kurdistan-Iraq* (London: Routledge, 2016) 7.

<sup>lxviii</sup> Baser and Toivanen, “The Politics of Genocide Recognition”.

<sup>lxix</sup> Moradi, “Genocide in Translation”. 58.

<sup>lxx</sup> Mlodoch, “Fragmented Memory”, 209.

<sup>lxxi</sup> Nicole F. Watts, “The Role of Symbolic Capital in Protest: State–Society Relations and the Destruction of the Halabja Martyrs’ Monument in the Kurdish Region of Iraq,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 32, no. 1 (2012): 14.

<sup>lxxii</sup> As Hardi asserts “it is important to acknowledge the pain of Anfal, and the betrayals and false promises that followed in order to take steps towards healing for the survivors and for the community as a whole”. Hardi *Gendered Experiences of Genocide*, 7.

<sup>lxxiii</sup> Hardi, *Gendered Experiences of Genocide*; Karin Mlodoch, “‘We Want to be Remembered as Strong Women, Not as Shepherds’: Women Anfal Survivors in Kurdistan-Iraq Struggling for Agency and Acknowledgment”, *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies* 8, no. 1 (2012): 63-91.

<sup>lxxiv</sup> Tejel, “The Potential of History Textbooks”, 2577.

<sup>lxxv</sup> Hardi, *Gendered Experiences of Genocide*, 7. However, we should also underline that the KRG keeps making calls to the Iraqi central government for compensations of victims. See also: “KRG Calls on Baghdad to Take ‘Practical Steps’ to Compensate Anfal Victims’ Families”, *Kurdistan24*, April 14, 2018, <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/5e85e2f3-c08e-4fb3-97c1-8aa0535275c4>.

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- <sup>lxxvi</sup> Moradi, “Genocide in Translation”, 57.
- <sup>lxxvii</sup> Jinks, “Thinking Comparatively about Genocide Memorialization”, 434.
- <sup>lxxviii</sup> Mlodoch, “Fragmented Memory”, 205.
- <sup>lxxix</sup> Östen Wahlbeck, *Kurdish Diasporas. A Comparative Study of Kurdish Refugee Communities* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999).
- <sup>lxxx</sup> Baser and Toivanen “The Politics of Genocide Recognition”. In Britain, the KRG office has been working closely with the All-Parliamentary Group (APPG) towards the international recognition of the Kurdish genocide. As a result, the British Parliament took a vote to formally recognise Halabja as genocide in 2013. The Norwegian and Swedish parliaments formally recognised the chemical attack on Halabja as genocide in 2012.
- <sup>lxxxi</sup> Second author’s interview with a Kurdish politician who lived in exile in the Netherlands, Erbil, April 2013.
- <sup>lxxxii</sup> See Dlawer Ala’Aldeen’s own account: “Realpolitik and Disastrous Consequences: 10 Years on from Iraq, 25 from Iraq’s Genocide against the Kurds”, *Opendemocracy*, March 15, 2013, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/dlawer-alaaldeen/realpolitik-and-disastrous-consequences-10-years-on-from-iraq-25-from->
- <sup>lxxxiii</sup> Second author’s interview with Ali Siyasi (pseudonym) in Erbil, April 2013.
- <sup>lxxxiv</sup> See Dlawer Ala’Aldeen, “Realpolitik and Disastrous Consequences”.
- <sup>lxxxv</sup> <http://www.ipb.org/members/the-centre-of-halabja-against-genocide-and-anfalization-of-the-kurds/>
- <sup>lxxxvi</sup> Second author’s interview with Ali Siyasi (pseudonym) in Erbil, April 2013.
- <sup>lxxxvii</sup> Halilovich, “Long-Distance Mourning”, 420.
- <sup>lxxxviii</sup> Other examples of Foreign Office’s press releases on the commemoration of Anfal can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-office-statement-on-anfal-memorial-day> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-office-minister-comments-on-anfal-memorial-day--2>.
- <sup>lxxxix</sup> Baser and Toivanen “The Politics of Genocide Recognition”.
- <sup>xc</sup> Lacroix and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, “Refugee and Diaspora Memories”, 685.
- <sup>xci</sup> Second author’s interview with Ali Siyasi (pseudonym) in Erbil, April 2013.
- <sup>xcii</sup> Halilovich, “Long-Distance Mourning”, 412.
- <sup>xciii</sup> Baser and Toivanen, “The Politics of Genocide Recognition”.
- <sup>xciv</sup> Second Author’s interview with a diaspora member who lives in the USA. The interview, however, was conducted in Erbil, April 2013.
- <sup>xcv</sup> Second Author’s interview with a diaspora member who lives in the USA. The interview, however, was conducted in Erbil, April 2013.
- <sup>xcvi</sup> Lacroix and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, “Refugee and Diaspora Memories”, 692.
- <sup>xcvii</sup> Baser and Toivanen “The Politics of Genocide Recognition”.
- <sup>xcviii</sup> Second Author’s interview with a diaspora member who lives in the USA. The interview, however, was conducted in Erbil, April 2013.
- <sup>xcix</sup> Second Author’s interview with the head of Kurdish Businessmen Association in the Netherlands, Amsterdam, September 2013.
- <sup>c</sup> For instance, Six-Hohenbalken documents the experiences of two Halabja massacre survivors in Vienna who express criticism towards how Halabja and Anfal are remembered in the diaspora. She accounts: “Both are very dissatisfied with the role of representation ascribed to them in the diasporic realm. Various incidents have made them critical and cautious regarding representation in public. When asked to give testimonies at some commemorative events, they questioned expectations, their ascribed roles, and the space given to them- namely to speak as passive victims and not as survivors with agency and a desire to raise critical questions”. Six-Hohenbalken, “Remembering the Poison Gas Attack on Halabja”, 80.
- <sup>ci</sup> For instance, in the case of Rwanda there is a struggle over narratives of different sides that spills over to the transnational space and impacts the relations between Hutus and Tutsis in the diaspora. Orjuela, “Mobilising Diasporas for Justice, 2.

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- <sup>cii</sup> Halilovich, “Long-Distance Mourning”, 420.
- <sup>ciii</sup> Khayati, “From Victim Diaspora to Transborder Citizenship”, 3.
- <sup>civ</sup> Ababs Vali, “The Kurds and Their ‘Others’: Fragmented Identity and Fragmented Politics,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle-East* XVIII no. 2 (1998): 82-95.
- <sup>cv</sup> Elly Harrowell, “From Monuments to Mahallas: Contrasting Memories in the Rrban Landscape of Osh,” *Kyrgyzstan Social & Cultural Geography* 16, (2015): 203–225; Hamzah Muzaini and Brenda S.A. Yeoh, *Contested Memoryscapes. The Politics of Second World War Commemoration in Singapore* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016); Jinks, “Thinking comparatively about genocide memorialization”.
- <sup>cvi</sup> “The Kurdish Genocide – Achieving Justice through EU Recognition”, available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/d-ia/dv/03\\_kurdishgenocidesofanfalandhalabja\\_03\\_kurdishgenocidesofanfalandhalabja\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/d-ia/dv/03_kurdishgenocidesofanfalandhalabja_03_kurdishgenocidesofanfalandhalabja_en.pdf)
- <sup>cvi</sup> “MEPs remember Halabja chemical attack at exhibition in European Parliament”, KRG Cabinet, March 28 2013, available at: <http://cabinet.gov.krd/a/d.aspx?l=12&a=47051>
- <sup>cvi</sup> Khayati, “From Victim Diaspora to Transborder Citizenship”, 3.
- <sup>cix</sup> Anderson, “Grassroots Mobilization and Diaspora Politics, 28.
- <sup>cx</sup> Catic, “Circassians and the Politics of Genocide Recognition,” 1686.
- <sup>cx</sup> First author’s interview with a diaspora Kurd in France, April 24, 2016.
- <sup>cxii</sup> Edith Szanto, “Mourning Halabja on Screen: Or Reading Kurdish Politics through Anfal Films,” *Review of Middle East Studies* 52, no. 1 (2018): 135-146.
- <sup>cxiii</sup> Eda Debedas Dundar, “Adults in Children’s Bodies: Disabling Children in Bahman Ghobadi’s Films”, in *The History of Genocide in Cinema. Atrocities on Screen*, ed. Jonathan Friedman and William Hewitt (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016).
- <sup>cxiv</sup> See for instance Özlem Belcim Galip, *Imagining Kurdistan: Identity, Culture and Society* (London: IB Tauris, 2015). Nerys Williams, *Contemporary Poetry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011); Benjamin Morris, “Choman Hardi interview”, *Textualities*, September 1, 2018, <https://www.poetryarchive.org/interview/choman-hardi-interview>
- <sup>cxv</sup> In 2014, the London Kurdish Film Festival premiered the award-winning documentary, 1001 apples, with a discussion event on the representation of genocide in Kurdish art and cinema.
- <sup>cxvi</sup> First author’s interview with a second-generation diaspora Kurd in Finland.
- <sup>cxvii</sup> Terrence Lyons, “Conflict-Generated Diasporas and Transnational Politics in Ethiopia: Analysis,” *Conflict, Security & Development* 7, no. 4 (2007): 529-549.
- <sup>cxviii</sup> Mari Toivanen, “Political Transnationalism as a Matter of Belonging: Young Kurds in Finland” in *Dislocations of Civic Cultural Borderlines: Methodological Nationalism, Transnational Reality and Cosmopolitan Dreams*, ed. Pirkkoliisa Ahponen, Päivi Harinen, Päivi, and Ville-Samuli Haverinen (London: Springer 2016), 87-106.
- <sup>cxix</sup> Second author’s interview with Akil Marceau, the former director of the Representation of the Regional Government of Iraqi Kurdistan in Paris, November 2013.
- <sup>cx</sup> Marianne Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory”, *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1, (2008): 106.
- <sup>cx</sup> Jowan Mahmud, *Kurdish Diaspora Online. From Imagined Community to Managing Communities* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 99.
- <sup>cxii</sup> Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory”, 107.
- <sup>cxiii</sup> “Kurdish Youth Association of Canada (KYAC) Remembers Halabja and Anfal Genocide against Kurds”, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4JgxtL0SxSs>. See also “Ottawa Kurds remember Halabja”, Rudaw, March 20, 2015, available at: <http://www.rudaw.net/english/world/20032015>.
- <sup>cxiv</sup> Survivor accounts from Halabja revealed that the poisonous gas smelled like sweet apples. See Bahar Baser, “Haunted by the smell of apples. 28 years on, Kurds weep over Halabja massacre,” *Conversation*, March 17, 2016, <http://theconversation.com/haunted-by-the-smell-of-apples-28-years-on-kurds-weep-over-halabja-massacre-55979>

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<sup>cxv</sup> Lacroix and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, “Refugee and Diaspora Memories”, 687-688.