

Homeless even at home

Excerpt:

Following the identification of divergent social discourse concerning Kurds, between Sweden and Australia, questions remain regarding the reasons presiding the discrepancies.

Analysis of Amir Hassanpour's sociological theory on the "Non Education of Kurds"⁴³ ratifies the qualitative and quantitative insights of primary and secondary research methodologies, identifying the construction of perceptions of Kurds as discrepant between contemporary Australian and Swedish discourse following processes of modernisation, industrialisation and subsequently globalisation. The theory suggests that the comparative absence of social discussion around Australian Kurds can be explained by the evolutionary nature of cultural acculturation as forthcoming generations are more heavily enculturated into a global network that does not recognise the heterogeneity of the Middle East and thus does not demarcate Kurds as a unique ethnic group.

Moreover, with media and sociological relations forming a symbiotic relationship, 96% of Australian questionnaire respondents suggested the lack of social discourse is symptomatic of the homogenising effect of mass media which dilutes the Kurdish culture as it is not well connected to modern communications technology. However, the comparative discrepancies in social discussion concerning Kurds, potentially exposes the different acculturation strategies⁴⁴ normalised within Australia and Sweden, whereby the author of Acculturation: Perspectives on Psychological Science, John Berry, expressed that "the strategies adopted by individuals depends on the extent to which the individual is socialised, through macro institutions, to balance the two issues of culture maintenance⁴⁵and contact⁴⁶," iterating that Australian-Kurds, more so than Swedish-Kurds, are expected to learn or acquire the culture-specific behavioural skills, such as the language, customs and traditions that are necessary to negotiate the Australian cultural milieu through decreased contact with, and thereby maintenance of, their Kurdish culture.

Yoruk's Theory of "Paternalism Towards Kurds"⁴⁷ affirms this notion, upholding that the increased homogenisation of minority Middle Eastern cultures, aided further by mass media and international migration, reduced overall social discussion. Further, the theory postulates that Kurds are less active in the social sphere across Australia in comparison to Sweden because of varied forms of economic, and social paternalism⁴⁸. If this is true, the use of social assistance by Australian governments, to "restructure the internal structure of the working class"⁴⁹ has increased the acculturation process as Kurdish diaspora have become a large part of the "expanding informal proletariat, bifurcating their class and ethnic identities in doing so".⁵⁰ Hence, the decrease in social discourse within Australia may reflect the inherent diffusion of cultural values within the evolution from simple to complex of hybrid contemporary societies.

However, whilst primary and secondary research suggest the increased integration of Kurds within Australian society, the discrepancies in social discourse does not definitively reflect Evolutionary Theory as discussion is inherently formed through sociological frameworks. Indeed, In contemporary society, the discrepancy of social discourse around Kurds, between Sweden and Australia, is also enculturated through educational systems at the meso level, as further identified in a primary questionnaire, with 1%⁵¹ of respondent noting Australian educational institutions were responsible for providing explicit education on Kurdish communities within respective societies, compared to 18% of Swedish respondents.

Notably, the first aspect of the "Social Control of Kurds Theory," argues the absence of Kurdish social discussion within Australian education systems as demonstrative of the potential for institutions to regulate themselves in accordance with the social values entrenched within macro-level government discourse.⁵² In the Kurds case, the integrationist government rhetoric, incentivising inwards interaction, towards the new homeland in Australia rather than the outwards interactions towards the former homeland in Kurdistan, serves to ensure that that Kurdish-Australian citizens only act within and in relation to one political space, namely the country in which they are citizens, hence accelerating their assimilation process within Australian society.⁵³ This suggests social control of Kurdish discourse, as unrestricted social discourse undermines the power and authority of macro-level legislation and historiography, with Australian focus group respondents noting "a lack of access to the resource of education for Kurds,"⁵⁴ reflective of institutionalised expectations of Kurdish-Australians acting inwards, towards the new homeland, rather than outwards towards the former, thereby validating domineering political rhetoric.

- 43 Hassanpour, A., Skutnabb-Kangas, T. and Chyet, M. (1996). The non-education of Kurds: A Kurdish perspective. *International Review of Education*, 42(4), pp.367-379.
- 44Term used by John Berry, author of Sam, D. and Berry, J. (2010). Acculturation. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5(4), pp.472-481. to highlight the four strategies of acculturation as assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalisation.
- 45Term used by John Berry, author of Sam, D. and Berry, J. (2010). Acculturation. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5(4), pp.472-481. to express the degree to which people wish to maintain their heritage cultures and identities
- 46 Term used by John Berry, author of Sam, D. and Berry, J. (2010), Acculturation. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5(4), pp.472-481 referring to the degree to which people wish to have contact with those who are outside their group and participate with them in the daily life of the larger society.
- 47 Yörük, E. and Özsoy, H. (2013) Shifting forms of Turkish state paternalism toward the Kurds: social assistance as “benevolent” control. *Dialectical Anthropology*, 37(1), pp.153-158.
- 48 Term used by Erdem Yörük, author of Shifting forms of Turkish state paternalism toward the Kurds: social assistance as “benevolent” control to describe the economic development, through social assistance programs, involving Kurds as crucial instruments to manufacture Kurdish consent in eroding legitimacy among the Kurds
- 49 Ibid
- 50 Ibid
- 51 Appendix E: Swedish Focus group
- 52 Appendix A: Questionnaire
- 53 Janowitz, M. (1975). Sociological Theory and Social Control. *American Journal of Sociology*, 81(1), .82-108.
- 54 Khayati, K. and Dahlstedt, M. (2014). Diaspora Formation Among Kurds In Sweden. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 4(2).