Transecting security and space in Kurdistan, Iraq

Till F Paasche
Department of Geography, Soran University, Kurdistan Region, Iraq;
e-mail: till.paasche@soran.edu.iq

James D Sidaway
Department of Geography, National University of Singapore
Singapore; e-mail: geojds@nus.edu.sg
Received 16 November 2014; in revised form 14 April 2015

Abstract. Departing from most coverage of Iraq, which tends to be focused on insecurity, this paper is about securities; drawing on research in the provinces of Iraq administered by the autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). In the last decade, the KRG’s territory has experienced very few significant bomb attacks. These were directed against KRG personnel, rather than targeting civilians per se, as so frequently happens elsewhere in Iraq. In contrast, the KRG has enjoyed relative security, enabling fast development. To the southwest however, there is a complex territorial contest between the Peshmerga (armed forces of the KRG), the forces of the central government of Iraq and Islamic State (al-Dawlah al-Islāmiyyah – frequently called ISIS or ISIL in English) whose insurgent territory spans the Iraq–Syria border. To the northeast, the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK), who have contested the Turkish state since the mid-1980s, now control swathes of territory. Transecting these spaces, the paper develops a grounded study of how Kurdish security forces operate. While insecurity continues in the disputed territories and the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan governs the zone along the Turkish border, the security forces of the KRG utilize very direct forms of surveillance and control. Negotiating these, our paper traverses spaces of security, sovereignty and (disputed) territory.

Keywords: Kurdistan, Iraq, biopolitics, security, territory

Introduction: Grounding Iraqi security

In a ‘history of spaces/powers’ in Yemen, John M. Willis (2012: 6) asks:

“how were both North and South Yemen made possible as bounded political, social and moral spaces? And how do we write the histories of spaces that were themselves inextricably rooted in local and trans-local histories of economy, empire, state formation, religious thought, and resistance?

His strategy is to study roads and security, both in imperial (British and Ottoman) archives and in local and Islamic narratives. As it did early in the twentieth century and again prior to Britain’s departure from Aden in 1967, contemporary Yemen generates concerns about security, terrorism and disorder. In recent years, Yemen has experienced armed rebellion, American drone attacks, bombardment by Saudi aircraft and massive displacement of civilians, forced to flee for their safety. Yet complex local and regional dynamics are frequently reduced to simple narratives about sectarianism and regime security. Some similar spatial histories, including resort to ‘sectarian master narrative’ (Visser, 2012) are evident in the context of Iraq. Notwithstanding rearticulated commitment since 2014 to use western military force there in the name of security, ‘Iraq’ is also mentioned alongside ‘Vietnam’ in debates on America’s world role, reverberating with what an edited collection about Vietnam in Iraq in a series on ‘Contemporary Security Studies’ calls ‘legacies and ghosts’ (Dumbrell and Ryan, 2007).

However, rather than another analysis of external geopolitical security narratives about Iraq, this paper writes from Iraq, focusing on grounded security practices that regulate and
frame territory. Geopolitical narratives about Iraq have shifted from Saddam Hussein’s Ba’thist regime as a threat (via ‘weapons of mass destruction’) to notions of failed states and thus source of dangers beyond western purview (e.g. ‘jihadists’). Such sweeping designations belie the complexity on the ground. Attendant to this complexity, we examine security practices in the autonomous Kurdistan region of northern Iraq in the context of the heterogeneous territorial structure of the region. Investigating everyday ways in which spaces are being controlled and secured, we draw on debates around biopolitics, territory and fluid power relations. During the course of our research, this fluidity has seen the control of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) extend (with Kirkuk reclaimed as Kurdish and now largely controlled by the KRG) and the establishment of new borders with Islamic State.\(^{(1)}\)

The account of the complex layers of territory and security in this paper point to intersecting and layered configurations. Just over two decades ago, John Gerard Ruggie (1993: 174) argued that: ‘It is truly astonishing that the concept of territoriality has been so little studied by students of international politics; its neglect is akin to never looking at the ground that one is walking on’. Although territory has long been an object of scrutiny in political geography (see for example, the section introductions and essays assembled in Kasperson and Minghi (1970)) it has latterly become a theme of lively theoretical discussions (Antonsich, 2011; Elden, 2014; Elden, 2015; Murphy, 2012; Painter, 2010; Sassen, 2013). Stuart Elden (2010: 799) has argued that territory: ‘can be understood as a political technology: it comprises techniques for measuring land and controlling terrain, and measure and control — the technical and the legal — must be thought alongside the economic and strategic’. With these approaches in mind, our paper reports and reflects on the intertwined geography of security/biopolitics/territory that has emerged in northern Iraq. This leads to us focus on layers and complex intersections of territory. The next section briefly details our methods. We then describe the broad landscape of territory and security in Iraqi Kurdistan, focusing on the biopolitical modus operandi of Kurdish security. The paper then moves to Kirkuk (before and after its occupation by forces of the KRG) and to the Qandil Mountains, largely controlled by the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK). Our conclusions problematize narratives that fold an array of grounded territorial formations into the category of ‘failed state’. As elsewhere, in Iraq, this label belies the ways in which territory functions.

**Methods: Transecting security and space**

On 29 September 2013 a bomb shook the KRG capital Erbil,\(^{(2)}\) leaving six attackers and six security officers dead and 60 wounded, amongst them civilians. The attack was carried out by a suicide bomber in a van packed with explosives followed by a gunfight. It is notable that this was the first such bomb in Iraqi Kurdistan since 2007, whereas elsewhere in Iraq there has seldom been a day in the last decade without bombings\(^{(3)}\): just a day after the September 2013 bomb in Erbil for example, 13 bombs killed at least 47 in Baghdad. Moreover, the 2007 attack (that resulted in 14 deaths) had targeted the same building: the headquarters of the security forces. A suicide bombing in 2004 killed 98 had targeted and killed the deputy Prime Minister of the KRG. While in much of Iraq, brutal and frequently sectarian war rages and murders civilians; the handful of bomb attacks in the KRG since the fall of Saddam Hussein

\(^{(1)}\)Given the fraught representational politics in references to the Islamic State and the variety of acronyms used to describe it (ISIL, ISIS, IS), we shall henceforth adopt the term Dā‘ish (derived from the Arabic abbreviation for the group) that was used by all our interlocutors in Kurdistan. Whilst Dā‘ish’s ideological–territorial project is beyond our scope, online searches yield an avalanche of media commentary and recent books. VICE News offers a grounded dispatch: https://news.vice.com/video/the-islamic-state-full-length (retrieved 10 January 2015).

\(^{(2)}\)Erbil is sometimes rendered as Arbil or Irbil. In Kurdish it is known as Hewlêr or Hawler.

\(^{(3)}\)Iraq Body Count seeks to keep a tally of this dreadful toll: www.iraqbodycount.org/.
have mostly targeted the apparatus of the KRG, especially *Asayish*, the KRG’s internal security agency.

The victims of the 2004 bombing are commemorated by a monument (Figure 1), in an Erbil city park where there was once an Iraqi army base. Our paper begins at that site – and moves from it into the disputed territories to the southwest and then to the PKK-controlled area adjoining the boundary between Iraq, Iran and Turkey. While our empirical focus is on state and quasi-state security apparatus, this leads us analytically to the relations between sovereignty, territory and personhood.

The first author has worked in Kurdistan (with only relatively short periods away) since July 2013. The second author joined him in Kurdistan for 10 days in July–August 2013 and again in September 2014. Hence, in addition to the more formal interviews, daily life informs the paper; each stop at a checkpoint and every conversation with members of the security forces becomes a form of participant observation. Adapting street-level transects used to interpret securityscapes in Maputo and Phnom Penh (Paasche and Sidaway, 2010; Sidaway et al., 2014), the paper is partly structured around encounters with visible forms of security along two routes. Whereas in the papers on Maputo and Phnom Penh, transects were translated into detailed urban maps of security and space, in Iraq, the interaction of movement and scale was different. This time we also used vehicles, moved beyond cities and covered more ground.

The paper also draws on 15 interviews with informants connected to security in the KRG. Nine interviews were conducted with senior politicians and members of parliament from the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), two of the three main political parties forming the KRG. Amongst these interlocutors were a military advisor to the president (from the KDP), the KDP’s advisors for Syria and foreign relations, the minister responsible for the (formerly) disputed territories (KDP) and the head of the PUK in Kirkuk. Other interviews were conducted with the head of the central Presidency in

![Figure 1. Monument in Erbil (source: photograph taken by one of the co-authors in Iraq in June 2014).](image)

(4) A third party, *Gorran* (Movement for Change), that has emerged since 2009 and gained more seats than the PUK in the 2014 elections does not have its own security forces. Since June 2014, the Minister of Peshmerga affairs is a Gorran member; however, the Peshmerga remain as divided along party lines as before (Chapman, 2009).
Erbil, a regional head of the intelligence service, a Peshmerga colonel and the manager of a private security company in Erbil. We also interviewed a founding member of the executive committee of the PKK. All interviews, bar one, were conducted by the first author (in 2013–14). We use the interviews to discuss the observations made during transects; to challenge official or established discourses when they contradict what we observe and to get a better understanding of territory and security where questions arose. However, interviews inform and frame transects and are thus not prominent in the paper.

**Biopolitics, blood and soil: Territory and security in Iraqi Kurdistan**

Kurdish identity and politics within and beyond Iraq are heterogeneous. Political parties intersect with tribal, linguistic and ideological cleavages. In Iraq, a bitter contest between the KDP and PUK culminated in armed conflict between 1992 and 1998 (intertwined with a longer struggle with Baghdad and relations with regional and outside powers) ending in an uneasy alliance that still survives. In addition, there are several thousand PKK fighters in the mountains along the Turkish border. These fractures however interact with the Turkish, Persian and Arab majorities of the states whose boundaries cut across a putative Kurdish homeland (Culcasi, 2006). Iraqi Kurdistan has been shaped by a long history of ethno-territorial struggle in which the Kurds experienced relative marginality and repression (culminating in genocide carried out by the Iraqi government in the 1980s). Whereas the Iraqi state increasingly defined itself as ‘Arab’ in the second half of the twentieth century, especially after the Ba’th party came to power in the late 1960s (Davis, 2005), its weakening in the face of armed struggle from the Kurds and external onslaught has seen the Kurdish territories transformed. Kurdish autonomy in the three northern provinces (see Figure 2) now rests on a security state that demarcates insiders (Kurds) and others (Arabs) in ways that invert the former biopolitical logic of the Ba’thist state. Yet while there is a voluminous literature on Saddam Hussein’s

---

(5) See Ahmed (2012), Aziz (2011), Ahmed and Gunter (2007), Jabar and Dawod (2006) especially the chapters therein by Bozarslan, van Bruinessen, Dawod and Stansfield. All these structures are experienced through gender, given the patrilineal structure of Kurdish societies whereby sovereignty, masculinity and identity are intertwined (Alinia 2013; Begikhani et al., 2015; King, 2008, 2014). Challenges to this patrilineal structure in areas controlled by the PKK and PYD are reworking these gender relations but are beyond our scope here.

(6) See McDowall (2004) for a history up to the American-led invasion of 2003. On Iraqi Kurdistan and the USA, see Little (2010). Although relations between the Kurdish political parties are not our focus, as we note in the section on the Asayish, it continues to be run on party lines, adding a further twist to security/territory interface. This interface is also intimately tied to accumulation: the business of petrodollars, commodities, real estate, contracts, patronage and corruption. In the same year that a valuable primer on these appeared (Leezenberg, 2006), a confidential US diplomatic cable on ‘Corruption in the Kurdish North’ claimed that because ‘formal government [the KRG] is subordinate to the party [KDP and PUK]…loyalty became the paramount value; competence and honesty were dismissed. Once in power, party leaders took their rewards; their followers emulate them. Ignorance and ever-present worries about Baghdad also help to keep people’s eyes shut to the problem. Thus, in Kurdistan corruption spread from the top down’. However, the cable goes on to indicate something more like a top-down/bottom-up dialectic in which security is a hinge: ‘The core of the corruption in both [KDP and PUK controlled areas] i.e., ‘the godfathers’ as one interlocutor termed them, lies with those who control the security forces. They keep the game running because controlling the guns means they can enforce their illegal contracts. Security forces, and thus corruption networks, depend on their patrons and thus seldom cross party lines, i.e. companies that do business in Erbil do not do business in Sulaymaniyyah and vice versa. This extends even to the cell phone industry….’ (anon, 2006: 2)
security state, the intersections of territory, sovereignty and security in the KRG are thinly documented.

Today, overlapping (and sometimes competing) territorial layers are intertwined with power and security. However, these territories are not straightforwardly determined by legal boundaries but also involve de facto and sometimes fluid formations, practices and levels. Whereas Figure 2 indicates the external borders of Iraq, as Elden and Williams (2009: 407) noted, for Iraq, ‘the international legal term of territorial integrity is being pulled apart; where the spatial extent of the state must be preserved at all costs, yet the sovereignty of the state is rendered entirely contingent’. Although the Iraqi state had faced a series of challenges since its demarcation by imperial cartographers after the First World War, these have been compounded since the US-led invasion in 2003. Today, insurgents control large swathes of territory including cities and the Kurdistan Region is autonomous, with its own government, armed forces (the Peshmerga) and security service (Asayish) and a separate visa regime. During our research, however, Iraq remained the de jure state, and the KRG receives 17% (about $10 billion dollars per annum) of Iraq’s total oil and gas revenues. Although the KRG has been seeking its own oil and gas extraction and export infrastructure to limit this dependence, it has relied on this money from central government coffers, although Baghdad halted payments for the first eight months of 2014, thus heightening the tensions between the two governments (Paasche and Mansurbeg, 2014).

The classic (though controversial) account is Makiya (1989). See Brands and Palkki (2012) for the Ba’thist regime’s security-threat conceptions and Dimitrov and Sassoon (2014) for a comparative study of the single-party security states of Communist Bulgaria and Ba’thist Iraq. The development of a national security state in Iraq is placed in regional contexts by Owen (2014) and Tripp (2013).

Although focused on the insurgency that challenged the British mandated state in 1920, Kadhim (2012) is an instructive short survey. Mufti’s (1996: 9, italics in original) book ‘tracing the evolution of “stateness”’ in Iraq and Syria is also helpful. Both books also problematize the notion of an Iraqi state conjured up ab initio by the British. Equally, through an account of the development of ideological and nationalist movements prior to the Ba’th, Franzén (2011) examines the evolution of the Iraqi state, its challengers and development and Davis (2005) provides a valuable survey of state power and historical memory drawing on a survey of Iraqi sources. Natarajan (2011) stages a suggestive comparison of sovereignty in Mandate (1914–32) and Coalition-occupied (2003–2011) Iraq. On opening up wider Kurdish histories, see the special issue of *Iranian Studies* (2014: 5) guest edited by Djene Bajalan and Sara Zandi Karimi. See Kirmanj (2014) on Kurdish history textbooks produced by the KRG.
The KRG has been labelled a ‘quasi-state’ and scholars have focused on disputed territories beyond its formal border with the rest of Iraq (Bartu, 2010; Natali, 2010; Romano, 2007; Wolff, 2010). However, we argue that multiple territorial layers need to be taken into account in and around Iraqi Kurdistan. Accounting for these requires consideration of the boundary practices of the KRG, both at the concentrated security spaces of its (contented) external borders and at hundreds of internal checkpoints as well as its broader regime of internal surveillance. Thus, the intersection of security and territory in the Kurdistan Region is complex. To examine these intersections on the ground, we consider biopolitics; signalling the intersections of a variety of powers(9): the production, regulation and control of population in connection with territory (Foucault, 2010). Whereas many interpretations of Foucault identify biopolitics with management of life and governmentality with the economy and the production of modern subjectivity, in the context of Iraqi Kurdistan security and military/police power are their most tangible configurations, shaped by a history of armed struggle, forced migration and insecurity. Whilst governmentality ‘has population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument’ (Foucault, 2007: 108), it is that technical instrument that forms our focus here. Security impacts life everywhere in the KRG at all times. In this context, Kurdish ethnicity becomes a key marker. Within the territory of the KRG, Arab Iraqis are subject to heightened control. When considering oil export policies or budgets, questions of sovereignty and power in Iraq and Kurdistan are unclear and constantly contested. Ongoing power games and lack of clarity on responsibilities and jurisdictions are the source of many disputes. Encountering

(9) The literature on biopolitics is large and contested. We follow in Lemke (2011: 2) in recognizing that ‘Defining biopolitics and determining its meaning is not a value-free activity that follows a universal logic of research. Rather, it is an integral part of a shifting and conflicting theoretical and political field’.

Figure 3. Logo of the Asaysh. (http://dfr.gov.krd/a/d.aspx?l=12&a=4289, retrieved 10 January 2015)
the biopolitics of security on the ground however, leaves little doubt about who exercises sovereignty and controls territory.

Asayish

The main agency responsible for security in the KRG is the Asayish (Kurdish for security) which is supported by the immigration office, other policing agencies (police and traffic police) and wide parts of the population. The responsibilities of the Asayish are primarily anti-terror but also include serious crime and drug smuggling. It can best be described as a hybrid of secret police, internal intelligence service and anti-terror unit. The Asayish were introduced in the mid-1990s by the two main political parties: the KDP and the PUK. Today the Asayish have offices in every town. As Chapman (2009: 3) notes, although legally an agency of the Regional Government:

“whose Peshmerga and Interior Ministries were nominally unified in April 2009, the KRG security sector remains divided on a party basis…with the KDP dominating the Governates of Dohuk and Erbil in the north and northwest portion of the Region and the PUK dominating Sulaymaniyah Governate in the south. KDP and PUK each maintain parallel Peshmerga, police, Asayish and [internal party] intelligence services in their areas.

Little escapes the attention of the Asayish. While many are grateful for the security the agency provides, they have an authoritarian aura. Casual conversation criticizing them is almost impossible. Attempts to talk about the Asayish will end most conversations immediately or make interlocutors noticeably uncomfortable. When such conversations happen, the KRG government is not the focus and people leave no doubt that the sovereign body the security answers to are the two political parties.

The Asayish symbol (see Figure 3), in the colours of the Kurdish flag – held by two hands, but also resembling an eye is worn by personnel at checkpoints. Centred on the Asayish, a tight security network spans over the KRG operating on several levels of control and biopolitics. This network has three components that have been tightening over the period of our research (that saw the emergence of Dā‘ish on Kurdistan’s southern and western boundary):

1. Controlling movement: Every visitor to the region immediately encounters a network of checkpoints(10) at road blocks between and around towns. This roadblock system within the KRG makes it impossible to move without being checked by the Asayish, which resemble light infantry units. Besides a visual scan of the car checking for suspicious behaviour, the KRG has introduced a number plate system that enables fast control. While blue number plates indicate official vehicles, which are rarely checked, cars with red plates are taxis, which are often pulled over to check the passengers. Cars in private

(10) On checkpoints as foci in contested postcolonial sovereigntyscapes, see Sidaway (2003). Jeganathan’s (2004: 75) analysis of the role of checkpoints (drawing on the Sri Lankan case) describes them as ‘located not at the boundary of the state, but at its shifting fluid margins’. He points also to their locations ‘at the boundaries of a target….If the logic of the anticipation of violence creates a plethora of shifting targets…then the checkpoint is an attempt by an agency of the state to control that flickering movement….that [configures] practices of anticipation in a double way. On the one hand, to pass through a checkpoint is to remember why checkpoints exist – it is to recall the possibility of a bomb. The few who are, in fact, carrying or have some knowledge of a bomb would also, I imagine, anticipate its explosive impact. But on the other hand there is another kind of anticipation – that of soldiers checking the flow of traffic and people, asking questions. They are anticipating violence in another way’ (p. 69). It is also instructive to compare and contrast the modus operandi of discipline at checkpoints with both the ways that ‘military technologies and approaches to security “crossover” into civil and commercial spheres’ (Nguyen, 2015: 8) elsewhere and the carceral mobilities through which prisoners are moved (Moran et al., 2012). Studying these (in the case of imprisoned asylum seekers in the UK, some of whom will be Kurds) Gill (2009: 195) points to ‘the politics of mobility not only as an outcome but as part of a process of representation’.
ownership bearing white plates are almost always stopped to exchange a few words with the driver. Officers can quickly determine where a driver is from through their accent (or dialect), and whether he (women drivers are less frequent) is commuting within the region or is far away from home. Since Arabs rarely learn a Kurdish dialect, it is also possible to spot an Arab in a Kurdish car. Cars with Iraqi plates from outside the KRG are invariably singled out and searched for explosives and weapons. Depending on the security threat level, cars with Iraqi plates may not be allowed to pass a checkpoint at all. Once vehicles are stopped, the Asayish focuses on ID cards.

2. Immigration and ID cards: The KRG has a visa and residency system separate from the rest of Iraq. Acquiring a residency card for the KRG involves several steps. Applicants, including Iraqi citizens not already registered in the KRG, need a letter from a sponsor vouching for them. In case the sponsor and/or the applicant are unknown to the Asayish, a background check is performed in addition to the more classically biopolitical strategy of blood tests, checking applicants for HIV, hepatitis and other infectious diseases. The final stage of the process is an interview at the local Asayish headquarters that includes questions on the political orientation of the applicant, occupation and family ties.

3. Monitoring the norm: Plain-clothes Asayish officers patrol cities and towns, listening to accents and checking for anything that appears to be out of the ordinary. Those deemed suspicious are interrogated. When asked how the KRG’s territory is secured, interviewees from the Asayish and Peshmerga respond that Kurds have learnt from a history of insecurity and want to make sure that this does not happen again. There are networks of cooperation and collaboration. Although officially not stressed, it is well known that the Asayish has a network of informants keeping it updated on developments and the atmosphere amongst the population, who in turn report out of the ordinary things to the Asayish. A military advisor to the president adds that this is precisely what differentiates the KRG from the territories under the nominal writ of Baghdad.

Although many Kurds remember the Ba‘th state’s security police (mukhābarāt), the Asayish tends to be perceived as a protector in the context of the extreme insecurity elsewhere in Iraq. This requires heightened levels of direct control and surveillance that are now stretched as a result of the KRG’s acquisition of new territories. However, biopolitical surveillance is accompanied by narratives of blood and soil and Kurdish solidarity. We consider their interactions below, in which the blood and soil narrative is foregrounded via transects to Kirkuk and the solidarity one around Qandil.

Into disputed territories: Transect one

Entrenching security (May 2014)

With the research themes of biopolitics, territory, boundaries and security and our destination in mind, in the morning of 28 May 2014 one of the co-authors departed from the offices of the KDP run ‘Directorate of Kurdish Affairs outside the Region of the KRG’ in Erbil. After a 90 minutes drive, a large colourful sign welcomed visitors to Kirkuk followed immediately by a landscape of blast walls, Kevlar and guns. We arrived at the local KDP office to discuss the security situation on Kirkuk’s streets. A complex security setup had emerged that sought to accommodate all ethnicities despite mutual distrust creating a security vacuum that has sometimes been filled by insurgents. In the six months before Dā‘ish and the Peshmerga advanced on Kirkuk, seventy inhabitants were killed in political violence.

Parts of the Nineveh Governorate, Kirkuk Governorate, Diyala Governorate and the Makhmur District depicted in Figure 4 are claimed both by the KRG and the central government in Baghdad. These disputed territories, including Kirkuk have long been a source of tension resulting in standoffs between the Peshmerga and the Baghdad-controlled...
Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). Notwithstanding a multi-ethnic population living close to Iraq’s second largest oil field, Kirkuk has long been a symbol in Kurdish narratives that script it as a cultural capital – although the population is diverse, with Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Yezidi and Christian communities. Historically, the Turkmens formed the majority within the city of Kirkuk, while the Kurds dominated Kirkuk province (Gunter, 2011; Stansfield, 2013; Wolff, 2010). The ethnic Turkmen presence has led Ankara to watch developments there carefully and occasionally to threaten intervention if it felt the Turkmen population to be endangered (Gunter, 2011; Wolff, 2010).

While historically the Kurds and Turkmen had formed the majority, the Ba’th regime conducted an Arabization campaign around Kirkuk, aiming to recompose the ethnicity. As Kurds were expelled or fled and as Arabs arrived, they became the predominant ethnic group, although population data have long been part of a codification and governmental logic that made: ‘arbitrary changes of ethnic categorization by the political power conducting the census…as well [as] equally arbitrary changes in the political meaning assigned to these ethnic categorizations, and to their numerical size’ (Dundar, 2012: 3). The latest census was conducted in 1957, before Saddam’s Arabization campaign (Gunter, 2011; Romano, 2007). This campaign only ended with Saddam’s overthrow in 2003 and is thus part of the basis of the more recent dispute between Baghdad and Erbil, with both sides claiming the area, citing the numbers of their ethnic groups living there. While the Kurds argue that historically Kirkuk is theirs, the Arabs point to the number of Arabs currently living there. For more than a decade, Kurds have sought to repopulate Kirkuk. The fundamental biopolitical
instrument of census continues to be a domain of contest. According to the post Ba‘thist Iraqi Constitution (Article 140) and before that the Transitional Administrative Law (Article 58), a referendum would have to be carried out to settle the dispute. The process would include a form of ‘normalization’, or reversal of the Arabization process, a census followed by a referendum. Since this would likely mean that the disputed territories would fall to the KRG, Baghdad has always opposed the process. Furthermore, the reversal of the Arabization process would mean moving Arabs that have lived there for some 30 years, a potent recipe for future conflict, since Arabs would be unlikely to willingly surrender homes or support a leadership that had ‘surrendered’ Kirkuk. The fact that one of largest oilfields in the area lies underneath Kirkuk complicates the dispute. Kurdish informants, however, refer to Kirkuk more often in terms of blood and soil than oil. Moreover, while Kurds have the law (in the form of Iraq’s constitution) on their side, the implementation of a referendum that could settle the dispute between Baghdad and Erbil has been difficult and is in any case seen as unlikely to settle the tensions of a multifaceted conflict dating back decades that is entangled with strategic natural resources (Gunter, 2011; Natali, 2008; Romano, 2007; Wolff, 2010).

With Baghdad blocking the referendum and the Kurds unwilling to compromise on the status of Kirkuk (it is unlikely that any Kurdish politician who supported the handover of Kirkuk could be re-elected) both sides settled for an unstable compromise. Our interviewees cited the referendum and Article 140 when asked about the future of the disputed territories. However, they all implied that no quick solution could be found. An adviser to the president (referring to himself as a private citizen) told one of us that it might take 50, maybe 100 or more years to resolve, but the Kurds will never renounce their claim.

While Kurdish Peshmerga forces and the Iraqi Army secured different sectors around the city (neither force was allowed into the centre) a multi-ethnic security federal police force and Kurdish Asayish were charged with Kirkuk’s internal security. According to Kurdish officials we spoke with, this is where the problems began. In theory all ethnicities are supposed to organize security collectively within the federal police force that goes back to President Talabani’s (2005–2014) reconciliation initiative, in practice they do not trust each other. The Kurds regularly accuse their Arab counterparts of cooperating with insurgents in the city. High levels of distrust and leaking operational details to insurgents create a security vacuum. While international and regional news spoke of jihadists, Kurdish officials describe them as Ba‘thists and Sunni tribes fuelled by deeply rooted antipathy towards the Kurds and government in Baghdad. As one high ranking member of the KRG stated in an interview ‘anyone who claims something different does not understand the situation’.

However, the security setup on the ground in Kirkuk (where different forces and ethnicities seek to control sectors) is replicated on a larger scale across the disputed territories. Poring over a map with the Director responsible for Kurdish Territories outside the Region, trying to get a clear idea of security and control in the disputed territories, a chaotic patchwork of different setups and arrangements were described. While no blueprint has been agreed on for the security arrangements, the rule of thumb is that where there is a majority of Kurds, it is Kurdish security, if there is a majority of Arabs, the security forces are federal, and in between Turkmen militias operate in conjunction with Kurdish forces. However, in an ethnic landscape shaped by deportation, Arabization and the resettlement of the formerly deported, and where a census conducted by one side can trigger conflict, the question of majorities is not clear and different interpretations are matters of life and death. Any movement of troops may trigger violent responses. Carefully asking the head of the directorate if this rather chaotic setup on the map reflects the situation on the ground where federal and Kurdish security forces struggle with their responsibilities, he confirmed this, drawing on the idea of a security vacuum where insurgents fill the gaps.
The disputed territories were a liminal space for both the KRG and Baghdad, but one that both claim. Adding to the complexity, one party to the contest is formally part of the other (the KRG is part of the Republic of Iraq, Kurdish parties also form parts of the central government and there are some Kurdish members of the ISF). The disputed territories as such can be clearly mapped in legal terms. There is an undisputed KRG and an undisputed rest of Iraq. However, there has long been a more fluid border running through those territories on the ground, demarcating territory controlled by the Peshmerga and territory under the control of the ISF. Thus, disputed-ness does not refer to an empty uncontrolled space that is being (re-)negotiated, as a map might suggest: instead it is filled with tens of thousands of soldiers. While in some parts each side has established their presence, they converge at others and renegotiate the boundary regularly on the ground.

One of the few exceptions to the flexible border can be found in the form of the security trench around Kirkuk. Driving through the city and past the vast oil-extraction-refining-storage infrastructure, we arrived at Kirkuk’s outskirts and the beginning of the security trench (see Figure 5). Whilst we were looking across to an Iraqi Army post complete with their US supplied armed vehicles, the Peshmerga explained how the trench divides nearby Arab settlements from Kirkuk, by cutting off all small roads and dirt tracks. This way insurgents or cars loaded with explosives cannot enter the city unnoticed by using a network of small roads. With the installation of the trench, all vehicles have to pass an Asaysh checkpoint on one of the main roads that remain open. At the time of the visit the wall was the KRG’s first line of defence. More recent events made it only one of many Kurdish security rings around the city. While the drive into Kirkuk resembled any trip through the undisputed KRG territories:

![Security trenches near Kirkuk](source: photograph taken by one of the co-authors in Iraq in May 2014).
short stops at a regular series of checkpoints, the return from the disputed territories traversed an international-border-like infrastructure, where the Asayish search every car and question every driver in order to prevent weapons, insurgents and explosives reaching Erbil.

**Transecting ‘reclaimed’ Kirkuk (June 2014)**

Teaming up with war correspondents (Paasche, forthcoming) one of us revisited Kirkuk and the frontline/new Kurdish boundaries twice, the first time on 15 June, five days after Mosul fell to Dāʿish and four days after the Peshmerga took Kirkuk and all of its surrounding area. The second visit was a week later when the Kurds had begun to fortify their positions around their newly acquired territory. Approaching from Erbil on 15 June, we arrived near the centre of Kirkuk around lunch time at the fortified complex hosting the PUK’s headquarters. Arriving back in Kirkuk there was no atmosphere of victory celebration despite the dramatic events that had taken place days before. The Iraqi flag was still flying on official buildings and federal police were on the streets doing their jobs in the usual manner (bearing Iraq’s flag on their sleeves). At the PUK’s headquarters we spoke with the local head of the PUK as well as Ala Talabani, a member of the Iraqi National Assembly federal parliament (and President Jalal Talabani’s niece). They were keen to update us by confirming reports from regional and international media that the Iraqi army stationed around the city had withdrawn before Dāʿish arrived at the outskirts of the city (indeed later that day we could see Iraqi uniforms lying in the desert outside the barracks). We were told that to prevent Dāʿish from taking over Iraqi army positions (including all the equipment that had been left there), the Peshmerga moved in. They seized what had been left behind and took over the positions in order to secure all of Kirkuk’s inhabitants. Asking the head of the PUK forces if we would still see federal police on the streets in the future, and thus implying that Baghdad had now officially lost all control and influence on the Kurds, he grinned and responded with diplomatically, ‘we will see’. However, he continued by stating that this symbolized the implementation of Article 140, meaning that Kirkuk will now remain Kurdish.

Leaving the building after the interview, the street was full of heavily armed security forces including KRG police officers, unmarked militia that act as close protection details and Asayish. Moving in an armed convoy provided by the PUK we drove to the new Peshmerga positions west of the city that marked the frontline. Although Dāʿish were only 500m away, the atmosphere was calm and we could wander around and take pictures of the Peshmerga and Kurdish flags over Humvees and bomb blast walls still carrying the Iraqi flag (see Figure 6). Later we joined a spontaneous press conference given by the General of the 1st division stationed in this section of the front. Inside a shipping container, over cold cokes, hot coffee (to toast Peshmerga success) and baklava, the General explained that they were building defences, including what he called a ‘wall of protection’, to prevent any force from outside from entering the newly Kurdish controlled territories. Later he specified that all areas under Peshmerga control ‘are Kurdish to us’. With the chaotic withdrawal of the Iraqi Army, the Peshmerga was filling a security vacuum to prevent Dāʿish moving in. Without fighting Baghdad’s forces, the Peshmerga was able to seize those parts of the disputed territories that the Kurds long considered theirs (the conflict that began soon after was with Dāʿish not Baghdad). In addition, hundreds of thousands of Arabs, Turkman and others fled into Kurdish-controlled territories as these were the only spaces considered safe.

On June 15, bulldozers were starting to fortify Peshmerga positions along a canal that marked the new border of Kurdish territory. A week later, the landscape had changed and was now dominated by high earth walls and an old T-55 tank dug in with its barrel facing Dāʿish positions (see Figure 6). Hence an improvised position quickly acquired an air of permanence. The seizure of Kirkuk has a revanchist dimension – Kurds reclaiming a city that had been progressively and often violently Arabized since the 1970s. A brutal war wages
further south. But our Kurdish interlocutors know exactly what territory they want, and what they are content to leave to the Iraqi Army (plus its tactical allies) and Dā’ish to contest. In terms of biopolitics, boundaries and territory, the KRG’s aim is now to deepen control and hold-fast.

To the Qandil Mountains: Transect two

While literature on territory in Iraq has tended to focus on the disputed territories and latterly the ideological–territorial project associated with the declaration of a Caliphate straddling the borders of Iraq and Syria, the case of Qandil shows that the idea of Kurdistan’s ‘un-disputed territories’ does not really hold what it promises. The situation on the ground in Qandil is more complex than a language of statehood, monopoly of violence and boundaries may readily encompass.

Despite three decades of conflict between the PKK and the Turkish state and its intensity (about 40,000 deaths), analytical literature on the PKK’s ideological evolution remains relatively small. There are few accounts of the PKK’s base in the Qandil Mountains that straddle the borders of Iraq, Iran and Turkey. Within the discourse about Qandil is the realization that despite multiple attempts, the PKK cannot wholly be beaten by military means, despite Turkey’s large standing army (Bacik and Coskun, 2011; Bengio, 2011; Larrabee, 2013). The PKK began retreating into Iraqi territory from the very beginning of

(11) For accounts of the PKK’s ideological trajectory to the mid-2000s, see Marcus (2007) and Özcan (2005). On the subsequent evolution of and influences on the PKK strategy of Democratic Centralism, see Casier and Jongerden (2012). It is instructive to read this in tandem with the account of Anatolian Kurdish disavowals of the state in Hamelink and Barış (2014) and what O’Leary (2012: 515) calls ‘Kurdish strategic adaption, to remake both Iraq and Turkey in their interests.
its armed struggle in the 1980s. While the Ba'athist state was acutely hostile to the PKK, Saddam Hussein's regime was preoccupied by the conflict with Iran and Iraqi Kurds. The KDP and the PUK both operated further south and thus a buffer emerged between the PKK and Saddam’s forces. At the same time, the terrain was ideal for a guerrilla force and a zone emerged that was controlled by the KDP and – around Qandil – increasingly by the PKK. The foundation for this arrangement was a deal that PKK and KDP leaders Abdullah Öcalan and Masoud Barzani struck in the 1980s, giving the PKK the right to use what was then KDP-controlled territory along the Iraqi–Turkish border to set up camps and launch operations inside Turkey. Without this, the PKK would have had to operate in hostile territory from the outset. Although the Turkish military soon started attacking the PKK camps in northern Iraq, it could not wage anti-guerrilla warfare as effectively as it could within Turkey and had to limit itself to aerial bombing, occasionally supported by ground troops.

Responding to Turkey’s need to fight the PKK and Baghdad’s lack of control, Ankara and Baghdad negotiated a deal in 1984 permitting Turkish forces to enter Iraqi territory as far as 5 km below the border. Marcus (2007) suggests that one of the reasons for Baghdad to agreeing to this was the hope that Turkish forces would also hit KDP camps. When this occurred, relations between the PKK and KDP were strained, but the PKK was soon entrenched around Qandil and could neither be eliminated by the Turkish or Iraqi armies nor expelled by the Peshmerga. The PKK’s expulsion from bases in Syria in 1998 both fostered ideological innovation and reinforced Qandil’s value to the PKK (Paasche, 2015). When US forces arrived in northern Iraq in 2003, they too did not seek to occupy this area, although they did establish checkpoints on the roads leading to it (Brandon, 2006).

When pressed about the KRG’s inability to exercise control over its ‘undisputed’ territory in Qandil, the KDP’s head of Foreign Relations suggested we visit to the area to understand the situation better. Since there is no office one can call, one of the authors first headed to Qandil in November 2013, unsure of what reception awaited us. After a 45 minutes drive up to the mountains from Soran (half-way between Erbil and the Iranian border), we turned off the main road and were stopped by the last Asayish checkpoint. After discussions with the Asayish, it took about 10 more minutes, through a small village, until we came to another checkpoint: run by the PKK. Several well-armed guerrillas in combat dress, flags of the PKK and affiliated organizations (see Figure 7) and a large portrait of Öcalan made it clear who was in charge here. Asking to talk with PKK representatives, we were invited into the checkpoint post and offered hot tea, cigarettes and chocolate pralines while one of the guerrillas held a series of walkie-talkie conversations. Within an hour a PKK commander arrived. Having completed the usual round of introductions he accompanied us to Qandil though an area that, according to the PKK, has been under their military control for 15 years. There are no Peshmerga here. Yet when passing across PKK-controlled territory, we saw the KRG’s flag flying over a large building. While the PKK holds the monopoly of organized violence here, the KRG remains responsible for services, since the villagers here are still registered KRG residents. The KRG’s flag we saw here flies over one of its schools, while around it armed PKK members bear the red star on their brassards. Whereas a KDP politician suggested we visit Qandil to see the terrain that makes it impossible for outside forces to easily evict the guerrillas, around Qandil it is evident that some state apparatuses of KRG are present, but its forces are not securing the area. Hence an autonomous region with its own security force cedes security to a guerrilla force which has used this territory to support attacks on a neighbouring state (Turkey), while the central government in Baghdad more or less ignores the whole arrangement. Discussing this with representatives from the KRG, the KDP and Peshmerga commanders, there are clear security/control boundaries but fluid ones when it comes to state services, including education. Within the complex network of biopolitics,
territory and boundaries, issues of Kurdish solidarity and mutual support soon emerge. Our original questions about ‘hosting’ or ‘tolerating’ the PKK did not yield responses, until one interviewee replied that he did not comprehend the question; ‘The PKK are Kurds, this is Kurdistan, and they are at home. We [the KRG] are not in a position not to tolerate or not to host them despite struggles that in the past lead to intra-Kurdish fights’.

However, this does not mean that the Peshmerga representatives or political advisors unilaterally support the PKK, its tactics and ideology. For the KRG, the situation in Qandil does present a complicating factor in their relations with Ankara. KRG officials seek to minimize them by advocating a peaceful solution and no active support for the PKK, although there are splits on party lines related to wider cleavages amongst the PKK, KDP, PUK that have been reinforced by the former’s close alliance with the Kurdish-led movement in northern Syria (Bozarslan, 2014). Given the fact that the PKK is not confined to the mountains, but is in control of several villages that are serviced by the KRG, the question of what constitutes ‘no active support’ poses a challenge for most interviewees. The most direct answer came from an adviser to the president who stated that active support refers to financial aid and weapons deliveries. Inquiries about what would happen when wounded PKK fighters show up in a KRG-run hospital remained unanswered. Yet while some interlocutors have no problem with the issue, citing pan-Kurdish solidarity, others refer to Ankara or Baghdad when it comes to the responsibility for dealing with them. Officially the KRG follows a line of facilitating peace talks and containing the PKK, although the idea of containment is not clearly defined. KRG representatives suggest that the PKK is only temporarily in Qandil, indicating that the PKK is explicitly concerned with Kurdish issues in Turkey and that they will leave once the issues are resolved.

Over the years however, the PKK has shifted from the aspiration to establish a Kurdish nation-state in eastern Anatolia towards modes of organization avowedly outside the state, its boundaries and its institutions. Öcalan (2011) called this system (conceived as a form of grass-roots democracy influenced by anarchist thought) Democratic Confederalism. Outlining the principles of Democratic Confederalism, Ocalan is very explicit about the anti-statist logic as well as the targeted spaces of this paradigm:

“Democratic confederalism in Kurdistan is an anti-nationalist movement as well. It aims at realizing the right of self-defence of the peoples by the advancement of democracy in all parts of Kurdistan without questioning the existing political borders. Its goal is
not the foundation of a Kurdish nation-state. The movement intends to establish federal structures in Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Iraq that are open for all Kurds and at the same time form an umbrella confederation for all four parts of Kurdistan. (Öcalan, 2011: 34)

The aspiration is not only to transcend international boundaries but also to build Democratic Confederalism across a broader Kurdistan and to defend it by all means necessary – including armed force. The civil war in Syria has enabled the model to be replicated by the Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat (PYD) (a party affiliated with the PKK by the shared creed of Democratic Confederalism) in some of the majority Kurdish areas of northeast Syria (known in Kurdish as Rojava). Rojava’s revolution however is contained to the north by Turkey and to the south and west by Dâ’îsh and the remnants of Syrian Ba’thist state (Gunter, 2014; Paasche, 2015; Schmidinger, 2014). The dynamics between top-down and bottom-up power in Rojava and its relationship to Qandil are complex and contested, but at Qandil itself the PKK has no intention of hastily leaving and a swathe of territory in northern Iraq (and extending into Iran) between 10 and 40km wide and around 200km long is subject to PKK control (Figure 8).

At Qandil, a memorial to PKK cadres who have fallen in the struggle overlooking a PKK military cemetery adds to the sense of permanence (Figure 9). When we arrived there were fresh graves. And as one of the PKK’s co-founders and a member of the Executive Committee explained to us in an interview, Qandil embodies Democratic Confederalism, whilst adding that the KRG’s vital oil pipeline runs through PKK-controlled land. Referring to a map of the area he continued that its level of control varies. In some areas, PKK cadres are confined to the mountains, but civilian areas have become depopulated due to past fighting. However, in spaces like Qandil where the PKK has established a monopoly on violence beyond the immediate camps for guerrillas in the mountains, the KRG’s police cannot be involved in disputes since the PKK would not allow them to enter. Instead it was claimed that Democratic Confederalism, is based on a committee structure and organizing daily life through understanding and reconciliation rather than police, rules and repression. Rhetorically, the PKK emphasizes that military affairs and civilian issues are strictly divided and do not interfere with each other.

Figure 8. PKK presence in Iraqi Kurdistan.

(12) Much reportage has arguably been too hasty in describing the PYD, who are the main Kurdish movement in Rojava and the associated Yekinevê Parastina Gel (YPG), as subservient to the PKK.

(13) See Watts (2012) for a valuable account of biopolitics/governance of martyrs and memorials at another site in Kudistan.
When discussing the PKK-controlled spaces in the KRG/Iraq it is challenging to find the right terminology, given the PKK’s formal disavowal of boundaries and national territorial aspiration and their complex relationship with the KRG that defies easy summary. Things have been more complex still since the PKK’s forces joined the Peshmerga at the front-lines with Dā‘ish, operating far from Qandil or Turkey. Whereas outside narratives about Iraq have been focused on these front-lines and discuss state failure/fracture these labels obfuscate the complex intersections of biopolitics, security, sovereignty and territory.

Conclusions: Postcolonial security states
Since the fall of the Ba‘th and departure of the occupying allied armies, Iraq is often narrated as a failed state. However, this belies complex sovereigntyscapes; de facto arrangements that rework and produce landscapes of power and territorialization. Writing from another site usually interpreted through the lens of state failure, and building on accounts there of governance without government (Menkhaus, 2007), Alice Hills (2014: 91) notes that while Somalia has become the paradigmatic failed state to many observers, but ‘In fact, Somalia is managed by a variety of security and administrative entities that are linked ethnically and economically but have different levels of stability and styles of governance’. Our paper has charted similar grounded and variable arrangements in the north of Iraq. Although the motives for it will long be debated (Hinnebusch, 2007), one key backdrop to the Anglo-American invasion in 2003 was the narrative about security (Sovacool and Halfon, 2007). More widely the history of an ideology of ‘national security’ in the United States has recently been retraced by Andrew Preston (2014). Its evolution has led the US into wars in Afghanistan and Iraq after ‘9/11’ and in Indochina 40 years before. But the meanings of security go far beyond those defined by American strategic culture. The literature on these diverse meanings is now vast – witness recent readers in security studies (Collins, 2012; Salter and Mutlu, 2013) and textbooks (Jarvis and Holland, 2015) adding to an already voluminous bibliography.

Yet it is important to cut through these domains and entanglements and reconceptualize security, in the words of some who critique its analytical centrality; ‘not as some kind of universal or transcendental value but rather as a mode of governing or a political technology’
(Neocleous, 2011: 26), ‘that imbues itself on all social relations and attaches itself to almost all commodities’ (Rigakos, 2011: 63). As Ali Bilgic (2014: 261) insists (writing about former Yugoslavia, another site of conflict and western intervention): ‘Ideas about what security means, for whom security can be sought and how security can be achieved are constitutive to ideas about how individual and collective identities are constructed’. Likewise, writing about the majority Kurdish areas of southeast Turkey, Jessie Hanna Clark (2013: 851) measures security through ‘a multi-directional and cross-spatial (public and private) network of power’. Our paper has traversed some of the tangible aspects of this network across the borders into Iraqi Kurdistan.

Our account points to an array of Kurdish territorial structures and in many ways echoes what others have described elsewhere as a plural field of security power brokers (Côté-Boucher et al., 2014; Jeursen and van der Borgh, 2014; Schomerus and de Vries, 2014). Beyond encounters with this plurality however, the journeys we report additionally mirror an aspect of territorial control in and around the KRG, specifically its networked mobility. The relationships between stasis and networks, flatness, volume and mobility have become part of the intellectual re-evaluation of territories ‘as contingent products of an ongoing series of connections between people, discourses and objects’ (Jones and Merriman, 2012: 937). And, drawing on a mapping of transit corridors in the Gulf of Aden (between Yemen and Somalia), Zoltán Glück (2015: 14) argues that ‘The production of security space is…a kind of production of circulation infrastructure’. Although many checkpoints in Iraqi Kurdistan appear semi-permanent (with well-built barriers and kiosks similar to those found at car parks or toll booths elsewhere) others may be temporary: power shifts as Peshmerga, PKK (and Dā’īsh) travel. In the fluid situations of Iraq (and Syria), power and security hinge on the regulation and exercise of mobilities. In October 2014, images of Peshmerga convoys and weapons being cheered by thousands of other Kurds have circulated widely. Ankara acquiesced to the Peshmerga crossing Turkish territory as they moved between KRG territory in northern Iraq and Dā’īsh-besieged Kobane. These events, together with wider struggles around Kirkuk and Kobane, have become symbolic sites in the vexed and long-standing interactions of Kurdish territory, security and space.

Acknowledgements We are grateful to the editor, Ananya Roy, as well as Sallie Yea, the Politics, Economies and Space Group (at the Department of Geography, NUS) and three anonymous referees for their helpful suggestions. In addition, Peter Sluglett generously read and offered extensive comments on an earlier draft. All errors and interpretations remain our own, however. The paper was finalized in the spring of 2015 whilst James was visiting the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Birmingham, UK. He thanks colleagues in Birmingham and is also grateful to Soran University for their generous hospitality in 2013 and 2014. We both thank our drivers and interlocutors in Kurdistan.

Funding
The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article:

The research was funded by a grant from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the National University of Singapore, Crucibles of Globalization: Landscapes of Power, Security and Everyday Lives in Post-Colonial Asian Cities (R-109-000-133-133).

References
Ahmed M A, 2012, Iraqi Kurds and Nation-Building (Palgrave Macmillan, London)
Ahmed M M A, Gunter M M 2007, Eds, 2007, The Evolution of Kurdish Nationalism (Mazda, Costa Mesa, CA)
Anon, 2006, “Corruption in the Kurdish North, confidential cable from Iraq Kirkuk to Iraq Baghdad,” Office of United States Secretary of State, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06KIRKUK37_a.html
Alinia M, 2013, *Honor and Violence against Women in Iraqi Kurdistan* (Palgrave Macmillan, New York)
Antonsich M, 2011, “Rethinking territory” *Progress in Human Geography* 35(3) 422–425
Aziz M A, 2011, *The Kurds of Iraq: Nationalism and Identity in Iraqi Kurdistan* (I B Tauris, London)
Bacik G, Coskun B B, 2011, “The PKK problem: explaining Turkey’s failure to develop a political solution” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 34(3) 248–265
Bartu P, 2010, “Wrestling with the integrity of a nation: the disputed internal boundaries in Iraq” *International Affairs* 86(6): 1329 -1343.
Begikhani N, Gill A K, Hague G, 2015, *Honour-based Violence: experiences and counter-strategies in Iraqi Kurdistan and the UK Kurdish diaspora* (Ashgate, Farnham)
Bengio O, 2011, “The ‘Kurdish Spring’ in Turkey and its impact on Turkish foreign relations in the Middle East” *Turkish Studies* 12(4) 619–632
Bilgic A, 2014, “Exploring ‘What’s Good about Security’: politics of security during the dissolution of Yugoslavia” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 16(2) 260–278
Bozarslan H, 2014, “The Kurds and Middle Eastern ‘state of violence’: the (1980s) and (2010s)” *Kurdish Studies* 2(1) 4–13
Brands H, Palkki D, 2012, “‘Conspiring Bastards’: Saddam Hussein’s strategic view of the United States’ *Diplomatic History* 36(3) 625-659
Brandon J, 2006, “Mount Qandil: a safe haven for Kurdish militants – Part I” *Terrorism Monitor* 4(17) 1–3
Cäsar M, Jongerden J, 2012, “Understanding today’s Kurdish movement: Leftist heritage, martyrdom, democracy and gender” *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 14, 1-10, http://ejts.revues.org/4656
Chapman D P, 2009, *Security Forces of the Kurdistan Regional Government* (Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC)
Clark J H, 2013, “‘My Life Is Like a Novel’: embodied geographies of security in Southeast Turkey” *Geopolitics* 18(4) 835–855
Collins A, Ed, 2012, *Contemporary Security Studies* (Oxford University Press, Oxford)
Côté-Boucher K, Infantino F, Salter M B, 2014, “Border security as practice: An agenda for research” *Security Dialogue* 45(3) 195-208
Culcasi K, 2006, “Cartographically constructing Kurdistan within geopolitical and orientalist discourses” *Political Geography* 25(6) 680–706
Davis E, 2005, *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA)
Dimitrov M K, Sassoon J, 2014, “State security, information and repression: a comparison of Communist Bulgaria and Ba’thist Iraq” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 18(2) 3–31
Dumbrell J, Ryan D, Eds, 2007, *Vietnam in Iraq: Tactics, Lessons, Legacies and Ghosts* (Routledge, London and New York)
Dundar F, 2012, “‘Statist quo’: British Use of Statistics in the Iraqi Kurdish Question (1919–1932)”, *Crown Paper 7* (Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University , Waltham, MA), http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/cp/CP7.pdf
Elden S, 2010, “Land, terrain, territory” *Progress in Human Geography* 34(6) 799–817
Elden S, 2014, *The Birth of Territory* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL)
Elden S, 2015, “From hinterland to the global: new books on historical and political understandings of territory” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 33(1) 185 – 190
Elden S, Williams A J, 2009, “The territorial integrity of Iraq, 2003–2007: invocation, violation, viability” *Geoforum* 40(3) 407–417
Foucault M, 2007, “Spaces of security: the example of the town. Lecture of 11th January (1978)” *Political Geography* 26(1) 48–56
Foucault M, 2010, “Right of death and power over life”, in *The Foucault Reader* Ed P Rabinow (Vintage Books, New York) pp 258–272
Franzén J, 2011, *Red Star Over Iraq: Iraqi Communism Before Saddam* (Hurst, London)
Gill N, 2009, “Governmental mobility: the power effects of the movement of detained asylum seekers around Britain’s detention estate” *Political Geography* 28(3) 186–196
Glück Z, 2015, “Piracy and the production of security space” Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 2015 33 642–659
Gunter M, 2011, The Kurds Ascending: The Evolving Solution to the Kurdish Problem in Iraq and Turkey (Palgrave Macmillan, New York)
Gunter M, 2014, Out of Nowhere: The Kurds of Syria in Peace and War (Hurst: London)
Hamelink W, Barış H, 2014, “Dengbêjs on borderlands: Borders and the state as seen through the eyes of Kurdish singer-poets” Kurdish Studies 2(1) 34–60
Hills A, 2014, “Somalia works: police development as state building” African Affairs 114(450) 88–107
Hinnebusch R, 2007, “The US invasion of Iraq: explanations and implications” Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies 16(3) 209–228
Schomerus M, de Vries L, 2014 “Improvising border security: ‘A situation of security pluralism’ along South Sudan’s borders with the Democratic Republic of the Congo” Security Dialogue 45(3) 279 -294
Jaber F A, Dawod H, Eds, 2006, The Kurds: Nationalism and Politics (Saqi, London)
Jarvis L, Holland J, 2015, Security: A Critical Introduction (Palgrave, London)
Jeganathan P, 2004, “Checkpoint: anthropology, identity and the state”, in Anthropolgy in the margins of the state Eds V Das, D Poole (School of American Research Press, Santa Fe) pp 67–80
Jeursen T, van der Borgh C, 2014, “Security provision after regime change: local militias and political entities in post-Qaddafi Tripoli” Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding 8(2–3) 173–191
Jones R, Merriman P, 2012, “Network nation” Environment and Planning A 44(4) 937 - 953
Kadhim A, 2012, Reclaiming Iraq: The 1920 Revolution and the Founding of the Modern State (University of Texas Press, Austin)
Kasperson R E, Minghi J V , Eds, 1970, The Structure of Political Geography (University of London Press, London)
King D E, 2008, “The personal is patrilineal: Namus as sovereignty” Identities 15(3) 317–342
King D E, 2014, Kurdistan on the Global Stage. Kinship, Land, and Community in Iraq (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ)
Kirmanj S, 2014, “Kurdish history textbooks: building a nation-state within a nation-state” The Middle East Journal 68(3) 367–384
Larrabee S F, 2013, “Turkey’s new Kurdish opening” Survival 55(5) 133–146
Leezenberg M, 2006, “Urbanization, privatization and patronage: the political economy of Iraqi Kurdistan”, in The Kurds: Nationalism and Politics Eds F A Jabar, H Dawod (Saqi, London) pp 151–179
Little D, 2010, “The United States and the Kurds: a Cold War story” Journal of Cold War Studies 12(4) 63–98
McDowall D, 2004, A Modern History of the Kurds (IB Tauris, London)
Makkiy K, 1989, Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq, Updated Edition, with a New Introduction (University of California Press, Berkeley CA)
Marcus A, 2007, Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence (NYU Press, New York)
Menkhaus K, 2007, “Governance without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, State Building, and the Politics of Coping” International Security 31(3) 74–106
Moran, D, Piacentini L, Pallot J, 2012, “Disciplined mobility and carceral geography: prisoner transport in Russia” Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 37 446–460
Mufidi M, 1996, Sovereign Creations: Pan-Arabism and Political Order in Syria and Iraq (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY)
Murphy A B, 2012, “Territory’s continuing allure” Annals of the Association of American Geographers 103(5) 1212–1226
Natali D, 2008, “The Kirkuk conundrum” Ethnopolitics 7(4) 433–443
Natali D, 2010, The Kurdish Quasi-State (Syracuse University Press, Syracuse)
Natarajan U, 2011, “Creating and recreating Iraq: legacies of the Mandate system in contemporary understandings of Third World sovereignty” Leiden Journal of International Law 24 799–822

Neocleous M, 2011, “Security as pacification”, in Anti-security Eds M Neocleous, G S Rigakos (Red Quill Books, Ottawa) pp 23–56

Nguyen N, 2015, “Chokepoint: regulating US student mobility through biometrics” Political Geography 46 1–10

Öcalan A, 2011, Democratic Confederalism (Transmedia Publishing, London, Cologne)

O’Leary B, 2012, “The federalization of Iraq and the break-up of Sudan” Government and Opposition 47(4) 481–516

Owen R, 2014, The Rise and Fall of the Arab Presidents for Life (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA)

Özcan A K, 2005, Turkey’s Kurds: A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Öcalan (Routledge, London and New York)

Paasche T F, 2015, “Syrian and Iraqi Kurds: conflict and cooperation” Middle East Policy 22(1) 77–88

Paasche TF, forthcoming, “Co-producing fieldwork under fire – collaborating with journalists in Syria and Iraq” The Geographical Journal

Paasche T F, Mansurbeg H, 2014, “Kurdistan Regional Government–Turkish energy relations: a complex partnership” Eurasian Geography and Economics 55(2) 111–132

Paasche T F, Sidaway J D, 2010, “Transecting security and space in Maputo” Environment and Planning A 42(7) 1555–1576

Painter J, 2010, “Rethinking territory” Antipode 42(5) 1090–1118

Preston A, 2014, “Monsters everywhere: a genealogy of national security” Diplomatic History 38(3) 477–500

Rigakos G S, 2011, “‘To extend the scope of productive labour’: pacification as a police project”, in Anti-security Eds M Neocleous, G S Rigakos (Red Quill Books, Ottawa) pp 57–83

Romano D, 2007, “The future of Kirkuk” Ethnopolitics 6(2) 265–283

Ruggie J G, 1993, “Territoriality and beyond: problematizing modernity in international relations” International Organization 47(1) 139–174

Salter M B, Mutlu C E, Eds, 2013, Research Methods in Critical Security Studies. An Introduction (Routledge, Abingdon and New York)

Sassen S, 2013, “When territory deborders territoriality” Territory, Politics, Governance 1(1) 21–45

Schmidinger T, 2014, Krieg und Revolution in Syrisch-Kurdistan: Analysen und Stimmen aus Rojava (Mandelbaum-Verlag, Vienna)

Sidaway J D, 2003, “Sovereign excesses? Portraying postcolonial sovereigntyscapes” Political Geography 22(2) 157–178

Sidaway J D, Paasche T F, Woon C Y, Keo P, 2014, “Transecting security and space in Phnom Penh” Environment and Planning A 46(5) 1181–1202

Sovacool B, Halfon S, 2007, “Reconstructing Iraq: merging discourses of security and development” Review of International Studies 33(2) 223–243

Stansfield G, 2013, “The unravelling of the post-First World War state system? The Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the transformation of the Middle East” International Affairs 89(2) 259–282

Tripp C, 2013, The Power and the People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge)

Visser R, 2012, “The sectarian master narrative in Iraqi historiography”, in Writing the Modern History of Iraq: Historiographical and Political Challenges Eds J Tejel, P Sluglett, R Bocco, H Bozarslan (Singapore, World Scientific) pp 47–60

Watts N F, 2012, “The role of symbolic capital in protest: state-society relations and the destruction of the Halabja martyers monument in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq” Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East 32(1) 70–85

Willis J M, 2012, Unmaking North and South: Cartographies of the Yemeni Past (Hurst, London)

Wolff S, 2010, “Governing (in) Kirkuk: resolving the status of a disputed territory in post-American Iraq” International Affairs 86(6) 1361–1379

© SAGE Publications Ltd, 2015