

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/republic-of-dreams-ordinary-people-extraordinary-struggles-and-the-future-of-iraqi-kurdistan/>

The speaker reflects on their extensive work in Kurdish activism, particularly in Iraqi Kurdistan, which began after years of academic focus on British activism in Turkey. Their journey into Kurdish activism started with a research trip in 2009 to investigate a protest in Halabja, a town known for a notorious chemical attack in 1988. During this visit, the speaker connected with a local undergrad named Pesa, who later became a key figure in their narrative nonfiction book.

The speaker intended to tell the stories of the Kurdish people, emphasizing the personal experiences of individuals rather than academic arguments. Through meticulous research, including interviews and firsthand observations during pro-democracy protests and the Kurdish independence referendum, they aimed to reveal the everyday lives and struggles of ordinary Kurdish families, like Pesa's.

The narrative explores the complexities of Kurdish identity and activism across different regions (Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Syria). It highlights the contradicting nature of Kurdish politics, where they both sought autonomy while contending with the desires of surrounding states for control over their populations. Pesa's family, depicted as a working-class Muslim family fleeing persecution, symbolizes resilience and a desire for a meaningful life despite considerable hardships.

Throughout the writing process, the speaker emphasizes the importance of humanizing the Kurdish experience and showcasing their diverse socio-political landscape, aiming to challenge victim-centric narratives. The book not only illustrates the struggles faced by Kurds but also conveys themes of hope, community, and the significance of home as a source of identity and strength. Ultimately, it seeks to invite readers to appreciate the complexity and humanity of Kurdish lives in the face of adversity.