Is Kurdistan heading toward democracy?

A Case Study of Democratization process in Iraqi Kurdistan
Can a nation without being an independent state reach democracy? According to some researchers a democratization process cannot happen without having an independent state with control over their own territories. The Kurdish people without a given state are divided between four authoritarian states in the Middle east and in opposite to its neighbors' have Kurds ambition to become democratic always existed. The purpose of this thesis was to analyze if Iraqi Kurdistan is heading towards democracy and to find what the driving factors behind the democratization process are. The thesis used a qualitative text analysis approach with a complementary case study where the thesis focused on Larry Diamonds internal and external factors as a guiding instrument to determine what political mechanisms have driven Kurds and politicians' transition to democracy and peace. The analysis presented that authoritarian division, authoritarian development, free values, civil society, peaceful pressure and limits of sanctions and aid conditionally drove them. For answering the research problem, is a democratization processes possible for non-independent states? It is possible, Kurds in Iraq have so far accomplished to establish an electoral democracy, and a consolidated democracy is not impossible if legitimacy among politicians are increased and if freedom of expression is uncontrolled by politicians and if corruption decreases.

**Keywords:** Middle east, democracy, democratization, autocracy, authoritarianism, Kurds.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**INGO** International Non-Governmental Organization
**KDP** Kurdish Democratic Party
**KRG** Kurdistan Regional Government
**NGO** Non-Governmental Organization
**OFFP** Oil for Food Program
**PUK** Patriotic Union Kurdistan
**UN** United Nations

1. INTRODUCTION
In peace and development studies democratization processes has played an essential role in post-conflict societies. A democratic system and peace-building was two terms that soon came to be synonyms: democratic peace. The reason of why democracy and peace seems to important is because of democratic countries are not fighting against each other (Burnell, 2006:1). In the research field of peace and development studies, political mechanisms are studied to solve issues in a peaceful way with driving actors from national and international level (Burnell, 2006:1; Jarstad & Sisk, 2008:1). There have been debates about how these political processes should functionalize, whether they should be in the frame of authoritarianism or within the frame of democracy (Rose, 2009: 10). In peacebuilding missions' democracy has become a standard strategy where both factors are essential ambitions for post-conflict societies. Sometimes these factors interconnect and collide which becomes a dilemma in war-to-democracy transitions (Jarstad & Sisk, 2008:1).

The research problem for a democratization process emerges right from the beginning when studying who can be democratized. Richard Rose (2009) argues that the first condition for a democratization process to start is a state with given territory where it possess control over police, courts and army. These are the minimum qualifications that the state has to accomplish otherwise it will fail (Rose, 2009:10). The last three decades within the field of peace and development research, there have been explanations and interpretations about democracy and which effects it had on national and international politics (Rose, 2009: 11).

The global effects can be seen in the spread of free and fair elections in the world. Democracy has become an ideology with strong influence on states beside all challenges and threats it has brought, for example corruption, antidemocratic culture or strong concentration of power. Traditionally researches have emphasized national conditions for non-democratic systems to become democratic. Typical conditions have been economic wealth, a pushing civil society or an educated population (Haerpfer et. al, 2009:4). Following this variety of debates about who become democratic leads to two other distinctions why and how?

The first distinction concentrates on why and how democracy arises, where the primary approach concentrates on elements that occur during the democratization process, for example, mass social movement, elite pacts or international interventions. This approach can be seen as a situation-oriented approach that focuses on proximate causes. Why democratic transitions
occur researches have underlined social cleavages, class associations, economic developments and systems (Haerpfer et al, 2009:4). While the secondary distinction how highlights international actors’ inclusion of the democratization wave in 1970 and domestic factors influence on Latin America, East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, time and how in-depth democratization have impacted on transitioning regions to new situations, which also is why democratization processes in these regions differ in comparative politics. (Haerpfer et al, 2009: 4-5).

Other researches claim that the desire for freedom are the main mechanisms that motivates states to become democratic (Hofferbert and Klingemann, 1999). Moreover, there is not a single cause that can explain why democracy emerges and why it is the ideal regime that countries want to achieve. In 100 years states have tried multiple regime forms and failed most times, historically governments have been ranked as best and worse. Democracy have during Aristoteles time been classified as the worst form of political system, as he called "Rule of Crowd" where people had the rule over the state. In modern times, it has become the most successful alternative for states (Rose, 2009:11, Political Science, 2017). When studying political systems in the Middle East, most states are governed by authoritarian leaders. While Kurdistan as a non-independent state is split between four states have gone through multiple conflicts and their democratic ambition has always endured since 1992 and the ambition for a democratic province is still ongoing.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM
According to Rose (2009) a democratization process cannot begin in a state without a given territory. It is here where the problem for the thesis emerges, is it possible to begin a democratization process for a nation that is not identified as a state? The research aim is to study if Iraqi Kurdistan is heading towards democracy and identify which challenges it faces toward democracy. Democratic values and a democratic system have been essential for Kurdish citizens and politicians, because they have seen what it is like to be oppressed, tortured and betrayed as a nation and minority in the Middle East (Sofi, 2009:127). Democratic values as freedom of expression, equal civil rights, right to vote and freedom of practicing personal religion or belief are some of the values Kurdish people and politicians stand for and stimulate throughout their society in order to maintain peace and harmony (Sofi, 2009:127).

At the same time the democratic ambition might be a strategy to achieve recognition and support from the West. There is a greater chance that western states will support an independence process if the political system within the society is democratic. Further on, democratization in Iraqi Kurdistan might also effect and inspire middle eastern authorities to transit toward democracy. Since failing democracy-buildings are most common in authoritarian regions as Middle east, Saudi Arabia and China. Conclusively, this will be a case study about democratization process from a local context, in this case it will be applied on Iraqi Kurdistan.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE & QUESTIONS

This essay intends to analyze if a non-independent state as the Kurdish province in Iraqi can develop democracy using Larry Diamonds democratization theory that contains of internal and external factors that are driving societies to democracy. Additionally, the thesis will study challenges in the democratization process in the Kurdish province in Iraq. Following questions are set as guidelines to fulfill this aim and problem:

- Which factors have driven Iraqi Kurdistan toward democracy?
- Which obstacles in the democratization process are they facing toward democracy?

1.4 RELEVANCE OF TOPIC
The thesis is written within peace and development studies which is an interdisciplinary subject and problem-oriented field of study, which use theories from other disciplines which is essential for the thesis purpose. The theory used in this study is the political scientist Larry Diamond theory on democratization. From a peace and development perspective this is a very important subject to study since Iraqi Kurdistan is a highly discussed topic within the international conflict sphere, due to the referendum for a self-independent in Iraqi Kurdistan that took place in September. This is an opportunity and challenge when writing a bachelor thesis and more central to write about, since they are struggling to reach recognition as an independent state from the west and their neighboring countries – Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. In comparison with western states that are governed with democratic institutions, have Iraqi Kurdistan not had the same experiences as west have of democratic systems. Moreover, this thesis can help to understand how the Kurdish people are heading towards democracy in a peaceful way.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

A critical discussion of the literature is considered as an important part of the research work. A systematic exploration of keywords has been read through to get an overview of all material that are related to the topic. The used databases were Google Scholar and OneSearch, both databases have an operation of selecting material, that present a well collection of information, interesting books and articles relating to the research problem. The explored keywords in the databases were: authority, democracy, democratization, process, Kurdistan, Iraq, post-conflict and war etc. This section of literature review offered research related to democratization in Kurdistan and a broader understanding of the process toward democracy.

1.5.2 DEMOCRACY

Democracy is difficult to define because it can be justified in several ways. It has been identified as a goal and the ideal political system that contain of certain values. Free and fair elections are created as starting points for democracy (Rose, 2009:12). There has been a distinction between the Maximalist and Minimalist view of democracy. The Maximalist has a broad definition and claim that democracy cannot be achieved until social, economic and political relations are democratically controlled. This ideal was created in 1960 by Western oriented democracies and was criticized by other who thought it was a bourgeois directed democracy, meaning that
political systems with social and economic inequalities are not included within the term democracy (Ekman et al., 2014: 20; Hydén, 1998:27-28).

The Minimalist view is limiting the political sphere because the term democracy is connected with smaller components about electoral procedures. The minimalist view is built on Joseph Schumpeter's classical definition of democracy. Where democracy is a system that purposes to produce the general interest among people in a state. Democracy is not only a political method according to Schumpeter, it is a competition between political elites and parties to govern. The main core in his view is built on accountability that the citizens possess over the political rulers. The accountability protects the citizens from risking political decision makers turn into a controlling authority. He makes the statement that when citizens have a choice of voting on more than two political alternatives can the threat of becoming a tyranny be under control (Held, 1995:223-224).

Other researches within the Minimalist scholar are Samuel Huntington (1991) and Seymour Martin Lipset (1959) that primary analyzed democratic development and democratization processes in different parts of the world. Huntington likewise Schumpeter is critical against the maximal definition of democracy and normative institutions. His definition of democracy is when the decision makers are chosen through free, fair and regularly elections, where the candidates are competing against each other in a truthful way to govern. A critique against Huntington and Schumpeter is their narrow view of democracy. Where democracy can be established if "free and fair elections" are established without achieving other democratic values such as freedom of expression or access to alternative information.

One of the traditional scientists within the political science sphere is Robert Dahl, he belongs to the maximalist view of democracy. His definition is more normative in comparison to Schumpeter and Huntington. The citizens are the state also named as Demos. This was considered as the ideal system, where all decisions should be taken by them to reach legitimacy throughout the state (Dahl, 1989:108). Dahls classical definition of democracy is polyarchy that contain seven elements: free and fair elections; right to alternative information; freedom of expression; elected officials; equal voting and right to create independent organizations. These elements can manage as a tool for measuring democracy (Dahl, 1989: 220-222). In later stages of Dahls life, he broadened his definition to what have become "liberal democracy" that is
including civic participation and political deliberation and hence is leaning more towards the maximalist definition.

1.5.3 DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS

The terms democracy and democratization can easily be misunderstood since both words are similar. Therefore, it is essential to determine what democratization indicates. Researchers have studied democratization process in numerous ways that have managed to become a standard model within this field. The concepts describe the process and how it goes through phases and conditions of democracy principles, which each state is supposed to accomplish to become democratic (Ekman et.al, 2014:17). Traditionally democratization studies within political science has been classified as comparative politics. It usually has studied authoritarian regimes and their loss of power. Comparative analysis of governmental transitions today has become widespread in political science, but also in researches about state- and nation building, international relations and development studies (Ekman et.al, 2014:18).

Researches have struggled to find the right indicators that possibly could explain how democracy can survive, maintain stability and how a democratic government could establish. Ekman (2014) argues that the underlying structures in a society came to be the settlement whether democracy was possible or not. Factors such as economic development and modernization- education, urbanization and welfare etc. would unavoidably lead to democratization since new actors required accessibility and representation in the political system. The view of democratization in relation to structures can be seen as deterministic. It means that democratization is only possible under certain conditions, such as socioeconomic development level or a political culture that is responsive to promote a democratic system (Ekman et.al, 2014: 67-68). Przeworski (2000) argue that economic development will not provide a democratization process, but it a way of supporting democracy to persist (Przeworski et al, 2000: 114). Criticism against this claim have demonstrated the opposite, economic development contributes with a democratization process, such as masses interest in economic redistribution.

Dankwart Rustow (1970) developed four phases that states pass to democratization. The phases are national unity; a prolonged and inconclusive political struggle; decision phase; habituation phase (Rustow, 1970:351). Other researches have argued that states go through: liberalization,
decision and habituation, which are three conditions for a process (Ekman et.al, 2014:18). The only difference is the number of phases, what they have in common is the transition from non-democratic to democracy. The term liberalization means a decrease of oppression and an increase of civil and human rights. In this stage, democratic movements might contribute with an extension of transition for an effective democracy. Actors such as trade unions, labor and left parties and urban movements tends to pursue democracy (Ekman et.al, 2014:19; Federico and Porta, 2009:180).

In 1990 the transition phase was the most debated term in comparative politics that have contributed with confusion and misunderstandings about the correct definition of transition. Rustow (1970) was one of the first people who began to use the term in his article “Transitions to Democracy”. The term transition has in practice often been used as changing political regime from non-democratic to democratic. The term can also be used in the opposite direction, from democracy to non-democracy. Transition is not a specific transition, it is originally a regime's transition in general (Huntington, 1991:14-26). Matter of fact, has the transition phase has caused loads of insecurities and criticism. O'Donnell and Schmitter claims that the transition phase is not a linear process from authority to democracy as many researches often claim (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986:3). One can consider the transition phase as completely finished when free and fair elections and a new constitution is stabilized in a society (Linz and Stepan, 1996: 3).

The last phase of a democratization process is the consolidation phase of democracy that requires democratic values to be spread throughout the society and used. One first characterization of consolidation is what Dahl (1989) called polyarchy. Democratic consolidation is often recognized as democratic stability and survival. However, it is crucial to highlight that stability and survival does not automatically mean a democratic consolidation. Democratic consolidation is about quality, moment of stability, institutionalization of political rulers and legitimacy. A democratic regime is consolidated when all political groups recognize the democratic institutions as the only legitimate place for political concurrence. In general, most researches have chosen a broad definition that includes political actors, institutional frameworks and the citizens attitudes toward the political system (Diamond, 1999; Ekman et.al, 2014: 27-31).
When the Cold war ended was most of the authoritarian regimes in Africa, Eurasia and Latin America influenced of democracy, especially multiparty elections that were internationally spread (Levitsky & Way, 2002). These regions attempted to transit toward democracy by using a mixture of characters from democracy and autocracy, researchers were calling these governments as non-democratic or transitional democracies. Most of these states were failed and were falling back to authoritarianism again or remained as a hybrid regime. Hybrid regimes have multiparty elections and are violating political and civil rights. Hence these regimes would be classified as democracies by minimalist standards, but not by maximalist standards. Levitsky and Way (2002) was calling these for competitive authorities. Which is elections without democracy where free and fair elections take place frequently in the state. Incidents as violence, oppression, arrestment and murders of candidates, journalists, political supporters and control over media are also common in competitive authorities (Levitsky & Way, 2002).

1.5.4 DEMOCRATIZATION IN MIDDLE EAST

Since the beginning of 1970 democracy has been very low in Middle east and North Africa. Both these regions have barely transitioned towards democracy. Instead they have consisted of civil warfare and political disturbances (Markoff, 2009:69). Even though Middle east is still ruled by authoritarianism there have been some political, social and economic developments. Middle east is recognized as the region where democracy has least progressed. These states tend to fall back to authoritarianism where same families have governed over decades and all are in some way misled (Cavatorta, 2009:321). The majority of Middle eastern states have a high degree of corruption and most of them experiences great challenges concerning legitimacy (Diamond, 1999:271).

The persistence of authoritarianism is according to some researchers mostly due to rents, that possess control on the domestic economy and political system. Axel Hadenius (2007) claim that natural resources have a negative effect on democratization process. States that uses oil as natural resource tends to become less democratic because the income from oil contributes with consequences for the civil societies and political organizations. The risk is that states might develop a rentier economy, which means that the income from oil is not dependent of taxes and becomes autonomous in relation to the society (Hadenius, 2007). Rentierism effects the political system by making social groups reliant on the state that regulate all capital. The resources might
develop an enormous state apparatus that becomes the main employer in this type of economic structure (Cavatorta, 2009:330-331).

Further on Hadenius (2007) discusses authoritarian states will not become democratic due to religious causes. Historically religion has played an active role for democracy to develop, for example the protestant and catholic church. The relation between religion and democracy have recently been investigated in Muslim states where the lack of democracy is enormous according to Hadenius. He claims that the reason might be that states are controlling the religious life of people and finds a connection between politics and religion. This also happened in protestant societies, it has however not hindered them for processing (Hadenius, 2007). Cavatorta (2009) underlines that neither Arabic political culture or Islam has any connection with the weak potential of becoming democracy. Indonesia for instance is one of the largest muslim state in the world that is democratic. Islamism is a reaction to poverty, patrimonial repression and Western dominance within the international sphere. It is not Islam per se that cause authoritarian rule – but other underlying social structures. The conflicts in Palestine and Iraq have had a great effect on the governments in the Middle East and any democratic change in that region is unbearable to happen. A liberal authority for this region might be the optimal regime system in the next coming future (Cavatorta, 2009: 336-337).

Cavatorta (2009) argues that the Middle East has not accomplished to sustain political, social and economic institutions in their societies. Secondly, it has not encouraged polities such as the global wave of neo-liberal democratization. Turkey and Israel are the two states in Middle East that have not governed to authoritarianism according to Cavatorta (2009). Lebanon is identified for not being an authoritarian state anymore due to its consociational engagements and Iraq even though it faces many obstacles, is neither defined for being a democracy or an autocracy (Cavatorta, 2009:321-322). Jordan is considered as a democratic state that has gone through some changes toward an electoral democracy.

When USA's invasion in Iraq took place in March 2003 have Middle East been in focus in international relations. The purpose of the invasion was partly an attempt to create democracy. George Bush named the invasion to "The greater Middle East Initiative" where the purpose was to provide economic development, collaboration among states, business and civil society leaders. Bush intention was to promote democracy in Iraq in order to escalate democracy in the Middle East (Girdner, 2005:45). President Bush and his administration changed their stances
of their foreign policy concerning middle east. He announced a new method towards freedom in Middle east. He mentioned if the Middle East won't establish freedom in their society it will continually contribute with stagnation, resentment and violent (Diamond, 2008: 264). Although USA have stated to promote democracy in Middle east they have occupied and been through war. These outcomes were seen both as unimpressive and discrediting ways to promote democracy (Markoff, 2009:69).

When debating on democratization in Middle East there have been research about a fourth wave of democratization. In 2011 there was demonstrations in major parts of Middle East and North Africa, called "The Arabic spring". The complaints began in Tunis where people claimed on president Ben Ali to leave his post. The revolt did not only purpose to reach a democratic and free state, but also improved rights for women and equality (Tønnesen, 2013:1-3). There have been prospects for a new wave of democracy to begin because people started to question the authoritarian regimes in middle eastern and north African states. Few months later when the Arabic spring ended, people realized it would be difficult to establish democracy when numerous states fell back to authoritarianism again (Diamond, 2011: 299–307).

1.6 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The thesis uses Larry Diamonds theoretical factors as guideline for understanding the democratization process in Iraqi Kurdistan and which factors are motivating Kurdish citizens and politicians to become democratic. This theory is applicable to use for this topic since the Kurdish province Bashur is located in an authoritarian state (Iraq) and Diamonds (2008) internal factors discusses factors within an authoritarian state that are driving towards democracy. The internal factors are: authoritarian division; authoritarian development; free values; the rise of civil society. The external factors he addresses are: diffusion and demonstration effects; peaceful pressure; limits of sanctions and aid conditionality; democracy assistance. These factors will be further described in detail in the theoretical chapter.
1.7 DISPOSITION

The thesis contains of seven chapters. The first chapter is beginning with an introduction that offer the reader a background of the democratization debates. Research problem, questions and relevance are also included in this section. Second chapter describes method and research design of this essay, which material will be used and what the limitations and delimitations are within the thesis. Further on, the third chapter consists of a literature research that reviews what previously have been written regarding democracy and democratization. The fourth chapter aims to present the findings of the research questions. The fifth chapter analyses the results in relation to Diamonds internal and external democratization factors. The sixth and last chapter will be a conclusion that discusses and summarizes the whole thesis research questions; theoretical framework; result and analysis will be included.
2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The thesis used a qualitative research strategy approach that emphasized the meaning of a certain subject in form of words. In qualitative research strategies, it is usually an abductive approach that analyses the relation between theory and findings which possibly can answer the research questions. The thesis used a systematic literature search and text analysis of democratization process in Iraqi Kurdistan. For this paper Larry Diamonds theory will be used as a tool to increase the understanding of how democratization process emerges and the case study will concentrate on how it looks in Iraqi Kurdistan as a post-conflict society.

Case study as a method suites the chosen topic concerning democratization process, where each factor from the theory takes into account and are clarified subsequently. The findings will be analyzed and structured in same way. Furthermore, an analysis will be made by primarily studying theory but also on literature review and scholars. The thesis follows a logical structure that interconnect research questions, material and theory with findings and analysis (Yin, 2003:20).

The thesis will use different types of material that possibly can answer the research questions and strengthen the quality throughout the thesis. These materials will in some way approach issues related to democracy in Iraqi Kurdistan and study how these sources connect and relate with Diamonds theoretical factors that are driving a society towards democracy. Secondary resources will be used where issues related to the topic will be studied deeply in order to identify which factors have motivated Kurds in Iraq Kurdistan toward democracy.

2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Case studies aims to describe some phenomena in that context and involve how people and actors understood that phenomena, for example a local community, a single school or family. Alan Bryman (2012) argues that this type of research design in sociology have been rated as the best–known studies. A case study suites qualitative text analyses that requires a
concentrated and detailed description of the chosen case. In case studies do the researcher clarify unique characters of the case, also recognized as an *idiographic* method (Bryman, 2012:66-69). The benefits with a case study design contributes with an in-depth description when studying one chosen country and not multiple countries, the research will provide a much greater result and understanding when analyzing the phenomena in interest (Landman 2003: 87-88).

Single case study is a research design to prefer as a method because it suites to the research questions that is labeled as *how-questions*. This thesis will analyze *how* democratization process in Iraqi Kurdistan emerges with guidance of a theoretical framework. A selection of relevant material will be made to collect the findings. When using single case study as approach it is difficult to generalize and draw conclusions about the theory and findings. This is the opposite approach to the "*structured and focused comparison*" by Alexander L. George in 1979. Is uses two or more cases for the research and compare it with each other in a structural way, for example a democratization process in Iraqi Kurdistan and Syrian Kurdistan. Both approaches are qualitative, theory oriented models that identifies a research problem and applies variables that are significant for that problem (Drozdova & Gaubatz, 2009).

The structured and focused comparison has been an influential tool in many researches to analyze how one or more variables manages. The benefit is that researchers can draw conclusions and generalize how variables, theory and subject succeeds (Drozdova & Gaubatz, 2009). This approach will not be adopted for the thesis because the situation in Kurdistan is unique and already too broad in its sense. The region is divided between four states with huge differences that requires material and time. Conclusively, the optimal choice is to do a one *single case study* and analyze one province separately because the process is currently ongoing.

### 2.2 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

This essay concentrates on the Kurdish province in Iraq. As mentioned earlier in the historical background the Kurdish situation is complex, the reason of why this essay only studies the province in Iraq is due to several reasons. The Kurdish province in Turkey is difficult to study from a democratic point of view, where human rights are barely respected, the Kurdish people struggle to speak their own national language (Mason, 2014:112). Further on, the province in
Iran is not important to study since there have not been any significant changes within the region and the Kurdish issue in Iran is not crucial. In Syria, the conditions are poor since the Islamic State took over the region and destroyed major places and cities. Therefore, the Kurdish province in Iraq is the most applicable and relevant to study (Mason, 2014:112-113). These limitations and circumstances will be a challenge during the research process, but is still of relevance and importance to write about.

The time delimitation for the materials are from 1990 to 2017. This can be seen as a long time. Kurdistan have been through radical political changes under this time, where the government system is one of the major transformations. The political function went from dictatorship toward political institutions that gave citizens freedom and rights to vote on political candidates of their interest. Therefore, it is essential to investigate in material during this 27 years if it is manageable.

The delimitations considered for the thesis is a qualitative desk study, with single case study as research design. A systematic literature research and qualitative text analysis will be made and a qualitative text analysis is preferred because it creates a meaning by connecting with other texts. It provides an increased understanding of how the democratization process functions in Iraqi Kurdistan from different perspectives. In qualitative desk studies the combination of text analysis and interviews are helpful to go in depth of what people think of a democratization process in Iraqi Kurdistan. However, interviews and a field study will not be in consideration because the province is still under threat and risky to visit since the referendum and Kirkuk attack. It is neither possible to do interviews with Kurdish politicians in Sweden due to the thesis time limitation.

2.3 MATERIAL

For an increased understanding and wideness for this essay, it a requires lot of material. When searching for information, data and facts concerning this topic there was a lack of material on the internet as well in literature books about democratization process or democracy in Kurdistan. These obstacles were limiting the research process. This may be due to the fact that they are still not internationally recognized as an independent state and there has not been much
research written about it. This will be combined with secondary literatures, that most of all will come to use, such as literature books, articles, websites such as J-store and Nationalencyklopedin to find information about certain terms, political parties, organizations etc. in Iraqi Kurdistan.

One of the literatures that seems to debate about democratization in Kurdistan is David Romano and Mehmet Gurses book *Conflict, democratization, and the Kurds in the Middle East: Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria* (2014). The authors highlight the democratization process within the province and what possible obstacles for a democratic transition can occur, it also emphasizes conflicts and history from each province of Syria, Iran, Iraq and Turkey. This literature book will mostly be used because it matches the thesis aim. The purpose of using this literature is not to repeat the text, but to find out information that possibly could answer the research questions in relation to Diamonds internal and external factors. It is essential to mention that this thesis will not only consist of Romano and Gurses, but also other material that will be found during the writing process.

The thesis has used *Social Research Methods* (2012) by Alan Bryman and *Metodpraktiken* (2012) by Peter Esaisson et.al. to structure methodological framework and other sections correctly. Diamonds (2008) book *Spirit of Democracy* will mainly be used to investigate the internal and external factors that drives a democratization process. Moreover, it will be used as a theoretical framework in this essay containing of nine factors. The purpose is not to only focus on some few researches, but on multiple researches to reach a wide and interesting observation as possible. The thesis will also use literature from other political scientists and development researchers, two of those are Robert Dahl and Dankwart Rustow, however they will not come to use theoretical instrument.
As a researcher, with a Kurdish descent, there are some ethical considerations that needs to be taken into account when writing this topic. The ambition is to be objective throughout the whole thesis concerning democratization process in Iraqi Kurdistan. Additionally, it will be in consideration to use objective material, where some sources are written by Kurdish authors and the material can somehow be subjective, since the Kurdish issue is sensitive for some people. However, if subjective material would come to use it could still legitimize the thesis quality, as long as the researcher stays neutral and are not taking any position of the different material. Being objective as a researcher is one of the ambitions throughout the whole thesis. On the other hand, it can be beneficial to write a thesis with a Kurdish descent because one can access material and sources in Kurdish language that offer another point of view than western written sources when studying the democratization process in Iraqi Kurdistan.
3. Historical Background

Martin Glassner (1996) makes the statement that a nation is a group of people, while a state is within a geographical area where an institution wants to achieve control over that area. When such complications occur between nation and state there is a clear issue. The citizens within a state can belong to several nations, nations that sometimes are a minority in relation to the states origin population. Minorities that feel disadvantaged by their state can take different arrangements to show their dissatisfaction, that can contribute with a complicated situation for the state to solve.

Further on Glassner (1996) mention that Kurds are a clear example of the problematic of matching between state and nation. The Kurds are a stateless nation which means that they do not belong to any specific state, but at the same time they are recognized as a nation (Glassner, 1996). They are the fourth largest group in the Middle East. The amount of Kurdish citizens is approximately 25-35 million. There is 4-5 million Kurds located in Iraq, 6 million located in Iran, while 1,5 million are located in Syria and the rest of the Kurds are located in Turkey (Karlsson, 2008:10). Kurdistan is a divided region in the Middle East with territories located in Northern Iraq called Bashur; North-Eastern Syria called Rojava, North-Western Iran called Rojhalat; and South-Eastern Turkey called Bakur (Karlsson, 2008:7).

According to Minorities at Risk project Kurds are categorized as minority at risky in each of these states, where they all have been through discrimination and oppression (Minorities at risk project, 2006). This has led to citizens organizing collective resistance toward procedures concerning the Kurdish identity and cultural persistence, which has gone through unsuccessful armed rebellions to form a sovereign state in all four states (Mason, 2014: 111).

The only time Kurdish people were capable to establish any degree of territorial sovereignty was when the Gulf war ended in 1991 and when the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003 fell, which contributed with two interstates conflicts. Turkey and Iraq are the states with highest degree of Kurdish citizens where they all are trapped between civil society, war and democracy. Iraq consist of a high degree of violence and their democratic government are at the same time instable. Turkey governs democratically, the Kurdish citizens are however formally situated in a rebellion state where the violence has increased since 1999 (Mason, 2014: 112). Due to the high amount of population, size and geographic place Turkey should work to both increase and
maintain an armed insurgency and contending seats in a democratic parliament in a peaceful way (Mason, 2014: 112).

Iran has a long history of civil wars and lack of democratic culture that is hindering Kurdish citizens to follow up and adjust their grievances in a peaceful way. Iran is not classified as a fully functional democratic government because the ruling elites are exercising power over the candidates during elections. Syria is situated in a civil war, where the conflict emerged due to the pro-democracy protests in Middle east and North Africa, also called the Arabic spring. The Kurdish people or the Kurdish road toward autonomy in Syria had nothing to do with the Syrian civil war.

Kurdish people in Syria are situated between numerous contending rebel groups, where some of them are seeking democracy while other are seeking other non-democratic systems as authority, tyranny, totalitarian etc. Syria have not been governed democratically before the emergence of the civil war in 2011 and the visions for a democratic beginning after the war has ended is currently unclear (Mason, 2014: 112-113). Democratic institutions in Iraq and Turkey offer armed violence as an option to protect their own benefits and seek compensation for their disturbances. In Iran, the democratic institutions are non-existing and in Syria the occurrence of a bloody civil war was is still ongoing to begin a democratic transition.
4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter is describing Larry Diamond (2008) democratization theory. The theory is taken from his book *Spirit of Democracy*. The theory contains of four internal factors and five external factors. These factors present what the motives behind Iraqi Kurdistan's democratization processes are. Beginning with the internal factors that is starting below.

4.1 INTERNAL FACTORS

Authoritarian divisions

One of the primary factors Diamond (2008) underlines in his theory are authoritarian divisions. When authoritarian regimes transition to a democratic system, one is looking at the fractures that occurs. Meaning that democratic transitions mostly begin as a consequence, by divisions in the authoritarian regime that happens indirectly or directly (Diamond, 2008:90). In democratic transitions leaderships in governments do play an essential function where leaders and their opponents have had conflicts, coalitions, rivalries and agreements that have provided the government with control over how and in what rate the democracy can be influenced. Two terms that follow the impact of leaderships in democratization processes are "between hard-liners and soft-liners". A leader that is listed as "hard-liner" is often an elite or a leader that possess all power and does not take into account other people's thoughts or intentions. In contrast to leaders that are labeled as "soft-liners" possess a power by listening to its population and uses a rational strategy to govern (Diamond, 2008:92-93).

Diamond (2008) highlights that authoritarian regimes lose their legitimacy when they not are accomplishing their duties or when they absolutely are weakening to succeed their settled goals and thereafter turn out to become redundant. Many authoritarian regimes have accomplished to not fall from their positions because the citizens have failed to identify the necessities and ambitions of what they need in their society (Diamond, 2008:94). Such as the authoritarian states in Eastern Europe could maintain their position in many years, since they had resources that could buy legitimacy from militaries, party elites, top bureaucrats and business men. When the government is in such a bad condition that they are not able to gather taxes from its population they are forced to find another way to maintain in position. That is by using natural resources such as oil, diamonds, copper and other types of mineral wealth. Oil is one of the
particular natural resources that persist authoritarian leaders to stay in the regime. The last option for the state is to get foreign aid and by then it is defenseless (Diamond, 2008:90-94).

Authoritarian development

Second internal factor that Diamond (2008) highlights is when authoritarian regimes accomplishes to lead the states forward with economic growth as a driving factor. In many states such as South Korea, Taiwan, Brazil, Chile and Spain the economic development has flourished an authoritarian regime. The economic development provided an educational growth among citizens, more access and possibilities to information and an awareness about democratization in the world. This will additionally contribute with good conditions for a democratic system to establish in a state (Diamond, 2008:94-95).

An increase of economic growth within an authoritarian state creates two opportunities Diamond (2008) claim. Firstly, will economic development make the transition towards democracy more possible and secondly will an increased growth maintain democracy when it has begun to process. Economic development has overall made the transition towards democracy more possible, but have also been positive to process even after the establishment (Diamond, 2008:97). The relation between economic development and democratization process has been one of the most influential theories in democratization studies and it was developed by Seymour Martin Lipset. According to Diamond is the relationship still strong between democracy and economic development that produces a more rapid growth of economy, however it is essential to clarify that some poor countries and continents have also managed to transit towards democracy, such as Latin America and Asia (Diamond, 2008:96-97). In reality, there is not a strong correlation between economic growth and democratic development, but with economic development, there is a slightly stronger relation. But most of the fastest growing economies are not democracies (China and Vietnam) and a backlash for democracy is seen in many developing countries, with the argument to strengthen economic growth.

Free values

Diamond (2008) highlights the third factor as free values. Economic growth changes a society into a democratic culture that challenges one to focus on one leader, party or elite. It changes both the state's economic and social structure when power and resources are disappearing broadly and it has a strong influence on values and attitudes towards a democratic path
(Diamond, 2008:98). From the structural perspective, economic growth has generated with a middle class that has improved their educational level and access to information among people. When states have reached an average level of development and national income, inequality will subsequently decrease in states and diminish the political and social polarizations between states and social classes (Diamond, 2008:98). The possibility of spreading free values and opinions through all kinds of media and education are essential for the democratization processes.

Meaning that educated people tend to accept different opinions, respect minority rights, appreciate the impact of freedom and become trustful in people's opinion. If any of these possibilities would be insulted it would not be seen as democratic and instead promote polarization (Diamond 2008: 99). Conclusively, the impact of wealth, high level of education in relation to growing income, media exposure and working status has influenced people's lives strongly into democratic attitudes, values and behaviors and the establishment of a democratic culture (Diamond 2008:99).

Civil society

The civil society plays an important role for a democratization process to begin and for diminishing authoritarian regimes. The civil society is when individuals integrates and cooperate with together freely and independently for their common interests and the states participation is excluded (Hydén, 1998:150). Some values within the society are democratically directed or trigged by citizens that continually have been oppressed and less on the promises and failings political regimes have said. Citizens will realize their political freedom and rights, they will speak out and start organizations and demonstrations for their human rights. Another transition into democracy is when interest increases from the higher social classes such as privileged industrialists, mechanists, landowners and bankers realizes that the authoritarian regime has failed and their long-term interests might come to harm (Diamond, 2008:103). When formal and informal organizations increase in civil society it manages to change the power balance to the civil societies benefit and the authoritarian regime goes from dominating to defensive. The creation of organizations contributes with students demonstrating and industrial workers striking. Alternative information provides another type of information than what the regime presents. In many states, free creation of organizations is associated as the source to democracy (Diamond, 2008:103-104). If the civil society want to take over the authoritarian
regime toward a democratic transition it requires a united organization, regardless of what social class or political background they are coming from (Diamond, 2008:105).

4.2 EXTERNAL FACTORS

Diffusion and demonstration effects
Diamond presents the first external factor that drives democracy as ideas, concepts, models, demonstrations and divisions that has been spread out through borders. These factors became gradually stimulated and taught of what previously have happened from the democratization waves (Diamond, 2008:108). Huntington called these snowball effect meaning that actions such as demonstrations, could emerge a democratic transformation from one state to another and if one state with the same culture as its neighbor would success it is more possible that neighboring country will succeed as well. Similarities as culture, religion and history between neighboring states has a diffusion effect on a developing democracy.

Peaceful pressure
International democratic states and actors often have managed as peaceful instruments in authoritarian regimes in order to promote and sustain human rights and democracy. Diamond (2008) have stated this into three major connections which western democracies have pressured authoritarian states for a peaceful change. The pressures that have made authoritarian states helpless to west are: economic links such as trade, investment and credit; security links as treaties and guaranties; and lastly social ties as traveling, immigration, global non-governmental organizations (NGO) and international educations. The impact of international connections has managed to link different cultures and unite democratic states together (Diamond, 2008:111-112). Further on Diamond (2008) presents that peaceful pressures are usually trough three deliberative and overlapping approaches: conditioning of aid, sanctions and diplomacy. Diamond clarifies that diplomacy is the efficient way of improving democracy, especially when political crisis's takes place in authoritarian regimes.

Limits of sanctions and aid conditionality
Following the successful peaceful pressure that drives democracy, sanctions have in contrast often failed, due to lack of appropriate control over autocratic states. It usually happens that sanctions reduce the bonds which provides leverage. Sanctions might end in some numerous
outlets and their ambition is to separate autocratic governments from their interactions. States that has a strong bond with western democracies tend to have a more positive effect (Diamond, 2008: 116).

**Democracy assistance**

Meaning that international states or institutions attempts to effect, help and improve civil societies, democratic culture, institutions and elections in other states. Under authoritarian occurrences international states and institutions will assistance forces and civil societies and as Diamond (2008) is classifying as the worst reason, in exiles working for democratic difference. Since the third wave of democratization in the middle of 1970, there has been an increase of democratic assistance (Diamond, 2008:120). For instance, National Endowment for Democracy (NED) has been a sufficient actor to promote democracy, where their primary task was to aid economic support to democratic organizations in the world. The aim was through different kind of donations, support civil societies to pressure their authoritarian regimes and leaders to achieve free societies. NED also emphasized free liberty rights in Nicaragua, which contributed with literatures and journals educated the citizens to stand up for the unfair governing that General Pinochet led (Diamond, 2008:121). Other influential actors that have assisted democracy in post-conflict societies are Nordic, British, European Union other global actors.

Elections has been central in democracy assistance, where many western states have supported with aid and donations to strengthen political parties, judicial procedures, human rights, administration and systems for controlling corruption, education agendas, self-regulating medias and more on (Diamond, 2008:126). Except economic, social and electoral support democracy programs have offered training and education on how to improve volunteer networks, campaign organizations, public opinion and democratic strategies when electing candidates and members (Diamond, 2008:127).

**Democracy by force**

The last external factors to drive democracy is when global actors are forcing or threatening an authoritarian regime to rebuild. Democracy by force is generally the last alternative international actors choose to promote democracy since the regime are forced to rule in a democratic way, neither will a new culture and peacefulness change straightway. Diamond (2008) highlights that military and institutional interventions are the most common and least successful methods to drive democracy (Diamond, 2008:128-129).
Diamond has been criticized for his theoretical approach of describing the emergence of democracy in a state by classifying nine internal and external elements. One of the first critiques is based on the democratic evolution, where all states does not go through these nine elements to become democratic. The process from autocracy to a solid democracy is not that easy like Diamond (2008) presents by these factors. Discussing the criticism concerning his theory, the transition is more difficult for states than what he presents, since states tend to fall in a trap where they govern with both democratic and autocratic systems, no one can either know if they are working towards a democratic transition or staying as a hybrid regime (Carothers. 2002:10). Additionally, throughout his theory he uses a naive adoption of US perspective especially in Peaceful pressure and Democracy assistance. His theory is embedded in a strong pro-US ideology that one must have in consideration when studying the democratization factors. US have been the main supporter of many of the worlds brutal dictatorships when it fits US security interest.

The thesis concentrates on studying the democratization process by using numerous elements that is driving democratic movements, where the aim is to identify arguments in the Iraqi Kurdistan's democratization process and connect that with the theory. Going back to the criticism concerning states that not pass these elements towards democracy are not distressing the thesis, because the aim is to analyze and attempt to clarify where in the democratic transition Iraqi Kurdistan are and which obstacles it faces in their democratization process. The theory is still relevant to use as an instrument because it describes the underlying social structures in-depth through nine important and different factors in democratization processes.
This chapter describes the driving factors behind Iraqi Kurdistan's democratization process by using Diamonds theoretical internal and external factors.

5.1 INTERNAL FACTORS

Authoritarian division
The outbreak of war between Iraq and Iran in 1980 reconstructed the coalition between Kurds and Iranians, which offered the Kurds a chance to consolidate their part of Kurdistan after the Kurdish revolt in 1975. The renewed coalition with Iran were threatening Iraq's dictator Saddam Hussein for a survival of the Kurdish government. This contributed with a genocide called al-Anfal campaign in Kurdistan where 200,000 Kurdish people died by using chemical and neurological weapon (Yesiltas, 2014: 51, Karlsson, 2008:145). The Anfal campaign by Hussein was seen as a perfect way of regulating in authoritarianism according to the Baathist rulers (Yesiltas, 2014:51). The relationship between Kurds and Iraq changed when Hussein's autocratic government collapsed in 2003. Kurdish citizens in northern Iraq became de facto autonomous between 1991-2003 and they processed stability, territorial integrity, economic and administrative facility. Americas intervention in Iraq 2005, implemented a new constitution that lead to recognizing political influencers in Kurdistan, such as Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) (Yesiltas, 2014:52).

The Kurdish region in northern Iraq became a federation that have managed to develop a democratic regime, civil rights and freedoms. Even though they developed forward these years the also faced difficulties, such as religious and ethnical separations when shaping and improving the region. The divisions between Kurds and Arabs became a central issue for Iraq concerning their stability and democratic process. The in-depth separation among them formed a battle on how authority should be organized in Iraq (Yesiltas, 2014:52). Before the American intervention and new constitution in Iraq where Iraqi Kurds under the authoritarian ruler Saddam Hussein, which can be seen as the "hard-liner" leader as Diamond presents in his first internal factor. When the Iraqi Kurds became a de facto state, their first Kurdish president Jalal Talabani govern the territory in a "soft-liner" way by working towards civil rights, democratic system and freedom (Diamond, 2008:92-93, Yesiltas, 2014:52)
As Diamond highlights, natural resources as a central factor in the persistence of authoritarian states, the debate of reaching autonomy in Kurdistan has been essentially argued, where the city Kirkuk have historically been important for both Iraq and Kurds. The KRG ambition was based on accomplishing international affairs by using oil as their natural resource and income. The impact of oil has increased KRG power in Iraq, which has threatened Iraq's regional integrity and been criticized by Iraq's prime minister Nouri Al-Maliki to diminish KRG's influence and change the constitution from 2005 (Yesiltas, 2014:52). The democracy in Iraq has been instable due to Erbil's and Bagdad's conflict, which possibly could lead back to authoritarianism. At the same time a new political party Gorran emerged in competition with the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union Kurdistan (PUK) which made it harder for current Kurdish politicians to seem as "soft" concerning the oil and autonomy (Yesiltas, 2014:53).

A major issue in Iraqi Kurdistan is the lack of legitimacy by the ruling leaders within Iraqi Kurdistan. In practice, Iraqi Kurdistan has managed in a way where political membership had a high status and connections to the ruling family and leaders have contributed with benefits, for example they are prioritized for employments, educations, organizations, public administrations and other general functions. This have led to irritations among the citizens where they feel inequality and cleavages occurs intentionally and corruption is a part of the leadership in Iraqi Kurdistan. Referring to an opinion poll from 2010 about whether the Kurdish people feel that the province is corrupt it was presented that roughly 90% of the participation thought that corruption was a major issue (IRI, 2010:14, Watts, 2014:146). The corruption can be reflected in the family corporations and companies among PUK (Talabani) and KDP (Barzani) leaders where each of them have fortunes up to two billion and about 400 million individually. The Barzani family and his political party has most power and influence in the Duhok and Erbil and Talabani and his political party has the most influence in Sulemani. Both leaders have family and relatives in positions for ministries, embassies, public administrations, televisions, media and other positions (Karlsson, 2008:156-157).

Authoritarian development

Kurdistan's region consists of rich natural resources such as water, oil, natural gas and raw materials. The greatest oil resources in Iraq are located in Kirkuk, Khaneqin and Mosul. Ironstone and natural gas are also exploited in Sulemani and Kirkuk. For about 6% of the world's oil sources are within Kurdistan and 17% of Iraq's oil resources (Akreyi, 2006:16; Karlsson, 2008: 164; Natali, 2010:119). Further natural sources in Kurdistan are chrome, lead, zinc, coal
and salt. These natural resources have however not improved the economic situation for the Kurdish population in the region. The income has rather instead come to use for the central governments international affairs. Even though raw material, agriculture, oil and water resources are utilized throughout Kurdistan, industry and communication have managed unsuccessfully for the development in Kurdistan (Akreyi, 2006:26).

The oil in Kirkuk plays an essential role for Iraq and Kurdistan economic survival, which is also the reason of why the conflict is often highlighted in international media. In the constitution, article 111 presents that the oil-and natural resources are equally owned among all people, in all regions and governments. In article 112 present that the revenues should be equally divided proportionally throughout the state, even to those areas that are lacking oil (Karlsson, 2008:164; Romano, 2014:194). The fields in Kirkuk have been exploited since 1932 and are concluded within this statement. If Kirkuk becomes a part of the Kurdish province the revenues from oil and gas must be divided throughout Iraq per capita. The economic division has successfully managed to diminish the authoritarian government in Iraq and the economic wealth have been equally divided between individuals and groups to promote democratization (Karlsson, 2008:164).

However, if the Kurdish province someday want to declare independence, will their right to oil resources in Iraq end (Karlsson, 2008:164). Referring to this, there was a referendum the 25th of September 2017 in Iraqi Kurdistan where Kurdish citizens all over the world voted for an independent state. The referendum resulted in 92% voting "yes" for a self-independent state and free from Iraq and the rest 8 % voted "no" for the independence (Rudaw, 2017a). Though, the referendum was not internationally recognized from the rest of the world, Turkey, Iran and Iraq declare to KRG's president current Masood Barzani that it would have consequences if the referendum took place (TheNewArab, 2017). Few weeks after the referendum the current situation in Bashur is risky and threatened by Iraq. Kirkuk was one of the provinces that were under attack by Iraq's prime minister Haider al-Abadi (Rudaw, 2017a) and retaken by Iraqi forces since the 16 October 2017 (BBC, 2017).

If one is looking at the economic situation in Kurdistan after the constitution and Saddam's fall the economic growth have increased more than ever, due to oil incomes and international aids. Which have had influence on the democratization process, especially when 17% of the oil income from Iraq was invested on infrastructures for example: houses, schools, hospitals, roads and bridges. The economic process also improved the political relations between Kurds and
minority groups, because the Kurdish people have included the minority groups Turkmans, Christians and Yezidis (Sofi, 2009:101, Karlsson, 2008:157). Finally, there has been a huge engagement each year called "Erbil International Trade Fair" since 2005, where the engagement has taken place three times in Erbil. In 2007 there were 300 companies from 22 different states participating and in 2008 it increased to 500 companies participating. More than 11 states have released embassies in Erbil and states as France, Russia, America, Great Britain, Iran, Germany, Croatia and even UN has released offices in Erbil (Sofi, 2009:118). Economic activities and Kurdish, Turkish, Arabic and Iranian investments have increased in cities as Erbil and Duhok since a new law have provided foreign ownerships. Through successful public relation campaigns Iraqi Kurdistan have presented a region full of international relations (Karlsson, 2008:156).

Free values

At the same time as KRG strengthened the infrastructures throughout the region, education was essential for them. They sent an amount of Kurdish students to different universities in the world, in order to educate the Kurdish population when they came back to Iraqi Kurdistan. According to Kurdish politicians this was seen as a modern strategy to follow like most democratic states use for educational purposes. Political freedom, such as religious freedom is higher in Iraqi Kurdistan than other parts of Iraq, thus it does not mean the political freedom is complete (Watts, 2014:145). The leaders in Iraqi Kurdistan have been and are still criticized for not respecting civil rights since a systematical torture occurred by the Kurdish security force (McDowall, 2004:381). Journalists have also been put through harassments and torture; one time a journalist was kidnapped and killed in 2010 due to his oppositional articles; another time in 2013 a journalist was killed due to his work about corruption within Iraqi Kurdistan. These two incidents are just a few of the incidents that have happened concerning freedom of expression and speech (Dagher, 2010, Watts, 2014:145).

Beside these incidents, the free values and freedom of expression have been marginalized throughout Iraqi Kurdistan. Journalists, editors and other type of criticism have previously been challenging to write about, especially concerning politicians, their families and corruption (Watts, 2014: 157). At the same time websites and media has for example Facebook been essential for offering alternative information, opinions and assisting mobilization. The internet access and function in Iraq consist of the lowest rate of internet penetration in the whole Middle East and North Africa. Iraqi Kurds have access to internet often and is most used among
students and young people. They tend to be most active on Facebook in non-political forums to involve other young citizens to their activities and interests (Watts, 2014:158).

Civil society

The economic growth has also benefited the democratization process in Iraqi Kurdistan through supporting organizations to fulfill their interest and activities. Transition from the authoritarian Baath government to a self-ruling and legitimate actor of social and political work have provided an emergence of associations, organizations and political parties in Iraqi Kurdistan. The amount of associations and organizations increased due to the improved cooperation between PUK and KDP in the beginning of 2000 (Sofi, 2009: 195). The American invasion in Iraq and the fall of Baath regime contributed with an increasing level of international organizations in Iraqi Kurdistan. These organizations worked in and throughout the civil society to encourage the leaders in Iraqi Kurdistan to produce a civil society for the democratic transition (Raoof, 2010: 38).

There are about 1000 different kinds of organizations within Iraq and Kurdistan, which includes local, national, international, small and political parties' organization and associations (Sofi, 2009: 196). The leaders in Iraqi Kurdistan have implemented aid for the creation of associations and organizations and different political forums such as social media and television channels. This is to reach as many people as possible to the political debate and to let the society influence in the politic through associations and organization. Further on it was a strategy to prevent creation of undemocratically powers in the society which could hinder the achievement of transitioning to democracy (MacQueen, 2015: 429-435; Watts, 2014: 149-152).

The organizations have previously been dependent of the dominating political parties'. The new organizations have lately been based on voluntarism and questioning the political parties of their monopoly over the institutional engagements. Even though pressure from the dominating parties and the limited resources that the organizations contain, it has provided an independence of civil society where the organizations engage in activities such as lectures, seminars, public debates, protests and striking. Through one of the organizations in Iraqi Kurdistan was a successful one called "Kurdish Disabled Group" where about thousand activists created a list of 15 issues that was about welfare benefits and attempted to influence their authorities by striking and demonstrating in front of the parliament (Watts, 2014:154-156).
Internal Summary
The Kurds has gone through difficult periods of oppression by authoritarian leaders but has successfully gone through an Authoritarian division where new soft-leaders as PUK and KDPs came to power for leading Iraqi Kurdistan. Challenges in the democratization process for Iraqi Kurdistan is corruption among politicians that has a negative effect for the democratic development to move forward. In Authoritarian divisions has the income from oil and the international relations also had a positive effect for developing democracy in Iraqi Kurdistan. Free values have been spread in the Kurdish society and facilitated the democratic development forward, where plat forums as Facebook have played an influential role for spreading information and opinions. The free values are also limited for journalists that have been killed for spreading information about politicians and corruption, which has a negative effect for the democratization, moreover this is an obstacle they have to work on for processing forward. Finally, has the Kurdish Civil Society driven the democratization process forward through demonstrations, striking’s and creation of free associations and organizations. The internal factors have so far corresponded to describe the democratization process in Iraqi Kurdistan. In next section, we will study Diamonds external factors.

5.2 EXTERNAL FACTORS

In this section, we will look at the external factors that has driven the democratization process in Iraqi Kurdistan, starting with diffusion and demonstration effects.

Diffusion and demonstration effects
Diamonds first external factor can be related to the American invasion in 2003 when Iraqi Kurdistan was presented as an influent model for driving democracy throughout Iraq. Where the purpose by Bush and his administration was to promote democracy and human rights that in return would encourage other states in Middle east and north Africa (Girdner, 2005:45; Salih, 2002). The Kurdish people stayed away from the conflict and they got their own province where they could establish an autonomous government and institution. The contribution of war in Iraqi Kurdistan meant a more democratized province with more institutions (Karlsson, 2008:149; Watts, 2014:145). This factor can also be connected to the Arabic spring in 2011 where demonstrations and revolutions toward authorities had a spreading effect in major states of Middle East and north Africa with the ambition of changing regime leader and system.
Following this incident, did Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani hold an inaugural speech in April 2012 where he highlighted that the Kurdish spring already begun 20 years ago during the spring in 1991 when the Baath and Hussein's regime fell (Watts, 2014:142).

"Recently, some countries of the Middle East and North Africa have begun to see the emergence of democracy and justice. The Kurdistan Region welcomes these changes, and supports any change that is in the direction of democracy, freedom and human rights. By contrast, the Kurdish Spring began twenty years ago when the people of Kurdistan rose up, with the support of the Kurdistan political parties, and managed to end the authority of one of the most dangerous dictators of that time in our land, choosing to install the rule of law, democracy and freedom without the support of foreign countries" (KRG Cabinet, 2012).

**Peaceful pressure**

While the external incident that have happened was in 1994 when there was a conflict between KDP and PUK based on dividing the limited resources between Erbil and Sulemani provinces. Which resulted in 70 000 Kurdish citizens leaving their homes and in approximately 1000 dead people. One year later did the US manage to establish a ceasefire between the two parties but it did not take so long until the conflict started again since KDP was offered weapons from Bagdad and they conquered Sulemani in 1996. There were about 80 000 Kurds leaving their homes since Iraqi forces was killing and arresting opponents to Saddam Hussein (Karlsson, 2008: 150). With support from Iran the PUK manage to strengthen their forces and take back their provinces. While the capital state Erbil was under KDP power.

The conflict between the parties became more advanced when Turkey and PKK got involved of their common interests and issues. In September 1998 in Washington, the US function as mediator between the political leaders Talabani (PUK) and Barzani (KDP) where they reconciled their internal issues in a peaceful way. However, the economical division was practically still instable until the fall of 2000, when provinces and villages was built up and incomes from trades, imports, investments, consumption and oil strengthened the political cooperation (Karlsson, 2008:151-153).


Limits of sanctions and aid conditionality

The Kurdish region in Iraq have been through sanctions twice, the first one was a consequence of the Kuwait war in 1990-1991 where about 10,000 people lost their lives due to oppression, war and starvation. UN hindered Iraq from selling oil since that would strengthen the Iraqi military. In exchange of giving oil to UN the Iraqi citizens and Kurds were offered humanitarian aid, through the so-called oil-for-food-program (OFFP). The second sanction UN adopted was after Saddam Hussein's al-Anfal Campaign that took many Kurdish people's lives in 1992. There was a lack of everything and people began to sell their homes in order to survive the hard conditions. By 1999 the OFFP managed to strengthen the economic situation in some degree, where 13 % of the incomes were provided for the northern region of Iraq and the political situation became successfully better afterwards (Holmén, 2017; UN, 1995; CRS, 2005).

Democracy assistance

One of the factors that were driving Iraqi Kurdistan toward a democratic transition, was when the UN military forces under the control of US and western world began an invasion in Iraq, with the purpose of removing Iraqi authoritarian regime from Kurdish citizens that were oppressed, tortured, killed and discriminated in years (Sofi, 2009, 127). When the authoritarian regime left the ruling position after the American invasion the Kurdish people did start their own government by holding a free and fair election. At the same did the indigenous fight between KDP and PDK did end and contributed to a coalition regime with the purpose of developing democracy and internationalize the Kurdish issue about independence (Sofi, 2009, 128). The strategic cooperation between the political parties have played a crucial function in strengthening, stabilizing and developing a democratic society in Iraqi Kurdistan. They consist of full control over the legislative, executive and judicial power where they have reduced the term of democracy and divided the political positions among each other.

This strategical cooperation challenges opponents to win an election and the governing parties will not feel responsibility to citizens and institutions (Diamond, 2008: 90-94). There are both internal and external pressure on the leaders in Iraqi Kurdistan to establish democratic institutions and democratic culture. Many of global actors have pressured political leaders toward a democratic direction. Internal actors within Iraqi Kurdistan promoted democratic elements by creating non-governmental organizations (NGO), associations, political parties, media and students (Watts, 2014: 142 &162). The international opinions and supports towards
Kurds have totally changed since the Saddam regime fell and when Kurdish forces fought against the terrorist group Islamic State (Rudaw, 2017b).

**Democracy by force**

In 2003 was Iraq invaded for USA and Great Britain suspected them for having weapons of mass destruction and relations with the terrorist organization Al-Qaida. The Saddam Hussein regime fell within three weeks of the war and at the beginning of May it was declared that the war was over by the Bush administration. Hussein's sympathizers increased rapidly toward the USA's forces after the regime fell. At the same time the American military was lacking resources, education and preparation to sustain stability in Iraq when the sympathizers and Iraqi forces growth.

**External Summary**

In *Diffusion and demonstration effects* has the Bush administration attempted to spread democracy and human rights but not succeeded to push Iraqi Kurdistan's democratization process forward. The effect of the Arabic Spring has not succeeded in pushing a democratization process, according to Kurdish politicians has the Kurdish Spring passed by already in 1991. *Peaceful pressure* happened twice for Kurdish citizens in 1995 and 1998 when the latter succeeded to bring peace between PUK and KDP through diplomacy. In similarity to this factor, has Iraqi Kurds went through *sanctions* twice due to different incidents that occurred in Iraq between 1990-1992. It did however develop their economic process which led to some degrees of autonomy and political development. In *Democracy assistance* has UN and US military forces has attempted to assist Kurdish politicians with peace and stability and thereafter has the Kurds been able to establish free and fair elections when the conflict ended. Fights between KDP and PUK has been ongoing in decades and US assisted with diplomacy to solve their issues. Other global actors have also encouraged Kurdish politicians to construct a democratic culture. *Democracy by force* is a factor that often fails for encouraging democratization processes according to Diamond, which is true due to the failed invasion US and Great Britain had in 2003. Conclusively, have all external factors been involved within the Kurdish democratization process, except *Democracy by force* which failed.
6. ANALYSIS

This section will present an analysis of the case where Diamonds theory is analysed in relation to Iraqi Kurdistan. It will answer the research questions and finish with a discussion about the theory and findings.

In Authoritarian Division Diamond argues that most democratic transitions began as a consequence by divisions in the authoritarian regime and that states usually possess to the kind of leaderships "hard-liners and soft-liners". This can be seen in Iraqi Kurdistan where the history of being ruled by a hard-liner leader - Saddam Hussein and his government possessed all power over the people. An authoritarian leader tends to discriminate minorities or certain groups as both Diamond (2008) and Silander (2012) highlights. Hussein as an authoritarian leader over Iraq discriminated the Kurdish minority with oppression, torture and genocide. It was not until the USA's intervention in Iraq 2003 where the authoritarian regime fell and Iraqi Kurdistan could begin the process towards democracy. It began already in 1991 when the province became autonomous and the democratization processes developed furthermore after Iraq's constitution recognized KRG. President Talabani governed in a "soft-liner" way and emphasized values as civil rights and freedom as a part of the democratic society, which most previous scientists has highlighted as essential for a democratic process (Dahl, 1989: 220-222; Diamond, 1999: 2; Ekman et.al, 2014: 19; Yesiltas, 2014: 52).

Even though the implementation of these democratic values had an essential impact for the democratization process in Iraqi Kurdistan it was still suffering of legitimacy from the citizens due to the leaders' political position of high status and control over the public administrations. Many Kurdish citizens felt inequality, cleavages, corruption and disappointments of fulfilling democratic values as civil rights and freedom for example. Diamond claim that when states loses its legitimacy from the citizens and are not able to gather taxes they forced to use natural resources. Just as Iraqi Kurdistan's leaders are doing to maintain stability in the region by using the oil and natural gases from Kirkuk. From this perspective about authoritarian divisions, it looks like Iraqi Kurdistan are heading one step toward democracy and falling behind two steps backward to authority.
With Carothers criticism in consideration towards Diamonds internal and external factor, it seems like the first factor Authoritarian division functionalized well as a tool for understanding if Iraqi Kurdistan is heading toward democracy or not. One can draw the first conclusion here that it has driven their democratization process. Iraqi Kurdistan have had both type of leaderships between hard-liners and soft-liners. The democratic transition started as a consequence of Hussein's fall in Iraq and the Kurdish political leader were lacking legitimacy from the people and used oil for the state's economic stability. Challenges Kurdish people are facing toward democracy are the lack of legitimacy, high level of corruption and inequality among politicians. When all these issues are reduced and solved the democratic process might begin completely, otherwise it will stay as a hybrid regime or competitive authority as Levitsky & Way (2002) are calling it.

Authoritarian development - Many researchers have found a relationship between economic growth and democracy, for example Diamond (2008), Hofferbert and Klingemann (1999) while Przeworski (2000) claimed that economic growth is only a way of keeping the persistence of democracy. From the maximalist view democracy will not be achieved until the economy is totally controlled democratically by institutions, which it is not in the case of Iraqi Kurdistan because the incomes are possessed by the politicians. Ekman (2014) argues that economic growth as modernization, education, urbanization and welfare would promote democracy and Diamond (2008) presents the opposite of economic growth and authoritarian development would promote education and knowledge about democracies existence among the citizens in Iraqi Kurdistan. However, neither of these two approaches have happened there for establishing democracy, because the income from oil have been spent on international affairs instead (Akreyi, 2006: 26; Diamond, 2008: 94-95).

One can clearly see that the progress of economic development was successful due to natural resources in Kirkuk. The oil has since the history brought rivalries between nations and leaderships. Just recently the oil in Iraqi Kurdistan was retaken by Iraqi forces due to the referendum for an independent Kurdistan that brought instability nationally and internationally. The economic situation to promote democracy have been instable lately, but it has always in some way promoted development in the Kurdish region since Iraq's new constitution. The promotion can be seen to some degrees, for example has the authoritarian leadership diminished by dividing economic wealth equally between the citizens and minorities as Christians, Yezidis and Turkmans (Karlsson, 2008: 164).
The economic growth has further improved and increased schools, offices, roads, hospitals, houses, bridges and buildings and strengthened relations internationally (Sofi, 2009: 101, Karlsson, 2008: 157). Conclusively, for answering the research question has Authoritarian development also driven Iraqi Kurdistan to become democratic. Both authoritarian division and development can be recognized as complex factors for Iraqi Kurdistan's democratization process. They have so far been helpful tools for understanding the process from authority to democracy. Just as Carothers (2002) criticizes that all states do not go through these factors, it seems like they manage to promote democracy in some cases, even if they are using oil to maintain stability instead of taxes and other incomes like democratic states do.

In Free values Diamond (2008) presented economic growth as an essential tool for achieving education, democracy, knowledge and to spread free values throughout the society. In Iraqi Kurdistan, Kurdish students are studying abroad and comes back when their education is finished. The international relations and contacts Kurdish politicians and citizens have had have spread free value in the society, for example freedom of expression has been very essential for the Kurdish citizens. Further on Diamond discuss that attitudes toward leaders changes when free values are spread in societies. This relates to Iraqi Kurdistan, when journalists were harassed, kidnapped, tortured and killed when spreading information about corruption amongst Kurdish politicians. As Diamond also approaches, free values are fruitful through media and education, which relates to the case where Facebook has been one of the most popular platforms for spreading alternative information, opinions and assisting mobilization.

Alternative information and freedom of expression from Dahls polyarchy are two important conditions for democracy which connects with Free values. Even though alternative information, freedom of expression and free values are common in Iraqi Kurdistan, this could be criticized because Kurdish politicians have tortured journalists for spreading information and Diamond underlines if free values are insulted a society cannot be classified as democratic. Both Rose (2009) and Dahl (1989) agree with Diamond's definition of democracy is only achieved when free values and expressions can be spread. Free values are not completely free or achieved in Iraqi Kurdistan but it is an underlying factor that is pushing Kurdish citizens forward in their democratization process for becoming a democratic province society where free values are accepted and established.
Civil society

Economic growth became influential for the democratization process in Iraqi Kurdistan in many ways. For the civil society, it supported them by financing organizations and associations. Civil society promoted freedom and political rights among citizens that was oppressed. This external factor by Diamond (2008) corresponds to Iraqi Kurdistan, where international organizations increased after the American invasion that encouraged Kurdish politicians for a democratic system. Kurdish citizens benefited from organizations that adopted different political and non-political forums. It was financed by politicians to spread political discussions, values and issues among the people, it was a strategy to prevent authoritarian powers and for encouraging democracy in Iraqi Kurdistan (MacQueen, 2015: 429-435, Watts, 2014: 149-152).

Diamond claim that civil society contributes with demonstrations and striking's when they have grievances against politicians. This occurred in Iraqi Kurdistan when an organization attempted to change the welfare situation in Iraq through demonstrations. Facebook have been a popular platform for spreading information that organizations have used to gather people with same interest and issue as them. The demonstrations also led to striking among some citizens where they barely ate for three months, with the purpose of getting attention of their opinion by Kurdish politicians (Watts, 2014: 154-156). Kurdish politicians might be difficult to negotiate with, they have however managed to let the civil society be a part of the development by creating organizations and associations. As Diamond clarifies that organizations are often associated as the source of democracy (Diamond, 2008: 103-104). It seems like Civil society has fitted completely as a driving factor for democracy in Iraqi Kurdistan. The Kurdish citizens must be heard and respected by their Kurdish politicians in order to feel stability and legitimacy.

In Diffusion and demonstration effects did the factor correspond on Iraqi Kurdistan. Bush attempted to promote democracy and human rights in Iraq primarily with some Kurdish areas included. The purpose was to spread it throughout the Middle East, it did however not succeed. Prime Minister Barzani discusses that Kurdish spring started 20 years ago in 1991 concerning the Arabic Spring in 2011. Meaning that demonstrational effects in Tunis 2011 did not influence government or Kurds to demonstrate for changing regime leader and system. Barzani welcomed and supported the demonstrations in the Middle East 2011. Diffusion and demonstrations might occur in some states to become democratic, it does however not have same effect as it had
before during the first, second and third democratization waves. The Arabic Spring seemed to be the fourth democratization wave in the world it did however not affect Iraqi Kurdistan’s democratization process (Diamond, 2011:299–307; Watts, 2014:142).

In *Peaceful Pressure* Diamond underlines, international actors for being an instrument to promote democracy and peace in states where political crises occur. The utility of *peaceful pressure* corresponds to Iraqi Kurdistan, when US used diplomacy to bring peace between PDK and PUK. According to Diamond was diplomacy the most successful strategy to solve conflicts which is true referring to the conflict the Kurdish politicians had and solved in 1998, Washington. *Peaceful pressure* is similar to the case in *diffusion and demonstration* effects, when Bush invaded Iraq to hindrance conflict and attempted to encourage democracy. In peaceful pressure the conflict between KDP and PUK in 1994 and 1998 made 15 000 people leaving their homes. US used diplomacy twice to encourage democracy, the second attempt in 1998 succeeded to maintain peace in the province and contributed to a coalition regime.

Which means that peaceful pressure for driving democracy was effective sometimes in Iraqi Kurdistan, referring to Carothers that clarified that all factors does not encourage democracy or succeed, which is correct when studying the first diplomacy US had between KDP and PUK in 1994. Further on, Diamond does not include internal pressure in *peaceful pressure*, that also is motivating democracy in Iraqi Kurdistan. It can be related to the demonstrations Kurdish people have engaged to advance a more democratic culture – additionally is this one of the challenging factors Kurdish politicians and citizens has for reaching a democratic culture throughout the province. Democracy must come from within and cannot be achieved through corruption and conflicts like it is now in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Diamond presents *Limits of sanctions and aid conditionality* as an approach that often fails for promoting democracy in a society. That might be correct in some cases, Iraqi Kurdistan went through sanctions twice that affected Kurds through oppression, war and starvation. Both sanctions were organized by UN for different purposes and the Kurdish people was affected both times. Even though Diamond claim that sanctions often fail, which they did since many Kurdish people suffered. At the same time, it has facilitated Kurds in 1992 when UN brought peace in their society by developing democracy among politicians and citizens started get back to their homes again. Conclusively, sanctions have motivated Iraqi Kurdistan to begin a
democratization process with UN as an influential actor for increasing their economic situation and stability.

**Democracy assistance** in Iraqi Kurdistan was when US, the armed UN forces and the Western states and the EU encouraged democracy by diminishing authorities, like Hussein. Whether democracy assistance has really promoted democracy is a complicated issue, because politicians have strengthened Iraqi Kurdistan in positive directions in many ways and have possessed power and control over legislative, executive and judicial power that reminds of authority. After the American invasion and years of battle between KDP and PUK free and fair elections was established. Even though the parties became a coalition with the aim of processing democracy they have prevented opposition parties to win elections in Iraqi Kurdistan. This cannot be seen as democratic, referring to Held (1995) from the minimalist view claim that democracy is threatened for becoming a tyranny when people only have two alternatives of political parties. That is exactly what is happening in the province. Conclusively, democracy assistance in Iraqi Kurdistan have pushed democracy with assistance from international actors' that have pressured them to implement a more democratic culture and institutions. One major problem is the Kurdish politicians' possession of control over the province, institutions, companies, universities and media. This leads additionally to further challenges in their democratization process.

**Democracy by force** is the last approach to drive democracy and is similar to previous external factors when international actors attempt to developed authoritarian states to democratic ones. By now one has recognized US as a fundamental democratization actor in post-conflict societies because they have been involved in all these previous factors and they are involved in **Democracy by force** too. When the US military invaded Iraq, they did not succeed in the war and failed to promote democracy because Iraqi supporters increased while the US military were lacking education and experience (Mehmet & Gurses, 2009). This case corresponds to Diamonds factor because they failed to establish democracy and peace. Which is not surprising because violence and war will not automatically bring peace and stability in societies. Democracy comes from within and cannot be forced. Unfortunately, this is the most common method international actors force in other states. Finally, **Democracy by force** in Iraqi Kurdistan has occurred and failed, which means that it has not driven a democratization process and Diamond were correct regarding its failing method.
6.1 DISCUSSION

One major problem for the research was to find an appropriate democratization theory that could be implemented on the Kurdish province in Iraq. However, one must take into consideration that the perfect theory could not be found for what the thesis attempted to accomplish. Most of Diamonds factors corresponded on the case of Iraqi Kurdistan. It does however not have to mean that they are going through a process because essential parts were lacking from the concept "democracy" and "democratization process" that were presented in the literature review. For example: freedom should be governed by rule of law; social, economic and politician institutions should be democratically controlled and not by the regime. Some of Dahls factors freedom of expression; right to alternative information, free and fair election and right to create independent was involved in Diamonds civil society and free values.

When comparing the internal and external factors utility it seems like both concepts manage to describe how societies process from authority to democracy and it corresponds on the chosen case. Iraqi Kurdistan democratization process began as a consequence of authoritarian leaderships and conflicts. Moreover, where the Kurdish citizens oppressed, tortured, followed and killed in all fours state. Kurds in Iraq were those who suffered most and when Saddam Hussein's regime fell was free and fair elections already established. Afterwards have underlying social structures pushed Kurds democratization process forward.

According to Diamond does a democratization process go through internal and external pressure, it seems however that internal factors have driven citizens and politicians toward democracy more than external factors. There was more information available and more to write about regarding internal in contrast to external factors, that has driven democracy but not as much. The theory's utility was suitable on the case, it did however differ to the other scholars in the literature review that presented conditions and measurements for democracy and democratization. This theory did not go in-depth exactly and were lacking on to describe how elections, candidates, political parties and government has functionalized lately.

For future research about democracy in Middle east, Iraq or Kurdistan are Dahls polyarchy and Rustow's democratization phases to prefer for democracy measurements or a combination with
Diamonds nine factors. One will then understand what has driven citizens and politicians to democracy and what they have to accomplish for becoming democratic. Since primary resources was limited in this research it is a suggestion for future research when more material and information are available about this topic, such as speeches, discussions and debates by Kurdish politicians in parliaments, television, party programs, political party campaigns and news will be examined. Diamonds internal factors overlapped with Dahl and Rustow, but differs when analyzing the outcome of external factors. Moreover, this theory does present which factors have driven societies toward democracy, while previous research presented which phases should be achieved to define a democratization process or which criteria should be accomplished to be classified as democratic system.
7. CONCLUSION

The research problem was if a nation without being an independent state can reach democracy? The research problem analyzed Iraqi Kurdistan's democratization process by using Diamonds theoretical factors as instruments for understanding which underlying factors might have driven and challenged Iraqi Kurds and politicians' democratization process. In order to accomplish the research problem and two questions were set as guidelines: Which factors have driven Iraqi Kurdistan to democracy and Which obstacles in the democratization process are they facing toward democracy? The research answers were achieved with numerous material as basis, literature, previous research and speech from the Prime Minister Barzani.

Through the nine driving factors one can observe which factors have driven Iraqi Kurdistan and which challenges they faced and has to solve in order to become democratic. All four internal factors: authoritarian division, authoritarian development, free values and civil society have driven Iraqi Kurdistan toward democracy and three external factors: Peaceful pressure; Democracy assistance and Limits of sanctions and aid conditionally from external factors have driven democracy. Democracy by force and Diffusion and demonstration effects have occurred in Iraqi Kurdistan but has not driven or had any effect on the government and politicians toward democracy. The internal pressures from within might be important for a democratization process, but not enough for reaching a democracy.

During the exploration of findings, it seems like the fall of Saddam Hussein and the US invasion had meaningful results for driving democracy in Iraqi Kurdistan. Special incidents for the democratization process was when the Western states increased and diminished the dictator leader Hussein. When the Arabic spring occurred the "Kurdish Spring" had already passed 20 years before. The independence ambition has contributed with a democratic desire for Iraqi Kurdistan. Free and fair elections have been adopted and some degrees of freedom of expression can be seen in the Kurdish province. With the uprising in 1991 did the Kurds accomplish to establish general elections in 1992 and afterwards have free and fair elections regularly been held.
Conclusively, democratization processes are possible for nations and societies without a given state. What could reduce their democratization process further is to become an independent state; however, accomplishing all principles to become a state, for example control over territories that are clearly defined. Corruption, freedom of expression and lack of legitimacy are major obstacles the province has to resolve for calling themselves a consolidated democracy. As Diamond (1999) and Ekman (2014) say, a democracy consolidation is about quality and institutionalization of political rulers and legitimacy. Even if some problems exist among the politicians that can affect the transition, are the prospects for a democratization process possible for Iraqi Kurdistan and they might manage as a model for middle eastern authorities. For answering the research problem, Iraqi Kurdistan as a nation without a state has so far accomplished to become an electoral democracy.
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