

RESEARCHING INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

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Disjunction of Borders, Who Is the Outsider?

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Abstract

This study investigates how in multinational states the implementation of the dynamic interaction between citizenship and nationhood boundaries generates different levels of belonging and membership, and consequently, many in-between levels of inclusion and exclusion of migrants with different ethnic backgrounds. By taking the case of the Kurdistan Region, a federal semi-autonomous subject of Iraq, this research aims to answer how two displaced groups including Iraqi Arabs, holding the citizenship of Iraq, comparing to non-Iraqi Kurds, who are nominally citizens of neighboring countries, experience exclusion through defining their membership. The intersection of citizenship and national boundary emerges as a critical issue in the Kurdistan region, where state-internally displaced Arabs traverse the Kurdish national boundaries and the nation-internally migrant Kurds from Turkey, Iran, and Syria, move across the Iraqi nation-state borders.

This work is built on a body of literature that purposefully identifies and reflects on the disjunction of citizenship and nationhood. By delving into various views, four emphasized characteristics of the citizenship concept are figured out: legal status, rights, political participation, and a sense of belonging. In regards to methodology, this study is a qualitative comparative case study of two ethnic groups. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews are utilized to collect data. The results show, the Kurdish immigrants are excluded in virtue of legal boundaries as they are perceived as foreign in line with the citizenship stipulation of Iraq nation-state whiles Iraqi Arabs, due to symbolic boundaries that take them as an outsider to the Kurdish community, have been disadvantaged from getting the full access to resources and participation in the Kurdish society. Comparison of these two groups reveals how citizenship appears as a barrier and insufficient status for granting rights to internally displaced people.

Keywords

Belonging; Citizenship; Ethnic Boundaries; Exclusion; Kurdistan Region.

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1. Introduction

After years of conflict following the Gulf War in 1990–1991, Iraqi Kurds finally achieved autonomy when the Coalition Forces led by the United States enforced a no-fly zone in Iraqi Kurdistan. After the uprising against Saddam Hussein's regime in 1992, the first parliamentary and presidential elections were held, and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), a new semi-autonomous government of Kurdistan in Iraq, was established. Since the collapse of the Hussein regime in 2003, the KRG has experienced extensive constitutional changes, and in the meantime, it began rebuilding infrastructure. Based on the oil industry, the economy blossomed and new job opportunities and investment possibilities attracted a huge number of people from different backgrounds, including Kurds from Iran, Turkey and Syria and Arabs from other provinces of Iraq. At the same time, due to pervasive struggles in the region, particularly Syria's civil war, internal conflicts in Iraq and the recent invasion of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), hundreds of thousands of people were displaced. Seeking a shelter, most people fled to the Kurdistan Region as the closest and safest area in the north of Iraq. In 2017, Iraq with 2.6 million persons had the fourth highest rates of internal displacement (Asfour 2020; IDMC 2020). However, since then a part of these groups have returned, around 78 percent due to lack of social security and livelihood opportunities are still displaced (IDMC 2020).

Scholarship on displacement engaging with policies and laws investigate how to prevent or eliminate this phenomenon and also how to find support for displaced people. Whilst studies on internal displacement almost advocating the humanitarian discourse focuses on quantitative analysis to provide data for international institutions like UNHCR, this research takes a comparative sociological view into the experiences of two migrant groups in the Kurdistan Region, where displaced Arabs traverse the Kurdish national boundaries and Kurds from Turkey, Iran, Syria and elsewhere cross the borders of Iraq. The first group is the formal members (citizens) of the Iraqi state and according to prominent accounts, their resettlement in Kurdistan Region is recognized as internal displacement inside the borders of the nation-state. And the other side is Kurdish migrants who consider themselves as belonging to the Kurdish nation and perceive their movement to Kurdistan Region as an internal relocation inside their national borders where they share similar political and cultural agendas. Here, contrary to mainstream works on displacement, the reasons triggering the movement, the number of displaced persons and the migration trajectories are not at the canon, but the level and extent of membership-induced exclusion these people in the host community live is the core of exploration.

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq is a de facto autonomous polity with an ethno-nationalistic approach to establishing boundaries. Confronting the citizenship policies of the Iraqi nation-state and the local boundaries of the Kurdistan Region reveals a place of disjunction for membership practices. Two ethnic migrant groups face boundaries contributing to this challenge: Kurdish people moving across international borders who are not recognised as citizens of Iraq but are

ethnically connected to the Kurdish community and internally displaced Arab people who hold Iraqi citizenship but are excluded by the Kurdish community and local government's boundaries. When borders encircle a homogeneous community, citizenship is not problematic, but once people move across borders or borders stretch over disparities, citizenship faces a fundamental question about the status of those considered outsiders according to the community's identity but currently living within its territorial borders.

Since the nineties, debates on the concept of citizenship, especially concerning the flow of immigration to Europe and North America, have intensified in the academic sphere as well as in policy-making bodies. Prominent studies have explored the challenges of citizenship in terms of policies related to the acquisition and integration of migrants into Western states. On the other hand, globalisation has motivated new approaches claiming that the boundaries of the nation-state are deteriorating and that citizenship is being restructured based on supranational structures (particularly in postnationalism approaches). Despite these trends, in the Global South, most explicitly in the Middle East, nation-state borders have survived and ethno-national boundaries have robustly preserved the categorisation of the social world into 'us' and 'them'. In Iraq, as in other southern multi-ethno-national states, membership in the political community faces a combined challenge of national identity, sovereignty and state-making.

The definition and requirements of citizenship, as well as its implementation, have social and political effects ranging from individual lives to high-level policy-making. Borders of citizenship are raised by national identity and political practices, and they can shape life opportunities, marginalise groups and exclude individuals from social and political rights. Furthermore, borders extend these disadvantages to family and interpersonal relations, institutional admissions, household formation, the labour market and many other social domains. Empirical-critical research on citizenship and membership examining experiences of different migrant groups in a context with multifarious boundaries helps us reconceptualise ethno-national identity as a source of policies, understand hierarchies based on membership status, and recognise the ways membership is exercised by individuals.

2. Research objectives and questions

The overarching aim of this research is to explore how the dynamics and implementation of the interaction between national identity (a contextual factor) and citizenship regulations (the relevant outcome) create or extend boundaries and subsequently affect individual lives and expand inequality between displaced groups. Given that the literature on internal displacement has rarely explored the conflicting boundaries in host sub-state polities where membership peripheries are inconsistent with the respective state membership regulations, we need to know more about the importance of membership formulation in the emergence and development of

social differentiation. I will extend my observations to challenges of membership (both formal and informal) through nation-state borders and investigate the local implementation of membership in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq as a particular geographic region that has historically experienced many political struggles. This research will examine how two displaced groups of Kurds and Arabs experience the interaction between formal membership in a state known as citizenship and membership in an ethno-national group in their lives. Specifically, regarding their migration situation, how and to what extent are these two diverse ethno-national groups excluded?

3. Literature review

Concerning the aforementioned objective, this section looks into theoretical approaches of citizenship to promote understanding about the exclusionary aspects of this concept in the context of internal displacement. Since it would be beyond the scope of this study to address all theories of citizenship, I will draw a general picture of the concept of citizenship, from its inception through its theoretical development concerning ‘nation’ and ‘national identity’. Then the dimensions of citizenship as a tool for analysing the exclusion of two main ethnic migrant groups in this study will be discussed.

One initial theory of citizenship from a sociological perspective comes from T. H. Marshall, in the context of the British Labour Party’s program in 1949 (Shafir 2002). According to Marshall (1950: 87), citizenship is

a status bestowed on those who are full members of the community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed. There is no universal principle that determines what those rights and duties shall be, but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed.

Based on this definition, the central components of citizenship are membership in a community and the rights and duties that accompany this membership. From Marshall’s perspective, the key to integrating individuals in liberal democracies is access to equal rights. Marshall goes on to distinguish three types of citizenship identified with different rights—civil rights, political rights and social rights—that emerged during the previous three centuries such that each category of rights arose as the complement for the previous one.

In any discussion about the concept of citizenship, questions about membership are common. Membership is a categorical notion that distinguishes insiders from outsiders. Citizenship is

similarly binary; it includes some individuals by redistributing resources and excludes others due to constructed common identities. According to Turner, ‘nineteenth-century national citizenship was constituted around racial divisions because it excluded outsiders from access to resources on the basis of an (ascribed) ethnic or national identity’ (Turner 2001: 192). The dominant understanding of citizenship centres around membership to a national identity built on cultural intimacy. Membership politics define long-term residents of a state who do not belong to the nation as outsiders and transborder populations with longstanding residence in other states who belong to the ‘homeland’ or ‘kin’ nation as insiders (Brubaker 1992, 1994). Citizenship has been developed as the best tool for bonding nation-membership with state-membership, a fundamental requirement for the ideal model of the nation-state.

To understand the convergence of citizenship and nationhood, it is essential to know when and how they have been interrelated. Historically, with the birth of the modern nation-state, the concept of citizenship relying on national borders appeared after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 (Gans 2017: 109). Since the French Revolution, the doctrine of nationalism has undergirded state efforts to create and reinforce a homogeneous national citizenry premised on the ideal of equality between citizens. Consistent with nationalist ideas, incorporation into society was organised only through citizenship. The formal status of citizenship granted individuals their rights, and, in return, they were obliged to commit to the state. The formation of citizenship and the nation-state is complementary. The state, constituted as a political unit for organising nations, manages the nation’s members and controls relations with other national groups. Inversely, different ethnocultural groups have joined together under the hegemony of a dominant group and formed a single nation to more easily reproduce a common cultural identity.

The national character of membership demonstrates the internal and external politics of belonging through the way the categories of insider and outsider are generated. While the boundaries between outsiders and insiders are not stable and static, there are various modes and levels of membership that do not necessarily grant the full privileges of citizenship. Accordingly, many experts point out that under this diversified understanding of membership, the citizen/non-citizen dichotomy expands into a more stratified structure that has been described as ‘second- or third- class citizenship’ (Shklar 1998), ‘quasi-citizens’ (Bauböck 2017; Donaldson and Kymlicka 2017) or ‘denizenship’ (Kondō 2001).

4. Dimensions of citizenship

Due to the ongoing expansion of the concept of citizenship, there have been several attempts to organise the various understandings of citizenship with diagnostic dimensions. Many dimensions based on interpretations of citizenship and its scope have been revealed, but four are the most prevalent: legal status, rights, political participation and a sense of belonging to the national

community (Bloemraad 2004 ; Bloemraad et al. 2008; Bosniak 2000; Faist 2009; Shachar et al. 2017; Sassen 2002). These dimensions can overlap, accentuate or impair each other, and these interactions may reflect on or be reflected from the boundaries of citizenship. My intention in discussing these dimensions, beyond exploring the theoretical interpretation of citizenship, is to apply them as methodological tools to compare the degrees of membership or incorporation of Kurdish and Arab ethnic groups in the Kurdistan Region.

4.1 Legal status

The legal dimension of citizenship refers to the formal identification of membership in an ‘organized political community’ (Bosniak 2000). The most basic affiliation of people with a nation-state is epitomised in their legal status. The conditions for obtaining this status are predetermined by the state in question to decide who can acquire citizenship. Acquisition of citizenship theoretically grants all relevant rights in the country and extends necessary support from an international perspective (Brubaker 1994; Bloemraad 2004). Therefore, all non-citizens will authoritatively be excluded from these privileges.

4.2 Rights

Almost all attitudes about citizenship are related to the established entitlements granted to members of a certain political community. As Engin Isin notes, ‘citizenship as a legal institution governs who may and may not act as a subject of rights within any given polity’ (Isin 2017: 500). Since this is determined by the state, citizenship rights are dependent on membership. Losing membership results in losing the state-guaranteed rights, so this is the foremost stage of exclusion. As previously mentioned, in Marshall’s initial categorisation, citizenship rights were sorted into civil, political and social rights. Today, these are still perceived as the main categories of citizenship rights. Civil rights are the fundamental citizenship rights that guarantee individual freedom. They include ‘liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, freedom of occupation and of movement in pursuit of that occupation, the right to own property and conclude valid contracts, and the right to due process of law’ (Shafir and Peled 2002: 9).

Political rights are individual privileges of participation in a political community. Political activities like voting in elections and referendums or running for office as a parliamentary or local council representative are the most ingrained political rights (Shafir and Peled 2002; Kondō 2001; Shaw 2017). Other types of political rights include freedom of speech and protest. To what extent and to whom these rights are granted are crucial questions in examining the exclusivity of citizenship regimes. The final type of citizenship rights, social rights, concerns the relationship between people and the welfare system to grant economic security (Shafir and Peled 2002; Kivisto and Faist 2015; Klausen 1995). In other words, social rights provide inclusion in the distribution of resources (Klausen 1995; Marshall 1950). As explained by Marshall, they are ‘the

right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in society' (Marshall 1950: 69).

4.3 Political participation

Political participation concerns people's cooperation in the government of their territory (Bauböck 2006). This dimension of citizenship affirms the value of public participation in the project of self-government. According to Thomas Faist, the principal dimension of citizenship is 'the legally guaranteed status of equal political freedom and democratic self-determination' (Faist 2014: 24). Faist considers citizenship to entail two legal and political perceptions, the latter of which signifies the 'relationship between the state and democracy' (Ibid). In this regard, democracy ensures citizens' freedom to participate in political decision-making. By emphasising citizens' contribution to the political body, citizens become political actors developing political communities as public spaces and a democratic society emerges. On the other hand, 'in nondemocratic states, holding citizenship provides no guaranteed access to the ballot box, freedom of political expression, or freedom to assemble for collective action' (Bloemraad 2017: 533).

4.4 Belonging

Beyond citizens' formal statuses, the recognition of individuals as members of the community of their origin is an indispensable dimension of citizenship. Citizenship is not merely about a recognised status or granted rights; it is also about affiliation with a community (Faist 2014). Creating boundaries that mark one group as insiders and others as outsiders is a social tool to maintain community cohesion, and in the era of nation-states, these boundaries are established as national boundaries (Bosniak 2000; Brubaker 1992, 1994; Bloemraad et al. 2008; Castles 2005; Shevel 2017; Kamens and Meyer 2012; Joppke 1999; Turner 1990). However, national belonging as constructed through collective identity spans both territorial borders and cultural practices.

5. Methodology

Consistent with the purpose of this study, its research design is a comparative case study with two groups. A comparative approach was applied to investigate the distinct circumstances of non-Iraqi Kurds compared with Iraqi Arabs residing in the Kurdistan Region. Through comparing these two groups, the disjunctive implementation of nationhood and citizenship can be demonstrated, particularly the intrinsic failure of the concept of citizenship through social segregation. As for the data collection method, the semi-structured interview was adopted because of its suitability for investigating how participants speak about their experiences. The

subjects to be analysed in this study are Iraqi Arabs and non-Iraqi Kurdish immigrants. A non-probabilistic sampling technique, or snowball technique, was used to recruit participants. To minimise certain intersectionality effects, participants were selected based on a variety of characteristics, including age, gender, residency status, occupation, country of origin (in case of the Kurdish participants), city of residency (in the Kurdistan Region), marital status and migration type. As an essential ethical rule, participants' data were treated confidentially and anonymously to ensure privacy. In the following section, I discuss the final results by taking a comparative view to explain each group's circumstances in every dimension of citizenship.

6. Legal status

Based on the findings, we can conclude that neither group is bestowed the status of full citizenship in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Arabs are considered Iraqi citizens and, as internal migrants in the Kurdistan Region, they must apply for short-term residence permission. Kurdish immigrants, in some cases, can acquire a semi-citizenship status, but recently almost all of them were forced to apply for temporary permission, much like other immigrants. Citizenship regulation in Kurdistan is not entirely central (in Baghdad) nor exclusively independent (in Kurdistan); instead, there are two parallel and sometimes contrary approaches to legal membership. On one hand, the Iraqi government has made the process of acquisition of citizenship for Kurds stricter, and on the other hand, the Kurdish local government, using a nationalist approach, has dispossessed Arabs of their rights as Iraqi citizens.

The incompatible policies of the local government of Kurdistan and the central state of Iraq have exposed the precarious situation of the status and citizenship rights of non-Iraqi Kurds. Evidence revealed that large numbers of Kurdish immigrants from Iran, Syria and Turkey were granted semi-citizenship status through the 'Tejenus' (naturalisation) course between 2002 and 2011. This upgrade was introduced and authorised by the leading political parties in the early 2000s when the Iraqi central government still had feeble administrative and political dominion over Kurdistan. Recently, Baghdad has taken steps to reorganise Iraq as one homogeneous nation with a single state, and consequently, citizenship regulations have become more intricate with each passing year. Many Kurdish individuals from outside Iraq have lost their permanent residence permission, and even those granted legal citizenship by the Kurdish government were denationalised by the Iraqi state. In this respect, as Chung (2017) points out, 'the ability of the state to denaturalize citizens reminds us how the citizenship institution itself can be used to create or reinforce social hierarchies, wield political control, and create new national narratives' (Chung 2017: 436).

Considering the current regulations in the Kurdistan Region, denaturalised and newcomer non-Iraqi Kurds and Iraqi Arabs are obliged to appeal for short-term residency. For both groups,

identical conditions are defined concerning valid duration, requirements and other legal operations. Notably, while the bureaucratic application process for short-term residency serves all applicants equally from a legal perspective, in reality, it functions as a hurdle for Arabs. In the process of applying for short-term residency, immigrants must be approved by a local Kurdish citizen called a ‘Wasete’. This approval is not easily acquired by Arabs.

Based on the findings, both groups under study suffer precarious legal statuses such that Arabs are not granted permanent residence despite holding Iraqi citizenship and non-Iraqi Kurds, who may or may not have citizenship in their country of origin, are not granted secure permanent permission to stay in the Kurdistan Region. None of the members of these groups surveyed in this project had a clear outlook about their status. Among them, the Kurdish immigrants who possess neither legal documents from their original state nor Iraqi citizenship, are suffering stateless status.

7. Rights

7.1 Free selection of residence

Analysis of data shows that, apart from refugees, migrants choose their destination with no formal obstruction. The initial selection of their destination is free for both Kurds and Arabs but changing cities would be problematic for the Arab group since resettlement in a new place requires a new bureaucratic residency application. New confirmation is needed, so there is a lower chance of finding a “Wasete”, whether an acquaintance or a broker, to approve the residency.

7.2 Free travelling

One benefit of being Kurdish is the range of travel rights within the Kurdistan Region’s borders. Internal travel is facilitated for non-domestic Kurdish people, while Arabs are prohibited from moving between cities in the Kurdistan Region. Both groups have experienced hindrances at security control stations between cities. However, Kurdish people can escape time-consuming detentions by showing their ID cards and speaking in Kurdish to demonstrate their Kurdish identity. According to theories of national citizenship, the nation-state is ‘a space of free social and geographical mobility, in both vertical and horizontal dimensions’ (Brubaker 2010: 63). But for Arab Iraqi citizens in the Kurdistan Region, free geographical mobility is inhibited. Consequently, social mobility is also interrupted, because decreased geographical mobility negatively affects access to job opportunities and welfare services. The Kurdish group is confronted with formal barriers that restrict them from travelling beyond the borders of the Kurdistan Region. Kurdish residents with a passport from their nation-state of origin have

potential options for travelling abroad, but political party members or refugees who entered the Kurdistan Region without a passport are excluded from this right. The latter group is permanently deprived of travel abroad because of losing citizenship status in their country, and likewise in Iraq, they are not granted citizenship rights or travel documents.

7.3 The right to ownership

The findings of this study show that concerning the possession of property, the two groups have equal formal rights such that short-term permission holders from both groups are not allowed to own real estate. Remarkably, despite the formal restrictions, in some cases individuals from both groups were able to obtain this right. For instance, both Arabs and Kurds employed by the government can purchase residences in their own names. Informal alternatives to statements help migrants to avoid formal restrictions. Any type of goods can be purchased but must be formally registered in the name of an acquaintance with Kurdish-Iraqi citizenship living in the Kurdistan Region. The social and political networks facilitating these informal opportunities are more common in the Kurdish community.

7.4 Free access to jobs

Concerning the legal right to freely access the job market, Arabs and Kurds possess identical residencies and somehow have a similar situation. Often, temporary permitted migrants (either Arab or Kurd) can gain access to jobs in non-governmental organisations (regional and international agencies) but not in the governmental sector. Generally speaking, although Iraqi Arabs can become government officials in rare cases, the authorised support available to them is not equivalent to that offered to naturalised Kurds. In addition to the legal situation, Kurdish authorities afford further advantages to non-Iraqi Kurds through personal or political relations to facilitate their access to certain jobs in the public sector and special self-employed professions.

Aside from the legal and direct restrictions, what determines access to a job is the ability to speak Kurdish. Knowing the Kurdish language can support the process of finding, applying for and gaining a position. Obviously, Kurdish people can acquire more and better positions than Arabs regardless of the type of their residency.

7.5 The right to form a family

No divergence was discovered concerning legal barriers to forming a family. Specifically, there are no legal obstacles to either an Iraqi Arab or a non-Iraqi Kurd marrying a Kurdish-Iraqi partner. If there are distinctions, they are symbolic barriers that prohibit Kurdish individuals from marrying Arabs, as partners of the same ethnicity are preferred.

7.6 Educational opportunities

Free education at the primary and secondary levels is a basic right extended equally to both groups. Distinctions are embedded in higher education, where Arab applicants have less access to public universities. Additionally, when studying at international or private universities, Arab students complain about the superiority of Kurdish culture in these institutions and the lesser benefits afforded to them. Notably, non-Iraqi Kurds have confronted the education ban at some stages, and their studies were facilitated by local administrators.

7.7 Access to courts of law

The analysis shows that access to the judicial system in the Kurdistan Region is regularised for both groups. They equally enjoy the right to file a lawsuit in a court defending their interests. What participants emphasised in their statements was not a difference in access to courts but that the judicial and decision-making process is contestable. Court decisions may be biased due to ethnic and political prejudice in favour of the Kurdish group.

8. Political participation

The results reveal that political participation, considered an advanced right of citizenship, is not officially practised by the Kurdish and Arab groups under study. Political rights generally imply providing prerequisite freedoms allowing members of a community to participate in their governance. Using this meaning, neither non-Iraqi Kurds nor Iraqi Arabs can participate in political decision-making without obstruction. If we consider the right to vote (Bloemraad 2017), the freedom to speech and assembly, the right to form and engage in a political party, and political activism (Shaw 2017) as the foremost indicators of democratic political rights, both groups are inhibited from inclusion in their political representation. Due to their incomplete formal membership as full citizens, Kurdish individuals cannot take part in formal political procedures like elections. Similarly, Iraqi Arabs are treated as outsiders in the Kurdistan Region and thus are not legally permitted to participate in political processes and projects.

Political participation as a theoretically delineated dimension of citizenship that concerns affiliation with a community (Faist 2014) could imply intensified inequality between insiders and outsiders. Political rights are normatively inclusive (Castle 2005) since they make all insiders eligible to decide upon affairs affecting their interests, but, at the same time, they are exclusionary to those who cannot fulfil membership requirements. In the Kurdistan Region, political exclusion has become a fact insomuch as non-Iraqi Kurds lack the legal status of citizenship and Iraqi Arabs do not meet the criteria of Kurdish nationhood to be qualified for decision-making.

9. Belonging

Concerning a sense of belonging as a contextual dimension of citizenship, a significant discrepancy is recognisable regarding how and to what extent Arabs and Kurds feel they belong to the society of the Kurdistan Region. Arabs, in contrast to non-Iraqi Kurds, appear to have no sense of belonging to Kurdistan, neither as an ethnic-cultural affinity nor as a federal subject of the Iraqi nation-state. Based on their comments, Kurdish individuals feel a strong sense of belonging to Kurdistan both culturally and socially and as an ethno-national territory.

Importantly, from the Arab participants' point of view, citizenship status in Iraq can guarantee a legal insider status in the Kurdistan Region. They do not feel socially and politically included in the Kurdistan Region, whereas the non-Iraqi Kurds are well-involved. At the same time, while the Kurdish interviewees emphasised the legitimacy of their inclusion and membership in the Kurdistan Region, they insisted on the rejection of Arabs. The latter group is perceived as alien to the Kurdish nation; from this perspective, they have no right to act or be treated as members of the Kurdistan community. The arguments led to the subsequent conclusion that Arabs, rather than being members, are presumed to be solely constitutionally attached subjects of the Kurdistan Region polity.

Remarkably, in this study, in addition to Arabs, bi-ethnic (half Arab, half Kurd) participants did not feel a sense of belonging to Kurdish society and saw themselves more as outsiders. This lack of association can be explained partly in terms of social rejection by Kurdish peers. In Brubaker's words, 'nation membership in a more informal sense, however, is not administered by specialized personnel but by ordinary people in the course of everyday life, using tacit understandings of who belongs and who does not, of us and them' (Brubaker 2010: 65). The feeling of not being accepted and legitimised to perform as an actual member of Kurdish society is shaped and intensified through symbolic boundaries enforced particularly on the periphery of Kurdishness.

10. Implications for citizenship, borders and displacement

In contrast to classic normative approaches that citizenship binds the people of a state together with equal access to resources, in the nation-state of Iraq, citizenship is deeply segregating. On one hand, the Iraqi constitution does not ensure citizenship rights for migrants (non-Iraqi Kurds in this case); on the other hand, the KRG likewise does not provide a mechanism through which displaced Arabs can contribute to decisions that affect their rights and interests. Deprivation of legal citizenship, for the Kurdish group, has led to a sense of not being fully incorporated into the community. Meanwhile, Arabs may have formal citizenship status, but they are often excluded

from substantive rights. As Peter Schuck (2000) affirms, ‘this tension between formal and substantive conceptions of citizenship reflects, among other things, the stark differences among legal rules, political realities, and civic aspirations’ (Schuck 2000: 196). The distance between formal rights and real access, and between legal membership and substantive citizenship, is further expanded by exclusionary acts arising from ethno-national tendencies.

Crossing the citizenship and nationhood boundaries generates a different level of belonging and membership and consequently many in-between levels of inclusion and exclusion. Historically and conceptually, citizenship has always been implied as a membership category, a mechanism for allocating persons to states and thus as something that creates belonging (Brubaker 1992). But in its exclusionary attributes, citizenship disadvantages those who do not belong to the protective community and might restrict the allocation of status and rights to them. Bearing in mind that the formulation of the citizenship concept is pertinent to typically defined nation-states wherein the borders of nationhood and citizenship envelope each other. In the context of multi-national states or the states in making, a mismatch of membership and belonging could be observed in a way that there would be practices of membership without rights, as Arabs in this research experience, or the extension of rights previously associated with citizenship to non-formal members, who belong to the dominant or certain nation, just the same as the involvement of non-Iraqi Kurds.

As the data in this study show, legal status as the formal aspect of citizenship at the hand of the nation-state interferes with the full affiliation of non-Iraqi Kurds. The Iraqi state denies permanent permission and citizenship to non-Iraqi Kurds. The rules of citizenship acquisition epitomise the agency of the state to attain and defend sovereignty as well as to strengthen the territorial integrity of the nation-state. On the opposite side, the results support the idea that membership in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq is strongly defined and implemented in an ethno-nationalist manner. While the local constitution in the Kurdistan Region professes equal rights for all Iraqi citizens, the implementation of rules leads to the classification of people according to their ethno-national origin, primarily Arab and Kurd. Although many restrictions for Arabs are established in the name of security, the ethnic characteristics of regulation and social relations usher in various forms of inequality, exclusion and injustice, which mirror the ways in which membership is governed by the body politic. In this sense, Hayden (1992) coined the term ‘constitutional nationalism’, which ‘means constitutional and legal structures that privilege members of one ethnonation over other residents’ (Hayden 1992 in Verdery 1998: 294).

According to the inspection of the situation of two ethno-national groups based on main dimensions of citizenship, it can be claimed that citizenship cannot be that apparatus for inclusion and equality of individuals with different backgrounds. Confronting the internal displaced Arabs and interstate migrant Kurds, both groups experience various forms of exclusion in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. In multi-national states like Iraq citizenship fundamentally lacks

the capacity of granting access to resources, social rights, or democratic political representation. Holding citizenship status of a nation-state for people who are internally displaced in its borders could not guarantee the full entitlement of rights. But lacking this status can exclude those who are not recognised as a citizen. Investigation of membership regime in Kurdistan Region of Iraq confirms how critical study on citizenship must be underlined when inspecting the marginalisation of internally displaced persons. This case study tells us, in multi-layered political entities when individuals are displaced inside their origin state, the risk of losing rights is possible and they may not be able to enjoy the whole rights already had.

11. Conclusions

Following the exploration of the situation of two ethnonational groups, we can conclude that in a semi-autonomous political unit such as the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, where citizenship boundaries intersect with ethnic boundaries, legal citizenship does not definitively ensure substantial rights for Arab citizens while officially excludes migrant Kurds. In classic theories, citizenship is highlighted as a universal apparatus for inclusion and equality, but in multi-ethnic societies in the Global South, it has become a tool for exclusion. The results demonstrate how citizenship can be institutionally distorted in contemplation of national/ethnic identity and subsequently stimulate inequality. The challenges of citizenship in the Kurdistan Region involve defining boundaries by state-making and applying these boundaries in practice, as well as the discordant outcomes of the implementation of formal boundaries made by the Iraqi central government. .

Going beyond the official marginalisation in the Kurdistan Region, the exclusionary social relations in this setting result in the ongoing conflict over who belongs to the community and to what extent this belonging facilitates access to resources. Both groups in this study experienced exclusion emanated from the type of membership and belonging they have. The important implication of the citizenship concept in studying internal displacement is that where state bonds different ethno-national groups, citizenship does not provide internal displaced persons inside the borders of the state with full access and social acceptance further it deprives the groups who moved into the border of their nation to be a full member of the community. This exclusionary side of citizenship and incompatible memberships in multinational states requires attention in scholarships to clarify the various forms and levels of marginalisation and discrimination of internal and international displaced persons.

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