Stateless Diaspora Diplomacy and State Building: A Comparative Case Study of Jewish Diplomacy in Europe and the United States prior to 1948 and Kurdish Diplomacy in Europe Today

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how stateless diasporas adopt social practices of diplomacy to influence domestic politics and foreign policies of governments in their receiving states and home states, thereby advancing national agendas for state-building in a variety of forms. The paper draws a comparisons between the diplomatic models of the stateless Jewish diaspora in Europe and the US before Israel's foundation and the current stateless Kurdish diaspora in Europe, highlighting the shift from their orphaned to assertive diplomacy models. The study analyzes the impact of Jewish and Kurdish diaspora leaders' autonomous agency, economic and intellectual resources, and intra-community relationships on their diplomacy objectives, patterns, and outcomes. Based on five in-depth elite interviews with leaders of the Kurdish diaspora, participant observations at academic events in Paris, Brussels and Stockholm, as well as literature review on Jewish diaspora diplomacy prior to 1948, my study sheds light on the conditions and contexts of stateless diaspora diplomacy models and contributes to international relations literature.

Keywords: Jewish Diaspora, Kurdish Diasporas, Stateless Diplomacy, Europe, the Middle East

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude examine comment les diasporas apatrides adoptent des pratiques sociales de diplomatie afin d'influencer les politiques intérieures et étrangères dans leurs États d'accueil comme dans leurs pays d'origine, apportant ainsi leur contribution au projet de construction étatique. L'article compare les modèles diplomatiques de la diaspora juive apatride en Europe et aux États-Unis avant la fondation d'Israël avec ceux de la diaspora kurde actuelle en Europe, mettant en lumière le passage d'une diplomatie « orpheline » à une diplomatie affirmée. L'étude analyse l'impact de l'autonomie des dirigeants des diasporas juive et kurde, de leurs ressources économiques et intellectuelles, ainsi que des relations au sein de leurs communautés sur leurs objectifs, schémas et résultats diplomatiques. Basée sur cinq entretiens approfondis avec des leaders de la diaspora kurde, des observations participantes lors de manifestations académiques à Paris, Bruxelles et Stockholm, ainsi qu'une revue de la littérature sur la diplomatie de la diaspora juive avant 1948, cette étude éclaire les conditions et contextes des modèles diplomatiques de diasporas apatrides et contribue à la littérature du champ des relations internationales.

MOTS CLÉS : diaspora juive, diaspora kurde, diplomatie apatride, Europe, Moyen-Orient

This study examines how the Jewish and Kurdish diasporas have adopted distinct conventional and unconventional social practices of diplomacy for their national aspirations, interests, and claims within institutionalized settings or outside institutionalized venues in various periods throughout their histories. The Jewish and Kurdish diasporas have become stateless since the loss of their traditional homelands in the past and present. Consequently, they faced social and political exclusion, discrimination, exile, and pogroms, all of which compelled both communities to situate themselves on the margins of state-linked societies and the international community (Cohen 2023; Bozarslan, Gunes, and Yadirgi 2021; Gurses, Romano, and Gunter 2020; Dag 2017; Dekel-Chen et al. 2010; Moreh and Yehuda 2010; Khayati 2008). They ultimately experienced ghettoization and marginalization in the receiving states (Zeitlin 2012; Guyot 2011). Lacking legal status and political legitimacy, their behaviors outside the institutional structure constitute "orphaned" diaspora diplomacy, involving restricted and excluded social practices. They organized in the shadow of state affairs and their formal settings, despite their lack of adequate institutional and formal structures, to reach out to political and public decision-makers and convince them of their objectives. To this end, the elites of both diasporas have attempted to represent their marginalized communities' interests and communicate them directly or indirectly with state and non-state actors through a variety of cultural, political, and social activities to negotiate and advocate for their objectives. The diplomatic endeavors of the Jewish diaspora leaders, despite the numerous obstacles they encountered, yielded a diverse array of effective accomplishments in pursuit of their objectives. Conversely, the Kurdish diaspora diplomacy continues to encounter hurdles that impede the accomplishment of their fragmented aspirations. What has differentially shaped the diplomatic efforts of two stateless diaspora communities over the course of their histories?.

This research paper argues that three factors have played a significant role in shaping the diplomacy models of both stateless diasporas, along with their objectives and aspirations. The first factor refers to the agential attributes of both diaspora communities' leaders, which include their language skills, education, economic and intellectual resources, knowledge of political and social developments in host societies, as well as their level of incorporation and access to institutional settings in receiving states. The second factor pertains to the degree to which they have established a national platform based on national discourses, which serves as the foundation for their unified and unambiguous political objectives and claims, as well as their intra-community organization and cohesion. The final factor relates to the impact of the host and home governments' geopolitical interests on the diplomatic efforts and relations of both diaspora communities.

Diasporas engage frequently in social practices to fulfill the essential functions of diplomacy, which include communication, representation, advocacy, and negotiation, with the aim of influencing state policies, relations, and behaviors (Ho and McConnell, 2019:235). They resort to direct means, such as one-to-one meetings, or indirect methods, such as people-to-people interactions, to influence public opinion and secure transnational support for their compatriots' collective political causes. Hence, diaspora mobilization has been a subject of diplomacy studies within the fields of international relations and world politics (Koinova 2017; Adamson and Demetriou 2007; Shain and Barth 2003; Constas and Platias 1993). Adhering to the same principles as non-state actors like human rights groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society organizations, diasporas operate as autonomous entities. They build horizontal networks, through which they leverage their expertise and resources to engage in lobbying campaigns. In this way, they seek to exert direct or indirect influence on the domestic and foreign policies of governments in their countries of origin and settlement, as well as the legislative framework of regional and international institutions such as the European Parliament and Commission (Aggestam, Schierenbeck, and Wackenhut 2023; Arkilic 2022; Ho and McConnell 2022; Adamson 2016; McConnell 2016; Coggins 2015; Berkowitz and Mügge 2014; DeWind and Segura 2014; Khayati 2012). Despite burgeoning research on the relationship between diasporas as non-state actors and diplomacy, the variations in political and social practices of diplomacy among stateless diasporas in the past and present have remained understudied. This creates a gap in the literature by not fully understanding how and why stateless diasporas have pursued different political and social diplomacy practices in the past and present.

To explore these questions, I conducted six months of ethnographic field research from June to December 2023 in Brussels, Paris and Stockholm, five in-depth interviews with the long-term leading diaspora members of the Kurdistan National Congress (KNK), conversations with key figures from various Kurdish diasporic confederations, and extensive literature reviews and document analyses on the stateless Jewish diaspora prior to the foundation of Israel. The paper aims to promote understanding of both diasporas' similar legal status in terms of statelessness and its implications, their different agential abilities, and causal conditions related to geopolitics. Their shared status arises from the loss of their homelands and the inability to establish their own sovereign states, which have resulted in their exclusion from official and structural support and a sense of marginalization, vulnerability, abandonment, and pariahdom in the world of states. The paper analyzes how both diaspora communities have pursued distinct diplomatic paths, used discrete means, targeted specific stakeholders, and cap-

italized on certain opportunities despite their shared negative characteristics, such as statelessness, ghettoization, and marginalization in receiving states. Drawing inspiration from comparative research, this paper provides a significant empirical and analytical contribution to the interplay between stateless diasporas and diplomacy in the field of international relations.

The paper is organized as follows: In the first section, I briefly discuss the conceptualization of stateless diasporas and their orphaned diplomacy practices. In the following section, I analyze how the Jewish and Kurdish stateless diasporas emerged and carried out diplomacy, encountering disparate challenges and opportunities while the Jewish diaspora moved from the orphaned to assertive forms of diplomacy. I conclude the paper by underscoring the differences in diplomatic patterns and strategies between the Jewish and Kurdish diasporas that resulted in different outcomes for their respective objectives.

Stateless Diaspora and Orphaned Diplomacy

In the field of international relations and world politics, diaspora diplomacy has become a burgeoning phenomenon (Kennedy 2022; Ho and McConnell 2019; Constas and Platias 1993). Despite diasporas' exclusion from the terrain of international law, they act as non-state actors to impact state foreign and domestic policies (Aggestam, Schierenbeck, and Wackenhut 2023; Ho and McConnell 2022; Coggins 2015). While diasporas target governmental agencies and decision-makers in both origin and settlement states, ruling governments in home states also aim to mobilize diasporas as "soft power" sources to lobby domestic politics and influence foreign policy in receiving countries (Gonzalez and Torneo 2021; Gonzalez 2011). On the other hand, governments engage their nationals with the intention of promoting their economic and political agendas and national interests while maintaining local and transitional links with them through governmental bodies, including embassies and other state-initiated agencies, as well as citizenship acts (Arkilic 2022; Gamlen 2006; Wah 2013; Délano 2014). Non-state actors, such as multilateral international organizations and NGOs, engage with diasporas to utilize them as a "strategy" and "project" for various economic and political objectives, such as remittances, development aid, and knowledge transmission (Waldinger 2008: xii). Despite their instrumentalization by multiple actors, diasporas continue to exert collective agency by choosing their agendas and the source of their activism, as well as devising strategies for lobbying political stakeholders and policymakers in the home and host states regarding domestic politics and foreign policies (Koinova 2012, 2013; Constas and Platias 1993). State-linked diasporas remain significantly

entwined with state ideologies, structures, and discourses, while stateless diasporas, as discussed below, draw inspiration from objectives and critical approaches to states, their rulers, and institutions.

Statelessness involves social and structural constraints on the national community's right to exercise its own cultural and political sovereignty and foster its national identity (Gordon 2020; Eliassi 2019; Redclift 2013; Bloom, Tonkiss, and Cole 2017). Many different ethnonational and linguistic communities are deprived of their own sovereign nation states. They are citizens of the states from which they were displaced, but they believe that these ruling states control their ancestral homelands. They suffer from the lack of national representation of their homelands within the international community, particularly within the United Nations (UN). Most of these UN member states are multi-national and rule over more than one nation and homeland, receiving little to no legal and political recognition (Nimni 2011). These stateless nations are often subjected to inferiority by dominant nations and authoritarian regimes (Guibernau 1999:2-4). While rejecting the aspirations of these subordinated nations for the recognition of their cultural and political identities and self-determination, authoritarian regimes frequently pursue denial and oppression policies toward these ethnically and linguistically diverse communities (ibid. 55). The denial policy is in fact frequently the root cause of violent disputes, leading to civil war and, eventually, the forced evacuation of members of these stateless communities (Guibernau 1999). Such circumstances result in the emergence of embryonic stateless diasporas outside the borders of their homeland.

Stateless diasporas, dispersed and extended segments of stateless nations, were "born of the loss of national territories." They forge homeland identities in exile, national imaginations that contribute to the preservation of unity and solidarity amid dispersion (Dufox, 2008: 29). Sheffer expounded on the concept of stateless diasporas, contending that they are subdivisions of nations that were unable to establish independent states and exercise cultural, political, and territorial sovereignty (Sheffer 2003: 73). These populations, dispersed across various states outside their ancestral homelands, often face abandonment, neglect, impoverishment, and undesired status. The stateless status of these nations is not defined by the deprivation of citizenship to exiled individuals under Arendt's legal concept of "rightlessness" (Arendt 1962: 296). The nexus between statelessness and citizenship constitutes a "weak form of identity," according to Pizzorno as it is considered only a matter of legal identification but not of national belonging (Pizzorno 1991). Therefore, citizenship among diasporas does not promote a sense of their belonging to receiving nations and the state structures whose citizenship they possess. Instead, they form extended segments of state-

less nations, to which they develop a sense of belonging due to their shared cultural heritage, history, ethnic bonds, and ancestral territories. Therefore, they engage in activities that extend beyond their borders, advocating for the cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and political interests of their stateless nations in their lost homelands. They attempt to actively mobilize for their compatriots' cause and political objectives through a variety of institutionalized or non-institutionalized collective actions. To that end, they conduct diplomacy in their own distinct manner, which often undergoes institutional changes in conjunction with the establishment of their sovereign states. Armenians and Jews are two typical examples of communities that have transformed from stateless to state-linked nations (Sheffer 2003, 149).

Three essential characteristics and pillars of the social practices of diplomacy adopted by diasporas constitute representation, communication, and negotiation (Ho and McConnell 2019). Diasporic representation implies that elected representatives in institutionalized forums bring their communities' absences into the political arena, whereas communication is a medium for these diasporic actors to articulate their communities' needs and demands. Finally, negotiation is the third stage of an institutional process of diaspora diplomacy that involves collaboration or contestation of interests, values, and meanings, as well as conflict resolution between two or more parties, resulting in political configurations and institutional arrangements (Abdul-Jabbar 2019; Bird, Saafeld, and Wüst 2011; Martiniello 2006). However, the authors did not specifically distinguish between distinct stateless and state-linked diaspora typologies and the conditions under which they engage in diplomatic activities. Drawing from the three pillars of diaspora diplomacy, I concentrate on stateless diasporas, labeling their diplomatic engagement as the orphaned model. This approach highlights social practices that state actors exclude and constrain under international law.

The term "orphaned" refers to marginalized practices of stateless diaspora populations. I use the term "orphaned diplomacy" figuratively to highlight the undesirable, undervalued, and unrecognized status associated with stateless diasporas, along with the institutional and political constraints that push them into the margins of state entities. Due to their statelessness, these diasporas frequently experience disadvantage and exclusion, which leaves them in a vulnerable, marginalized, and abandoned position (Kufakurinani, Pasura, and McGregor 2014). In other words, stateless diasporas lack institutional and political recognition, legitimacy, and constitutional status as interlocutors for elected decision-makers. Like non-state actors, they are not subject to legal compliance with international treaties and state-to-state diplomatic procedures since they are barred from international law, which makes it impossible for

them to conduct dynamic diplomacy (Sending, Pouliot and Neumann 2015). Despite engaging in a variety of peaceful and contentious activities on the margins of the state community, they frequently encounter multiple obstacles such as a lack of legal status, restricted access to institutional settings, deficiencies in their communication capabilities and language skills, limited resources, and a lack of specific knowledge about political developments in host societies. Furthermore, intra-community fragmentations and conflicts complicate the diplomacy of stateless diasporas to make consistent and coherent claims (Aggestam, Schierenbeck, and Wackenhut 2023; Schwartz 2022; Constas and Platias 1993). Geopolitical interests and relationships between sending and receiving states also pose major challenges to stateless diasporas' diplomacy. These factors might even generate transnational repression by governments in both the sending and receiving states, which deprives informal diasporic diplomats of legal and institutional resources and adds further pressure to constrain them.[1] These challenges undermine the efficacy of the stateless diaspora's diplomatic efforts, erode the credibility of their political claims, and weaken their representation.

Yet, stateless diaspora leaders find themselves compelled to shift their diplomatic practices beyond formal and institutional settings, engaging in contentious politics through public mobilization and lobbying to indirectly communicate with decision-makers, a practice commonly referred to as "outsider activism" (Tarrow 2005:45–48). They are organized through conventional techniques, utilizing a variety of contentious and peaceful strategies that extend beyond formal political settings to embrace citizens, advocacy and pressure groups, and grassroots movements. They embolden these political and social entities to engage with elected representatives, such as councilors, mayors, and MPs, as well as government agencies and authorities, with the aim of drawing attention to their objectives (Aggestam, Schierenbeck, and Wackenhut 2023; Dag 2017). These social practices represent people-to-people diaspora diplomacy, in which grassroots constituents engage in socio-cultural activities and interact with the general public in informal and non-institutionalized settings. Thus, stateless diaspora leaders exercise autonomous agency by organizing and mobilizing their members and non-diasporic constituents to communicate their objectives to improve their compatriots' cultural, political, and economic circumstances in host and home countries, as well as in transnational space. By doing so, they also navigate through domestic politics and foreign policies in both the receiving and original states. While non-institutionalized collective actions form the foundation of stateless diaspora diplomacy, their younger members frequently

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[1] Interviews with Amed, September 2023.

strive to participate in institutionalized structures by securing seats in local and national parliaments, aligning themselves with social democratic and left-wing parties, or joining interest organizations and unions (Dag 2022). These younger members possess a degree of education and language skills and seek to instill institutional participation and legitimacy. However, they often lack experienced memories that require their homeland-related commitment and responsibility and thus fail to adequately represent the collective national interests and objectives of their communities.

Formation of Stateless Jewish and Kurdish Diasporas and Diplomacy Models

The Jewish and Kurdish diasporas constitute two notable examples of marginalized and oppressed stateless communities that have engaged in social practices of diplomacy at certain points in their respective histories. The Jewish diaspora is regarded as one of the first prototypes that preceded the foundation of the State of Israel (Safran 2005). The diasporization of Jews dates back to the seventh century BCE, following their violent expulsion from their ancestral homeland. The deportation became an essential aspect of Jewish identity (Dimont 2004). They became physically cut off from their homeland, but Jerusalem remained in their sacred ceremonies and lives. On the other hand, the Kurdish diaspora came into existence only in the early 1970s, despite the exile of Kurdish intellectuals and elites by Ottoman rulers, Turkish and Persian regimes since the early 1920s, and pan-Arabist regimes in Iraq and Syria since the 1950s (McDowall, 2007). However, the Kurdish diaspora has maintained an intense attachment to their homeland. While the Jewish and Kurdish diasporas differ significantly in terms of territorial connection, relocation, and expulsion to specific regions, as well as faith and societal structures, both communities have experienced statelessness, dispersion, and marginalization as a result of the loss of their traditional homelands in the Levant. Consequently, both diasporas have engaged in orphaned diplomacy on the periphery of recipient societies, attempting to regain control of their homelands and restore their sense of community. While the diplomatic efforts of diasporic Kurds, accompanied by armed uprisings of their homeland compatriots, failed to yield significant achievements to advance the Kurdish cause, Jewish leaders relied on the trial-and-error principles of diplomacy, employing a variety of methods, ideas, and facts until they achieved the desired outcome (Sofer 1998: 357; Weizmann 1949). Consequently, their diplomatic patterns underwent a significant shift, culminating in the establishment of the Jewish homeland through assertive diplomatic ventures.

The Jewish exodus from their ancestral homeland in Canaan, the southern Levant, sparked the formation of the Jewish diaspora. The Assyrians in 740 BCE, the Babylonians in 605 BCE, and the Romans in 19 A.D. collectively exiled the Jews, subjecting them to political, religious, and social calamities, as well as slavery, outside their homeland (Ehrlich 2009). They dispersed around the globe, with the highest concentrations in Europe, Russia, and the Middle Eastern region. Most European states assimilated them, but Russia subjected them to ghettoization, antisemitic attacks, scapegoating, and pogroms, resulting in deteriorating living conditions and mental and physical suffering (Taylor 2017). For instance, Hannah Arendt conceptualized Jewish marginalization as "pariah" and framed their interactions with host societies within the framework of "parvenu" (Arendt 1944). While the former described them as outsiders barred from participation in cultural, economic, political, and social settings, the letter referred to their assimilation and alienation from Jewish tradition, culture, and rituals. Due to anti-Semitic contempt and their status as pariahs in Russia, their persecution and victimization became everyday standards rather than exceptions, leading to the typology of a stateless and victim diaspora (Cohen, 2023.) In response to anti-Semitism and persecution, Jewish intellectuals, inspired by political and cultural Zionism, began to organize the dispersed Jewish segments to restore their lost homeland with full political and territorial sovereignty and return (Taylor 2017; Reinharz 1985). For instance, Theodor Herzl, a prominent Jewish leader, believed that the creation of a Jewish state was the only feasible way to end the Jewish plight, improve their living conditions, and achieve Jewish emancipation. Consequently, they initiated intra-community and international diplomacy efforts aimed at influencing and changing the negative mindsets of both Jewish and non-Jewish individuals (Friedman 2021).

Jewish diaspora diplomacy was notably marginalized and pushed outside of mainstream societies in Russia and East and West Europe (Dekel-Chen 2017; Taylor 2017; Reinharz 1985). Without formal and institutional representation and recognition, certain Jewish individuals, incorporated into the institutional settings of their receiving states, were self-appointed and operated in their own manner on behalf of their religious communities. They acted as unofficial diplomats, communicating within government administrations at the local and national levels to shield Jews from discriminatory and anti-Semitic insults and pogroms in Eastern Europe and Russia while also attempting to preserve the traditional Jewish way of life (Dekel-Chen 2017: 515–19). However, the self-appointed and chaotic phase of stateless Jewish diaspora diplomacy came to an end with Theodor Herzl's idea to assemble the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897. In response to the Jewish dilemma and anti-Semitism, this Congress capitalized on Zionism to create an institutional, national, and political platform,

thereby establishing the Jewish home state. The initial Zionist convention played a pivotal role in determining the framework and approach of diplomacy under the elected Jewish leadership. It facilitated the communication and negotiation of their desired objectives with political non-Jewish actors in receiving states and fragmented Jewish segments (Ibid.: 518). Thus, the convention provided their representatives with invaluable guidance and established the Jewish diplomatic paradigm, which comprised the "one-to-one" manpower of elected Jewish leaders. These leaders were successful in identifying the analogous underlying interests, non-material values, and policies of power holders in European and Middle Eastern states. For instance, the Jewish leaders centered their diplomatic approach on "realpolitik" and "quid pro quo" relationships between state actors rather than appealing to the world community on the basis of "humanitarian" or "moral" values (Kornberg 2007: 48). Having identified the agendas and interests of their receiving states, they strove to connect Zionist objectives with the national interests of power holders to shape their foreign policies (Reinharz 1985: 407). This approach produced effective performances and outcomes by moving their social practices into institutionalized venues (Sofer 1998: 357). The pragmatic, proactive, and assertive diplomatic skills of the Jewish leaders paved the way for the realization of their aspirations, namely the establishment of a sovereign Jewish home state in a legally and internationally undefined area, inherited from the Ottoman Empire but under the control of the British mandate in 1948. Although many exiled Jews returned to Israel and continued to immigrate in the form of "Aliyah", other Jewish groups decided to stay in their receiving states, where they have lived for decades. However, most Jewish diaspora groups worldwide recognize Israel as their historical and cultural homeland, actively participating in diplomatic efforts on its behalf (Schwartz 2022).

The division of the Kurdish homeland among Turkish, Iranian, Iraqi, and Syrian states, as well as its permanent loss following the Ottoman Empire's collapse in the late 1910s, prompted the displacement and escape of Kurdish individuals to European states, resulting in the formation of the Kurdish diaspora(s). The Kurds endured a second division of their homeland right after the First World War ended in the early 20th century, following the first partition that occurred in the 17th century (McDowall 2007). The Kurdish chieftains failed to capitalize on emerging opportunities to carve out their national state during the Middle East's remapping process due to their inability to effectively integrate their differentiated local interests and overcome political and social intra-community fragmentation (Vali 1998). Furthermore, regional and international powers, particularly the British and French in the Middle East, abandoned the Kurdish chieftains, leaving the Kurds at the mercy of newly-emerging national states,

Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, which subjected them to tyranny, assimilation, displacement, and colonization of their homeland (McDowall 2007; Dag 2017). Yet, the Kurdish movements and chieftains launched several uprisings against the regimes of these states during the 20th century in response to their repressive measures, as well as the colonization of the Kurdish homeland, culture, natural resources, and minds. However, most Kurdish rebellions resulted in the defeat and deportation of the leading elites, along with the ethnic cleansing of the Kurdish population. Forced immigration of politically persecuted and conflict-generated refugees, initially to metropolitan cities and later to European countries, has become their standardized reality (Schmidinger 2019; Dag 2017; Anderson and Stansfield 2011; Tejel 2009; Ammann 2000). Various categories of Kurdish immigrants began to form collective groups in the diaspora due to their "dispersion", "identity maintenance", and shared concerns about "homeland orientation", as well as transnational activism for homeland politics (Brubaker 2005). Today, a wide number of Kurdish diaspora organizations and mobilization structures operate in local, national, and transnational spaces throughout Europe, frequently assisting their compatriots' aspirations to achieve self-governance and self-determination (McDowall 2007; Dag 2023). However, despite the constant threat from authoritarian Islamist and nationalist regimes in the Middle East, the Kurdish diaspora groups and structures remain deeply divided and unable to unite around common objectives and desires. Due to the presence of diverse politics and ideologies, as well as the absence of legitimate claims, the leaders of the Kurdish diaspora have failed to foster integration and cohesion within the Kurdish community. Consequently, the political and ideological differences that drive their intra-community fragmentation constitute a substantial hurdle, eroding the legitimacy of diplomatic efforts among Kurdish diasporic segments.

Stateless Kurdish diaspora groups have found themselves in a space of clandestine existence, where they are everywhere but largely invisible, unable to secure recognition for their identities and cultural rights in institutional and legal contexts. Yet, individual Kurdish intellectuals, politicians, artists, and activists have resorted to both "one-to-one" manpower, interacting with pressure groups, NGOs, and representatives of certain ethnic and diasporic communities with shared concerns, as well as people-to-people interaction with the general public through contentious politics outside institutional venues such as demonstrations, protest actions, cultural events, and music nights. In this way, they have attempted to generate representation for their Kurdish homeland compatriots, as well as communicate and advocate for their national cause on the streets in Germany, Sweden, France, the United Kingdom, and other European countries, where the largest groups of Kurdish refugees have settled (Dag 2017).

However, the Kurdish diasporas have been less effective in communicating and connecting their claims to the domestic or foreign policies of their host countries. The primary obstacles to the successful diplomatic efforts of Kurdish elites and grassroots constituents in the diaspora are the absence of proactive and pragmatic leaders with well-calculated tactics, realpolitik-based strategic alliances around shared interests, knowledge-deconstructing policies, and awareness of the social and political developments in receiving countries. Furthermore, the actions of ruling regimes targeted the Kurdish diaspora segments and their leaders to criminalize them and finally marginalize their claims.[2]

Emergence of the Jewish Diplomacy Model

The educated and dedicated Jewish leaders and intellectuals held the first Zionist Convention in Basel in 1897, setting the stage for the transformation, source, and legitimacy of Jewish diplomacy to address a variety of internal and external challenges both inside and outside of Jewish diaspora communities worldwide. For the first time since the destruction of the second Temple, such a convention served as the "Jewish national assembly", a shared institutional and national platform. A significant outcome of the convention was the formation of the World Zionist Organization (WZO), which aimed to officially represent Jews and legitimize their national claims, drawing inspiration from Zionism as a political movement. Its aim was to unite dispersed Jewish segments from various countries for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, the enactment of legal rights for the Jewish state in Palestine, and the formation of an organization to foster Jewish unity (Taylor 2017: 7-8; Kornberg 2007: 45). To put it differently, the first convention functioned as a watershed moment in reviving the Jewish identity and establishing the Jewish state, but it also led to the transformation of the world's public mindset toward Jews (Friedman 2021:106). In pursuit of these objectives, Jewish leaders employed both intra-community and international diplomacy as strategic tools, which drew inspiration from the discursive narrative concerning the imperative of political Zionism and the organizational frameworks associated with the WZO. Theodor Herzl, the movement's leader, believed, for instance, that diplomacy would provide universal remedies to the universal Jewish sufferings (Kornberg 2007: 48). Accordingly, Jewish leaders, including Herzl, Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, and others, adopted pragmatic, flexible, and secret diplomatic strategies and techniques. However, their views, ideas, and methods concerning Jewish nationhood and home state, as well as their political and ideological disagreements, were frequently conflic-

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[2] Interview with Amed, September 2023.

tual, inconsistent, and unsystematic (Charbit 2017:23). Despite the multifaceted factors of discrepancy and inconsistency hindering instant successful Jewish diplomacy, the growing concerns about anti-Semitism and the threat to Jewish survival ultimately compelled the Jewish leaders to establish a cohesive front. They arrived at the basic understanding that the creation of a Jewish homeland required land acquisition, recognition, and immigration. While overcoming these divisions, they were actively involved in political and social practices that recognized the geopolitical interests of state-linked power holders and reached out to state heads and officials. Thus, they shifted away from orphaned forms of diplomacy and adopted assertive diplomacy, which specifically targeted the power holders of important nations with the intention of accomplishing Zionist aspirations (Schwartz 2022: 84). In this process, the agential abilities of the Jewish leaders, rooted in their educational, intellectual, and economic resources, constituted the fundamental characteristics of their man-to-man diplomacy.

Agential Capabilities of the Leading Jewish Diplomats

Well-educated Jewish leaders, many with university degrees and political careers, characterized the early method of Jewish diaspora diplomacy as man-to-man initiatives and efforts (Sofer 1998: 26–27). Self-appointed individuals in the economic and political sectors in receiving countries represented the Jewish community until the qualified and skilled Jewish leaders took center stage at various times, with their objectives limited to preserving their constituents' religious rituals (Dekel-Chen 2017). However, elected representatives like Theodor Herzl, Chaim Weizmann, David Ben-Gurion, and others, who were of, by, and for the Jewish people, played a significant role in shaping, advancing, and consolidating their objectives. These individuals used their unique diplomatic styles to represent their constituents in institutionalized settings, communicate their claims to elected decision-makers, and negotiate their interests. Their agential abilities and qualities were tied to their social status, reputation as acclaimed figures, educational degrees, intellectual capacities, professions, communication skills, financial independence, competence to generate clear and original ideas, and organizational skills. Furthermore, their reliability, legitimacy, flexibility, pragmatism, adaptability, and dedication to the Jewish cause played a crucial role in enabling them to access institutional structures for their diplomatic efforts and unlocking numerous doors that would have otherwise been inaccessible to ordinary Jews (Friedman 2021; Reinharz 1993). For example, Theodor Herzl established himself as a highly esteemed journalist and writer in the German-speaking region, as did Chaim Weizmann, an eminent scientist in the UK. Weizmann

gained extensive credibility in his field of study because of his scientific integration, connections, and discoveries.

These notable leaders leveraged their journalistic or scientific contributions to influence decision-making processes in their receiving countries by performing Zionist diplomacy within the bureaucratic and governmental apparatus (Reinharz 1993:70). For instance, Reinharz characterized Weizmann as an astute and pragmatic autocratic Jewish leader who prioritized financial resources, education, and the political and cultural Jewish ideals crucial to the establishment of the Jewish state (Ibid.). In pursuit of his scientific career, he made diplomatic efforts to establish clout with British and French elites for the national Jewish cause and ambitions. Along with Weizmann's diplomatic efforts, David Ben-Gurion was a capable and prudent leader who left a significant impact on Jewish diaspora diplomacy. Ben-Gurion was the leader of the Jewish Agency, a prominent figure in the labor movement with a steadfast commitment to socialism, and he was also heavily involved in grassroots Jewish activities (Richman 2018). These leaders capitalized on their position of power to reach out to key politicians and foster persuasive communication and dialogue (Reinharz 1985: 406). Using their capacities, legitimacy, resources, and skills, these leading Jewish diplomats strove to acquire access to decision-makers within institutional frameworks and exert influence over their decisions in order to assert the Jewish nation's presence in international affairs. Thus, Jewish leaders' individual agency was vital to moving into institutional contexts, especially in the UK and then the US.

Institutional National Platform and Political Movement for Jewish Diplomacy

Political Zionism inspires Jewish diaspora diplomacy, with the ultimate goal of gaining control of the ancient Jewish homeland in Palestine, promoting Jewish immigration, and building a powerful national identity with pride and self-confidence in response to Jewish constituents' inferiority, alienation, and assimilation into receiving societies (Friedman 2021; Sofer 1998; Reinharz 1985). Political Zionism was shaped by socialist and religious nationalist schools, the labor left, and revisionist rights—all of which were entangled in utopia, dogma, and internal conflicts. Whereas the former prioritized internationalism while maintaining universal values in their diplomatic initiatives, the letter focused more on realpolitik (Sofer 1998:361). However, Theodor Herzl assumed the role of the primary negotiator and pragmatic strategist of the Zionist movement, as well as the first diplomat to advocate for the Jewish people's desire for national sovereignty and self-determination and to secure legitimacy and national recognition for their as-

pirations (Friedman 2021). Herzl's extolled ability allowed him to convene Jewish people at the first Zionist Congress, which was the movement's primary objective, and to establish its institutions, such as the WZO, as crucial platforms for Zionist diplomatic endeavors aimed at representing, communicating, and advancing Zionist objectives. These included the development of a national organization fostering Jewish unity under the banner of Zionism, the achievement of international recognition for Palestine's legal claim, and the advancement of an organized, widespread Jewish settlement in Palestine (ibid.). Despite many religious and ideological opponents and divisions among assimilated Jewish diaspora constituents in Europe, the convention delegates resolved to establish a Jewish home state (Taylor 2017). Consequently, the first Jewish convention marked a significant milestone in the revival of Jews from social and political oblivion and death. It also served as the first global assembly of Jewish people, responding to the widespread Jewish plight and anti-Semitism (Friedman, 2021). The ensuing Zionist congresses, which were akin to Jewish parliamentary settings, functioned as a legitimate venue for institutionalized Jewish voices, allowing Jewish leaders to generate institutional representation and legitimacy for "global-trotting diplomacy" (ibid. 106).

The Jewish people's united voices and claims served as the major source of legitimacy for Jewish diplomatic power in the pursuit of Zionist objectives. Weizmann, for example, anticipated everything from the Jewish people, whom he regarded as the greatest power, but very little from the other major state powers (Reinharz 1985: 385). Ben-Gurion also encouraged the Jewish masses in the United States, in particular, to rely solely on their unity as well as their own resources and power, organizing them into political leverage in a mobilization process to influence public opinion. In other words, rather than pleasing the US government, he focused his efforts on the "most united and best-organized" grassroots American Jews, using their influence to pressurize American decision-makers to support the Jewish state (Landau 2011). For Ben-Gurion, American Jews were the principal source of economic and political power in Jewish diplomacy. According to Shapira, Ben-Gurion believed that American Jews could push for the formation of a Jewish state in Palestine and facilitate the large-scale immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe and Russia to Palestine because they could persuade the US administration to achieve these objectives (Shapira 2014: 121). He believed that winning over the people and winning public opinion was crucial (Ibid.). Ben-Gurion recognized the United States as a powerful nation with the best-organized American Jewish community. Therefore, Jewish leaders placed a high value on the unity of Jewish diaspora factions and, for the most part, were able to integrate their fragmented agendas to protect the Jews when confronted with threats to their survival.

Geopolitical Inter-State Interests and Jewish Diplomacy

Herzl, the political movement's leader, believed that the worldwide Jewish plight necessitated universal solutions through "international diplomacy first, diplomacy second, and diplomacy third" (Kornberg 2007:48). Subsequently, he traveled to the Middle East and a number of other European countries to meet with high-ranking government representatives, including the German Kaiser, the Turkish Sultan, the Russian Minister, the Italian King, the Prince of Bulgaria, the British Minister, and the Pope, to persuade them to support Zionist objectives, which revolved around the establishment of the Jewish state (Friedman 2021; Taylor, 2017). His diplomatic encounters with the leaders of these powerful countries generated a transforming impact on the public mindset, which qualified Herzl to gain recognition as a legitimate representative for Jews and internationalize the Jewish cause (Friedman 2021:138). Herzl endeavored to shift the Jewish dilemma to the international arena in pursuit of realpolitik, using assertive diplomacy to alter Jewish self-perceptions and interact with key actors in Europe and the Middle East. For example, Herzl deconstructed the national interests of the major state actors who could impact the creation of the Jewish state. Within this context, Herzl negotiated with the Ottoman Sultan administration about how Jews could provide financial assistance in exchange for the recognition of the Jewish state and charter in Palestine, as well as with European power holders about how Zionism could shift away from the idea of potential "Jewish revolutionaries" and how the Jewish state in Palestine serves as "the wall of defense against Asia" (Kornberg 2007: 48). He outlined the requirements for the formation of a Jewish state in such a way that it might align with the national interests of key European and Middle Eastern powers. For instance, Herzl's calculation to persuade the Zionist Congress to accept the British offer for Jewish immigration to Uganda has been interpreted as a maneuver to compel the Ottoman Sultan to comply with Jewish demands: "If you won't give us Palestine, we'll drop you completely and go to British East Africa" (Weizmann 1949: 85). Although Herzl's efforts were largely unsuccessful, he pushed the Jewish generation to continue pursuing the Zionist objectives to advance the Jewish cause, with a focus on the formation of a Jewish home state in Palestine (Friedman 2021).

In particular, World War I offered Jewish leaders numerous opportunities to undermine the national interests of major powers, leveraging them to align with powerful European actors and shape their foreign policies in the Middle East to further Jewish objectives. Weizmann, like Herzl, built personal contacts with high-ranking non-Jewish foreign politicians, diplomats, and prominent intellectuals, primarily from the United Kingdom, France, and Italy, and even recruited them to the Jewish cause

(Schwartz 2022: 84; Reinharz 1993:142). While he capitalized on his influence among Russian Jews and linked British and Jewish interests, British policymakers recognized Weizmann's influence and worked with him to enlist and mobilize Jews against Russia. British policy, which aimed to maintain its dominance by relying on local clients and native rulers rather than its own military power, linked its sympathy for Zionist objectives in the region to its policies of confining the Turks in Asia (Reinharz 1993:160–161). Furthermore, Weizmann's successful diplomatic efforts targeted British ministers, promoting their interests by providing a bulwark for their defense of the Suez Canal in the event of the establishment of a Jewish state. Meanwhile, Britain and France centered their geopolitical interests on enticing "American Jewry" to their side, thereby drawing the US into the war (Taylor 2017). Through the identification of shared interests, Weizmann's diplomatic efforts culminated in the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which established the fundamental principles for the future Jewish state in Palestine (ibid. 84–85). Therefore, by endorsing the restoration of the Jewish home state, Weizmann persuaded certain British government figures to back Jewish interests in the Middle East. However, a lack of coordination among the various British government components in London, the British administration in Palestine, and the British representation at the League of Nations in Geneva signified that British geopolitical interests did not always align. While Weizmann established a favorable relationship with the London government, he failed to use his influence on the British representation in Geneva to recruit members of the British administration in Palestine who maintained favorable relations with Arabs and secured their backing for British interests (Sofer 1998: 20–36). British geopolitical interests in the Middle East, coupled with strategic ties with Arab powers, prompted the drafting of the White Paper in 1922 and its subsequent publication in 1939. This document severely restricted "Jewish immigration" and "land purchases" in Palestine. Despite the institutional representation and legitimacy of Jewish diaspora diplomats, the geopolitical interests of major powers and their links with Arab governments in the Middle East posed a threat to Zionist aspirations. Based on these experiences, Ben-Gurion, for example, was distrustful of the British government, seeing Britain's diminishing imperial power in the region and around the world and identifying Britain as an "unseen enemy of Israel" amid the conflicting events of the 1940s (Bialer 1991: 219). In his opinion, the US government is trustworthy and honors its commitments (Gorny 1991: 92). In this sense, Jewish leaders realized both the power of American Jews and American influence in the Middle East, which they sought to combine in order to further Jewish-desired outcomes. Thus, the creation of a new Jewish home state and its "de facto recognition" by the American administration eleven minutes after its declaration testify to the success of Jewish leaders' proactive diplomacy (Segev 2018; Taylor 2017; Sofer 1998).

Formation of the Kurdish Diaspora diplomacy Model

Since the early 1920s, both exiled Kurdish elites and ordinary refugees have engaged in social practices that have shaped the patterns of Kurdish diaspora diplomacy in European states. These practices are characterized by people-to-people interactions with the public through cultural events and contentious politics, as well as man-to-man interactions with specific political individuals and groups. However, their accomplishments have been restrained due to the lack of Kurdish agential leadership attributes in the diaspora, collective national platforms, and collective national agendas to resolve intra-community conflicts that arise from political and tribal structures imported from Kurdistan. Furthermore, Kurdish diaspora diplomats endured transnational persecution as a result of the geopolitical interests of receiving governments and those ruling their traditional homeland. Thus, Kurdish diaspora leaders failed to present their compatriots' claims consistently and cohesively in institutional settings for communication and negotiation with decision-makers. Their non-institutional representation and communication remain chaotic, marginalized and fragmented outside of institutionalized settings.

Origin of Kurdish Diaspora Diplomacy

Historically, Kurdish diaspora diplomacy with one-to-one manpower traces back to the diplomatic efforts of prominent exiled figures, particularly Mehmet Şerif Pasha in the 1910s in Europe, who strove to represent the Kurds at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. He struggled to persuade local Kurdish leaders, including Shaykh Mahmud Barzinji, Sayyid Taha Gilani, and Simqu Shikak, to support the idea of an independent Kurdistan. However, his efforts were unsuccessful due to his inability to secure political support from homeland actors. In contrast, the dominant power, specifically Britain, worked with local actors and circumvented Şerif Pasha's representation (Kia 2023: 127–132; Wyrtzen 2022:98–99). Since the 1920s, several self-appointed Kurdish diplomats have followed him, including Emin Ali Bedirxan, Kamuran Ali Bedirxan, Ismet Cherif Wanly, Kemal Fuad, and Kendal Nezan, as well as numerous Kurdish students and intellectuals. They established numerous Kurdish institutions, including the Kurdish Students Society in Europe (KSSE) in 1956, the Association of Kurdistan Students Abroad (AKSA) in 1977, the Federation of Kurdistan Labours' Associations (KOMKAR) in 1979, the Kurdish Institute of Paris in 1983, the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan (ERNK) in 1985, KONKURD in 1993, the Kurdish Parliament in Exile in 1995, and the KNK since 1999, as well as DIAKURD in 2022. The institutionalization of Kurdish dias-

pora diplomacy has additionally penetrated the digital space referred to as "Kurdistan in the Sky" through MED-TV, the first Kurdish satellite TV founded in 1995 in Belgium and the UK, which was followed by MEDYA TV, ROJ TV, and numerous internet news agencies and social media platforms in diverse European states (Feuilherade 1999).

However, despite their various diplomatic efforts to represent the Kurds and communicate their claims through man-to-man political meetings with European left-wing and pressure groups, trade unions, and political parties, the exiled Kurdish leaders and elites in the diaspora have not been as successful in forging a united and organized Kurdish voice to challenge the colonial politics of ruling Turkish, Persian, and Arab regimes in their homeland. Similarly, since the 1990s, ordinary Kurdish refugees have engaged in people-to-people interactions with the European public to protest the draconian measures and repressive policies of ruling regimes in their home countries, thereby exposing the colonial politics of ruling regimes in their receiving states. People-to-people diplomacy has included, but is not limited to, grassroots participation in cultural activities (festivals, music concerts, cultural nights, and exhibitions), contentious politics (rallies, demonstrations, and occupation of public spaces), and self-immolation and self-sacrifice. The people-to-people diplomacy model among the Kurdish diaspora segments, which sought to represent the Kurdish cause, has been characterized as "victim diplomacy" (Humphrey 1999). The Kurdish refugees and immigrants aimed to internationalize the Kurdish issue and draw attention to the suffering of their homeland compatriots through contentious politics, including self-sacrifice. Despite risking their lives, Kurdish refugees in the 1990s had little success in bringing their compatriots' claims in the homeland and abroad into institutionalized settings in European and international political environments.

Lack of Collective Will for Organized and Coordinated Diplomacy and its Negative Implications

A number of factors contributed to the Kurdish diasporas' failure in the 1980s and 1990s to successfully integrate their diplomatic efforts into institutional settings in receiving states and secure legitimate status for their representation, communication, and negotiation of national claims. Despite the shared threat to Kurdish survival and identity erasure, the Kurdish diaspora's elites, intellectuals, and grassroots refugees lacked the collective will to overcome intra-community conflicts and tribe domination, as well as the political and ideological divisions and dogmatism of dominant Kurdish actors in Kurdistan. These in-

cluded the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the Kurdistan Socialist Party (PSK), the National Liberation of Kurdistan (KUK), as well as the tribe-centric Kurdistan Democratic Party (PDK) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in the 1980s and 1990s. These players from the homeland have consistently maintained a dominant position in the Kurdish diaspora's venues, organizations, relationships, and claims. Due to their persistent political and ideological frictions and the absence of a unified vision for the national cause, these factions have occasionally been involved in violent confrontations in an attempt to eliminate one another as adversaries (O'Connor 2021: 117–119). Their inability to reconcile their ideological and political differences hindered them from coordinating collective operations toward a positive outcome for their objectives. Each of these diasporic divisions linked to the homeland actors established their own associations to organize cultural events for their followers, but they were unable to effectively represent the interests of homeland's compatriots or the entire Kurdish diaspora's constituents to European societies in Germany, France, Sweden, and other countries. Therefore, the repercussions of homeland actors' policies have not only weakened the influence of Kurdish representation in the diaspora but have also diminished the impact of their internal and external communication, forcing them to the periphery in receiving societies. Consequentially, the substantial participation of Kurdish elites, associations, and ordinary refugees at the grassroots level in diplomatic ventures in the diaspora proved to be fruitless. Nonetheless, these diasporic components have struggled in their own ways to revitalize Kurdish identity, raise Kurdish consciousness among assimilated Kurdish guestworkers, and mobilize ordinary refugees against the colonial politics of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria, as well as for self-determination, independence, and recognition of Kurdish cultural and political rights (Vanly 1988: 67).

Agential Inability of Kurdish Diaspora Diplomats

One of the main causes for the absence of Kurdish representation in institutionalized settings is the inability of grassroots refugees and Kurdish elites to develop agential characteristics through successful social integration, language and educational acquisition, structural incorporation, and professionalism within host societies' political, economic, and cultural spheres. The legacy of colonial policies in their ancestral homeland is another aggravating factor. The regimes in countries of origin have displaced Kurdish individuals from their villages and towns, left them in limbo, abandoned, uneducated and destitute, and denied them access to relevant economic and educational opportunities that would have allowed them to acquire adequate resources they required for rel-

evant skills and education (Beşikçi 2004). For example, most Kurds in Turkey were internally displaced refugees, living in shanty towns in urban areas far from their home regions (Tas 2016: 59–60). The majority of these Kurdish groups hail from rural Kurdish regions, where they have limited opportunities for education, let alone obtaining a university degree. Some Kurdish segments escaped repressive anti-Kurdish policies in Turkey and became refugees in European states during the 1990s. However, they encountered criminalization as well as cultural, social, and structural discrimination in new European states (Dag 2017). They have struggled to acquire the linguistic skills in new host societies to build the necessary economic, political, and social capital, and to successfully complete their "integration process". Furthermore, Kurdish diaspora leaders, under the influence of homeland's political players, failed to effectively encourage Kurdish refugees to learn the languages of receiving societies and adapt to new social environments. Instead, they sought to recruit these vulnerable refugees to advance the ideological and national aspirations of their compatriots in Kurdistan. They made efforts to galvanize their collective actions outside of institutionalized settings in the form of mass protests and rallies, as well as cultural festivals in public squares (Humphrey 1999). While these collective actions implied people-to-people diplomacy, rendering Kurdish suffering and demands visible, most Kurdish refugees had little access to institutionalized venues where they could communicate with relevant actors and groups in the decision-making process and advocate for the national Kurdish cause in the Middle East. They have lacked the economic and political resources to convert their quantitative presentation into lobbying efforts, which aimed to facilitate communication with decision-makers in the host states and lobby their foreign policies.

Absence of Consensus-based Institutional Platform for the Kurdish Cause

In 1999, Ismet Cherif Vanly led a group of former members of the Kurdish parliament in exile to form the KNK and represent the Kurdish claims within institutionalized settings in European states. They emulated the models of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) and the African National Congress (ANC) in representing Kurds both overseas and at home.[3] The KNK defines its role as "a higher body of the Kurdish people to protect the interests and unity of the nation of Kurdistan", serving as a national platform for "representatives of political parties" and a variety of social, cultural, and religious formations, as well as politically independent individuals from the diaspora and Kurdistan" (KNK

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[3] Interview with Zeydan, September 2023.

2023). Amed, a member of the KNK's executive committee, stressed that the organization serves as a national NGO, representing Kurds in their divided homeland and in their dispersed diasporas throughout Europe. He reaffirmed that the KNK's additional pertinent missions have been to inform the international public and state community about the Kurdish national struggle and to defend the national rights of the Kurds for a democratic and equal society.[4] Despite its self-description as a national umbrella organization, leading members of other Kurdish diaspora organizations such as Navenda Rewanda Kurdistani and the Kurdish Diaspora Center in Switzerland, both affiliated with the PDK, as well as the impartial DIAKURD, viewed the KNK as heavily influenced by the PKK's ideology and politics. Hence, these rival Kurdish actors refused to recognize the KNK as the preeminent national platform for the Kurds, attend its meetings, or agree with its defined objectives.[5] For example, the KNK and its rivals, the Kurdish Diaspora Center in Switzerland and the Kurdish Institute of Paris, held three separate conferences in Lausanne in May, June, and July 2023 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Lausanne Treaty. While the KNK's final conference declaration emphasized agendas linked to the ideas of the imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, Masoud Barzani, the leader of the PDK, conveyed the messages at the conference hosted by the Kurdish Diaspora Center in Switzerland (ANF News 2023; Van-Wilgenburg 2023). The Kurdish Institute of Paris convened academics at a symposium to discuss the consequences of the Lausanne Treaty for Kurds and Armenians (Geerdink 2023). Not only were the messages at these three distinct conferences divided, but attendees also accused one another on social media platforms of having affiliations with the PKK or PDK, compromising their ability to represent legitimate Kurdish claims.[6] Nonetheless, the KNK continues to be the most influential diasporic Kurdish representation, striving to secure observer status as the Kurdish nation's representative in state institutions and specific agencies of regional and international organizations like the UN and EU. The KNK may require the adoption of an extensive intra-community diplomacy strategy in order to establish an inclusive platform and secure concessions and integration among highly heterogeneous Kurds. Within this context, its leaders might consider how to transform the representative structures of the KNK from a national platform for certain ideological and political objectives to a global platform that encompasses all politically-dissident Kurds, geographically-dispersed Kurds in the Caucasus, Israel, Lebanon, North America, and beyond, as well as religiously-diverse Kurdish segments with Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Yezidi faiths.

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[4] Interviews with Amed, September 2023.
[5] Personal conversation with Mamo, June 2023.
[6] Personal Conversation with a Diakurd member, October 2023.

Detrimental Implications of Interstate Interests for Kurdish Diaspora Diplomacy

External factors, specifically the framework of geopolitical interests and ties between ruling regimes and governments in receiving states, pose a significant obstacle to the Kurdish diaspora's diplomacy efforts. Diverse state actors and power holders take advantage of Kurdish statelessness, excluding them from the processes of representation, communication, and negotiation regarding their presence in interstate institutions and affairs. These state actors frequently hinder Kurdish representation and silence Kurdish voices on a regional and international level, using the political discourse of "terrorism" associated with the PKK against the Kurds (Deewanee 2022). For example, the Russian invasion of Ukraine sparked security concerns throughout Europe and prompted Sweden and Finland to join NATO. However, having recognized European security concerns, the Turkish regime has capitalized on Turkey's geopolitical importance and NATO membership to pressurize European applicant states for political concessions on its severe anti-Kurdish policies. Encouraged by the European and American governments, NATO's Secretary General subsequently urged Swedish and Finnish decision-makers to sign a trilateral memorandum to address Turkish requirements and security concerns (Kauranen 2022). Most Turkish concerns revolve around European support for Turkey's anti-Kurdish oppression and human rights violations, such as the denial of Kurdish cultural and political rights and the persecution of Kurdish exiles and diaspora leaders (Dag 2022).

The KNK leaders emphasized the direct implications of this memorandum, asserting that Turkish requests for Kurdish politicians and activists' arrest, linked to terrorism-related diplomatic activities, prompt international agencies like Interpol to issue arrest warrants. They argued that these regimes, which oppress the Kurdish population and culture and colonize the Kurdish homeland, effectively transform the legitimate demands of the Kurdish diaspora into persecution, arrest, and deportation, thereby posing fundamental obstacles to Kurdish diplomatic activities.[7] Furthermore, the Turkish regime has utilized its embassies and diaspora groups to sway the domestic policies of host states, thereby criminalizing Kurdish diaspora members and suppressing Kurdish voices. In conjunction with terrorism, the Turkish regime has integrated the persecution and criminalization of Kurdish diaspora members and activists into Turkish diaspora objectives (Arkilic 2022:4). Consequently, government agencies in Europe continue to disregard the political disequilibrium related to the stateless

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[7] Interviews with Zerdest, September 2022.

status of the Kurdish populations and their political claims represented through the Kurdish diaspora, citing their geopolitical interests with the ruling Turkish, Iranian and Arab states in the traditional Kurdish homeland. The Kurdish diaspora is thus relegated to a peripheral and marginalized position with its ongoing orphaned diplomacy in state affairs and institutionalized spheres and is subject to the discriminatory policies and subordination of the Turkish, Arab, and Iranian state agencies and diasporas.

Renewed Hope for Kurdish Diaspora Diplomacy

Kurdish diaspora actors, including the KNK and other confederations, as well as politically independent individuals, are striving to transform Kurdish diplomacy from a state of victimhood and orphanage to one of assertiveness, despite their fragmentation, statelessness, geopolitical challenges, and lack of competent, skilled, and resourceful Kurdish diplomats. The KNK and other diasporic Kurdish establishments specifically target state and public stakeholders operating within institutionalized frameworks. In other words, the Kurdish diaspora actors step up their communication with lower-level civil servants, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), domestic and global pressure groups, political party representatives, trade union representatives, feminist groups, and representatives of other oppressed ethnic and religious communities who share similar concerns to Kurds regarding their homelands, such as the Armenian, Assyrian, Jewish, and Tamil diaspora communities.[8] Aside from the efforts of KNK and other Kurdish components, members of younger Kurdish generations born, raised, and educated in the diaspora strive to participate in the structures of left-wing, social democratic, liberal, and green parties in receiving European states. They possess mainly university degrees, speak numerous languages, and are knowledgeable about the political and social concerns of receiving societies. Therefore, they seek to participate in the political decision-making processes at local municipalities and run for local, national, and European parliaments. A former Kurdish-Swedish MP, Amineh Kakabaveh, set an illuminating example when she utilized her influence to communicate and negotiate with the head of the Swedish government, thereby recognizing the presence of Kurdish forces in Syria and delaying negotiations and agreement between the Swedish and Turkish governments for the Swedish NATO bid. Kakabaveh's individual agency, bolstered by her educational achievements, linguistic proficiency, and understanding of host societies' cultural, political, and social dynamics, as well as her lingering memories of her own and her Kurdish compatriots' lived ex-

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[8] Interviews with Newroz, September 2022.

periences, allowed her to influence Swedish foreign policy (Aggestam, Schierenbeck, and Wackenhut 2023; Dag 2022). However, the younger generation's involvement and impact in institutional settings remain minimal, often limited to only providing advisory services.

Conclusion

This paper compared the Jewish diplomacy model in Europe and the US until the formation of Israel in 1948 with the diplomacy model of the stateless Kurdish diaspora in Europe today. The article focused on the agential attributes of both community leaders and their political and social diplomacy practices and objectives, as well as transnational obstacles to their diplomacy efforts. I argued that the stateless Jewish diaspora model that existed prior to 1948 and the current stateless Kurdish diaspora model serve as two insightful examples of both successful and unsuccessful diplomacy outcomes. In other words, despite shared concerns about the loss of their respective homelands and long-term statelessness, the driving forces behind various models and outcomes of Jewish and Kurdish diaspora diplomacy involve different attributes, practices, strategies and obstacles. These include how the leaders of each community have exercised their agency to tackle ideological divisions and political fragmentations within their communities, how they established a platform to discuss common agendas, how they set up institutionalized representation and underlying legitimacy, and how they understood realpolitik in terms of the geopolitical interests of governments in both the sending and receiving states.

The paper reveals that the Jewish diaspora leaders, with a high degree of education, language skills, economic resources, and integration into receiving societies, conducted mainly intra-community diplomacy to unite fragmented Jewish groups around the modern Zionist movement with the aim to create their home state in Palestine. To this purpose, they held the First Zionist Convention, which served as a national platform for elected and institutionalized Jewish representatives, providing them with legitimacy and recognition for their objectives. Representing the political interests of their constituents, the Jewish leaders engaged in man-to-man communications with low- and high-ranking decision-makers to present and negotiate their ambitions for the establishment of their ancestral home state. In the context of realpolitik, the Jewish diaspora leaders' agential skills in the social practices of diplomacy enabled them to proactively identify the major players and their national interests in relation to their strategic objectives.

In contrast, while Kurdish diaspora leaders lack agential qualities, they have failed to establish a shared national platform that would enable elected Kurdish representation to communicate collective claims based on national discourses and objectives and to negotiate these claims with decision-makers in receiving states. Instead, the fragmented Kurdish diaspora leaders and elites have engaged in competition with one another for scarce resources, mobilizing ordinary Kurdish refugees and immigrants for their own ideological and political agendas. Moreover, they have lacked a unified political movement that could represent Kurdish interests, articulate their national claims, and facilitate negotiations with policy-makers in institutionalized settings. In other words, each faction has pursued its own agendas and engaged in people-to-people mobilization, employing distinct contentious politics and tactics such as protest events, cultural nights, hunger strikes, occupation of key public spaces, and other collective actions to persuade the public to indirectly pressurize their policy-makers. In this context, they have been responding reactively to political events in the homeland instead of proactively launching pioneering initiatives to prevent catastrophic attacks targeting their compatriots both in the diaspora and the homeland. They have presented their inconsistent and ideologically-oriented claims to powerless actors such as pressure and advocacy groups rather than to power holders in the context of geopolitical interests and realpolitik, emphasizing the transformative Kurdish role in the Middle East. Ultimately, the Kurdish diaspora lacks the necessary national discourse, vision, representation, and legitimacy to effectively communicate their national Kurdish demands and engage in negotiations with political actors in the receiving states about their homeland's future agendas. Contrary to the shift in Jewish diplomacy patterns, the orphaned diplomacy of the Kurdish diaspora, which relies on man-to-man power and people-to-people interaction, has not transitioned into assertive and proactive diplomacy. The Kurdish diaspora leaders may reflect on the challenges related to their statelessness and accordingly devise creative methods to respond to their shared concerns and organize around common agendas, allowing them to effectively and uniformly represent, communicate, and negotiate their national demands, ensuring the success of their diplomatic efforts.

The paper concludes that stateless diaspora elites seek to dynamically participate in the orphaned form of diplomacy on the periphery of the international community by representing, communicating, and negotiating their national claims, interests, and objectives in institutional settings. In this context, my findings highlight several limitations associated with international relations and international law, which pose significant challenges to the diplomacy efforts of stateless diasporas. These frameworks fail to explicitly define the stateless status of these diaspora communities as non-state actors or to regulate their conduct.

Due to geopolitics and the bilateral and multilateral national interests of states, these constraints often result in their marginalization, vulnerability, alienation and transnational persecution. These constraints negatively impact their efforts to represent and improve the situation of their extended stateless nations in the homeland, host countries or transnational spaces. On the other hand, they are able to obtain a variety of opportunities to represent their national cause when they develop agential abilities, such as language skills, educational attainments, and a collective will to integrate their diverse ideological and political agendas for the sake of collective national claims. Accordingly, their economic and educational resources, community cohesion, institutional representation, understanding of the political conditions of host societies, and capacity to recognize and combine their objectives with the shared interests of power holders in the context of realpolitik determine the outcomes of stateless diaspora diplomacy. These factors are critical to the success or failure of stateless diaspora diplomacy and its ability to influence the domestic politics and foreign policies of governments that host or challenge them.

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