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Changing Foreign Policies and the Kurdish Diaspora

A Qualitative Study of the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden During the NATO
Process



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Abstract

This thesis explores the impact of NATO negotiations between Turkey and Sweden on the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden. To address this, this thesis has focused on the key concepts of identity, sense of belonging, integration and relationship with the state. To collect data, the method of semi-structured interviews has been used, which then was analysed using thematic analysis. This revealed that the negotiations have had significant effects on the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden, including feelings of betrayal and fear. This has led to a reinforced Kurdish identity, and decreased feelings of belonging and safety. It has also affected the political participation of the Kurdish community, as some react by becoming more politically engaged while others actively avoid political participation, censoring themselves. The findings emphasize the need for inclusive and sensitive policymaking and more research on the topic is necessary.

Keywords: Kurds, diaspora, foreign policy, Swedish government, NATO negotiations, identity, belonging, integration

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List of Abbreviations

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
PYD	Democratic Union Party
YPG	People's Defense Units
Säpo	Swedish Security Service
MIT	The National Intelligence Organization

1 Introduction

The Kurdish people are often considered the largest ethnic group without a nation. They are spread across the countries of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria and have, since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, faced decades of assimilation, persecution, discrimination and displacement (Al, 2021). As a consequence, Kurdish diaspora communities have been established worldwide and their struggle and quest for recognition and rights echo loudly in Sweden – a nation traditionally viewed as a humanitarian power, welcoming those fleeing persecution and seeking a new beginning. Kurds in Sweden had the opportunity to not only speak the Kurdish language but also to be active and participate in the transnational politics of their home country, in ways they could not before (Khayati, 2012). This, however, took a drastic change with Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the 24th of February 2022.

The invasion sent shockwaves throughout the world and marked an unprecedented tragedy in the history of Ukraine. This drastic aggression underscored the transformed security landscape in Europe, triggering a reevaluation of Sweden's long-standing stance of neutrality. As a response, Sweden made the historic decision to join NATO (Wahlgren, 2022). But at what cost?

Hours after Sweden publicly stated that they would apply for NATO membership, President Erdoğan released a statement. Turkey will currently not approve of the membership if Sweden does not end all their ties with the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) and the Syrian People's Protection Unit (YPG), both terror-labelled organisations in Turkey (Wahlgren, 2022). This became a topic of debate and possible implications were speculated, with critics cautioning against the risk of creating a dependent relationship with an authoritarian regime known for imprisoning opposition, persecuting its population and discriminating against minorities. Following a month of intense discussions and propaganda efforts - Sweden, Finland and Turkey signed the Trilateral Memorandum, an agreement which outlined 10

demands, focusing on cutting Finland and especially Sweden's ties with the Kurds and alleged involvement in terror activities. The agreement aggressively targets the Kurds, as the Turkish government often use the label 'terrorist' to combat oppositional voices (Sarsour, 2023). For the first time since the Second World War, Sweden extensively changed their foreign policies because of an authoritarian regime (Medin, 2023 pp 50-51).

The relationship between Turkey and the Kurds is influenced by complexity and tension, coming from a history of discrimination, political marginalization, armed conflicts, displacement and human rights abuses. The systematic oppression including arbitrary arrests, torture, and displacement has been used to silence the Kurds, further complicating efforts toward reconciliation and resolution (Al, 2021).

This ongoing challenge for the Kurdish diaspora highlights not only the Kurdish struggles in Sweden but also the broader geopolitical contexts and human rights concerns that influence the experiences of diasporas worldwide. This study advances the debate on what happens with an ethnic minority's sense of belonging when the state they are residing in changes course in foreign relations, in a way that harms or threatens to harm members of the diaspora community. Researchers so far have studied the case of the Palestinian diaspora during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Western countries as well as Muslims in the United States in the aftermath of 9/11 and the war on terrorism, however, the topic of how the Kurdish diaspora is affected is severely under-researched.

1.1 Research question

The following research question aims to understand how the NATO process is perceived and experienced by the Kurds.

- How is the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden affected by the NATO negotiations between Turkey and Sweden in terms of their attitude towards the Swedish government, identity, integration and their sense of belonging?

1.2 Research aim

This thesis seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives of the people at the centre of the NATO negotiations between Turkey and Sweden - the Kurdish diaspora. Another research aim is to discover how the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden makes sense of Sweden's

changing foreign policies and discourse surrounding the Kurds and how they cope with this new narrative. To explore this, in-depth, semi-structured interviews will be employed, using thematic analysis to analyze the data.

1.3 Significance and Purpose

When examining previous research, this study has found a significant gap. While there is extensive research on how minorities affect international relations, little attention has been given to how minorities are affected by foreign policies. This oversight undermines the understanding of critical issues such as human rights, social integration and cultural preservation. By focusing on the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden in the context of NATO negotiations with Turkey, this thesis seeks to address this gap in the literature. An increased understanding of the Kurdish diaspora's experiences will also shed light on the broader geopolitical contexts and human rights concerns of diaspora communities all over the world. It is also valuable for policymakers, NGOs and other political actors that engage with diasporas to know the impact of foreign policy decisions on this group, to make more informed policy decisions. Furthermore, as this study explores how Sweden's foreign policy changes affect the Kurdish diaspora's feelings of belonging, social integration, identity and attitude towards the government, it could enhance the social cohesion within Swedish society.

2 Background

2.1 The Turkish-Kurdish Conflict

As briefly mentioned previously, the relationship between Turkey and the Kurds is influenced by tensions and conflict. The core of the conflict lies in the Kurdish desire to create their own nation. It is a complex issue with deep historical roots but a key point can be traced back to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, which aimed to carve up the Ottoman Empire's territory, included provisions for a Kurdish state. However, this provision was never fully realised, due to various reasons, a major one being the rise of Turkish nationalism under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Laciner and Bal, 2004).

Assimilation, imprisonment and displacement have long characterised the relationship and the Kurds have faced systematic oppression for decades. Zeydanlıoğlu (2013) argue that the

Kurdish identity in itself has been seen as a threat by the Turkish government, and that discriminating policies not only targeted political activists but anyone with a Kurdish identity and background (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2013). The Kurds have had periodic rebellions and in 1978, Abdullah Öcalan formed the PKK (the Kurdistan Workers' Party), a communist organisation with the aim to create an independent Kurdish state. The group were involved in several guerilla operations against the Turkish government and has been defined as a terrorist organisation by several actors such as the European Union, the United States and Turkey. (Bacik and Coskun, 2011) The PKK and Turkey had some improvements in their relations in 2013 when a peace process was initiated. The rise of the Kurdish political party, HDP, in the Turkish elections in 2015 however changed this course of history as the party gained 13% of the votes and thereby stopped the Turkish leading party, AKP, from gaining absolute majority. This resulted in a new brutal war against the PKK, targeting Kurdish villages in the southeast (Al-Ali and Tas, 2018).

2.2 Sweden's concessions to Turkey

On January 23, 2024, Turkey voted in favour of Sweden's NATO membership application, one and a half years after Sweden applied. The following section will explore what concessions Sweden made to get Turkey's approval and what possible consequences this could have on the Kurdish population.

For Turkey to accept Sweden's NATO application, an agreement was signed, the Trilateral Memorandum, on the 28th of June 2022. The agreement encompassed 10 obligations that Finland and Sweden needed to fulfill, for Turkey to accept their NATO application (see 10.1). Many political analysts agreed that Sweden went too far in the agreement, giving Turkey more than necessary (Konflikt, 2023). It has also been criticised for being unclear, raising several questions: How can Sweden legally stop activities from groups that are not terrorists but merely affiliates? How would they combat disinformation? To do that they would need to rewrite the freedom of organisation and speech (Medin, 2023 pp 50-51).

The agreement entails that Sweden opens their weapon export to Turkey. Contrary to what one might believe from reading the agreement, Sweden did not previously have a weapon embargo towards Turkey. However, they withdrew the permits for the export of military equipment in October 2019, after Turkey's military offensive in northern Syria against the

Kurds (Sjögren, 2022). The United States also agreed to sell F-16 planes to Turkey as an implication of the negotiations, despite several leading US congressmen expressing worry about how Turkey will use them against its Kurdish neighbours in Syria (Dahlberg, 2024).

The agreement also states that there will be increased cooperation between the Turkish and Swedish intelligence services, MIT and Säpo. Sweden therefore commits to cooperate with an organ that according to Swedish authorities' reports is committing abuse and torture-like means. There is very little transparency regarding the cooperation between the intelligence services but it is confirmed that Säpo has been actively involved in the negotiations. There has also been a change of behaviour in Säpo since the negotiations as several Kurdish organisations have expressed that they have been feeling targeted during the NATO process, among them NCDK, Sweden's largest Kurdish organization Säpo has also been criticised for deporting Kurds for being a "threat to the national security" since the negotiations, without explaining the basis for the claim. This has been seen as a way to please Erdogan, as Turkey, shortly after Sweden applied for membership in NATO, published a list of extraditions of 33 people with alleged terrorist connections in Sweden and Finland. The people on the list were of various backgrounds, often being regime critics, activists and journalists, many of them Kurds (Konflikt, 2023).

Sweden also introduced new terrorist legislation during the NATO process, despite criticism from the Council of Law. The law forbids promoting, strengthening or supporting terrorist organisations. This includes, for example, organizing activities, taking care of children or finance participation in such an organization. Sweden's Minister of Law states that the law has been developed over several years, however, the actualisation today is primarily relevant in connection to the NATO process (Haglund, 2023).

The agreement specifically targeted Sweden's relationship with PYD/YPG and the Gulen Movement, as Sweden promised not to support the organisations and on the 5th of November 2022, the Swedish government went even further, as they announced that Sweden distanced itself from PYD/YPG, a significant shift from the country's stance before the NATO application. Sweden has previously praised the YPG/PYD, in their fight that ultimately led to the end of the Islamic State, showcasing the changing discourse surrounding Kurdish groups (Radlovacki, 2022; Linde 2020).

3 Previous research

3.1 The Kurdish diaspora in Sweden

Sweden has, as mentioned, been considered a “centre of gravity” for the Kurds. Khayati (2012) discusses why Kurds have gravitated towards Sweden and how the Kurdish diaspora has been integrated into Sweden. He finds that the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden is well integrated, while still holding on to their Kurdish identity. The Kurdish diaspora in Sweden has a good relationship with the government and the political engagement of the Kurds in Sweden is widespread, both regarding transnational activities focusing on their homeland and domestic Swedish politics. Sweden’s open political climate in combination with the social and political diversity of the Kurdish community seems to be a major reason why many Kurds have come to Sweden and have successfully integrated. There is a sense of thankfulness towards Sweden among the Kurdish diaspora, as they have significantly more rights in Sweden than in their home countries (Khayati, 2012)

Eliassi (2016) studied the correlation between Kurdish statelessness and the feeling of belonging in Swedish society through semi-structured interviews. He found that while the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden is well integrated in terms of political belonging, a majority does not feel like an equal part of Swedish society. The participants described that Swedishness is not only achieved through citizenship but also through inherited, ethnic factors hindering Kurds from truly feeling included (Eliassi, 2016). Another study by Eliassi (2013 pp.69-98) showed that the Kurdish diaspora’s identity is largely based on collective experiences, which in the Kurdish case is associated with oppression and suffering. He explains how individuals of the Kurdish diaspora often connect their suffering with the Kurdish collective. First-hand oppression therefore reinforces the Kurdish identity. Eliassi also mentions that Kurds praise Sweden for granting Kurds rights that they do not have in their home regions. The Kurdish diaspora has a strong desire to maintain their Kurdish identity while having their Swedish identity as well (Eliassi, 2013; pp. 69-98).

3.2 The Impact of Host Country Foreign Affairs on Diaspora Communities

The following section will explore previous research about how other diaspora communities are affected by the host country's actions in foreign affairs that directly affect them and their country of origin and see if we can find a pattern or an expectation for what we will find about the Kurdish diaspora, and how they are affected.

3.2.1 Palestinian diaspora

The Palestinian and Kurdish diaspora share some similarities as both face significant challenges due to displacement and statelessness. A qualitative study by Cox and Connell (2003) explores the experiences of Palestinians living in Sydney, focusing on how displacement and statelessness have shaped their national identity and how they maintain their cultural identity while integrating into a new society. The study found that Palestinians in Sydney often base their cultural identity on shared experiences and narratives. It is characterised by a shared sense of injustice and the loss of homeland. This has triggered a need to belong somewhere. Since Australia has provided this opportunity, most of the participants in the study expressed significant feelings of loyalty towards Australia, while maintaining a high level of political engagement and participation surrounding the Palestinian question (Cox and Connell, 2003).

Another study by Julianne Weinzimmer (2008) explored how the perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict affected the Palestinian-American identity in the US through in-depth interviews. The study discovered that the perceptions of the conflict significantly influenced the participant's identity and attitude towards America. Many of the participants expressed hurt and frustration over their treatment in comparison to Israeli Jews. For instance, while Israeli Jews could freely visit Israel without hindrance, Palestinians often faced obstacles when travelling to their families and homes in the occupied territories. This triggered many Palestinians to engage politically to shape the politics of the US. The study also highlights how generational differences shape the participants' identity and feelings towards the US. First-generation immigrants have a stronger connection to the conflict than second-generation due to their direct experiences and ongoing connections with their homeland (Weinzimmer, 2007).

3.2.1 Muslims in the United States

Muslims in the United States experienced a significant shift after the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, and the war on terror campaign that came after. This is concluded by a mixed-method study by Farida Jalalzai (2010). A significant amount of the Muslim-American population has experienced more discrimination and was shown to be anxious after the terror attack, both on a personal and group level. In response to discrimination, rather than retreating, the Muslim-American community have become more politically engaged, aiming to improve their community's standing and treatment in the US, especially the younger population (Jalazi, 2010). The war on terror also affected their identity and sense of belonging and Chouhoud (2022 pp. 29-46) found that despite challenges many Muslims strive to sustain their identity both as Americans and as Muslims. In contrast to the Palestinian and the Kurdish diaspora, Muslims in the United States have similar identities among first and second-generation immigrants (Chouhoud, 2022 pp. 29-46).

4. Conceptual Framework and Theoretical Expectations

This section will present relevant concepts for understanding the relationship between the Kurds and the Swedish state and society. This will provide a foundation to assess how this relationship was influenced by the recent Swedish-Turkish negotiations. The concepts have been chosen based on their relevance to the study, as they both determine how the participants have been affected and because the concepts themselves can change with Sweden's foreign policy shift. Based on these concepts and the previous research, one can derive several theoretical expectations which also will be formulated.

4.1 Identity

Claire Mitchell (2006) argues that identity means how humans identify themselves in relation to others. It is based on different attributes such as gender, age and ethnicity and creates different stereotypes of the other group through generalisation. She means that it is in relation to these stereotypes that one understands their own identity. Prins et al., (2013) agree with this and add that the term therefore is based on social construction and determined by the interaction with others (Prins et al., 2013).

Hall (1994) explores how identity is formed within diasporic communities and presents two perspectives on cultural identity. The first perspective presents diaspora identities as collective and rooted in shared historical experiences and cultural codes. The second perspective recognises the ongoing evolution and fragmentation of identities, emphasising that cultural identity is a process rather than a fixed state, formed and transformed by history, culture, and power dynamics (Hall, 1994). Adamson and Demetriou (2007) also agree that diasporic national identity differs from the traditional international relations theory. They mean that the diasporas form their diasporic identity through transnational practices and communication (Adamson and Demetriou, 2007)

Expectation 1: The Kurdish diaspora's identity will be affected, possibly reinforcing the Kurdish and adverse to the Swedish identity. This connection may be stronger for first-generation immigrants from Turkey.

Cox and Connell's (2003) and Eliassi's (2013 pp. 69-98) studies confirm Hall's (1997) theory, as the Palestinian and the Kurdish diaspora often base their ethnic identity on shared experiences and narratives. The Kurdish identity, as the Palestinian and Muslim, is dual and the diasporas often identify both with their ethnic roots and the host country. The NATO negotiations could reinforce the Kurdish self-image of being victims, constantly betrayed by other states, while opposing the Kurdish image of Sweden as a protector of their rights (Eliassi, 2013 pp. 69-98). There could be a difference between first and second-generation immigrants in the study, as the identity among the first-generation diasporas generally is more connected to the collective suffering and narratives (Eliassi, 2013 pp.69-98; Weinzimmer, 2008). There could also be a difference between participants coming from Turkey and those coming from other parts, as they have more experience with Turkish oppression, therefore reinforcing the feelings of betrayal. While the Muslim diaspora did not experience a significant identity difference between generations, they do not identify with suffering and oppression to the same extent as Palestinians and Kurds, but rather focused on their religiosity (Chouhoud, 2022 pp. 29-46).

4.2 Belonging

Belonging is a fundamental human need and impacts mental and emotional well-being. An individual's sense of belonging refers to the feeling of home, being safe and emotionally

attached (Yuval-Davis, 2006; 197). In this context, home is symbolic and a space of acceptance, safety and comfort (Antonsich, 2010; 646). It refers to feelings of belonging to a specific place or group, being treated as an equal and feeling valued and respected within the context (Mahar et al., 2013; 1029). The term is therefore relevant for this thesis, as the feelings of belonging might change with these policy changes, as it is directly related to being treated as equals and feeling safe.

Expectation 2: The Kurdish diaspora's sense of belonging in Sweden will be negatively affected.

Studies on the Palestinian diaspora (Cox and Connell, 2003) and the impact of 9/11 on Muslims in the US (Jalalzai, 2010) indicate that foreign policy decisions can lead to feelings of exclusion and decreased belonging. Research on feelings of belonging in the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden shows that Kurds often feel excluded in Swedish society because of ethnic differences such as skin and hair colour (Eliassi, 2016). The NATO negotiations might reinforce the feelings of not belonging, as it might lead to feelings of betrayal for the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden, as Sweden compromises their security, which itself hampers feelings of belonging. It could also further reinforce feelings of exclusion, leading to feelings of being second-class citizens.

4.3 Integration

According to Ahokas (2010), integration denotes the immigrant's adaption to the majority society through learning the language or working. He emphasises integration as a two-way process, with mutual respect from both sides and means that it is important for host societies to welcome the immigrant with opportunities and tools to learn basic values, language and traditions, while the immigrant needs to be willing to learn and adapt (Ahokas 2010). Weiner (1965) defines political integration as the cohesion of several elements, including addressing gaps between the governing elite and the masses, emphasising the need for mutual influence and consent, consensus of societal values and creating a national identity in ethnically diverse societies. Weiner also means that it is important for individuals to be able to organise for common purposes (Weiner, 1965).

Expectation 3: The integration of the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden will be exacerbated and there will be an increase in political engagement and activism among the Kurdish diaspora.

If Kurds feel as though Sweden's foreign policy changes undermine their rights or are discriminatory it may exacerbate their integration, as they are not treated with respect. The Kurdish Diaspora have traditionally been a well-integrated group with a positive outlook on Swedish society (Khayati, 2012; Eliassi, 2013 pp. 69-98) and the NATO negotiations could risk feelings of alienation and decreased participation in Swedish societal and political life, undermining the social cohesion. Khayati (2012) mean that perhaps the biggest reason for the successful integration of the Kurds has been Sweden's open political climate and their opportunity for transnational activities, which deteriorates with Sweden's agreement with Turkey. Both the Muslim and the Palestinian diaspora have been more politically engaged because of the foreign policies of their host country and have increasingly criticised the state (Weinzimmer 2008; Jalazi 2010). The already active Kurdish diaspora might therefore become even more engaged, but with a shifted, more critical focus towards the Swedish state.

4.5 Relationship with the state

According to Cohen (1997 pp. 117-141), the diaspora relationship with the state is often complex, as they have to navigate between loyalty towards the host state and their ethnic solidarity. This could be a source of tension if the host country views the dual identities of the diaspora as a threat (Cohen 1997 pp 117-141). Swianiewich (2001, pp. 15-41) argues that the citizen's relationship with the state is dependent on factors such as transparency, quality, opportunities for participation and economy. He also argues that efforts to address social issues and inclusivity affect the perception of the state positively (Pawel Swianiewicz, 2001, pp.15-41).

Expectation 4: The relationship between the Kurdish diaspora and the Swedish state will become adversarial.

The Kurdish diaspora's traditionally good relationship with Sweden is largely because they have been allowed to have dual identities (Khayati, 2012). As the NATO negotiations affect this, the relationship will likely become adversarial. Furthermore, the Kurdish population will likely feel as though the negotiations target their opportunity for participation through for

example the increasing cooperation with MIT. A less inclusive society and decreased efforts to address social issues further increase the likelihood that the Kurdish diaspora's relationship with the Swedish state will be adversarial.

5 Methodology

5.1 Research Design

This is an exploratory qualitative case study of the Kurdish diaspora which seeks to gain a holistic understanding of the research question. The accounts from the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden are central to this thesis and the qualitative approach allows for an in-depth understanding of personal experiences, which a quantitative method would lack. As argued by Robson & McCartan (2016 pp. 151), qualitative research is suited for exploring complex and social phenomena where depth and context are crucial (Robson & McCartan, 2016 pp. 151).

5.2 Selection

This thesis will include individuals from various backgrounds and age groups, to enhance the generalizability of findings. I have asked my Kurdish network of contacts to help me find participants, who then were selected using purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of the diaspora, including both first and second-generation immigrants of various age groups and genders. This sampling method is justified as it is a small-scale of interviews without the intention to make generalisations (Robson & McCartan, 2016 pp. 279). All of the participants identify as Kurds, as the Kurdish identity is essential to understand the challenges for this group relating to the NATO negotiations. Another delimitation is that the participants need to speak Swedish or English, as that will be the primary language for data collection, to avoid language barriers. Because of the many ethical aspects and challenges of interviewing children, participants in this study must be 18 years or older.

5.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

As previously mentioned, semi-structured interviews were the primary method for data collection. This provided flexibility and depth as it allowed for unexpected elements to be unveiled during the interviews while also providing structure by following an interview guide. This structured yet flexible approach seemed the most appropriate for the inductive nature of the research question, as this allows the revelation of data that the respondents might wish to share but of which the researcher was previously unaware. While focus group interviews can be effective when researching different opinions and norms, individuals may be hesitant to share personal reflections and stories among others (Robson & McCartan, 2016 pp. 290). Furthermore, the participants' knowledge surrounding the NATO negotiations is varied, which could risk exclusion or hesitation to speak their minds in a group setting.

When conducting the interview guide, I followed (Hermanowicz, 2012 pp. 479–499) recommendations regarding following a logical order. The interviews involved 17 baseline questions based on four different themes (See 10.2) and were formed by the conceptual framework to explore the participant's feelings of identity, belonging, integration and relationship to the Swedish state (see 4). I started the interviews by asking more general questions, to give useful context for the rest of the interview and then moved on to the core questions regarding the NATO negotiations and their personal experiences. I tried to end the interviews on a good note and also asked if there was anything they would like to add. Before the interviews, I conducted a test interview, to perfect the questions (Hermanowicz, 2012 pp 479–499).

Before conducting the interviews, I introduced myself to the participants and provided an overview of my research. I aimed to be as transparent as possible and presented the study's objectives, outlining how the information gathered during the interviews would be used for the thesis (see Appendix 2) I also sent out the questions for the interview guide to all of the participants prior to the interviews, as this gave the participants time to reflect on the questions beforehand allowing them to give more nuanced answers (Jacob, S. A., & Furgerson, 2012 pp 1-10). I also informed the interviewees that they had the right to end the interview at any time, not answer or withdraw their response or participation. Additionally, I assured the participants of the confidentiality and ethical considerations throughout the interview process and collection of data. All of the interviews were in person because of the

intimate nature of the questions. Consent from the interviewees to participate and be recorded was obtained before the interviews (see 10.3). The participants' well-being is crucial for the quality of the answers and they were therefore asked where they felt the most comfortable meeting.

5.4 Data analysis

The data collected from the semi-structured interviews was analysed using Thematic Analysis. This method is used to identify themes and patterns in qualitative data and is suitable for data containing personal reflections, experiences and perceptions, making it suitable for this exploratory study (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 82). The data process initiated with transcribing the interviews, to then employ an inductively derived coding scheme, with themes emerging directly from data instead of data being derived from predetermined categorisation, allowing for a holistic understanding of the data, as it is not restricted to predetermined themes. An iterative review process was also implemented to minimize the risk of overlooking themes (Kiger and Varpio, 2020). After coding all the interviews, I started grouping the codes into suitable themes. These themes then became the baseline of my iterative review process, as it took a deductive approach, trying to gather more codes relevant to the themes, and regrouping the themes into larger patterns. I then found an overarching theme, which permeates all the data.

5.5 Limitations

The generalisability of this study is limited as it is a single case study with a diverse and small sample of only 8 participants. Kurds in Sweden are not a homogeneous group and there are several layers to their identity. However, I have found common themes in their stories. While the findings of this thesis shed light on the Kurdish diaspora's experience of the Swedish shift in foreign policy, it does not claim to capture the full spectrum of challenges that minorities face in a changing political climate in their host countries. Nonetheless, it adds valuable insights to this underexplored area of research and may still offer a detailed account of context-specific conditions (Robson & McCartan, 2018, 20).

The events of this study are recent and there are few research reports regarding the subject. I have therefore based a lot of my background on recognised newspapers, which may be

biased, however, I have critically evaluated all of my sources and compared all of the information with different sources, to make sure that they are correct.

Another limitation of this study is the language barrier, as most of the participants are from the Kurdish region, therefore Swedish is not their first language. This may increase the risk of misinterpretations and undeveloped answers (Squires, 2009 pp. 277-287). However, the participants for this study have lived in Sweden for several years and are proficient in Swedish. Further measures have also been taken to ensure that the participants feel comfortable and heard (see 5.6).

5.6 Ethical Concerns

Qualitative research requires care and sensitivity throughout the research process, especially when conducting interviews informed consent is crucial for an ethical study and as mentioned previously, all participants were informed about the purpose of the interview and that they could withdraw their participation at any time (Bryman, 2012, 138). It is an important ethical aspect when conducting qualitative interviews that the participants are comfortable and I asked all of the participants where they were the most comfortable meeting. I also informed all of the participants that they would remain anonymous and the interviews would not be traceable or identifiable. Several of the participants expressed concerns regarding the anonymity of their participation, as critical remarks on Turkey could have consequences if they decide to go back. Furthermore, some participants can be considered vulnerable, coming to Sweden as political refugees from Turkey, making the confidentiality of the interviews especially important.

5.7 Ethics Writing and Analysis

Data analysis is crucial for the in-depth and personal nature of qualitative research. According to constructivist epistemology, knowledge is subjective and constructed by personal experiences, making it impossible for humans to obtain objective truth. Pawluch and Woolgar (1985 pp. 160) therefore posit that a researcher should admit their own bias so that the reader has information to critically evaluate the research (Woolgar, 1985 pp. 160). This thesis could be influenced by background and personal attachment to indigenous rights however, I strive to preserve my academic integrity and remain objective in my analysis and I

have tried to cite my participants as accurately as possible without risking revealing their identity.

5.8 Positionality

My position as a Swedish-Kurdish woman born in Stockholm significantly shapes the interview dynamics and reflects the results from the interviews. The shared Kurdish heritage could establish a sense of understanding and trust among the participants, which could generate more open and meaningful exchanges during the interviews, however, there is also a risk that it could have the opposite effect. Norms and expectations within the shared background might discourage the participant from discussing sensitive topics or opinions, if there were concerns about what the researcher might think or feel about the subject (Merriam et al., 2010). Furthermore, the strong nationalist sentiments within the Kurdish community are important to acknowledge in this study, as there may be a fear among the participants of not aligning with the perceived collective stance on Sweden's negotiations with Turkey, which could potentially hinder open discussions and lead to self-censoring (Karim, 2020). To create a safe environment during the interviews, I clearly stated that the point of the interview was to understand Kurdish perspectives and feelings and that there are no right or wrong answers.

As some of my participants can be considered a vulnerable group, I must reflect on my privileged position and how the participants might perceive me. Most of the participants in this study come from oppressive regimes and have experienced traumatic events. However, they may not define themselves as vulnerable or victims and it is important for me as a researcher not to victimize them or deprive them of their agency (Alexander, Pillay and Smith, 2018). While my background aligns with the participants of the study in many regards, I recognise my limitations in understanding the experiences of those who have lived in conflict zones and immigrated to Sweden.

6 Analysis

6.1 Identity Conflict

Almost all the participants portray a complex picture of their identity, feeling both Kurdish and Swedish to different degrees. As many Kurds identify with Swedish values and culture, it can be difficult to navigate between feelings of loyalty and betrayal. The participants describe how they have defended Sweden to their Kurdish friends, saying that Sweden, unlike other states, has a high moral high ground. Many mean that Sweden has given them a safe space, a home where they could keep their Kurdish identity. This does not go away with the NATO negotiations, but it makes the image of Sweden more complex and contradictory. One participant described Sweden as a “loving mother” caring for the Kurdish diaspora and fighting for their rights. The change of attitudes made them feel not only betrayed but shocked and afraid, feelings which other participants also expressed.

Some of the participants have experienced severe traumatic experiences and oppression in Turkey, before coming to Sweden and many had to flee because of their or their family member’s perceived political activity. Some were imprisoned or had parents who were imprisoned, and some experienced displacement or persecution.

"My father was here, so we came to join my father, who couldn't stay in the country. It was after the military coup. He was arrested along with others at one point, at that time, a lot of people were arrested for their opinions. Sometimes, it wasn't even necessary to be politically active. By that time, I don't think people even dared to. But anyway, it was for political reasons that he had to leave the country after the military coup in the '80s. He was arrested, questioned, and treated badly. He was also beaten. They did what they were allowed to do. They beat them and forced them to do degrading things. Like where they had to crawl on the ground or something like that. It's a fairly typical Turkish treatment of those perceived as opposition."

The NATO negotiations brought up the memory of this mistreatment by Turkey and participants described feelings of insignificance as the Swedish government bows to Turkey,

saying it is a democracy. The trauma that Turkey has exposed them to reflects a part of their identity as well, creating a conflict between the participants' Swedish and Kurdish identities.

The NATO negotiations have reinforced the Kurdish identity as being victims, and many participants used historical explanations to make sense of Sweden's actions. The History of the Kurds is full of betrayal from other states and one frequent example that comes up is when the United States left the Kurds after being allies during the fight against ISIS, leaving them for Turkey to attack. Another example is when Olof Palme, the former Swedish prime minister was killed, leading to accusations against the Kurds for his murder. Many of the participants who lived in Sweden at the time described feeling excluded and demonised during this time.

"There have been times when I have felt vulnerable as a Kurd in Sweden, for example, when Palme was murdered. Because of my background and ethnic affiliation, I dared not say that I am Kurdish, even though I am proud to be Kurd. (...) Everyone viewed Kurds as terrorists who killed Palme."

Several participants also blamed themselves, the Kurdish diaspora, for being too trusting in other states. Every state acts in their interests and it is naive to believe that a state will help them if it does not benefit them.

Another theme throughout the interviews is that participants believe it would be good for Sweden to show more support towards the Kurdish diaspora, as they are a well-integrated group with genuine love and will to contribute to Swedish society, showcasing the identity of the Kurdish people as well integrated citizens, deserving of Sweden's protection.

Some participants expressed that Sweden's desperate handling of the negotiations is a sign that the security threat towards Sweden is much greater than we know. Otherwise, there is no justification for Sweden's way of acting. It does not make sense, as it goes against the view of Sweden as a humanitarian actor, a protector of the Kurds.

Some of the participants expressed feelings of hope, that Sweden would go back to its past identity as protector and caregiver it once was for the Kurds. They mean that now when Turkey has accepted Sweden's NATO application, things might go back to the way it was.

One participant even expressed that this might have some positive outcome in the future, that Sweden will apologise to the Kurds and that the Kurdish language eventually can become a minority language in Sweden.

6.2 Feelings of Belonging

Many feel as though they belong in Sweden, and that their core values and culture correlate with the Swedish, while some participants do not feel like they fully belong anywhere.

"I'm not entirely Swedish, but I'm not entirely Kurdish or Turkish either. I'm a bit of each. When I'm here in Sweden, I'm definitely not Swedish in others' eyes. Then I might be a Kurd or a Turk or an immigrant, definitely not Swedish. But when I go to Turkey, then I'm absolutely not a Turk or a Kurd. Then I am a Swede who has come from Europe."

The participants portray a high level of solidarity within the Kurdish diaspora, even more so during the negotiations, and several have found an increased sense of belonging with each other during this time. This can also be seen through the number of individuals that were willing to participate in my interview, out of 15 people asked, all agreed to participate. Many of the participants expressed worry for other Kurds in Sweden, but also how Kurds in the Kurdish regions could be affected.

"Because of the negotiations, the United States has now promised to sell F-16 planes to Turkey. Aircraft that will now kill Kurds in Syria and Iraq. Kurds always pay for the political games of other states."

A few of the participants also expressed deep worry and sadness as they directly know or are aware of who the individuals on Turkey's list of extraditions are.

"Many of those on the extradition list are people I've known for a long time. Some were close personal friends and they have been feeling really sad. I've tried to give them a lot of psychological support as well. I've been like a psychologist here, unfortunately. Because there are so many who are feeling sad."

Another prominent fear that came up during the interviews was the increased cooperation between MIT and Säpo, which many believe will continue for many years. Many believe that it will be harder for Kurds to engage in transnational politics while Sweden feels indebted to Turkey, which will probably be for a couple of years. This increases feelings of exclusion, as they feel that the rest of Swedish society freely can practice their political rights.

Another common feeling among the participants is that the Swedish government or people do not understand the Kurdish struggle or perspective. They explain that they feel a sense of distrust when they share their experience of the Turkish government, both in political forums or personal cases of torture or imprisonment. The Turkish government is not viewed as a dictatorship in Sweden, and therefore their experiences are constantly questioned.

"I must relate to others' image of Turkey and always be aware that others may see Turkey from a completely different perspective and have completely different experiences I don't mind that. Everyone has their perspective. Everyone has their experience. But my experience should not be denied. Because it exists. It is belittled everywhere. And everywhere I must explain it. I am forced to say that what I am telling is true. (...) It could be when I explain that my father was imprisoned even though he had done nothing. Then I am questioned, people think I am lying. The suffering of the Kurds is not recognized at all. A Palestinian does not need to explain their vulnerability. Almost everyone can understand that. Kurds from Iran do not need to explain that Iran is actually an oppressive regime. Everyone agrees and everyone thinks it is a vile regime. But it is not so when it is Turkey. There is no difference between Turkey and Iran in relation to the Kurds. There is no difference. As a Kurd, you are subjected to the same type of oppression. In some parts, the oppression from Turkey is much worse than it is from Iran."

Even if the participants feel betrayed by the Swedish government, and as if their experiences of Turkey are questioned, they feel a sense of solidarity from the Swedish people. In contrast to when Palme was murdered, they feel sympathy from others in their surrounding. A feeling that they are rejected by the Swedish government, not the Swedish people.

6.3 Integration and participation in public life

Several participants expressed fear that Sweden hampers the integration of the Kurdish diaspora. They no longer feel welcome in Sweden, not specifically because of their Kurdish heritage, but because they were immigrants. The NATO process reinforced these feelings, as they are being treated differently than other groups of society.

Sweden's actions also affected their political participation in different ways. The NATO negotiations seem to have triggered a heightened sense of self-censorship among the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden. Several of the participants reported that they, or others they knew, increasingly avoided engaging in Kurdish activities. This included not participating in Kurdish demonstrations in Sweden, abstaining from posting critical comments about Turkey on social media platforms, or even avoiding public celebrations of the Kurdish New Year. Many participants mentioned the increased cooperation between the Turkish and Swedish intelligence services MIT and Säpo as a reason why. Furthermore, many of the participants expressed concerns about their anonymity in this study and one participant explained how openly criticising the Turkish government could have consequences for her.

Other participants had the opposite reaction towards the negotiations and became even more politically active as a result. This could be through contacting journalists and being active in Kurdish organizations. One participant who works as a journalist, engaged through writing texts and podcasts regarding the negotiations, to raise awareness of how the Kurdish diaspora is affected. He explained that Sweden's handling of the negotiations triggered him to become more active, while some of his friends completely shut down because of the shock.

"I don't know, I work extra hard when things are really tough. I somehow become more energetic. Whereas some people react in a completely different way. They become almost paralyzed. I have friends who couldn't work, for example, for a period. Because of this strong shock."

A consistent theme throughout the interviews was the extensive knowledge all of the participants had regarding the NATO negotiations. The participants actively followed the news regarding it and were aware of several concessions that Sweden made to Turkey and possible consequences for the Kurdish diaspora.

6.4 Relationship with the state

A recurring theme throughout the interviews was changing attitudes towards the government, and many participants described new feelings of betrayal. The interviews also revealed a rising distrust in the Swedish government and that the way they handled the negotiations can be seen as a reflection of incompetence and weak analysis. Many believe that instead of letting go of moral principles to please Erdogan, Sweden should have let NATO and the United States handle the negotiations. Instead, they feel as if Sweden went unnecessarily far to get Erdogan's approval, throwing the Kurds under the bus. One participant described how the government let Sweden walk into Turkey's trap and that this has damaged Sweden's image as a humanitarian actor.

Swedish politicians were also criticised for accepting Turkey's narrative of the Kurds as terrorists. A narrative that made so many Kurds come to Sweden to escape.

"Suddenly it felt as if Swedish politicians, had bought the Turkish definition of terrorism. If you're not called a terrorist in Turkey, then you're not on the right side, I would say. And suddenly, we could see the same rhetoric in Sweden. I believe it was Sweden's NATO ambassador, Oscar Stenström, who said on the radio that he was talking about a certain Kurdish organization. He said, 'Säpo believes that this organization does not pose a security threat to Sweden, but it does to Turkey.' And when I listened to that, I thought, but Turkey thinks my language is dangerous for Turkey, that my history is dangerous for Turkey, that my songs are dangerous for Turkey. So how far are these people going to go? And this person was, as I said, the leading figure, the Swedish diplomat conducting talks with Turkey. And every time I read, and listened to his arguments, I could notice a translation of Turkish arguments. A few years ago, we would have never heard anything like that."

Not only were participants upset over Sweden's increasing acceptance of authoritarian regimes, but meant that the negotiations made Sweden go in that direction as well, specifically Sweden's new terrorist law comes up as an example.

"We even have a new anti-terrorism legislation because of the negotiations. This was terrible for the rule of law in Sweden. Not for Turkey. We know that it is an autocracy, in Turkey. But

for Sweden, it was a terrible beginning. In terms of limitations on democracy, freedom of speech."

Many accuse the Swedish government to conditionally accept the Kurds when it is suitable for them. A frequent example is when the Kurdish YPG defeated ISIS, when Sweden praised the Kurds for their effort, in contrast to the discourse surrounding the Kurds during the NATO negotiation, as participants describe feelings of being demonised.

"Kurds used to be described as heroes for they fought against Daesh, against ISIS. They were like NATO's reserve army there. Suddenly, they all became terrorists and now Sweden stands against PYD and YPG. Kurds are demonized in Sweden. Sometimes you hear phrases like 'the Kurdish baggage' on TV. When discussing the NATO negotiations, they say that it is because of the 'Kurdish baggage,' that Turkey delayed this. So it's a bit sad that we have become baggage."

Many believe Sweden's actions in the NATO negotiations are part of a bigger issue, where the Swedish government treats its citizens differently based on their heritage and moral principles become less important. Many were influenced by a pessimistic worldview and expressed feelings of the world becoming more inhumane and driven by self-interests rather than human rights. One participant even speculated that the government is purposely portraying Sweden as less humanitarian and welcoming, as they want to discourage refugees from seeking asylum in Sweden.

Despite the participants feelings of betrayal, shame and fear towards the Swedish government, a significant theme throughout the interviews were gratitude and love for Sweden. Many mean that Sweden has given them a safe space, a home where they could keep their Kurdish identity. They priced Sweden for their humanitarian efforts, their democracy and advocacy for human rights.

6.5 Individual factors

A few individual factors have been identified concerning how they have been affected by the NATO negotiations and their attitude towards the Swedish government. Two of the participants were not born in Turkey and have not had first-hand experiences with oppression

from the Turkish government. This is also reflected in their perspectives, as these participants seem to have an emotional distance regarding the negotiations compared to those born in Turkey. All of the participants expressed a sense of gratitude and loyalty towards Sweden except one participant, who was the only one born in Sweden.

7 Discussion

The following discussion will be structured by the Conceptual Framework (see 4), as they are crucial to understanding the research question and will be a tool for understanding the Kurdish diaspora's experiences.

7.1 Identity

The NATO negotiations have evidently made the participants reevaluate both their Kurdish and Swedish identities. The view of Sweden as a humanitarian actor, protector of human rights and the Kurdish people has been challenged, as Sweden had the opposite role during the negotiations. The deeply rooted feelings of loyalty towards Sweden have led to a sense of betrayal and confusion. To manage these feelings and identity confusion, the participants have tried to make sense of this betrayal, to understand why this has happened to them. This has been through various explanations, one of them being the reinforcement of the Kurdish people as a stateless victim, without trusted allies or friends. They blame themselves for being too trusting and naive, not learning from historical experiences, as they once again are being betrayed. Another explanation is that there is a threat that is not known to the public, which has triggered the drastic change of action for Sweden, otherwise Sweden, the protector and mother of the Kurds, would not betray them. Both of the participants who were not born in Turkey were however not as affected, possibly because they have not experienced the suffering which many Kurds have made into their collective ethnic identity.

This confirms Expectation 1 (see 4.1), indicating that diasporas who experience a lot of suffering connect that to their ethnic identity, which is reinforced during hard times. It was also expected that the perception of Sweden as a humanitarian actor was challenged, as this was not how they portrayed themselves during the negotiations. This feeling was further reinforced as the negotiations personally affected the participants.

7.2 Belonging

Participants' feelings of belonging have also been scattered by the negotiations. While the participants express that Sweden still feels like home and are emotionally attached to Sweden, their sense of safety has been damaged. Two of the participants refer to Sweden before the negotiations as a mother they never had, the ultimate symbol for comfort, acceptance and safety. This, however, has changed with the negotiations and many of the participants express that the Kurdish diaspora and other immigrant groups in Sweden are not treated as equals. The NATO negotiations have made them feel less valued and respected, crucial aspects to feeling affinity and belonging. Many found a sense of safety with each other and an increased sense of belonging with other Kurds, as the need for sharing experiences and feeling understood increased. However, they also feel a sense of solidarity from the Swedish people, which may mitigate feelings of exclusion in their everyday life. Despite the feelings of betrayal and exclusion, the participants' gratitude for Sweden permeates. Many feel as though Sweden has not only stood up for the Kurdish people but personally saved them or their family members from oppression, torture and imprisonment. Just like the Palestinian diaspora, there is a need for the Kurdish people to belong somewhere and to find a safe space. Since Sweden has provided this for the Kurds and therefore, deep feelings of gratitude still persist. This also explains why the Swedish-born participant was the only one who did not express these feelings, as he does not have that need to the same extent.

This confirms Expectation 2 (see 4.2) and shows a pattern between the Muslim, Palestinian and Kurdish diaspora regarding how foreign policy decisions in a host country that targets the diaspora community lead to decreased belonging. However, unlike the other cases, the Kurdish diaspora feels solidarity with the Swedish people which might mitigate feelings of exclusion. This is interesting as previous research has found that the Kurdish population feel a social exclusion but a political belonging, opposite to the effects of the negotiations.

7.3 Integration

The negotiations could also affect the level of integration within the Kurdish diaspora, as they feel more of a division in their treatment compared to native Swedes. In order to feel an interconnection with different parts of society, it is crucial to feel valued and respected, as you are an equal part of society. Many participants express that they do not feel as though the

feeling is as welcoming as it used to and some even mean that Sweden purposely is portraying this picture, as they do not want more refugees to come to Sweden. In order to be integrated, the host country is supposed to provide tools to learn basic values. This is significantly harder if the values of the country are unclear, but also if it goes against the immigrant group itself and their identity, which this shift in Sweden communicates. It affects them not only emotionally but as political beings, as participants are censoring themselves on social media, avoiding Kurdish events and Kurdish demonstrations in Sweden, a democratic country that a majority of the participants fled to so that they could freely practice their political rights. All of the participants follow the negotiations closely and have a strong sense of solidarity for the Kurdish diaspora, both in Sweden and the Kurdish regions. Many are worried for their friends and relatives, as the threat of extraditions have grown and Turkey have got weapons that likely will be used against the Kurdish diaspora in Syria.

Expectation 3 (See 4.3) is therefore both validated and rejected. While the anticipated worsening of integration has occurred, political activism has shown mixed results, with an increase for some and a decrease for others. This differentiates from both the Muslims and Palestinians in the US, as their political engagement generally increased to influence their host-state's foreign policies. This decrease among the Kurdish population can be explained by Weiner's (1965) theory on political integration (see 4.3), as the gap between the governing elite and the Kurdish diaspora has become larger as the participants feel alienated, the societal values and national identity have lost worth and many are afraid to organize for Kurdish purposes. The interviews have revealed that the decrease of participation is not due to lack of awareness or engagement, but because of fear of suffering consequences, especially in regards to the new threat of extradition, being punished by the new terrorist legislation or the increased cooperation with MIT, as many fear that they would not be able to return to Turkey.

7.4 Relationship with the state

The Kurdish diaspora's relationship with the Swedish state has been profoundly impacted by the negotiations as Kurds in Sweden historically have had a positive relationship with the state. Participants expressed perceived incompetence and weak moral resolve and many Kurds feel that Sweden went too far in appeasing Turkey. This perception is exacerbated by the new Swedish anti-terrorism legislation, which is seen as a consequence of the negotiations and a step towards de-democratization, similar to Turkey's governance. Despite

this, many participants believe that the Swedish public supports the Kurds and that the political actions by the state goes against the general populace.

This is in line with Expectation 4 (see 4.4) and can be explained by Khayati's (2012) statement that Kurds came to Sweden because it allows for dual identities and political rights. The NATO negotiations have impaired this and thereby target the very reason for many Kurds to have settled in Sweden. Furthermore, the state appears to side with an external entity, Turkey, that has historically oppressed Kurds. Sweden has also seemed less inclusive and compromised on historically clear values, crucial aspects of a good relationship to the state.

8 Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis has answered the research question: *“How is the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden affected by the NATO negotiations between Turkey and Sweden in terms of their identity, sense of belonging, integration and attitude towards the Swedish government?”*.

The analysis of this study shows that the NATO negotiations between Turkey and Sweden have had profound implications for the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden. This can be seen in the reassessment of their Swedish and Kurdish identities, loss of belonging and integration and a strained relationship with the Swedish state. The results confirmed the expectations based on the literature and concepts while also revealing unique aspects of the Kurdish diaspora's experience, such as the decreased participation among parts of the diaspora.

An aim of this thesis was to find how the Kurds make sense of Sweden's actions and find explanations for how this could have happened. The participants have shown several ways to approach this, including historical explanations, reinforcing Kurds as stateless victims, but also by blaming the Kurdish diaspora for being too trusting. Another outlook which holds on to the image of Sweden as a protector was that there must be an unknown threat to the public, otherwise they would not abandon the Kurds.

This thesis significantly contributes to the academic discourse on how diaspora communities are affected by their host country's switching foreign policies. By focusing on the Kurdish diaspora's experiences with Sweden's NATO negotiations, the thesis fills a notable gap in the literature, which has previously overlooked the impact of foreign policy changes on diaspora

communities in terms of their identity, sense of belonging, and political actions. Kurdish diasporas, like other diasporas such as the Palestinian and broader Muslim communities, are often very connected to their ethnic identity and maintain a high level of transnational engagement, making them very affected by changes in foreign policy, especially in the case of the Kurds, as the NATO negotiations have targeted their ability to do so. This thesis has shown how they have navigated their dual identities with these changes.

This thesis also holds its value in the insights for NGOs, policymakers and political actors who engage with diaspora communities. Understanding the deep implications that foreign policy decisions can have on these communities can guide more informed and inclusive policymaking. Sweden's changing attitude towards the Kurds with the NATO negotiations with Turkey for example has had direct repercussions on the Kurdish diaspora's sense of security and belonging, their attitude towards the state, their participation in public life and their social integration in Sweden.

While this study captures intimate insights of Kurdish voices in Sweden, it cannot represent all Kurdish experiences in Sweden, as the generalizability is limited, however, it opens the door for further exploration. Future research could benefit from a larger, possibly mixed-method or quantitative approach, as this could show a more representative picture. This could be complemented by qualitative elements such as comprehensive surveys, to provide depth while gaining a more collective understanding of the Kurdish diaspora's experience. The findings in this thesis are an initial step in theorizing how the diaspora communities' feelings and experiences are affected by the foreign policy actions of their host nation. It calls for further theoretical development to find the mechanisms that influence diaspora reactions.

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10. Appendices

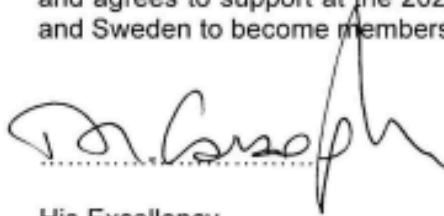
10.1 Trilateral Memorandum

TRILATERAL MEMORANDUM

1. Today the representatives of Türkiye, Finland and Sweden, under the auspices of the NATO Secretary General, have agreed the following.
2. NATO is an Alliance based on the principles of collective defence and the indivisibility of security, as well as on common values. Türkiye, Finland and Sweden affirm their adherence to the principles and values enshrined in the Washington Treaty.
3. One of the key elements of the Alliance is unwavering solidarity and cooperation in the fight against terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, which constitutes a direct threat to the national security of Allies as well as to international peace and security.
4. As prospective NATO Allies, Finland and Sweden extend their full support to Türkiye against threats to its national security. To that effect, Finland and Sweden will not provide support to YPG/PYD, and the organisation described as FETÖ in Türkiye. Türkiye also extends its full support to Finland and Sweden against threats to their national security. Finland and Sweden reject and condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, in the strongest terms. Finland and Sweden unambiguously condemn all terrorist organisations perpetrating attacks against Türkiye, and express their deepest solidarity with Türkiye and the families of the victims.
5. Finland and Sweden confirm that the PKK is a proscribed terrorist organisation. Finland and Sweden commit to prevent activities of the PKK and all other terrorist organisations and their extensions, as well as activities by individuals in affiliated and inspired groups or networks linked to these terrorist organisations. Türkiye, Finland and Sweden have agreed to step up cooperation to prevent the activities of these terrorist groups. Finland and Sweden reject the goals of these terrorist organisations.
6. Further to this, Finland refers to several recent amendments of its Criminal Code by which new acts have been enacted as punishable terrorist crimes. The latest amendments entered into force on 1 January 2022, by which the scope of participation in the activity of a terrorist group has been widened. At the same time, public incitement related to terrorist offenses was criminalised as a separate offense. Sweden confirms that a new, tougher, Terrorist Offenses Act enters into force on 1 July, and that the government is preparing further tightening of counter-terrorism legislation.

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7. Türkiye, Finland and Sweden confirm that now there are no national arms embargoes in place between them. Sweden is changing its national regulatory framework for arms exports in relation to NATO Allies. In future, defence exports from Finland and Sweden will be conducted in line with Alliance solidarity and in accordance with the letter and spirit of article 3 of the Washington Treaty.
8. Today, Türkiye, Finland and Sweden commit to the following concrete steps:
- Establish a joint, structured dialogue and cooperation mechanism at all levels of government, including between law enforcement and intelligence agencies, to enhance cooperation on counter-terrorism, organised crime, and other common challenges as they so decide.
 - Finland and Sweden will conduct the fight against terrorism with determination, resolve, and in accordance with the provisions of the relevant NATO documents and policies, and will take all required steps to tighten further domestic legislation to this end.
 - Finland and Sweden will address Türkiye's pending deportation or extradition requests of terror suspects expeditiously and thoroughly, taking into account information, evidence and intelligence provided by Türkiye, and establish necessary bilateral legal frameworks to facilitate extradition and security cooperation with Türkiye, in accordance with the European Convention on Extradition.
 - Finland and Sweden will investigate and interdict any financing and recruitment activities of the PKK and all other terrorist organisations and their extensions, as well affiliates or inspired groups or networks as outlined in paragraph 5.
 - Türkiye, Finland and Sweden commit to fight disinformation, and prevent their domestic laws from being abused for the benefit or promotion of terrorist organisations, including through activities that incite violence against Türkiye.
 - Finland and Sweden will ensure that their respective national regulatory frameworks for arms exports enable new commitments to Allies and reflects their status as NATO members.

- Finland and Sweden commit to support the fullest possible involvement of Türkiye and other non-EU Allies in the existing and prospective initiatives of the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy, including Türkiye's participation in the PESCO Project on Military Mobility.
9. For the implementation of these steps, Türkiye, Finland and Sweden will establish a Permanent Joint Mechanism, with the participation of experts from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, and Justice, as well as Intelligence Services and Security Institutions. The Permanent Joint Mechanism will be open for others to join.
10. Türkiye confirms its long-standing support for NATO's Open Door policy, and agrees to support at the 2022 Madrid Summit the invitation of Finland and Sweden to become members of NATO.



His Excellency
Mr Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye
Ankara



His Excellency
Mr Pekka Haavisto
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Finland
Helsinki



Her Excellency
Ms Ann Linde
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Sweden
Stockholm

Madrid, 28 June 2022

Full reference: Trilateral Memorandum Turkey, Finland, and Sweden, 2022, available at: https://www.NATO.int/NATO_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/220628-trilat-memo.pdf, Accessed 21 May 2024.

10.2 Interview Guide

Translated to English:

Background:

- Tell me a bit about yourself. What do you do for work? Have you lived in Sweden your entire life?
- (If relevant) How long have you lived in Sweden, and why did you come here?
- How would you describe your relationship with Sweden/Turkey/Kurdistan?
- Tell us about your Kurdish identity. Do you identify as Kurdish, Swedish, or both?
- How do you engage with the Kurdish community in Sweden? Are you engaged in any organizations? Do you attend Kurdish events?

Knowledge about NATO Negotiations:

- How much do you know about the NATO negotiations between Turkey and Sweden?
- Where do you usually get your information on political issues?

Consequences for Kurds:

- How do you think the NATO negotiations have affected the Kurdish minority in Sweden?
- Have you noticed any changes in the Kurdish community in Sweden due to the NATO negotiations? Increased activism? Increased solidarity?
- Have the NATO negotiations affected you in any way?
- Do you know of anyone who has been directly affected by the NATO negotiations?
- How has Sweden's stance on the issue made you feel? Have you experienced any uncertainty, fear, or hope in relation to this situation?
- What do you think about Sweden's position in the NATO negotiations? Has it changed your view of Sweden? What do you think the consequences might be for the Kurdish community?

Expectations:

- Do you have any expectations regarding Sweden's role in this? Do you think Sweden has or will live up to these expectations?

- What do you hope for the future in terms of the NATO negotiations, their consequences, and their impact on the Kurdish minority in Sweden?

Closing Thoughts:

- Is there anything else you would like to share or discuss that we haven't covered?

Original interview guide:

Bakgrund:

- Berätta lite om dig själv, vad jobbar du med? Har du bott hela ditt liv i Sverige?
- (Om relevant) Hur länge har du bott i Sverige, och varför kom du hit?
- Hur skulle du beskriva din relation till Sverige/Turkiet/Kurdistan?
- Berätta om din kurdiska identitet, identifierar du dig som kurdisk, svensk eller båda?
- Kan du berätta om ditt engagemang i den kurdiska gemenskapen i Sverige? Är du engagerad i någon organisation? Brukar du gå på kurdiska event?

Kunskap om NATO-förhandlingar:

- Hur mycket vet du om NATO-förhandlingarna mellan Turkiet och Sverige?
- Var får du vanligtvis din information om politiska frågor ifrån?

Konsekvenser för kurder:

- Hur tänker du att NATO-förhandlingarna har påverkat den kurdiska minoriteten i Sverige?
- Har du märkt några förändringar i den kurdiska gruppen i Sverige på grund av NATO-förhandlingarna? Ökad aktivism? Ökad gemenskap?
- Har NATO förhandlingarna påverkat dig på något sätt?
- Vet du om någon som blivit direkt påverkad av NATO-förhandlingarna?
- Hur har Sveriges ställningstagande i frågan fått dig att känna? Har du upplevt någon osäkerhet, rädsla eller hopp i relation till den här situationen?
- Vad tycker du om Sveriges ståndpunkt i NATO-förhandlingarna? Har det ändrat din syn på Sverige? Vad tror du att de kan ha för konsekvenser för den kurdiska gemenskapen?

Förväntningar:

- Har du några förväntningar angående Sveriges roll i detta? Tror du att Sverige har eller kommer att leva upp till dessa förväntningar?
- Vad hoppas du på för framtiden när det gäller NATO-förhandlingarna, dess konsekvenser och påverkan på den kurdiska minoriteten i Sverige?

Avslutande tankar:

- Finns det något annat du vill dela med dig av eller diskutera som vi inte har täckt?

10.3 Consent Form

Consent to Participate in Research

I understand and agree to the following:

- I can withdraw from the study at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences.
- I have the right to withdraw permission to use data from my interview within one month after the interview, upon which the material will be deleted.
- The purpose and nature of the study have been explained to me in writing, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I acknowledge that I will not directly benefit from participating in this research.
- I consent to my interview being audio-recorded.
- All information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- My identity will remain anonymous in any report on the results of this research.
- All information on identifiable individuals is to be noted, stored and reported in such a way as to render individuals unidentifiable to outsiders. This applies in particular to information that can be considered ethically sensitive. This means that it is to be impossible in practice for outsiders to access the information.
- If I or someone else is at risk of harm, the researcher may have to report this to the relevant authorities, discussing it with me first but reporting with or without my permission if necessary.
- Under freedom of information legislation, I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research for further clarification and information.

Researchers' Information:

Signe Andersson

Contact:

Participant's Signature:

_____ Date: _____

Researcher's Signature:

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.

_____ Date: _____