

**Bangor University**

## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

### **The Obstacles to Political Development in the Kurdistan Region 1992-2014**

Khalil, Hiwa

*Award date:*  
2016

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**The Obstacles to Political Development in the Kurdistan Region  
1992-2014**

**HIWA MAJID KHALIL**

**2016**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**School of Social Sciences  
College of Business, Law, Education and Social Sciences  
Bangor University**

## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the main obstacles to political development in the Kurdistan region (KR) in the period 1992-2014. It is an interdisciplinary study of recent history, culture, economics, politics and regional relations with a focus on political outcomes. Data from documentary sources is supported by semi-structured interviews with political stakeholders. The first part reviews the current historical, geographic, economic and social situation in the KR. The analysis is informed by theories of political development and the dependency school. The second part concentrates on the socio-political organisation of the KR, the performance of government and parliament, the role of the political parties and tribes. The third part evaluates the external relationships between the KR and the neighbouring countries, namely Iran and Turkey, and their impacts, positive or negative on political development.

The aim of the study is to explain the interaction between all these aspects in the process of political development. Modern political institutions are considered as a tool for development, manifested in general elections in a multiparty system. However, the finding of this thesis is that the political institutions in the KR themselves obstruct the process of political development. The main political parties have a strongly centralised hierarchical structure without devolution of power or rotation of leaders. The parties cooperate with chieftains and tribes to stay in power. A further finding is that the level of political development in the KR corresponds to its relationships with neighbouring countries and the stability or instability of the region. The existence of Kurdish populations in the neighbouring countries and the standing of the KR as a non-state entity has had a negative impact on the ability of the Kurdistan regional government to follow an independent policy for development.

This Thesis Is Dedicated

To

My wife Parishan.

To

Zhia, my little son, who left us one week after he was born in October 2015.

## **Acknowledgments**

Let me begin with a word of thanks to my wife, for her endless support and love. Thank you to my parents.

I heartily thank my supervisor Professor Howard Davis for his insightful support and professional advice, which contributed to the successful completion of the study as well as my personal and professional development.

I also wish to express my appreciation to my friends notably: Dr. Murad Hakeem, Dr. Izaddin Rasool, Nykola Lee, Sadettin Taşçi, Sartip Khalis, Sherwan Hashm, Zana Dizayee, Kovan Brifki, Wrya Majid, Dldar Sedqi, Aras Abdulkarim, Hardy Mahmood and Muhhamad Waladbagi.

I wish to use this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to this study's participants who shared their time, knowledge, experience, and cooperation with this study.

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## **Abbreviations**

EU: European Union

GM: Gorran Movement

GNP: Gross National Product

HCDP: Human Capacity Development Programme

ID: Iraqi Dinar

IMF: International Monetary Fund

IMK: Islamic Movement of Kurdistan

ISIS: Islamic State of Iraq and Sham

IU: Islamic Union

KDP: Kurdistan Democratic Party

KDPD: Kurdistan People's Democratic Party

KDP-I: Kurdistan Democratic Party-Iran

KFM: Kurdish Freedom Movement

KR: Kurdistan Region

KRG: Kurdistan Regional Government

KRSO: Kurdistan Region Survey Organisation

OFFP: Oil for Food Programme

PASOK: Kurdistan Socialist Party

PKK: Kurdistan Workers Party

PUK: Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

UN: United Nations

USA: United State of America

USCR: United States Committee for Refugees

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WB: World Bank

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## Preface

A variety of issues influence political development in the Kurdistan region (KR), sometimes called the Iraqi Kurdistan region or the North of Iraq. Internally, the region lives within a complex socio-political situation, where political parties co-exist with deadly rivals, have their own armed forces, are divided administratively, relate to tribal organisations and where there is both unity and disunity between political elites. Externally, the geographical location and neighbouring governments' policies often influence the stability, instability and level of political development in the KR. The legal status of the region is even more controversial. From 1992 to 2005, the KR had autonomy under the umbrella of international support and United Nations (UN) resolutions. In the decade which followed from 2005, it has had federal status in the framework of the Iraqi constitution. In 2014, with ISIS controlling the majority of the Sunni part of Iraq, the president of the KR explicitly demanded an independent state.

This timespan is necessary to understand the context and pathways of political change. The puzzle is that, while a federal system normally consists of several regions, Iraq has only one federal region. Despite this, the KR has been able to behave somewhat like an independent state, especially in the oil and military sectors. On the other hand, the region continues to face difficulties in defining its authority and boundaries within the status quo. In response to this complex situation, this thesis aims to describe and analyse a variety of aspects of its formal structure (executive and legislative apparatuses), informal aspects of political life (the tribal fabric) as well as neighbouring states' relationships with the Kurdistan regional government (KRG) and its political parties. To understand this complexity, the resources of more than one theory, a range of data and a mixed methodology need to be utilized to be able to provide a comprehensive view of political development in the KR.

This thesis is a study of the Iraqi Kurdistan region from 1992 to 2014. It is written from the perspective of theories of political development and informed by political theory, international relations and theories of political culture. The thesis is divided into ten chapters, which together support the argument that in the KR there is an inconsistency between two types of structure. On the one hand, there is a multi-party system, with a parliament and political competition which mainly corresponds to western democratic ideas. On the other hand, these bodies are dominated by political parties based on Marxist-Leninist structures even if this is not explicitly acknowledged; and behaviour which is shaped by a mixture of Sharia and western secular laws. In fact, there is a problematic relationship between the



existence of the apparatuses of democracy and the practice of these apparatuses in everyday life and policy.

Chapter One focuses on the characteristics of the KR and investigates its historical origins, its controversial geographic location, demography, economic sector and social features to highlight those subjects that have an impact on the process of political development in the KR in the current situation.

Chapter Two, on the state of knowledge, key concepts and theories, reviews the available research literature on the subject of political development in the KR. Concepts from state and institution theory, political elite theory and geopolitical theory are used to frame key questions and to explore the main challenges of political development in the KR, including the problematic de facto status of the KR and foreign influences upon its development.

Chapter Three, on the concept and definition of political development, presents the key ideas in political development thinking. The chapter provides an overview of political development theories, both from the political development tradition itself, as well as the more critical ideas of the dependency school.

Chapter Four, on the design and methodology of the study, reviews the theoretical context, methodology, methods and type of data collection. The study uses both qualitative and quantitative data and it is a single case study that compares the periods of government from 1992 to 2005 and from 2006 to 2014.

Chapters Five and Six explore the formal government administrations of the KR chronologically, and their role in political development, both negative and positive. Chapter Five on the foundations of government and parliament (1992-2005), examines the building of governmental and parliamentary apparatuses as a step towards institutionalization. This success, however, led to the division of the government into the administrations of Erbil and Slemani which amounts to deinstitutionalisation and regression in political development. The next chapter, on the policy shift towards unification and the rise of opposition (2006-2014), examines the second experiment in political life in the form of the united cabinet and explores the reality of unification on the ground, both in the period when opposition was absent (the fifth cabinet) and when opposition emerged (the sixth and seventh cabinets).

Chapter Seven, on the structure and function of the political parties, addresses the role of the political parties. It is a continuation of the previous chapters. The programmes, structures and perspectives of the main political parties of the KR are assessed and analysed. The issue

of their leadership is also considered. The long-established political parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP since 1946) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK since 1976) receive more attention than others. The influential Islamic parties emerged after the uprising in 1992 and the *Gorran* (Change) Movement was not established until 2009.

Chapter Eight, on the social fabric, tribes and politics, investigates the impact of tribes on political parties and vice versa and the consequences of these relationships for the process of political development. It explains why political parties and the government sometimes reinforce and sometimes marginalise the role of tribes.

Chapter Nine deals with the impact of foreign intervention and political development in the KR, especially in terms of the relationships between the neighbouring countries of Turkey and Iran and the Kurdistan region's political parties and government. Turkey has the greatest impact on the region, compared with other regional states. The reason is that, historically, the KR was part of the Ottoman Empire; it is the recognized outlet for the KR to connect with Europe economically; and the majority of the Kurdistan Workers Party's (PKK) headquarters and safe havens exist within the KR's border areas with Turkey. Finally, the Turkish government still maintains military bases inside the KR. However, this does not mean that other states are unimportant, only that Iran and Turkey have the most direct role in the stability or instability and development or undevelopment of the KR.

Chapter Ten, conclusion, explains the contribution to knowledge made by the research, highlights the weaknesses of theories of political development and explains how in the KR, the democratic political institutions created after 1992 were broadened and supported by western countries, but have continued to behave in a way that remains a barrier to further political development.

## **Chapter One: Identifying the Kurdistan Region**

The aims of this chapter are: to lay the foundations for the following chapters, to describe the physical and natural resources of the KR which shape the material context for political development, to provide some historical context in order to explain the distribution of the economic and social resources of the KR according to existing quantitative and qualitative data, and finally to contribute to a better understanding of obstacles to political development in the KR.

A political entity contains certain characteristics which contribute directly to the nature of political development in the entity. They include: 1. Geographical location – with its various features (landlocked or sea access, fertile and non-fertile land, climate, natural or imposed boundaries) and history 2. Demography 3. Economy (agricultural, industrialized or non-industrialized economy, individual income, the rate of unemployment and the distribution of wealth) 4. Social characteristics (especially education). The combination of these elements plays a crucial role in the political development process of any society. They are considered in turn.

### **Geography and History**

Some of the fundamental elements in the developmental process are geographical: the physical characteristics of a territory, the relationship between earth and its people, between people themselves and with others (O’Shea, 2006). The geographical location of a territory is often linked to recognition of its boundaries by foreign entities<sup>1</sup>. The territoriality and the sovereignty of an entity not only defines the state authority, but also includes the communication function of boundaries with other states. This identification can be considered as a part of the institutionalisation of the entity and ways to “distinguish between us and them, inside and outside, domestic and foreign” (Newman and Paasi, 1998:187-195; Minghi, 1963; Paasi, 1997; O’Shea, 2006).

According to Pye (1963) more communication inside a society leads to more development. Based on this claim, communication with the outside world should have a similar role. However, this communication function will differ from one geographical location to another. For instance, in the European Union (EU), communication across borders has become open

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<sup>1</sup> Many Kurds believe that they are victims of their geography and that this geography plays a crucial role in their destiny. This type of thinking can impact on the ability of a nation to choose its trajectory of development, leading to negative consequences for Kurdish society and its policies.

and fluid. In contrast, the boundaries of many countries, in the Middle East for example, indicate that the political role of geographical boundaries is more than just the physical borders that separate countries.

Geographical boundaries represent a dynamic relationship between place and society, people and their symbols (Murphy, 1990). This does not mean that geography is an agent, but refers to the political imagination that geography is able to play through political ideology. This dynamic, for example, has been a key consideration in the conflict between the KRG, its political parties and the central Iraqi government, which is an ongoing process, but without armed conflict since 1992.

The KR is a landlocked location and the surrounding countries all have problems with the Kurdish question. This feature has negative consequences for its relationships with the external world, especially in terms of economic development. Such a landlocked location creates difficulties in connecting with the global marketplace, which serves to build the infrastructure of a society (Hill et al, 2012). As the KR does not have access to sea routes, its economic development can be threatened by pressure from other governments in the region. The political aspects of geography will be considered further in Chapter 2.

Historically, Kurdistan means ‘the land of Kurds’ (Kelly, 2010; Culcasi, 2006; Yildiz, 2004). It has frequently been controlled by others. In the seventh century, when Arabs diffused Islam and dominated Kurdistan, they used the word *Kurd* for the inhabitants of the Zagros Mountains, which are located in Iran and the present-day KR. In the twelfth century, the Turkish Seljuk prince Saandjar built up a province named Kurdistan which is now located in Iran. The term then became used in the sixteenth century for all those areas that had a majority of Kurds located in them (Yildiz, 2004:7; McDowell, 2007:6).

The impact of this complex geography on politics in the KR can be traced back to when Greater Kurdistan was divided between the Safavid and Ottoman Empires in 1639. Later, the Sykes-Picot agreement in 1916 divided Greater Kurdistan between Russia, France and Britain. Due to the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917, the latter power refused to be part of this agreement. When the Ottoman Empire no longer featured on the world map after World War I, Syria was under French mandate and Iraq was under British mandate. The Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 divided Greater Kurdistan between Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Syria. Southern Kurdistan (the KR) became part of Iraq (Ismail, 1991; Dahlman, 2002; O’Leary and Salih, 2005; Culcasi, 2006; Gunter, 2009).

Iraqi Kurdistan, after the granting of autonomy in 1970, was divided again into two parts, one of them being the current KR and the other (with a Kurdish majority population) being run by the Iraqi government, referred to in Article 140 of the Iraqi constitution as the so called ‘disputed areas’. Again, in the 1990s, the autonomous part (three Northern provinces) was divided geographically, administratively and politically by internal war into two parts, with some further sub-divided areas, as discussed in the following paragraphs. These ‘Hard Divisions’, as will be seen, continued to have serious repercussions for the social fabric of society and created socio-political cleavages between the segmented parts that can be described as ‘Soft Divisions’.

With this compartmentalization, the occupier states began to transform the demographic features of the areas with majority Kurdish populations, either by changing the Kurdish names of cities and locations or by removing Kurds and replacing them with other ethnic groups to create a non-Kurdish dominant ethnic group in each of these countries. In Iraqi Kurdistan, this process reached its peak after the Ba’ath regime seized power in 1963, with apartheid policies and the *Anfal* campaigns and chemical bombings in 1988, forced settlements and the Arabization of Kurdish territory. These deeds ultimately led to the deaths of around 200,000 people and destroyed more than 4000 villages or more than 80% of rural settlements (Kelly, 2010; Dahlman, 2002; O’Shea, 2006; Natali, 2010; (Yesiltas, 2014:50).

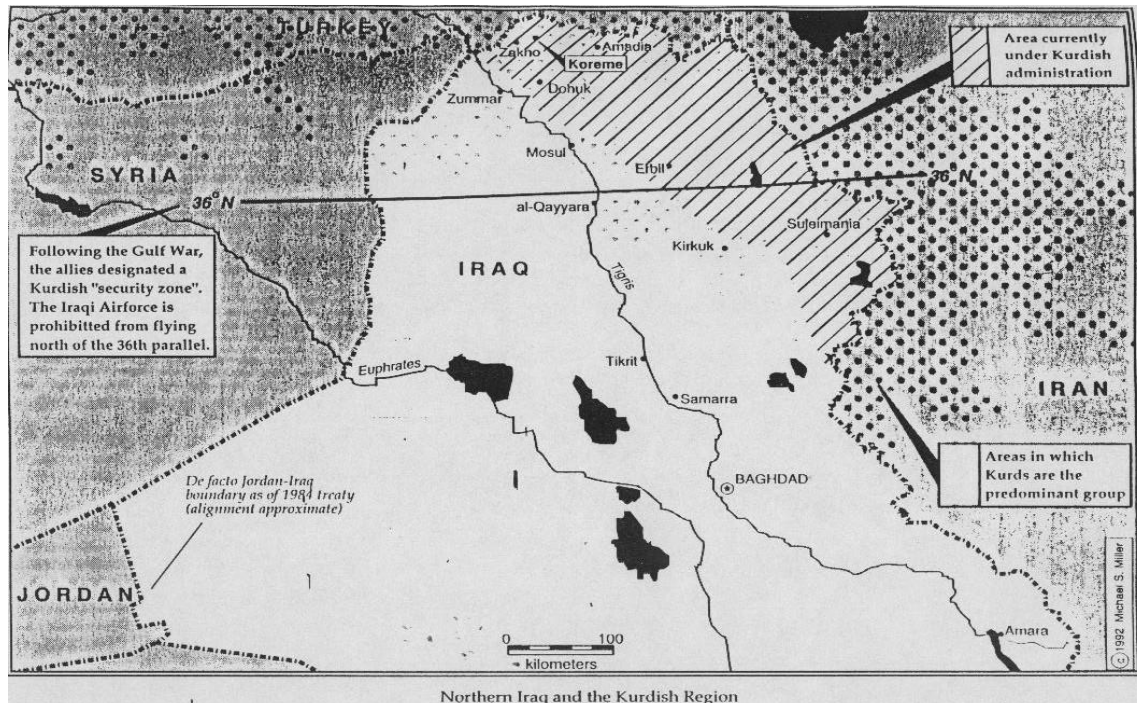
In its transformation attempts, the Ba’ath regime used politically charged terms to motivate the Iraqi Arab population such as changing the name of Kirkuk to *Ta’amim* (which in Arabic means nationalization) or the *Anfal* campaign, which refers to a Sura or a chapter of the Quran, which announces war against atheists and takes their property as spoils, or instead of using the term ‘Kurdistan’, calling it *Shimalona Al-habib* which means ‘our lovely North’. Furthermore, the majority of investment aimed at developing the country was designated either for the Arab part of Iraq or for military forces to be used against neighbouring countries or against Iraqi ethnic groups and religious creeds (Ismael and Ismael, 2005). According to Karami (1997:206) and Natali (2010) 12% of the total Iraqi budget was invested in the KR. The outcome of this policy was a lack of infrastructure in the region. Even today, household water supplies, sewerage systems, sufficient electrical power and advanced agricultural tools are lacking in the KR.

The landmark political events in the Iraqi state since 1921, such as the 1958 revolution, the 1968 coup, the 1980 Iran-Iraq war and the 1990 attack on Kuwait have all led to negotiations with Kurds about the solution to the Kirkuk province problem or demarcation of the

boundaries of the KR (Hiltermann, 2008). The demands frequently reiterated by the Kurds, in 1919 by Sharif Pasha and Sheikh Mahmoud, in 1944 by the *Hiwa* party, in 1961 by the *Eiyol* (September) revolution, in the negotiations of 1970, the new revolution in 1975, the 1991 negotiations, in the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL, Article 58, 2004) and finally in the Iraqi constitution in 2005 (Article 140) have consistently aimed to integrate the disputed areas into the KR.

Disagreement between Kurds and the central government over the definition of boundaries was a factor in the failure of the autonomy agreement on 11 March 1970 (March Manifesto, *Beyannamey yazdei Azar*). This disagreement was replaced by an accord between Iran and Iraq in 1975, and was named the Algeria Agreement and spelled the demise of the Kurdish autonomous claim that included all majority Kurdish population areas. Even the 36<sup>th</sup> parallel that was drawn in 1991 by the international community to protect the Kurds, divided Iraqi Kurdistan by a straight line (see Figure 1.1). All of these external interventions, up to now, have doubled the challenges in the process of establishing a self-ruling entity and have shaped the endless struggle between the KR and successive Iraqi governments.

Figure 1.1: Division of the KR by the 36<sup>th</sup> Parallel



Source: KRG Website (2013): <http://old.krg.org/reference/images/IKR09.jpg>

After the uprising in 1991, Kurdistan political parties controlled the provinces of Erbil, Duhok and Slemani and established their authority. The territory of Iraqi Kurdistan consists



of 18.5% of Iraq's total land. Until 2014, 51.4% was under the control of the Baghdad government and the rest was governed by the KRG (Yosif, 2012) (see Figure 1.2). In 2009 the KR parliament approved the draft constitution which in Article (2:1) states that

Kurdistan-Iraq is a geographical and historical entity made up of the Duhok province in its present administrative boundaries, as well as the provinces of Kirkuk, Slemani, and Erbil Provinces, as well as the districts of Akra, Shiekhan, Sinjar, Telkeif, Karakush, and the sub-districts of Zummar, Basheka, Aski Kalak of the Nineveh province and the districts of Khanakeen, Mandili of the Diyala province according to their administrative boundaries before 1968 (KRG, 2009).

Identifying the boundaries of the KR in this way provoked a reaction from regional states (Kelly, 2010), which led to the suspension of the referendum on the KR draft constitution.

Figure 1.2: Kurdistan Regional Territory and Disputed Areas



Source: Crisis Group Middle East Report No 88, (8 July 2009) 'Iraq and the Kurds: Trouble Along the Tiger Line'. The green line has been adjusted to add more detail and the towns of Chamchamal, Khanaqin and Kifri have been added.

In 2014 with the ISIS invasion, Kirkuk province and the majority of the disputed areas came under the control of the KRG and their destiny still remains uncertain. These areas could be incorporated into the KR peacefully or there could be another conflict between the KRG and the Iraqi government, depending on future events in the context of the KR, Iraq and the wider region. On the other hand, the resistance of the KRG to the ISIS invasion created more international respect and support for the KR and raised the level of its demand for federalism to an independent state.

While the KR is made up of the provinces of Duhok, Slemani and Erbil, these areas have been segregated between different political parties since 1996. Geographically, they are divided between the KDP, the PUK (and the Islamic factions until 2003). Each of them manages the areas they control according to their own laws (see Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3: Dominant Parties in the Kurdistan Region (1996-2003)



Source: CIA World Factbook, cited in Martin van Bruinessen (2005) 'Iraq: Kurdish challenges'.



In addition, some Iraqi Kurdistan and Turkish frontier areas have until the present time been controlled by the PKK. For this reason, in studying the geography and history of the KR it is important to consider how it has been segmented both internally and externally. Geographical and geopolitical divisions have contributed to permanent instability and great difficulty for strategic plans or development.

## **Demography**

Measurement of the KR's population in Iraq has always been subject to constant revision for reasons which are more political than technical<sup>2</sup>. Khalil Mohammad (2013), the head of the statistics board of the KR stated that the Iraqi and Kurdistan political parties do not wish to have accurate population statistics because the exact rate of each religious and ethnic group will be clear and this would conflict with the political parties' interests (cited in Tahir, 2013:8).

Through the forced resettlement process (in Arabic *Mojemia'at* and in Kurdish *Komelga Zore Mlékan*), the Iraqi regime before 1991 forcibly removed 150,000-200,000 Kurds into the Arab parts of Iraq and the majority of them were killed by the regime. The regime also, displaced approximately 800,000 people inside the KR and more than 200,000 Kurds migrated to Iran (Dahlman; 2002:289; Yildiz, 2004:25-26; Kelly, 2010:718; Romano, 2005). The estimated number of victims of these processes differs from one source to another. However, they account for thousands of victims. Table 1.1 shows the figures from the UN-Habitat report of 2000, that out of 3,515,921 (the population based on the use of Food Coupons<sup>3</sup>) in the KR, 805,505 or 22.91% of inhabitants had been displaced.

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<sup>2</sup> The population census is a political issue. In the Ba'ath period the regime tried to limit the recording of the Kurdish population by excluding them from the census and the Kurds declined to participate for fear of conscription. Many of them joined the Kurdish movement and lost their Iraqi ID. After 2003, the central government and the KRG agreed to solve the problem of disputed areas and the KR's budget by holding a census. They agreed to allocate 17% of the total Iraqi budget to the KR until the census was held. To decide the future of the disputed areas either as part of central government or part of the KR needed a process of normalization and census and finally referendum which should have been completed in 2007. The central government's fear of losing these areas led to delay. The problem is not technical but political. Since 2005, many different elections have been held in Iraq without technical problems, but the government continues to announce that they have technical problems in conducting a census.

<sup>3</sup> The Food Coupon is the food ration that Iraqi citizens have had since 1996 according to the Oil For Food Programme (OFFP) and since that time the Food Coupon has been used as the data for measuring the population of Iraq. However, the problem with this method is that because citizens benefit from the Coupon, families often do not delete the names of dead persons. According to the Kurdistan Region Survey Organisation KRSO (2014:9) 98.6% of all households in the KR use Food Coupons.

Table 1.1: UN-Habitat (displaced people in the KR)

Expelled in the 70s and 80s	372,347
Victims of the 1988 Anfal campaign	222,839
Victims of ethnic cleansing	58,706
Victims of the in-fighting	77,004
Returnees from Iran	40,145
Refugees from Iran	491
Refugees from Turkey	2,552
Victims of conflicts with the PKK	15,335
Others	16,086
Total	805,505

Source: 'The Internally Displaced People of Iraq', (UN-Habitat cited in Fawcett and Tanner, 2002:16).

According to the reports of the United States Committee for Refugees (USCR) and Human Rights Watch, the population displaced by the Arabization process was between 100,000 and 120,000. The PUK announced that the number of displacements in its zone of influence was 59,699 while the KDP's number was 58,000 (Fawcett and Tanner, 2002: 16-17).

Concerning the total population, based on pre-statistics from the Ministry of Planning (2013:2-3) in the KR, the population is more than five million. Tables 1.2 and 1.3 show the KR's population growth from 2009-12.

Table 1.2: Size of the KR Population

Governorate	Population		Estimated population	
	2009	2010	2011	2012
Erbil	1,717,284	1,820,120	1,929,114	2,044,635
Slemani	1,803,792	1,855,265	1,908,207	1,962,660
Dohuk	1,177,714	1,234,499	1,294,022	1,356,415
Total (KR)	4,698,790	4,909,884	5,130,461	5,360,948

Source: Ministry of Planning (2013): 'Population Statement', [http://www.mop.gov.krd/resources/MoP%20Files/PDF%20Files/Population\\_Statement.pdf](http://www.mop.gov.krd/resources/MoP%20Files/PDF%20Files/Population_Statement.pdf) (Pre- statistic refers to the process of the numbering of houses and the numbers of each family as a first step toward a final census in the KR).

The statistics in this table include: 1. Those who live in the KR and whose Food Coupon is related to the KR. 2. Those who live in the KR but whose Food Coupon is related to the central government. 3. Residents of the disputed areas that are controlled by the KRG. 4. This number does not include the Shingal district which has a resident population of 400,000.

Table 1.3: Food Coupons in the KR

Governorate	2009	2010	2011	2012
Erbil	1,428,677	1,462,650	1,517,762	1,582,053
Slemani	1,635,193	1,670,457	1,709,678	1,760,076
Dohuk	961,880	1,005,190	1,038,744	1,087,413
Total (KR)	4,025,750	4,138,297	4,266,184	4,429,542

The size of the population does not accord with an exact census. It is the process of pre-census (numbering and inventory) that was done in 2009 and 2010 by the KRG's Board of Regional Statistics under the supervision of the UN. Source: Ministry of Planning (2013:2-3): 'Population Statement', [http://www.mop.gov.krd/resources/MoP%20Files/PDF%20Files/Population\\_Statement.pdf](http://www.mop.gov.krd/resources/MoP%20Files/PDF%20Files/Population_Statement.pdf)

In addition, the number of refugees that have emigrated from Syria since the events of 2011 and inside Iraq following the ISIS invasion reached 1,400,000 or one third of the total KR population (UNI, 2014).

Undoubtedly, the growth of the population and the development process have influenced each other, especially through their link to government capacity and available resources. Any plan for development will benefit from a steady population growth rate. However, due to the abnormally rapid increase in the KR, population demands can exceed the governmental capacity to meet these demands. For instance, at the start of the school year in 2014, many schools where displaced families had settled did not open and electricity shortages doubled in frequency.

Concerning population distribution, 77.8% of residents live in the governorate centres, and the remaining 22.2% live in districts, sub-districts and rural areas (Ministry of Planning, 2011:5). The numbers of residents in urban areas is at odds with the economic features of the KR, which is a primary agricultural and non-industrial region. The growth of urban areas and population is not a response to the growth of economic activities or more employment opportunities. Rather, it is a result of the Ba'ath policy of the destruction of villages especially up to 1991 (see Table 1.4).

Table 1.4: The Kurdistan Region's Villages (reconstructed following the uprising 1991 up to 2002)

Governorate	Number of villages	Destroyed villages	Reconstructed villages	Remaining villages to reconstruct
Erbil	1,497	1,205	800	405
Dohuk	1,123	809	470	339
Slemani	2,035	1,992	1,350	642
Total	4,655	4,006	2,620	1,386

Source: KRG Website (2013): <http://old.krg.org/about/ministries/reconstruction/index.asp>

In the 1970s around 80% of the KR population lived in villages (Berwari, 2013:134). By 1991 this proportion had reversed, with nearly 80% living in urban areas. The Slemani province has 83.2% of urban residents, while the Dohuk province has 27.5% of urban residents (KRSO, 2014:7). Even after the rebuilding of the rural areas by the KRG, their settlers suffered from a lack of services, which again resulted in the evacuation of these areas (Kurdistan Review, 2014). Consequently, the extension of urban regions has not automatically lead to economic transformations, such as the emergence of a middle class.

## **Economy**

Economic development as a part of the development process requires a combination of political stability, governmental economic activity and private sector activity in a competitive atmosphere. The Iraqi state relies mainly on oil extraction and nearly 99% of its exports and 95% of its revenue comes from the oil sector (UNI, 2013:1). Successive coups in the first and the second decades of the Republican era, a powerful centralization of the economy and the declarations of war against the Kurds, Iran and Kuwait damaged the economic sector and led to the greatest portion of Iraq's income being devoted to military expenditure. According to Ismael and Ismael (2005:612) Iraq's public expenditure on military services as a percentage of GNP in 1960, 1987 and 1990 was 7.3%, 30.2% and 27.4% respectively.

The outcome was the stagnation of the economy and war debts reaching around US\$100 billion. Rebuilding the destroyed country required inputs of double this amount (Anderson and Stansfield, 2004:84; Al-Khafaji, 1988). The Kuwait invasion provoked an international embargo on Iraq. The uninterrupted process of the militarization of society to keep the

regime in power further ruined human capacity and the pursuit of an ethnic policy doubled the challenges of the rebuilding process. Added to this picture, is the damage caused by sectarianism in Baghdad after 2003, which continued up to the rise of ISIS in 2014 and resulted in an increase in military expenditure.

The KR is rich in natural resources. The land and the climate have the ability to produce variety of vegetables and fruits. Agricultural land represents about 42.5% of the total area of the KR, of which 87.6% is rain fed (37.2% of the region) and 12.4% is irrigated (5.3% of the region's land) (Ministry of Planning, 2011:1; Gafor, 2005). During the 1980s, the KR contributed 25-30% to all of the food production in Iraq (WFP, 2001:4).

However, before the uprising, due to the destruction of villages by the Ba'ath regime, and after the uprising as a result of the Oil for Food Programme (OFFP) and the internal war, the shrinkage of local markets and an increase in the rate of employment by political parties, this sector was almost completely destroyed. Now Iraq imports the majority of its goods from abroad. For example, importing wheat from Australia involves Iraq spending half of its total price on transportation, despite the fact that it can be produced in the KR (Natali, 2010). The USAID report (2008:5-14) stated that in 2007 the KR imported 65% of its total food consumption. Yet the region produces 50% of Iraq's wheat, 40% of its barley, 98% of its tobacco, 30% of Iraq's cotton, and 50% of its fruit.

Economic activity in the agricultural sector has continued to decline. In 2003, around 35% of the KR's population engaged in agriculture as the main source of their income. By 2012, this rate had reduced to 9% of the total population. Total governmental investment in this sector was US\$ 677 million from the KR's total budget between 2006-2013, of which 48% was for growing crops and 52% for animal farming (Kurdistan Review, 2014: 156-157). In 2014, 6.63% of the total forcework was active in this sector (Ministry of Planning, 2014:39). In addition, there is a shortage in providing agricultural services, which reduces the farmers' motivation. The government has created a state of dependency, through its reliance on the import of essential goods, leading to political dependency.

There are reasons for the backwardness of agriculture. Firstly, the Ba'ath regime policy destroyed the agricultural infrastructure, subsidized essential goods, used petrodollars and spent the income of the state on military service. In an interview, Muhamad Ra'auf<sup>4</sup> the agricultural minister in the fifth cabinet, pointed out that the Ba'ath regime tried to make the

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Muhamad Ra'auf.

KR an agricultural backyard for other parts of Iraq, but it built the strategic warehouse for agricultural products outside the KR or in the Arab part of Iraq. This meant that the government prevented the accumulation of capital in the KR, by controlling or destroying the infrastructure of the region, which was mainly agricultural.

Secondly, after the uprising in 1991, foreign aid<sup>5</sup> agencies did not target the rebuilding of the infrastructure, but sought an opportunity to find markets in which to sell their products. The majority of the basic goods came from abroad at cheaper prices than those for domestic goods (McDowell, 2007). Thirdly, the backwardness of agriculture relates to the rivalry between political parties to increase their cadres and pay themselves salaries even in the rural areas (often without any duties, which in Kurdish is called the *Bin Diwar*, meaning the person who lies in the shade of the wall and gains a salary). The budget came from 13% of the Iraqi total budget that was allocated to the KR. Fourthly, after 2003, around 17% of the total Iraqi budget coming from the oil sector was allocated to the KR, which strengthened the government-parties' capacity to 'employ' people. It destroyed the agricultural sector because of the transformation of the workforce from the agricultural sector to the government-parties' sectors<sup>6</sup>. Finally, contaminated land and landmines have harmed the agrarian sector. After the internal war, some farmers obtained livestock from foreign agencies, but many livestock died from disease and a lack of medicines or from landmines.

Concerning the workforce, as Figure 1.4 shows in 2012, the economically active workforce (15-64 age range) constituted 38.4% of KR residents which is a low rate. Among men 65.7% and 12.2% women were in the labour force (Ministry of Planning, 2014:26-7). The unemployment rate in 2012 was 7.4%, down from 17.9% in 2009 (Ministry of Planning,

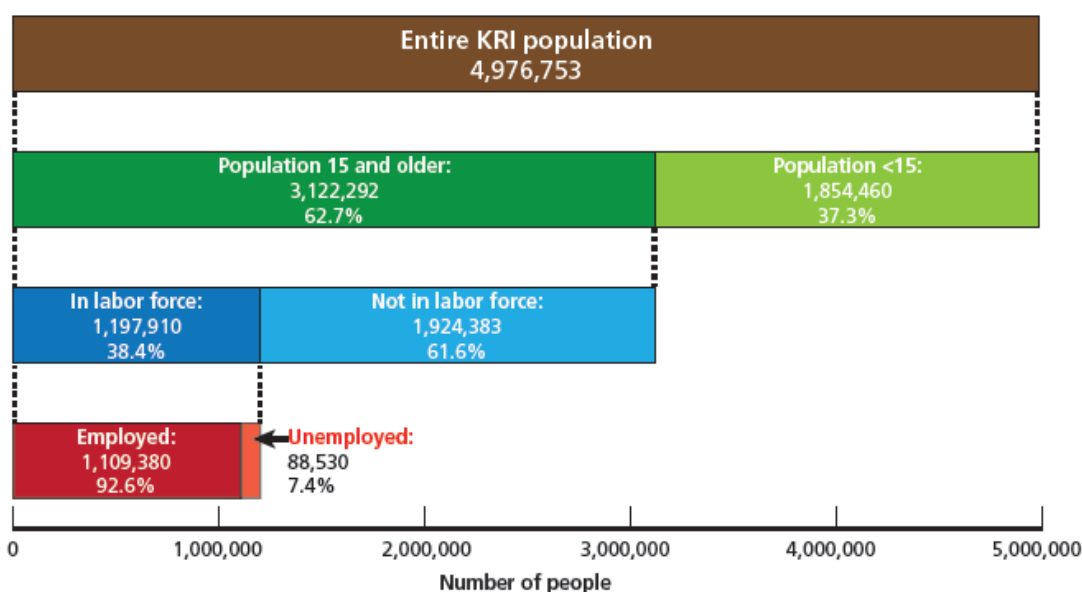
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<sup>5</sup> The aid programme improved to some extent the local economy and the recovery from poverty and malnutrition. However, it spread corruption and inequality in society due to the control of the distribution of the food and its trade by local figures such as Aghas, Sheikhs and entrepreneurs who had connections with political parties. Also, it helped to reinforce the PUK and the KDP due to the UN agencies, which dealt with them directly (Leezenberg, 2005; Natali, 2007; Natali, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> After 2005, the government followed the policy of rebuilding the agricultural sector by funding farmers for a certain period after which the farmers had to repay the loaned amount. However, this policy did not succeed, due to the import of agricultural commodities, lack of governmental support for domestic production and the high value of the Iraqi Dinar (ID) currency after 2003, compared to the currencies of neighbouring governments that facilitated agricultural trade between the region and these governments. For instance, in 2013, the governmental wheat price in Iran was 720 Toman per kilo (nearly 23 US cents at the time). Iraqi smugglers bought wheat from Iranian farmers at 1200 Toman which benefitted both, but it impacted negatively on the agricultural sector of Iraq as a whole (News (2013) BBC Persian, 10 May). Meanwhile, the governmental price of high quality wheat in the KR in the same period was 792 Iraqi Dinar or US 66 cents (News (2013) Rudaw, 03 June).

2011:1). Another report from this ministry, “Strategic Planning for Developing the Kurdistan Region for the Years 2012–2016”, announced a strategy to reduce the unemployment rate to 4% in 2016 (Ministry of Planning, 2012). However, this plan needs a stable political situation that cannot be guaranteed in the KR, because of frequent changes in Iraqi domestic and regional political conditions. The best example was the cutting of the KR’s budget in 2014, the inroads of ISIS, the influx of refugees into the KR and the halving of the oil price since 2015. All of these factors have had an impact upon the increase in unemployment, which has forced many young people to seek a better life in Europe.

Figure 1.4: Labour Force Status of the Kurdistan Region



Source: Ministry of Planning (2014:26) ‘Capacity Building at the Kurdistan Regional Statistics Organization Through Data Collection’. (Note: the total population in this figure is different from total in tables 1.2 and 1.3, although they all come the Ministry of Planning).

The other sectors of economic activity, particularly since 2005, are the oil sector and housing. The alteration from a de facto unit to a federal one in 2005, strengthened the region’s capacity to invest in the oil sector. Oil extraction by international companies formally brought the KR into an international economic network. From 2007 to 2013, total investment in the oil and gas sector was US\$15-20 billion. This can be compared with investment in the agricultural sector (US\$677 million from 2006-2013) (Kurdistan Review, 2014:91). The challenge is that the KR, as Leezenberg (2005:633) has stated, has become a

“rentier state”<sup>7</sup> more than a productive one, through its reliance on the petrodollar rather than investment in renewable resources and human capacity.

In 2009, for the first time and formally, the KRG extracted oil using a Norwegian company (DNO Company). Until 2013, more than forty companies from nineteen different countries including Total, Exxon Mobil and Chevron entered the KR to invest in the oil and gas sector (Iraq-Business News, 2013). The problem in studying the oil industry in the KR is the disparity between official documents on oil revenue and the Parliament Oil and Gas Commission which make it difficult to access accurate statistics. Opposition parties in the sixth, seventh and eighth cabinets challenged the lack of transparency in oil revenues. Unusually, the oil sector does not have its own ministry building. The question is: can political and economic development be improved while this sector suffers from a lack of transparency and a fragile market as happened in 2014 and 2015?

According to the Resource Governance Index (RGI, 2013), a website that investigates the quality of the management of natural resources (oil, gas and the mineral sectors), in 2013 within the group of 58 countries that produce 85% of the world’s total petroleum, Iraq ranked 29<sup>th</sup>. It is classified as a weak country that has failed in its management of this sector in terms of accountability and transparency. The concealment of information by interested elites and the institutional weakness in the surveillance of this sector leads to a lack of transparency. Oil revenues can be used as a political economic lever to control society, which weakens the process of institutionalisation and allows elites to dominate society.

Further, the ability of the KR to compete in regional and world oil markets is limited. Other main actors in the Middle East such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iran and Kuwait dominate the

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<sup>7</sup> Although the KR is not a state, the concept ‘rentier state’ is relevant to understanding the relationship between governance and the economic system. In this thesis the term refers to the political economy of the KR and is used to show how the elites in power in the period before 2003 as well as after, have benefitted from a non-productive economy which relies on oil revenue. As Beblawi (1987:384) stated, there is no pure rentier economy; any country has other sources of income to some extent. But as this thesis explains, oil is the major source of income in the KR. Many other countries in the Middle East also rely on income from oil. However, because oil extraction in the KR is in its early stages and because of the fall in the oil price in 2014, it is difficult to compare the KR with other states in the region. The main similarity is that the political elites have a tendency to rely on oil to strengthen their power through the direct allocation of oil revenue to public services instead of via an efficient tax system. As Ross (2001) argues, the states which are rich in oil resources are more likely to be dictatorships, while Luciani (1994) similarly argues that rentierism obstructs the development of civil society. This thesis does not argue that the rentier economy is the only obstacle to political development in the KR. Socio-political factors are equally important, alongside the type of economy. For further information about the rentier state see: Anderson (1987), Brynen (1992), Chaudry (1997), Luciani (1988, 1990, 1994, 1995) and Ross (2001).



market and have more ability to extract oil. There are also other powerful economic and political actors such as Turkey. For the KR, the best solution in this situation is to improve other economic sectors, that can be relied upon in both crisis and non-crisis periods.

After oil, the main investment sector is the housing sector. As well as making the oil sector a main source of revenue, the government promoted housing projects that turned land into a source of income. The relative political stability in the KR compared to other parts of Iraq fuelled a boom in the housing sector. The total investment in this sector from 2006-2012 was US\$13.7 billion (Kurdistan Review, 2014:120-121). This sector also suffers from corruption. The Reform Commission, *Lejney Çaksazi*, that was launched by the president of the KR in 2011 reported that, after one year a total of 174 corruption cases were investigated, involving 95 officials from the KRG. The corruption was in various sectors of the government, including the “health sector, the allocation of public property to businesses, governmental employment opportunities, administration and government bureaucracy, the tendering of public projects, budget transparency, investment policies, public housing projects, agricultural lands, market monopolies, and fuel and domestic energy” (KRP, 2012). Citizens complain about the monopoly of this sector by officials and the high price of houses. The housing shortage in rural areas means that 37% of rural residents suffer from homelessness (Ministry of Planning, 2011).

The fourth source of income is the tourism sector. Erbil the capital city of the KR was chosen as the Arab world capital for tourism in 2014. Investment in this sector began in 2007, and the total investment from this date until 2013 was US\$3 billion, and the revenue in 2012 was US\$650 million (Kurdistan Review, 2014:187). According to investment law in 2006, construction and tourism investment projects are free from tax, which again can lead to injustice in the distribution of income (Kurdistan Parliament, Law No 4, 2006). However, the ISIS occupation has had a negative impact on activity in this sector.

For a better understanding of economic sectors, it is important to review other sources of income from the KR to complete the overall picture.

After the establishment of the KRG in 1992, the main source of income was foreign aid. In 1993, Turkey paid US\$13.5 million to the KRG to obtain its backing in pursuit of the PKK (Chorev, 2007:4). To achieve a ceasefire between the KDP and the PUK, the US in 1996 paid these parties US\$11 million and in the same year the KDP opened the *Haji Omran* trade gate with Iran that earned \$US100,000 daily (McDowell, 2007:389). Nearly two-thirds of

international aid for Iraq between 1992 and 1996 was allocated to the KR. Furthermore, during that period the government started trading with neighbouring countries. Trade revenue with the Turkish government reached almost US\$750 million annually, and 85% of this trade was for the Erbil (KDP) administration. From 1992 to 2003, the Erbil administration gained \$US1.5-2.5 billion from the renting of land and factories. During the same period, the British government, through its international development programme, and the UN in its budget for Iraq, allocated 78% and 65% to the KR and 22% and 35% for the rest of Iraq respectively (Natali, 2010:30, 31, 44, 58).

Next, a portion came from the selling of oil by the Iraqi government (OFFP) after 1996. From the budget of the OFFP, 13% was allocated to the KR's three provinces and 59% to another fifteen Iraqi provinces. The UN dealt directly with the Erbil and Slemani administrations without the mediation of the Iraqi government (OFF, 2003). The portion of 13% was divided between Slemani at 43%, Erbil at 34% and the Dohuk province at 23%. In other words, 57% for the KDP zone and 43% for the PUK zone (from this 13% portion in six years the KRG received only 51% and the remaining 49% was kept in a French bank). In 2004-2005, the region received \$US1.5 billion from this money (Leezenberg, 2005:639; Natali, 2007:1116-1120; Natali, 2010:54). In this finance map it is necessary to note that the population of the KR's three provinces contains around one-fifth of the total Iraqi population. After 2005, nearly 95% of the KR budget came from 17% of the total Iraqi budget. All of these revenues and foreign aid helped the KR "to survive, but not to thrive" (Chorev, 2007:5).

Table 1.5: The Kurdistan Region's Allocated Budget by Trillion Dinar (parliament and judiciary council spending excluded) (1200 Dinar= US\$1)

Budget per year	Amount (trillion)	Investment budget	Operational budget
2007	7,847,660	2,285,556	5,518,287
2008	7,628,783	2,879,079	4,674,842
2009	8,857,263	2,303,338	6,553,925
2010	11,432,176	3,543,074	7,889,102
2011	13,950,670	3,852,000	-----
2012	15,245,797	3,678,437	10,624,518
2013	16,942,749	5,333,791	11,507,171

Source: collected from Kurdistan Region Parliament website (<http://www.perlemanikurdistan.com/Default.aspx?page=byyear&c=LDD-Yasa>).

As Table 1.5 shows, the budget of the KR increased, but not because of a booming productive economy in its various sectors. According to the parliament Budget Law for 2013, the region faces a deficit of 1,684,900 trillion ID (Kurdistan Parliament, Law No 1, 2013). The deficit has caused banks to fail, delayed salaries, suspended housing mortgages and marriage loans. It reflects insufficient economic planning in the KRG and over-emphasises oil revenues. At the beginning of 2016, the budgets for 2014 and 2015 has not approved because of financial crisis. Furthermore, the KRG in 2016, cut off the salary of its employment from 15% to 75% (KRG, 2016).

Besides this, it is important to mention the role of the Kurds in the diaspora, especially in the 1990s. As the value of the Iraqi currency declined relative to foreign currencies, diaspora Kurds transferred money (Dollars and Euros) to their families. This process had two benefits: firstly, it reduced the burden on the government to provide for citizens' livelihood; secondly, it helped the region's economy by bringing foreign currency into the KR alongside the Iraqi Swiss Dinar which is recognized as an international currency of Iraq used solely in the KR. Other parts of Iraq used the copied Dinar (currency issued by the Baghdad government), which is only used inside Iraq. However, with all these revenues the living conditions for many people remain difficult. Table 1.6 shows the rate of poverty in the KR.

Table 1.6: Poverty Rate as a Percentage of the Total Population of the KR

Provinces	Governorate centre	Other urban places	Rural areas
Erbil	0.9	3.5	10.1
Slemani	0.5	3.8	7.8
Dohuk	3.6	5.9	20.5

Source: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) (2011:24) 'Confronting Poverty in Iraq'.

According to this data the average rate of poverty in the KR is different from one place to another and between rural and urban areas<sup>7</sup>. Further, according to a report published by the

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<sup>7</sup> The poverty in this table, according to the IBRD (2011:10-14), is measured by 1) "an empirical indicator to measure living standards which is referred to as per capita expenditure; 2) a threshold value (poverty line) that distinguishes the poor from the non-poor via a cost-of-basic-needs method. 3, a set of indices that describe poverty in the population such as levels of expenditure on consumption (food, housing, services, education), per capita income, and the calories that each person needs daily. Iraqi households with a monthly per capita expenditure of less than 76,896 ID are categorised as poor and more than this amount is categorised as "non-poor".

World Bank (2015:3) the poverty rate in the KR “increased from 3.5 percent in 2012 up to 8.1 percent in 2014”. After 2003, the number of rich people (millionaires and billionaires) increased. The majority of this rich stratum is composed of those who run communications, oil, building and construction, cigarette and alcohol companies, as well as major traders in construction, food and medicines. In other words, those who have either political influence or political power (Karim, 2015).

Overall, in the KR the political position has overlapped with economic status in a negative relationship which contrasts with the political development idea (See Chapter 3), which claims that economic development will lead to political development. Obviously the KR has partly developed in the construction sector, oil extraction, foreign trade and international relationships have also been established, but they have not contributed directly to political development. The control of the economic system has reinforced the political status quo.

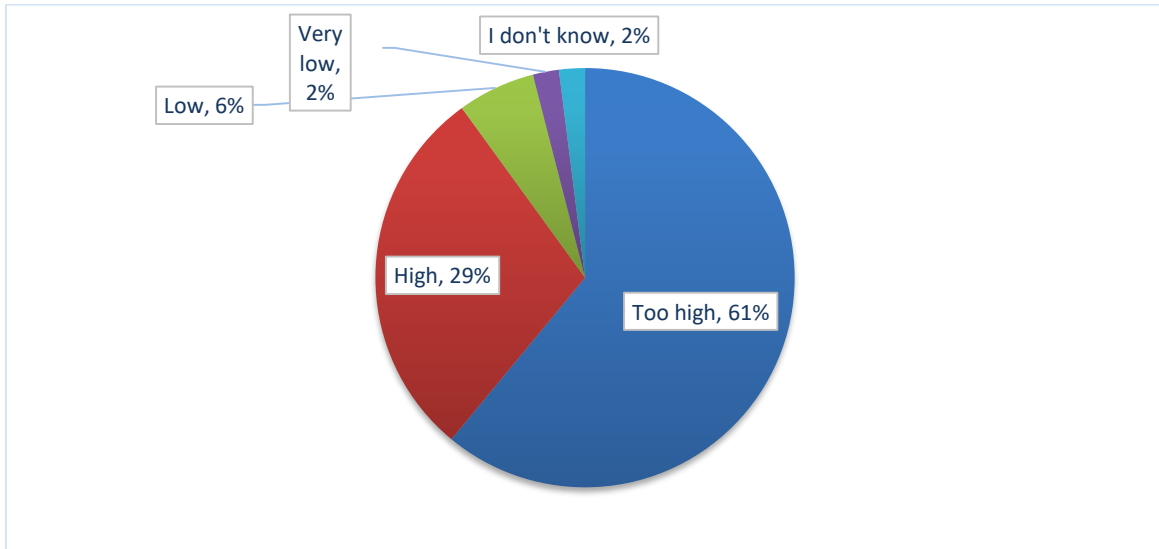
Often, political officials use their positions to deliver economic outcomes or vice versa. Economic inequality correlates with political inequality, which means the economically powerful person has more political influence. Huge companies are registered in the name of a person close to officials to cover the official’s corruption (Abdulla, 2013). This situation can be considered as the result of the absence of political competition over a long period of time and the absence of accountability that is related to political inequality, both of which generate regressive results for political development (Acemoglu et al, 2008:181).

Economic progress as a process is more than just economic growth. It includes both growth and change which focuses on the qualitative aspects of change in production, attitudes, behaviours and improvement of institutional performance (Meier, 1995). The infrastructure of the KR is incompatible with what is actually essential for the country. For example, many luxury cars exist without having insurance or standard roads or enough petrol (often drivers have to wait hours for a tank of petrol or its price is double that of other parts of Iraq). The number of hotels has increased, while the region suffers from a lack of hospitals (Rubin, 2012).

All of these phenomena are rooted in corruption. As Benavot (1996) argued, corruption and inequality in the distribution of capital and goods leads to the formation of a nondemocratic system with underdevelopment in the country. The figure below illustrates the level of corruption according to public opinion.

Figure 1.5: Corruption in Governmental Apparatuses

Q: 'In your opinion how high is the level of corruption in the government institutions?'



Source: Tojinewe Centre (2011) 'Current political issues of the KR', *Kurdistan Intellectual Foundation*.

As the figure shows, participants in this survey overwhelmingly agree that corruption in governmental organisations is at a high level.

In short, in the KR up to 2014, the economic sector boomed quantitatively but in terms of qualitative measures, it still suffers from monopolization and a non-productive economy, inadequate fiscal policy, and inequality in the distribution of national wealth.

## Society

The social profile includes religion, ethnicity, language and education issues. Issues of class and gender are also relevant (see Chapter 7 and 8). The religion of the majority of KR citizens is the Sunni creed of Islam. Other religious groups such Christian, Jewish, Yezidi, Mandai, Sabian, Zoroastrian and Kakai exist and practice their religious rituals. In all these religions, converting to another religion is either forbidden or very difficult and the converter may face death. Secularization of society is at a low level and Islamic clerics have a powerful role in society. The sixth Article of the draft constitution states that Islam is a source of legislation.

Ethnically, the region consists of various ethnic groups of Kurds, Turkmen, Arabs, Assyrians and Armenians. This variety is mirrored in the diversity of languages. According to law, each minority has the right to be educated in its mother tongue and in Article 14 of the draft constitution, Turkmen and Assyrian are considered as official languages in the areas where they constitute the majority. Furthermore, this ethnicity is reflected in parliament in

which Turkmens have five seats, Chaldeans and Assyrians have five together and Armenians one seat, which represents a quota with portfolios in the cabinet.

The Kurdish language itself is divided into the *Hawramani*, *Surani* and *Badinani* dialects. The Surani dialect is official in the Suranian and Hawramanian areas and *Badini* in the Badinan area. Dialect variation is a normal phenomenon in any society, but its exploitation creates political problems. The diversity often leads to people not understanding each other. Political parties and their mass media in striving to gain peoples votes, play a negative role in deepening this language gap, by focusing on diversity and local dialects more than the formation of an official common language<sup>8</sup>.

Another issue of social profile is education. In principle, education has a positive effect on development in parallel with other elements. According to some points of view, compared with other aspects such as urbanization, its impact is even more obvious<sup>9</sup> (Meyer and Rubinson, 1975). Scholars have made connections between political development, democracy and education and have argued that the rate of education (especially higher education) leads to increased institutionalisation of the political system. An educated person has more information about politics, more motivation to participate in politics and behaves in a way that supports democratic values (Benavot, 1996; Patil, 2012; Lipset, 1959; Lerner, 1958). However, Acemoglu et al (2005) argue that education by itself does not lead to democracy and political development.

To achieve political development through education, the type of education system and its basis (democratic secular education, teachers, textbooks, technology, adequate buildings and other educational facilities) together with family and social education, play a pivotal role. In the KR, tuition is free. Through the self-administration period, the number of students increased, but in terms of quality, this sector suffers fundamentally from a poor ratio of teachers to students, classrooms with more than 35-40 students, a lack of adequate textbooks and inadequate buildings. Most school textbooks are published abroad. Often, students use second hand books from previous years, while new books are sold on the black market.

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<sup>8</sup> Many words have political implications. For example, for the word 'woman' the KDP uses *Afrat* and the PUK uses *Jin* and the IU uses the term of *Xwişk*. For the word 'student', the KDP uses *Qutabi* and the PUK uses *Xwendkar*. Even in official documents such as in Education Ministry forms, both words are written with the same meaning.

<sup>9</sup> This claim comes in contrast to Lerner (1958) who argues that urbanization leads to an increase in the educational level and then more modernization. The rise of ISIS challenged this idea fundamentally. However, both of them emphasise the importance of education in development (see also Winham, 1970).

There is the problem of the lack of a standard language in education. In universities the majority of students can speak only one of the Kurdish dialects. A system of booklets prepared by tutors is the norm, due to the lack of main references in the Kurdish language. According to the Minister of Education, this sector accounts for 24% of governmental employment (Kurdistan Review, 2014:167-171).

According to KRSO (2014:7-8), the rate of participation in elementary school is 91.5%, in secondary school it is 59.8% and in preparatory school it is 36.9%. The total number of those who can read and write from the age of 10 and above is 67.8%. The main reason for leaving school is to participate in gaining a livelihood for the family (20.4%). Additionally, 7.2% cannot attend school because of a lack of schools in their area. However, the growth of the education system and participation in schools has not eliminated illiteracy. At the governorate level it stands at 13.6%, increases to 16.3% in the district and sub-district areas and rises to 25.4% in the rural areas (Ministry of Planning, 2011:118). The education system in the KR suffers from some fundamental problems: the frequently changing education system and its methods; the influence of religion; and its domination by political parties.

Regarding religious education, Islamic studies begin in primary school based on the textbook of Islamic Education entitled *Perwerdey Islami*. Entering the upper year requires a pass in the religious module. In the first years of schooling the students' ability to read and write is limited, and they are compelled to learn and memorize religious texts. Such lessons continue until entry into university.

Concerning higher education, the participation rate increased from 4.9% in 2003 to 14.7% in 2009 with no increase in the number of teachers. The teacher-student ratio dropped from 1:12 in 2004 to 1:19 in 2009 (Ministry of Planning (2011:3). The number of universities increased from 3 universities in 2003 to 18 public and 11 private universities in 2013 (Kurdistan Review, 2014:173).

However, after 1992, the opening of new universities mirrored the political rivalry between the PUK and the KDP. For example, the PUK in 1992 reopened Slemani University which had been closed by the Ba'ath regime. This happened at a time when the government did not pay the salaries of Salahaddin University staff for four months because of a lack of finance (Ala'Aldeen, 2013). As a response to the PUK, the KDP founded the University of Dohuk in the same year. In 2006, the University of Kurdistan in Erbil (British-Kurdish University) was opened by Nechirvan Barzani from the KDP. In 2007, the American University was

opened in Slemani by Barhan Salih from the PUK. The University of Chamchemal in the PUK Zone and Suran University in the KDP Zone are in the same situation.

The political parties' domination of the educational centres, has weakened their scientific value. Not only in the universities, but even in the secondary schools, political parties hold elections to elect party representatives. Instead of emphasising improvements in the education system, national integration and spread of a spirit of tolerance, this process instils students with the concept of loyalty towards a party. The role of schools as a tool of socialization in the framework of the nation has changed to become a tool for introducing students to parties' ideas<sup>10</sup>. What happens in the real world is different from what is taught in textbooks. For example, the students read The Nationhood (*Niştımany*), civic education, social education and human rights textbooks in a curriculum that is focused on human rights, tolerance, democratic principles and the history of the Kurdish fight for freedom, but in actual society, the concepts of the party are dominant, together with tribal values, and conflict.

The influence of parties extends to the employment of those who support them (See Chapter 7 and 8). In the universities often the spirit of partisanship dominates scientific discussion and shrinks the scope of critiques. Instructors are divided between political parties. The University Instructors' Unions have power to influence employment procedures and university policies. Often instructors who want to be employed in the university sector have to go through these unions that belongs to political parties. The Student Unions in universities belong to the dominant political parties, often recording the students' name and their political affiliations. By the end of the fifth cabinet this phenomenon had reduced but it still continues.

The sixth cabinet began a reform of the higher education system under the name of the Human Capacity Development Programme (HCDDP), and sent a number of students abroad.

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<sup>10</sup> Various Student Unions play a role in pursuing the party programme in schools and universities and often operate as a data collection wing for parties. If students wish to find a better occupation or university accommodation, it is advantageous for them to fill in their forms and accept the membership of political parties. Often these unions have the names of all students and their affiliations. Branches have monthly meetings with their members in schools, universities or their union buildings (dominant parties have formal offices in schools and universities) and discuss party issues. Generally, members pay a monthly subscription. Some of the political parties have become rich and do not charge such subscriptions. Further, university staff and school teachers have their own political party unions. In my employment as an instructor in the university, one of the political party unions supported me and without its support it was difficult to be employed. Having a sponsor or a mediator that knows a key official is equally important in employment. These unions are even able to find places for candidates for postgraduate studies.



Up to 2015 around 3,200 students out of 4,350 in the framework of this programme started their studies (Hawlati, 2015).

The role that families play in the socialization of teenagers and children's processes must also be taken into account. It may even have a greater influence than official education. The KR is a deeply politicized society. It is very rare that political debates do not happen between family members or relatives on political issues. Hence, the younger generation will be familiar with political affiliations and often all family members are followers or supporters of one party.

The party domination of everyday life extends to the media. The overwhelming majority of media organizations based in the region belong to political parties. New social media such as Facebook play an important role in daily socio-political debates. The PMs of the fourth term have utilized Facebook to display the corrupt documents of previous cabinets on their pages and then to circulate them in the press. In short, all of these ideological influences undermine the role of education and instead make it a tool for political regulation, adapting citizens to the party-ization of society<sup>11\*</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has mapped various dimensions of the KR: geographic, historical, demographic, economic, religious and educational, and their relevance to the process of political development. Although the Ba'ath regime deprived the KR of possibilities for development, the creation of the KR as a self-administrative regime after 1992 gave it the authority to manage its various natural resources. However, possessing natural resources is not enough to develop a country. How to manage them in favour of development requires an effective government.

Different sources of economic activity and sources of income such as petrodollars, border crossings, airports, tourism and other governmental revenues constitute the KR's revenues. The major sector of the economy in the KR is non-productive. Trade is mainly with Turkey and Iran which is again a shaky income source because of its relationship with political

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<sup>11</sup> In my interviews all participants agreed that the media belongs to the political parties, and they contributed to the disintegration of society more than integration, because of they reflect the idea of their parties which are in sharp competition with each other.

\* In Kurdish the term for 'party-izing' is '*Be Hizbi Kirdin*', which means that a political party controls all aspects of society. It is not the same as the party-state term applied to the Soviet Union, because in the KR there is more than one political party. It has more negative than positive connotations.

interests that can impact on the economic relationship (see Chapter 9). This means that the durability of this type of economic growth is under question in the absence of an economic diversification policy and a degree of self-sufficiency, especially in the agricultural sector.

Generally, between 2005 and 2013, individual incomes increased in the region, but the inequality of distribution of wealth, market price fluctuations and the reason for this increase have to be considered. The slogan of “Kurdistan is the next Dubai” that has been promoted by some officials since the fifth cabinet illustrates the trajectory of development in the KR.

To understand political development of the KR, there needs to be a review of ideas from the literature on political development. The next chapter focuses on the literature, concepts and theories related to political development in the KR.

## **Chapter Two: Literature, Concepts and Theories**

The Kurdistan Region was attached to the state of Iraq in 1926, five years after the foundation of Iraq as a state in 1921, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the redrawing of boundaries by the powerful and victorious states. Their aim was to form zones of influence and to keep a balance among different local ethnic groups and states to serve their political and economic interests. These factors combined to bind the KR to Iraq and create a country with negative features of government collapse, coups and successive devastating wars against its citizens and neighbours, as subsequent history shows.

The Kurds in Iraq, since the establishment of this state have fought, politically and militarily, to obtain their political rights. This endless conflict and tension has been the context for development in the KR and indeed in Iraq as a whole. This situation has not just prevented forward movement, it has also put development in reverse; especially during the Ba'ath regime from 1963 and more specifically when Saddam Hussein held power from 1979 to 2003 (albeit for Kurdistan until 1991). After the Kurdish uprising, *Rapereen*, in 1991 the circumstances changed dramatically due to the establishment of the Kurds' self-autonomy within the Iraqi state.

This period of promise was not without turbulence in its political life, which is reflected in socioeconomic aspects. At the beginning of the uprising, the KR's political parties which were previously forbidden from exercising political activities, obtained the authority to establish political institutions in the framework of a democratic system by passing an electoral law and holding parliamentary and presidential elections. However, democracy faced challenges, due to the unfamiliarity of political parties with democratic principles. This turbulence makes it necessary to focus on political development in this region and to know what the impediments that confront this process are.

### **Literature Review**

The following review is based on books, theses and articles on the subject of political development in the KR in the English language. Most of the scholarly publications on Iraqi Kurdistan (after 1992 called the Kurdistan region as well) have been written by historians and orientalist who have drawn attention to the social structure of Kurdistan, Kurdish Freedom Movements (KFM) and the kind of political relationship between its political parties and central government. The contribution of authors such as Bois (1966), Meho and Maglaughlin (1968), Kreyenbroek and Sperl (1992) Gunter (1993, 1996, 2009) and

McDowall, (2007) are important sources for the history of the KR and Greater Kurdistan as well. This corpus, which is mainly descriptive, reflects the social life and economic activity of the KR, at a time when it was mostly based on subsistence agriculture and small scale production of handicrafts for local markets or, as they explain, the relationship between Kurds and central governments and their political movements. However, they were either written before or at the outset of the uprising or do not give full consideration to aspects of political development in the KR. The following pages present and summarise the main academic contributions in a chronological order<sup>1</sup>. It is necessary to mention that one characteristic of literature on the KR, is that it tends to be uncritical of other works and there is little interaction between the sources. One reason could be the recent rise of the KR as a political entity and the underdevelopment of its economic, political, educational, communication and social aspects. Some studies on the KR focus on specific themes such as human rights, ethnicity, political parties, tribes and Kurdish political movements.

There are relatively few writings about political development in the KR. One is *Identity, Nationalism and the State System: The Case of Iraqi Kurdistan* by Sophia Isabella Wanche (2002). This research discusses Kurdish national identity in the framework of tribe, language, class and religion and its impact on the Kurdish nationalist movement before 1991 and the political development of this movement. It also considers the relationship between the Kurds and neighbouring states. The main focus of this thesis is national identity, the nationalist movements in Iraqi Kurdistan and the impact of international and regional policy on these movements. However, with the establishment of the KRG in 1992 and the declaration of the federal system, recognized in the Iraqi constitution in 2005 (Article. 117, No 1), the nationalist movements acquired government status. Since this thesis was written socio-political changes have affected the KR's national identity and its political development. What is more, development through a political movement is different from

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<sup>1</sup> There is a wide literature on the Kurdish nationalism in Greater Kurdistan, which it goes beyond the purpose of this thesis. The majority of studies focused on issues of language, history, ethnicity and culture. However, through the thesis, implicitly the reader can understand the elements on nation building and nationalism sentiment in the KR. See: Phillips, D, L. (2015) *The Kurdish Spring: A New Map of the Middle East*: London: Transaction Publishers Bengio, O. (2014) *Kurdish Awakening: Nation Building in a Fragmented Homeland*: Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014 Romano, D. (2006) *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Opportunity, Mobilization and Identity*, UK: Cambridge University Press. Olson, R, W (1996) *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s: Its Impact on Turkey and the Middle East*, USA. University Press of Kentucky, 31 Oct 1996 Aziz, M, A. (2011) *The Kurds of Iraq: Ethnonationalism and National Identity in Iraqi Kurdistan*, London: Tauris Academic Studies. Abbas, V. (2003) *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism*, USA: Mazda Publishers.

political development in the framework of governmental institutions. These institutions change the definition of identity of both the movement and nation within the new context.

Stansfield's study *Iraqi Kurdistan Political Development and Emergent Democracy* (2003) was the first to investigate political development in the framework of political parties, their impact on governmental structure and policymaking from 1992-2001. The hypothesis of the book is that

The current divided political and administrative system is a direct manifestation of the historical development and characteristics of the political system of Iraqi Kurdistan (Stansfield, 2003:5).

The book attempted to investigate the structure of political parties and the political party system in the KR in the 1990s by using major documents and elite interviews, available to the author because he had worked as an adviser for both the Erbil and Slemani governments at that time. Critics have noted and as the author himself acknowledges the difficulty of avoiding the politically charged atmosphere. The book focuses on the official structure of the KRG(s), the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the manner of making decisions inside these two political parties. The relationships of the KR with other countries, the social fabric, and its role in the political development in the KR also receive attention. Stansfield's contribution to the knowledge still relevant.

However, after 2003, the regime in Baghdad changed, and the abovementioned parties established a united cabinet. The relationship between them changed from disunity to a kind of political consensus. Then, between 2009 and 2014, a powerful opposition rose up, which gained one-third of parliamentary seats. The study of political development in the KR required further review and updating.

Yildiz, in his book *The Kurds in Iraq, the Past, Present and Future* (2004), provides an overview of the chronology of the Kurdish Freedom Movement (KFM) and relationships between the central government and Iraqi Kurdistan. The main object of the book is humanitarian aid to the KR after 1991. In this framework, the author tried to investigate Kurdish human rights in the context of international law. However, in the twentieth century besides international law, the economy, the world political order and geopolitics played a crucial role in determining the future of a nation.

O'Leary's study entitled *The Future of Kurdistan in Iraq* (O'Leary et al, 2005), focuses on the KR through its history, the national freedom movement, political parties and the KRG. The book is set in the KR in the framework of international policy following the downfall

of the Ba'ath regime. It then highlights the constitutional aspects of building Iraq after 2003. The main goal is to show the political events that have occurred in Iraq since 1921 to suggest that a federal system is the best solution for the future of Iraq. By implication, the reader can understand why the KR did not develop in the last century. However, the development of internal affairs since the publication of the book in 2005, needs more focus. This thesis responds to this challenge.

Olson's book *'The Goat and the Butcher: Nationalism and State Formation in Kurdistan-Iraq since the Iraqi War (2005)'*, revolves around the regional and international political equations and their impact on the KR. It analyses the Kurdish issue, mainly from the collapse of the Ba'ath regime in 2003 to the establishment of the Iraqi government in 2005. It assumes that Iraq, the Kurds, Turkey and the USA are the main players. However, Iran needs to be included in this list. The study presents the struggle between capitalists and nationalists in the KR on how to achieve the national goal. Olson argues that the Kurds seek their independence either through national orientations or economic orientations. According to Pranger (2006) the main point of the book is that Turkey has a great impact on the KR and the future of the KR is unpredictable, because when Kurdish leaders make decisions, they consider external rather than internal factors.

*The Kurds, Nationalism and Politics* edited by Jabar and Dawod (2006) with the cooperation of a number of international contributors discusses the ethnic problem of the Kurds in the Middle East, with a focus on Iraq. It contains studies of the Kurds' nationality, ethnicity, language and religion and concludes that all of them are politicized. In this context it searches for a solution to the Kurdish issue in the framework of federalism. It shows that Kurds have a different identity from surrounding identities (Persians, Turks and Arabs) and they try to preserve this identity from assimilation within other identities. The main themes are historical and the role of internal actors, especially political parties and elites, is neglected and does not target the KRG and parliament's performance.

The report published by the *Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales* (2008) entitled *A Fact Finding Mission in Kurdistan, Iraq: Gaps in the Human Rights Infrastructure* (Yildiz et al, 2008), attempts to investigate human rights policy and related organisations in the KR and in parts of Greater Kurdistan (Iran, Turkey and Syria). The report focuses on progress in and obstructions to human rights after the Kurdish uprising in 1991. It concludes that some aspects of human rights had improved and noted that the failure was not due to a

lack of sufficient legislative provision, but the result of unimplemented human rights provisions.

Chapman, in *Security Forces of the Kurdistan Regional Government* (2009), studied military organisations in the KR, their development after the uprising in 1991 and the American invasion in Iraq in 2003. The author argues that despite a single government, two different types of army organization exist in the KR under the supervision of two separate administrations, one in Erbil and another in Slemani, each commanded by a political party. This phenomenon plays a negative role in political development due to the possibility of military intervention in politics, as happened in the period from 1994 to 1996.

The book authored by Natali, *The Kurdish Quasi-State, Development and Dependency in Post-Gulf War Iraq* (2010), focuses on international aid to the KR through NGOs, international organisations such as the UN or the Oil For Food Programme (OFFP). It highlights how aid programmes reinforced the two administrations via their dealings with the dominant political parties and how political parties distributed aid via local figures and chieftains to protect these parties -a relationship that led to the growth of patron-clientist relationships and the spread of corruption. Furthermore, the book argues that aid did not result in infrastructure development, but led to the control of construction activities by the dominant political parties. These activities became a source of income for them to employ citizens in various political parties' offices and in government administration. However, the book only focuses on one of the obstacles to political development in the KR.

Another source in the framework of political science and international relations is the thesis written by Yaniv Voller *From rebellion to de facto statehood: international and transnational sources of the transformation of the Kurdish national liberation movement in Iraq into the Kurdistan regional government* (2012). It focuses on the de facto status of the KRG and it attempts to obtain international legitimacy as a step towards state-building, beginning with the KFM in 1958 until the establishment of a de facto region. The author argues that national liberation movements result in the creation of a de facto region because of dramatic changes in the domestic and international setting. This transformation has an important impact on the identity, politics, strategy and the development of such movements. The thesis argues that

By constantly interacting with the international community in an effort to legitimise its existence and actions, the de facto state puts itself under further scrutiny and allows more transnational actors to take part in the process of state-building (p, 2).

The important conclusion of Voller's research is that for de facto regions to gain legitimacy and international support, they are more likely to promote democracy and development by the liberalization of their political systems. In other words, leaders of unrecognized regions are more prepared to build democratic institutions through interaction with the international community. However, what happens in the external setting is often not reflected in internal affairs. As will be shown, the establishment of democratic institutions in the KR has not necessarily brought about political development and a democratic system. The Voller thesis explains that de facto regions are often small in terms of population and geography, however, they punch above their weight in international politics and play an important role in regional political stability or instability. The author acknowledges that his main focus is on legitimacy, not the development of de facto status.

Ofra Bengio's book *The Kurds of Iraq, Building a State Within a State* (2012), is another source that reviews the relationships between the Kurdish political movement and the Ba'ath party, the relationship between the KRG and its political parties with external powers, and the war between Iran and Iraq and its impact on the Kurdish question. It is essentially a historical approach to the Kurdish issue.

The book *Conflict, Democratization and the Kurds in the Middle East: Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria*, edited by Romano and Gurses (2014) assumed Kurds to be both an opportunity and an obstacle facing democratization in the Middle East. Relating to the KR, Chapter 2: *Iraq, Arab Nationalism, and Obstacles to Democratic Transitions* by Ozum Yesiltas, reviewed the relationship between Kurds and the Iraqi government in a historical context. The Author believes that the Arab nationalist policy pursued by the central government was the main obstacle to democratizing Iraq, which destroyed Iraqi Kurdistan and undermined the government capacity. The review did not target the current socio-political organizations of the KR. Chapter 7, by Nicole F. Watts, *Democracy and Self-Determination in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq*, focused on the democratization process in the KR in the period 2003-2014. The author argues that the NGOs, political opposition and independent mass media as signs to democratization exist in the KR. The chapter was mainly focused on the political activities in Slemani and not the whole of the KR, which is a weakness point of the study. The NGOs that the author mentioned are mostly seeking public services and not political rights. As well, as this thesis' arguments and interviews reasserted that the KR suffers from a lack of independent mass media, NGOs and domination of political parties on



all sectors of society. The current so called, mass media, political parties and NGOs of the KR consist partly of obstacles to political development in the KR.

Chapter 13, *Ankara, Erbil, Baghdad: Relations Fraught with Dilemmas*, by Orfa Bengio, targeted the relationship between Turkey and Iraq. The author claims that after 1991's attack by the American-led coalition on Iraq, it made the KR a new neighbour to Turkey. The 2003 changing regime in Bagdad, Shi'a and Sunni division, allowed the Shia domination of the government to force the Turkish government to improve its relationships with the KRG. This means that the relationship of Turkey with the KRG, has not been established on the good will of Turkey, but is the result of regional circumstances. The author argues that both the KR and the rest of Iraq are quasi-states\*. Relating to the KR, she believes that especially after 2003 the KR is in the process of nation building. The signals of this process according to the author are: self-government, the parliament, the flag and the army. However, as this thesis implicitly shows political parties utilize nationalist sentiments to challenge external threats onto their interests.

Through the chapters related to the KR, it obvious that the high price of oil and relative stability before the rise of ISIS dominated the type of authors' thinking regarding the KR.

Taucher et al *The Kurds: History, Religion, Language, Politics* (2015), as the title suggests, focuses on Greater Kurdistan and a wide range of issues. One chapter is historically focused on the political parties of Iraqi Kurdistan and the rivalry between political parties and between tribes in order to achieve their narrow interests and how through these rivalries, the neighbouring countries were able to use Kurdish parties and clans against each other or against a neighbouring country. The author argues that even with the establishment of the KRG under the protection of the western powers which provided a safe haven, the Kurdish political parties were unable to develop a proper political system due to deep rivalry between themselves. This point of view underlines the problem that the current political parties in the

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\* Jackson (1990:21) referred to quasi-states for independent ex-colonial states, which suffer from sufficient institutional capacity to runs its internal and external affairs. He defined quasi-states as "they disclose limited empirical statehood: their populations do not enjoy many of the advantages traditionally associated with independent statehood. Their governments are often deficient in the political will, institutional authority, and organized power to protect human rights or provide socioeconomic welfare. The concrete benefits which have historically justified the undeniable burdens of sovereign statehood are often limited to fairly narrow elites and not yet extended to the citizenry at large whose lives may be scarcely improved by independence or even adversely affected by it" (see: Jackson, R. H. (1990), *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

KR represent in terms of political development. The author notes that the unification of the government after 2003 was the result of changes brought about from the outside rather than the political will of the elites. However, the unification did bring stability to the region compared to other parts of Iraq.

Each of above-mentioned studies illuminates an aspect of the socio-political and economic life in a descriptive or historical framework or by focusing on the key events that have occurred in the political life of the KR. These contributions to knowledge though valuable, leave some gaps and unresolved issues. There is a need to move beyond the existing knowledge, towards a better level of conceptualisation and theorization of what has occurred on the ground. It is difficult to understand the entire process of political development without tying together these various aspects in a scholarly theoretical approach. The following section considers some of the theoretical and conceptual tools which can help to shape a more complete understanding.

### **Key Concepts and Theories**

The KR is in a complicated situation, which needs to be recognized in any analysis. It is a stateless country but it is also a state within a state. This paradoxical status was born from its geopolitical location, weakness of central government and international political factors including support mainly from western countries. Political development must be considered a complex and multidimensional process, spanning place and time, individuals and society. To understand the multiple aspects in the context of the KR, the resources of more than one theory are required.

Kurdistan as a region has exercised semi-independence since 1991 when Kurdish people rose up against the central government of Iraq which led it to withdraw its apparatuses from the KR. The action provided an opportunity for the latter to build its own institutions (Bengio, 2005). Subsequently, the creation of a no-fly zone or *safe haven* by the UN Security Council Resolution 688 in 1991 and Operation Provide Comfort, helped the KR to manage its domestic and foreign affairs. In 1992, parliamentary elections to form the executive and legislature authorities were held by various political parties. The aftermath was parliamentary rule and a coalition government by cadres of the two most powerful parties namely, the KDP and the PUK. As a result, the term Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) appeared in the political literature. Later, in 1996 the UN 986 resolution, Oil For Food Programme (OFFP) gave economic assistance to the KR.

If the situation of the KR is discussed in terms of the state aside from the concept of sovereignty, the KR should be recognized as an independent state because it exercises authority, issues laws, manages governmental apparatuses, has controlled the majority of income resources since 1992, regulates tax and has its own military forces. Hence, the question can be posed whether the KR is recognized as a de facto region or an independent state or a federal state, or whether it is a new form of political entity under an international umbrella, which in public international law is called "governance without the state" (Rudolf, 2009:2).

It is important to investigate the meaning of these concepts to obtain comprehensive knowledge of the KR. According to the de facto situation, it could be defined as an

Organised political leadership which has risen to power through some degree of indigenous capability; receives popular support; and has achieved sufficient capacity to provide government services to a given population in a specific territorial area, over which effective control is maintained for a significant period of time. The de facto state views itself as capable of entering into relations with other states and it seeks full constitutional independence and widespread international recognition as a sovereign state. It is, however, unable to achieve any degree of substantive recognition and therefore remains illegitimate in the eyes of international society (Pegg in Voller, 2012:59).

However, the concept 'illegitimate' in this definition needs to be questioned. The establishment of the KR is based on UN resolutions and international support, so, it does have legitimacy.

Another definition refers to an entity which in practice has "at least some effective [...] authority over a territory within a state" (Schoiswohl in Essen, 2012:2). This level of effective authority is accompanied by a certain level of political and organizational capacity. The concept of a de facto regime has been defined by International Humanitarian Law and International Criminal Law and it is used to describe an international actor in the political arena possessing International Legal Personality and recognition, even if implicit, by other governments (Essen, 2012). Based on this, the region is a de facto entity with both political and legal responsibility at the local and international level. The KR operated in this way from 1992 to 2005 when the new Iraqi constitution was approved.

According to the Montevideo Convention on Rights and Duties of States (December 26, 1933), the state in international law should possess the following characteristics: (A) a permanent population; (B) a defined territory; (C) a government; and (D) the capacity to enter into relations with other states. The KR has the first three characteristics. The fourth

one actually refers to the sovereignty of the state and it is a normative concept (Beitz, 1991) more than an empirical one. There are states in the world that have the capacity but cannot enter into relations with some other states, for instance, Israel with some Arab countries.

After 2005, the ability of the KR to establish relationships with other countries became enhanced by virtue of its official federal status and then with the invasion of ISIS in 2014 this ability increased. In addition, it is important to note that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, politics at the international level has incorporated the concept of humanitarian intervention, which implies the end of the state's absolute sovereignty (Beitz, 1991). Other intervention occurred but not under justification of humanitarian intervention. This is in contrast to the Montevideo Convention on Rights and Duties of States, which states in Article eight that "No state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another". Humanitarian intervention by international organizations or "supra-state bodies" (Kingsbury, 2007:58) such as NATO and the UN has and break down the concept of absolute sovereignty (Held, 1991). The collapse of absolute sovereignty was positive for the KR. This occurred in Iraq in 1991 with Operation Provide Comfort.

Concerning internal and external sovereignty (Beitz, 1991), the KR has internal sovereignty and to some degree, external sovereignty. In terms of internal sovereignty, it exercises authority over its citizens and executes laws issued by the KR parliament (as well as, some Iraqi civil laws). External sovereignty is a more controversial subject because from 1992 to 2003, the KR was protected by the international community. Later, the Iraqi constitution (2005: Article, 117, No 1) came to define Iraq as a federal state and acknowledged the official governmental structure of the KR. Article 141, which states that all contracts concluded by the KRG since 1992, are valid. This means that the KRG has the capacity to enter into relations with other states or organizations and act as a quasi-state (Natali, 2007).

As mentioned, some scholars (e.g. Essen, 2012) refer to de facto status as being a situation of an entity exercising authority on a territory within a state. This definition does not target sovereignty as a key issue, but the exercise of power in the context of governmental institutions. Parallel to this understanding of the KR's status, it is useful to apply Fukuyama's (2004:22) interpretation. He does not refer to sovereignty, instead he makes a distinction between two concepts: the *scope* of the state activities or those actions and the aims that a government tries to achieve, and the *strength* of the state's power or the capacity of the state to make and execute plans, perform legislation, function transparently and have institutional capacity. Both strength and scope, here, refer to the government more than the state.

Roxborough (1979:118) defined the state as "a structured and interlocking set of institutions". In these definitions there are interconnections and a merging of state and government. The question of sovereignty is not settled yet and the KR does not fit perfectly into the context of state theory that developed around the nation-state idea. Moreover, these debates on the state and its sovereignty contrast with the common belief in the KR that the problem of development is its location (no access to an international sea) and its stateless situation. Watts (2014:147) borrowed from King (2001:525) the concept of 'state-like entity' to describe the political situation of the KR with its exercise of internal but not external sovereignty. Natali (2007) used the concept of quasi-state to describe the KR situation. However, as this thesis will explain, the KRG exercises a degree of external sovereignty as well, and especially since ISIS emerged in 2014. From this perspective, it is more practical, in discussing political development in the KR, to give priority to the government and political institutions' performance rather than giving priority to the state.

However, it is important to know how these institutions accomplish their responsibilities. The type of institution (complex or basic, professional or non-professional and run by whom) and its performance has a direct impact upon political development. Hence, in the study of the KR, a further theory needs to be considered, namely institutional theory.

In this thesis the term 'institutions' is used in the context of democratic institutionalisation, when the transfer of power and elite changes happen frequently through public and competitive elections in both government and a political party's leadership. A specific question is why, after the formation of the government in 1992, with an elected parliament and the existence of political organizations, the KR fell into internal war from 1994 to 1996 which led to instability, deinstitutionalisation and a breakdown in social order (Jepperson, 1991). One factor contributing to the conflict was that political organizations had not become institutionalized. As North (1993:12) states "Institutions are the rules of the game and organizations are the player". Knight (1992) uses similar terms

Institutions are features of society and government which involve both formal and informal structures (Peters, 1999). The institutions of the state must continue in their functions regardless of political and personnel changes (Kingsbury, 2007). Roxborough (1979), in analysing the state's performance in what he described as Third World countries, argues that it is necessary to consider which social classes control the institutions and the mechanisms of decision making. In the KR, for instance, the political apparatuses are controlled by a circle of political elites, the majority of whom have remained in power for decades.

For this reason, investigation of the performance of the KR's institutions is necessary. Indeed, as this thesis is a political study and "the roots of political science are in the study of institutions" (Peters, 1999:1), so institutionalisation is indispensable for stability and development (Martinussen, 1997; Huntington, 2006). This study aims to avoid internal disputes between different varieties of institutionalism and draws on the general framework of institutionalism theory, especially political institutionalism<sup>2</sup>. Its main focus is on the state apparatuses and the interaction between them. This does not mean that the study avoids applying other approaches of institutionalization. As Hall and Taylor (1996) have observed, the schools of institutionalism are closely related.

The degree of political development in a society can be measured by different political activities in the framework of political institutions (Huntington, 2006). Institutions by definition have some essential features. According to Peters (1999:18-19) political institutions:

1. Are recognized as a structural characteristic of society and polity (This structure could be formal or informal);
2. Have some degree of stability;
3. Influence individuals' behaviour; and
4. Members of an institution have some degree of shared values.

Respect for an institution "lies in the moral authority it exercises over the individual" (Parsons, 1990:326). Institutions for Parsons imply a set of norms that interact together. For institutions to endure, they need to be legitimized and people accept them (Calhoun et al, 2002). If "institutions consist of cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour" (Scott, 1995:33), what are these norms? How can this cognition be identified in the KR if the means–ends concept that Parsons has referred to is applied? Parsons explained the role of institutions in the integration of the social system and noted the importance of institutional control over individuals' actions as well as the importance of social stability in the institutional framework. Failure to perform this function leads to the division of society.

The same view of the fundamental role of institutions is found in Huntington's studies on political development and institutionalization. He refers to Institutionalisation as a "process

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<sup>2</sup> Peters (1999) refers to six different approaches in the new institutionalism and poses the question: does it enrich political science? He argues that we can gather all of them under one umbrella.

by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability" (Huntington, 2006:12). Moreover, he considers that the level of institutionalisation can be measured by adaptability, complexity, autonomy and coherence in organizations and procedures. Subsequently, by institutionalization, the polity will be impersonal and the rules will apply independently of personal ties.

Political institutions are a necessary but not sufficient condition for development. In the period before 2003, various political institutions were established in the KR, including parliament, governmental organs and political party organizations, but development was prevented by military conflict between the political parties. Therefore, one aim of this thesis is to investigate this unrealised potential and explore the other factors that shape the political sphere in the KR and find out what is going on behind political institutions that has a negative impact on their role. The deficiency of institutions in the KR is visible in its present form because they are dominated by political elites. In fact, institutionalisation and the political elites' behaviours impact upon each other. Therefore, it is necessary to spotlight the political elites and their power in the KR. The KR, as a new political entity with a tribal base (see Chapter 8) and tendency for non-democratic rule, needs a theory of political elites. Theories of political elites will be used in this thesis to help reveal impediments to the political development of the KR.

Elite theory has been applied to nation-states or independent states, but this does not mean it cannot be utilized to study a non-state entity, especially if that entity possesses modern political organizations. Political elites and political institutions have a close relationship. Institutions limit the elites' behaviour and in return, the elites' behaviour impacts upon the institution's formation and performance. What is important is that the unity, cooperation and disunity among elites is reflected in the type of political system, constitution, institutions and economic activity (Higley and Lengyel, 2000).

Burton and Higley (1987:296) defined elites as: "People who are able, through their positions in powerful organizations, to affect national political outcomes individually, regularly, and seriously". Mosca explains that "in all societies... two classes of people appear: a class that rules and a class that is ruled" (cited in Parry, 1969:36). Pareto also divides social classes into the ruling class and ruled class. The ruling class directly or indirectly participates in political authority, which means that they form political elites (cited in Parry, 1969).

However, this thesis utilizes a concept of political elite which does not depend on a sociological concept of class struggle or the ruling class. The justification for this is that the literature on the ruling class is dated and does not properly apply to the current political and economic situation of the KR. Furthermore, as described in this thesis the majority of economic activities are controlled by political parties and political elites. Bottomore (1993:7) used the concept of “political elite” or “governing elite”, which it is more suitable for studying the relationship between the political elite and political development in the KR. Bottomore used political elite to distinguish the concept from political class used by Mosca, which includes all groups that exercise political power and influence and fight for leadership. The political elites or governing elites which directly exercise power are smaller in size and number than the political class. Hence, the political elites as he pointed out are “members of the government and the high administration, military leaders ...politically influential families and leaders of powerful economic enterprise” (p:7).

In the case of the KR it is possible to illustrate this with the example of a military commander being owner of a big company and at the same time, being a member of a political bureau of a party and also a member of an influential family. It is a problem that the literature on political development itself is related to the democratic system more than others. The lack of change in political leadership underlines the need to apply a new political elite approach in order to understand the socio-political structure of the KR.

Baylis (1998), in his study of the relationship between elites and institutions in Germany, the Czech Republic and Slovakia after 1989, explains that in these countries a complex interdependence can be seen between new political elites and new political institutions. Elites established the new institutions and the latter created a suitable setting for the elites' actions. Baylis argues that it is important to distinguish between the ways in which elites change and superficial institutional change.

The situation of the KR after the uprising in 1991 was a political and administrative vacuum. To fill the vacuum, the political elites decided to hold parliamentary elections and form political institutions to maintain social order and political stability. However, disagreement among the political elites led to the collapse of the political institutions within two years of their creation: “the façade of elite consensus on the rules of the political game and the mission of political institutions promptly collapsed” (Tokes, 2000:74).



Concepts such as elite, stability, institutions, unity and disunity among political elites are all closely connected. Higley et al (1998), and Higley and Lengyel (2000) highlight the connection between stability, the nature of the political system and the unity of elites. They claim that, in consolidated democracies, elites have a strong unity and a wide differentiation. Authoritarian regimes have neither. Totalitarian regimes have strong unity but a narrow differentiation. Finally, unconsolidated democracies live in a state of flux and may experience a short period of authoritarian features which means extensive differentiations, but fragile unity. However, it is difficult to place the KR in a single one of these situations.

Elite disunity occurs when political elites cannot trust each other and an atmosphere of fear governs different factions. This fear arises from a belief that if a person or a group obtains political authority, others will lose everything. In these circumstances, transfers of authority often occur through violent conflict and outside the institutional framework (Dogan and Higley, 1998; Higley et al, 1998; Higley and Lengyel 2000; Higley and Burton, 1989). On the other hand, the implication of consensus, as Higley and Burton (1989) show, is that elites must accept political outcomes even when they are not in their favour. This consensus is a foundation for democratic institutionalisation and the rule of competition (Burton and Higley, 1987; Burton and Higley, 1998).

The same phenomenon could be seen in the KR, after the first parliamentary elections in 1992. The PUK and the KDP divided the parliamentary seats and ministerial portfolios fifty-fifty (with five seats allocated to the Christians). However, political elite unity failed with the outbreak of internecine warfare in 1994 up until the Washington Agreement in 1998 between the two parties. This agreement led to a period of political calm, but without the unification of the two separated administrations. After the downfall of the Ba'ath regime in 2003, both political parties found common ground until the establishment of the united cabinet in 2006.

The fifth and the eighth cabinets expanded to include various political parties with an equal number of posts for both the PUK and the KDP (see Chapter 5 and 6). Additionally, in 2007, both parties signed a Strategic Agreement (see Appendix 1) to participate with a single list in both the KR provincial and Iraqi parliamentary elections. The Strategic Agreement governs all types of relationships between these two parties. The same accommodation is reflected in relationships between the political parties of the KR and the Iraqi government. The region's political parties created the Kurdistan Alliance Bloc in the Iraqi parliament

(2005-2009) to co-ordinate their policies towards the Baghdad government. These policies were enabled by a consensus among the political elites.

Etzioni-Halevy (1998) argued that for a democratic system to be established and consolidated it is crucial that political elites have relative autonomy. This autonomy can exist in a system that consists of a variety of civil political parties, NGOs and transparent funding sources. It is harder to apply it in a newly formed region where political elites have other roles, such as head of a clan and military commander. Furthermore, if the political parties and the government are a source of livelihood for citizens, the equation will be even more complex (this issue will be discussed in the following chapters).

Higley and Burton (1989) also discuss the role of the economic sector and its political negative impact on consensus and stability. Finally, both Eisenstadt, (1973a:89) and Huntington (2006) argue that to achieve political development, political elites need to be modernized.

In this thesis, the terms “political elites” and “political leaders” or “leadership”, are used interchangeably. The top party elites and government officers of the KR are considered to be political elites. In the KR, there are tendencies towards non-democratic rule, which also impacts negatively on the process of institutionalisation (This claim will be substantiated throughout this research). This is linked the history of the political parties that was based on Marxist-Leninist principles and the non-devolution of power at both levels of political party and governmental authority as well as parties having armed forces (see Chapter 7). The non-democratic base of political elites in the KR is a combination of their being party-based, family-based, and religion-based and being backed by armed forces. Sometimes a leader combines all of these three bases, which gives him additional strength. Although, there was a growth of opposition for a period of time (2009-2014), it was very limited. This division between parties means that, a portion of the population is sufficient to re-elect the same political elites for a long period of time.

As mentioned in a previous section of this chapter, Voller (2012) argues that there is a tendency in de facto entities to build democratic institutions in co-operation with the international community. In the KR, while there are democratic intuitions, they are under the influence of political parties. Each party and its leaders, has a tendency towards non-democratic rule within the party or in government and they try to limit the capacity of opposing parties as much as possible. However, their ability is limited because they want to

show the outside world a democratic façade. This formal democratic competition is inconsistent with the actual political activity and the tendency of political elites. The term “non-democratic” is used here to describe to the tendency for there to be non-rotation of power. Even when elections have been held on the level of political parties or government, the same leaders stay in power for more than two terms and people follow rulers to gain economic and fiscal privileges.

In the light of these considerations, this thesis will explore the relationship between elites and political development in the KR. Specifically, it will address the following issues: (A) the need for political elites to abandon separate armed forces and nationalize the army; (B) the diversity of elites and their participation in the regulation of the institutional framework (parliament and government); (C) the role of the tribal base that continues to give political parties authority, but has a regressive impact on the process of political development.

To return to an issue raised in Chapter 1, geography has its impact on the mind of people and political elites in the KR. The idea of being victimized by geography is mainstream in the KR; the idea that geography prevents the people from having their own independent state. However, it is important to notice that this determinist view of geography can be exaggerated by political elites and have a negative impact on political development. For this reason, it is important to include a brief review of geopolitics and geopolitical theory and its impact on the KR’s policy, especially with neighbouring countries.

The geographical location of the KR, in its sensitive location in the Middle East, influences political decisions at both international and regional levels<sup>3</sup>. To understand this geopolitical position and its influence on political development, it is useful to mention the Kurdish proverb “we have no friends but the mountains” (Dahlman, 2002:273).

Geopolitics revolves round the idea of “how the world is or should be organized” and this idea related to the “activity of government and foreign policy” (Painter and Jeffrey, 2009:198-207). In geopolitics, geographical features, physical location, space, natural and human resources combine with a state and politics to shape the importance of a geographical area. According to Dahlman (2009:89-90), the main question in geopolitics is “how does geography affect politics?” or “how, exactly, geography matters to world affairs?” He

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<sup>3</sup> Region is a geographic area which is "unified culturally, unified at first economically and later by consensus of thought, education, recreation etc, which distinguishes it from other areas" (Young in Minshull, 2009:18).

defines geopolitics as “the study of the relationship between geographical features and international politics” (p. 97).

In brief, the term refers to the understanding of “how politics, especially international politics, and geography are related” (Flint, 2102:17).

Geopolitics has played a vital role in political development in the KR. With the declaration of Iraq as an independent state in 1921 and the incorporation of the KR into this state, firstly, the concept of nation-state building as a form of political development was not in favour with either Iraq or the KR. The series of wars that occurred between the Kurdistan political movements and the Iraqi governments from 1921 to 1991; the type of relationship between both sides from 2003 to 2013 which led to the KR’s annual budget being cut off in 2014; and the Iraqi regime’s treatment of different ethno-religious groups are all evidence of this.

The Sykes-Picot treaty of 1916 was followed by the treaty of Sevres in 1920. In part III, Articles 62, 63 and 64, under the heading *Section III Kurdistan*, it is stated that the Kurdish people could have their autonomy or independent state if they have the ability to run their own affairs. As it did not serve the powerful states' interests at the time, this treaty was replaced in 1923 by the Treaty of Lausanne in which Kurdistan is officially divided among Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Syria. The 1975 Algeria Agreement between Iraq and Iran on the Kurdish issue, also indicates the importance of Kurdistan’s geopolitics in shaping the politics of the neighbouring states.

Even in the war on Iraq in 2003, Iraq’s neighbours (Iran, Turkey and Syria) who did not have a good political relationship with the Iraqi government, opposed the attack on Iraq, the main reason being the threat of the Kurdish issue. However, politics is changeable and this can be seen in the difference in political rhetoric among the KRG, Iran and Turkish governments after the change of regime in Iraq in 2003, and more specifically between Turkey and the KDP or Iran and the PUK (see Chapter 9).

Kennedy (2004), in an article for *The Guardian*, wrote “in a world that seems full of contending ideas and aspirations, perhaps none is more puzzling than the tension between democracy and realpolitik”. The author explained how geographical location has an impact on politics. This claim should be applied to the geographical position of the KR, surrounded by countries that have Kurdish residents and assumes that any development in the KR will have a negative effect on political stability if their Kurdish inhabitants make the same demands. Kaplan (2009:98-103) argued that

The map determined nearly everything, leaving little room for human agency.... The geographically illogical states in the Fertile Crescent (the Fertile Crescent, wedged between the Mediterranean Sea and the Iranian plateau), none is more so than Iraq.... The mountains that separate Kurdistan from the rest of Iraq, and the division of the Mesopotamian plain between Sunnis in the centre and Shiites in the south, may prove more pivotal to Iraq's stability than the yearning after the ideal of democracy.

Mackinder (1904:422) famously related the state's power and its development to geographical location and declared "man and not nature initiates, but nature in large measure controls". However, this deterministic view about geography, reduces the ability of humans and the political system to shape its future. Yet this deterministic view is common among intellectual and ordinary people in the KR and has given a good rationale to the political elite to justify their type of governance. The Kurdish proverbs of 'we are surrounded by enemies' and 'we are the victim of our geography' are evidence of this type of thinking. Geographical location has some power to shape economic development, such as having access to an international sea; and to frame relationships with neighbouring countries, but it does not have power to determine whether the type of political system is to be democratic or non-democratic, secular or non-secular. This determinist view reduces the ability of a nation to fashion its future.

Culcasi (2006) in a study of the impact of Kurdistan's geography on international political relationships describes how its geography has negatively impacted upon Kurdistan and how neighbouring states have stood against most of the Kurds' demands. Culcasi refers to Chomsky's (2002) argument about the KR before the collapse of the Ba'ath regime that even if the USA were to accept the establishment of a federal region for Iraqi Kurdistan, it would be opposed by the Turkish government. The government of Iran certainly takes the same position and both governments may intervene in KR to control any potential instability, which may occur inside their boundaries (Moberly, 1992). The geopolitical location of the KR and its impact on the relationships with its neighbouring countries is addressed in Chapter 9.

The situation has not been static. After 2003 especially the KR obtained more opportunities, politically, legally and economically, to move towards development. It did not mean that barriers were removed. But the type of relationship with neighbouring countries and especially with Turkey, shifted markedly to establish a better relationship. This new relationship helped to overcome some of the disadvantages of geography in the political and economic relationships between countries. In addition, in 2014 with the inroads by ISIS to

parts of the KR, the international community provided military and economic support for resistance and the KR became a 'political traffic arena' in which the level of visits by foreign officials increased to bolster the stability of the region. In early 2015, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the UK's parliament published a long report about the KR, asking the government to expand its relationships with the KR and even to prepare itself for the possibility of an independent Kurdish state (House of Commons, 2015).

### **Formulating the Problem**

In the political development of the KR, certain events have occurred which have left their footprint on the development trajectory. These events include: firstly, the United Nations Security Council's resolution (660) about economic sanctions on Iraq in 1990 that were designed to limit world trade with Iraq. The sanctions had an impact on Iraq's development in two ways; on the one hand, they hindered economic progress and the rebuilding of the infrastructure of the country that was devastated by Iraq's wars against its neighbours, namely Iran and Kuwait. Subsequently, the KR as a part of Iraq could not avoid being involved. On the other hand, the living conditions of the people of the KR were improved by the introduction of the OFFP in 1996. The negative consequences were the devastation of the agricultural sector due to the import of everyday items from abroad (during the Ba'ath period this sector had already been destroyed, but it was never rebuilt after 1992). Due to the PUK and the KDP employing people in administrative organizations, military and party offices, the number of government employees rose markedly without any growth in the productive sectors. Politically, foreign aid helped to establish a relationship between the KRG as a non-state actor and foreign governments. However, the dependency of the KR on the Iraqi government shifted to dependency on foreign countries and the region suffered from both an internal and an external embargo (Stansfield, 2003; Natali, 2007; Natali, 2010). Secondly, the internal conflict between the PUK and the KDP (1994-1996) led to a geographical and political division of the KR. This war forced those people who supported one of the two parties to abandon their homes, land and towns and move to areas controlled by the relevant party. This process even separated family members. Many ordinary people and party members went missing during the internal war, which created a deeply politicized society. The social unions, educational centres and even religious organizations became divided along political party lines.

Thirdly, the geographical division also had implications for economic activities. Two key parties, the KDP and the PUK, controlled nearly all the important economic activities in the areas under their control. This phenomenon led to the spread of extensive corruption. The budget allocated to the KR by the Iraqi government was divided between the two parties. The problem is that fiscal data are not clearly and transparently published by the KRG (Nore and Ghani, 2009).

Fourthly, with the weakening of the Iraqi central government after 1992 and the interference of neighbouring states in the KR issues (via one of the two main parties) the region's situation became more complicated. This can be clearly observed during the period of internal conflict in the KR, when it became the stage for a balance of power among regional states on the one hand, as well as a zone to exclude anything that would have a negative impact on their interests, on the other.

This period, finally, coincided with the emergence of a variety of Islamic groups; and for a time some areas of the region have been totally controlled by them. Their stated aim is to apply Islamic law or *Al-Sharia* which prohibits all kinds of music and arts, prevents the schooling of females and punishes offenders by extreme religious means. Military conflict occurred between the PUK and some of these groups and between the KDP and others such as *Ansar Al-Islam* (the partisan of Islam). During the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the US attacked the Islamic groups that they had identified as terrorist groups (Nore and Ghani, 2009; Leezenberg, 2005).

These events, besides encouraging the PUK and the KDP to seek tribal support, left their mark on the development process and type of socio-political culture (see Chapter 8). However, this does not mean a complete absence of progress in the KR. For example, holding parliamentary elections, one year after the uprising, can be considered as a first step towards pluralism. Moreover, after 2005, the two administrations founded a united government. A powerful opposition appeared in the 2009 parliamentary elections. Furthermore, regarding the development of human rights, Amnesty International (2013) reported that respect for human rights was in a more favourable position than with other parts of Iraq.

What is more important after the collapse of the Ba'ath regime in 2003, and the creation of a new constitution for Iraq, was that it became an opportunity for the KR to invest more in the economic sector. According to the Iraqi constitution (2005), which recognized the KR

as a federal entity (Article 117), it has power to run its internal affairs (Article 120). The KRG in coordination with the Baghdad government formulates oil and gas strategic policies (Article 112). Both governments in coordination manage the KR's customs' revenues (Article, 114). More importantly, according to Article 115 "All powers not stipulated in the exclusive powers of the federal government belong to the authorities of the regions and governorates that are not organized in a region". Article 141, states that all legislation that has been enacted in the KR since 1992 remains in force. Despite all the difficulties between the KRG and Baghdad government, these Articles have empowered the KR to provide a road map for its future development (Shakir, 2014).

In short, in the study of political development in the KR there are variety of concepts that must be considered such as the institutionalisation process, regional and international political equations, its geographical location and the history of the foundation of the Iraqi state. The aforementioned theories are generally applied to independent state entities, but this does not mean that they cannot be applied to a non-state entity. The next chapter reviews some ideas on political development and dependency as a context for understanding the process of political development in the KR.



### **Chapter Three: The Concept and Definitions of Political Development**

Scholars refer to the history of human development either by classifying societies under the binary labels of traditional and modern, community and society, mechanical and organic, developed and underdeveloped societies, or by studying them historically through evolutionary perspectives. To some extent each society or nation has developed. However, the degree of this development differs from one to another. This chapter presents an overview of two different schools of thought on political development, to know their perspective towards political development and their weaknesses and strengths. The aim is to introduce development issues and connect them with political development in the KR in preparation for detailed and more comprehensive coverage of each subject in the following chapters. The thesis focuses mainly on the political dimension of political development rather than, for example, political culture, political psychology or economic development.

Politics is derived from the Greek term of *Politikos*, which means “appertaining to the city, the citizen and citizenship” (Price, 1975:19). Like other social concepts there is no single definition. In the sphere of public life there are various applications of the concept of politics (Morgenthau, 2012:96). Identifying politics in developing societies where both formal and informal structures contribute to shaping policy and making decisions is particularly difficult (Burnell and Randall, 2005).

Politics in a democratic system can be defined as an “activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live” (Heywood, 1997:4). Political subjects in the broad sense should be defined as “activities surrounding the process and institutions of government” (Burnell and Randall, 2005:3).

The concept of politics in this thesis refers to the various political and mutual interactions of governmental apparatuses with domestic formal and informal political power and their relationship with external political players. The purpose of this broad definition of politics is to find out how it serves a political development process in society. If development in its simplest form is progress that occurs within and between different aspects of a society, then politics is the method of managing and regulating these aspects.

## **The Political Development School**

The concept of development gained currency in the late eighteenth century with the emergence of capitalism. It replaced terms such as progress, evolution and growth, which were borrowed from natural science (Larrain, 1989; Mothoghy, 2005). “The term ‘development’ implies movement or growth over time along some specified set of dimensions from one state of these dimensions to another” (Willner, 1964:471). After the Second World War, modernization theories emerged in the context of the rise of the USA as a hegemonic power, the growth of communism and capitalism as rival ideologies and the appearance of new nation-states as a result of decolonization policies (Tipps, 1973; Berger, 2003). Political development was explicitly utilized in the 1960s to refer to the political modernization of newly emerged states (Kingsbury, 2007).

These circumstances and particularly the fear of competition from communism drove the USA to monitor new countries through policies of modernization. Political development theories built on modernization theories in response to the shortcomings of the latter. Both modernization and development theories have certain similarities in their conceptual characteristics. For example, both make use of concepts such as traditional norms, a transformation period, and they distinguish between the modernized and the undeveloped, developing and developed societies. In addition, both concepts attempt to display and propose a set of practical goals and programmes (Nwzary, 2007).

Economically, development means a growth in economic capacity. Socially, it refers to the distribution of income and social services on an equal base, and culturally it means building a national identity (Portes, 1976:56). Development in the broadest sense means a better life for all people or improvement in the essential and basic needs of life such as, clean water, shelter, food, sanitation and education. It originates from economic, social and cultural processes, which enhance an individual’s capacity to manage their life (Peet and Hartwick, 2009; So, 1990).

It is crucial to understand that, for political development to occur, the polity needs to develop procedures that allow political authorities to legislate. For Huntington (1965:386 and 393), political development is the “institutionalisation of political organizations and procedures”. This definition is ambiguous as institutionalisation can lead to the establishment of either a democratic or a non-democratic system. However, it is obvious that political development needs political will as a prerequisite.

Nye (1967) believes that a single definition of political development cannot cover all aspects, especially if it concerns a dynamic and durable process. Lucian Pye (1965:5-11), in his influential theoretical study '*The Concept of Political Development*', identified ten dimensions.

1. The political prerequisite for economic development.
2. The politics typical of industrial societies.
3. Political modernization.
4. The operations of a nation-state.
5. Administrative and legal development.
6. Mass mobilization and participation.
7. Building of democracy.
8. Stability and orderly change.
9. Mobilization and power.
10. One aspect of a multidimensional process of social change.

Nye (1967:418-419) also refers to the difficulty of defining of the concept "since it has an evaluative as well as a descriptive content", which is derived from scholars' different opinions and each one is focused on self-interested criteria in a specific place and time. He defined political development (or decay) as "growth (or decline) in the capacity of a society's governmental structures and processes to maintain their legitimacy over time".

Winham (1970:810) stated that political development means "the development of democratic political institutions and processes". While Coleman (1971:74) defined it in functionalist terms as "a continuous interaction among the process of structural differentiation, the imperative of equality, and the integrative, responsive, and adaptive capacity of a political system".

Later the definition of political development broadened to embrace additional aspects. Przeworski et al (2000:1) defined it as a "multifaceted process of structural transformation, not only economic, that becomes manifest in the growth of income, productivity, consumption, investment, education and life expectancy, and employment -all that makes for a better life".

If all the above-mentioned aspects of political development are combined, they show that political development corresponds to both micro and macro changes in society. At the micro level the concept deals with the individual level (individual capacity and participation), and at the macro level it deals with the variety of institutions<sup>1</sup> in society and their degree of modernisation (Chilton, 2005). For this reason, to understand the process of political development it is difficult to rely on any definition of this process which mainly targets a single aspect (e.g. economic, social or cultural). As Pye (1963:16) pointed out “no single scale can be used for measuring the degree of political development”. Political development includes multiple dimensions and various aspects of society. It is a dynamic process which reproduces itself to adapt to new challenges according to changing features of society. Relying on this claim and following the discussion of the multi-dimensionality of this process, our definition is illustrated at the end of this chapter.

### **Elaboration and Critique**

Studies of modernisation mostly emphasised the economy as the key to modernise other aspects of society. Lerner (1958:60), for example, pointed out the sequences of modernisation as urbanisation, literacy, exposure to mass media and participation (economically and politically), which all correlate with improvements in the economic situation of individuals. For Lipset (1959:75), the sequence of modernisation was wealth, industrialisation, urbanisation and education. The early studies of political development in the 1960s broadened these ideas and argued that politics and culture also contribute to political development.

Cutright (1963:255), linked political development to institutional capacity, and noted that a developed country should have “more complex and specialized national political institutions than a less politically developed nation”. He believed that the level of political development could be measured by comparing the degrees of development in political institutions between nations. Almond and Verba (1963), Pye (1965) and Huntington (2006), all referred to the importance of participation in political development, its impact on political stability or instability, government efficiency and legitimacy<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of institutions is related to governmental structures—legislatures, executives, agencies, and courts (Arnold and Hero, 2005). These formal institutions authoritatively shape and execute policies that identify society's benefits and interests.

<sup>2</sup> The concept of legitimacy, from the Latin *Legitimare*, refers to transformation of power into authority. The term is different from *legality* which does not guarantee that the government respects its citizens or citizens

A number of authors have engaged with the problem that political development is complex and multi-dimensional. Packenham (1964:109-117), advocates a five-fold approach to political development as follows:

1. The legal-formal approach deals with the constitution, laws, elections and separation of powers. This approach is normative and it is not necessarily useful for understanding what is happening in reality.
2. The economic approach focuses on government capacity, economic development and the ability to supply demands. This approach was popular among modernisation theorists who saw economic growth as a pathway to democracy. However, measures such as increase in per capita income cannot be accurately measured. In addition, many rich countries still have a non-democratic political system. Instead, Jackman (1973), referred to democratic political development and connected it to economic progress and the establishment of political organizations democratically.
3. The administrative approach emphasises the bureaucratic capacity of institutions to create stability and order. Focusing on governmental outputs. This approach highlights system rationality instead of tradition, nepotism, personality cults and charisma or ascriptive criteria.
4. The social system approach focuses on the mass participation of different groups in society. It recognises the participation of different socio-political groups in political activities and the rotation of power. However, as Huntington (1984) points out, where there is insufficient institutionalisation, participation may lead to instability; or as in case of KR, leads to party domination on society.
5. The political culture approach studies psychological concepts. According to Packenham “the psychological mechanisms at work occur on at least two levels: (i) the level of attitudes or sets of expectations about political roles held by members of the polity, and (2) the level of personality”.

In addition to these five approaches, Packenham added the geographical approach to refer to the influence of geographical location on political development. The same view is reiterated by Escobar (1995:9), on the role of geography in development. He pointed out that

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accept to obey the government (see Heywood, 1997:193). Legitimacy “involves the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate or proper ones for the society” and as an evaluative concept has close relations with the effectiveness and diffusion of “secular political culture” in society (see Lipset, 1959:86-89 and Lipset 1960:77).

“geographical imagination has shaped the meaning of development for more than four decades”. This point is relevant to the KR, which is surrounded by countries that have different political interests and sometimes the region becomes an arena for the settlement of political conflicts (see Chapter 9). However, it is important to avoid exaggeration in the role of geography and neglect the other factors in political development.

Each approach that Packenham identifies, taken together, they highlight the fact that political development is a multi-dimensional process which includes government, society and individuals. These different approaches cannot be separated but can be broadened to include the external foreign relationships of a country and their impact on political development. Consistent with the functionalist view of the social system a defect in one aspect will have a negative impact on the whole process.

Scholars such as Almond and Verba (1963), and Pye and Verba (1965), focused on the normative dimension of political development but also recognised multi-dimensionality, in terms of three dimensions linked to cultural aspects. The first is the change from a passive population to a contributory or participatory citizenry. This process has to be grounded in equality and acceptance of universal laws. The second is growth in the government's capacity<sup>3</sup> to run social affairs, control social conflict and supply general demands. The third is structural differentiation, functional specialization and more integration in society through participation in institutions. Implicitly, universal law refers to western liberal law, political and Human Rights. Thus, individuals have duties and rights and the government is being recognized as a legitimate authority. The result is, society and authority can monitor themselves.

Olsen (1968), broadened these ideas and instead of ‘approach’ used the term ‘dimension’, which he divided into values (political development) and material aspects (modernisation). Olsen pointed out that “national socio-economic and political development are both conceived of as multi-dimensional processes, consisting of several empirically interrelated but analytically distinct dimensions” (p:702). He identified five dimensions of political development which he then sub-divided. The characteristics of a democratic society in this view are: the separation of executive and legislative functions; civic control of the

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<sup>3</sup> A state has many sources of capacity, which are different from one state to another. Capacity basically refers to the state's ability to extract various resources to enforce its status at both internal and international levels. The government as an agent of the state, exercises the function of extraction. Thus the concept refers to the performance ability of the government. Knowing the degree of political capacity is a necessity for the state, to make plans, strategies, decisions and respond to internal and external demands (see: Feng, 2006).

legislature; the existence of a stable multi-political party system; diversification of power among governmental apparatuses; and finally, citizens' influence on governmental institutions through free expression and associations.

Emphasising industrialization, Olson added five further socioeconomic dimensions, which were again sub-divided into categories borrowed from modernisation theories, namely "Industrialization, urbanisation, transportation, communication and education" (p:703). Olsen's elaborated Packenham's approach and concluded that all the dimensions and sub-dimensions are interrelated and cannot be separated if political development is to be achieved.

In this new trend the political procedures have priority and come above economic factors. This reversal was the result of the limitations of previous studies that each emphasised one dimension of development, as well as lessons from the experience of what was going on in the political transformation of developing countries.

Another controversial subject in studies of political development is the role of the military. In the early 1960s, the idea of supporting the military as a modernising organisation spread. The basic reason was that this sector was "recruited from a comparatively modern, rational, and cohesive middle class" (Bienen, 1971:11). Theorists such as Pye (1961), criticized institutionalisation as a failed approach that was introduced to underdeveloped countries from outside by those unfamiliar with native culture. He referred to the military as nation builders and as an apparatus of development. Lovell and Kim (1967) identified the military as a mechanism of modernisation through its activities in political socialisation and political communication within society and abroad. Marion and Levy (1971) referred to the army as a tool for stability and modernisation.

Some authors were critical of these claims. Huntington (1965), for example, claimed that the military may lead to modernisation but not to stability, institutionalisation and political development<sup>4</sup>. He suggested that "Instead of relying on the military, American policy should be directed to the creation within modernizing countries of at least one strong non-communist political party" (p:429). Many newly emerging countries in the twentieth century, for a certain period of time, were ruled by military elites who were mostly supported

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<sup>4</sup> Huntington (1965), distinguished between modernization and political development. As Bienen (1971) mentioned, in his view political development means institutionalisation and the stability of institutions. Mobilization, participation and economic growth for Huntington was a part of modernization and not political development.

by foreign countries. Countries such as Iraq, Syria, Pakistan and Egypt became militarized states.

The military approach opened the way for military intervention in political issues. It increased the risk of armed conflict with neighbouring countries as well as internal war if any political dissent should arise between the army and others. Both development and dependency schools neglected the role of war (internal and external) in underdeveloped societies and their negative impact on development. Many of these countries were stuck in a permanent war for more than a generation and faced long term economic and political exclusion that often provoked civil war. Understanding the origins of war among and within underdeveloped societies may lead to a better understanding of the origins of political underdevelopment.

With coups d'état and the rise of military regimes in various developing countries, development theorists such as Huntington (2006) argued for the necessity of stable institutionalized government regardless of the type of government. Huntington in the first page of his book *Political Order in Changing Societies*, states that

The most important political distinction among countries concerns not their form of government but their degree of government. The differences between democracy and dictatorship are less than the differences between those countries whose politics embodies consensus, community, legitimacy, organization, effectiveness, stability, and those countries whose politics is deficient in these qualities. Communist totalitarian states and Western liberal states both belong generally in the category of effective rather than debile political systems (2006:1).

Before Huntington, Apter (1965) observed that modernisation may lead to instability. Following this idea, Huntington prioritized institutionalisation before mobilisation and participation, fearing that economic growth which was conducive to fast mobilisation and participation would destabilize the order of society (Wucherpfennig and Deutsch, 2009). As a result of this view of the dangers of instability and the risks of participation leading to social conflicts, studies of political development focused on the crises or problems that might occur in this process.

Binder (1971) argued that in the process of political development the state may face crises of identity, legitimacy, participation, distribution and penetration. If the state traverses these crises successfully, the goals of development will be achieved. According to him, the ability of the state is evident in how these crises are resolved. Political development “refers to the change in the type and style of politics” (1971:66). The goal of political development is to



handle these crises and establish a sustainable institutionalized government to serve both individuals and society.

Combining the ideas of Almond and Verba (1963), Pye and Verba (1965) and Nye (1967), Coleman (1971) argued that political development is the capacity of the political system to institutionalize a new form of organizational integration, dissolve conflicts in society, and shape new forms of participation and equality in the distribution of resources. Consequently, if a political system satisfies these demands, it can overcome the problems of national identity and power legitimacy. According to Verba (1971), capacity can be evaluated as the ability of governmental organizations to make decisions and implement them. Furthermore, institutionalisation processes are differentiated between political institutions and economic apparatuses. This distinction leads to the separation of power-holders from economic activities which, in turn, limits the rulers' power (Glaeser et al, 2004).

The majority of theorists devote attention to the role of institutions. However, other studies also refer to elites, and their unity or disunity and their impact on political development, as a key element in determining government capacity and stability. They focus on the effective bureaucratic system and its role in the management of public services with the elaboration of nongovernmental organizations. Next, public support is important in identifying the degree of government capacity. Government capacity in the application of its programmes and responding to public demands, leads to stability in the country (Nelson, 1984; Crone, 1988). An effective bureaucratic system as Weber (1968) describes is related to the rational-legal political system, and consequently, it obtains the citizens' support. For this reason, in one party or an authoritarian system it is difficult to measure the level of public support. Jones and Olken (2005), investigated the important rule of leaders of developing countries in growth or non-growth and policy making. Also, Glaeser et al (2004:271), argued that "human capital is a more basic source of growth than are the institutions".

In addition to institutionalisation and the role of elites, Almond and Powell (1966), later included secular culture in the process of political development and observed that development is a reaction of the political system to changes that occur in both internal and external settings; especially, nation-state building, political participation<sup>5</sup> and the re-

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<sup>5</sup> Political participation refers to the engagement of citizens in political activities such as voting, campaigns, making financial contributions, contacting public officials, attending protests and demonstrations, and being involved formally or informally in politics. Participation has a close relationship to the improvement of socio-economic aspects of life such as an increase in per capita income, education and urbanization (see: Nie et al, 1969; Brady, et al, 1995; Dalton, 2008). There is a revolution as a kind of political participation. However, the

distribution of national wealth. The measures of this process are “structural differentiation, subsystem autonomy, and cultural secularization” (reiterated in Huntington, 1971:300). Structural differentiation<sup>6</sup> indicates the division of functions between subunits. This differentiation, in turn, leads to autonomy of the subsystem and complexity of the organization (Rueschemeyer, 1977; Dewar and Hage, 1978). An important implication is that in the process of state building, other national-ethnic entities will not be victimized in this process.

The concept of secularisation, according to Almond and Powell (1966), Chaves (1994), and Verweij et al (1997) refers to the reduction of religious intervention in the individual’s life and social and economic activities. As Jabar and Dawod (2006:281) have argued, “secularization and the creation of the nation-state go hand in hand as indispensable, integrated components, asserting new loyalties and a novel socio-economic and political organization, that stand over and above other forms of allegiance and political association”.

The above-mentioned discussion on political development shows that the theory is not static and it develops new ideas around institutions, elite, bureaucratic systems, public support and secularisation. Moreover, between the early 1970s and 1990s certain events and new measurements affected the trajectory of political development studies. The goal of fast modernisation and the process of rapid exploitation of natural resources led to a fear of devastation of natural resources without a solution to the problems of economic inequality, poverty, health and providing shelter. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, a new concept of sustainable development emerged, to give a new priority to these aspects of development, the protection of the environment and human beings alongside the previous concerns.

Various reports such as the *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment* (1972) in Stockholm; *The World Conservation Strategy, Living Resources Conservation for Sustainable Development* (1980), and *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future* (1987), known as the Brundtland Commission, was the first report by the UN to consider the human and environmental as

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political development theories as originally formed in western capitalist societies, focused on political participation through democratic institutions and neglected revolution as a kind of political participation. A revolution as a tool to change the capitalism into socialism or communism has been put forward in dependency theories.

<sup>6</sup> Differentiation refers to the separation of institutions and social functions from each other, with a semi-autonomous framework of the institutionalized system; and the degree of differentiation refers to the division of labour (see: Eisenstad, 1964). Furthermore, differentiation means, division and the specialization of roles and institutions which are related to modernized societies (see: Coleman, 1971).

well as economic issues in development, which implicitly refers to responsible government. Sustainable development studies concluded that for development to occur it must include dimensions of economic development, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability and that the dimension of responsible politics is an essential concomitant (SDSN, 2015:4).

At the end of the Cold War, the concept of good governance was used by the World Bank to refer to the crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa in 1989 and after that by authors as a tool for democratization. The Worldwide Governance Indicators, were based on six dimensions of good governance from 215 economies in the period from 1996 to 2013, namely voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, and regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption (Weiss, 2000; Santiso, 2001; Doornbos, 2010; WGI, 2013).

From the mid-1970s, some countries had made the transition into a democratic system in what Huntington (1991) called 'Democracy's Third Wave'. This emerging theme coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the publication of Fukuyama's book *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), and the use of the Human Development Index as another measure of development in the 1990s that mainly focused on individual experiences of life expectancy, education and per capita income to evaluate the capacity of government. All of these events impacted on the stance of some researchers towards the subject of political development and led to a stronger focus on democracy. Acemoglu and Robinson (2006), for example, treat the terms democratisation and political development as synonymous.

As a result, scholars and international organisations argued that development is not a goal in itself, but a tool to achieve desirable goals and the centre of these goals is the human being (Kingsbury, 2007:16; UNDP, 1990). However, in reality it is different from the moral aspects of the tenet. As history often shows, the pure notion of development is often corrupted by ideologies, leading to regressive outcomes. For example, the World Bank and its apparatuses fund developmental programmes in financially and economically weak countries, according to conditions laid down by the bank, especially policies for the liberalization and privatization of the economic sector (Bradshaw and Huang, 1991; Hills, 1994).

Welzel et al (2003:341-342), Inglehart and Welzel (2005) linked a number of variables in political development according to three trajectories and entitled them 'the theory of human development'. The first, socioeconomic trajectory, included technological innovation,

productivity growth, improving health and life expectancy, increasing incomes, raising levels of education, growing access to information and increasing social complexity. The second is the trajectory of value change, which refers to the extension of the market, trade and social mobilization<sup>7</sup>. The third is the shifting of political institutions towards democracy. According to Welzel et al (2003), three criteria are required to achieve political development. However, external relationships and rivalry between global political powers also have to be taken into account.

Studies of political development have expanded to include more aspects of development and have enlarged their theoretical base. It makes it difficult to combine all of these aspects in one theory. Pieterse (2010:92) has pointed out that these new aspects which might be titled “alternative development” have enriched the theory, but at the same time have fragmented it.

In summary, it is important to show how different elements of development can interact. The time has passed when researchers made universal assumptions, reduced the problems of underdeveloped countries to economic factors, and focused on economic growth as a priority strategy. Today, the important role of socio-cultural features in each society cannot be ignored. In developmental studies there is a new focus on noneconomic aspects, single countries, and their relation to the global system, research into social, cultural and gender differentiations, and explanations of the obstacles to development in each society (Portes, 1976; Martinussen, 1997).

The new premise of political development theories is diversity. The idea of ‘multiple modernities’ is now standard wisdom for development and it has made the notion of political development more pragmatic. It is open to the objection that external economic and political relationships remain fundamental and responsible for creating underdevelopment. As a reaction, dependency theories emerged, which have argued for external factors as the key to keeping underdeveloped societies undeveloped.

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<sup>7</sup> Marshall defined mobilization as “the process by which a group goes from being a passive collection of individuals to an active participant in public life”. (see: Scott and Marshall, 2012). Scholars such as Huntington (2006) and Cameron (1974) regard political parties as the main tools in political mobilization.

## **The Dependency School**

Political development theories emphasize internal factors as the main obstacles to development. Partly in response to development theories came the dependency approach, which focused mainly on the role of external factors and their impact on underdevelopment. The connection between political development and economic growth in dependency theories is more complex than in political development theories. The latter describe development as stages marked by variety of indicators, while the dependency school refers to a kind of system that does not evolve through such stages. This school influenced Third World countries from the early 1960s to the 1980s, especially those in Latin America. There are various theories of dependency, which mainly emerged from a combination of Marxism and structural thinking through the formation of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) in 1949 (Larrain, 1989; Love, 1990). ‘Structuralism’, here, means that underdevelopment can be understood in terms of the historical structure of the international economic system (Smith, 1979). This section reviews some important points in this school of thought.

In the dependency view, development means economic growth and the discussion mainly focuses on economic relationships without engaging closely with politics itself. The political expression of the dependency school is socialism which occurs via revolution (Angotti, 1981). As Leys (1977:95-96) has noted, the dependency school is “economistic in a sense that social classes, the state, politics, ideology figure in it very noticeably as derivative of economic forces, and often get very little attention at all”. To understand underdevelopment, it tries to analyse cross-state economic relationships and “offers a general interpretation of current situation”. The economy is fundamental for other aspects.

Raul Prebisch (1963), the director of the ECLA, pointed out that the mechanisms of economic growth in industrialised societies do not contribute to the development of poorer societies. The problem is that the underdeveloped countries export raw materials to developed countries at a cheap price and import manufactured goods at a higher price. Consequently, international trade and exchange are based on an unequal relationship which favours capitalist developed states. This inequality in exchange leads to inequality in economic development. According to the ECLA, the solution was import substitution, for countries to manufacture their own goods (Ferraro, 2008; Larrain, 1989:13-16).

The focal points of this critical school are international political economy, economic surplus<sup>8</sup>, and the unequal relationship between industrialized capitalist developed countries and underdeveloped societies. In other words, the “relationship between the social, economic, and political structures of the dependent countries and the international capitalist system” (Cardoso, 1977:12; Ahiakpor, 1985; Frank, 1969).

Frank (1969), as a pioneer of this school, addressed the history of underdevelopment and argued that to understand the factors of underdevelopment, it is important to identify the history of each underdeveloped country and its relation with the outside world. According to Frank, external factors especially economic ones constitute a key element in underdevelopment. However, such an interpretation overestimates the power of economy and the power of industrialized societies to determine the fate of underdeveloped societies, and in contrast, underestimates the power of a nation and the role of national factors in development or underdevelopment. The result is generalisation and at the same time oversimplification of a complex issue of political development and underdevelopment of a society (Smith, 1979).

Santos (1970:231-232) also emphasised the economy, defining dependency as “a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected”. Santos distinguished three periods of dependency. First, colonial dependence, in which colonizing countries dominated trade, colonial land and human labour. Second, financial-industrial dependence at the end of the nineteenth century, a period when monopoly finance in the metropolises was invested in the production of raw materials and the agricultural sector in the peripheries to reinforce metropolitan development. The third is the post-war period when international corporations invested in the industrial-technological sector of underdeveloped countries and became a consumption market for the former.

However, in the present world system, many aspects are different. The monopoly of finance is no longer under the domination of the western capitalist states. Other powerful financial centres have emerged outside the capitalist zone, such as the Gulf States. Many financial crises have occurred in the capitalist states such as the Euro-zone financial crisis. Further,

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<sup>8</sup> Baran and Sweezy (1966:9) defined economic surplus as “the difference between what a society produces and the costs of producing it. The size of the surplus is an index of productivity and wealth; of how much freedom a society has to accomplish whatever goals it may set for itself”.

not just capitalist developed countries, but other countries can invest in both developed and underdeveloped countries.

Michael (1981:317), has linked dependency to the “vulnerability” of the state economy, which means the extent to which the economic sector of a country depends on imports of goods and services. Economic vulnerability correlates with political subordination. However, there are countries such as Iran that are economically weak, but maintain their political independence and play an important role in the regional political equations that contrast with the policy of Western industrialised and developed countries. This country according to the Index of Economic Freedom (2015) was the most closed economically and ranked 171 out of a total of 178 countries.

Hills (1994), has argued that the policy of dependency was pursued after the 1980s by the USA in alliance with the UK and countries within the international membership of the World Bank (WB), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). This policy was applied through strategies of liberalization, privatization of economy and free trade designed to prevent single nation-states from opposing the hegemony of the USA. The best strategy to implement this policy is direct foreign investment that forces recipient countries to minimize trade regulation in favour of its companies. The policy that Hills calls “micropolitics in the international system” turns the concept of dependency into interdependency (Hills, 1994:172). It benefits those countries that dominated the international economic markets via economic bodies that may be considered as driven by political ideology rather than unbiased mechanisms.

To achieve their plans, in the 1980s, the WB and the IMF imposed Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) on developing countries to make them adjust their economic foundations to conform to neo-liberal principles as a condition for being able to take out loans. The policies were designed to reduce state intervention in the economic sector and encourage more privatization, free trade, lower tariffs on imports and reduce subsidies to public services in these countries. They imposed heavy conditions on the poor and developing countries (Bradshaw and Huang, 1991; WHO, 2013).

According to the Human Development Report (2002), 29 out of 50 African countries spent more on debt than on their health sector. The WHO’s (2013) report entitled ‘Debt’ stated

At present 41 countries are identified as heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC), thirty-three in Africa, four in Latin America, three in Asia and one in the Middle East.... The total debt of all developing countries in 1995 amounted to 41 per cent of their total gross

national product (GNP), whereas the total net aid received was a mere 0.9 per cent of their total GNP (WHO, 2013a).

Loans intended to develop these countries exacerbated the situation and enhanced dependency. How underdeveloped countries can benefit from these loans and adapt to a new environment is therefore a political issue. Harvey (2005:6), writing about the role of the USA in the creation of dependency in Iraq after 2003 argued that the USA

promulgated four orders that included ‘the full privatization of public enterprises, full ownership rights by foreign firms of Iraqi businesses, full repatriation of foreign profits... the opening of Iraq’s banks to foreign control, national treatment for foreign companies and the elimination of nearly all trade barriers’. The orders were to apply to all areas of the economy, including public services, the media, manufacturing, services, transportation, finance, and construction. Only oil was exempt (presumably because of its special status as revenue producer to pay for the war and its geopolitical significance).

This policy was implemented in a country that had a long history of nationalization, where the majority of the population were government employees, and where subsistence goods and public services were subsidized.

Samir Amin (1997:4-5), argued that in the present world system, dependency continues under the title of globalization. He lists five different ways in which it occurs:

1. Technological monopoly.
2. Financial control of worldwide financial markets.
3. Monopolistic access to the planet’s natural resources.
4. Media and communication monopolies.
5. Monopolies over weapons of mass destruction.

Amin addressed economic, technological and military aspects of development without mentioning the role of politics itself in underdeveloped countries. It means that politics is either neglected or is given a subsidiary position to other aspects. These aspects can be monopolized by non-state actors, but politics is mainly directed by the state to regulate other socio-economic aspects and foreign relationships. Amin himself suggests globalized capitalist hegemony should be replaced by the formation of a global political system under a world parliament based on socialist principles. This means that politics cannot exist in isolation. Although Amin criticizes the global system, he proposes a global system.

In contrast to Amin’s view, Sullivan and Nadgrodkiewicz (2008) argue that the best solution for the underdeveloped countries of the Middle East and North Africa is to develop privatisation, foreign investment and reform of the governments of these states to make them



more democratic. They believe that the economy failed in these states because of the lack of political reform alongside economic reform, the low level of women's employment and rapid population growth. For these countries to develop, they argue, there has to be link between a democratic system and the market economy.

While the role of politics and its capacity to develop and change with the environment is important, the capacity of each country's leaders in development is important as well. The dependency school argues that dependent status is historical and rooted Europe's domination of other countries since the fifteenth century. This domination has continued through the political elites of underdeveloped countries who trained in the dominant countries. The interests of these elites often coincide with the interests of the developed societies; a relationship which produces the status of dependency (Ferraro, 2008).

Dependency theories implicitly recognize the role of internal factors (So, 1990) even if this claim applies only to certain countries, especially during the Cold War. However, not all political elites are trained or have mutual interests with western developed societies. The elite role has to be studied separately in each underdeveloped country and in relation to other factors such as free mass media and economic and political competition. Internal policies compound the effect of external factors. Overall, abstract interpretation of underdevelopment and attributing it to just one external or internal factor may detract from understanding what actually occurs in reality.

The dependency school divided the world society between the centre and periphery, metropolis and satellites. According to this school, to develop, dependent states should base their efforts on the self-reliance model (trade between themselves), and find their own paths to development by replacing imports with internal production (Tony, 1986; Larrain, 1989; So, 1990:104-105). This is a static view which does not consider the skills and capacity of each nation. Empirically, there is considerable divergence between the economic political poles in the global economy. Therefore, the important question is "the necessity of identifying the specific economic, political and cultural linkage of centres and peripheries" (Preston, 1996:194). This suggestion, according to the dependency school, follows from the close ties between underdeveloped countries' elites with western capitalist states (Chilcote, 1978; Valenzuela and Valenzuela, 1986; Preston, 1996; Kay and Gwynne, 2000;). Moreover, it implies a unilinear direction for development; aiming for socialism not capitalism.

The policy of self-reliance to promote economic development in the Latin American countries can be seen in this summary from Bradford Burns:

The elite proudly regarded the new railroads, steamships, telegraph lines, and renovated ports as ample physical evidence of the progressive course on which their nations had embarked. In their satisfaction, they seemed oblivious to another aspect of modernization: that those very steamships, railroads, and ports tied them and their nations ever more tightly to a handful of industrialized nations in Western Europe and North America.... They failed to take note of the significance that many of their railroads did not link the principal cities of their nations but rather ran from plantations or mines directly to the ports, subordinating the goal of national unification to the demands of the industrial nations for agricultural products and minerals. As foreign investment rose, the voices of foreign investors and bankers spoke with greater authority in making economic decisions for the host countries. Local economic options diminished. In short, modernization magnified Latin America's dependency (cited in Smith, 1979:275).

The progress that Bradford Burns refers to is quantitative progress without reference to qualitative progress in politics.

In a related debate, the experience of the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) highlights the multi-centrality of economic power and orientations, which do not necessarily conform to be a western capitalist model. Another example is the Asian Tigers' countries which developed in recent decades as a result of the crucial role played by national developmentalist governments that controlled industrialization policies. In fact, the globalisation of the economy can co-exist with a wide range of political types from socialist and democratic to non-democratic. This diversity means different criteria are required to understand their development. Political diversity exists in a world in which states are more integrated, dependent and interdependent. Each state to some extent depends on other states and none can exist as an isolated entity; especially in the current technologically developed world where many issues and phenomena become worldwide.

Another important theme in dependency theory is the relationship between dependency and foreign aid. Michaely (1981), connected dependency to foreign aid and foreign investment that leads to the destruction of the recipient country's economy. Michaely explains that foreign aid can provide an atmosphere of public consumption without any productive activity that leads to a decrease in the value of the domestic currency. In Chase-Dunn's (1975) view, direct investment penetrates directly into the economy and creates a direct dependency, but aid programmes operate indirectly to create an indirect dependency.

Natali (2010), in a study of foreign aid in the KR, claims that such aid has created a dependency situation in the region and ruined the infrastructural sector. This has occurred at a time when the region has both the natural and human capacity to invest in the reconstruction of the country. However, in the KR's case, as is argued in this thesis, the role of internal political elites has to be considered as a conduit for corruption and misuse of aid. This is not to say that foreign aid is worthless, but rather, that aid should serve political development. For donors, stability is more valuable than democratic political development. In response, Gershman and Allen (2006) have argued that aid should be in the framework of "democracy assistance".

Moyo (2009), has reservations about foreign investment in developing countries and argues that apart from humanitarian and emergency aid or donations via charities going directly to people and some institutions, the problem of foreign aid is hidden in government-to-government aid or international organisations' aid given to governments in developing countries. This type of aid is misused by corrupt political elites who fail to respond to the needs of society. The alternative is not to cease foreign aid and investment, but to adopt new ways of directing aid and investment to serve the whole of society. It follows that internal politics and administrations are important.

To sum up, the dependency school provides a useful framework concerning the role of international economic policy and representative bodies such as the WB, the IMF and the relationship between developed and undeveloped states. However, it is crucial for a better understanding of the situation of underdevelopment to connect these external factors to what is occurring in the real context of each society. Internal factors such as the role of politics itself, inequalities in the distribution of national wealth, resources and services, the level of democratic institutionalisation, its social structures, the engagement of political elites in corruption and the level of internal skills and abilities, all have to be considered<sup>9</sup>. For example, Sen (1996) linked underdevelopment (famine, minority rights, natural disasters, and demographic change) to lack of free mass media, absence of political opposition and lack of individual choice.

It can be seen from the above discussion that external factors (the economic and political role that foreign states play) and internal factors (social, cultural and elite politics) both affect

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<sup>9</sup> For this reason, new dependency studies also refer to the role of internal political elites. However, like the old version of dependency theories they give priority to external factors. In this new perspective, the state in underdeveloped countries serves as an agent for local and international capital (So, 1990: 164-165).

the level of political development in any society; both “internal and external structural components are connected” (Valenzuela and Valenzuela, 1986:502).

### **Critiques of the Dependency School**

As with any theory in the socio-political and economic sciences, the dependency school has faced criticisms. The first target is the methodological problem of how many capitalist centres and peripheries exist in the world’s economic system and the relationship between the centres themselves and peripheries. This methodological question relates to the structural studies that dependency theories are based on. Each state-nation has its specific interests that may come into conflict with others<sup>10</sup> (Friedmann and Wayne, 1977:404).

A second criticism is that, by focusing on economic relationships in the international context, it disregards the role of culture in politics and development. Culture, in this school, is considered to be a subordinate factor in development (Kapoor, 2002). Whereas culture is significant in shaping individual attitudes (of both citizens and political elites) and the diffusion of democratic values.

Kay and Gwynne (2000), Valenzuela and Valenzuela (1986), and Akbari (1984), argue that dependency theorists present a rational analysis and powerful evidence of underdevelopment but downplay the role of internal political systems. As Walt (1998) maintains, an overemphasis on external economic factors has led to a rigid approach. A capitalist economy actually leaves room for manoeuvre and covers various and varied responses to challenging circumstances.

An overemphasis on the role of the external factors has created a notion of “the people without history” in dependent countries (Wolf, 1982 in Kearney, 1995:551). Focusing on the historical evolution of capitalist development leads to neglect of the domestic components of non-capitalist societies or, as Kapoor (2002:654) stated, “using Europe as a universal model”. The view that the world has been ruled by capitalist states is a holistic framework

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<sup>10</sup> This problem led Wallerstein (1974) to revise the centre- periphery world system to make it more flexible by dividing it into core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral states. Wallerstein stated that without the semi-periphery it is difficult to understand the structural differentiation and relationship between the core and the periphery. The semi-periphery is the bridge between them. Each state in this new design can move towards a higher position and become an industrialized capitalist state. This claim contrasts with the dependency claim that the movement is towards socialism.

which implies that. For countries to develop, the world economic system needs to change fundamentally. It amounts to a type of utopianism (Angotti, 1981).

The new theorists of dependency in the 1970s and 1980s reassessed the relationship between dependency and development which was mutually exclusive in classical studies of dependency including more internal factors. For example, Cardoso (1973) was a pioneer in new studies of dependency who used the concept of “associated dependent development” as a bridge between dependency and modernisation theories to recognize the growth of active international corporation between various countries (cited in So, 1990:140). However, like classical studies, economic analysis remains the foundation and foreign domination is held responsible for dependency, but indirectly, through domestic elites and capital investment that flows into underdeveloped countries through multinational corporations.

A further critique highlights the challenge to the dependency school which comes from fundamental changes in the global political economy, namely the end of the Cold War, the emergence of new supra national powers such as the European Union (EU) and new powerful economies. Preston (1996:344-345), Kay and Gwynne (2000:56), have argued that with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world order moved into a tripolar instead of bipolar system. In this system, the USA and Japan, the developed East Asian countries and the EU have an important role.

The dependency school has also had to confront the issue of globalization. Globalization is an attractive term which serves the aims of liberals and liberalization, and it is linked to the rapid growth in international trade (Kay and Gwynne, 2000). As Kearney (1995:549) stated, globalization relationships transformed the two-dimensional division of the world (centre-periphery) into multiple-dimensions. Regardless of whether globalization is understood in negative or positive terms, many problems have become global issues that call for more cooperation between states. Many economic organizations have been established and various developing countries such as China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia are members; for example, the G20 foundation. The globalization concept, even in comparison with modernization theories, points to the positive role of local cultures in the development process.

Another point is about trade. As the history of trade shows, trade relationships support internal development. This contrasts with the stance of dependency theory which insists on isolation from capitalist states. Active engagement with the world economy should contribute to development goals (Walt, 1998). As European Union history illustrates, free

market policies were the cornerstone of this union which transformed interrelationship to integration. East Asia (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong) countries is another example. By establishing relationships with developed capitalist countries they became powerful industrialized countries without being dependent or peripheral. They developed with the support of powerful central governments that provided political stability and suitable conditions for foreign investment. These examples and factors, highlight a significant topic. In contrast to the views of development theory and globalization, state intervention can play a crucial and positive role if it prioritizes development instead of building a military state.

Dependency theory neglects the regional context of development which may have more impact than the world context. If underdeveloped countries are considered in regional terms, they share many characteristics. For instance, the majority of the Middle Eastern countries have the same religion, undemocratic regimes, mixed traditional and modern economies and cultures, large populations, a mainly tribal base and extended family structures. Power is monopolized by authoritarian elites and a rotation of power often occurs by military coup or revolution. States such as Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya and Yemen have aimed to build a powerful and integrated state, through militarization of society and the repression of opposition and ethnic groups.

The largest countries in the Middle East are engaged in strong rivalry with each other rather than co-operation, which has impacted upon the stability and instability of each country. The same description of regional characteristics could be applied to the Latin American, the northern African and Caucasian countries. It even applies to the developed countries in regions such as western Europe, eastern Europe and east Asia, that have very similar cultures and features. Hence, the regional context plays an important role in development.

In a nutshell, undoubtedly, the dependency school is justified in referring to external factors as playing a negative role in underdevelopment, but the role of internal factors should not be neglected. The following figure is designed to show the key similarities and contrasts between the two theoretical traditions, before moving on to the general conclusion.

Table 3.1: Comparison of Political Development and Dependency Theories.

Similarities	Differences	
	Political Development	Dependency
The focus for both schools is development of the Third World	Ahistorical: domestic factors are responsible for underdevelopment	Historical emphasis on colonialism and post-colonialism in underdeveloped societies
Both schools make general assumptions about underdevelopment (global analysis)	Originated from the West and especially the USA	Originated in underdeveloped countries
Both schools divide the world into a bipolar system	Capitalist orientation. Support for international free trade	Socialist orientation. Emphasis on trade between socialist states
The unit of analysis is the nation-state	Lack of historical explanation	Historical experience such as colonialism
Teleological perspective	Based on evolutionary perspective (functionalist)	The result of failure of ECLA programme (revolutionary perspective)
Both agree that modern economy is led by the Western economic powers	Nation-states can develop	Development is impossible because of the domination of capitalism
	Micro-analysis. Focuses on individuals, their behaviour, values and beliefs	Macro-analysis, focuses on economic production, international trade and relationship between underdeveloped and developed countries
	Culture shapes behaviour	Economy shapes behaviour
	Institutional and cultural standpoint	Structural and economic standpoint
	Reflexive theory with globalist tendency	Rigid theory with regionalist tendency
	To develop a society must change from the inside	To develop, the outside conditions must be changed (global economic system)

Source: Preston (1996:194-195); So, (1990: 96-109); Valenzuela and Valenzuela (1986:508-511); Kapoor (2002).

## **Conclusion**

To prepare the conceptual foundations for what follows, this chapter has reviewed the political development and dependency literatures, highlighted areas of consensus and specified the key concepts which are required for further exploration.

The two major schools attempt to explain the problems of underdevelopment and its origins in different ways and with different recommendations. Both of them try to address issues of underdevelopment through universal generalization. This level of generalization can be considered as a point of weakness. A more adequate theory needs to combine both internal elements and external ones with regards to the inside components of society to make a positive contribution to change.

The role of government-political elites, also, in the early stages of development is crucial. As discussed in this chapter and as experiences have shown, a government-political elite that respects the democratic rules and orients development is a necessary characteristic for political development. Despite this, it is not desirable that government should undertake all responsibility for development. The government's duty is to regulate the economic sector and not to control it. The role of society, NGOs and economic organizations must also be considered. If all revenue sources are monopolized by government, the social capacity and government capacity will be imbalanced and the private sector will not grow sufficiently.

Certainly, the economic sector has an important role in political development but it is not the only factor. There are many examples of states that have developed economically but failed under authoritarian regimes. For instance, at various times in the twentieth century, Germany, Italy, Spain and Russia were economically developed but were non-democratic states. Though the economy is important in political development, politics is the essential factor; the reason being, that politics draws the map of economic progress and maintains the stability of society.

Based on the different views and critiques of political development that have been reviewed in this chapter, the political development can be defined as a process which is (1) dynamic, nonlinear but still coherent, interlocking and constructive; (2) leads to the strengthening of the political, economic, social and cultural components of civil society, together with (3) positive outcomes in terms of the contribution of both government and society to the political process, which (4) increase the government's capacity through democratic



institutionalization, (5) requires political will between different political groups, and (6) leads to greater integration with international processes.

These elements reflect the multi-dimensionality of the development process. Political development is a *constructive, interlocking* process which is not built on one sector that has priority over others. It requires comprehensive development and the participation of individuals and institutions. The functional differentiation of types of organizations should not mean separation, but rather a connection between various aspects which contribute to the *coherency* of this process. This requires a *dynamic* but planned and flexible agenda capable of changing in time and place, open to different pathways according to the differences between societies and how they choose to develop politically. Political development is a *nonlinear* process which means that there is no common point of origin or necessary trajectory. As Eisenstadt (1973) argued, the road to development differs from one society to another according to human capacity and available resources in a country.

Multi-dimensional development paves the way for the second point concerning the growth of *civil society*, when cultural, economic and political sectors are differentiated and mutually interdependent (not subordinated to centralized authorities). This context of civil society includes different political movements, ethnic groups and different social classes with various micro-cultures. They need to be combined in such a way that different groups have a mutual consensus about the importance of living together under accepted legal and democratic constitutional authority that gives access for all of them to gain political positions according to their merit. This criteria, as Hajarian (1993) pointed out, should be achieved by planting the citizenship concept among citizens and treating them equally.

Differentiation and complexity in the economy, seen for example in the division of labour and the growth of the middle class, is linked to other aspects. Individuals and corporations engage in economic activities which lead to the rise of economic interest groups and eventually the growing autonomy of the economy and society from the state. In politics, as Huntington (2006) maintains, development leads to more complexity of political organizations and the *government capacity* to respond to the political demands of different groups. Development in this domain requires not only the formation of real representative bodies, pressure groups, different political parties, the separation of powers and regulatory bodies; but extends to all societal realms through support for the rise of civil society organizations and *democratic institutionalization*. It is important that the general framework of political interaction is identified by society and political groups, to minimize political

instability. This framework indicates the level of *political will* or the stance of political elites towards democratic institutionalization.

Finally, in political development, *integration with international processes* is important. Modernization, political development and dependency studies were all elaborated at a time when the world was divided ideologically between the West and the East, which left its impact on the type of relationships between developed and underdeveloped countries. The latter became the field for ideological struggle between the two poles of the system at the time. In the current world system, which provides more flexibility for state alliances, the role of the international dimension cannot be ignored; it exists alongside the internal role of underdeveloped states.

This practical complexity of political development means that the theoretical conceptualization of this process is bound to differ from what happens in reality. This means the operationalization dimension of political development at any time may be undermined by political factors such as internal war, elite conflict, and lack of natural resources or demands that may overload the system capacity. Further, group interests or narrow affiliations of local leaders can threaten development.

In short, applying a synthesis of development and dependency schools to study political development is helpful as a context to show how political parties, participation, legitimacy, institutionalisation, political culture and the type of foreign relationship all play a part in political development. Just as political development theories were given an impetus by the emerging new countries after the Second World War, so, in the 1990s and early twenty first century, the many new government and movements emerging in the Middle East since the Arab Spring have given a new impetus to the political development debate. Debates on development have broadened to not just include political development but living conditions, the supply of human rights and protection of environment all of which depend on politics.

The next chapter moves from this general discussion to the programme of research and the manner of collecting data for the investigation of the obstacles to political development in the KR.

## **Chapter Four: Design and Methodology of the Study**

The KR suffers from inadequate and poor research on the subject of political development. This study aims to rectify this and undertakes a wide-ranging investigation of the obstacles facing political development in the KR. The need for this research comes firstly from the fact that so far scholars have not made a critical investigation of the political development process in the KR. The majority of studies are focused on international relationships, ethnicity, nationalism and political parties. Secondly, as a region with de facto status within the Iraqi federal system it has a special place in the Middle East. Thirdly, there is a need for research to analyse the informal as well as the formal political institutions of the KR and their impact on political development.

As the previous chapters have shown, the study of political development in the KR needs to take account of multiple variables including: the historical context, geographical location, the domestic socio-political fabric, fluctuations in the balance of power between Kurdistan's political parties, the role of political elites and regional and international political relations.

This study focuses on political development from 1992 to 2014. The reason is that the first KRG was established in 1992, through public elections and it administered its domestic issues free from the Baghdad government. The year 2014 was the end of the seventh cabinet, which gives an opportunity to assess its performance. Important changes occurred after that period, both internally and externally, but it is difficult to address them because of the rapid change in the nature of the events and their impact upon political development. However, where necessary, these new events are briefly discussed.

The de facto recognition of the KR in 1991 and then the establishment of the KRG in 1992, provided a historical opportunity for the Kurds and paved the way for Kurdish political parties to create a self-administrative entity in the northern part of Iraq. In the self-administrative period, the region faced challenges which originated in the ambition of political elites to seize authority alone and exclude others, which led to military conflict among political parties. This conflict impacted upon political development and it still plays an important role in ongoing events. In addition, change inside the circle of top leaders in the KR is rare. This can be seen in the long intervals between the political parties' congresses as well as the continuities in leadership.

The research and literature described in the previous chapters leads to the following questions:

- To what extent have the democratic political institutions (electoral government, parliament and political parties) helped to promote political development in the KR?
- What impact do political parties (the level of internal openness and their relationships with the governments in the region) have on the political development process in the KR?
- What is the type of relationship between political parties and governmental institutions in the KR?
- What are the relationships between society, culture, political parties and government and how do they relate to political development?
- In the geopolitical context, what roles do regional states play in the political development of the KR?

Each of these questions comes back to the political parties, which represent a unifying theme in this study. Hence, this thesis will provide evidence for the key proposition that

Political development in the Kurdistan region corresponds directly to the level of internal openness of the political parties and their relationships with the governments in the region.

This theme emerged from the previous chapters on the KR's background and the theories of political development. However, the theme extends beyond the framework of political development and in some respects it is a challenge to existing approaches. This is the reason why this thesis has a focus on the role of political parties in the KR and their interaction with other political, economic and social aspects that constitute obstacles to the process of political development.

### **Research Design and Strategy**

In this thesis, there are elements of political science, sociology, economic, international relationships and history; political development cannot be captured in one single discipline. As Wucherpennig and Deutsch (2009) pointed out, political development is a mixed subject. For this reason, this thesis focuses on political consequences as they are understood in each discipline. It utilizes political science and political sociology together with a subsidiary framework of international relations from the last fifty years. For example, the early research by the Committee on Comparative Politics of the Social Science Research Council (CCPSSR) studied modernisation and political development in relation to education (Coleman, 1965), communication (Lerner, 1958; Pye, 1963), bureaucracy (LaPalombara,

1963), political culture (Pye and Verba, 1965) and political parties (LaPalombara and Weiner, 1966). The crises and sequences of the political development process in relation to differentiation, equality, identity, participation, legitimacy of government and its capacity to distract and penetrate has been studied by Binder et al (1971). Other theorists such as Huntington (2006) studied political development in the framework of political science through the institutionalisation of policy and participation. The majority of these studies utilized the methods of comparison between countries, case studies and mainly qualitative research. These methods were in the tradition of structural explanations and were broadly objectivist. This thesis has some similarities, it is not comparative to another case study but it has different phases; and it is more historical and interpretive and the interviews were held in order to interpret and explain phenomena and not just collect information. In addition, this thesis takes into account regional relationships.

The dependency school studied underdevelopment and development in the framework of the economic relationship between states. However, new trends in international relationships recognise that the state is no longer the only actor in the international arena and refer to non-state actors, namely international organisations, as partners or even counter-partners of states (Higgott et al, 2000; Kappen, 2003). The dependency school has a strong theoretical base and is mainly quantitative with a focus on the economy; while this thesis mainly focuses on the political aspects of political development and their impact upon other aspects.

The sources of data on the KR are fragmented, which makes accessing them difficult, especially information that relates to the income and revenues of the KR. Typically, the data published by the Ministry of Planning (its statistic branches) and Ministry of Oil do not correspond to the data published by political parties, which participate in the same cabinet. There is a lack of transparency and credibility in the government data. In 2015, according to Corruption Perception Index, of 167 countries, Iraq ranked 161 as one of the most corrupt countries (Transparency International, 2015). It also has to be taken into account that the unification of the government was in 2005, which means that the ministries that operate throughout the country have only been established recently including the ministry of planning, which is in charge of statistics (the issue of unification is discussed in the following chapters). For this reason, the data collected from various sources is interpreted according to the authorities that published them (official and semi-official government and political parties, and other sources such as books and organisations' websites).

The research design includes interviews (described below), that are designed to supplement, corroborate and develop the above-mentioned data sources and theoretical perspectives. For this reason, there is no separate chapter to analysis the interview data; the interviews are integrated with other sources of information and commentary. In terms of design, the research can be understood as a case study which focuses on political development in the KR. Stake (1995) defines a case study as an approach

In which the researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process or one or more individuals..., and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (cited in Creswell, 2003:15).

The present case study is a "single case study" which, as Yin (2009:46-47) notes, represents a critical test of a significant theory and represents a unique case. In a single case study, the researcher observes and analyses a phenomenon that has not been analysed; it is a longitudinal case to study how certain conditions have changed over time.

The KR as explained earlier, altered from a de facto autonomous status into a recognized federal entity in 2005. Hence, it is necessary to address the changes that have occurred in this significant political period. This study is, therefore, a comparative study, comparing the progress that occurred in different phases at the level of the governmental apparatuses, political parties and societal changes. This method is used to analyse differences and similarities between two or more subjects of the study in different periods.

The study is designed to address "what" type questions (Blaikie, 2010:61). To achieve this aim, it utilizes multiple sources of information such as archival investigation, interviews and documents. It uses both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data is used when it is essential in the study of a population, the annual budgets of government and political parties, voting behaviour and so on. These materials are used to compare, check and, where possible, triangulate evidence which refers to the same event, facts or interpretations (Yin, 2012; Creswell, 2003).

However, the main emphasis in the analysis is interpretive. In contrast to positivism it looks for culturally derived and historically situated interoperations of the social life-world (Crotty, 1998:67), and allows the researcher to "filter(s) the data through a personal lens" (Creswell, 2003:183). Qualitative researchers focus on the meaning of particular texts, actions or social relations. For example, the investigator may use evidence from individuals (narrative, phenomenology), institutional processes, activities and events (case studies) or

culture by scrutinizing the behaviour of individuals or groups (ethnography) (Creswell, 2003).

As the majority of this research is qualitative, the study uses a number of data sources and types of inquiry to explore the various aspects of political development. It moves from the more particular (specific socio-political aspects of society and its apparatuses) to the more general (political development in the KR), utilizing an inductive strategy to answer the specified questions. An inductive strategy should help to limit over-generalization from what can be observed in the KR. Hence, the results apply mainly to this region.

Merriam (1988) argued that “there is no standard format for reporting case study research” (cited in Creswell, 1998:188). Following this argument, an epistemology is employed, which acknowledges the relationship between the subjects of the research and the researcher, in the reality of Kurdistan society. The reason for adopting this standpoint is that the researcher is an insider to the case study setting (indeed, the town where he lives, is where the key KDP cadres and officials live). The researcher plays a reflexive role in the study (Creswell, 2003). He is engaged in issues of political development in the KR, contributing to on-line websites and journals as well as conducting research interviews. The reliability of qualitative research benefits from minimizing the distance between the researcher and the subject (Creswell, 1998). Insider knowledge is also valuable when analysing and interpreting available data.

However, the research also, benefits from the distance gained by studying abroad and being challenged by western sociological assumptions about political development. These positions of being an insider and being at a distance, have helped to strengthen the researcher’s understanding of issues of political development in the KR.

### **Research Practice and Fieldwork**

To fulfill the purpose of this study, the researcher employed a number of methods in data collection, utilizing both primary and secondary sources. The main library sources were books, academic journals and official documents (from political parties, government, parliament and the presidency). The relative lack of previous research made it essential to use Internet websites, mass media, some available dissertations and other current information sources. This included actively following relevant ongoing events through various TV channels in order to assess elite and mass opinion about ongoing events. As the majority of the mass media are dominated by political parties, the researcher tried as much

as possible to check each source of data with other governmental, non-governmental and political party sources to ensure the reliability of the data.

The researcher used resources in the English, Kurdish, Arabic and Persian languages. The titles of non-English books and journals, are given in the list of references in both English and the original language. The Persian sources contain details of both Persian and English calendars. The titles of Kurdish websites' subjects are written in Latin Kurdish making them more accessible for non-Kurdish readers as Latin Kurdish is widely used in the KR and Greater Kurdistan. It is necessary to mention that, in the provinces of the KR, spelling formats differ, for example Erbil (Arbil, Irbil and in Kurdish Hewler), Dohuk (Duhok, Dihuk) and Sulaimani (Sleman, Suleimaniah, Sulaymaniyah). This thesis adopts the following form: Erbil, Slemani and Dohuk.

The interviews were used to explore the major impediments that face the process of political development in the KR. The interviews were with officials, MPs, cadres (government and political parties) and heads of some larger tribes. They were semi-structured using a limited number of open-ended questions in order to gain in depth responses.

The next source is observation, which was made possible by the researcher spending nearly four months in the field. Direct observation is recognized as having a role in data collection and analysis. Utilizing both secondary and primary (interview and observation) sources of data, significantly enhances the reliability of the data. Besides the interviews, the researcher had informal conversations with members of the public, to learn their point of view about subjects related to the study. They included taxi drivers, a person in a coffee shop, as well as conversations with colleagues of the university. The purpose was to collect data from various sources, not only officials or textbooks, but from ordinary citizens. I recorded their views in my field notebook. However, the data is unsystematic and is not quoted directly, it is only treated as a source of background knowledge.

The field work was carried out in three provinces of the KR, namely Erbil, Dohuk and Slemani. However, the main focus was on Erbil, on the grounds that it is the capital city and officials and where cadres of various political parties are concentrated. All interviews were immediately transferred to my laptop, recorder, USB and a hard drive to avoid any damage or loss of data. During my fieldwork period in the KR from mid-March to Mid-June 2014, seventeen participants were interviewed by way of face to face and open-ended interviews, six participants responded via E-mail and one provided written answers. The participants



were from various occupations and different governmental and political officials such as Ministers, top political parties' cadres, Members of Parliament and chieftains (see Appendix 7). Each participant had their own specific questions. However, sometimes the participant had more than one duty at the same time or previously, which led to an extended list of questions. One example, was an interviewee who had been a member of the political bureau and an MP and Minister at different periods.

The participants were selected from the main political parties. I decided to interview 25 participants, who were most influential and accessible; five participants from each political party (elected and non-elected to keep a balance) and five chieftains across the region. I prepared a list of those I selected to interview. I eliminated the first figures of each political party because access to them was difficult. I followed a pragmatic way in selecting the interviewees. Further, I regarded the target of five per party to be sufficient to obtain a range of opinion and avoid repetition by doing more interviews. However, carrying out field work on the ground did not follow exactly the same patterns as I had planned because of the events that are explained in the next section.

After gaining approval from the Bangor University Research Ethics Committee for Social Science (see Appendix 5), the interview letters, questions, consent forms and participant forms were all translated into the Kurdish Language (see Appendices 8, 9 and 10). All interviews were done via the Kurdish language. However, there was an opportunity for interviewees to respond either in English or Kurdish (both Kurdish dialects). Only one e-mail interview was conducted in English. Before starting the interview, the consent form and participant form were prepared for each participant, who was requested to read and sign (if they agreed). According to the interview ethical framework, some ethical recommendations were not met during interviewing. Sometimes, the interviewees did not even read the participant information and basically told me 'do what is best for you'. Verbally, I informed them that they were free to not respond to any question that they did not want to answer. Before starting the interview, I introduced myself and the topic of my study. Additionally, I showed the participants the Support Letter that was provided by my supervisor (see Appendix 6).

Carrying out interviews in the KR is a difficult task. Face to face interviews had to be arranged by a personal mediator or broker, or via mobile phone to make an appointment. The brokers were friends or relatives who knew someone who had a connection with the interviewee. Some of them (mostly interviews by correspondence) were contacted via

Facebook to arrange a meeting. However, they preferred to send their questions via Facebook. Many of them ignored me and did not send back the answers. In addition, many who were approached directly by phone rejected my appeal for an interview, giving reasons of lack of time. (Around 40% of the total number that I contacted rejected the interview directly or indirectly). Some of them just said ‘not today’, ‘tomorrow’ and finally did not respond to my phone calls. For this reason, the broker was the best option.

In fact, the researcher was treated differently according to how he was perceived. Having a good car was important in doing interviews, especially with chieftains and some cadres of political parties. Further, signing the participant form was the most difficult part of the interview. In the Parliament Member Syndicate, where I had asked many people to take part in interviews, a significant number refused to take part after reading and being asked to sign the consent form even though they were free to sign or not. I realised the Kurdish cultural context was totally different to following scientific procedures compared to the European context. Many of the potential participants thought it was a form of insult, because they were in powerful positions and signing the consent form put them in the rank of ordinary people. I faced the same problem when I did the field work for my MA between 2006 and 2007.

### **Fieldwork Problems**

Other problems were encountered, besides those mentioned above. Firstly, the time coincided with various events which created logistical difficulties, although it was a dynamic period politically. The whole of April 2014, was the month of election campaigns for the Iraqi parliament and the KR provincial elections. The cadres of political parties were engaged in campaigns, which affected the interview process. However, during this month, I travelled to all three provinces of the KR and a number of cities to observe the elections process. I could observe the types of rivalry between political parties and talk with people about the process of the campaigns.

In May, I continued my interviews. To carry out the interviews, it was necessary to travel from province to province, which was sometimes pointless, because the interviewee was engaged with other duties. In June 2014, ISIS attacked Mosul province, causing a shortage of vehicle fuel in the KR. Vehicles had to wait in queues for nearly 24 hours or more for rationed fuel (30 litres for two days). The fuel price on the black market increased six fold and the transport system became totally jammed. For instance, during doing one of my interviews, to come back from Amedi to my base city Pirmam I waited three days for a car,

because the allocated fuel was not enough for both directions and no car was ready to take me. Finally, I called my family to buy fuel on the black market to pick me up. July was the fasting month, *Ramadan*, which affected the interview process, because the majority of people were fasting and there were electricity shortages and temperatures were very high.

Some interviews were done in a cafeteria. For the interviews with chieftains, there was no private place. The interview was held in the chieftain's palace, (called *Kuçık* or *Diwexan* in Kurdish), in which many servants, bodyguards and guests of the chieftain were presented and nearly all were smoking. During questions the chieftain, *Akha*, looked at the audience as if to secure approval for his speech. For one interview with a chieftain, he changed the appointment three times and each time I was ready at his palace. The interviews with chieftains were held at night.

The same occurred during an interview with some MPs in the Parliamentary Syndicate, where the interview took place, in a non-private room which had a TV which was turned on. The majority of participants interrupted the interviews to answer their mobile phones. Sometimes, a few participants reacted strongly when I asked questions such as 'What are the privileges of being a member of a party compared with an ordinary person who is not a member of a party?' or the question 'A lot of the national budget is allocated to the parliamentary members. They have many privileges, such as receiving vehicles, houses, body guards and high salaries and pensions. Do you consider this as a kind of corruption?'

Finally, as mentioned, the interview data is not used to form a separate chapter, but serves as additional and supplementary data to the theme of the thesis. The responses sometimes are paraphrased and sometimes direct quotations are used. The participants allowed me to use their real names and functional titles. The interviewees' responses therefore can be considered as both the policy of their political parties and as private opinions. They contain both types of data, the official political party view as well as commentary, which can be considered more individual. Chapter Nine (on neighbouring governments' policy) contains less interview material because of the lack of response from officials who are in charge of this issue.

To provide further support for the theme of this thesis and the data of interviews, unpublished questionnaire data is used from a report of the *Tojinewe Centre: Kurdistan Intellectual Foundation* entitled *Current Political Issues of the Kurdistan Region*. The survey was conducted by written questionnaires between 23 January and 5 February 2011. There were

1,320 participants from the cities of Slemani (451), Erbil (564) and Dohuk (186) of which 1,201 responses were counted.

I accessed the whole data of the survey, thanks to a personal relationship with the director of the centre and because, at the time of the survey I was an editor of the *Tojine* Journal. The centre is related to the Media and Culture Institution of the KDP, and conducted the survey for the KDP, but independently and by professionals in relevant subjects, especially sociologists. The questions were designed by the centre itself. The surveys were not published, but because of the lapse of time, the director of the centre allowed me to publish the data which is relevant to this research. The data, design and methods described here prepare the ground for the next chapter, which examines the performance of the parliament and government in the KR.

## **Chapter Five: Foundations of Government and Parliament (1992-2005)**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to focus on parliament and government and their performance throughout the phases of the KRG to understand their structural form, their capacity to influence society and the kind of relationship that exists between these two main bodies. It will help to provide an understanding of the current level of, and obstacles to, political development in the KR.

The approach is to review the different governmental cabinets and parliamentary terms, using description and analysis based on published sources, research interviews and some quantitative data. The events and performance of political apparatuses are often closely associated and interlocked, so there are some overlaps between the sections in this chapter.

As the table below shows, from 1992 to 2014, seven different cabinets with different durations were formed in the KR. They held power either alone or by coalition between different political parties. This and the next chapter focus on these different cabinets and their achievements to underline the sequence of political development in different periods. From the third cabinet until the fifth cabinet, two separate administrations were established in Erbil and Slemani; for this reason, the terms cabinet and administration are both used. This chapter discusses the cabinets from 1992 to 2005, and the rest will be in the next chapter.

Table 5.1: The Kurdistan Region's Parliaments and Cabinets

Parliament Term	The cabinet	Duration	Ruling Party	Prime Minister
The first term (1992-2005)	The first cabinet	1992 to 1993	PUK, coalition with KDP	Fuad Masum
The first term	The second cabinet	1993 to 1995	PUK, coalition with KDP	Kosrat Rasul
The first term	The third cabinet (administration)	1996 to 1999	KDP (in Erbil)	Rozh Nuri Shawis (Deputy of Nechirvan Barzani).
-----	The third cabinet	1996 to 2001	PUK (in Slemani)	Kosrat Rasul
The first term	The fourth cabinet	1999 to 2006	KDP (in Erbil)	Nechirvan Barzani
Transitional period (2002-2005)	The fourth cabinet	2001 to 2006.	PUK (in Slemani)	Barham Salih. (From 2005 Omar Fatah)
The second term (2005-2009)	The fifth cabinet	2006 to 2009	KDP, coalition with PUK and other parties	Nechirvan Barzani.
The third term (2009-2014)	The sixth cabinet	2009 to 2011	PUK coalition with KDP	Barham Salih
The third term (209-2014)	The seventh cabinet	2011-2014	The KDP coalition with the PUK	Nechirvan Barzani.
The fourth term (2014-...)	The eighth cabinet	2014-...	A broad based cabinet	Nechirvan Barzani

Sources: Government website (2014) <http://cabinet.gov.krd/>; Mirkhan, Z. H. (2011) 'The Iraqi Kurdistan Region', *Goftogu*, 58, pp. 11-22, [Online], available at: <http://www.noormags.com/view/fa/articlepage/927442?sta=%d8%a7%d9%82%d9%84%db%8c%d9%85%20%da%a9%d8%b1%d8%af%d8%b3%d8%aa%d8%a7%d9%86%20%d8%b9%d8%b1%d8%a7%d9%82> (Accessed: 22 July 2013). [In Persian calendar (1390)] and Author's own. Note: From 2002 to 2005, it was the transitional period, which was the period when international negotiation started on changing the region in Baghdad, which united the policy of the KDP and the PUK and established parliamentary general elections in 2005 (See: Ala'Aldeen, 2013).

## **Establishing Government and Institutions**

The origins of the KRG go back to the Kurdistan Front that was founded in 1988 as a unified reaction of the political parties of Iraqi Kurdistan to the Ba'ath regime's actions against the Kurds. The Front consisted of eight political parties namely the KDP, the PUK, the Kurdistan People's Democratic Party (KDPD), the Kurdistan Socialist Party (PASOK), the Kurdistan Branch of the Iraqi Communist Party, the Assyrian Democratic Movement and the Kurdistan Toilers' Party (Yildiz, 2004, Chapman, 2009, Khalil, 2008). After the uprising in 1991, this Front became the body that took up the legitimate political leadership of Kurdistan society.

With the establishment of the Safe Haven by the international community in the North of Iraq, refugees from neighbouring countries returned. The Safe Haven zone caused the central government to withdraw its governmental organizations from the KR. This allowed the Kurdistan Front to control the KR. However, each party tried to control its own areas of influence by forming separate relationships with regional states and authorising their military commanders to act as a legal authority in the areas under their control. The rivalry between political parties and chaotic economic circumstances created a culture of theft, killing for food or money, the sale of governmental and public assets to neighbouring countries by local commanders, and widespread corruption. In other words, political instability and social disorder prevailed (Gunter, 1993a; Karami, 1997; McDowell, 2007).

A minimum level of standard of living and stability are crucial for political development. In the above-mentioned situation, providing daily subsistence for citizens and achieving stability and social order for the exercise of authority should be the main goal. To solve the challenge of disorder, the Kurdistan Front invited fifteen internal experts who represented various political parties to form a committee and compose a law for parliamentary elections to shape the legislative and executive authorities.

The outcome of discussions between the committee's members from 23 September 1991 to 28 January 1992 was Law No.1 (Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly Law) and Law No.2 (the Law of Presidential Elections), which stated that parliament has the authority to pass laws from its position as the highest body in the region (Aziz, 2000; Parliament website, 2013a). Through these laws, the general democratic framework of political activity, the rights and duties of authority and the relationship between legislative and executive powers were set out. The two laws were the first step towards the consolidation of the political institutions in the KR.

To implement these laws, on 19 May 1992, thirteen political parties competed for 105 parliamentary seats. The KDP and the PUK's coalition list both gained a similar proportion of votes. After division of the threshold of other parties between the KDP and the PUK, the KDP gained 50.22% of total votes and the PUK 49.78%. As a result, aside from the Christian quota (the right to five seats regardless of the vote), from seven Kurdish lists, only the KDP and the PUK entered into parliament. The rest failed to pass the 7% threshold (see Table 5.2). Turkmen did not participate.

Table 5. 2: Results of Parliamentary Elections (1992)

Political Party	Gained Votes	Proportion
KDP	437,889	45.50%
PUK and Toiler party	423,833	43.61%
Islamic list	49,108	5.50%
Yekgrtin (the Union)	24,882	2.56%
Democratic Union of Kurdistan and Independents	21,123	2.17%
Kurdistan Democratic People's Party	9,903	1.02%
The Independent Democrats	501	0.05%
Total	971,953	100%

Source: Parliament Website (2013) 'Session Minutes, First Term 1992', [online], available at: <http://www.perleman.org/default.aspx?page=sitecontents&c=Parliament-History1992>

Commenting on the first public elections in 1992 McDowell (2007:380) writes

Like many elections elsewhere, the campaign was essentially a personality contest. It was about loyalty to leaders rather than matters of ideology.... The overwhelming majority voted according to their sense of personal loyalty.

This situation, as will be seen the following chapters, still continues. In the presidential elections Masoud Barzani, head of the KDP, gained 44.6% and Jalal Talabani, head of the PUK, obtained 44.3% of the total votes. The close result of both elections, the ambition to capture power and the loser's fear of being excluded from power by the winner, caused the PUK to reject the results with accusations of fraud in the elections (Khalil, 2008). In fact,



both sides believe that they gained the majority of votes and accused the other side of fraud in the elections<sup>1</sup>. According to one interviewee

To resolve this problem and to form the government, ministries' portfolios were divided between the PUK and the KDP by a fifty-fifty ratio; appointments were allocated equally and if a minister belonged to the KDP, the deputy had to be from the PUK and vice versa. Any decisions had to be made by both the Minister and his Deputy<sup>2</sup>.

This outcome did not emerge from the goodwill of political elites. It was the result of mediation by foreign actors, especially France, to create a unified cabinet. The 'solution' paved the way for the future decomposition of government and society. It was decided to hold the presidential elections again because no candidate had gained the majority of votes. However, while both leaders stayed out of governmental political institutions, they continued to supervise them. Any decisions required their approval and they became the main reference for decision making (Ala'Aldeen, 2013; Natali, 2010; Chapman, 2009; Leezenberg, 2005; Gunter, 1993).

The election results clearly showed that society was divided equally between the PUK and the KDP. Consequently, with the lack of experience of political democratic life among both parties and voters, any decision made by one political party would tend to include or exclude nearly half of society. The political cleavage and distrust between parties affected the process of political development.

The first alliance cabinet was formed on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1992 by the Prime Minister from the PUK (Fuad Masum who became the president of Iraq in 2014), with his Deputy from the KDP, fifteen other Ministers and their Deputies from both parties and the participation of one Christian Minister. The important achievement of this cabinet was to fill the power vacuum by establishing new institutions with indigenous cadres that possessed legitimacy in running society and executing orders. The declared aims of the first cabinet (Aziz, 2000:106-107; Khalil, 2008:73) were to:

1. Provide freedom of speech, belief, religion<sup>3</sup>, journalists and syndicates.
2. Apply the law and support judicial independence.

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<sup>1</sup> Participants in interview according to their political bias counted their party as a winner in those elections.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Mohamad Mulla Qader, a Minister in the first cabinet on 10 June 2014. He mentioned that if he allowed any privilege for his bodyguards, his deputy did the same. "[Laughingly and seriously], if I drink a cup of tea, my Deputy drinks a cup of tea".

<sup>3</sup> The term 'freedom of nation' is an ambiguous term because it does not refer to what it means by the 'freedom of nation'. Whether it is independence or federalism is not clear.

Theoretically, this agenda shows that despite the crudity and lack of democratic experience, the elites at the time tried to initiate democratic procedures, which could be considered as a first step towards political development. The decision to run the country as a democratic system calls for some investigation of why political parties at the time tried to follow this policy. The answer lies in several features of the KR politics at the time:

1. The existence of various Kurdish parties before 1990 with two major competing parties (the PUK and the KDP).
2. The establishment of the Kurdistan Front, which can be considered as a step towards the aggregation of different interests, providing revolutionary legitimacy.
3. Parties in the Kurdistan Front through their history had fought against a dictatorial regime, so it was unacceptable at the time to follow the same approach to self-rule. In addition, the formation of the Front which included various political parties was a democratic pathway in itself. On the international level, the period of establishment of the KRG coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union and a wave of democratisation which possibly influenced the KR's political parties.
4. As Voller (2012) argues, the leaders of de facto entities seeking to gain international support are generally willing to build democratic institutions and liberalize the political system. However, this point will be accepted only up to the point where each party's interests are no longer threatened by their rivals. Voller's argument is pertinent to the KR, where this principle operated until the parties' interests were secured.

In the first phase of the establishment of government and parliament, the division of offices between the PUK and the KDP was by mutual agreement. Prior to the first cabinet the struggle was outside the government, but the even split of elected representatives brought it into the governmental sphere. The struggle became endemic to government and obstructed its capacity. However, because the financial capacity of the government was weak, corruption was limited. Nonetheless, the first cabinet in its short period in office succeeded in organizing all the KR's cross border incomes. Further, the Prime Minister concentrated on governing instead of 'party-izing'<sup>4</sup>.

The growing competition between the political parties obstructed the performance of the government and the internal rivalry to take control inside the PUK itself (see Chapter 7),

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Mohamad Mulla Qader.

caused the collapse of the first cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1993 (Gunter, 1993; Chapman, 2009). Another reason, as the prime minister of the first cabinet explained, was the non-participation of the president of the KDP and the Secretary General of the PUK in either parliament or government. As he mentioned

If the two leaders of PUK and KDP enter parliament, we will be rescued from considerable trouble. Every decision now needs a party decision. If the leaders join the government there will not be this uncertainty (quoted in McDowell, 2007:385).

The short life of this cabinet neither allowed it to execute its agenda, nor helped it to promote economic growth. Until the second cabinet was formed, the offices of the different political parties were a substitute for government.

To fill the vacuum of power the second cabinet was formed, again by the PUK, on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1993. It was headed by a Prime Minister with a military background from the most extreme faction of the PUK opposed to the KDP at that time (Ala'Aldeen, 2013). The new prime minister used "government funds to promote his own enterprises" (Stansfield, 2003:151). According to a minister of the first cabinet

The new prime minister worked 100% on partisanship and not on how to govern, and worked to weaken the KDP. As a result, both parliament and government became party-ized<sup>5</sup>.

The PUK's change of Prime Minister and the majority of his ministers, without the acceptable involvement of the KDP, strengthened the latter's distrust, caused increasing strife, elevated party interests over national interests and controlled trade points by political parties without returning the revenues to government coffers. This period coincided with the commencement of armed conflict between various political parties- the PUK and the KDP, the PUK and the IMK, the KDP and PASOK (Khalil, 2008).

Conflicts mirrored the depth of antagonism between political parties, their will to exclude others and were a sign of the unwillingness of the political elites to establish democratic institutions. In addition, due to the nonexistence of opposition in the parliament as a result of the fifty-fifty rule, and the increase of loyalty to each party's ideology, discord grew in ministries between ministers and their deputies. These events led to a sharp polarization and the 'party-ization' of society.

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Mohamad Mulla Qader.

To understand the factors in the failure of the first and the second cabinets, it is important to look at the historical hostility between the KDP and the PUK and how it was reflected in the governmental process. At the beginning of the establishment of the KDP, two factions, communist and nationalist were involved in a deep struggle (see Chapter 7). According to one interviewee, after the establishment of the PUK by the communist wing of the KDP in 1975, the struggle between both parties erupted into armed conflicts. At this period, the leaders of political parties imported the revolutionary culture from outside, especially from certain Arabic countries that had imposed revolution by the gun. Hence, both sides used arms against each other. Eventually, according to the leadership base of each party, the PUK emerged to dominate areas of Slemani, Kirkuk and some parts of Erbil, the mostly Soranian area; and the KDP emerged in areas of Duhok, Mosul and some parts of Erbil, the mostly Badinan area<sup>6</sup>.

The same interviewee continued to explained at length, when the activities of a party were prohibited, their popularity gradually decreased. After the uprising, this balance which in Kurdish language came to be called 'mountain balance' (until the uprising the major activities of both parties were in the mountainous areas) transferred into the cities, which led to the outbreak of war in Erbil. Eventually, two administrations were built, coinciding with a narrowing of privileges. The members of each party were enabled to gain privileges such as employment, trade and investment in their zone. In such a situation, a businessman for example, has a simple choice in terms of party allegiance and business interests. Because of the geographical and administrative division, financial capital cannot be mobile. A PUK supporter would be prevented from investing in the KDP zone and vice versa. As a result, investors remained in their areas and supported the dominant party there<sup>7</sup>.

The polarization of society by and in favour of political parties opened the way for them to control the entire apparatus of economics, politics, culture and education. In addition, as (Weiner, 1965), mentioned the polarization undermined societal integration, which is recognized as a crucial aspect in the process of political development.

It is important to mention to the logic of force in the mentality of the PUK and the KDP. A top leader of the PUK explained that:

If a party in the KR were to achieve first place in the elections, the runner up would not gain power for a long period of time. In the KR the power of logic and law does not apply,

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Saro Qadir.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Saro Qadir.

only the logic of power. For this reason, if the other party does not have the military strength to counter problems, and maintain its popular base, it faces problems<sup>8</sup>.

The logic of this statement reflects the fragility of institutions in the region, the role of militia and elites in political development and more importantly the permanence of the dual administration system, with political parties on the one hand and the government on the other<sup>9</sup>.

Hence, one of defects of the coalition government was the non-unification of the army, *Peshmerga*, under a legitimate centre accepted by all parties. In my interviews, in response to the question ‘the army belongs to whom?’ the participants replied that the army belongs to the KDP and the PUK. Without announcing one’s loyalty to one of the main parties it is difficult to enter the military sector. However, in the 2013 and 2014 elections, various political parties gained votes within the military. At the same time, the military organization is often in parallel with tribal trends (see Chapter 8). What is more, during the field work observation, I found out that some army units are limited to specific areas which do not allow citizens from other areas to join. The result of such a military structure is that instead of becoming a national army it has accelerated the division of the region and the society. This role of the military is maintained by the political leaders who are or who have been army commanders. According to one interviewee “up to now the military force participates in electoral fraud, in war and destroying election centres”<sup>10</sup>.

This negative role of the army, alongside the sort of political thinking of each party that counts itself as a legitimate body with the right to rule society, is a powerful reason for the collapse of the first and the second governments and the outbreak of the internal war. As Almond and Powell (1969:10) argued “in all societies the role of formal governmental institutions is shaped and limited by informal groups, political attitudes, and a multitude of interpersonal relations”.

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Sa’adi Ahmad Pira.

<sup>9</sup> The logic of force still dominates the parties’ mentality after more than two decades of governing. The most obvious example is the parliamentary election campaigns of 2014, in which events such as burning cars and shops and wounding occurred between supporters of various political parties and in different cities. One military commander of the PUK announced that even if other parties gained 100% of the vote, the PUK would not allow them to take power in Slemani and threatened to resort to arms as previously if necessary (Source: Awene, M, A. (2013) ‘The Deputy of the Internal Minister Announced that the Security Forces Are Free to Vote for Any Political Party’, 27 August, [online], available at: <http://www.awene.com/article/2013/08/27/25052> (Accessed: 27 August 2013). [In Kurdish: Birîkarî Wezarefî Nawxoy hêzekanman serpişk kirduwe deng be kê deden Biden].

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Sa’adi Ahmad Pira.

The aftermath of these events was political instability in the region which prevented political development. The double embargo on the KR and increasing poverty and unemployment in society fuelled this conflict. In the mid-1990s the unemployment rate reached 70-80%. Males participated in the civil war to obtain essential subsistence for their families (Stansfield, 2003:53; Leezenberg, 2005). This high level of poverty and unemployment occurred at the time when in the first cabinet the government unspent budget was 13.5 million Iraqi Swiss Dinar plus US\$3.5 million and in the second cabinet it was 4.5 billion Iraqi Swiss Dinar that mainly came from border crossings (Ala'Aldeen, 2013:64-72). In one interview, a member of the first cabinet pointed out that the first cabinet succeeded in collecting more than US\$10 million<sup>11</sup>.

In that period the distribution of wealth was to a small circle around the top leaders of each party and they in turn would be responsible for allocations to lower levels of the hierarchy. According to one interviewee,

Before allocating the budget for the public sector, the PUK and the KDP decided on their own shares, and then the factions inside each party would redistribute the allocated portion<sup>12</sup>.

The imbalance between society (poverty and unemployment) and the wishes of elites to control all effective positions of power created an unintegrated socio-political society in favour of single party rule, freezing political development through an attempt to homogenise both society and authority by narrowing the circle of political activities. To achieve this goal, powerful organisations of different kinds of media were established to mobilize in favour of one party or the other<sup>13</sup>.

In addition, the KRG was obstructed by its geographical landlocked character, its being surrounded by unfriendly governments and by the intervention of regional powers in the KR's issues (see Chapter 9). As the former secretary of state of the USA, Henry Kissinger (1999) observed the KR must trade with "forbidding geography, ambivalent motives on the part of neighbouring countries, and incompatible motivations within the Kurdish community itself" (cited in Gunter, 2008a:237).

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with Mohamad Mulla Qader.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Saro Qadir.

<sup>13</sup> In my interviews, which referred to the role of mass media in the KR, participants expressed the view that the mass media belongs to the political parties. Even those called independent media have a bias or loyalty to a given party.

In brief, the strong message of the first and the second cabinets was that elections alone are not a sufficient factor to propel institutions on a trajectory towards political development. Even if these institutions are supported by law, there is a tendency for them to break down, especially if a militia mentality rules the government. In the KR, the citizens' economic situation and the tendency to take absolute power to the exclusion of others, destroyed progress towards political development.

### **The Role of Parliament**

The first parliament was formed on 4 June 1992 according to Law No 1:51 and its term was three years. However, due to a deep struggle between the KDP and the PUK from 3 May 1994 until 27 June 1994 the parliament, whose president belonged to the KDP, was surrounded by the PUK's armed forces, which meant, in practice the authority of this body as a legislative one to monitor the government's actions came to an end (Khalil, 2008). Article 6 of Law No. 1 states that the army cannot enter the precinct of parliament.

This action highlighted the type of thinking of political elites, who instead of solving points of disagreement through democratic procedures preferred to resort to the logic of force. The second cabinet collapsed on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1994 and internal war broke out, which meant the collapse of the parliament as well (Parliament website, 2013; Chapman, 2009). As a reaction to the war, 59 parliamentary members were stuck in the parliament building for 101 days and issued a manifesto against internal war (Jambaz and Pirdawd, 2008:5).

The term of parliament extended from 1992 until June 2005. From 1996 to 2002, the parliament was dominated by the KDP alone, which extended its duration four times without elections. In this period the KDP filled its seats according to the results of the 1992 parliamentary elections (and not according to the fifty-fifty agreement), winning 51 seats, which together with five seats of the Christians resulted in a majority of seats (56 out of a total of 105), allowing them to change the laws in their own favour (Stansfield, 2003). This practice could be considered as a civilian coup, whereby a political party, alongside another party, remains in power via the legitimacy of parliament and without using guns and without holding public elections. In 2002, again and without elections the parliament re-formed in coalition with the PUK according to an agreement between them, the so-called transitional period (2002-2005). As power was divided politically, it was reflected geographically. The first session of parliament in the transitional period was held in Erbil, the area dominated by the KDP and the second one was held in Slemani, the area dominated by the PUK.

A leader of the KDP mentioned that the main reason for taking up the legislative authority instead of the executive one by the KDP was the non-existence of previous experience in running governmental apparatuses. It is also accounted for by the influence of a kind of western idea amongst the top cadres of this party, who lived abroad before the uprising and believed that the authority of parliament comes above government power, because the parliament votes to appoint and depose the head of cabinet<sup>14</sup>.

It is important to note that the period of the fifty-fifty agreement conflicts with the law of establishment of parliament which refers to a duration of three years. Mutual agreement was reached that each party would run the parliament for two years and the next government for the next two years, and vice versa (Parliament Website, 2013). This political division of all ranks and positions facilitated the deinstitutionalisation of the legislative structure. Instead of a separation of powers, in practice both parliament and the executive authority were mixed. It resulted in the vulnerability of the parliament structure to party influence and barriers to parliament's responsibility for pursuing government accountability.

The main reasons for this relate to the question of the party allegiance of the president of the parliament and which party should fill the presidency. Despite the parliamentary elections, the distribution of offices of both parliament and government forms one political package. This means that neither parliament nor government represent the people. They firstly represent parties and then citizens<sup>15</sup>.

The parliament, which originally consisted of 105 members, expanded to reach 169 members due to frequent changes among the elderly and following the death of members. New members were appointed by the political bureaus of parties. Also, the total number of women in this round was only nine, which reflects the general lack of women's participation in public life (Jambaz and Pirdawd, 2008).

It is important to mention that the threshold of 7% to qualify for a seat according to Article 36:3 of the elections law was another obstacle to political participation and development in the KR. The region was on the verge of institutionalisation of political arrangements that would allow different parties to practice their programmes. However, through law some

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with Mohamad Mulla Qader.

<sup>15</sup> In my interviews, participants pointed out that MPs firstly represent their parties and then the people. It is usual that an MP represents both their party and the people. However, the problem in the KR is that representation is more in favour of political parties' interests than peoples. Thereby, the term 'representing party and then people' indicates a negative phenomenon.



political parties were excluded from entering into parliament. For example, the IMK did not enter into parliament, even though it gained 49,108 or 5.5% of the votes and according to the law every 30,000 votes was equal to one seat (Kurdistan National Assembly-Iraq, no date).

This party lost their votes in favour of the winning parties. This happened at a time when the IMK was a member of the Kurdistan Front and like other parties possessed a military force. Horowitz (1993) argues that the failure of democracy in many societies is due to power conflicts between civilian or military elites, non-readiness of the sociocultural setting to accept democratic principles and weak institutional formation. This was the situation in the KR, especially considering the history of these parties, which were forbidden by the Ba'ath regime. Their inherent form of political activity was clandestine or partisan actions against central government.

In short, it is difficult to say that the foundations of the political structures in the KR encourage the development of civic norms among political elites to create a stable situation or even to prevent the outbreak of internal war. The sum of all these factors was the geographical division of authority in the KR.

## **Consequences of Division for Political Development**

In this period of two administrations (1996-2005, which in practice started in 1994), the social perspective of the polarization of society was deepened by the political parties via their different branches and organizations. The period coincided with physical ‘cleansing’ (killing, coercion and mutilation) and the use of the parties’ armed forces to suppress opponents’ views. Legitimate bodies such as the courts became biased towards a dominant party and social problems were solved mainly through party organizations, tribal chieftains and according to traditional norms. The power of the chieftains was increased by distributing wealth among those supporting the dominant party<sup>16</sup>. The KDP, because of its social structure which includes different strata and because of its religious background, was more successful in gaining the support of chieftains<sup>17</sup> (see Chapter 8).

The policy of cleansing extended from top to bottom, or from authority to society. As Horowitz (1993:18) argued, “in divided societies, there is a tendency to conflate inclusion in the government with inclusion in the community and exclusion from government with exclusion from the community”. The result was a decrease in the ability of the government to penetrate different aspects of society (one of canonical function towards political development) and, conversely, the increasing ability of dominant parties to enter the various social spheres. To secure the status quo, the security and militia activities that were associated with every political party became enlarged.

In the economic sphere, the double sanctions on the KR, the civil war (in Kurdish, internal war) and then division of administrations, inflated prices. The PUK zone faced an extra embargo from the KDP through its control of the border crossing of Ibrahim Khalil (Khabour), the main trade gate with Turkey. Irregular salary payments, electricity cuts, the increasing price of goods and a lack of enough income to subsist led to the spread of daily conflict between citizens. Powerful figures in parties and tribes engaged in market speculation. Recruitment to the military services of each of the dominant parties increased as they offered better salaries and privileges such as plots of land to own property. Thus, military positions became more popular than other services (Ala’Aldeen, 2013).

Even recruitment to and retirement from the army was not based on age. According to one interviewee, the military became a tool for maintaining the economic and political interests

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Salahaddin Babaker, Haydar Esmail Abdullah, Mohamad Haji and Mohamad Mulla Qader.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Mohamad Haji and Saro Qadir.

of each party<sup>18</sup>. Up to now, the majority of families have a member or members in the military or security services. Another interviewee pointed out, recruitment and employment in the military, police and public services all required a support letter, *Tezkyeh*, issued by various parties' offices<sup>19</sup>. As the economy, the market, institutions, governmental offices and the military are monopolized by each party in its respective area, becoming a member of a party is the only or the best option for citizens to gain privileges.

An important impact of the two administrations was the brake on the growth of the free economic sector due to the instability of the region. Both the economic and political spheres were controlled by parties<sup>20</sup> which also used their communication organs and mass media to control social interaction and culture. Concepts such as human rights were insignificant relative to the main problem of citizens, which was simply to gain a livelihood. This state of affairs gave the opportunity for a party to practice its power regardless of human rights considerations.

As mentioned, after the civil war,<sup>21</sup> the KDP founded a new cabinet in Erbil in 1996 with the participation of some smaller parties: the Kurdistan branch of the Iraqi Communist Party; the Assyrian Movement; the Independent Workers Party of Kurdistan; and the Islamic Union. The cabinet had fifteen Ministers and five extra Ministers without portfolio, called Regional Ministers, to satisfy the small parties or minorities, to enhance legitimacy. The influential areas of the cabinet were in the Erbil and Duhok provinces or the Yellow Zone (indicated by the yellow colour of the KDP's flag). It worked as a separate government from the Slemani government formed by the PUK. The period of two administrations was a good opportunity for many small political parties in both the Erbil and Slemani Zones. In both administrations the majority of ministers and provincial governors were the KDP or the PUK

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<sup>18</sup> Interview with Sa'adi Ahmad Pira. In all my interviews, the participants agreed that the army is a political and not a national one. One of the participants even used the term "Kurdistan parties' army" instead of national army.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Mohamad Mulla Qader. In this interview, he pointed out that for employment, in the police sector for instance, the employee needs to have the party's support letter. The head of police is appointed by the party, hence, the party offices and head of police, cooperate in employing people in this sector.

<sup>20</sup> There was a consensus among my fieldwork participants as well as ordinary people and small businessmen I spoke to that the economy and market are monopolized by political parties and only marginal room remained those outside party circles.

<sup>21</sup> The PUK and the KDP entered into an intense conflict to remove each other from the political arena and govern society alone. However, the balance of power between them on the one hand, and neighbouring countries' interests on the other, prevented the achievement of this aim by either party. At the beginning of the war, the PUK controlled the capital city and then the KDP through the support of the Iraqi Army controlled all cities of the KR and the PUK fled into Iran's boundary areas. This triumph of the KDP was a direct signal to threaten regional stability according to whether the KDP alone controlled the KR, it may become a source of threat for these countries. As a result, the PUK with support mainly from Iran through intense fighting returned to Slemani province.

political bureau's members. Ministers of each administration discussed weekly the government issues in the political bureau and then in the cabinets (Stansfield, 2003).

In the PUK zone another problem inside the government was the strengthening of local loyalties between the top cadres from Erbil and Slemani. The struggle between its various factions led to the supremacy of the Erbilian members in the PUK cabinet. This phenomenon, also reflected multi-centrality in making decisions. This problem forced the PUK to form a new administration (or the fourth cabinet in Slemani) in 2001 with Barham Salih as Prime Minister –who is originally from Slemani. He tried to run a government independent from party interventions. However, his attempts did not succeed (Ala'Aldeen, 2013). The PUK domination of the government and personalisation of authority in favour of the General Secretary's family and a small group of his supporters led to massive discontent inside the party's base. Some cadres of the political bureau petitioned the General Secretary to set up reform inside the party, and threatened to separate if he did not (Mustafa, 2013).

In contrast, this factionalism is less prominent in the organisations and in the governance of the KDP. This is evidenced in the greater stability of this party compared with the PUK. However, the top leaders of both parties tried to capture or 'family-ize' their authority<sup>22</sup>. Khalil (2009) studied the PUK and the KDP with an economic eye and characterised them as economic patrons who act in favour of leaders' families on both sides. The same claim was reiterated by an interviewee that the leaders' family of both parties receive a portion of the economy and national budget<sup>23</sup>. Bengio (2003) stated that in function these parties are closer to militias than political parties. The same claim was implied by the president of the KDP at the threshold of unification of both administrations when he stated that the KDP and the PUK "should turn into two civil parties and melt within one government" (Gunter, 2008:50).

Concerning the parliament, its power was paralysed and became a wing of the executive branch. A joint parliament formally operated until 1994. By the establishment of the third cabinet (also in Kurdish called an administration or government) in Erbil, the KDP had

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<sup>22</sup> For example, by establishment of the third cabinet in 1996 in the Yellow Zone, Nechirvan Barzani became Deputy Prime Minister and then from 1999 up to now, except for two years, he has remained as head of the government. Mohamad Mulla Qader, a cadre of the KDP pointed out that Nechirvan Barzani became a Prime Minister, because he is a grandson of Mostafa Barzani and son of Edris Barzani, and son-in-law of the KDP's head. Without these credentials others find it difficult to run for this post. Even inside the party, close relatives hold the key offices. It is also widely recognized among ordinary people.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Saro Qadir.

reformed parliament with some smaller groups without PUK membership and its laws applied only in the Yellow Zone. In the Slemani government, the PUK chose Jalal Talabani as president of the Green Zone (the colour of the PUK's flag) to supervise the cabinet acts and implement parliament duties. Moreover, the duties of the parliament were transferred into the PUK's political bureau (Lawrence, 2008:64; Ala'Aldeen, 2013; Stansfield, 2003).

The chief aim of each side was to preserve the status quo of its dominant area which made it extremely difficult to discuss development. Some small parties had Ministers in both administrations. The reason for this was that the dominant parties were attempting to show to the outside world that the cabinet was democratic and was made up of multiple parties. Some of these parties were formed by the same dominant parties to give them legitimacy (Khalil, 2009). The Islamic Union was a party that emerged at this time and had activities in both zones<sup>24</sup>.

Furthermore, the two administration periods from 1996 to 2005 coincided with the emergence of a different phenomenon that challenged the rebuilding of the future of the KR. Different Turkmen parties were created and were supported either by Turkey (such as the Turkmen Front) or by the KDP<sup>25</sup> or the PUK to keep the balance of power. Various extremist Islamic groups especially *Ansar Al-Islam* that introduced Al-Qaida to the KR were activated and different small party groupings emerged. The proliferation of numerous political groups led to the phenomenon that it is very rare to find a street in the cities of the region without various political parties' offices. Many of them are just a routine party office to support a dominant party and gain economic privileges. People often refer to them as 'political shops', *Dokani Siasi*.

Apart from these two formal administrations, two other informal semi-administrations were formed. One was founded by the PKK in the *Choman* border areas with Iran and then extended throughout the border line of the KR, which led to further outbreaks of fighting in the region between this party and the KDP in 1996-98. To this day, the PKK has some bases in the KR. Another semi-administration was shaped by an Islamic group, *Ansar Al-Islam* in

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with Bayan Ahmad (Barwary) and Salahaddin Babaker.

<sup>25</sup> In the KR people often believe that the minority seats of parliament belong to the KDP. One reason is that the majority of them are habitants of the Yellow Zone. Further, during my fieldwork I had an informal conversation with some Peshmerga of the KDP in Erbil and Dohuk. They reported that in the parliamentary elections in 2013, the KDP commanded some battalions in Erbil to vote for a Turkmen party and in Dohuk for a Christian party. However, in Dohuk the party faced problems because of the religious culture, where some Peshmerga refused to vote for a Christian party. This reflects the dominance of religious beliefs in the society.

2000, operating in the *Halabjah* border area with Iran. This led to armed conflict between it and the PUK from 2001 and ended with an attack by the USA on this group in 2003 (Muir, 2002). Absence of negotiation, coercion and the logic of power were the prevailing features of the KR at the time.

In 1998, the KDP and the PUK signed the Washington Agreement that ended the military conflict and brought about political stability without unifying the two administrations. However, the new upheavals that happened such as planning for the overthrow of the Ba'ath regime and holding opposition conferences regarding the future of Iraq after the Ba'ath, forced the two parties to seek convergence. After eight years of division, on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2002, with the participation of Danielle Mitterrand, the head of the PUK, the KDP and the parliamentary lists, the Kurdistan parliament held its first session. In that session and according to the Washington Agreement, the parliament was formed according to the election results in 1992; 51 seats for the KDP and 49 for the PUK (Nuraldini, 2003).

Though geographically and politically the KR was divided horizontally between the KDP and the PUK, this division was reproduced in the vertical division of society between the rich and poor classes. The negative impact of the latter was and continues to be more profound than the former division. Authority can eventually be unified through the establishment of united organisations as happened in the KR, but to close the societal gap between its various strata requires more time and more capital. For example, while the PUK and the KDP formed a united cabinet in 2006, the features of a divided society remained almost unchanged from two administrations period (Mustafa, 2013). According to one interviewee, the political party itself became a tool in the creation of injustice between social classes and strata<sup>26</sup>.

A good summary of this argument in this chapter is a statement by another interviewee who explained at length

Political parties are designed to peacefully represent the differences and diversities present in society. However, parties active in the Kurdistan Region have played a negative role in this respect. Due to the absence of a regular peaceful and democratic handover of power, differences and enmities have taken roots in the region. Hence, in contrast to long-established western democracies where other parties are considered as rivals, in the Kurdistan Region other parties are mainly viewed as enemies. In such a system, parties attempt to thrive through intensifying the existent differences in society and party leaders work hard to turn their members into a loyal, ignorant, and

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with Saro Qadir.

ideologically motivated force. There is no attempt to educate the party members in accordance with the modern norms of fair competition, mutual respect, cooperation and peaceful coexistence. On the contrary, the focus is on the differences and further polarisation of society for greedy party interests through the utilisation of the existent differences. For instance, instead of working to enhance national solidarity, political parties are reinforcing the local, linguistic and tribal affiliations to keep the party members loyal and guarantee the party's survival or dominance<sup>27</sup>.

The segmentation of society through these different political parties with different programmes, without a national agenda, facing each other as enemies, created a society divided by religions, parties and local identities. Certain party activities may be considered to have created active citizens, but the problem is that the narrow influence of these parties usually comes before more inclusive features such as national interest.

In a nutshell, up to 2005 the political developmental process met with ups and downs. The two administrations ruled a divided society but opened the way for the PUK and the KDP to practice power and become more familiar with governance procedures. However, the regressive impact of this kind of politics continued into the next united cabinet. The existence of various political parties in the KR does not mean political development actually occurred. In the KR in the 1990s, the political parties instead of building or accelerating the process of political development obstructed it. This claim is discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

## **Conclusion**

In the KR the governing process and political institutions (legislative and executive branches) were interlocked and difficult to separate. The KRG has been divided politically between the PUK and the KDP, a division which reflects the socioeconomic division within society. The division of the KR and between different armed parties that attempted to preserve the party rather than serve the "nation", indicates to an unstable co-existence as well as inadequate political will to develop society. In such a situation, the party comes above or is equal to society and only its members are considered as citizens.

Where citizens' loyalty is synonymous with their membership of a party, the consequence is that the party's ideology will count as the government's plan, its armed forces as a national army, its party's leaders as national leaders and its unions as the civil society organizations. In the KR, separate administrations were more beneficial for political leaders (Stansfield,

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with Adnan Osman.

2003). In the first decade of the parties participation in rule, it was difficult to separate party and government. As LaPalombara and Weiner (1966:415) pointed out “where the party and government are indistinguishable, there tends to be no buffer between the formulation of public policy and its application”.

Regarding international intervention, the 688 UN Resolution to establish a safe haven in 1991 and the Washington Agreement in 1998, can be considered as evidence of the positive role that the international community played in the political development of the KR, designed to bring about stability. What can be extracted from these events is that the unification of the government was achieved through external factors. To sum up, political development in the first period of the establishment of the KRG (1992-2005) failed in the hands of the political elites and political parties.



## **Chapter Six: The Policy Shift Towards Unification and the Rise of Opposition (2006-2014)**

### **Introduction**

The KR has experienced development to some extent. Following the collapse of the Ba'ath regime in 2003 and up to 2014 the standard of living improved and economic activities grew. In political terms, opposition parties were allowed to develop. However, the contribution of the rotation of power to political development is open to question. In economic terms, as discussed in Chapter One, the KR has become a rentier state. Oil revenue supports political power by allowing government to fund itself independently without tax revenues.

After more than two decades of governing, the KR's leaders still resort to the concept of *Hikumety Sawa* (toddler government) to justify their inefficiency. It should also be remembered that the constitution of the KR remains in draft form. This chapter follows from the previous chapter and describes the successive cabinets and parliaments from 2005/6 to 2014. There is a greater emphasis on the government due to its greater influence as a political body compared with the parliament. The chapter aims to illustrate that despite the shift towards the unification of government and parliament and the emergence of opposition groups, political development is still affected by the legacy of the two administrations.

### **Government Structure: Broad Unity and Creation of Trust (2006-2009)**

The united cabinet (the fifth cabinet) established in May 2006 was the outcome of factors such as the Washington Agreement in 1998, the formation of a new political atmosphere in Iraq after 2003, which led to the emergence of new political powers and the appearance of new economic interests. External factors forced leaders to combine their political will in the frame of a coalition government. The cabinet was formed on the basis of the parliamentary elections in January 2005 or more than one year after the elections were held. The reason for the delay was the disagreement between the PUK and the KDP about the division of power in both Baghdad and the KR.

The fifty-fifty rule was repeated in the fifth cabinet with some participation from other parties. To get the consent of the majority of political parties, the number of ministries and ministers was increased to 42. Some did not have a portfolio or office and were called Minister for the Region without having the right to vote in the cabinet but they had the same

privileges and financial rights and pension. Further, General Managers of ministries were divided between the political parties (KRG, 2006; Chapman, 2009).

This broad based cabinet headed by the KDP followed an agreement with the PUK to alternate the head of government every two years. To divide power and form the cabinet in both Baghdad and the KRG, both the KDP and the PUK signed the Strategic Agreement and Kurdistan Regional Government Unification Agreement in 2006 (see Appendix 1). An interviewee from the KDP pointed out that

The Strategic Agreement was a ‘Tactical Agreement’. It was a factor to continue two administrations. Both the PUK and the KDP still have their own budget. By a whistle the government will collapse. It was signed in order for Massoud Barzani to become the President of the KR and Jalal Talabani to become the President of Iraq. Offices, as well, were divided equally between them. The government was a formality and each party dominated its own area<sup>1</sup>.

The key problem that the cabinet faced, as its Prime Minister reiterated, was the lack of trust between different political parties in the government. Each party tried to promote its own interests. The distrust between elites was reflected in the societal organizations which grew alongside parties’ interests as centres to collect public support. When the concept of responsibility towards society is restricted to responsibility for the party, the efficiency of the government declines. The outcome is a decrease in trust within society as a whole and the cabinet<sup>2</sup>.

The lack of opposition in parliament, as well as rivalry within the PUK, allowed the KDP to increase its interference in the government. Factionalism within the PUK, its engagement in Baghdad political issues more than those of the KR, the location of government in Erbil (which caused the Slemani governing organs to be dismantled), all led to the PUK’s Ministers becoming guests rather than partners in running government (Ala’Aldeen, 2013). Parties such as the Islamic Union (IU) had followed a dual strategy as both partners in government and as opposition to gain the benefits of governing on the one hand, and to avoid the accusation of being a partner in corruption on the other.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Mohamad Mulla Qader.

<sup>2</sup> In an interview with Muhamad Ra’auf a minister in the fifth cabinet who was from the Islamic Union party, he pointed out that throughout his time of office as a minister, except for an operational budget, no budget was allocated to his ministry despite this ministry offering many projects to the cabinet. Even if the cabinet agreed on a project, because the majority of the parliament were the PUK and the KDP, they obstructed any discussion of it. They thought a party that the minister belonged to could use it as a trophy in elections. Hence, the project would be carried out through the personal links with ministers and officials of each party.

In 2008, according to the Unification Agreement, it was the PUK's turn to form a new cabinet, but the internal struggle between factions left power with the KDP. This opportunity weakened the former and opened the door to a future split (Knight, 2009). Consequently, the KDP ruled the cabinet for the next two years. In addition, according to the previous pact, the presidential position was allocated to the KDP. Thereby, both executive branches were controlled by the KDP or more precisely by the Barzani family, helping it to increase its economic and fiscal monopoly (Katzman, 2009).

The most important feature of this cabinet which can be considered as a challenge to the political development process was that the majority of political parties participated in one list in the parliamentary elections in 2005. The Kurdistan National Democratic List gained 89.55% or 104 seats from the total of 111 seats (Kurdistan National Assembly-Iraq, no date: 21). This means there was no opposition in parliament to challenge the government. In other words, all parties agreed on a common agenda to run the government. The challenge to political development is that it is difficult to aggregate the programmes of all these different parties into a single coherent agenda.

Throughout the fifth cabinet the Ministries of Finance, the Interior, Justice and the Peshmerga did not become unified (Gunter, 2008; Khalil, 2009). According to Article 5: d of the Unification Agreement, all ministries of the government had to be unified within one year (see Appendix 1). The non-unification of these focal ministries meant that there was a deep distrust between both sides; and society was ruled by monopolizing the finance, military and legal sectors in favour of political parties. In the following cabinets, in which these ministries were formally unified, the two administrations continued *de facto*. For example, despite the formation of some unified army units, the majority of Peshmerga salaries are paid by political parties and the biggest battalions (70 and 80 battalions) are under the control of the PUK and the KDP respectively.

Further, in the two administrative periods, two different systems of civil servants' salary applied in the Yellow (KDP) and Green Zones (PUK) respectively. Civil service salaries in the Yellow administration were higher than in the latter. This difference created another challenge to the unification of the Finance Ministry. In addition to this, some cities geographically belonged to the Erbil province but were administered by the Slemani government (PUK) and applied their law. Some cities in both administrations experienced the same situation.

The same points were reiterated by further interviewees who pointed out that the parties' organs exerted a powerful influence on the ministries. Until the end of the seventh cabinet all previous cabinets were just formally unified. The police and intelligence sectors of both political parties were separated from each other. The ministers of each party only had relations with their zone of influence and his/her deputy had power in the other zone and vice versa. Formally they were a single cabinet but in reality each minister represented their own zone<sup>3</sup>.

According to some interviewees, the factors which play a role in recruitment to party and government office include: the level and background of loyalty to a party, the history of family and social rank such as being the offspring of a Sheikh or Agha, wealth, support for the party in the time of revolution, as well as competition between party members, and finally the women's quota<sup>4</sup>.

In such circumstances any steps towards political development face challenges due to the spread of negative phenomena within government. They affect the commitment of individuals and represent obstacles to reform or progress. According to a Minister of the fifth cabinet:

In this country there is nothing in the name of the governing system and efficient government. Any project that is constructed, is not constructed by a national government, but accomplished on the base of personal influence<sup>5</sup>.

Consequently, the concepts of accountability, responsibility and the interpellation of officials are difficult to achieve. According to another interviewee, unification of the two administrations occurred at the top level of political parties' leaders, but did not penetrate to the majority of their base, organs and offices<sup>6</sup>. Non-transparency and corruption spread, which was the main factor that encouraged the rise of opposition parties<sup>7</sup>.

With all of these defects, however, from the fifth cabinet the military conflict between the PUK and the KDP was transformed into partial political co-operation. The society focused more on living conditions and well-being. The check-points of each party between their

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Mohamad Haji.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Saro Qadir and Adnan Osman. The majority of those interviewed were in broad agreement with the above-mentioned factors. In addition, the elections law and bylaw of political parties guaranteed the women's quota.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Muhamad Ra'auf.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Adnan Osman.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Muhamad Ra'auf.

previous zones have continued to exist up to now, but the sphere of social freedom increased. For example, in 2006, demonstrations were held in various cities such as Halabjah, Chamchamal and Slemani (the main area of the PUK), to demand more public services and the eradication of corruption (Gunter, 2008). This phenomenon had rarely occurred in the past. The fifth cabinet even established a Ministry for Human Rights, although it was abolished in the following cabinet. Through the unification of the cabinet, the attention of the political system was focused on boosting economic activities.

Concerning the presidency, Massoud Barzani was confirmed as president of the KR in an agreement on 1 December 2004. The problem of defining the KR president's powers delayed the inauguration of parliamentary sessions for more than five months after the parliamentary elections were held<sup>8</sup> (Mustafa, 2013:4). As a result of this agreement, presidential authority was added to the executive branch and was considered to be the highest executive power in the KR with the ultimate right to approve or reject parliamentary legislation or return laws to the parliament for more discussion (KR draft constitution, 2009).

In 2005, the presidential law (Law Number 1) was approved by parliament including Article 2 and 3, which states that the president will be elected by citizens for four years, and for not more than two terms. In contradiction with this, Article 17 states that for the first term the president will be chosen by parliament. The contradiction shows the elite's political will plays a determining role in the institutionalisation or deinstitutionalisation of the system and the law is composed in favour of their interests.

According to this law, a presidential candidate will be president of the KR if he gains the majority of votes (51%) but to depose him 75% of the parliament votes are needed. This reflects the tendency towards semi-personalization of authority and the supremacy of top elites over institutions. For example, the president of the region through his eleven years' presidency period was never questioned by parliament.

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<sup>8</sup> Parliamentary elections were held on 1 January 2005 and the parliament was formed on 4 June 2005. On 8 June 2005 the parliament passed the presidential law. The passing of this law just four days after the formation of the parliament shows that the law was prepared before the formation of parliament; implying that the political parties dominated the legislative bodies. Nwshirwan Mustafa (2013), the second figure of the PUK at time and now the General Coordinator of the GM in his diary stated that the KDP drafted the presidential law and the delaying of the formation of parliament was related to the rejection of this law by the PUK political bureau. However, eventually it was accepted by the General Secretary of the PUK alone without political bureau consultation.

## **Parliamentary Structure 2005-2009**

Parliamentary elections were held in January 2005. The total number of seats increased from 105 to 111 to include Turkmen (five seats) and Armenian (one seat) quotas. Eleven seats were allocated as quotas to different ethnic and religious minorities. Thirteen political lists participated in the election campaigns and three lists entered parliament which were the Kurdistan National Democratic List<sup>9</sup>, Iraqi Kurdistan Islamic Group and the Toilers list (Katzman, 2009; Mirkhan, 2011; Ala'Aldeen 2013).

The ratio of women to men was 29 to 82. It means that women had a higher level of representation than in the previous term. This participation was guaranteed by law through international pressure. However, it represents the gradual removal of an obstacle to women's participation in political activities. Concerning the education level, 70 out of 111 members of parliament, had a university degree and higher certification. Others were below university level; some only had an elementary school degree. Compared with the previous term the educational level of members had improved (Jambaz, 2007).

In this term the parliament approved some important laws such as the Investment Law in 2006<sup>10</sup>, the law that the KRG wished to apply to the KR as a trade pathway for the whole of Iraq (Gunter, 2008). Other examples include the Anti-Terror Law of 2006 and the Hydrocarbons (Oil and Gas) Law of 2007 and approval of the draft constitution in the extended period of parliament in 2009. The referendum on it has not been held to date, owing to resistance from the opposition to the draft and intervention from neighbouring countries<sup>11</sup>.

According to interviewees, the main problem of the parliament in the period 2005-2009 was its structure, which was dominated by political parties without independent members. Members were those who either had a close relationship with elite leaders or those who could

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<sup>9</sup> The Kurdistan National Democratic List consisted of the PUK and the KDP and the IU, the Kurdistan communist party, Turkmen parties, the Kurdistan Social Democratic party, Christian parties, the Kurdistan National Union Democratic party and Farmers Party) that gained 104 seats (40 seats gained by the KDP, the PUK had 38 seats, the IU 9 seats and others for minorities and some small parties).

<sup>10</sup> According to this law an investor can acquire a plot of land by symbolic rent or for free or long term lease investment. Projects are exempted from tax and customs for ten years, starting from the first day of their actual production; and all imported equipment according to this law is tax exempt. Consequently, the law itself became a part of the creation of inequality. An observer, by looking at construction projects and their prices, can easily find out the depth of inequality created by government itself via the law of Investment. By this law, an owner of a project can use the wealth gained from this project to build another project, again without paying tax.

<sup>11</sup> Personal communication with the members of the constitution committee.

easily get the tribal or religious votes. Hence, the parliament became the parties' parliament and not a citizens' representative body<sup>12</sup>.

Further, interviewees agreed that another factor in this inefficiency of parliament was that political parties did not send in top leaders to the parliament. They do not consider parliament to be an institution on a par with or above executive power. Often, only the parliament Presidential Assembly (the president, vice president and secretary) were members of the political bureau. The Assembly members are chosen out of parliament and by an agreement between political parties. To gain votes, parties nominate top cadres to election lists, but after that they return to their party posts. For example, the MPs cannot impeach or bring ministers or the president to account. There is no political will to make parliament strong<sup>13</sup>.

The elections were held by a closed party list system which means that all candidates were nominated by the political parties. As interviewees pointed out, the voters vote for the entire party list. The candidates often have no role in gaining votes, only the party<sup>14</sup>. As an MP of the second term explained

Because the MPs are nominated by parties and according to a closed list, hence, they are subordinate to the parties' plan and programme and have to work to execute the parties' programme. Although the MP is a people's representative, the party is the point of reference<sup>15</sup>.

This phenomenon did not only make parliament inefficient as a legislative institution, but it also allowed the executive branch and parties to dominate parliament (Asasard et al, 2009). The electoral law (Law No 47, Article 10, 2004) does not allow individuals to nominate themselves as candidates. Even the opposition parties which arose in the third term did not change this law.

Evidence of parliamentary surveillance of government can be found in the questions that were asked by parliamentary members during the second term (2005-2009). Sixty-two questions were addressed to nineteen ministers and the total responses from all ministers

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<sup>12</sup> Interviews with Nahla Mohammad Sa'adulah, Ihsan Abdullah, Karim Bahri Bradost, Zana Rostai and Mohamad Mulla Qader.

<sup>13</sup> MPs of different parties are in general agreement about this issue. Regarding parties' agreement outside of parliament, they agreed that this process had become the reality of the political process in the KR. Without agreement it is difficult to elect the Presidential Assembly of parliament. The best example is the fourth term of parliamentary elections. For six months the parliament did not hold sessions because of disagreement between political parties on the division of parliamentary and cabinet posts.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Amina Zikri, Zana Rostai, Bayan Ahmad, Layla Amir, and Zakia Sayd Salih.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Ihsan Abdullah. In fact, the majority of MPs expressed the same view.

numbered 27. The number of questions in 2008 and 2009 was 51, which coincided with the beginning of the rise of the Gorran Movement (GM) that was supported by some of the PUK MPs who subsequently became members of this movement (Jambaz, 2009:6).

To sum up, it can be argued that, in the second term, parliament's performance was under the supervision of the political parties with negative consequences. The role of members was vague: did they represent a specific area or the whole of the KR? Did they represent the party's programme, or what was their priority? According to the closed list, the KR counted for a single constituency. This happened again in the third term of parliamentary elections, when each MP was a representative of the whole of the KR. These arrangements killed the spirit of competition and undermined the relationship of parliament to the general public. The result was a political system which was an obstacle to more open and flexible participation.

#### **Towards the Rebuilding of Institutions: Government Structure (2009-2014)**

The Minister of Higher Education in the sixth cabinet, Ala'Aldeen (2013:117) described this cabinet as "one step forward, two steps back". Throughout the sixth cabinet strong competition emerged between the government and new opposition groups. At the same time, the rivalry within the cabinet between the KDP and the PUK continued, especially through the weakening of the PUK by the Gorran Movement, which broke off from it.

Following the principle of shared positions, the sixth cabinet was formed by a Prime Minister from the PUK and the Deputy of the KDP for two years and vice versa in alliance with some other parties and minorities. It meant that this government reproduced the characteristics of the previous governments. However, the presence of the opposition altered the balance of power between the parties. To some extent opposition increased public political awareness especially through the election campaigns, which focused on government performance in previous cabinets and the role of elites in wasting national wealth and corruption.

In response to social pressure and the growth of strong opposition, as a first step towards the establishment of a technocratic cabinet, the number of ministries was reduced to nineteen with five other officials that had ministerial rank. However, the programme was extremely ambitious for such a short period. It included renovation and reconstruction, transparency and reform, unifying institutions, regulation of public spending, participation of youth and women in political life and many other aspects that related to the relationship of the KRG with the outside world (KRG, 2009b).



Furthermore, the government declared that it would attempt to cut off the intervention of political parties in governmental affairs, re-regulate parties' activities and their funding. It did not succeed. The only policy to have been implemented so far is the regulation of parties' budgets, in the eighth cabinet, by which time the opposition had been incorporated into the government. According to a survey that was held during the sixth cabinet, the majority of participants (85%) were of the opinion that there is too much intervention by political parties in governmental affairs (Tojinewe Centre, 2011).

This cabinet did attempt reform and some important decisions were made. The Prime Minister decided to cut ministers' salaries by 10% and return the savings to the government budget as a step towards the reduction of inequality in the distribution of wealth. Another important decision was the return of public buildings such as schools to the government. However, because the majority of them were seized by political parties or had been sold by the PUK and the KDP, this reform has yet to succeed<sup>16</sup>.

The higher education system saw a reform in the project of the Human Capacity Development Programme (HCDP) designed to send students abroad. The policy was welcomed by the intellectual strata of society as providing an almost equal opportunity for all postgraduate students. Moreover, the employment of university deans partly changed from employment via political parties to apparent competition by curriculum vitae. The main area of implementation of the abovementioned resolutions was the PUK zone. According to one interviewee,

The innovation capacity of government was obstructed by latent rivalry within the united cabinet. A general framework of common interests was absent. Obstructions were also generated by other participants in governmental circles; the parties in government did not recognize that governing is a shared responsibility. The cabinet was the same as in the period of the two administrations. The KDP's ministers were real ministers with authority and power in Erbil and Dohuk; while the PUK's were ministers of Slemani<sup>17</sup>.

Throughout this cabinet, protests and turbulence occurred in different parts of the region. Demonstrators were from various strata of society and were higher education students in

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<sup>16</sup> Up to August 2013 from thousands of dunums of land and 300 buildings occupied by officials and political parties, only 10 buildings had been returned to the government and the majority of them were returned by the PUK because it was itself the head of government (source: NRT (2013) 'After two years still the decision to return public property has not been executed', 21 August, [online], Available at: <http://nrttv.com/dreje.aspx?jimare=33309> (Accessed: 21 August 2013). , [In Kurdish] Paş Dû Sal Le Derçunî Ta Esta Biryarî Gerandinewey Mulk û Malî Giştî Cêbecê Nekrawe].

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Muhamad Ra'auf. Other participants expressed the same view.

particular. Three opposition parties, the Gorran Movement (GM), the Islamic Union (IU) and the Islamic League (IL), led the protests. The main base of protest was the Green Zone and particularly Slemani city but turbulence occurred in the Yellow Zone. In 2011, in the Badinan area, some people attacked bars, massage shops and hotels and the KDP accused the IU of inciting its followers to burn these places. In reaction, the IU's headquarters were set alight and this party accused the KDP. The Gorran Headquarters in the cities of Erbil and Soran were also burned. In addition, the new NRT (Nalia Radio and TV) was burned down in Slemani just a few days after its first broadcasts.

These tensions reflect the deep antagonism between political parties and their inability to solve disputes. Growing opposition groups, rejecting and accusing each other were the dominant features of this period. Beside this, internal rivalry between the PUK and the KDP on the one hand, and within the PUK itself on the other, caused a paralysis of the fundamental reform programme. The multi-polarity of power beyond the elected authority challenged the capacity of government. The problem was that all of these power centres were both a part of the political system and in opposition to it. For example, the opposition groups participated in parliament and occasionally protested against the legitimacy of it.

Simultaneously, the Arab Spring to some extent influenced KR society. To exploit these events, the opposition and especially the GM at the beginning of 2011 published a manifesto that was entitled the Opposition Package '*Pakêcekanî opozîsyon*'. It requested the dissolution of the government and its replacement by a new technocrat cabinet with the ability to fight corruption (Gorran, 2012). Thereafter, protests broke out to challenge the government.

When the period of the sixth cabinet ended after two years, on 4 April 2012, the seventh cabinet was formed by the Prime Minister from the KDP, and his Deputy from the PUK. Like the previous cabinet, the new one consisted of 19 ministries and five other offices with the same rank as minister. Some ministers remained in office for more than three cabinets (even remained in office in the eighth cabinet). For example, the Minister of the Interior has held this position from 2001 up to now and he is a member of the KDP political bureau (KRG, 2009a). The Minister of Oil and Gas has held this position continuously since the fifth cabinet. The cabinet received the confidence vote of parliament without elections and without the participation of opposition groups in a confidence debate.

Many citizens and small political parties believe that the aim of unification of the government is not to serve society, but to serve the interests of the KDP and the PUK. They use their power in parliament via their representatives to enact any resolution that favours them. According to an MP of the third term, the political process and decision-making are accomplished outside parliament and then are brought back to parliament because the parties' leaders are outside parliament<sup>18</sup>. Another MP agreed and explained that the duty of parliament is just to approve legitimisation<sup>19</sup>. Khalil (2009:24) argues that the united cabinet was a result of a Unification Agreement between the KDP and the PUK, which can be considered as a guarantee to establish a democratic system in the region, but its mechanisms narrowed the political space to the extent of making it impossible to achieve this goal in the near future.

While the cabinet is the executive power, since 2005 the president of the region has been considered to be the highest executive authority in the KR. As in the previous term, the president belonged to the KDP and his Deputy was designated by the PUK. In contrast to the previous term, throughout the sixth cabinet, the president executed duties individually and without having a deputy until 2012, when he chose Kosrat Rasol from the PUK as his deputy (Halbijardin, 2012). The president has often been accused of reflecting the interests of his party more than national interests, performing as a president of a party, not of a whole region. In a questionnaire, 21% of participants gave the response that the president acts as the president of the region, while 44% considered him to be president of the KDP. In Slemani city only 10% of participants responded that the president of the KR behaves like a president of the region. Even in Dohuk, which is considered to be the base of the KDP, fewer than 35% of participants considered that the president acts like a president of the KR (Tojinewe Centre, 2011).

In short, the type of formation of the sixth and seventh cabinets indicates that the government did not have a strategic plan towards political development. The rotation of power originates from the relative balance of power between the PUK and the KDP (shown in the 50:50 division of offices which has lasted since 1992) and both parties' failure to accept being out of power. The general public accepts this situation as a reality. There is no formal evidence but there is a scepticism among people about the possibility of change because even the

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<sup>18</sup> Interview with Omer Nuraldini.

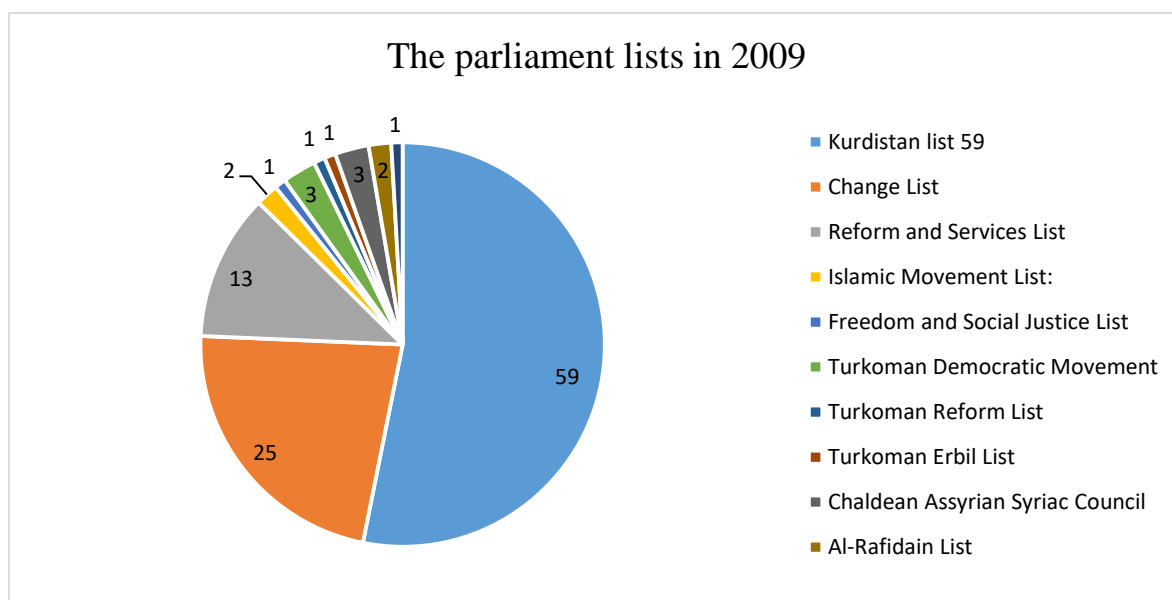
<sup>19</sup> Interview with Adnan Osman.

growth of the opposition did not bring about change and it was re-absorbed into the dual structure of power.

### The Third Term of Parliament: Rising Political Opposition

The parliamentary elections in 2009, like previous elections, were held according to the closed list system<sup>20</sup>; with strong competition, especially following the emergence of the *Gorran* ‘Change Movement’, which was supported mainly by educated strata in various parts of the country, particularly in Slemani province. The figure below demonstrates each list’s seats in the third term of parliament.

Figure 6.1: Distribution of Parties’ Seats in the KR Parliament in the Third Term



Source: KRG website (2014): <http://www.krg.org/p/p.aspx?l=12&s=030000&r=319&p=229>

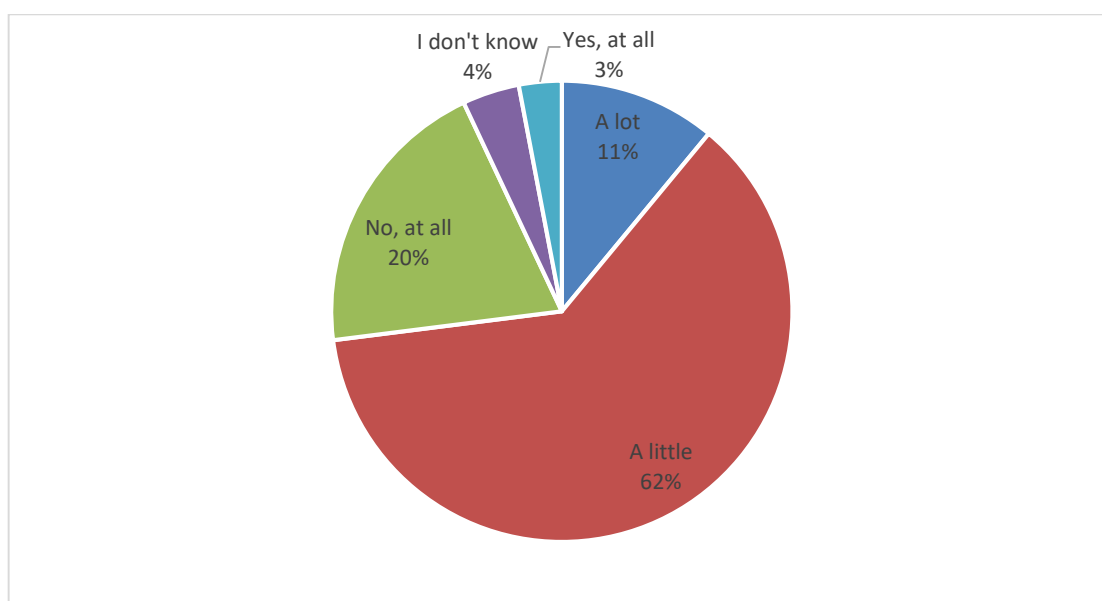
The third term of parliament saw some changes. The minimum age of parliament candidates was lowered from 30 to 25 years, to give more opportunity to younger people to participate in political affairs. In addition, the quota rate for women increased to 30% of the total number of parliamentary seats according to Electoral Law No 2, Article 4 in 2009 (KRG, 2013). The rise in the women’s quota was a response to the Iraqi constitution, Article 49:4 of which states that the rate of women’s participation in parliament should not be less than 25%.

<sup>20</sup> During my interviews, which coincided with the KR’s provincial and Iraqi parliament elections in April 2014, I witnessed many candidates using their tribal title as a way to gain votes from their tribes. This type of nomination is an index to the structure of representative bodies and manner of mass mobilization by political parties to acquire votes regardless of the consequences of such nominations.

Regarding the age of representatives, while it allowed younger people to participate in political life, it was nevertheless an obstacle to the development of skills because, according to the law, an MP retires after finishing their parliamentary term. This means that a 25-year-old MP can retire at the age of 29 with a high pension or 80% of total salary per month. Even if the member dies his/her inheritor will receive the pension (Law No 12, 2008). The retirement law applies to all MPs, which means a portion of the national budget has to be allocated to them and to ministers.

Another main change was that strong opposition groups arrived to express different voices. Theoretically, this can be considered as a step towards more democratization of political authority. However, the question remains: how far has parliament succeeded in monitoring government performance? The figure below shows the public response to this question in a survey.

Figure 6.2: Responses to the Question of Monitoring Government by Parliament  
Q: Do you think the parliament has power to monitor government performance?



Source: Tojinewe Centre (2011) 'Current political Issues of the KR', *Kurdistan Intellectual Foundation*.

As figure shows, 62% of respondents to the questionnaire believed that the parliament had not succeeded properly in monitoring government and 20% believed that it had not succeeded at all. A further important question is whether the parliament lists in the third term became more independent from their parties' interventions or not? The following section attempts to find the answer to this question.

In the parliamentary elections of 2009, the GM gained 25 seats, a result which neither the Movement's leaders nor the political investigators anticipated. However, like other parties, the head of this movement just participated in the elections and after that withdrew from parliament. Owing to the closed list system, all the MPs were subject to their parties' programme<sup>21</sup>. According to one interviewee, in the KR's political culture, MPs have to submit to party discipline and the party's framework. Any disagreement is seen as a kind of rebellion against the party, not simply a difference of opinion<sup>22</sup>.

On the other hand, the emergence of a new strong opposition in a short period of time can be considered as a direct stimulus for the governing political parties to review their past record in exercising power. Instead of reviewing their performance, the KDP and specially the PUK started cutting the salaries of many of those who voted for the GM, particularly in the army and security services. Consequently, the term 'Cut off Livelihood' (*Nan Braw*) became widely used. This response reveals political parties' lack of respect for the rights of citizens to decide their political tendency and to express their opinion in elections. It shows the unreadiness of elites to understand the aspirations of the new generation. Although parties formed the parliament according to the logic of democracy, they are incapable of playing the democratic game and democratic procedures have not taken root.

Emerging opposition caused the parliament, in contrast to previous terms, to become more active. The opposition group interrogated the sixth cabinet's Prime Minister. In April 2013, the Gorran parliamentary list called MPs to put questions to the seventh cabinet's Prime Minister, who refused on the grounds that he was busy (Gorran, 2013). Throughout the third term, from 2009 to 2013, parliament asked 418 questions to government and the government responded to 285 questions (Parliament Press Statement, 2013). Compared to the previous term, the number of questions in the third term increased significantly.

In 2011 and 2013, events occurred that require more scrutiny to explain the performance of the parliament in the third term. In early 2011, demonstrations occurred in the KR and lasted for more than two months. The organisers announced that they were supporting the Egyptian protest against the Mubarak regime. The direction then changed and demonstrators attacked

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<sup>21</sup> Nearly all of the interviewed MPs from different terms and various lists agreed that the MPs follow their party's commands especially on political issues. As Amina Zikri pointed out, "the priority is for the party and its programme, because people trusted the party and then, within the party, they voted for me".

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Adnan Osman.

the KDP headquarters in Slemani, which caused deaths and injuries on both sides<sup>23</sup>. Subsequently, opposition groups headed the demonstrations and it absolutely became a political issue (Watts, 2014).

The demonstrators demanded the reform of government performance and equality in the distribution of wealth. The demonstrators and opposition parties demanded the overthrow of the whole political apparatus, including parliament and government. The demonstrations were brought to an end by cutting the opposition parties' funding for a few months to compel them to withdraw support for the demonstrations.

An MP of the third term pointed out that

There was no parliamentary opposition. Because, instead of making parliament as a platform, the opposition required to resolve it. The opposition left parliament and exercised its activity on the streets [meaning making disorder]<sup>24</sup>.

The main outcome of the protests were the reforms announced by the president of the region in the Nawroz ceremony 2011. Some points were: monitoring the fiscal system that embodied huge corruption<sup>25</sup>; all political parties and mass media must disclose their financial resources; political parties should not allow themselves to be influenced by relations with foreign governments; the government must determine the earliest date for provincial elections; activating the public prosecutor; and the companies that monopolised the economy must be shared with citizens and a portion of their stock be given to them (Barzani speech, 2011).

To legislate these reforms, Law No 2 was approved by parliament in March 2011. Articles referred to the separation between the political party and government, the dissolution of

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<sup>23</sup> Due to the attack being in the PUK zone, the KDP accused the police and Asayish (another branch of the police services but more powerful) that they were unable to protect the KDP's buildings. Hence, army services (Zeravani) under the control of the KDP from Erbil were sent to Slemani without the permission of the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence (Peshmerga). The action caused a strong reaction from both the PUK, opposition groups and other organizations that compelled these forces to remain on the outskirts of the city. In fact, the army was moved by the KDP's leaders. Two years after this event, in July 2013 Barham Salih revealed that the army moved without his permission (Awene (2013) 'Dr. Barham Salih Between Problems and Security Forces', 31 July, [online], available at: <http://www.awene.com/article/2013/07/31/24257> (Accessed: 27 August 2013). [In Kurdish: Dr. Barham Salih Le Nêwan Cule Pêkirdin û Westandinê Hêzekanî Zêrevanî Le 17 Şubat].

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Omer Nuraldini.

<sup>25</sup> Many of these points remained as ink on paper. In August 2014, on social networks, mass media and webpages of MPs, lists of corrupt activities were released that contained the names of 100,000 retirees from different political parties. The overwhelming majority of them belonged to the KDP (more than 60%) and the rest to other political parties. The lists were about the illegal retirement of party cadres with a high salary paid by government.

parties' armed forces and the formation of a national army, the re-rewriting of the draft constitution and the preservation of the courts' independence. To be an enacted law it needs to be published in an official parliament newspaper. Up to now it has not been published as an enacted law.

Certainly, if any law is to be implemented it needs the backing of parliament, government and citizens. In the KR, political parties have controlled both government and parliament, so legislation must first of all serve the political parties. One interviewee mentioned that "because there are no institutions, we cannot separate government and political parties; the relationships between them are intertwined"<sup>26</sup>. The non-implementation of the new law led the opposition to announce another reform manifesto in early 2012. It focused on reform in the political system, independence of the military, independence of the courts, eradication of corruption, reform of the education system, curtailment of parties' interference in government and the establishment of a government capable of implementing the reform process (Gorran, 2012). This led to renewed negotiations inside and outside parliament.

Besides the demonstrations, another important event was the extension of the presidential term of office. In April 2013, the PUK and the KDP met opposition parties and proposed to extend the presidential term. The suggestion was rejected by the opposition (Gorran, 2013a). The dominant parties realized that according to the presidential law in 2005, even with the agreement of opposition groups, they could not nominate the president for the third term nor extend his term (Law No 18 and 19, 2013).

On 30 June 2013, the PUK and the KDP list in parliament passed the law to extend the parliamentary term for two months and the presidential term for another two years (until 21/9/2015)<sup>27</sup>. In the absence of a constitution, the dominant parties utilized the opportunity to interpret laws in their own favour. Frequent changes to the law in favour of the governing parties has been the norm through the period of parliament and government in the KR. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the first term of parliament was extended by parliament itself (the KDP) until 2002 and then by agreement between the KDP and the PUK until 2005 (The same phenomenon applies to the provincial assemblies).

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with Muhamad Ra'auf.

<sup>27</sup> In interviews with MPs from the KDP and the PUK. They pointed out that the resolution to extend presidential terms came from the political bureau of each party; because the resolution was political, the MPs of each party were obliged to support it.



By this resolution, the president became the legitimate authority backed by parliament. However, opposition groups interpreted this as a bloodless coup that took place to prevent the rotation of power. In the Kurdish language they used the term parliamentary coup or white coup '*Kwdetai Sipy*'. Many publications used the expression the 'extended period president' or the 'illegal president'. Consequently, parliament as a vehicle for democratic institutionalisation acted as an instrument of deinstitutionalization. The extended term profoundly affected party-ization by provoking various social strata to stand against each other. Even opposition lists announced that they would consider the presidency and the parliament as illegitimate bodies (Sbeiy, 2013). However, by participating in the eighth cabinet, for a while, the opposition groups ignored this issue.

In response to the extension of the presidency, opposition groups decided to withdraw from parliament by ending the legal term of parliament on 20 August 2013. However, they remained because of their political bureaus' decision. This is because the political bureau is the ultimate stage in decision making, not members of parliament<sup>28</sup>. One interviewee pointed out that in the KR, for change to occur, it has to be guaranteed by governmental institutions and not by party organization. Furthermore, economic power has to be separated from political parties that have monopolized the market<sup>29</sup>.

To sum up, growing opposition in parliament raised hopes for a move away from "managed democracy" (Knights, 2009) to a more liberal democratic system. However, in the KR, the negative role of the majority in the parliament and the role of political bureaus paralysed this hope. The closed 'collective' list, office in the Presidential Assembly as a political rank<sup>30</sup>, and the coalition between the PUK and the KDP, all restricted parliamentary performance. The experience of the third term shows that political parties play a dual role in political development: they exploit pre-modern aspects of organisation which help them to remain in power; and they have a modern structure (multi-party system) co-existing with party-ized government and society.

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<sup>28</sup> In my interviews with MPs, the majority of them stated that in political issues the MPs do not have a role. Instead, the political bureau of each party or the head of the party makes the final decision.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Haydar Esmail Abdullah.

<sup>30</sup> All of my MP participants agreed that whoever will occupy the posts of the Presidential Assembly of parliament is a political subject more than a legislative duty. By agreement between the political bureaus, the posts of Presidential Assembly are divided between the parties. Without distribution of these posts, the cabinet of the government cannot be formed.

## Conclusion

The type of power sharing is a problem for political development. If at the beginning of the 1990s, the fifty-fifty split was the best choice for running the government, its continuation led to the non-rotation of power. Although the Unification and Strategic Agreements between the PUK and the KDP brought about relative stability for society and political activities, it did not eliminate the crucial obstacles to the democratic institutionalisation of societal organizations and political development. As one interviewee observed, as a result of the difficulty in rotating power, the political parties agreed the eighth cabinet to be a broad-based cabinet the same as the fifth cabinet to avoid political, economic and social instability<sup>31</sup>.

The process of institutionalisation towards political development, even since the unification of cabinets, is weak. The type of relationship between a political party and citizen has affected the concept of participation. The purpose of political participation is not to criticise the governing party because of its performance, but rather to support one party against another regardless of its efficiency in the achievement of public interests. In spite of the emergence and growth of the Gorran Movement this tendency continues. This Movement was reabsorbed into the political process. It shows how the political system allows some dissent but can easily suppress it. Above all, it shows the weakness of parliament.

The absence of a constitution created another challenge. The relationship between political organisations and the type of separation of powers is regulated by ordinary laws enacted by parliament. Concerning the presidency, the president has more authority and rights than responsibilities, especially in terms of security and the military (Kelly, 2010).

In summary, even the government or political parties who are successful in creating socio-political organizations will have difficulty considering them as democratic institutions that serve the entire society. This chapter, with the previous one, reviewed the political structure of parliament and government, and by explaining their performance tried to show their capacity for political development. It is obvious in the KR's political system the abovementioned bodies were born from political parties. Hence, it is necessary to study the type of political parties in the region as a complementary element of this study to know how their structures contribute to or create obstacles to political development.

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<sup>31</sup> Interview with Salahaddin Babaker.

## **Chapter Seven: Structure and Function of the Political Parties**

### **Introduction**

The existence of more than two political parties in the KR does not mean that it is a mature democratic system; especially when the parties have their own armed forces and control the economic sector. This chapter attempts to show the extent to which political parties in the KR have either facilitated the process of political development or acted as an obstacle to it.

Political parties in the KR originated as freedom movement and, up to 1991, the key activities of the Kurdish parties were armed struggles in remote areas against the central government. Weapons became one of the main features of Kurdistan politics influencing party thinking and creating a militia-commander style of leadership which has guaranteed their survival (Miran, 2010). Even carrying a weapon is part of the socio-political culture. Originally, they adopted a Marxist-Leninist ideology and type of mass organisation in a society with a low level of education (for example, the first University in the KR opened in Slemani in 1968). This characteristic feature helped parties to achieve mass mobilization, obedience to the party's programme and loyalty to the party's leaders. Mass mobilization and the extended influence of political party organs remain a dominant feature in Kurdish politics.

The chapter will discuss the structure of political parties in the KR, the process of leadership, their decision making, their functions and their relationship to society. This approach helps to identify the experiences of change within the political parties and how they have adapted to the environment of upheaval in different periods. It requires a brief historical review of the emergence of the political parties in the KR beginning with the KDP. The chapter then focuses on the PUK, the GM and the IU. These are the main players in the political arena. However, in spite of their different ideologies, it is useful to note that many of the parties' branches in society have similar functions and play similar roles. For example, a women's union exists in each party with different titles, but they each mobilize the female population around the party's programme.

To understand the essential functions of political parties in the KR and their penetration into society, it will be necessary to focus on their function more than their structural form. However, to define their role, it is necessary to focus on their structure as well. This approach corresponds with the elite and institutional theories that were discussed in the second

chapter. To attain this objective, a brief historical narrative of the establishment of each party is needed to identify their common features.

### **The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP): Background**

In the 1930's, many Kurds joined the newly-founded Iraqi Communist Party. In the 1940s some other small parties were established in Iraqi Kurdistan such as *Hiwa* (Hope) and *Shorsh* (Revolution). They also followed the Marxist approach. When the KDP was formed, they merged into one (Gunter, 1993). The KDP is the oldest modern Kurdish party in Iraqi Kurdistan and it was the first to organize and institutionalize political activity by combining politicians, the army and tribal chieftains (Akyol, 2010). The majority of political parties that were established later had top leaders who were members of the KDP.

The Republic of Kurdistan was established in Mahabad-Iran in 1945, supported by the USSR, involving Mullah Mustafa Barzani. The formation of the Kurdistan Democratic Party-Iran (KDP-I) enhanced national sentiment within Iraq's Kurds and led to the formation of the KDP-Iraq in 1946. This party tried to combine the different rural and urban strata of society.

The powerful rural and tribal figure of Mullah Mustafa Barzani, who before the formation of the KDP was in Slemani, was chosen to lead the party. Hamza 'Abdallah, an educated urban figure who became the Secretary General and two landlords, Sheikh Latif Barzinji, the son of Sheikh Mahmmud Barzinji, who led the revolt against Britain after the first world war, and Ziyad Aghai Kwiyi, a famous feudal-nationalist Agha, were chosen as Vice Presidents. They were chosen by Mullah Mustafa Barzani for their influence on local areas. Even in the foundation of the Revolution Leadership Council, *Encwmeni Serkrdaieti Şoriş*, some of the chieftains became members of this council (Stansfield, 2003; McDowell, 2007; Berwari, 2013).

It is important to note the religious significance of the choice of Sheikh Latif Barzinji, who belonged to the Qaderi religious order (a branch in Islam), while Mustafa Barzani was of the rival Naqhshebandi order. Another important religious order in Iraqi Kurdistan is the Talabani order. Jalal Talabani another influential member of the KDP's political bureau, belongs to this order, who later became the Secretary General of the PUK. By constituting the revolutionary leadership in this way, Mustafa Barzani neutralized the threat of religious and geographical division. Even many Christian and other religious groups joined the KDP. Later, as Bruinessen (1992) notes, with the increasing tension in the late 1950s, between

farmers and some Sheiks and Aghas, on issues of farming land, water for irrigation and the division of crops in some parts of Iraqi Kurdistan, the popularity of the KDP increased because of its support to farmers.

As society was predominantly agricultural, to choose one Deputy from the farmers' strata and another from the national revolutionary strata can be considered an intelligent decision. Chieftains and landowners became engaged more in politics via a modern and broad based party. The exile of Mustafa Barzani to the USSR as a result of the collapse of the Kurdistan Republic in Iran in 1946, allowed the urbanite figures to take the reins of leadership. On the return of Mustafa Barzani after the change of regime in Iraq from monarchy to republic in 1958, he again became the KDP's leader alongside Ibrahim Ahmad, the Marxist General Secretary (Yesiltas, 2014). During the period of absence of Mustafa Barzani the Marxist-Leninist ideology dominated the party<sup>1</sup>.

However, this caused inter-party factionalization, reflecting the hostility between the 'leadership' or tribal-traditional wing and the General Secretary's Marxist-urban 'political bureau' wing. Support for the policy of land reform by the political bureau wing weakened the traditional power of the chieftains, aggravating this dispute between the party's tribal and Marxist wings (Qhader, 2007; Gunter, 1996; Anderson and Stansfield, 2004).

In the 1960s, when conflict grew between the two wings of the KDP, the political bureau wing (Marxist wing), based on the small urban middle class, tried to lead Kurdistan society, despite the fact that it was an agricultural society. This was the reason why the majority of Kurdistan society was with the leadership wing<sup>2</sup>. The separation of the political bureau and the formation of the PUK in 1975 provoked armed clashes between the PUK and the KDP in the following decades (80s, and 90s). The conflict led each of them to seek support from one of the regional states and with the central government against each another.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Saro Qadir.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Abdilselam Berwari.

## **The KDP's Congresses and the Issue of the Leadership**

Throughout its existence, the KDP has held thirteen congresses at different intervals. According to the internal regulations of the KDP, the party must hold a congress once every four years. However, it has been very rare for this party to hold its congresses on time. The first important phase in the political life of the party was in 1959 or the fourth congress, when Mustafa Barzani the leader of the party returned from exile. The party was being run by the political bureau members who followed a pro Marxist-Leninist ideology, which was alien and ill- adapted to society (Al-Khorsan, 2001).

According to one interviewee,

The return of Mustafa Barzani saw increasing conflict between the two wings, which finally led to the separation of the political bureau's members and the strengthening of the Barzani family's hold on the leadership. Until the beginning of the 1970s, the Barzani family were not members of the party. Then, two of his sons joined and gradually their numbers increased. Eventually, in the thirteenth congress more family members entered the party. Features of dictatorship grew at the expense of democracy and individualism<sup>3</sup>.

At the beginning of the formation of the KDP, the choice of Mustafa Barzani as leader could be justified firstly in terms of the fighting history and religious background of this family in resisting Ottoman and Baghdad authority since the early twentieth century, which attracted many tribes to support the leadership of this family. Second, the exile of Mustafa Barzani to Slemani helped to attract support from the educated and other tribes. This meant that, in addition to his own tribal support, he gained followers from both the Badinan and the Soranian areas. Additionally, one of his wives was from Slemani. The third reason was his personality as a Peshmerga leader. The final reason was his participation in the building of the Kurdistan Republic in Iran. All of these points helped to confirm him as a charismatic personality in the eyes of the majority of society and in the national movement of Iraqi Kurdistan. Ultimately, the struggle between tribal attitudes and Marxist-Leninist attitudes inside the party ended in the triumph of the former over the latter (Stansfield, 2003).

The second phase of Mustafa Barzani leadership lasted until his death after eight successive congresses. He was succeeded from the ninth congress in 1979 by his son, Masoud Barzani, who continues to lead the party. At the thirteenth congress in 2010, Nechirvan Barzani, his nephew and son-in-law, was elected as vice-president of the party without competition and without secret ballot (KDP, 2013). According to a top cadre of this party, the KDP is a

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Mohamad Mulla Qader.

national party with religious pluralism. For this reason, except for the period of absence of Mustafa Barzani (1946-1959), no political ideology had a chance to grow. The family embodies its religious and political history; and it owns the tribal militia. In fact, it is a family-run party<sup>4</sup>.

With the collapse of the Kurdistan revolution following the Algeria agreement between Iran and Iraq in 1974, and the separation of the political bureau and formation of the PUK, the KDP formed a provisional leadership. In the ninth congress in 1979, dissent between the Masoud Barzani wing and Sami Abdulrahman (a member of the provisional leadership), resulted in the latter being ousted and Edris Barzani (the brother of Masoud) becoming a member of the political bureau, who at the same time was supervisor of both the armed forces (Peshmerga) and the Public Relations Office of the party. In the tenth congress in 1989, Nechirvan Barzani (son of Edris Barzani), with backing from Iran became a member of the political bureau (Al-Khorsan, 2001). In the twelfth congress in 1999, Massror Barzani, son of Masoud Barzani, became the political bureau member who was the chief of the KDP intelligence service, called *Parastin*, and the chief of the Security Agency of the KRG (KDP, 2013). Since the uprising and establishment the KRG, the majority of key posts inside the party, the government, the economy and charitable organisations have been managed by the Barzani family.

In fact, in the period from 1946 until 1991, the majority of the KDP's activities were guerrilla activities. The exception is some periods of the 1960s, which had a peaceful relationship with central government and involved the participation of ministers in the Iraqi government. Through the 1970s and the 1980s, the KDP was in military conflict against both the central government, the PUK and other political parties. In 1992, it participated in running the government. This means that for around half a century this party was far from civic activity and the mentality of armed conflict shaped the leaders' thought who even now hold the key offices. Most changes occurred within the same generation of old cadres or their offspring<sup>5</sup>.

Regarding the establishment of the KDP, some notice has to be taken of the following: Firstly, at the beginning of the establishment of the KDP, its approach depended on the Marxist-Leninist model, which meant that it could not accept any other rival ideology or

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Saro Qadir.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Mohamad Mulla Qader and with Saro Qadir.

point of view<sup>6</sup>. It is evident in the lack of agreement between the leaders of the party that finally led to the establishment of the PUK. At its tenth congress in December 1989 the KDP removed the concept of Marxist-Leninist ideology from its bylaws (Al-Khorsan, 2001). The ideology proved to be incompatible with the essence of the establishment of this party, which was based on nationalism on the one hand, and the religious framework of society on the other. Secondly, it was difficult to accept that the Marxist-Leninist ideology at the time could be applied to the Kurdish tribal-illiterate (or low-literacy) society in which land was manipulated by landlords (*Agha, Mir, Sheikh*) and mosque endowment known as *Waqif* still existed. The origins of the party were shaped by an ideology, which was alien to the conditions, which actually prevailed.

Kurdistan was not a clear-cut peasant society, subject to exploitation by chieftain landlords. Loyalty to the chieftain, and especially religious chieftains, was part of accepted traditional structure or at least was not compulsory. Many rural workers have their own land. In some places, a group of villages does not compose a tribe and farmers run villages by electing a Mukhtar between themselves, and cultivate their crops together (see Chapter 8).

Thirdly, due to the revolutionary approach and partisan activities, guerrilla conflict became a part of the identity of this party in mobilizing society. The failure of the central government to recognize Kurdish political rights galvanized this identity. Up to now the army has been controlled by the PUK and the KDP independently and even in their organizational structure, parties have Peshmerga and Martyr Offices<sup>7</sup>. These factors aided the centralization of power, which can still be seen in both parties' leadership and their levels of government performance.

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<sup>6</sup> To better understand the functional type of the KDP at the time, which was later reflected in the political system and political activity in Kurdistan society, it is important to mention the Baku Declaration by Mustafa Barzani in 1948. The declaration, which was about the Kurdistan Freedom Movement (KFM), states that the KFM does not allow any other groups or organisations to be established apart from the KDP, and if necessary 'we will fight against them' (Barzani, 1997:302-336; Berwari, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> After the uprising, in some parties such as the KDP this branch changed into the Election Office (Interview with Omer Nuraldini).



## **The KDP After the Uprising**

The eleventh congress in 1993 was the first to be held at a time when the KDP participated in indigenous government. Joining the congress were three other small parties. The congress was held in Erbil, in the Public Sports Centre which changed its name to the *Holy Zerd*, 'Yellow Hall', to correspond to the KDP's flag. This symbolic action can be interpreted as a sign of the homogenising of society by the KR's political parties. Between the eleventh and twelfth congresses an internal war broke out. The result was a delay in holding the next congress and the deeper penetration of the KDP into the running of governmental affairs. In the twelfth congress in 1999, the party proposed a set of recommendations and proposals including: holding provincial elections, establishing an administrative justice court, the establishment of a Human Rights institution (controlled by the party's leader) and the formation of a Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Al-Khorsan, 2001). All of these tasks can be considered as governmental functions, decided by the party in congress. In the congress, the leader of the party argued that it should to be more institutionalized, in other words more disciplined in party organization (Qhader, 2007).

In the thirteenth congress in 2010, under the slogan of Renewal, Justice and Coexistence, the KDP reformed its organisational structure, adding local committees and creating a Council of the Governorate to make decisions with regard to the recruitment of new members and diversity of the party's programme. One of the important tasks of the Council of the Governorate is to evaluate the quality of those nominated by branches for Iraqi and Kurdistan governmental offices and to report to the Political Bureau. Another task is considering the cultural diversity in its political activities (KDP, 2010). This change was an attempt to gain more influence on society because of the emergence of the Gorran Movement as a new rival party in both the Green Zone (dominated by the PUK) and then in the Badinan area (dominated by the KDP). The votes of this Movement increased between the Kurdistan parliamentary elections in 2009 and the Iraqi parliamentary elections in 2010 in the Badinan area. The KDP's votes declined in this area which had been considered a KDP heartland.

To extend its reach, the KDP expanded its Committees (*Liq*) from eight headquarters in 1991 to 25 after the thirteenth congress in different areas inside and outside of the KR<sup>8</sup>. These branches again are divided into different sub-branches, with organisations for youth,

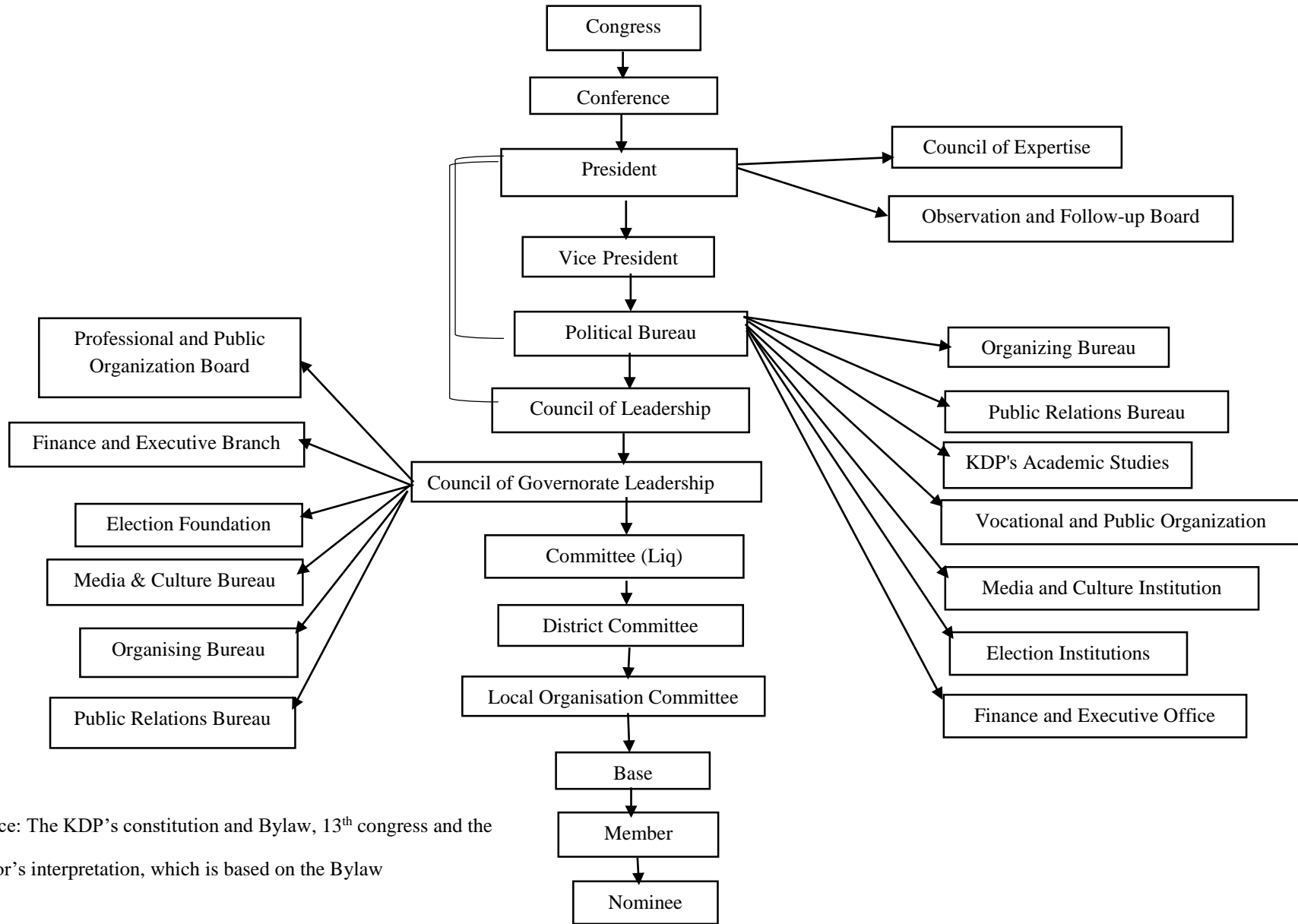
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<sup>8</sup> The number of the KDP's Branches is 26. However, there are 25 actual Branches, in order to accommodate Kurdish reluctance to use the number 13, which people believe is an inauspicious number. For this reason, after the twelfth Branch the next Branch is the fourteenth.

teachers, sports, students and women and so on. After this congress the offices of the social activities of the party expanded. Many perform the duty of charitable organizations or exercise tasks such as giving direct grants to certain people, sending patients abroad, sending student to study abroad, solving tribal disputes and participating in funeral ceremonies. Funds are provided according to the social rank of the family. Sporting activities and cultural events are often held under the party leaders' name. The party tries to influence every corner of social life.

The extent of the party's penetration of society and its control of funding resources shows clearly how this party can dominate society and intervene in the government's decision making process. The diagram below illustrates the KDP's structure and its various organisations. The central part of diagram is copied from the party Bylaw, and then additional information has been added by the author to show how the party operates via different organs nation-wide. The central part illustrates that the party has a hierarchical structure. Since, the establishment of the party in 1946, it has kept the same structure and in the thirteenth congress in 2010, the Council of Governorate Leadership added to its hierarchical structure.

Figure 7.1: KDP's Organisational Structure



Source: The KDP's constitution and Bylaw, 13<sup>th</sup> congress and the author's interpretation, which is based on the Bylaw

As the diagram shows, despite the congress and conference, the main body of the KDP, begins with the president and other main executive branches which are associated with it. At the operational level, the Committee (*Liq*) and its sub-units are the most important vehicles for mobilization. All social organizations for youth, women, syndicates and so on, operate under the supervision of the Committee and its sub-units in cities and villages. The diagram also illustrates how the party, through the Political Bureau, monitors its different branches inside the party as well as the Council of Governorate Leadership, at the level of each province (KDP, 2010). According to the bylaw of the KDP, the Political Bureau (executive body) members, select from the Council of Leadership to assist the president of the party. Hence, the Political Bureau comes above the Council of Leadership. In reality, the president is the highest power and the congress is a legislative body that regulates and evaluates the party's performance between two congresses (Article 18). As Stansfield (2003:103) has pointed out, in relation to both the KDP and the PUK

The analysis of power-groupings within the leadership apparatus illustrates that the parties are characterized by centralized leadership structures governing a politics of diffusion, ensuring that pluralistic demands are controlled within a hegemonic structure.

At the local level, one task of the local organization committees, for example, is “to cooperate with the civil society organizations within its geographic working place” (The KDP's constitution and Bylaw). The Organizing Bureau is another important mobilization organ which in its geographical area has the task of managing human resources such as women, students and the youth. More importantly the party has a stake in the mass media that consolidates its influence through broadcasting the policy of the party. Nomination to be a KDP member starts from 16 years of age.

According to the bylaws, each organ of the party has the authority to punish its members if they do not fulfil their responsibilities such as participating in periodical meetings on three occasions or paying their subscription for three months without good reason. The punishment system ranges from issuing a reminder, a warning, suspension, lowering one's party rank, removal and finally, dismissal. Such punishments can be considered typical procedures for any organization. However, a problem arises when these kinds of punishment are linked with employment opportunities in the public offices controlled by the political party. As the party controls the economic sector, subscriptions are not the main source of funds.

Local branches or organs have a duty to report what occurs in their geographical area (political and social events), to higher branches, then the higher branches recommend lower branches. This hierarchy starts from the lower branches (base) to the higher branches. Furthermore, the higher branches have a duty to evaluate the lower branches' performance. Consequently, the party horizontally and vertically monitors its members and penetrates into society. It is essentially a non-democratic system, especially as the majority of governmental officials are members of the party. As the table below shows, the roles are parallel. In 2014, the year of the ISIS attack on the KR, many Political Bureau members (from the KDP as well as the PUK) took on the role of military commander at the front with ISIS.

Table 7.1: Parallel Roles in the Political Bureau and Government

Members	Party Role	Governmental Role
Masoud Barzani	President	President of the KR
Nechirvan Barzani	Vice-President	Prime Minister (the 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> cabinet)
Masror Barzani	Chief of the intelligence agency ( <i>Parastin</i> ), Political Bureau Member	Chief of intelligence and security ( <i>Asaysh</i> )
Azad Berwari	Political Bureau Member	Deputy Prime Minister (6 <sup>th</sup> cabinet)
Izzadin Berwari	Political Bureau Member	-----
Zaeem Ali	Political Bureau Member	Previous Peshmerga Minister, Peshmerga Commander
Salah Delo	President representative in Kirkuk	-----
Jafar Iminki	Party speaker, Political Bureau Member	Deputy speaker of the 4 <sup>th</sup> parliament
Fraydoon Jwanroyi	Political Bureau Member	-----
Kamal Kirkuki	Political Bureau Member	Parliament president in the 6 <sup>th</sup> cabinet
Fazil Mirani	Secretary-General of the political bureau	Internal Minister in the 4 <sup>th</sup> cabinet
Mahmoud Mohammad	Political Bureau Member	-----
Kakamin Najar	Responsible for the sixteen Committee ( <i>Liq</i> ), Political Bureau Member	-----
Rosch Shaways	Political Bureau Member	Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister
Karim Sinjari	Political Bureau Member	Internal Minister since 2001
Rebwar Yelda	Political Bureau Member	Parliamentary member for the 4 <sup>th</sup> term
Hoshyar Zebari	Political Bureau Member	Iraqi Foreign Minister 2005-2014, Financial Minister 2014-2016

Source: KDP (2014) 'KDP Politburo Members' <http://www.kdp.info/p/p.aspx?p=2&l=12&s=010100&r=345>. Some information has been added by the researcher himself.

At the top level of leadership, the figures from the revolutionary period continue to rule the party, which means that rotation of the leadership is difficult. In other words, although the party has become institutionalized, it has also become more centralized via the hierarchical organization of tasks amongst the various branches and organs of the party. This affects the democratic decision making process, especially given the influence of the leader's relatives on the party. According to one interviewee

Before the uprising, decisions were made by collective leadership. After the uprising the process of decision making became limited to a few figures such as the President of the party and his Deputy. The Council of Leadership which consists of 51 members has two or three hours to make decisions. This means that the decisions are dictated to them. Giving all this power to a leader creates corruption and there is common responsibility in the creation of corruption between leadership members<sup>9</sup>.

The interviewees' claims are different from those of Stansfield (2003:108) who observed that

There is a consensus of opinion from KDP Political Bureau members that the majority of decisions are reached by democratic procedures, and on occasion go against the wishes of Masoud [the president of the party].

According to interviewees the party leaders in Kurdish political parties have ultimate power. Excluding the interviewees from the Islamic Union, other interviewees from different political parties mentioned that the final decision was made by the leader of the party. More than one decade separates the author's interviews and the Stansfield interviews, but still the same person is in power. This political behaviour leads to centralism and creates a kind of collective obedience which is in contrast to the open pathway of political development that builds on individualism and mobility between positions.

According to the Bylaws of the KDP, the president has the duty to preside over both Political Bureau and Council of Leadership meetings, and he is considered as *a guarantor of the unity of the party* (my emphasis) (KDP, 2010). Many of the followers and supporters of the party believe that the president of the KDP is the symbol of Greater Kurdistan, unifying various social classes and ethnic groups to achieve national goals.

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with Mohammad Mulla Qader. The same claim was made by Saro Qader, that 'before the uprising, decisions were made by the president and political bureau, but now, the strategic decisions are made by the president alone or in consultation with others'. Abdul Salam Berwari, claimed in an interview that often because of loyalty to the president, after discussion of a subject, 'we respected the decision that he made'.

On the other hand, as the KR is a nascent region, taking early steps towards stability and development, the centralization of this party may actually favour a developmental process. However, centralism does not exclude the rotation of power in leadership. According to one interviewee,

Regarding the KDP, the problem is if we consider the claim that the KDP is run by a family, family-owned parties are not confined to Kurdistan [the KR]. For example, in reality Saddam's sons were successors to their father, just like Bashar was to Hafiz Assad. Lebanon has several family-owned parties within the Muslim as well as the Christian traditions, like the Junbulat and the Amin families. Pakistan's Bhutto and India's Ghandi dynasties are other examples. These parties are not necessarily undemocratic or dysfunctional. The family-owned party system is acceptable in most cases, and it is known that it has provided stability in the party with all feuds and fissures stopping at the leadership doorstep. The problems arise when the family-owned-party turns to family-owned-government, as is arguably the case in the KR's political system<sup>10</sup>.

Another contradiction, as discussed in the previous chapter, is the monopolization of the economic sector by political parties and the merging of party affairs with governmental ones. In describing the power of the KR Prime Minister and the Deputy President of the KDP, Stansfield (2003:110) concluded that

Nechirvan has been actively creating a support base and has accumulated a vast amount of wealth through various business dealings. The extent of his power is unrivalled within the KDP region, in both terms of political influence and financial control.

To summarize this section, the KDP emerged as a revolutionary party to achieve national goals. In order to do so, it attempted to mobilise different strata of society. However, after more than two decades in power including participation in several political elections it still has not become a full civic party. It retains features of a tribal-militia party, with corresponding political rhetoric and continuity of political personnel. It means that the party has a limited ability to adapt to the changing environment. In the last election in 2013, this party promised to distribute oil revenues directly to its citizens, however, this has yet to be fulfilled<sup>11</sup>.

In brief, it is difficult to consider the KDP's emergence as being a result of the modernization of Iraq and Kurdistan society or even to consider it as a modern party or a tool for

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with Hishyar Abid.

<sup>11</sup> Some of the top leaders of the KDP, on TV and in meetings announced that if they vote for the KDP, citizens can have a direct share in the oil income.

modernizing society. On the contrary, the party has been a vehicle for the reproduction of non-modern values and a challenge for the political developmental process.

### **The Formation of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)**

The PUK was established in Damascus in 1975 and its formation was the result of the breakdown of the Kurdish revolution, the struggle between the key KDP figures for leadership from the 1960s onward, the support for Maoist ideology among some of the political bureau members of the KDP, and the Algeria agreement (Stansfield, 2003). With the establishment of the PUK, the KFM transformed from a single leading party into two leading parties that later came to characterise the political system of the KR. The formation of the PUK pushed Turkey and Iran to reinforce the KDP as a rival to the PUK (Hassanpour, 1994).

In a meeting with Kurdish students in London in 1975, Talabani said of Mustafa Barzani, the leader of the KDP, that “he is not a traitor or a servant [to the central and other governments], but nobody can deny that he is a tribal man”. Talabani, who was a member of the KDP’s political Bureau and at the same time was one of the leaders of the Marxist-Leninist Association of Kurdistan in the early 1970s proposed the formation of a new party. The PUK was founded by a combination of Wide Line (*Héli Gşti*), who were previous members of the KDP, the Marxist-Leninist Association of Kurdistan (*Komala*), and the Social Democratic Movement of Kurdistan (*Bizotnewa*). The new party was Marxist-Leninist (PUK website, 2013).

Marxist-Leninist ideology was clearly influential in the thinking of the Kurdistan political elites and was one of the reasons for disagreement between Barzani and Talabani. Barzani tried to gain the support of the USA by showing his willingness to extract Iraqi Kurdistan oil if the USA were to recognise the independence of Iraqi Kurdistan (Bruinessen, 1992; Masum, 2007). According to one interviewee, Talabani’s Marxist viewpoint was opposed to Barzani’s stance towards the USA. However, Barzani also had relationships with the USSR, the Iraqi communist party and Israel; and this is led to further conflict about who would run the party and society<sup>12</sup>.

The leader of the PUK was, however, closer to the Chinese than the Soviet communist model; responding to the idea that the KR was an agricultural society, like China at the time.

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Saro Qadir.



Al-Khorsan (2001) argues that the PUK did not gain broad acceptance at the outset, especially in the rural areas, because of the dominance of tribal and religious cultures. Stansfield (2003) pointed out that the moderate *Bizotnewa* wing gained strong middle class support throughout the KR, except among the Barzani and Bradwsti tribes, while the *Komala* as a Maoist (extremist) wing gained support among students. Both factions operated under the supervision of the *Héli Gşti*. Later, however, the PUK tried to include key tribal and social figures as a bridge to gain support from different strata and political views. Ideology played a less influential role than key personalities. The PUK (like the KDP) followed the hybrid system with tribal features incorporated into the modern type of party structure. According to a leader of the PUK, “generally, in the KR the political parties are not based on an ideology or a typical kind of political thinking”<sup>13</sup>.

The General Secretary of this party pointed out that “one goal of our fighting is political, economic and cultural liberation from imperialism and from the Aflaqian [Michel Aflaq the founder of the Ba’ath ideology] colonial settlement policy” (PUK, 2014). However, Marxist-Leninist ideology is more focused on the achievement of equality between classes rather than the rights of self-determination for a nation. It can be questioned whether the ideology held by the PUK was suitable for the reality of Kurdistan society at the time (see Chapter 8). Although the PUK’s leaders stated that ideology was a reason to split from the KDP; the KDP ideology was also Marxist-Leninist. The main factor in the division was which personality would become president of the KDP, Barzani or Talabani? As Nechirvan Barzani, the Deputy President of the KDP pointed out:

Ideology was not the source of conflict between the KDP and PUK. The programmes of both parties are virtually identical, and the goals are the same. The problem is one of who has power, and this may be solved by either elections or violence . . . Believe me, there is no apparent external difference between the KDP and PUK, it is a personal matter (Stansfield, 2003:114).

Nevertheless, adopting Marxism-Leninism and then Maoism from the 1950s onwards, is a sign that intellectuals and political elites were aware of mainstream ideologies and what was going on in the world. However, the PUK’s actual practices on the ground, as discussed in the following sections, are similar to those of the KDP. For example, both of them have a long-lived leader, both were based until the Kurdish uprising on Marxist-Leninist ideology, both are armed parties, have very similar structures and intervene in government affairs. In

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with Sa’adi Ahmad Pira.

1994, in the middle of the internal war to bring about reform to the administrative body of the KRG, some of the PUK's cadres published a statement calling for an end to intervention in governmental affairs, monitoring the police and the army to be carried out by government (Aziz, 1994).

After the uprising, the PUK ideology changed from Marxism-Leninism to social democracy. It stated that the tribal background of society had changed with the end of the economic feudal system of society and that the principles of capitalism were growing in the KR, enshrining individualism and the supremacy of law and that people would no longer need to rely on the tribe as their source of protection (PUK, 2014). However, this assumption that change has occurred in a war-torn country, and in such a short period of time is implausible, given their previous hostility towards capitalism and the West.

### **The PUK's Structure and Congresses**

From its establishment in 1975 up to now the PUK has held only three congresses. The three wings composing the PUK kept their own organizations. They merged into the PUK at the first congress in 1992 (PUK website, 2013). The congress coincided with the PUK taking power and the collapse of the Soviet Union, which compelled this party to change its ideology and follow social democratic principles.

In the first congress, which was held in both Slemani and Erbil, elections were held to elect officials of the party except for the Secretary General and the first Prime Minister of the first cabinet and the Deputy Secretary General. They were recommended to stay in their positions via a *Tazkiyah* (party support letter), issued by the Secretary General himself. Between the first and the second congress internal war broke out and the PUK established a new administration in Slemani. In a Plenum in 1996, the party decided to establish the Ministry of Human Rights in the Slemani administration and an office of human rights in all government ministries. At the same time the PUK decided to raise the salary of government employees in its domain (Al-Khorsan, 2001). These decisions refer to the dominance of the party in the public sector. The second congress of the PUK in 2001 was again held with the previous Secretary General and nearly all the same leaders remaining in their positions. However, it was the period of the commencement of disagreement between the top leaders of the party on how to run the government and participate in the new Iraqi and KR government, which finally led to the resignation of the Deputy Secretary General.

After the resignation of the Deputy Secretary General in 2007 to establish the Gorran Movement, two other Deputies were appointed: one from Slemani and the other from Erbil. The appointments reflect the factionalism in the party which is also reflected in the region's geography. The third Congress of the party took place in 2010 and the same three characters (The General Secretary and his Deputies) remained in their positions (PUK, 2014). However, after the absence of the Secretary General, instead of deputies, his wife who is a Leadership Council member, became the first figure of the party. After two decades of elections and governing, this party still has a military office.

According to Article 26 of the PUK bylaw for the third congress "If there is one candidate for the General Secretary's post, the person shall directly become the Secretary General". Article 27 pointed out that the General Secretary shall "assign [appoint] his or her deputy from members of the Leadership Council (Committee) to which he or she can delegate some of his or her responsibilities" (PUK Bylaw, 2013).

According to the Bylaw, the party must hold a congress every three years. The maximum number of members in the congress is 1,000, of which 120 are elected by the Secretary General and Leadership Committee (Council). The Supreme Preparatory Committee for congress has the duty of electing the congress members to represent the PUK in the Iraqi and Kurdistan parliaments, different ministries, embassies and other governmental organizations inside and outside the KR (PUK Bylaw, 2013). All of these authorities of the party reflect the level of the party's control and centralisation.

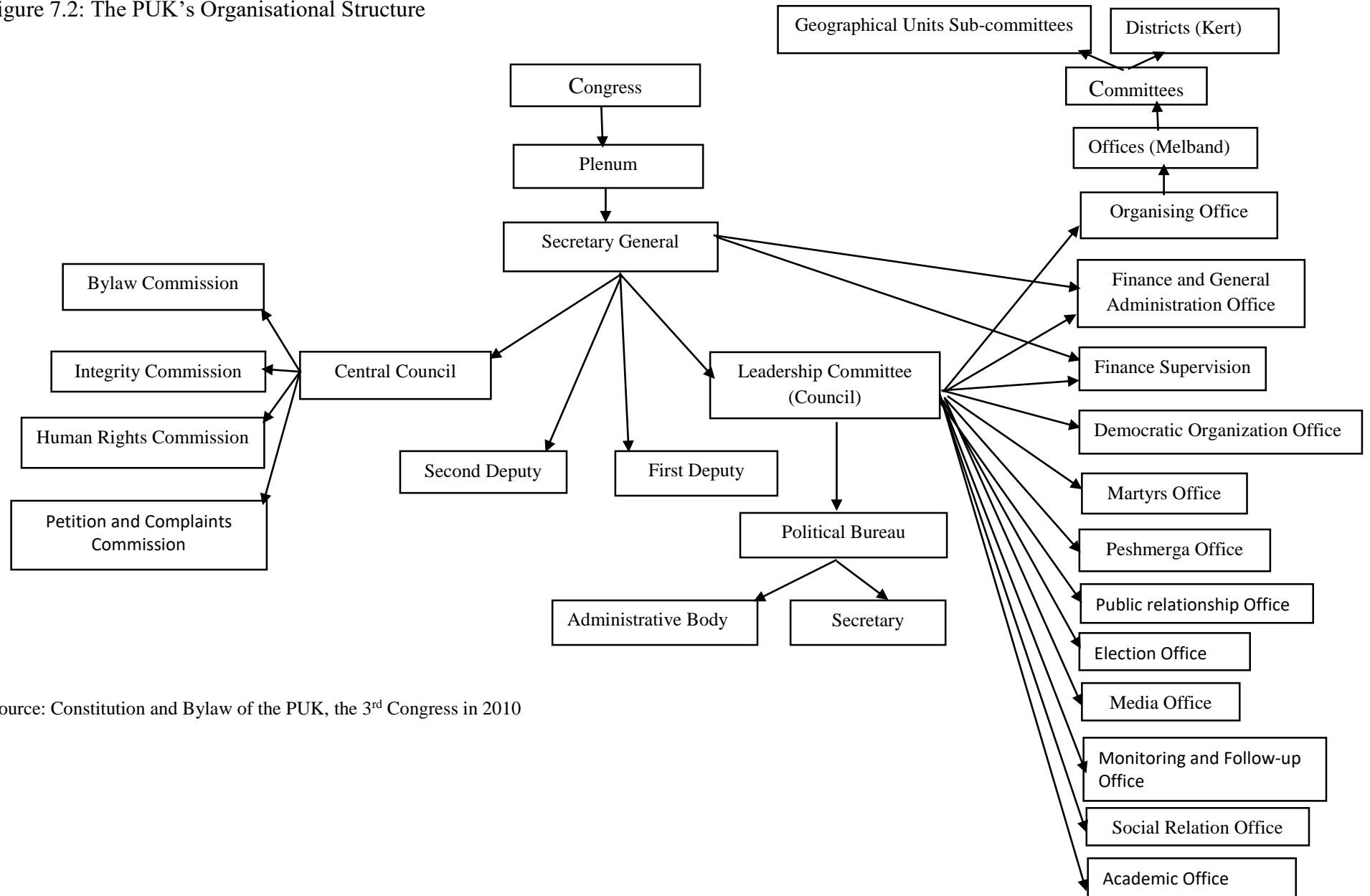
Article 18 of the PUK Bylaw states that "If the Conference [congress] is not held for whatever reason, a Plenum will be authorized to postpone the Conference [congress] for three to six months with a limit of one postponement. If the Conference is not held after that period, the Leadership shall lose its legitimacy". However, after the absence of the General Secretary in 2012 due to ill health, the PUK held a Plenum in 2014 and up to now did not hold the congress. The deep factionalism inside the party, and concentration of absolute authority in the hands of the Secretary General eventually caused a split in the PUK in 2007 (Mustafa, 2013), (see following section).

The intense struggle between the factions of this party can be seen as a key problem. Many of its top leaders have their own newspapers, TV channels, magazines and websites. The struggle became most obvious in the extended absence of the General Secretary. Internal and international commentators agree on the multi-polarity of the PUK (Gunter, 1996; Anderson

and Stansfield, 2004; Babekr, 2006; Osman, 2008). The Kurdish term *Fre Menberi*, has been broadly used to refer to this multi-polarity. The feature that once kept the party underdeveloped has enabled it to adapt to environmental changes that came with a new generation. At the same time, the result was that the areas under the control of the party became more open compared with the KDP. This is reflected in the issue of freedom of speech and criticism of government and party officials in the Green Zone.

The PUK, like the KDP, has various organizing offices to mobilize society including a Committee, Sub-committee (office) and District or Geographical Units in all rural and urban places, with different unions and syndicates. The base of both parties is heterogeneous and complex. All the above- mentioned features of the PUK add up to it being a closed, militia party more than a social democrat one, despite Talabani's (2012) stated aim to establish a socialist democratic society, as declared in its bylaw. The following diagram illustrates the organisational structure of the PUK.

Figure 7.2: The PUK's Organisational Structure



Source: Constitution and Bylaw of the PUK, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress in 2010

The diagram shows, that the hierarchical model of discipline is reflected in the organisation of the PUK, and especially in its sub-branches such as District and Geographical Units for mobilizing citizens. Like the Committees (Liq) of its rival the KDP, the Offices (Melbend) and the local sub-units of the PUK have responsibility for mobilizing people through different social and specialized unions for women, workers, doctors, youth, chemists, artists, and so on. The PUK also has a Human Rights Office. Employment in public offices is generally monitored by the party, especially in the Green Zone where a party Support Letter is required, particularly in the military and security services. The diagram refers to the Peshmerga Office, which is a military organ controlled by a political party. The Media Office which disseminates party ideology is another feature of the organisational structure. Hence, the structure of the party comes into deep contradiction with civic activities. Membership of the party starts from the age of 15 (it is 16 in the KDP). Like the KDP, this party disciplines its members by: warning notice, suspension, de-promotion and expulsion. According to the PUK bylaw one duty of its members is to oppose factionalism, tribalism and favouritism for a geographical area. However, as Chapter 8 will explain, in practice it participates in reviving tribes as a tool to stay in power.

Comparing the structures of the KDP and PUK, the hierarchy of the distribution of power in the former is more centralized. However, on the ground, according to interviewees' statements, the process of decision making and mobilization is very nearly the same. The main difference is because the PUK is a merger of three political groups in one party, hence, its political culture is more open to accepting various ideas. However, since the establishment of both parties, one family has ruled each party. The president of the KDP, and the Secretary General of the PUK have been in power for nearly four decades. This means, that the main point of development within a political party which is the issue of devolution of power and changing leadership is absent. The rule and function of the leader of the PUK can be seen in a statement made by Stansfield (2003:115):

Within the PUK, the Political Bureau members acknowledge that Talabani is the overall decision-maker, and he appears to be more forceful in this position than does Massoud Barzani, as many PUK members consider Talabani a form of talismanic guide for the party.

While, according to the PUK bylaw, the Leadership Committee has the highest power between two congresses. In the fieldwork period (March to July 2014), I visited the areas under the control of the PUK. All of the PUK's buildings and the majority of the governmental entrance boards are coloured green as a symbol of the PUK's flag. At the

entrance to the majority of cities under the domination of the PUK, a large photo of its Secretary General is displayed.

### **The Leadership Issue in the PUK**

Understanding the role and the power of the leadership is a main factor in understanding the obstacles to political development in the KR. From the history of the establishment of this party in 1975 up to now, the party has not changed its Secretary General. According to the internal programme and procedures of the PUK, some of the Secretary General's duties are: the responsibility to make decisions; elect his deputy from the Leadership Committee; suggest candidates for the Administrative Organs of the party; chair Leadership Committee meetings; be responsible for and monitor financial affairs and revenue sources; and form the Consultative Council, which consists of five people (PUK Bylaw, Article 28).

As mentioned, since December 2012, the Secretary General has been absent for reasons of ill health. According to Articles 21 and 28:1 of the internal bylaw, in such situations an extraordinary congress must be held, but due to deep rivalry inside the party and the willingness of the Secretary General's family to perform his duties, the congress has been postponed. As a cadre of the PUK pointed out,

The institution of decision making is weak among the Kurdistan parties and persons have more authority than institutions. Decisions are made by an individual without consultation with the party, a factor which produces corruption. In the PUK the Secretary General's wife has made decisions since his absence, although she is not the Deputy Secretary General<sup>14</sup>.

Another top cadre of this party explained in an interview that, the PUK has the problem of who will succeed the Secretary General. In his absence the Deputies are unable to act. The successor should exercise the same authority as the Secretary General<sup>15</sup>. According to Article 28:2, the Deputy of the Secretary General shall perform all the duties of the Secretary General until the extraordinary congress is held. According to one interviewee, one reason for delaying the formation of the eighth cabinet in 2014, for nearly nine months, was the absence of the Secretary General and lack of agreement between other members on how to divide offices<sup>16</sup>. This claim refers to the power, dominant role and charismatic personality of the leader of the party and indicates the weak institutionalisation within it.

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with Haydar Esmial Abdulla.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Sa'adi Ahmad Pira.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Saro Qadir.

In the parliamentary election in 2013, the number of votes for the PUK declined compared with previous elections.

In a report prepared by the Central Council of the PUK, regarding the reasons for the decrease in the party's votes and possible remedies, mention was made of the need to form a transparent fund for the PUK's revenues coming from its properties inside and outside the KR, and especially from London, Istanbul, the Emirates, Jordan, Iran and the USA. A large proportion of the PUK's assets belong to certain top cadres (Spee Media, 2013: No 7). Also, the leader of the PUK runs the *Nocan* Company that combines different businesses in the oil, food, construction, tobacco and other sectors (Ala'Aldeen, 2013). The interviewees in this study agreed that political parties in the KR have become a tool for trade and business.

The most important posts inside the PUK and government have been held by the Secretary General's family and his relatives. They include key posts in the Iraqi government, the PUK's foreign relations office, the security (*Zaniary*) office, the Cabinet Functions Co-ordinator Office in the seventh cabinet, the PUK's Finance, Supervision Office and Finance Ministry in the seventh cabinet and Deputy Prime Minister in the eighth cabinet. The process of legislation is either positively influenced by the abovementioned officials, or they create obstacles to any laws that conflict with their interests.

To sum up, the bureaucratic system is in paralysis because of the probability of the appointment of incompetent office-holders. More importantly, the national interest is interpreted corresponding to the family's interest. The PUK, like the KDP, is a family-owned-party which translates into family-owned-government and debilitation of the process of political development.



## **The Gorran Movement (GM)**

Disagreements and the lack of response to the demands for reform of the PUK, as well as the imbalance of power within the government between the PUK and the KDP, help to account for the formation of the GM which emerged from within the PUK (CEIP, 2009). The leader of the GM, Nwshirwan Mustafa, on leaving the PUK in 2007, founded the *Wishe* (Word) Media Company (TV, radio, newspaper, magazine and website) which mainly focused on government performance. The company performed as the opposition outside parliament to mobilize citizens through its broadcasting and as a base to establish a new political party. In 2009, the GM participated in the KR parliamentary elections and was formally established as a political organisation in 2010 (Gorran, 2013b). Mass media ownership is common to all political parties in the KR and it played a crucial role in the formation of the GM.

The main reason for the success of the GM was the extent of corruption in governmental circles and the disclosure of illegal government expenditure by this Movement in election campaigns. The Movement brought about a national awakening as to what was happening behind closed doors, in terms of government performance, especially its fiscal aspects. More importantly, the GM introduced new concepts: individual freedom, civil society, a national budget, transparency, the type of political system and responsibility towards the next generation. These terms were unfamiliar or poorly defined for the majority of society. The Movement, via the mass media, planted the idea that income is the property of the nation and not of parties. As Bauer (2015:147) stated, instead of relying on the topics of 'liberation' and 'historic experience' that were used by the dominant parties, the GM injected the new topics to society.

Certain characteristics distinguish this Movement from other parties in the KR. The Movement publishes monthly expenditure reports on its website. In a challenge to some of its parliamentary members who asked for facilities such as a car, a house or early retirement, the General Coordinator (leader) of the Movement asked them in an open letter to apologise publicly or if not to resign (Mustafa, 2012).

The magic of the title 'Gorran' which means 'Change', can be considered a symbolically powerful factor in gaining new supporters. The slogan of the party not only challenges corruption but offers a new alternative to the prevailing ideology based on revolutionary

legitimacy. The majority of its supporters are the younger strata, the new mostly post-uprising generation, who are more urban and better educated (Cordesman et al, 2010).

In spite of these distinctive features, however, the process of mobilization and membership is similar to other parties of the KR. For instance, according to the constitution of the Movement, applicants for membership must be 18 years old, and pay a monthly subscription. Local offices hold very regular meetings with members and report to the next level. The Movement participates in Syndicate and Union elections and it has established large party headquarters in districts and sub-districts to control and mobilize citizens (GM constitution, 2013).

The image of the General Coordinator can be found on the walls of buildings belonging to the Movement. According to a top cadre and parliamentary member of this Movement, all political parties in the KR have the same type of political thinking. Despite some differences between their views about politics, their members often think and behave in the same manner<sup>17</sup>.

Up till now the ideology and political perspective of this Movement has remained unclear. According to the interviewees: it is not a religious Movement; it is a civil party but does not believe in extreme secular concepts. It is a liberal party, and believes in the separation between state and religion. However, it does not believe in marginalizing religion. The party does not have a distinct ideology. For this reason, it has embraced people with different views<sup>18</sup>. As a cadre of this Movement explained its base is similar to that of the PUK and the KDP, because it contains a broad spectrum with different social and even political backgrounds. It promotes a political reform agenda that is compatible with many ideologies and political persuasions. That is why amongst its members, the wealthy are found next to the poor, the educated next to the illiterate, the urban dweller next to the farmer and the atheist next to the Islamist<sup>19</sup>.

The party's relationship to religion is illustrated by its role in legislation. Many of the cadres in Gorran's mass media and social networks, including the first to be elected in the parliamentary elections in 2013 were members of Islamic parties. This may be the reason why the leaders of this party in an interview with the KNN Channel (2013) announced their intention to reject any law that would conflict with Islamic principles. Later, in enacting the

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Adnan Osman.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Adnan Osman and Mohamad Haji.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Hishyar Abid.

law to allow loans from abroad, on 2 June 2015, the Islamic parties left the parliament hall in protest. In their view the law was against Islamic principles. However, the GM approved the law because the Minister of Finance belonged to the Movement.

Concerning the leadership, three years after its formal establishment, in December 2013 the Movement held its first congress (26-27 December) without choosing its General Coordinator in congress. Instead, and in contrast to other political parties of the KR, the General Coordinator was elected by the Executive House for a two-year term, renewable for no more than three terms. The General Coordinator has no deputy and in his absence for any reason, the Executive House will elect the successor (GM constitution, 2013).

Decision making, according to one interviewee, is similar to the other parties, with the important decisions being made by the General Coordinator<sup>20</sup>. All the GM's ministers in the eighth cabinet were chosen by the General Coordinator alone<sup>21</sup>. According to an MP in the third term of parliament, the GM is even more committed to their party's leadership directions than other parties<sup>22</sup>. However, despite these reservations, the Movement for the first time introduced the concept of political opposition to the political arena of the KR, which is a crucial element in the political development process.

### **The Gorran Movement and Society**

Although the GM emerged to challenge corruption and demand reform in the political system, it had difficulty in broadening its rhetoric to appeal to the wider society. It mainly focused on the Green Zone and the challenge to the PUK; and it tried to show that Slemani province had lost influence as a cultural and political base on the KR compared to other provinces. Like the PUK, its leadership headquarters, top leaders and media channels were based in Slemani.

Some of the top cadres disagree with the local emphasis of this Movement. Some other cadres have suggested creating a new party in the Badinan areas as an alternative to the Movement<sup>23</sup>. In fact, apart from the Islamic Union, all the other political parties exert most of their influence in a specific area. According to the interviewees, this fact derives from the

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with Adnan Osman.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Abdilselam Berwari.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Omer Nuradinin.

<sup>23</sup> The source of this idea was Adnan Osman, who I interviewed. He explained that the Gorran leadership was monopolised by certain persons with specific localities, who prevented others from other locations from entering the higher levels of leadership.

process of configuration of the leadership of each party. For instance, the top leader of the KDP is from the Badinan area; and the PUK's and the GM from the Soranian area. The majority of the GM's top leaders are from Slemani. The political culture reflects the tribal base which is influenced by traditional feelings of attachment more than rationality<sup>24</sup>.

Another interviewee noted that, one aspect of the failure to penetrate all parts of the region is linked to the rivalry between the dominant political parties which has resulted in the demographic, geographic, administrative and political division of society. The history of the KFM shows that until 1975, or the rise of the PUK, commanders and officials from the South, for example, were employed in the Northern part of country. However, after that period this phenomenon declined and had nearly disappeared by the end of the civil war<sup>25</sup>. Hence, at the macro level, this division of supporters between specific areas is the legacy of the defeat of the process of nation building by the political parties which originated with the multi-party system in the KR.

The GM inherited this political division which created a culture of distrust between the authorities and citizens on the one hand, and between the followers of the ruling party and the Movement on the other. It reignited the culture of violence and the use of violence to express alternative political views. The GM like other parties, aspires to a homogenous society based on an exclusive political view. For example, between the parliamentary elections in 2009 and 2013, the Movement's political rhetoric was based on rejecting the top leaders of the PUK and the KDP, accusing the PUK and small parties of being obedient to the KDP, and rejecting all political institutions such as parliament, government, and presidential bodies (Cochburn, 2009; Hawrami, 2011). The distrust that exploded in the March 2011 demonstration led to the use of military force to end it (see Chapter 6).

Instead of attempting to change society, the GM focused on the negative activities of the authorities in order to gain votes, it became the runner up in the elections. Its rhetoric after the 2013 elections changed dramatically and the Movement participated in the eighth cabinet which was again formed by the KDP and the same previous Prime Minister.

Another important feature of the GM is that, the Movement was designed from the topdown and not from the bottom up. The Movement did not emerge with new leaders as a natural growth of public discontent against political authority. It grew as a result of dissent between

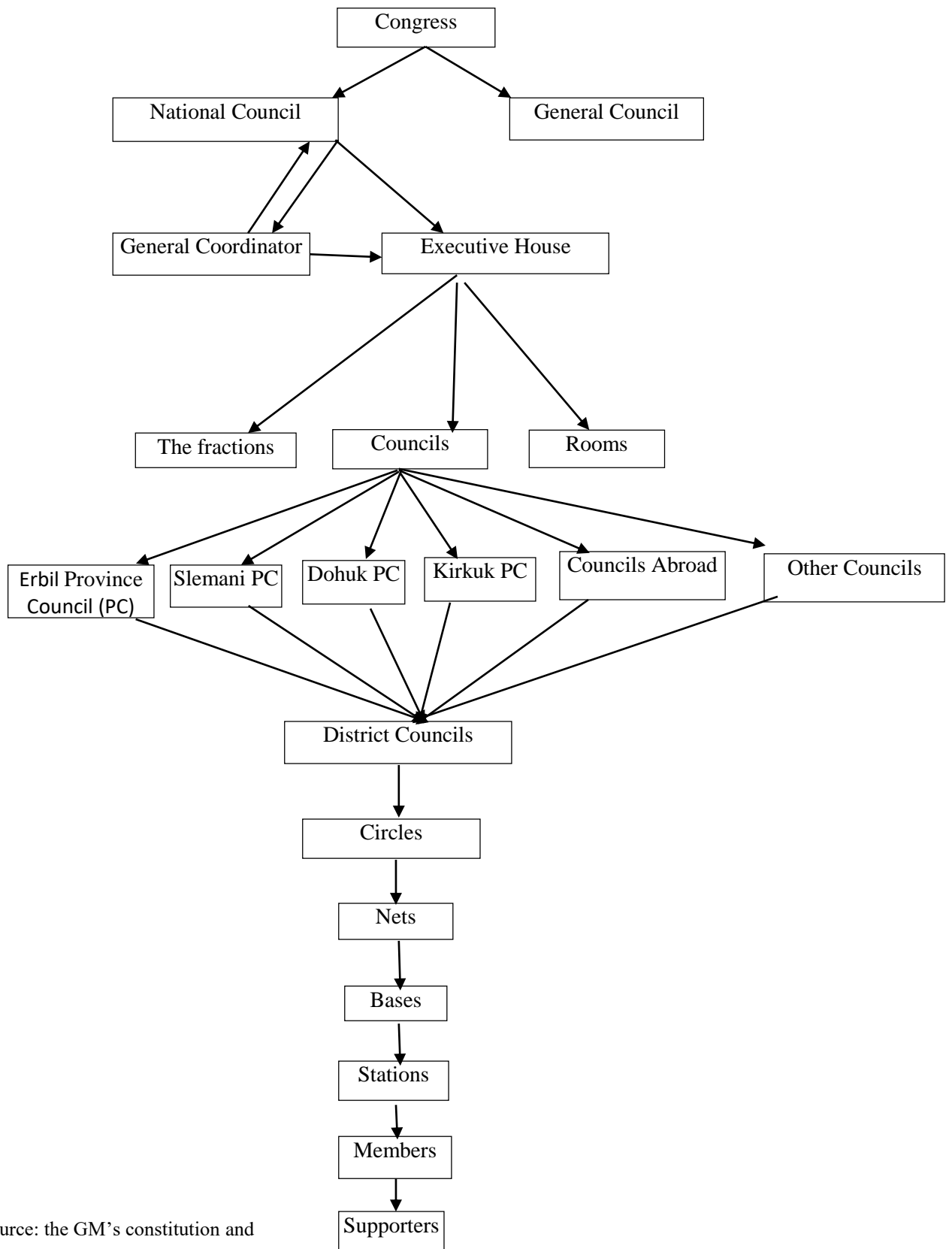
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<sup>24</sup> Interview with Mohamad Haji and Adnan Osman.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Saro Qadir.

the leaders of the PUK. Considering its top leaders, political rhetoric and geographical performance, it is difficult to see GM as a social reformist movement which aims to appeal to the whole country. The legacy of the PUK and its type of political activities are reflected in the structure of the Movement as the figure below shows.

Figure 7.3: The GM's Organisational Structure



Source: the GM's constitution and

Website: [http://gorran.net/En/Gorran\\_En.swf](http://gorran.net/En/Gorran_En.swf)

The diagram shows how the offices of the party extend into various geographical locations and occupations. The new Movement has branches for individual supporters and members that are related to the Circle's branches at the party's lowest level of mobilization. They operate in a similar way to other parties. Like the PUK and the KDP's Academic Studies Organ, the Scientific Branch (Rooms) is included in the GM structure and is run by experts. The GM has local sub-branches to mobilize people. Like the PUK and the KDP, it has external branches for the Kurds in the diaspora. Like the other parties, it formed General Council branches that consist of specialists and well-known people with experience in different fields such as the military, diplomacy, sport, the arts, law, engineering, and so on. This allows the Movement to penetrate into different corners of society. Besides, the General Congress that is held once every four years, each province holds their own congress every two years.

However, the Movement has chosen new terms to differentiate its structure from the other parties. The terms used to describe members in various ranks are also different from those of other political parties in the region. This is a symbolic act to attract more supporters and members. In addition, unlike other parties in the KR, the GM has an organ to coordinate between its representatives in the Iraqi and the KR parliament and province council (The Fractions). The Movement does not have a military branch, although the General Council can mobilize armed groups.

In a nutshell, while this Movement has a new perspective towards politics in the KR, its institutional form and its functions resemble those of other parties. It has not succeeded in breaking down the legacy of mass membership and mobilisation. The Movement has encouraged more people to engage in politics but the party-ization of society has become more entrenched.

## **The Islamic Parties and Society: Background**

Religion is a powerful contributor to the socio-political life of KR society, especially Islam as the religion of the majority of population. Societally, this contribution can be seen in religious events such as mass everyday participation in mosques for common prayer, especially on Fridays; having two religious ceremonies or *Eid* per year; two events commemorating the prophet (his birthday and his journey from Mecca into Medina, called the *Hijrah*); Imams and caliphs events, all of which are holidays. Religious concepts persist, such as *Zikat* and *Sadaqhe* in helping poor people, and many other religious events are held such as festivals for memorising the Quran or praying for rainfall in drought years. Other religions in the region have their own rituals and celebrations.

Throughout the twentieth century, the majority of Kurdish political movements and revolutions were led by religious figures, but without religious goals. Mullahs and Sheikhs have also played a role in schooling people especially in the rural and remote areas (Sabir, 2008). The *Hojrah* (a place, often in a mosque for religious studies) that is run by clerics undertakes the duty of schooling people (males) through instruction in religious issues. The Islamic groups have utilized this history and issue frequently reminders that more than 95% of the Kurdistan population is Muslim. There is no census to confirm the exact number of Muslims in the KR and there are many religious minorities, such as Jews, Armenians, Assyrians, Khaldeans, Ezidinian, Zarathustrans and Kakies who are non-Muslim. The Islamic factions frequently use the idea of the Muslim majority to resist the secularization of society and the constitution.

In education, religion forms part of the curriculum in the early years of schooling and through to faculties of Islamic thought in the universities. In the economic sphere, Islamic Banks operate in the KR and mortgage interest is forbidden by pressure from the Islamic parties on the grounds that it is against Islamic principles and is *Haram*. Seven out of a total of 39 banks in the KR in 2014, were Islamic banks (Kurdistan Review, 2014:70).

Any economic law passed in parliament requires review by a committee of Islamic clergy to determine whether it is in accordance with *Al-Sharia* or not. The security services cannot arrest a Mullah without the permission of the Endowment and Religious Affairs minister. Politically, the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs supervises religious issues under a Minister from the Islamic Movement (in the fifth, sixth and seventh cabinets). Constitutionally, in a draft constitution Article (6), it is written that ‘Islam is a source of



making laws' and laws approved by parliament cannot be in conflict with *Al-Sharia*. Islamic religion therefore plays a role in all aspects of society: in politics, the economy, law, education and security.

The roots of Islamic parties in the KR can be traced back to the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) movement (Ala'akidy, 2011). In addition, both internal and external factors helped Islamic movements to strengthen their bases in the KR. Externally, the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 was important. For example, the Kurdistan Islamic Movement was established in 1987 in Iran and supported by it. Then, there was the capture of power by the Taliban in Afghanistan which shares the same creed with the Islamic Movement in the KR. Close ties between the Egyptian Islamic factions (especially the MB) and the Islamic Movement helped the rise of these parties. The Islamic Union stated that 1994 was the official year of inauguration of this party although it had engaged in clandestine activities before this date (Irevany, 2003; Ala'akidy, 2011).

Internally, the main political conditions which helped to reinforce Islamic trends were the internal war between the KDP and the PUK and the destruction of the economic aspects of everyday life. The situation prompted the rise of various Islamic groups, especially the Islamic Union that was financially backed by Saudi Arabia, Iran and some other Gulf states. In the period of internal war this party provided some daily subsistence for poor people (Ala'akidy, 2011:100-101; Sharif, 2008; Akyol, 2010).

The non-religious parties, the PUK and the KDP, responded to each other's weakness by occasionally supporting one Islamic faction against the other party. In the period of two administrations, the Islamic groups had seats and a portfolio in cabinet and government, which gave them more room to grow. Another factor is Iraq's position in the Arab world which meant that the KR as part of Iraq was affected by the Arabs' religious-tribal culture and their view of Islam. These factors, in conjunction with the non-secular educational system, highlight influential Islamic audio-visual mass media and huge print-runs of Islamic books, which were conducive to the growth of Islamic groups in the region.

Regarding the Islamic factions' perspective on society and development, top cadres of Islamic parties often speak of their desire to return to the *Al-caliphate* period which is recognized only by the Sunni creed. It reveals: their intellectual dogmatism, which means looking backward instead of forward; failure to adapt to changes in the environment and progress at the local and global scale; their rejection of the secular system; and their desire

to impose *Al-Sharia* according to their point of view on society. For instance, in an interview with Ali Bapir, the leader of the Islamic League (IL) that was published on this party's website, he stated that in order for the secular tendency in the KR to be overcome, "our dream is to draft an Islamic constitution to represent society" (Komalnews, 2013). The IL states in its bylaw that one duty of this party is to preserve the morality of family and society by preventing the intrusion of western norms. The leader of this party, in an interview with Spee Media (2013, No:1), rejected the status quo in KR's universities which allows the mixing of genders.

In spite of these influences, political development it is not a one-way process and the KR is not isolated from the outside world. It is important to take into account the processes of internationalization, globalization and regional upheavals and their effects on the KR. Upheavals such as the Arab Spring and the defeat in applying *Al-Sharia* in countries such as Egypt and Tunisia exist alongside ISIS and its claim to apply *Al-Sharia*. Within the KR, the rise of the GM has coincided with a reduction in the number of advocates of Islamic parties. For this reason, some cadres of the Islamic Union and Islamic League even suggested removing the title *Islamic* from their parties, although the suggestion was not accepted.

At the moment three Islamic parties are active in the KR, the Islamic Union, the Islamic League and the Islamic Movement. The following paragraphs focus on the Islamic Union as the main Islamic party in the political arena of the KR.

### **The Islamic Union (IU)**

The IU is a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in the KR (Mahmoud, 2011). In the events of Egypt between the MB and Egypt's military services in 2013, the mass media of the IU focused strongly on the events and supported the MB. A top cadre of the IU, in an interview with Rudaw (January 2014) stated that the party "is an extension of the school of the Muslim Brotherhood.... The Muslim Brotherhood is the mother of most of the ideas on which the Islamic Union builds itself." According to the same report, the former party leader Salahdin Bahaddin announced that "The Muslim Brotherhood is the best school in which one can be educated. We are proud to be graduates of the Muslim Brotherhood school". However, after the recognition of the MB as a terrorist group by the Egyptian government, and the rise of ISIS as an extremist Islamic faction, the IU and other Islamic parties faced fundamental challenges from voices in Kurdistan society which accused them of being a base for religious radicalisation.

The constitution of this party states that the principles of the IU are fraternity, liberty and justice. It also states that Islamic principles are the basis for its political activities and it is a “national reformist party that tries to solve the political, social, economic and cultural problems of society from an Islamic standpoint”; it respects the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a human achievement. In an interview a cadre of this party stated that “in our [the IU] view of point, politics is a part of the great Islamic project.... We have an office called the Announcement (proselytization) Office, *Maktab Al-Da'awa*, which invites people to Islam and religiosity”<sup>26</sup>. Another cadre pointed out that “Islamism is a main motivation for loyalty to this party and its members believe that, through the IU, they can serve Islam”<sup>27</sup>. When it was formed, the party created a variety of charitable organizations throughout the country, especially among widows of the internal war, poor people and students through the distribution of goods, money, free student accommodation, arranging sporting events and offering sportswear for the youth, and building mosques mainly in the rural areas. Youth meetings were often held in mosques as an easy way to encourage them to pray, making *Sallat*. The party tried to influence citizens by exciting their religious feeling in response to the hard economic conditions.

The socio-political activities of the IU are different: building mosques, opening small civil projects such as training barbers, textile and craft workers, opening health centres and direct monetary assistance to poor families. Most of the finance to run these projects comes from the Islamic Kurdish League, which is funded by certain Islamic states and wealthy individuals. The head of this centre is a Kurd who is the head of the Islamic Countries Conference<sup>28</sup> (Amin, 2012).

In the parliamentary elections in 2013, the total number of Islamic parties’ seats in parliament increased. However, the total number of their votes compared with the Iraqi parliamentary elections in 2010 decreased. Nearly half of all the IU votes were gained by two candidates. Both were missionaries, one from the Soranian area and another from the Badinan area (Siwkani, 2013). Compared with other parties, the IU is the only party that has nearly the same level of support in both the Soranian and Badinan areas.

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with Bayan Barwary.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Salahaddin Babaker.

<sup>28</sup> In asking the IU’s cadres about the relationship between this party and the Islamic Kurdish League, responses differed. One of participants did not deny the link between the IU and the League, while another denied any link.

At its sixth congress in 2012 the IU, for the first time in the history of the KR's political parties, chose a new leader. The selection was not based on the constitution of the party, rather, the leader decided to step down from his post after eighteen years<sup>29</sup>. However, in 2016, in eighth congress he again elected as the general Secretary of the party.

Regarding its political activity and structure, the process of decision making in the IU is collective as the important decisions are made by the Leadership Council. The Presidential Council is recognized as the highest authority inside the party that creates the framework for party policy<sup>30</sup>. The IU is similar to other parties in having various offices in different districts and sub-districts. It has established its own unions for students, women and sport as well as different kinds of mass media that spread the party's ideology. Some of the union's titles are adapted to religious priorities. For example, the women's union is called the "Sisters Union". The party created organs such as the Family Unit, or *Osrah*, to attract families and apply Islamic principles to them. As the Deputy General Secretary of this party explained "the IU represent all classes and strata of society and different ages. Through our various organs and units, we try to attract people. For every strata, the IU has established a specific organ"<sup>31</sup>.

In terms of finance, the IU has a different structure. Apart from external support, the fund comes from the government's allocated budget, trade activities such as construction projects, and donations. According to interviewees, another source is its ordinary members' subscription which consists of 2.5% of the total monthly income of the member. As there is no banking system in the KR, trust between members and the party is the basis for knowing the rate of each person's income. Thus, the subscription varies from member to member. High ranking officials pay more: The Iraqi ministers and MPs pay 50% of their monthly salary; the KR's ministers and MPs pay 40%; the members of the provincial council, retired ministers and MPs pay 30% of their pension to the party<sup>32</sup>. The corresponding officials of the KDP, and the PUK, do not pay any portion of their salary or pension to their political parties<sup>33</sup>. The figure below illustrates the organisational structure of the IU.

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Bayan Barwary.

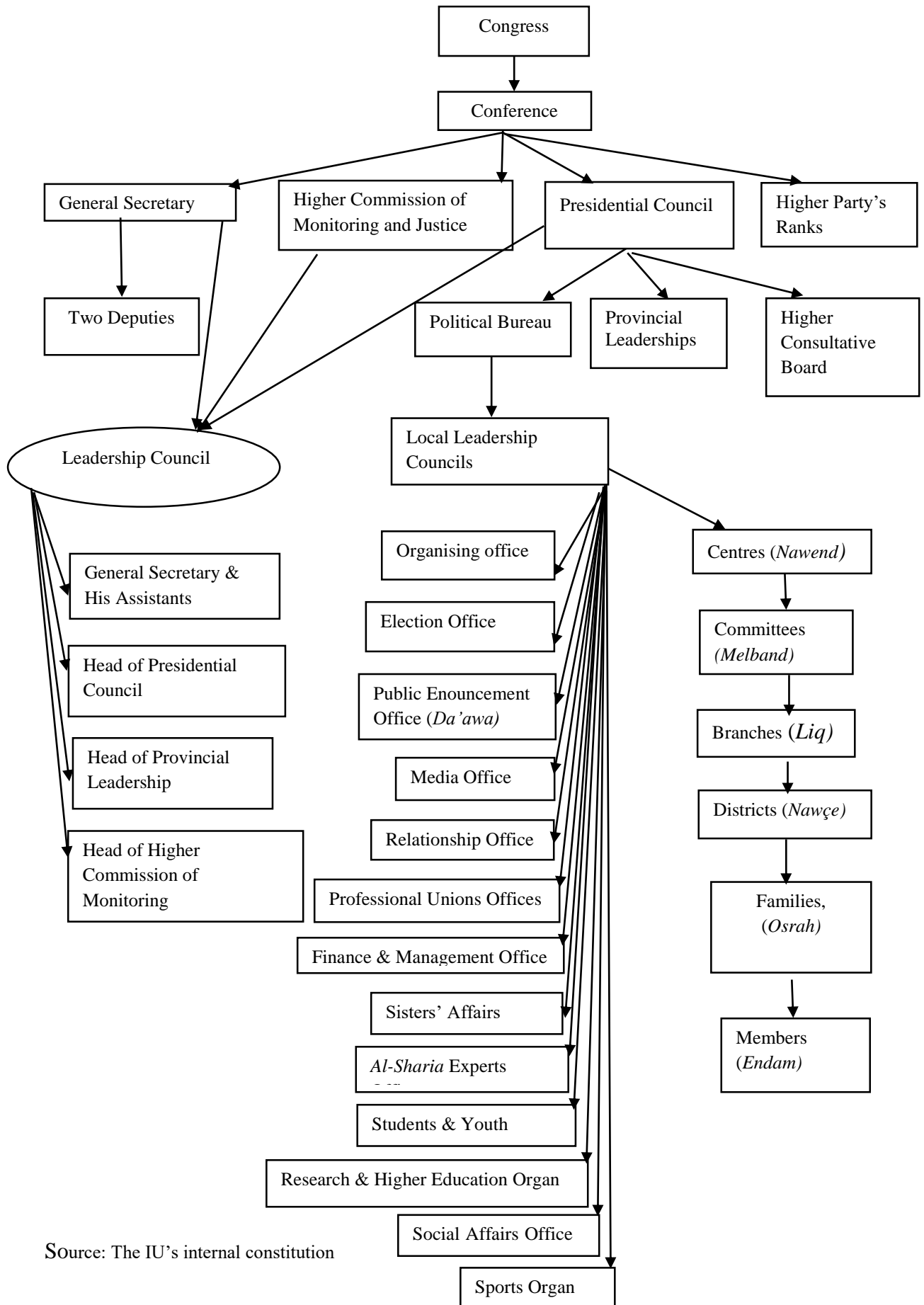
<sup>30</sup> Unlike participants of the other political parties, the participants of the IU asserted that the leader cannot make decisions alone nor do they have the authority on final decisions.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Salahaddin Babaker.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Salahaddin Babaker and Bayan Barwary.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Omer Nuraldini.

Figure 7.4: The IU's Structure



Source: The IU's internal constitution

As diagram shows, all organs of the party have a responsibility to act according to and to spread Islamic principles, especially via the Public Announcement (proselytization) Office (*Da'awe*), the *Al-Sharia* Experts Office and Family (*Osra*) Offices. It could be said that the party has a structure that may come into conflict with modern party duties. For example, the IU teaches its members to hold meetings about how to memorize or read the Quran, which is not the duty of a modern party. The party uses the *Al-Sharia* Office to interpret Islamic principles and apply them to various political and non-political activities. In a similar way to the other parties in the KR, each organ and office has a periodic meeting to discuss new events and to give recommendations and suggestions to higher organs which are then implemented in a hierarchical way. Similar to the GM, the rate of women's participation in the various IU organs is 25% of the total membership.

In general, it is difficult to see how political development can occur under the umbrella of the Islamic parties in the KR. The basic reason is that many features of modern society cannot co-exist with Islamic principles. Examples include individual human rights, banking interest charges, equality between males and females in inheritance, or as witnesses in court. They have long term negative consequences on the political development process through their negative impact on the status of women in society and the failure to secularize the economic, educational, constitutional and state institutions. Society will become more closed through the application of *Al-Sharia* and will lose the ability to compete economically with the outside world. It is doubtful if the Islamic politics of the Islamic Union can resolve the problems of economic and fiscal deficit, the weakness of the military, weak institutionalisation of government or fraud in elections.

## **Conclusion**

As this chapter has shown, the obstacles to political development that arise from the political parties are many and varied. Some of the obstacles derive from the top-down hierarchical structure of political parties and the type of leadership, which has created centralized party control which is reflected in the centralism of government performance. These obstacles are rooted in their histories especially those of the PUK and the KDP, their military origins and the legacy of Leninist-Marxist-Maoist ideology; as well as Muslim Brotherhood ideology.

To mobilize support, political parties' branches exist in all parts of society (streets, neighbourhoods, sub-districts, unions, syndicates, villages and even abroad). In structural perspective, political parties have succeeded in covering most of society through their

interconnected branches, creating a highly politicized society. While the political parties have been able to institutionalize their procedures and organization to mobilize citizens, it is doubtful whether this institutionalisation is in accordance with the political development process, especially when the parties' influence on the economy, bureaucracy and employment is considered. The political parties remain unable to move beyond their traditional structures or relinquish their armed forces, which increases the threat of potential armed conflict. After two decades of governing the struggle between the political parties is deeply embedded within society. The attempt by the Islamic parties to apply *Al-sharia* to all sectors of government and society is a further obstacle. To sum up, the KR's political system is open enough to allow a degree of division, conflict, tension, competition and innovation, so the obstacles to development are not insurmountable. However, the competition is not constructive.

Having explored the influence of political parties in government and parliament in the previous chapter, this chapter has reviewed the internal structures and functions of the political parties. To complement this picture, the next chapter will focus on the tribal fabric of society, its relationship to the political parties and government, and how this relationship also represents an obstacle to political development.

## Chapter Eight: Social Fabric, Tribe and Politics

### Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to describe the social composition of the KR and to explain how it retains some features of traditional society. The chapter explores the linkage between tribes and political parties to show how they reinforce each other and their impacts on government. It makes a connection between politics as an institution and as a process involving ordinary social lives to gain an insight into how tribes have operated politically in different periods. To do this, it is necessary to investigate the history of the tribe before the emergence of the KR as a socio-political entity; and explain how tribes became a strong political unit and gained economic benefits.

The starting point is that the tribe is both relevant to and produces the dominant type of political culture in the KR. As Almond (1956:396) pointed out “Every political system is embedded in a particular pattern of orientation to political actions” (cited in Pye, 1969:7), namely political culture, which is a part of general culture within a society. Political culture

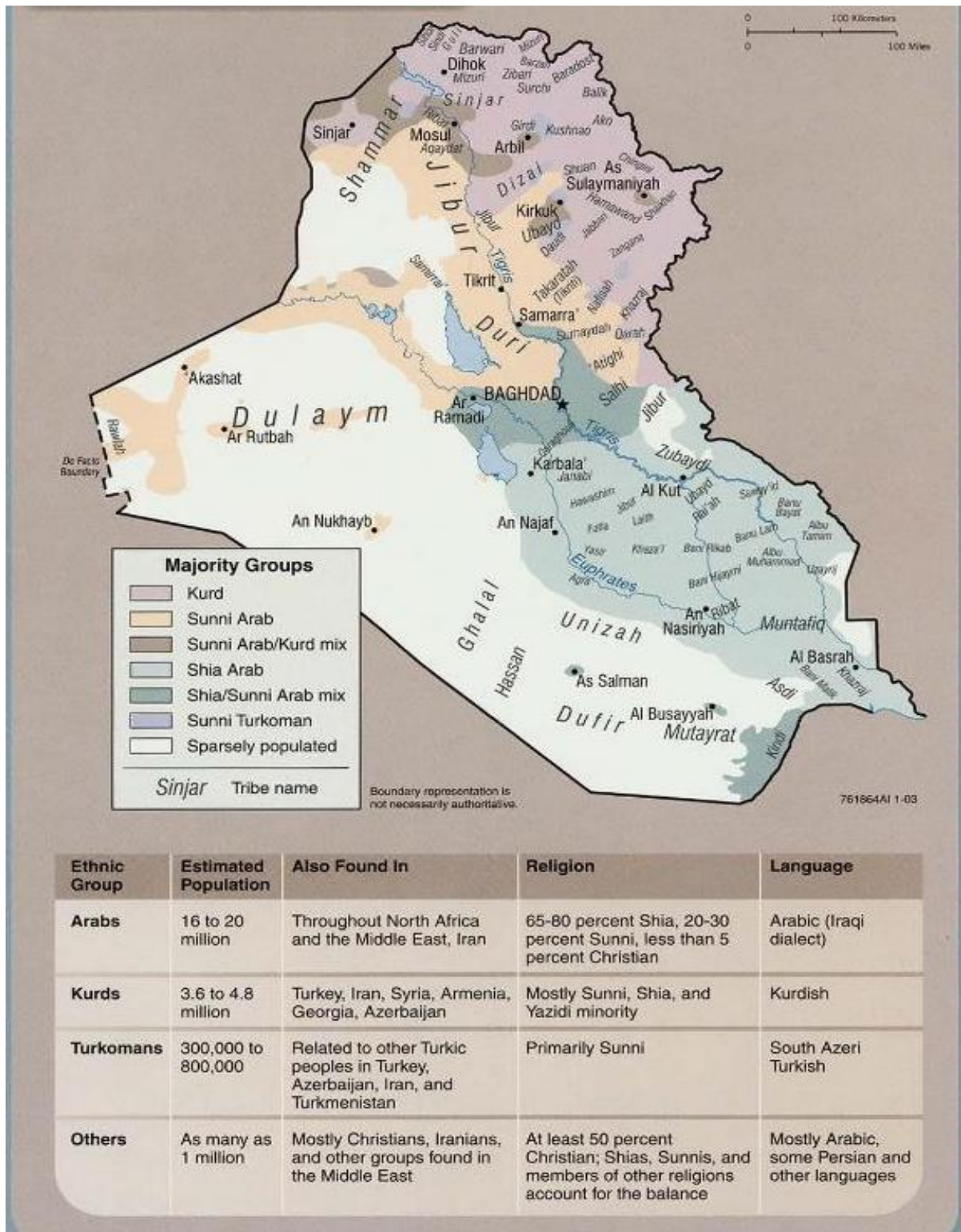
Suggests that the traditions of a society, the spirit of its public institutions, the passions and the collective reasoning of its citizenry, and the style and the operating codes of its leaders are not just random products of historical experience but fit together as a part of a meaningful whole and constitute intelligible web of relations (Pye, 1969:7).

As this chapter shows, tribal values are implicated in government and politics through the political parties.

Anderson and Stansfield (2004:160) define a tribe as “a socio-political unit with territorial limits based upon kinship and descent”. In the KR, besides this type of tribe, there are also groups of villages which are based on land ownership more than blood or kinship (McDowall, 2007). Some villages have a head or Mukhtar without having a tribal chieftain. They identify themselves with their village or use the name of a geographical unit that refers to the set of villages. Identifying a tribe only by kinship can be useful for studying the clan-village and migratory tribes that are based on kinship. However, the tribe as a bigger community and especially sedentary tribes, are actually based on a combination of relationships such as kinship, land ties and religious creeds or even political ties. The map below illustrates the distribution of the major tribes within the Iraqi state, including the Kurdistan Region.



Figure 8.1: Iraqi Ethno-Religious Groups and Major Iraqi Tribes Map



Source: "Iraq: Country Profile" Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) map cited in "Iraq: Distribution of Religious Groups and Ethnic Groups", <http://usiraq.procon.org/view.additional-resource.php?resourceID=002425>, June 2003.

## Background to Tribalism in Iraq

Studying the tribal fabric in the KR is difficult, because its meaning and power has changed from place to place and time to time, along with feelings about territorial identity (McDowell, 2007). Sedentary tribes have stronger territorial identity than nomadic tribes. However, tribalism or a tribal base is the dominant socio-political structure in the KR society<sup>1</sup> (Fuller, 1993; Malanczuk, 1991), although some ordinary farmers\* (in Kurdish *Jutyar*), and city dwellers exist who do not belong to tribes. Before the *Chaldaran War* between the Safavid state and the Ottoman Empire in 1514, Kurdistan was a part of Iran. As a result of this war, Iran lost the major parts of Kurdistan. Then the principality emerged in both countries (Edmonds, 1957). Many Kurdish emirates such as *Baban*, *Badinan* and *Soran* emerged, which had their own soldiers, to defend their lands. The centralization of power was called *Eskane Ashaiyer* in Iran and the *Tanzimat* process in the Ottoman Empire, which led to the eradication of the Kurdish emirates (Vali, 2006; Saria'a-Al-Qhalam, 1998).

However, tribal domination through the power of the chieftain continued. The appointment of some governors by the central government in the Kurdish emirates and the lack of legitimacy of the latter among tribes, led to an increase in the role of chieftains and tribes; tribes became the focal socio-political unit. This does not mean that the society only consisted of tribes: the expansion of government power and bureaucracy, oil exploration, land reforms from the Ottoman Empire to the Iraqi state in 1932, 1938 and 1963; the use of machinery in agriculture that led to migration from villages to cities especially in the 1950s, all led to the rise of independent farmers and the growth of commerce, which enhanced the economic power of individuals. Even in the era of the monarchy, the Iraqi communist party played a great role in provoking and supporting farmers against the Sheikhs and Aghas who

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<sup>1</sup> In my field work, the participants agreed that the KR's society is mainly a tribal based society. Even in urban areas similar values of tribal structure can be seen.

\* Instead of using the term "peasant", I have used the term "farmer" to describe those who work on the land, whether shared, rented or owned land. According to one definition, "peasants are a class characterized by small-scale agricultural production, economic self-sufficiency, low division of labour and relative political isolation from urban working classes" (Abercrombie et al, 2006:288). In Kurdistan society there is a low division of labour, and in some cases, small land owners have an economic self-sufficiency economy, but politically, there is no clear division between farmers and the urban working class. The majority of Kurdish political activities have been conducted in villages, and sometimes urban political elites moved to villages, so that farmers were automatically engaged in politics. When central government buys tribal loyalty, again farmers are engaged in politics. When villages were destroyed by central government, farmers were re-located in new settlements or in cities. Hence, farmers have engaged actively in politics, even if they have not constituted a distinctive social class.

were landlords. In addition, before the uprising in the Kurdish areas controlled by the KDP and the PUK, the parties limited the chieftains' power. In the third congress of the KDP in 1953, when the leftists ruled the party, they called for agricultural reform and farmers and workers' rights (Bruinessen, 1992 and 2002; Stansfield, 2003:66; McDowell, 2007).

The establishment of the Kurdistan political parties after the First World War, by both urban and rural leaders, is a sign that Kurdistan society adopted some of the political features of modern politics. The growth of the mass media, transport between villages and cities, and the diaspora of Kurds also helped to open up the tribal society and reduce its influence.

With the emergence of the republican system, first with the Ba'ath regime and then the establishment of KRG, tribalism was once again strengthened in the service of authority. Geography is another factor in tribalism in the KR: features of tribalism remain stronger in the mountainous areas than the plain areas. One reason is the type of political activity of the political parties. Chieftains on the plain held large tracts of land, and, the majority of political activities against landlords, especially by the Iraqi communist party before it was made illegal by the Ba'ath regime, occurred in these areas. This does not mean that the mountainous areas were free of landlord exploitation, only that land ownership was on a smaller scale. The semi-nomadic mountain tribes depended mainly on husbandry. After the Kurdish parties became illegal, they retreated from the cities and returned to clandestine and armed activity in the mountain areas. Thus the type of coalition between Kurdish parties (the PUK and the KDP) and chieftains in a given territory, has shaped the forms of tribalism and the relationship between farmer-tribesmen and chieftains\*.

There are alternative interpretations of the rise or continuation of tribal power in Iraq of which the KR is a part. The change from a monarchy to a republic in 1958, and return of Barzani from exile, led to the strengthening of the KDP control in the north (Kurdistan part) of Iraq. This event pushed the government to encourage tribes such as the Harki, Surchi and Bradwsti, which were traditionally hostile to Barzani to revolt against him and his party (Stansfield, 2003). As he was the key intermediary between the Barzani tribe and other tribes as well as the leader of the KDP, a complex intra-tribe and tribe-party conflict ensued. When the Ba'ath regime emerged, it followed the policy of demolishing religious sectarianism and tribalism. Its manifesto referred to the rejection of sectarianism, racism and tribalism as negative concepts that were remnants from the times of colonial power (Baram, 1997:1).

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\* The interviewees hold similar views on this issue.

However, as it became embroiled in internal and external wars, the regime again drew on the tribes to gain support and recruit soldiers. The successive wars against Kurds in both the monarchical and republican periods can be considered as one factor that shifted the attitude of authority towards the tribes (Yehya, 2013). For example, in the monarchical period, the government utilized tribes against the Kurdish rebellion and then with the establishment of the republican system in 1958, the government tried to abolish the tribal structure. However, the war against the Kurds impelled the government to return to tribes and form the army from both Kurd and Arab tribes<sup>2</sup>.

To prevent Kurds from supporting the Kurdish movement, the central government offered a socio-economic opportunity to those Kurdish tribal chieftains who joined the fight against the Kurdish movement (Malanczuk, 1991). This policy encouraged many chieftains to create their own militia, *Jash*, to fight and earn money, acquire positions and settle old antagonisms between themselves and some of the Kurdistan Freedom Movement (KFM) leaders. According to one chieftain

My tribe was divided in such a way that some were fighting as Peshmerga at the Kurdish Revolution Front and some were fighting for the Ba'athist Regime as *Jash*<sup>3</sup>. After 1975 and the failure of the Kurdish Freedom Movement, the majority of tribes became *Jash*. We were among them and I established a *Jash* brigade composed of 700 members. This was the way we chose to save ourselves, since otherwise we would have been dispatched to fight in the Iran-Iraq war<sup>4</sup>.

Bozarslan (2006:137) argued that “the survival of tribes depends narrowly on the existence of a conflictual environment”. In the war against Iran and Kuwait, support for tribes reached its peak and the government created titles such as ‘The General Sheikh of the Tribe’, ‘Tribe Sheikh’s Deputy’, ‘Tribe’s Flag Carrier’ and ‘The Tribe’s Poet’ (Yehya, 2013). In addition, in order to weaken political Islam, the Ba’ath regime relied on tribal figures (Hassan, 2007). This process can be described as co-optation whereby the regime supports traditional and tribal organizations in favour of the ruling party. After the collapse of the Ba’ath regime, the new Iraqi government again restored power to the tribes to combat Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups. It formed the *Al-Sahwa* forces from various tribes, held congresses for tribes and armed them. Finally, in response to the ISIS invasion in 2014, the Iraqi government

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Sarbest Dewali on 30 March 2014, the chieftain of *Dosky* tribe, which consists of 124 villages.

<sup>3</sup> *Jash* is the Kurdish term which literally means 'donkey foal' and is used to refer to Kurds siding with the Iraqi government, organised in special regiments and used to counter the Kurdish revolts.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Sarbest Dewali.

again formed a militia from tribes, where it plays a major role in the disputed and the Sunni areas\*.

Bruinessen (2002) has argued that the continuation of tribalism is a reaction of Kurdish society to the types of deal made by other states with the Kurdish community, which works as a political coalition to defend itself. With the growing influence of the Iraqi state in the tribal territories, the tribes become larger through their coalitions. On the other hand, this means a tendency to reject non-Kurdish authority. The history of tribes in the KR shows that the rivalry between tribes, supported by state power, has been a dominant feature. Central government has succeeded in utilizing this rivalry against the Kurds themselves and their freedom movements.

For instance, in the fighting between the Ba'ath regime and the KFM in 1974, a Kurdish force of around 20,000 men called *Forsan Al-Kurd*, supported the regime (Al-Khorsan, 2001:219). This army was under the command of each tribe and the government dealt with their chieftains. The soldiers even received their salary through the chieftains. This action strengthened the chieftains' power and position, but on the other hand, deepened the rivalry within Kurdish society to gain more privileges and power. The government entitled these chieftains *Mostashar* which means counsellor to be in command of the tribes' militia (Bruinessen, 2002). In addition, this support by the central government to chieftains helped them to invest in the economic sector and they became the major investors in the urban areas (Gunter, 2004; Stansfield, 2006; Leezenberg, 2005). As mentioned in Chapter One, the chieftains' economic power continued during the period of the KRG with the Oil For Food Programme, smuggling and economic privileges given as rewards for supporting a certain political party (Natali, 2010).

Concerning the current roles of the chieftains, one MP pointed out that

Tribal chieftains today are no longer restricted by the geographical boundary of their villages. They have become super-rich oligarchs of the region. Kurdistan society is the loser, as loyalty shifts from the nation to specific tribes<sup>5</sup>.

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\* After the ISIS invasion, the KRG also established some army for minorities (Christian, Yezidi, Kakai etc.) under the control of the Peshmerga Ministry to protect their own territory in cooperation with the Peshmerga. This refers to the fragmentation of the national army between minorities, tribes and political parties.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Adnan Osman.

However, it is important to notice at that time there was a sense of Kurdishness in Kurdish society (urban and tribes). This sense could be invested by Kurdish political parties in favour of building a national sentiment. Especially by considering the fact that political parties are a modern tool for development and as mentioned in the previous chapter, the key political parties in the KR (especially the PUK) were against tribalism. However, these political parties, in order to gain support, reinforced the tribal sentiment and sometimes a chieftain became a commander either of Peshmerga or of *Forsan Al-Kurd*. In addition, the rivalry among various tribes itself was another factor in strengthening the tribalism. The combination of all these factors was the continuation of the tribal fabric. Even Bengio (2012) refers to the period of the KFM and the role of chieftains in that period in supporting either the Movement or the state.

The chieftain's position is supported from within by the tribe and from the outside by the government. Consequently, the chieftain operated as a link between the members of tribe and the outside world. The dominant political parties continued to fund tribal members via their chieftain after the uprising. A top official of the PUK stated that

If political parties did not reinforce tribes, they could not be reinforced. Tribes and the tribal norms are revived and reinforced by the political parties. Tribes will perish if the political parties do not distribute money or other types of financial and political favours through the tribal chieftains. Such measures reinforce the belief for tribesmen that without the tribe and its chieftain their life, security and prosperity would be jeopardised<sup>6</sup>.

The same statement was reiterated by a top official of the KDP, who pointed out that the political parties of the KR have themselves created some tribes<sup>7</sup>. What is noteworthy is that, despite the tribe originally being based on the male line, some tribes in Kurdish society have been headed by a female, such as the Badinan Surchi tribe which is one of the biggest tribes in the KR<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Sa'adi Ahmad Pira.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Mohamad Mulla Qader.

<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that, although Kurdistan society is patriarchal, it has some specific characteristics which relate to the position of women in society. For example, even in previous eras, Kurds have had female poets and an army commander or occasionally a married man can be known via the name of his wife as an appendix to his name. Statues of famous Kurdish women can be seen in public places or some of their palaces remained as national heritage sites. Even more significantly, in contrast to the Islamic religious principle, which forbids men and women to dance together, they are found together in Kurdish traditional dances.

Broadly, the Iraqi central government policy towards Kurds can be counted as one factor in forming the common sense of nationality among the Kurdish tribes. The central government has always thought that the Kurds make problems for the government. Hence, the paradox that even those Kurdish tribes that joined the central government have been considered as a part of Kurdistan society. With the passage of time, and before the uprising in 1991, the strengthening of a central deprivation policy towards Kurds and the growth of a community of urban educated elites, Kurdish tribal society gained to some extent a sense of nation, even if it was not complete.

As Fuller (1993,109) stated “Even if the Kurds possess a strong sense of their own identity in relation to the surrounding nationalities, their sense of ethnic unity is still poorly developed”. However, after two decades of self-rule, and regime change in Baghdad which brought about the participation of Kurds in the Iraqi government, the Kurdish sense of ethnicity (*Kurdaiety*) has grown. In Iraqi parliamentary elections it is very rare that a Kurd in the KR votes for a non-Kurdish list. The various Kurdish parties in the Iraqi parliament form the Kurdistan Coalition. Even when the ruling parties in the KR faced strong opposition in the Kurdistan parliament, they combined with the opposition to form a Kurdish united policy in the Iraqi parliament.

However, the enhanced sense of *Kurdaiety* did not diminish the sense of tribalism or locality. In fact, the political parties reinforced tribal power by using them as a kind of mechanism for and object of political influence. Political identities within the KR are an amalgam of ethnicity (*Kurdaiety*) and locality. Ethnicity is more important in relation to the ‘other’ (non-Kurds), while locality is important for internal political competition.

Returning to our argument, in the period from 1960s, to end of 1980s, the urban population increased by 35%, following the destruction of villages, the relocation of the Kurdish inhabitants, and the Arabization process. These factors led to the growth of a sense of insecurity, which forced people to rely on the security provided by their tribe. Furthermore, they impacted negatively on the rationalization and bureaucratization processes of society, due to the persistence of powerful traditional attitudes in cities (Stansfield, 2003; Natali, 2010:23). The tribes retained some of their collective, rural norms. For example, people often

use their village, city or tribal nickname<sup>9</sup>; or they still keep their livestock in the cities. Even the majority of top political leaders have a tribal base, support or nickname.

Although, in the urban areas tribal ties declined and the geographical link between the tribal members disappeared but the blood ties still exist. When a member of a tribe faces a problem, especially with those outside his tribe, members of the tribe often consider the problem to be a shared one and defend each other<sup>10</sup>. As McDowell (2007:13) claims, Kurdish society is still “based upon kinship ideology”. This is because the purpose of the urbanization process was not to modernise society, it did not result in the creation of a middle class as a social stratum independent from the governmental economic sector. Instead, as Stansfield (2003) pointed out, in the 1980s, the Iraqi government spent large petrodollar sums in the KR to create urbanization via forced settlement, and promote a culture of dependency on central government.

In brief, the tribes had a role in politics either through their support for the Iraqi central government against the KFM or vice versa. The balance of tribal power was modified following the uprising, when the financial power of the political parties increased and was used to gain tribes’ support. After the uprising, tribal militias were brought under the command of the political parties, but often with a commander from the same tribe. In the Yellow Zone, the majority of the militias became a part of the KDP Peshmerga and in the Green Zone they became a part of the PUK Peshmerga<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with Ihsan Abdullah.

<sup>10</sup> In an informal conversation with a taxi driver, I asked about his tribe and why they (the tribe members) need a chieftain when they live in the city? He replied that “everybody needs a master or a Big Brother to solve their problems or protect themselves”. It means that the tribe to some extent still has a security and justice role.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Ibrahim Ali Haji Malo, the chieftain of the Mizori tribe, which consists of 111 villages.



## **Social Fabric in the Kurdistan Region**

Kurdish society in the broadest sense can be divided into semi-nomadic tribes, rural and urban society. Kalhor (2006:102-104), referring to the wider context combines the nomadic and rural categories and states that traditionally nomadic tribal life predominated, although rural life and its economic role are important. In contrast, Bruinessen (1992), believes that the Kurds mainly inhabit urban and rural areas, while nomadic tribes are secondary. In the Kurdish language, the terms *Kucher* or *Rewend* are used to describe the nomadic tribes. In the KR, the tribe as a community that migrates from one place to another is less common as tribes have often settled in villages or been forcibly relocated to cities either by the government or by ongoing bombardment by Turkey and Iran since 1992 in the boundaries area, which is the main place for nomadic-and semi-nomadic tribes. In addition, after 1996, a combination of the OFFP with the recruitment of farmers and members of semi-nomadic tribes, encouraged them to be settled tribes. For this reason, the majority of Kurdish rural areas consist of small villages, which are either a part of a tribe or are independent, keeping their own characteristics such as having a Mukhtar and a Rish Spee Assembly. In terms of bureaucratic procedures, a Mukhtar is more powerful than the Rish Spee Assembly. However, the power of the Assembly within a village, to which the Mukhtar belongs, is greater than the Mukhtar's.

Not all villages consist of tribes or consist of tribesmen (Edmonds, 1957). Bruinessen (1992:133) mentioned that “the structure of Kurdish tribes has various degrees of complexity”. Even within the villages of a single tribe, different social customs can be found. Economic relationships between farmers and chieftains and among community members can vary from place to place. Communities, customs and the relationship between land and community are not always based on tribal arrangements. For example, sometimes people from other tribes or villages will rent or cultivate in the village or on tribal land, and may share crops or not. Often community ties continue even when a member does not live within the community. These ties can extend beyond the relationship between farmers and land or between farmers and their landlord. For instance, a person who lives in an urban area often continues to use their tribal or village title. Annually, on one day in spring, the tribe or village members hold a ceremony together. Often the ceremony is supported by a political party, such as the ‘*Jaf Culture*’ ceremony that is usually supported financially by the PUK.

Religion is another factor that plays an important role in the power of a tribe and its chieftain<sup>12</sup> (Asasard, 2009). The head of the tribe may be either a non-religious figure (the feudal *Agha* and *Mir*), a religious-feudal figure or a purely religious figure (*Sheikh*). The eldest son usually inherits but, in the absence of a son, a female can be the successor. Moreover, a chieftain can be chosen by agreement between heads of villages of a tribe or by the government (Bois, 1966); or even by a political party. In the absence of a chieftain, his or her close relatives exercise the power of the chieftain and solve problems. However, if the chieftain does not have a successor, or his successor is not old enough, the closest relative takes this position<sup>13</sup>.

At the present time these figures have a role in political, economic and military affairs. The role of the Sheikh is the most important. Originally, the Sheikh's authority derived from religion, but in the middle of the nineteenth century this combined with nationalist motives, illustrated by the Sheikhs of the Barzani and Talabani tribes. Sheikhs were able to cut across geographical and tribal boundaries and build an extensive power base (Benjamin, 2007). Bruinessen (1992) also pointed out that in the nineteenth century, when the Ottoman Empire launched the policy of centralizing power by destroying the Kurdish principality and its authority to solve disputes, it allowed the influence of the Sheikh to grow. The authority of the Sheikh was not limited to the boundaries of the tribes. As a man of God, he could mediate to solve disputes between different tribes. Given this increase in authority, it is not surprising that the leaders of the majority of Kurdish rebel and national movements were religious figures.

The combination of villages into larger tribal communities, or the splitting of tribes, show that ties to land and not only blood ties are decisive for solidarity. Certain sects had a role in the expansion of the tribe, when a number of villages combined to follow the founder of the sect. Groups of villages may conform to natural geographical features and have control of check points (governmental, tribal or both)- as can be seen, for example, at the boundary between the Surchi and Barzani, or at the boundary between the latter and the Mzori tribe, which is a both a river and a check point. The borders of tribes are not fixed, especially in the vicinity of cities or in tourist areas. Near to cities, the extension of the public infrastructure transforms the character of tribal land. In the villages that attract tourists, the

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Saro Qadir.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Ibrahim Ali Haji Malo and Sarbest Dewali.

selling of land to outsiders has become a normal business, while in other rural districts it is forbidden to sell land to foreign (non-village) people, or it is very rare.

Often the tribes have control of their own land and the land expropriated by the government needs agreement from both sides<sup>14</sup>. In non-urban areas, the government's ability to influence certain issues such as the management of land disputes and social matters (including female rights, honour, polygamy and elopement issues) is reduced. Both the chieftain and government or a political party may become involved in solving such problems and the relevant documents will be kept in both governmental and party archives<sup>15</sup>. Thus a tribe (a traditional body) can play the role of a court in conjunction with the government and political parties (modern bodies).

To add to these two factors (religious and economic), external threats either from other tribes or from central government, have played a role in the formation, growth and division of tribes (Back, 1996). When a tribe increases in size, its political power also increases. According to one MP,

It is normal to have a tribe member representative of the tribe in the parliament, as tribes constitute a segment of the society and they can play their part in deciding which candidate should get more votes. Nevertheless, this results in the election to parliament of candidates with tribal affiliations and prone to tribal norms<sup>16</sup>.

Geographical position is another factor that impacts strongly on the maintenance of tribal power in the KR. It is surrounded by neighbouring states: the boundary area with Turkey is under the influence of Turkish culture and power, the southern part of the region is under Arab influence (Iraq and Syria) and the Iranian part is influenced by Persian culture. Chieftains have often been supported by one of these countries against another tribe or against the KFM (Bruinessen, 1992). The heterogeneity of Kurdish communities, which impacts on cultural exchange and trade (Fuller, 1993) is increased by the mountainous terrain. The existence of various religions and sects has also created a heterogeneous society.

The emergence of the Marxist and socialist parties after WWII, did not eliminate cronyism and traditional features. In the 1980s and 1990s, the socio-political elites who had experience

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<sup>14</sup> At present if a chieftain has more than 300 dunums (four dunums is equal to one hectare), the government takes the rest and redistributes it among the tribe. This policy was the result of land reform law in the early republican era in the 1960s (Interview with Sarbest Dewali).

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Sarbest Dewali and Ibrahim Ali Haji Malo.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Amina Zikri.

in western countries and were influenced by modernisation studies, tried to inject this new culture into the region's tribal body without prior preparation (Al-Khorsan, 2001). Not only did they fail to achieve their goal to make up for the cultural deficit, they actually reinforced tribal culture as a reaction to these alien ideas and paved the way for the emergence of extremist Islamic beliefs and factions. Other urban elites either returned to their tribal base to gain their support or to establish the military wings of their parties. It transformed tribal conflicts into party struggles.

According to one interviewee,

One reason for the shift among educated political elites towards tribal support is that, political parties in the KR are either traditionally formed from tribal *Diwexans*<sup>17</sup> or have been compelled to resort back to these *Diwexans* since their foundation as parties. The power and influence of *Diwexan* appears invincible; throughout the history of both liberation movements and tranquillity, political parties have always resorted to tribal support. Conversely, the political parties have always needed these tribes to guarantee their votes and constituency support. Thus, the tribal mentality infiltrates the centres of decision making. This explains why, although political parties are established by the elitist educated intelligentsia, they gradually end up being run by tribal figures<sup>18</sup>.

What is also important, is the internal financial structure of each clan-village. Some villages have a Fund Box or "*Sindoq*". A group of families or *Binemale(s)* volunteer to collect a sum of money for the Box. Under social pressure most families participate. The sum is different from one family to another according to their financial means. The Box will be kept by a person who is considered to be reliable. The money collected is administered by the Village Assembly that often is run by the *Rish Spee*, and is spent on various objects such as funeral events, helping a poor family in the village, helping a family with wedding expenses, helping orphans or the treatment of an acute disease.

The Fund Box operates as a local credit bank in supporting its members when they face tough economic situations. Even non-participating families can access the benefits of the Box, by virtue of their membership of the *Binemale*. This financial support is, on the one hand, democratic in the sense that each person's participation is based on his or her economic

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<sup>17</sup> The *Diwexans* that I visited were large palaces, often divided into three or more parts. One part is for the chieftain's family, one part for guests and one part for servants and guards. The latest models of cars can be seen in the *Diwexan* yard that belongs to the chieftain. The number of cars, guards and the size of the *Diwexan* corresponds to the power of the chieftain. Sometimes beside the *Diwexan*, the chieftain has another house to stay in.

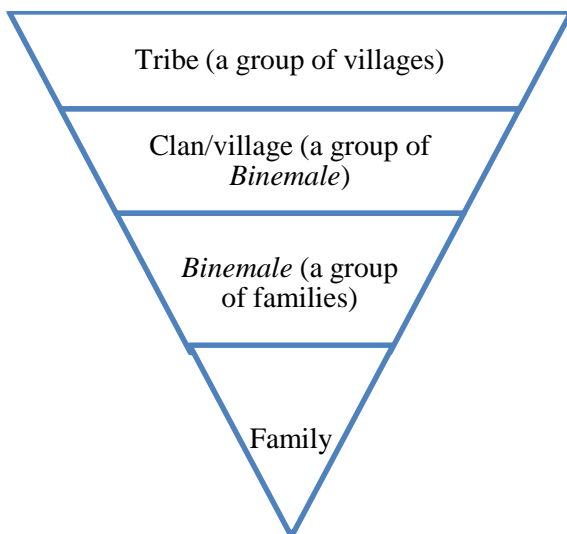
<sup>18</sup> Interview with Mohamad Haji.

resources, while on the other, it can reinforce the kinship ties and encourage loyalty and develop feeling between the members of a community. This is particularly important if the government is unable or unwilling to offer such financial services. The custom generates a sense that everybody has a responsibility to contribute, to help and to share when the government lacks the capacity to provide public services. In villages or among relatives that do not have a Box, they usually help each other in events such as weddings, funerals and medical expenses.

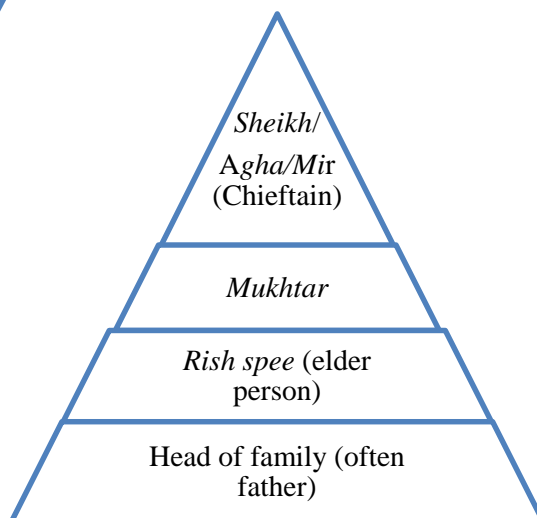
All of these factors (war, agricultural economy, geographical position, the type of Kurdish Freedom Movement, the religious background of its key figures and the relationship between parties and tribes) have shaped the tribal social fabric of society in the KR. The tribe as a local, traditional and kinship base, intersects with the larger scale fabric of religious authority, political power and economic exchange. The pyramids below show the structure of a tribe by its level of formation and its hierarchy of power embodied in leadership.

Figure 8.2: The Structure of a Tribe

A: Tribal social structure



B: Tribal structure through influential figures



Within a tribe, the Sheikh, Mir or Agha is the supreme authority who owns extensive tracts of fertile land and livestock. He often has the power to divide the tribe or village's land between the members of the tribe or even persons outside the tribe (Ahmad, 2008). However, the influence of political parties does not end with the chieftain. It penetrates into other parts of the pyramid. Each figure of the pyramid has their own specific role. The chieftain has the highest rank and the power to influence all the members of the tribe. The Mukhtar, because of his role as an informal administrator has an impact on the clan or village. Sometimes the

Mukhtar is a low rank military commander of a political party (often the PUK or the KDP). The chieftain's position is inherited, while the Mukhtar is elected by male farmers, but gains a salary from the dominant political party or from government and is administratively connected to the district or subdistrict<sup>19</sup>. (In city districts a political party has influence in electing Mukhtar by supporting a candidate or electing them unopposed).

If a *Rish Spee* or head of the *Binemale*<sup>20</sup> supports a powerful nominated Mukhtar, he often gains economic benefits from the dominant political party such as a retirement salary or employment for a member or members of his family in the party, government or military organs. This co-optation system creates parallels between the political system and tribal organizations. In fact, the method for electing Mukhtars is a kind of limited democracy where elders (*Rish Spees*) who represent a number of families will choose the Mukhtar. However, it is sort of being democratic in that the number of participants in the election process is restricted and mainly males participate in the elections.

To complete this overview of the tribal base of Kurdistan society, it is important to consider the legal definition of family. According to Law No.8 (2011) under the title of 'An Act Against Domestic Violence', the family is defined as "a group of natural persons who have a married relationship and relative relationship which continues to the fourth generation, and which has been adopted by law". The definition shows that the base of the family in Kurdish society is very broad, and includes nearly all relatives. This mirrors the reality of Kurdistan society, where the meaning of the family extends well beyond parents and siblings.

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Sarbest Dewali.

<sup>20</sup> In Kurdistan society the world of *Binemale* is used to refer to a family whose members consist of a father, sons and male grandsons, which means that if a girl marries a person who is not related to them by blood, she is not included the *Binemale* and blood transfer just by male members. Often the females do not receive an inheritance. The system clearly favours the role of males.

## Connection Between Tribes and Political Parties

Before the uprising, some of the chieftains and *Mostashars* with their militia forces (*Jash*) co-operated with the Peshmerga to fight against the Ba'ath regime. The Kurdistan Front announced an amnesty to those chieftains who fought against the Kurdish Movement (Hiro, 2001; Bruinessen, 2002; Malanczuk, 1991). In the uprising in 1991, a number of chieftains and *Jash* commanders who were hostile to the KDP joined the PUK and vice versa. In the confused period of the uprising, several chieftains formed the "Society of Kurdish Tribes" to protect their tribal identity. Some chieftains established their own parties, such as the Conservative party, whose members are from the Surchi tribe (McDowell, 2007:380).

As a response, and because of a vacuum of power and disorder, and because the tribes were powerful, the political parties' formed the *Rekxrawe Komelayetyiekan* (Societal Organizations), the majority of whose members were representatives of tribes. These organizations still survive under different titles and under the authority of the dominant parties. For example, the PUK has a formal unit in its organisational structure called the "Social Office" and the KDP has the "Solving Tribes Disputes Office", which are responsible for solving social problems and disputes between local communities, villages, clans and tribes, either alone or in co-operation with chieftains. The rivalry between the PUK and the KDP reinforced the tribes' political power by strengthening their economic power. With the outbreak of the uprising, the participation of the *Mostashars*, helped them and other tribal figures to enhance their socio-political position and achieve office government (Yehya, 2013). In addition, this rivalry enabled chieftains, local strong men and *Mostashars* to engage in the misappropriation of public resources without facing criminal prosecution. In 1992, for instance, out of 700 public vehicles in the Erbil municipality, just 92 remained and the rest were sold to Iran. The political parties chose silence in order to not lose their support (McDowell, 2007:383).

The PUK and KDP calculated that by gaining the chieftains support, the tribesmen would continue to support them. For this reason, both parties have continued to fund the *Diwexans* of the Aghas and Sheikhs. The linkage between tribes and political parties is again reinforced to the extent that a party can benefit this or that tribe more than another party. Tribes have regularly switched their backing from one party to another. Consequently, the political

support of the tribe is conditioned by economic and political interests<sup>21</sup>. Sometimes, chieftains have bodyguards who are paid either by the PUK or the KDP. This reflects the fact that the army is controlled by parties and tribal leaders influence them in turn<sup>22</sup>.

After the parliamentary elections and the formation of a cabinet in 1992, apart from some conflicts between the KDP and the Surchi tribe during the internal war, the tribes accepted the authority of government (Stansfield, 2006). However, the internal war strengthened the position of chieftains, because tribes became a source of military supply to political parties on the one hand, and could challenge the power of a particular party in its dominant area by supporting a rival party on the other. Socially, the collapse of the KRG's security agencies led to individuals finding themselves in a security vacuum, with the result that tribes became a safe haven for the tribe's members. This led to the strengthening of tribal affiliations and the reinforcement of the position of chieftains.

Belonging to a tribe allowed its members to gain economic benefits, power, social position and security. However, in the absence of an effective government, any disagreement between tribes could lead to armed conflict or tension (Özcan, 2004). This conflict and tension often occurred among Kurdish tribes on issues such as division of land, power or matters of honour related to women. This phenomenon constituted one of the main obstacles to the development process. When political parties and chieftains solve disputes between tribes, it strengthens the parties' social role and weakens the power of the law and courts.

Concerning the relationship between the tribe and political parties after the uprising, McDowell (2007:385-386) observes that

Following the demise of traditional tribalism as the prime form of socio-political organization during the 1970s, the 1990s saw the emergence of neo-tribalism as two major 'confederations' competed for hegemony in Iraqi Kurdistan. At the centre of each party, as with traditional confederations, lay a core of those loyal to the paramount. Beyond this core lay a widening group of people who supported one

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<sup>21</sup> Interview with Mohamad Haji, Saro Qadir and Bayan Ahmad. When asked the question: Do parties fund Diwexan?, the participant chieftains denied this and explained that the party/government pays the salary of bodyguards and guards of the Diwexan. When the same question was put to cadres of different political parties, they agreed that the PUK and the KDP do fund chieftains' Diwexans. One reason why chieftains reject this claim could be that before the uprising, chieftains had more independent space, economically, politically and militarily. However, after the uprising, the political parties/government became more powerful, especially in terms of their capacity to fund chieftains, but the chieftains want to show society that they are independent.

<sup>22</sup> Bodyguards who are paid by political parties, wear official army uniforms, but it is easy to identify to which party they belong: the KDP if they wear a red cap or the PUK if they wear a green cap.



confederation or the other less directly. Thus, the system of patronage and power still reached down to the street through intermediaries who themselves acquired followings through local patronage. These new 'Aghas' are the *Peshmerga* or *Jash* commanders who commanded their own following.

However, as mentioned the Ba'ath regime through the 1970s and 1980s reinforced the tribalism to gain support against the KFM and Iran. McDowell uses the concept of neo-tribalism for Kurdistan society. In this view, the relationship between tribes and the non-indigenous (central Iraqi government) power shifted after the uprising to one between tribes and an indigenous power. The interviews confirm this interpretation. The new situation also brought the tribes' direct military power under the control of the political parties<sup>23</sup>. With the consolidation of indigenous power, the horizontal power of tribes shifted to a vertical axis. Each federation or political party uses the tribes as part of its base to stay in power, a situation which can create a potentially unstable society; because the government needs stable institutions and a degree of democratic participation.

The political support by tribes for parties in return for economic benefits was reinforced by the Oil for Food Programme which followed the internal war. New ties resulted in the leaders of political parties as well as chieftains becoming wealthy in the process of trade with the UN agencies (Natali, 2010). After 2003, most of the chieftains engaged in reconstruction projects or the property business<sup>24</sup>. Previously, in the period when the KR was under the double sanction of the UN and the Iraqi government, the chieftain, Mukhtar and Agha had the duty to distribute daily subsistence. In fact, the country's budget was spent in various ways to reproduce tribal values. This was done for example, by holding tribal ceremonies, village festivals, funding the chieftain's palace and by nominating and employing tribal figures in government departments. The duties of the *Diwexan* would include informal meetings to solve financial problems and disputes, collecting votes in elections for a particular party, and assembling troops for the party's militia<sup>25</sup>.

Often the head of the tribe, clan or village plays a role in the employment of community members. There are mutual advantages to these figures and the political parties in these arrangements. Each village (and sub-districts) has its Mukhtar (meaning both a person who has been selected and who has a kind of plenipotentiary role). Each Mukhtar has their own

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<sup>23</sup> Interview with Sarbest Dewali.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Ibrahim Ali Haji Malo and Sarbest Dewali.

<sup>25</sup> Chieftains and cadres of various political parties mentioned these roles of tribes in their interviews.

document stamp (seal) that signifies legal power in administrative affairs. Consequently, this informal body becomes a part of the bureaucratic system. In choosing a Mukhtar, parties intervene in their zones and often the one elected is the one who shows the greatest party loyalty. The Mukhtar is a representative who conveys the village's demands to the official authority and vice versa.

The same policy in appointing the Mukhtar was followed by the Ba'ath regime in order to mediate between the rural community and government for economic benefit (Baram, 1997). Since this time in the KR, the bureaucratic system has originated with the Mukhtar of a sub-district or a village. Without his Support Letters it is difficult for a person to advance his or her case. In the Yellow Zone the majority of Mukhtars are appointed by the KDP, while in the Green Zone the PUK chooses them via a panel which is called a District Assembly (*Anjomany Garak*). This cooperation between the Mukhtar and a political party is not explicit in the political party's structure. However, there is more than one channel of connection between them, for example, via the Organization Office or through various party's local branches.

According to a report on the Hawlati website in 2013, the Interior Ministry responsible for keeping national security proposed a number of conditions in the appointment of Mukhtars in sub-districts. According to the proposal, the Mukhtar is required to have at least elementary schooling, be a married person between 30 to 50 years old, and should be a candidate for four years, but renewable. Among the duties of the Mukhtar is the requirement to record data in areas under his authority secretly and to report any suspicious movements (Mohammad, 2013). In this way the authorities have attempted to impose some rational criteria to counter the purely traditional; by increasing his security and bureaucratic role.

At the same time, members of the KR parliament submitted a proposal concerning Mukhtars. It specified that they should be elected, have a purely representative role, be awarded a monthly salary (actually a grant rather than a salary), have the same security duties (reporting any suspicious movements by residents or foreigners in their sub-districts) and a responsibility to report the district or village's problems to the authorities (Parliament, Submitted legislation No:1515, 2013). The proposal has not yet been passed into law and still the Mukhtar security role is ambiguous; especially regarding the villages. Although, the role of the Mukhtar is debated, it is crucial in both the administrative and security sectors of the KR. This phenomenon can come into conflict with administrative norms or at least create barriers to modernizing the state bureaucracy.

The outcome of this party and clan-tribal domination is a segmented society, a corrupted economic sector, a negatively polarized society and a non-nationalized army. One interviewee spoke at length of the connection between parties and tribes.

The KDP, with tribalism nesting in the heart of its organisation, is strongest in the rural mountainous districts where tribalism is prevalent. Whereas the PUK, which is ideologically opposed to tribalism (at least at the early period of its existence), is strongest in the urbanised districts and the lowland-rural areas. The KDP is more suited to that social structure and therefore more able to exploit it to its advantage than other parties. There are reasons why competing Kurdish parties are so keen to forge tribal allegiances. The social system is based upon the collective loyalty of the tribe. The system works on the basis that a political party will bestow the chief certain financial rewards and indulge them with privileges in return for them securing the loyalties of their entourage. The financial awards come in various forms, such as the allocation of a number of salaries for their personal bodyguards, or/and a monthly allowance for their divan maintenance. The privileges come in the form of gifts of cars, land allocations, the appointment of relatives to government posts and the award of government contracts<sup>26</sup>.

The same point was repeated by another interviewee who explained that in the KDP area, tribal loyalties are more powerful, and their armed forces and administrative officials have to be from these tribes<sup>27</sup>.

At present, the official authorities (parties and government) command the army, which limits the direct military influence of tribes. However, their influence is articulated by a modern tool, which is elections. Tribes play the crucial role in the success of political parties in winning public elections<sup>28</sup>. According to two different reports from the Hawlati (2013) about the candidates in the fourth term of the parliamentary elections in the Badinan area in 2013, 90 candidates from fourteen different political lists were nominated from various tribes. The KDP list, nominated 34 out of its 100 candidates from the whole of the KR, 26 of whom were from the Badinan area and 12 of whom represented various tribes and entered parliament. The IU and the PUK nominated 17 candidates each (Anwar,

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with Hishyar Abid.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Mohamad Haji.

<sup>28</sup> My fieldwork in the KR to study this subject coincided with the Iraqi parliament and KR's provincial elections. Each list contained tribal candidates. I asked the question concerning the tribal background of nominated candidates and 'was the candidate qualified for such a post?' Many answered negatively, however still they voted for them because the nominated candidate is from their tribe. The quality, rationality and policies of the candidates are less relevant than their tribe. Even a picture calendar contains the slogan of a tribe, for example "Dosky is our Identity". Furthermore, in some areas when people ask 'who are you?', they refer to tribal identity and not personal identity.

2013). Hence, the tribes are one of linkages between the party, parliament and government.

The 2013 and 2014 elections in the KR, unlike those held previously, were run by semi-open list and political parties nominated a wider range of figures. Voters were free to choose their nominated candidate from the list. The majority of those who gained votes had either a tribal or an Islamic background. One interviewee stated that the semi-open list had negative consequences in comparison with the closed list. In the closed list, the parties put the names of qualified members at the beginning of the election list. In the semi-open list voters have more freedom in choosing their members, with the result that the majority of those who entered parliament were elected for reasons of their background identity<sup>29</sup>.

However, not all political parties have exploited tribal networks to an equal extent. For example, according to one interviewee the GM through its General Co-ordinator has relationships with the tribal chieftains, which go back to the period before the uprising<sup>30</sup>. The IU interviewee explained that his party has a relationship with tribes and chieftains. But because the PUK and the KDP fund the *Diwexan*, the chieftains have closer relationships with these two parties<sup>31</sup>. The IU's failure to gain tribal support is linked to the fact that the tribes make resource demands. However, because the national budget is under the control of the PUK and the KDP, the IU has not succeeded in gaining tribal support<sup>32</sup>. Some political parties instead of putting a traditional tribal figure on its ballot list, try to find a well-educated member of the tribe with higher level qualifications to represent the tribe. Sometimes, political parties use religious figures, both as candidates and campaigners to collect votes among more conservative and tribal populations<sup>33</sup>. One interviewee observed that, while those from tribal backgrounds are necessary for attracting votes, others who have more ability and knowledge are needed to perform duties in the Parliamentary Committees<sup>34</sup>.

After the rise of the Islamic parties, clergy and Islamic missionary names were added to the electoral lists by the various political parties. Interviewees explained that this was in order

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<sup>29</sup> All participants that I interviewed agreed that in the elections for the Kurdistan parliament and provincial government of both 2013 and 2014, the majority who gained votes were from tribal backgrounds and the semi-open list had a negative role in allowing unqualified candidates to enter into parliament without any major change in the number of votes that political parties had gained via the closed list.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Adnan Osman.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Bayan Ahmad

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Salahaddin Babaker

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Omer Nuraldini.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Haydar Esmail Abdullah.

to gain votes and not a positive change. “To win in elections a party will adopt any means, even if they conflict with its ideology and goals”<sup>35</sup>. This may eventually lead to these social forces becoming powerful in guiding the political parties and not vice versa, so political parties become the followers of society and not leaders of it<sup>36</sup>.

This evidence from elections warrants the conclusion that: the tribal base is still powerful in the region; political parties recruit from this base to gain the tribes’ votes; the important resolutions and politics drawn up in the political bureaus must serve firstly parties’ interests and then they need to gain a majority of votes to become law. Resorting to tribal and religious networks is one of the best options to guarantee this. It is obvious how the domination of parties and the reproduction of tribalism as a characteristic of traditional society parallel each other. The significance of tribal identity in the socio-political mosaic also invites the leaders of the parties to be charismatic figures. For this reason, leadership changes are very rare in the socio-political system of the KR.

Employment is another influential factor in the relationship between parties and tribes. The KDP and the PUK have monopolized the main opportunities for employment including high administrative positions. Many people join the party and vote for it to gain economic and employment benefits. This kind of relationship can be defined as both patronage and clientelism. Fukuyama (2013:16) defines patronage and clientelism as

A reciprocal exchange of favors between two individuals of different status and power, usually involving favors given by the patron to the client in exchange for the client’s loyalty and political power. Clientelism is distinguished from patronage primarily by its scale, and by the use of a hierarchy of organized intermediaries in the distribution of favors. As such, clientelism is a phenomenon associated with electoral democracies.

The connection between parties and tribes shows how the tribes’ participation in power impacts negatively on the democratic institutionalisation process and distribution of wealth and power. One aspect of the contest between different political parties is the level of support provided by the tribes, which is based on the level of privileges that this or that party can offer to the chieftain. The outcome is “incongruence between formal rule-making processes and de facto power holders” (Levitsky and Murillo, 2013:96). Having modern institutions does not mean that they perform on the basis of modern values or that their functions are modernized. This is one of the main problems facing political development in the KR. In a

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<sup>35</sup> Interview with Zana Rostai.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Omer Nuraldini.

USA investigation of Kurdish tribes in 2006, in an interview with Sheikh Mazhar Surchi, the Surchi tribal leader reported that

Tribes were forced to cooperate with the KDP and the PUK because the parties controlled all employment and education opportunities.... If you are not a member of either the KDP or the PUK, you cannot prosper in the KRG - the parties will insult or impose on you until you join (Wilgenburg, 2011).

This response indicates that the tribal power has limits but still they see themselves as counterparts to the government, and that political parties instead of government control the key sectors.

Tensions often occur between a tribe, a village or clan community and a political party. If the tension is not resolved, the community may be inclined to support another powerful party which can provide better funding, better socio-political opportunities or economic benefits. The best example is the armed conflict between the KDP and the Surchi tribe, which split the tribe's support between the PUK and the KDP, and the migration of a part of the tribe to the PUK zone and electing a new chieftain as a counterpart to another chieftain of the same tribe. This led to new competition and the emergence of new tribal and political figures within the tribe itself to the detriment of the political development process.

To sum up, the current relationship between tribes and between them and the parties is not based on a common enemy as it was previously. Nevertheless, it has not been replaced by the creation of a socio-economic class to facilitate economic and political development; or the emergence of a new identity and values within the parties to encourage society towards development. On the contrary, in order to remain in power, political parties have tried to centralize power, procedures and administrative units while relying on the support of the tribal network. As Lipset (1960) argued, social divisions which have a historical background and inequality in the distribution of wealth will have an impact on political stability if they remain unresolved. For political parties, keeping the status quo has a higher priority than planning for development.

## **Conclusion**

The KR is not totally based on tribal society and tribal culture. Forces that have an impact on tribalism work in different directions; sometimes they strengthen it and sometimes they weaken it according to the play of political interests. Nonetheless, there is a powerful connection between political parties and tribes. After the establishment of governmental institutions, the deep rivalry between political parties caused tribal figures to remain influential in the political process. Often, in the various government and party offices, the top circle of officials or secretaries is filled by a tribal figure and his or her family and relatives. These relationships impact negatively on the development of rational bureaucratic administration.

With the establishment of the government institutions in 1992, the power of the tribes and chieftains was reduced, however, the tribes' power did not disappear entirely. It demonstrates that the tribal fabric is not fixed, but decision makers can shape it in favour of their economic and political ends. Hence, after the uprising, connections were transformed into a patron-client relationship, in which tribes often act as a broker between society and government or political parties (Leezenberg, 2006).

Political parties are compelled to follow two types of policy at the same time. On the one hand, they need to maintain their tribal affiliations to preserve their tribal support; and on the other, they need to control the power of the tribes to prevent threats to the party's power. The main factor in a party's strength and cohesion is not only its tribal backing, but also the intensity of party discipline within the tribe and among its elected representatives who simultaneously serve their own personal interests, the interests of the party and the tribe's interests. This diffusion of power has enabled parties to bridge cross-cutting cleavages in society. Therefore, political parties which were considered to be a modern tool for the transformation of tribal society into a modern one, have actually deepened the social cleavages in the KR.

In brief, the KR has adopted modern formal political structures, however, the orientation of the ordinary person towards politics is based more on traditional incentives. Locality, religious orientations and tribal loyalties are the criteria for political participation and the formation of political culture. These orientations are produced by traditional structures (tribes and religion), modern structures (political parties) and the interaction between the two.

## **Chapter Nine: Fragile Entity, the Impact of Regional Intervention on Political Development**

### **Introduction**

Greater Kurdistan extends to several countries. This means that any change or development in the KR cannot simply be considered a domestic issue, it is also related to the politics of the regional powers. From the establishment of the Iraqi state in 1921 up to now, the neighbouring governments either alone or with the support of international powers have maintained a presence in the KR. As discussed in Chapter 5, the Kurdish internal war in the 1990s provided a context for direct intervention by neighbouring governments. The KDP allied with Iraq and Turkey and the PUK with Iran, Turkey and Syria or both parties together with one of the states.

After 2003, due to deepening sectarianism throughout the Middle East, as well as the discovery of natural resources in the KR, the world's eyes focused more on this entity (Kirmanj, 2013). However, external relationships, whether involving the KRG or the dominant parties (the PUK and the KDP), have been confused and interlocked. On becoming a federal entity, the KRG broadened its external relations. By 2016, thirty-five countries had established their consulates or economic commercial offices in the KR. The region has a department of foreign relations and can enter into political and economic relationships with other countries via fourteen offices across the world (KRG, 2016a).

The Arab states with a Kurdish population such as Syria have an impact on the KR. The role of Syria, however, has been ambiguous since the uprising in Syria in 2011 and ongoing events (Bryza, 2012). The voice of other Arab states on the Kurdish question often comes through either the Arab League or the Islamic Conference, which are both against an independent Kurdistan and in support of a united Iraq (Alarabiya, 2014; Stansfield, 2014). However, this rhetoric is open to change.

Undoubtedly, the US<sup>1</sup> and the EU have an influential role in the political and economic development of the KR. The role of Western society in supplying a safe haven was discussed

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<sup>1</sup>The US played an important role in both the creation of the KR and preserving its stability. As is well known, in 1991 it participated with Turkey and some European states in the creation of a safe haven, which led to the establishment of the KR. They then provided the Non Fly Zone for the KR which prevented attacks from the Baghdad authority on the KR. In 1998, the US brokered the peace agreement between the PUK and the KDP which resulted in an end to the internal conflict. In 2003, it attacked Ansar Al-Islam, an extremist Islamic group in the KR. In 2005, the US and its European allies supported the Kurds' demand for federalism and in 2014,



in the second chapter. However, the present chapter concentrates mainly on Turkey and Iran as neighbouring gateways and as the most powerful adjoining countries.

The chapter reviews the events that have occurred in the regional context to understand their impact on the KR and its developmental pathway. It presents a chronology and analysis of events focused on the obstacles to political development. It is important to remember that this thesis covers the period since the establishment of the KRG in 1992 up to its seventh cabinet in 2014. Important events occurred in mid-2014, when ISIS attacked the KR shortly after the end of the seventh cabinet. It is difficult to predict the consequences in terms of political development in the KR. However, where necessary, the chapter will refer to key impacts of the ISIS invasion.

The main aim of this chapter is to explore how neighbouring governments play an important role in the process of political development either by creating stability that results in economic collaboration and trade, or by creating instability through treating the KR as an object of military and security strategy.

### **Turkey: 1992-2003, Conflict and Cooperation**

The Iraqi Kurdistan was a part of the Ottoman Empire known as the Mosul Villayet (province). This Villayet consisted of Kirkuk, Mosul and the current KR. At the time of the events in Iraq in the 1990's, the Turkish president suggested to the international community that the Iraqi state be divided into three federal entities. The plan was called *Ozal's Map* or *Ozal's Federalism*. According to the plan, the Kurdish entity would consist of Erbil, Dohuk and Slemani. The Turkmen entity was Mosul and Kirkuk and the Arab entity would form the other parts of Iraq. The Turkish government then suggested that the Kurd and Turkmen parts be attached to Turkey (Alshameri and Hamid, 2012:277-278). The next president of Turkey, Demirel, reiterated the same request in 1995 to redraw the boundary between Iraq and Turkey with the Mosul Villayet being incorporated into Turkey (Khadir, 2009; Ahmad, 2007).

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when ISIS approached borders of the KR, the US and some other European states' airstrikes supported the Kurdish forces. Hence, the relationship between the KR and western society expanded to include military co-operation between both sides. However, US policy towards the Kurds is still ambiguous and remains in the framework of maintaining a united Iraq. In the disputed areas, the US follows a compromise solution which means attempting to satisfy all ethnic groups in the area. The strategy has not succeeded yet.

However, on the ground, after the Ba'ath regime withdrew its administrative apparatuses from the KR in 1991, a vacuum of power resulted in a flow of refugees into Turkey and the Turkish government with western allies was obliged to create a safe place inside the northern part of Iraq for Kurds. Turkey's purpose was to achieve certain specific goals which were: to prevent the KR from becoming a military base for the PKK; to prevent an uprising in Turkey's Kurdistan, as a way of gaining EU support for accession; to support the US policy of removing the Ba'ath regime; to support the Turkmen as a bargaining chip for Turkish policy in the KR; and to reduce the pressure of Kurdish immigrants on Turkey (Ala'alaf, 2006; Alshameri and Hamid, 2012). Contrary to Turkey's expectation, the Ba'ath regime did not change nor did Turkey achieve its goals. The safe haven shifted into a self-administering entity ready to hold presidential and parliamentary elections.

Both Turkey and Iran explicitly announced that they were against any kind of parliamentary elections in the north of Iraq. However, the self-administering entity became a reality and subsequently pushed Turkey to follow a dual policy. Firstly, they set out to establish secure ties with the Kurds' leaderships. To achieve this purpose both Talabani and Barzani gained Turkish diplomatic passports and as part of this deal, both leaders had to fight against the PKK (Cagaptay, 2012). In order for the action to be legal, the Kurdistan parliament promulgated a law to prohibit the PKK's activities in the KR. The Turkish government subsequently donated US\$13.5 million to the KRG and the Turkish Red Crescent opened its offices in the region. Secondly, Turkey created obstacles to the KRG in its attempt to establish relationships with western countries, or at least closely monitored these relationships. This goal was achieved by the outbreak of internal war and the fragmentation of the KRG into two local administrations (Saifaldin, 2008:172; Saifaldin, 2009:105; McDowell, 2007:384).

Turkey, in fact, tried to control the actions of the KRG by military, economic and political means. The situation caused instability in the region and minimized trade ties which were essential for development. Any trade and humanitarian aid was monitored by the Turkish authorities since Turkey controls the main border crossing with the KR. A portion of this trade was petroleum smuggled via tankers from the KR to Turkey at a price cheaper than the market rate (Natali, 2010).

As discussed in the previous chapters, the conflict between the PUK and the KDP divided the KR geographically and politically. Foreign military intervention commenced in 1996 when the PUK invited Iran to attack the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran that had headquarters

in the KR and then attacked on the headquarters of the KDP in Erbil. In response, the KDP, invited the Iraqi army to return to Erbil, which had been under the control of the PUK (Khalil, 2009; Ala'Aldeen, 2013). Thus, the safe haven became a place for the settlement of old scores between various political parties and even neighbouring governments.

The crucial result of the internal war was that the neighbouring countries successfully overcame, if only temporarily, the sense of united nationalism among Kurds. The collapse of a united government because of the internal war meant that external powers did not deal with the government, but with local administrations or the PUK and the KDP (Charountaki, 2012). On the other hand, with international sanctions on Iraq, economically, the only gateway to supply domestic goods was through Turkey and then Iran. Any hostilities with either state would lead to a tough economic situation.

Turkey as a member of NATO and partner in the international coalition against Iraq in 1991, and as a gateway to Europe, has always been the most important neighbour for the KR. For this reason, the Kurdish leaders tried to cultivate a friendly relationship with Turkey as the most powerful state in the region, which could be an outlet for Kurds to connect at least economically with the outside world; Iran being considered a pariah state from the Western viewpoint (McDowell, 2007; Valdani, 1996). This type of thinking (relationship with the West) originated from Kurdistan's geographical and regional political system. Its landlocked geography and regional antagonism pushed Kurds to seek friends beyond the neighbouring countries.

As the KR was established by an international resolution in 1991, so its survival has depended mainly on international support. For example, when the KRG was established, and after a series of military interventions into the KR by Turkish troops, the Western countries (Netherlands, Norway and Germany) suspended their military trade with it and the European parliament and Russia requested Turkey to withdraw its troops from the KR (Valdani, 1996).

Internally, this protection turned the KR into the focal point for different groups from other parts of Greater Kurdistan which doubled the neighbouring countries' concerns about the future of this entity (Hafezi Nya, 2006; Natali, 2004). This protection can be considered as a tool for the KRG to use as counter-pressure against Iran and Turkey. Through the 1990s, in order to avoid any undesirable outcomes and to protect its own national security, Turkey had developed a policy that basically relied on military action (Özcan, 2011) to make the KR unstable and provide a justification to enter the KR with international backing.

The main result of this policy was non-investment by domestic and foreign companies in the KR. The majority of investment or aid which arrived was humanitarian aid, a situation that is typical of war-torn countries or those suffering from natural disasters. Consequently, in the absence of the private sector, the government-party became the main source of employment, especially in the military sector.

The establishment of a safe place inside Iraq, supported by Turkey, evolved into a political entity. It allowed Turkey to exploit the old hostility between the KDP and the PUK. Beginning with the tension between these parties, Turkey played a role in continuing the war between them and then played the role of broker to end it. This rivalry between the PUK and the KDP, and the attacks of the PKK on the KDP, created an opportunity for the Turkish government to establish military bases in the region in the name of peacekeeping, which resulted in the Ankara Agreement in 1996 between the KDP and the PUK (Saifaldin, 2009; Elik, 2014).

Up to now, these bases have remained in the areas that are under the control of the KDP. It means that any kind of stability in the region has been based on the policy of Turkey (also Iran) towards the KR which can easily be broken. In other words, in the KR the stability required as a main factor to political development depends on the relationship between these two sides. It is true that even temporary stability can give an opportunity for political institutions to establish themselves, but it is difficult to imagine in such a short period a country being able to consolidate its democratic institutions. The KRG's history during this time shows that the neighbouring countries' will to destabilize governmental institutions was greater than their desire to bring stability.

The strengthening of ties between Turkey and the Erbil administration (the KDP) after 1996, and visits by officials of the KDP to Turkey in 2000, came as a warning from Turkey to the PUK. Because of their closeness to the PKK and Iran, the PUK officials were persuaded to visit Turkey to improve their economic and political situation. This move was parallel to the PUK efforts to combat the PKK in the same year (Bengio, 2012).

In 2002, by spreading the rumour of a changing regime in Iraq, the Turkish government accepted assistance from the USA in the war against Iraq. However, unlike the 1990s, military cooperation between the KR and Turkey, the Kurdistan parliament and Iraqi opposition groups opposed the intervention of Turkish troops in the KR and public demonstrations were held in the region which pressed the USA not to allow the involvement

or interference of Turkey in the KR during the war. Even after the war, the KRG and Iraqi government refused any military assistance from the regional powers (Khadir, 2009; Ala'alaf, 2006). This uncertainty and tension in the relationship between the two caused more military pressure on the KR from Turkey which led to the bombing of many of the Kurdish border villages and the destruction of infrastructure, schools and bridges.

Generally, the Turkish policy towards the KR from 1992 to 2003 was based on fuelling conflict between the PUK, the KDP and the PKK to create conditions of instability in the KR. Support for the Turkmen to develop ethnocentric tendencies also led to regressive outcomes for the developmental process. The various relationships with the KR political parties established during this period were based on the dual policy of keeping the KR entity so weak that it would be unable to declare itself to be an independent state and yet strong enough to act against the PKK.

The Turkish policy of supervising political parties in the KR and trying to fill the vacuum of power continued until 2003, when the international community tried to topple the Ba'ath regime. This brought about a new opportunity for the KR. However, the result of all these events was that divisions within government and society deepened, which reflected negatively on the process of political development; because the Turkish government did not participate to strengthen the official (or national) political institutions, but in contrast tried to weaken them. The relationships were not with national institutions but with sub-national organizations (with political parties).

### **Turkey: 2004-2014: From Conflict to Economic and Political Cooperation**

For a period after 2003, the Turkish position towards the KR became severely strained. Turkey lost its influence, due to its having been excluded from participating in the war on Iraq and its political relationships with the KDP deteriorated. Meanwhile, Iran was engaged in the issue of how to run the Iraqi government with a Shia majority and it had the PUK as a strong ally in the north of Iraq.

To cooperate with the USA in the war on Iraq, the Turkish government made a number of conditions: a Kurdish independent state in the north of Iraq would be unacceptable; any kind of federalism in Iraq based on ethnic lines would be rejected; Turkey should have the right to enter easily into the KR under the justification of protecting the Turkmen peoples; disarmament of the Peshmerga; giving broader rights to the Turkmen population; and finally keeping its troops within the northern border of Iraq or with the KR. The above mentioned

points worried the Kurds, the Arab opposition parties and even the EU and resulted in Turkey being prevented from intervening in the war on Iraq (Qader and Salih, 2010; Ala'alaf, 2006:8; Ahmad, 2007:59; Alshameri and Hamid, 2012:287).

In the period from 2003 to 2008, the relationship between the KRG and Turkey reached a nadir and speeches on both sides contained threats against the other. Large scale demonstrations against Turkey were held by people in all the cities of the KR and by various political parties. With the announcement of the war on Iraq, Turkey stated that if the Kurds entered Kirkuk or established a Kurdistan state, the Turkish government would attack it (Stansfield, 2014).

In that period, the main problem that faced Turkey was the Kirkuk issue. It realized that federalism was becoming inevitable. It therefore tried to exclude the Kirkuk province from the federal map and was successful in its attempt to make Kirkuk not just a domestic issue within Iraq, but a regional issue with a future that could impact negatively on the regional context (Ala'alaf, 2006). In the Iraqi parliament elections of 2005, the Kurds gained 27% of votes, a result which Turkey felt to be a threat, because it presaged possible independence for the Kurds. At the same time, Sunni Arab allies of Turkey who boycotted the elections gained only 6% of total Iraqi parliamentary seats, while the Arab Shias who were allied to Iran gained the overwhelming majority (Alshameri and Hamid, 2012; Oktav, 2011:65). These results were not in Turkey's favour and they led to an increase in tension between the KRG and the Turkish government. As a result, the KRG and its key political parties, which before 2003 were allies of Turkey against the PKK, turned to support the PKK as a pressure card against Turkey (Cagaptay, 2012).

Turkey threatened to enter the KR to pursue the PKK guerrillas. However, this was strongly opposed by the USA, Kurdistan political parties and society in general. In spite of the growing tensions, once Kurdish federalism was enshrined within the Iraqi constitution in 2005, and Shias dominated the Baghdad government (synonymous with domination by Iran) Turkey was compelled to accept the status quo and tried to establish a closer relationship with the KRG to keep the balance of power in Iraq (Oktav, 2011). One way was to strengthen economic ties. In 2006, the Kurdistan parliament passed the Investment Law which stated that the KRG would deal with foreign investors in the same way as local investors. Then, in 2007, the Oil and Gas Law was passed, allowing the KRG to export oil. Both laws attracted foreign and local investors and the economic relationship between Turkey and the KR improved. To understand the reasons for the improvement, the above-mentioned political

upheavals within Iraq, the KR and inside Turkey have to be considered. For instance, it is important to note that shortly before the end of the Ba'ath regime in Bagdad in 2003, the AKP had gained power in Turkey in 2002, following the policy of “zero problems with neighbours” or minimizing external tensions. One aspect of this policy was the search for new markets in neighbouring countries (Özel and Özkan, 2015:90). Later, in 2009, with the appointment of Ahmet Davutoğlu as foreign minister, this policy included the KR as well.

The Turkish government had to confront the fact that the KR had officially become a federal unit within Iraq. With the change of regime in Iraq, the Kurds became more united than the Shia and Sunni Arabs. The Baghdad government engaged in sectarian conflicts which reduced the capacity of the government to govern. Therefore, the Sunni Turkish government, which had a more secular than Islamic view of politics, realized that having close ties with the KRG could bring more benefits than disadvantages. As a federal entity the KRG became an important internal and external player in the political arena.

In terms of geography, the KR is the pathway between Turkey and other parts of Iraq. The Iraqi oil pipeline of Kirkuk passes through the KR which is a source of income for the Turkish government. This economic relationship also helped the Turkish government to improve the worsening economic situation in the Kurdish part of Turkey that may in turn have led to a reduction in support for the PKK. The PKK previously utilized the economic situation in these areas against the Turkish government. This relationship tied the KRG more closely to Turkey (Gunter, 2008:42).

The period of 2009 also coincided with the AKP retaining power for a second term and gaining 29% of the Kurdish votes inside Turkey. The party promised to grant political rights to the Kurds in Turkey. In this year, the Turkish government announced the “Openness Democratic Plan” that focused on the economic relationship and direct investment in the KR, while at the same time emphasizing the unity of Iraqi territory (Alshameri and Hamid, 2012:284).

At the regional level, the biggest opportunity for the KR to establish friendly relations with Turkey was the Arab Spring in Syria in 2011. It corresponded with the Turkish “zero problem with neighbours” policy and a change in the PKK political rhetoric (Özcan, 2011; Cagaptay, 2013). In the aftermath of this event and the control of some parts of Syria by Syrian Kurdish parties in 2012 (mainly offshoots of the PKK), the political view of Turkey towards the KRG shifted in favour of a strategic partnership in the Middle East, to prevent

both Kurdish sides, the Iraqi and the Syrian, from converging to have negative effects on Turkey. In security terms, the better the relationship with the KRG, the better the Turkish government could resist the PKK's threat because most of their bases are in the KR. In this way, Turkey realized that it could keep the balance in Iraq against Iran as well. According to the Finnish Swiss report, 75%-80% of construction projects in the KR are undertaken by Turkish companies. The relationship between Turkey and the KR reached a level of "unthinkable decade ago" (Fidan, 2016:120-122). Politically, all these factors could contribute to stability inside Turkey itself.

At the same time, it is important to note the changes in the PKK perspective on the Kurdish question, which contributed to the change in Turkish policy towards the KRG. In 2009, the year which saw an improvement in the relationship between the KRG and Turkey, the Turkish national intelligence organisation and the PKK negotiated on how to solve the Kurdish question in Turkey: the so-called "Kurdish Initiative" policy (Charountaki, 2012:190). In the following year, this party changed its rhetoric about the establishment of Greater Kurdistan as a nation-state, in favour of the creation of democratic self-rule for different ethnic groups in the Middle East. The establishment of the three Cantons in Syrian Kurdistan in 2012 (which shifted to a federal entity in 2016), with the participation of other ethnic minorities in sharing power, was the first step by the PKK towards this new policy.

In Newroz (spring) 2015, the imprisoned leader of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan condemned the nation-state as a western imperialist ideology against the people of the Middle East (in a message broadcast via various Kurdish TV channels). This new ideology reduced the anxiety of Turkey towards the perceived threat to its territorial integrity and the threat of a possible independent KR to its security. On the other hand, this change in rhetoric enhanced the ability of the KRG to assert its claim to an independent Kurdistan in North Iraq. The rhetoric, possibly promoted the declaration of a Peace Process in early 2013 between the PKK and Turkey in which the KRG, (the KDP) played an important role via mediation. However, this new ideology towards the nation-state, has implications for the Kurds' efforts to establish an independent state, because of the heavy influence of the PKK on the KR. The PUK and the GM are closer to the PKK than the KDP, which holds on to the rhetoric of building a Kurdistan state in the north of Iraq.

Another factor internal to Turkey was the candidature in 1999 of Turkey to become a member of the Europe Union. This is reflected step by step in Turkish policy (Özcan, 2011; Cagaptay, 2013). In the period when the AKP was in power after 2002, the military policy



of the previous governments was modified to pursue soft economic and political solutions and to decrease the level of military involvement (Elik, 2014). This change within Turkey helped to stabilize the economic and political situation in the KR as well. However, after the breakdown of relationships with many neighbouring states and the AKP's failure in the June elections in 2015 to establish a new cabinet alone or by coalition, early elections were held in November 2015 and the AKP returned to the military policy and ended the Peace Process. Beyond the Turkish border, the period of close relationships between Turkey and the KRG overlapped with increasing tensions between Erbil and Baghdad, which reached a peak in 2011 and thereafter. Simultaneously, the relationship between Baghdad and Turkey worsened (Park, 2014).

Beside the political factors, the energy economy is a major factor in consolidating relationships between the two sides. The discovery of a huge amount of oil by powerful international oil companies pushed the KR onto the international oil market map and reinforced its political and economic identity. This factor became a dilemma for Turkish policy. On the one hand, these companies extract and sell oil in a zone which threatens Turkish security. On the other, according to reports, Turkey's oil and gas consumption is expected to double in a few years. The KR can supply this demand at a cheaper price than buying it from other suppliers namely Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan and Iraq (Sharif, 2015).

Factors of regional rivalry between Iran and Turkey, international sanctions on Iran, which damaged its hydrocarbon infrastructures, Turkey's demand for energy, the invasion of some parts of Iraq by ISIS, and Russia's use of hydrocarbons as political leverage especially after relationships between them deteriorated in the aftermath of Turkey's downing a Russian jet in Syria in December 2015, all led to an increase in instability in the regional context. The combination of these Turkish internal, regional, as well as, Kurdish question pushed Turkey to choose the KR as one of its oil suppliers to increase its energy security (Borroz, 2014; Sharif, 2015).

The energy relationship can improve political relationships between the KR and Turkey. The relationship is not without challenge for both sides and especially for the KR after having its budget cut off by the Bagdad government. How this affects the KR economy will depend significantly on the oil revenue which "relies upon accessing consumers via Turkish territory" (Borroz, 2014:109). This shift in Turkish policy contrasts sharply with the time before 2008, when the exporting of the KR's oil independently by the KRG was an

“anathema for Ankara” (Bryza, 2012:55). However, this economic dependency became a political interrelationship as argued in this chapter.

In late 2013, as the tension between the KRG and Baghdad authority on oil exportation deepened, the Turkish government suggested that the revenue from the oil sector from both sides could be saved in a Turkish government bank, and then 83% be allocated to the Iraqi government and 17% to the KRG as its portion in the total budget of Iraq. The idea was supported by the USA and some Kurdish political parties nonetheless, it was rejected by the Iraqi government. However, the revenue from selling Kurdistan’s oil is kept in a Turkish bank (Halk Bank), which means that the KRG economic and financial sectors mainly depend on Turkey (Ministry of Natural Resources, 2014; Sobhi, 2013). Moreover, on the international level, the influence of Turkey as a main route for transporting energy will increase.

Another economic factor is that the KR has become one of the largest markets for Turkish products. The KR’s streets are witness to the scale and ubiquity of Turkish products, Turkish restaurants and companies, Turkish banks, schools and universities which all operate in the KR. The relationships have reached the point where Kurdistan citizens can easily gain a Turkish visa. According to the Ministry of Trade and Industry in the KR, the trade between the two sides in 2009, 2012 and 2013 was US\$ 4.0 billion, 8.4 billion and 12.0 billion respectively. In addition, Turkey has tried to change its trade relationship with the KR to one of investment; 80% of the KR’s imports come from Turkey and its companies account for 65% of foreign business in the KR. (Kurdistan View, 2014:74). In 2007, the KR was the nineteenth largest market for Turkey; in 2011 it became the sixth biggest market for Turkey’s goods and then in 2013, after Germany and the UK (see figure 9.1 below), the KR became the third largest market for exporting Turkish goods (Cagaptay et al, 2015). In fact, the majority of technological and infrastructure development in the KR has been designed and executed by Turkey (Logan, 2009:180).

Figure 9.1: Country Rankings for Turkey's Exports

2007	2011	2013
1. Germany	1. Germany	1. Germany
2. UK	2. UK	2. UK
3. Italy	3. Italy	3. KRG
4. France	4. France	4. Russia
5. Russia	5. Russia	5. Italy
6. Spain	6. KRG	6. France
.....	.....	....
19. KRG	11. Iraq	11. Iraq
19. Iraq		

Source: 'Turkey and the KRG: Signs of Booming Economic Ties', *The Washington Institution* (2015), based on the Turkish Ministry of the Economy, Turkish Statistical Institute: Iraq and KRG data <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/turkey-and-the-krg-signs-of-booming-economic-ties-infographic>

All the above-mentioned factors helped to stabilize relationships to the degree that Turkey and the KR signed a bilateral contract in 2014, to export KR oil for fifty years through Turkey to the outside world. However, relying on Turkey alone may harm the KR's interests in the long term.

In 2013, the KRG and Turkish government's relationship took a step forward with the formal invitation of the president of the KR to participate in a wedding ceremony in Diyarbakir (Turkey), known as the capital city of the Kurds in Turkey. The invitation included a request to the KR president to support the Peace Process<sup>2</sup>. The meeting was widely broadcast by the mass media and for the first time the Kurdistan flag was shown to audiences (KRP, 2013). This means that the KR had become an important actor playing a role in relation to other parts of Greater Kurdistan. The leaders of the KRG came to recognize that, while other countries play a role in the stability or instability of the KR, it can be a player too.

The closer relationship between Turkey and the KR was complemented by increased pressure from the Iraqi government on the KR. The Iraqi government accused Turkey of intervening in Iraq's internal issues and sovereignty (Elik, 2014). At the same time, it

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<sup>2</sup> It is necessary to take into account that just one week before this event, the powerful Kurdish party in Syria (Kurdish Democratic Union Party/PYD), which is supported by the PKK announced self-rule in some Kurdish areas of Syria. This step was strongly rejected by the Turkish government, followed by an official rejection by the president of the KR (KRP, 2013).

accused the KR of behaving like an independent state. On the ground, any contract with Turkey on an oil issue met with the response of a reduction in the KR's annual share of the total Iraqi budget<sup>3</sup>. In 2014, the policy of Turkey towards the KR became more positive. With the control of Sunni areas by the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) in June 2014, the KRG and Peshmerga controlled the Kirkuk province and its oil fields. It then announced the right to independence of the Kurdistan state via referendum, without explicit opposition from the Turkish government. To achieve this purpose, the Law of the Higher Independent Commission for Election and a Referendum was passed by the KR parliament (Law No 4, 2014). In reaction to this resolution, Huseyin Celik, spokesman for Turkey's ruling party (AKP), in an interview for the Financial Times, announced that

In the past an independent Kurdish state was a reason for war [for Turkey] but no one has the right to say this now.... In Turkey, even the word 'Kurdistan' makes people nervous, but their name is Kurdistan.... If Iraq is divided and it is inevitable, they are our brothers (cited in Dombey, 2014).

Furthermore, In October 2014, with the attack by ISIS on Kobani (a Kurdish province in Syria), the Turkish government allowed the Peshmerga safe passage through its territory to help Kurdish fighters confront ISIS.

This means that the relationship between Turkey and the KR turned from hostility into political, security and economic cooperation. There are three main reasons for this change: to allow the KR to be a buffer zone for Turkey against ISIS; to keep a Turkish balance in Iraq in relation to Iran; and to reduce the danger from Syrian Kurds and their relationship with Kurds in Turkey. This shift reverses the previous stance, when Turkish officials called Kurdish leaders 'tribal chieftains' or refused to meet the Iraqi president, Jalal Talabani, who was a Kurd (Charountaki, 2012:191).

On the international level, it is important to mention that, the closer engagement of Turkey in the KR is Turkey's response to the engagement of the USA in the Kurdish issue since 1992. The fear of a USA monopoly and the Kurds becoming the main allies of the USA in Iraq, pushed Turkey to engage more in the KR, in favour of its own interests. Even before the Washington Agreement in 1998, Turkey tried to make peace between the PUK and the KDP through the Ankara Process in 1996 (Charountaki, 2012). The withdrawal of USA

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<sup>3</sup> In 2014, the Iraqi government cut off the entire budget of the KR. At the beginning of 2015, it sent a portion of 17% of the KR budget as money for the sale of the KR's oil. However, by the summer of 2015, the KR was selling its oil independently without payments to the Baghdad government.

troops from Iraq in 2011, provided an opportunity to strengthen the ties between the KRG and the Turkish government.

Through the ups and downs of the relationship between Turkey and the KR, Turkey's role has eventually been to strengthen the KR. As Bengio (2012) says: Turkey has been a "reluctant builder". Unlike the previous role of the KDP-PUK/KRG in its alliance with Turkey to fight against the PKK, now the role has shifted to help the Peace Process between the PKK and Turkey.

However, with all of this, there is a belief in the KR that the relationship between both sides is essentially a relationship between the key figures of the KDP on one hand, and the AKP government on the other, which has its origins in regional rivalry more than mutual understanding. For this reason a top cadre of the KDP stated that "if any change occurs in international policy, Turkey will break its agreements with the KRG"<sup>4</sup>.

Overall, after 2009, Turkey's soft policy achieved desirable goals for both sides. The relationship between Turkey and the KR passed from: dealing with political parties instead of government (1992-2003); to freezing relationships (2004-2008); and to semi-institutionalisation of relationships (2009 onwards). The question remaining, considering the critiques by Turkish nationalist parties of the AKP policy towards the KRG, is whether the shift in power from the AKP to other parties, and a coalition cabinet in Turkey, means that Turkish policy towards the KRG will remain the same or change? In view of the entrenched economic and energy relationships which have shaped a kind of long-term strategic relationship between both sides, it is difficult to anticipate radical change that will impact negatively on the KR in the near future.

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Mohamad Mulla Qader.

### **Iran: 1992-2003: Making Problems for the Status Quo**

In the first decade of the establishment of the KR, the common ground in foreign policy in Iran and Turkey, with some differences in tactics was: how to deal with the Kurdish question? Turkey called the Kurds 'Mountain Turks', while Iran counts them as having Iranian roots. Both countries deny Kurds political rights. Following the Algeria Agreement between Iraq and Iran in 1975, Iran opened its boundaries to Kurdish refugees.

The change of regime in Iran in 1979, increased the hostility between the new Islamic regime in Iran and the Ba'athist's in Iraq. However, political relations between Iran and the Iraqi Kurdish parties improved. Up to 1992, Iran's ties with Kurds in Iraq were closer than Turkey's. They were used to exert pressure against Iraq and against the Iranian Kurdish opposition who had settled in Iraq. Initially, the ties were with the KDP. Later after the *Anfal* process, they also included the PUK, which supported the Kurdistan Democratic party of Iran (Al-Khorsan, 2001). In the war between Iran and Iraq, the Kurds backed Iran which resulted in the decline of Ba'ath authority in many parts of the KR and especially in the border areas with Iran (Sazmandeh et al, 2011). Before and after the 1991 uprising, various Kurdish political parties had offices in different cities in Iran.

According to one assessment,

Iran opposes any arrangement that might embolden the Iraqi Kurds to set up their own government or state. Iran has supported measures to reconcile the various Kurdish factions in Iraq (Byman et al, 2001:56).

Iran's viewpoint on the Kurdish issue shifted when the western states and especially the USA, in company with Turkey, provided a safe haven which was interpreted by Iran as a way for the USA to access Iranian territory and strengthen the Iranian opposition who had settled in the KR (Ihsan, 2001). For Iran, the safe haven meant greater influence for Turkey in the KR. Iran's policy in contrast to Turkey's was to prevent the Iraqi Kurds becoming so weak as to be overcome by the Iraqi government. However, like Turkey, it was afraid of the consequences of an uprising among its own Kurds (Olson, 1998).

With attacks by Turkey on the KR in pursuit of the PKK in the 1990s, Iran feared the growing influence of Turkey on the KR, especially in view of its alliance with the USA and Israel. This threat encouraged Iran to support the PKK on the KR territory. In reaction, the Turkish government supported Iran's Kurdish political party the KDP-I, also within the territory of the KR (Olson, 1998). Both sides agreed to prevent the establishment of any Kurdish entity in northern Iraq and prevent it becoming strong enough to threaten their territory. Both states

used the KR as a field of combat to pursue their own interests and to weaken the influence of the other.

The KR parliamentary elections in 1992 had the effect of bringing both countries together. It led to the Ankara meeting between the neighbouring countries which concluded that “we as main regional powers, will not allow any entity to rise without our permission and against our will” (Jaf, 2005:133-134). From 1992 to 1995, the neighbouring countries met frequently on issues related to the KR (Hetuti, 2009). To mobilise regional public opinion against the KR, Iran represented the KR elections as an American conspiracy (Qhader, 2005). Persian language websites regularly pose the question: will the KR become the second Israel in the Middle East, or not?

Iran officially rejected the establishment of any political entity in northern Iraq, but simultaneously maintained its relations with the political parties and established *Nasr Command*, an army unit which managed relationships with the political parties in the KR (Kalji, 2010). In this way it tried to control the political situation in the KR in the interests of security inside Iran.

During the internal conflicts in the 1990s, Iran supported the PUK and the PKK. Iran was the main partner in this proxy war and had a role greater than the Turkish one. It received many Iraqi Kurd refugees who were mainly supporters of the KDP. Some occasionally faced problems (such as imprisonment or pressure to return to the KR in hard economic circumstances) which were designed to put pressure on the KDP. In the middle of the war, when Turkey began to be a broker for peace, Iran was drawn in to play the same role, reflecting the rivalry between the two countries. However, when its attempts failed due to the rapprochement of the Kurdish parties to US policy, Iran reinforced its ties with the PKK and the Islamic groups in the KR (Bengio, 2012). Hence, Islamic groups succeeded in gaining control of some areas of the Garmin administration which was under the management of the PUK (Natali, 2010), while the PKK controlled some of the border areas.

The contest between the PUK and the KDP altered to become a multi-sided conflict. Thus, for a period between 1996 and 2003, the KR was divided into four zones<sup>5</sup>. Each was run by a different party and they applied their own resolutions and tariffs on trade (see Chapter

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<sup>5</sup> These zones were controlled by the KDP, the PUK, the PKK and the Islamic extremist group called Ansar Al-Islam from 1996 onwards. In 2003, the USA attacked Ansar Al-Islam and removed them. During my field work, I visited the PKK areas. The PKK controls some border areas without intervention from the government. These areas contain many villages and farming lands that are still used by farmers.

five). In such circumstances, the purpose of each party was not to rebuild the country, but to stop their areas from being penetrated by other parties. To achieve this, Kurdish political parties were prepared to be allies with different regional governments that were against any kind of political rights for Kurds. Such a response begs serious questions. Were the parties trying to serve national goals? Was there any prospect for institution building?

Besides the KDP and the PUK, many small parties had a relationship with a neighbouring state, mainly at the borders between Iran and the KR. They established checkpoints and imposed non-governmental tax and *Bexşîş* (the payment that a trader has to make to the Peshmerga at the checkpoints, which amounts to a kind of bribery). The effect of these actions was to reduce the amount of trade, the number of traders, and increase the price of items. It led to a monopoly of trade by dominant political party figures and military commanders. The top party cadres became leading merchants due to their intermediary role, called *Waste* in Kurdish, and evasion of informal tax or *Bexşîş*. This behaviour among senior officials can be considered as one of the sources of the current corruption in the region.

In terms of economy and trade, the KR became a big market for Iran's products, which helped to improve the quality of life of Iranian border cities (Kar-online, 2014). Between 1992 and 2003, Iran also opened bilateral gateways to benefit from trade with the KR (Sazmandeh et al, 2011;). At the same time many unofficial crossings for smuggling opened between the KR and Iran, for which Iranian traders paid lower tax. As the result of the vast amount of unofficial trade, as Natali (2010:55) describes, the KR became a "free zone" for Iranian traders and smuggling<sup>6</sup>.

To summarize Kalji's (2010:54) viewpoint, after the establishment of the KRG in 1992, Iran's policy had five aims. First, it was designed to prevent the disintegration of Iraq and the formation of an independent Kurdistan in northern Iraq. Second, it was to deal with the KRG(s) to strengthen the opposition to Iraq and prevent the Iraqi government from re-gaining control of the KR. The third aim was to maintain a certain level of relationship with the KRG(s), to give it responsibility for keeping stability in the border areas and prevent any armed action by the Iranian opposition groups. Fourthly, it was to prevent the KR becoming

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<sup>6</sup> Apart from the domestic factors which contributed to this phenomenon of smuggling via border crossings, the UN Resolution 661 in 1990 compelled the international community to avoid any kind of trade (import and export) with Iraq. Later, UN Resolution 986 (Oil For Food Programme, 1995) allowed for the provision of "medicine, health supplies, foodstuffs, and materials and supplies for essential civilian needs" (Article 8(a)). According to this resolution, the only export item allowed was oil and any imports were on a limited scale and monitored by the UN (Natali, 2010). The situation facilitated the growth of smuggling and corruption.



an arena for activities against Iran's interest by other countries, and finally, to prevent the impact of nationalism among Kurds in Iraq on Kurds in Iran. In short, Iran was a powerful country in the region that played a crucial role in the political process of the KR.

### **Iran: 2004-2014: A Factor of Continuous Instability**

Iran continues to be the main actor in shaping Iraqi government policy and its interests are often opposed to the USA policy in Iraq as a whole. In 2003, the Kurds aligned themselves with the USA front which Iran called 'The Great Satan'. If the first period in the history of the KR (1992-2003) led to the bonding of the KR and Iran, thanks to a common enemy in the Ba'ath regime, this common enemy ceased to exist after 2003. With the KR becoming a federal entity, electing a Kurd as president of Iraq, and coordinating politics between the KR's political parties, the KR shifted to a "soft threat" for Iran (Mehrani and Por- Eslami, 2012:90).

Politically, the KR became a centre for the reinforcement of Kurdish national identity, or *Kurdaiety*, throughout Greater Kurdistan. Economically, the export of oil by the KRG strengthened the KR's position. Legally, the KR has authority guaranteed by the constitution. All of these factors mutually strengthen each other and mean that Iran cannot threaten to end the KRG. If Iran were to try this, the KRG could mobilise the Kurdish oppositions in Iran. It has therefore dealt more cautiously with the KRG and tried to use its influence since 2005 via the Shia-led Iraqi government. The new de facto situation forced Iran to minimize threats by bringing together Shias and Kurds in the new Iraq. Iran utilized its historical relationship with them and historical relations between Kurds and Shias, as well<sup>7</sup> (Zibakalam and A'abdollahpor, 2008).

This policy of Iran was opposed to USA interests in Iraq. In 2007 and 2008 the American army arrested Iranian diplomats, businessmen and an army commander in the KR, which led to a reduction in the ties between Iran and the KRG. In response, Iran closed its border

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<sup>7</sup> The relationship between the Kurds and Shia is not based on creed, as the majority of the KR's Muslim Kurds are Sunni. However, in the Ba'ath period, both Kurds and Shias were marginalized and they were in conflict with the Ba'ath regime. Further, because Iranian authority is Shia and was against the Ba'ath regime, all of them had common political interests. In 2005, both Shias and Kurds voted for the Iraqi constitution which guaranteed federalism for Kurds. While, the Arab Sunni sect boycotted the voting. After 2009 the authority in Baghdad became more Shia, and both Sunni and Kurds were marginalized. As a result, the common ground between Kurds and Sunni increased. However, the rise of ISIS in the Sunni part of Iraq and its invasion of the KR complicated the relationship between Kurds, Shia and Sunni. As a result, the Kurds' relations with Shias and Sunnis is not clear-cut and is in continuous flux.

crossings with the KR, attacked border villages and reinforced its ties with the residue of Ansar Al-Islam to put pressure on the KRG to follow Iran's policy (Logan, 2009). The re-opening of the border in 2009 following mediation by the Baghdad government was linked to the KRG closing Iranian Kurdish party, *PEJAK*, (a branch of the PKK) headquarters in the KR (Rafaat, 2007).

In the years between 2009 and 2013, which overlapped with the rise of a strong opposition in the KR on the one hand, and deep tension between the KRG and Baghdad on the other, Iran's relationship with the KRG became normalized and there was minimum tension<sup>8</sup>. Again, this improvement in relationship occurred at the same time as Turkey-KRG relationships improved. Before the ISIS invasion, any claim by the KRG to include the disputed areas was sharply rejected by Turkey, which benefited Iran's interests without any direct engagement. On the other hand, Iran influenced the Iraqi government that also rejected the extension of the KR's border in the disputed area.

In August 2013, in reaction to Turkey's increasing infiltration, the Prime Minister of the KR, Nechirvan Barzani, was officially invited to participate in the swearing in ceremony of the new Iranian president, Hassan Rouhani. This signified Iran's concern about the growth of Turkey's influence in the KR. However, the share of the PUK's<sup>9</sup> votes in the parliamentary

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<sup>8</sup> Iran exerts cultural influence on the KR which goes well beyond formal political structure and relationships. Many western works of philosophy, politics and social science are translated from the Persian language into Kurdish. Further, although Iran has a closer relationship with the PUK, it is important to note that thousands of Kurdish refugees who fled to Iran after 1975, mostly pro-KDP, returned to the KR and settled in areas under the influence of the KDP. In many districts and sub-districts such as Soran, Pirmam, Tanahi, part of Binaslawa and other places, many Kurdish people speak to each other in Persian. The Newroz national festival, which is the first day of the Kurdish and Persian calendar (two different calendars) is an opportunity for visitors from Iran to visit the KR which is more open than the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iranian singers from both inside and outside Iran are invited to the KR through the Cultural Ministry of the KRG or private companies. Both Kurds and Persians consider their ethnic roots as Arian. These informal social and cultural links are less visible than economic and political ties but reflect Iran's strong cultural impact on the KR.

<sup>9</sup> External supervision of a political party is visible in the KR. However, the top leader of the PUK can often be seen to criticize the KDP for establishing a strong relationship with Turkey and neglecting Iran. The KDP in turn criticizes the PUK for its close relationship with Iran. Looking at the claims of both sides, it could be argued that foreign relations in the KR are still not on a governmental track. There is another question that ordinary people as well as scholars often ask: Is the relationship with Turkey more beneficial than the one with Iran or vice versa? The question itself refers to hidden rivalry between the PUK and the KDP on the one hand, and Turkey and Iran on the other. The answers tend to favour the Turkish side, since people think of Turkey as a member of NATO, as a gateway to Europe, as a secular Sunni state and as the channel for the KR's oil to reach the international market. In contrast, Iran is a Shia Islamic culture, and a country which suffers from international sanctions. However, after the events of the Turkish army attack on the Kurdish cities in Turkey since the end of 2015, there has been some shifting in the citizens' view. In addition, in some sense, the power of oil unites the PUK and the KDP.

elections in September 2013 declined, which led to the weakening of the influence of Iran on the KRG. In contrast, Turkey was able to increase its influence through its close relationship with the KDP (Cengiz, 2013). Iran continued by using its representative in the KR to help form the eighth cabinet, because of disagreement between the PUK and the GM on the Deputy Prime Minister position. Iran arranged meetings with political parties to keep the PUK more fully integrated (Rudaw, October 2013). In June 2015, a disagreement between political parties on the duration of the presidential term and its authorities occurred in the parliament. The KDP and some other parties and minority parties boycotted the session. The other parties (the PUK, the IU, the IL and the GM) invited diplomatic observers to attend that parliament session. Their justification was, that they felt threatened by the KDP, who had the capacity to use military power against the parliament. Iran alone sent a high ranking diplomatic consultant; others either did not participate or sent low ranking officials.

When the president of the KR announced steps towards independence, following the ISIS events in May 2014, the Prime Minister of the KR was again invited to Iran. In a meeting with Iran's military figures, the Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council pointed out that

I intentionally met with Nechirvan Barzani in [military] uniform so that he would understand that for us the integrity of Iraq is important (Namazi, 2014).

This means any further nation-state movement by the KR would be met with a military response. The problem in making relationships with Iran as Sadjadpour and Ben Talebluis explain (2015:39) is that

Iran's political-ideological army, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its elite Quds Force unit are responsible for devising and implementing Iran's regional policies, not diplomats in the Iranian foreign ministry.

Hence, Iran looks at the KR through a military and security lens, which makes it difficult to establish official civil relationships. In late December 2014 the head of the Iran parliament visited the KR. This followed visits to the KR by many top western and Turkish officials. The Iranian Speaker visited the KR parliament which means that it was officially recognized as a political institution along with the KRG. After this visit, the official Iranian Diplomacy website stated that the Iranian government should engage more in the KR and reinforce its relationship with the KRG to counter the influence of Turkey. However, the visit started

from Slemani, in the PUK zone instead of Erbil, the capital city of the KR (Irاندپلوماسی، 2015).

According to the officer of political relationships of the GM, the KRG's external relationships are not institutionalized, but rather administered by the two main political parties. Both the KDP and the PUK have representation offices abroad. Despite the fact that the KRG has opened official diplomatic missions in recent years, they are weak. The same interviewee pointed out

The PUK and the KDP affiliated representation offices have diluted Kurdish diplomatic efforts. As each of the two parties represents a demarcated geographical area in the KR this has influenced their relations with the outside. While the PUK represents Slemani province, the KDP represents both Erbil and Dohuk provinces. It is quite normal to have party representations abroad to establish links and relations with political parties. However, this should be limited to party affairs; they should not present themselves as representatives acting on the authority of the official KRG<sup>10</sup>.

The trade and economic sector activity increased in both directions, and various commercial and construction agreements were signed and a free trade zone was inaugurated on the Slemani border. The trade ties between Iran and Iraq reached US\$13 billion in 2014 of which 40% was with the KR (Bultannews, 2014). According to the Minister of Trade and Industry, the majority of trade consisted of food, domestic goods and medicine. In 2013 out of 2,300 foreign companies in the KR, from 78 countries, around 1,500 were Turkish, and 280 were Iranian (Kurdistan Review, 2014:47-49). As the amount of trade between the KR and Iran and Turkey shows, Turkey has more extensive economic relationships with the KR, which is related to its greater political influence.

The majority of Iranian companies (around 80%) are in the Green Zone and nearly 60% of the needs of this zone are supplied via Iran (Natali, 2010:95; Logan, 2009). In contrast to agreements with Turkey, the majority of Iran-KR agreements were signed by Iranian provincial authorities rather than the central government. It highlights the poor or non-existent infrastructure of the KR on the one hand, and Iran's use of the KR as a market for the consumption of Iranian goods, not as an opportunity to rebuild the country or invest in it. However, in the mid to long-term, the hydrocarbon production of the KR and especially its cheap price for Turkey, may intensify competition with Iran's production in this sector; which means that the KRG can challenge the Iranian policy towards the KR. Whether the

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with Mohamad Haji.

response will be in favour of the KR or not will depend on the future balance of the regional political equation.

In summary, the clash of regional and international power interests in the KR has taken different forms: before 2003 the KR was an arena of active conflict around the regional powers' interests; after this period, it had to consider the interests of the regional and international powers which both competed or co-operated with each other. It demonstrates how outside influences are significant for the political development of the KR. Even if the KR has capacity, its ability to develop remains limited because its stability depends on external political factors. It highlights the political dependency of the KR on outside external circumstances; a dependency which is reflected in its economic dependency because of the legacy of a weak infrastructure.

## **Conclusion**

The common ground among the KR's neighbouring countries is that, when the political relationships between these countries are weak, they use the Kurdish question as leverage against each other. When relationships improve, they use this improvement to limit Kurdish political rights. Consequently, the relationships between the KR and the neighbouring governments are shaped by mutual distrust. Political liaisons, especially during the first decade of self-governing, were based on political parties. Both Iran and Turkey followed different types of policies in the two periods, but the target was the same until 2003 onwards, when Iran's influence over the Iraqi government increased, and the role of Turkey in the Iraqi government simultaneously decreased; this caused Turkey to shift its policy towards the KR (Barkey, 2010).

Turkish foreign policy towards the KR was related to the strength of the KR's impact on the national security of Turkey. However, after the KR constitutionally gained *de jure* status and then explored oil in its territory and engaged in the power struggle between the Sunni and Shia in Iraq (referring to the struggle between Iran-Shia and Turkey-Sunni), the economic aspects were added to the security aspect, which enhanced the relationship between both sides. Turkey agreed to export KR's oil to the global market while ensuring an energy supply for Turkey's domestic market. Iran continued to deal with the KR case via a security lens. However, considering the one-sidedness of the economic and trade relationships, it is difficult to imagine that either state will contribute to institutional capacity building or the strengthening of democratic procedures in the KR.

A leader of the IU sums it up as follows:

The KRG's interstate relations are based on two premises: first, there are some provisions in the constitution which envisage the authority to exercise diplomatic relations with the outside world. Second, irregular relations are based on considerations mostly driven by greed and risk taking. The aim of these types of relations is generally related to natural wealth (oil), trade business and markets. Currently, KRG relations are provisionally (until the outstanding issues with central government are resolved) administered based on these two premises. The reason for this mixture of behaviour is the fact that Iraq doesn't enjoy full sovereignty over its territory and regional and international players are stronger than the will of Iraq. Kurds have found a quite comfortable place in this sovereignty gap to play their role<sup>11</sup>.

However, this niche for the KR is not a stable one; it depends on external circumstances. This limited opportunity has not expanded the KRG's capacity to make its own future policies. For this reason, there is an underlying instability in relationships with regional powers which makes the future of the KR unpredictable. This has an impact on political development because it can only flourish when there is some degree of certainty regarding the future.

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with Muhamad Ra'auf.

## **Chapter Ten: Conclusion**

This research project has identified obstacles to political development in the Kurdistan Region in the period 1992 to 2014. This final chapter aims to highlight the contribution to knowledge which has been made to the field of political development studies and the political sociology of the region. It reviews the main thesis findings and offers a critique of political development theory. First, it is appropriate to comment on certain challenges and limitations that were faced by the research. The first challenge was theoretical. Current theories of political development are mainly western oriented, which means that they are poorly adapted to understanding political development in the KR. The second was a methodological limitation. The lack of reliable data, even official data, on the oil economy for example, or on the process of making political decisions, because it is often behind the scenes; or the impossibility of doing a large scale survey among political party members and the difficulty of conducting interviews with officials from Turkey and Iran about their relationships with the KR. However, the research was primarily about the formal political institutions within the KR and their relationship to other parts of society. So the interviews with officials partially overcame this limitation. Another limitation was the barriers to mobility in the KR and the difficulty of access to the top elites. I have tried to overcome these challenges by following on-going debates in the mass media and social media, by conducting interviews and where possible by direct observation in the field; and as a resident of the KR, my interpretations draw on my personal experience of the political culture and communication.

### **Critique of Political Development Theories**

This thesis has identified political development in the KR in terms of: political institutions, political elites, the social fabric and foreign relationships. The study of political development requires explanations, and analyses which then make connections between these aspects.

The study has found it is necessary to adjust the unit of analysis from the usual nation-state category in political development theory to a non-state political entity<sup>1</sup>. Modernisation,

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<sup>1</sup> There is an extensive literature on the concept of the nation-state. Although the KR is not a state, the concept is unavoidable because the mainstream literature in modernization and political development theories adopts the nation-state as the main unit of analysis, and situates political development in terms of national borders. However, this 'methodological nationalism' has not withstood the growing tendency to recognise diversity in political formations, including non-state entities, quasi-states (Jackson 1990) or sub-state nations. States often include more than one nation or ethnic group and there are multinational states. The variety demonstrates that

development and dependency theories, all take the nation-state to be the unit of analysis. The KR is not an internationally recognized state, but is more similar to a nation-state than a federal or devolved region. It has the political apparatuses that are necessary for political development, namely: government, parliament, political parties and relationships with other countries. Although Article 1 of the Iraqi constitution states that “Iraq is a single federal state”. Despite the assumptions of political development theory, it is necessary to reduce the unit of analysis from the nation-state to the study of the performance of the de facto political authority in the region.

Political development studies based on western experience prescribed pathways for the development of underdeveloped societies. Their prescriptions have frequently clashed with the culture and realities of the countries in development by focusing mainly on the formal requirements of development and considering development as stages on the way towards a liberal democratic system (Rush, 1992:220). Sometimes, their recommendations could be regressive rather than progressive. For this reason, Frank criticized their “theoretical adequacy, their empirical validity and their policy effectiveness” (Frank in Larrain, 1989:98).

More recent contributions on socio-economic development have argued that alongside economic growth and the establishment of democratic political institutions, political development is difficult to achieve without changes in values (Hyden, 2003; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Inglehart and Welzel, 2009). This trend complements previous ideas. However, it is more applicable to those societies that have experienced modernisation and industrialization. Many societies have not had this experience. This is one of the reasons why Inglehart and Welzel (2005 and 2009) used the concept of human development, modernisation and political development interchangeably. For development to occur, the function and structure of institutions and the culture of society under the impact of external environment all have to be engaged.

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states are not typically homogeneous in terms of their history, social composition, values, norms, culture and institutions. The thesis has not debated this issue or engaged directly with a related question: the past, present and future of Kurdish nationalism. The purpose of using the nation-state category here is to highlight how the KR occupies a position between two types of status: an independent entity that has sovereignty within its own territory according to formal and international recognition, which give this entity the capacity to manage its own affairs (federal region within a state); and the non-state political entity that lacks this recognition but has some capacity to conduct its own affairs (de facto autonomous region).



The above academic debate, when juxtaposed with the reality of development in undeveloped societies, shows that in general, the growth of political development theories has outpaced the development of underdeveloped societies. These theories commenced with concepts of modernisation and subsequently evolved with concepts of development, globalisation, human development and sustainable development. The latest expression is the idea of ecological democracy (Rocheleau, 1999; Baber, 2004). In some cases, on the ground there have been reversals in development: in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen and Libya.

Another aspect to the conceptual ‘disconnect’ as shown in Chapter 3, relates to the political development argument itself. For example, in the 1960s, theorists suggested that to develop the undeveloped societies, the military should hold power. The justification was to ensure stability; the army would embody bureaucratic efficiency and act in the national interest. This view ignored the fact that it would lead to more militarization of society at the cost of civic values, which are important for political development. The result was that many countries became more militarized and this weakened the civic political institutions. The Middle Eastern countries are the best example of who participates in political authority and how it is a neglected topic.

Concerning the KR, two examples can be mentioned; firstly, when the formal political requirements for political development were put in place, the role of tribal culture and its power was not substituted, but as explained in Chapter 8, rather reinforced through these modern institutions. The possibility that formal democratic institutions can serve traditional powers has been neglected by political development theories.

Secondly, in political development theories, political parties in a multi-party system are viewed as tools for development (LaPalombara and Weiner, 1966). The question is: does this idea recognize that parties possess armed forces, control media and culture, or reinforce tribal fabric even though they are publicly elected? Theories of political development, from the 1950s and 1960s provided an important if over-simplified and over-generalized theoretical base. However, to have value for the analysis of contemporary societies, adjustments according to the range of types of society are necessary. As Thomas (2011 and 2014) argues, and as the findings of this thesis show, political development thought and especially the American literature, with its emphasis on institutions and institutionalization, neglects the purpose behind institutionalisation.

Another significant theme in studies of development is the priority given to economic growth. The linkage between economic growth and political development is complex and is mediated in various ways by the culture of social and political elites, media institutions and political parties. Economic growth may occur without progress in the political sphere. According to Sen (1996), the issue of development is more complicated than selecting some economically successful authoritarian states and comparing them with other non-authoritarian states with low economic growth and deciding in favour of an authoritarian solution. Sen (1996) found a link between media freedom, parliamentary political opposition and economic growth. In other words, there is a connection between democratic political norms, civil rights and economic performance. Hence, sustainable policies drive the sustainability of economic growth and orderly change in the socio-political aspects of society.

One important assumption of modernization and political development theories is that development progress is unilinear. To develop, underdeveloped nations have to pass through the same stages that the developed nations passed through. These theories highlight the internal obstacles to the development of undeveloped nations (Larrain, 1989). They assert that these nations can develop by introducing the developed nations' values and technology. At the same time, the dependency school targets external factors and pays less attention to internal factors, disregarding the internal impact of foreign trade and the values of developed societies. This means that both views minimise the contribution of social variables in development at the expense of economic and political variables. Consequently, political development becomes a top-down process shaped by external factors (as in development theories) or the result of an economic plan shaped by a government (the dependency school). Both views are vulnerable to a kind of rigid stereotype through their generalized assumptions.

The political development concept therefore perpetuates some inherent problems of scope and definition. For this reason, the alternative definition made connections between politics, society and the individual in the political, economic and cultural spheres, as well as in international relationships. This approach has its own pros and cons. On the one hand, it encompasses various aspects that relate to political development, while on the other, it broadens the scope of research, and makes the enquiry more complex and difficult. However, in spite of these difficulties it is possible to give a relatively clear vision of what political development means.

According to the findings of this research, both internal and external factors form barriers to the political development process. Both factors complement each other. In the case of the KR, in specific periods and in contrast to the dependency school (see Chapter 3), external factors have helped to bring about stability and economic improvement. Also, in the case of the KR, the regional neighbourhood plays a critical role in supplementing the internal and external factors- a point that is neglected in political development theories.

A country cannot be isolated from the degree of stability or instability, the type of culture and the level of development of its neighbours. Wallerstein (1999:24) argued that movements impact on other movements when they are culturally and geographically close. The same claim can be broadened to apply to the impact of a state upon its neighbours. The instability in Syria and Iraq and the tension between Turkey and the PPK, Turkey and Iran, all have a negative impact on the stability of the KR. Similarly, according to the Democratic Domino Theory, an increase or decrease in the level of democracy in one country will increase or decrease the level of democracy in its neighbours (Leeson and Dean, 2009).

In some periods, the influence of the KR's neighbours was in contrast to the contribution of wider external factors. For example, in the first decade of self-government, the neighbouring countries stood against it, while the western countries supported it. Sometimes, both neighbours and distant allies have co-operated to bring stability to the KR, as can be seen in the ISIS attack in 2014. As illustrated in Chapter 9, the stance of neighbouring countries towards the KR and the degree of co-operation between them is important.

Information technology, transportation and the health system, which have reached the most rural parts of the KR, have reduced the gap between the rural and the urban areas. However, the mass media (TV, radio and newspapers) have developed under the control of the political parties. They actually contribute to a unified political culture; but this unification is not open enough to accept other ideas. Global media content is quickly adapted through the use of the Kurdish language. This culture is even mirrored in the social media. Political parties have numerous pages which typically contain hostile messages towards other parties. They generate public debate on political issues but, the debates are shaped by party lines. For this reason, the diversity of mass media has not contributed to the openness of society or the achievement of political development.

In addition, the KR as a federal entity and the weakness of the central government from 1992 up to now, has provided more opportunity for the KRG to behave as a semi-independent state especially after 2005. The KR has its own army, large scale foreign relationships and its own political apparatus, controlling its own internal financial sources as well as an allocated budget from the Iraqi government; it is planning to achieve economic self-independency. It is true that federalism status limited the ability of the KR to behave as an independent state, however, it provided a legal ground for being self-governing. This is the situation, which is entitled the “paradox of federalism” in the literature (Danilovich, 2014).

This analysis of political development theories in relation to the experience of the Kurdistan region implies that the basic concepts of political development such as urbanisation, participation, political parties, and differentiation and so on, are still essential. However, they have to be used and criticized. What has changed is not the fundamental conceptualisation, but the circumstances in which they need to be applied and the interpretations which need to be made. Concerning the KR itself, this thesis has tried to see beyond the formal institutions that are linked to the process of political development. It has tried to show how society connects to politics and vice versa, to discover the relationships between the economy and politics, and how they are all tied together.

### **Analysis and discussion**

This research defined political development (see Chapter 3) as a process, which is (1) dynamic, nonlinear but still coherent, interlocking and constructive; (2) leads to the strengthening of the political, economic, social and cultural components of civil society, together with (3) positive outcomes in terms of the contribution of both government and society to the political process, which (4) increase the government’s capacity through democratic institutionalization, (5) requires political will between different political groups, and (6) leads to greater integration with international processes.

The elements of the definition suggest a number of criteria which can be used to assess progress in political development. Political development can be considered to have occurred if there is evidence of the following. First of all, close, constructive relationships between political institutions (legislature, parliament, parties etc.). The findings from the present research show that relationships are in fact based on geographically distinct spheres of influence, conflictual competition (which has led, for example, to the suspension of parliament) and the placing of party above national interests. Secondly, there is a civil

society which can flourish independently of the state and market. Thirdly, evidence of a contribution by both government and society to the political process (e.g. through the political will of the elites, a public sphere and open media). Fourthly, evidence that the government's capacity is increasing through democratic institutionalization (not simply formal electoral processes). Fifthly, there is evidence that a variety of political groups have a legitimate voice and can exert political pressure. And finally, there is evidence that international relationships contribute to integration (through mutual recognition, the trade system, security etc).

Certainly, the mechanisms and prerequisites to launch political development exist in the KR. They include political party organizations, mass mobilization, participation, public elections and institutionalization, which are the key themes in development theories (Huntington, 2006; LaPalombara and Weiner, 1966; Rustow, 1970). However, as illustrated in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, the type of relationship which exists between the parties is not effective for the purposes of political development. As Inglehart and Welzel (2005) have argued, political parties may use state resources to serve their own interests. This situation, which Eisenstadt (1973a:47) called "breakdowns of modernization and development" means that the tools of modernization exist, but they are not used properly by the government to achieve development.

In the case of the KR then a change in the relationship between the political institutions is first required. This will only follow from a change in the elites' behaviours toward democratic values. Chapter 7 explained that the rotation of power, for example, is absent within political parties, and this problem is replicated in the lack of rotation of power in the government. However, this change will not be enough on its own. According to Almond and Verba (1963), Pye et al (1965), Inglehart and Welzel (2005) fundamentally, secular values also need to take root among the people. The secularisation theme is an important issue, but the evidence is not available to draw up a full conclusion. This second feature, as explained in Chapters 1, 7 and 8 is weak in the socio-political context of the KR. Thirdly, Lipset (1959) argued that economic development would lead to a democratic system. Stable and diverse of economic growth is a further condition. However, as Chapter One showed, economic growth in the KR was the outcome of the petrodollar, a governmental device rather than a market economy. If it improved living conditions from 1996 to 2013, it also contributed to the strengthening of certain political elites and parties. This economic leverage helped political parties to generate a mosaic of religious-tribal-local connections and a Party-ized

culture. Without all three transformations, political development is likely to be an incomplete process.

This research has approached the subject from the point view of politics and political development relations in the political sphere. However, there are two further issues which has been highlighted in this thesis, namely the international community's desire for stability and the possibility of social economic changes from below which might produce new incentives for change. Finally, there is a sense of nationalism emerging from inside and within Kurds in diaspora, which challenges the behaviour of the political elites to follow more modern norms of ruling.

Following on from the research findings, the main internal and external obstacles to political development in the KR can be summarized as follows.

### **Internal Factors: The Problematic Nature of the Political Parties**

As revealed in Chapter 5, 6 and 7, the functions of political parties, parliament and government interlock in such a way that often they encroach on each other's domains. This feature produces a hierarchical relationship between them. According to the results of this study and the testimony of the interviewees in the KR, the political parties come first, then the government and finally the parliament. This arrangement has two negative consequences: firstly, it undermines the autonomy of the government and, secondly, there is a lack of checks and balances to see if the government or political parties exceed their authority.

In terms of Binder et al's (1971) development syndrome -differentiation, capacity and equality - the political organisations of the KR suffer from a fundamental malaise. The dominant power of the political parties challenges the differentiation between the legislative, judicial and executive authorities. The main problem in the KR is not how to separate these authorities, but how to reduce the power of political parties. Political bureaus control decision making, so that important decisions are made outside rather than within the elected bodies (legislative and executive). The best example is the debate in parliament in August 2015 on the extension of the term of the president. MPs from the KDP and its allies, who called for an extension, boycotted the parliamentary sessions because the non-KDP members tried to reject the extension. Even when the Consultative Council, the highest judicial authority, made a decision to keep the president in office (the majority of its judges belong

to the KDP), the political parties from the non-KDP half of the MPs rejected their decision. Finally, the KDP banned the GM representative from parliament and government.

One factor behind the lack of differentiation is that the political parties originated as, and continue to be, mass political parties. Since 1992 they have controlled the major economic sectors, and military and public recruitment. This control enables them to directly mobilize in favour of the party's interests, without the support of civil society organisations. The civic organisations that have emerged, mostly belong to the political parties. These organisations, along with the mass media and public employees, are mobilized to participate in elections to convey the impression of a democratic political process and development in the KR.

This kind of performance produces a 'hybrid regime'. "Hybrid regime" is a term used by Fritz and Menocal (2006) to refer to the less developed countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa in which states have formal democratic institutions and the state intervene in the development process. They describe these regimes as

Characterised by populist politics, 'delegative'/strong-man leadership and decision-making processes.... Moreover, in these regimes, the rule of law is at best uneven. Clientelistic structures and high levels of corruption often persist, especially when citizens have few means of holding elites to account (p:17-18).

These features are very apparent in the political system of the KR. Political parties have succeeded in establishing a collective national feeling, but have failed to transfer this sentiment into a coherent national identity. Political mobilization and participation via political parties perpetuate the rhetoric of nationalism although on the ground they serve the parties' sectional interests. One important reason for this failure is the weight of history in the second half of the twentieth century. It was the history of political parties more than the history of a whole nation. This type of thinking still exists in the KR. For example, when ISIS attacked the town of Shingal in 2014 and the Peshmarga failed to resist, part of society and other political parties accused the KDP of failing to protect these areas.

According to Organski's (1965) 'linear' perspective on development, in order to develop politically, nations pass through four stages: "the politics of primitive unification, the politics of industrialization, the politics of national welfare, and the politics of abundance" (Organski in Olton 1966:161). The first stage is the stage of nation building as the primitive and necessary stage towards political development. The other stages depend on the success of this stage. In the KR, however, as shown through this thesis, the political parties were the

main tool of mobilization and divided the KR according to party affiliations more than national loyalty.

The hierarchy of party-government-parliament prevents political parties from being a two-way channel of communication between people and the government and an agent to transform power and change political elites. The KR party system conflicts with David Easton's (1957) model which had a great impact upon the structural-functional literature (Higgott, 1983). According to Easton, a political system consists of Inputs, Process and Outputs. Inputs refer to the demands and support that come through different strata of society, which are aggregated by various political parties and civil organisations into the government. The government then responds to demands according to its ability and resources. Independent socio-political organisations continue to accumulate demands. However, in the case of the KR, the government and civil organisations are dominated by political parties, which themselves have the role of processing demands, decision making and performing the role of feedback. The situation that comes into contrast with our definition of political development (points 2, 3 and 4) will subordinate the civil society organisations and undermine the institutionalisation capacity of government.

Another challenge facing political development in the KR is that the key Kurdish political parties were not originally formed to participate in elections. They were movements in a struggle for freedom and still have military wings, their own mass media, intelligence agencies, and overseas representation. They were created before the establishment of the state-government organisations and filled up the institutional vacuum in 1992. Consequently, they embody state-government functions and structure. The state-government in the KR does not have a monopoly of force over its territory.

As interviewees from the PUK, the KDP and the GM affirmed, the role of political parties needs to be reduced, if they are to develop genuine electoral or civil parties. The form of the main Kurdish political parties is consistent with LaPalombara and Weiner's (1966:29) description of "mass externally created parties", which are not incorporated perfectly in parliamentary values and have the potential to destabilize the political system. Even, where there is a degree of pluralism and competition, such parties reject peaceful transition of power. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 illustrated this problem in the KR. In the first decade of governing, the dominant features were internal war and dual administrations. In the second period, with the rise of opposition groups in 2009-2014 the protesters rejected the whole political system. The establishment of the eighth cabinet in 2014 led to suspension of the



parliament for seven months because the political parties could not agree on the division of posts. Even after they reached agreement on posts, the ongoing disagreement about the extension of the presidential term led in 2015 to the suspension of parliament.

As a medium for political development, political parties therefore suffer from a lack of democratic institutionalisation. There is a wider literature on democratization which has many facets and dimensions. This thesis has focused mainly on the political process and structure; hence, the term ‘democratic’ has been used in a narrow sense and essentially to refer to the mechanism of elections, representation and voting procedures, and ‘non-democratic’ has been used to refer to the ambiguity of a party’s programme (e.g. secular or not); the non-rotation of power inside the party; delays in holding congresses; lack of transparency in funding and political involvement of armed forces. As Eisenstadt (1973:30) pointed out, there is no necessary relationship between the multiplicity of political parties and their ability to introduce change and political modernization. LaPalombara (2007:141) echoes Eisenstadt (1973:143) in arguing that public “elections would not necessarily lead to democracy”. In the KR, political parties easily secure the votes in public elections by operating the levers of funding, recruitment and tribal influence. Participation is permitted but it serves party interests. Participants are passive objects rather than active subjects.

Another problem facing political development in the KR is the lack of rotation of power. For political parties to contribute to development, their higher offices need to be occupied by modernized elites (Han, 1970). In the KR, the same elites and their families have ruled the country since the 1950s. The latest generation will play the same role. The findings of this thesis are consistent with Mirza (2007) on political discourse that the independence of political elites in the KR, gave them an opportunity to make decisions without any public or legal investigation.

Transitions of power within government and political parties are rare. The level of criticism within each party does not target the first figures of each party and their families. Each party has an organisational structure that limits the capacity to change, even when some free discussions are permitted. The leadership may initiate ideas for discussion and members may bring ideas from below, however there is no mechanism to connect all of these ideas to promote creative change. According to the interviewees, in reality, the voice of the president is heard above the other voices and procedures of a party.

The results of this thesis also correspond with Fukuyama (2015) and Bromley (1997), who have argued that a country can build modern ‘democratic’ institutions which merely serve the ruling elites and not political development. In such societies, the political elites utilize state resources as private property through a network of political backers such as merchants and urban-based intellectuals. Participation in politics does not serve the public interest, only individual self-enrichment. Such institutions are inefficient at supplying public goods fairly and properly.

Every parliamentary election in the KR since 1992 has delivered either a fifty-fifty division of power or a broad based government. This has brought about stability, however it actually represents the defeat of the “peaceful transformation of power” between political parties through elections (Newton and Deth, 2010:281). There is an appetite for coalition between political parties, tribes and certain intelligentsia figures in order to serve the interests of political elites at the cost of political development.

To what extent can the KR elites (party leadership) be said to be ‘traditional’ or ‘modern’? The majority of the party leaders were raised according to the traditional norms and structure of Kurdish society and keep their connections with the mainstream culture and social structure, especially via the chieftains. However, they have a good level of education and international experience, mostly in western societies. They understand the local society and the demands of the outside world and adapt themselves easily to both. They benefit from outside support and inside trust; at least each political party does in its area of influence. It has helped them to remain in power for a long period of time with the electoral support of the public. The modern and democratic tools of participation through elections have served to reinforce an old traditional socio-political system.

Another challenge to political development is the membership of political parties. When a party attracts members, it plants the notion that both material and non-material existence will be difficult without belonging to the party. Membership appears to be voluntary but, in reality, it involves a form of coercion. Recruitment by political parties with the public services is a key factor in mass participation and electoral successes. By tying the recruitment of party members to both the civic and military sectors, political parties in the KR follow a policy of exclusion rather than inclusion, in which they exclude those who do not support their policy. Citizenship is limited to those who support the dominant party in its territory.

As a result, the whole employment process from the hiring of teachers in a primary school to the appointment of judges and the recruitment of soldiers becomes a political process which works systematically in favour of the power-holders. This type of recruitment, which Rush (1992:130) calls “agency-recruited”, refers to office-holding via the mediation of others and especially by political parties. The phenomenon underlines the fragmentation of the political system and the penetration by parties of the bureaucracy to become a ‘party-ocracy’<sup>2</sup>. It narrows the opportunities for innovation and change, and restricts the space for other interpretations. Periodically, the activities of a particular party in a specific territory are forbidden by the dominant political party and in time a kind of ‘hate culture’ emerges. It prevents political parties from becoming nation-wide bodies.

In short, the main political parties and elites have stayed in power with mass support and regional monopolies of economic organisations and recruitment. They represent traditional culture and structure more than the modern values of political development. In this respect, the function of political parties in the KR contrasts sharply with the tendency of political development theories to consider political parties as the main instrument of political development in new states (Jackson, 1966). For political development to occur it is necessary to transcend these normative and simplified abstractions and embrace a more pragmatic view.

### **Internal Factors: The Tribal Base Obstacle**

As noted earlier McDowell (2007:14) has argued that the state and tribes are incompatible:

States are static, intent on exercising a monopoly of power within a defined territory. They require an urban dimension, which embodies a bureaucracy and culture based upon the written word.... Tribes operate on kinship ideology and territoriality; the latter includes both established villages but also more fluid ideas that no state could entertain.

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<sup>2</sup> Calise (1994:442-443) in a study of whether the political system in Italy is presidential or parliamentary, argues that “Italy is neither a presidential nor a parliamentary regime: Italy is a partocracy, a term that, much as it might appear self-evident, calls for some specification”. For him ‘partocracy’ or party government “is a form of government where a party holds monopolistic control over the governmental process” (p:444). Calise used the term “partitocrazia” to describe the political situation of Italy at the time. There are some similarities between this type of party system in Italy and the KR: both are multiparty systems and parties participate in election competitions. However, what distinguishes the KR party system is that each of the two major parties dominates a specific geographical area and all the key political parties have their own armed forces, intelligence services and some public services. For further discussion of partocracy, see Lorch (1994); Pious (1994); Pelloni and Savioli (2015).

McDowell represents a typical view by saying that the modern state is incompatible with tribal society. However, as has been illustrated in Chapter 8, the relationship is more complex than this standard view suggests. In the Iraqi state, due to the state's inability to monopolise power, the state co-operates with, and shares power with tribes, and grants them economic privileges. In the KR, as the authority of the Iraqi government was replaced by the power of political parties the parties extended various privileges to the tribes to the extent that they would serve party interests but not threaten them. Tribes have become genuine partners in governance.

Chieftains carry out certain legal duties in co-operation with the ruling parties. Thus, the bureaucratic system is divided between the political parties, government and tribes. For instance, instead of using the Personal Status Law, issues such as honour crimes, polygamy (which is forbidden by law) or tribal and land disputes, may be resolved by applying traditional justice in co-operation with official bodies. The government is therefore not the ultimate source of power (neither is the army or the bureaucracy); it has to co-operate with other rival sources (Diamond, 2004). The key feature is that this power sharing is mediated by a political party, which means that in the KR, politics is a hybrid type between tribal and party/government (Rowton, 1973). It allows a degree of autonomy to both the tribes and government, but on the condition that the dominant political parties maintain sovereignty over them (party-ocracy). The equation favours both the political parties and tribes, but does not favour institutionalisation as an aspect of political development.

Geographically, the division of the KR in the mid-1990s, helped to reinforce the ties between the tribes and political parties. The level of political and economic advantages as well as the geographical location of a tribe, determine which alliances are made between tribes and parties.

Public elections are another tool to strengthen ties. Political parties nominate a tribal figure as a political representative of both the tribe and the party on one hand, and use this to prevent coalitions between the tribe and the party's rivals on the other. Tribalism has been revitalized as a source of social identity, mass mobilization and participation. The arrangements present a democratic appearance to the outside world.

It is clear, however, that hybrid politics conflicts with the nation building process. As Romano (2006:27) pointed out, Kurdish political elites are "more tribal or sectarian than nationalist". On the national level, socio-political identity is fluid between national, tribal,

local and party elements. This corresponds with Cole's (1982) definition of tribes as "groupings of people who use the idiom of kinship to explain their solidarity, recognizing, however, that they are integrally part of a wider society and culture not based on kinship" (Cole in Alshawi and Gardner, 2013:50).

This type of co-operation works through ascribed status, especially among incumbents to the government and parliamentary offices. The political parties nominate influential figures to stand in public elections, who come from backgrounds such as Mullah, chieftains or their relatives, or offspring of well-known cadres of a political party. Their ascriptive status appears to shift into achieved status through their electoral success. In fact, this shift is simply the replacement of an older generation with their offspring by using political parties and elections<sup>3</sup>. If the tribe is to be considered "as a mechanism for asserting social power" (Alshawi and Gardner, 2013: 46) this power is not formed in the framework of a modern civic organization that includes individuals from different backgrounds but is rather built on the shared power of individuals of the same community.

Some social changes have weakened the socio-political power of tribes. They include urbanisation, forced settlements and the intrusion of non-native cultures either through the mass media, the Kurds in the diaspora, trade or (I)NGOs. However, tribes still are powerful socio-political units in the KR. One reason is that, if the state-government as an overarching authority fails, which happened in the KR both before and after the uprising, citizens will rely on the other smaller entities such as tribal communities. In such situations of state-government weakness, the role of chieftains, Mukhtars and Rish Spee, will increase as they coordinate between villages or the members of a tribe to protect themselves from external threats.

When the social fabric is considered in relation to the physical geography and the type of economy of the KR, the consequences for political development became even clearer. As explained in Chapter One, the KR has both plains and mountains. In such a geography, if the political authority obstructs industrialisation, as happened in the Ba'ath regime, the main activity will be traditional farming (mainly in plain areas) and husbandry (mainly in mountainous areas). With a lack of advanced tools for planting and harvesting, the members

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<sup>3</sup> There are some similarities with western democratic systems. In the UK, for example, the expression 'old boys club' refers to a particular type of social and educational background. However, the problem for political development occurs when this phenomenon becomes a general mechanism to secure government and political offices without adequate scrutiny.

of a village work together to help each other. Until now, this kind of farming has remained a feature of the agricultural sector in the KR. It reinforces feelings of attachment to traditional structures (family, village and tribal ties). With the return of government influence in tribal areas especially via public services, the collective agricultural system has reduced somewhat in importance but the authority of the chieftain, Mukhtar and Rish Spee may still exist.

In this context, political parties oscillate between democratic rhetoric and supporting tribal values to remain in power. Support for the tribal fabric and figures by the political parties themselves, leads to a preference for sub-loyalties rather than national loyalty. Sub-loyalties impact negatively on the government and parliamentary performance. More importantly, it means that other sub-identities have the space to flourish (such as local, tribal, Soranian, Badinian identities, various dialects, as well as political party identities) they compete with national identity and often in practise rank above it.

To sum up, internally, the main problem facing political development is the type of mass participation, the kind of relationship between parties and political structures (government and parliament), and between them and the social fabric. They all have a negative impact on the structure of the political and bureaucratic system and keep the political elites in power. The structure and formation of both society and its political parties leads internally to less openness and stagnation, which reduces the capacity for mobility, adaptation and innovation.

### **External Factors**

In his overview of the development process, Hyden (2003) states that external factors play an important role. The two most important in the KR are financial dependency (especially foreign aid) and influence of neighbouring countries. As Chapter One explained, the majority of the KR's funds come from outside the region. Its financial dependency is the combined result of poor internal political performance, external aid programmes and the KR's budget share from Baghdad. One negative consequence of this dependency has been the destruction of the agricultural sector and the need to import the main subsistence commodities from abroad.

In the first period (1992-2003), the KR's source of income was petro-dollars, donations from INGOs and foreign countries, UN organizations and in the middle of this period the OFFP. However, it was not 'country-built aid' to rebuild the region's infrastructure. As Barakat (2005) and Brynen (2000) have argued, foreign aid can have both harmful and useful consequences. Outcomes depend on the types of plans that originate in the recipient societies

and the aims of the donor states. According to a report at the beginning of the establishment of the KR, approximately 70% of the population relied on foreign aid in the form of humanitarian assistance (Bauer, 2015). Bauer explains:

The huge financial and humanitarian assistance had a problematic side effect. It created a new type of economy, providing those groups with power who had access to the aid supplies. The strengthening of these local groups - many of them deploying their own militias - had a negative impact on the Kurdish population's cohesion (p:143).

This foreign aid became part of an OFFP programme and inflated the size of the government, as more than 90% of Iraqi revenue (including the KR) is derived from oil. The Iraqi government still sells oil and buys foodstuffs. According to a report published in Middle East Politics about Iraq, the government currently supplies 99.7% of the food consumed by all families (Springborg, 2015:115). Other economic sectors have stagnated because of the oil industry.

For political development to occur, the political authorities of the recipient state must be willing to invest the aid and encourage stability and development. However, the terminology, aims and forms of aid vary considerably, reflecting different strategies: recovery, development, humanitarian aid, rehabilitation, rebuilding and reconstruction. In some countries the purpose of aid is relief and prevention of poverty, in others the aim is development, establishment of democracy and the rule of law. In other cases, people receive aid through political parties (Barakat, 2005; Brynen, 2000; Natali: 2010; Carapico, 2002).

In the case of the KR, the main aim of aid was to preserve regional stability and security among the neighbouring countries which had experienced a Kurdish influx in 1991. Aid was granted in the name of humanitarian assistance, causing the KR to become a market for foreign goods. People received aid via a network of political parties, chieftains, local agencies and sometimes in the form of agricultural tools and livestock. It can be concluded that the purpose of aid to the KR was not political development or the establishment of powerful and democratic political institutions or improving economic sector.

Foreign aid in the framework of the OFFP, as Natali (2010) has argued, did not target the construction of infrastructures, either by the two Kurdish administrations or by international agencies. Instead, it fostered corruption and inequalities in the distribution of wealth. Foreign aid has long been considered a possible contributor to economic growth (Chenery and Strout, 1966). However, it is questionable how far it can bring about democratic political and social change. Economic growth without change in the socio-political institutions increases

inequality and prepares the way for violence (Wurfel, 1959:456-457). These outcomes have been displayed frequently up to the formation of the sixth cabinet and have been met with the demand: 'equality in the distribution of wealth'.

In a study of foreign aid to different countries between 1975 to 2000, Knack (2004) found out that it impacts negatively on the accountability and responsibility of government towards citizens, spreads corruption and conflict over the source of aid, and weakens the bureaucratic system and the rule of law. There is an inverse relationship between the level of aid and the quality of government performance. Knack (2001) argues that, in aid recipient countries, the public sector workers became deskilled and bureaucracy increases as government responsibility towards its citizens is reduced. Skills are concentrated in foreign civil organizations. Carapico (2002:379) also argues that foreign aid received directly by NGOs, political parties and other social and educational organizations, which he calls "extra-governmental channels", undermines the authority of government by creating reliance on foreign agencies and states; even if the ostensible purpose of the aid is to democratize the political system.

The evidence in this thesis shows that foreign aid and then oil revenue strengthened the hand of party rulers to the detriment of indigenous economic development. The establishment of the KRG, which coincided with the supply of food by INGOs, deepened the competition between the PUK and the KDP in their aim to benefit from the food suppliers (Natali, 2010). By controlling sources of revenue, the parties pursued the policy of recruiting from the rural population to their civic and military sectors and government organisations.

When the previous opposition participated in the coalition government (the eighth cabinet) they released evidence of corruption in various sectors and ministries, but this did not lead to prosecutions. For example, documents released in 2014 showed that various political parties 'employed' more than 100,000 of their members in ministries without any duties. In February 2016, the fiscal deficit triggered by a decreasing oil price and cutting off the KR budget by Baghdad forced the KRG to reduce its employees' salaries from 15% to 75% (KRG, 2016b).

Recent data confirms the devastating effect of relying on outside sources of income and oil revenue. According to ministry sources, in 2003 approximately 35% of the KR's total population relied on agriculture as their main source of income, while in 2014, it had dropped to 6.63%. The annual subvention by government to this sector is \$US250 million (Kurdistan



Review, 2014:153-155; Ministry of Planning, 2014:39). This occurred during the period since 2003, when reconstruction of the entire Iraqi agricultural system, and diversification of the economy was a strategy of the coalition countries (Looney, 2003).

In brief, the KR's financial capacity and its lack of autonomy in the economic sphere have hindered its development. It is important to add that government policies, especially after 2003, were ineffective. It was the period when doors opened for the KRG to participate in international trade and rebuild its domestic economic sectors, but this opportunity was ignored by relying on oil as a main industry.

The other main external factor in political development is the influence of neighbouring countries. As Kagan (2015:21) says "politics follows geopolitics". In the establishment of the relationships with other countries, the KRG suffers from two fundamental weaknesses. Firstly, being part of the Iraqi state limits the KRG's ability to broaden its relationships independently. Foreign countries often prefer to establish relationships with the KR through the Baghdad government. The exception to this is the period after 2009, which coincided with the discovery of oil in the KR and the growing strength of the Shi'a in Baghdad, which strengthened the role of Iran. One reason for countries to avoid making a direct relationship is that it may encourage the religious and ethnic minorities of the neighbouring countries to seek their political rights. This would create instability in the wider region and impact negatively on trade and especially, energy security. This highlights the fact that the degree of development is related to the level of stability and development of the neighbouring states and the extent to which they intervene in each others' internal issues.

Secondly, even before the establishment of the KRG in 1992, the political parties had their own offices abroad for relations with governments and institutions. This undermines the government's capacity to engage in international relations. Even the KRG's official foreign representation offices, which were established in 2006, are divided between the PUK and the KDP.

The relationship between the KR and Turkey reflects the change of regime in Iraq in 2003, which constitutionally strengthened the KR. Turkey responded to this by changing the emphasis from military-security to economic-political relationships. Turkey did not officially recognize the KR, but it recognized that the change of the regime in Iraq gave a better opportunity to Turkey to achieve its goals through improved relationships with the KR

(Larrabee, 2007). Future relationships between the two will be shaped by upheavals in the wider region and Turkey's stance towards its own population of Kurds.

It is important to note the factors that impelled Turkey to follow a peace policy within its own borders. They include the Arab Spring, Shi'a domination in the regional context, especially in Iraq after the withdrawal of the USA troops from Iraq in 2011, the deterioration of the relationship between Ankara and Baghdad, and the PKK threat to Turkish security enhanced by backing from the Shi'a governments of Iran. For this policy to succeed, the Turkish government needs the support of the KRG as a mediator between Turkey and the PKK.

Hydrocarbon resources in the KR are another factor in the approach of Turkey to the KRG (Cagaptay and Evans, 2012). In the above list of factors, only energy is within the territory of the KR; the others are out of the control of the KRG. However, even energy is a volatile factor. With the halt to the peace process between Turkey and the PKK in mid-summer 2015, the PKK blew up the oil pipeline that carries oil from the KR to the global market. The energy relationship depends on the stability or instability of relations between the Turkish government and the PKK, the PKK and the KRG. However, as an independent state and the gateway for the KR to the outside world, Turkey has the upper hand in dealing with the KR.

Another point of weakness in the relationship between the KRG and Turkey is that political parties in the KR believe that the relationship between both sides is the relationship between the KDP and the AKP (Turkey ruling party), which has not been institutionalized. As illustrated in Chapter 9, this assumption encouraged the PUK to strengthen its relationships with Iran. This can be seen in the speech of Baram Majeed Khan, a PUK advisor on Iranian affairs:

Iran is worried about the fact that the Kurdistan Region has strong economic and commercial ties with Turkey.... Iran feels that Turkey has crept into the Kurdistan Region more than it should (Idiz, 2013).

It means that the future of the relationship between Turkey and the KRG-KDP may deepen the political rivalry between the political parties in the KR.

Like Turkey, Iran sees the KR as an arena of challenges and opportunities. Since its establishment in 1992, the KR has become a market for Iranian goods. However, maintaining security is the main challenge for Iranian policy. Before 2003, Iran dealt with the KR directly without the mediation of the Iraqi government. Subsequently, with the Shi'a domination of the Iraqi government, Iran has tried to establish a strong central government in Iraq to

weaken the KR (Barzegar, 2008: 50-51; Barzegar, 2010). Iran now follows a dual policy towards the KR, which is based on the type of government in Baghdad on the one hand, and the forms of regional and supra-regional power relations in the KR, on the other.

A similar analysis can be made of the relationships between Iran and the KRG as was made of the relationship between Turkey and the KRG. Instead of being a relationship between two governments, the relationship is more between the PUK and Iran. Hiwa Osman, an analyst of Iraqi and Kurdish affairs pointed out that

It's their geopolitics [the PUK and the KDP] that dictates their decisions.... The difference is understandable: The KDP lives on the border with Syria, the Islamic State [IS] and Turkey. The PUK lives on the borders of Iran and [the rest of] Iraq and has no borders with Turkey (Salih, 2015).

In fact, the non-state status of the KR has opened the hand of its political parties to establish international relationships independently and to pursue their own interests; and it allowed neighbouring countries to intervene in the KR's domestic issues. The struggle between political parties and personalities often shapes these relationships. Connections with the neighbouring countries are party/personalised rather than state/government and institutionalised.

Compared to Turkey, the relationship with Iran is more problematic. As explained in Chapter 9, Iran deals with the KRG through a combination of diplomatic and military channels. Even in the internal war, Iran provided the PUK with weapons against the KDP. The majority of Iran's construction projects in the KR are by the "Bonyad Foundation", which belongs to the Islamic Revolution Guard, called *Sepah* (Eisenstadt et al, 2011:12). The oil trade between Iran and the KRG depends on road tankers. Iran thinks that setting up an oil pipeline between Iran and the KRG will weaken the federal government of Iraq. Politically, Iran prefers to maintain relationships via political parties rather than the KRG or keep it at the lowest level through low ranking officials. An exception was that after an ISIS attack, the Iranian parliament speaker visited the KR. Iran has Consulates in both Erbil and Slemani. Most visits and meetings occur with leaders of political parties (not only the PUK and the KDP), not the KRG. However, the main problem for political development is that Iran is one of the "Big Five" countries (China, Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela) that acts "to halt or reverse the advance of democracy" in regional and international settings (Walker, 2015:20).

Relationships with Iran and Turkey have been a double burden for the KRG in its attempts to reconcile economic requirements and political freedom. Further, it has to bear the

consequences of competition between regional and supra-regional powers in the KR, which impacts on its stability and instability (Gunter, 1998).

To sum up, the future of political development in the KR is uncertain. The findings of this study show that the contributing factors are the political upheavals in the KR between 1992 and 2014, the rise of ISIS, the cutting off of the KR budget by the Bagdad government, the drop in the oil price as the main source of revenue, and the influx of nearly two million refugees into the KR. In the political sphere, the underlying theme is the deep rivalry between political parties. The multiparty system and periodic general elections have not guaranteed effective government. While the period from 1992 to 2014 can be considered as a transitional period, the current signals are not in favour of actual political development. The changes that have occurred do not originate from the elite's political will but from pressures from below or from external economic and political upheavals.

The KR is living in a constitutional vacuum and the major laws passed by the parliament carry different interpretations according to which party is in power. Demands for reform often remain as political rhetoric. Each party displays features of mass mobilization, militia organisation and cadre discipline. Each party in power, whether alone or in coalition, employs its own members in government offices, which means that equal opportunity is absent. Collusion between political parties, chieftains and religious figures has weakened the performance of government and parliament. International relationships are mostly party-led; and because of the lack of institutionalisation (or nationalization) these relationships often deepen the struggle between political parties.

All the findings confirm that, in the KR, to achieve political development it is necessary for a parliament to be established that has the power of surveillance over government. A type of government needs to be established that has the power to monitor and regulate the political, economic and military spheres and the ability to represent the KR. This aim cannot be achieved until the political parties are transformed into civic parties. Thus far, the political parties of the KR have not been open enough to respond to the requirements of political development. Economic diversity and a secular social context are other requirements. Some obstacles can overcome internally, such as the implementation of law and rotation of power if there is political will. However, some of them are less controllable by the KRG, and especially neighbouring countries' policies. However, the fate of the political development of the KR is not totally subservient to its geopolitical circumstances, internal policy has a role to play in changing this fate. The problem of political development in the KR is that

endogenous government lacks the capacity for development and that powerful exogenous factors escape the control of this endogenous government.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix1: Kurdistan Regional Government Unification Agreement

January 21 2006

The supreme interest of the people of the Kurdistan Region, today more than at any other time, requires that its citizens further unite their energies and capabilities. We face serious and delicate issues in the period ahead when the future of the Kurdistan Region will be decided as we move through the development of a democratic and federal Iraq. We must secure and guarantee the historic achievements of our people and the realization of our full and just rights by putting in place and implementing the permanent Constitution, establishing a genuine federal and democratic Iraq; restoring Kirkuk, Khanaqin, Sinjar, Makhmour, and other Arabized areas to the embrace of the Kurdistan Region, and developing and growing the democratic experience in the Kurdistan Region with further strengthening of stability and liberty through the creation of a lasting unification of the Kurdistan Regional Government.

For these reasons, The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), on the basis of partnership, consensus and equity, agreed to the following:

1. A New post of Vice President of the Region will be established by amendment to the Law of the Presidency of the Region. The Vice President will be from the PUK and will also serve as the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Peshmerga forces of the Kurdistan Region.
2. The Prime Minister and his Deputy will be identified by the Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA) and will be charged by the President of the Kurdistan Region with forming a joint cabinet. The Prime Minister will submit the names of his cabinet to the KNA.
3. The Speaker of the KNA will be from the PUK and the Prime Minister will be from the KDP until the next election of the KNA at the end of 2007. For the next election, the KDP and PUK will participate in a joint slate as equals, and at that time the post of the Speaker of the KNA will go to the KDP and the Prime Minister will be from the PUK. This will be for two years. After that, the KDP and PUK will rotate the posts of Speaker and Prime Minister. If by the end of 2007 elections are not conducted due to delay, the posts of Speaker and Prime Minister will rotate.
4. If either of the ministerial blocs withdraws from the joint cabinet, the entire cabinet will be considered as resigned.
5. The ministerial posts will be divided as follows:
  - a) The Ministers of Interior, Justice, Education, Health, Social Affairs, Religious Affairs,

Water Resources, Transportation, Reconstruction, Planning, and Human Rights will be from the PUK.

b) The Ministers of Finance, Peshmerga Affairs, Higher Education, Agriculture, Martyrs, Culture, Electricity, Natural Resources, Municipalities, Sports and Youth, and Minister of Region for the affairs of areas outside the Region will be from the KDP.

c) The remaining ministries will be assigned to other parties of the Kurdistan Region.

d) The Ministries of Finance, Peshmerga Affairs, Justice, and Interior should unite within one year. These four ministries, until they unite, will have both a cabinet minister and a minister of the region for the affairs of the concerned ministry. Each minister will have responsibility for the part of the ministry which is currently under their control.

6. The budget of 2006 will be managed as it has been decided, but the share of the budget of the Presidency of the Kurdistan Region, the KNA, the Council of Ministers, and the Judicial Council, and any other joint items from each side will be allocated equally. Afterwards, in the coming years, the Kurdistan regional budget will be prepared by the unified KRG and submitted to the KNA. After approval, the budget will be allocated to various areas according to population percentage and agreement within the unified KRG.

7. Under the auspices of the Presidency of the Kurdistan Region there will be established a Supreme Commission to institutionalize the police and security agencies of the Kurdistan Region. These united agencies will be removed from political considerations. After the unified KRG takes office in the capital of the Kurdistan Region, Erbil, a special program will be instituted for university graduates with the aim of recruiting new candidates to the security services of the governorates for the sake of unification and re-establishment of these important agencies for our people.

8. The KRG representations abroad, according to agreement of both the KDP and PUK, will be assigned by the Prime Minister and his Deputy.

9. In all the Governorates of the Kurdistan Region a joint committee will be established between the KDP and PUK to resolve issues as they may arise.

10. Both sides, KDP and PUK, will present Mr. Jalal Talabani as their candidate for the sovereign post in the Iraqi Federal Government.

Masoud Barzani, President, KDP

Jalal Talabani, Secretary General, PUK

Source: KRG, <http://www.krg.org/a/d.aspx?r=223&l=12&a=8891&s=02010100&s=010000> (accessed: 15 July 2013).

## **Appendix 2: The Participant Information Form**

COLEG BUSNES, Y GYFRAITH, ADDYSG A GWYDDORAU  
CYMDEITHAS  
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, LAW, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



PRIFYSGOL  
**BANGOR**  
UNIVERSITY

### **The Participant Information Form**

**Title of research:** The title of this research is “The obstacle to political development in the Kurdistan region: 1991-2014”. The researcher is Hiwa Majid Khalil, Department of Social Science. The research is a PhD project and it is supervised by prof. Howard Davis.

#### **Reason for the research:**

Kurdistan region, a de facto entity since 1991, has established a local government, a multiparty system and has held various elections. However, in term of political development, the region faces difficulties. The academic literature on this issue and regarding the Kurdistan region is scarce. This research attempts to study the n-dimensionality of obstacles to political development in the KR. The aim of the research is to spotlight how the modern body of politics (political party, parliament and government) together with traditional features of society (tribal society) and regional governments have prevented the process of political development in the Kurdistan region before 1991 and 2014, and to find out reasons behind that.

#### **Details of participation:**

Regarding the issue of political development in the KR, there is not enough research and sources on this topic, hence the need for new data collection. The main method of the fieldwork or interview is interview with parties and parliament officials or elite interviewing. Several questions have been drafted about familiar cases to participants and those questions are the general framework of the interviews.

Participants will normally be identified by their names, positions, and institutions. However, Participants’ identification details may be fully or partly anonymized if they wish. The interview will be recorded if participants do not object. If they prefer, the researchers will



take notes. Participants' information would be used just in this research and if they agreed for related publications. The researcher promises to keep what participant want to be hidden or uncovered and to transfer knowledge and understanding with responsibility and in an honest and cautious way to my research.

Signature:

Researcher Name: Hiwa Majid Khalil

Phone: 07504636861

E-mail: [hiwa\\_siyasa@yahoo.com](mailto:hiwa_siyasa@yahoo.com)

**RIFYSGOL BANGOR**  
NEUADD OGWEN,  
BANGOR,  
GWYNEDD, LL57 2DG  
FFÔN: +44 (0) 1248 382222  
FFACS: +44 (0) 1248  
382085  
EBOST: [soos@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:soos@bangor.ac.uk)

Elusen Gofrestredig. Rhif:  
1141565

**BANGOR UNIVERSITY**  
OGWEN BUILDING,  
BANGOR,  
GWYNEDD, LL57 2DG  
TEL: +44 (0) 1248 382222  
FAX: +44 (0) 1248 382085  
EMAIL: [soos@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:soos@bangor.ac.uk)

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### Appendix 3: Declaration Consent

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COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, LAW, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL  
SCIENCES



**Title of research:** The title of this project is “Obstacles to political development in the Kurdistan region: 1991-2014”. The research, by Hiwa Majid Khalil, is for a PhD in the School of Social Sciences, supervised by Professor Howard Davis.

#### DECLARATION OF CONSENT

1. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the research at any time, without giving any reason.
2. After reading the participant information form and speaking to the researcher, I am fully aware of the framework for the research and my role as an informant.
3. I understand that all individual information will be held securely and used only for the purpose of the PhD and related publications.
4. All questions that I have about the research have been satisfactorily answered.
5. I agree for this research interview to be recorded and for the recording to be used for the purposes that have been explained to me.
6. I understand that all the information I provide will be treated as strictly confidential.

I agree to participate.

Participant’s signature:

Participant’s name:

Date:

**RIFYSGOL BANGOR**  
NEUADD OGWEN,  
BANGOR,  
GWYNEDD, LL57 2DG  
FFÔN: +44 (0) 1248 382222  
FFACS: +44 (0) 1248  
382085  
EBOST: [soos@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:soos@bangor.ac.uk)  
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**BANGOR UNIVERSITY**  
OGWEN BUILDING,  
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TEL: +44 (0) 1248 382222  
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## **Appendix 4: Interview Questions**

### **Political Parties**

#### **Factual/ questions**

1. What were/are your posts inside the party and outside the party?
2. What are the privileges of being a member of a party compared with an ordinary person who is not a member of a party?
3. In employing your members in official posts, to what extent do you consider his/her personal qualities and social background?
4. Who does your party represent? Is it a certain strata or class of society?
5. Why is your party more powerful in the Badinan area than the Soranin area or vice versa? Even your party (Gorran and the PUK and the Islamic League) has not gained any parliamentary seats in the Badinan area. Does this mean the political parties of the region are to some extent more local rather than national?
6. Is politics in the KR always a zero sum game? Which means if I win, you lose?
7. How would you describe the party system in the KRG? Is it a multi-party system? especially by looking at economic sector that mainly has been controlled by the KDP and PUK)

#### **The connection between army and political parties**

8. Who is the army for?
9. Who is or what are the main obstacle(s) behind forming a national army? Or how should the Peshmerga military develop to become a national army?

#### **Questions about a relationship between political party and tribes**

10. Kurdistan society to some extent is a tribal one and by looking at your party's parliamentary candidate list, there were names of tribal members that were nominated for parliament. What is your relationship with the tribes?

11. As you know, the tribal norms often come into conflict with developmental norms, which means that to a high extent the political parties' have a responsibility to do something in this respect. Why don't you try to take action towards reducing this impact?

### **Internal Decision making process and leader issue**

12. What is the system of decision making inside the party?

13. Why doesn't the phenomenon of succession of leadership exist inside the political party at the level of leadership? Does this mean that the party will be more based on personalization or family links?

14. Some people say that the concentration of personal power is conducive to corruption. Do you agree?

### **Party and society**

15. Many citizens say that the parties are no more than a means to get money or do business. So, how should your political party engage with social and political development?

16. By each party having such a huge mass media (TV, newspapers, radio, magazines, websites and ...) in which they compete sharply, do you think that the media divides society more than they unifies it?

### **Financial question**

17. Where does your party funding come from?

### **Religion question**

18. What is your connection with religion? Is your party a secular party or non-secular?

### **Parliament questions**

#### **Simple question**

19. What were/are your posts inside the party and outside the party?

#### **The process of decision making**

20. According to the internal system of parliament, all members have the right to nominate him/herself for the parliament assembly (the president, vice president and secretary) and who

gains the majority of votes can run these positions. However, in all previous terms, these positions were distributed according to the political agreements between political parties and outside of parliament. What is your opinion about this?

21. Does the parliament make laws and resolutions by itself or primarily do the political parties' bureaus discuss these issues between themselves? For example, the constitution and presidential issue discussed in bureaus and then in parliament.

22. To what extent did the parliament members succeed to be independent in decision making or were they often under his/her party's influence? Because often or in the majority of times, all members of a list vote against or for a resolution.

23. What is your connection with your place and people?

### **The connection between parliament and government**

24. Have you as an individual ever voted against your party's policy? why?

### **The budget issue**

25. Why has the parliament still not been successful in passing a law to regulate parties' activities and especially their funding?

26. Many believe that the government does not regulate the budgetary issue of political parties because this step might be an action towards reducing the social and political hegemony of some parties on the public sphere. To what extent do you agree?

27. A lot of the national budget is allocated to the parliamentary members. They have many privileges, such as receiving vehicles, houses, body guards and high salaries and pensions. Do you consider this as a kind of corruption?

### **Government Questions**

#### **Factual Question**

28. What were/are your posts in the party and outside the party?

### **Relationship between government and parties**

29. As we know the cabinet since 2005 is a coalition cabinet between parties that are still struggling. To what extent did this struggle between political parties inside the government aid them to gain their own interests thus creating a barrier to the government's performance?

30. Many times ministers of each party are engaged in the affairs of their party's dominant areas. This can be seen in their visits and meetings that the PUK's ministers have focused more on the green zone and the KDP's on the yellow zone. Can government succeed in removing the boundaries of the two administrations?

## Appendix 5: Research Ethics Committee

COLEG BUSNES, Y GYFRAITH, ADDYSG A GWYDDORAU  
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17 February 2014

Dear Hiwa

Re: The obstacle to political development in the Kurdistan region: 1992-2014

Thank you for your revised application to the CBLESS Research Ethics Committee. The committee has considered your application and I am now able to give permission, on behalf of the CBLESS Research Ethics Committee, for the commencement of your research project, with the proviso that where quotation of participants views would be impossible without identifying them, permission to use quotations should be secured at the time of interview rather than retrospectively.

I wish you well with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Diane Seddon

Chair, CBLESS Research Ethics Committee

Cadeirydd, Pwyllgor Moeseg y Coleg

cc: Professor Howard Davis

**RIFYSGOL BANGOR**  
NEUADD OGWEN,  
BANGOR,  
GWYNEDD, LL57 2DG  
FFÔN: +44 (0) 1248  
382222  
FFACS: +44 (0) 1248  
382085  
EBOST:  
soss@bangor.ac.uk

**BANGOR UNIVERSITY**  
OGWEN BUILDING,  
BANGOR,  
GWYNEDD, LL57 2DG  
TEL: +44 (0) 1248 382222  
FAX: +44 (0) 1248 382085  
EMAIL:  
soss@bangor.ac.uk

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## Appendix 6: Supervisor Support Letter

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To Whom It May Concern

**Hiwa Majid Khalil**

This is to confirm that the above is a bona fide postgraduate student at Bangor University, registered in the School of Social Sciences since January 2013 for the degree of PhD.

In order to collect data for his research project on the political sociology of the Kurdistan Region, Iraq he is required to conduct original fieldwork in the region. He has been granted permission for this for a period of 6 months and will continue to work under my supervision for the duration. He will leave the UK on **14 March 2014** and will return in **mid-September 2014**.

If further information is required, please contact me via email at [h.h.davis@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:h.h.davis@bangor.ac.uk) or telephone 01248 382123 or +44 1248 382123 (international).



Professor Howard Davis, MA (Cambridge) PhD (Edinburgh) FRSA  
School of Social Sciences

**RIFYSGOL BANGOR**  
NEUADD OGWEN,  
BANGOR,  
GWYNEDD, LL57 2DG  
FFÔN: +44 (0) 1248  
382222  
FFACS: +44 (0) 1248  
382085  
EBOST:  
soss@bangor.ac.uk

**BANGOR UNIVERSITY**  
OGWEN BUILDING,  
BANGOR,  
GWYNEDD, LL57 2DG  
TEL: +44 (0) 1248 382222  
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**YR ATHRO/PROFESSOR CATHERINE A. ROBINSON**  
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## **Appendix 7: The Interviewees Duties in the periods 1992-2014.**

### **Abdilselam Berwari**

Counsellor of Deputy Speaker in the fourth term of the parliament. MP of the third term, administrator of the KDP's Committee (*Liq*) in Austria. Chief of the KDP's media, administrator of the USA Committee (*Liq*). Chief of the Gollan and Xebat media organization. Chief of political files in the KDP's president office, chief of the KDP's Academic Studies (interview: 19 June 2014).

### **Adnan Osman**

Manager of the Hawlati newspaper, Manager of the Rojname Newspaper, MP of the GM in the third term of the parliament (interview: 6 July 2014).

### **Amina Zikri**

MP of the third and fourth term, member of KDP's Committee (*Liq*) in Dohuk, member of the executive assembly in the KDP's Womens' Union, the chief of the Dohuk Institution for Political Issues (interview: 2 April 2014).

### **Bayan Ahmad (Barwary)**

The IU's Political Bureau member, chief of the IU's womens' office. MP of the third term of parliament (interview: 6 June 2014).

### **Haydar Esmail Abdullah**

MP of the first term, Member of the Organising Office of the PUK, Deputy of the Erbil Committee (*Melbend*), member of the Democratic Organization Office (interview: 13 May 2014).

### **Hishyar Abid**

The organiser of the Badinan Room, which is in charge of the Duhok and Mosul Provinces. Member of the National Assembly of the GM (interview: 30 June 2014).

### **Ibrahim Ali Haji Malo**

The chieftain of the *Mizori* tribe, which consists of 111 villages (interview: 29 March 2014).

### **Ihsan Abdullah (Amedi)**

Member of the KDP's Committee (*Liq*) in Dohuk. Chief of Organization Office in Dohuk. MP of the second term (interview: 2 April 2014).

**Karim Bahri Bradost**

Member of the Democratic Organization Office of the PUK. Chief of the Lawyers' Syndicate. MP of the second term of parliament (interview: 12 May 2014).

**Kwestan Muhamad Abdulla**

MP of the second term in the PUK list. MP of the third term in the GM list (interview: 14 July 2014).

**Layla Amir**

MP of the third term of the KDP. A member the Student Union Secretary (interview: 25 June 2014).

**Mohamad Haji**

The chief of the GM's political relationship. Member of the National Assembly (interview: 13 May 2014).

**Mohamad Mulla Qader**

The previous member of the KDP's Political Bureau. Member of the Central Committee in the Eylol and Gollan revolution. Chief of the KDP's Dohuk Committee. Chief of the KDP's Erbil Committee. Minister in the first cabinet. Chief of the KDP's cabinet (1995-1996). MP of the first term of parliament (interview: 10 June 2014).

**Muhamad Ra'auf**

chief of Leadership Assembly of the IU. Member of the IU list in the Governing Council in Baghdad. The minister in the fifth cabinet. A businessman (interview: 6 June 2014).

**Na'amat Abdullah**

The MP of the second term of parliament in the KDP list. The head of the Parliamentarians Syndicate (12 May 2015).

**Nahla Mohammad Sa'adulah**

MP of the second term of parliament in the PUK list. Member of the Organising Office (interview: 12 May 2014).

**Omer Nuraldini**

MP of the third term of parliament in the KDP list. The head of the KDP bloc in parliament. Lecturer at Salahaddin University, department of political science. Member of Organizing of the the Central Committee (interview: 6 April 2014).

### **Sa'adi Ahmad Pira**

The head of the PUK bloc in the first parliamentary term. Minister of Agriculture. Minister of Health and Social Affairs. Minister of Relationships and Humanitarian Affairs. Political Bureau member. Chief of the PUK's International Relationship (Interview on 14 May 2014).

### **Salahaddin Babaker**

The IU's Political Bureau member. The Leadership Committee member. Member of the Planning Board of the IU. Deputy General Secretary of the IU. Minister in the eighth cabinet (interview on 8 June 2014).

### **Sarbest Dewali**

The chieftain of the *Dosky* tribe, which consists of 124 villages (30 March 2014).

### **Saro Qadir**

Member of the Communist party before the uprising. Chief of the logistic relationship between Afghanistan and the USSR. Chief of the Gollan foundation. Chief of the Media office. Leadership Committee member. Counsellor of the KDP's president. Head of the Institute for Research and Development- Kurdistan (Interview on 7 June 2014).

### **Tariq Jambaz**

The head of the PUK bloc in the first term of parliament. MP in the second term of parliament (interview 12 May 2014).

### **Zakia Sayd Salih**

Chief of the KDP's Womens' Union in Dohuk. Member of the Dohuk Municipal. Government and organisations coordinator with the WFO. The KSP's MP of the second term (interview: 3 June 2014).

### **Zana Rostai**

Leadership member of the IL. Chief of Training and Development Academy of the IL. Chief of the Balwez organization for human development. Member of the Parliamentarians Syndicate. MP of the third term of the KR parliament. MP of the third term in the Iraqi parliament (interview: 12 May 2014).

## Appendix 8: Declaration of Consent in Kurdish

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### ناونیشانی توژینهوه:

ناونیشانی ئەم بابەتە بریتییە لە " بەر بەستەکانی گەشەسەندنی سیاسی لە ھەریمی کوردستان: ۱۹۹۱-۲۰۱۴". توژەری ئەم بابەتە 'ھیوا مەجید خەلیل'ە لە بەشی زانستە کۆمەڵایەتیەکانی زانکۆی بەنگۆر. توژینهوهکە نامەی دکتۆرایە بە سەرپەرشتی پروفیسۆر 'ھاوارد دیقیس'.

### رەزامەندی دەربەرین:

۱. من بە خۆبەخشانه بەشدارم لەم چاوپێکەوتنەدا و ھەرکاتیک کە ویستم دەتوانم کۆتایی بە چاوپێکەوتنەکانە بێنم.
۲. دواى خویندەنەوی فۆرمی زانیاری بەشدار بووان و گفتوگۆ لەگەڵ توژەردا، من ئاگاداری چوارچێوەی توژینهوهکە و رۆلی خۆم وەک بەشداربووێک.
۳. من ئاگادارم کە زانیاریەکان بە ئەمانەتەمو مامەلیان لەگەڵ دەکریت و تەنیا بۆ نامەی دکتۆرا و بلاوکراوە پەیوەندیدارمەکان بەکار دیت.
۴. گشت پرسیارەکانم سەبارەت بەم توژینهوهیە بە باشی لە لایەن توژەرمووە وەلام دراوەتەوه.
۵. من رازیم کە ئەم چاوپێکەوتنە تۆمار بکریت بۆ ئەو ئامانجانەى کە بۆم باس کراون.
۶. من ئاگادار کراوەتەوه کە گشت زانیاریەکان لەم چاوپێکەوتنەدا زۆر بە ئەمانەتەوه دەپارێزرین.

واژووی بەشدار بوو:

رازیم بە بەشدار بوونم:

رێککەوت:

ناو:

RIFYSGOL BANGOR  
NEUADD OGWEN,  
BANGOR,  
GWYNEDD, LL57 2DG  
FFÔN: +44 (0) 1248 382222  
FFACS: +44 (0) 1248  
382085  
EBOST: soss@bangor.ac.uk

BANGOR UNIVERSITY  
OGWEN BUILDING,  
BANGOR,  
GWYNEDD, LL57 2DG  
TEL: +44 (0) 1248 382222  
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EMAIL: soss@bangor.ac.uk

YR ATHRO/PROFESSOR CATHERINE A. ROBINSON  
PENNAETH YR YSGOL/HEAD OF SCHOOL  
  
  
  
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## Appendix 9: The Participant Information Form in Kurdish

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### فۆرمی زانیاری به‌شداربووان

نانونیشانی توژینهوه: نانونیشانی ئەم بابەتە بریتییە لە " بەر بەستەکانی گەشەسەندنی سیاسی لە ھەریەمی کوردستان: ۱۹۹۱-۲۰۱۴".  
توژمەری ئەم بابەتە 'ھیوا مەجید خەلیل'ە لە بەشی زانستە کۆمەڵایەتیەکانی زانکۆی بەنگۆر. توژینهوهکە نامەی دکتۆرایە بە  
سەرپەرشتی پروفیسۆر 'ھاوارد دێفیس'.

### نامانجەکانی توژینهوه

ھەریەمی کوردستان وەک ھەریەمیکی دیفاکتۆ لە ۱۹۹۱ ھە، حکومەتیکی خۆجێی دامەزراندووە و خاوەنی سیستەمی فەرپارتیە و  
چەندین ھەلیژاردنی ئەنجام داوە. سەرھەرای ئەمەش، لە رووی گەشەسەندنی سیاسییەوه، ھەریەم رووبەرۆوی ھەندێ گرفت  
بووتەوه. توژینهوه ئاکادیمیەکان لەسەر ئەم بابەتە کەمن. ئەم توژینهوهیە ھەول دەدات کە بەر بەستە جوړاوجۆرەکان لەبەردەم  
گەشەسەندنی سیاسی لە ھەریەمی کوردستاندا بختە روو. ئەمانجی ئەم توژینهوهیە بریتییە لەوەی کە چۆن ستراکتۆرە مۆدێرنەکان  
(پارته سیاسییەکان، پەرلەمان و حکومەت) لەگەڵ خەسڵەتە تەقلیدیەکانی کۆمەڵگا (کۆمەڵگای خێلەکی) و ولاتانی ھەریەمی  
بەر بەست لەبەردەم پروسەیی گەشەسەندنی سیاسی لە ھەریەمدا دروست دەکەن و ھۆکارەکانی پشت ئەم بەر بەست دروستکردنەش  
دەخزێتە روو.

### زانیاری بەشداربووان

سەبارەت بە بابەتی گەشەسەندنی سیاسی لە ھەریەمی کوردستاندا، توژینهوه و سەرچاوەی پنیویست لەبەر دەست نییە، بۆیە پنیویستە  
داتای نوێ کۆ بکریتەوه. لەم توژینهوهیەدا میتۆدی چاوپێکەوتن لەگەڵ کادیرانی پارته سیاسییەکان، پەرلەمانتاران و نوخەیی  
سیاسی و کەسایەتیە کۆمەڵایەتیەکان گراوتەبەر. وەک چوارچۆنیەکی گشتی، کراون لەسەر بابەتە دەستنیشانکراوەکان چەندین  
پرسیار گەڵالە. بەشداربووان لە رێگەی ناو، پلە و بەرپرسیاریتی لە دامەزراوەکاندا دەناسرێن. ئەگەر بەشداربووان خوازیار بن  
دەکریت ناماژە بە ناو و نیشانیان نەدریت. بە پێی رەزامەندی بەشداربووان چاوپێکەوتنەکان تۆمار دەکرین یا خود تەنیا تێبینیەکان  
دەنوسرینەوه. چاوپێکەوتنەکان لەم توژینهوهیەدا بەکار دێن و بە پێی رەزامەندی بەشداربووان دەکریت بۆ بلۆکراوەکانی داھاتوش  
بەکار بەنێرین. توژمەر بەلێن دەدات کە داتا و زانیاریەکان بە خواستی بەشداربووان و بە ئەمانەتەوه مامەڵەیان لەگەڵدا بکریت.

ناو: ھیوا مەجید خەلیل

واژوو:

ئیمیل: [hiwa\\_siyasa@yahoo.com](mailto:hiwa_siyasa@yahoo.com)

تەلفۆن: ۰۷۵۰۴۶۳۶۸۸۱

RIFYSGOL BANGOR  
NEUADD OGWEN,  
BANGOR,  
GWYNEDD, LL57 2DG  
FFÔN: +44 (0) 1248  
382222  
FFACS: +44 (0) 1248  
382085  
EBOST:  
soss@bangor.ac.uk

BANGOR UNIVERSITY  
OGWEN BUILDING,  
BANGOR,  
GWYNEDD, LL57 2DG  
TEL: +44 (0) 1248 382222  
FAX: +44 (0) 1248 382085  
EMAIL:  
soss@bangor.ac.uk

YR ATHRO/PROFESSOR CATHERINE A. ROBINSON  
PENNAETH YR YSGOL/HEAD OF SCHOOL  
  
www.bangor.ac.uk

Elusen Gofrestredig.  
Rhif: 1141565

Registered Charity number:  
1141565

## Appendix 10: Interview Questions in Kurdish

### پارته سیاسیهکان

#### پرسیاره فاکتهکان

۱. دهکریت باس له بهرپرسیاریتی یاخود پلهی خۆت له ناوهوه و دهرموهی پارته سیاسیهکهتا بکهیت؟
۲. نهگهر کهسیک ببیت به نهدام پارت چ نیمتیازاتیکی ودهست دهکهویت به بهراورد لهگهل کهسیک که نهدام پارت نییه؟
۳. له دامهزراندی نهدامانی پارتکهتان بو پسته فهرمییهکان/حکومییهکان تا چند لیهاتووی تاکهکسی و بهگراوهندی کومه لایهتی کهسهکه رهچاو دهکریت؟
۴. پارتکههی ئیوه نوینهرایهتی چ تویرهکی کومهلگا دهکات؟ ئایا نوینهرایهتی تویره یان چینیکی دیارکراوی کومه لایهتی دهکات؟
۵. پارتکههی ئیوه له چ دهفریک به هیزتره؟ له ناوچهی بادینان یان سوران؟ تهناخت ههندی پارتی سیاسی و مک گوران، یهکیتی و کوملای نیسلامی یهک کورسیشیان له ناوچهی بادیان به دهست نههیناوه). ئایا نهه بهو مانایه نایت که پارتکهکانی ههریمی کوردستان زورتر لۆکالین تا پارتی نیشتمانی؟
۶. ئایا لهو بروایهکان که سیاسهت له ههریمی کوردستاندا گهمیهکی سفرییه؟ واته نهگهر من ببهمهوه تو بهتهوه اوتهی دهوڕینیت یاخود به پچهوانهوه؟
۷. بهرای جهانبهت سیستهمی پارتیهتی له ههریمی کوردستاندا چ جوهره سیستهمیکه؟ ئایا سیستهمی فره پارتیهتییه؟ ( به تابهتیهش نهگهر رهچاوی نهوه بکهین که دهوتریت که پسته سهرکییهکان و داهات له لایهن ههندی پارتیهوه قورغراون).

#### پهوهندی ئیوان سوپا و پارتی سیاسی

۱. سوپا سهر به کئییه؟
۲. چ کهسیک یا خود چ شتییک بهر بهستی سهرکییه له دامهزراندنی سوپایهکی نیشتمانی؟ یا خود چون دهکریت هیزی پیشمهگره بکریت به هیزیکی نیشتمانی؟

#### پهوهندی ئیوان پارتی سیاسی و عهشیرهت

۱. ههریمی کوردستان تا رادهیک کومهلگایهکی خهلهکییه. به سهیر کردن له لیستی پارتکهتان بو ههلبژاردنهکانی پهلهمانی ناوی ههندی کهسایهتی عهشاییری دهبنریت. دهکریت پیمان بلنیت پهوهندی ئیوه لهگهل عهشیرهتهکان چونه؟
  ۲. هه وهک دهزانن زور جار لهئیوان بهها عهشاییرییهکان و بههاکانی پیشکهورتن بهریهکههوتن دروست دهبیت. نهههش بهو مانایه دیت که پارتیه سیاسیهکان بهر پرسن له چارسهکردنی ئهه کیشهیه. بوچی پارتکههی ئیوه ههنگاوی نهناوه یا خود ری و شوینی پیهیستی نهگرتوه بهر له پیناو کهمکردنهوهی بهها عهشاییرییهکان؟
- پروسهی دهکردنی بریار له ناو پارته سیاسیهکان و پرسی سهرکردایهتی
۱. پروسهی دروستکردنی بریار له پارتکههی ئیوه دا چونه؟

۲. بۆچی ديارده جينگرتنهوى سەرۆك له ناو پارتەكەى ئيوهدا بوونى نيبه؟ ئايا ئهوه بهو مانايه نايه كه پارتەكە تاكهكەسييه ياخود لهسەر بنه‌ماى پهبه‌ندى خيزانى دامه‌زراوه؟

۳. به برواي هه‌ندى كەس كۆ بونهى هيز له لايهن يەك كەسه‌وه ده‌بته هۆى بهرهمه‌ينانى گه‌ندەلى. راي ئيوه لهم باره‌يهوه چيه؟

### پارتى سياسى و كۆمه‌لگا

۱. زۆرىك له هاولاتيان ده‌لين كه پارتە سياسيه‌كان ته‌نيا نامرازىكن بۆ به‌ده‌سته‌ينانى پاره و بازارگانىكردن. نه‌گه‌ر وه‌ها بيهت چۆن پارتەكەتان گه‌شه‌ه‌ندى كۆمه‌لايه‌تى و سياسى بهرهم بيهت؟

۱. هه‌ر پارتىكى سياسى خاوه‌ن هيزىكى ميديايى له‌رادبه‌ده‌ره (وه‌ك تيفى، رۆژنامه، راديو، ويبسايهت و گوڤار) كه زۆر به توندى ملاملانى يه‌كتر ده‌كهن. به راي ئيوه لهم چۆره كەشه‌دا ميديا كار ناكات بۆ دابه‌شكردى كۆمه‌لگا له‌برى يه‌كگرتنه‌وهى؟

### پرسيار له‌پاره‌ى دارايى پارى سياسى

۱. سه‌رچاوه‌ى پارمه‌داركردى پارتەكەتان چيه؟

### پرسياره له پاره‌ى نايينه‌وه

پهبه‌ندى نيوان پارتەكەى ئيوه و ئايين چۆنه؟ ئايا پارتەكەى ئيوه پارتىكى نايينه‌يان سنيكولاره؟

### پرسياركانى په‌رله‌مان

### پرسياره فاكتەكان

۱. ده‌كرت باس له بهرپرسيارىتى ياخود پله‌ى خۆت له ناوه‌وه و ده‌روه‌ى پارتى سياسى بكه‌يهت؟

### په‌رۆسه‌ى دروستكردى بريار

۱. به‌په‌ى په‌يره‌وى ناوخۆى په‌رله‌مان، گشت ئەندامه‌كان مافى خۆپالوتنىيان بۆ ده‌سته‌ى سه‌رۆكايه‌تى په‌رله‌مان هه‌يه (سه‌رۆك، جينگرت سه‌رۆك و سكرتير). هه‌ر كەسيك كه زۆرتريه‌ن ده‌نگ به‌ده‌ست به‌يه‌ت ده‌توانيه‌ت ئەم پۆسته به‌ريوه ببات. به‌لام له گشت خوله‌كانى په‌رله‌ماندا، ئەم پۆستانه به پته‌ى ريكه‌وتنى پيشومخته له نيوان پارتە سياسيه‌كاندا له ده‌روه‌ى په‌رله‌ماندا دابه‌ش كراون. راي ئيوه لهم باره‌وه چيه؟

۲. ئايا خۆدئ په‌رله‌مان ياسا و برياره‌كان ده‌ده‌كات يا خۆد پيشومخته، مه‌كتەب سياسى پارتە سياسيه‌كان گه‌توگۆى بابته‌كان له نيوان خۆياندا ده‌كات؟ بۆ نمونه بابته‌ى ده‌ستور و پرسى سه‌رۆكى هه‌ر يه‌م پيشومخته له نيوان پارتە سياسيه‌كاندا گه‌توگۆى له‌سه‌ر كرابوو.

۳. له په‌رۆسه‌ى ده‌ركردنى بريار تا چ راديه‌ك ئەندام په‌رله‌مان توانويه‌تى سه‌ربه‌خۆ بيهت؟ يا خۆد تا چ راديه‌ك له ژير كۆنترۆلى پارتەكانياندا بووه؟ چونكه زۆربه‌ى كاته‌كان، گشت ئەندامانى ليه‌تتېك پيكه‌وه يان پشتگيرى له بريار يان ياساييك ده‌كهن يان دژى ده‌هستن.

۴. پهبه‌ندى ئيوه به خه‌لك و ناوچه‌كانه‌وه چيه و چۆنه؟

## پهيوهنی نيوان پهلهمان و حکومت

۱. نایا نیوه و مک تاکیک هیچ کات له دژی سیاستی پارتیکهتان دنگنگان داوه؟ نهگمر بملی بو؟ نهگمر نا بو؟

### پرسی بودجه

۱. بوجی تا ههنوکه پهلهمان نهیتوانیوه سمرکوتوو بیت له دهرکردنی یاسایهک که کار و چالاکی پارتیه سیاسییهکان ریک بخت؟ به تاییهتیش پرسى بودجه.

۲. ههنديک لمر پروایهدهان که حکومت/پهلهمان پرسى بودجهی پارتیه سیاسییهکان ریک ناخات، چونکه نهمه دهیته هوکاریک بو کهمکردهنوهی ههژمونی سیاسی و کومه لایهتی ههندي پارتی سیاسی لهسمر فهزای گشتیدا. تا چ رادهیهک نیوه هاوران لهگمل نهم بوچونه؟

۳. بریکى زور له بودجهی نهتهویى بو نهدامانی پهلهمان ترخان کراوه، نهمان نیمتيازاتی فراوانیان ههیه و مک و مرگرتنی نوتوموبیل، خانو، حیمایه و موچه و پله و پایهی باش. بهرای نیوه نهمه جوړیک له گهندهلی نییه؟

### پرسیارکانی حکومت

### پرسیاره فاکتهکان

۱. دهکرتیت باس له بهر پرسیریتی یاخود پلهی خوت له ناوهوه و دهر موهی پارتی سیاسی بکهیت؟

### پهيوهنی نيوان حکومت و پهلهمان

۱. ههر و مک دزمانین کابینهی حکومت ههر له سالی ۲۰۰۵ موه کابینهی تهوافقییه له نیوان نهمو پارتانهی که مملانیی بهکتریان دهکرد. تا چ رادهیهک نهم مملانییه له نیوان پارتیه سیاسییهکاندا له ناو حکومت، پالنهر بووه بو بهدهستهینانی بهرژموندی تاییهتی خویان که دهکرتیت نهم بهرژموندیانه بین به بهر بهست له بهردم کارایی حکومت؟

۲. زورجار دهبنریت و وزیرمکانی ههر پارتیک زورتر دهرگیری کیشمکانی نهمو دهفهرانهن که له ژیر دهسترویی پارتیکهپاندان. نهمهش زور جار له دیدار و چاو پیکهوتنهکاندا دهبنریت که وزیرمکانی سهر به 'پدک' زورتر تهکیزیان لهسهر ناوچهی زهرده و وزیرمکانی 'پنک' پش لهسهر ناوچهی سموز. بهم پییهش نایا حکومت توانیویهتی سنوری دوو ئیدارهیی جاران له ناو بیات؟



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