

# Comparative analysis of bulgarian and kurdish cultures

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Traditionally, Bulgaria is a patriarchal society. The father in the family is the main figure as well as the grandfather (usually the father's father). Similar to Kurdish people, when a female marries in another family she leaves and lives with them. She is also expected to call her new father and mother in law "mom and dad" and obey them more than their own child.

Moreover, usually the cousins from your dad's side are closer to you than the cousin from your mom's side. Personally, where I come from it really depends on the household. Some households are run by the mother and some households are run by the father. Moreover, some are run by the grandfather or the oldest in the family. These days, in Bulgaria, there are no strict rules as to who has to be the head of the family. It varies from family to family. In my family, my dad is the breadwinner and my mom is a stay-at-home mom and sometimes contributes to charity events. My mom always made it clear how important my dad is and that we should be very careful to respect him. For example, when I was a kid and when I did something bad, she always used to say, "oh my goodness, when your dad comes you will see heaven". Therefore, in my family, my dad is the main figure, but in others it was either the mom or the oldest person in the family.

Contrastly to past Kurdish society and in terms of marriages, we do not marry within the family, let alone marry cousins, but due to the fact that Kurdish people no longer practice marriages within the family, our cultures are similar in this area. People marry whoever they want to marry and whenever they want to marry. In terms of economics, I observe the same in my country as in Kurdish areas. Areas that are more nationalistic oriented, or

supporters of nationalistic parties in the government are often unemployed people with low economic status. However, people that are more open minded have higher economic status because they either left the country to find a job or to attend a university.

Religion in my country is important, people usually only celebrate Christmas and Easter, but nothing radical. Religion is the way we pay respect in our country, but we are also very peaceful about it. We follow the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, but again we are not radical like some Kurdish people that join terrorist groups.

I've pretty much been othered in any society or social circle I've been in since growing up. Being the only girl in the family, playing with my brothers and his friends often times resulted in, oh, " She's in my team- great!". Later on, I went to elementary school that was in the middle of our city and I was coming from the suburbs. Most of my classmates were leaving within five minutes walking distance from the school, and even if I lived, let's say 20 minutes, I was the girl from the other area. Keep in mind that for elementary school students, everything outside of the three streets you're allowed to hang out in seems like another world. And I was part of that other world. I never really blamed them but oftentimes, they would gather after school to play and I had to leave home. Their friendships were stronger, I couldn't keep up with the things happening after school and I guess I've always felt left out. Years later I found myself in high school. The issue this time was that I was enrolled in a science high school which was strongly focused on preparing highschoolers for medical school in Bulgaria.

Simultaneously, I was enrolled in a boarding school in the UK so I was going back and forth in order to make it work. I remember how oftentimes the soviet books we were using in Bulgaria had inaccurate or old information and I would inform the teacher. This was met by resentment from both teachers and students, and behind my back I'd often be called " Miss England" or " Miss Americana wanna be" like it was something bad to know another language or introduce novel way of learning. Although, it is important for me to note how other students were very curious and would always ask me about my learning process abroad.

After I've finished high school I took a gap year and left for Indonesia. I was volunteering in an all-female women crisis center in Yogyakarta. Indonesia has three most prominent religious group and I was working in the Islamic region. Most of my co-workers mostly females, were covered from head to toe and so I was. I was kindly asked by one of them to cover, in order to avoid sticking out on the street for the skin I was showing ( I was wearing long jeans and t-shirt). I remember a particularly funny story, which almost led me to leaving the country. I needed food and they gave me a scooter (never rode a scooter in my life before) and sent me to the store. The streets were crazy, and while I was waiting at the stoplight a lady on the next scooter literally called me a white person and touched my arm. I literally freaked out. Also, I was called all sorts of white stereotypes, like kids calling me " Barbie" even though I look nothing like the doll or looking like a celebrity because of my skin. So many people on the streets were asking me for photos and being the other was not necessarily a bad thing.

The next Spring I was already in college. Knowing that I was perceived different back home, I had high hopes that I would fit in the States. But yet I was othered. I was the international student often times perceived as rude but with a golden heart (citing friends and peers here). However, no matter how cool and smart and how good my English was I was always a Bulgarian. Not really saying that this was a bad thing I just thought that Drew would be place where I will fit in like a glove and not be othered. But I was. And it was not bad. Now I embrace being the other because number 1 it means that I can contribute with things I know and local classmates never did or learned about. Of course being the other can be challenging and hard to brush up on, but sometimes if we look beyond our egos and feelings and embrace challenge and deviance, things would turn out differently.

Kurdish people do not have their own country but they have regions which are primarily populated by their society. Despite the fact, that they are very tolerant due to the diversity in their communities (Yazidis, Christian, Jewish and etc.) they do not receive such tolerance.

In Turkey for example, at the beginning of the twenty century, thousands of Kurds were heavily persecuted for rebellious behavior. Certain areas of the country populated by Kurdish people were prohibited for foreigners to visit. Moreover, they weren't part of any historical documentation and weren't acknowledged as Kurdish people but "Turks" that populate the mountains. In the 80's and 90's of the twenty century, they weren't allowed to speak their own language or broadcast and play publicly their own music. For example, Kurdish people were subjected not only to language ban but

expressing ethno-centralism and were even forced to change their names. Ways of preservation of Kurdish culture were mouth by mouth or buying illegal cassettes. Some of these cassettes were to be buried by their owners in their backyards due to the frequent Turkish raids in these areas.

Fortunately, in the early 90's Kurdish language was allowed again and is now spoken in these areas. For example, not long ago in my school, we had visitors from a Turkish school. I know basic Turkish so I tried to speak to the children but didn't understand a word. Later on, I told my Turkish friend how my Turkish sucks, and she asked me which area the kids were from. When I said the town they were coming from, she said, oh they are Kurdish. They really don't like us and do not speak our language. They come from poor areas and are mostly farmer's children that do not continue with their education.

In Iraqi Kurdistan, on the other hand, things work differently. They have their own regional government and face more freedom and acceptance than the Kurds in Turkey. Recently, in 2017 they held an independence referendum for recognizing the independence of Iraqi Kurdistan. Their capital, Erbil, is very rich in oil and has external trading affairs with nearby countries. They have their own TV channels, their own schools and definitely one of the busiest airports in Iraq. The region is relatively peaceful in comparison to other parts of Iraq and therefore it is also the most development region. My cousin's best friend Jasmine is married to a Kurdish guy from Erbil. They have very high socio-economic status and are very open-minded. Her husband and his family immigrated to Bulgaria when he was a child but

always went back to Iraqi Kurdistan to visit family. When they married, she went to visit with him and her family was frightened. Although when she came back, she said that Erbil is very different than what we hear on the news about Iraq and that is indeed very beautiful and developed region. When I told one of my Iraqi friends about this story, he said that he believed the Kurdish people live off of them. He acknowledged their wealth but claimed it to be from the oil on Iraqi land. He also stated, how their president now, Mr. Barzani is of a Kurdish descent and will turn Iraq into Kurdistan.