THE EFFECT OF IDENTITY ON THE CONFLICT IN SYRIA

by

AYHAM ALHUSEEN

Submitted to the Institute of Social Science

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
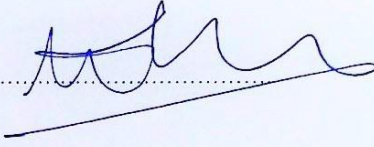
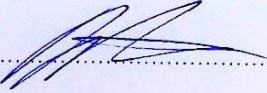Master of Arts

Sabancı University

July 2017

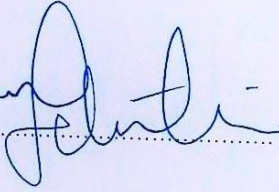The Effect of Identity on the Conflict in Syria

Approved by:

Asst. Prof. Kerim Can Kavaklı

   (Thesis   Supervisor)

Prof.   Meltem Müftüler-Baç

   (Jury Member)

Asst. Prof. Selin Türkeş-Kılıç

   (Jury Member)

Date of Approval: 26.07.2017

ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF IDENTITY ON CONFLICT IN SYRIA

AYHAM ALHUSEEN

MA. Thesis, July 2017

Thesis Supervisor Asst. Prof. Kerim Can Kavaklı

Since the conflict started in Syria in 2011, the borders between identities started to grow and the identity started to emerge as one the main issues in the Syrian conflict.. To understand the role of identity in this conflict, I collect and analyze data from inside Syria. This rare dataset gives us an insight about the perception of the Syrian people inside Syria. I find that the different identities (Arab and Kurdish) reacted in a similar manner to some questions while they reacted differently to others. When asked about their migration or post conflict preference, both Arabs and Kurds reacted similarly and the identity did not have an effect. However, when asked about their support to an initiative as a possible solution to the conflict or how they perceive the role of the UN in the conflict, the responses of the Arabic participants were different than the Kurds.

Keywords: Syria, Conflict, Identity, Migration, Ethnicity, Post-conflict.

ÖZET

SURİYE'DEKİ ÇATIŞMADA KİMLİK ETKİSİ

AYHAM ALHUSEEN

Yüksek Lisans Tezi Temmuz 2017

Tez Danışmannı: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Kerim Can Kavaklı

Suriye'de 2011 yılında başlayan çatışmadan beri, kimlikler arası Sınırlar büyümeye başladı ve kimlik, Suriye'deki çatışmada temel konulardan biri olarak boy göstermeye başladı. Bu çatışmadaki kimliğin rolünü anlamak için ben, Suriye'nin içinden veri toplayıp analiz ediyorum. Bu nadir veriler bize, Suriye'nin içindeki Suriye'li halkların yüzdesi hakkında bir fikir vermektedir. Ben farklı kimliklerin (Araplar ve Kürtler) bazı sorulara, diğer kimliklere farklı reaksiyon gösterirken, aralarında aynı biçimde reaksiyon gösterdiklerini keşfettim. Onlara göç veya çatışma sonrası tercihleri sorulduğunda, Araplar ve Kürtler'in benzer şekilde tepki veriyorlar ve kimlik herhangi bir etki göstermiyor. Bununla beraber, çatışmaya mümkün bir çözüm olan açılıma bunların desteği sorulduğunda veya çatışmada Birleşmiş Milletler'in rolünü nasıl buldukları sorulduğunda, Arap katılımcıların Kürtler'den farklı cevap verdiği görülmüştür.

Anahtar kelimeler: Suriye, çatışma, kimlik, göç, etnik köken, çatışma sonrası.

Dedication

I would like to humbly dedicate this work to all of my family and friends. Especially to my lovely wife Rukaia who has been a constant source of love and support. I am lucky to spend the rest of my life with her, my amazing parents Ghassan and Wedad who always encouraged me to go on every adventure, especially this one, and my dear bothers Waddah and Mo'men.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

List of Symbols and Appreviations

IDPs: Internally Displaced People.

Irregulars: paramilitary, guerrillas, death squads, secret police and other unofficial groups involved into violent conflict.

IRB Form: Institutional Review Board Form.

PCPB: post-conflict peacebuilding.

UN: United Nations.

1. Introduction

Syria has a lot of diverse identities which have been living with each other for a very long time. Those identities coexisted and lived in a peaceful manner for the most part. However, since the conflict started in Syria in 2011, the borders between these identities started to grow. Armed groups from each identity started to emerge with the purpose of protecting the group from the other groups. Those armed groups started to fight each other which made the gap grow even bigger. Each group started to promote its own interest as the only solution to the crisis in Syria. The current destruction of Syria is not merely the infrastructural or physical destruction but it is also a process of societal devastation.

This research explores the effect of a person's ethnic identity on the way they see the solution for the Syrian crisis. There have been several initiatives by the international community to stop the violence in Syria. These initiatives had mixed responses from the different parties on the ground inside Syria. This research will explore how one's identity can change their attitude towards such an initiative. The focus will be on how the Arabic and Kurdish ethnicities are affecting the current conflict in Syria. With few previous work that focuses on identity in Syria, especially the ethnic one, it is important to examine this topic. The Syrian conflict's effect is spreading over a wide area of the world and its consequences can last for generations to come. A report from News Decoder describes the reasons behind the Syrian conflict's importance as "for a mix of reasons — historical, religious, geographic and geopolitical — Syria now represents one of the world's biggest and thorniest challenges as it spawns a refugee crisis and puts Russia and Iran on a possible collision course with the United States and its allies" (News Decoder, 2015). Another report from The Hill states that the Syrian conflict "has fueled the biggest refugee crisis since World War II" (Fabian, 2016). The same report include a statement from Barrack Obama where he says ""The situation in Syria … haunts me constantly" (Fabian, 2016). Many political and media sources provide some inconsistent reasons behind the conflict and the situation on the ground inside Syria. But it is hard to find any coverage about the opinions of Syrian people about it. The lack of accessibility and communication methods, security risks, and many more reasons makes it very difficult to get the perception of the Syrians inside Syria about the conflict.

For my thesis I communicated with Syrian citizens who are still inside Syria at the time of data collection through an online survey. The survey consisted of questions about respondent's background and three issues related to the war. One part was about how the conflict will end and which party might win the war. The first part contained a hypothetical initiative to solve the conflict presented by the United Nations UN. It asked the participants about their attitude towards the initiative. This part included a survey experiment where some of the participants were presented with the initiative without the support of any international party, while the remaining participants were presented with the initiative with the support of the US government. The experiment reflected no difference in the responses of the control or the treatment groups which might be a result of several factors. However, when the responses of the Arabic participants are compared to the Kurds, a difference in the attitude is detected. Some Arabic participants totally rejected the initiative while no Kurdish participants did. The perception of the role of the UN was also different between the Arabs and the Kurds. More Arabic participants thought that the UN is supporting the Assad regime than the Kurds, even though a considerable amount of the Kurdish participants did think that its role is supporting the regime. Secondly, the survey also included questions about the migration and why the respondents did not leave Syria. The responses of both the Arabs and the Kurds were similar with the majority having the means of leaving but they wanted to stay. The third part of the survey was about the post-conflict reconstruction. I asked the respondents whether they would prefer cash or training after the war. The identity here did not show an effect and the majority of the Arabs and the Kurds preferred training over funding after the war.

This research provides an important insight about the cause and effect analysis about the role that the identity plays in the Syrian conflict. The Syrian conflict is still new and very little work has been done about it. Most previous research provides some information with surveys about the opinions of the Syrian citizens focusing on single variables without examining the connection to other variables and factors that might have a cause and effect relationship with them. The ethnic identity has also received very little attention and more focus should be directed towards it to identify the role it plays in the Syrian conflict in particular and in conflicts in general.

Before discussing the conflict itself, it is important to discuss the structure of the Syrian state and the historic relationship between the different identities in Syria. This will be the next section. Then a discussion about the previous literature available on the main topics discussed in this thesis and about the Syrian conflict. Then the research design and methodology is presented to explain how the data was collected and what the survey design is. Afterwards, a summary about the sample is presented with the main descriptive statistical information about their geographical distribution, educational background, and gender distribution. Then the main findings are presented in three sections; the first is about the end of the conflict and their expectations about who will win and how. This section includes the findings for the survey experiment. Second, is the migration preferences and why they stayed and where they expect to be in five years. Third, the post conflict findings are presented and the support preference in that period. The final part includes the conclusion of the thesis.

2. Background about the Identities in Syria

The Syrian Arab Republic is a small country in the Middle East. It is usually referred to as Syria, and has Damascus, The world's oldest inhabited capital, as the capital. The history of Syria goes back to thousands of years BC. The word Syria is most likely derived from the name of the Neo-Assyrian Empire established in the 10th century BC in the region. Many empires across the history took control of Syria. Some of those empires were established and vanquished on its lands. With the controlling powers changing over time, many ethnicities and religions inhabited the country across the history, and this diversity still exist until today.

The current state of Syria was established after the World War I ended in 1916. When the Ottoman Empire retrieved from the Levant area, the Levant was divided by France and UK after the Sykes-Picot Agreement into Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine. The states that resulted from the agreement still has a lot of conflicts within them and they still suffer from violence, oppression, terrorism, and many other problems that affect not only the people living there or the neighboring countries, but the entire world is being affected by the outcomes of these problems.

One of the most important and deep issues in the area is the different ethno-religious identities of the inhabiting people which are mostly distinguished by Ethnicity, Religion, or a mixture of both. Some of the major identities that exist in Syria include; Arabs, Kurds, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Alawism, Assyrians, Yazidis, Druze, and more. Each of these identities has its own characteristics and unique bonds to the other identities. Figure (1) is a product of the Gulf2000 project by Micheal Izady. It maps the geographical distribution of the main identities in Syria (Izady, 2010). This paper will focus only on the Arabs and the Kurds in Syria and how each identity is responding and being affected by the current conflict. It is worth noting that Arabs are divided into smaller groups based on religious background. The Sunni Muslim Arabs are the majority in Syria with almost 60% of the population while the Alawites Muslim Arabs represent around 12% of the Syrian population. The Kurds are mostly Sunni Muslims and they represent 9% of the total Syrian population.

This chapter will describe the Syrian state before and after 2011 when the conflict started in Syria with a focus on the Arabs and Kurds within this structure and the main events that affected each of these identities within the past 50 years.

Figure 1: Geographical Distribution of Main Identities in Syria (Izady, 2010)
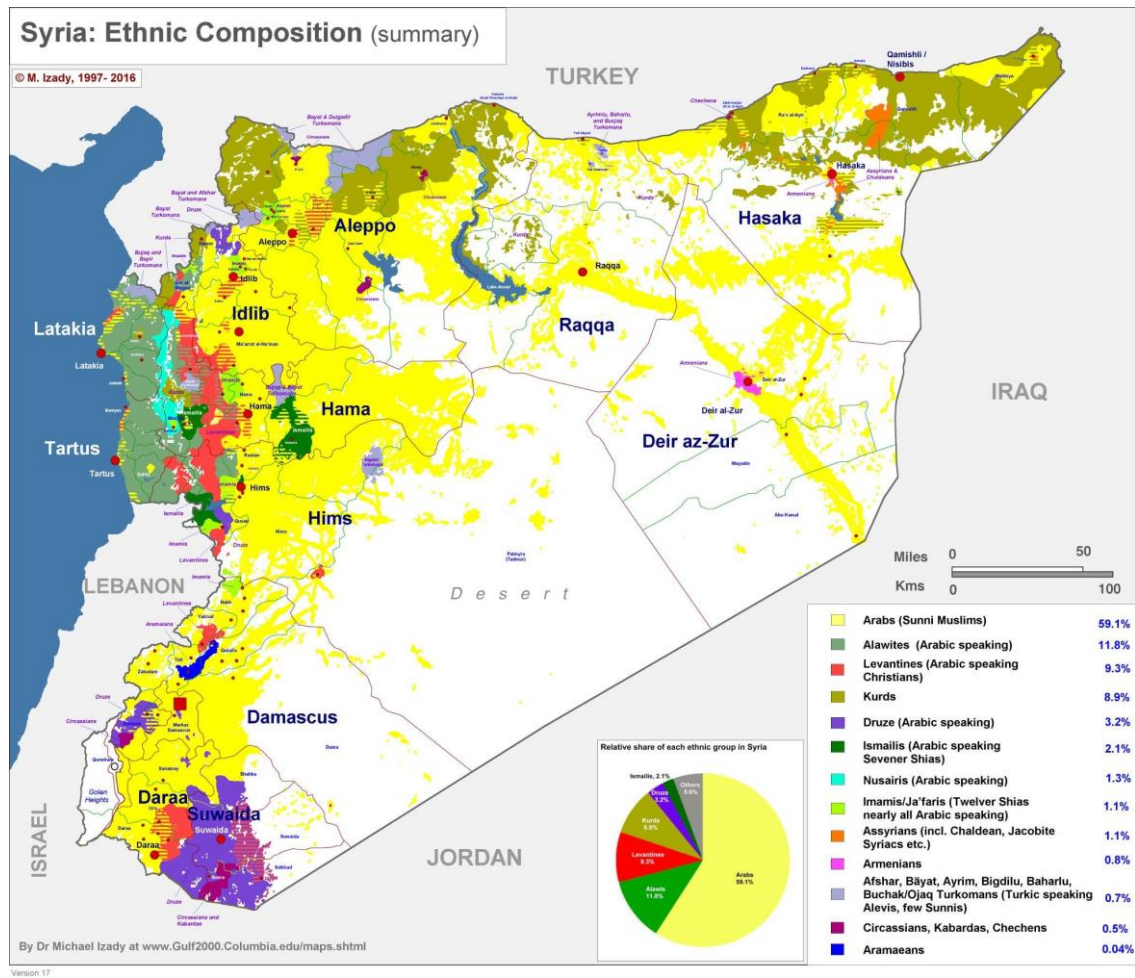
2.1. Before 2011

The Structure of the Syrian State

In 1946, the last French soldier evacuated from Syria and it became a fully independent state. The new state was not stable and during the first ten years it witnessed multiple coups and change of governing authority. The Baath political party; an Arab nationalist socialist party was established in 1947. The main objective of the Baath party is to create the Arabic nation from the Arabic gulf to the Atlantic Ocean which includes the MENA region. It considered the Syrian state to be transient state that was created by the invaders and it should be merged with the other Arabic nations to create the united Arab nation. In 1958, a step towards this dream of creating the unified Arabic nation

happened. Syria and Egypt united to create the United Arab Republic with Jamal Abdel Nasir the president of Egypt as the president of the new state. With this new state, all Syrian political parties were dissolved including the Baath party which advocated for the union. However, this union was ended in 1961 by a coup of Syrian military officers and the union dissolved.

In 1963, the Baath party seized control of the Syrian state and became the ruling power. Hafiz Al Assad was a member of the Baath party and he became the minister of defense in 1966. After three years, in 1970 Hafiz Al Assad leads a coup and overthought the president at that time and became the president while keeping the Baath party as the ruling party. Hafiz remained the president until he died in June 2000. His second son Bashar Al Assad became a president afterwards, and he is still the internationally acknowledged president until the writing of this document in 2017.

The rule of the Assad family depended heavily on the military forces and security branches. Ahed Al Hendi (2011) identifies the main four security directories in Syria as, Military Intelligence, Air Force Intelligence, State Security, and Political Security. The heads of two of these branches are Alawites[1] which is the Islam sect that the Assad family was from, while the heads of the other two are Sunnis[2] which is the majority of the Syrian population. But this is only in theory, the Assad family controls everything in the country and the connections with the Assad family overrides the ranking position within the institutes. Al Hendi explains it as, "A lower-ranking officer with ties to the Assad family, might possess greater authority and privileges than his superiors, simply due to family connections." Al Hendi goes on to describe the results of this mechanism as; "Many Syrians have, unfortunately, experienced first-hand the nepotism, corruption, and ruthlessness of the fear factories run by this inner circle." (Hendi, 2011). Which is the actual situation on the ground. The Syrian state had institutes that will function on the low to middle level citizens, but it does not apply to higher class citizens with connections to the Assad family or their relatives. If the person in charge of a certain service had a connection to the Assad family or one of the people supported by them, they will be unaffected by laws and regulations. This applies to all aspects of life from the high-level

---

[1] The Alawites are an offshoot of Shia Islam who revere Ali, the Prophet Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law (Spencer, 2016).

[2] Sunnis regard themselves as the orthodox branch of Islam. The name "Sunni" is derived from the phrase "Ahl al-Sunnah", or "People of the Tradition". The tradition in this case refers to practices based on what the Prophet Muhammad said, did, agreed to or condemned (BBC News, 2016).

trade and economic aspects that all had to benefit an Assad family member to be able to exist. To the low-level services where employees can take charges and bribes to provide that service to the people despite it being their right. Examples to basic services where people usually had to pay to get them done include; travel documents or permits, educational documents, complicated lawsuit judgment, identification papers, police intervention for some issues… and many more. Syrian citizens knew and learned how to live with the corruption that was deep into the country's institutes and it became a rule of life.

It is also notable that the Syrian Arab Republic has witnessed a very long state of emergency. It was declared in 1963 when the Baath party seized power, and it continued until the revolution started in 2011 when the Assad regime declared that it was over and replaced it with antiterrorism laws. According to Alarabiya channel, it was the longest state of emergency in the modern states history (Alarabiya, 2011). The state of emergency gave the Syrian government very wide power over the Syrian citizens. The security forces practically were able to do almost everything without legal liability. The detainees were supposed to not be detained for more than three years, but in real life this can go on for much more than that. The Syrian citizens would stand in customary courts with no idea where they are, who are its members and without the right to defend themselves or being a citizen. (Alarabiya, 2011). This unlimited authority and the ability to abuse citizens without consequences has maintained fear and the lack of feeling of belonging to the normal citizens without being affiliated with the Assad family or the security forces.

The Arabs in the Syrian Arab Republic

When talking about the Arabic ethnicity in Syria, it is clear from the name of the country the depth and strength of the connection. Even though the name of the Syrian state in English is the Syrian Arab Republic. In the Arabic language, the order of the words is different. The name in Arabic language is The Arab Syrian Republic. This is important because in theory, the Arabic origin and belonging is a higher priority than belonging to the Syrian state. The nationality of a Syrian citizen when filling an official document is expressed as "Arabic Syrian" regardless of the ethnicity or the origin of the citizen. It is assumed that the Arabic ethnicity is the container to all other ethnicities in

the country. This is advocated by the government and the Baath party for the future Arabic nation that it aims to create.

This might create the impression that majority Arab citizens are the ones controlling the country. However, this is not the actual situation on the ground. The Baath party and its principles was a mere front to the Assad family's power over the country. The Assad family is from an Alawites background. For this reason, the Alawites were at an advantage than the other Arabic groups within the country. The main leaders of the military were Alawites and they were given an advantage over all other groups within the security forces and other state institutes. Which created contempt and dissatisfaction among the majority Sunni Arabs. The Sunni Arabs felt that they were discriminated against and that the country was held down by this group that oppressed and corrupted its structure and institutes. An attempted revolution against the Assad regime happened in 1982. The Assad regime used extreme violence and successfully oppressed it with tens of thousands of Syrians massacred and many more disappearing within the regime's prisons in the following years. The results of this attempt created a lot of fear and suppressed hatred towards the regime and its group from the majority of the Sunni Arabs in Syria.

The Kurdish Syrians

The Kurds are a major component of the society in the Levant area. They played a major role in its history and many of the leaders of the area's community were from the Kurdish ethnicity. They coexisted with the other components of the society with no major conflicts before the recent history. However, this started to change after the oppressive, unjust governments that took over the area, especially Syria. Other than the results of these governments that affected all the ethnicities from corruption and oppression and other negative effects, these governments started some activities that damaged certain components of the population and cracked the structure of the Syrian society. As Akram Albunni describes it, "In Syria, the aspects of a "Kurdish national problem" were revealed only by the succession of undemocratic authorities whose legitimacy derived from an ideology saturated with nationalistic intolerance, with no place in diversity, respect for human rights and the interests of other ethnicities" (Albunni, 2004). One of the major events that were executed by these authorities that affected the Kurdish Syrians was the exceptional population census in 1962. This census excluded more than 70 thousand

Kurdish Syrians from the Syrian nationality and treated them as foreigners. The number has increased now to almost three hundred thousand. Another event that created deep issues between the Arabs and the Kurds in Northern Syria was the Arabic Strap project in the early seventies that aimed to create and Arabic barrier between the Syrian Kurds and the other Kurds in neighboring countries. The construction of the Ufrat dam created the opportunity to remove all the Arabic villages in the area that was flooded by the water to the area close to the borders in the north and giving them lands that the Kurds claim it was taken from them. The conflict on these lands continue until today with both sides claiming ownership of it. In 2004, a Kurdish uprising in the north-eastern part of Syria started against the regime's injustice but it was successfully oppressed with hundreds of victims and more pressure on the Kurds in that area.

There are also some Kurdish nationalist parties that advocate to create the Kurdish State which will group parts from Syria, Turkey, Iran, and Iraq together to create this state. The advocacy towards this state by some Kurdish political parties and the advocacy against it by the Assad regime created some fear and distrust between the Arabs and the Kurds.

2.2. After 2011

In mid-March 2011, the Syrian revolution started against the Assad regime. The revolution was encouraged by the Arabic Spring where many other revolutions against the dictatorships in the MENA region has emerged. The Syrian revolution was spontaneous and unorganized. It aimed to free the country from the oppressive regime and create a democratic state that will overcome the oppression and the dictatorship that it suffered from for more than 40 years.

The revolution started with peaceful movement that was faced with extreme violence by the Assad regime. The regime considered all demonstrators as traitors and terrorists. The security forces would use live bullets against the demonstrations to kill the participants and impose fear on the people to stop the demonstrations. Anyone who is suspected to participate in the demonstrations would be arrested and sent to one of the security branches without trial or the ability to contact or find out where they were taken. During detention, extreme types of torture are used against the detainees that cause permanent disabilities and death. In most cases, when a person dies in detention the bodies are not given to their families and only their ID cards are given and the families are told that the

person is dead. Human Rights Watch published a report based on Caesar's 50,000 photos from the Assad security agencies that describes this process[3]. The report mentions the testimony of Maryam Hallaq, the mother of Ayham Ghazzoul which was arrested by the Assad security forces which states, "they gave me a piece of paper and sent me to Tishreen Military Hospital –the Forensic Medicine department—where they gave me a [death] certificate stating that Ayham had been killed" (Human Rights Watch, 2015). The report mentions that they did not return Ayham's remains to his mother, and they did not provide her with any of his personal effects.

The Assad regime's violence caused the peaceful movement to deviate from its course and it attempted to defend itself by force. The cycle of violence escalated as more and more violent methods were used by each side and the regime officially started to use the military with all its capacities to oppress the revolution. Heavy machinery including Tanks and armed vehicles, air force including jets and helicopters, even ballistic missiles were used against civilian areas. The revolution turned into a war and the peaceful movement faded in favor of violence.

The Arabs

The Sunni Arabic majority areas were the areas that witnessed the strongest response to the revolution. The biggest demonstrations that almost paralyzed the regime happened in Homs, Hamah, Deir Ezzor, and Daraa in 2011. With the progress of events the regime lost more than 60% of Syria in favor of the rebels. Most of these areas were Sunni Arabs majority. However, the regime used its air force to torture these areas and daily bombing targeted all vital institutions within them. Hospitals, electricity and communications' facilities, even schools were targeted by those attacks. With the focused attacks comes the indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas where many people die on daily bases. The regime made sure that the areas that goes out of its control would suffer severe consequences. This is the reason that Sunni Arabic citizens tend to be affected more by the war.

---

[3] Caesar is a defector who left Syria with tens of thousands of images, many showing the bodies of detainees who died in Syria's detention centers. A team of international lawyers, as well as Syrian activists, interviewed the defector, codenamed "Caesar," who stated that, as an official forensic photographer for the Military Police, he had personally photographed bodies of dead detainees and helped to archive thousands more similar photographs (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

After the revolution began, the rebels tried to reject the identity that was created by the regime in the past years. Starting with the flag, the rebels considered the current flag to represent the Baath party and its regime. They raised a new flag which was used before the Baath party controlled the country and they rejected the current flag of the Syrian state. They also created a coalition of the main rebel political powers, with the help of outside supporters, and the coalition created a temporary government that also rejects the Assad regime's government. These activities, and some other similar ones, increased the crack of the Syrian identity between the rebels and the regime.

The rebels fought ISIS from the beginning and they were the mostly affected by it. Most of the lands that ISIS controlled were taken from the rebels including Al-Raqa, Deir Ezzor, and large areas in Aleppo and Damascus's countryside. A military operation called The Ufrat Sheild, in Arabic "درع الفرات", supported by Turkey helped the rebels to regain control on some areas in Aleppo's northern and eastern countryside. As this operation fought against ISIS, it was aiming to stop the Kurdish forces from connecting the eastern part of the areas that it controls to the western part.

The Kurds:

The Kurds had a more organized political leadership that has been active for many years and they had a different approach to the revolution. They participated on smaller scale in the peaceful movements and the armed forces of the Kurdish parties did not interfere against the regime. In fact, they reached some sort of an agreement with the regime. The Kurdish forces and agencies in some cities like Qamishli and Hasakah are functioning in parallel to the regime's agencies. The regime's authorities have decreased and it stopped interfering in many aspects of the lives of the people and it still has its military and security branches in those cities while the Kurdish armed forces are working in the same cities as well. There is also some coordination between the regime and the Kurdish forces but the relationship is not clear or public. A report published on Independent includes a statement from one of the leaders of the Kurds in Syria. "The overthrow of President Bashar al-Assad by Isis and rebel groups that are affiliated to al-Qaeda would be a calamity for the world", says the Syrian Kurdish leader Saleh Muslim (Cockburn, 2015). The report continues to describe that "The Syrian Kurds, previously marginalized and discriminated against by the Damascus government, have become crucial players in the country's civil war over the last year" (Cockburn, 2015). Still the

relationship is difficult to describe. Another report by Al-Monitor describes this relationship in the case of Aleppo when the rebel forces retreated from it as "This apparent coordination between the Syrian regime and the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) against armed groups that were keeping Sheikh Maksoud under steady fire have prompted comments about "Kurdish-regime cooperation." But it is not that simple. What we have is friendship and enmity coexisting" (Tastekin, 2016).

This relationship has kept the Kurdish controlled areas from suffering as much as the other areas in the Northern part of Syria. The services are damaged especially electricity, water, and connections but not as much as the areas that was in the middle of the armed conflict. The armed conflict did not reach many of the Kurdish controlled areas and the destruction by the bombing and shelling of the regime did not target them at all. They did however create their own management which is called Self-Management Agency and they later declared their intention of creating a local government in the areas under their control. The Kurdish armed forces and political parties use the flag of Kurdistan, the planned state of the Kurdish nationality, in parallel to the Syrian flag. The parties that ally with the rebels use the flag that is declared by the rebels as the Syrian flag while the parties that ally with the regime use the regime's flag. However, both use the same Kurdistan flag.

The Kurdish forces created the Democratic Forces of Syria which includes some Arabic and Assyrian armed groups but its majority and leadership is from the Kurdish nationalist PYD party's armed forces. These forces with the support of the USA mainly could push ISIS back from many areas in the northern part of Syria. These forces are considered by its supporters a tool to fight ISIS. However, it is considered by the Arabs and Turkey to be a threat to the area as it gives the Kurds control over large areas in the northern part of Syria.

2.3. Demographic Change

The vicious war had a huge effect on the civilians living in Syria. The estimated numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees state that more than 6.3 Million IDPs exist inside Syria, and almost 5 Million refugees live in neighboring countries, Egypt and Europe. Figure (2) shows the map made by Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) which presents the numbers of Syrian refugees and IDPs by mid Jan 2017 (ERCC, 2017). These numbers when compared to the Syrian population

which is estimated to be around 23 Million by 2010 shows that almost half of the Syrian population has left their homes to become either a refugee or an IDP. This process is changing the structure of the Syrian community and creating deep problems that will require generations to stop the conflicts emerging from it after the war is over.

Each of the parties fighting on the ground in Syria faces accusations of creating demographic change in favor of its supporters. The Sunni Arabs are accused of pushing Shi'a and Alawite Muslims out of their homes while the Kurds of bushing the Arabs out of their areas, and the regime faces the largest accusations of removing the Syrian nationality of its opposition while giving it to foreign militias that fight along its side.

Figure 2: IDPs, Syrian refugees, and Palestinian refugees from Syria (13/01/2017) (ERCC, 2017)
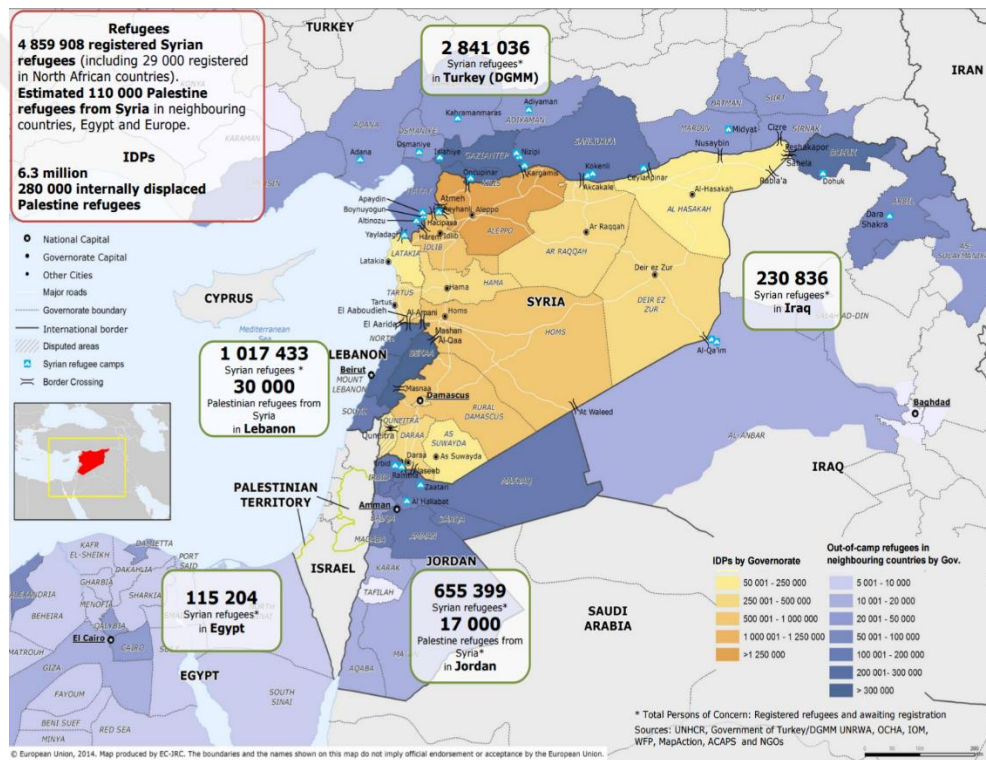
The refugee crisis is also affecting the Syrian identity. With the sixth year of the conflict, many of the refugees in other countries are settling and becoming used to their new environments. As the time progress, it will be harder for them to return to their homes after it is destroyed by the war and with difficult circumstances and very poor services including especially education and health services.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Ethnicity and Conflict

Ethnic identity is hard to measure. Individuals simply do not conform to any single identity, especially those based on ethnicity. The "pure" origin of the person is considered to signal more belonging than "less pure" ones. The purity is measured by the family and ancestors of the group member. Turton describes ethnicity as it has no meaning beyond the "imagined" sense. It is based on collective belief in the existence of the community (Turton, 1997). Roland Hsu sets three main aspects of ethnicity; first, ethnicity is considered a problematic issue that is testing societies. Second, ethnicity is used to create a seemingly homogeneous social group whose members are assumed to have similar attributes. Third, ethnicity is considered to cover other elements of social classification like class (Hsu, 2010).

When discussing the conflict caused by identity, it is usually focused on collective violence which can be defined as "an infliction of violence deliberately carried out by actors who are, or perceive themselves to be, part of a group with a common purpose beyond the immediate act of violence" (Brzoska, 2007). As Tilly argues "the 20th Century had more collective violence than any other century of the previous 10,000 years" (Tilly, 2003). However, ethnicity, religion and other identities often have dynamic relationships to conflicts. It can be one of the main causes for conflicts and it affects the way the conflicts are handled. Some consider it to be the reason why conflicts become violent. When individuals get very attached to their own identity and they create barriers between themselves and other identities, sectarianism manifests itself. Al-Qarawee (2013) argues that, "sectarianism lacks features that could make it a constructive or stabilizing force. It is based on conflict-oriented narratives, fed by mutual hatreds and victimizations" (Al-Qarawee, 2013). Examples of such violence can be found in Rawanda and Sri Lanka. Economic and other factors does not explain the conflict and its results there. Humphreys, Posner, and Weinstein states that "it is clear that the Hutu rebels wished to kill selectively, just as the Sinhalese rioters sought to murder only Tamils. The goal in both cases was to eliminate members of the out-group while protecting one's own co-ethnics" (Humphreys, Posner, & Weinstein, 2002). This shows the negative role that identities can play in conflicts when they are separated. It can create a negative attitude towards other parties and their actions. The rejection of any

solution to the conflict presented by an "enemy" identity usually happens and the solution is less likely to be accepted. Even when it holds no harm to the other identity and the solution is the best available option.

Another example can be found in Sudan. In Jok's discussion about identity where the identity in Sudan was unified into a single one and all other identities were excluded. Jok states that "Arabic and Islam as an interconnected model of homogenizing the people of Sudan. The ideology is too rigid and it rejects any negotiation and compromise over these twin models" (Jok, 2013). Any solution that compromises those identities cannot be accepted or tolerated. Solutions that present new identities are immediately rejected without negotiations. Not only the rejection of solutions, identity can lead to one solution over the other. (Beber, Roessler, & Scacco, 2014) Finds that exposure to Southern Sudanese rioting in Khartoum makes Northern Sudanese respondents more likely to support the secession of the South and less likely to support Southerners remaining as citizens in the North.

On the other hand, Jenkins (2000) stated that "ethnicity, or identity, doesn't always explain what people do (not even when they insist that it does)". He continues to argue that "ethnic differences, even when combined with clear-cut differences of interests, do not necessarily lead to conflict" (Jenkins, 2000). The conflicts usually are much more complex than simply based primordial ethnic differences. As Turton argues, those who justify or explain these wars through pure ethnic interpretations, inevitably renders their arguments to the over-simplistic "ancient hatreds" narrative. This over-simplistic narrative ignores the (re)production of violence manifested in the tragedy of the armed conflict that creates and perpetuates these sentiments and salience of differences. Ethnic sentiment seems to be able to motivate people to act in extremely violent ways but on closer inspection, the empiricism of statement does not hold true. Even most recent examples (Yugoslavia and Rwanda) are far more complex, than simply "ancient hatreds." (Turton, 1997). In fact, identity can be used to de-escalate conflicts. Using the leadership of bigger collective identity groups to stop the violence created by a smaller subsection of it. It also can be utilized for solving issues or as guarantor for agreements between conflicting parties to make it acceptable to its members. Looking only at the negative role of ethnicities in conflicts does not reflect the entire effect that it creates.

3.2. When and Why People Move

The Syrian conflict has left millions displaced and has forced many more to seek refuge in other states around the world. Why would people in general leave their country and move to places with other cultures and restart a new life where in most cases they will need to learn a new language, traditions, law and economical systems? The types of movement can be categorized, into two broad categories: voluntary and forced migration. Voluntary migration is defined as individual based choice and will to leave the country where one is located for another. The canon on this topic is very extensive. People can move due to many factors including those related to economic, cultural or political dynamics. On the other hand, forced migration is defined by externally forced displacement, caused by a range of factors from the emergence of armed conflict to deportation (Gibney, 2013). Refugee is a subcategory of forced migrants, who have been given official status as refugees in foreign states based on the principle states cannot repatriate individuals to other states where the life of the individual would be in jeopardy. The Syrian conflict has produced the largest number of refugees in the world. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR reports that 55% of the world's refugees come from three countries with Syria producing 5.5 million of them. Figure (3) is from the UNHCR official website that shows the main refugees sources and hosts (UNHCR, 2016).

Figure 3: Main refugees' sources and hosts (UNHCR, 2016)
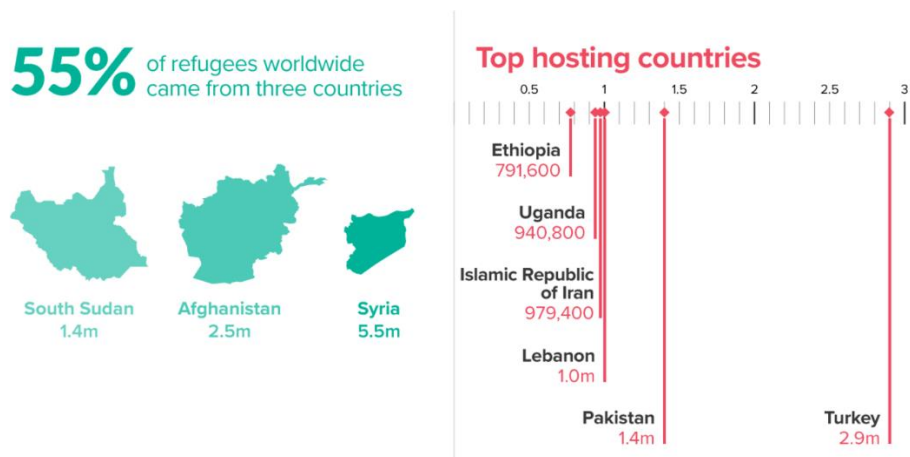
It shows the UNHCR statistics about the main countries producing refugees in the world and the main hosting countries for those refugees. Turkey comes on top of the list of hosting countries with around three million. The vastness of refugee numbers, hosted in

Turkey is evident when compared to Pakistan, second on the list, which currently hosts less than half of those numbers.

Yet it is important to ask, why would people move out of their countries against their will? Will Moore and Stephen Shellman in response to this question would argue it is violence. Their paper titled "Fear of Persecution: Forced Migration, 1952-1995" explores the dynamics of contemporary reality forcing individuals to leave their homes while also examining which states produced more refugees than others (Moore, 2004). Moore and Shellman mention the work of (Schmeidl, 1997) that follows the work of (Clark, 1989) which describes three types of factors that influence forced migration: root causes, proximate conditions, and intervening factors. These factors are one way to explain the forced migration. However, it is important to note there are other ways to describe and analyze the process. Moore and Shellman conclude that, "the violent behavior of governments and dissidents (and their interaction) are the primary determinants of forced migration flows" (Moore, 2004). So, the higher the degree of violence in a place the higher the possibility of producing refugees and hence making forced migration more likely to occur. With a lower level of violence conflicts should produce lower numbers of refugees. According to Moore and Shellman, "Institutional democracy and income do influence the size of forced migration flows, but their impact is relatively small: the push factor of violence drives the process" (Moore, 2004). Therefore, violence seems to be the main force behind forced migration and other factors tend to have less of an effect. If other economic and political issues occurred without violence, the amount of forced migration will be much smaller when compared to a similar situation with a violent factor.

Since the end of World War II, there has been no major war between great powers and with time, interstate wars have decreased in favor of intrastate wars. Thus, in our contemporary global society civil wars within failed states are considered to be the main source of forced migration by many scientists. Keely describes the source of interstate conflict as, "fragile, failing, or failed states, not wars between states, caused this post-Cold War displacement" (Keely, 1996). Strong and stable states do not produce refugees and forced migration is very unlikely to happen. Some other scientists like Wimmer and Schetter stated in response to the high migration flow from Afghanistan that the "main problem Afghanistan faces is the absence of a monopoly of power and of other basic

state functions" (Wimmer A and Schetter, 2003). When a state is in this situation, the conflict will affect the livelihoods of many that in turn causes the production of large numbers of refugees. The migrants that flee from their homes will seek refuge in other states that usually provide assistance to the incoming refugees as obligated by international laws.

However, the situation on the ground can be different and in many cases the political leadership of some countries will advocate for banning refugees and immigrants from entering their borders. Jeremy Hein and Tarique Niazi describe why the states might not be able to provide assistance to the refugees. They argue the "state is proving less and less capable of assisting forced migrants due to: (1) the vast increase in the numbers of people displaced during a big forced migration crisis. (2) New forms of forced migration that do not fit existing forms of refugee protection" (Niazi & Hein , 2016). When states are faced with a huge wave of refugees, their institutions become incapable of handling the crisis and it becomes very difficult to provide the services that are usually provided to them. Also, when the cases do not have regulations or laws to respond to them (like IDPs or Stateless people) the states find it difficult to act and respond to the crisis. In such cases, unofficial institutions take part in the process like NGO's, charities, and religious groups. The religious identity can help in responding to the refugee crisis when the states fall short. Hein and Naizi describes it as, "world religions remind us that the primordial refugees did not have a 'nationality' based on a 'country of habitual residence'" (Niazi & Hein , 2016). When migrants from different nationalities seek refuge in a country with similar religion, the religious institutions would play a bigger role in providing them with assistance. The *shared identity* between the refugees and the host communities can help to foster improved relations between the two groups.

3.3. Post Conflict Environment

After long and violent conflicts, societies go through the post conflict phase. It is when the society tries to overcome the atrocities that it suffered during the conflict. In case of failure, the conflict will break and the cycle will need to be completed to find a solution and stop it. Collier, Paul stated, "the post-conflict peace is typically fragile: around half of all civil wars are due to post-conflict relapses" (Collier P. , 2003). This demonstrates how often the conflicts will reignite after the incorrect conclusion the tensions that produced the conflict. There are many difficulties that post conflict societies

go through. Collier, Paul, Anke Hoeffler, and Måns Söderbom in their paper Post-Conflict Risks, identify two main challenges, "Post-conflict societies face two distinctive challenges: economic recovery and reduction of the risk of a recurring conflict" (Collier P. A., 2008). Overcoming those challenges is necessary to overcome and maintain stability after the conflict. Collier's paper reaches the conclusion that, "political solutions need to be supplemented by robust economic and military external assistance" (Collier P. A., 2008). The economic development will take a long time to be effective. Therefore, they recommend military assistance to maintain the peace while the economic progress occurs.

Krause and Oliver in their paper on Peace, Security and Development in Post-Conflict Environments examines the post-conflict peace building (PCPB). They state that "most recent post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation programs have been conducted in an ad hoc and unsystematic way, with little critical self-reflection on the underlying assumptions or structural biases of PCPB efforts" (Krause, 2005). They consider that the process is usually conducted as a temporary response with an assumption that it will accelerate the reconstruction of the state. However, this is not always the case. Looking at the track record of the PCPB operations they state that, "the track record of PCPB is littered with states (Afghanistan, Somalia, Liberia, Angola, Haiti and even Cambodia) in which domestic governance is weak, armed violence remains high, and respect for human rights and the rule of law is questionable" (Krause, 2005). The process is not that simple or successful as it is expected. More planning and considerations needs to be accounted for to promote more successful state building endeavors. Another study by Joakim Kreutz concluded that in armed conflicts, "if the belligerents mobilized along ethnic lines, the risk of recurrence increases" (Joakim, 2010). This is especially the case when the conflict duration is longer. This should be taken into consideration when working with the Syrian conflict as the long duration and the existence of multiple ethnicities and identities where the conflict is affecting their bonds has severely damaged their coexistence.

3.4. Previous Work on the Syrian Conflict:

The Syrian conflict is still very recent and violent and not much work has been conducted about it. It is difficult to obtain accurate data from inside Syria. While the work on the Syrians who fled from Syria is still very small and mostly practical research conducted to design the response to the aid and relief projects and the refugee wave. Most focus goes to the armed and violent aspects of the conflict and how the progress of the armed parties on the ground and how the terrorist attacks are being handled. Very little has been done on the analysis of the conflict and the implications of the problem. A report on the Washington Post about the Syrian refugee crisis states that "the increasing influx of refugees and asylum-seekers to Europe is signaling to the West that the Syrian conflict can no longer be neglected without consequences" (Mironova, Alhamad, & Whitt, 2015). Handling the Syrian refugees is not a temporary action and with the conflict's progress without the sight of a solution also means that more will be coming. Some countries hosted more refugees than others. This also brought another issue into the front. Icduygu describes it as "the Syrian refugee crisis demonstrates the limitations of today's international asylum and protection system, and presents an opportunity for the international community to put the concept of ""burden sharing" into practice" (Icduygu, 2015). As we can see, there are many implications emerging from the Syrian conflict and more work needs to be done to understand its extent.

Most of the work that has been done so far was on the Syrians who left Syria, the reasons they left their country and migrated. The Washington Post's report states that "More than half (57 percent) of ordinary civilians say that they left because it is simply too dangerous to stay; 41 percent say this is also the main reason they left" (Mironova, Alhamad, & Whitt, 2015). Those publications provide an insight about the Syrians' point of view about the conflict. However, the Syrians inside Syria are not being communicated and very small amount of work is targeting them. The dangerous situation makes it extremely difficult to collect information from the inside of Syria.

The work conducted inside Syria is very difficult and there are some publications that present an analysis to some aspects of the conflict. The researches conducted by Badael Foundation such as *Peace Building Defines Our Future Now* research provide some insight about women's role, and basically gender identity, in the peace building process inside Syria (Ghazzawi, Mohammad, & Ramadan, 2015). While *Peace*

Journalism or War Journalism research sheds light on the role of local media groups in supporting peace or advocating for violence (Alhuseen, Abyad, Alwany, & Sabbagh, 2016). The CCSD also conducted some research inside Syria. The report titled *Building peace within Syrian communities* describes the work of the community leaders at the forefront of efforts to build peace in Syria, and the mechanisms that they use (CCSD, Building peace within Syrian communities, 2014). It also published a report about *Perspectives of Key Syrian actors on "Freeze Zones" Initiative* (CCSD, Perspectives of Key Syrian actors on "Freeze Zones" Initiative, 2015). Another report was published about the public accountability inside Syria and how the communities are holding their decision makers accountable for their actions (CCSD, Public Accountability in Syria, 2016). Also, The Day After Foundation TDA published a report about the perception of Syrian citizens inside Syria about the international initiatives (TDA, 2016). Another report by TDA describes how Syrians perceive sectarianism in Syria. (The Day After, 2016). Figure (5) shows the responses of the participants in TDA's survey about the how they perceive other identities in Syria.

Other survey conducted by TDA shows that respondents in both regime and opposition-held areas are united in their rejection of federalism. 44% in opposition-held areas reject it and 57% in regime-held areas. While 79.6% of respondents in Self-Administration areas endorse federalism, more than half strongly support it. (The Day After T. , 2016). These researches are important and provides an insight about Syrian people's perspectives from inside Syria. However, it looks at the opinions of people in different locations without looking at their background and identity. The regime and opposition areas are mostly Arabic majority, while the Self-Administration area are mostly Kurdish majority. Was it the identity of the participant the factor that created this difference? Or was it the experience itself in those areas? It is hard to tell the cause and effect through observations only and without further analysis.

In this thesis the link between the identity and the attitude towards an initiative is what has been examined. The analysis attempts to link the pieces together to understand how they interact and affect each other. Not only the attitude, but also the migration and post conflict preferences are analyzed. It also tries to measure the participants' attitudes indirectly through a survey experiment. The survey experiment used in this survey aimed

to eliminate many factors that might affect the responses and obtain more accurate information. The logic behind using the survey experiment is discussed next.

3.5. Theory behind the Survey Experiment:

There are two main methods for research that include observational and experimental researches. Each of them has their strengths and weaknesses. The main goal of survey experiments is "combining the best aspects of both approaches, capitalizing on their strengths and eliminating many of their weaknesses" (Mutz, 2011). A survey experiment can be described as "to modify one thing in a situation and then compare an outcome to what existed without the modification" (Neuman, 2002). It has many useful ways to be utilized. Mostly it is used to determine the cause and effect relationship between tow variables. "An experiment can powerfully test and focus evidence about causal relationships" (Neuman, 2002). The experiment used here is an empirical one. "In the empirically based experiment, our goal is to determine whether an independent variable has a significant effect on a specific dependent variable" (Neuman, 2002). In this experiment both the control and treatment group are almost identical and the only factor that is changed is the treatment.

Most of the challenges that can be overcome through a survey experiment are described as "challenges include selection bias, spurious correlation, correlated measurement errors, censored data, the lack of true counterfactuals, and mutual causation" (Kuklinski, Gaines, & Quirk, 2006). There have been many researches that utilized a survey experiment. Regarding ethnicity and identity there was an experiment about the effect of race on hiring staff (Michael & Mullainathan. , 2004). The experiment attempted to identify the relationship between the race of a person and the chance of getting a job. The experiment is used here in a similar logic as it tries to determine the effect of the identity on Syrian people's preferences about the conflict and its end.

The different international initiatives towards a solution for the Syrian conflict faced different responses from Syrian citizens. Some would support a certain initiative while they would oppose another. The reasons behind this attitude towards those initiatives can vary. Many factors are claimed to affect it including political, economic, or other factors. The main hypothesis here is that when a certain initiative is presented, it is more likely to be accepted when supported by an international party. The stronger and more support an initiative will receive from international parties, the more likely it will be supported

by the Syrian citizens. Also, it is claimed that the identity has a significant effect over the attitude towards an initiative. When an initiative is presented or supported by a party that is considered an ally or has a shared interests with an identity, it will be more likely that the initiative will be supported more by the members of this identity. It will also be rejected by the members of other identities that are in conflict with the accepting identity even if the initiative had no conflict with their interests. The experiment in this thesis examines this claim. The Arabic and Kurdish ethnic identities in Syria are considered by many to have a conflict of interests. When an initiative is presented by a party that allies more with the Kurds, the Arabs can become suspicious and more likely to reject the initiative in fear that the Kurds will obtain their interests on the account of theirs.

For this experiment, the US government was chosen as a treatment to support an initiative presented by the UN. The UN is supposed to be a neutral party so its effect on the attitude should be minimum. The US government was chosen as a treatment because of its strength as an enforcing power over the initiative which is considered to provide a guarantee in case of violations. It also has a more opposing attitude towards the regime which can be more acceptable by the Kurds and the Arabs in the rebels' areas than Russia which supports the Assad regime strongly. Another factor is that it has less conflict of interests or involvement in the conflict than the local parties like Turkey or Iran. It also supports the Kurds in their war against terrorism while it its support to most Arabic has been degrading and its promises of supporting them in many occasions has not been fulfilled which created distrust and suspicion. This was enforced by the strong support to the Kurdish forces in Northern-Syria which was considered by many Arabic leaders to be a threat to the Arabic existence in the area. This is why The US's role is expected to affect only the ethnic identity aspect with the respondents so we can expect to get a more accurate results by having the US as a treatment.

4. Research Design

4.1. Methodology

The main question that this research asks is:

"How does a person's identity affect the way they see a solution for the Syrian War?

To explore this question, this thesis communicates with Syrian citizens and look at two different identities inside Syria; the Arabs and the Kurds. It examines how each identity is responding to three main aspects of the conflict; the end of the war, migration, and the post war environment.

For the first aspect, this research is an action research that conducted a survey endorsement experiment in Syria by presenting Syrian participants with hypothetical peace initiative. Half the participants read a version of the text that included a note of endorsement by an outside international party that affects both ethnicities. The endorsement was by adding that *The US government declared that it supports this solution as it will end the conflict and provide stability to the area.* The other half of the participants read a version without this endorsement note. Then all respondents stated their level of support for the hypothetical initiative. The difference in responses between the two groups of participants represents the effect of the endorsement on their attitudes. The crucial difference between a regular survey and a survey experiment is that in the latter we do not directly ask a participant's attitude or opinion on a given topic. Instead we present participants with a number of hypothetical scenarios in which a participant's choices reveal their underlying attitude. Survey experiments are particularly useful if participants are likely to give false answers to direct questions because of social desirability bias, that is to say, they want to give answers that the researcher will approve. We are primarily interested in whether a person's support for a peace initiative depends on the endorsement the chosen party and how each identity responds to it. The survey also included some questions about a person's characteristics that may affect their attitudes towards the initiative. These factors include the person's political background or affiliation with political parties, educational background, involvement in the conflict (did they lose a close relative, a house or property), and where the person lives.

In addition to this endorsement experiment the survey included questions about migration, which is one of the main effects of the Syrian conflict on other countries. The

participants were asked why they have not migrated so far and if they plan to do so in the future. We are particularly interested in whether people who remain in Syria have reasons to stay or lack resources to leave. The last point of the survey was to ask the Syrian people on how they see the future of the conflict. What is their expected view of the solution and how the post conflict environment will be in their view and what kind of support they expect will be needed in order to rebuild the country.

The data was mainly analyzed through statistical methods. The analysis with statistical methods will explore how the answers to each question can be connected to the identity or other characteristics of the participants. The survey included some open-ended questions. Those questions will explain some of the respondents' responses and it will help in explaining any connections that are found using statistical analysis, or it will provide some information that cannot be obtained using statistical methods.

4.2. Data Collection

The data was collected by contacting Syrian citizens living inside Syria. The participants were sent a survey which contained the questions that were designed to get the needed information to analyze the research topic. The survey was designed into two forms; one included the control question and one included the treatment. The forms were implemented on an online survey platform[4]. Each respondent was sent a link to one of the forms to fill. The targeted area included all the Syrians residing inside Syria regardless of the exact location of their residence. However, due to the data collection limitations mentioned below, most respondents were from the northern part of Syria.

Given that Syria is a conflict zone we were not be able to use probabilistic sampling methods. Instead we used the snowball sampling method. We contacted several people inside Syria in different geographical locations. These people answered the survey and they contacted other people inside Syria to fill the questionnaire. The process was done based on personal connections and no professional surveyors were involved. The first participants were contacted online first and informed about the project. They were asked for their participation and to fill the consent form. The consent form is available in the appendix. Then they did the same process when asking other participants inside Syria to participate in the survey by explaining the project and asking them for their participation

---

[4] The platform that was used here is google forms which can be accessed from the link:
https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/

and filling the consent form. After signing the consent form the participants answered the questions. An Institutional Review Board form (IRB form) was prepared and approved by Sabancı University Research Ethics Council (SUREC) before the data collection was initialized.

Any Syrian citizen could participate in the survey as long as they are residing inside Syria at the time of the data collection. The only restriction was that the participant should be from either an Arab or a Kurdish ethnicity. Gender, education, occupation balance was taken into consideration and attempted to be achieved but it was not a requirement for participation. The participant's identity was not known before they filled the survey. They would check a box in the survey to identify as Arabs, Kurds, Assyrians, or other. The only known information before filling the survey was if the participant will be given a treatment or control form. It was distributed to create a balance between the size of the treatment and control groups included in the survey.

4.3. Measures

In order to avoid obstacles and obtains as accurate information as possible while protecting the participants from suffering any harm due to their participation in the survey, the following measures were used:

1- The first step after creating the survey instrument was to pre-test it in order to ensure that questions are not ambiguous and do not create discomfort for the participants. The survey was sent to 10 Syrian citizens for test before the data collection was initialized. The pre-test responses were not included in the final data set.

2- The participants were given a consent form in in the beginning of the survey. The participant could not complete the survey without approving the form. The form was written in Arabic and if they had any questions the researcher and the thesis advisor's contacts were included for them to communicate with. In order to continue with the survey, the participants needed to mark the box in the form that says "I participate in this survey voluntarily and understand that I can stop at any point I choose. I consent to my answers being used for research purposes".

3- The survey did not ask for any direct identifiers such as a participant's name, ID number, telephone number or address. It only collected information about participants' age, gender, education level, occupation, the area they are originally

from and the area where they live currently. Since it did not record participants' names or other identifying information an individual's answers will not be traceable to them.

4- In order to minimize discomfort, the experimental scenarios were designed to be hypothetical. Participants were explicitly informed that all scenarios they read in the survey are hypothetical.

5- All responses obtained from participants are confidential and only accessed by the researcher and the thesis advisor, who is the PI in this project. Responses are analyzed and used only for research purposes.

6- We do not predict any harm to the participants from the survey. The survey was conducted through online connections so no one was asked to go in or out of the country. They were informed that all the scenarios in the experiment are hypothetical, which minimized the risk of misleading people about the political situation, and if a respondent felt uncomfortable with any item during data collection, they were free to quit the study.

4.4. Limitations:

The main limitation of this study is the fact that the participants were contacted through personal connections of the researcher which resulted in several shortcomings including; first, a small sample that could be more accurate if it was larger. Second, the sample was not fully randomized. Some characteristics of the sample, such as education, was greater than the others. Finally, the sample was geographically distributed mostly in the northern part of Syria and did not include all the locations inside it.

Another limitation was that the participants were not contacted directly. The communication through online survey made many participants refrain from participating as they were afraid that the information would go to untrusted parties. In fact, between 200 to 300 more participants were contacted and refused to participate in the survey. If the communication was direct with the participants, the sample would be almost three to four times as big.

5. Descriptive Statistics

The participants in the survey were all Syrians living inside Syria at the time of collecting the data. Most participants lived in the northern part of Syria in the region outside the control of the regime. Most of the Arabic participants lived in the northeastern part while most of the Kurdish participants lived in the north-western part with some interlocution between them. Figure (4) shows the percentage and number of participants from each geographical location inside Syria with two participants who did not specify their location exactly.

Figure 4: Sample Geographic Distribution
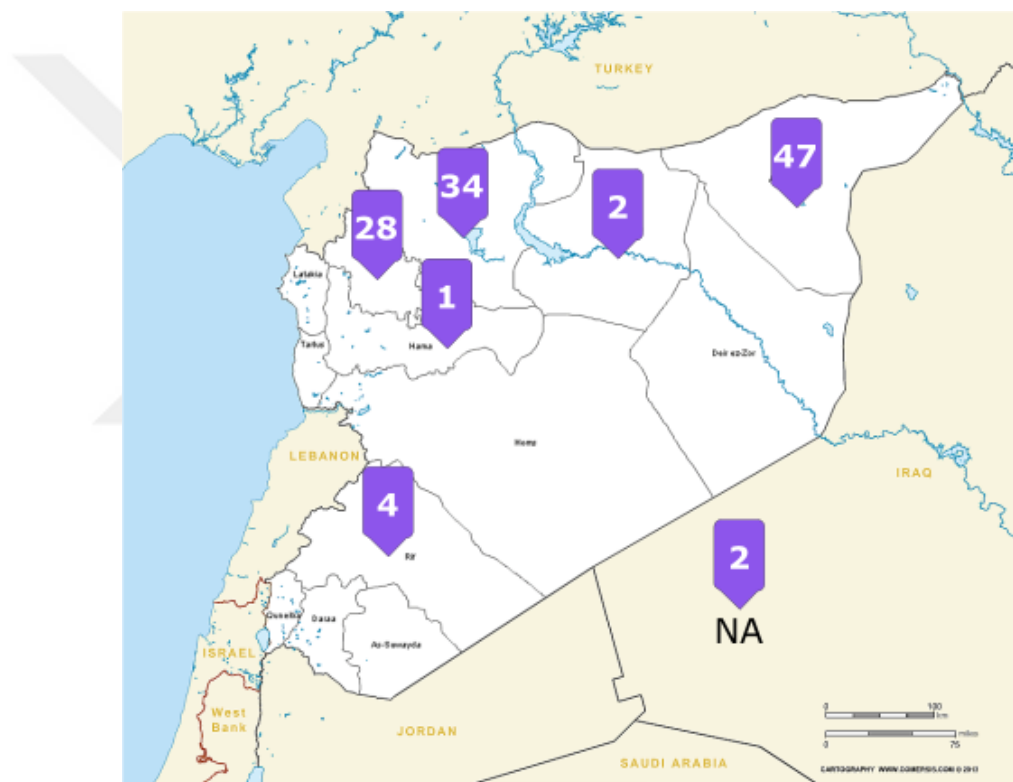
The reason behind this distribution is basically the accessibility and the ability to reach the participants in those areas. Despite the questionnaire being online which makes it accessible by all regions, the people are usually afraid of participating without a direct contact to the party conducting the research to make sure that there is no hidden agenda behind it. Most of the connections were located in the northern part of Syria. Also, in the regime's areas it is even harder to participate in surveys because intelligence is monitoring the internet activities and anyone with suspicious activities will face severe

consequences which keeps people from participating in surveys especially if they are, even slightly, related to political issues.

Most participants were between the ages of 25 to 35 years old. Figure (5) shows the age distribution of the participants. While figure (6) displays the gender distribution of the participants. Less than third of the participants were females while the remaining ones were males.

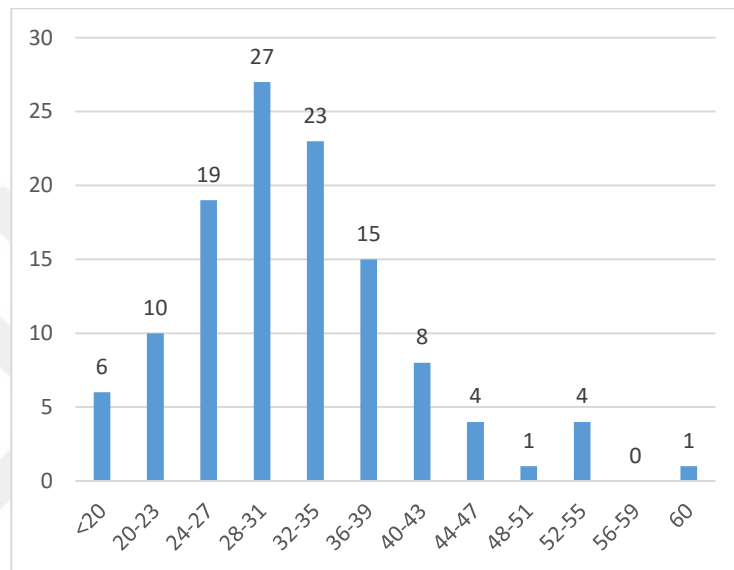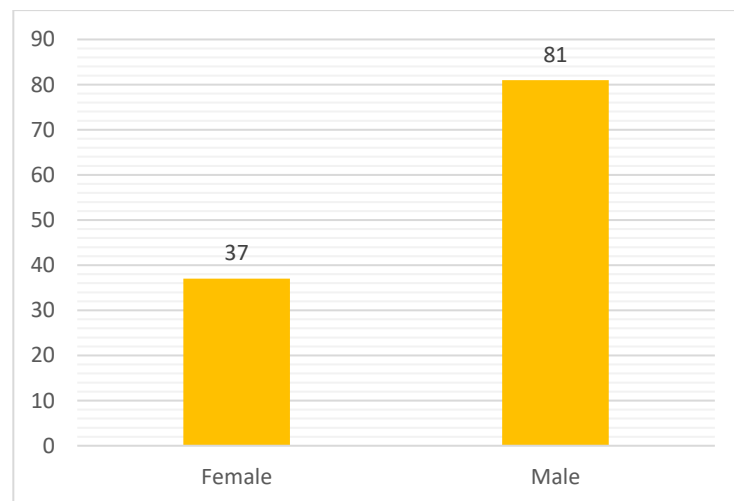*Figure 5: Sample age distribution*

Figure 6: Sample gender distribution

The education background of the participants shows that most of them held bachelor's degree or was studying in university for one. The percentage of participants with a university degree or higher is over 80% while the participants with only high school or

short-cycle tertiary education were less than 10% each. Figure (7) shows the educational background of the participants.

Figure 7: Education background
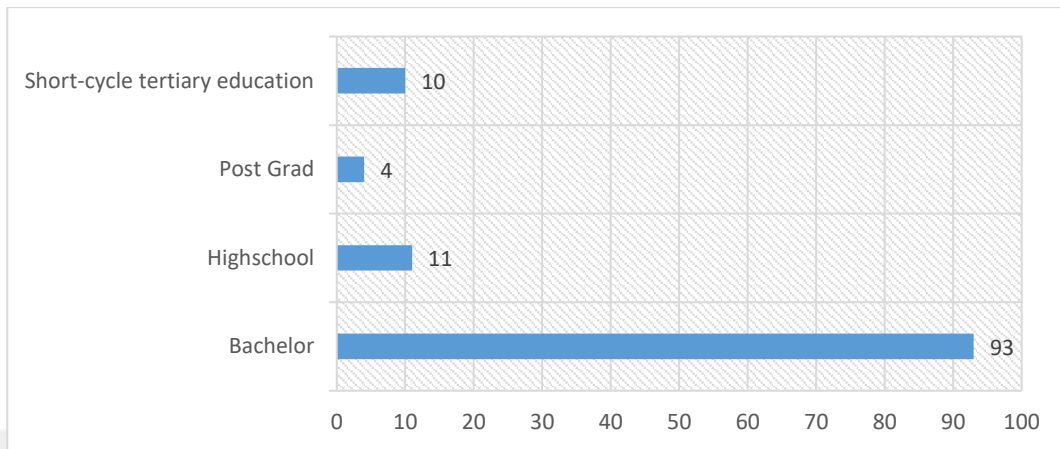
It is worth noting that this distribution could have been affected by multiple factors. One of the notable factors is the fact that personal connections played a role in encouraging the people to participate in the survey. As mentioned earlier, people needed a direct contact to the researching party to participate in the survey. Because most of the connections were male, around the age of 30 and with university degrees. This helped in getting a sample that had similar characteristics to them. Another factor is the internet accessibility. Due to difficult access to internet and security risks inside Syria, many users with lower education only uses internet for communications and social media and don't use anything else. Only more educated people use the internet and participate in online surveys.

It was taken into consideration that the control and treatment groups should have similar characteristics. When comparing the control group to the treatment group, we can see that this is true. The appendix contains t-tests comparing the control to the treatment group. The groups contain close percentages of women, people who lost a person or faced financial loss, the percentage of Arabs and Kurds, and similar age distribution.

6. Findings

6.1. The End of the War

When asked about how the war will end, the responses show clearly that the participants see the political solution as more likely to be the solution. However, the participants seemed to be more confident that the war will not end in a total victory for one of the parties than about it being ended with a political solution. Almost 80% of them considered that to be unlikely with 57% considering it to be very unlikely and 22% to be somewhat likely. When they were asked about ending the war with a political solution, the majority of 68% considered it to be likely with 33% considering it to very likely and 35% to be somewhat likely. These numbers reflect that the participants in this survey have lost most hope in having one of the conflicted parties winning over the remaining ones even if it was the party that they support or wish it to win. They are looking at a political solution as being more likely to end the war but they are still not as sure about it. Figure (8) below shows the percentage of responses to this question.

Figure 8: How the war will end
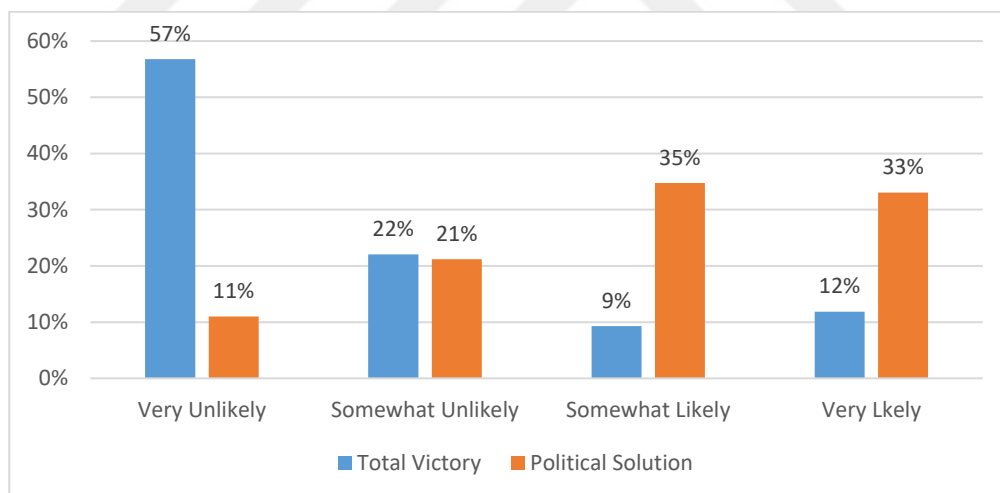
The hesitation about the political solution can be due to division in the international world. Most the parties on the ground in Syria survive with the support of international actors with each pushing towards its own interests. The international supporters are still divided and each of them pushing its allies against the others. The Security Council was not able to take a decisive act about the Syrian war despite the amount of human rights violations committed by the conflicting parties especially the Assad regime which even used chemical weapons against civilian areas with the only response is to remove these

31

weapons without any consequences. With the support of Russia and China and the use of veto against any decisions that affect the Assad regime, the Security Council was unable to take any effective actions to at least limit the violence inside Syria and it continues to escalate as the time progress. This is also lowering the expectations of one of the parties winning the war as it continues for its sixth year with no party taking over the other ones. Most of the participants also expressed the expectation that war will not be ending anytime soon, and more than half the participants thought it will last more than five years.

It is worth noting that the responses for both questions about how the war will end or its duration showed no statistical relationship between the results and the respondent's identity as Kurdish or Arabic. This is expected to reflect similar views from both identities to these questions.

The Survey Experiment

To test the effect of the identity on a respondent's reaction to a scenario about ending the conflict. The survey included a question about how the respondent feels about a hypothetical initiative from the United Nations for a proposed solution. To create a survey experiment, half the participants received a version of the initiative without any endorsement. While the other half received the initiative with an added endorsement by the US government. The initiative's description was short and it included several points that were of interest to both the Arabs and the Kurds. The initiative's description in the survey was as follows:

Now I will read you a hypothetical solution to the war.

The United Nations is trying to get the factions in Syria to start negotiations to reach a settlement.

The negotiations will have 3 main goals:

1-   Maintaining a unified Syrian state.

2-   Overtaking terrorist groups and removing foreign fighters in Syria.

3-   Guarantee the rights of all minorities and protecting them.

This is the description presented to the control group. While for the treatment group, the following text was added at the end of the description:

The US government declared that it supports this solution as it will end the conflict and provide stability to the area.

The support of an international super power can add more trust to the implementation of the initiative and the endorsement can mean that there is more guarantee that the parties will commit more to its conditions. However, the US government had an unstable position towards the parties related to the different identities. It supports the PYD which is the Syrian branch of the PKK in Turkey which the US government condemns. It also promised the support of some parts of the Syrian opposition but it only supported some parts and abstained from supporting others. This might cause more distrust towards the US government by the Syrian Arabs than the Syrian Kurds and the experiment was designed to see if that holds true.

The Figure (9) below shows the responses to this initiative by the control and treatment groups. While Figure (10) shows the attitude towards the initiative by ethnicity (Arabs and Kurds).

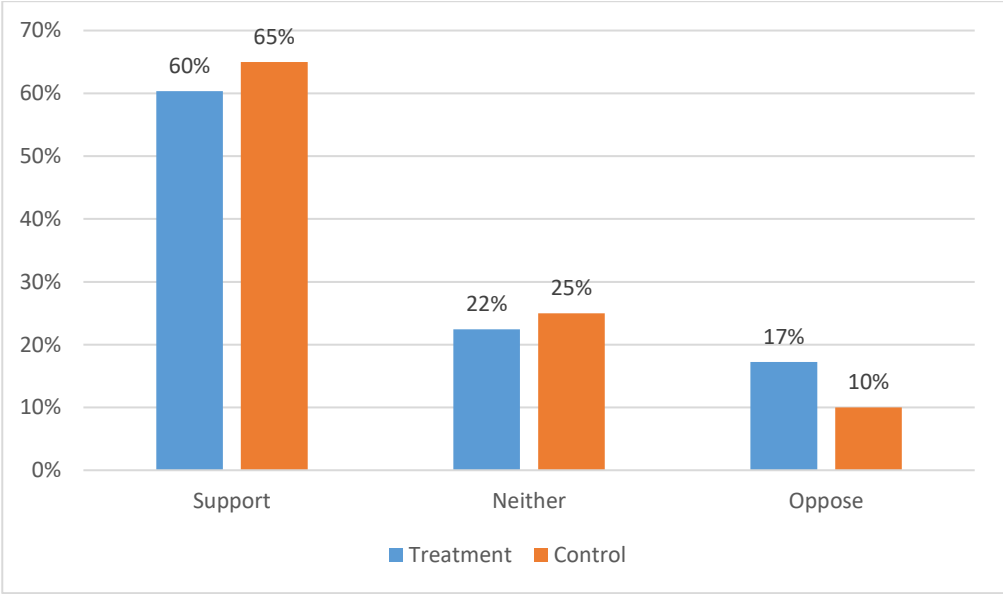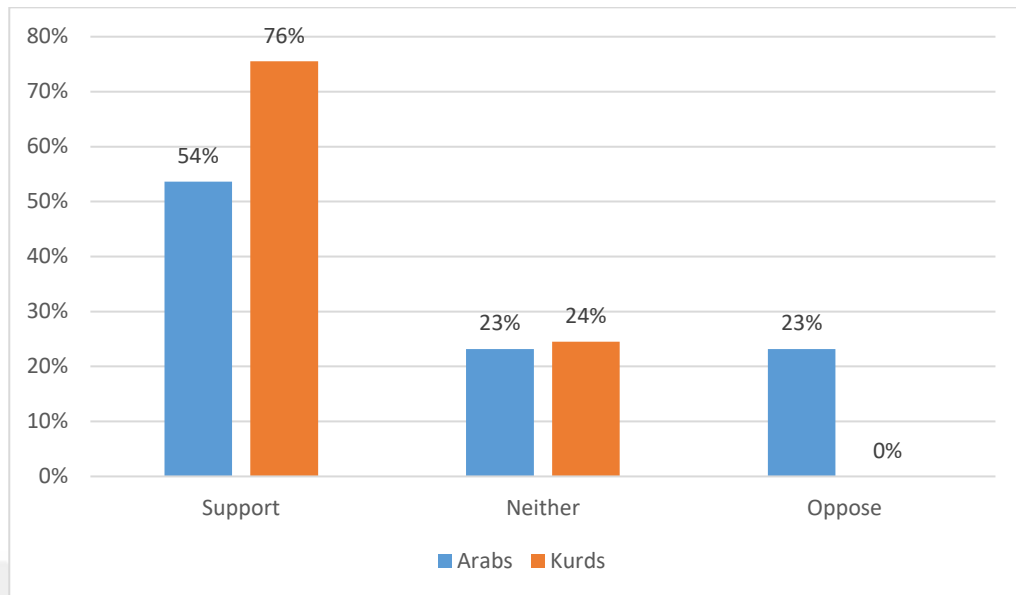*Figure 9: The attitude towards the initiative by treatment*

Figure 10: The attitude towards the initiative by ethnicity

Surprisingly, the statistical analysis of the responses shows no relationship between the treatment and the respondent's attitude towards the initiative. The treatment had no effect over supporting or opposing the initiative. It only shows a relationship between the respondent's identity as Arab or Kurdish and their attitude towards the initiative. The results of the statistical analysis are shown in the appendix. The analysis included the effect of treatment on the Arabs and the Kurds. It also controlled for the effects of other variables like gender, education, age, losing someone, and financial loss. It all showed no relationship between the treatment and the attitude.

The lack of relationship between the treatment and the responses can be simply explained by concluding that the relationship between the treatment and the respondent's attitude towards the initiative is negligible. However, it can also be a result of other factors that affected the appearance of such relationship. Some of these factors include the following: The treatment was too subtle: the treatment used in this experiment used the US government as the party that provides the endorsement. The US government provides support to both parties of the Arabic opposition and the Kurdish leadership. It also included a statement from the government that it was a good initiative. It is possible that if the statement included a commitment to enforce it and an obligation to participate it would have been more effective. This might cause the responses to be unchanged by the endorsement.

The treatment was added to the end of the description: the survey was a short online survey that can be read quickly. The text for the initiative was long and the participants might skim through it quickly without fully reading it. As the endorsement being located at the end of the text it can be ignored or passed by without fully being read. If it was at the beginning of the text it might have resulted in a bigger effect.

The sample was too small: the sample here is small and when used in an experiment it gets divided into a control and treatment group which reduces its size more. This might cause the effects of the experiment to be unnoticeable and it needs a larger sample to be investigated.
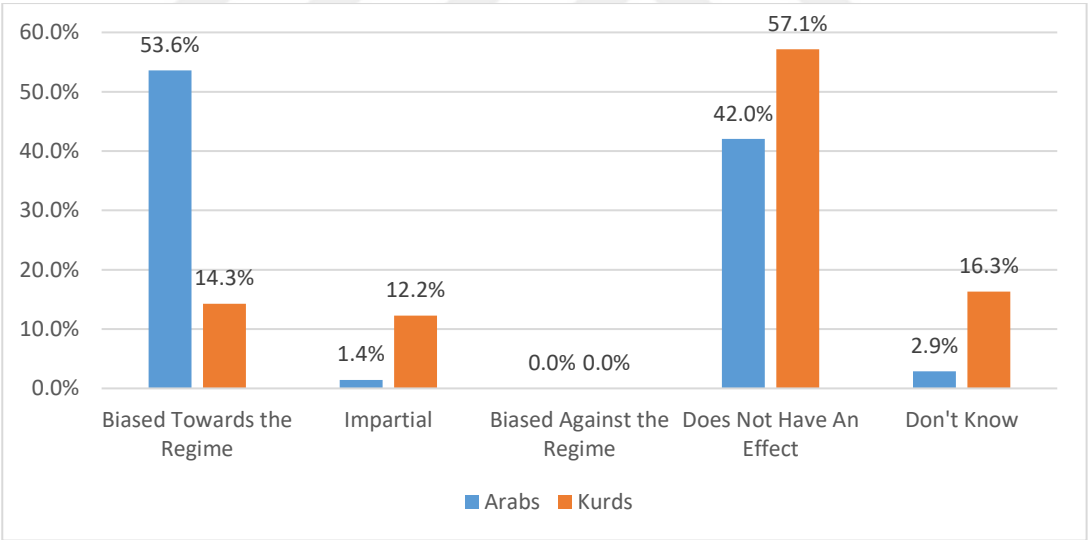
What is noticeable in the results is the relationship between the ethnicity of the respondent and their attitude towards the initiative. The small P value in the regression indicates that the effect of the ethnicity cannot be ignored. When looking at the plot we can see how this relationship can be described. Despite having a smaller sample, the number of Kurds supporting the initiative is very close to the number of Arabic supporters who had a larger sample. There are also 16 Arabic participants who opposed the initiative with zero Kurdish ones. This means that none of the Kurdish participants found any problem in the initiative to be unacceptable for them. With the Arabic ones, there was a significant amount that did find a problem and rejected the initiative.

The Kurds are accused by some parties of planning to divide Syria for creating their own nation. The first point in the initiative was to *maintain a unified Syrian state* while the third one was to *guarantee the rights of all minorities and protecting them*. The Kurdish participants accepted the initiative which reflects the acceptance of maintaining a unified Syria as long as it guaranties the rights of the minorities in contrast to the accusations. These points are also usually accepted by the Arabs. The second point in the initiative about *overtaking terrorist groups and removing foreign fighters in Syria* can be the problematic one for the Arabs and it is most likely the one that caused the rejection of the initiative. The Kurdish area has more organized armed groups that fight with the support of international actors against ISIS. The accusations of terrorism are only directed towards them by individual parties like Turkey but not by the international community. In fact, the Kurdish forces are playing a role as a party on the ground inside Syria that is opposing terrorism. This makes this point more likely to be acceptable for the Kurdish participants as it does not pose any threats for them. On the Arabic side, this

35

is a different matter. In the opposition controlled Arabic majority areas there is a big number of unorganized armed groups that fight with the support of different parties. The Assad regime accused the opposition by being terrorists since the revolution began and it always demands the elimination of terrorist groups before discussing any solution for the crisis. This is considered by the opposition to be the elimination of the opposition so that the regime can regain control and destroy all other parties. The opposition usually agrees on eliminating terrorism and it is fighting against many terrorist groups in Syria including ISIS. However, they demand a clear definition of who are the terrorist groups that will be targeted by such agreements for them to make sure that such decisions will not be used against them by the regime and its allies. This is most likely the reason for the Arabic opposition to the initiative.

As the experiment's main part about the initiative was presented by the UN, the survey included a question about how the participant perceives the role of the UN in the Syrian conflict. The responses are presented in the figure (11).

Figure 11: UN's role

The statistical analysis indicates a considerable relationship between the ethnicity of the respondent as an Arab or a Kurd and their attitude towards the initiative. The regression results are available in the appendix. Mainly the Arabic participants were divided into two groups; the first and bigger group which makes more than half the participants considered the UN's role to support the Assad regime. Since the survey was conducted in opposition controlled area, this is considered a sign of distrust and the UN's role is considered to support the suffering of the Syrian people. The second group with less than

half the participants considered the UN to have no effect on the Syrian conflict. Very small and negligible number of participants considered the UN's role to be impartial. With the Kurdish participants, there was a different response. The majority of the participants with more than half of the sample considered the role of the UN to have no effect on the conflict. Only 14% of the Kurdish participants considered the UN's role to support the Assad regime which is a much lower percentage than the Arabs.

It can be noted here that the identity has an effect on the way Syrian participants in this survey perceive an initiative. The Arabic participants had some doubt about the initiative and some of them rejected it. While more of them expressed distrust in the UN's role in the conflict and considered it as supporting the Assad regime. The Kurdish participants were more accepting and none of them rejected the initiative. Also, less of them expressed distrust in the UN's role. Some of them still did but much less than the Arabic ones. It seems here that the Arabic identity of the participants was threatened by the initiative presented by the UN which caused the rejection, while the Kurdish identity was less threatened and they had no rejection to the initiative. However, in both cases a high number of the participants, almost half of them, thought that the UN had no effect at all.

Participants' Recommendations

In order to give the participants a space to explain some of their ideas, open-ended questions were included in the survey to ask the participants about the challenges that are facing the end of the war in their opinions and what they would recommend putting an end to it. Most the Arabic participants stated that they see the main challenge facing the war is that the Assad regime is still in power. Subsequently, many of them recommended the removal of the Assad regime in order to put an end to the war. This was explained in several ways; some considered the regime to be a criminal authority that is killing the Syrian people and it will not stop until removed. This means that the war will not stop until this party is removed from the equation. Others considered the regime as a tool for a Russian-Iranian occupation to Syria. The regime is the front for those outside forces to control the country and this tool needs to be removed and the occupation forces to leave so the country can be governed by Syrians and start the peace building process. Some considered the stubbornness of the regime with no concessions at all during the entire conflict to be one of the main reasons behind the violence and the continuation of the war. The regime does not recognize any opposing party and considers them all to be

terrorists that should be annihilated. This is reflected in other statements by some participants who considered terrorism to be a strong reason behind the war and it should be removed from the country starting with the regime and its supporting militias as the main terrorist groups inside Syria. Some of the Kurdish participants gave similar statements about the need to remove the regime for a solution to the war. However, it was in lower frequency than in the Arabic participants' responses. This could be because many participants in the Kurdish area feared the consequences of such statements by the regime since it still exists in their areas.

Another issue that can be seen in the comments is the role of the international community and other countries. Many participants considered the role of outside forces and the fight over their interests in Syria by supporting different parties as the gas that fuels the war. Iran and Russia were mentioned most repeatedly but other forces including the US and Arabic countries were also within the comments. The participants considered the lack of agreement within the international community, the weak role of the UN, and following private interest on the account of the Syrian population and the stability in the area as the reason behind sustaining the war. This was reflected in the responses of both the Arabic and the Kurdish participants.

The main tool that the participants from both ethnicities mentioned the most was the dialog and negotiations between the conflicted parties to reach a peaceful solution and end the war. No major difference in the challenges that face a solution for the conflict or the methods that should be used to reach such solution was detected in the responses of the participants. Both the challenges and the recommendations given by the Arabic and the Kurds were similar and the different identities were on the same page in this regard.

6.2. Migration

The survey included participants that were all inside Syria. Despite the challenges and threats faced within Syria and the safety that can be obtained by taking refuge in other countries, the participants did not leave Syria. The survey included a question about the reason the participants did not leave the country. Whether they wanted to leave but they were not able to do so, or they had the means to relocate but did not want to. Most of the respondents with more than 82% said that they could leave and travel somewhere else, but they did not want to. Only 17% of the participants said that they wanted but did not have the ability to do so.

As the Syrian crisis goes through its sixth year, most people who wanted to leave were able to find the means to do so in the previous years. This explains the majority of the respondents who wanted to stay in the country. Figure (12) shows the percentages of the responses on this question.

Figure 12: the ability to leave Syria
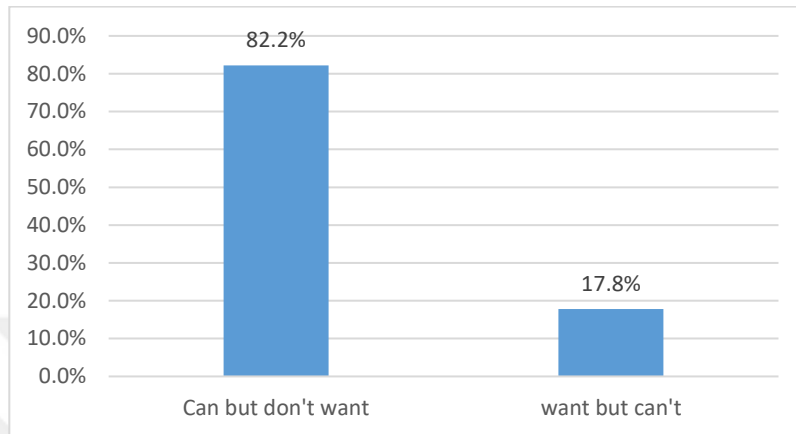
When examining the responses of the Arabic respondents and the Kurdish ones separately, no difference between the answers of both groups were detected. Very close percentages exist among the Arabs and the Kurds in response to the ability to leave Syria or staying inside it. Most participants from both ethnicities stated that their presence inside Syria is a choice made mainly because of their commitment to their home country and they do not want to leave to another place despite having the opportunity and the means to do so. Some expressed the responsibility to be a part of the change that is happening in Syria and it is their duty to take action and participate in reaching the best solution for their home country. Others considered living inside their home country and within their people and culture is the best option for them. The participants who were not able to leave despite their need to do so mostly considered the risks and financial costs to be over their capacity and they will leave if they had the ability. The need for leaving comes mostly from the risks of the armed conflict and the potential threat of an attack or a bombing that endangers their lives and their families' lives as well. One of the major reasons that pushes young men towards leaving is the obligatory military service that the regime enforces on any man between the age of 18 and 42. This will get those men into the frontlines of battlefronts with no deadline for being relieved form that service unless having a permanent injury, a disability or death. Many men have been the army for years with no idea when they will be released. In the non-regime areas, some armed groups

also started to enforce such regulations. The Kurdish armed forces began to recruit men living in the areas under its control to participate in its forces. This has extended the pressure on the young men to leave Syria despite having the ability to stay there with no immediate threat.

The issue of the mandatory service is an indication that the armed groups are starting to get more organized and they are starting to act as functioning institutions that enforces obligations on the citizens.

The participants were presented with another question about their expectations of where to be in five years. Figure (13) shows the percentages of the responses.

Figure 13: where do you expect to be in five years.
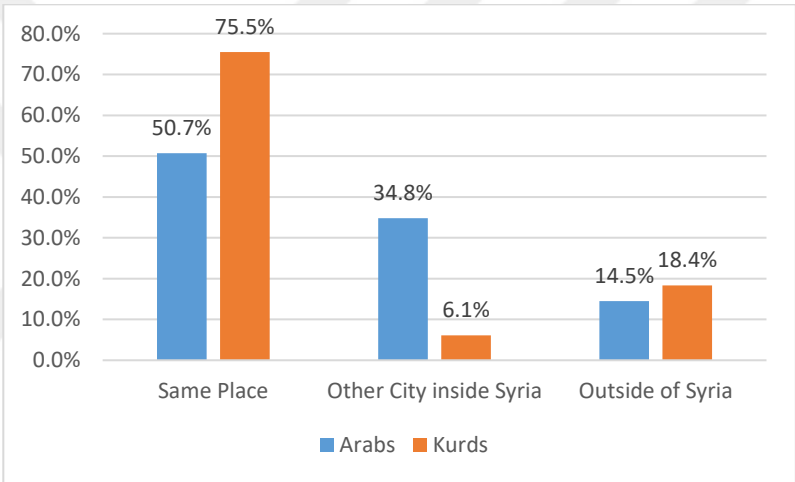
The results about staying inside Syria are similar to the previous question with no major effect of ethnicity over the responses. However, we can spot some difference in the responses of the Arabic participants and the Kurdish ones. As the percentage of the respondents who see themselves out of Syria are similar between both ethnicities. It is noticed that 25% more Kurdish participants expect to be in the same place after five years. While 29% Arabic participants expected to be in another city inside Syria. This is expected to be a result of the fact that the Arabic areas included in the survey has suffered more from the war than the Kurdish ones. More Arabic participants were IDPs than the Kurds. The IDPs has less connection to the cities where they are living currently and they hope to return to their home cities after the war. The expectation or "hope" of returning there after five years can be related to their hope of the war's end and the ability to return to their hometowns by then. The Kurdish participants were mostly living in their home

towns and this is the reason that less of them expect to be in another city inside Syria after five years.

It is worth noting that Turkey is the main host for the Syrian refugees in the world. More than three million Syrian refugees are living in Turkey currently. There are several factors that affect the reason behind the big popularity of Turkey with the Syrian refugees including its location, capacity, economic and accessibility. But it should be noted that the shared identity in religion, history and ethnicity for some Kurds, Turkman and Arabs can play a big role in this case. However, it is out of the range of this research to discuss this issue.

6.3. Post War

The survey aimed to get some information about how much the participants were affected by the war. It included two questions about this subject; the first is about losing a close friend or family member, the second is about the financial losses that the participants have faced. The results show that more than 92% of participants did lose a close friend or a family member. Only less than 8% of the participants did not face such loss. When comparing the results according to ethnicity, we find close results between the Arabs and the Kurds. Only 5% difference between the two identities. Also, the regression results show no relationship between the two variables.

This is different when looking at the financial loss that the participants faced. In total, less than 24% of the participants said they did not face any financial loss because of the war, while the remaining participants faced at least one other loss from a house, a car, a job, a land, or savings. One added category by the some of the participants in the comments was losing their study. Many college students were unable to continue their education because of the war. The main reasons they cannot attend their universities anymore include the universities' existence in a dangerous or inaccessible regions, or it is under the control of a party were the student opposes and will be at risk if they attend. Losing education cannot be included in the analysis as many participants might have faced a similar loss but since it was not included in the options they did not mention it. The main options included in the question are direct losses. Other indirect losses include the currency exchange rate that dropped more than 10 times its value before 2011 with the salaries increasing in a much lower scale. The average salary of government sector

41

employee dropped from around 350 USD before 2011 to around 75 USD in 2017. The indirect losses are not included in the survey as they are very difficult to measure.

When looking at the financial losses based on ethnicity, we can see a difference in the responses between Arabic and Kurdish participants. The results show more losses for the Arabic participants than the Kurdish. Around 40% of the Kurdish participants expressed that they did not face any financial loss compared to only 11% from the Arabic. When examining the relationship statistically, we find through a regression with the Arabic indicator variable as the dependent variable and the types of losses as the independent variables that the R-squared value is large enough to prove a relationship between the ethnicity of the participant and the chance of facing a financial loss. The P values show that the Arabs are more likely expected to lose a house or a land than the Kurds. The appendix shows the results of the regression. This is more likely, as mentioned earlier, due to the fact that the Kurdish areas did not suffer as much as the Arabic majority areas included in the survey. The Arabic majority areas suffered from direct shelling and targeted by airstrikes. Many areas also became frontlines in the battles between different factions including the regime, rebel forces, and ISIS. In the meantime, most Kurdish areas were involved in much lower scale in the armed conflict. Figure (14) shows the distribution of financial losses based on ethnicity.

*Figure 14: Financial loss based on ethnicity*
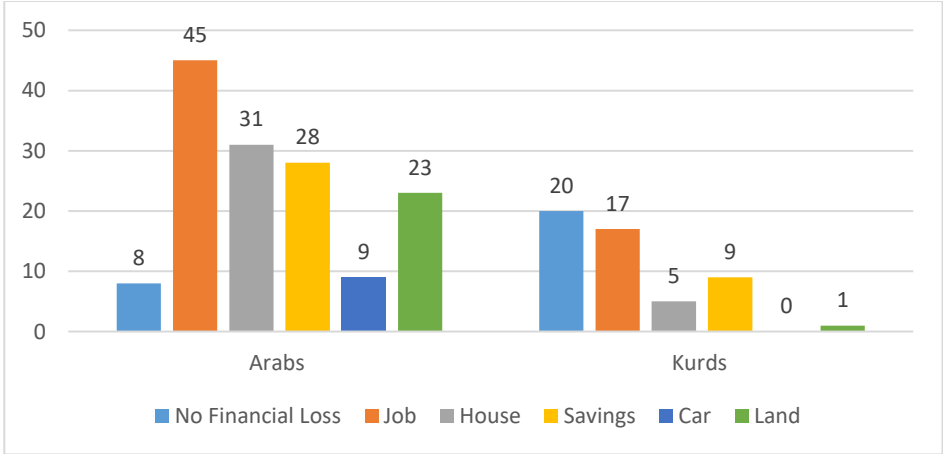
Those are only the direct financial losses that the participants have endured. Indirect losses like currency exchange rates compared to salaries,

After knowing about the financial losses that the participants had endured, there were asked about what type of support they would prefer after the war ends. Will they prefer

a lump sum payment equal to 6 months' minimum wages or a 3-month training program that will give you skills that aims to help them find employment? The figure (15) below shows the responses of the participants.

Figure 15: Support preference
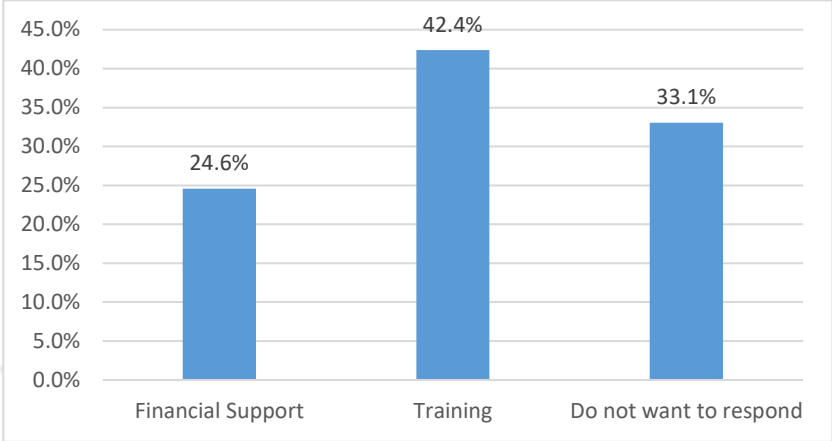
With a deeper analysis, it is worth noting that statistically there is no effect of the ethnicity on the preference. Both the Kurdish and Arabic participants had similar preference in regard to the financial or training support. The appendix shows the regression results for this question. Despite the different losses faced by each ethnicity, the preference between training and funding after the end of the war is the same.

It is worth noting that this question was the most question that the participants did not want to provide a respond to it. Almost third of them marked the option "Don't want to respond". There is no clear reason for this abstention. It can be simple shyness or other reason that was not reflected by the responses or comments.

So we can conclude that despite the different effect of the war on the Arabs and the Kurds, the participants had a similar response to what they prefer after the war, and the identity did not have an effect over their preference. Identity does not play any role on the individual expectations of the post conflict period in this survey.

7. Conclusion and Implications

This research has explored one of the world's most complicated conflicts directly as it occurs, by communicating with Syrians, on the ground, inside Syria. This is important dimension of this research, as it does not depend on expectations, media sources or any mediator between the information source and the analysis. It also provides information about the conflict as it progresses on the ground and not after its end. This can provide information and recommendations on how to positively develop the conflict and how the different Syrian identities can react to international initiatives. The data-collection methods were designed and implemented to fit the research objectives and provide accurate reflection of the participants' views about the topic. The survey had a pilot test to make sure the questions were clear and that the respondents could fully understand what they were responding to and that the information provided is dependable. It is still not perfect and has its limitations with the distribution and randomization of the participants. Despite the sample being small, the data collected is robust and very rare to obtain under similar circumstances.

When looking at the answer to the research question, the main interesting point to note is that the identity of the participants did affect some aspects of their attitude with different reactions while it had no effect on other aspects and both identities had similar reactions to the same topics. The part where identity majorly affected responses, was related to a hypothetical initiative by an international party to solve the conflict. Despite the absence of an effect resulting from the survey experiment. The effect was also present in the perception of the UN's role in the conflict. Despite the agreement on its weak role in the Syrian case, the Arabic participants generally perceived the UN as predominantly supporting the Assad regime more than the Kurds. The Arabic identity participants, on the other hand, had more of a negative collective attitude towards the UN's role. Therefore, it seems the reaction to initiatives presented by external parties and the attitude towards those parties was affected by the person's identity.

However, it is important to reiterate that individual variables, such as migratory and post-conflict support preferences, were not affected by the identity of the participants. When there is no collective effect of a variable like migration or individual support preference, the participants responded in similar ways regardless of their identity. Only other factors

like the economic situation or the consequences of the war, had an effect on shaping migratory and post-conflict support preferences.

This information has some important implications for future interventions in Syrian. Firstly, initiatives presented by an international party should consider which segment or group within Syrian society should present the proposed solution. Despite some promising initiatives that could potential generate considerable progress, can often be rejected by some local groups when the presenting party is perceived as threatening their own identity. A neutral international party can gain more support for an initiative when it is perceived as no threat to the major collective identities.

This research can also be utilized to guide future endeavors focusing on issues such as migration and post conflict support for the Syrian community. To demonstrate that both groups had similar reactions to those issues despite the different circumstances they each are facing and hence guide a comprehensive solution for the future. The importance paid to the different identities should be subverted and more attention should be targeted towards economic and educational support for the return of Syrians refugees, to their homes and the reconstruction of post-war Syria.

8. Appendix

Ordered logistic regression with the attitude towards the initiative as the dependent variable and the ethnicity and the treatment as the independent variables.

	(1)
treatment_indicator	- 0.135
	(0.226)
Arab_indicator	- 0.766 **
	(0.24)
Observations	118

Standard errors in parentheses
$^{*} p < 0.1,$ $^{**} p < 0.05$

Regression results for the perception of the UN's role as the dependent variable and ethnicity as the independent variable.

	(1)
Arab_indicator	- 1.2 **
	(0.26)
Observations	118

Standard errors in parentheses
$^{*} p < 0.1,$ $^{**} p < 0.05$

Regression results for losing a close friend or a family member, or facing a financial loss as the dependent variable and the ethnicity as the independent variable.

	(1)	(2)
Arab_indicator	- 0.044	- 0.042
	(0.049)	(0.087)
Observations	118	

Standard errors in parentheses
$^{*} p < 0.1,$ $^{**} p < 0.05$

46

Regression results for the financial loss as the dependent variable and ethnicity as the independent variable.

	(1)
Arab_indicator	- 0.042
	(0.087)
Observations	118

Standard errors in parentheses
$^{*} p < 0.1, ^{**} p < 0.05$

Regression results for the training or funding support for the post-conflict as the dependent variable and ethnicity as the independent variable.

	(1)
Arab_indicator	- 0.099
	(0.141)
Observations	118

Standard errors in parentheses
$^{*} p < 0.1, ^{**} p < 0.05$

T test for the treatment control groups:

Variable	Control M	Treatment M	t	Sig. (p)
Age	32.38	32.51	0.57	0.565
Gender	0.68	0.68	-0.07	0.941
Ethnicity	0.55	0.62	-0.77	0.440
Losing a person	1.90	1.94	-0.98	0.327
Financial loss	0.21	0.25	-0.53	0.596
Observations	118			

Significance in parentheses
$^{*} p < 0.1, ^{**} p < 0.05$

Sabancı University

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Study Title: Identity's Effect on the Conflict in Syria

Principal Investigator: Ayham Alhuseen, Sabancı University

Dear Participant,

This project is a part of an MA thesis which aims to gain a better understanding of the role that the different identities that exist in Syria plays in shaping the people's attitudes towards the conflict in Syria.

For this purpose, we will give you a survey that will take approximately 15 minutes.

All your answers to this survey will be kept confidential and not shared with anyone from within or outside of Sabancı University. The information collected for this project will be used for only research purposes.

This project has been approved by Sabancı University Research Ethics Council. The survey does not include uncomfortable questions. However, during the survey if, for any reason, you feel uncomfortable please let the interviewer know or you can stop answering the questions.

You can contact Ayham Alhuseen, a student at Sabancı University Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences the program of conflict analysis and resolution, to receive more information about the study by email at ayham@sabanciuniv.edu.

 If you believe that your rights have been violated in any way, please contact Cengiz Kaya, Director of Research and Graduate Policy at Sabancı University at (216) 483-9666 or by email at cengizkaya@sabanciuniv.edu.

> *I participate in this survey voluntarily and understand that I can stop at any point I choose. I consent to my answers being used for research purposes.*

- o Yes

Date_____

جامعة سابانجي

نموذج الموافقة على المشاركة في دراسة بحثية

عنوان الدراسة: أثر الهوية على موقف السوريين من النزاع في سورية.

الباحث الرئيسي: أيهم الحسين – جامعة سابانجي.

عزيزي المشارك،

إن هذا الاستبيان هو جزء من دراسة لرسالة ماجستير تهدف إلى الوصول إلى فهم أفضل للدور الذي تلعبه الهويات المتعددة في سوريا في تشكيل مواقف الناس من النزاع في سوريا.

لهذا الغرض سنقدم لكم استبيانا يستغرق تقريبا 15 دقيقة لملئه.

سيتم المحافظة على سرية كافة المعلومات التي ستقدمونها في هذا الاستبيان ولن يتم الاطلاع عليها أو مشاركتها مع أي شخص سواء داخل أو خارج جامعة سابانجي. سيتم استخدام المعلومات المقدمة لأغراض بحثية فقط.

هذا المشروع قد تمت الموافقة عليه من قبل مجلس الأخلاق البحثية في جامعة سابانجي. الاستبيان لا يحتوي على أي أسئلة محرجة. ولكن في حال شعرتم بعدم الراحة لأي سبب كان يمكنكم إخبار الباحث أو التوقف عن ملء الاستبيان.

للمزيد من المعلومات يمكنكم التواصل مع أيهم الحسين وهو طالب في جامعة سابانجي في كلية الفنون والعلوم الاجتماعية في برنامج حل وتحويل النزاعات على الإيميل ayham@sabanciuniv.edu

إذا أحسستم بأنه تم انتهاك أي من حقوقكم يمكنكم التواصل مع جنكيز كايا مدير سياسات الأبحاث والدراسات العليا في جامعة سابانجي عبر الهاتف على الرقم 9666-483 (216) أو عبر الإيميل على العنوان cengizkaya@sabanciuniv.edu.

أشارك بهذا الاستبيان بشكل طوعي وأعلم بأنه يمكنني التوقف في أي وقت كان.
وأوافق على استخدام إجاباتي لأغراض بحثية.

○ **نعم**

التاريخ_____

Bibliography

Alarabiya. (2011). The Syrian State of Emergency, the Longest Period of Its Kind. *Alarabiya.net*, Retrieved from https://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/03/26/143032.html.

Albunni, A. (2004). The Syrian Kurds, The Identity and The Solution. *Aljazeera*, Retrieved from: http://www.aljazeera.net/knowledgegate/opinions/2004/10/3/%D8%A3%D9%8 3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AF- %D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9- %D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9- %D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%84.

Alhuseen, A., Abyad, L., Alwany, R., & Sabbagh, R. (2016). *Peace Journalism or War Journalism.* Istanbul: Badael Foundation.

Al-Qarawee, H. (2013). Heightened Sectarianism in the Middle East: Causes, Dynamics and Consequences. *Italian Institute for International Political Studies*.

BBC News. (2016). Sunnis and Shia: Islam's ancient schism. *BBC News*, Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-16047709.

Beber, B., Roessler, P., & Scacco, A. (2014). Intergroup Violence and Political Attitudes: Evidence from a Dividing Sudan. *The Journal of Politics*, 76(3):649{665.

Brzoska, M. (2007). Collective violence beyond the standard definition of armed conflicts. *SIPRI Yearbook* , 94-106.

CCSD. (2014). Building peace within Syrian communities. *Center for Civil Society and Democracy*, Retreived from: http://ccsdsyria.org/files/peace_resouces_report_en.pdf.

CCSD. (2015). Perspectives of Key Syrian actors on "Freeze Zones" Initiative. *Center for Civil Society and Democracy*, Retreived from:

http://ccsdsyria.org/perspectives-of-key-syrian-actors-on-freeze-zones-
initiative/.

CCSD. (2016). Public Accountability in Syria. *Center for Civil Society and
Democracy*, Retreived from: http://ccsdsyria.org/wp-content/uploads/Public-
Accountability-in-Syria.pdf.

Clark, L. (1989). Early warning of refugee flows. . *Washington, DC: Refugee Policy
Group.*

Cockburn, P. (2015). *Syria civil war: Kurdish leader says collapse of Assad regime
'would be a disaster' despite its treatment of his people.* Retrieved from:
http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syria-civil-war-kurdish-
leader-says-collapse-of-assad-regime-would-be-a-disaster-despite-its-
10515922.html: Independent.

Collier, P. (2003). Breaking the conflict trap: Civil war and development policy. *World
Bank Publications*.

Collier, P. A. (2008). Post-conflict risks. *Journal of Peace Research*, 45(4), 461-478.

ERCC, E. R. (2017). Syria Crisis – IDPs, Syrian refugees, and Palestinian refugees
from Syria. *DG ECHO daily map*, Retreived from:
http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20170116_DailyMap_IDP
sRefugeesSyria.pdf.

Fabian, J. (2016). *Obama: Syrian conflict 'haunts me'.* Retreived from:
http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/297154-obama-syrian-conflict-
haunts-me: The Hill.

Ghazzawi, R., Mohammad, A., & Ramadan, O. (2015). *Peacebuilding Defines Our
Future Now.* Istanbul: Badael Foundation.

Gibney, M. J. (2013). Is Deportation a Form of Forced Migration? *Refugee Survey
Quarterly*, 32 (2): 116-129.

Hendi, A. A. (2011). The Structure of Syria's Repression. *Foriegn Affaires*, Retrieved
from https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2011-05-03/structure-
syrias-repression.

Hsu, R. (2010). *Ethnic Europe: mobility, identity, and conflict in a globalized world* . Stanford University Press: Stanford, CA.

Human Rights Watch. (2015). *If the Dead Could Speak: Mass Deaths and Torture in Syria's Detention Facilities.* Retrieved from: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/syria1215web_0.pdf: Human Rights Watch.

Humphreys, M., Posner, D., & Weinstein, J. (2002). *Ethnic Identity, Collective Action, and Conflict: An Experimental Approach.* Boston: APSA.

Icduygu, A. (2015). Syrian Refugees in Turkey: The Long Road Ahead. *Migration Policy Institute*, Retreived from: http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/38158672/TCM-Protection-Syria.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A&Expires=15007 12492&Signature=6U2SnUIq02PbNso3ytSqtrVzUx4%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DSyrian_Ref.

Izady, M. (2010). Syria Ethnic Composition in 2010 (summary). *the Gulf/2000 Project*, Retreived from: http://gulf2000.columbia.edu/images/maps/Syria_Ethnic_summary_sm.png.

Jenkins, R. (2000). The limits of identity: ethnicity, conflict, and politics. . *Sheffield Online Papers in Social Research.* .

Joakim, K. (2010). How and when armed conflicts end:Introducing the UCDP Conflict Termination dataset. *Journal of Peace Research*, 47(2) 243–250.

Jok, K. M. (2013). *CONFLICT OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN SUDAN.* Academic Dissertation: University of Helsinki.

Keely, C. (1996). How nation-states create and respond to refugee flows. *International Migration Review*, 30(4): 1046–1066.

Krause, K. &. (2005). Peace, security and development in post-conflict environments. *Security dialogue*, 36(4), 447-462.

Kuklinski, J., Gaines, B., & Quirk, P. (2006). *The Logic of the Survey Experiment Reexamined.* 15(1), 1-20.: Political Analysis.

Michael, L., & Mullainathan. , S. (2004). Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination. *The American Economic Review*, 991-1013.

Mironova, V., Alhamad, K., & Whitt, S. (2015). *In two charts, this is what refugees say about why they are leaving Syria now.* Retreived from: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/09/28/in-two-charts-this-is-what-refugees-say-about-why-they-are-leaving-syria-now/?utm_term=.c60f2727f562: the Washington Post.

Moore, W. H. (2004). Fear of persecution: Forced migration, 1952-1995. . *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 48(5), 723-745.

Mutz, D. (2011). *Population Based Survey Experiments.* New Jersey.

Neuman, L. W. (2002). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches.*

News Decoder. (2015). *WHY SYRIA IS SO IMPORTANT.* Retreived from: https://www.news-decoder.com/2015/10/06/why-syria-is-so-important2/: News Decoder website.

Niazi , T., & Hein , J. (2016). The primordial refugees: Religious traditions, global forced migration, and state–society relations. *International Sociology*, 31(6), 726-741.

Schmeidl, S. (1997). Exploring the causes of forced migration: A pooled time-series analysis, 1971-1990. *Social Science Quarterly* , 78 (2): 284-308.

Spencer, R. (2016). Who are the Alawites? *The Telegraph*, Retrieved from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/02/who-are-the-alawites/.

Tastekin, F. (2016). *What's brewing between the Kurds, Syrian regime?* Retrieved from: http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/12/turkey-syria-kurdish-knot-sheikh-maqsoud.html: AlMonitor.

TDA. (2016). titled Syrian views on international agreements regarding Syria: Cessation of hostilities, Geneva III, and any upcoming elections under UN

supervision. *The Day After*, Retreived from: http://tda-sy.org/en/uncategorized/syrian-views-international-agreements.html.

The Day After. (2016). Sectarianism in Syria Survey Study. *The Day After website*, Retreived from: http://tda-sy.org/en/publications/english-sectarianism-in-syria-survey-study.html.

The Day After, T. (2016). Syria: Opinions and Attitudes on Federalism, Decentralization, and the experience of the Democratic Self-Administration. *The Day After website*, Retreived from: http://tda-sy.org/en/publications/%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%DB%8C%D8%A7-%D8%A2%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%88%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%DB%8C%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%84%DB%8C%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84.html.

Tilly, C. (2003). The Politics of Collective Violence. *Cmbridge : CUP*, Chapter 3 (esp. pp . 5575).

Turton, D. (1997). War and ethnicity: global connections and local violence in North East Africa and Former Yugoslavia. *Oxford Development Studies*, 25(1), 77-94.

UNHCR, U. N. (2016). Figures at a Glance. *official website*, http://www.unhcr.org/statistical-yearbooks.html.

Wimmer A and Schetter. (2003). Putting state-formation first: Some recommendations for reconreconstruction and peace-making in Afghanistan. *Journal of International Development*, 525–539.