Kurdish Community Organisations in London: a Social Network Analysis

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by Alessio D'Angelo

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Kurdish Community Organisations in London:
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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to contribute to the debate on ethnic community organisations and social capital analysing the structures and functions of networks among Kurdish community organisations in London. Though encompassing a wide range of differences, Kurdish communities show a significant internal cohesion, which has strengthened in recent years. In the last two decades several organisations have been set up to address the specific needs of these communities and to promote their cultural identity. The complex network of relations in which Kurdish organisations operate has a major role in shaping their daily life and activities. Personal relations between coordinators and board members emerge as the main factor influencing the development of organisational links. An important role is also played by the kind of services provided and by the characteristics of users and members of staff. Organisational networks appear to enhance the Social Capital of both organisations and the people they serve. This 'network of organisations' is often perceived by its members as a social reality in its own right. However, formal coordination activities are still very limited and the organisational networks are far from being used at their full potential. Kurdish organisations have also developed an important capital of 'weak ties' with local authorities and mainstream organisation, apparently without major conflicts for 'external representation'; on the other hand, Kurdish communities are not able to speak with a common voice on a London-wide scale. Attempts to develop a formal consortium or umbrella body in the past were frustrated by personal differences and political divisions. A new initiative in this direction is currently under development.

KEYWORDS:

Note on the author

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Kurdish Community organisations in London: a Social network Analysis

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1. Background

1.1. Ethnic community organisations and social capital

Recent years have seen a growing interest in the role of migrant and ethnic community organisations (Moya, 2005; Schrover and Vermeulen, 2005), which are generally considered an important means of support and integration for ethnic minorities, and particularly for first-generation and newly arrived migrants and refugees (Zetter, 2000; Zetter *et al.*, 2005). It has been estimated that in 2001 there were about 5,500 of these organisations in England and Wales (McLeod *et al.*, 2001), with a very wide range of characteristics in terms of groups they work with, organisational dimension and legal status. Migrant and ethnic community organisations tend to serve, mainly but not exclusively, particular minority communities, sometimes on a neighbourhood, but more often at city or local authority level. This reflects the fact that most organisations originate form networks of cultural, economic and kinship ties binding migrant and minority groups together (McLeod *et al.*, 2001). Schrover and Vermeulen (2005: 824) suggest that "*the extent to which immigrants cluster in organisations is a critical measure of collectively expressed and collectively ascribed identity*".

As well as providing direct support with the provision of tailored services - such as legal and welfare advice, training and cultural activities - these organisations also act as advocates for those who are disadvantaged and underrepresented and have a major role in increasing civic engagement by advocating participation in the local community (Lees *et al.*, 2003). They also have a prominent role in reducing the isolation of their users, providing opportunities and places to meet people, make friends and share similar experiences as well as giving information to access mainstream service providers - in other terms, strengthening their users' social networks.

Research on community organisations has increasingly adopted the concept of social capital. According to Putnam (1995) - one of the concepts' leading exponents, though not its originator - social capital refers to the collective value of social networks and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other. In more practical terms, it refers to a 'surplus capacity' (Fennema, 2004): social capital allows an individual, or a group, to do what s/he otherwise would not be able to do. Jacobs and Tillie (2004) operationalised the concept in a strict sense of being embedded in a social network through associational life. In this respect, the social capital of a specific group or organisation is the aggregation of the social capital of its members; similarly, the more ethnic organisations are connected to each other, the greater their social

capital (Fennema and Tillie, 2000). Organisational social capital has a direct effect on individuals, since a member or user of a highly connected organisation can access the resources of the whole organisational network (Tillie, 2004).

Gilchrist (2004) noted that terms such as 'community' and, more recently, 'social capital', never seem to be used unfavorably. However social networks and social capital are not inherently positive in their effects. This has long been recognised in Putnam's distinction between two different forms of social capital: 'bonding' (or exclusive) and 'bridging' (or inclusive). The former is more inward looking and has a tendency to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups. The latter is more outward-looking and encompasses people across different social and cultural divides (Putnam, 2000: 22). As Putnam argues, depending on the characteristics of the available social capital, one can either expect co-operation, generalised trust and institutional effectiveness, or sectarian tendencies, corruption and ethnocentrism. With respect to the specific case of ethnic organisations, some authors have pointed out the risk that they can reinforce social division and even segregation (Taylor, 2003; Crow, 2005) and create a state of dependency in accessing services and rights. Zetter et al. (2005) also point out the conflicts, both internal and external, that can affect migrant and refugee organisations.

However, the challenge to the naïve equation of social capital and social networks with social benefits does not prevent recognition of the benefits that they have the potential to bring. "*Other things being equal, people with smaller social networks are more likely [to have poorer] general well being than their better connected counterparts*" (Crow, 2005: 14).

1.2. Measuring social capital with social network analysis

One of the reasons for the rising interest in social capital is the assumption of its measurability. On the other hand, because of its complexity and controversial interpretations, recent debate has generated a wide heterogeneity of approaches and measurements (Baron *et al.*, 2000; Grootaert and Van Bastelaer, 2001).

In relation to the specific case of ethnic minority organisations, one of the most methodologically aware examples is found in a series of studies by Fennema and Tillie (e.g. 2000). The authors propose to measure the strength of an ethnic community through a number of operational concepts such as: 'organisational density' (the number of formal organisations of an ethnic group divided by the number of residents of the ethnic groups); 'organisational filling' (the number of affiliates to ethnic organisations divided by the number of ethnic residents) and 'institutional completeness' (the variety of activities and services provided by the organisations in relation to the needs of the community). They also suggest assessing the level of social capital by measuring the linkages that come into being when one individual serves simultaneously on the governing board of two or more organisations.

In her review of social capital measures, Stone (2001) highlighted that social capital is a multidimensional concept. In particular, most theorists agree that this concept consists of two related but analytically separable elements: 'structure' and 'meaning', usually conceptualised in terms of quantitative and qualitative dimension (Fennema, 2004). "*The shape and extent of a network* - observed Wallman (2005: 1) - *says nothing about the content or the links between its nodes.* However networks and their characteristics are measured, their existence cannot act as a measure of social capital per se, but must be connected to an investigation of the characteristics of these links, such as the material or immaterial resources passing through them, the frequency and

reasons of the relations, the norms, values and common objectives governing social relations within the network (Stone, 2001). This is why an holistic analysis of social capital requires integrating complementary data collection techniques (Krishna and Shrader, 2000). In her study on 'networks of the Chinese community in Milan', De Luca (2004) proposes a comprehensive analysis combining quantitative networks data collection with in-depth interviews. At the beginning, the latter are necessary to explore the field and adjust the questionnaire to the specific case study, while the quantitative results can emphasize distinctive network patterns in some areas and could lead to further qualitative analysis in order to clarify aspects that were not included in the questionnaire.

This research project explores ways to develop a mixed approach for the analysis of ethnic organisations' networks, both in terms of structure and meaning, integrating quantitative and qualitative methods.

1.3. Visual exploration of social networks

Moving from the theoretical approach described above it is possible to conceptualize the measurement of social capital in terms of social networks analysis (e.g. Fennema, 2004; Flap, 1999). In this sense, the idea of structural social capital can be visualized in a graph (Fennema, 2004) - or 'network map' - consisting of points and lines between these points, where nodes are the individual actors and ties are the relationships between them (see Figure 1).
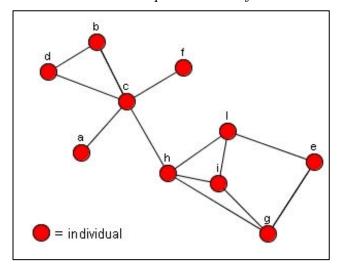
Figure 1. A classic visual representation of a Social Network

Social network analysis studies the structural patterning of the ties that link social actors (Carrington *et al.*, 2005). To uncover such patterns, it collects and examines data on actor-to-actor ties. Such data record who is connected to whom and how closely they are connected. Typically, the data are organised into square, N-dimensions, N-by-N matrices, where the N rows and the N columns both refer to the social actors being studied. Cell entries in these matrices indicate either the presence/absence or the strength of some social relationships linking the row actor to the column actor.

Network maps provide a revealing snapshot of a social 'ecosystem' at a particular point in time and can even help answering key questions in the community building process (Krebs and Holley, 2002). Particularly, the shape of a social network helps determine a network's usefulness. Smaller, tighter networks can be less useful to their members

than networks with a lot of loose connections ('weak ties') to individuals outside the main network. More 'open' networks, with many weak ties and social connections, are more likely to introduce new ideas and opportunities to their members than closed networks with many redundant ties (Granovetter, 1973; 1983). In other words, a group of people who only do things with each other already share the same knowledge and opportunities; whilst a group of individuals with connections to other social worlds is likely to have access to a wider range of information and resources.

1.4. Methodological challenges of social networks analysis

Unlike place-based communities, social networks do not have any obvious point at which it would be appropriate for researchers to draw the line in terms of people to be included in their study. As a result, where the boundaries of people's networks are drawn may be somewhat arbitrary (Crow, 2004). Further difficulties arise from the fact that relations between members of a network are not fixed, but vary in character in significant ways. Networks links may, for example, be characterized by reciprocity, or there may be relations with a sharp distinction between donor and recipient. The things that pass between network members may be more or less tangible, ranging from hard cash, through information, to more abstract phenomena such as status and respect. Network links may be activated on a daily basis or much less frequently. Finally, many people feel they belong to several communities simultaneously (Gilchrist, 2004: p.4); their networks are flexible and strategic, depending on the social and political context, as well as their personal circumstances and choices.

All these elements make social network analysis more an exploratory exercise that an exact science (Carrington *et al.*, 2005). The analysis of organisational networks is even more complex: organisations are 'social networks' in themselves and the ties between them are developed both as formal, institutional links and as part of the social networks of the individual working with the organisations. This complexity makes the selection of the respondent from each organisation of major importance in the collection of networking data.

1.5. Case study: Kurdish organisations in London

The case study chosen for this research project are the Kurdish community organisations in London. Despite its relevance both in terms of numbers and social and cultural impact on the host society, the Kurdish population in London has been relatively little studied as such[1]. Since their area of origin - 'Kurdistan' - does not currently exist as a separate, independent country, but is divided between several states, most research includes Kurds into more general categories, such as Middle Eastern or, according to country of birth or nationality, as Turkish, Iraqis, Iranians, Syrians. However – though encompassing a wide range of cultural and political differences – Kurdish communities in London show a significant internal cohesion, which has strengthened in recent years. Since the 1980s, they have set up a large number of cultural associations, community centres and service provider agencies to address the specific needs of their community and to preserve and promote their cultural identity. In November 2005, some of these organisations also started an exploratory process of coordination and partnership, which adds to the interest - both practical and theoretical - of this case.

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[1] Among the few examples: Griffiths (2002); Enneli *et al.* (2005).

2. Methodology

2.1. Methods

This research project used a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques:

- **Literature review and analysis of existing data** on Kurdish population in the UK and London as well as on organisational issues. This allowed me to gain a general understanding of the characteristics of Kurdish population and of the wider context in which Kurdish organisations operate. The review included both academic research and grey material produced by Kurdish organisations. The analysis and elaboration of official statistics includes the production of maps of the population distribution in the boroughs of London using Geographic Information System (GIS) techniques.

- **Survey and network analysis** of Kurdish community organisations in London, structured into three parts:

  - **(B) A closed-questions questionnaire** to collect general information on activities and services provided, users, staff, organisational structure and economic dimension.

  - **(C) A network matrix** to codify the different kind of relations established between organisations: knowledge, frequent contacts, partnerships projects, shared resourced, shared clients, etc[2]. Data has been coded and analysed with the help of a social network analysis software (NetMiner 2.6) in order to develop a structural map of the organisations' network.

  - **(D) Semi-structured interviews** to investigate organisation's activities and history, current problems and plans of development, particularly focusing on its formal and informal links as well as partnerships developed with other organisations. Norms, values and strategies within the organisation's network have also been explored, highlighting trust and reciprocity as well as conflicts and internal competition. The interviews have also been used to collect more information about the Kurdish population in London: the understanding on the social environment being a key element to analyse the development of social networks.

For reasons of practicality and time constraints, it has been decided to administer (b), (c) and (d) during the same interview session with representatives of 12 selected organisations.

2.2. Access and sampling

I worked with MODA (Migration Organisations' Development Agency) for more than two years, developing its 'Directory of Ethnic Community Organisations' (MODA 2006a) and helping with other community projects. MODA is currently working on a coordination project among Kurdish organisations in London. This made it easier to put together a first list of organisations, including contact details and general information about their activities. Access to interviewees was facilitated through established

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[2] See section 3.3

contacts in MODA's network[3]. On the other hand, care was taken not to limit the research to a convenience sample. Further contacts were made through snowballing, as a direct result of the interviews administration process. Organisations were chosen so as to provide a good representation of their diversity, including both big and small organisations, well-established and new, multi-service community centres and specialised agencies.

Care has also been taken in identifying the individual respondent for each organisation. This has always been the main coordinator of the organisation or - when necessary[4] - another individual with strong grasp of the organisation's activities and structures. Respondents were asked to answer as much as possible on behalf of the organisation rather than from a personal point of view.

2.3. Ethical issues

The design and research process have been guided by the Ethical Guidelines of the Social Research Association (SRA 2003). In compliance with Middlesex University's regulations, the Research Ethics form was approved and signed.

The information gathered in the course of the project - such as organisations' activities and structures - are mainly (at least formally) available to the general public. Therefore such information and the names of the related organisations are sometimes explicitly disclosed in this research report. Individual respondents (community organisations representatives) are not considered particularly disadvantaged. However, the interviews have sometimes raised professional as well as personal issues. Some of the interviewees may feel that the disclosure of such information, as well as their views on the topics under investigation, might have an effect on their professional position and on the organisation they work with. Consequently any personal issue or view has been kept confidential. Voluntary participation and the right to withdraw from participation at any time have also been guaranteed, though no particular problem arose in the course of the research.

2.4. Analysis of data with NetMiner

In recent years a considerable number of software packages for social networks analysis has been developed, both commercial and freely available. Some merely aim at the visualisation of networks, others focus on analysis procedures; others have been specifically developed to integrate network analysis and visualisation. Among the most commonly used in the latter category: UciNet, Pajek and NetMiner (a review of these and other application packages is available in Huisman and van Duijn, 2005).

It must be highlighted that these statistical tools have been primarily designed for testing hypotheses. In other words, they do not provide a simple, direct way to explore the patterning of network data, providing a single, straightforward 'answer' (Carrington *et al.*, 2005). One dataset can in fact produce several different results, and the network map must be adjusted by the investigator to better highlight the characteristics of the network that are considered most relevant.

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[3] During a meeting in March 2006, the organisations participating in MODA's partnership project have also decided to include this research project in their framework of activities, offering their support to the investigator and expressing their interest in helping the development of further, more comprehensive versions of it.

[4] At the time of the interview, one organisation – Kurdish Cultural Centre - was in the process of enrolling a new coordinator.

The software which has been used for the analysis of data collected within this research project is **NetMiner II** (Express Edition), possibly the most user-friendly among these packages and the one with the most developed graphic interface.
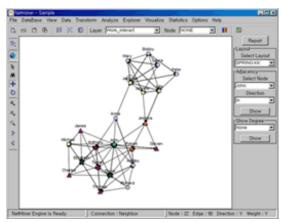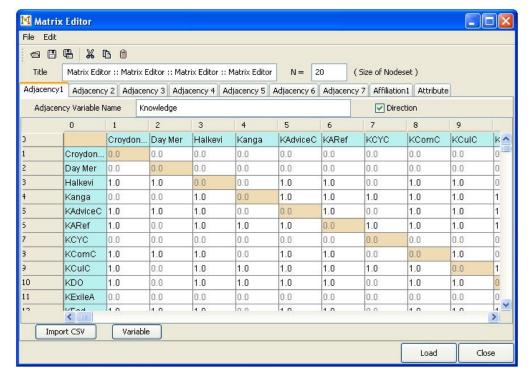
Figure 2. A screenshot from NetMiner II

Figure 3. An example of NetMiner's Matrix Editor

NetMiner II allows users to explore network data visually and interactively, and helps to detect underlying patterns and structures of the network (Carrington *et al.*, 2005). It combines three types of variables (CYRAM, 2005):

- adjacencies matrices: representing links between actors (nodes), such as knowledge, friendship, joint activities or other kind of connections.

- affiliation variables: representing the adherence of an actor to a particular group (i.e. affiliation to a party, an organisation, etc.)

- attribute data: other characteristics of the actor, usually codified as numbers (e.g., in the case of organisations: date of establishment, members of staff, economic turnover, etc.)

Data can be entered by importing datasheets (Excel, ASCII or other file formats) or directly via the built-in matrix editor - a spreadsheet editor not different in its appearance from the one used in MS Excel (see Figure 3) - which is the method used for this research project.

During the interviews, respondents were asked to fill a 'Network Matrix' (shown in Appendix 2), showing a list of Kurdish organisations in the rows and 11 different kinds of relations ('adjacencies') in the columns. The possible relations and their definitions are as follows:

- *Knowledge.* "We know this organisation".

- *Frequent contacts.* "We have frequent contacts with this organisation".

- *Membership/Partnership.* "We are members and/or formal partners of this organisation and/or our organisations belong to the same umbrella group".

- *Overlapping staff or board membership.* "There is at least one member of our staff or management board who is also a member of this organisation's staff or board".

- *Our clients use their services.* "Sometimes we direct our clients to this organisation to use their services; or some of our clients use their services".

- *Their clients use our services.* "Sometimes this organisation directs their clients to use our services; or some of their clients use our services".

- *Our organisation uses their services.* "In the last 2 years we used services provided by this organisation (e.g. training for our staff, space hire, consultancy)".

- *This organisation uses our services.* "In the last 2 years this organisation used services we provide (e.g. training for our staff, space hire, consultancy)".

- *Joint projects.* "In the last 2 years we worked on a joint project or activity with this organisation".

- *Joint funding.* "In the last 2 years we submitted a joint application for funding; and/or we received shared funding".

- *Shared resources.* "In the last 2 years we shared other resources with this organisation (e.g. meeting or conference space; IT facilities, etc.)".

In other words, for each organisation, respondents have been asked to identify what kind of relations are in place. Additional rows allowed the respondents to indicate any other relevant organisation they are in contact with: this helped to expand the list of organisations in the fieldwork ongoing process.

Data coded from the matrices have been added up and re-organised according to 4 macro- categories ('layers'):

- **Knowledge.** Indicates the representative of the organisation X declared to 'know' the organisation Y, in the broad sense of being aware that this particular organisation exists.

- **Strong Organisational Links (Q1).** Indicates one or more of the following: relation of partnerships or membership between X and Y; presence of at least one member of the staff or management board of X who is also a member of staff or board of Y; X and Y working on joint projects or activities, receiving joint funding or sharing material resources (venue, meeting spaces, IT facilities, etc.)

- **Shared Resources and Activities (Q2).** Indicates that X and Y work or have recently been working on joint projects or activities, received joint funding or share material resources (venue, meeting spaces, IT facilities, etc.).
- **Shared Clients.** Indicated that X frequently signposts its clients/users to use the services of Y, or vice versa.

It must be highlighted that the analysis has been conducted assuming 'symmetric relationships', i.e. given a connection from actor X to actor Y, actor Y is also connected to actor X. This has made it possible to analyse the Network among 20 organisations even though only 12 have been interviewed. The main limitation is that the Network Maps produced do not say anything about reciprocity of relations and it is not always possible to verify the information provided.

Exploring the dataset of each layer with the 'Analyse' commands of NetMiner, it has been possible to produce the series of Network Maps shown on section 3.3. The Network Maps have also been integrated with other information coming from the questionnaire: members of staff[5], yearly turnover, most common nationality among users, and type of organisations (community centre, specialised agency or umbrella organisation).

3. Research findings

The next sections discuss the results of the interviews and questionnaires - together with other findings from the literature review and analysis of grey material - in the following order: profile of the Kurdish population in London; characteristics and activities of Kurdish community organisations; Network analysis and networking issues.

3.1. Kurdish population in the UK and London

Kurds and Kurdistan. Estimated at 30 to 40 million people, the Kurds are generally considered the largest nation in the world without a state. About 20 million Kurds live in Turkey, 7 million in Iraq, 2 million in Syria, 6 million in Iran (De Agostini, 2006), with the entire area of 'Kurdistan' - literally 'the land of Kurds' - covering approximately 410,000 Km². Though Kurds have a strong common identity, they are also a very diverse population (Abdul-Maek, 2002). The Kurdish language - which belongs to the Indo-European family - includes two primary groups of dialects, namely Kurmanji (spoken by approximately 60% of Kurdish people) and Sorani, and many others sub-dialects, including Gorani, Zazaki, Kermanshahi and Laki (*ibid*). Nearly 3/5 of Kurds are today at least nominally Sunni Muslims of Shafiite rite, but there are also many followers of mainstream Shiite Islam, of several mystic Sufi orders and, particularly among Kurds from Turkey, Alevi Muslims (usually considered a sect of Shiite Islam). Other groups follow different religions, including Yazidism and Christianity, especially among Kurds from Iraq. Life under the rule of different states and harsh political contrasts between different Kurdish parties, have emphasised the divisions of a society where the role of 'tribes' is still strong, particularly in the rural areas.

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[5] A different numerical weight has been given to full-time (weight=3), part-time (weight=2) and volunteer (weight=1) workers.

Kurdish migration to Europe and the UK. In the last decades - due to repression and instability in the areas of origin - many Kurds fled to seek asylum elsewhere, particularly in Europe and North America. Kurdish migration to the UK, as to the rest of Europe, dates back to the 1960s, when a significant number of young Kurdish intellectuals came for their education. Most were from Iraq, but others came from Iran, Syria and Turkey (McDowall, 1997). During the 1970s the balance changed, with a growing influx of migrant workers form Turkey, particularly to Germany, responding to the demand for unskilled labour in the rapidly expanding European economy. At first most came from Western or Central Turkey and were of Turkish nationality, but from the late 1970s significant numbers of Kurds from eastern Turkey started to arrive, also pushed by growing disorders and repression. In the late 1960s and 1970s other small groups came from Northern Iraq because of the conflict in the area, particularly after the collapse of the Kurdish movement in 1975. Similar was the case for the Kurds from Syria after the Ba'ath party came to power in 1963 and in particular after 1970, when al-Asad secured his presidency. In the 1980s and 1990s the waves from Iraq increased significantly, following uprisings, the aftermath of the Gulf War and the repressive actions of Saddam Hussein's regime, including the brutal Anfal campaign. By 1999 the number of Kurds in Europe probably exceeded 750,000 (McDowall, 1997). In the last few years, an overwhelming majority of Kurds coming to the UK are asylum seekers (with increasing waves from Iraq since the beginning of the war in 2003), but there are also some students, professionals and business people.

Until the beginning of the 1990s, over 90% of the working Kurdish population in the UK was employed in the textile sector (Newroz Festival, 2006), which at the time was one of the largest sources of industrial employment. However, towards the end of the 1990s, the textile trade collapsed and the number of clothing factories fell from around 1600 to the current 20-30[6], some of which are still owned by Kurds. This dramatic change forced the Kurdish community to find alternative work and move to other sectors, such as the food and catering industry (e.g. restaurants, take-aways, cafes and off licences).

Ethnic awareness among these communities was in the beginning almost non-existent (Griffiths, 2002). When they arrived as 'Turkish guest workers' they found a large settled community of Turkish people living in North London and - because of the common language factor - most Kurds either worked with them or were employed by them. According to the last Newroz Festival Report (2006: 7), up until recently many Kurds from Turkey "*gave their businesses Turkish names such as 'Turkish Restaurant' or 'Turkish Supermarket', or presented themselves as Turks, subconscious that it would improve their business*". Only gradually did specifically Kurdish identity emerge within these communities.

A major role in this process was played by students and political refugees active since the 1970s, under whose influence many immigrants started to describe themselves as Kurds (McDowall, 1997). Martin Van Bruinessen (2000: 5) highlighted the intimate connection between exile and nationalism, explaining that "*the awareness of Kurdistan as a homeland, and of Kurds as a distinct people, has often been strongest in those Kurds who lived elsewhere, among people of different languages and cultures. (…) It was exile that transformed Kurdistan from a vaguely defined geographical entity into a political ideal*". Curtis (2005: 3) goes so far to say that "*the Kurdish nation is unlikely to have even formed had its members never left Kurdistan*". As with other migrant communities - such as Asians, Africans and Carribeans - the second generation showed

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[6] Some Kurdish textile owners moved their businesses to Eastern European countries, like Romania and Bulgaria.

stronger interest in its origin than their migrant parents: "*the desire to discover 'who I am' led to a significant surge of interest in political and linguistic identity among younger Kurds during the 1980s and 1990s*" (McDowall, 1997: 457)[7].

The development of Kurdish organisations was parallel to this process. The first European associations were set up in the late 1970s, among highly politicised students. Kurdish workers associations followed later in time, the first being a group of European organisations called 'Komkar', which shortly became a federal umbrella for dozens of local and national organisations, including the UK (McDowall, 1997). Finally, with the increase of refugees and asylum seekers in the 1990s and 2000s, many service provider organisations were set up to address these new needs.

Kurds in the UK: available statistics. While it is known that there are substantial Kurdish communities in the UK, and particularly in London[8], there are no reliable statistics on the Kurdish population as such. One of the main reasons is the particular classificatory problem regarding this population. In fact, most data sources, including Census, usually subsume Kurds within other groups, such as Asians, Middle Easterners, Turks, Iraqis, Syrians, Iranians or others, according to categories such as 'country of birth' or 'country of citizenship'[9]. On the other hand, triangulating different statistical sources, it is possible to get some useful estimates.

1. Census **-** According to the last Census, in 2001 there were 7,172,091 residents in London, of whom 39,100 were born in Turkey, 17,294 in Iraq and 20,398 in Iran. These figures have been made available to the public also at the level of individual Boroughs (see Table 1)[10]: and analysis with a GIS Software (ArcView GIS), produced the maps shown in Figures 4 and 5.

As shown on the maps and Table, whereas the population born in Turkey is more strongly concentrated in some specific boroughs, Iraqis and Iranians appear more evenly distributed throughout the city. Particularly, the boroughs with the highest concentration of people born in Turkey are Haringey (8,589, 4% of the total population), Hackney (7,729, 3.8%) and Enfield (6,176, 2.3%), followed by Islington (3,123, 1.8%), Waltham Forest (1,728, 0.8%) and Barnet (1,1135, 0.4%). People born in Iraq, on the other hand, are mainly living in Ealing (3,043, 1%), Westminster (2,026, 1.1%), Brent (1,742, 0.7%) and Kensington and Chelsea (1,007, 0.6%). Finally the highest concentrations of Iranians are in Barnet (3,039, 1%), Ealing (2,225, 0.7%), Westminster (1,616, 0.9%), Kensington and Chelsea (1,408, 0.9%) and Brent (1,276, 0.5%). These figures appear coherent with the information released by some community organisations, stating that the majority of Kurds in London live in the northern boroughs (particularly Haringey and Hackney), with sizeable communities in Ealing, Croydon and Hammersmith & Fulham.
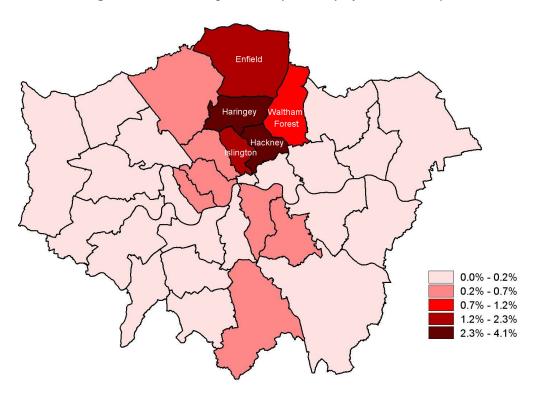
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[7] In recent years, an important role in enhancing Kurdish networks both abroad and in the country of origin has been played by the new media. The number of Kurdish websites has grown rapidly. Everything from journalistic and scholarly articles to Kurdish music, political propaganda, news and banned books are now online, available for everyone to download. Interestingly, the spread of the Kurdish writings on the internet will probably lead for the first time to a standardised Kurdish language (Curtis, 2005).

[8] It has been estimated that at least fifty percent of the Turkish, Kurdish and Cypriot people in the UK live in London (GLA 2006).

[9] Surveys on Ethnicity – including the 'Ethnicity' field in the Census – are even of less use, with the Kurds being forced either into 'Other White' or into 'Others'.
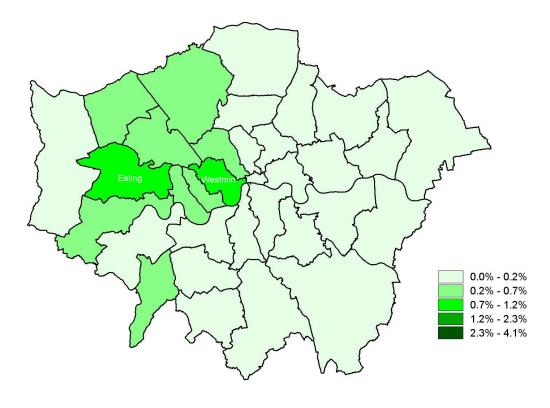
[10] Smaller scales – such as data at ward or Census output area level - can be obtained only contacted directly local authorities.

Figure 4. London Population by country of birth: Turkey

Source: Census 2001

Figure 5 – London Population by country of birth: Iraq

Source: Census 2001

Table 1. London 2001. Population by country of birth and borough

Area / Borough	ALL	Turkey	%	Iraq	%	Iran	%
LONDON	**7,172,091**	**39,128**	**0.5**	**17,294**	**0.2**	**20,398**	**0.3**
INNER LONDON	**2,766,114**	**24,891**	**0.9**	**6,629**	**0.2**	**8,065**	**0.3**
City of London	7,184						
Camden	198,020	562	0.3	623	0.3	1,182	0.6
Hackney	202,824	7,729	3.8	236	0.1		
Hammersmith and Fulham	165,242	318	0.2	784	0.5	952	0.6
Haringey	216,507	8,589	4.0	272	0.1	582	0.3
Islington	175,797	3,123	1.8	223	0.1	409	0.2
Kensington and Chelsea	158,919	594	0.4	1,007	0.6	1,408	0.9
Lambeth	266,169	467	0.2	262	0.1	348	0.1
Lewisham	248,922	738	0.3			240	0.1
Newham	243,891	478	0.2				
Southwark	244,866	804	0.3	285	0.1	231	0.1
Tower Hamlets	196,106	443	0.2				
Wandsworth	260,380	419	0.2	454	0.2	596	0.2
Westminster	181,286	609	0.3	2,026	1.1	1,616	0.9
OUTER LONDON	**4,405,977**	**14,237**	**0.3**	**10,665**	**0.2**	**12,333**	**0.3**
Barking and Dagenham	163,944	264	0.2				
Barnet	314,564	1,135	0.4	932	0.3	3,039	1.0
Bexley	218,310						
Brent	263,464	373	0.1	1,742	0.7	1,276	0.5
Bromley	295,532	289	0.1	243	0.1	279	0.1
Croydon	330,587	931	0.3	358	0.1	536	0.2
Ealing	300,948	436	0.1	3,043	1.0	2,225	0.7
Enfield	273,559	6,176	2.3	246	0.1	659	0.2
Greenwich	214,403	494	0.2	249	0.1		0.0
Harrow	206,814	236	0.1	558	0.3	774	0.4
Havering	224,248						
Hillingdon	243,006			326	0.1	389	0.2
Hounslow	212,341	275	0.1	646	0.3	565	0.3
Kingston upon Thames	147,273			839	0.6	457	0.3
Merton	187,908	263	0.1	338	0.2	383	0.2
Redbridge	238,637	481	0.2	215	0.1	211	0.1
Richmond upon Thames	172,335	298	0.2	264	0.2	553	0.3
Sutton	179,769			308	0.2	373	0.2
Waltham Forest	218,342	1,728	0.8				

It is difficult to estimate what proportion of this population includes Kurds. According to some estimates provided by Kurdish Organisations (particularly the Kurdish Cultural Centre) Kurds in the UK would be around 70% of people from Turkey, 65-70% of people from Iraq and 15% of people from Iran. Applying these estimates to the Census 2001 figures makes a population of about 41,700 Kurds in London - of whom 27,400 from Turkey; 11,200 from Iraq and 3,000 from Iran.

Finally it must be considered that these data do not include undocumented migrants and that last Census refers to 2001: since then the population of London has dramatically changed. Because of demographic developments, refugees' inflows and other migration, the Kurdish population is likely to have risen significantly.

2. Home Office statistics on refugees - The Home Office statistics of asylum applications for 2000-2005 show that Iran, Iraq and Turkey represent the top ten nationalities applying for asylum in recent years (see Table 2).

Table 2 - Applications for asylum (excluding dependants) by nationality

	ALL	Turkey	Iraq	Iran
1995	43,965	1,820	930	615
1996	29,640	1,495	965	585
1997	32,500	1,445	1,075	585
1998	46,015	2,015	1,295	745
1999	71,160	2,850	1,800	1,320
2000	80,315	3,990	7,475	5,610
2001	71,025	3,695	6,680	3,420
2002	84,130	2,835	14,570	2,630
2003	49,405	2,390	4,015	2,875
2004	33,960	1,230	1,695	3,455
2005	25,720	755	1,435	3,140

Source: Home Office, 2005, 2004

Once again, it is easy to assume that a significant percentage of this population are Kurds or Kurdish speaking people. Actually – in the absence of any data based on ethnicity and including the Kurds as a separate group – language becomes the main proxy to estimate the Kurdish population[11]. In this respect, the latest available statistics on the language spoken by asylum applicants (Matz *et al.*, 2001), put Kurdish on the top of the ten most spoken languages in 2000 (see table 3). Farsi, Arabic and Turkish stand at the second, fourth and eighth positions respectively: no doubt many Kurds are included in these categories as well.

Table 3. Applications for asylum (excluding dependants) by language spoken (April -December 2000)

Language	Applications
Kurdish	4,890
Farsi	4,260
Tamil	2,300
Arabic	1,980
Albanian	1,810
English	1,360
Somali	1,250
Turkish	1,240
Pushtu	930
French	860
Other	6,720
Total	27,600

Source: Matz et al., 2001 (Home Office)

3. Other sources and estimates – Another interesting estimate comes from the results of the Iraqi elections of 2005, when also Iraqi citizens living abroad had the right to vote. 30,961 registered to vote in the UK (16,184 in London, 13,444 in Manchester and 1,333 in Glasgow), of which 64% voted for the Kurdish Alliance: 19,815 people (Kaban, 2006), many of which are presumably Kurds. Naturally this figure includes only people who were eligible to vote and could or decided to do so; and does not includes irregular migrant and people under the age of 18.

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[11] The language spoken is not registered by the Census but, for example, it is collected in school records, which are usually available from local.

Finally, several different estimates arise from Kurdish Community Organisations themselves. According to the figures collected from reports and publications and during the interviews, Kurdish population in the UK could be anything between 130 to 200 thousands people, with some bringing it to 300 thousands. The Kurdish population living in London is estimated between 60 and 80 thousands.

Kurds in London: socio-economic characteristics. To have an indication of the main demographic characteristics of Kurds living in London it can be useful to look at the Census data again. As shown on Table 4, people living in London and born in Iran, Iraq and Turkey are characterised by a general gender balance, with a slight prevalence of men. Most of people born in Turkey (58.6%) have an age between 16 to 39 years and only 3.3% are over 60. For Iraqis and Iranians, the 16-39 years old are about 42% of the total and over 60 are 10/11%.

Table 4. London Population by country of birth, gender and age

	All	women%	Age Range				
			0-15	16-39	40-59	60-74	75+
Iran	20,398	48.6	7.8	42.1	39.3	7.3	3.5
Iraq	17,294	44.7	12.8	42.1	34.4	7.9	2.9
Turkey	39,128	48.3	14.0	58.6	24.0	2.2	1.1

Source: Mackintosh, 2005 (from Census 2001)

These general trends are likely to be shared by Kurds (who are included in this population) and are confirmed by the estimates provided by respondents during the fieldwork.

In-depth information on the socio-economic profile of the Kurdish population in London can be only deduced by research on Iraq, Turkish or Middles Eastern population - though in this way it is hard to identify the peculiarities of Kurds - and with the help of some case-study research conducted within (and sometimes by) the Kurdish communities. According to several sources, the Kurdish population in London hits most of the indicators for social exclusion: ESOL[12] needs, living in social housing and unemployment rates as high as 50% (Community Engagement Project, 2005).

Particularly, research carried out by the Kurdish Housing Association (KHA 2006) on a sample of 380 **households**, indicates that the household size among Kurdish people is generally larger that the national average, with a substantial number of households with more than 5 individuals. Kurds often do not get accommodations to suit their household size and live in poor and overcrowded conditions. More than 63% of respondents wanted to move out of their current accommodation, the main factors being the temporary nature of the accommodation (31%), overcrowding (25%), poor state of repair (15%), or unsafe environment (13%). The majority of respondents were housed either by a local authority of by a Housing Association, only 23% were renting from a private landlord, while 10% was temporarily staying with relatives of friends and 2% were housed in hostels.

The **health needs** of Kurds are equally problematic: the fact that many Kurds live in poor housing condition and on state benefits significantly affects their health. Moreover, Kurdish organisations report a high proportion of Kurds in London who are disabled or with long term illness - 25% according to KDO (Kurdish Disability Organisation) - mainly because of war or torture in the country of origin. The physical and psychological marks of these events have, in the words of KDO representatives, serious "*culture-specific implications for the delivery of mental health supports*".

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[12] English for Speakers of Other Languages

The **lack of spoken English**, together with other factors - such as lack of knowledge of the British system and of their rights as refugees or migrants - leads to severe problems of accessing services. On several occasions community organisations have denounced the fact that Kurds are not recognised in their diversity, not even in terms of language, by many local authorities (Kaban, 2006), with problems both in terms of interpreting services and culturally-aware service provision[13].

The combination of the social factors mentioned above has direct effects on the situation of many **young Kurds**. Some organisations report that Kurdish students are often underachievers in their schools, and need special assistance. Some of these youngsters, particularly those in high-density housing areas, are even at risk of becoming involved in crime and drugs (Enneli *et al.*, 2005).

Some community groups express their concern for a general perception that Turkish speaking communities are involved in the drugs trade. The events of November 2002 - when violence erupted in a café in the Green Lanes area of North London, leaving one man dead, four with gunshot wounds and 20 more with injuries – marked the lower point in how these communities are perceived. This had a serious impact on Turkish and Kurdish people in London and on their aspirations, education and employment opportunities (Community Engagement Project, 2005). Since then, local communities have undertaken serious efforts to address the problems of **stereotyping and stigmatisation**, a relevant example being the series of activities within the 'Community Engagement Project' promoted by the London boroughs of Hackney, Haringey, Enfield and Islington together with several community groups.

As mentioned above, the Kurdish population is far from being homogeneous. In fact, several different sub-groups emerge. One of the main divisions is based on the country of origin. Several respondents reported that Kurds from Iraq are more likely to rely on benefits and are generally living in poorer economic and social conditions, even though they often have a high level of education[14]. On the other hand Turkish-speaking Kurds are usually more involved in business activities, even though quite often they come from the countryside, have low literacy levels and sometimes do not even speak much English. With regard to relations with other ethnic minorities, some respondents mentioned significant difficulties, particularly among Turkish-speaking Kurds, because of "*the bad influence of Turkish nationalists' way of thinking even on non-Turkish population*". Sometimes, tells one respondent, "*Kurd youngsters meet up with Black or Asian, which have very different cultural backgrounds and behaviours, and this can lead to conflicts*". More generally, Kurds coming from rural areas seem to have more issues of integration than those – now a minority – coming from the cities. For example, one of the respondents reports there have been noise complains "*when Kurds celebrate their funerals, in their 'noisy' way*". Another example is the food culture: "*Some Kurds from rural areas* – tells one interviewee – *do not like fast-food culture and places like McDonald and Pizza Hut... this can even lead to cases of domestic violence, when husbands expect their wives to prepare a proper meal every day and cannot accept them to prepare ready-meals*".

Some interviews denounced how "*Kurds tends to keep themselves to themselves*"; with some interacting almost exclusively with other Kurds or, in the case of Turkish speakers, with Turkish people. As one of the interviewees explains: "*This is easier: a similar background, the same language… and the fact that they live in the same area. If you live in some areas of Haringey it is very difficult to bump into somebody who is not a Turkish-speaker!*". This 'closeness' of Kurdish people is reported to be particularly

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[13] The case of Kurds from Turkey is particularly problematic: they speak three different dialects and sometimes they cannot even understand each other; this adds further complexity to the provision of interpreting and translation services.

[14] As highlighted by one respondent, "*unlike Kurds from Turkey, Kurds from Iraq - even during Saddam's regime - they were allowed to study and practice their language*".

relevant among older generations[15], who sometime barely speak English and use Kurdish community centres very often, whilst younger generations are reported to be more easily involved into 'British society'.

3.2. Kurdish community organisations in London

History. The history of Kurdish organisations in London dates back to the 1980s, when the first Kurds who settled in London, mainly intellectuals and political refugees, set up a number of organisations with mainly cultural and political aims. The oldest and still one of the most well-known is the Kurdish Cultural Centre (KCC). When they started their activities – says the current coordinator – "*there were very few community centres in the UK, and we were among the first and major Kurdish organisations in Europe*". In the beginning, KCC aimed to be a sort of "*Kurdish Embassy for a nation without a state*", but in about three years they realised this aim was out of reach and began to re-shape their organisation as a multi-purpose community centre[16]. On the other hand, with the increase in the inflows of economic workers, particularly from Turkey, the Kurdish community had to deal – in the words of another respondent – "*with more urgent and practical issues: housing, health, legal problems*". This is why other service provider organisations were set up; among the biggest, Halkevi[17], established in 1985, and the Kurdish Workers Association, in 1989[18]. During the late 1980s and 1990s, with a further increase in the Kurdish population in London, Kurdish organisations started to specialise: some focusing on specific areas of intervention (e.g. Kurdish Housing Association and Kurdish Disability Organisation) others working mainly at a local level, addressing even more the needs of a specific community, usually defined by the country of birth/nationality, with the two main groups being Kurds from Turkey and Iraq[19]. Within this process, the role of the communities of origin, including political parties, became more and more relevant, both in terms of funding and managerial selection (Wahlbeck, 1999). Most organisations active today define themselves as 'non-political', but in their venues are often displayed symbols not only of general national ideals, but also of political affiliations with political parties or political figures (particularly the PKK among Turkish-speaking centres). The effects of this politicisation, as described in the following sections, have been relevant until recently on the daily life of community organisations and even on their users.

Kurdish organisations: number and location. If compared to the size of the population they serve, Kurdish organisations appear among the most active ethnic organisations in London, and among the most numerous. For this research project eleven representatives of Kurdish organisations have been interviewed (their characteristics are summarised in Table 6 and a brief description of their activities is presented in Appendix 1b)[20].

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[15] By 'older generations' many respondents meant 'over 40'.

[16] This double identity - being a cultural/political organisation and a community centre at the same time - is still in place today.

[17] In the first years Halkevi served mainly Turkish users, but in the course of time became a Turkish-Kurdish organisation.

[18] In the 1990s changed KWA changed its name into Kurdish Community Centre

[19] Kurds from Iran, a minority within the Kurdish community, never set up a big community centre of their own, being either involved in other Kurdish organisations or in mainstream Iranian groups.

[20] The sample also includes organisations such as the Kurdish Human Rights Project, which in fact acts more as an NGO than as a service provider for the local community; nonetheless they appeared to be strictly connected to community centres and to the wider Kurdish community, and in this respect part of the same network. Another particular case is represented by MODA: this is a second-tier organisation aiming at supporting and giving advice to migrant and refugee organisations from all ethnic backgrounds;

However, during the research process it was possible to put together a wider list of organisations, some of which have not been interviewed because of lack of time or because they appeared less relevant for a representative sample. The full list of the 20 Kurdish organisations in London (together with other initiatives and associations both inside and outside London) is reported in Appendix 1a. All these organisations have been included in the questionnaire's Network Matrix and therefore in the network analysis. No other Kurdish organisation in London has been indicated by respondents; so it is possible to consider this list as reasonably comprehensive.

Table 5. Kurdish Organisations: Characteristics of the Sample

Name	Borough	Year set up	Turnover (£ 1,000)	Staff[1]			Type of org. [2]
				f-t	p-t	vol.	
Halkevi	Hackney	1985	325	12	23	25	CC
Kanga	Ham. & Ful.	2005	50	0	0	20	SP
Kurdish Advice Centre	Haringey	1993	189	2	2	7	CC
Kurdish Association for Refugees	Ham. & Ful.	1992	166	2	1	23	CC
Kurdish Community Centre	Haringey	1989	250	4	3	7	CC
Kurdish Cultural Centre	Lambeth	1985	130	2	3	27	CC
Kurdish Disability Organisation	Islington	1992	55	1	1	9	SP
Kurdish Federation	Haringey	1998	8	0	0	9	U
Kurdish Housing Association	Haringey	1988	500	3	0	6	SP
Kurdish Human Rights Project	Camden	1992	100	8	2	9	SP
Women's Union of Kurdistan	Lambeth	2005	0	0	0	6	SP
MODA	Newham	1998	90	1	3	2	SP

Key: (1) f-t = full-time ; p-t = part-time ; vol. = volunteers
(2) U = Umbrella organisation ; CC = Community Centre ; SP = Advice/Service Provider
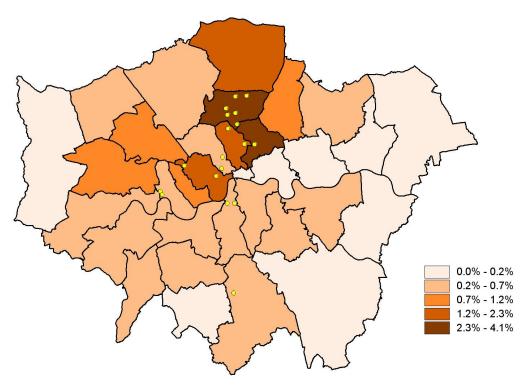
Using GIS Software, the organisations have also been geographically mapped, together with the concentration of people born in Turkey and Iraq in each London borough. The map on Figure 6 shows that a significant proportion of Kurdish organisations are based in North London, particularly in an area across the boroughs of Haringey, Hackney and north of Islington – which are also the areas with the highest concentration of people born in Turkey or Iraq. This indicates quite clearly how community centres tend to be established in the areas where a special community – in this case the Kurdish one – is concentrated. Other organisations are based in West London or Lambeth, in areas known for a relevant presence of Iraqi communities. Finally, there are some organisations in central London – such as Kurdish Human Rights Project and Kurdish Human Rights Watch: they do not operate on a community level, but as advocacy and lobbying groups, and this justifies their central location, far from any particular concentration of Kurdish population.

The high number of organisations shows a considerable 'organisational density', i.e. the number of organisation in relation to the overall Kurdish population (Fennema, 2004). Using the estimates mentioned above of 60-80,000 Kurds in London, it is possible to work out a density of about 3,000-4,000 users per organisation. On the other hand, this is only a proxy of the 'organisational filling', i.e. the percentage of Kurds involved in the activities of Kurdish organisations or benefiting from their services (*ibid*). As with other ethnic minorities, it is likely that some Kurds, especially among the most well-established, are involved more with mainstream services and social activities than with the Kurdish-only ones. On the other hand, some local surveys

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but it is also coordinating a partnership project among Kurdish Community Organisations. MODA's Director, Dr. Kamal Rasul, is a Kurd himself and has had a relevant role in the setting up of some Kurdish organisations in the UK.

on the refugee population in general (e.g. Kofman and Lukes, 2005) showed that sometimes refugees and new arrivals are quite isolated and not even aware of the presence of ethnic organisations providing services in their own language. In this respect, the main strength of ethnic community organisations – operating through individuals' social networks (from the professional networks of staff members to friendship and family ties among workers and clients) – is also one of their limits, because it makes it difficult to reach 'outsiders'[21].

Figure 6. Location of Kurdish Organisations and Population by country of birth: Iraq or Turkey

	0.0% - 0.2%
	0.2% - 0.7%
	0.7% - 1.2%
	1.2% - 2.3%
	2.3% - 4.1%

Source: NSI, Census 2001

Services and activities. Kurdish organisations provide a wide range of services, which can generally be allocated into three main categories: one-to-one advice and consultancy; training; and social/cultural activities. As mentioned above, some organisations act as general, multi-purpose community centres, offering a wide range of services and facilities. All the community centres included in the sample (Kurdish Advice Centre, Kurdish Community Centre, Kurdish Cultural Centre, Halkevi) have some standard services in common, such as legal, immigration and welfare advice, ESOL and IT classes – but also some less 'obvious' activities, like folk dance classes. Community centres are also used as meeting points for the local Kurdish community: all the above mentioned organisations have a communal area with a small café and satellite TV, which is used particularly by the older generations. Since most community centres serve primarily their local community, there is no real overlapping in service provision and none of the respondents mentioned any kind of conflict to reach users. On the other hand, when one area is not 'covered' by any organisation, people get in touch

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[21] Some respondents complained that their organisations – and Ethnic Organisations in general – are not adequately advertised outside the community and from mainstream service providers, making it difficult for Kurdish new arrivals to become aware of their existence.

with one particular centre or another according to their personal contacts (i.e. through their own social networks); in this respect certain organisation appear more capable of attracting clients than others.

One peculiarity of Kurdish community organisations is the presence of highly specialised agencies, focusing on one particular field of intervention. The two more relevant cases are the Kurdish Housing Association, which manages accommodation units and provides housing advice, and the Kurdish Disability Organisation, which has been set up especially to address the needs of Kurdish disabled people. But there is also one sport association ('Real Kurds'), two 'young people organisations' and other independent projects, often supported by bigger organisations as partnership projects[22].

The diversity of services provided shows a very high 'institutional completeness' (Fennema, 2004), with organisations covering virtually every aspect of the social and cultural life of the Kurdish community. On the other hand, many respondents emphasised their effort to promote 'full inclusion into the English society'; the coordinator of KANGA, for example, explained that "*the preservation of Kurdish identity goes parallel to its promotion among non-Kurdish people, and must be part of a wider strategy of reciprocal understanding and respect within a multicultural society*". The central role of ESOL classes in the organisations' activities is an example of the efforts of community centre to empower their users and break the vicious circle of dependency from same-language service provision.

Users. Kurdish organisations, naturally enough, tend to serve mainly Kurdish people, even though most of the respondents stress the fact that they are "open to everybody" and some actually serve a significant number of non-Kurdish users: mainly Turks and Arabs, but also Africans and Caribbeans. For some of the organisation, this is part of a strategy; the Coordinator of the Kurdish Advice Centre, for example, said they are studying ways to open their services to a wider range of users from different backgrounds, in order to better use their resources and, consequently, become eligible for more funding. As mentioned above, some organisations tend to serve mainly the local community, so for example organisations based in North London (Haringey and Hackney), work mainly with Turkish speaking Kurds. Most Kurdish users - as most of the Kurdish population in general - are Asylum Seekers or Refugees. Particularly, Kurdish Cultural Centre reports that a high percentage of their users (about 60%) are 'failed asylum seekers'.

In relation to gender, the representative of Kurdish Community Centre in Haringey points out that in the past "*most users were men; but now the profile of clients is more gender balanced: women are more independent, do not spend all their time at home anymore and see the importance of joining community activities, learning English and being more involved in the host society*". Similar trends have been confirmed by other respondents. The fact that in recent years at least three Kurdish women's organisations have been set up indicates an increasing level of community engagement among Kurdish women.

Staff. Similarly, most members of the staff and of the boards of management are Kurds: this has been explained not so much in terms of ethnic affiliation, but rather because of language issues, since many users speak Kurdish only. However, there are also several examples of non-Kurdish members of staff, particularly among the trainers for ESOL classes (which are often English) and among admin workers, technical staff and catering operators – which in some case are from other ethnic minorities, e.g.

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[22] See Appendix 1b

Africans, North Africans, Cypriots. In one case, the organisation's coordinator is not a Kurd and does not even speak the Kurdish language: this has been explained in terms of the need of staff with a strong expertise in funding and organisational issues, beyond any issue of ethnicity. More generally, big organisations with a wide range of services are more likely to be involved into the wider, 'mainstream' voluntary sector, attracting workers and resources from outside the Kurdish community. So for example Halkevi and Kurdish Disability Organisations are involved in London-wide service delivered schemes which bring together both ethnic and non-ethnic voluntary organisations.

Funding issues. Though within a wide range of different situations, all interviewees said to be quite unhappy about the funding situation of their organisation. One of the main issues is the almost complete disappearance, in recent years, of 'core funding', i.e. long term funding to support the basic maintenance of the organisation, such as admin costs, basic salaries and resources. Most organisations must now rely on project funding: money given for specific activities and for a limited time. "Today the funding strategy of most trusts is too short – complains one of the coordinators – one year, and you have to start searching for more. You never feel secure and you never have your salary guaranteed!". The issue of coordinators' salaries has been raised on several occasions: many of the coordinators/directors work on a voluntary basis or have to pull together small bits of money from the surplus of individual projects. These are the people who usually run and manage the core of the organisations: should they decide to quit, the whole organisation would become insecure.

Organisations with very specialised activities, like Kurdish Housing Association, have even more complex needs in terms of economic resources and "*it is very difficult to find the right funders for what we do*". Similarly, funding difficulties for the Kurdish Cultural Centre seem to arise from the hybrid nature of its activities: half cultural centre, half service provider. Even organisations with a more stable economic situation, naturally enough, agree that "*funding is never enough* – as specified by one respondent – *we have so many ideas, so many needs we'd like to address, but resources are very limited*".

Some respondents have highlighted a kind of paradox in terms of organisation's size and funding issues. On the one hand there are small organisations, which can easily access little amounts of money from grant making trusts and often get help from bigger groups and individuals. For example the Women's Union of Kurdistan is supported almost exclusively by donations from individuals and from the help of bigger organisations, whilst the Kurdish Federation is mainly funded by members' subscriptions. On the other hand there are big organisations, which have a complex structure in place, and can usually afford a full time professional fundraiser. They often work in partnership with local authorities and are involved in London-wide funding schemes. The ones with the most serious funding problems seem to be medium-sized organisations – which are the majority of Kurdish organisations: they deliver a large number of services and have considerable costs, but there is no time or available workforce to concentrate on funding. Many respondents recognised that this scenario would make it vital for organisations to come together and develop strategic joint funding programmes. In fact, both governmental non-governmental funders have put pressures for a strong coordination between same-ethnicity community organisations in the delivery of services (MODA, 2006). However, very little has been done in this direction to date.

Finally, the fact that Kurds have not an internationally recognised country - so no embassy or government - have been highlighted as another factor seriously limiting their potential in terms of needs advocacy in the UK.

Surprisingly enough, none of the respondents mentioned their venue as a major issue in terms of funding and resources. Most organisations are based in rented offices – with the rent often paid by the local council – or are hosted by a big community centre together with several other community groups. Some of the smaller organisations are hosted by bigger ones (e.g. the Women's Union of Kurdistan, works in the offices of PUK, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan), whilst the Kurdish Cultural Centre emerged as the only Kurdish organisation to own its premises.

3.3. Networking processes of Kurdish organisations

Kurdish organisations operate in the wider context of the London Kurdish community – or rather, communities – and within the social networks developing both at organisational and individual level. The role of these networks is not just a surplus to their activities, but is a key factor in their organisational life, from the establishment of a new organisation to the development of its projects and services. It is therefore not surprising that many respondents presented the activities of their organisations as part of the same environment: 'Kurdish community organisations' (plural) were often mentioned as an individual subject, as a social reality in their own right.
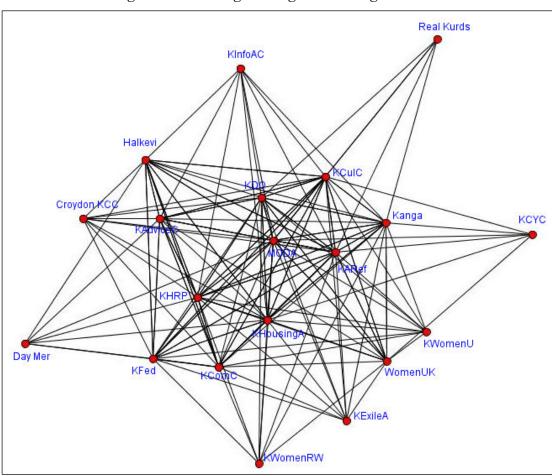
Figure 7. Knowledge among Kurdish organisations

The primary element is, of course, the reciprocal knowledge between organisations, which has been mapped trough the first layer of the Network Matrix (see section 2.4).

The Network Map in Figure 7 shows quite clearly that most organisations are condensed in a highly connected core: in other terms, most Kurdish organisations know each other; with a small minority in a slightly peripheral position: known by many but not by everybody (e.g. Day Mer, KCYC and Real Kurds).

It must be highlighted that mapping the 'network of knowledge' has been - maybe paradoxically - the most difficult part in the administration of the questionnaire. During the interviews, almost all respondents declared to know "*all Kurdish organisations*"; whilst in fact, from the results of the network matrices this appeared to be a bit of an overstatement. Moreover the identification of organisations through their official name proved to be quite confusing. Some organisations have both a Kurdish and an English name and others have changed their name recently; some respondents agreed that "*the names of organisations sound all the same*" and it is easy to get confused. Eventually, the easiest way to identify other organisation was through expression such as "*the organisations based in that area*" or "*the organisation managed by that person*" – and this gives an insight of the main 'coordinates' through which most organisations develop their links.

The differentiation between 'Knowledge' and 'Frequent Contacts' used in the Network Matrix also proved not to be easily understandable for many respondents. Most of them ticked either both or none of the boxes. On the other hand, different degrees of 'knowledge' and frequency of contacts between organisations emerged from the in-depth interviews. Some confusion probably arose with regard to the meaning and purpose of these contacts. In some cases frequent contacts with another organisation are in fact based on joint activities or formal coordination; in others, they are simply part of a relation of acquaintance or friendship between individuals operating in different organisations. Each organisation includes a large number of people – board members, workers and volunteers – with different roles and different social networks: the way in which their personal networks become part of the wider organisational network depends on the role of these individuals as well as on their own initiative.

One of the most basic, but also one of the most important examples emerges in the work of one-to-one advisors. Quite often, when their own organisation cannot provide direct help to the needs of a client, advisors can suggest contacting another organisation within the Kurdish network[23], so for example a community centre such as the Kurdish Association for Refugees signposts disabled users to the Kurdish Disability Organisations; which in turn signposts users with housing needs to the Kurdish Housing Association; and so on. The results of the 'shared clients' matrix – quite similar to those on 'knowledge' - show that this kind of inter-connections are highly developed among Kurdish organisations. On the one hand, these processes extend the reaching capacity of organisations; on the other, they enhance the range of services and possibilities available for individual users – in other words, community organisations become a gateway to a larger network of services, thus enhancing the social capital of every individual they serve.

More generally, many respondents say they have frequent contacts with other organisations simply to "share information" both on organisational issues and, for example, to deal with complicated legal issues concerning their clients.

The set of formal organisational links and joint activities proved much easier to map and produced highly significant results. The Network Map in Figure 8 is based on the

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[23] Of course advisors can also signpost to non-Kurdish service providers; but many users need services provided in their own language.

'Q1' layer[24] and shows 'strong links' such as membership or partnerships between organisations, overlapping staff members, joint project and activities, joint funding or shared resources.

The Figure indicates that some organisations occupy the role of key 'nodes' within the network, having connections with several other organisations: Halkevi, MODA, the Kurdish Housing Association, but also the Kurdish Cultural Centre and KANGA are the main examples. Other organisations are connected to the rest of the network only through a link with one of the key nodes, for example KCYC with Kanga, Day Mer with Halkevi or the Kurdish Women Union with the Women Union of Kurdistan. According to social networks theory (e.g. Crow, 2004; Gilchrist, 2004; Granovetter, 1983), though these peripheral organisations have access to the core of the network through one link only, this can be enough to enable the circulation of information and resources throughout the whole network of organisations. No organisation appears to work in isolation, completely detached from the others. Many respondents appeared aware of the high potential embedded in the network of Kurdish community organisations but they – in the words of MODA's director – "*spend too much time on funding and administrative issues and got distracted from maximising the benefits they could gain from cooperation*".
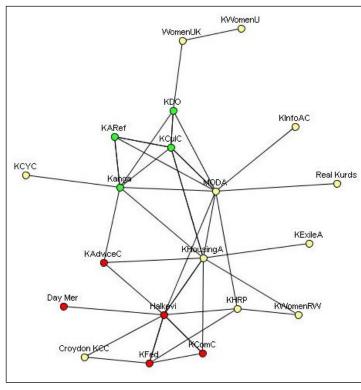
Figure 8. Strong links among Kurdish organisations

The interviews tried also to investigate the factors shaping the connection between organisations and – on a wider scale – the factors shaping the network. As mentioned before, the knowledge and friendship among individual workers, and particularly among directors, coordinators and board members, emerged as one of the main elements. The role of 'overlapping staff', as mapped in the Network Matrix, also appeared of relevance - and strictly linked to the previous factor. According to the

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[24] See page 16 for definitions.

interviewees, many individuals operate in the management board of more than one organisation at the same time, or, for example, work as paid staff in one organisation and as volunteers in another. Once again, it is difficult to work out to what extent these connections can be considered as organisational links or rather as projections of the social networks of individuals. Quite often, official partnerships and membership do not imply any specific commitment, but are just a formalisation of existing ties between organisational managements[25]. However, it emerged clearly that these kind of links have a direct effect on the development of joint activities and partnership projects.

A further insight emerged from colouring the nodes of the network map in Figure 8 according to the country of birth of the majority of users, as reported during the interviews. Organisations working mainly with Kurds from Turkey (coloured in red) and organisations working mainly with Kurds from Iraq (coloured in green) appear clearly clustered together. Though none of the respondents explicitly pointed this out, the nationality of users – which is often the nationality of most members of staff – appears as another relevant factor in the networking processes[26].
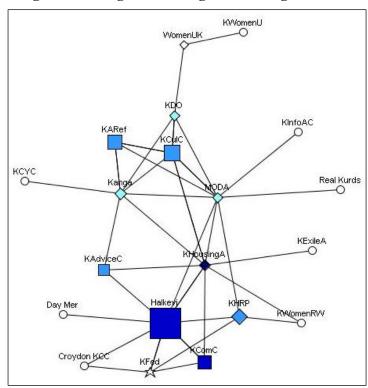
Figure 9. Strong links among Kurdish organisations

SHAPES: *Square = community centre; Diamond = service provider;*
                            Star = umbrella organisations; Circle = unknown (not interviewed)
SIZE: *Size of the shape show size of staff (full-time, part-time and volunteers have been given a different 'weight', see section 3.4)*
COLOURS: *Shades of blue show economic turnover (darker = higher)*

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[25] e.g. many Kurdish organisations in London are members of MODA and three of them – Halkevi, Kurdish Community Centre and Croydon Community Centre – joined the Kurdish Federation.

[26] On the other hand, as mentioned before, organisations serving one particular community tend to be based in the areas where that community is more concentrated; so for example most organisations serving Turkish speaking Kurds are based in North London. In this respect it could be possible to interpret this clustering simply in terms of cooperation between organisations operating in the same area – which is the explanation provided by two of the interviewees.

Figure 9 shows the same network map, but highlighting other characteristics of the organisations: staff size, economic dimension, and type of organisation. The map indicates that the number of people working in an organisation is not always proportional to its funding situation: there are organisations with relatively small staff but very high economic resources (e.g. Kurdish Housing Association) and others which are much bigger but have a small income because they mainly work on a voluntary basis (e.g. Halkevi). Moreover, the biggest and richest organisations are not by definition those in the most central position of the network. MODA, for example, is relatively small both in terms of staff and economic turnout, but appears highly interconnected within the network (in this case because of the reputation of its coordinator, who is well known within the Kurdish community and took part in the setting up of some Kurdish organisations).

The last network map (Figure 10) is the most 'selective': it extracts from the previous one only the links based on joint activities and projects or on shared resources and funding ('Q2')[27]. The main result is the presence of five organisations which have not declared - or have not been indicated - to take part in any specific shared activity with any other Kurdish organisation: Day Mer, the Croydon Kurdish Community Centre, Real Kurds, the Kurdish Information and Advice Centre and the Kurdish Human Rights Project. Though these organisations, as shown in Figures 8 and 9, can be fully considered part of the organisational network, they are not able to (or decided not to) make any practical use of it in their provision of services or activities.
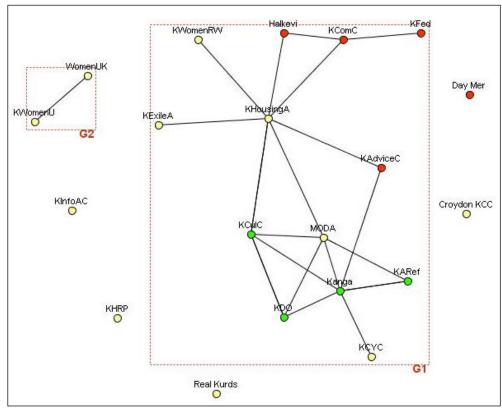
Figure 10. Shared resources and joint activities between Kurdish organisations

On the other hand, the Figure shows that 13 organisations - over a total of 20 - are part of a main strong group sharing resources or carrying out projects and activities together (G1). As emerged from the interviews, the collaboration between Kurdish organisations seems to focus mainly on the organisation of social and cultural events,

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[27] In other words it does not take into account other more informal, flexible or intangible links.

such as the Newroz Festival (the Kurdish New Year, on March 21st), the Kurdish Film Festival and various music concerts and dance performances. The Kurdish Housing Association and Kurdish Cultural Centre have an important role as promoters of such activities - and thus a central role in the Network Map. Respondents from these organisations highlighted how such cultural activities "*bring together Kurds from different areas and backgrounds*", thus enhancing "*the sense of a Kurdish community and creating opportunities to know new people*".

Other groups have also tried to cooperate in the field of service provision. Special partnerships (formal and informal) have been established between sister-organisations working on the same field or addressing the same groups; for example KANGA and KCYC for young people, and Women's Union of Kurdistan and Kurdistan's Women Union for women[28]. The latter two organisations, however, do not appear to be strongly involved in any activity carried on by the rest of the G1 group, thus representing a kind of small sub-network of their own (G2).

Most respondents believe that promoting and developing partnerships with other Kurdish organisations is of major importance, not just for 'good neighbourhood' or 'ethnic solidarity', but because this has a direct and strong impact on the quality and quantity of services provided and the funding received. Some organisations, such as the Kurdish Housing Associations, try to promote frequent meetings to exchange experiences and "*understand each other*". Similarly, KDO's coordinator said to put "*a lot of emphasis in the importance of partnership with other organisations* (…)*But in the end we manage to do more with mainstream organisations than with Kurdish ones*".

To explain the relatively small number of joint activities, some respondents call into question lack of time and the fact that management committees always work on a voluntary basis. The problem in developing partnerships, in the words of KANGA's coordinator, is that "*there is never enough time: you struggle all the time to stay alive and get funding*". On the other hand, some respondents agreed that 'the Kurdish Community', as well as many grassroots workers, would like to do much more in terms of cooperation, but there is a wide gap "*between this commitment and some members of management board*", which have had long term conflict on both personal and political issues. In fact, political fragmentation appears as the main constraint to Kurdish organisations' network development. "*Because of our history* – explained an interviewee at the Kurdish Housing Association - *we have been politically divided for a long time*" and this has directly affected the life of community organisations. One coordinator even stated that political division, particularly in the past, could prevent some users from accessing the services provided by certain organisations. Even during the interviews, some respondents frowned upon the involvement of "other organisations" in political activities and their links with political parties abroad and even hinted at the "*allegations of their connections with drug dealers reported on newspapers*".

At the same time, more than one interviewee explained that the migratory experience and life far from the areas of origin was an important factor in overcoming these divisions and promoting cohesion among all Kurds. One worker from the Kurdish Human Rights project says that "*in the countries we come from we were divided, but here we could meet and know each other. In Iraq I had never met a Kurd from, say, Turkey, but here I can develop new relations. We realized we have problems as Kurds as a whole and we started cooperating to tackle them*". What emerged from the interviews seems to confirm Martin van Bruinessen's (2000) explanations about the connection between migration and Kurdish identity. More generally, most respondents

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[28] See Appendix 1b

confirm that the situation has significantly improved in the last ten years – both because of the new international situation[29] and for the commitment of younger generations.

Another interesting aspect of the cooperation among Kurdish organisation is the support provided by some London-based organisations to the groups in the rest of the UK (e.g. in Glasgow, Birmingham, Petersborough and Middlesborough). Some organisations, such as the Kurdish Housing Association and the Kurdish Cultural Centre provide training and special advice to help setting up local organisations. As pointed out by KHA's coordinator: "*Kurds living outside, after having been dispersed by the government's programmes, are somehow 'exiled' from the rest of the community in London, which is better established and can access more services; so they need all our help and encouragement*".

Networking outside the London Kurdish network. The relationships between Kurdish organisations show only a part of their wider organisational networks. In fact, many of them cooperate with mainstream organisations working on the same field or addressing similar users. For example, the Kurdish Housing Association coordinates its activities with Somali and Filipinos housing associations, holding yearly meetings to exchange experiences and practices: "*even though we work with different communities, we have similar problems*".

Throughout the years, Kurdish organisations have also developed good relations with the local authorities of the areas they operate in, and not just in terms of funding. "*We are consulted, attend meetings, discuss policies*", explains, for example, KDO's coordinator. On the other hand, some respondents say these relations could be improved. The Kurdish Housing Association reports to feel sometimes "*invaded by the local Council*", who tries to take back some of the facilities and services they provide and to centralise its activities. This kind of statements came out also about funding "*Ethnic minority organisations* – says the coordinator of the Kurdish Association for Refugees – *get some money from the local authorities, but much less than mainstream agencies. Why? We do a much more specific job and a very high percentage of refugees who access their services can do it only thanks to our help: we have to signpost or even to provide interpreting!*"

In spite of these contrasts, many Kurdish organisations appear to have a well-developed system of 'weak ties' with mainstream local and regional organisations and authorities, which significantly enhance their social capital. However such ties are mainly based on local interventions or time-limited activities and develop thanks to the commitment of individual coordinators. This means – as reported by most respondents – that there are no conflicts for 'external representation', but also that Kurdish communities are not able to speak with a common voice on a London-wide scale. This is why – as explained by MODA's director - Kurdish organisations, as well as many other minority groups, cannot not yet "*become part of the Government strategy to make the voluntary sector contributing to the delivery of public services within the framework of strategic partnerships and governmental commissioning*" and thus risk, in the long term, to be "*marginalized and even face extinction*".

Finally, it must be mentioned that some Kurdish organisations have established direct links with organisations or groups elsewhere in Europe, both Kurdish and mainstream. For example there are several 'Komkar' centres throughout Europe: frequent contacts

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[29] Particularly in Iraq, where the main political parties, after years of internal struggle, started to cooperate for the government of the de-facto independent Kurdish region.

have been reported by members of staff of 'KAC / Komkar' in London[30]. Again, the Kurdish Human Rights Project has frequent contacts with all Kurdish organisations in the UK and some in Europe. They share information and, in the Kurdish Regions, have strategic partnerships. They also cooperate with mainstream human rights organisations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch and have regular meetings with the Government. The role of the Kurdish Federation in the UK is also interesting: as well as being an umbrella for local Kurdish groups, this organisation is also a member of the European Confederation of Kurdish Community Associations, based in Belgium, which includes 12 nationals federation, the main being in Germany, France and Switzerland. The Kurdish Federation also works within the European Social Forum and – though is activities are not fully developed yet – it aims to bridge the reality of the local Kurdish community with the transnational and international context.

Towards a Kurdish consortium? In the past different groups of organisations attempted to establish an umbrella group or consortium of Kurdish Organisation. One of this processes, for example, started in 1999, with the support, amongst others, of the Kurdish Cultural Centre; but without success. Another example is represented by Kurdish Federation in the UK, set up in 1998, but aiming more at a coordination of political activities and international advocacy than at developing joint projects and coordinated delivery of services.

In November 2005, MODA launched a new partnership project to develop "*structural and functional co-ordination and partnership among organisations belonging to the same ethnic or cultural community*" and particularly – as a sort of 'pilot' - among Kurdish community organisations in London. As explained in the project founding document, "*there are many reasons which entail moving away from small fragmented models of organisational activity and service delivery* (…): *waste of resources, short term durability, and lack of strategic vision and quality-assured sustainable service delivery programmes*" (MODA 2006b). MODA's pilot project, which is still in its early stages, aims to follow two main steps. Firstly - since participating organisations have identified research as "*a key element to advocate community needs*" - it has been decided to work on a series of research projects, in order to 'scientifically' document the needs of the Kurdish communities. Secondly, building on the research results, the organisations intend to develop a set of funding proposals for the provision of services in specific areas of intervention (e.g. health, housing, legal advice, cultural activities). Members of the project will identify, based on specialization, the main applicant organisation for each proposal, which would be supported by all the others. To facilitate these activities, participating organisations have also decided to formally establish a 'Kurdish Organisations Consortium'.

The organisations taking part to the first series of meetings (November 2005 to April 2006) are KANGA, Kurdish Association for Refugees, Kurdish Cultural Centre, Kurdish Disability Organisation, Kurdish Federation, Kurdish Housing Association, Kurdish Human Right Project, Real Kurds and Women's Union of Kurdistan. It appears that a major role in this project is played by those who are already in a central position in the organisational network showed in Figure 8, 9 and 10. In other words, this process is a formalisation and strengthening of a networking process which was already in place. Nevertheless, the project aims to attract a much larger number of groups. Some respondents expressed their optimism regarding this initiative, because it does not try to impose any organisational superstructure or merge organisations, but brings them together for a common aim which should benefit each of them. As highlighted by

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[30] However – despite KAC being officially mentioned in the Komkar's international website – the coordinator says there is not any kind of formal coordination or affiliation.

MODA's director "*the success of a networking initiative lays in the balance between cohesion and mutual benefit on one hand and maintaining a certain degree of autonomy for all the members on the other*".

4. Conclusions

A review of different sources and estimates indicates there are no less than 50,000 Kurds in London, of whom about 65% from Turkey and 25% from Iraq. They came mostly as refugees and asylum seekers and – though within a wide range of characteristics – are reported to hit most of the indicators for social exclusion. The migratory experience has been one of the main factors behind a shared sense of 'Kurdish' identity which has significantly increased since the 1970s.

Throughout the last few decades, many Kurdish community organisations have been set up to address the needs of the Kurdish population. Today there are at least 20 of them operating in London, including small and medium-sized organisations, well-established and new. If compared to the size of the population they aim to serve, this scenario seems to show a considerable 'organisational density' of about 3,000-4,000 potential users per organisation. A significant proportion of these organisations are clustered together in the Northern boroughs of Haringey, Hackney and Islington, which correspond to the areas with the highest concentration of Kurds (especially from Turkey).

Kurdish organisations appear to play a double role: on the one hand they provide culturally-specific services in Kurdish language and aim to preserve and promote a Kurdish cultural identity (which many Kurds feel neglected by the authorities); on the other, there is an evident effort to promote social, cultural and civic inclusion into the wider society. The range of services provided is quite wide, covering many aspect of the social life of their users, from legal advice and training to cultural and leisure activities. Some organisations operate as multi-purpose community centres; others deliver highly specialised services in sectors such as housing and health. In recent years at least three Kurdish women organisations have been set up, showing an increasing level of community engagement among them. Since most community centres serve primarily their local community there is no significant overlapping in service provision or conflict to reach users.

The complex network of relations in which Kurdish organisations operate has a major role in shaping their daily life and activities. Most organisations know each other and consider the network of Kurdish organisations a social reality in its own right. Many of them are strongly linked by formal and informal ties, such as membership and partnership agreements or overlapping board members. Personal relations between coordinators and boards of management emerge as the main factor influencing the development of organisational links. An important role is also played by the area where the organisations operate, the kind of services provided and the country of birth of users and staff. Conversely, staff size and economic dimension do not appear to have a significant influence in this dynamic, with both big organisations which are relatively isolated, and smaller ones which act as 'key nodes' within the network.

The Network analysis shows that 13 organisation out of the 20 considered are part of a strong group sharing resources or carrying out projects and activities together. As emerged from the interviews, both coordinators and case workers use this

organisational network in different ways: to share and exchange information, to signpost clients and to promote and organise cultural and social events which bring together Kurds from different areas and backgrounds. From this point of view, organisational networks appear to enhance the social capital of both organisations and the people they serve. However, coordination on funding strategies and service delivery is still very limited and the organisational networks are far from being used for their full potential. According to some respondents, this is also because most coordinators and directors – often working on a voluntary basis - are constantly 'distracted' by a number of funding and administrative issues which impede long-term strategies of this kind.

Kurdish Organisations have also developed an important capital of 'weak ties' with local authorities, mainstream organisations working in the same field of service provision and even international organisations. However, such ties are mainly based on local and time-limited activities and develop through the work of individual coordinators. This means that there are no conflicts for 'external representation', but also that Kurdish communities are not able to speak with a common voice on a London-wide scale.

Both governmental and non-governmental funders have made pressures for a strong coordination between same-ethnicity community organisations in the delivery of services, but previous attempts in this direction were frustrated by personal contrasts and political divisions. On the other hand most respondents agree that the situation has significantly improved in recent years - particularly thanks to the commitment of younger generations. A new initiative for the development of a Kurdish 'consortium' is currently under development; the main actors being some of those already playing a key role in the informal network of Kurdish organisations,

Methodological implications and developments

From a methodological point of view, this project aimed to contribute to the development of social networks analysis as applied to the study of community organisations. The practical example of Kurdish organisations in London shows how social network analysis can be successfully used to explore the structures and patterns of such organisational systems. Using sociograms, networks can be easily summarised, visualised and analysed – sometimes allowing to identify key elements or patterns which wouldn't emerge using traditional methods.

Due to time and resources constraints, however, this project presents some limitations which would be worth addressing in further research.

Firstly, only a sample - however significant - of Kurdish organisations has been interviewed. The main risk of analysing a network interviewing only a portion of the actors involved is that results can emphasise the role of the interviewees and understate the role of the others. Collecting information from all known Kurdish organisations would have guaranteed a higher reliability of results. On the other hand, in this case results appear fairly balanced: not all the respondents emerged among the 'key nodes' of the network, and not all the organisations outside the sample were described as peripheral.

Secondly, a more in-depth exploration of the Network - as mentioned in section 1.2 - would have also required a circular process of investigation, going back to the respondents after the first analysis of the network and, eventually, re-drawing the network's structure according to the information arisen from further discussion. Possible further research could also include more than one respondent from each organisation, e.g. members of staff other than the coordinator and volunteers; this

would provide further insights about the links between personal and organisational networks and on the presence of complex sets of sub-networks within each organisation.

Finally, it would be of interest to investigate the level of involvement of the wider Kurdish population – at the very least interviewing some users, but also trying to contact Kurds who are not involved in the activities of these organisations. Interviews with key informants from outside the Kurdish communities - such as representatives of mainstream voluntary organisations and local authorities - could help to better explore the relations of Kurdish organisations and communities with the wider society.

Acknowledgements

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[31] The full list of the organisations contacted is in Appendix 1.

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Appendix IA – Kurdish Organisations

Kurdish Organisations in London[32]

Croydon Kurdish Community Centre *(CKCC)*
73-77 London Road; Croydon CR0 2RS, Tel: 020 8688 7271; Fax: 020 8680 0887.

Day Mer - Turkish and Kurdish Community Centre *(Day Mer)*
Former Library, Howard Road, N16 8PR, Tel: 0207 275 8440; Fax: 0207 275 7245; E-Mail: info@daymer.org.

Halkevi - Kurdish and Turkish Community Centre *(Halkevi)*
92-100 Stoke Newington Road; N16 7XB, Tel. 0207 249 6980; Fax. 0207 690 4003.

KANGA - Kurdish Association for New Generations Abroad *(KANGA)*
Palingswick House, 241 King Street, W6 9LP, Tel. 020 8563 7918; Fax: 020 8563 1918

KCYC - Kurdish Children and Youth Centre *(KCYC)*
c/o KANGA; Palingswick House, 241 King Street, W6 9LP, Tel. 020 8563 7918; Fax. 020 8563 1918.

KDO - Kurdish Disability Organisation *(KDO)*
6-9 Manor Gardens, London N7 6LA, Tel. 020 7272 9790; Mob. 07832 334806; Email: kdoorg@ikurd.com.

Kurdish Advice Centre *(KAdviceC)*
St Mary's Community Centre, Birkbeck Road, Hornsey, N8 7PF, Tel:020 8347 8657; Fax: 020 8347 8669; Email: info@kurdishadvicecentre.org.uk.

Kurdish Association for Refugees *(KARef)*
Palingswick House, 241 King Street, W6 9LP, Tel. 020 8563 7918; Mob. 07971 050159; Fax. 020 8563 1918.

Kurdish Community Centre *(KComC)*
Fairfax Hall; 11 Portland Gardens, N4 1HU, Tel. 0208 880 1804; 0208 802 9963; Email: kurdscentre@hotmail.com.

Kurdish Cultural Centre *(KCulC)*
Stannary Street, SE11 4AA, Tel. 020 7735 0918, Mob. 07939 447877; Fax. 020 7582 8894; Email: soranhamarash@yahoo.co.uk.

Kurdish Exile Association *(KExileA)*
2 Thorpe Close; W10 5XL, Tel & Fax: 020 8962 9933; E-mail: kea@kea96.org.

Kurdish Federation in the UK - FED-BIR *(KFed)*
92-100 Stoke Newington Road, N16 7XB, Mob. 07917 325574.

Kurdish Housing Association *(KHousingA)*
Selby Centre; Selby Road, N17 8JN; Tel: 020 8808 9954.

Kurdish Human Rights Project *(KHRP)*
11 Guilford Street, WC1N 1DH; Tel: 020 7405-3835; Fax: 020 7404-9088; khrp@khrp.org.

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[32] The identification codes used in the Network Maps (Figures 7 to 10) are shown in brackets.

Kurdish Information and Advice Centre *(KInfoAC)*
c/o Caxton House, 129 St Johns Way, N19 3RQ, Tel. 020 7263 3151, 020 7272 9499.

Kurdish Women's Rights Watch *(KWomenRW)*
Linen Hall, 162-168 Regent Street, W1R 5TB.

Kurdistan Women's Union *(KWomenU)*
78 Askhitt Court, Polygon Road, NW1 1ST, Tel. 020.7209.3148; Mob. 07939 447877; Fax. 020 7582 8894; Email Kurdistan-women-union@hotmail.com.

Real Kurds Sports Association *(Real Kurds)*
Area 4, 349c High Road, Wood Green, N22 8JA, Tel. 020 8888 8188, Mob. 077 3421 8456, realkurds@btconnect.com, realkurds.co.uk.

Women's Union of Kurdistan *(WomenUK)*
5 Glasshouse Walk, Vauxhall, SE11 5ES.

Main Kurdish Organisations outside London

Kurdish Life Aid Trust
3 Moor View, Morr Lane, Kento, Newcastle, Tel. 0191 286 9146; Fax: 0191 2712 7749.

Halkevi Doncaster
37 Bakett Road, Wheatley, Doncaster, DN2, Tel. 0130 232 1803.

Mesopotamia Society in Ireland
Tel. 0035 386 8805 826 (Latif Takak), www.kurdistansolidarityireland.com.

Other cultural and political groups and initiatives

Kurdish Academic Network
88 Heron Hill, Belvedere, Kent, DA17 5SH

Kurdish Film Festival
kurdishfilm@yahoo.com; information available from KCC-Haringey, KCC-Oval and Halkevi

Kurdistan National Congress (KNK) UK
10 Glasshouse Yard, London, EC1a 4JN, Tel. 020 7250 1315; Fax: 020 7250 1317; Email: knklondon@gn.apc.org.

Kurdish Scientific and Medical Association (KSMA)
Dollan House, Purvis Way, Colchester, CO4 9FA, Fax 01206.742545; www.ksma.org; contact@ksma.org.

Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)
5 Glasshouse Walk, Vauxhall, SE11 5ES.

Radyo Rojbas
Tel. 0870.041.4606; http://rojbas.halkevi.com; Broadcasting Monday to Saturday from 2 to 5 pm on Sound Radio frequency: 1503 MhZ AM/MW.

Appendix IB – Case studies[33]

Halkevi
One of the oldest and biggest Kurdish organisations, the centre was established in Stoke Newington in 1984, to meet the social, cultural and educational needs of Kurdish and Turkish speaking communities in London (75% of current users are Kurds), and particularly those living in North London. Halkevi provides support to both well-established communities and new comers, running over 25 projects, including: help and advice on business, health, immigration, welfare, housing, education and employment; Kurdish and Turkish mother tongue language courses; supplementary classes; ICT training; folk dancing courses; drama lessons; music courses; sporting activities for youngsters; radio broadcasting; seminars and speeches; cultural festivals and other cultural activities, conflicts resolution; older people's project; health campaigning; community engagement project and family learning. Halkevi's premises comprise a large common space, a small café and rooms for meetings and trainings. Halkevi carried out several need analysis surveys among users and most of its projects have been designed to meet those needs. Halkevi has a 'sister-organisation' in Doncaster (Halveki Doncaster) and is member of the Kurdish Federation Fed-Bir. A 'Roj Women Committee' runs and manages all women activities on voluntary basis within Halkevi and Kurdish Community Centre.

KANGA (Kurdish Association for Younger Generations Abroad)
KANGA is a company limited by guarantee and in the process of becoming a charity; it aims to serve Kurdish children, young people and their parents by promoting education, arts, music and other cultural activities for Kurdish children and young people (up to the age of 25) as well as their parents. KANGA currently runs supplementary classes, mother tongue courses and art and music classes in four London boroughs. They also manage a Youth centre in West London, providing pre-GCSE and GCSE classes and other activities for young Kurdish people. KANGA was first established as a project of Kurdish Association for Refugees and become an independent organisation in 2005; both organisations are still based in the Palingswick House community centre in Hammersmith&Fulham which also hosts other voluntary organisations. KANGA is now working in cooperation with KCYC (Kurdish Children and Youth Centre), another small organisation specialised in working with Kurdish young people.

Kurdish Advice Centre
The Kurdish Advice Centre has been set up in 1993 "to provide support to – and to promote the interests of – the Kurdish community in North London and the rest of the United Kingdom". They aim to achieve these goals by providing education and training, recreational facilities, leisure activities, cultural events and the provision of specialist advice on housing, employment, immigration, health and welfare "in a culturally sensitive way". The centre is used as a meeting point, especially by elderly people, and often hosts cultural event and conferences, including political ones. Their premises – part of the St Mary's Community Centre in Hornsey - include a small café, a library, an area for public events, a crèche and a small gym. After a period of financial crisis, KAC have recently changed they coordinator and in February 2006 carried out a report about the users's views about the organisation, with the aim to respond more effectively and strategically to members and service users needs. KAC, also known as Komkar, was originally established within the European Komkar network; however no official links are in place any more.

Kurdish Association for Refugees
Established in 1992 as "Kurdish Association in West London", the organisation was recognised as a charity and changed its name in "Kurdish Association for Refugees", aiming to address, in the long term, the needs of all Kurdish people (and particularly Kurdish refugees) in the UK. However, KAR is currently serving mainly the Kurdish communities of West London, mostly originating from Iraq. The organisation set up as its own mission to "fill the gap of mainstream services", providing a range of services including advice and information on immigration, welfare, housing, health and other social issues, interpreting and translation services,

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[33] Information based on the data collected during the fieldwork and should be correct as of April 2006.

production of information material and leaflets on common health issues in Kurdish language, IT classes and other courses. KAR also runs a day centre for Kurdish elders and organises different social and cultural activities. Its 'Children and Youth Project' provides mother tongue, music, art and supplementary classes to Kurdish children in different areas of London and includes a Youth centre with leisure facilities. In 2005 part of this activities were established into a separate organisation, KANGA (see above), which continues to coordinate is activities with KAR. Both organisations are based in the Palingswick House community centre in Hammersmith&Fulham.

Kurdish Community Centre
Formerly known as Kurdish Workers Association, KCC is a charitable centre established in Haringey in 1989. It aims to provide services designated to advance education, relieve poverty, promote health and well being and provide facilities for recreational activities of Kurdish people. KCC provides a wide range of advice services as well as ESOL and Kurdish language classes, IT training programmes, folk dance lessons, drama lessons, cultural events and seminars, crèche for children. Other facilities offered include a tea bar, a library and a main hall which is also hired out for events. In 2000 the venue of KCC was seriously damaged by fire and as been completely refurbished in 2004. KCC has always been at the forefront of preparation for Newroz celebrations (the Kurdish New Year), which in 2005 attracted over 15,000 in all London and in 2006 has been hosted by the Greater London Authority. Within KCC operates the 'Roj Women's Organisation' – also active within Halkevi's structures - which is in the process of becoming a recognised charity.

Kurdish Cultural Centre
Kurdish Cultural Centre (KCC) is the oldest Kurdish organisation in London and one of the first in Europe. It was established in 1985 as a sort of Kurdish 'cultural embassy', even though throughout the years, with the increase in the arrivals of Kurdish refugees it shifted its activity towards a more general 'community centre' model. Today KCC provides casework and advice on immigration, welfare benefits, housing, as well as interpreting and translation services, ESOL and IT courses for refugees and asylum seekers, mother tongue classes, Youth club and Elderly club However, cultural activities are still the core of KCC, which aims to "work towards the preservation and promotion of the Kurdish language, art and cultural heritage". Each year, they organise at least 12 conferences and workshops and at 2 arts exhibitions. They publish a cultural journal and a newsletter. Facilities also include a library and a book shop. KCC promoted a Kurdish Disaster Fund for development project in Kurdistan and helps Kurdish groups in the UK to set up their own organisations.

Kurdish Disability Organisation (KDO)
KDO was set up in 1992 with the special aim of facilitating and supporting the integration of Kurdish disabled refugees into British society by providing support to enable them to access essential services and overcome linguistic, physical and cultural barriers. Today KDO is a client led registered charity providing information, advice and casework as well as social and cultural activities, interpreting services and tribunal representation, they also provide outreach support to selected clients.
KDO is active in publishing a series of booklets and leaflets on a range of topics, mainly related to health issues. They also organise seminars on educational, cultural and disability related issues and cooperate with other Kurdish organisation in the organisation of cultural and social events. KDO's cultural activities go well beyond their usual target of disabled people; recent initiatives include a Kurdish Fashion Show, a Kurdish Music Project and visits to the British Museum. KDO is hosted by the Manor Gardens community centre, near Holloway Road (Islington).

Kurdish Federation (Fed-Bir)
Kurdish Federetion the the UK – also known as Fed-Bir - was established in 1998 to develop a coordination among different Kurdish organisations in the UK and to act as "defenders of the Kurdish struggle for freedom and democracy". The federation had three member associations when it was founded and since then two more have joined the federation. London-based

member organisations are: Halkevi, Kurdish Community Centre and Croydon Kurdish Community Centre. The federation is run by a management committee working exclusively on a voluntary basis. In the past few years they have also set up a number of sub-committees: International Affairs, Outreach and enlargement; Project Commission; Finance Commission. Fed-Bir is also part of Kon-Kurd, the European Confederation of Kurdish Community Associations.

Kurdish Housing Association (KHA)

KHA is a charitable organisation established in 1989 to provide housing services to the Kurdish community in London. KHA works in partnership with local authorities "to identify and alleviate the housing needs of the Kurdish community". It manages about 101 units of permanent housing, 6 units of temporary housing and some bed spaces. They also run employment courses, IT classes for adults, provide translation and interpretation services, job-seeking and cv-writing advice as well as welfare advice. KHA, together with other Kurdish organisations, organises community and cultural events promoting integration into the wider society. They are hosted by the Selby community centre in Haringey.

Kurdish Human Rights Project

Kurdish Human Rights Project is an independent, non-political human rights organisation dedicated to the promotion and protection of the human rights of all persons in the Kurdish regions of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria and elsewhere. It is a registered charity founded in London in 1992 working with its partner organisations in the regions. Some of its legal battles have established international precedents which have significantly changed the lives of people in the Kurdish areas – thus KHRP has earned international recognition for its work and has developed strong links with other NGOs. Its office is located in the London "where it is not subject to the intimidation and censorship faced by regional nongovernmental organisations". Though it does not provide direct services to the local Kurdish community it has links with most Kurdish organisations in London and is often involved in the promotion of cultural events.

Women's Union of Kurdistan (Zhinan)

WUK is a small, recently established organisation aiming at assisting Kurdish women in the UK and in the Kurdish region to defend their rights, as well as "informing, teaching and making women aware of the society and its social values". Their objectives include: to provide interpreters for those unable to communicate in English; to run English classes; to interact with women from other minority groups in order to become familiar and aware of one another's culture and tradition; held seminars about the inequality and discrimination women face; to solve problems related to marriage; provide advice and help for those who suffer from any emotional or psychological condition; provide the opportunity for women to be educated and employed by finding the appropriate courses and jobs. WUK started is activities in 2005 and most of is services are still in a planning phase. However, they have already started to follow several individual cases abroad, in contact with the embassy of the country of origin and coordinating their activities with Kurdish Women Union, another small women organisation. WUK is hosted for free by PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) in their office in Vauxhall.

Appendix 2 – Network Matrix

The matrix used in the questionnaire to codify relations between organisations

	A		B		C		D		E	F
	Knowledge	Frequent contacts	Membership/partnership	Overlapping staff or board	Our clients use their services	Their clients use our services	Our organisation uses their services	Their organisation uses our services	We have/had joint projects	We have/had joint funding	Shared resources
Croydon Kurdish Comm. Centre										
Day-Mer (Turkish & Kurdish C. Centre)										
Halkevi (Turkish & Kurdish C. Centre)										
KANGA										
Kurdish Advice Centre										
Kurdish Association for Refugees										
Kurdish Children and Young Centre										
Kurdish Community Centre (Haringey)										
Kurdish Cultural Centre (Oval)										
Kurdish Disability Organisation										
Kurdish Exile Association										
Kurdish Federation										
Kurdish Housing Association										
Kurdish Human Rights Project										
Kurdish Inf. & Advocacy Centre										
Kurdish Women's Rights Watch										
Kurdish Women's Union										
Real Kurds Sports Association										
Women's Union of Kurdistan										
MODA										
Other org. (specify)										
Other org. (specify)										

A = knowledge and contacts ; B = organisational/formal links ; C = shared clients ; D = use of one another services ; E = Joint projects or activities ; F = Joint resources or funding

Note: The first versions of the matrix included a smaller number of organisations. More organisations have been added on the ongoing process of interviews administration.