

Kamran Mir Hazar

# Stateless Nations and Digital Identity Construction: The Case of the Hazara of Hazaristan Under Microscope



University of South-Eastern Norway  
USN School of Business  
Department of Economics, Marketing and Law  
PO Box 235  
NO-3603 Kongsberg, Norway

<http://www.usn.no>

© 2021 Kamran Mir Hazar

This thesis is worth 30 study points.

## Acknowledgment

It was an incredible journey through master study in Management Information Systems, learning and learning with many exciting challenges. That journey was impossible or difficult in my situation without the University of South-Eastern Norway (USN), its professors, and staff members.

First, I would like to thank Dr. Karen Stendal respectfully for her supervision in this master thesis.

Then, I would like to thank all participants in this study for enlightening me to capture new insight knowledge of the Hazara of Hazaristan.

My special thanks to my family for their support and for their tolerance. They understand my concerns, and I can share my closest moments with them.

# Abstract

This master thesis investigates the importance and challenges of digital identity construction for the stateless nations, takes the qualitative case study as the research approach, and examines the case of the Hazara of Hazaristan to give a novel and in-depth insight into the issue.

First, it looks into background literature to give a relative picture of the current knowledge on identity, logical identity, the identity of self, collective identity, stateless nations and identity, and digital identity. Then, it presents Social Identity Theory and Social Acceleration Theory as theoretical grounds for data collection and analysis. Next is to present the Hazara of Hazaristan as one of the most persecuted peoples facing almost every sort of systematic crime since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Then, the research method, including data collection and analysis, is presented. Next, in the findings, the importance of digital identity construction and the related challenges are reported. The findings indicate that digital identity construction for the Hazara is essential, helping them rejoin and join together, stay connected, and use digital identity to improve their situation, particularly their human rights situation. Digital identity helps them to have a national identification number, statistics, and national census. It enables them to start a national discourse and dialog regarding the right of self-determination, national autonomy, and sovereign state through establishing digital institutions and experiencing digital democracy, including e-vote and e-Dai parliament of e-Hazaristan. The findings also indicate that the process of digital identity construction is not without challenges. Some of those challenges are trust issues, the Afghani deceleration forces, and the digital divide.

Next, this master thesis discusses related issues, including the human rights situation as an underlying pattern that can accelerate or decelerate the process of digital identity construction. This study brings literature, findings, and theories together, arguing that Social Identity Theory at some levels can explain the Hazara situation but has some limits in its cognitive and alternative processes. Keeping the logical formulation of Social Acceleration Theory, the position of acceleration dimensions and deceleration forces should be changed to be employed in the case of digital identity construction for the Hazara. Some possible issues such as security, privacy, and diverse regulations in the possible future e-Hazaristan ecosystem are discussed.

This study may have some practical and research implications encouraging the Hazara to concentrate on new methods of struggle and the researchers to be more future centric rather than explaining what happened.

**Keywords:** Digital Identity, Stateless Nations, Hazara, E-Hazaristan

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1      Introduction .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2      Background Literature.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1    Identity.....	9
2.2    Stateless Nations and Identity .....	11
2.3    Digital Identity.....	13
<b>3      Theoretical Considerations.....</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1    Social Identity Theory .....	15
3.2    Social Acceleration Theory.....	18
<b>4      The Hazara of Hazaristan, the Case.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>5      Research Method .....</b>	<b>22</b>
5.1    A Qualitative Case Study to Investigate Digital Identity .....	22
5.2    Data Collection.....	23
5.3    Data Analysis.....	26
5.4    Limitations .....	27
5.5    Validity .....	27
<b>6      Findings.....</b>	<b>28</b>
6.1    Identity Written on the Hazara Face .....	28
6.2    National Identification Number to Construct Digital Identity .....	30
6.3    Reunion and Connectivity, Digital Identity as an Umbrella .....	31
6.4    Statistic - National Census .....	32
6.5    Empowerment and Human Rights Improvement .....	33
6.6    National Dialogue, Toward National Autonomy and Sovereign State .....	35
6.7    Challenges and Deceleration Forces.....	36
<b>7      Discussion .....</b>	<b>39</b>
7.1    Back to Research Question .....	39
7.2    Revisiting Theories.....	41
7.3    E-Hazaristan Ecosystem, Digital Identity as a Building Block .....	43
<b>8      Conclusion .....</b>	<b>44</b>
8.1    Implications for Practice .....	45
8.2    Implications for Research .....	45

8.3 Future Research .....	46
<b>References.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Appendix A: NSD Assessment .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Appendix B: Interview Guide .....</b>	<b>55</b>

## Table of Figures

Figure 1: Social Identity - Cognitive Processes.....	16
Figure 2:Social Identity - Cognitive Alternatives.....	18
Figure 3: Dimensions and Motors of Acceleration by Rosa (2013, p. 194) .....	19
Figure 4: Deceleration Forces .....	20
Figure 5: Semi-Structured Interview - The Process .....	23
Figure 6: Example of Comment as a Tag in Microsoft Word .....	27
Figure 8: Identity and Critical Position of the Hazara .....	30
Figure 9: Importance of Digital Identity to the Hazara .....	32
Figure 10: Hazara Digital Identity - Challenges .....	37
Figure 11: Hazara Digital Identity: Reconstruction and Construction .....	40
Figure 12: Human Rights and Possible Scenarios of Hazara Digital Identity Construction .....	40

## Table of Tables

Table 1: Semi-structured Interviews – Participants and Interview Duration .....	24
Table 2: Keywords and Hashtags .....	25
Table 3: Three popular websites related to the Hazara .....	26

# 1 Introduction

Digital Identity (DI) is one of the core concepts within information technology and information systems. It enables the interaction of the people with organizations and governments and facilitates and accelerates the social, economic, and political inclusion and empowerment in the information age (Addo & Senyo, 2021; Tamppuu & Masso, 2019). Today, many concepts, objects, and subjects of the non-digital world such as currency, vote, election, democracy, home, citizenship, residency, government, passport, and nation are combined with words virtual, smart, online, digital, and electronic to represent another level of our algorithmic being in which the digital identity is laid as their core component (Bridle, 2016; Calzada, 2018; Martin, Gezer, & Wang, 2019; OpenDemocracy, 2017). However, dozens of stateless nations with millions of people struggling to access their human rights, including having their identity recognized and respected and possibly having a digital identity.

Digital Identity is widely defined as the digital representation of the entities such as individuals and organizations transformed with meaningful and functional attributes to access online and digital services (Seigneur & Maliki, 2009; Sullivan, 2011, 2016). In the case of the digital identity of individuals, depending on its domain and purpose, the entities' uniqueness to establish digital identity can consist of name, date of birth, place of birth, gender, and biometrics (Abelson et al., 1998; Sullivan, 2011, p. 6; 2018). Further, but not limited to, digital identity gets commercial and legal character under organizational and governmental schemes (Sullivan & Stalla-Bourdillon, 2015). An example of digital identity in the context of government and e-government is the National Identification Number (NIN) that connects citizens and governments. Through the development of e-governments from version 1.0 to version 5.0, this connection is getting more and more citizen-centric based on the principles of self-sovereign identity (SSI) and distributed identity that emerged with blockchain technology (Capisizu, 2020; Kowalkiewicz & Dootson, 2019; Nakamura & Suzuki, 2019; Sullivan & Burger, 2019). Today, leading digital governments, including Denmark, Estonia, and Korea, with advanced identity proofing, authentication, and authorization, provide integrated and innovative services such as Estonia's e-residency program (Medaglia, Eaton, Hedman, & Whitley, 2021; Sullivan & Burger, 2017). In this thesis, the digital version of the National Identification Number is the main focus of investigating digital identity. While many state nations and their governments are in the phase of digital transformation, digitization, or establishment of entirely native digital institutions by accessing technology's

benefits and emerged values (DN, 2020; Mellouli, Bouaziz, & Bentahar, 2020), some other peoples and nations as stateless peoples and nations are struggling to establish their fundamental human rights such as the right to live and the right for self-determination (Mir Hazar, 2020d; UNHCR, 2015). Peoples and nations such as the Hazara of Hazaristan, Catalan of Catalonia, Scat of Scotland, Kurd of Kurdistan, Tibetan of Tibet, and Uyghur of East Turkistan are considered Stateless Nations (Mir Hazar, 2020d). An organization called The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) currently has dozens of members from stateless nations. One of the most digitally developed nations, Estonia, also known as the Digital Republic of Estonia, was a founding member of UNPO before gaining its independence (Heller, 2017; UNPO, 2018).

In this paper, peoples with a shared identity, geography, history, culture, and root "continually produced and negotiated through social interaction" (Williams, 2018, p. 29) without state and national sovereignty are considered as stateless nations. The state's absence can be due to a stateless nation's unwillingness to give up and transfer its sovereignty to others or/and the stateless nation is not allowed to practice rights fully, including self-determination (Mir Hazar, 2020d). In some cases, such as the Hazara of Hazaristan, the states who occupied their territories treated them as slaves, second class, or not existing citizens facing everyday systematic crimes (Poets Worldwide, 2017; Zabriskie, 2008). In the case of Uyghur, they do stand in a critical situation between life and death (Dwyer, 2005; D. Tobin, 2020). In the case of stateless nations of Catalonia and Scotland, they had referendums for their independence but are still unsuccessful in gaining it (López & Sanjaume-Calvet, 2020).

Internet and web 2.0 have provided this opportunity for stateless nations to take their resistance to the next level, have more connectivity and interaction, and establish more important push points in their cyber-activism (Mir Hazar, 2020d). In this process, identity, and integration of its notions into technology, for instance, script recognition by the Unicode Consortium, were/are a further manifestation of the stateless nations' resistance. Next, on top of the demonstrated identity, which is considered a human right (Powell, 1998), they could/can build their nationalism toward realizing their self-determination goal, which is also considered another human right (Aghapouri, 2018; Béland & Lecours, 2019; McCorquodale, 1994).

This study investigates the importance of digital identity construction among the stateless nations as a step beyond their cyberactivism and a building block in an ecosystem within the boundaries of an e-country. I do try to find an answer or answers to the research question:

Why is digital identity important to stateless nations, and what challenges might they face in digital identity construction?

Having the qualitative study approach, I put the case of the Hazara of Hazaristan under a microscope. The Hazara people of Hazaristan are one of the most persecuted people in the world, facing systematic crimes since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The attacks on the Hazara are not only on their existence to invade their land Hazaristan but also attacks on their identity.

This study first walks through the related literature, then the research design and data collection methods. Next, it presents the Social Identity Theory and Social Acceleration Theory as possible supporting theoretical ground, but not limited to them, for the next step, data analysis and reporting the findings. Then, the research question, related literature, theories, and findings are brought together to discuss different aspects of the topic. The final chapter is a conclusion, covering the possible practical and research implications and suggestions for future research.

## 2 Background Literature

### 2.1 Identity

Identity is a complex concept with many aspects studied and discussed in several contexts within the social sciences. Based on the fundamental assumptions, those studies mainly focus on the individual and social dimensions from self-psychology to interactionism, still far from a common taxonomy (J. Côté, 2006). With a dynamic nature, the perceptions of identity flow from biology, root, ethnic origin to instances such as culture, language, history, belief, and place, producing and shaping notions formed in social interactions, a dynamic state of negotiation between self and other, while constructing and articulating self, constructing with others, and contributing to form things in common (Brinck, Reddy, & Zahavi, 2017, p. 131; Gaertner, Sedikides, Vevea, & Iuzzini, 2002; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983). Even if not permanent, drawing boundaries seems to be one of the first steps to construct an identity, but as it goes further, isolating it and investigating it becomes complex. Even if we focus on self-identity and collective identity as shared points, there is no general agreement to be considered the starting point of constructing identity. Sometimes it is suggested that self and identity are mental concepts, sometimes social products, and sometimes forces for action (Morf & Mischel, 2012).

### 2.1.1 Logical Identity, and the Identity of Self

The question "Who am I?" that has been asked throughout the history of the human being might be the first step toward self-consciousness, exploring the self, and becoming aware of self. It might need a distinct momentum of self, as early hermeneutic explores the interpretation of self to realize the self. In the distinction, the self finds self-flowing into individual and societal levels influencing each other, a back and forth process (Brinkmann, 2008; Tatum, 2000). The dynamic of crossing the boundaries of self might construct a "cognitive-affective motivated action system" with layers, subsystems, and features such as interpersonal, self-signature, and moving further to self-construction type (Morf & Mischel, 2012). While the self contributes to self-nested elements, including self-concept and identity, not as the final product, as the final is in contrast with the dynamic nature of the self; it is influenced by many factors, including the others' self and self-surroundings (Morf & Mischel, 2012; Tatum, 2000). From another angle, the identity process with nested elements and factors within the process itself or outside contributes to personality development. We might discover nested processes and levels toward personality development, from traits, motivational, social-cognitive, and developmental processes to narrative Identity, self-defining, and meaning-making (Lilgendaal, 2015, pp. 490–507) where we meet the public and private aspects of self. It might be the result of self-awareness (Carver, 2003, pp. 179-196), a flow within one complexity and another complexity, and perhaps from unconscious to conscious (Bernet, 2002) or the other way around.

The self, in turn, contributes to some information of I to be presented, recognized, and broadcasted (Manago, 2015, pp. 508-524) as personal identity. To what stand and how the self, the biology, the mentality, or the society contribute to the formation of I and producing information about I, have been studied from different aspects, viewpoints, and philosophical grounds, still questioning "Who am I?", and how to define it (Waterman, 2015, pp. 195-209). It seems naturally unable to achieve a common taxonomy, as Nietzsche (1974, p. 5) explains philosophy as "an interpretation of the body and a misunderstanding of the body,"; as Heidegger (2002, pp. 23-74) view on the law of identity within the logic opens a discourse on "the usual formulation of the principle of identity  $A = A$ ," and as Jacques Derrida's deconstruction discourse is pointing out differences and traces of traces (Cilliers, 2016, pp. 193-210).

From whatever angle and level, we look at identity as the necessity of the logic, an invention, reinvention, construction, or deconstruction point of the logic, or as a product, the self remains as

one part of the equation. When we return to digital identity and its logical construction, still, we expect A to be equal to A and not B.

### 2.1.2 Collective Identity

The momentum of distinction, the process of identity construction and deconstruction or the other way around in the metaphysical level, create a space, room, and the possibility of belonging and belonging together (Griffiths, 2017; Heidegger, 2002), to the self of other that are not necessarily contradiction or reflection of the related originated discourses. However, they connect us later or within their process to a broader space, to the society where the self becomes aware of self (Carver, 2003), and may further in one direction within the technology locate, for instance, in the Scandinavian tradition of participatory design and its possible virtues (Steen, 2013). The self belongs to the plural self, family, friends, community, and surroundings that bind them together and takes the metaphysical aspects of identity to another level. Even if we consider individualism, its formulation and possible contradiction based on inclusion relate to belongingness (Guibernau i Berdún, 2013, pp. 2-6). Groupness and belongingness with their psychological aspects contribute to the formation and deformation of symbols, myths, languages, folklore, history, and other human development phenomena (Cornips & de Rooij, 2018, pp. 17-27; Jaspers, 2018). The identity formed based on the psychology of belonging can go further to form national identities and even borders and contribute to concepts and social movements such as human rights, globalization, feminism, and socialism as emotional attachments, or the choice raised by self-awareness and self-identity (Carolissen, 2012; Guibernau i Berdún, 2013, pp. 26-49; Meyers, 2007).

Today, there are hundreds of languages, state, and stateless nations, religions with different types of gods, and many groups formed around shared political, cultural, and social interests and instruments (Ausloos & Petroni, 2007; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; T. D. Hall & Nagel, 2007).

Together with the exclusion, the attached instruments also contribute to racism and force others into socially marginalized locations as outsiders and outgroups, as stateless people and stateless nations. Depending on the situation of the victims and dominant groups, the impacts vary from life and death to living conditions and health (Coutin, 1999; Dunn, Forrest, Burnley, & McDonald, 2004; S. Hall, 2012, pp. 41-61; Mir Hazar, 2020a; Zabriskie, 2008).

## 2.2 Stateless Nations and Identity

Sometimes it is a paradoxical situation, as "there are more nations than states," and some of the existed states can be described as nationless states as one or more nations such as the Hazara and Uyghur within the states face systematic crimes, including genocide and forced displacement (Fong, 2019; Nimni, 2011, p. 55). The perception that people who hold citizenship also hold a national identity based on their citizenship has been challenged as "although all nations have a national identity, not all of them have a state of their own" (Guibernau, 2004). The Rohingya are also examples of people and nations without a national identity as their citizenship is denied and not recognized as citizens (Cheesman, 2017). "According to the United Nations, only about 3 percent of the world's recognized ethnic and nationality groups have achieved statehood. Though an unprecedented number of new states have emerged since 1990, the existing world order remains conservative in the prerequisites for recognizing new states" (Minahan, 2016, p. 17). Being a stateless nation from one aspect means carrying an identity or identities that are often denied and not treated equally—as such, and as the other systematic crimes, protecting and promoting the identity is considered an essential part of the stateless nations' resistance. Homeland, language, culture, history, statelessness, and the hope to gain self-determination are among the factors that hold them together and tie them around Identity (Nimni, 2011; Williams, 2018). Those efforts increase when they are in a safer place, and their diaspora consciousness emerges (Hess, 2009, p. 6). Even in exile for many, one of the main factors to promote identity is the homeland, the historic territory such as Hazaristan, Catalonia, Tibet, East Turkestan, South Turkestan, Kurdistan, and Balochistan (Bernal, 2006; Guibernau, 2004; Ibrahimi, 2012; Laguerre, 2020; Mir Hazar, 2020a; Tsavkko Garcia, 2018).

In Catalonia, one of the main focuses was/is working on the Catalan language, making it professional, encouraging people to learn, read, and write in Catalan. They also accelerate activities such as industrial innovations as a part of the Catalan Identity within a larger community (Valentines-Álvarez, 2018). Like many other stateless nations, the Catalans also used mass media for publicity of their Identity (Almiron, Narberhaus Martínez, & Mauri, 2016). Several studies indicate that most people in Catalonia, Scotland, and Wales prefer to have their own identities and be recognized as Catalan, Scottish, and Welsh rather than Spanish and British. The Catalans and the Scots have held referendums for their independence but still unsuccessful in gaining it (C. Côté, 2016; López & Sanjaume-Calvet, 2020; Nagel, 2004).

In the case of Tibetan, the diasporas work actively to form an exiled Tibet government and administration with members across the globe, a de facto formed based on the Tibetan identity

and related territory. They have a green book and blue book issued for the citizens of Tibet to hold them together, and each becomes an ambassador representing Tibet and Tibetan (Brox, 2012; Falcone & Wangchuk, 2008; McConnell, 2009, 2013). The Uyghurs of East Turkestan are also working hard to raise awareness in Western countries and among the Uyghurs by emphasizing their traditions, language, history in direct relation with Uyghur Identity (Klimeš, 2015; Newby, 1996; NurMuhammad, Horst, Papoutsaki, & Dodson, 2016).

After decades, almost more than a century facing systematic crimes, isolation, and marginalization, the Hazara of Hazaristan are moving forward to reconstruct their identity. For decades, the dominant groups and the ethnocratic and clerical regimes were pushing them back by destroying and falsifying their identity; today, there are writing their history, promoting their folklore, remembering their traditions, and trying to connect them to the modern world (Mir Hazar, 2017, 2020d; Poets Worldwide, 2017).

Identity is an important issue among almost all stateless nations. Today, it is hard to find a Kurd to call him/herself someone from Iraq but Kurdistan. Today, geopolitical discourses around the region the Kurds reside are formulated with the existence of Kurdistan, and it is difficult or impossible to ignore the Kurdish identity, particularly after the 2017's independence referendum (Berwari & Ambrosio, 2008; Culcasi, 2006; King, 2013; Mustafa, 2020). In the case of Rohingya, their diasporas have contributed to the Unicode of the Rohingya language and provided a platform for the registration of Rohingya refugees using blockchain technology (Abraham & Jaehn, 2019).

As we go deep into literature, we can see that identity plays a significant role in the world of stateless nations, their activity, and their resistance to establishing their rights. Technology, and particularly the internet, provide them a better opportunity to raise their voice, accelerating their goals through cyberactivism and promoting their Identity (Abraham & Jaehn, 2019; Aghapouri, 2018; Belton, 2010; Mir Hazar, 2020d).

## 2.3 Digital Identity

Although the stateless nations are actively involved in cyberspace, and some studies considered their activities as the formation of the digital/cyber/virtual nation (Aghapouri, 2018; Bakker, 2001; Bernal, 2006; Candan & Hunger, 2008), only a few pointed out digital identity construction among the stateless nations. Those highlighted activities are, for instance, running web TV, engaging and interacting in social media are mainly studied from political and cultural perspectives and can be

considered cyberactivism rather than forming a digital nation using digital identity as one of the main components (Anderson, 2019; McCaughey & Ayers, 2013; Mir Hazar, 2020d). Some studies are concentrated on the Rohingya project in the refugees and humanitarian context, not particularly Rohingya as a stateless nation (Abraham & Jaehn, 2019; Rohingya Project, 2017). On the official website of the Rohingya Project (2017), it is announced that the services they provide include R-ID, R-COIN, R-Historical Archive, and R-Academy. There is no future technical information about the project except the self-sovereign Identity approach. Some research reports published on its official website, including two assessments of a pilot project and digital solution, indicate that R-coin is on the Ethereum network (Rohingya Project, 2017).

Outside of the context of the stateless nations, in other contexts such as state nations, e-governance, organizational development, human development, and human rights, many studies investigated the digital identity from different aspects, including technical aspects and its security privacy and management dimensions. One of the most emerging topics within digital identity and identity management processes, including identification, authentication, and authorization, is the move from the silo and federated models to a more user/citizen-centric and particularly the self-sovereign Identity approach (Baars, 2016; Ferdous, Chowdhury, & Alassafi, 2019; A. Tobin & Reed, 2016) which seems to have enormous implications for the stateless nations. Looking at the history of digital governance and the change in public management, we can track the change from centralized authority (Margetts, 2009, pp. 119-131) to inclusion, distribution, and self-autonomic identity approach aligned with the goals of the stateless nations conjoining self-sovereign identity with self-determination goal (McConnell, 2009; Naik & Jenkins, 2020a; The Pioneers of the Hazaristan Independence Movement, 2021). An organization called ID2020 (2018) in its Alliance Manifesto says: "For some, including refugees, the stateless, and other marginalized groups, reliance on national identification systems isn't possible. This may be due to exclusion, inaccessibility, or risk, or because the credentials they do hold are not broadly recognized. While we support efforts to expand access to national identity programs, we believe it is imperative to complement such efforts by providing an alternative to individuals lacking safe and reliable access to state-based systems".

By concentrating on the principles of the self-sovereign identity and the goals and the situation of the stateless nations, it is possible to identify a typical pattern. For instance, the principle of sovereignty aligns with the goals of self-governing and self-determination. The principle of the user's existence aligns with the return of self to self, identity to self, to be seen and recognized, and

not to be ignored. The decentralization principle fits the scattered stateless nations refugees in their own homes and refugees outside (Naik & Jenkins, 2020a, 2020b). The move from identity management models such as a silo, federation, centralized federation, and distributed federation has been realized by blockchain technology (Baars, 2016; Ferdous et al., 2019). While silo and federated models still have their use cases, self-sovereign identity as an emerging topic of investigation, development, and deployment may shift the paradigm of digital identity construction and management, in which the stateless nations can grab it (Kubach, Schunck, Sellung, & Roßnagel, 2020; Toth & Anderson-Priddy, 2019; Zwitter, Gstrein, & Yap, 2020).

### 3 Theoretical Considerations

This chapter presents two theories employed in this study "as part of an interactive process of data collection and analysis" (Walsham, 1995) to gain a deeper insight into the case. The first theory is Social Identity Theory, and the second one is the Social Acceleration theory.

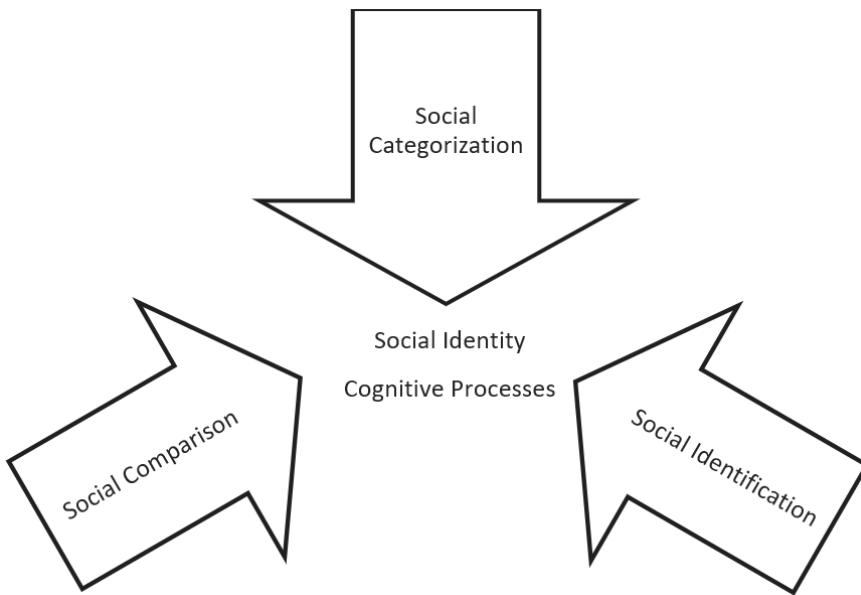
#### 3.1 Social Identity Theory

People are not just individuals carrying only personal identity. They are members of society attached to groups and social locations. Social Identity Theory (SIT), as a theoretical ground in the social and "collective psychology of intergroup attitudes, produced within a social structure of intergroup relationships and mediated by people's collective definition, perception, and understanding of those relationships" (J. C. Turner & Reynolds, 2010). SIT conceptualizes a group "as a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership of it" (Tajfel, Turner, Austin, & Worchel, 1979, pp. 56-65).

Based on the notions of ingroup and outgroup, SIT concentrates on individuals and their self-conception as group members and "addresses phenomena such as prejudice, discrimination, ethnocentrism, stereotyping, intergroup conflict, conformity, normative behavior, group polarization, crowd behavior, organizational behavior, leadership, deviance, and group cohesiveness" (Hogg, 2006, pp. 111-136).

SIT does not focus on individual prejudices, interpersonal interaction, and reductionism nor the real conflict of group interests suggested by Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGCT) (Sherif, 1958).

SIT's focus is intergroup cognitive processes involved in the intergroup conflict (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971).



*Figure 1: Social Identity - Cognitive Processes*

SIT argues that social-psychological processes toward establishing group identities with ingroup favoritism and self-esteem as drivers are involved in acts such as racism and social conflicts (J. C. Turner, 1978). Those cognitive processes include social categorization, social comparison, and social identification (Tajfel et al., 1979; J. C. Turner & Reynolds, 2010).

### 3.1.1 Cognitive Processes

#### 3.1.1.1 *Social Categorization*

According to SIT, intergroup behavior does not exist without categorization. People divide themselves into ingroup and outgroup, into us and them (Tajfel et al., 1971). They "defined themselves in terms of social categorizations that provided them with social identities." Self-interest and individual behavior become less effective than group identities when the conditions are in place (J. C. Turner & Reynolds, 2010). It is a process that can end the depersonalization of both ingroup and outgroup members (Hogg, 2006, pp. 111-136).

The related studies confirm that in pure cognitive groups and cognitive mechanisms, ingroup, and outgroup categorization is possible with anonymous others (J. C. Turner, 1984, pp. 518-538) when there is "neither a conflict nor previously existing hostility between the groups, no social

interaction between the subject and nor any rational link between economic self-interest and the strategy of ingroup favoritism" (Tajfel et al., 1979).

From SIT perspective, some social categorization outcomes are ethnocentrism, discrimination, and racism (Tajfel et al., 1971; J. C. Turner, 1978).

### *3.1.1.2 Social Identification*

According to SIT, group formation is a matter of social identification, where group members adept the group's identity. From SIT perspective, social identity may be defined as "the sum total of a person's social identifications where the latter represent socially significant social categorizations internalized as aspects of the self-concept" (J. C. Turner, 1984, pp. 526-527). Those identifications, for instance, can be gender, nationality, ethnicity, and religion. "People became a group not insofar as they developed positive interpersonal attitudes on the basis of mutual need satisfaction but insofar as they defined themselves in terms of a shared social category membership. A shared social identity emerged on the basis of cognitive criteria such as shared fate, shared situation, or shared attributes (positive or negative)" (J. C. Turner & Reynolds, 2010).

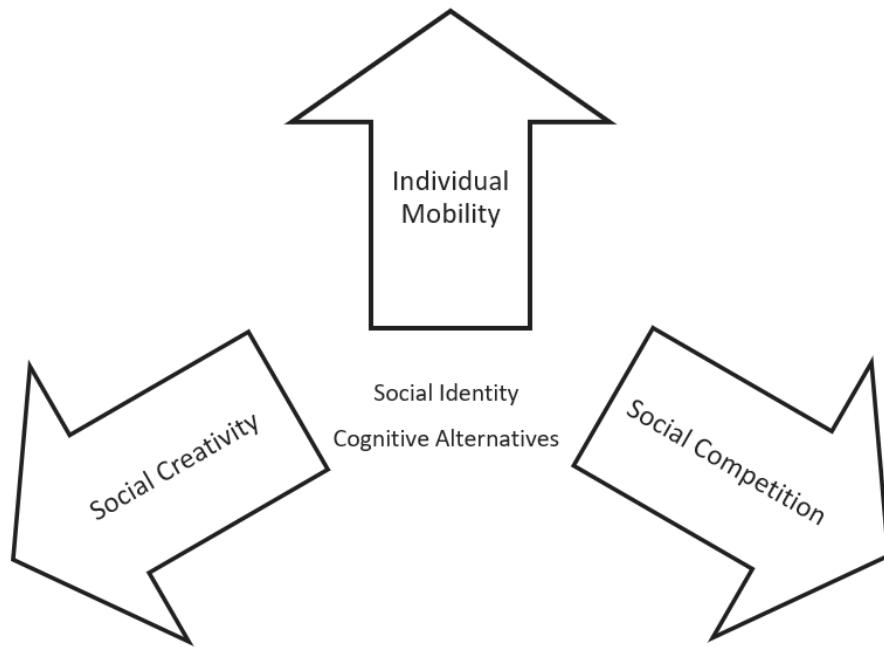
### *3.1.1.3 Social Comparison*

When a group has formed, and its members established social identity based on the cognitive criteria, membership, and prototypicality, the social comparison emerges as a part of the intergroup relationship and as another cognitive process or tool (Hogg, 2006) for segmentation, classification, and order of the "social environment." Social comparison enables a link between social identity and competition; it enables social locations and groups, a "system of self-orientation for self-reference" (Tajfel et al., 1979, p. 59; J. C. Turner, 1975), tending to over others, "define one's group positively in order to evaluate oneself favorably" (J. C. Turner, 1984, pp. 518-538).

## **3.1.2 Cognitive Alternatives**

Social comparison can create hierarchy and "dominant/high status and the subordinate/ low status" (J. C. Turner & Reynolds, 2010). As such, group members with low status and "inferiority as stable and legitimate and could not join the high-status group as an individual" may be motivated to bring positive changes to their status (J. C. Turner & Reynolds, 2010).

According to SIT, low-status and marginal members take strategic "cognitive alternatives" such as individual mobility, social competition, and social creativity to change and improve their social identity (Hogg, 2006, pp. 111-136; J. C. Turner & Reynolds, 2010).



*Figure 2:Social Identity - Cognitive Alternatives*

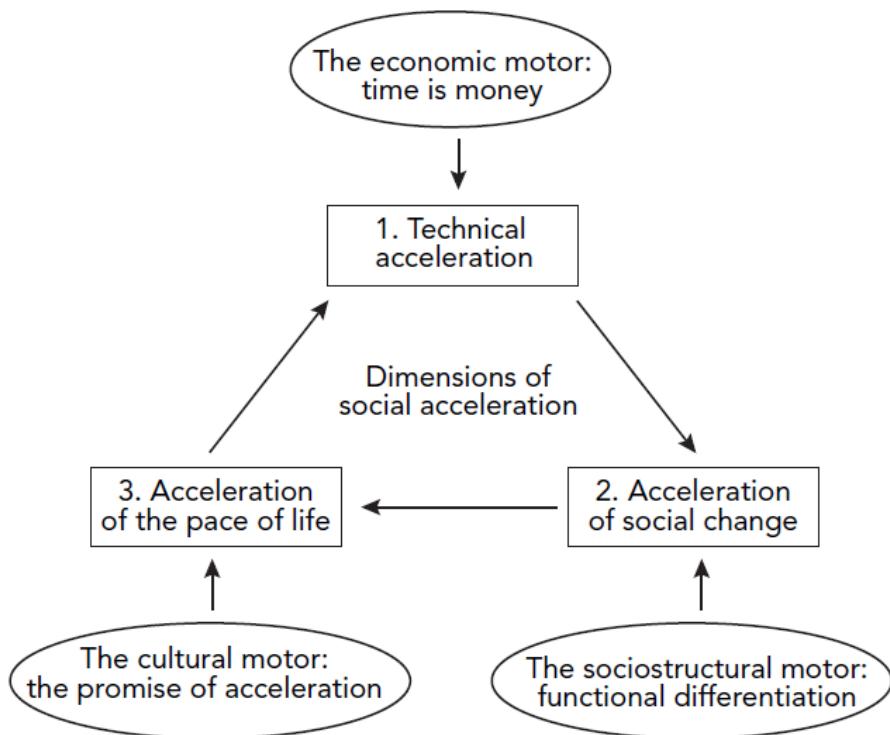
## 3.2 Social Acceleration Theory

The primary context of the Social Acceleration Theory (SAT) is high-speed, accelerating, and modern western societies. The theory is proposed by Rosa (2003, 2013) to "adequately understand the nature and character of modernity and the logic of its structural and cultural development" by adding a temporal perspective of analysis (Rosa, 2003). The concept of acceleration in western acceleration societies can be applied to many phenomena such as computing and transportation, measurable by "the increase in quantity per unit of time (or, logically equivalent, as a reduction of the amount of time per fixed quantity)" (Rosa, 2013, pp. 65-66).

### 3.2.1 Paradoxes, Dimensions, and Motors

SAT emphasizes the links between the temporal dimensions of modernization's processes and their "paradoxical flip sides," on top of Durkheim, Weber, Simmel, and Marx's discourses. From social structure to differentiation with disintegration paradox (J. H. Turner, 1981), from culture to rationalization with the iron cage paradox (Scaff, 1989), from personality to individualization with mass culture paradox (Simmel, 1971), and from stance to nature to domestication with

environmental disaster paradox (Cole, 1993), those flip sides are evident of acceleration (Rosa, 2003). According to the proposed SAT, social acceleration has three dimensions and categories, including technical acceleration, the acceleration of social change, and the acceleration of the pace of life with driving motors, including the economic motor, cultural motor, and structural motor (Rosa, 2003; 2013, pp. 63-93).

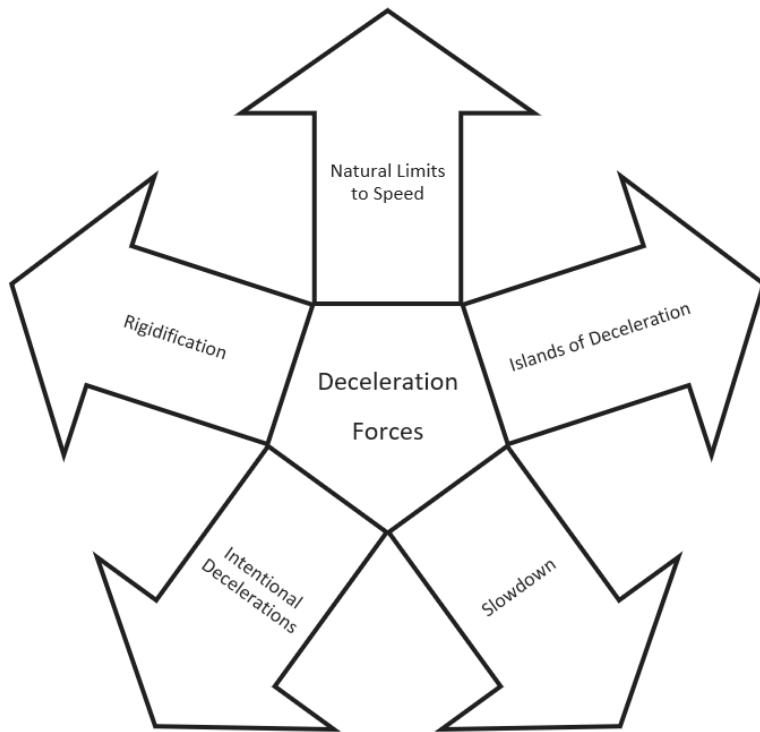


*Figure 3: Dimensions and Motors of Acceleration by Rosa (2013, p. 194)*

### 3.2.2 Deceleration Forces

SAT also characterizes five categories of phenomena and inertia that resist or slow down the processes of acceleration and the dynamics of acceleration. Those categories include, first, the natural limits to speed, which "cannot be accelerated by the principle," including "the most physical processes, like the speed of perception and processing in our brains and bodies, or the time it takes for most natural resources to reproduce" (Rosa, 2003). The second category of inertia is the islands of deceleration, where "both territorial and social niches or oases of deceleration have until now been partly or entirely left out of the accelerating processes of modernization" (Rosa, 2013, p. 83). The third one is the slowdown phenomenon (for instance, traffic jams) as an

"unintended consequence of acceleration and dynamization. This frequently entails dysfunctional and pathological forms of deceleration" (Rosa, 2003; 2013, pp. 80-90).



*Figure 4: Deceleration Forces*

The fourth category relates to intentional decelerations with two forms. The first form is deceleration as an ideology such as "ideological movements against modern acceleration and its effects" (Rosa, 2003; 2013, pp. 80-90). The second form is slowdown as a strategy of acceleration, as "limited or temporary forms of deceleration which aim at preserving the capacity to function and further accelerate within acceleratory systems" (Rosa, 2003; 2013, pp. 80-90). The fifth category of inertia is cultural and structural rigidification or crystallization with perceptions such as the end of history and impossible to have real change (Rosa, 2003; 2013, pp. 80-90).

## 4 The Hazara of Hazaristan, the Case

With Asian roots and almond eyes, the Hazara were the largest ethnic group in their country before the Afghan/Pashtun tribes' attacks and massacring more than 50% (Minority Rights, 2015). The borders of the Hazara territory, known as Hazaristan, the land of Dai-s, were "in one direction from Kandahar in the south to Mazar-i-Sharif in the north and another direction from Kabul in the east to Herat in the west" (Bellew, 1880, pp. 113-117). Backed by British colonial officers, as the attacks from northern parts of British India increased and the Hazara Dais were invaded by Afghans

(Mir Hazar, 2020a; Poets Worldwide, 2017; Temirkhanov, 1980, pp. 259-260), the name of Afghanistan appeared on the maps (Vivien de St Martin, 1825). According to historians and the day's newspapers, thousands of the Hazara captives, including women and children, were also sold as slaves (Poets Worldwide, 2017, p. 257; Temirkhanov, 1980; Thames Star, 1892; Waikato Times, 1892); the most parts of invaded Dais were distributed among the attackers, and many Hazara forced to work on their own lands for the invaders (Katib Hazārah, 2016, p. 969; Temirkhanov, 1980, pp. 265-266).

The "entire 20<sup>th</sup>-century history has been marked by killings of Hazara and systematic discrimination against them" (Poets Worldwide, 2017, p. 257). For instance, in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Afghan Taliban massacred thousands of the Hazara in Mazar-i-Sharif, Yakawlang, Bamyan, and Koudiposht (Human Rights Watch, 1998; Poets Worldwide, 2017). The main policy of the "Taliban's ethnocratic and clerical regime" was/is to force other ethnic groups such as the Uzbek, Tajik, and Turkmen out to Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan and the Hazara to the graveyard (Mir Hazar, 2020b; Zabriskie, 2008). Falsifying and destroying the Hazara history, culture and identity was another parallel plan that has been flowed besides other systematic crimes. For instance, in 2001, the "Taliban destroyed the ancient Buddha sculptures of Bamyan, which were principal symbols of Hazara history and culture and one of the most popular masterpieces of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity" (Human Rights Watch, 1998; Poets Worldwide, 2017).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Hazara resistance tried harder to change their human rights situation by improving education, gender equality, and establishing civil rights movements. However, the systematic crimes against them did not end. The Taliban and other fundamental ethnocratic and clerical groups are still targeting, abducting, and beheading them, and the Afghani regimes isolate their protests and legalize discrimination against them. "For instance, in July 2016, the Hazara Enlightenment Movement's peaceful protest targeted by the Taliban-Daesh, after the regime forcefully isolates the rally in one part of Kabul, which in addition to the massacre, as the president of PEN International, Jennifer Clement, explains, it should also be considered censorship (Mir Hazar, 2020b, 2020c; Poets Worldwide, 2017)".

In the era of the internet and social media, identity has been one of the hottest topics among non-Afghans/Pashtuns, including the Hazara (Lewis, 2011). Many of them question not only Afghan as their national identity and Afghanistan as the name of their country, but also the issue of majority and minority, arguing that the dominant group that has power for decades broadcast false

information in the absence of a comprehensive census and based on unreliable data and narration (Raofi, 2018).

In 2021, a group of Hazara intellectuals under The Pioneers of the Hazaristan Independence Movement (2021) released the Charter of Hazaristan. In the third article of this charter under chapter one, one of the goals is to "form a Digital Hazaristan and establish high security and privacy-protected digital identity along with issuing a national identification number and conducting a census of Hazaristan citizens."

## 5 Research Method

The chapter covers the research method, including the research approach and design, data collection, the recruitment process, data analysis, limitations, and issues related to the validity of the research.

To comply with data protection legislation regarding the processing of personal data, including the data collection, storing, and sharing in this research project for Master Thesis Management Information Systems, the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) was notified. NSD assessed the project with reference number 571772 (Appendix A).

### 5.1 A Qualitative Case Study to Investigate Digital Identity

Back to the research question, the approach taken in this study is a qualitative case study as a vehicle to explore the flow, the dynamic, and the complexity of identity and the construction of its digital representation among the stateless nations at individual and social levels using a variety of data sources (Walsham, 1995). The topic and the research question in this study can fit the characteristics of the qualitative study, including researcher as an instrument, inductive logic, participants' meanings, emergent design, holistic account, and reflexivity (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, pp. 180-199).

As we see within the literature and theories, we deal with layered and dynamic phenomena with many dimensions, sometimes very abstract, difficult to make them operational, sometimes very emotional, very personal, and at the same time connected to not only the other members of the same scattered stateless nation and their situation but other peoples and nations, dragged into different fields from psychology to social and political sciences. Taking only one or a few aspects to make them investigable and measurable with variables and coming up with numerical data may not reveal the importance of digital identity and its construction challenges for stateless nations.

To understand the importance of digital identity for stateless nations, we need to listen to them and have their views and perspectives. We need to know what happened to their identity, what is happening, and what might happen when using technology to construct their digital identity (Kaplan & Maxwell, 2005).

There are many similarities, such as statelessness itself among the stateless nations. However, on the other hand, each stateless nation can be unique and extreme in its context, difficult that one stateless nation represents the other instances, and it requires in-depth and detailed study (Matthews & Ross, 2014, pp. 221-233). That is why in this study, the focus among dozens of stateless nations is on one nation, the Hazara of Hazaristan.

## 5.2 Data Collection

The primary source of data collected in this study is semi-structured interviews. Some related websites and public social media posts, groups, and pages were also searched to capture any related data.

### 5.2.1 Semi-Structured Interview

To be more flexible for new explanations and exploration and the emerge of new possible angles (Matthews & Ross, 2014, pp. 221-233), the interviews in this study were semi-structured.

First, an interview guide was developed to ensure all possible related aspects are covered during the interviews (Appendix B). The interview guide contains an introduction about the research, the rights of the participants, privacy rights, the right to withdraw the consent, the security of the information, and permission to start recording. The body of the interview guide contains a set of questions related to identity, the importance of digital identity, and the challenges. The interview guide has an ending section, informing the participant about stopping the record, re-informing about the participant's rights, and questioning if the participant has any consideration.



*Figure 5: Semi-Structured Interview - The Process*

Next, an information letter containing information about the project, criteria, the rights of the participants, including privacy and consent withdrawal rights, responsible persons and parties, and contact information followed by a consent form was prepared.

In the next step, the potential participants based on the following criteria in the personal network were listed, and finally, contacted fourteen interviews (Table 1):

- Being a member of the Hazara indigenous and stateless nation
- Being an active member of the Hazara
- Knowing the Hazara history and contemporary issues
- Have experiences within the research topic
- Having an opinion about the research topic

The two first interviews were like the pilot interviews, and the two last ones to see if there are more data to be collected from interviews.

Participants of Semi-structured Interviews and Duration					
Participants \ Info	Gender	Education Level	Continent	Interview (HMS)	
Interviewee 1	Female	Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.)	Europe	01:30:29	
Interviewee 2	Female	Master's Degree	Asia	01:20:13	
Interviewee 3	Female	Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.)	North America	01:30:51	
Interviewee 4	Male	Master's Degree	Europe	01:20:56	
Interviewee 5	Male	Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.)	Europe	01:56:12	
Interviewee 6	Female	Master's Degree	North America	00:47:48	
Interviewee 7	Male	Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.)	Europe	01:19:28	
Interviewee 8	Male	Master's Degree	Asia	01:28:47	
Interviewee 9	Male	Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.)	Europe	01:40:28	
Interviewee 10	Male	Bachelor's Degree	Asia	01:46:43	
Interviewee 11	Male	No Official Degree	Europe	01:35:55	
Interviewee 12	Female	Master's Degree	Asia	01:29:57	
Interviewee 13	Male	Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.)	North America	01:53:42	
Interviewee 14	Female	Bachelor's Degree	Europe	00:59:33	

*Table 1: Semi-structured Interviews – Participants and Interview Duration*

All participants have signed the consent form digitally before conducting the interviews. Due to the outbreak of Covid-19 and the participants' geographical locations, the interviews were contacted online using the education account of the University of South-Eastern Norway in Zoom.

All interviews are recorded with the permission of participants, and later they were transcribed and anonymized for data analysis and future research.

Two interviews were conducted in English and the rest in the native language of the Hazara. The expected time for each interview was first approximately 30-60 minutes, but the average time of each recorded interview is about 01:44 hours. The entire recorded interview is 20+ hours. The off-record parts, including the introduction and ending, are about 05-10 minutes.

The role of the researcher was not to be engaged and push opinion in the dialogue. The interviewees could talk, and the researcher wanted to bring some more questions from the answers and ensure that the topics in the interview guide are covered. From 20+ hours of interviews, the average engagement of the researcher is about ten percent. All interviewees had their cameras on, and there was only about five minutes break between two interviews. During the data collection and data analysis process, backups of the data have been taken on the local computer, cloud storage, and external storage.

### 5.2.2 Googling, Websites, and Social media

Besides the semi-structured interviews, several keywords/hashtags were developed and identified in English and the native language of the Hazara to google and search within three popular websites that cover the issues related to the Hazara as well as public pages and groups in social media, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Table 2).

Keywords and Hashtags		
Language No.	English	Hazaragi/Dari/Persian
1	Hazara Identity	هويت هزاره
2	Hazaragi Identity	هويت هزاره گي
3	Hazara Digital Identity	هويت ديجيتالي هزاره
4	Hazaristan Identity	هويت هزارستان
5	Hazaristan Digital Identity	هويت ديجيتالي هزارستان
6	E-Hazaristan	هزارستان الکترونيکي
7	Digital Hazaristan	هزارستان ديجيتالي

Table 2: Keywords and Hashtags

Although the search returned no data related to digital identity, this step was taken to improve the validity of the data within the extreme and unique case of study and reduce any possible gap (Matthews & Ross, 2014, pp. 221-233).

The primary domain names of those three websites are registered in 1998, 2003, and 2010 (Table 3).

Websites			
No.	Name	URL	Registration Year
1	Kabul Press	www.kabulpress.org www.kabulmobile.com	2003 2012
1	Hazara International	www.hazarainternational.com www.hazarapeople.com	2019 2010
3	Hazara.net	www.hazara.net	1998

*Table 3: Three popular websites related to the Hazara*

### 5.3 Data Analysis

While having the interpretive approach, the data analysis started with conducting the interviews, taking notes, finding similar patterns with previous interviews and other data, capturing links to theories, and capturing new important issues related and unrelated to the research topic question. In this content analysis, the logical approach was not only to be limited to the theories but also inductive to capture patterns, segments, and categories from the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, pp. 180-199; Patton, 2015, pp. 541-552).

The next phase of data analysis was during the transcribing of the interviews. The first plan was to use NVIVO for qualitative data analysis, but since it does not support the native language of the Hazara (RTL), that Microsoft Word and Excel have been used.

In Microsoft Word, the data is segmented and categorized with comments as tags. It was tried to find any possible segment and sub-segment and links between them. Some example tags are the cognitive processes and cognitive alternatives from Social Identity Theory, acceleration dimensions, and deceleration forces from Social Acceleration Theory, and tags such as trust, reunion, connectivity, statistic, empowerment, e-Vote/e-democracy, and digital institutions from data.

من موافق هستم که ما هزاره ها باید در ارابطه کار اساسی خواهد بود اما وجودش بنظر از مه یک نیاز هست. برای م هزاره در هر جای دنیا که هست مثلای که مشخص داشت که میزني تمام معلومات بیرون می آید ، اگر هر فرد هزاره که داخل آن تمام اطلاعات یک فرد موجود باشه ، اگر چه ا خیلی دقیق داره اما خوب مسلم شروع بد نیست | شروع ما می توانیم

اگر ما یک بانک اطلاعاتی مشخصی برای هزاره ها داشته می تواند مبنای یک دولت دیجیتال هزارستان شود ، میدانید تعداد چی تعداد مرد هستند چه تعداد زن هستن، د چه تعداد ک هستند در چه سنینی هستند، بعد چه مقدار آن ها کار می کنند باز نشسته هستند، چه مقدار آن ها درآمد دارند ، درآمدهای تحصیلات ، چه تعداد داکتر ما داریم ، در چه زمینه ها ماد خواهیم داشت . احتمالاً این اتفاق رخواسته نداشت از نظر همان حامی ها

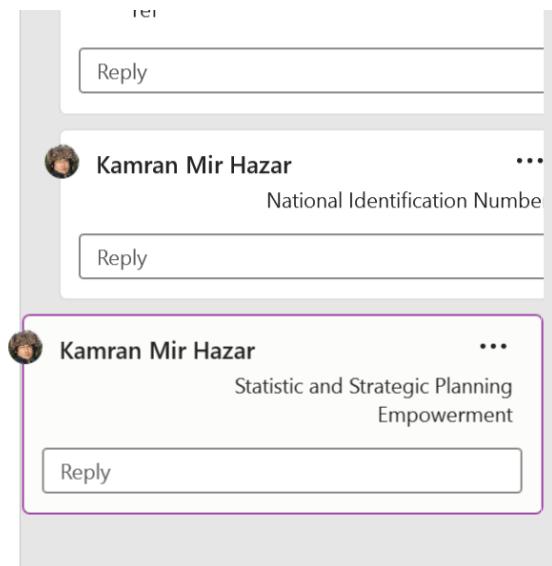


Figure 6: Example of Comment as a Tag in Microsoft Word

The next step was to refine them and prepare to report the findings.

## 5.4 Limitations

There were some limitations during data collection, data analysis as well as the whole research project. The first limitation was the time limit—the whole research project needed to be done in a few months of a semester. Although most of the communications, including corresponding with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD), contacting interviewees, taking consents, and conducting interviews, were digital through the internet, the outbreak of COVID-19 made the process slower than expected.

There could also be more interviewees and more people to talk about the topic. Although the current interviewees are actively engaged in the Hazara issues and have different opinions about the research topic, more people might see the topic from different angles and perspectives.

Another limitation was digital interviews. Although technology is a part of our life and all interviewees have turned the camera on, it was possible to capture more data in the traditional interview setting, including body language data.

## 5.5 Validity

As mentioned in the previous chapters, identity and digital identity are complex issues. Although there are many similarities, such as statelessness among the stateless nations, each has its

uniqueness. The Catalans, the Hazara, the Scots, the Uyghur, and the other stateless nations have their unique identity, and if not impossible, it is hard to generalize one case.

Within the context of the case, the topic is relatively new, and there are not many sources of data to collect and analyze. The interviews for this study and a few articles and posts on social media might be the first data related to the case.

## 6 Findings

This chapter presents the findings regarding the Hazara identity, the importance of digital identity to them, and the challenges they might face throughout digital identity construction. First, it explores the identity at personal and collective levels and Hazaristan or Hazaristani level as possibly national identity. Next is the importance of digital identity for the Hazara, including digital identity to cross the boundaries and bring the Hazara together, digital identity to empower them, to improve their human rights situation and end their marginalization process, as well as the digital identity to be a start point for national dialogue, establishing digital institutions and democratizing Hazaristan, all toward a sovereign state and national autonomy.

Next, this chapter presents Hazara's challenges, such as Afghani deceleration forces, religion, digital divide, the issues related to trust, and immigration generations that might disconnect from the Hazara identity and disappear into new dominant identities.

The quotations presented in this chapter are translated from the native language of the Hazara (Hazaragi/Dari/Persian), and rather than translating word by word, the concept and means are presented.

### 6.1 Identity Written on the Hazara Face

The Hazara identity consists of their personal identities and the common root, history, culture, and geography of Hazaristan. "I am an individual, having a distinct identity as Hazara. I have a language different than other languages. I have different myths and folklore. So, I am an individual with a distinct identity that, together with other individual Hazara and their identities, forms the collective identity of the Hazara linked to a place called Hazaristan" Interviewee 5).

While the Hazara ethnic group is the main people carrying the Hazara identity, the Hazara identity does not necessarily link a person or a group of people to one ethnic group. "The Hazara identity had cultural and linguistic capacities together with historical narratives and values to be considered

the national identity for people with different ethnic backgrounds. Hazara is an ethnic group and at the same time a Hazara nation, a nation without a state" (Interviewee 8).

Identity is a complex issue for the Hazara at both personal and collective levels impacting each other intensely and impacting the Hazara life directly, putting them in a critical position. "The Hazara did not have power in the last three centuries. The Pashtun rulers have killed many of them, forcefully displaced many of them, and invaded their lands" (Interviewee 10).

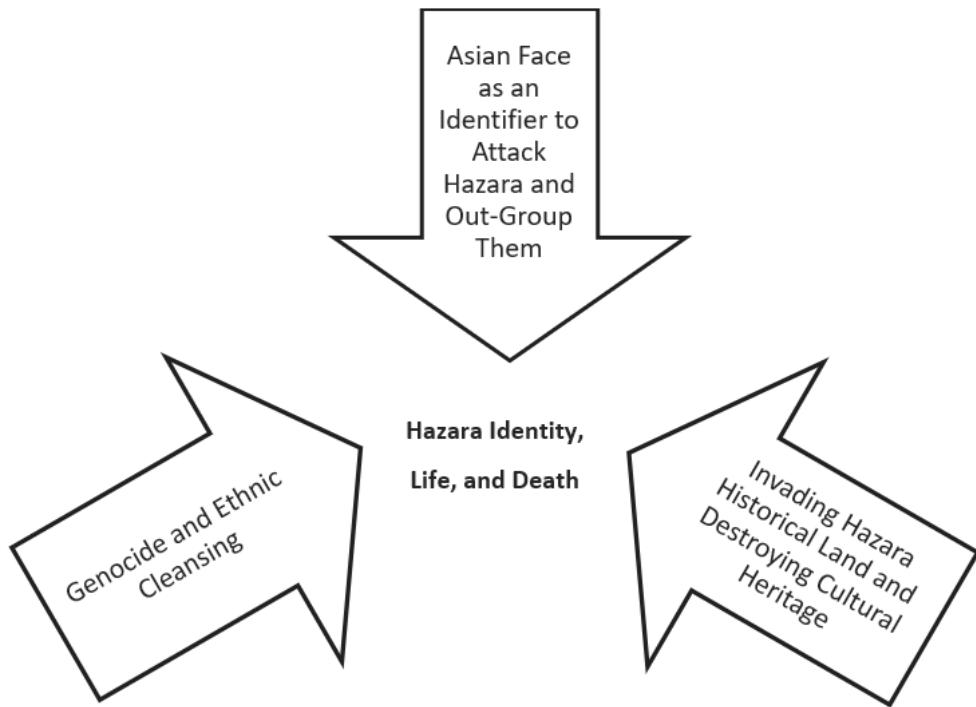
The personal and collective identity of the Hazara has been denied and considered a crime for the last two-three centuries since the Afghans or Pashtuns have gained power. "They have not been accepted as Hazara, nor Afghan. They have been considered the second and third-class people in their country" (Interviewee 12).

It is easy to identify a Hazara individual among their neighboring peoples. The face of the Hazara is a unique part of the Hazara identity that puts them in great danger. "The Asian face of the Hazara with their almond eyes makes them an easy target. This face is like an identifier, and the Hazara enemies can identify them quickly among other neighboring peoples, loot them, abduct them, and kill them" (Interviewee 1). This identifier makes the Hazara suffer discrimination in public places and governmental organizations. They cannot equally access public services and systematically face discrimination. "When I go to banks in Kabul or when I apply for a job even in the organizations that suppose to defend human rights, I face discrimination. Before I say anything, my face tells I am a Hazara. My identity is written on my face. The Hazara face is a unique part of the Hazara identity, and we cannot take it away" (Interviewee 2).

The attacks on the Hazara identity are complex as the Hazara identity. On the one hand, each individual easily becomes a target. On the other hand, the collective existence of the Hazara and their collective identity is under attack either by historical places being invaded or their historical heritage being destroyed. "the Hazara cannot move to the invaded city Kandahar, one of the main parts of the Hazara civilization. The same in Ghazni, another historical city of the Hazara. A Hazara cannot find a job easily in Ghazni. They are taking Hazara's historical identity away from the Hazara, like what they did with the Buddhas of Bamyan that they destroyed in 2001 (Interviewee 1).

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after the genocide of the Hazara, a significant part of them decided to leave the Hazara identity, and the Hazara oppressed society for the better. "They have tried to join the Tajik and the Uzbek ethnic groups to stay safe and change their future. However, they have not been accepted entirely on their arrival and after decades of war and systematic crimes.

That is why they are now returning to the main Hazara society, as it is impossible to live without an identity" (Interviewee 1).



*Figure 7: Identity and Critical Position of the Hazara*

Using technology and establishing digital identity to protect and promote the Hazara identity is essential for the Hazara. "Like many other nations, the Hazara should also use technology to change their life and take part in the modern world. We cannot escape from our identity. A person carries identity all the time. We should know our identity better in this modern world and try to make it recognized and respected among the other identities" (Interviewee 11).

Technology and the construction of digital identity in this digitalized world might significantly impact the existence of the Hazara identity. "What does save you from silence and inexistence in this digital world? If, for instance, you do not access technology regarding your identity and development in your life, you will find yourself outside, far from all others on this planet" (Interviewee 1).

## 6.2 National Identification Number to Construct Digital Identity

Digital identity construction for the Hazara as a group of people and a nation requires constructing and establishing National Identification Number (NIN), natively digital, to record the required information. "Like non-digital identity, people find themselves into collective identity or arrive into

collective identity with their personal identity. To construct and stay connected to the collective space of digital identity, each person should have his/her unique identity, which is NIN" (Interviewee 3).

NIN has many advantages, and its construction process has many challenges. "Digital identity and NIN are the fundamental bases of any strategic move for the Hazara. It takes time, but we need it, and we can make it possible. All important works have some challenges initially, and we need to study all dimensions carefully" (Interviewee 1). The meaningfulness of the numbers or characters that the Hazara NIN should be formed by is essential to the Hazara. "It should consist of meaningful numbers or characters representing the person and act as codes and channels, connecting that person to her/his history, culture, and the nostalgic collective unconscious. People with meaningful numbers and characters in their NIN would be more engaged than some random numbers" (Interviewee 2).

### **6.3 Reunion and Connectivity, Digital Identity as an Umbrella**

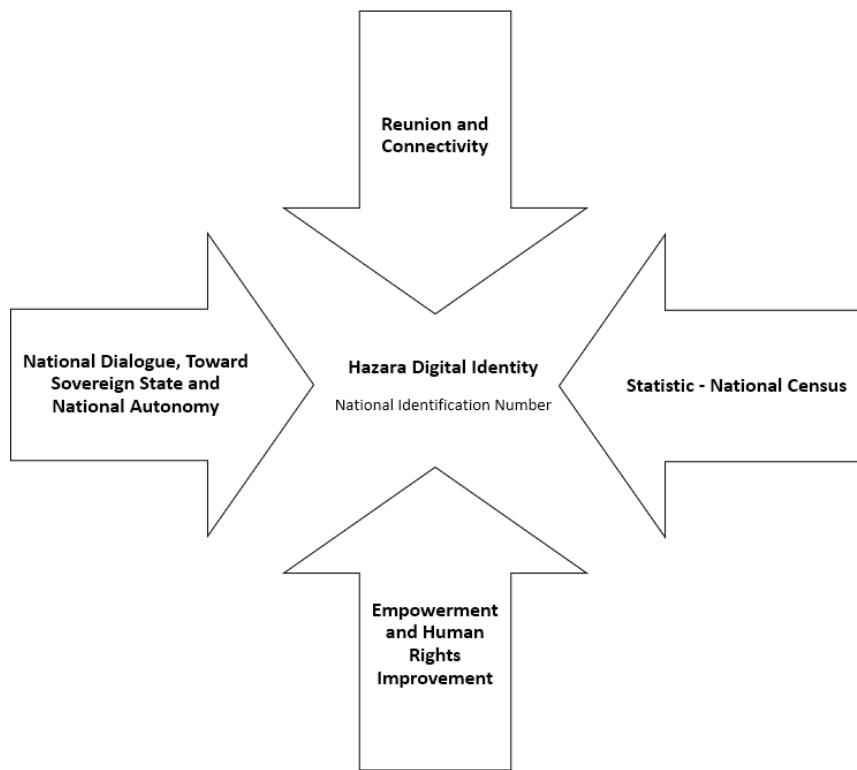
Digital identity helps the scattered nation, the Hazara, to come, reunite, and stay together. Many of the Hazara have left their community and country. "We are separated from each other, a part in Hazaristan, a part in Pakistan, a part in Iran, a part in central Asia, and many in western countries. Digital identity and the nostalgia of history we share may connect us again" (Interviewee 3).

Digital identity is like an umbrella in the digital world, connecting the Hazara worldwide. "The Hazara need a digital roof to avoid the danger of marginalization and inexistence and save their future generations that may lose their identity. They need something that can guarantee their digital existence" (Interviewee 3).

Digital identity also brings hope, maybe a nostalgic hope to track those Hazara sold as slaves in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. "Our digital identity may help us find the children of those Hazara" (Interviewee 12).

Digital identity makes it possible for Hazara to create secure communication channels. It helps them be united and gives a new definition of Hazara's interests while looking into the past. "We used to record our identity by writing down the personal information such as name and date of birth, and our more collective identity such as the clan's name. Maybe we were afraid of losing our identity. If some of us had to move somewhere else, those records could help keep them in our

collective memory. Now, we are in the world of technology, and we need to have the digital identity to save our identity and keep us connected" (Interviewee 5).



*Figure 8: Importance of Digital Identity to the Hazara*

## 6.4 Statistic - National Census

The Hazara needs to know about the quantity and quality of the Hazara population. Digital identity and NIN make it possible to have reliable demographic information. "Registration and issuing national identification numbers are like conducting a national census and having statistics about the Hazara population simultaneously. It has many benefits for the Hazara" (Interviewee 5).

Digital identity, registration, and census give general and detailed information to the Hazara in Hazaristan and the rest of the world. "I, as a Hazara living in North America, do not know how many Hazara are here. In the same state I live in, I do not know the number of Hazara and what they do. I only know a few through the personal network, but not the other. A significant number of Hazara are in Australia. However, we do not know precisely how many" (Interviewee 6).

Digital identity brings self-awareness to the Hazara, makes them know themselves better with detailed and broader pictures. "When we register our population, for instance, we know the population is fifteen or twenty million, it makes us believe that we can change our situation. We should do it" (Interviewee 6).

Another benefit that digital identity brings is that the Hazara and the world and international community would understand that "the story of minority and majority comes from falsification of the dominant group and the ethnic-centric governments of so-called Afghanistan" (Interviewee 9). The Hazara did not have a voice in the international community. The governments of Afghanistan were ignoring the existence of the Hazara or have tried to present them as not more than three to five percent of the population. "We have Shia Hazara, Sunni Hazara, Ismaili Hazara, Christian Hazara, humanist Hazara, non-believer Hazara, Canadian, Australian, Norwegian, British, Iranian, and Pakistani Hazara. Having the exact number of the Hazara brings power to the Hazara" (Interviewee 6).

With the Hazara digital identity and national census conducted and governed by the Hazara, they can make strategic plans for their contemporary situation and future. "When we have data, we can make plans. For instance, in some particular fields, we need to educate more, and in other fields, we have well-educated human resources that can be organized for developing the Hazara society. Other examples are gathering data on life average, gender equality issues, and information related to businesses worldwide. Having data gives us an idea about our weaknesses and strengths" (Interviewee 2).

## 6.5 Empowerment and Human Rights Improvement

Another importance of digital identity for the Hazara is that it empowers them and contributes to improving their human rights situation. It increases self-confidence, self-consciousness, trust, and transparency among the Hazara.

- **Self-confidence**

Decades of being a victim have broken the Hazara's self-confidence and collective spirit, pushing them to more individual and collective despair and more Internalized oppression. Having a digital identity based on the most advanced technologies and the ability to be aware of each other, refined self, and connect to other similar self, in a larger group, start to decelerate oppression. "Hazara digital identity contributes to collective solidarity, increases self-confidence, accelerates Hazara reunion and their return to their origination while moving forward. The change process among the Hazara has already started. They are now everywhere in this world, they love education, and they try to learn more. Digital identity helps them to speed up the process of

change by increasing their individual and collective self-awareness. At least for fifty years, the world of a Hazara was isolated to a tiny place physically and psychologically. Now, Hazara is resisting, trying to access a more extensive and equal world and bring change to their life. If we compare the contemporary situation, it is already much better than before, and the reconstruction of our collective self-awareness started" (Interviewee 7).

- **Trust and Transparency**

Living as an oppressed group destroys many things, including trust and transparency among the oppressed group members. Digital identity and a national identity system governed by the Hazara can build trust and transparency, an essential factor of the change. "We lived separated, isolated, and scattered. Oppression and persecution made us think that everyone around us, even another one of us, could be a potential danger. Afghani regimes have broken us, have broken our nation into smaller groups and isolated individuals. That is why the Hazara, their activists, politicians, and intellectuals are individualists not working systematically and use more trial-and-error methods. We need to rebuild trust among ourselves, and digital identity facilitates it for us" (Interviewee 1).

- **Economic Opportunities**

Systematic crimes, including systematic discrimination and exclusion, have put Hazara in poor economic conditions. "The share they receive from so-called national budget is sometimes nothing or less than one percent. They were displaced from their locations that they could access better communication and business opportunities with other peoples and countries. They were isolated in the mountains, with no roads and no food (Interviewee 10).

Digital identity may facilitate economic opportunities for the Hazara, first, among themselves. "In western countries, my identity as a Hazara does not have a role in my economic opportunities. However, Afghani regimes compare people with their identity. If the person is a Hazara, then no equal business opportunity. We need unique economic models using technology to change." (Interviewee 1).

Building Hazara national economy and facilitating economic opportunities using digital identity is a complex task. However, accepting the complexities and facing them may bring new economic models among the Hazara. "Difficult and complex, but we can think of Hazaristan Digital Bank based on the Hazara digital identity. As Hazaristan is not independent now, this bank can be established in a western country to be safer out of Afghani regimes' danger and follow the best

standards and regulations. It is like a dream and imagination, but technology is a handy tool to realize them" (Interviewee 1). "It should be possible to have Hazaristan digital currency or a stable cryptocurrency governed and administrated by Hazaristan Digital Bank. The bank can support Hazara startups, cooperate with other banks" (Interviewee 6).

- **Deceleration of Marginalization and Minoritization**

Facilitating the population registry and considering the possible outcomes such as re-finding the self, reunion, connectivity, empowerment, and heading toward self-determination are all pointing to the human rights of the oppressed Hazara. To reconstruct the broken identity of the Hazara and construct digital identity is human rights itself. "We can take our historical narratives and our culture into the digital world. We make them alive. We can build our historical Dai-s, reconstruct our Buddhas, celebrate our Nawruz, and respect those who were lost. The oppression forces and those who enjoy the ethnic privilege want us to stay in the medieval world with them, but we have enlightenment movements, we have lost many lives for justice, and we do not want to stay with them in the dark" (Interviewee 9).

It is impossible to give correct statistics of the Hazara killed by Afghani regimes and Afghani extremist groups now. The Hazara Digital identity may help them to solve it and bring the Hazara one step forward for their struggle. They can document systematic crimes, seek justice at international courts, and make the international community recognize the Hazara genocide. "When you have digital identity and information about the Hazara, you can track the human rights violations against them. For instance, in recent years, in Maidan, Ghazni, Zabul, Kabul, Oruzgan, Takhar, Balkh, Sari Pol, and Baghlan, they killed many Hazara. We have people, and we have proof. We can go to International Criminal Court (ICC) with evidence, proof, and people who are victims" (Interviewee 1).

## **6.6 National Dialogue, Toward National Autonomy and Sovereign State**

Another importance of digital identity for the Hazara is that it raises a national dialogue about the right to self-determination toward national autonomy and a sovereign state. They can establish their digital institutions, practice democracy in the digital world, and move faster toward democratic Hazaristan.

- **Digital Institutions and Organizations**

The Hazara Digital identity construction first requires establishing an authorized and trustful organization, a public registry. “We need an authorized institution to prepare and start registration of the Hazara and issuing them digital identity. We do not have such an institution now, and nor other organizations with neutral vision. The first step is difficult to take. Our experts and activists should be responsible, and people should trust them” (Interviewee 7). From the first steps of digital identity construction, “the national dialogue starts, and the Hazara should discuss and look at different aspects of making something with their own hands” (Interviewee 7).

The national dialogue and the progress of digital identity construction lead to discussions regarding the importance and necessity of establishing other institutions such as a digital national bank, authority to prepare digital elections (Interviewee 7).

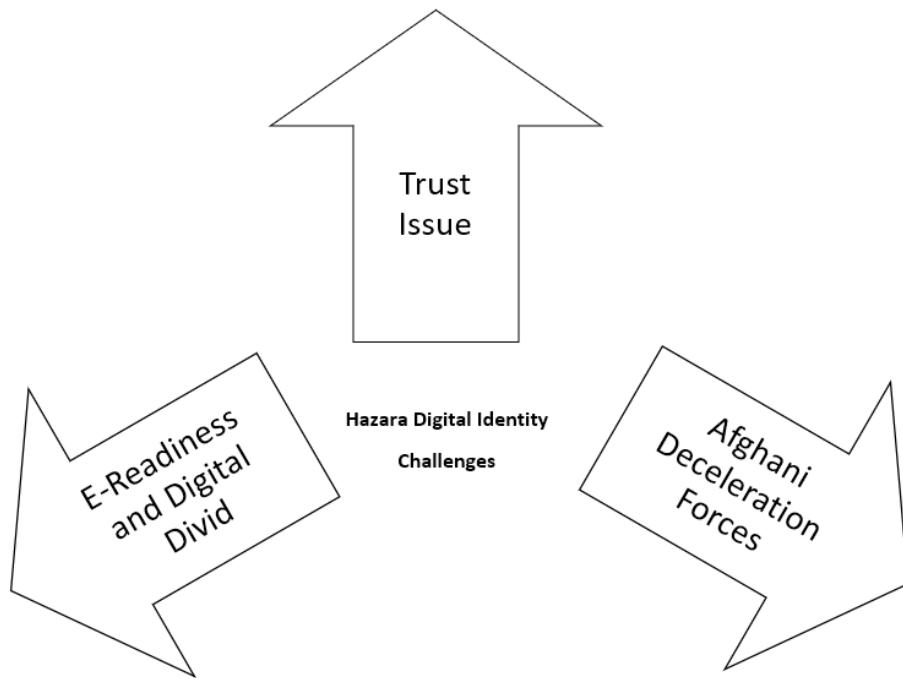
- **E-Vote, E-Democracy, E-Government**

Except for those Hazara living in western countries, the rest have not yet experienced a modern and democratic election. “We have tried our best to join the elections in so-called Afghanistan. Women and men together, young and old together, we love a peaceful and democratic country. In response, they have attacked us at the voting centers with their suicide bombers and ignored our vote and decisions by fraud” (Interviewee 9).

Digital identity enables the possibility of e-vote, e-democracy, and e-government. “ We now have the Hazaristan Charter, which is an up-to-date and modern charter. Using the Hazaristan charter as a roadmap, we can construct digital identity, have digital elections for Dai Parliament of Hazaristan and establish the Dai Sate of Hazaristan digitally” (Interviewee 10). If the outcome or the strategic plans of the Hazara throughout the process of digital identity construction or main milestones is to have a real-time national census, elections, and governmental institutions, then "it may be possible to gain soft power for diplomacy, open direct diplomatic relationship and negotiate for the state recognition without the interfere of oppression forces" (Interviewee 10).

## **6.7 Challenges and Deceleration Forces**

Walking through digital identity construction, gaining goals, and accessing benefits is not an easy process. It has many challenges that may lead the Hazara to fall into unrealistic optimism harming the whole process. Those challenges are Afghani acceleration forces, religion as a decelerator, digital divide and not being ready for the digital world, trust issue, and immigration generations.



*Figure 9: Hazara Digital Identity - Challenges*

- **Trust Issue**

While digital identity can be a tool to build trust among the Hazara, they might not trust the process of digital identity construction, at least at the beginning. “Without the trust and engagement of the Hazara, constructing digital identity would be meaningless, impossible and waste of resources” (Interviewee 12). Gaining public trust among the Hazara is a difficult task. “The Hazara faced long-term human rights violations. The Afghani government has used some against the other. Many have used us and harmed us. We have injured people. They are very sensitive and very reactive. It would be a big challenge to gain trust and keep this trust until they move next level of being a nation” (Interviewee 12).

The Hazara nation is diverse, some very religious, and some from new generation non-believers. They have Shias, Sunnis, Christians, Ismailis, humanists, and some Buddhists. “While accepting diversity among the Hazara, the process of digital identity construction should be neutral and transparent” (Interviewee 9).

Raising awareness about digital identity, its benefits, and its challenges is another essential factor that can gain the trust of Hazara. “The Hazara are honest people, difficult to establish trust, but once they trust, it can be a kind of identity movement (Interviewee 3).

- **Afghani Deceleration Forces**

The challenges originated from Afghani deceleration forces are directly connected to the human rights situation and the safety of the Hazara. The Afghani oppression forces will not let the Hazara go easily. They are still dividing the Hazara into smaller groups, making their access to technology as little as possible or taking them down entirely offline. "In Hazaristan, a limited number of people have access internet. However, the issue is that the Afghani government controls access and decides to give access or not. The Hazara do not have direct internet access, for instance, through satellite. Put yourself in the situation that the official Afghani forces attack Hazara, for instance, in Behsud, and kill and injure forty of them in one day. At the same time, they turn off mobile and internet access. Then, you are disconnected, and there is no single point of communication. They control internet and mobile access, isolate the Hazara, and make them their living conditions like in graveyards. Then, you are in a black hole; no one sees you, no one hears you, and you have not existed anymore" (Interviewee 1).

The Afghani extremist groups are also another deceleration force closely cooperating with official forces to stop the Hazara from establishing their digital identity. "They stop Hazara on their ways, check them, check their mobile phones if any application they consider as danger, including the one related to digital identity, is installed. They can do suicide-bombing, abduct Hazara and use any possible violent action to stop Hazara" (Interviewee 7).

- **E-Readiness and Digital Divide**

Expecting the Hazara to be fully ready for the digital world is unrealistic as many forces, some against their will, prevent them from being fully ready. Minimal access level of communication and internet, absence of digital infrastructures in Hazaristan, absence of training besides generation difference are some of the challenges that increase the digital divide. Those challenges are again mostly connected to the human rights situation of the Hazara.

"We have many people who are not familiar with the internet, smartphone, and computer. We need at least access to the internet, phone, and computer. It takes a long time to construct a digital identity for the Hazara. We need volunteer activities; those who have devices with the internet help others register their identity. We have a digital divide among the Hazara" (Interviewee 4). In the geographical location of Hazaristan, where a significant part is up to four to five thousand meters above the sea, people have no access to the internet, digital device, and power resources " (Interviewee 4).

## 7 Discussion

This chapter brings the research question, findings, theories, and background literature together by discussing whether the findings can answer the research question and what patterns can be identified within the findings. Next, this chapter revisits the theories, employing them as a lens to see whether they apply to the case or need to be extended, re-formulated, or they do not apply at all. Then, some other issues will be discussed regarding digital identity as a core component and a building block of the E-Hazaristan ecosystem.

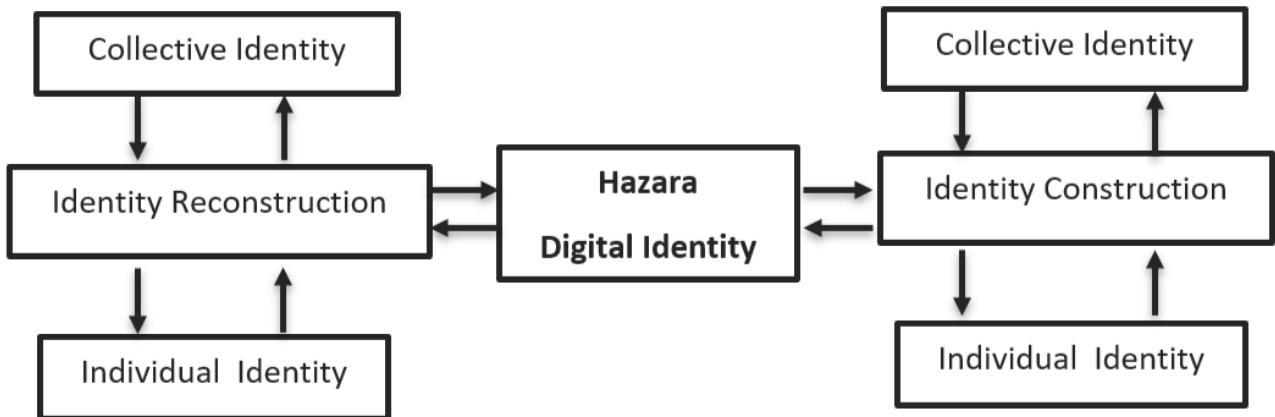
### 7.1 Back to Research Question

Back to the research question, why is digital identity important to stateless nations, and what challenges might they face in digital identity construction?

The findings of the case first indicate that it is important to construct a digital identity as a high priority, at least in the case of the Hazara of Hazaristan. "The Hazara need a digital roof to avoid the danger of marginalization and inexistence and save their future generations that may lose their identity. They need something that can guarantee their digital existence" (Interviewee 3). Digital identity for the Hazara may involve not only constructing digital identity but both the reconstruction and construction. Returning self to the self or formulating self is a dynamic process itself, possibly ending with a new definition (Morf & Mischel, 2012; Tatum, 2000). It can also be modified or accelerated by technology (Rosa, 2003; 2013, pp. 63-93).

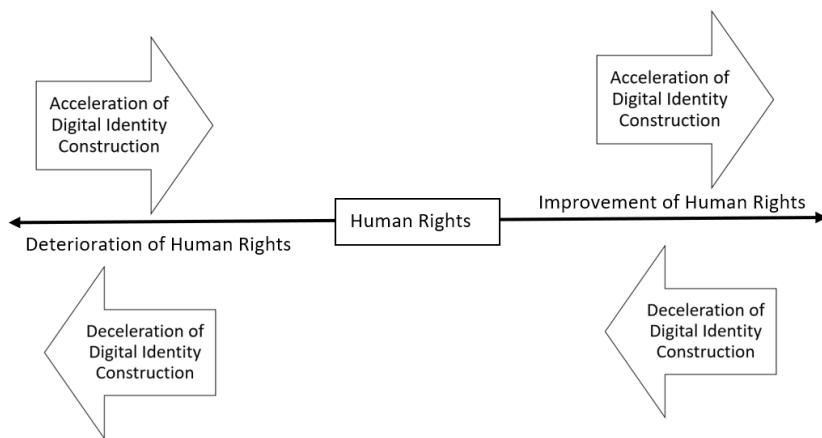
The findings also indicate that the process of digital identity construction stands not only on the construction of individual identities but the reconstruction and construction of a collective and national identity of the Hazara. "Hazara digital identity contributes to collective solidarity, increases self-confidence, accelerates Hazara reunion and their return to their origination while moving forward" (Interviewee 7). Flowing from self to a cognitive space where other-selves arrive or find themselves (Brinkmann, 2008; Tatum, 2000), a plural self-signature within the group or society in a "cognitive-affective motivated action system" (Morf & Mischel, 2012). Again it is possible to be impacted and accelerated by technology (Rosa, 2003; 2013, pp. 63-93). Digital identity is essential for the Hazara because it helps them find themselves. The arrival and the future interaction of those diverse selves of the scattered nation may generate a new narrative Identity, self-defining interpreted within a redefined society (Lilgendaal, 2015, pp. 490–507). Those joined and rejoined selves may carry some belongings, notions, emotions, and practicalities from their past while

arriving at new definition of grouped self. Then there is no longer only the reconstruction of the identity but also construction enabled by technology and digital identity.



*Figure 10: Hazara Digital Identity: Reconstruction and Construction*

Digital identity is important for the Hazara. It helps them rejoin and join, establish self-confidence, build trust, and have reliable data for strategic plans. It helps them to start a new national discourse for their right to self-determination. The construction of digital identity for the Hazara is not an easy plan, but with many challenges, including trust issues, Afghani deceleration forces, and the digital divide. While it is challenging to unbind and isolate importance and challenges from each other, we can identify an underlying pattern that impacts them both. The findings indicate that the human rights situation of the Hazara is a strong influencer in both directions, the importance and the challenges of the Hazara digital identity construction.



*Figure 11: Human Rights and Possible Scenarios of Hazara Digital Identity Construction*

Improving the human rights situation of the Hazara may lead to two directions, acceleration of digital identity construction and decelerating it. A part or part of the Hazara may choose not to concentrate on the Hazara identity toward self-determination and prefer to remain under one possible roof with other neighboring peoples. The improvement of the human rights situation may also lead to the acceleration of digital identity construction as some challenges, such as Afghani deceleration forces, will not remain as it was so far.

Considering the same underlying pattern, the continuation of human rights violations against the Hazara may also bring them into a possible acceleration of digital identity construction or its deceleration. More violations may force Hazara to stop digital identity construction or encourage them to accelerate the process as one strategic option to change their situation.

In all four scenarios, the Hazara diasporas may have a crucial role. Diasporas of stateless nations are active and can look at the situation from other perspectives (Aghapouri, 2018; Bakker, 2001; Bernal, 2006; Candan & Hunger, 2008). The Hazara diasporas are free from many challenges that the Hazara in Hazaristan face. For instance, the Afghani acceleration forces cannot control them. They have better access to technology without the intervention of those forces and maybe have some digital natives among their new generation. The Hazara diasporas can start the process of digital identity construction outside Hazaristan and so-called Afghanistan.

## 7.2 Revisiting Theories

The findings indicate that Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel et al., 1979, pp. 56-65) can be a lens to look at the situation of the Hazara on some levels, with some exceptions. To make it more precise, we should revisit two futures of SIT, besides the cognitive processes. The first is the conceptualization of a group "as a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership of it" (Tajfel et al., 1979, pp. 56-65). The second is the ignorance of SIT to focus on individual prejudices, interpersonal interaction, reductionism, or the real conflict of group interests suggested by Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGT) (Sherif, 1958). At least, in the case of the Hazara, those two features of SIT might be a contradiction or reflect a paradox. First, who within the collection of the individuals should determine the formation of the group? The dominant members? All members? Second, who should determine the degree of social

consensus? The dominant members? All members? What about those who leave the group as many Hazara did and are unsuccessful through two first SIT cognitive processes, the social categorization and social identification in the new group? Are they still members of the group they left? Are they members of the new group? Are they without any group? Do they form a new group, for instance, called a pending group with or without congregative processes? We can turn SIT again and ask more questions to magnify the contradiction. For instance, shall we make the group small as much as possible to access that level of degree of social consensus? Does not this end to a sort of individualism or more scattering of a nation that is already scattered? What if they perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement, but cannot agree due to internal and external factors? Are they still members of the same group? Back to the case, to the scattered nation, some members wish reunion and still consider those who forcefully left as members of the Hazara. The unsuccessful move of a significant part of the Hazara to gain new social categorization and new social identification, while it is not impossible but hard to return to the old group, is challenging to be considered as a cognitive alternative, individual mobility, creativity, or social change. Here, SIT accesses the individual level while in the cognitive processes, somehow ignores individualism.

We can concentrate more on individual mobility as an alternative in SIT while looking at the importance of digital identity construction for Hazara by asking more questions. As the findings indicate, the identity construction is not considered only the move of individuals by themselves, but a kind of collective to have a successful move from where they were ignored and marginalized and have no agreement. It can be argued that the collective mobility of the Hazara can be considered as the movement of one single unit, one member. However, in that case, the previous questions will remain unanswered.

The identity construction for the Hazara can be considered mobility, both individual and collective, not only individual as SIT suggests (Hogg, 2006, pp. 111-136; J. C. Turner & Reynolds, 2010). Since digital identity construction is new for Hazara, it can also be considered social creativity, but again not within the group that has been marginalized and faced every sort of systematic crime.

As the findings indicate, the Hazara are subjected to social comparison and forced to marginalization. This cognitive process of SIT might be seen and examined outside of the Hazara, from the dominant side.

The Social Acceleration Theory (SAT) is another theory selected in this study to be employed for data collection and data analysis (Rosa, 2013, pp. 65-66). The primary target and context of SAT is

western society and modernity in well-developed countries. However, it might be interesting to use it as a theoretical ground analyzing the case of the Hazara. SAT does not fit the Hazara situation regarding digital identity construction unless we keep its logical construction and replace acceleration dimensions with deceleration forces. Of course, those dimensions and forces should be relative, as the findings present, and as they are not similar in well-developed countries. The Hazara digital identity construction might not have the same notions and might not be as fast as technology in the west. However, the acceleration process started in about the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the west (Rosa, 2003), might have some similar notions with the Hazara digital identity regarding speed and time. “The oppression forces and those who enjoy the ethnic privilege want us to stay in the medieval world with them, but we have enlightenment movements, we have lost many lives for justice, and we do not want to stay with them in the dark” (Interviewee 9).

### **7.3 E-Hazaristan Ecosystem, Digital Identity as a Building Block**

As we see within the findings, digital identity encompasses fundamental changes, enabling strategic move of the Hazara toward establishing a digital or e-Hazaristan. The main component of e-Hazaristan would be digital identity with national identification number as it holds other components together and makes it possible, for instance, to have e-vote, e-lection, and e-Dai parliament experiencing digital democracy. Digital identity also is required as the main component to realize the other importance of digital identity for the Hazara, such as e-bank, e-currency, and economic development. It means that all those units or components indicated in the findings should be considered parts of a system enabled and functioning by digital identity. This system can be the e-Hazaristan ecosystem.

Realizing the e-Hazaristan ecosystem can have many other challenges in addition to those indicated in the findings. For instance, the security of the system and users and the users' privacy can be discussed from technical perspectives and the perspectives of regulations such as GDPR. Those challenges would be more complex as the Hazara are in many countries, and regulating e-Hazaristan to meet all regulations would not be easy. However, the principles of the self-sovereign identity powered by blockchain technology (Naik & Jenkins, 2020a, 2020b) aligned at some level with the Hazara case may help to overcome those challenges and enter a new paradigm of identity construction and management (Kubach et al., 2020; Toth & Anderson-Priddy, 2019; Zwitter et al., 2020). However, since the findings indicate that trust is an important issue and there should be a

central trusted authority to register and provide identity, it increases the complexity of the future e-Hazaristan ecosystem.

## 8 Conclusion

This study has concentrated on digital identity construction for the stateless nations that consist of tens of millions of people by taking the case of the Hazara of Hazaristan under the microscope, investigating the importance and challenges of digital identity construction. Although the aim is not to generalize the case to other stateless nations, as we are dealing with identity and uniqueness, it provides a new window to look at the world of the stateless nations and a new deep insight into the world of the Hazara of Hazaristan from the perspective of information technology and information systems.

This qualitative case study first walked through background literature regarding identity, logical identity and identity of self, collective identity, stateless nations and identity, and digital identity. Next, Social Identity Theory and Social Acceleration Theory were presented as the theoretical grounds for data collection and analysis, followed by presenting the Hazara of Hazaristan. Then the research method with the research approach, data collection, data analysis, limitations, and issues related to validity was presented. Next, considering the research question, the importance and challenges regarding digital identity construction reported. The findings indicate that in the case of the Hazara of Hazaristan, digital identity construction is a strategic move with many benefits, including having a national identification number, reunion, connectivity, statistic, national census, empowerment, human rights improvement, and the start of a national discourse or dialog toward national autonomy and sovereign state. Digital identity construction is not without challenges, as presented, followed by its importance. Those challenges are the trust issue, the Afghani acceleration forces, the digital divide, and not having equal access to technology. In the discussion chapter, the research question, background literature, theories, and findings are brought together, and some possible issues regarding digital identity construction are discussed. It also presented the human rights issue as an underlying pattern followed both in challenges and the importance of digital identity construction for the Hazara of Hazaristan. It was also presented some reflections regarding the digital identity as the main component and a building block of the e-Hazaristan ecosystem.

This study may come with some implications for practice and research and the possibility for future research.

## **8.1 Implications for Practice**

This research may first bring a new discourse within the Hazara people about their identity and the possible new approaches that they can consider improving their identity and situation in general. As the new generation of the Hazara people is more active in cyberspace and cyberactivism, the study may encourage them to reflect upon digital identity construction. Such reflections may become a motor for accelerating digital identity construction and accelerating e-readiness within their society. It may enlighten the Hazara to walk beyond the current strategies they have to improve their identity and their human rights situation. Within those reflections, the Hazara activists and scholars may capture some of the requirements of digital identity construction, look deeper into the new possibilities enabled by digital identity, and take their struggle to the next level with more related research and practical actions.

On the other hand, the other stateless nations may also become inspired to investigate the possibilities of digital identity construction within their societies. As stateless nations are not members of the United Nations, they may think of some alternatives, such as the United Stateless Nations in cyberspace, connecting and interacting between their every e-country and their digital ecosystem.

As there are some deceleration forces through the digital identity construction of the Hazara, other stateless nations may have their relative deceleration forces. Those forces may systematically plan and act to stop any process of digital identity construction for the stateless nations.

On the other hand, with the strategic move of stateless nations toward digital identity construction and establishing ecosystems of e-countries as new demands, the technology, including blockchain technology and quantum-resistant blockchain, may become impacted, and new architectures and development methods arise.

## **8.2 Implications for Research**

This research informs the research community, particularly within information technology and information systems, of the importance and challenges of digital identity construction for millions of Hazara and the possibility of relative importance and challenges within other stateless nations such as the Uyghur, Catalan, Tibetan, and Kurd.

This research may encourage the research community to look closer at the stateless nations from information technology and information systems' eyes and investigate the new requirements and

demands. The stateless nations consist of tens of millions, and they need to benefit from technology for their rights strategically.

This research may also encourage those researchers who are experts in the Hazara study to have more future focus and active future centric research than explain what happened. The same may apply to researchers in the area of other stateless nations.

### **8.3 Future Research**

Being informed of the importance and challenges of digital identity construction for the Hazara of Hazaristan is essential, but not enough. It requires steps forward investigating the requirements, and the process of digital identity construction, not as a single unit but as a building block of e-Hazaristan and its ecosystem. The research can be conceptual and empirical, developing theoretical grounds, frameworks, and possible architecture of the future e-Hazaristan ecosystem. Although this research is not trying to generalize the case of Hazara of Hazaristan, future research on multiple cases of stateless nations may capture similarities and differences of digital identity construction within those nations and generate new related knowledge.

## References

- Abelson, H., Lessig, L., Covell, P., Gordon, S., Hochberger, A., & Kovacs, J. (1998). Digital identity in cyberspace. *White Paper Submitted for 6.805/Law of Cyberspace: Social Protocols*.
- Abraham, I., & Jaehn, M. (2019). 'Immanent Nation: The Rohingya quest for international recognition'. *Nations and Nationalism*, n/a(n/a). doi:10.1111/nana.12560
- Addo, A., & Senyo, P. K. (2021). Advancing E-governance for development: Digital identification and its link to socioeconomic inclusion. *Government Information Quarterly*, 38(2), 101568. doi:10.1016/j.giq.2021.101568
- Aghapouri, H. (2018). *Nationalism and diaspora in cyberspace: The case of the Kurdish diaspora on social media*. ResearchSpace@ Auckland,
- Almiron, N., Narberhaus Martínez, M., & Mauri, M. (2016). Mapping media accountability in stateless nations: the case of Catalonia. *Catalan Journal of Communication & Cultural Studies*.
- Anderson, P. (2019). 'Independence 2.0': Digital activism, social media and the Catalan independence movement. *Catalan Journal of Communication & Cultural Studies*, 11(2), 191-207.
- Ausloos, M., & Petroni, F. (2007). Statistical dynamics of religions and adherents. *EPL (Europhysics Letters)*, 77(3), 38002.
- Baars, D. (2016). *Towards self-sovereign identity using blockchain technology*. University of Twente,
- Bakker, P. (2001). New Nationalism; the Internet Crusade. *International relations and the new inequality: power, wealth, and the transformation of global society at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The Amsterdam School of Communications Research*.
- Béland, D., & Lecours, A. (2019). Nationalism and the politics of austerity: comparing Catalonia, Scotland, and Québec. *National Identities*, 1-17.
- Bellew, H. W. (1880). *Races of Afghanistan*. London: Trübner and CO. W. Thacker and CO.
- Belton, K. A. (2010). From cyberspace to offline communities: Indigenous peoples and global connectivity. *Alternatives*, 35(3), 193-215.
- Bernal, V. (2006). Diaspora, cyberspace and political imagination: the Eritrean diaspora online. *Global networks (Oxford)*, 6(2), 161-179. doi:10.1111/j.1471-0374.2006.00139.x
- Bernet, R. (2002). Unconscious consciousness in Husserl and Freud. *Phenomenology and the cognitive sciences*, 1(3), 327-351.
- Berwari, A., & Ambrosio, T. (2008). The Kurdistan referendum movement: Political opportunity structures and national identity. *Democratization*, 15(5), 891-908.
- Bridle, J. (2016). Algorithmic citizenship, digital statelessness. *GeoHumanities*, 2(2), 377-381.
- Brinck, I., Reddy, V., & Zahavi, D. (2017). 6 The Primacy of the "We"? *Embodiment, enactment, and culture: Investigating the constitution of the shared world*, 131.
- Brinkmann, S. (2008). Identity as self-interpretation. *Theory & Psychology*, 18(3), 404-422.
- Brox, T. (2012). Constructing a Tibetan demos in exile. *Citizenship Studies*, 16(3-4), 451-467.
- Calzada, I. (2018). 'Algorithmic nations': seeing like a city-regional and techno-political conceptual assemblage. *Regional Studies, Regional Science*, 5(1), 267-289. doi:10.1080/21681376.2018.1507754
- Candan, M., & Hunger, U. (2008). Nation building online: A case study of Kurdish migrants in Germany. *German Policy Studies*, 4(4), 125.
- Capisizu, L.-A. (2020). Digital identity. *Conferința Internațională de Drept, Studii Europene și Relații Internaționale*, 8(VIII), 256-263.

- Carolissen, R. (2012). "Belonging" as a Theoretical Framework for the Study of Psychology and Globalization. *Journal of social issues*, 68(3), 630-642. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4560.2012.01767.x
- Carver, C. S. (2003). Self-awareness. In M. R. Leary & J. P. Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of Self and Identity* (pp. 179-196): Guilford Press.
- Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2006). Linguistic landscape and minority languages. *International journal of multilingualism*, 3(1), 67-80.
- Cheesman, N. (2017). How in Myanmar "national races" came to surpass citizenship and exclude Rohingya. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 47(3), 461-483.
- Cilliers, P. (2016). Difference, identity and complexity. In *Critical Complexity* (pp. 193-210): De Gruyter.
- Cole, D. H. (1993). Marxism and the Failure of Environmental Protection in Eastern Europe and the USSR. *Legal Stud. F.*, 17, 35.
- Cornips, L., & de Rooij, V. A. (2018). *The Sociolinguistics of Place and Belonging: Perspectives from the Margins* (Vol. 45). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Côté, C. (2016). The Scottish Referendum: The View from Quebec. In D. Hutchison, G. Hassan, & N. Blain (Eds.), *Scotland's Referendum and the Media: National and International Perspectives* (pp. 195-203): Edinburgh University Press.
- Côté, J. (2006). Identity studies: How close are we to developing a social science of identity?—An appraisal of the field. *Identity*, 6(1), 3-25.
- Coutin, S. B. (1999). Denationalization, inclusion, and exclusion: negotiating the boundaries of belonging. *Ind. J. Global Legal Stud.*, 7, 585.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*: Sage publications.
- Culcasi, K. (2006). Cartographically constructing Kurdistan within geopolitical and orientalist discourses. *Political Geography*, 25(6), 680-706.
- DN. (2020). *Digital Nations Charter*. <https://www.canada.ca/>: Government of Canada Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/system/digital-government/improving-digital-services/digital9charter.html>
- Dunn, K. M., Forrest, J., Burnley, I., & McDonald, A. (2004). Constructing racism in Australia. *Australian journal of social issues*, 39(4), 409-430.
- Dwyer, A. M. (2005). The Xinjiang conflict: Uyghur identity, language policy, and political discourse.
- Falcone, J., & Wangchuk, T. (2008). "We're Not Home": Tibetan Refugees in India in the Twenty-First Century. *India Review*, 7(3), 164-199.
- Ferdous, M. S., Chowdhury, F., & Alassafi, M. O. (2019). In search of self-sovereign identity leveraging blockchain technology. *IEEE Access*, 7, 103059-103079.
- Fong, B. C. (2019). Stateless nation within a nationless state: The political past, present, and future of Hongkongers, 1949–2019. *Nations and Nationalism*.
- Gaertner, L., Sedikides, C., Vevea, J. L., & Iuzzini, J. (2002). The "I," the "we," and the "when": A meta-analysis of motivational primacy in self-definition. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 83(3), 574.
- Griffiths, D. (2017). Martin Heidegger's principle of identity: On belonging and Ereignis. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 36(3), 326-336.
- Guibernau i Berdún, M. M. (2013). *Belonging : solidarity and division in modern societies*.
- Guibernau, M. (2004). Anthony D. Smith on nations and national identity: a critical assessment. *Nations and Nationalism*, 10(1-2), 125-141. doi:10.1111/j.1354-5078.2004.00159.x
- Hall, S. (2012). The boundaries of belonging. In (pp. 41-61): Routledge.
- Hall, T. D., & Nagel, J. (2007). Indigenous Peoples. *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*.

- Heidegger, M. (2002). *Identity and difference*: University of Chicago Press.
- Heller, N. (2017). Estonia, the digital republic. *The New Yorker*, 18.
- Hess, J. M. (2009). *Immigrant ambassadors : citizenship and belonging in the Tibetan diaspora*.
- Hogg, M. A. (2006). Social identity theory. In *Contemporary Social Psychological Theories* (pp. 111-136): Stanford University Press.
- Human Rights Watch. (1998). *Afghanistan: The Massacre in Mazar-I Sharif*: Human Rights Watch.
- Ibrahimi, N. (2012). Shift and Drift in Hazara Ethnic Consciousness.
- ID2020. (2018). The Alliance Manifesto. Retrieved from <https://id2020.org/manifesto>
- Jaspers, J. (2018). The boundaries of belonging. *The Sociolinguistics of Place and Belonging: Perspectives from the margins*, 45, 17.
- Kaplan, B., & Maxwell, J. A. (2005). Qualitative research methods for evaluating computer information systems. In *Evaluating the organizational impact of healthcare information systems* (pp. 30-55): Springer.
- Katib Hazārah, F. M. (2016). *The History of Afghanistan: Fayz Muhammad Katib Hazarah's Siraj Al-tawarikh* (R. McChesney & M. M. Khorrami, Trans. Vol. 3): Brill.
- King, D. E. (2013). *Kurdistan on the global stage: kinship, land, and community in Iraq*: Rutgers University Press.
- Klimeš, O. (2015). Nationalism and modernism in the East Turkestan Republic, 1933–34. *Central Asian Survey*, 34(2), 162-176.
- Kowalkiewicz, M., & Dootson, P. (2019). Government 5.0: the future of public services. In: The Chair in Digital Economy.
- Kubach, M., Schunck, C. H., Sellung, R., & Roßnagel, H. (2020). Self-sovereign and Decentralized identity as the future of identity management? *Open Identity Summit 2020*.
- Laguerre, M. S. (2020). 20 Cyber-spatial cartographies of digital diasporas. *Geographies of the Internet*.
- Lewis, M. W. (Producer). (2011, 11.11.2020). The Complex and Contentious Issue of Afghan Identity. *GeoCurrents*. Retrieved from <https://www.geocurrents.info/place/south-asia/the-complex-and-contentious-issue-of-afghan-identity>
- Lilgendahl, J. P. (2015). The dynamic role of identity processes in personality development: Theories, patterns, and new directions. In *The Oxford handbook of identity development*. (pp. 490-507). New York, NY, US: Oxford University Press.
- López, J., & Sanjaume-Calvet, M. (2020). The Political Use of de facto Referendums of Independence The Case of Catalonia. *Representation*, 1-19.
- Manago, A. M. (2015). Identity development in the digital age: The case of social networking sites. In *The Oxford handbook of identity development*. (pp. 508-524). New York, NY, US: Oxford University Press.
- Margetts, H. (2009). Public management change and e-government: the emergence of digital-era governance. *Routledge handbook of Internet politics*, 119-131.
- Martin, F., Gezer, T., & Wang, C. (2019). Educators' Perceptions of Student Digital Citizenship Practices. *Computers in the schools*, 36(4), 238-254. doi:10.1080/07380569.2019.1674621
- Matthews, B., & Ross, L. (2014). *Research methods*: Pearson Higher Ed.
- McCaughey, M., & Ayers, M. D. (2013). *Cyberactivism: Online activism in theory and practice*: Routledge.
- McConnell, F. (2009). De facto, displaced, tacit: The sovereign articulations of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. *Political Geography*, 28(6), 343-352.
- McConnell, F. (2013). Citizens and refugees: constructing and negotiating Tibetan identities in exile. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 103(4), 967-983.

- McCorquodale, R. (1994). Self-determination: A human rights approach. *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 43(4), 857-885.
- Medaglia, R., Eaton, B., Hedman, J., & Whitley, E. A. (2021). Mechanisms of power inscription into IT governance: Lessons from two national digital identity systems. *Information Systems Journal*.
- Mellouli, M., Bouaziz, F., & Bentahar, O. (2020). E-government success assessment from a public value perspective. *International Review of Public Administration*, 25(3), 153-174.
- Meyers, D. (2007). Feminist perspectives on the self. *Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*.
- Minahan, J. B. (2016). *Encyclopedia of Stateless Nations: Ethnic and National Groups around the World: Ethnic and National Groups around the World*: ABC-CLIO.
- Minority Rights, G. I. (Producer). (2015, 06 19). Hazaras. Retrieved from  
<https://minorityrights.org/minorities/hazaras/>
- Mir Hazar, K. (2017). Enlightenment movement and Arg, Hazaristan Charter and the Need of Strategic Dialogue with Tajik, Uzbek and Turkmen Retrieved from  
<https://www.kabulpress.org/article240085.html>
- Mir Hazar, K. (2020a). Intersectionality: From American Black Movements to Yellow Uprising of the Hazara in Hazaristan.
- Mir Hazar, K. (2020b). *Intersectionality: From American Black Movements to Yellow Uprising of the Hazara in Hazaristan, Identifying the Patterns of Oppression Toward Social Justice and Self-Determination, A draft application for a fictional citizen science project*. Final assignment for the course Critical Theory and Digital Transformation (4DH405). Unpublished.
- Mir Hazar, K. (2020c). *Sensur i Afghanistan*. Unpublished, Bergen: Morgana Press.
- Mir Hazar, K. (2020d). *Stateless Nations: Forming Digital Nation Toward Independence*.
- Morf, C. C., & Mischel, W. (2012). The self as a psycho-social dynamic processing system: Toward a converging science of selfhood.
- Mustafa, S. D. (2020). Iraqi Kurdistan independence referendum: political parties, opportunity and timing. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 1-17.
- Nagel, K. J. (2004). Transcending the National / Asserting the National: How Stateless Nations like Scotland, Wales and Catalonia React to European Integration. *The Australian journal of politics and history*, 50(1), 57-74. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8497.2004.00320.x
- Naik, N., & Jenkins, P. (2020a). Governing Principles of Self-Sovereign Identity Applied to Blockchain Enabled Privacy Preserving Identity Management Systems. In (pp. 1-6): IEEE.
- Naik, N., & Jenkins, P. (2020b). *Your identity is yours: Take back control of your identity using GDPR compatible self-sovereign identity*. Paper presented at the 2020 7th International Conference on Behavioural and Social Computing (BESC).
- Nakamura, A., & Suzuki, K. (2019). Japan's attempts to digitalise government: An introduction of "My number" system in reforming public management. In *Public service excellence in the 21st century* (pp. 145-167): Springer.
- Newby, L. (1996). Xinjiang: in Search of an Identity. *Unity and diversity: local cultures and identities in China*, 1, 67.
- Nietzsche, F. W. (1974). *The gay science: with a prelude in German rhymes and an appendix of songs* (Vol. 985): Vintage.
- Nimni, E. (2011). Stateless Nations in a World of Nation-states. *Routledge handbook of ethnic conflict*.
- NurMuhammad, R., Horst, H. A., Papoutsaki, E., & Dodson, G. (2016). Uyghur transnational identity on Facebook: On the development of a young diaspora. *Identities*, 23(4), 485-499.
- OpenDemocracy. (2017). How online citizenship is unsettling rights and identities. *OpenDemocracy (London)*.

- Patton, M. (2015). Qualitative analysis approaches: identifying patterns and themes. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications*, 541-552.
- Poets Worldwide (Producer). (2017, 03 21). An Open Letter from the Poets World-wide to the Hazara, Civil and Human Rights Organizations, Immigration Authorities, and World Leaders. *Hazara Rights*. Retrieved from <http://hazararights.com/spip.php?article35>
- Powell, C. (1998). Introduction: Locating Culture, Identity, and Human Rights. *Colum. Hum. Rts. L. Rev.*, 30, 201.
- Proshansky, H. M., Fabian, A. K., & Kaminoff, R. (1983). Place-identity: Physical world socialization of the self. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*.
- Raofi, W. (2018). National Identity Crisis Threatens Afghanistan Peace. Retrieved from <https://tolonews.com/opinion/national-identity-crisis-threatens-afghanistan-peace>
- Rohingya Project. (2017). The Rohingya Project: Social and Financial Inclusion Platform. Retrieved from <https://rohingyaproject.com/elementor-2936/>
- Rosa, H. (2003). Social acceleration: ethical and political consequences of a desynchronized high-speed society. *Constellations*, 10(1), 3-33.
- Rosa, H. (2013). *Social acceleration: A new theory of modernity*: Columbia University Press.
- Scaff, L. A. (1989). *Fleeing the iron cage: Culture, politics, and modernity in the thought of Max Weber*: Univ of California Press.
- Seigneur, J.-M., & Maliki, T. E. (2009). Chapter 17 - Identity Management. In (pp. 269-292): Elsevier Inc.
- Sherif, M. (1958). Superordinate goals in the reduction of intergroup conflict. *American journal of Sociology*, 63(4), 349-356.
- Simmel, G. (1971). *On individuality and social forms*: University of Chicago Press Chicago.
- Steen, M. (2013). Virtues in participatory design: Cooperation, curiosity, creativity, empowerment and reflexivity. *Science and engineering ethics*, 19(3), 945-962.
- Sullivan, C. (2011). *Digital Identity : An Emergent Legal Concept*: University of Adelaide Press.
- Sullivan, C. (2016). Digital citizenship and the right to digital identity under international law. *computer law & security review*, 32(3), 474-481.
- Sullivan, C. (2018). Digital identity—From emergent legal concept to new reality. *computer law & security review*, 34(4), 723-731.
- Sullivan, C., & Burger, E. (2017). E-residency and blockchain. *The computer law and security report*, 33(4), 470-481. doi:10.1016/j.clsr.2017.03.016
- Sullivan, C., & Burger, E. (2019). Blockchain, digital identity, e-government. In *Business Transformation through Blockchain* (pp. 233-258): Springer.
- Sullivan, C., & Stalla-Bourdillon, S. (2015). Digital identity and French personality rights—A way forward in recognising and protecting an individual's rights in his/her digital identity. *computer law & security review*, 31(2), 268-279.
- Tajfel, H., Billig, M. G., Bundy, R. P., & Flament, C. (1971). Social categorization and intergroup behaviour. *European journal of social psychology*, 1(2), 149-178. doi:10.1002/ejsp.2420010202
- Tajfel, H., Turner, J. C., Austin, W. G., & Worchel, S. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. *Organizational identity: A reader*, 56(65), 9780203505984-9780203505916.
- Tammpuu, P., & Masso, A. (2019). Transnational Digital Identity as an Instrument for Global Digital Citizenship: The Case of Estonia's E-Residency. *Information Systems Frontiers*, 21(3), 621-634. doi:10.1007/s10796-019-09908-y
- Tatum, B. D. (2000). The complexity of identity: "Who am I?". *Readings for diversity and social justice*, 2, 5-8.
- Temirkhanov, L. (1980). تاریخ ملی هزاره (A. Toghyan, Trans.). Quetta: تنظیم نسل نو هزاره.

- Thames Star. (1892). THE HAZARA REVOLT. *Thames Star*, p. 2. Retrieved from <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/THS18920720.2.11.4>
- The Pioneers of the Hazaristan Independence Movement. (2021). Hazaristan Charter. Retrieved from <https://www.hazaristan.asia/index.html>
- Tobin, A., & Reed, D. (2016). The inevitable rise of self-sovereign identity. *The Sovrin Foundation*, 29(2016).
- Tobin, D. (2020). A "Struggle of Life or Death": Han and Uyghur Insecurities on China's North-West Frontier. *The China Quarterly*, 242, 301-323.
- Toth, K. C., & Anderson-Priddy, A. (2019). Self-sovereign digital identity: A paradigm shift for identity. *IEEE Security & Privacy*, 17(3), 17-27.
- Tsavkko Garcia, R. (2018). Diasporas and the role of social media on militant/political activities: The Basque diaspora in Argentina in the spotlight. *Crossings: Journal of Migration & Culture*, 9(1), 77-90.
- Turner, J. C. (1975). Social comparison and social identity: Some prospects for intergroup behaviour. *European journal of social psychology*, 5(1), 1-34.
- Turner, J. C. (1978). Social categorization and social discrimination in the minimal group paradigm. *Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations*, 101, 140.
- Turner, J. C. (1984). Psychological Group Formation'. *The Social Dimension: European Developments in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 2, 518-538.
- Turner, J. C., & Reynolds, K. J. (2010). The story of social identity. In *Rediscovering social identity: Key readings*: Psychology Press, Taylor & Francis.
- Turner, J. H. (1981). Emile Durkheim's theory of integration in differentiated social systems. *Pacific Sociological Review*, 24(4), 379-391.
- UNHCR. (2015). About statelessness. Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/about-statelessness/>
- UNPO. (2018). UNPO: ESTONIA. Retrieved from <https://unpo.org/members/20845>
- Valentines-Álvarez, J. (2018). Seeing like a factory: Technocratic nationalism in Catalonia, 1930-1939. *History and technology*, 34(3-4), 235-258. doi:10.1080/07341512.2019.1565745
- Vivien de St Martin, L. (Cartographer). (1825). Carte Generale du Royaume de Perse et du Royaume de Caboul ou Afghanistan. Par L. Vivien, Geographe. Grave par Giraldon Bovinet. 1825. A Paris. Chez Menard et Desenne, Libraires Rue Git le Coeur, No. 8. [Atlas Map]. Retrieved from <https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/s/4g965h>
- Waikato Times. (1892). AFGHANISTAN. *Waikato Times*, p. 3. Retrieved from <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/WT18920811.2.23>
- Walsham, G. (1995). Interpretive case studies in IS research: nature and method. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 4(2), 74-81.
- Waterman, A. S. (2015). Identity as internal processes: How the "I" comes to define the "me". In *The Oxford handbook of identity development*. (pp. 195-209). New York, NY, US: Oxford University Press.
- Williams, S. (2018). *Rethinking Stateless Nations and National Identity in Wales and the Basque Country*. Cham: Springer International Publishing AG.
- Zabriskie, P. (2008). Hazaras: Afghanistan's Outsiders. *National Geographic*.
- Zwitter, A., Gstreich, O. J., & Yap, E. (2020). Digital Identity and the Blockchain: Universal Identity Management and the Concept of the 'Self-Sovereign' Individual. *Front. Blockchain*, 28.

# Appendix A: NSD Assessment

## **Stateless Nations and Digital Identity**

### **Reference**

571772

### **Status**

Assessed

Behandlingen av personopplysninger er vurdert av NSD. Vurderingen er:

Our assessment is that the processing of personal data in this project will comply with data protection legislation, so long as it is carried out in accordance with what is documented in the Notification Form and attachments, dated 11.03.2021, as well as in correspondence with NSD.

Everything is in place for the processing to begin.

### **NOTIFY CHANGES**

If you intend to make changes to the processing of personal data in this project it may be necessary to notify NSD. This is done by updating the information registered in the Notification Form. On our website we explain which changes must be notified. Wait until you receive an answer from us before you carry out the changes.

### **TYPE OF DATA AND DURATION**

The project will be processing general categories of personal data, special categories of personal data regarding ethnic origin until 30.06.2021.

### **LEGAL BASIS**

The project will gain consent from data subjects to process their personal data. We find that consent will meet the necessary requirements under art. 4 (11) and 7, in that it will be a freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous statement or action, which will be documented and can be withdrawn.

The legal basis for processing general categories of personal data is therefore consent given by the data subject, cf. the General Data Protection Regulation art. 6.1 a).

The legal basis for processing special categories of personal data is explicit consent given by the data subject, cf. art. 9.2 a), cf. the Personal Data Act § 10, cf. § 9 (2).

### **PRINCIPLES RELATING TO PROCESSING PERSONAL DATA**

NSD finds that the planned processing of personal data will be in accordance with the principles under the General Data Protection Regulation regarding:

- lawfulness, fairness and transparency (art. 5.1 a), in that data subjects will receive sufficient information about the processing and will give their consent
- purpose limitation (art. 5.1 b), in that personal data will be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes, and will not be processed for new, incompatible purposes
- data minimisation (art. 5.1 c), in that only personal data which are adequate, relevant and necessary for the purpose of the project will be processed
- storage limitation (art. 5.1 e), in that personal data will not be stored for longer than is necessary to fulfill the project's purpose

## **THE RIGHTS OF DATA SUBJECTS**

NSD finds that the information that will be given to data subjects about the processing of their personal data will meet the legal requirements for form and content, cf. art. 12.1 and art. 13.

Data subjects will have the following rights in this project: access (art. 15), rectification (art. 16), erasure (art. 17), restriction of processing (art. 18), data portability (art. 20).

These rights apply so long as the data subject can be identified in the collected data.

We remind you that if a data subject contacts you about their rights, the data controller has a duty to reply within a month.

## **FOLLOW YOUR INSTITUTION'S GUIDELINES**

NSD presupposes that the project will meet the requirements of accuracy (art. 5.1 d), integrity and confidentiality (art. 5.1 f) and security (art. 32) when processing personal data.

To ensure that these requirements are met you must follow your institution's internal guidelines and/or consult with your institution (i.e. the institution responsible for the project).

## **FOLLOW-UP OF THE PROJECT**

NSD will follow up the progress of the project at the planned end date in order to determine whether the processing of personal data has been concluded.

**Good luck with the project!**

Contact person ...

Data Protection Services for Research: +47 55 58 21 17 (press 1)

## Appendix B: Interview Guide

Interviewing member of the Hazara indigenous people and the stateless nation about the importance of digital identity and how technology can help them

### Introduction

- Information about the research project
- Information about the rights of the participants, including the privacy rights
- Information about the way data is being stored
- Information about the recording
- Start recording

### Identity

- What identity means to you?
- What do you think about the individual, collective, and, if applicable, the national identity of the Hazara?
- Can you give some aspects of those identities?
- Why is identity important for stateless nations, particularly the Hazara?
- Does identity have any impact on the Hazara life, relationship, and social contract?
- Are there any other aspects of the Hazara identity that you want to highlight?

### Importance of digital identity

- Is it necessary to construct a digital representation of Hazara individual, collective and national identity?
- What can be achieved by constructing those digital identities?
- Can digital identity accelerates gaining some goals, for instance, establishing human rights, including self-determination?
- Do you expect any impact of digital identity on the Hazara life, relationship, and social contract?
- For instance, how might digital identity impact the social, political, economic, and cultural situation of the Hazara?
- Can you give some examples?
- Is there anything more to add?

### How can information technology help?

- Do you think information technology can help to achieve those goals?
- How?
- What do you need precisely of technology regarding identity construction?
- What about those who do not have access to technology?
- Do you think technology can reduce the gaps regarding identity, for instance, collective and national identity?
- What technological resources need to accelerate constructing digital identity?

- Suppose you have the infrastructure, systems, and human resources to construct digital identity. How do you imagine your nation in the next five to twenty years?
- Is there anything else about the way technology can help?

### **Ending**

- Anything else to add?
- Turning off the recording
- Again giving information about the participant rights
- Asking if sh/e has any consideration